

FIRST OKPE EDUCATION SUMMIT,

DECEMBER 27, 2010

RESUME AND COMMUNIQUE

His Royal Majesty, Gen. Felix Mujakperuo, CFR, mni, Orhue I, the Orodje of Okpe realized that Okpe was becoming educationally backward. He got informed that many Okpe sons and daughters who finish primary school education are not able to enter secondary schools and many of those who finish school at the post primary level are not able to enter the higher institutions for further education. Upon this realization, Orhue I and Udogun Okpe Supreme Council saw the need to organize the First Okpe Education Summit. Chief Asini's 2010 Anniversary Committee, as directed by Orhue I, co-opted Dr Ovaborhene Idamoyibo as the Summit Coordinator and Gabriel Onodjaefe as a member and the summit was held on Monday December 27, 2010 as part of the 2010 Anniversary grand finale at the Orodje Palace Quadrangle, Orerokpe. The theme of the summit was '**The Okpe and the Challenges of Education in the 21st Century**'.

The Royal Father of the day, Orhue I, the Orodje of Okpe graced the Education Summit, while Chief (Prof.) Sam Oyovbaire, the *Ogba iroro* of Okpe, chaired the session and moderated the paper presentations and discussions. Prof. Hope Eghagha, Delta State Commissioner for Higher Education, presented the keynote address. Chief (Mrs) E. E. Onokpasa of Sapele, ably represented by Chief (Mrs) Edith Onajite Agino presented a paper on '**Universal Basic and Secondary Education in Okpe: How Progressive?**' and Dr Bernard Owumi of the University of Ibadan, Ibadan presented a paper on '**Tertiary Education in Okpe: The Last Two Decades**'.

Dr Tony Nwaka, Delta State Commissioner for Basic and Secondary Education, represented by Mrs E. A. Fovie, Mrs Elizabeth Okiemute Okeregbe, Education Secretary, Sapele LGA, Mrs V. Edokpolor, Education Secretary, Okpe LGA, Mrs C. E. Eguriase, representative of the Chief Inspector of Education, Orerokpe, Prof. Emrobome Idolor of Delta State University, Abraka, Chief (Mrs) Rosalyn Egborge of

the University of Benin, Benin City, Dr (Mrs) Iroriteraye-Adjekpovu Janice Imizuokena of the Delta State University, Abraka, Dr (Mrs) J. I. Kalusi of the College of Education, Warri and Mr. Edadogwaye Ughwusuena of the Delta State Polytechnic, Ogwashi-Uku attended the summit as invited discussants. Many senior traditional chiefs, representatives of all the Districts in Okpe, Okpe Voice, Okpe Union, youths, women, etc, participated at the education summit. A Communiqué Committee comprising the following members was constituted to prepare and submit the resume and communiqué of the education summit to Udogun.

COMMUNIQUÉ COMMITTEE

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| 1. Dr Ovaborhene Idamoyibo | Chairman |
| 2. Dr (Mrs) Iroriteraye-Adjekpovu Imizuokena | Secretary |
| 3. Chief V. Natufe | Member |
| 4. Arc. Ralph Kariere | Member |
| 5. Mr. Gabriel Onodjaefe | Member |

Arising from the papers, discussions, remarks and contributions presented at the summit, it was noted that Okpe needs to focus on the 21st Century challenges of education. The formal and non-formal forms of education were identified, but the formal education was considered necessary for Okpe, since education is life to the child as reproduction and nutrition are to the human race. It was observed that many Okpe students hardly wish to go to school nowadays, perhaps because of poverty and hunger. It was also noted that many parents are no longer willing to train their children as it were; they rather wish to acquire modern clothes and more fashionable assets, assuming that these assets would become inheritance to their children. The point was made, however, that the best asset for children is education, because all material assets that seem fashionable today could become obsolete by the time the children grow to inherit them.

It was further observed that a large number of primary school pupils in the public schools in Okpe sit on the floor to receive lessons and this is unacceptable in this age. The primary school leavers consequently lack functional literacy, which has resulted in their inability to enter secondary schools and has increased school dropout rate. Similarly, many students at the secondary school level indulge in

examination malpractices of various kinds, leaving their schools of study to enroll external examinations like WAEC and NECO in notorious schools often referred to as 'Miracle Centres' that open only during registration and administration of external examinations and others hire degree graduates to impersonate and write the examinations for them. Consequently, they credit their papers, but are not able to pass JAMB and Post-JAMB examinations to enable them enter higher institutions.

Summit Congress resolved and called on Okpe and Sapele Local Government Authorities:

1. To legislate the compulsory inclusion of Okpe language in the curriculum of primary schools in Okpe land.
2. To ensure that Okpe language is taught and examined in all primary schools in Okpe land.
3. To do an upward review of the bursary award they give to Okpe students and make it regular, covering all disciplines of learning. In another dimension, a method (such as oral interview) should be devised to identify only indigent students to benefit from the bursary scheme so that children whose parents can afford their training conveniently would not compete and spend the funds on mere extra-curricular activities.

Summit Congress also called on all well meaning Okpe sons and daughters, including the political class, Chiefs, academics, etc:

1. To donate buildings, seats, books, computers, internet and e-library facilities to schools in Okpe communities and draw electricity to them.
2. To provide scholarships to indigent and less privileged pupils and students of Okpe origin to enable them acquire education.
3. To augment the salaries of teachers posted to rural areas in Okpe, to encourage them stay and teach our children adequately. This gesture should be extended to teachers at the adult literacy centres in Okpe land.

Summit Congress succinctly called on communities in Okpe:

1. To ensure the security of teachers in their respective communities by instructing their youths against harassment and kidnapping in the area.
2. To protect the properties and facilities in the schools.

Summit Congress further called on Udogun Okpe Supreme Council:

1. To constitute Education Committees at Udogun, District and Community levels.
2. To summon, investigate and sanction any individual or group of persons found guilty of gormandizing funds meant for Okpe community scholarships, or selling scholarship slots of the Okpe to non-Okpe indigenes.
3. To constitute a Political Evaluation Committee as a Sub-Committee of the Okpe Leaders of Thought, or as a substantive committee, to invite all Okpe political leaders, particularly those who hold positions, representing the Okpe people in Government, by the end of every year to give account of their stewardship; to ensure that they show respect for the Okpe traditional institution and contribute toward educational advancement in the land. This Committee should henceforth be consulted from time to time, to determine nominations for political appointments in Okpe.

The roles of the Udogun Education Committee should include the following:

1. To ensure the immediate take off of the National Open University Centre, Sapele and Institute of Continuing Education Centre, Orerokpe.
2. To canvass and pursue the posting of qualified teachers to schools in Okpe land.
3. To plan and ensure a good representation of Okpe at the Federal and State Universal Basic Education Boards so that educational facilities mapped out for schools in Okpe get to them.
4. To liaise with government to ensure proper implementation of policies and programmes that will enhance educational development in Okpe.
5. To carry out mass literacy campaign in all the Districts of Okpe (at churches, market places, streets and various meetings), to emphasize the importance of education to parents, children of school age and dropouts, as well as enlighten and challenge parents to invest in their children's education.
6. To emphasize girl child education and adult literacy in the land.
7. To emphasize pre-primary school programmes such as Early Childhood Care Development Education (ECCDE 3-6yrs), because most industries no longer employ graduates who are above the age of 25.
8. To emphasize quality education, since job seekers who graduate with less than second class upper degree qualification now have difficulty getting employment.

9. To ensure that all Okpe children who hawk and sell wares on the streets are withdrawn with immediate effect and sent back to school.
10. To ensure that all scholarship schemes in Okpe run regularly.
11. To liaise with Okpe Union to see that its laudable plan to raise N1.5b fund in order to provide 500 Okpe students scholarship annually is effectively implemented.
12. To ensure that schools that run like 'Miracle Centres' and operate only during registration and administration of external examinations like WAEC and NECO do not exist in Okpe land.
13. To strategize high level human resources development programmes and appropriate political awareness to enable Okpe produce more Professors, Doctors, Permanent Secretaries, Chief Judge, etc.
14. To oversee the activities of the District and Community Education Committees and handle all cases reported to it by the aforementioned committees.

The roles of the District Education Committee should include:

1. To provide statistics of the number of schools and the number of Okpe students in the schools within the communities of each District and forward to the Udogun Education Committee for the purpose of enhancing effective planning.
2. To monitor activities of parents, pupils, students and teachers, etc, in the schools.
3. To drive for posting of youth corpers to the schools in Okpe land and ensure their comfort.
4. To oversee the activities of the Community Education Committee and handle all cases reported to it by the aforementioned committee.

The roles of the Community Education Committee should include:

1. To ensure that schools in the communities have adequate teachers, particularly in core subject areas.
2. To consult with the administration of schools in the communities, as well as with PPEB to employ and pay temporary teachers in core subject areas from community funds and recommend them to PPEB at the appropriate time for proper employment.
3. To monitor pupils and students' enrollment, attendance and progress in the schools.
4. To ensure that parents are encouraged to create reading corners for their children at home and give room for reading while they engage the children with household assignments.

5. To ensure that all Okpe pupils and students register for external examinations at the appropriate levels and that they have to register in their own schools, not in 'Miracle Centres,' unless otherwise determined by genuine circumstance.
6. To identify successful Okpe sons and daughters who are capable of sponsoring the education of one or more indigent Okpe students and call on such individuals to do so.
7. To handle all cases of indiscipline amongst pupils, students and parents in the schools and refer difficult cases to the District Education Committee that should in turn refer extreme cases to the Udogun Education Committee.
8. Monitor the standard of teaching and learning in all private schools in their communities and take appropriate steps to insist on the relevant standards.

At the end of the First Okpe Education Summit, congress resolved and called on the Delta State Government:

1. To promulgate a byelaw that will make the study of Okpe language compulsory in all primary and junior secondary schools in Okpe land.
2. To note that the Okpe need higher institutions; therefore, the State should endeavour to start the proposed Delta State Polytechnic, with its take off site at STC, Amukpe and permanent site at Deghele Elume as well as the approved National Open University (NOUN) Centre, Sapele and Institute of Continuing Education (ICE) Centre, Orerokpe very soon.
3. To build more model primary and secondary schools in Okpe land.
4. To establish ICT Training Schools and Skill Acquisition Centres in Okpe communities to back up formal education in the area.
5. To provide computers, internet and e-library facilities to many schools in Okpe communities and ensure that the plan to provide computers is accompanied by a plan to draw electricity to the schools to ensure functionality of the facilities
6. To renovate all the dilapidated infrastructures in schools within Okpe land.
7. To direct DESOPADEC to build staff accommodation in all the schools within the rural areas of Okpe land, to attract and encourage teachers to stay in such schools.
8. To provide adequate classroom furniture for all the primary and secondary schools in Okpe.
9. To construct access roads, install electricity and boreholes in all Okpe communities where there are schools to encourage the teachers to stay.

10. To direct the Post Primary Education Board (PPEB) in the State that whenever there is approval from government to recruit teachers preference should be given to the temporary teachers who are already being engaged and paid by communities to salvage teaching and learning in the schools.
11. To pay teachers well and upgrade them appropriately.
12. To provide adequate and effective security that is capable of stopping kidnapping and other dreadful vices in the society to encourage teachers perform their duties freely without fear.
13. To return missionary schools to the owners in Okpe land.

Dr Ovaborhene Idamoyibo
Chairman,
Communiqué Committee

Dr (Mrs) Iroriteraye-Adjekpovu Imizuokena
Secretary
Communiqué Committee