

The Kwacakworo Association for Culture, Peace, and the Arts

Concept Paper

(by Professor Beckry Abdel-Magid, January 2023)

Preamble:

Dr. Conradin Perner (aka Kwacakworo) has spent a lifetime promoting humanist ideals as a professor of literature, as an ethnographer, as a delegate for the International Committee of the Red Cross in many parts of the world, as a Senior Peace Advisor for the Swiss Government in Sudan, as a Commander of the International Joint Military Commission (JMC) in the SPLA-section of the Nuba Mountains and as an author who published extensively on the people of South Sudan. His publications include books on comparative and oral literature, ethnography work including an eight-volume monograph on the Anyuak and a four-volume Anyuak-English dictionary, an autobiography on research and adventures, and numerous reports on culture and peace missions. Kwacakworo dedicated more than thirty years of his life in research and in service of the people of South Sudan. In 1993, Kwacakworo played a decisive role in the epic escape of thousands of child-soldiers from an impending massacre and helped move them from the Ethiopian border, through the then Southern Sudan, to Northern Kenya. Among the many awards he received is an honorary citizenship of South Sudan presented to him by President Salva Kiir Mayardit for his outstanding services to the people of South Sudan.

Purpose:

To honour the legacy of Kwacakworo, a group of scholars and friends are working to establish The Kwacakworo Association. The group will coordinate with the Town of Davos and the University of Zurich in their effort to establish Haus Perner as a centre of culture and education in Davos.

Mission:

The mission of the Association is to engage and support scholars, artists, researchers, authors, and activists in their work to promote social cohesion, peace and justice in the world.

Goals and Objectives:

The goal of the Association is to create bridges of communication and collaboration between indigenous communities across the world in education, cultural exchanges, arts, and peace building. The Haus Perner will be made available as a gathering place for scholars, artists, researchers, musicians and authors to exchange, create and work.

The objectives of the Association are to:

- Preserve Kwacakworo's spiritual, immaterial, and material heritage.
- Develop historical documentation of the 150-year-old Kwacakworo' family house (Haus Perner) which will be the Association Center to entice researchers and artists to visit and use the Center in Davos (<https://www.musethno.uzh.ch/static/perner/>).
- Promote cultural exchanges between scholars, artists, researchers, musicians and authors coming to Davos and to the Haus Perner.
- Use the comprehensive documentation of Kwacakworo' writings and other activities to educate the young generations of students, researchers, and activists about literature, anthropology, ethnography, and European, African, and Asian cultures.
- Establish links between the higher education institutions in Switzerland (e.g. the University of Zurich) and higher education and cultural institutions abroad, including the University of Zurich, Winona State University, the University of Juba..
- Use the upper floors of the house as a temporary residence for artists (writers, painters, musicians etc.), researchers and scholars to provide them with time, energy, and inspiration. These residents will be selected by the Board of Directors and representatives from the Town of Davos, and member universities. The idea is also for Haus Perner to become a space where young artists coming to the numerous art, music and cultural festivals organised in Davos can stay, exchange, create, work and rest.

Develop a comprehensive homepage (in English and Deutsch) to provide access to Kwacakworo's life and work to current and future students, researchers, scholars, and the public across the world.

- Create branches of the Association at other universities and institutions to facilitate cultural exchange among artists, authors, scientists, and activists across the world.
- Obtain grants to run the activities of the Association, promote its mission and purpose, and publish the proceedings of the activities.

Governing Body:

Board of Directors: Currently the founding group consists of Professor Beckry Abdel-Magid (chair), Professor Dr. med. Paolo Suter, Ms. Joane Holliger, Ms. Michelle Kläger, Professor Dr.med. Jürg Kesselring, Dr. med. Hans WEhrli, Mr. Christian Grünig, the lawyer Mr. Andres Flütsch and Mr. Adok Gai Busice Jok. The founding group is working on raising funds and establishing the Association. Once the Association is established, a board of directors will be selected to run the Association. The board of directors will include representatives from the Town of Davos, the University of Zurich, Winona State University, other universities, and members from the arts, culture, and peace organizations. The Board of directors will establish the By Laws and Policies of the Association.

Budget:

Initial Funds: The goal of the founding group is to raise CHF 200'000.- as an initial budget to start the activities of the Association. An initial CHF 50'000.- are needed to establish the Association and register it as a legal entity in Switzerland.

Location: The group will be working with Kwacakworo, the Town of Davos, and the University of Zurich to establish an office for the Association. Branches of the Association will be established at the University of Juba, Winona State University, and other interested institutions.

Fundraising:

The Founding Group is inviting various organizations, private individuals, and friends of Kwacakworo to donate generously to this noble cause. A bank account has been established in Davos to receive donations that will allow for the official registration of the Association.

Founding Group:

Beckry Abdel-Magid, PhD, PE, Professor of Composite Materials Engineering,
Winona State University, USA, Beckry@winona.edu

Joane Holliger, joane_h@hotmail.com

Paolo Suter, Professor, Doctor of Medicine, University of Zurich,
paolo.suter@usz.ch

Christian Grünig, Designer, Artist, Resident of Davos,
gruenig.christian@gmail.com

N. Adok Gai, Director General, National Communication Authority, Republic of
South Sudan, nadok@nca.gov.ss