



Your Voice is Your Power

Annual Report

2015



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Message from the Honorary President



Salome Mbugua

IN DECEMBER 2014 when I was appointed as the Honorary President of AkiDwA, I promised to remain available and active and I have affirmed my commitment to support the organisation's vision and mission in 2015. My passion for an equal society where all of us are treated with dignity and respect remain the same. AkiDwA have and will continue to ensure the rights of migrants and in particular migrant women are upheld. This was apparent during the year through representation, advocacy work, participation in shaping of policy both at national and European level.

In January 2015, I was invited by the Holocaust Memorial Education Trust as the President of AkiDwA, to attend and light a candle in remembrance of people who lost their lives during the holocaust and specifically for black and ethnic minorities. The Holocaust was the mass murder of six million Jews and millions of other people leading up to, and during, World War II. The killings took place in Europe between 1933 and 1945. They were organised by the German Nazi party, led by Adolf Hitler. In 1933 the Nazi established commission No 3 whereby hundreds of adults and children of African descent were forcibly sterilized-this would reserve German blood and honour.

I continued to present AkiDwA at the European network of migrant women during the year and I was able to present our work at European level to policy makers.

In April 2015, I received an invitation from the European Commission's Directorate-General Justice, under the auspices of Ms Věra Jourová, Commissioner for Justice, Consumers and Gender Equality, to attend a high-level hearing on the future of gender equality in Brussels, Belgium. The discussions focused on key major areas that concerns equality for women these include decision-making, employment and pay, health, development and gender-based violence at the end of the two days forum the participants developed a policy solutions was reviewed by high-level politicians and representatives from the European Parliament and Member States.

My representation on behalf of AkiDwA with the Department of foreign affairs – conflict resolution unit came to an end in 2015 after the development and launch of Ireland's second national action plan on women peace and security, resolution 1325. Migrant women's rights are human rights too and while some of these rights continue to be denied my support continued during the year to Turn Off the Red Light campaign on cutting the demand and trafficking of women for sexual exploitation led by Immigrant Council of Ireland and Repeal the 8th Amendment campaign led by pro-choice groups in Ireland to repeal the 8th Amendment to the Constitution of the Republic of Ireland.

AkiDwA was featured in a newly launched book – *Irish feminism: past, present and future*. My chapter, *Feminism and Migrant Women in Early 21st Century in Ireland* is a significant mark. It clearly demonstrates the struggles but also the strength of migrant women in Ireland. It gives us the opportunity to ensure the struggles and opportunities of migrant women in Ireland are recorded in Irish literature.

In 2015, I was awarded a three week UN fellowship where I received training on United Nations Human Right Systems, Instruments and Mechanism at OHCHR Offices in Genève. AkiDwA is featured in the United Nations Documents and Data, in particular, on shadow report on periodic review that we submitted in 2011. I profiled AkiDwA during my three weeks training to participants, staffs and all at the United Nations and gave a short presentation on hate crime.

In 2015, together with the board, staffs, intern and volunteers a lot was achieved. AkiDwA will remain committed to ensuring migrant women are afforded equal treatment and opportunities. The organisation remains relevant, important and active platform for migrant women in Ireland.

Salome Mbugua

Message from the Chairperson



Ashimiedua Okonkwo

2015 WAS A challenging year with structural changes taking place in AkiDwA. The organisation continued to suffer from economic turn down that resulted to reduced staff, affecting activities and in particular information provision and outreach work. Evaluation conducted by Brian Harvey in December 2014 identified key challenges and critical issues facing the organisation and migrant women in general, key recommendations included the need to build the social capital of migrant women and their families, ensuring their access to public services (e.g. health, childcare and information); The importance of developing employment, training and economic opportunities, including the recognition of prior competences; Integration, adaptation and cultural adjustment, with the promotion of inclusive attitudes toward the migrant community, including respect for religion therein; Discrimination, racism, media bias, stereotyping, the 'double-glazing' glass ceilings that affect women in general and migrant women in particular, addressing the particular issues of trafficking and FGM; Political: the need to end direct provision, permit the right to work and bring in a fresh legislative framework (Immigration, Residence and Protection Bill), with

assistance to those who have suffered from institutionalisation; Visibility and influence of the migrant community, making an impact on mainstream political issues, civic engagement and the avoidance of tokenism; Finding champions and role models for the migrant community; Cooperation among NGOs in the overall migrant community; and Securing adequate resources for AkiDwA itself.

The evaluation helped in shaping AkiDwA new strategic plan 2015-2018 which became effective since January 2015 and efforts were made during the year in implementation of the plan by executing some of the key objectives and activities.

During the year AkiDwA continued to convene the national steering committee on FGM; the committee made up of fifteen organisations worked collaboratively well in developing of Ireland second national action plan on FGM. AkiDwA worked with ENAR Ireland in addressing racism, the three organisations held a conference in June. Funding applications were submitted to different funders, the year saw an increase in funding from HSE. FGM work progressed dramatically with awareness raising and reaching out to stakeholders that include schools and Garda.

The AkiDwA office remains accessible to members and the public.

Ashimiedua Okonkwo





Introduction

ESTABLISHED IN 2001, Akina Dada wa Africa (AkiDwA), Swahili for sisterhood, is a network of African and other migrant women living in Ireland, aiming to promote equality and justice. It is a Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO), a representative body for migrant women, irrespective of their national or ethnic background, tradition, religious beliefs, socio-economic or legal status.

AkiDwA advocates with, and on behalf of, migrant women and the organisation reviews key government policies, practices and legislation through the lens of a migrant and gender perspective. Whereas originally AkiDwA was established for African women, from 2010 it was redefined as 'African and other migrant women'. At present, about 70% of the constituency is African, the balance coming from a variety of other states. So far, AkiDwA has directly helped or worked with over 3,750 women from over 35 countries.

VISION

A just society where there is equal opportunity and equal access to resources in all aspects of society: social, cultural, economic, civic and political.

MISSION

To achieve equality and justice for migrant women living in Ireland.

VALUES

AkiDwA work, both externally with migrant women, stakeholders and partners and internally with staff, board and members is guided by the following values and principles:

- **Respect for personal dignity:** A non-judgmental approach which respects the dignity of those whom we engage: staff, volunteers, members, partners and the general public
- **Integrity, honesty, accountability, professionalism and transparency:** Our work should be undertaken with a sense of responsibility to each other and to the people and organisations with whom we engage, with transparency in our work and accounts
- **Openness to learning:** We believe in remaining open-minded, continuing to learn from others, including diverse stakeholders, while staying passionate and enthusiastic;
- **Empowerment, solidarity and partnership:** We believe in the direct representative voice of migrant women. We seek to empower people, helping those in dependency to move to independence. We believe in a partnership approach that facilitates solidarity among people and communities
- **Equality, justice and participation:** We believe in an equal and just society: We ground our policy advocacy work in the lived experiences of migrant women, whose participation we seek to promote across all levels of our organisation.

PURPOSE/OBJECTIVE

The main objective for which AkiDwA is established is:

To engage in the advancement for education and the relief of poverty by setting up a drop-in-centre to relieve hardship for women immigrating, particularly from the continent of Africa into Ireland by providing information, counseling (including therapeutic services for survivors of war, FGM, torture and other forms of disempowerment to women) and social friendly facilities.

- To set up a library to provide information and research facilities and collection of stories for women coming from diverse cultural African backgrounds including magazines, videos, books, newspapers and leaflets from their home countries.
- To organise social and cultural events/festivals to enhance integration and appreciation of foreign African cultures.
- To identify the needs of African women migrating to Ireland and to provide a support network.
- To undertake research on the status and position of African women in Ireland and to organise conferences and seminars on themes reflecting the needs of African women in Ireland
- To encourage intercultural understanding and educate against racism in all its forms.

Activities carried out in 2015



THIS REPORT reflects the 2015 activities as indicated in AkiDwA new strategic plan 2015-2018. During the year all the four key Strategic objectives indicated in the plan were covered.

THE VOICE: During the year AkiDwA staff and board participated in various meeting with government and non governmental agencies this include the department of foreign affairs, Gardai and health executives. An Information Guide for Education Professionals in Ireland on FGM was launched in February 2015 and has been shared and distributed to Teachers Unions and colleges around the country.

EQUALITY: AkiDwA continued to support the Turn off the Red Light campaign and Repeal the 8th amendment. Staff and board members were involved in the meetings during the year where they gave key address. AkiDwA convened five meetings with the national committee on FGM during the year Address. Staff attended the FYPAR meeting at Ballybough with minister of new communities, Aodhan O’Riordain TD and highlighted issues faced by young migrants in Ireland.

Salome Mbugua Honorary president was invited by European Institute of Gender Equality to give a presentation on community engagement during the launch of their report in Portugal on girls at the risk of FGM in Europe. Based on Irish statistic the research found that Over 1500 girls aged 0-18 residing in Ireland , born in country of origin or Ireland are at risk of FGM.

COMMUNITY: Three meetings were held with the Young Migrant Women’s group. The self-organising training project, Sisters-In-Solidarity commenced in October 2015, the project continues targeting migrant women around the country. AkiDwA successfully hosted Dublin city one city one people event in February 2015.

ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT: Six funding application were submitted, funding was received at European level through partnership project with End FGM campaign with coordinating partner been Cyprus. AkiDwA income generation strategy was discussed during the year. One of its strategy is to develop membership scheme; the organisation continue to work on improving member’s database, a software to help with this was purchased. Discussions were also held with the House of Akina-a bow tie producing company which received support for setting up from AkiDwA in 2011 and have interest in supporting the work of the organisation. The office got refurbished during the year and IT-Computers were upgraded. The board met six times during the year and AGM was held on 28th November.

During the year, the organisation continued to apply four key approaches to advance the above strategic priorities as follows:

AWARENESS RAISING AND CAPACITY BUILDING: AkiDwA, in partnership with ENAR and the Africa Centre hosted an event on Tuesday the 19th of May, the week leading up to Africa Day weekend. The event was the official Irish launch of the E.N.A.R. report on an European wide experience of racism against People of African Descent (PAD). The event was sponsored by the SIPTU, National Equality Committee (NEC) and it took place in their building – Liberty Hall. AkiDwA president Salome Mbugua launched the publication as she was a member of the expert group in Brussels that produced it; AkiDwA was indicated in the report. Manager, Claudia, made a short address to close the day while Chairperson Meddy, facilitated a brief session on calls to action and feedback from the audience.

The **Young Migrant Women** held several meetings during the year. The group received training and also led discussions on International women's day.

For the month of May, AkiDwA's social media featured pieces on **Africa Day**. These were a combination of event promotion posts and posts on the history of Africa Day or Africa Liberation Day as it was originally known. The posts gained more and more likes, increasing AkiDwA's reach. The organisation exceeded target likes and followers of 1000 for both Facebook and Twitter.

The animation on FGM was completed and launched on the 5th of February as part of the **International Day of Zero Tolerance Against FGM** at an event co-organised with Action Aid Ireland to mark that day.

AkiDwA had a stand on **Africa Day** celebrations at Farmleigh House on Sunday the 24th of May. This was a hugely successful day with a broad range of people from different backgrounds calling to the stand to engage with the organisation and take away publications.

For the month of June, AkiDwA's social media focused on the 20th of June – **World Refugee Day** – with a feature on famous refugees, and the 26th of June – **International Day of in Support of Victims of Torture** – with news pieces on the topic from around the world.

A very successful **Health Day** took place on the 26th of November in collaboration with Trinity College Dublin: School of Ecumenics, School of Global Health and TIDI.

The manager also took part in the first of a series of talks held by **Youth Nation** on young people in Ireland making a difference in social justice. She spoke about the work of AkiDwA and her experience as a migrant woman living in Ireland.



Visits were made to direct provision mainly **Mosney**.

Training on FGM was delivered to various institutions and agency that included students at Trinity College, Marino College and health care professionals. Over 20 Community health ambassadors were recruited. Several meetings were held with Gardai.

Action Aid Ireland approached AkiDwA to come on board as an associate partner on an **FGM European project** between ourselves, Action Aid Ireland and **Action Aid Italy**. This project is at funding application stage, the application was submitted to the European fund and we will have a decision in December. The project proposes to engage religious leaders and former circumcisers in training and workshops that we could deliver all over Ireland in an effort to strengthen the movement to eradicate the practice of FGM

In September 2015 Salome was recruited as consultant to take on the development of the **2nd National Action Plan on FGM**.

The **animation on FGM** was completed and launched on the 5th of February as part of the **International Day of Zero Tolerance Against FGM** at an event co-organised with Action Aid Ireland to mark that day.

As part of our awareness raising to teachers, we wrote an article on FGM and submitted to Lori Kealy of the **Irish National Teachers Organisation (INTO)**. The article appeared in the April issue of *InTouch* magazine which has a readership of over 30,000 teachers nationally, every month.

Delivered **training to 32 students** (3rd year) on FGM in Trinity School of Nursing and Midwifery on FGM.

Focus group discussion on migrant women's experiences of maternity services was held in Kilkenny. Report to be compiled on findings.



FORUM ON THE FUTURE OF GENDER EQUALITY IN THE EUROPEAN UNION

20 and 21 April 2015 - Brussels





Influencing Policy

AKIDWA PARTICIPATED on Immigrant Council of Ireland Policy and Research steering committee. The committee would focus on 2 areas: the integration of the Muslim community in Ireland and the effects of the housing crisis on migrants

AkiDwa continues to be involved in the coalition to repeal the 8th amendment and AkiDwa, chair and board members were featured speakers in several meetings during the year. Migrant women voice and representation is important in the whole campaign given the death of Savita, Bimbo and X case all who were migrant women. AkiDwa ran a successful workshop at one of the repeal the 8th conference which took place on Saturday the 12th of September on: “women who cannot travel”. The workshop was full to capacity and feedback from the coalition is that it’s one of the most engaging and informative workshops.

In 2015, AkiDwa was appointed by COSC Department of justice and equality to join the Monitoring Committee of the Second National Strategy on Domestic, Sexual and Gender-based Violence 2016-2021.

AkiDwa, along with 5 other organisations: The Africa centre, Forum Polonia, Wezesha, The Anti-racism Network and the New Communities Partnership met and formed the MIGRANT-LED COALITION. The aim of the coalition was to develop and launch an election manifesto for the up-coming general elections 2016 and to mobilise the migrant community in Ireland to vote.

Representation and Participation

THE MANAGER attended a charity ball in aid of SickleCell and Thalassaemia, Ireland on the 1st of March, 2015.

The manager took part in the NWCIs soapbox event where she spoke on behalf of the organisation. She also attended functions at DCU and ITT on behalf of AkiDwA to celebrate the day.

The manager attended the meeting of the Immigrant Council of Irelands new policy and research steering committee. The discussion focused on the integration of the Muslim community in Ireland and the effects of the housing crisis on migrants. A publication has been launched that was informed partly from this process. *Experiences of Islamophobia: Living with racism in the Neoliberal Era* by James Carr.

Manager attended the consultation on the new maternity strategy Dublin meeting at the end of July.

AkiDwA attended the Women's Human Rights Alliance meeting, exploring the process of Irelands review under the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women CEDAW

The manager attended an information visit aimed at those who could benefit from an introduction to the European Commission and European Parliament, how they operate and how they interact with each other and with the Council when forming policies and making laws. The focus of the presentations was on the migration challenges facing Europe. This took place in May.

The manager also took part in a workshop developing the content and style of a training toolkit that will be delivered to our community health ambassadors as well as other relevant people with the abortion rights campaign.

Caroline attended the Mojatu Foundation International Conference in Nottingham, UK in August.

The manager attended the first of 3 END FGM Network meeting in Brussels.

AkiDwA staff attended the launch of NWCIs Advancing Gender Equality in Health: The Potential of the Public Sector Duty which was held at UNITE the Union in Dublin.

The Manager and Honorary President attended the launch of the END FGM European Network and a knowledge sharing training seminar.

AkiDwA also took part in a documentary as part of a proposed submission to the HPRA to make emergency contraception EC (NorLevo) available over the counter as opposed to behind the counter in Ireland. This is coordinated by Re (al) productive Health.

AkiDwA attended round table on youth 2015 and beyond – NYCI at Dublin Castle.

AkiDwA also attended DELI Project with Declan - DCC and migrant entrepreneurs.





Funding

IN DECEMBER 2015 AkiDwa received funding as part of a joint application to the EU with partners in Greece, Belgium and Portugal to develop a web based platform, providing information and support in different languages to those at risk and who have been victims of FGM and any other forms of Gender Based Violence. The project commenced in November 2015.

Funding was received from HSE for FGM work in 2015. The funding mainly progressed activities as indicated in the work plan for FGM for 2015.



AkiDwA board 2015

- Amel Yacef, Chairperson
- Melatu Uchenna, Secretary for the Board
- Jules Buckley, Treasurer
- Ashimedu Okonkwo
- Aradhana Ghai, Board member
- Beatrice Mbogo, Board member
- Grace Wilentz, Board member
- Valery Mollay, Board member
- Cindy Njoki, Board member

Honorary President
Salome Mbugua

AkiDwA staff 2015

There was only one full time staff in 2015, the manager, all the other staffs continued to work on half time basis, however three of them had to leave the company when their contract came to an end by July 2015. Office administrator was provided by FAS under community employment scheme and communication and media supported by TUS.

- Claudia Hoareau, Manager (full-time)
- Caroline Munyi, Migrant women health officers (full-time)
- Alwiye Xuseyn Migrant women health officer (part time)
- Amaka Okwonko, Development officer (part-time)

- Spaqz Nkaku, Communication and social media (part-time)
- David McDonnell, Accountant (part-time)
- Barbara Gervasutti (part-time)
- Antoinette Kelly office administration (part-time)

Intern and volunteers

There were two volunteers during the year and one intern during the year these were:

- Pamela Kapundwa
- Winiswa Nxele
- Zeruah (Viola) Buchanan intern from USA

2015 Financial statements

Akina Dada Wa Africa Limited

(A company limited by guarantee, without a share capital)

Income and Expenditure Account

for the year ended 31 December 2015

		2015	2014
	Notes	€	€
Income	4	165,148	169,452
Expenditure		(97,314)	(163,758)
Surplus for the year	10	67,834	5,694

The company has no recognised gains or losses other than the surplus for the year. The results for the year have been calculated on the historical cost basis. The company's income and expenses all relate to continuing operations.

Approved by the board on 11 October 2016 and signed on its behalf by:

Ashimedua Okonkwo
Director

Jules Buckley
Director

2015 Financial statements

Akina Dada Wa Africa Limited

(A company limited by guarantee, without a share capital)

Balance Sheet

as at 31 December 2015

	Notes	2015 €	2014 €
Current Assets			
Debtors	7	3,500	3,500
Cash at bank and in hand		141,353	85,662
		144,853	89,162
Creditors: Amounts falling due within one year	8	3,275	15,418
Net Current Assets		141,578	73,744
Total Assets less Current Liabilities		141,578	73,744
Reserves			
Income and Expenditure account	10	141,578	73,744
Members' Funds	11	141,578	73,744

Approved by the board on 11 October 2016 and signed on its behalf by:

Ashimedua Okonkwo
Director

Jules Buckley
Director



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