



Working towards  
structural transformation

Annual Report

2018

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# Message from the Chair



Anne Waithira Burke,  
co-ordinator of Young  
Migrant Women and  
Jules Buckley, AkiDwA  
Board of Directors.

2018 was a great year for AkiDwA. We engaged with a wide range of stakeholders, reached out to our members and we held meetings with policymakers and organisations representing migrant women in Ireland. AkiDwA endorsed the importance of having representation of migrant women in decision making and in all public spheres and we demonstrated this by working hard to secure two seats on the board of the National Women's Council of Ireland – myself and Ini Usinga were voted in unanimously. We continued to challenge inequality and discrimination, including the online abuse faced by migrant women. Our staff and board members were quite outspoken on this issue through several platforms.

2018 was also a year of restructuring. The organisation undertook a comprehensive evaluation and review through the engagement of an external consultant from Dunglave Associates. The consultant undertook a review of documents and reports on activities, projects undertaken, finances, and policy development over the past four years. Over 30 people were interviewed for the evaluation, including funders, board members, staff, volunteers, members, migrant women, advisory board, partner organisations and facilitators of various activities within the organisation.

The evaluation and review found that the organisation has a great level of governance, and that AkiDwA has highly qualified board members, the organisation is embedded with resilient governance policies and compliance. It found that AkiDwA has skilful, knowledgeable and motivated staff who take pride in their work and that members, volunteers and target groups have loyalty to the important work of the organisation. AkiDwA was found to be a highly respected, credible and relevant organisation that is recognised for unique expertise and longevity in the field, with a unique position as a migrant-led national women's representative organisation.

Communication within and outside the organisation, members' engagement, and building leadership within and outside the organisation were identified as areas that needed improvement.

Following this intensive review and evaluation a new strategic plan called Shaping the Future 2019-2021 was produced. The strategic plan covers four key themes, Voice, Equality, Community and Organisational Development. By the time this plan comes to an end, our organisation will be celebrating 20 years anniversary. I take this opportunity to thank everyone on the board, staff, volunteers, interns, partners and members who worked with us during the year.

Through the contribution made by each and every one of us, we continue to build an inclusive society where each and every person is respected and treated with dignity.

Ashimedu Okonkwo,  
Chair of the Board of Directors,  
AkiDwA



# Word from the Head of Operations and Strategy

In 2018, I took on the role of Head of Operations and Strategy to work together with the Board towards restructuring the organisation. We devoted time on strategising on our mobilisation of members through outreach, connecting with migrant women through organised events and activities, identifying gaps by connecting and working with stakeholders, funders, NGOs, women's organisations, statutory and non-statutory groups and other influential key people.

This year saw engagement of new staff, allowing more outreach activities to be delivered around the country. In the last half of 2018, AkiDwA reached out to migrant women in 16 counties and women's reproductive health training was delivered to at least 145 women. After concerted efforts and lobbying for three years COSC, the National Office for the Prevention of Domestic, Sexual and Gender-based Violence, agreed to include two key actions on FGM on their Second National Strategy on Domestic, Sexual and Gender-based Violence 2016-2021. With the members of National Steering Committee on FGM we held a meeting with Minister Catherine Byrne after she was asked by the Taoiseach to explore the gaps on FGM work in Ireland. The group requested the development of a comprehensive government plan on FGM, establishment of a government-led interagency committee, and for funding to develop a network of community health workers from migrant communities.

We campaigned on many issues which include the ratification of the Istanbul Convention, which is the most comprehensive legally binding tool on gender based violence and domestic violence. The Convention recognises the circumstances of migrant women that create extra vulnerability to violence and if implemented by the government, would give greater protection to women from sexual and gender based violence.

AkiDwA also led and convened meetings on mobilisation of migrants to political participation, through support from the Department of Justice. Two major conferences were held in Dublin and Cork with AkiDwA playing a huge role on making this happen. In May 2018, I was appointed as a Commissioner on the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission, a position which gives AkiDwA the opportunity to shape and promote human rights and equality for migrant's women, men and children. In November 2018, I called on the State to tackle racism and discrimination faced by people of African descent, while commenting on ESRI 2018 monitoring report which showed that employment rate for African nationals is 45% compared to an average of 70% other minority groups. Employment rates for African women were even lower at 38%, which is 17% below the average female rate in Ireland. We continue to identify opportunities economic, social, and political for migrant women in shaping the future.

Salome Mbugua,  
Head of Operations & Strategy,  
AkiDwA



Salome Mbugua pictured with Taoiseach Leo Varadkar and President Michael D Higgins.

# Key highlights



Beginning of Women in Social Engagement (WISE)  
project by Partners in Catalyst.

- Over 145 women received training on women's reproductive health between July and December 2018
- AkiDwA visited 16 accommodation centres for people seeking international protection
- AkiDwA and the National Steering Committee met with Catherine Byrne, Minister of State for Health Promotion to discuss Female Genital Mutilation
- Successful conference on mobilisation of migrants into politics was held in Dublin with over 100 leaders from the migrant community
- Cosc adopted and included 2 key actions on the Second National Strategy on Domestic, Sexual and Gender-based Violence 2016-2021
- Ashimedu Okonkwo, Chair of AkiDwA elected to the board of the National Women's Council of Ireland
- Salome Mbugua, founder of AkiDwA appointed as a Commissioner of the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission by the President of Ireland
- Comprehensive review and evaluation undertaken by the organisation

# Activities and projects undertaken during 2018

Akina Dada wa Africa-AkiDwA (Swahili for sisterhood) is a national network of migrant women living in Ireland. Established in 2001, AkiDwA's mission is to promote equality and justice for migrant women. Our vision is for a just society where there is equal opportunity and access to resources in all aspects of society: social, cultural, economic, civic and political.

The main objective of AkiDwA is to engage in the advancement of education and the relief of the hardship of women migrating, particularly from the continent of Africa, into Ireland. This is achieved by providing information, counselling including therapeutic services for survivors of war, Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), torture and other forms of disempowerment to women. AkiDwA is both a company limited by guarantee, not having a share capital, and is also a registered charity.

2018 marked the end of our three year strategic plan, and so a comprehensive review and evaluation was carried out to help inform future work and the development of a new strategic plan. Following is a narrative of activities, projects and events which were undertaken during the year in line with the four key strategic objectives – voice, equality, community and organisational development, as set out in the plan 2015-2018.

# Voice

To present the voice of migrant women and their families to the political and administrative system, the media and society as a whole

On 6th February, International Day of Zero Tolerance for Female Genital Mutilation, AkiDwA marked the occasion with participation in public events and high profile media appearances. AkiDwA spoke at the Action Aid launch of the AFTER project – Against FGM through Empowerment & Rejection. Further, AkiDwA participated in a discussion regarding the FGM global awareness campaign run by the Guardian newspaper. AkiDwA founder, Salome Mbugua and one of our Community Health Ambassadors appeared on the RTE Six One News in a segment on FGM. AkiDwA also featured as a leading voice on FGM in coverage of the Zero Tolerance events in the Irish Times.

The AkiDwA manager, Salome Mbugua, represented the organisation and gave a presentation at a Fine Gael intercultural meeting organised by the Taoiseach office in March. Discussions focused on embracing diversity and social inclusion.

AkiDwA was actively involved in the advisory committee for Africa Day 2018, assisting the Department of Foreign Affairs in hosting the celebration of African people and culture. The organisation participated in Ministerial celebrations of Africa Day - a Reception held by the Department of Foreign Affairs on 25th May to mark Africa Day. Board member, Kuxi Ghai and founder, Salome Mbugua were Africa Day 2018 Champions, acting as ambassadors for the event. The organisation had a promotional stand on 27th May during the flagship Africa Day celebrations at Phoenix Park, sharing information on the organisation with people calling at the AkiDwA stand.

As a member of the advisory group on the implementation and monitoring Migrant Integration Strategy, on 24th March AkiDwA led a successful event on mobilising migrants for political representation. The organisation took a leading role with Salome Mbugua chairing the event. Minister David Stanton opened the conference and TDs from seven political parties attended and spoke in a panel at the event.

The organisation appeared the G Request Dublin based variety talk show airing on SKY TV to discuss referendum on repealing the 8th Amendment. The discussions focused on the opinion of the panellists towards sexual reproductive health and in particular on abortion. AkiDwA has been an active member of Together for Yes campaign. Salome Mbugua participated in this panel discussion.

In July, two Community Health Ambassadors, from Carrick-on-Suir organized for FGM awareness raising seminar, well attended by over 40 people including social workers, Gardaí and representatives from different community organisations. The event was covered by the local media.

AkiDwA is a member of Observatory on Violence Against Women – a collection of organisations and women's groups working to end domestic, sexual and gender based violence, convened by the National Women Council of Ireland. As part of our collaboration with the Observatory, Salome Mbugua spoke at a conference organised by the Observatory, focusing on the Istanbul Convention on violence against women and domestic violence. In 2018, Ireland had signed but had yet to ratify the Convention. In her speech, Salome Mbugua outlined the major articles that relate to migrant women, articles 59 to 62. They describe the support and measures each country should put into place to ensure the protection of migrant women experiencing or at risk of abuse. These articles cover issues such as deportations and independent immigration status of women.

# Equality

To address equality issues critical to the long-term inclusion and advancement of migrant women in Irish society, seeking demonstrable differences to and positive impact on their lives.

## Direct Provision

Since 2014, AkiDwA has been a member of the Working Group on the Protection Process and Direct Provision, under the chair Justice Bryan McMahon, charged with making recommendations on improvements to the current system of accommodating asylum seekers and processing their protection claims. AkiDwA also advises on implementation of the recommendations, monitoring and working with the Department of Justice and Equality.

Since 2014, AkiDwA has been an advisory member on implementation of McMahon report on direct provision led by the Department of Justice and equality, in March the advisory group completed actions for each recommendation awaiting for implementation, some of which have commenced such as residents of Direct Provision been able to cook for themselves in some centres.

## Brain Gain

Brain Gain, AkiDwA's annual professional networking event, took place on Thursday 12th July 2018 in Dublin City Council Civic Offices, Wood Quay, Dublin 8, from 6pm-9pm. The event gathered migrant professionals and entrepreneurs sharing their successes and challenges. Steven O'Gara from Dublin City Council Local Enterprise Office (LEO) delivered a presentation on the supports available to new business owners and different way of managing enterprise.

## Repealing the 8th Amendment

As part of the referendum campaign to repeal the 8th amendment of the Constitution, AkiDwA joined the campaign for Yes in December 2017, in support of women's right to access safe abortion. In 2018, the organisation facilitated two meetings with members, one in Mosney and the other with Influential Migrant Women, to ensure members had the right information before the referendum vote. On May 26th, Ireland voted to repeal the 8th amendment of the Constitution, paving the way for the legalisation of abortion in some circumstances. The country voted by 66.4% to 33.6% to repeal, with more than two million votes cast. There is still much work to be done to ensure that every woman in Ireland has access to the healthcare she needs, and AkiDwA will build on this success to ensure this becomes a reality.

## Women, Peace and Security

AkiDwA was invited to advise the Department of Foreign Affairs Conflict Resolution Unit on their work on Women, Peace, and Security, and we invited two members of the Influential Migrant Women Group to participate in their strategic meeting. Salome also gave a presentation to the Oversight Group of Women, Peace and Security in March. In September 2018, Salome was appointed by the Tánaiste as Independent Chair of the Working Group for the Development of the third National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security. In November 2018 AkiDwA supported the convening of preparatory workshop in Cork in advance of the drafting of the National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security.

## Gender Based Violence

A dialogue meeting was held with Adrian Cristea, Executive Officer of Dublin City Interfaith Forum, to explore synergies between AkiDwA and the Forum on our shared work on Gender-Based Violence. Additionally, AkiDwA continued to collaborate with Gardaí on development of the guide on FGM and hope to launch the guide before the end of 2018.

## Civic and democratic participation of migrants

To progress work and activities in this area, AkiDwA continued to convene meetings with a coalition of NGOs working with Migrants (Immigrant Council of Ireland, Cairde, Forum Polonia, Wezesha, New Communities Partnership) and together the coalition organised for a conference focusing on migrant political participation. With the support from the Office for the Promotion of Migrant Integration (OPMI) in the Department of Justice & Equality (DJE), the coalition held a conference at the Department of Justice building on March 24th 2018, with a view to promoting the political engagement of migrants in Ireland. The event was launched by Minister of State for Equality, Immigration and Integration, David Stanton and AkiDwA president, Salome Mbugua chaired the event. There was a specific focus on encouraging participation in the Local Elections in 2019. To kick off the event, attendees heard a presentation on electoral rights and after lunch, a panel discussion and Q&A included representatives of political parties, followed by a group work session for all participants to finish up the day. The NGO Coalition aimed to get 100 migrant leaders from around the country to attend the event to spread key messages on participation in their communities across the country. There was more demand for attendance at the event than could be accommodated. Nearly one hundred migrant participants attended, plus NGOs were also in attendance. There were attendees registered from all counties bar four. All the main political parties sent representatives to the event including a Senator, a TD, a Councillor, party administrator and election candidates. Most parties agreed that they were not doing enough to engage with migrants. The event was funded by DJE and the grant of 6000 Euro was administered by AkiDwA.

The organisation continues to lead the call for inclusion for migrants in all political arenas. Through AkiDwA's recommendation and support, the DJE agreed that the organisation transfer the remainder of the funding from the Dublin event (€2,200) to host a similar event in Cork. AkiDwA supported the Cork team and organisations which planned for the event under the auspices of the Cork City of Sanctuary, Advocacy sub-group- Cork Migrant Centre, Love & Care for People, Think Speak Do, Nasc, Cork City Partnership, Together Razem Centre, New Communities Partnership, Cork Kerry Community Healthcare, International Organization for Migration, Cork City Council Social Inclusion Unit. The Deputy Lord Mayor, Cllr Fergal Dennehy launched the event and the Minister of State for Equality, Immigration and Integration, David Stanton, TD, delivered the key note address to the 123 people participating in the event.

## Dare to Dialogue

To mark the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence 2018, AkiDwA engaged in dialogue with men and faith leaders to stand against gender-based violence. A half-day event was held on 12th December at Dublin City Council offices at Wood Quay. Representatives from Immigrant Council of Ireland, Dublin City Interfaith Forum, Women's Aid and Wezesha spoke at the event. The conference heard that a large number of migrant women are affected by domestic violence and out of the 669 calls to Women's Aid's 24 hour national helpline, the largest group calling was migrant women (87%).

AkiDwA undertook baseline research on domestic violence as it relates to the migrant community in Ireland. Though hidden, domestic violence has been prevalent in accommodation centres and remains a concern among the wider migrant communities. Kuda Mushaya who is an advisory member of AkiDwA gave a presentation on preliminary findings during AkiDwA's AGM in December 2018. Further analysis on this area will be carried out in 2019. The organisation has been linking up with Offaly Domestic Violence Services who have recently engaged staff to work with ethnic minority women on this area.

# Community

To build the capacity of the community of migrant women and their families, developing their skills, confidence and spirit of independence through training, employment, workplace integration, business and entrepreneurship.

AkiDwA held five general information and outreach meetings during the year in Dublin, Sligo, Cork, Galway and Monaghan. The organisation has been sharing information about our work and seeking partnership moving forward as we build bridges and create connections.

## Capacity Building

AkiDwA held meetings with women in Waterford and Balseskin accommodation centre as part of our outreach programme. Members were recruited during these meetings and some of them have been attending AkiDwA activities while others have joined the Community Health Ambassador programme. Personal and life skills training was delivered to 13 women between January and May 2018 as part of training. For exposure the women visited the Dáil through the support of Senator Alice Mary Higgins. During the visit the women met with various TDs and Senators, and David Stanton, Minister of State for Equality, Immigration and Integration addressed them. Three women in the group were on deportation order while others have spent a great length of time within the accommodation centre. Issues affecting women within the accommodation centres were discussed and the Minister promised to favourably address the most pressing ones which include lack of female GPs in the centres and a lack of privacy, mainly with the centre's staff entering residents' rooms unannounced. AkiDwA was also commissioned by Robert Emmet Community Development Project to deliver training to their migrant women members.

## Community Health Ambassadors

Two trainings were held with twelve newly recruits in the Community Health Ambassador programme. Community Health Ambassadors work to raise awareness of the health issues faced by migrant women in Ireland, and in particular the health consequences of female genital mutilation (FGM). The first training was held on March 28th in the Irish Refugee Council and second one was held on 19th May. Both trainings were facilitated by Salome Mbugua and Shamsun Nahar Chowdhury.

## Influential Migrant Women

Three meetings were held with the Influential Migrant Women (IMW) group during the year. Ailbhe Smyth, convener for the Coalition to Repeal the Eighth Amendment, facilitated the session on reproductive health while Adaku Ezeudo facilitated the session on entrepreneurship. Twelve members of IMW attended a workshop on organisational development, management and fundraising on the 13th of September 2018, facilitated by Robin Hanan. Participants shared that the workshop was informative and a refresher for the already existing organisations. The organisation has succeeded in one of its objectives for this project, two IMW now sit on the board of the NWCI, namely Ini Usanga, from Love and Care for People, based in Cork, and Ashimeda Okonkwo of Cyril Solicitors and the Chairperson of AkiDwA. Both Meddy and Ini Usanga were appointed during the NWCI AGM on 21st June and AkiDwA's motion for their appointment was passed unanimously.



Community Health Ambassador training with Shamsun Nahar Chowdhury and Salome Mbugua.



Influential Migrant Women meeting on reproductive health with Ailbhe Smyth.

## Young Migrant Women

The project Sense of Self continued for the second year in 2018, more members were recruited especially coming from Direct Provision centres. The two leaders of the group actively worked on a programme of activities and planning throughout the year. Two of the Young Migrant Women members were involved in the launch of Social Inclusion Week by Dublin City Council. Trish Sefu and Mimmie Malaba recited two poems on loneliness and childhood during the launch. This was a great way of communicating and expressing themselves, while challenging attitudes and educating participants on the challenges facing young women living in Direct Provision. On 25th August and 3rd November, the Young Migrant Women held the Migrants Got Talent event at the Killarney Court Community Hall in Dublin's North Inner City. This was to give young women a platform to showcase their individuality and talent. Salome Mbugua delivered a presentation on challenges facing migrant youth in Blanchardstown in November where she connected and made links with social workers, Gardaí from the area and the community.



WISE programme graduates receiving their certificates.



Emily Logan,  
Chief Commissioner  
for Irish Human  
Rights and Equality  
Commission  
speaking at  
Migrant Women  
Together seminar.

## Migrant Women to the Fore

In September 2018 the Young Migrant Women to the Fore training was re-launched aiming at increasing political participation of the migrants by knowing their rights to vote and to contest election as part of active citizenship. Funded by Community Foundation for Ireland, the programme participants learned about Irish history and the political system, political parties, leadership skills and ways of identifying the needs of their communities. Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs model was applied during the discussions. Participants also discussed trending affairs of the country as they happened during the course duration. Team building skills and presentations were delivered at every meeting, building members confidence and expanding their knowledge. Participants were also paired up with their local TDs and councillors to gain first-hand experience of the how politics are conducted in the country, in order to get the feel if they are to run for positions in the coming elections. The programme lasted for 10 weeks and was facilitated by Mick Rafferty and Patricia McCarthy acting as Partners in Catalyst. Participants were awarded certificates of completion on 27th March during which AkiDwA continued the celebration of International Women's Day that takes place earlier in the month.

## Women in Social Engagement

Women in Social Engagement (WISE) training began in January 2018. This project was funded by the Department of Justice and Equality. Over 50 migrant women benefited from this project. Weekly meetings were held on Saturdays where women would discuss problems within their communities. The aim of this training was to become a leader in one's own community. In order to achieve this goal, discussions were held on identifying current issues within their own communities as well as practicing to speak out and raise awareness for issues and needs within the community that are not being met. The training was facilitated by Patricia McCarthy and Mick Rafferty from Partners in Catalyst. The women met for five sessions in January and February. At the end of the training a showcase was held where the women received their certificates from Kathleen Fahy of Fine Gael.

## Migrant Women Together

AkiDwA and the Immigrant Council of Ireland established a migrant women's group in September in order to consolidate the work being carried out by small groups of migrant women. In December, Migrant Women Together Forum was held at the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission, bringing together a group of strong, influential, active, passionate women who shared experiences, struggles, stories and successes they have gone through in the work they do. The emphasis on collaboration and coalitions between different groups were raised as a way to strengthen our relationships and make our work go that much further. Plethora of group were present, among those were the Sunrise Foundation, International Ireland, Polish Community in Ireland, Muslim Sisters of Eire, Women4Women, Filipino Justice for the Undocumented, Association of Ukrainians, Stamp III Association, Immigrant Council of Ireland and National Women's Council of Ireland.

## Other Community Activities

The AkiDwA Information Day, Celebrating Diversity was held in Monaghan in July, where 72 people, primarily youth, attended. The discussions were engaging and interesting – focusing on issues affecting youth. AkiDwA's work on FGM and other projects was shared with those in attendance. Training on organisational development was delivered to a group of Influential Migrant Women on 13th September. Ten women participated the training, delivered by Robin Hanan. AkiDwA is committed to promoting the health of migrant women and in 2018, saw the emerging need to increase our focus on mental health. We launched Let's Talk sessions with migrant women this year. These are informal mental health discussions, led by a professional from a migrant community who has knowledge and skills in this area. Further, AkiDwA has joined as a member of Mental Health Reform. A discussion paper on this area is in development.

# Organisational development

To obtain core funding, build project income, database, staff, fundraising, social media, members' involvement.

Due to the commencement of new GDPR rules from the EU, commencing in May 2018, AkiDwA developed a policy and contacted all members and stakeholders in the organisation's contact database about these changes through email. The primary purpose of GDPR is to define standardised data protection laws for all member countries across the European Union. GDPR will increase privacy and extend data rights for EU residents, and help EU residents to understand personal data use and rights under GDPR.

Two newsletters were sent to members and stakeholders to share the latest news and activities from AkiDwA. The first newsletter was sent in July and the second in December.

## Board meetings

Six board meetings were held during the year and several sub-committees were held, including Financial and Funding, Human Resources and Programmes and Projects.

## Staff, interns, volunteers

Four staff, four interns and three volunteers served the organisation during 2018. AkiDwA had two full time and one part time staff members, two of whom were recruited towards the middle of the year: Women's Support Officer, Nenette Bouithy joined us in July and Head of Operations and Strategy, Salome Mbugua, joined us in September.

3 people participated in the VHI Women's Mini Marathon on behalf of AkiDwA, with Davis Jaha from Wezesha supporting the recruitment of volunteers.

## Annual General Meeting

The Annual General Meeting was held on the 1st of December 2018 at Wynn's Hotel, with the theme Shaping the Future. Members, friends and supporters came from all corners of Ireland to learn about our achievements, challenges, and plans for the future.



Brainstorming session at AkiDwA AGM 2018.

## Sources of funding

Since March 2018, six funding applications have been prepared and submitted to funders. Dublin City Council agreed to provide funding for a halftime position which will go towards the Development Officer salary, making her role full time. HSE Sexual Health and Crisis Pregnancy Programme (SHCPP) have committed to fund a full time position to deliver reproductive health sessions to women in all the Direct Provision accommodation centres. This role should commence in July and internal recruitment (among members with health background) was done as agreed with SHCPP. A funding application was also submitted to UNHCR for a project on racism. Small funding including donations (2200 Euros) was received from AkiDwA members, Africa day and North East Inner City Community Grant. A meeting is yet to be held with representative from Pobal to discuss the opportunity for future funding from dormant accounts.

## Evaluation and review for the organisation

In 2018, AkiDwA commissioned an organisational evaluation and review in order to help inform progress and future planning. The objective of the evaluation and review was to document and assess the work of AkiDwA in the last three years (2015-2018), covering the life span of AkiDwA's strategic plan which ended in 2018. The evaluation assessed key outcomes, outputs and achievements from AkiDwA in the last three years, looking into successes and challenges, effectiveness in terms of impact, cost-effectiveness and efficiency. The independent evaluator also explored the capacity to influence policy and legislation and potential impact on minority ethnic migrant women living in Ireland. The review and evaluation showed that while the organisation has faced challenges, AkiDwA remains unique, valuable and continues to play a significant role by providing a platform and voice which is much needed. It also highlighted the organisation has highly qualified board members, skilful, knowledgeable and motivated staff, who take pride in their roles and AkiDwA work and that AkiDwA members, volunteers and target groups have loyalty to the important work of the organisation. AkiDwA is highly respected, credible and very much a relevant organisation recognised for our unique expertise and longevity in the field as well as being a distinctive migrant-led national women's representative organisation. The review however also highlighted the challenges the organisation has been through due to restructuring which include change in management and limited resources, it also emphasized on the need to build leadership among migrant women.

# Specialist programmes

## FGM work

Training continues to be delivered to frontline services, 50 participants from Global Health at the School of Medicine of Trinity College Dublin received training in March. Training was delivered to 70 Gardaí in Nenagh, Co. Tipperary in April. 40 nursing students received training on FGM at Dundalk Institute of Technology. 30 teachers from Cavan received training on 6th June. St James's Hospital contacted AkiDwA and we delivered training to 35 of their staff on 5th July.

Public awareness on FGM continued to be shared mainly by Community Health Ambassadors, and through sharing publications and on-line training modules designed by AkiDwA and 11 other organisations working at EU level (UEFGM). During the year over 40 Community Health Ambassadors (CHAs) were recruited. The majority of these remained active during the year, reaching out to community, schools, healthcare professionals and frontline services and raising awareness on FGM. On 10th August, CHAs from Tipperary organised an event at Nenagh that brought many participants together, including the local Gardaí. Due to high demand 1,000 leaflets on FGM were reprinted in June.

AkiDwA continued to convene the National Steering Committee on FGM to work mainly on monitoring the implementation of the civil society-led National Action Plan. Comments by Ali Mohammed from Islamic Cultural Centre caused a lot of controversy and concern early in 2018, with AkiDwA and the National Steering Committee addressing the myths behind these comments publicly. The Taoiseach has appointed Catherine Byrne TD as Minister of State for Health Promotion to work with AkiDwA and other members of the National Steering Committee to identify the gaps in FGM work and on 14th June a meeting was held at the Dáil with the Minister. The following recommendations were made:

- The development of a comprehensive government plan to safeguard women and girls and support those who have experienced FGM is an urgent priority and, in its absence, there is no whole of government approach to the eradication of FGM in Ireland. FGM is a complex issue which requires a coordinated response across government departments, relevant State agencies and NGOs.
- Establishment of a government-led interagency committee, with representation from key government departments, State agencies, NGOs and women from affected communities.
- This committee should be tasked with responsibility for the development of a comprehensive government action plan or strategy that identifies priority actions and timeframes and clarifies the government department or state agency with primary responsibility to ensure actions are implemented. The action plan should address the following key areas: Prevention of FGM through engagement with affected communities; Protection of girls and women at risk of FGM; Provision of services and support for women and girls who have experienced FGM; Prosecution of those in contravention of the Criminal Justice (Female Genital Mutilation) Act 2012; and Promotion of efforts to eradicate FGM globally.
- In order to ensure successful implementation, it must include robust monitoring mechanisms, a set of meaningful and measurable indicators and an interim review process.

## Women's Reproductive Health

In July 2018, with funding support from HSE, a programme on women's reproductive health was established within AkiDwA with an aim to reach out to migrant women seeking protection and living in accommodation centres for asylum seekers in Ireland. The role of Women's Support Officer was created to deliver this programme. The objectives of the training were:

- To increase knowledge of contraception available in Ireland.
- To increase knowledge and awareness of sexual and reproductive health services.
- To increase understanding of relevant Irish legislation.
- To provide information on where and how to access crisis pregnancy supports and services in Ireland as required.

AkiDwA identified 24 accommodation centres suitable for the training and by December 2018 we had reached 13 centres and delivered training to 144 women. The participants learned and actively took part in the training and received certificates they were also linked up with local service providers.

# 2018 Financial statements



Shamsun Nahar Chowdhury,  
Development Officer (centre)  
with Akidwa members.

## Akina Dada Wa Africa Company Limited by Guarantee

(A company limited by guarantee, not having a share capital)

## Statement of Financial Activities

(incorporating an Income and Expenditure Account)

for the year ended 31 December 2018

	Notes	Unrestricted Funds 2018	Total 2018	Total 2017
Incoming Resources				
Generated funds:				
Voluntary Income				
Grants Received		122,360	122,360	107,104
Resources Expended				
Net Incoming Resources available for charitable application		122,360	122,360	107,104
Resources Expended on Charitable Activities				
Admin. Expenses		133,068	133,068	122,871
Total Resources Expended	4	133,068	133,068	122,871
Gross transfers between funds				
Surplus/(deficit) for the year		(10,708)	(10,708)	(15,767)
Net movement in funds for the year		(10,708)	(10,708)	(15,767)
Reconciliation of funds				
Balances brought forward at 1 January 2018		132,682	132,682	148,449
Balances carried forward at 31 December 2018		121,974	121,974	132,682

Approved by the Board of Directors on 7 October 2019 and signed on its behalf by:

Ashimedu Okonkwo  
Director

Jules Buckley  
Director

# 2018 Financial statements

**Akina Dada Wa Africa Company Limited by Guarantee**

(A company limited by guarantee, not having a share capital)

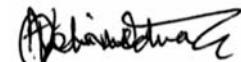
## Balance Sheet

as at 31 December 2018

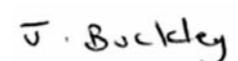
	Notes	2018 €	2017 €
<b>Current Assets</b>			
Debtors	9	4,339	3,500
Cash and cash equivalents		119,835	132,999
		<b>124,174</b>	<b>136,499</b>
Creditors: Amounts falling due within one year	10	(2,200)	(3,817)
<b>Net Current Assets</b>		<b>121,974</b>	<b>132,682</b>
<b>Total Assets less Current Liabilities</b>		<b>121,974</b>	<b>132,682</b>
<b>Funds</b>			
General fund (unrestricted)		121,974	132,682
<b>Total funds</b>	13	<b>121,974</b>	<b>132,682</b>

Approved by the Board of Directors on 7 October 2019 and signed on its behalf by:

Ashlmedua Okonkwo  
Director



Jules Buckley  
Director







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