



# NEWSLETTER

July - December 2020



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## Dear Members and happy New Year!

Trusting you, your families and friends all had a restful Christmas and New Year break. This year started with lockdown necessitated by Covid 19. I am conscious of the fact that this is not what we were envisaging. But however, this is a pill we all have to swallow to contain the spread of the virus.

In the last newsletter (January to June 2020), we pointed about the need to safeguard our mental health. This is because we are aware that isolation and keeping to ourselves is not what is normal. We are going to encourage you to seek help for yourselves should you feel as if things are getting on top of you.

We are also aware that during what we call 'peace time' or normal time, our lives as migrants are difficult here in Ireland and this is mostly due to structural challenges which are beyond our control. Please do not hesitate to reach out for help and there is so much we can do to alleviate the feeling of loneliness and isolation on the phone, email etc.

Our work continues, though differently. We are here for you!

Again wishing you a peaceful and prosperous 2021!  
Warm regards and enjoy your newsletter!

Caroline Munyi, Migrant Women's Health Coordinator

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## AkiDwA is honoured with Rosie Hackett Award

AkiDwA work recognised by labour women and awarded the **Rosie Hackett Award**. Rosie was an Irish insurgent and trade union leader who founded the Irish Women Workers Union, and was involved in the 1916 Easter Rising.



## AkiDwA appointed to monitoring Committee under Section 44 Children Act 2001

AkiDwA CEO was appointed by the minister for Justice and Equality in October to the Monitoring Committee tasked with overseeing the effectiveness and efficiency of the Diversion Programme on youth.

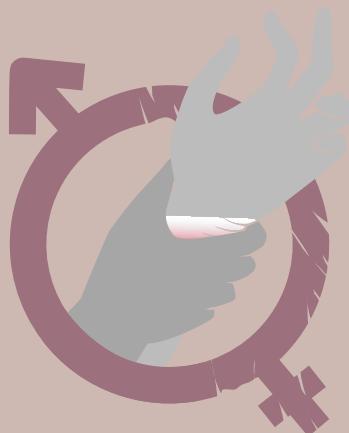
And a second meeting was held with chief superintendent for the youth to discuss concrete actions on work with migrant youth.



## Minister Launches Victim Support project

AkiDwA was invited by Minister for Justice and equality on 27th October to an online event on the pre-launch of victim support project which aims to deliver training, raise awareness on rights and services and support available for women victim of sexual violence. There will also be a review of laws and policies and funding for groups supporting women.

This project is part of recommendations from Tom O'Malley Implementation Group Report which not only seeks to introduce new supports but also strengthen existing ones for vulnerable victims and witnesses in the criminal justice system.



## Language and civic test proposed for Irish Citizenship

AkiDwA attended meeting with the DJE in September on the launch of report by ESRI on applying on language and civic test in the application of citizenship.

## Gender and racism Conference held

On 21st October, AkiDwA, NWCI and National Travellers women forum held a conference on Gender and racism, discussions focused on the intersectionality of migration, gender and racism. Various speakers from the three organisations spoke during the conference including Oluchi Porter and Salome Mbugua.

The conference heard the challenges facing women in direct provision which include racism and sexism, difficult in parenting and access to services and resources.



## FGM Review

AkiDwA is collaboratively working with End FGM network (from Belgium) in mapping FGM in Europe, Caroline Munyi, Migrant Women's Health Coordinator is putting information on Ireland together. AkiDwA has commissioned a consultant to undertake a comprehensive review and evaluation on FGM work in Ireland in the last five years.

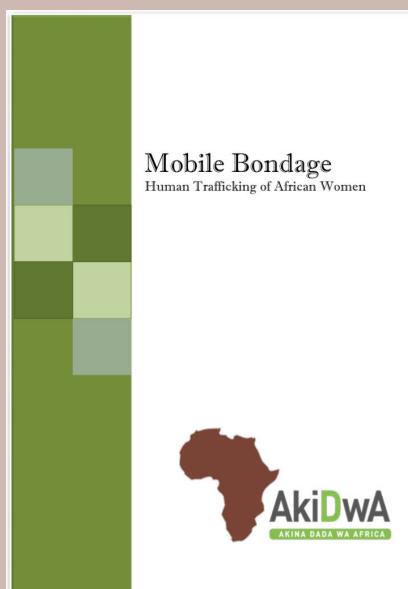
The outcome of this review is hoped to help with lobbying and campaign, and more so for a government led National Action Plan (NAP).



## AkiDwA report on trafficking of migrant women Launched

AkiDwA launched findings of the research on trafficking of migrant women in November. The research which mainly focused on trafficking of African women in Ireland shows victims from the African continent often come from vulnerable situations and are under peculiar circumstances which require a context specific approach to be applied in the prevention and protection of victims. Prosecution of traffickers and implementation of effective laws and policies must be applied. Additionally country of origin and destination must work together to address the root cause of the problem.

The report makes valid suggestions and recommendations which include the establishment of gender-specific accommodation for the victims of human trafficking. The provision of statutory definition of reasonable grounds for suspicion that a person is a victim of human trafficking needs as well as the burden of proof necessary to determine victimhood. The codification of the current practice guideline that currently provide for the national referral mechanism and the victim support structure. The establishment of a state fund for victim of trafficking compensation. Copy of this research can be found on our website [www.akidwa.ie](http://www.akidwa.ie)



## Women Together for a better world project

Implementation of AkiDwA project on Women together for a better world whose aim is to bring migrant and indigenous women together to articulate ways to achieve a better and equal world has progressed well in the last few months.

Mapping of organisations working with communities in county Clare and Donegal was undertaken and most of the organisations responded positively to the project. Meeting was held with Clare Women's Network in September.

Training session for the project has been produced after several meetings with women from Clare Women's Network. The project is funded by Department of Foreign Affairs, Development Education Unit.

**SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS**

<b>1</b> NO POVERTY 	<b>2</b> ZERO HUNGER 	<b>3</b> GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING 
<b>4</b> QUALITY EDUCATION 	<b>5</b> GENDER EQUALITY 	<b>6</b> CLEAN WATER AND SANITATION 
<b>7</b> AFFORDABLE AND CLEAN ENERGY 	<b>8</b> DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH 	<b>9</b> INDUSTRY, INNOVATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE 
<b>10</b> REDUCED INEQUALITIES 	<b>11</b> SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES 	<b>12</b> RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION 
<b>13</b> CLIMATE ACTION 	<b>14</b> LIFE BELOW WATER 	<b>15</b> LIFE ON LAND 
<b>16</b> PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS 	<b>17</b> PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS 	

**AkiDwA'S Project**

*Women together for a better world.*

AkiDwA accelerating the 2030 Agenda through the sustainable development goals(SDGs).

**Did you know there are 17 sustainable development goals?**

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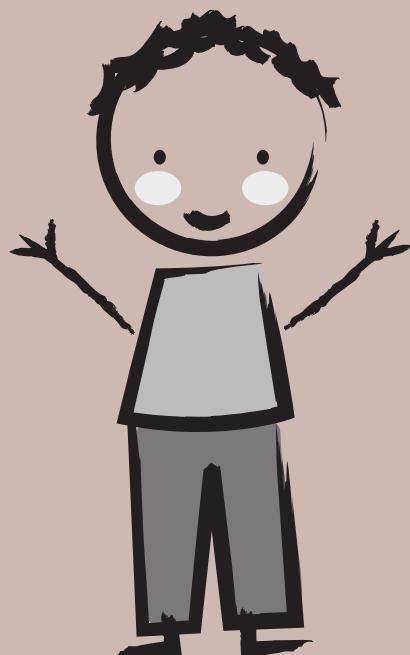
An Roinn Gnóthai  
 Eachtracha agus Trádála  
 Department of  
 Foreign Affairs and Trade



## It takes a village to raise a child

AkiDwA is working towards the implementation of the project It take a village to raise a child, Funded by OCHCR (United Nations).

The organisation is currently undertaking a literature review and interviews with key informants of the project. The project will hold workshop with particular migrant parents who have had their children taken into state care and will also hold high level round table discussions with policy makers and frontline services.



## Who care for carer's conference

On 30th September, AkiDwA held Conference titled who cares for the carers, the aim of the event was to give a platform to migrant women who have been at the forefront of providing care during this difficult time of Covid 19 and as well to

address the need for Carers to be Cared For, the discussions focused on people experiences, opportunities and challenges facing carers and what they do to cope with the demands of their work.

A purple promotional graphic for the 'Who Cares for the Carers?' conference. It features the AkiDwA logo (a stylized brown Africa map with the text 'AkiDwA' and 'African Research Network'), the text 'presents:', and the conference title 'WHO CARES FOR THE CARERS?'. Below the title, it specifies 'Wednesday, 30th September 2020', '2.00pm - 3.30pm', 'Online via Zoom', and 'Register on Eventbrite'. To the right is a circular illustration of a woman with dark skin and curly hair, wearing a yellow face mask and a brown vest over a light green top. The background of the graphic has a pattern of small white dots.

## Migrant Information Day

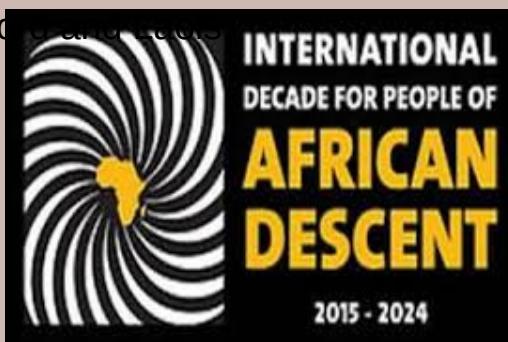
On 23rd September 2020, AkiDwA in collaboration with IOM held an information day at Wynn's hotel. Various organisations were invited to provide information on the day. These include, Dublin Therapy Centre, IOM, Dublin City Community Coop. The event was very successful despite restrictions imposed on social gatherings.

35 people from different backgrounds/nationalities, including Latino- Americans, Africans, Indians, Australians and Americans participated in the event. Financial support for the event was provided by IOM.



## Implementation of IDPAD- Ireland

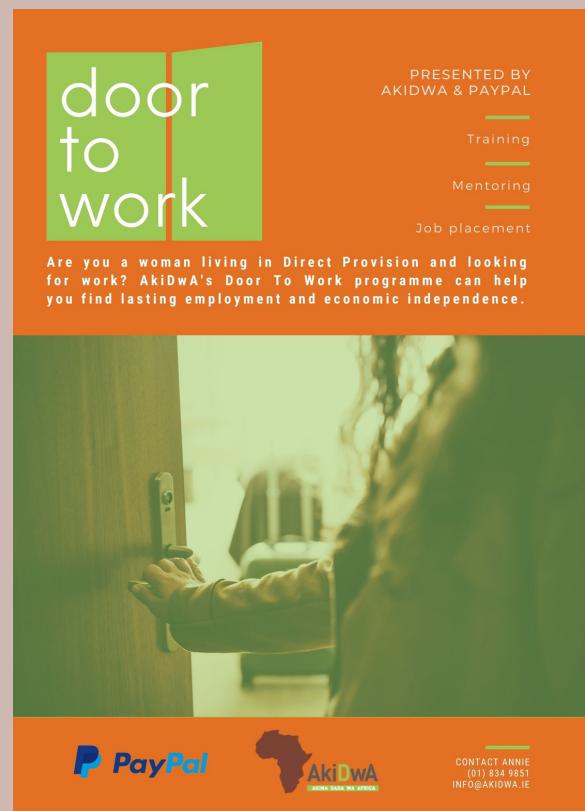
In support of the implementation of the International decade for People of African descent, Salome Mbugua helped in mobilising African organisations and groups in five counties, Cork, Limerick, Galway, Waterford and Tipperary.



Five regional meetings were held with over 100 African community in these counties participating. Discussions focused on the three-key objective of the decade which are recognition, justice and equality. The project is funded by Department of Justice and Equality and has a project worker. AkiDwA host the funding on behalf of the IDPAD – Ireland steering committee.

## AkiDwA employment and entrepreneurship project with PayPal

With support from PayPal, AkiDwA has developed two projects-Door to work project which aims to provide training on access to labour market, mentoring and job shadowing and In from the margin which is a project which will support women with low literacy levels and interested in establishing entrepreneurship projects



## Collaboration with Abbey Theatre

AkiDwA worked with Abbey theatre in a project called Dear Ireland, where Abbey Theatre produced a series and was broadcasted to the nation, and to the world in December through their social media outlet. The piece which is inform of a poem will remain available to viewers for the next six months.



Click to play video

## Sexual and gender-based violence Conference

On 26th November 2020 AkiDwA held a conference on Sexual and Gender-Based Violence: migrant women's perspective. 469 people registered for the conference and over 600 participated through zoom, Facebook and You tube: In this conference we marked the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender Based Violence. The conference covered trafficking but also the incidence of forced marriage and honour violence in some cultures (a form of domestic violence) and highlighted AkiDwA role in supporting migrant women survivors of violence and abuse. The organisation report on the outcome of the research on trafficking was shared during the conference. We had speakers and experts from different backgrounds from Ireland and UK.



Click to play video

## Community Health Ambassador

During the lockdown, Rodrigue has Rodrigue advises that there is need been connecting with the community to factor these group separately so online. Among the issues which have that their unique needs can be overwhelmed Rodrigue are mental catered for.

health and gender based violence among migrant communities in Cork and the surrounding areas.

According to Rodrigue 'the issue of mental health in particular need to be addressed because it spiked during the lockdown. This is because migrants, especially women in the Direct Provision centres have particular vulnerabilities which are unique to their situation and not common in the rest of the population'. These vulnerabilities are compounded by children especially for those women with small children in the DPs'.



**Rodrigue Nkwayaya**

## AkiDwA's Men's Health Project a Building Bridges initiative

Over the last two years AkiDwA has been running the Men's Reproductive Health project which is supported and funded by the HSE. This project mainly targets men in Direct Provision centres.

In this period, 3600 condoms and information leaflets were distributed to men in 15 accommodation centres

by Stephen who has been working with men in various centres in Ireland.



## Young Migrant Youth Summit

The Young Migrant Women Youth Summit was held on 8th November 2020 and had over 30 young people in attendance. The aim of the Youth summit was to bring young African Caribbean Migrant Men and women together to rub minds together but also empower and inspire each other. There was a need to bring young people together to help them integrate into the Irish Western Community. The summit was instrumental in deepening our appreciation of our values, cultural diversity, and unique contribution to the community. It brought together communities and organisations around our common issues of diversity and inclusion. The planning of the event was done by both the Young Migrant women's Network (AkiDwA) and Afroin Diaspora Centre (AdCenter).

The event was graced by Salome Mbugua, CEO of AkiDwA who was also a key note speaker.

Phase one speakers were Susanna Olatunji Komolafe (Keynote speaker from adCenter), Nana Ornella and Nengi Benstowe the Young Migrant women's group coordinator.

There were 8 speakers in total: six from within both hosting organisations and two externals.

The speakers addressed the below topic:

1)Where can people get support on common issues affecting migrants in Ireland?

2)How are people meant to react to common issues people throw at them e.g racist slurs etc

The feedback at the end of the event were all positive and attendees felt very well informed on all key areas discussed.



Young Migrant women's group- Planning committee

## Speaking on Migrant's issues

Getting invited to speak on behalf of AkIDwA on issues affecting migrants is the norm here. Caroline was invited by the RCSI/Rotunda Research groups to contribute to Bias Women Health and Science Week. As a way of saying thank you, they sent the attached card...



## AkiDwA 20th Anniversary

In preparation to commemorate AkiDwA 20th anniversary, AkiDwA is working in a joint international project with Herstory Ireland, the activities for this joint project include art and education projects.

*Celebrating*  
— 20 YEARS —

## AkiDwA Annual General Assembly 2020

AkiDwA Annual General Meeting was held on 5th December with many of our members attending though zoom. Discussions on domestic violence were held since this was a key issue of concern affecting our members in 2020. AkiDwA presented a summary of our work and future plans for domestic violence activism among women in Direct Provision. We also had a presentation from Sarah Benson, CEO of Women's Aid, providing information on Women's Aid data gathered throughout the pandemic, support

they provide to migrant women, and an overview of understanding domestic violence.

## AkiDwA Planning for 2021- 20th Anniversary

Staff and board met to discuss planning for 2021 which is a significant year for AkiDwA. The staff met on 11th December and board on 18th December. The views and input of members collected during the AGM on 5th December will be incorporated in the plan for 2021.

## AkiDwA's online presence

AkiDwA re-established its online presence on Instagram, which is managed by Sharon Etokhana. In the period we grew by 300 followers. Being a work in progress, we are looking to grow by at least 1000 followers by the end of 2021. So watch this space! And follow AkiDwA on Instagram if you are not already there!

We also optimized our social media platform by making use of paid ads for the first time and are looking to continue to use this as a strategy for active campaigning.

