

Africa Solidarity Centre Limited (Africa Centre)



Annual Activities Report 2016

1. Acknowledgement

Our annual report 2016 has been very nuanced and endured due to limited funding received. Our previous activities in 2015 was made possible with the financial support of our funders which we would like to renew our thanks to Irish Aid, Trócaire, Dublin City Council, City of Dublin Youth Service Board, IMPACT and other donations during the year, which unfortunately were all lost making the 2016 one of our most challenging year.

As well noticed and fairly in our previous year report, it was evident that due to the massive loss in funding, our organisation entered in it very mitigated and challenging year in terms of financial availability and the capacity of meeting our goals. Our activities in 2016 were considerably reduced due to lack of funding. With the constrained we experienced, it was mainly our Board members and volunteers that took active role within the organisation in our restructuring measures as to focusing on capacity development of the organisation and strengthen our financial sustainability.

Therefore, we frankly and sincerely thanking our dedicated volunteers for this past year and their commitments, the centre would not have survived to sustained during our financial challenges as we didn't have paid staff for the year.

Finally, we want to renew our thank our Board members for their responsibilities, engagement and invaluable contributions to the work of the organisation during the past year.

2. Chairperson's Introduction

It has been very challenging year for the Africa Solidarity Centre, but it has been a privilege and pleasure for me to be part of the ongoing restructuring of the centre including this year 2016.

Our financial situation has made it more challenging for the centre for us to focus attention on implementing the final year of our strategic plan (2014 -2015) but we managed to carry out limited outreach and networking activities with members of the African community and the wider Irish society but also reviewing the organisation structure and strengthen its capacity.

During the year, we have worked to increase visibility despite being unable to organise many events as we always aimed in our previous years at highlighting the contributions of the African Community to Irish life through our first development education residential activity in the countryside as usual.

We had collaborative work with our partner NGOs in Ireland and developed a very collaborative work European level on the issues affecting the African Diaspora Communities, the growing Afrophobia, hatred and the widespread racism against people of African Descent during the year. We also participated at high level discussion on the issues affecting African Communities through forums and conferences at national and at European level.

Recognising the greater achievements and contributions the former Director of the centre made sustaining the organisation in previous years, the board had entered in agreement with Mr. Mbemba Jabbi to renegotiate his services in rebuilding the organisation to get back funder confidence and sustainability and he is now acting director of the organisation.

The Africa Centre thanks Mr Jabbi for his love and passion to the African cause, not only coming back to help us rescuing the organisation assisting in finalising reports to funders, work with us on this report as a consultant and but also have accepted to reengage more with the organisation as acting director. As a voluntary and charitable organisation, our accomplishments are always made possible by men and women who support the Centre in various capacities: consultants, facilitators, mentors, donors and the devoted commitment of our board members.

I thank Africa Centre Board members for giving me their unconditional support which was needed in a difficult we had including a vote of no confidence on the outgoing Chairperson for the stability of the organisation and I earned their trust and support electing me as their chairperson. I took up the mantle of leadership at the Centre with a strong believe we will overcome the challenge as brothers and sisters working in unity toward a common goal. As always, I have no doubt that standing shoulder to shoulder we will accomplish Africa Centre's mission.

Finally, I would like to thank all members of the Africa Centre, funders, contributors and supporters for ensuring that the organisation grows from year to year.

Lassane Ouedraogo

Chairperson

3. Financial Update

This Summary report section on the financial statements attached to the activities Report, e.g.: Balance Sheet, Profit & Loss Statement including comparison with the organisation's budget, Cash Flow projection for the incoming months. The Africa Centre Board of management are aware of the financial challenges of the organisation and have already taken steps to achieve financial sustainability and to strengthen the governance of the organisation.

Short Financial Statement 2016

Income €7,933.00

Cost of Charitable Activities €6,885.00

Other Expenditure €3,751.00

Deficit for the Year €2,703.00

Balance B/F on 1/1/2016 €1,265.00

Balance C/F on 31/12/2016 €3,968.00

See page 9 of the Audited Accounts 2016 attached to this report.

4. Operational and Activities Update

Eventhough we faced financial constraint, we had managed to be more visible at national and European level highlighting the contributions of the African Community to Irish life, continued to distribute of the 'Africa Also Smiles' posters at various workshops as part of our development education on the topic of "Giving Voice to the African Diaspora".

The Centre on the 19th September 2016, organised a lecture on the "**Global migration, diversity, tolerance and tackling Islamophobia**" at Trinity College Dublin in collaboration with Comhlámh and Trinity Global Development Society. The lecture was delivered by Bashy Quraishy, an Inter-Cultural Consultant in Copenhagen and Secretary General of European Muslim Initiative for Social Cohesion (EMISCO) in Strasbourg and President of European network Against Racism (ENAR) Advisory Council in Brussels.



Africa Centre - Lecture on Migration & Mobility in Trinity College Dublin - Dublin, Sept 2016

In terms of Community Participation, during the year the Centre continued working with various African communities groups and other ethnic minority groups on capacity buildings, awareness raising on the issue of racism, Afrophobia and all other structured of discrimination. We also joined other European organisations (Green European Foundation - GEF, European Council for Refugee & Exile - ECRE, Greek Refugee Forum, Refugee Ideas and Solutions for Europe – RISE and Jesuits Europe, etc.).

What is RISE?

“Together we can shape a better refugee policy for Europe”

RISE 15 Member States

Austria	Ireland
Belgium	Italy
Denmark	Malta
France	Norway
Germany	Portugal
Greece	Spain
Hungary	Sweden
	UK

Greek Forum for Refugees - RISE Consultations Report Presentation - Athens, March 2016.jpg

We continue our work with Places of Sanctuary Ireland to highlight the truth about forced migration and dispelling unhelpful myths. The Centre has now taking an approach of befriending, facilitating connections and meetings between refugees and locals and promoting a Cultural Connections which find common interests and make integration easier for newcomers. We have also participated at various meeting with the International Protection Office (IPO), former ORAC Customers Consultations Meetings to highlight and contribute to the asylum single procedure implementation.

The Africa Centre continued providing information and referrals to members of the African Diaspora communities on immigration, health, education and other areas of interest. We continued our membership of European Network against Racism (ENAR), Africa Europe Diaspora Development Platform (ADEPT) and becoming member of the European Network for People of African Descent (ENPAD) at the European level. At home, we maintained our membership of Dochas (the umbrella body of Irish Development NGOs), Irish Development Education Association (IDEA) and became a member of the Wheel during the year.

We continue to network with other African led organisations in Europe; through Africa Europe Diaspora Development Platform (ADEPT) a project of African Foundation for Development (AFFORD) in the UK. The Africa Centre attended various international meetings and consultations including the Good Practice Plus Project Toolkit Launch at the Hate Crime and Extremism Conference in Belfast, the African Institute for Remittances (AIR), in collaboration with African Diaspora Organizations based in Europe, the Greek Refugee Forum Consultations and other national and European meetings.



Toolkit Launch at the Hate Crime and Extremism Conference in Belfast - Sept 2016

In terms of Development Education & Youth work, the Centre has continued to raise awareness of Africa, the continent's rich cultural diversity as well as highlight global injustices which affect the continent. The "Africa Also Smiles" has been one of our main resource which continues to provide valuable information to schools and groups. In Advocacy and Networking, the Centre participated in several meetings and events, to promote the objectives of the Centre and the cause of the African community in Ireland.

5. Strategy Update

As many other organisations face similarities in terms of funding loss and financial difficulties, it is very commendable that the Africa Centre this year had to investigate and explore new sources and avenues. We carried out consultation to develop a new strategic plan with a view to widening engagement with the development education and community sectors to extend the possibilities in benefiting from news source-funded that will enable the organisation to continue providing services to African communities in Ireland but also to engage in international overseas development in African countries.

There was also lack of support to the regional networks as planned, but as committed organisation, we are conscious that a funding mechanism must be drawn rapidly to reboot the organisation capability; gaining in the coming months or year in generating unrestricted funds for the Centre. Therefore, in succeeding that, the Board has tasked itself in submitting funding applications to funders and to redeveloping a new membership strategy. Our acting Director is helping in mapping out funding sources targeting them for African Diaspora community activities that will make the centre more viable and visible; and recruit staff to implement these activities in line with the needs of the African communities.

The lack of funding has also seen the organisation inability to organise the African Diaspora Community Forum in second year consecutively and most of the needed services to African Diaspora youths couldn't take place either. However, we re-engaged Dublin City Council to get these activities going during our strategic discussions with them

6. Conclusion

We would like to thank everyone who has generously helped us along the way during the year and we will engage then to build the trust for them to continue their support to allow us to exist and continue to serve Irish communities in their best interests. As part of our expansion and sustainability, we are drawing strategic thinking to implement development activities in African countries as a charitable organisation. Many thanks to our supporters for believing in us and investing in the Africa Solidarity Centre Ireland.