



Africa Centre

2004

A Year in Brief

Africa Centre
9c Lower Abbey Street
(Methodist Mission Building)
Dublin 1

Tel: +353-1-8656951
Fax: +353-1-8656951
Email: info@africacentre.ie
Website: www.africacentre.ie

Company Registration Number: 350740

Charity Number: CHY 14980

Table of Content

Item	Page
1 Introduction	1
2 Annual Public Lecture	1
3 Public Meeting on Darfur	2
4 Civic & Political Participation	3
5 Social Activities	4
6 Networking	4
7 Organisation Development	5
8 Looking to the Future	6
9 Financial Report	7

1 Introduction

The year 2004 was a year of challenges as well as a year of opportunity for Africa Centre. The loss of our only paid part-time Project Officer at the end of 2003, due to funding constraints, reduced the capacity of the organisation considerably.

In spite of this reality however, Africa Centre has continued to mark its presence in the map of voluntary organisations, particularly the immigrant-led organisations. This was made possible by the commitment of our volunteers. It is therefore important for us to register our sincere thanks to our volunteers for the commitment they have shown during the year.

We are very thankful to the Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust (JRCT) for recognising the important role that a group like Africa Centre can play in promoting the participation of our communities in society. The generous funding we received from the JRCT in the middle 2004 provided us with the opportunity to employ a full time Coordinator and to start the process of strategic plan development. In effect it has provided the organisation with a new hope and we expect other stakeholders to support us to achieve what we have set for ourselves to achieve

In order to manage the challenges of 2004, Africa Centre decided to focus its attention during 2004 on a few activities in which it has been successful during the past years. Debates, including public lectures and public meetings had proved very popular in the past and Africa Centre decided to make sure that these events are continued. In 2004 therefore Africa Centre focused on activities that are outlined in brief below:

2 Annual Public Lecture

Africa Centre organised its second Annual Lecture in February 2004. The event, which was held at the Royal Dublin Hotel, for the second consecutive year, was organised under the theme **‘Imaging and Representation of Africa in Western Media’**.

Guest speaker at the event was Dr. Vincent Magumbe, Director of the media agency ‘Africa Inform International’, whose main objective is to impact on the way African images are created and portrayed in the western media. Mr. Magumbe is a Ugandan

national and has frequently appeared as an African affairs analyst and commentator on several mainstream Western media networks, including the BBC, SKY TV and the CNN. He also teaches an MA Degree course module titled, “Africa in the Media”, at the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), University of London.

The main Respondent to Mr Magumbe was Mr. Rodney Rice, Producer and Presenter of ‘Worlds Apart’ programme in RTE.

Like the first lecture in February 2003, the Annual lecture 2004 was also a major success. The two events as concluded by Mary Purcell, in her review Report *‘brought intellectual content into the debate on Africa and featured African speakers, who did not often get a voice in Ireland’*. The lectures therefore contributed to Irish African dialogue and to the education of the mixed African and Irish audience. It is expected that this event be repeated next year.

3 Public Meeting on Darfur

This Public Meeting was organised by Africa Centre to highlight the political and humanitarian crisis in the western Sudan’s region of Darfur. The event was originally planned to coincide with the Africa Week, but due to non-availability of the main Speaker at the time, the event was pushed back to September 2004.

Two distinguished Guest Speakers addressed the event: Mr. Ahmed Diraige, a former Governor of the Darfur region and Dr. Abdullah El-Tom of the Department of Anthropology at UNI Maynooth. Dr. Abdullah El-Tom had just returned back from a visit to Darfur, just three Weeks before the event and was able to update the participants in the meeting about developments on the ground.

This public meeting was well attended. Many representatives of the Irish NGOs attended the event as well as others, from academic institutions and government departments, including Foreign Affairs and the department of Justice Equality and Law Reform. Sizable number of African immigrants in Ireland, particularly Sudanese were also in attendance and their interest and knowledge of the causes of the conflict encouraged a long participatory engagement with the Speakers.

The event also received considerable media coverage. The two speakers appeared on the RTE Morning Ireland Programme in the morning before the event. One of the main Speakers, Mr Diraige, was also able to meet with the former Minister of State, in the Department of Foreign affairs Mr. Tom Kitt, TD.

4 Civic & Political Participation

One of the important projects that Africa Solidarity Centre has engaged with in 2004 was the survey it conducted in 2004 on civic involvement and political participation of members of immigrant and ethnic minority communities in Ireland.

The survey aim was to identify the extent to which political parties in Ireland have adopted specific policies aimed at promoting the inclusion of immigrants and ethnic minorities in the political process. The survey was sent to the main political parties in Ireland (Fianna Fail, Fine Gael, Labour, Progressive Democrats, Sinn Fein and the Green Party) asking them about the initiatives they have taken/intend to take to encourage ethnic minorities' participation in the electoral process in the run up to the June 2004 Local and European elections. This survey ended up in the publication of two Reports entitled **'Positive Politics: Participation of Immigrants and Ethnic Minorities in the Electoral Process'** and **'Negative Politics, Positive Vision: Immigration and the 2004 Elections'**.

The Reports highlighted fundamental issues relating to institutional practices of the political parties that must change if they are to encourage members of ethnic minority communities to participate in the political process.

One of the extraordinary finding of the survey was the fact that the constitution of the 'Progressive Democrats' does not allow non-EU citizens to become party members despite the fact that all resident immigrants, including asylum seekers and refugees, can vote in local elections.

This Report also received considerable publicity in the media following its launch. It was also favourably received by stakeholders, particularly funders, as a proof of the contribution that immigrant-led organisations can play in society.

5 Social events

Social events for Africa Centre are important occasion for interaction between members of minority ethnic communities and the host society. They also form an entry point for people to make contacts with the organisation, after which, people could be harnessed into other activities of the Centre.

During 2004, Africa Centre organised two social events:

- Africa Centre X-Mas parties have now become a constant social event in our calendar. This year's Christmas party was our fourth consecutive party and it was yet another great success (in terms of attendance, mix of people it brought together as well as variety of activities - music, food, traditional dance, table quiz etc.). It also provided an opportunity for people to hear about our work and share experiences in an informal setting.
- Second social event was organised in 3 July 2004. This event was a scaled down version of our annual event 'Africa Week'. Due to funding constraint, the event was only limited to an opened one-day social event, which was organised in association with the members of the Zimbabwean community in Ireland.

6 Networking

Africa Centre recognised the need to increase its profile among the voluntary sector as well as with the statutory bodies. This requires the need for the organisation to engage in proactive networking activities as well as improve the day to day communications with various stakeholders.

In this regard, Africa Centre has given time to engage in the following networking and partnership activities:

- NGO Alliance: Africa Centre have attended and contributed to the drafting of the NGO Alliance Shadow Report in response to the Irish Government's First national Report to the United Nations International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (CERD Report).

- Africa Centre has also joined membership of the National Consultative Committee on Racism and Interculturalism (NCCRI) partnership. The partnership acts as an advisory body to the NCCRI Board. Many other leading NGOs, particularly, those working among immigrant communities are also members of this body

- Africa Centre has also engaged in a series of meetings with other Refugee/Immigrant Community-led organisations. The aim is to encourage contacts and to share experiences. This is one area that Africa Centre will need to develop in the future, particularly to carry out joint initiatives with other immigrant groups.

- Africa Centre has also joined the membership of the Equality Coalition, which is coordinated by the Irish Council for Civil Liberties (ICCL). This is a coalition of organisations working on the equality issues and its membership provides Africa Centre with opportunity to liaise with many organisations interested in this area.

7 Organisation development

Africa Centre has put much emphasis in 2004 on building its capacity. With the funding that it has received from the Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust (JRCT), the organisation is now able to move from being an entirely voluntary organisation to one which is on a firm professional footing. Thus, posing the need to strengthen the capacity and develop relevant policies, which will support this new reality.

- **Recruitment of Coordinator:** In October 2004 a full-time Coordinator was appointed. The Coordinator then started work in November 2004.
- **Strategic Plan:** One of the key tasks of the new Coordinator was to lead the development of a Strategic Plan. Funding was received from the JRCT for this project and an external facilitator was recruited to coordinate the consultation process. It is expected that the strategic plan document will be ready in first part of 2005.
- **Change of Name:** The last AGM in 2004 passed a resolution that Africa Solidarity Centre's name be changed to 'Africa Centre'. The Company Registration Office (CRO) however refused to register the proposed name when it

was subsequently presented to it (the reason being that the new proposed name 'Africa Centre' resembles some other registered names). It was however possible to register AFRICA CENTRE as a 'Business' name while Africa Solidarity Centre remains the legal name.

- **Policy development:** Since the recruitment of a full-time Coordinator, much of the time has been devoted to a strategic plan development and the development of necessary policies that will ensure that the organisation has in place effective governance and management structures that will support implementation of the strategic plan. In this context following policies have been prepared:
 - Recruitment Policy
 - Policy on Volunteer
 - Staff handbook

8 Looking to the future

The funding support that Africa Centre has just received from the Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust has renewed the energy and motivation in our organisation. There is now an opportunity for Africa Centre to build on this to develop its capacity and to provide leadership to advocate for the need for ethnic minority-led organisations to receive support from the government and other funding organisations.

The focus of our organisation in the next coming years will be to promote inclusion and active participation of African and the new minority communities at policy and decision making levels. In terms of inclusion and representation, the organisation will advocate the need for coalition building and networking among the organisations of minority communities. It will also work to promote active civic involvement of our target groups.

Africa Centre will also invest resources to ensure that it develops adequate organisational capacity that will enable it move from being an organisation entirely dependent on volunteers to one which is on a firm professional footing.

9 Financial Report

Auditors' Report to the Members of Africa Solidarity Centre Ltd

We have audited the financial statements of the Africa Centre which have been prepared under the historical cost convention and the accounting policies set out in the Report.

As described in the Report the company's directors are responsible for the preparation of financial statements, which are required to be prepared in accordance with applicable Irish law and accounting standards. Our responsibilities as independent auditors are established in Ireland by statute, the Auditing Practices Board and by our profession's ethical guidance.

We report to you our opinion as to whether the financial statements give a true and fair view and are properly prepared in accordance with the Companies Acts. We also report to you whether in our opinion: proper books of account have been kept by the company; whether at the balance sheet date, there exists a financial situation requiring the convening of an extraordinary general meeting of the company; and whether the information given in the directors' report is consistent with the financial statements. In addition, we state whether we have obtained all the information and explanations necessary for the purposes of our audit and whether the group's balance sheet and its profit and loss account are in agreement with the books of account.

We also report to you if, in our opinion, any information specified by law regarding directors' remuneration and directors' transactions is not given, and where practicable, include such information in our report.

Basis of Opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with Auditing Standards issued by the Auditing Practices Board. An audit includes examination, on test basis, of evidence relevant to the amounts and disclosures in the financial statements. It also includes an assessment of the significant estimates and judgments made by the directors in the preparation of the financial statements, and whether the accounting policies are appropriate to the company's circumstances, consistently applied and adequately disclosed.

We planned and performed our audit so as to obtain all the information and explanations which we considered necessary in order to provide us with sufficient evidence to give reasonable assurance that the financial statements are free from material misstatement, whether caused by fraud or other irregularity or error.

In forming our opinion we also evaluated the overall adequacy of the presentation of information of the financial statements.

Opinion

In our opinion the financial statements give a true and fair view of the state of the company's affairs as at the 31st December 2004 and of its surplus and cash flows for the year then ended and have been properly prepared in accordance with the Companies Acts 1963 to 2003.

We have obtained all the information and explanations we consider necessary for the purposes of our audit. In our opinion the company has kept proper books of account. The financial statements are in agreement with the books of account.

In our opinion the information given in the directors' report is consistent with the financial statements.

The net assets of the company, as stated in the Balance Sheet, are more than half of the amount of its called up share capital and, in our opinion, on that basis there did not exist at 31st December 2004 a financial situation which under Section 40(1) of the Companies (Amendment) Act 1983 may require the convening of an extraordinary general meeting of the Company.

Gargan and Associates
Accountants and Registered Auditors

1 Church View
Lower Main Street
Lucan
Co Dublin

Income and Expenditure Account
For the year ended 31st December 2004

	2004	2003
	€	€
Income – continuing operations	52,500	35,708
Expenditure – continuing operations	<u>(29,800)</u>	<u>(39,039)</u>
Surplus (deficit) for year	22,700	(3,331)
Accumulated surplus (deficit) brought forward	<u>(625)</u>	<u>2,706</u>
Accumulated surplus (deficit) carried forward	<u>22,075</u>	<u>(625)</u>

There are no recognised gains or losses other than the surplus or loss for the above two financial years.

Balance Sheet
as at 31st December 2004

	2004		2003	
	€	€	€	€
Fixed Assets:				
Tangible Assets		1,481		1,783
Current Assets:				
Cash at bank and in hand	<u>34,336</u>		<u>17,491</u>	
	34,336		17,491	
Creditors: Amounts falling due:				
within one year		<u>(13,742)</u>		<u>(19,899)</u>
Net Current (Liabilities)/Asset		<u>20,594</u>		<u>(2,408)</u>
Total Assets less Current Liabilities		<u>22,075</u>		<u>(625)</u>
Capital and reserves				
Income and expenditure account		<u>22,075</u>		<u>(625)</u>
Equity Shareholders' Funds		<u>22,075</u>		<u>(625)</u>

The financial statements were approved by the Board and signed on its behalf by:

 Director

 Director

NB: These accounts have been extracted from the statutory financial statements of the Africa Solidarity Centre. A copy will be filed with the Registrar of Companies following the Annual General Meeting.



Africa Centre,
9c Lower Abbey Street
(Methodist Mission Building)
Dublin 1
Ireland

Tel: +353-1-865 6951
Fax: +353-1-865 6951
E-mail: info@africacentre.ie
Website: www.africacentre.ie

Company Registration: 350740
Charity Number: CHY 14980

The Africa Centre is a voluntary membership organisation founded in 2000 and was officially launched by the Ambassador of the Republic of South Africa to Ireland in November 2001.

The principal aim of the organisation is to act as the focal point for the growing community of African immigrants in Ireland and to:

- **Challenge the negative image of Africa and her people by engaging in awareness raising through campaign, organization of social and cultural activities.**
- **Work in partnership with statutory and non-statutory bodies to address the emerging needs of the African immigrant community.**
- **Encourage a healthy and more vigorous Africa-Ireland exchange.**

Africa Centre activities in 2004 were supported by