



ANNUAL REPORT 2009



CHAIRPERSON'S INTRODUCTION

I have great pleasure in introducing to you the annual report of the Africa Centre for the year 2009 and hope that you find it useful and informative. The year was no doubt very challenging as the centre focused its attention on implementing the strategic plan (2008-2011) by consolidating its outreach and networking activities with members of the African community and the wider Irish society.

Throughout the year, we organised various events aimed at highlighting the contributions of the African Community to Irish life, for example, the continued distribution of the 'Africa Also Smiles' posters, Africa Day concert, our active participation in the Irish Aid family day event, amongst other activities. We launched the voter education project to raise awareness of the 2009 local elections as well as increase participation of members of the African community, with good success and the annual lecture which was had Ms. Massa Washington from the Liberian Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

During the year, the Africa Centre experienced a number of challenges which saw the departure of Mubarak Habib, Project Support Worker for our Refugee Programme. On behalf of the Africa Centre, I would like to acknowledge the work Mr. Habib has undertaken with the Centre and wish him all the best for the future.

The accomplishments of the Africa Centre, as always, were made possible by men and women who support the Centre in various capacities: consultants, staff, volunteers, facilitators, mentors and donors. They are the winds beneath the wings of our mission.

On behalf of the board I want to thank all the staff, past and present (Eric, Mbemba, Mubarak, Rebecca, Poilin, Kemi, Iwa, and Peace) for their tireless and hard work during the year. I thank Africa Centre's board for their unparalleled support. I wish to acknowledge the work of colleague Board members who are stepping down, Marie, Effe and Cherif. I also want to acknowledge the current Board members for their hard work and look forward to another year of work with them.

I have no doubt that standing shoulder to shoulder we will accomplish Africa Centre's mission.

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

Mohlakoana Mote
Chairperson

Core Aims

1.Promote Personal and Community Empowerment

Advice and Referrals

The Africa Centre continues to provide advice and referral services to both individual and group clients. During 2009, we continued to receive various types of queries by phone, email and in person, with people dropping into our office to seek information and advice. Queries received mainly came from the African community regarding advice and information about immigration, employment, education, social welfare entitlement and housing. We also received queries coming from members of the host community, mainly students, researchers, media people and others who have an interest in Africa.

A number of community groups in the process of formation have also approached us during the year for advice regarding the process of company registration and drafting of constitutions or Articles and Memorandum of Association as well as how to structure themselves. The Centre has also continued to provide various forms of assistance to other African organizations and individuals during the year.

Civic Participation

The Africa Centre and New Communities Partnership on the 3rd of November, 2008, launched a migrant voter registration and voter education campaign aimed at the 2009 local election. The campaign encouraged migrants to register and vote in the 2009 local elections through posters and leaflets and outreach work nationwide.

The key targets for this campaign were:

- Getting 10,000.00 ethnic minorities on the voters' register
- Provision of correct and clear information on their voters' rights through posters, leaflets and public information sessions nationwide.
- Link with local, city and town councils, trade unions, employers, universities/colleges
- Targeting ethnic print and broadcast media, running stories about our voter registration, right to vote and general voter education.
- To raise awareness of the Irish political system among immigrants
- To create awareness of and commitment to priority issues for immigrants in Ireland among candidates in the local elections

At the outset of the campaign, the Africa Centre and the NCP outlined three aims towards which the activities would progress. All aims are inextricably linked to both organisations' main objective of improving the lives of their members in Ireland and building a more equal, integrated society. Two of the three aims focused on raising awareness, confidence and participation within new communities themselves. The final aim focused on increasing politicians' interest and commitment to their immigrant voters. The campaign was launched on Monday 3rd November 2008 at the Africa Centre in Dublin 1. The aims for the campaign were established as follows:

Campaign events were held in the following areas area:

- Dublin
- Cork
- Limerick
- Galway
- Athy

The campaign was formally launched in Dublin and Cork. The Dublin campaign was launched at the offices of the Africa Centre on Lower Abbey Street, Dublin, by Eric Yao, the Coordinator of the Africa Centre, who encouraged immigrants to vote as “ a way to participate in society”.

The Cork campaign was launched by Deputy Lord Mayor, Councillor Patricia Gosch on Friday 14 November 2008 at the NCP offices based at Cois Tine on Pope’s Quay in Cork City.

Posters and leaflets were produced in over 25 languages and also information produced by the local authorities in each of the key areas for the campaign were used.

Large scale information dissemination activities took place, distributing posters and leaflets to many locations throughout Dublin, Cork and Limerick cities and counties as well as in Galway City and Athy.

The campaign teams in each area identified the locations which would enable them to reach the greatest number of immigrants and outreach activities took place in all the areas mentioned. Some of the activities took the form of street outreaches as well as public meetings.

We targeted:

- **Immigrants already engaged and active within their communities:** Information was distributed to NCP and Africa Centre member groups;
- **Asylum seekers:** Campaign teams visited Direct Provision Centres in Dublin, Cork, Limerick and Galway;
- **Recently arrived immigrants:** Information was distributed to immigrant support services; organisations within the community and voluntary sector; Family Resource Centres; Employment Resource Centres; Citizen Information Centres; Garda stations;
- **Well established immigrants:** Information was distributed to mosques; churches; shops & supermarkets; businesses and companies with large immigrant workforces; post offices; credit unions;
- **Students:** Information was distributed to third level institutions; student unions; student societies; VECs; schools; libraries; language schools.
- To raise awareness as widely as possible, information was also distributed to newspapers and magazines and posted on many websites.

These activities took place during the formal period of the registration period as well as during the period of supplementary registration. The aim was to get immigrants who missed out on getting registered within the stipulated period of normal registration to be registered on the supplementary register.

Once the supplementary register closed on 18 May, the Africa Centre and NCP concentrated on ensuring that as many of those finally registered would actually make it to a polling station to cast their vote. Meetings, gatherings, newsletters and websites were used as opportunities to issue final reminders. Using email and webtext, messages were sent to those who had participated in training and at public meetings and they were encouraged in turn to pass on the reminders.

We can confidently say that indications are that there was a significant increase in the number of migrant voters who registered as well as those who actually voted. We plan to get an analysis done and a report on this activity written in 2010.

Refugee Programme

In 2009, the Centre was unable to secure funding for this project. However, a funding proposal was submitted to the EU for its ERF project. The Centre requested an updated list of all asylum hostels from the Reception and Integration Agency and is still awaiting the necessary authorisation which will enable visits to hostels to conduct our own analysis of the conditions in which asylum seekers live on a day to day basis. The Centre aims to be able to see firsthand the situation in hostels in order to be able to take more informed action on issues affecting our colleagues in the hostels.

It must be also noted that the Africa Centre has actively engaged refugees and asylum seekers in all its activities. Community empowerment and development education activities have always been attended by refugees and asylum seekers. In addition the Centre continues to offer volunteering opportunities to refugees and asylum seekers. The Centre has in the course of the year intervened in situations where asylum seekers have faced personal difficulties.

World Refugee Day

Despite the lack of funding in this area, the Africa Centre did, not relent in its focus to support refugees and asylum seekers in Ireland. The Centre celebrated World Refugee Day this year on Thursday, 18th June, 2009, with a seminar titled: **Direct Provision, Effects and the Way forward**. Speakers at the event were Mr. Robin Hannan, CEO of the Irish Refugee Council and Mr. Wale Mogaji, Head of Communications and Integration, Refugee Information Service. Also present at the event was Mr. Manuel Jordao, country representative of the UNHCR in Ireland as well as other Africans and stakeholders.

Employability Project

The Centre received funding from the office for integration within the Dublin City Council for the employability project and it run from April to October 2009. Through the Employment Project, The Africa Centre facilitates sustainable integration of immigrants by creating pathways to meaningful economic participation. The project offered the following services to all immigrants:

1. Information workshops to approximately 15 participants at a time, covering various employment and entrepreneurship related topics.
2. One on one basic career guidance and mock interview sessions.
3. CV compilation
4. Provision of access to computer and telephone usage for job searching purposes & printing of job adverts, CV's and other related material.
5. Periodic follow up and encouragement calls to job searching clients.
6. Forwarding of CV's to recruiting companies on behalf of participants where agreed and suitable.
7. Facilitation of work experience placements.
8. Necessary referrals, such as to FÁS Social Welfare and other projects etc.

The employment project achieved a commendable success rate overall based on targets. Four out of five workshops that were planned took place successfully. The project also reached Fifty five people; a good number, although the aspiration had been to reach seventy five.

The first workshop took place in May 2009 with 15 people in attendance. The focus of the workshop was on supporting participants to identify various career paths based on their personal skills, experience and qualifications. This created more options for participants. Most importantly, participants had an opportunity of accessing individual attention from consultants.

Follow up to the workshop included supporting participants in various aspects of job searching. These include: typing CV's, making phone calls on their behalf and allowing them access to the use of the telephone; typing and or printing and photocopying copies of their CV's and covering letters.

A total of thirteen people attended the second workshop which took place in July. Interview skills were the main focus. The reason behind this focus was the realisation that most people in attendance already had CV's and had been successfully employed, and made redundant only in recent times.

The third workshop took place in September, with a total of twelve people attending. The workshop also dealt with CV writing and interview skills. The fourth and last workshop took place in

October. Fifteen people attended. The focus of this workshop was in equipping participants with skills necessary to start their own businesses. When it became apparent the challenges faced by job searchers in the current economic climate could not be defeated even with the best of CV's and interview skills, the Africa Centre decided to explore self employment as viable option to standard employment. Topics discussed include: writing a business plan, learning about legal structures available to set up a business and market research.

More funding is being sought in order to roll out a more comprehensive course and to support the 15 participants through various stages of preparing to start a business. An effort to place participants for work experience in entities within businesses sectors of their interest is also being explored. It is also thought that a mentorship scheme from experts in the business sector could benefit participants greatly.

Budgetary constraints were the most impedimentary of all challenges encountered during the implementation the project. Recent changes in immigration and employment related legislation and policies in the country have left immigrants with new but harsher constraints to economic inclusion. These constraints however, cannot be addressed through the Employment areas, but this project has been pivotal in providing evidence that will be helpful in the lobbying for necessary policy change.

Whereas the Employment Project has in the past supported mainly clients that required help in accessing employment in Ireland for the first time, recently the project has been inundated by an influx of clients that have been let go from their jobs due to prevailing economic constraints. The project has therefore had to adapt to cater for clients with entirely different sets of needs.

The Employment project remains relevant to the work of the Africa centre. However, unprecedented growth in racism and discrimination incidents which seem to be precipitated by both new recruitment policies and ill-informed attitudes towards immigrants has seriously widened the gap between the project and its main aim.

African Health Initiative

The African Health Initiative is a new initiative of the Africa Centre which commenced in 2009. A seminar took place at the Centre on the 12th of March, 2009 in collaboration with Cairde. primary focus of the African Health Initiative is to address the health inequalities and to promote health of Africans living in Ireland by engaging African individuals and communities to identify, assess, and implement culturally specific strategies to reduce the health risks of African and improve their overall health. This unique and critical effort will link community leaders, community-based health organisations, health service providers and public health system to comprehensively address the health inequalities and ease access to health care for disadvantaged African individuals and communities, and to promote fundamental improvements in the health status of all Africans. The target groups for the health initiative are

- Men
- Women
- Children
- Adolescents

The Guest speaker was Mrs Tendai Madondo from Christian Aid Ireland. She gave a background to the social construction of health and Africans approach to accessing healthcare. She highlighted that minorities find it difficult accessing health services yet they are more likely to experience health difficulties. She noted that Health needs in Africa differ from country to country. Conflicts and national instability can affect delivery and access to health services.

Categories to be targeted through the health initiative are:

- Migrant workers (skilled/unskilled)
- Asylum seekers
- Students
- Refugees
- Residents

- Undocumented
- African-Irish

Experiences and health outcomes are different for each of the above with disparities between access to health services and health issues for Africans. The full report on the seminar is available.

Anti-Racism Desk.

In December 2008, the Centre received a number of reports of racist incidents which showed an increase in such incidents suffered by members of the African community. It must be noted that that in the same month, the NCCRI has just closed its doors and ceased to exist. Since there was no specific body to record such incidents, the Centre contacted the Dublin City Council in order to access funding for an anti racism desk which would record reports of racist incidents and report them to An Garda Siochana.

A meeting was held at the Africa Centre offices with regards to setting up the anti-racism desk. A number of organisations including Dublin City Council and the Garda were present. Dublin city Council committed to funding the desk. Discussions focused on the best way forward and it was hoped that the desk would have been up and running in May. Later in the year, the integration office of Dublin City Council asked the Centre to put in a joint proposal with the Vincentian Centre. Meetings were held with the Vincentian Centre and a joint proposal has been submitted to Dublin City Council. We are still awaiting the result of the application.

Hotel Rwanda

The Africa Centre hosted Paul Rusesabagina, the man renowned to have saved the lives of over 1,500 people during the Rwanda genocide. His film, Hotel Rwanda, depicting the events that took place was shown, after which Paul answered questions from the audience and also autographed his new book and dvd's of the film. About 150 people attended the event, which was held at the Synge theatre in Trinity college. This was a very moving film and both the African and Irish community had the opportunity to meet Paul personally and ask him a lot of questions.

Multicultural Book Club

A multicultural book club commenced at the Centre with the first meeting on 2nd Sept 2009. The initiative was coordinated by Ms. Aine Lynch, an Irish lady who spent two years in Nigeria and had a passion for books from different parts of the world. The first meeting brought together a total of 10 people from Africa, India South America and Ireland. Six books were looked at namely:

- As it is in Heaven, by Niall Williams
- Middlesex, by Jeffrey Eugenides
- One Hundred Years of Solitude, by Gabriel Marquez
- Purple Hibiscus, by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie
- Family Matters, by Rohinton Mistry
- Perfume, by Patrick Suskind.

We have received emails from other people who have expressed their interest in joining.

African Youth Society

Work commenced on the establishment of the African youth society which will address issues facing African and other immigrant youth in Ireland. It is also to provide a space where African youths can engage with their Irish counterparts in various activities like debates and discussions. This initiative will provide the opportunity for youth music nights and also enable youths to engage in relaxing activities like pool etc.

A number of meetings have already taken place and it is hoped that in 2010 this initiative will be formally launched.

CORE AIM 2

Contribute and Promote an African perspective to Development Education

The Africa Centre's Development Education Programme in 2009 has undertaken significant reflection on its activities in the multiannual programme, looking at the whole area of what is an 'African Perspectives in Development Education'. The programme is more than just African perspective expressing the same messages, but rather a process that challenges some of the perspectives still prevailing in Irish Society about Africa. Developing such a perspective involved a process of exploring African culture, by identifying methodologies of communication, learning, reflection and action used in different parts of Africa and adapting these as part of the methodologies of development education in Ireland today.

In realizing the above perspective the Africa Centre facilitated its activities with an African perspective. This approach is diverse and complex, but vital in reaching our objectives set out in the strategic plan. As such, our work in 2009 was tailored to meet the objectives of the Irish Aid Strategy Plan 2008-2011 for Development Education, particularly in its aim to further promote southern voices in DE. In order to continue to build such a perspective, the Africa Centre's approaches in the first year were based on the following:

- Promoting and facilitating education led by Africans who have experience of living in Africa and who can bring an authentic voice to the educational experience by illustrating a southern perspective to others. To achieve this we facilitated Training for Trainers course in development education skills.
- Sharing knowledge which is based on experience of some of the complex topics in relation to African development (such as African history, politics, culture) to which the Africa Centre can bring a lived experience and understanding. This was achieved through our four day Exploring Africa Pilot course.
- A critical perspective on the use of images of Africa, on which the Africa Centre has already carried out work and which will be further developed through the coming three years.
- Use of diverse African education methods, such as story-telling and dance, which the Africa Centre will train educators to use effectively in relation to development and promote among development educators in Ireland

Development Education activities 2009

The Africa Centre and Dóchas held a seminar; Portraying the developing world: The whole truth and nothing but the truth? It took place at the Irish Aid Information and Volunteering Centre on O'Connell Street, Dublin and was attended by 87 people. The seminar focused on how images and messages are used in the portrayal of the developing world. At the seminar, Africa Centre launched its new re-designed Africa Also Smile poster.

The Africa Centre had its first Training for Trainers course in the Irish Aid Volunteering and Information Centre from Tuesday the 21st July to Tuesday 4th August 2009. 14 people attended the course. The course took place for five days over a three week period and 15 participants took part in the training. This five day course aimed to equip participants with the knowledge and the tools to engage groups in education on global development through the following sessions:

- Introduction to Development Education
- Media: Use of Images and Messages
- Facilitation Skills
- Use of Drama & Storytelling
- Use of Arts

Use of Music
Intercultural Education
Diversity
Activity focus

Below are some comments from the participants:

'The most important learning point was how to get everyone involved as a facilitator , working on the relationship between the team and the facilitator'

'All the sessions were very educational, empowering and active'

'Facilitators were very effective and supportive'

'I am very impressed, I will do things more differently that I used to'

The Africa Centre in collaboration with DTALK organised skills in media course for our members.

One of the Africa Centre objectives is to build the voice of Africans who can effectively engage with the media by providing a training module on media skills. In order to satisfy this requirement the Africa Centre in collaboration with DTALK organised a tailor made 'Working with the Media' course. The course took place in the Irish Aid Volunteering and Information Centre on the 14th and 15th April 2009. 6 people attended the course. The two day course facilitated by Pat Coyle thought participants how to write press release, carry out a radio interview and handling negative publicity. Participants commented that:

'they enjoyed the course immensely and learned a lot'

'the group dynamic and everything was great and the facilitator was encouraging'

'there is need for more and frequent trainings like this for the African community'

The Africa Centre hosted its 7th Annual Lecture on the 22nd June at the Gresham Hotel. The lecture titled was "The Negative Effects of Economic Crime to Africa's development'- A Liberian Perspective". We host Ms. Massa Washington, Commissioner of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) of Liberia, as guest speaker. The Keynote speaker was Dr. Sheila Killian, Lecture at University of Limerick. She explored the topic; 'the way in which Ireland's competition for multinational investment has unintended consequences for developing countries and how this contrasts with our general overseas aid policy'. The lecture was attended by 130people.

The Africa Centre developed the Exploring Africa Pilot Course in consultation with DTALK to address a gap and demand for such a course. Africa Centre's 'Exploring Africa Pilot Course' was open to all with an interest in Africa and African issues. The course introduced participants to Culture, Society and Stereotypes of Africa, African Politics and its Global Connections and Africans Contribution to Human Civilisation. Exploring Africa took place over four days from Tuesday 18th August – Friday 21st August 2009. The course was attended by 12 individuals.

Africa Centre carried out for the first time three courses; Skills in media for Africans, Training for Trainers in development education for our members and Exploring Africa Course, having a total of 31 participants from those trainings. Our Annual lecture had seen an increase in attendance from 100 to 130 people this year. Overall our audiences, course attendances and activities in the programme have increased compared to previous years. Through the various activities of the programme, we engaged our members and 'mainstream' DE organisations, including school visits and working with the Ballyfermot Traveller Group, to explore an African perspective in development education through drumming and storytelling. This allowed us to extend some of our activities to other parts of the country at conferences and workshops and that have increased our target group.

Our constituencies have increased interest in the past year, which was shown by our increased membership and Irish public participation in our activities. We continue our partnerships with

leading development education organisations like Irish Development Education Association (IDEA), Comhlámh, Latin American Solidarity Centre (LASC) and Debt and Development Coalition Ireland (DDCI). Our programme officer for development education is also a member of the advisory committee of National Youth Council Ireland (NYCI) development education programme. The Africa Centre is represented on the National Council of IDEA and that gave us an opportunity to network with the Irish development education sector and our members attended events organised by some of these organisation. We are optimistic that this membership will provide a good stepping stone for our activities next year as we are hoping to develop more skills in development education among the African community and also influence the African perspective in development education in the wider Irish development education sector.

The main achievements of our Development Education programme last year were;

- Organising the skills in the media course with Development Training & Learning at Kimage (DTALK) for our members and had 8 participants.
- Designing and running Training for Trainers in development education skills course with 15 participants.
- Designing and running Exploring Africa course, this was attended by 13 Participants.
- Redesigning 1000 copies of our Africa Also Smile poster campaign in line with the Dóchas Code of Conduct on images and messages. The re-launched was attended by all the African diplomats in Ireland.
- We got our website redesigned, which is much improved and has more information on our development education activities.
- We organised a major seminar with Dóchas which was attended by over 80 people from all walks of life, the media, DE sector, schools, fundraisers, community groups, NGOs and African diplomatic missions in Ireland.
- We continued our close link with the DE sector through our membership with IDEA and serve on its national council.
- Our Annual lecture and Moonlight Talks attracted more than 200 people all together this year. They form part of connecting the continent of Africa to Irish communities as they bring image of Africa by Africans not often heard in mainstream Irish debates and featured prominent African speakers.

Monitoring and Evaluation of Development Education activities

The programme had a fulltime programme officer. He was responsible for the day to day running of the programme, and during the last six months, an intern and a volunteer were recruited into the programme. Staff was responsible for designing, implementation, monitoring and evaluating the programme in line with the development strategic plan 2008-2011. A systematic record keeping of attendances through registration at events was kept and evaluations sheets were administered during implementation. A Rapporteur was hired for the seminar on images and messages and the launch of the Africa Also Smile poster. Records are kept for the distribution of the Africa also smiles poster and stickers. We monitored the participation of members of African community in the programme through evaluation papers.

Organisations that we partner with in 2009

We worked closely with Comhlámh, Latin American Solidarity Centre and Debt and Development Coalition Ireland through our Bloom Movement for Global Justice. We collaborate with DTALK for our Media and Exploring Africa Courses. We became a member of Dóchas and involved in many of their consultative meetings. Africa Centre is a member of IDEA and is represented on its National Council (Board) and also the programme officer is a member of the advisory committee of the National Youth Council of Ireland development education programme.

How progress towards the objectives was monitored and measured for each project.

The Africa has a development education working group that meets every two months looking at the DE work plan. The members of the working group comprise board members, representatives of Trocaire, Comhlámh, staff and members of the Africa Centre. During these meetings progress reports are presented by the programme officer and an update of upcoming planned activities is given to the group. Reports from these meetings were also discussed at staff meetings and at board meetings to monitor the process of the programme.

How the development education activities targeted at the formal education sector, please outline how the activities were integrated with mainstream education activities/curricula.

The Africa Also smile poster is been distributed to schools and this is on an ongoing bases. Also The training pack we are working on, when finished will be send to schools and we are hoping that these packs can facilitate sessions in the CSPCE subject. The Africa Centre Development Education programme made a submission to the Department of Education's forum on the Intercultural Education Strategy for members of the NGO/ Community Sector and we are hoping that this is the beginning of a development education pack on Intercultural education.

CORE AIM 3: Proactively engage in policy, research, networking, and encourage interaction and debate in the wider society.

Influence policy at all levels as it affects Africans in Ireland

The Africa Centre continues to engage with the Irish society and policy makers in its attempt to continue influencing policies that affect Africans in Ireland. The centre has participated in a number of meetings in Ireland and internationally and these meetings have influenced policy in different ways. The Centre was represented by the coordinator at the Fundamental rights Agency conference in Stockholm, Sweden and interventions made at the meeting was noted by the agency for implementation. Likewise, work by the Centre on the first draft of the Immigration Residence and Protection Bill has positively impacted on policy makers and we are still awaiting the second draft. Our work in DE has also impacted positively on policy not only in governmental circles, but with organisations as well.

Strategically network with our key stakeholders

Our networks have increased in the past year, evidenced by the increased numbers of Africans, other immigrant groups and the Irish public participation in our activities. The Africa Centre continued its leadership role in Ireland by becoming the first and only ethnic led organisation to become members of Dochas, the umbrella body for development organisations in Ireland. We continued our partnerships with leading development education organisations like Irish Development Education Association (IDEA), Comhlámh, Latin American Solidarity Centre (LASC) and Debt and Development Coalition Ireland (DDCI). Our programme officer for development education is also a member of the advisory committee of National Youth Council Ireland (NYCI) development education programme. The Africa Centre is represented on the National Council of IDEA and that gave us an opportunity to network with the Irish DE sector and our members attended events organised by some of these organisation. The Centre continues to maintain a strong link with the other two main ethnic led organisations in Ireland, NCP and AKiDwa as well as other organisations like the Diaspora Women's Movement and the Integration of African Children in Ireland. During the year, the Centre has provided various forms of assistance to the latter two organisations.

Africa Day Activities

Celebration of Africa Day continues to take prominence in the activities of the Africa Centre. This year was no different as the Centre actively engaged in a number of activities to celebrate Africa Day.

African Night at the South Court Hotel in Limerick

The Africa Centre held an African Night concert at the South Court Hotel in Limerick on Saturday, 16th May 2009. This was attended by Africans, Irish, Germans, Americans and also senior officials from Irish Aid. Talking Drum, a band based in Belfast performed on the night as well as artistes from Rap Ireland.

African Family Day in Limerick

On Sunday, 17th May, the Africa Centre participated in the Irish Aid sponsored Family Day held on the grounds of the Limerick City Council. We had a stall, where we displayed Africa Centre publications and other materials as well as give out the publications and also provide information about the Africa Centre.

Afro – Gig in Dublin

On the 23rd May, 2009 The Africa Centre held an Afro – Gig concert at the National Boxing Stadium in Dublin. This concert featured well known African musician Meiway and his band. Also in attendance were artistes from Rap Ireland and a group of young African and Irish girls who entertained with skilful Irish dancing. There was a good mix of nationalities, including staff from Irish Aid and members of the Diplomatic Corps.

Africa Day Family Day in Dublin

On Sunday, 24th May, 2009 the Centre participated at the Irish Aid Family Day in the Iveagh Gardens in Dublin. This event featured live music performances by African and Irish musicians, food drinks, games and a wide range of displays by African and Irish organisations. The Africa Centre was well represented with its stand where material on the Centre was displayed and given out to people. There was a lot of interest from a wide number of people who visited our stand.

African Diplomatic Missions in Ireland

The Africa Centre in the course of the year has strengthened its links with the African Diplomatic Missions in Ireland. The Diplomatic Missions have been very supportive of the work of the Africa Centre and we are exploring ways in which the Africa Centre can work in closer partnership with the Diplomatic Missions. During the year, the coordinator has held two meetings with all Heads of African Missions and explored ways of strengthening the already good working relationship that exists between the Missions and the Centre.

International links with Africa

The Coordinator has began initiating links with the African Union by holding discussions with the African Heads of Mission as well as other Diplomatic Missions in London. Secondly, during his visit to Ghana in April, he had the opportunity to meet the Vice President of Ghana, H.E. John Mahama and presented him with Africa Centre material, including our Strategic plan and our Africa Also Smiles poster. The Vice President was very impressed with the work of the Centre and the coordinator promised to keep in touch with his office with regards to the Centre gaining access to both the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the African Union. Other significant people I met were the Deputy Chief of Staff of the President, the Minister for Tourism, the General Secretary of the party in government and some Members of Parliament. All these people received material on the work of the Centre.

It is important to note, that while all the people I met were impressed with our work in Ireland,

they all asked if the Africa Centre was doing any work in Africa. I however assured them that it was part of our Strategic plan and the Centre would embark on some initiatives in Africa once we were able to attract the funding required for such projects.

CORE AIM 4: To build capacity and a strong organisational structure to support the work of the Africa Centre.

Board of Directors

2009 was an exceptional year for the Board of the Centre. A total of 5 in camera meetings were held during the year. In addition, a greater number of teleconferences were held by the full board as well as various committees. The Board formed a number of committees, sub-committees and working groups, each with terms of reference, to enable it function more efficiently. These are:

The Staff Committee

The Finance Committee

The Development Education Working Group

Youth Sub-Committee

The Refugee Sub-Committee

The Organisational Development Working Group

Staff

Funding constraints have impacted negatively on the staffing levels of the Centre during the year. As already indicated, the Centre lost the services of its Project Support Worker for the Refugee Programme due to lack of funding for this aspect of its work. The Centre wishes to acknowledge and express its sincere thanks to Mr. Mubarak Habib, for his work and services to the Centre for nearly a decade. The Centre also wishes Mr. Habib all the best in his future endeavors.

As indicated under Core Aim 2, the success of the funding application for the development education programme enabled the Centre to secure the services of two new staff. Rebecca O'halloran, an intern and Poilin Brennan, a volunteer. Kemi Adenekan has also joined the centre as a volunteer, and we also have two German computer students on internship with us.

Funding

The global recession had a significant effect on Ireland and this in turn has seriously affected the funding environment in 2009. The Centre has also been affected by the recession. The demise of the NCCRI and NAPAR, key supporters of the Africa Centre has affected the Africa Centre's finances. Also, the new government integration policy, "Migration Nation" focuses government attention on priority areas like local authorities, religious organizations, sports bodies and political parties. Therefore where the Department of Integration funded some activities of the Centre like the Employability project, the Centre has been limited to organizations functioning within the priority areas. However, despite the difficulties experienced, the Centre was successful in securing two new three year multi annual funding from Irish Aid and the Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust. Key funders during the year were the Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust, Irish Aid, Trocáire and Concern. We have also received small grants for specific projects, from a number of other donors. Detailed information of funding received during the year can be found in the book of audited accounts.

APPENDIX (1): FUNDERS AND AUDITORS

Key Funders for 2008

- The Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust
- Irish Aid
- National Action Plan Against Racism
- Dublin City Council
- St Stephen's Green Trust
- Cooperation Ireland
- Community Foundation Ireland
- National Consultative Committee on Racism and Interculturalism

Auditors

Gargan and Associates
1 Church View
Lower Main Street
Lucan
Co. Dublin

APPENDIX (2): BOARD AND STAFF MEMBERS

Board of Directors

- Mohlakoana Mote, *Chairperson*
- Abimbola Afolabi, *Vice Chairperson*
- Matthias Fiedler, *Member*
- Sahr Yambasu, *Member*
- Effe Adjei, *Member*
- Nchedo Obi-Igweilo, *Member*
- Marie Corcoran Tindill, *Member*
- Wale Mogaji, *Member*

Staff

- Eric Yao, *Coordinator and Company Secretary*
- Mbemba Jabbi Programme Officer
- Mubarak Habib, Project Support Worker
- Sebit Iwa
- Rebecca O'Halloran
- Poilin Brennan
- Peace Nukunzwe
- Kemi Adenekan

Vision

The vision of the Africa Centre is of an Ireland that enables and is transformed by the full inter-connected sharing and relationships between Africa and Ireland, an Ireland where Africans belong, are at home and participate fully with all other Irish communities in a just society, and of a society that is just, inclusive, enriched by the fullest interdependence, sharing and relationship between Africa and Ireland that leads to a sense of belonging, stability and creativity for all

Mission

Our Mission is to work to advocate, educate and network towards a just and inclusive society in Ireland, advancing attitudes, policies and actions that promote justice, social inclusion and meaningful participation for African communities in Ireland and encouraging a more positive Africa-Ireland exchange

Values

Our Values are respect and equality, the spirit of ‘ubuntu’ – of our connectedness as human beings to one another and a culture that nurtures participation and interdependence. The Africa Centre also works with the following values:

- Equality
- Anti-racism
- Participation
- Inclusion
- Learning
- Just society
- Belonging / home
- Stability
- Creativity
- Connectedness
- Relationship

AIMS OF THE AFRICA CENTRE

- Contribute and promote an African perspective within development education.
- Promote personal and community empowerment of Africans in Ireland.
- Proactively engage in policy, research and networking and encourage interaction and debate in the wider society.
- Build capacity and a strong organisational structure to support the work of the Africa Centre

APPENDIX (3): ABOUT THE AFRICA CENTRE

Africa Centre is a membership organisation that acts as focal point for the growing community of African immigrants in Ireland and to promote their inclusion and participation in Ireland in all aspects of Irish life.

The Centre gives practical and moral support to this aim through advocacy, training & awareness raising activities, debates, seminars & workshops and networking. The Centre is also engaged in development education and the promotion of a more positive and balanced imaging and representation of Africa and Africans in Ireland.

Africa Centre was founded in the year 2000 and was officially launched by the then South African Ambassador to Ireland, Ms. Melanie Verweord and Mr. Niall Crowley, CEO of the Equality Authority in October 2001.

The organisation is a company, limited by guarantee and is also a registered charity, with the Office of the Revenue Commissioners, under registration number CHY 14980.



AFRICA CENTRE
9C ABBEY STREET LOWER
METHODIST BUILDING
DUBLIN 1
Ireland

Tel: (+353-1) 865 6951
Email: education@afriacentre.ie



WWW.AFRICACENTRE.IE