

UGAG - Union of Ghanaian Associations in Germany is 10years old.

This year marks the 10th anniversary of UGAG – UNION OF GHANAIAN ASSOCIATIONS IN GERMANY, which will be celebrated in Mannheim, Germany on the 10th of August 2013.

Executives of UGAG On the 31st of May 2003, Ghanaian Associations from, Aachen, Cologne, Düsseldorf, Hamburg, Kaiserslautern, Krefeld, Ludwigshafen, Mannheim, Munich, the Ruhr, Saarbrücken and Worms met in Cologne to discuss on the formation of an umbrella organisation whose aim would be to assist Ghanaians in Germany and initiate development projects in Ghana. After a series of meetings in Cologne, Saarbücken and finally in Landshut, which brought in other members from Landshut and Stuttgart, the Union of Ghanaian Association in Germany(UGAG) was formed and a 5-member National Executive Committee was elected to manage the affairs of the Union.

The Union which is non-political, non-ethnic and religiously neutral has its membership open to all Ghanaian Associations and religious bodies.

Some of the founding members are presently not active; others like Bremen, Darmstadt and Freiburg, Munich, Karlsruhe have joined the union.

The union, which has its seat in Cologne, has the following aims and objectives among others:

- To support and co-ordinate the activities of all affiliated Ghana Unions and associations at local and national levels
- To represent and serve as a mouthpiece for Ghanaians at the state, federal and international levels.
- To serve as a medium and link between the Ghanaian Community and the Ghana Embassy in Germany
- To promote integration and harmonious intercultural relations between Ghanaians and Germans, and between Ghanaians and members of other communities living in Germany

Since its formation UGAG has lived up to its aims and objectives by:

- Negotiating with Lufthansa and other airlines to reduce fares for passengers flying to Ghana.
- UGAG had to play a negotiating role between Lufthansa and the Ghanaian Community in Germany concerning the practice allowing passengers, who have booked Lufthansa flights to be flown by other Airlines in smaller machines and late baggage arrivals in Ghana.
- We have been able to organise four cultural festivals first in Cologne then in Karlsruhe, followed by Worms and Stuttgart.
- The union organises lectures to educate and inform Ghanaians in the areas of pension schemes in Germany-how it affects the Ghanaian, banking and investment opportunities in Ghana, Returnee programmes among others.
- The union also launched the Ghana Solidarity Fund. Here donors can donate at least one Euro/month and the proceeds to be used to support unfortunate Ghanaian school children, who need support, because their parents cannot afford to support them at school.
- In 2012 computers, computer monitors, pens and pencils were distributed to two schools in Ghana; one in the North and the other in the South of Ghana. In this regard we wish to thank Ghana Cargo for its support in transporting these goods to Ghana free of charge. We used money donated into the fund to purchase these materials.
- Through UGAG, the relationship between Ghanaians living in Germany has improved tremendously especially between Ghanaians in Germany and the Ghana Embassy, Berlin.
- UGAG took part in a number of Seminars and Workshops on Immigrations, Integration, Re-integration issues, and on linking the Ghanaian Diaspora to the development of Ghana.

There is much more we can do, that's why we need more donors.

UGAG is still negotiating with the German and Ghana Governments to enable Ghanaians receive full pension benefits, if they decide to live in Ghana after retirement. Ghanaians receive reduced pension benefit, when they decide to live in Ghana. Other African countries like Morocco, Tunisia etc. are exempted from this regulation and receive full pension benefit. This must apply for Ghanaians. To this effect UGAG presented a signed petition to the Ghana Government which was presented at a National Diaspora Colloquium held in August 2012 in Accra. (See attached Petition) Ghana-German Cultural Festival

There are set-backs like financial difficulties, failing popularity among Ghanaian associations,

limitations in our effectiveness as regards our coordination function among others. However we are not daunted, but focused to move forward.

UGAG intends to strengthen its ties with other Diaspora Organisations. In the Netherlands and Italy preliminary contacts have taken place.

Currently, the National Executive Council is made up of: Mr Daniel Dake - President, Mr. William Nketia – Vice President, Mr. Daniel Torkonoo – Secretary, Mr. Christian Gyasi – Org. Secretary and Ms. Bertha Adjei.