

Strengthening the Voices of Migrant Women through Policy and Advocacy



AkiDwA Annual Report 2012

Introduction:

2012 was a historic year for AkiDwA with significant achievements on a few critical areas of work. After campaigning for over a decade for the implementation of a law that prohibits Female Genital Mutilation in Ireland, The Criminal Justice (Female Genital Mutilation) Act 2012 was signed into law on 2nd April. This law has been effective since 20th September. It is now a criminal offence for someone resident in Ireland to perform FGM. The maximum penalty under all sections of this new law is a fine or imprisonment for up to 14 years or both. While the principle of extraterritoriality is not included in the Act in order to conform to Constitutional and International Law requirements, Section 3 provides an innovative offence for the removal of a girl from the State for the purpose of FGM.

Another key achievement was the acceptance and consideration by the Reception and Integration Agency (RIA) of AkiDwA recommendations on three areas from the report *NO PLACE TO CALL HOME* Safety and Security Issues of Women Seeking Asylum in Ireland.

The organisation also saw progress on the area of domestic violence and migrant women: the Irish Naturalisation and Immigration Service published Guidelines for Immigrants experiencing Domestic Violence. The CEO of AkiDwA was selected for the second time as the vice chair of the National Women's Council of Ireland at their AGM in June. AkiDwA Staff Handbook and employment contracts were reviewed and updated.

After consultation with members, funders, stake holders, staff and board, the Organisation launched the new Strategic plan for 2012-2015.

Review of work of AkiDwA in 2012 and targets for 2013 was undertaken in December. The session was attended by staff, volunteers and board members. The half-day session was facilitated by Adrienne Boyle of Boyle & Associates. Among many other things the group looked into successes and challenges, which are identified as follows:

Success identified for 2012 include

- The passing of the Female Genital Mutilation laws
- The partnership with the Coalition on Gender based Violence
- The policy work on Direct provision and the publications around this
- AkiDwA's visibility at EU level
- AkiDwA engagement with the Taoiseach's Department
- The positive engagement with men in the organisation and migrant women leader
- The development and engagement of the Young Migrant Women's Forum
- The development of stronger partnerships and participation with other organisations, Doras Luimni, the domestic Violence Coalition, the Women's Human Rights Alliance, the Refugee Integration Agency.
- Publications: Independence Status Guidelines, AkiDwA Strategic plan
- The delivery of a number of annual events e.g. the Brain Gain, Migrant Women leaders forum
- The Door to Work Programme and the publications on this
- The 'Inis' Guidelines
- Teamwork of staff

Challenges identified

- The limited resources and working under pressure. Staff working with more responsibilities and the pressure brought by this.
- That many staff will be made redundant at the end of 2012
- Difficulty of accessing matching funding as the economic situation worsened
- Managing the clients demands and their increased dependency
- The delay of the IRP Bill, which was outside the control of AkiDwA
- That the Shadow Employer work did not develop as well as anticipated

In order to succeed in 2013 a few critical issues were highlighted:

- The organisation must stabilise resources
- It must continue to focus its work and strategies and remember it has gone from 6 staff to two staff.
- It must find a way to continue to give voice to migrant women
- It must maximise the opportunities that are available to it, for example in successful partnership in its policy work
- It must continue its approach of referral rather than delivery of services.
- It must ensure there is continuity from the last stage to the next stage in whatever the organisation prioritises

In the following section this report highlights and covers activities that were carried out in 2012 covering the key four strategies that are outlined in the organisation's current strategic plan.

Building the Capacity of Migrant Women:

The migrant women leaders met five times during the year and in July they organised a seminar on Child first guideline and child protection. The group had eight committed members, they agreed to form their own independent structures supported by AkiDwA. The group worked on a plan for 2013.

With financial support from Sisters of Mercy, capacity building training was delivered to a group of 12 women living in Mosney Accommodation Centre. The training was facilitated by trainers for Catalyst. The ten week course was a tremendous success that not only benefited women with knowledge but as well addressed their isolation. The women were awarded in-house certificates.

In 2012 AkiDwA Young Migrant Women group progressed significantly; twenty two young migrant women met six times during the year. The Organisation dedicated the International Women's Day to Young Migrant Women in Ireland and '*Connecting Young Migrant Women, Inspiring Futures*' was chosen to correspond with international Theme for the year. An inspirational documentary that was developed by six young migrant women in the group was screened on International Women's Day, highlighting the aspirational stories of young migrant women in Ireland. The group also received training that includes a session on goal setting. A half day workshop was organised to showcase the skills and talents.

From a request from the NWCI- Y Factor project, AkiDwA recommended three young migrant women to participate and inform work of the council. First ever summer camp for young migrant women was held by AkiDwA in August; the group invited other young people from BASE and opened the invitation to all. AkiDwA managed to secure funding to carry out a research into key issues and challenges facing young migrant women living in Ireland. The outcome of research is hoped to inform future work of the organization on this area.

Six migrant women from six counties were identified and invited to participate on a training of trainers health programme. The six women have joined AkiDwA Community Health Ambassadors.

Two round table discussions on Violence Against Women were held with men during the year, facilitated by Egide Dhala.

Training was delivered to migrant women leaders on Child Protection and the Children's Referendum in August.

Raising awareness of migrant Women Issues

In 2012 AkiDwA continued to raise awareness on issues that pertain to Migrant women at local, regional, national and European level.

Alwiye Xuseyn, the Migrant Women's Health Coordinator of AkiDwA, attended the 7th meeting of the European Integration Forum for the "Public Hearing on the Right to Family Reunification of Third Country Nationals living in the EU" held in Brussels early June. The Forum addressed issues of integration, family reunification during the application process and various asylum- related topics.

AkiDwA has been a member of Turn off the red light campaign (Trafficking of women for sexual exploitation) in Ireland and in 2012 as part of the campaign, AkiDwA and ICI held a joint seminar on the 28th of June entitled 'Migrant Women Need Choice, Not Exploitation'. The Seminar took place at the Irish Aid Volunteering Centre and Minister Joe Costello and Salome Mbugua, AkiDwA CEO, were among the key main speakers. Over 70 people attended that seminar, covered by different media among which the Irish times and RTE.

ICI, AkiDwA and coalition on Domestic Violence organised an Information session in July on migrant women and domestic violence. The session focused mainly on the publication of new guidelines by the Irish Naturalization and Immigration Service (INIS) that contains information on cases related to victims of domestic violence who wish to obtain immigration status independently from their relationship with the perpetrators.

With the invitation of the Ambassador of South Africa, the CEO of AkiDwA gave a presentation entitled "*Together contributing towards the progressive future for women*" to mark the National Women's Day in South Africa.

As part of the 16 Days Campaign, AkiDwA hosted a seminar and launched on November 30th the publication of 'We Lived To Tell', the book that highlights the various experiences of migrant women who have been affected by domestic violence. Greg Heylin, director of

COSC, launched the publication. Presentations focused on issues of domestic violence and mental health, the role of religion, culture and society in issues of domestic violence, and access to domestic violence. WMHC and the CEO had an exchange visit with UK organisations where they held meeting with Dr. Comfort Momoh and explored strategies of developing referral path and a one stop clinic for female survivors of FGM.

A meeting was also held with Naana Otoo-Oyortey, Executive Director of FORWARD and Black Women's Health and Family Support, mainly working with FGM practising community.

The CEO of AkiDwA was a guest speaker at a conference entitled "Living with domestic violence today". The conference was organised by the Offaly Domestic Violence Support Service. She also attended the Irish Gender Consortium conference and the launch of a report on *The Post-2015 Agenda a Millennium Development Goal Framework* in terms of addressing Gender Based Violence. The CEO's quote was referenced on the report.

On the 6th of December, AkiDwA collaborated with Somali human rights advocacy group and hosted a seminar on domestic violence. Speakers included African religious leaders from various religious denominations.

Nobuhle Ncube, Advocacy and Networking coordinator, gave a presentation on domestic violence and migrant women at an event organised by ICON. This event took place at Mount Joy Square Park.

The CEO of AkiDwA chaired a panel discussion and facilitated a workshop at an international conference in Cardiff, Wales, UK organised by BAWSO in partnership with six other organizations on "*Bringing human trafficking out of the shadows*".

AkiDwA is a founder member of the European Network of Migrant Women (ENoMW) based in Brussels and with membership from 15 members European countries; Alwiye Xuseyn has been the representative for the Organisation since 2010. In 2011 she was selected the chair of the network and in 2012 she officially presented ENoMW statutes before the Belgian Notary Authority. With AkiDwA leadership and efforts, the network secured two years funding from EPIM in 2012.

The CEO of AkiDwA and the Migrant Women's Health Coordinator attended the final meeting of the Grundtvig European Partnership mobility project in Prague, Czech Republic in June this year. During this meeting the partners discussed the progress and achievements of the project in 2011; they also identified future steps for the project and detailed how it might be used by other European partners.

The CEO attended a two-day meeting organised by the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCOE) in Warsaw. The meeting looked at hate crime and racism in various European countries and the steps that could be taken to counter such crimes. Through the invitation of Office for the Promotion of Migrant Integration unit, Department

of Justice and Equality, CEO also with Bruce Morrison, who is best known as the author of the U.S. Immigration Act of 1990, Bruce was collecting information from Immigrant organisations before he make recommendation on immigration in Ireland to Taoiseach Enda Kenny.

A successful Brain Gain networking meeting was held at the Gresham Hotel on 15th June. Over 100 people attended.

Influencing Policy

On 28th March 2012, after eleven years of working on FGM and advocating for law to be put into place to prohibit FGM in Ireland, the FGM Bill was passed by the two houses of Oireachtas.

The Criminal Justice (Female Genital Mutilation) Act 2012 was signed into law on 2nd April 2012 by President Michael D. Higgins. This law has been effective since 20th September. It is now a criminal offence for someone resident in Ireland to perform FGM. The maximum penalty under all sections of this new law is a fine or imprisonment for up to 14 years or both.

AkiDwA launched 'No Place to Call Home: Safety and Security Issues of Women Seeking Asylum in Ireland' during its Annual General Meeting on 10th November 2012, at the offices of the National Women's Council of Ireland. The research was informed by cross sections of organisations that participated in the survey, from around the country, and who engage with clients on the ground, mainly women seeking asylum who might present with issues of safety and security in direct provision settings. These organisations are: Doras Luimni, Domestic Violence Advocacy Service, Galway Refugee Support Group, Immigrant Council of Ireland, NASC, Mayo Intercultural Action, Mayo Rape Crisis Centre and Ruhama.

AkiDwA, Domestic Violence Advocacy Service and Ruhama met with officials from COSC and the Reception and Integration Agency on 5th November to discuss findings and recommendations. AkiDwA also met with the Reception and Integration Agency twice in order to discuss and progress recommendations from the report.

The Policy Coordinator of AkiDwA attended the Ghanaian Professional Association of Ireland's conference Seminar on Overcoming Racial barriers and Achieving Full Potential.

The CEO of AkiDwA and the Coordinator of ENAR met with Senator Ivana Bacik to explore the possibility of establishing a legal framework in Ireland on racism.

AkiDwA participated in ORAC panel liaison committee twice during the year. The organisation was requested to join expert peer group on FGM by EIGE and the CEO participated on their research on state of FGM in Europe.

Strengthening Organisational Capacity

AkiDwA website was refurbished and the new website was launched in December. Three E-bulletins were published and disseminated to members, organisations and groups during the year.

The Annual General Meeting was held on the 10th of November in the offices of the National Women's Council of Ireland. Three motions were discussed at the AGM, Showcasing the talents of young migrant women, Migrant women and homelessness and Migrant children in State care.

Twelve new board members were selected and joined the board of AkiDwA, two of these are young migrant women.

Six board meetings were held during the year, an evaluation and review meeting was held with external facilitator in December.

The organisation had seven staff employed in the year, funding for two positions came to an end in June and funding for four more staff positions came to an end at the end of the year and staff were made redundant. Ten staff meetings were held, each staff received supervision support over the year, and one staff training day was held during the year.

Board and staff participated at half day training on employment law by PILA- FLAC.

Recognition awards were presented to staff, volunteers and board members that have served the organisation over the years, for their contribution to the organisation

AkiDwA 2012 Board

1. Tina Akinola Jinad: Chairperson
2. Monica Anne Brennan: Vice Chairperson
3. Jules Buckley: Board member
4. Binta Obola: Board Member
5. Hilkka Becker: Legal adviser
6. Beatrice Mbogo: Board Member
7. Frances Soney: Board Member
8. Amel Yusuf: Assistant Secretary
9. Yasmin Kutub: Board Member

AkiDwA 2012 staff, Interns and Volunteers

1. Salome Mbugua: CEO
2. Annemarie O'Brien: Office Administrator
3. Catherine Mahoro: Accountant & Funding Officer
4. Nobuhle Nduka: Advocacy & Networking Coordinator
5. Kerry O'Leary: Research & Policy Development Coordinator
6. Alwiye Xuseyn: Migrant Women's Health Coordinator
7. Zuzana Pavilkova: Employment Coordinator
8. Amaka Okonkwo: Development and Event Officer

Volunteers:

Ciiku Ngetho

Cyndi Njoki
Egide Dhala
Luke Conlan
Dilyan Kiryakova

Interns:
Jackie Sheltry

Financial Report

Akina Dada Wa Africa Limited (A Company Limited by Guarantee and not having a Share Capital)

Income and Expenditure Account for the year ended 31st December 2012

		2012	2011
	Notes	€	€
Income	2	224,889	303,681
Expenditure		(302,673)	(392,521)
Deficit on ordinary activities before taxation		(77,784)	(88,840)
Tax on deficit on ordinary activities		-	-
Deficit on ordinary activities after taxation		(77,784)	(88,840)

Akina Dada Wa Africa Limited
(A Company Limited by Guarantee and not having a Share Capital)

Balance Sheet
as at 31st December 2012

	Notes	2012		2011	
		€	€	€	€
Current assets					
Debtors	5	3,500		3,500	
Cash at bank and in hand		89,299		173,263	
		<u>92,799</u>		<u>176,763</u>	
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	6	<u>(17,484)</u>		<u>(23,664)</u>	
Net current assets			<u>75,315</u>		<u>153,099</u>
Total assets less current liabilities			<u>75,315</u>		<u>153,099</u>
Net assets			<u><u>75,315</u></u>		<u><u>153,099</u></u>
Reserves					
Revenue reserves account			<u>75,315</u>		<u>153,099</u>
Members' funds	7		<u><u>75,315</u></u>		<u><u>153,099</u></u>