

FIFTH ANNUAL REPORT

Africa Centre

2006



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Selected pictures of some of activities during 2006

CHAIRPERSON'S INTRODUCTION

When a birthday comes around, it often causes us to engage in a little nostalgic reflection about our past. 2006 marked Africa Centre's fifth birthday. There are still enough original members active in the organisation from its early years and a library of past publications and documents, to get a sense that the Africa Centre is on a very significant journey. I hope therefore that this Annual Report is a rich reflection of that growth.

2006 was in many ways a new chapter for the organisation. It was the first full year of the implementation of our strategic plan, which you will be able to sense through the work areas listed below. It was the first year we organised the very successful World Refugee Day Awards. It was a year when 'Africa Also Smiles' posters were distributed widely throughout the country, to highlight positive impressions of Africa. It was a year when we pioneered research into the participation of Africans in Irish society, through our 'Inclusive Citizenship' report. It was a year for workshops on development education, rights-based approach training and

educational events such as the Annual Lecture with Dr. Tajudeen Abdul-Raheem, Secretary General of the Global Pan-African Movement. These offer just a flavour. Please enjoy reading below some of other varied and creative activities that the Africa Centre has been involved in.

No growth is possible without the contributions of Funders and supporters. Let me therefore take this opportunity to sincerely thank the Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust, the European Refugee Fund, Irish Aid, Ireland Embracing Cultural Diversity, the Reception and Integration Agency, Combat Poverty Agency, St. Stephen's Green Trust, Dublin Bus and the National Consultative Committee on Racism and Interculturalism. Special thanks are also due to my fellow Board Members, volunteers and members of the Africa Centre. Finally sincerest thanks to our gifted and energetic staff, Dier Tong and Mubarak Habib, without who so little would be possible.

Thanks to all

Mr. Philip McKinley, Chairperson

1 WORK AREA (I)

PARTICIPATION

1.1 Civic participation Report

With financial support from the Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust, the Africa Centre in 2006 carried out a major study on the civic participation of the African Community in Ireland. A report, titled *'Inclusive Citizenship in 21st Century Ireland: What Prospects for the African Immigrant Community'* was



produced and was launched on July 18, 2006 by Ms Mary Davis, Chairperson of the government's Taskforce on Active Citizenship and Chief Executive Officer of the Special Olympic Ireland.

The overall aim of the study was to contribute to the discourses on the integration of immigrants and ethnic minorities into Irish society and to highlight the key barriers that face immigrants in this process. In doing so, the study sampled the feelings, perspectives and experiences of a group of African immigrants about their involvements in civic activities both at their local community and wider Irish society levels. The study was also crucial and timely, as it coincided with the formation of the government Taskforce on Active Citizenship.

The report highlighted, among other things, the following key issues:

- ◆ It has highlighted how African immigrants in Ireland understand the concept and practice of civic engagements.

- ◆ The report identified how African immigrants participate in civic activities and their level of involvements in society.
- ◆ It has helped to confirm our understanding of the difficulties and challenges African immigrants face in civic practices and how they would like the problem to be addressed.

The findings of the study were presented in a report, under the following five thematic sections:

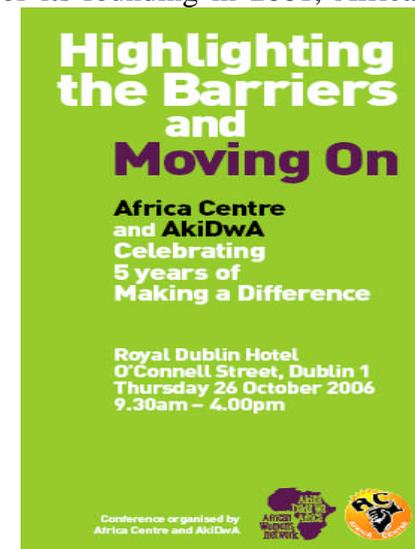
- ◆ Section one summarized respondents' understandings of meaning of civic participation.
- ◆ The second section dealt with respondents' involvements in civic activities at their local community's levels and in other activities that are religious-related or faith-based.
- ◆ Section three explored the natures and levels of respondents' involvements in the activities of voluntary organizations.
- ◆ Section four focused on respondents' participation in political activities.

- ◆ The fifth section highlighted the problems and obstacles that characterize the participation of African immigrants and other minority groups in Irish civic society.

The full report can be downloaded on our website www.africacentre.ie or you can contact the office to obtain a copy of the report.

1.2 The 5th Anniversary Conference

To mark the 5th anniversary of its founding in 2001, Africa Centre, in association with AkiDwA, organised a major one-day conference on Thursday 26th October 2006 at the Royal Dublin Hotel in Dublin. The conference was held under the theme '*Highlighting the Barriers and Moving On*'. The event provided an opportunity for



the sharing of experiences and highlighted the challenges during the five years of our existence.

Generally, the key outcomes of the conference could be summarised as follows:

- ◆ It provided us with opportunity to celebrate and mark the 5th anniversary and highlighting the successes and challenges faced.
- ◆ It helped build support and links with Governmental and non Governmental bodies working with immigrants.
- ◆ It provided a platform for Africans and other minority ethnic communities in Ireland to share experiences and challenges to participation.
- ◆ It challenged stereotypes and the invisibility of African and other minority ethnic-led organisations.

The conference was opened by Mr Niall Crowley, Chief Executive Officer of the Equality Authority. It was attended by over 120 participants from various statutory and non-statutory bodies, including 79 participants from African and other minority ethnic communities.

There were four keynote speakers in the conference. Sr. Anne Itotia gave a presentation which stressed the need for Africans in Ireland to have a 'Space', which can provide them with visibility and to be able to represent themselves. Dier Tong, Coordinator of the Africa Centre presented a paper on the difficulties faced by African and other minority ethnic organisations in accessing funding. Ms Ada Maduakoh, Chief Executive Officer of ProDiverse (UK) gave a presentation titled '*Diversity matters*'. Her presentation provided an opportunity to share European experience regarding diversity challenges. The final presentation, titled '*Africans in 21st Century Ireland: Will They Stay*', was delivered by Abel Ugba, Lecturer at University of East London. His

presentation identified the challenges to integration and the need to learn from experiences of immigration worldwide.

Apart from the main plenary sessions, there were four parallel workshops, which addressed the following specific themes:

- ◆ Participation in Employment
- ◆ Political participation and the 2007 General elections
- ◆ Immigration, Residence and Protection Scheme
- ◆ Funding and Resources for African and minority ethnic organisations/groups.

1.3 Collaboration among Minority Ethnic Organisations

During 2006, Africa Centre facilitated a series of meetings with African and other minority ethnic representatives. The aim of these meetings was to encourage collaboration and networking among the groups. These meetings are on-going and the final product we are aiming for is the formation of a network of African and minority community organisations in Ireland, which we strongly believe will bring about a more stronger and united voice for the community.

1.4 African Studies Institute

Africa Centre has been involved in a new initiative aimed at establishing an Africa Studies Institute in Ireland. The initiative brings together a number of government departments and the Dublin City University, which has been approached to host the proposed institute. It is envisaged that the Institute will engage in research, teaching and policy development around the African communities in Ireland and Ireland's links with Africa.

A consortium to fund this initiative is being proposed and some declared interest has already been received from the Department of Justice, Equality & Law Reform,

Africa Centre has contributed to the idea from the very early stages. The Centre is committed to supporting the project and will work in partnership with the Institute when it is finally starts operations.

1.5 Rights-Based Approach Training

Africa Centre is mindful of the need for activists and community leaders, in the African and the minority sector in general, to build the capacity to advocate and to campaign. In this regard, the Centre organised a two-day foundation training course in April 2006 on the concept of '*Right-Based Approach*' and how its principles can be used in lobbying and advocacy by activists in the community.

The training broadly covered two areas - knowledge and understanding of rights based approach and its application in advocacy, particularly using it to fight poverty and social exclusion.

The course was attended by 14 participants and facilitated by two experienced trainers – Mary Purcell and Robin Hanan. Participants explored the emergence and evolution of rights-based approach and the challenges and opportunities offered by human rights. Participants also learned about core principles of rights-based approaches: accountability, non-discrimination,

participation and empowerment. Broadly the course has helped participants:

- ◆ Understanding of rights-based approach theory and practice.
- ◆ Engaged confidently with issues of concern from a rights-based perspective.
- ◆ Used rights-based methodology to issues and areas of work in which they are involved.

1.6 Advice and referrals

Africa Centre provides advice and referral services to both individual as well as group clients. During 2006, 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 come from asylum seekers and refugees regarding advice and information about status, employment, social welfare entitlement and housing. We also received during the year queries from other categories of migrants like students and migrant workers. Also, we receive queries coming from members of the host

community, mainly students, researchers, media people and others who have 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. We also helped some of these groups with the drafting of constitution or Article and Memorandum of Association.

1.7 Collaboration and Networking

Africa Centre has built strong networks during the year. We work collaboratively with a number of key partners, including:

- ◆ AkiDwA: We have worked very closely with AkiDwA during 2006 in various issues. We also organised two joint events: the Conference in October 2006 and the Fundraising diner in November 2006.
- ◆ Africa Centre is on the board of the National Consultative Committee on Racism and Interculturalism (NCCRI).

- ◆ Africa Centre is also on the board of the European Anti-Poverty Network (EAPN).
- ◆ Africa Centre is also a member of a new joint venture imitative which include Comhlámh, Suas and Debt & Development Coalition, etc.
- ◆ We work with Dublin City Council, NCCRI, UNHCR, SPIRASI, Integrating Ireland and Sport against Racism who are members of the World Refugee Day committee.

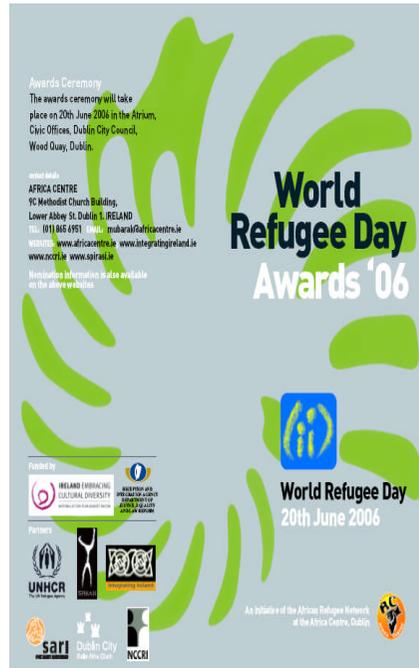
2 WORK AREA (II)

WORLD REFUGEE DAY

2.1 World Refugee Day 2006

Africa Centre took over the responsibility for the organisation of the 4th World refugee Day Awards in 2006, following its merger with the African Refugee Network in September 2005.

World Refugee Day falls on June 20th each year and was designated by a special UN General Assembly Resolution in 2000. On this day, countries around the world organise activities to call



the attention to the situation of refugees and to highlight initiatives to support them.

The awards provide opportunity to highlight the positive contribution that asylum seekers and refugees on the one hand and members of the local communities on the other, have made in the integration process. World Refugee Day Awards also provide opportunity for positive interaction between immigrant and members of the host community.

The 2006 Awards were organised by the Africa Centre in association with the Dublin City Council, Integrating Ireland, the National Consultative Committee on Racism and Interculturalism (NCCRI), SPIRASI, the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) and Sports against Racism in Ireland (SARI).



There were five headings under which Awards were presented:

- ◆ Community & Environment
- ◆ Health & Welfare
- ◆ Education & Youth
- ◆ Arts & Culture
- ◆ Sport & Leisure

Over all, there were 54 nominees for the Awards and one Award, under each of the five categories was given to either a member of refugee and asylum seeker's community or to a member of local community.

The Award ceremony was held at the Civic Offices at Dublin City Council. The former Lord Mayor of Dublin, Cllr Catherine Byrne was the guest of honor. She presented the awards to winners, together with Her Excellency Priscilla Jana, Ambassador of the Republic of South Africa to Ireland and others.

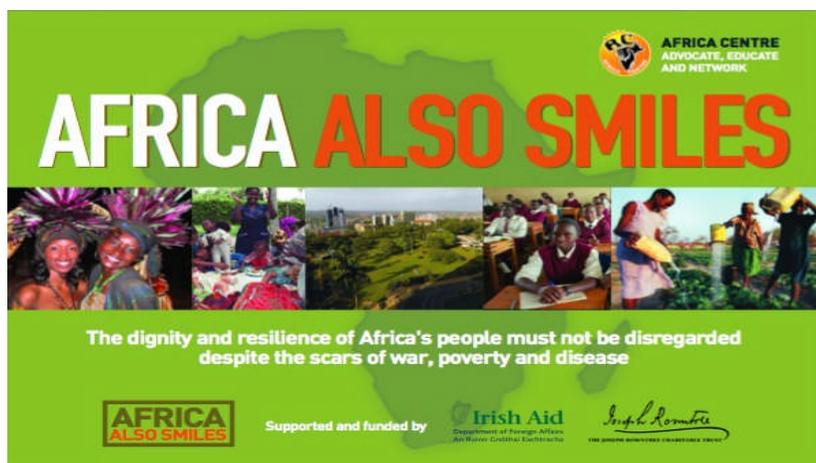
The event was attended by over 240 people and involved social activities and dance performances by the Children of Soweto group and the Punjabi Dancers.

3 WORK AREA (III)

EDUCATION & AWARENESS

3.1 Africa also Smiles poster:

Africa Centre produced in 2006 an educational poster, titled 'Africa also Smiles'. The aim for producing the poster was to confront the often negative image of Africa and African



people, often portrayed in the media and relief organisations. The poster was produced also to respond to concerns of members of the African community regarding the way these

images impact the day-to-day lives of Africans. This concern was a major topic of debate during the consultation process, leading to the development of our strategic plan in 2005. The Poster therefore was a way to kick-start awareness and advocacy campaign for a more balanced representation of Africa and African people. 2000 copies of the poster were produced and there has been considerable positive feedback on it. A follow-up plan is now being considered.

3.2 Annual lecture 2006

Africa Centre held its fourth consecutive Annual Public Lecture in May 2006. The event, which was held at the Wesley Hall, Methodist Central Mission Building, was under the theme "*Challenges of Globalisation: An African Experience & Perspective*". Guest Speaker was Dr. Tajudeen Abdul-Raheem, Secretary General of the Global Pan-African Movement. He was responded to by Dr. Constantin Gurdgiev, Lecturer in Economic, TCD and Director of the Institute of International Integration Studies. The event was attended by

over 80 people. It provided an opportunity for a participatory discussion and networking among the participants.



Picture of participants at Africa Centre Annual lecture

3.3 African Perspective in Development Education Workshop

A ½ Day workshop was organised in February 2006 with the aim of bringing together members of African immigrant community and ‘mainstream’ development education organisations, to explore the role that people from southern

countries in general and Africans in particular can play in development education in Ireland. The event was under the theme ‘*Diversity and Development Education in Ireland*’ and took place at the Wynn’s hotel in Dublin. The workshop was attended by a considerable number of members of the African immigrant community and representatives of ‘mainstream’ development education organisations in Ireland. There were two key resource speakers – Michael Doorly, development education coordinator at Concern and Ashok Ohri, Organisation and Social Development Consultants and expert in the development education and minority ethnic community in Britain.

3.4 Joint Venture & E-Campaigner Group

To strengthen its contribution and capacity in development education, Africa Centre has team up with Comhlámh, Debt & Development Coalition Ireland and Suas and form a Joint Venture group, through which these group can work more collaboratively. After a series of meetings, the Joint Venture has agreed three initiatives that form the key pillars of their

collaboration, namely: to inputs into the Comhlámh ‘Focus’ magazine; to develop a joint campaigning website; and potentially to hold some joint events. Each of these areas was discussed, regarding how this collaboration might work in practice.

- ◆ *Focus Magazine*: key area of collaboration will be the production of ‘Action Page’ at the front part of *Focus Magazine*. The page will be developed by the four organisations in collaboration with the editorial group of the Focus Magazine. The page will propose campaigning actions, which will be agreed by the four organisations. The bottom of the Action page will show the logos of the four organisations as promoters of the ‘Action’.
- ◆ Website: A website will be developed to enable members of the Joint Venture group to take action online; to electronically ‘vote’ on an issue; to send out an e-bulletin to a shared database of contacts. The website will be low in content and will direct users to each of the individual sites of the four organisations.

- ◆ The final pillar of the group is to organise joint events from time to time.

4 WORK AREA (IV)

ORGANISATION DEVELOPMENT

4.1 Funding

The year 2006 had been a good year for Africa Centre, in terms of improvement in income. The source of funding during the year included grants and fundraising activities. Total income during 2006 was €155,778 compared to €67,718 in 2005. Key funders during the year were: European Refugee Fund, the Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust, National Action Plan against Racism and Irish Aid. Beside, 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.

Africa Centre also organised a very successful fundraising dinner in November 2006.

Africa Centre also participated in a study on funding for minority ethnic organisations, which was commissioned by the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform. The study, which was carried out by the Fitzpatrick Associates, aim to develop a framework and principles to guide core funding for organisations representing minority ethnic communities.

4.2 Staff and volunteers

By the end of 2006, Africa Centre had two full-time staff members and three volunteer staff.

4.3 Office Space:

Africa Centre office, which was secured in space since May 2005 is at a central location in the heart of Dublin city and this has attracted large number of people who drop in to seek advice our information. The office is has been reasonably equipped to enable staff carry out their day-to-day task for the organisations.

APPENDIX (1): FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST DECEMBER 2005

	2005	2006
	€	€
Income – continuing operations	155,778	67,718
Expenditure – continuing operations	(134,757)	<u>(65,006)</u>
Surplus (deficit) for year	21,021	2,712
Accumulated surplus (deficit) brought forward	<u>24,787</u>	<u>22,075</u>
Accumulated surplus (deficit) carried forward	<u>45,808</u>	<u>24,787</u>

ALANCE SHEET as at 31ST December 2005

	2006	2005
	€	€
Fixed Assets:		
Tangible Assets	3,418	1,325
Current Assets:		
Debtors	1,308	763
Cash at bank and in hand	<u>81,763</u>	<u>45,437</u>
	83,071	46,200
Creditors: Amounts falling due within one year	(40,681)	<u>(22,738)</u>
Net Current Asset	<u>42,390</u>	<u>23,462</u>
Total Assets less Current Liabilities	45,808	24,787
Net assets	<u>45,808</u>	<u>24,787</u>
Capital and reserves		
Income and expenditure account	<u>45,808</u>	<u>24,787</u>
Members' Funds	<u>45,808</u>	<u>24,787</u>

NB: These figures were extracted from the statutory financial statements of the Africa Centre. A copy will be filed with the Registrar of Companies following the Annual General Meeting. For further details of the accounts see the book of audited accounts.

APPENDIX (2): FUNDERS AND AUDITORS

Key Funders for 2006

- The Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust
- European Refugee Fund
- Irish Aid
- Ireland Embracing Cultural Diversity
- Reception and Integration Agency
- Combat Poverty Agency
- St. Stephen's Green Trust
- Dublin Bus
- National Consultative Committee on Racism and Interculturalism

Auditors

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

APPENDIX (3): BOARD AND STAFF

MEMBERS

Board of Directors

- Philip McKinley, *Chairperson*
- Mohlakoana Mote, *Treasurer*
- Egide Dhala, *Member*
- Neltah Chadamoyo, *Member*
- Theophilus Ejorh, *Member*
- Nyiel Kuol, *Member*
- Benedicta Attoh, *Member*

Staff

- Dier Tong, *Co-ordinator and Company Secretary*
- Mubarak Habib, *Project Officer*
- John Moyo
- Sebit Iwa
- Carolin Gall

APPENDIX (3): ABOUT THE AFRICA CENTRE

Africa Centre is a membership voluntary 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 African people.

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.

AIMS OF THE AFRICA CENTRE

- ✚ To reach out to African community in Ireland and to promote their integration in society
- ✚ To engage in community development and poverty alleviation activities that improves living standards of African immigrants in Ireland.
- ✚ To advance public education and knowledge on intercultural and anti-racism issues.
- ✚ To promote links between Ireland and Africa and advance co-operation, dialogue and partnership on global development issues
- ✚ To build capacity and resources, where people may engage in social and cultural activities, training and where they may engage in research on issues that affect their life
- ✚ To network and collaborate with persons and bodies working among immigrants or active in global justice issues both at the local and international levels.



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