



Zero tolerance day on FGM 6<sup>th</sup> Feb 2013, Launch reort



Graduation on health training at the Gresham Hotel 2013



Brain Gain networking meeting- Celebrating five years 2013



Young migrant women Art Therapy day



Democratic participation of migrant conference

# Strengthening the Voices of Migrant Women

## By maximizing opportunities

AkiDwa end of the year report 2013

AkiDwa AGM, 15<sup>th</sup> November 2014

## **Introduction:**

**Early this year (2014) AkiDwA undertook a feasibility study** to explore and review the current situation and present suggestions for the way forward for the future of the organization. In particular, the study looked into current status, relevance and sustainability of the organization. The study found that despite losses of funds and staff in December 2012 the organisation continues to be high-performing and high-achieving. As the only migrant women organisation in Ireland, AkiDwA links and engages with migrant community, strengthens migrant women's voices and inputs into policy-making processes. Advocacy work has been critical and has created many changes in the lives of migrants in general. AkiDwA work is found to be highly valid and relevant, and the study confirmed the need to maintain the voice through the platform created by the organisation. The outcomes of the feasibility study have been used for the AkiDwA new strategic plan that will be implemented in 2015.

The report below is a narrative of activities undertaken in 2013 based on the work plan that had been approved by the AkiDwA board in November 2012.

AkiDwA had a very challenging year in 2013. Work was directed towards delivering the work plan in accordance with its priorities. Two research publications and a book were launched during the year: *Knowledge and Understanding of FGM by GP in Ireland*, *Integration challenges for Young migrant women*, and *Between Two Cultures*, a book with inspirational stories of young migrant women. Outreach activities and one-to-one support were rendered on a limited basis due to loss of staff: only one full-time staff worked with interns throughout the year. AkiDwA projects on Democratic Participation of Migrants led to great collaboration with Africa Centre and Forum Polonia.

## **Key Themes and strategies**

AkiDwA has three key themes; Gender based violence, Gender discrimination and Employment. Work on gender based violence has been mainly focusing of FGM and domestic violence. In 2013 AkiDwA work on domestic violence was mainly directed towards raising awareness with men living in direct provision settings. In 2013 work on FGM was quite advanced. Due to the continuing recession and lack of resources AkiDwA was only able to deliver once of activity under employment, Brain Gain, the networking meeting for migrant entrepreneurs and professionals was held in July. It was the fifth year of brain Gain running, a review was carried out on the night that indicated on the need to continue with this activity. On gender Discrimination AkiDwA convened meetings with stake holders and met with RIA 6 times. Policy on sexual harassment and gender based violence for all managers, staffs and residents for all accommodation centers for asylum seekers were published.

## **Female Genital Mutilation**

The advisory group on FGM held three meetings. There was progress in advancing AkiDwA recommendations on establishing a referral path for women affected by FGM, IFPA agreed to undertake the establishment of specialised clinic and to be funded by HSE. 2nd Edition 2013 FGM Information Handbook was printed and launched in November. The update was mainly done by the CEO and interns; the document was approved by principle Rotunda hospital and head of ISGP.

FGM Handbook for Health professionals 2<sup>nd</sup> edition was published and was launched on 6<sup>th</sup> Dec, 35 health professionals from a range of disciplines and organisations attended. Over 500 hard copies were disseminated before December 2013 to health professionals and organisations in (Galway, Dublin, Midlands – Hospital and GP and Primary Care clinics). Numerous soft copies and web link were distributed. Web link and soft copy mail out were sent to all ICGP women's health members (GP's working in women's health) and ISCP CPWHC members (Physiotherapists working in Women's health) through their societies

Networking was done with hospitals, clinics and individuals and training on FGM was delivered to TCD Midwifery students, MSc Global Health students Trinity college and student club DCU (120 students). Contact were made to ICGP to advocate for FGM to be placed on GP core curriculum

Four Meetings were held with AkiDwA community health ambassadors, the group continued to raise awareness on FGM in 2013 reaching over 1000 people in six counties.

MWHO attended two European End FGM meetings in Brussels (Oct and Dec 2013) and AkiDwA was an active member in the development of the new organisation (End FGM network) to be replaced end FGM campaign.

MWHO attended European Forum on Children's Rights in Brussels (Dec 2013) and gave feedback into development of 2015 European Child protection guidelines on FGM.

AkiDwA completed the evaluation of Ireland's 1<sup>st</sup> National Action Plan on FGM, and facilitated the convening of a new steering group, meetings were held with the group to discuss the development of the second national action plan on FGM.

## **Strategies four key strategies**

### **Capacity Building:**

AkiDwA looked for resources to deliver training and to facilitate participation of members in various meetings and conferences. A good number of women received training, mainly on health and many more were able to participate on Democratic Participation of Migrant Project. Outreach was also made possible through training: awareness training on Gender Based Violence (GBV) was delivered to over 60

people in five accommodation centres in five counties, Galway, Cork, Laois, Athlone and Dublin. The training was funded by Cosc and was facilitated by Egide Dhala. Through the funding support from Crisis Pregnancy Agency, 72 women benefited from the women reproductive health training and were awarded in-house certificates. The graduation was held at the Gresham hotel and the Principle officer, Noel Dowling presented the certificates together with Reception and Integration Agency.

Six community health ambassadors received training on Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), who undertook their role and delivered awareness campaigns countrywide using the FGM leaflets. The community health ambassadors have reached over 1000 people that included school teachers, Gardaí, GP and other healthcare professionals, social workers, migrant communities, hospitals and community groups in Cork, Waterford, Galway, Laois and Dublin.

Art therapy day was held on 23 May 2013 and approximately 50 people attended. The participants worked on beads, tie and dye, and great feedback was received. Women members of AkiDwA expressed their interests to participate in such activities once a week. Unfortunately, there was no resource to accommodate such requests. On Saturday, 10 August, AkiDwA hosted one day of Summer Camp with young migrant women in Ireland. Over 40 young people attended the day activities that included cultural dance, art, drumming, music, ball games and workshop on health and mindfulness.

#### **Awareness raising:**

Awareness raising campaigns and activities were carried out but it was difficult to implement many physical activities due to limited resources. AkiDwA social media and press release drafted during the year helped in reaching out wider audience.

In September 2013, AkiDwA invited 14 organisations working with migrants in order to support the project of Democratic Participation of Migrant in Ireland. Only four groups responded positively and a national conference was held at EU house in October 2013. A snapshot of a mapping exercise that AkiDwA had conducted at the time was shared during the conference. There was good attendance with over 90 people and EU house catered for all the cost of the conference. The keynote speaker was Simon Woolley from Operational Black Vote UK while Anastasia Crickley chaired the conference. Forum Polonia, Africa Centre and AkiDwA made presentations on the day as well as migrant women and men that participated in local elections in the previous years.

2<sup>nd</sup> edition FGM handbook for healthcare professionals was completed and launched in Trinity College in November. Over 35 people, mainly health care professionals and midwifery students attended the launch. Dr. Alexandra, midwife at Rotunda Hospital gave a keynote address. Five thousand copies were printed. HSE

supported with editing and printing of the documents, and has continued to help with distribution.

AkiDwA members and the CEO attended a conference organised by Broadcasting Authority of Ireland. The CEO has since held meetings with TV3 and RTE. The CEO and JB, Board member were featured in the audience on the Late Late Show in December and the invitation was from the presenter Ryan Tubridy.

AkiDwA CEO was invited by OSCE in Warsaw to give an introduction speech at the 7<sup>th</sup> OSCE Human Dimension Implementation Meeting (HDIM) in September. Her speech was focused on the intersection of gender and racism. OSCE has been active in promoting participations of women within their work. They have also supported specific projects on people of African descent. The AkiDwA CEO has been working with OSCE in establishment of training for women of African descent and Muslim women. Considering the Foreign Affairs Conflict and Resolution unit on *UNSCR 1325 'The Participation and Representation of Women: Successes, Gaps and Challenges'*, she highlighted the government failure to recognise gender specific harm that affect migrant women as well as continued deportation trend of women returning into conflict zone. She called for more support and protection, in particular, of women seeking asylum in Ireland.

To mark 16 days of activism on GBV, AkiDwA participated and organised several events. The FGM 2<sup>nd</sup> edition handbook was launched at Trinity College. An awareness raising meeting on rape of women in DR Congo was held in conjunction with Wezeshia and Congolese women in Ireland. The CEO spoke at a conference organised by Family Resource Centre. The conference highlighted the impact of domestic violence at community and national level and featured St.Michael's Estate Inchicore remembering all the women that have lost their lives in the last 20 years through domestic violence.

Final Inquest for Bimbo Onanuga was held in November 2013. Bimbo was from Nigeria and died of intrauterine foetal death in the Rotunda Hospital on March 4<sup>th</sup> 2010. The CEO had written a letter to the Coroner and Principle Officer, Rotunda hospital for an inquest after some members had expressed concerns over Bimbo's death as well as their experiences at the maternity hospitals. This was to ensure that the concerns of migrant women accessing the maternity hospitals are communicated with the management at high level, and also to ensure justice for Bimbo's family. AkiDwA attended two days hearing and the CEO was interviewed by the media. The coroner delivered ruling as of medical misadventure.

In November, the CEO responded to Interim Report of the Child Care Law Reporting Project. The report indicated that there is a high number of African children in state care. AkiDwA have been supporting women and families whose children have been taken to state care. The CEO wrote the letter to the Editor of both Irish Times and Irish Independent welcoming the report and also offered suggestions, which was published by both papers in November.

A workshop on Diaspora and Volunteering was convened by Minister Joe Costello at the Irish Aid Volunteering Centre in mid-November and AkiDwA was represented as well.

AkiDwA CEO was appointed by DCC to represent Ireland in Geneva at a conference on migrant entrepreneurship, which was held in November. The organisation's brain gain project was identified as a great initiative that other EU countries could learn from. The conference was a part of European Intercultural cities established in 2008 where Dublin city council is the representative of Ireland

The CEO met with Michelle Brachalet, the UN for women Secretary General. The meeting focused on issues of GBV and FGM, and AkiDwA work with migrant women. Michelle strongly advocates involvements of men to address GBV, which is in line with the AkiDwA working objective in relation to GBV.

A meeting was held with Ann Gorman, principle officer in the Office for the Promotion of Migrant Integration Department of Justice and Equality. The purpose of the meeting was to update the office with AkiDwA work and to build working relationships.

Over the year, AkiDwA convened six meetings with stakeholder groups on the topic of Sexual and Gender Based Violence (SGBV) in direct provision. The meetings were held and chaired by Reception and Integration Agency. Policy document on sexual harassment and GBV was developed. The policy is to be signed off and implemented in 2014.

Training on FGM was delivered to 150 medical students in February at Trinity College. Similar training was delivered to students in Marino College and Dún Laoghaire Institute of Art, Design and Technology. To discuss future options on delivering training to healthcare trainees in Ireland, the CEO met with the Director of Women's Health Programme at the Irish College of General Practitioners. They discussed the possibility of adding FGM to the curriculum, which is a follow-up of the recommendations made from AkiDwA GP survey. While AkiDwA has not been successful in implementing this recommendation, colleges are keen to have FGM as a topic of discussion in classes.

To mark International Women's Day at European level, AkiDwA CEO was invited to give a presentation at the European Parliament in Brussels on the impact of economic crisis on women. While the presentation was about the impact experienced by all women, she highlighted specific challenges encountered by migrant women in Europe.

CEO was asked by Amnesty International to give a presentation regarding the newly developed online FGM toolkit. The meeting took place at Amnesty office in Brussels and over 26 professionals from different agencies participated.

A successful and colorful International Woman's Day event was held at Dublin City Hall on 12 March, led by young migrant women from AkiDwA. Approximately 100 people participated in the event. *Between Two Cultures*, a book with inspirational stories of young migrant women was launched by Cllr Clare Byrne, Deputy Mayor of Dublin. Research outcome on integration challenges of young migrant women was presented, which was supported by Community Foundation for Ireland.

AkiDwA, Irish Refugee Council and Dora's Lumni held an awareness raising day and exhibition on direct provision: this was very successful and was picked up by media.

The CEO was invited to the panel discussion on Irish Aid policy on international development by Minister Joe Costello and Irish Aid. Her input focused on gender equality and the role of African Diaspora in Ireland.

The CEO participated in an expert meeting in April with ENAR Brussels on developing strategies at European level on racism and hate crime experienced by black Africans.

AkiDwA was involved with preparation of Africa day 2013. The organisation was part of the advisory committee and the CEO had a major role on the flagship day at Phoenix Park on 26<sup>th</sup> May. She also appeared on RTE six o'clock news. The AkiDwA booth was busy and a lot of information on the organisation was distributed on the day.

AkiDwA has been a member of the action on X case: the organisation has contributed during their rally and meetings since January. AkiDwA has stood in solidarity with women and organisations seeking for women's right to choose.

The CEO was involved with Afri, Famine walk in county Mayo in May. She was a speaker and walk leader during the event. She linked poverty issues of 19<sup>th</sup> century to poverty experienced in 21<sup>st</sup> century by many people in developing world, and highlighted the need to support most needy.

On Friday, 5 July, 2013, AkiDwA hosted the 5<sup>th</sup> annual Brain Gain Event at the Gresham Hotel on O'Connell Street in Dublin. The event was very successful with over 80 attendees.

### **Influencing policy:**

Policy document on Sexual harassment and GBV was completed during the year and is waiting to be signed off by all the organisations involved in drafting. AkiDwA played a crucial role and as a result the organisation has achieved major policy target that emerged from research publication on women seeking asylum in Ireland

(‘I am only saying it now: experiences of women seeking asylum in Ireland’, 2010 and ‘No Place to Call Home’, 2012).

The CEO also contributed into policy paper on the role of migrant women in Diaspora for international development, which was published by Friends of Europe, European organisation based in Brussels.

The CEO was part of the Black European Rights Leaders delegation representing 10 countries in Europe that went for an exchange in Washington DC for seven days. It was organised by Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe Office of Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (OSCE/ODIHR) and U.S. Helsinki Commission. AkiDwA CEO gave a presentation to the Congress house in Washington DC: her presentation focused on general overview of racism in Ireland and how it affect people of African Descent. In reaction to the hearing, Congressman Alcee L. Hastings (D-FL) introduced a resolution in recognition of people of African descent and Black Europeans, outlining concrete steps for the United States to take to help address racism and discrimination in Europe.

AkiDwA held a meeting with IRC to discuss and plan for briefing with policy makers on the issue of direct provision. The briefing took place in late March: an example of a bedroom type model in direct provision was displayed and the exhibition was featured in the media, which provoked more discussions on this issue.

On February 6<sup>th</sup>, AkiDwA launched research result on understanding of FGM among GPs. Undertaken by Egidie Dhala on behalf of AkiDwA, the research indicated that there is a lack of knowledge and understanding on FGM among GPs. The GP surveys have reached wider audience in Ireland, Europe and America. A meeting was held with HSE to discuss recommendations and an advisory group was established by HSE to monitor and advice on FGM work. The CEO and Egidie Dhala held a meeting with Dr. Miriam Daly, director of Women's Health Programme, Irish College of General Practitioners to discuss some of the key recommendations from the GP surveys. In the meeting, it was agreed that Miriam will support and promote the inclusion of FGM as a subject or topic in the curriculum for general practitioners. She also agreed to raise awareness on FGM by publishing articles in their GP magazine.

The research on Integration Challenges of Young Migrant Women was completed and launched in March 2013. A meeting was held with the Office for the Promotion of Migrant Integration.

The book, ‘Between two cultures - inspirational stories of young migrant women’ was launched in March and has been distributed widely.

AkiDwA held two meetings with IFPA to explore the possibility of establishing a referral system or one stop clinic for women and girls that have undergone FGM.



HSE has been keen to support any establishment of referral pathway. An advisory committee on FGM was set up in late March by HSE: the committee has met three times during the year where they explored work on FGM in Ireland and discussed framework that need to be carried out.

The CEO participated in a Diaspora and Development Roundtable in Germany. The purpose of the meeting was to prepare feedback for the upcoming UN High Level Dialogue (HLD) on International Migration and Development that took place in New York in October 2013.

The CEO is a member of the advisory group on resolution 1325 *Women, Peace and Security* with Irish Aid, which aims to monitor the National Action Plan launched by Irish Government in 2011. One of the key objectives is to engage migrant women and women from armed conflict in the implementation of the plan. Women asylum seekers and civil society organisations are named as partners in the plan. The advisory group met four times during the year and held a conference in October where the CEO gave her speech.

#### **Organisational Development:**

AkiDwA Annual General Meeting was held in November 2013 at Dublin Central Mission and was well attended with over 60 people. There were good discussions and recognition awards were given to three people, Hilikka Becker, Egide Dhala and Tendai Madondo that had contributed a lot to the organisation. Two of them had served in the board of AkiDwA.

Six board meetings were held during the year. The HR and Finance committee met three times, the fundraising committee met twice.

Staff meetings were held on a regular basis and the CEO held monthly supervision meetings with staff.

Two E-New letters were developed and distributed to members with the help of volunteers. This was a great way of communicating and updating AkiDwA members.

During the year AkiDwA made efforts to communicate with members through Facebook, emails and the website. Database was updated on a regular basis and members were contacted and informed of all activities and events.

Young migrant women were given the opportunity to plan and lead the international women's day. The CEO and staff worked with the group to plan for the event. Young migrant women were essential in the whole planning as well as very influential. Two young migrant women featured on 103.2 Dublin FM before the event and on Near FM during the event.

Susan Raziah, AkiDwA board member represented AkiDwA at ENAR general assembly in Brussels in June while Egide Dhala participated at PICUM member's workshop in Brussels on poverty among undocumented migrants.

**Board:** There were nine board members serving the organisation in 2013. Hilka Bekka resigned in early 2013 and Valerie Molly relocated to Brussels for studies.

1. Amel Yacef: Chairperson
2. Frances Soney Ituen: Vice Chair
3. Jules Buckley: Treasurer
4. Melatu Okorie: Board Secretary
5. Beatrice Mbogo: Board Member
6. Razieh Nikoomanesh: Board Member
7. Binta Obola: Board member
8. Tina Akinola Jinad: Board member
9. Maria Onyemelukwe: Board Member

**Staff:** AkiDwA staffs in 2013

1. Salome Mbugua: CEO- Fulltime
2. David McDonnell: Financial administrator- Four hours a week
3. Jessica O'Dowd: Migrant Women Health Officer- 3 days a week
4. Celina Carey/ Mary Yeomans-Byrne: Office administrator- part time

**Interns and Volunteers:** AkiDwA engaged a number of interns during the year to support the organisation work. There were also a good number of volunteers:

1. Laura McGonigle: Intren
2. Ida Segota: Intern
3. Happiness Mwase: volunteers
4. Egide Dhala: Volunteer
5. Megan Breckwold: Intern
6. Seema Bansal: Intern
7. Shalott Cecchini: Intern
8. Katelyn J. Lengeman: Intern

## AkiDwA Financial Report for 2013

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 2013

		2013	2012
	Notes	€	€
Income	2	120,136	224,889
Expenditure		<u>(127,401)</u>	<u>(302,673)</u>
Deficit on ordinary activities before taxation		(7,265)	(77,784)
Tax on deficit on ordinary activities		<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>
Deficit on ordinary activities after taxation	3	<u><u>(7,265)</u></u>	<u><u>(77,784)</u></u>

Income and Operating Deficit arose solely from continuing operations in the current year.

The company had no recognised gains or losses for the above two financial years other than those dealt with in the income and expenditure account.

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

**Balance Sheet**  
as at 31st December 2013

	Notes	2013	€	2012	€
<b>Current assets</b>					
Debtors	5	3,500		3,500	
Cash at bank and in hand		86,328		89,299	
		<u>89,828</u>		<u>92,799</u>	
<b>Creditors: amounts falling due within one year</b>					
	6	<u>(21,778)</u>		<u>(17,484)</u>	
<b>Net current assets</b>			<u>68,050</u>		<u>75,315</u>
<b>Total assets less current liabilities</b>			<u>68,050</u>		<u>75,315</u>
<b>Net assets</b>			<u>68,050</u>		<u>75,315</u>
<b>Reserves</b>					
Revenue reserves account	7		<u>68,050</u>		<u>75,315</u>
<b>Members' funds</b>			<u>68,050</u>		<u>75,315</u>