AkiDwA Launches Regional Office in Galway to Expand Support for Migrant Women

In March 2022, AkiDwA launched its new strategic plan in Galway, signaling its intention to establish a stronger presence in the region. One of the key actions in the plan was to open a regional office and build connections with local groups and organisations. This vision became reality on December 17, 2024, with the official launch of AkiDwA's Galway office, staffed by two dedicated team members.

Akina Dada wa Africa (AkiDwA)—meaning "sisterhood" in Swahili—is a national network committed to empowering migrant women living in Ireland. Since its founding in 2001, AkiDwA has been a driving force for equality and justice, striving for a society where migrant women have equitable access to social, cultural, economic, civic, and political resources. Recognized as a leading NGO, AkiDwA has positively impacted thousands of lives through advocacy, outreach, and capacity-building programs.

In its current Strategic Plan (2022–2025), AkiDwA is focusing on expanding its reach and deepening its impact on the lives of migrant women. "*We are committed to ensuring that no one is left behind. By collaborating with organisations here in Galway, we strengthen our work and our mission to support migrant women in meaningful ways*," said Dr. Salome Mbugua, CEO of AkiDwA.

AkiDwA's primary objective is to ensure that the voices of migrant women are heard and their presence is represented across all sectors of Irish society. The organisation works from a human rights perspective, grounded in principles of dignity and respect for all. Its work encompasses various projects, including:

- Economic Empowerment
- Reproductive Health and Well-being
- Prevention of Domestic Violence
- Advocacy Against Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)
- Integration and Community Building
- Delivering cultural competence training to service providers and frontline services

In 2024 alone, AkiDwA reached 9,625 women through its programs, delivering sessions in 161 accommodation centers for international protection applicants nationwide and partnering with 343 organisations. The launch of the Galway regional office marks a critical milestone for AkiDwA. It demonstrates the organisation's commitment to inclusivity and accessibility, addressing the unique needs of migrant women in the western regions of Ireland. This regional presence allows AkiDwA to provide more localized support and gain deeper insights into the specific challenges faced by migrant women in Galway and surrounding areas.

"The opening of our Galway office is a significant step forward," said Cllr. Uruemu, Chairperson of AkiDwA. "*It enables us to reach more migrant women outside of Dublin and to work directly with communities on the ground. Our mission is to support migrant women in achieving equity in Irish society, empowering them to realize their goals and aspirations. This work is not just about helping individuals, it's about fostering a more inclusive and accepting society for all."*

The Galway office will foster stronger collaboration with local organisations and government agencies, enhancing AkiDwA's advocacy efforts on behalf of migrant communities.

"I deeply admire the vision, dedication, and commitment to social justice that AkiDwA represents," said Councilor Hellen Ogbu. *"Coming to Ireland years ago, I remember the positive impact AkiDwA had, and it's truly a blessing to now have you opening your doors in Galway."*

As AkiDwA embarks on its first year in Galway, the organisation is excited to announce several initiatives aimed at empowering migrant women and building partnerships with local stakeholders this include a comprehensive research initiative to identify the specific challenges faced by migrant women in Galway. The findings will inform how AkiDwA can tailor its support and resources to meet these needs effectively. We aim to Strengthening Partnerships by collaborating with like-minded organisations and service providers in the region to ensure equitable access to mainstream services and interventions that promote well-being and integration. The organisation will also hold a series of networking events throughout the year to create platforms for discussing issues affecting migrant women, sharing insights, and developing collaborative solutions. One of the upcoming events in Galway is a dissemination workshop for a report by AkiDwA, titled *"Unheard Voices,"* on February 27, 2024. The report documents the lived experiences and challenges faced by migrant women in emergency accommodation centers in Ireland, ensuring their stories are heard and their needs addressed.

As AkiDwA deepens its work in Galway, it remains steadfast in its mission to create an inclusive and supportive society for migrant women. The organisation invites local stakeholders, community members, and partners to join in realising a shared vision of a just society where all have equal opportunities and access to resources across social, cultural, economic, civic, and political spheres.

"We are working together in solidarity, building an integrated society, one in which all people are valued, treated with respect and dignity, and enjoy equal opportunities and protections" Dr Salome Mbugua

For more information about AkiDwA's initiatives in Galway, please contact: Bethlehem 0834371211, or email info@akidwa.ie