



Ireland's national network for migrant women

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Four Migrant Women Gain Long-term Employment through AkiDwA's *Door to work* Project

"Collaborations with other agencies including corporate bodies can bring productive, much needed and lasting changes in lives of vulnerable migrant women" says Dr. Salome Mbugua, head of Operations and Strategy at AkiDwA. The organisation which seeks to promote equality and justice for migrant women has recently completed Phase I of the *Door to Work* project supported by PayPal.

AkiDwA—Ireland's network for migrant women—believes that without the attainment of equality in the workplace and in the access to employment, migrant women in Ireland cannot achieve full equality and integration in other spheres, for example, their communities, home and education. Thus the *Door to Work* project was designed with the aim of ensuring the social inclusion of migrant women and their economic independence, primarily through the development of professional skills

AkiDwA successfully completed their *Door to Work* programme on the 7th of July 2021. *Door to Work* is an innovative project delivered in collaboration with PayPal. The project saw one hundred and twenty PayPal staff offering their time and support to twenty-three migrant women through mentoring, career coaching and training on job search, preparation and presentation during interviews.

In their strategic plan *Shaping the Future 2019-2021*, AkiDwA identifies employment, alongside gender-based violence and health as one of the key areas of work for the organisation. In the long-term, it is envisaged that *Door to Work* will enable migrant women to secure lasting paid employment.

Furthermore the programme aims to empower women to seek employment in areas of their own interest and in fields specific to the qualifications obtained in their country of origin (e.g. IT, media, communications, admin, finance, legal, community and development work).

"We want to try and reduce the stigma in Ireland that care and cleaning are the only jobs suitable for refugees and asylum seekers." says Paula Letsie, Project Officer of *Door to Work* at AkiDwA.

The project, which commenced in February of 2021, was an overall success with twenty-three out of twenty seven registered migrant women taking part. PayPal enlisted other employers, such as SkillNet, Dress for Success, Indeed, the Irish Wheelchair Association and the Amplifier Group to take part in the project. AkiDwA secured a donation from PayPal which enabled the purchase of computer tablets, related equipment, and internet for each participant enabling access to online training. In March PayPal conducted mock interviews with the participating women for which they received extensive feedback. In May participants benefited from training sessions with SkillNet in Microsoft Excel, Word, and Powerpoint. Sessions were arranged with Indeed.ie to teach women how to apply for jobs using their platform.

“As a result of the Door to Work programme four participating women gained long-term employment. Participants also gained confidence in attending interviews and writing CVs.” says Project Officer Paula Letsie.

“As a society we must all work together to ensure no one is left behind” says Dr Mbugua.

The Economic and Social Research institute in their integration monitoring report has indicated that despite the right to work now being granted to people seeking international protection, many migrant women still face huge barriers in accessing employment. Both PayPal and AkiDwA will meet in September to discuss the next phase of the programme.

About AkiDwA: AkiDwA is a charity formally known as Akina Dada Wa Africa (Swahili for sisterhood). Established in Dublin in 2001, AkiDwA has been representing migrant women in Ireland for almost two decades by providing policymakers with the unique perspective of a migrant-led national women’s organisation. AkiDwA takes a holistic approach to integration that involves promoting both a migrant and a gender-specific approach to public services and by encouraging migrant women to access mainstream services and initiatives. We promote equality and justice for all migrant women in Ireland by ensuring equal opportunities and equal access to resources for all.

AkiDwA is based at Unit 2, Killarney Court, Buckingham Street, Dublin 1 Registered Charity Number 20063641 CHY No 17227

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