



Embracing Leadership in Diverse Communities

**Africa Forum Report
February 2014**

Wood Quay, Dublin

By Hilary Minch

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1. Welcome and Introductions

Mbemba Jabbi, Chairperson of the Africa Council and the Director of the Africa Centre welcomed all delegates, including representatives of the diplomatic community, councillors and TDs to the 2014 Africa Forum. He stated that last year over 100 people attended the Forum from all over Ireland and this year the Forum is expecting a similar numbers coming from many cities and towns from across Ireland who are mostly Africans and friends of Africans and Africa.

2. Introductions for the day

Joseph Nyirenda, Board member of the Africa Centre.

This is the second event of Africa Forum and I wish to emphasise how important it is that we meet together. Leadership – from an African perspective – is of great importance. As an African, I have thought that I should take responsibility for leadership in my community. There are perceptions that Africans are a little lazy. This is the driving enzyme that makes me do more than be lazy. I try to put in twice to everything I do. I want each and every person who has a perception that Africans are lazy to change their views. I am trying to create wider roads for Africans coming behind me. We should take full responsibility to do our best at whatever we do, not just for Africa, but for our children, and for people close to you. Whatever we engage in as a continent we have to show dedication, zeal and put energy into every endeavour. Through this we can shed light that Africans can work, lead, and we can show that Africa is ready to go forward, to develop.

The leadership theme of today's meeting tallies with this. I urge all of us to double, to treble the effort in everything we do. One weakness of our community is that we don't take part in many things. Let's change that and be part of things.

3. Representative of the Lord Mayor, Cllr. Michael O'Sullivan

The City of Dublin founded by migrants – who didn't have an integration strategy. I'm proud to be in front of people who have opted to come here, to share a common future together.

We've negotiated the challenges of integration quite well. Together, we have worked with the city council, migrant rights organisations, the Africa Centre, with new communities, all working towards a new Ireland. Now we are at stage where many of your children have been born here. This is a transition phase – migration phase 2.0. There are new challenges about where to go, challenges around participation, leadership. We need to energise and engage in these things. I would love to see city councillors from other ethnic backgrounds. I would love to see diversity in of the city represented at all levels of society – we all need to work together to achieve this.

These are difficult economic time, there are funding difficulties and the City Council keeps its focus on these issues.

However, anyone who is registered can vote in local elections, but you have to register. Some of the best leadership has come from Africa, but this only works with participation and engagement. I would encourage all in communities to participate, to engage.

4. Background to the Africa Forum

Mbemba Jabbi, Director, Africa Centre

A major challenge is that most people of African descent in Ireland don't know the Africa Centre. Back in 2001, the Africa Centre was launched because Irish people didn't know much positive things about African countries; their knowledge and source of information are coming from the newspapers and television advertisement. The main areas of focus of the Africa Centre are Community participation (to facilitate political engagement, supporting entrepreneurship development and facilitate the African community in all sectors of life in Ireland) and contributing multiple African perspectives to development education discourse and activities in Ireland. We are moving towards having regional Africa Community Groups not just Dublin base activities. Membership of the Africa Centre is open to all who agree with our ethos. We need your support to make things happen. The Africa Centre belongs to everyone, to the people of Ireland.

What the Africa Centre does:

- Facilitate the African community to participate fully in Ireland
- Promote positive side of Africans and Africa through multiple African perspectives in development education discourse and practice
- Work with youth from minority background through Intercultural Youth Society (IYS)
- Facilitate the Africa Forum & Africa Council
- Inform policy on issues affecting Africans in Ireland
- Fundraising to secure the sustainability of the centre

What the Africa Centre planned to do in addition:

- Service delivery
 - Work with Asylum seekers and refugees on integration and assistance
 - Young people on job creation and empowerment activities
 - Book-keeping courses for African entrepreneurs
 - Languages-(English, French & Arabic) courses
- Link up with other African Centres in Europe to partner on activities

Key Demographic Statistics

- Total population in Ireland: 4,588,252
- Number of people who are not born in Ireland 544,357 = 12%
- Africans: 58,697 (12%)
- 60% of the African population in Ireland are young, below 35years

(Source: 2011 Census figures)

These are the main challenges the Africa Centre is responding to:

- Leadership within the African communities
- Unemployment of Africans in Ireland
- Political participation
- Voice for the African community
- What role African Diaspora can play in Ireland and back home

- Engaging with young people, many of whom are Irish born
- Increase in racism incidences in Ireland since the recession hits
- African in the Direct Provision centre
- Mental illness of African immigrants, mainly in the Direct Provision Centre
- Meeting space to the African youths and community groups

What is the Africa Forum?

- A forum to discuss issues affecting Africans in Ireland
- Have a critical discussion on African Diaspora groups, how can they come together to form a representation and collective voice
- Demonstrate a range of positive ways linking Africa and Ireland on development issues
- Come together forming taskforce on issues concerning Africans in Ireland when the need arises
- Ensuring effective participation and facilitate means for African children and young people in our communities to realise their dreams
- Formulating policies to promote social inclusion and positive racial relations for Africans
- Provide educational supports to meet diverse cultural needs and improve social inclusion
- Involve in developing and implementing a joined up approach to integration by Africans and other minority groups

“How many Africans responded to Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade call for submissions on Ireland’s foreign policy? How many of us are engaged formally in development work? Do we inform decisions made by development agencies? How about young people lost in between two cultures? We can only resolved these issues by coming together as a community and find solutions”

What is the Africa Council?

- 20 member committee selected at Africa Forum
- To give voice for the African community
- Examine policy areas to engage stakeholders
- Explore ways to find solutions to issues affecting the African community
- Mobilize African communities to be proactive in our own integration activities

“It is easier to work together on policy, to work collectively, to mobilize African communities. We need to be at forefront of Africa day celebrations.”

5. Report from the Africa Council 2013-2014

Helen Bakali - Chair of Waterford Integration Forum

The Africa Council was set up last year at the Africa Forum which selected 21 members including the director for the Africa Centre, who serves as the chairperson of the council. During the year two young people were co-opted into the council to give voices to young people in decision making of the council, which made the council of 23 members during the year.

The work of the council has been hampered by the financial pressures, but we were able to fulfil some of the activities we planned with funds from Trócaire and Concern.

The funding and financing problems unfortunately have not gone away. We hope that with the new council coming in they can dedicate some of their time to raising funds.

Learning from the First Year of the Africa Council:

- Low turnout at meetings, low commitment is a problem.
- Some members were expelled for failing to attend 3 consecutive meetings without reason
- Main achievement - started a mapping exercise of Africans in Ireland
- Agreed on the election modalities,
- Logo (still need to be finalised),
- Facebook page

Recommendations:

- First council was voluntary, for one year only - we need a more committed, permanent council to be elected.
- Agree on working groups and have term of reference for each group with set activities with dateline
- Make sure there are more regional presence within the council
- Engage professionals or co-opt some members to fill the skill gap on the council
- Write policy on the areas affecting Africans in Ireland

Meetings held by Africa Council 2013-2014

Seven meetings were carried out by the council during the past year (2013-2014) and on average seven members attended the meeting which was below half of the total number of the initial council members. There were some members who never attended any meetings and we made a decision to suspend their membership after failing to attend three consecutive meeting without sending their apologies.

- First meeting was centred on drawing term of reference of the council, co-option of young people to the group and putting in place working groups to operate during the year.

- In the second meeting members agreed on the formation of working groups on Integration, Africa in the media, Diaspora role in development and youth (derived from discussion groups at the 2013 Africa Forum).
- Subsequent meetings were centred on looking at ways we can map out the African community in Ireland categorizing them into skills sets, gender, nationality, and regional presence.
- Two of the last meetings were centred on the election of the next Africa Council, the criteria, how candidates can apply and the election process itself.

Africa Council Members 2013-2014

1. Blaise Pascal Amani	12. Juliet Amamure
2. Chinedu Onyelem	13. Luke Burka
3. David Nyaluke	14. Macaire King Dila
4. Deo Sango	15. Mbemba Jabbi (Chairperson)
5. Elsa Ruddy	16. Mubarak Habib
6. Fionnuala Knox	17. Nchedo Obi-Igweilo
7. Hasekabay Zanga	18. Norman Cross
8. Helen Bakali	19. Rashid Butt
9. Jack Onek	20. Sahr Yambasu
10. Joseph Nyirenda	21. Salome Mbugua
11. Julaba Traore	22. Teleja Chimalango
	23. Yemi Ojo

6. Keynote speaker – Neltah Chadamoyo

Neltah Chadamoyo is a social worker, activist, writer, and CEO of Growing Words (more bio needed??)

Leadership is a big issue. We are talking about leadership since the beginning of time, but we haven't confronted it.

There are expectations. We are asked, 'where are your leaders?' A big ask for 1.3 billion people. We speak xx languages. We are 53 countries. We are in different places culturally and can only absorb some of what Ireland is. Genetically, Zimbabwe flows in me, but I am also Irish.

How many people were born in a free country? Most of us were born in a country (incl. Irish) under colonisation. I was born five years before the independence of Zimbabwe. Those who are born free are those born without shackles.

The big question is what do we want to achieve? Do we want to live in the past? In the war? Do we want to talk about way things used to be? Very few of us can move from there. Or do we want to move forward?

Leaders can be elected or they can turn up. But you can never make the assumption that people want you there. The biggest job of a leader is to sell. The Africa Council is a great idea. But it needs to work out what it is looking for. Is it looking for leadership that represents Africa? The challenge here is trying to lead from regions. We need to shed our past and look at our future for our children. Nothing comes perfectly packaged.

"Leaders can be elected or they can turn up. But you can never make the assumption that people want you there. The biggest job of a leader is to sell".

We can learn from the EU structure or we can make a different structure that makes more sense. We know that this is not working. Leaders not emerging but what kind of leaders are we looking for? Do we want sector leaders? What do we mean by leaders? The most vocal? We need a head/heart/hands to be an organisation. Not everyone capable of doing all the parts. We need heart commitment, zeal and drive.

Communication

Twenty first century technology can do so many things, live streaming, skype etc. Distance shouldn't be a problem. We can make things happen. Some large companies use technologies now instead of face to face meetings. We can make it work for us.

'People will challenge you if you are a leader'.

You don't have to listen to all criticism but you should engage and have the gall to say what works for you. Being a leader is difficult but it is an interesting space to occupy, trying to lead. You have to be able to encourage, get people to share your vision. Everyone needs a mentor if you are a leader. Only one person in this room has a mentor, but there are lots of leaders in the room. Where can you go and rant? It is not good for your mental health, for your body. Find a mentor – they don't have to be African, or a development person, but they need to be an honest person whose opinion matters, who respects you and can disagree with you.

Madness?

If all we do is talk and it is not coming to fruition, there's a problem. Do we do the same things all the time expecting different result? But we don't need to reinvent wheel, we can use technology to address the communication challenges.

Men and Women

If all the knowledge in room was being channelled effectively we wouldn't need to be here talking about leadership. Some men don't get feelings. Women working with men need to understand that men work differently from us. The differences are the same all over the world, and are not unique to Africans. Expectations of other people could bother you too much. If we want to challenge governments we need strategies that work, and we can't get one hundred percent agreement all the time.

Integration

How many of you have engaged media? Do we need to create a different space? It is not a uniquely African experience to find it hard to get to know your neighbours - it's a Dublin thing! Things are different in Kilkenny. We need to bring part of ourselves here. Irish people buy my Zimbabwe vegetables. We can integrate by sharing parts of ourselves. We are not smiling faces of poverty, we are bigger than the begging bowl, there's more to Africa than music, dance and food. We should appreciate and learn from Ireland. Integration is about an exchange of ideas, embracing and accepting each other. Please don't use the word 'tolerate'.

'We are not smiling faces of poverty, we are bigger than the begging bowl, there's more to Africa than music, dance and food'.

Leadership

If you want to be a great leader, accept criticism. If I don't challenge it means I don't care. You can disagree and this shows you care. Appreciate and accept if you don't know and ask for advice. Being a leader needs guts. An NGO leader should be committed and professional. Don't commit if you can't. Being a leader is not being perfect, its about knowing your weaknesses and strengths.

Do we need a leader from the African community? What do we want them to do? We need to be clear what we are looking for.

7. Plenary Discussion

Main issues raised by delegates and discussed with panel:

- Issue of commitment to the Africa Council – is there lack of sustainability? Where is the commitment of Africans? Do they come for a while, then leave the Council? Where is the 2013-2014 Africa Council today? Is it a lack of leadership? As leaders we need to be careful of people's needs, link between democracy and leadership.

- There is not much movement since last year. We assume there is a feeling of pan Africanism. Should we look at micro organisations from different countries? Then elect from there, work as a coalition.
- The African mapping exercise will see that different communities, skills are captured.
- Irish Aid volunteering opportunities for Africans in Ireland to volunteer in their countries of origin.
- Looking for something that makes a difference, we will get lost if nothing happens. We should be sowing seed for years to come, long term.
- Need to inform people about the Forum in advance, during the year, not just a few days before meeting.
- Participation – a meeting about how to increase social welfare would have a full room. Our problem is participation, people not interested in discussing our future. But we are failing our children who were born here.
- Commitment, leadership – also an Irish problem, not just African, problem is people being motivated by money/greed. Need to move away from that culture we are living in, energetic people to be motivated by passion.
- Were any ToR/modalities set down for the Council? 3 consecutive meetings and expulsion? But were calls made to these people to find out why? Creating awareness – lot of people not aware. Suggest make contact to all African organisations in all counties who can inform their members at grassroots level.
- The Council had to lay out some rules at early meetings. The people who didn't come to meetings didn't respond to contact at all. Rules were passed by Forum itself. If you miss 3 meetings you have personally excluded yourself. Whole Forum agreed these rules.
- Community comes into its own – spread word via e-mail etc.
- Are we considering the constitutional needs of such an organisation? Are we importing model from Africa where our brother has to join us (nepotism?)
- Structure of Africa Council – what about African regional representation on council, e.g. SADC?
- Regional representation would make council very political, regionalistic. The idea is that we will send info to all on mailing list for dissemination, and invitation to join board/council. Thorough procedure taken by board to ensure people who have put themselves to council are interested. Didn't take into account which counties people are from, that wasn't an issue.
- Will others feel excluded? (But they have the chance to participate too).
- We are here to discuss these things. Council members are accountable. Shouldn't be based on where people are from. A Ghanaian should be interested in African issues not tribalism or regionalism and be held accountable.
- 58,000 Africans in Ireland – can't all come. Let's start a discussion. This is just a start.
- We will build it up and iron out concerns. Some of these were also raised last year.

8. Workshops

Workshop 1: Using Resources of the Africa Forum creatively

Facilitator: Hafsa Belayachi –Co-founder of the Africa Centre Intercultural Youth Society.

First task is to develop a strategic plan to determine needs and purpose of the Africa Forum which elects the Africa Council and in doing that the key questions include:

- Who is the Africa Council?
- Target audience – why, where, when.
- What is the objective and how can the Africa Council reach its aims.

We can only work on what resources are needed once the plan is in place.

Need to map existing resources – e.g. existing African community groups, other organisations working with Africans to help determine projects for council

Publicity – rules and purposes of council, need to keep target group informed

Resource ideas could include:

- Social media for communication out of meetings to help spread word and raise awareness
- Human resources – database, communities, African migrants, need to determine skills available.
- Financial resources: need to be self-sustainable before asking for outside help. Grow shop businesses to be self-sustainable so we don't need aid.

Workshop 2: How can the Africa Council Engage Young People

Facilitator: Amel Yacef – Chairperson of AkiDWA

Key statistic: 60% of African population in Ireland is youth.

2 main themes that came out of discussion – **supporting both parents and young people**

What can the Africa Council do?

- Negotiating identity issues
- Institutional racism is an issue
- Children in care/family welfare

Other suggestions:

- Could Council join forces with other organisations to jointly lobby on issues?
- Issue on age that people can participate (not under 16)
- Council should make effort to share space with under 16s

Workshop 3: Integration of Social Inclusion

Facilitator: Elizabeth Salako – Community Outreach Officer of the Africa Centre

How do we socially include ourselves? How do we ensure Africans in Ireland are included?

- Education and media/social media are in common with all groups and can be used to help break down barriers.
- Language: some people not being able to speak English after being here so long. Need education/language classes.
- Participation and commitment: and volunteerism. These are interwoven into education.
- Engagement – are we engaging? Can we go to embassies and try to influence things?
- Media engagement – are we engaging media? Networking
- Resources – main challenge is the lack of them.

Workshop 4: Youth and Students - how to work together for common ground.

Facilitator: David Nyaluke – Africa Council member (2013-2014)

Two main issues: students and how to harness organisations

Harnessing Organisations:

- Africa Council should include both grassroots and high level organisations
- Need to re-constitute the way the Africa Centre and Council are formed work with youth and students
- We should bring together both individuals and country organisations. E.g. Country, national level organisation and county level representation in Ireland. Could use same model for Africa community. We need apex body to bring together these organisations. If Africa Council worked through these organisations, it could be stronger. This is how Africa Forum and Council can be changed to incorporate to harness organisations that will encourage youths and students participation.
- Engage church leaders – for Africa Forum and Africa Council.

9. Election of the Africa Council 2014-2016

Facilitator: Amel Yacef

There was a brief discussion on electoral process. The Forum was informed that sixteen people applied to join the Council. The Forum was being asked to approve the sixteen people who put themselves forward. It was clarified that the process was not an election as such, rather a formal appointment of those who volunteered. The application process included submitting CVs, references and completing an application form.

The new Africa Council will take over work of current committee and 4 working groups.

Fourteen of the sixteen nominees went to front of room. The two nominees not present at the meeting were not elected. All fourteen nominees were welcomed on to the Council and formally declared Africa Council members for 2014-2016 with a round of applause.

The Council needs to be a full 21 member team (including the Director of Africa Centre as the Chair so it was agreed that the remaining positions will be advertised, particularly targeting young people. The Forum needs to decide filling the 6 remaining positions.

Each of the new council members introduced themselves briefly to the Forum. The new Council is made up of people with rich experience, diverse nationalities, and professional backgrounds. They are from different parts of Ireland and include leaders, IT experts, professionals from business, tourism, finance, people working in the youth and arts sectors, people involved in anti-racism, integration, and inter cultural interests.

It was agreed that the new Africa Council will have to take all the comments shared today and work on them.

'I want to use and promote my skills for the good of all Africans in Ireland.'

'I would like to see Africans who are Irish and Africans in Africa having a bridge, cultural connections'.

2014-2016 Africa Council Members

Group Discussion

- It was raised by some delegates that there needs to be a better way of appointing the Council.
- What will council do? What is their pedigree? Is it just more meetings and summits?
- Council needs to come up with a better way of elections. What is the council looking for? What skills? Clarify this next year. Need to know what they are doing.
- On the issue of engaging with young people, one delegate remarked that young people would not be interested in a formal long meeting.
- Another delegate complained that they didn't know what the Council is, it was not explained.
- Council in its infancy, 1 year old. Lots of discussion, disagreement to be expected. Not all Africans represented.
- Need to put together ideas from this forum, Council must move forward with ideas raised today. Council can't move forward with their own ideas must listen to what are pertinent issues. Will look at them swiftly.
- Comments show that people are interested in Africa and council. Need to be able to reach you, need all contact details for people interested. Council will do well if supported by all people here.

10. Way Forward - Next Steps and Regional Representation

Mbemba Jabbi, Director of the Africa Centre

Next Steps for the Africa Centre

The Africa Centre has strengths and weaknesses. 56,000 Africans in Ireland presents huge challenges but these should be seen as an opportunity, not a weakness.

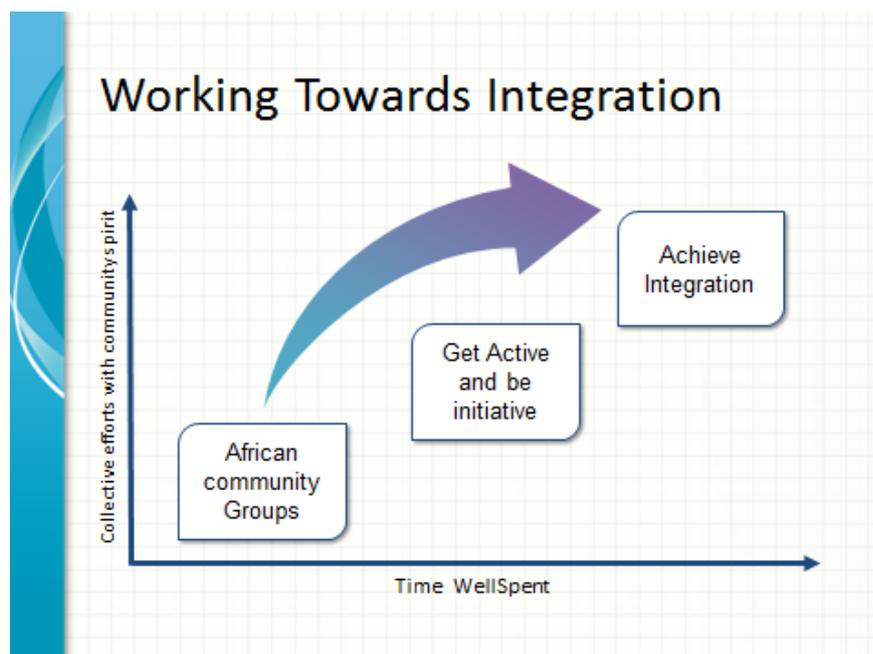
- The Africa Centre plans to have **consultations with African** communities across Ireland.
- **Regional networks** – Kilkenny now functioning. Good experience, have to start doing things in our own communities, don't wait for others to come to your rescue.
- **Intercultural youth society** – incorporate into Africa Centre, how to work together.
- **Service delivery** – book keeping courses, language courses, will help financial sustainability

The Africa Centre knows it can't make everyone happy. It is happy to facilitate the Africa Forum and Council – if members feel the Africa Centre is not the best organisation to do this, they need to inform the Africa Centre. There is an open door policy and the Centre is always happy to hear other ideas.

Next Steps Africa Council and African Forum

- There is a need for **wider consultation** with the African Community
- There needs to be clear **structure, agreed work plans**
- The Forum can look at potential of **regional networks**, the formation of African community groups, towns, regional activities, linking with county and city councils.

Working towards integration is a collective effort. If we spend our time properly, we can achieve active integration, rely on ourselves, no one is going to do it for us.



11. Closing Remarks

Lamin Bojang - Vice chairperson, the Africa Centre

The theme of today's Forum was 'leadership in diverse communities'. The previous speakers have highlighted some of the challenges. Leadership is a key challenge. It is only through leadership can we overcome these problems. Leadership is everyone's responsibility. People have travelled across length and breadth of the country to be here today – this demonstrates the level of interest there is and we know the challenges that face us.

I would like to thank the participants for their substantial contributions. These suggestions should provide way forward. The Council are there to serve the Forum. We know that it is not possible to please everyone and we recognise that not everyone is happy today.

But we need to unite and work with the Council even if we have differences. We have elected a Council and they now have a job to do and we need to unite to support them.

Thank you to staff team of the Africa Centre who organised today's event.

If anyone feels unhappy we hope we can make you happy. This forum is facilitated by Africa Centre, not owned by us. The Africa Centre is just part of the process. The Forum is for all of us. Together we can find ways to improve, to make things better.

Thank you.

12. Evaluation, Feedback from participants

The general overview from the participants was good, but most participants express the lack of communication between the council and the forum which they express to be strengthening and they are interested on how to follow up with the proceedings of the Africa council. Most of the participants express interest in becoming council members and expressed concern that the application process is not known to them

However many of the attendants at the forum such a gathering felt is long overdue and the African Diaspora needs such a forum to discuss issues affecting them in Ireland and how to contribute to the development of their countries of origin.

Most people gave positive feedback on the venue and the inputs of the day, but they felt the workshops were could have been better organised and one of the workshop which was on youth and student did not addressed the aim of the workshop, but rather was concentrating on what the Africa Centre should do.

A good number of the participants were not at the 2013 Africa Forum, which shows the interest of the African Diaspora communities to engage on issues affecting their lives here and ready to contribute something to the development of their countries of origin and forums like this can only facilitate that processes.

13. Appendices

Appendix 1: Attendance List

1.	Abdelghand Baki	2.	Eli McBett	3.	Luke Bukha Kasuwanga
4.	Abubakar Jilla	5.	Elizabeth Salako	6.	Macdonald Tsambwa
7.	Adeola Ogunsina	8.	Emmanuel Ndubuisi Nkwocha	9.	Maria Barry
10.	Admire Kamusoko	11.	Eric Byrne	12.	Maudisa Supkuour
13.	Ahmed Abdullahi	14.	Farai Jeyacheya	15.	Max Asante
16.	Amanda Ossaro	17.	Federica Helen Bakali	18.	Mbemba Jabbi
19.	Amel Yacef	20.	Felix Obiesie	21.	Memory Nyanbo
22.	Ann Kuraia	23.	Finbar Loftus	24.	Michael Doorly
25.	Annie Nyambura	26.	Fonong Fon	27.	Miren Malalen
28.	Anthony Ogochukwu	29.	Francisco Romero	30.	Moira OByrne
31.	Benoni Samuels	32.	Frank Home	33.	Mubarak Habib
34.	Betty Sinyang	35.	Godfrey Chimbganda	36.	Nchedo Obi - Igweilo
37.	Bisola Olagoke	38.	Hafsa Belayachi	39.	Nelthah Chadomoyo
40.	Breda Gahan	41.	Hamdi Tounsi	42.	Sonny Okorafor
43.	Catherine Daly	44.	Hannah Ojuolape	45.	Norman Cross
46.	Cecilia Muriithi	47.	Hayme Haymish	48.	Ogochukwu Sergius Anthony
49.	Charles Wani	50.	Helen Bakali	51.	Okezie Emmanuel Emuaga
52.	Claire Nonga	53.	Hilary Minch	54.	Peter Ehiwe
55.	Cosmas Kimutai	56.	Ian Callagy	57.	Peter Ozonyia
58.	Cruz Fuertes	59.	Jack Onek	60.	Philip Uzuoma
61.	Dadid Kortu	62.	Jane Dundon	63.	Princess Makhoba
64.	Daniel Ashu	65.	Jane Morocco	66.	Proster Nbemba
67.	Daniel Ashu	68.	Joe Komakeh	69.	Shay Lyn Cannedy
70.	David Nyaluke	71.	John Ashua	72.	Son Gyoh
73.	David West	74.	John Kobongo	75.	Stephen Imiren
76.	Denise O'Connor	77.	John Olawoye	78.	Sunny Nwakaji
79.	Deogratias Sango	80.	Joseph Nyirenda	81.	Teleja Tshimbalanga
82.	Ebenezer Segatu	83.	Juliet Amamure	84.	Tendai Nyaude
85.	Eddie Graham	86.	Kabir David	87.	Teresa Owan
88.	Edward Okesokun	89.	Kwame Darkwah	90.	Toto Chiaku Biniungo
91.	Edward Okobi	92.	Lady Abena Amedormey	93.	Vincent Misariro
94.	Egide Dhala	95.	Lamin Bojang	96.	Virginia Mendonça
97.	Eilis McDonald	98.	Lassane Ouedraogo	99.	Zephyrynus Ikeh

Appendix 2: Provisional Terms of Reference for Africa Council

What is the Africa Council?

The Africa council is made of 21 member elected at the Africa Forum organised by the Africa Centre and its partners. The membership includes members of the African community and others who work with the African community in Ireland.

Aim of the Africa Council

To work on issues affecting Africans with African communities, NGOs and governments departments in Ireland and also working with African governments and institution facilitating the African Diaspora in Ireland to influence development in African countries

Objectives

1. To provide a platform for the African Community where they can come together to address issues affecting them, network and share information
2. To explore and identify areas that can contribute to formulating policies for social inclusion and positive relations in order to meet the diverse cultural needs and social inclusion for people of African descents in Ireland
3. To ensure effective participation and inclusion of African young people in our communities
4. To involve in developing and implementing a joined up approach to integration by Africans and other groups within the Irish Society
5. Raise awareness among African communities of the role of volunteering and encourage them to volunteer in Ireland and in African countries
6. To identify and maintain panel of African experts to influence policy in Ireland take part in development projects in African countries

Operational procedures:

1. Africa Centre to chair and convene meetings
2. Have Bi-monthly meetings
3. To plan and host yearly Africa Forums
4. Create working groups to address issues identified by the forum
5. All meeting being held in Dublin
6. Absenteeism not entertained, a member will be disqualified from the council after 3 consequent absences from meetings
7. Quorum is 8 members present

3 – Africa Forum Concept Note 2013

Introduction

According to the 2011 census figures, there are 766,770 residents born outside of Ireland, which is 17% of the population. Out of this figure over 65,000 are of African descent, which makes 8.5% of the population¹. To cater the needs of these Africans living in Ireland, the Africa Centre with African community leaders will facilitate an African community forum bringing Africans and other stakeholders together to discuss how to overcome issues affecting African communities.

Key challenges facing African communities

The Africa society is seen as homogeneous² by many people and this tends to influence policy decisions and other activities planned for Africans in Ireland, which doesn't fit well and outcomes are always unachievable. The African communities are eager to integrate for greater participation within the Irish society and many are faced with some stumbling blocks. Racism affects many Africans because they are black and cannot speak English fluently. Racism is a determinant factor for African immigrants getting jobs in Ireland, which is very crucial for integration. If your name appears on an application form for a job different from a western name, no matter what qualification you have, you are automatically disqualified for short-listing neither to be call for an interview^{3 4}.

Another stumbling block is the asylum process. Asylum seekers are not allow to integrate, because they are confine to the direct provision centres, they cannot work and that in itself limit their chances for integration⁵. Even those who have their refugee status have to struggle with their daily life to make ends meet. There is no direct support provided to them and this make it difficult for them to feel part of the society neither to integrate.

The negative portrayal of Africa and Africans are reinforces of preconceived ideas about Africans in Ireland and this limit Irish people to see the positive side of the Africans and that in itself is a prejudice that put a setback on integration⁶. Lastly the lack of recognition of foreign qualifications is another difficulty that Africans face in Ireland. And all this affects the way Africans are integrated into communities in Ireland.

¹ This is Ireland, highlights from census 2011, part1; Black Irish, Black Africans and other Black. <http://www.cso.ie/en/media/csoie/census/documents/census2011pdr/Census%202011%20Highlights%20Part%201%20web%2072dpi.pdf>

² Speech presenting by H.E Ambassador (DR) Kemafo Nonyerrem Chikwe at the African Centre Conference on Images and Massages, Dublin Castle 14th July 2010: "Images and Messages, from an African perspective." Available at: http://www.africacentre.ie/images/publications/images_conference_report_2010.pdf

³ 'Anti-Racism' Migrant Rights Centre Ireland, <http://www.mrci.ie/Anti-Racism/>

⁴ 'Discrimination in Recruitment. Evidence from a Field Experiment' which found that Irish applicants were twice as likely to get short listed for a job, than their migrant counterparts with the same qualification. <http://www.equality.ie/Files/Discrimination%20in%20Recruitment.pdf>

⁵ Rights and Obligations of Asylum seekers in Ireland, By the Citizens Information Board. Available at: http://www.citizensinformation.ie/en/moving_country/asylum_seekers_and_refugees/the_asylum_process_in_ireland/rights_and_obligations_of_asylum_seekers_in_ireland.html

⁶ Speech presenting by H.E Ambassador (DR) Kemafo Nonyerrem Chikwe at the African Centre Conference on Images and Massages, Dublin Castle 14th July 2010: "Images and Messages, from an African perspective." http://www.africacentre.ie/images/publications/images_conference_report_2010.pdf

African Forum

The African community forum will focus on some of the key challenges facing African communities in Ireland in the context of government policies and the role Africans can play working with other stakeholders to facilitate a smooth integration process for their communities. The forum will adopt a community developments approach to;

- bring African Community to a round table forum to discuss issues affecting them in Ireland
- have a critical discussion on African community groups, how can they come together to form a representation and collective voice for over 65,000 Africans living in Ireland
- explore and identify areas Africans can contribute to issues happening in Ireland
- demonstrate a range of positive ways linking Africa and Ireland on development issues
- see how best community groups can come together forming taskforce on issues concerning Africans in Ireland when the need arises
- ensuring effective participation and achievement provision for African children and young people in our communities
- formulating policies to promote social inclusion and positive racial relations for Africans
- provide educational supports to meet diverse cultural needs and improve social inclusion
- involve in developing and implementing a joined up approach to integration by Africans and other minority groups

Forum Structure

Following on from the Africa Centre community forum in 2007, this Forum will focus on **‘policy and service delivery to support the integration of African in Ireland’**. Through a roundtable structure it will facilitate as much discussion as possible with a strong emphasis on ensuring good interaction between African leaders, African Embassies, civil society groups, non-government groups, including the voluntary and community sector, private, charitable and trade union sectors.

The Forum will seek to build on and complement existing initiatives within the African communities and it’s intended to hold regular Forum meetings each year. The Africa Centre will be the host of the forum, but the ownership lies on all African groups and leaders in Ireland. A report will be produced highlighting proceedings and this will be circulated to participants and also posted on the Africa Centre and AkiDwA websites.

The target audience is:

- African leaders
- African diplomatic missions in Ireland
- NGO Sector and agencies involving with African immigrants
- Educational institutions having African students
- Civil society groups in Ireland

- Numbers target 100 to 200 people

Time frame

The Africa forum is aimed to be held in January every year somewhere in Dublin with participants coming all over Ireland for a day or half a day conference.