

ACSONI e-bulletin

Afro Community Support Organisation
Development Education Programme

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This issue

INTRODUCTION: ACSONI STAFF
DEVELOPMENT EDUCATION PROGRAMME

Images and Messages Conference Dublin Castle July 2010

ACSONI DEVELOPMENT EDUCATION PROGRAMME

Images and Messages of Africa from an African Perspective, Public Awareness and Capacity Building Programme:

The images and messages used to portray Africans and people from the 'developing' world can have an enormous impact on people's perceptions and attitudes. People have different opinions on what constitutes "acceptable" in relations to images and messages in development. The use of colonial and dependency images continue to extensively inform the public's notion of Africa and its people. Images of African people usually depict poverty, economic dependency and starvation. All these factors are key drivers to inequality of opportunity, discrimination, poor race relations, misconceptions about people from the Afro community and the African continent. The core aim of ACSONI's Development Education Programme is to utilise positive messages and images of Africa and Africans in raising awareness of development issues, especially the factors fuelling the migration of Africans to Europe and the impact that this migration has on Africans in Europe. It aims to anchor development policy on the use of images and messages in the three partner states; Ireland, Slovenia and Northern Ireland. The programme will mobilise public support for action on fairer relations between the three partner states and African countries by challenging the Media and the Development sectors in their use of negative images and encourage the development of policy or Codes of Practice on the use of media messages. The programme's awareness raising strand aims to promote greater cooperation among all nations with special concern for fairer deals for poor countries with a particular focus on Africa. The Development Education Programme operates under the values underpinning the Millennium Development Goals (MDG's): equality, tolerance and shared responsibility.

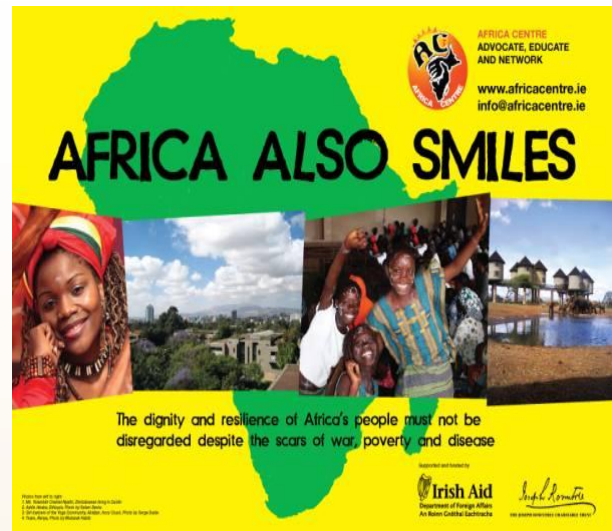
The Afro-Community Support Organisation (ACSONI) was formed in 2003 as an independent community organisation to address the needs and aspirations of people who are from the continent of Africa and African descendent nations. These include people who are of Afro-Caribbean, African American, and African European heritage. In January 2010, ACSONI launched its 3 year Strategic Plan with a vision to see a society that enables fair and equal treatment of all individuals, where equality, inter-culturalism and human rights are valued and embraced; a society that is inclusive, shared and free from all forms of discrimination.

Catherine Parkes

Programme Officer Development Education

Catherine Parkes was appointed to the position of Project Officer at ACSONI in July 2010. Prior to this appointment, Catherine has spent the last two years working for "Community Relations in Schools" (CRIS) as a Project worker. During the course of her employment with CRIS, Catherine worked extensively within the formal education sector in Northern Ireland. She worked with cross-community groups of children and young people, bringing students from Catholic Maintained and Controlled schools together and running issue-based workshops in an age/ stage appropriate manner. In particular, workshops and programmes were tailored to meet the actual needs of the schools and the students, usually addressing issues such as 'Identity', 'Conflict', 'Prejudice and Discrimination', 'Culture' and 'Symbols and Emblems'. She has experience of working with nursery, primary and post-primary students as well as with teachers and parents. In addition, Catherine has worked with young offenders at the Woodlands Juvenile Justice Centre in Bangor and has a sound working knowledge of the Revised Northern Ireland curriculum.

Catherine has worked closely with YMCA Ireland to deliver accredited "Reconciliation and Peer Peace" courses on a residential basis with young people aged between 16 and 25. She has also completed the OCN Level 3 course "Living with Diversity", which provided the opportunity to explore advanced group work skills and to learn more about the challenges that sectarianism, racism, homophobia and other forms of discrimination continue to pose in Northern Ireland. Catherine is currently studying for a Post Graduate Masters in Education at the University of Ulster, Coleraine. She is specialising in 'Education in Contemporary Society', which involves exploring the role of the Education sector in bringing about positive change in post-conflict Northern Ireland.



She completed her Undergraduate Degree in 2006, achieving a 2:1 LLB Law degree from the University of Newcastle upon Tyne, having opted to study modules in 'Human Rights', 'Legal Theory', 'Criminology' and 'Law, Society and Social Change'.

Catherine lives in Belfast and spends her free time socialising with family and friends. She is a keen swimmer and has recently begun training for her first half-marathon.

She is thoroughly looking forward to the opportunity to be part of this exciting new project and can't wait to meet new people and get started!



Catherine's role:

Catherine will work to promote integration by working with the ACSONI Development Education Team on an EU funded programme with our partners, The African Centres in Slovenia and Dublin to develop development education materials and training programmes over the next three years.

Programme Manager: ACSONI Development Education.

Alfred Abolarin was appointed Programme Manager for the Afro Community Support Organisation's Development Education Programme in July 2010.

He has worked for the Northern Ireland Housing Executive as Race Relations Officer for over five years where he was responsible for the implementation of the Housing Executive's race relations policy. In this role, he contributed to managing and coordinating various projects and initiatives for example, the development of the Black and Minority Ethnic Housing Forum, the Race Relations Charter and Minimum Standards programme, the Hate Incident Practical Action Scheme, which is a partnership initiative between the Housing Executive, the Department of Justice (DOJ) Community Safety Unit, and the Police Service of Northern Ireland. Alfred played a key role in the development of the Intercultural Achievement Awards; a joint venture between the Community Safety Unit DOJ; Racial Equality Unit - Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister, the PSNI and the Housing Executive's Community Cohesion Unit. Alfred has an academic background in Social Policy and Criminology and extensive experience of working on social justice, equality, and race relations' issues. He is an experienced strategist, trainer and facilitator on Antiracism, Interculturality and Race Hate-Crime.

Alfred was a former coordinator of Interact Northern Ireland (2000-2004) and also Chairperson of Northern Ireland Council for Ethnic Minorities (NICEM 2003 -2005) an umbrella organisation that works to promote Equality and Human Rights in Northern Ireland. He was the project coordinator of the Afro Community Support Organisation (ACSONI) through his previous work with South Belfast highway to Health (2003 -2005) and recently in 2008-2009 served on a voluntary capacity as the Vice Chair and Head of Strategy and Planning.

He has been on different forums, committees and boards at statutory, voluntary and at a community level, including membership of the Independent Advisory Group (IAG) to the Police Service of Northern Ireland (2004-2006), and has recently been appointed to a public office by the Northern Ireland Minister for Justice.

In 2006 he was presented with the highly commended Norman Capper Memorial Award certificate by the Northern Ireland Housing Council for excellence in the field of customer public relations, and in 2007, he was invited by Her Majesty the Queen and the His Royal Highness the Duke of Edinburgh to Buckingham Palace in recognition of his contribution to civic life in Northern Ireland.

Alfred is also an Alumni of Boston College Massachusetts, U.S.A

Alfred's role: Alfred is responsible for the management and the delivery of the ACSONI Development Education Programme in Northern Ireland.

The purpose of this position is to work with the ACSONI Development Education team on a European Union funded programme with our partners, the African Centre in Slovenia and the Africa Centre Dublin, to develop development education materials and training programmes over the next three years.

Alfred will also work to fulfill the strategic objectives of ASCONI as detailed in the Strategic Plan 2010-2013, which aims to promote the capabilities and interests of the Northern Ireland Afro-Community and increase opportunities for the community to contribute to civic life in Northern Ireland.



Upcoming Events

- ✚ Development Education and Intercultural Dialogue Programme
 - ✚ Development Education Training Programme
 - ✚ Working with the Media Workshops
 - ✚ Workshop on creative methodologies for Development Educators
 - ✚ Annual conference Belfast – Images and Messages: a Human Rights Issue 2011
 - ✚ IT Training Programme for young people
- ✚ Youth Competition on Images and Messages of Africa



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