



AFRICAN PEOPLES ADVOCACY (APA)

ANNUAL REPORT

September 2008 – September 2009

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APA BOARD OF TRUSTEES

September 2008 – September 2009

Ms. Sylvie Aboa-Bradwell, BA, MA, MPhil –Sylvie Aboa-Bradwell is the Founder of the African Peoples Advocacy (APA). Before founding APA in September 2008, Sylvie worked as UK co-ordinator of the Centre for Democracy and Development, a charity that promotes sustainable development and democracy in West Africa; assistant manager and adviser for AML, a charity aiming to educate and assist African immigrants in Spain, and consultant for several organisations working with the African Diaspora in the UK.

Mr. Don Flynn, BSc (HONS) –Don Flynn became a Trustee of APA shortly after its creation. He is also the Director of the charity Migrants Rights Network (MRN). Don is a regular and sought-after speaker at conferences, seminars and lectures. He also chairs the UK Race and Equality Network (UKREN) and the Platform for International Cooperation on Undocumented Migrants (PICUM).

Mr. John Mensah, BA, MBA –John Mensah is the Chairman of APA. He was the first person to encourage Sylvie to pursue her vision and found APA. He is also the Director of the community consultancy Outreach Management Services. As director of Outreach Management Services, John has extensive knowledge of UK African and other ethnic groups, and several years of experience providing opportunities for them to learn through experience. He is also a trustee and consultant to W’Afrika, and an Ambassador for Third Sector Leadership Development Council in the UK.

Dr. Peter Olusina Alakija, MBBS, MRC Psyc –Peter Alakija is a Child and Adolescent Psychiatrist. He was co-opted as a Trustee of APA shortly after the creation of this organisation. Peter is also Chairman of Outreach Management Services and Pride Foundation. He has several years experience mentoring African, black and ethnic minority youths in the UK.

Dr. Ola Sholarin, MSc, PhD –Ola Sholarin became a Trustee of APA shortly after the creation of this charity in September 2008. He is also a Senior Lecturer at Westminster Business School. Ola is a widely published researcher, and has served as research contributor for several organisations, including the London Development Agency.

CHAIR'S REPORT

The 2008-2009 year marks the first anniversary for African Peoples Advocacy (APA). We celebrate this anniversary with excitement, delight and humility. We are excited and delighted at having managed to overcome the birth pangs of our organisation, and we are humbled by the magnitude of the task ahead.

There has been no shortage of deliberations and challenges since July 2008, when I advised Sylvie Aboa-Bradwell to consider creating a charity. She had been agonising for some time about the lack of a platform for members of African communities to engage on issues that are of relevance to them, especially in the UK. Knowing her courage and determination, I am sure she would have undertaken something to remedy this situation sooner or later. But I am delighted at having been the catalyst leading to the creation of APA a few months later.

After many discussions, we decided to call this charity African **Peoples** Advocacy, rather than African People's Advocacy. We did so as an acknowledgement of the diversity and nuances inherent in the concept of "African". We wanted to highlight the fact that all individuals, including those who feel "African" because human race began in Africa, are welcome to join our organisation, as long as they share and respect our vision.

The choice of our name has proved an excellent icebreaker, as most people who write to us consciously or unconsciously refer to us as African People's Advocacy. Thus, they provide us with a unique opportunity to outline our vision when writing back to them.

We envision a world where African communities are educated and engaged on issues that are of relevance to them. Such an ambitious vision is doubtlessly exciting, but also challenging. How do we know what issues are of relevance to African communities? How do we proceed to determine them? What proof do we have that focusing on certain issues and not others will benefit members of African communities? How do we know that we have the necessary experts to educate and engage African communities on these issues?

All the above and many other questions were raised by the Charity Commission from the moment we submitted our application for registration in October 2008, till the registration of APA as a charity in August

2009. It is a measure of our determination and conviction that we were deterred neither by these questions nor the amount of time it took us to achieve one of our main objectives for this year.

We are convinced, and we were able to convince the Charity Commission, that we have the capacity to effectively engage and educate African communities on issues that are of relevance to them because of our outstanding board members, our focus on research and consultation of members of African communities, our emphasis on the eradication of poverty, race inequality and other issues that disproportionately affect members of African communities, and our ability to work in partnership with like-minded organisations.

Our board members all have several years of experience in leadership positions in non-profit organisations and elsewhere, and throughout this year, they have shown how eager they are to channel their proven leadership skills, energy and ability to work with others towards the realisation of the vision of APA.

Our focus on consultation of members of African communities and research on issues that are of relevance to them has already ensured, and will carry on ensuring, that we undertake work that is needed and beneficial to members of African communities. Our first-hand experience of the devastating impact of poverty and race injustice and inequality on members of African communities, and our determination to eradicate these evils will continue to guide us and determine our work.

We are aware that this is a titanic task. This is why we have engaged and will continue to engage in collaborative work with organisations whose interests coincide with those of APA. Also, APA will seek to build loyalty and credibility amongst potential donors, members and other stakeholders through professionalism, integrity, credibility and visibility.

My sincere thanks go to the Trustees, volunteers and members who have benevolently and enthusiastically served the organisation at this development stage. A special thank you goes to Sylvie Aboa-Bradwell for providing APA with an office in her home, and for donating the necessary administration equipment.

John Mensah

Chair

AFRICAN PEOPLES ADVOCACY:

Engaging and educating African communities

The African Peoples Advocacy (APA) is a registered Charity founded in the United Kingdom in September 2008. Its objectives are:

1. The promotion of equality and diversity for the public benefit by:

- * promoting knowledge and mutual understanding between different racial groups and genders;
- * eliminating discrimination on the grounds of race or gender.

2. The advancement of education and relief of financial hardship amongst African communities worldwide.

The activities we plan to carry out to achieve our objectives include:

- * Programmes to raise awareness of issues confronting African communities
- * Programmes aimed at promoting knowledge of African communities and African cultures
- * Campaigns against racial and gender discrimination
- * Research on African communities and African countries
- * Education of African communities on issues that are of relevance to them
- * Programmes to promote education and development in African countries.

Our Mission

The mission of APA is to promote equality and diversity for the public benefit, advance education, and relieve financial hardship amongst African communities.

Our Vision:

APA envisions a world where African communities are educated, and engaged on race and gender equality, the fight against poverty, and other issues that are of relevance to them.

Our Values:

*Accountability

*Justice

*Professionalism

*Inclusiveness

*Integrity

* Transparency

Our charity registration number: 1131139

APA ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS

The activities and events of APA throughout the year September 2008 – September 2009 include:

I. APA STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2009 - 2012

The Strategic Development Plan of APA for the period 2009 – 2012 was generated through recurrent discussions and consultations with the APA Board of Trustees, volunteers, members and a wide variety of stakeholders from October 2008 to March 2009.

The Strategic Development Plan provides background information on APA. It also contains recommendations for the development of a proper institutional framework that would enable APA to translate its vision into reality, gives details of APA's planned projects, and includes a fundraising strategy as well as a projection of APA's budget for the period 2009-2012.

The main recommendations of the APA Strategic Development Plan for the period 2009 – 2012 are as follows:

- APA should seek to become a reference point for the promotion of equality and diversity, as well as the advancement of education and relief of financial hardship amongst African communities.
- To achieve such an ambitious objective, the organisation needs to be fully aware of its strengths and weaknesses; develop a proper institutional framework, and establish collaborative links with institutions whose interests and agenda cohere with those of APA.
- In this development stage, APA should seek to build on its leadership's strengths and core competencies. Thus, the organisation should only engage in projects where it has institutional skills and knowledge such as research on African communities and African countries; programmes aimed at raising awareness of issues confronting African communities and promotion of African cultures.
- And while seeking to secure the funding necessary to operate, APA should adopt and respect a clear, principled fundraising policy.

II. CIVIC ENGAGEMENT AMONGST UK AFRICAN COMMUNITIES SURVEY

In accordance with our strategic decision to consult members of African communities to ensure that our work tackles issues that are of relevance to them, the African Peoples Advocacy carried out a groundbreaking survey between October and December 2008, with the intention of gauging the levels of civic engagement amongst UK African communities.

In spite of huge financial and manpower constraints, the African Peoples Advocacy conducted a survey of 300 individuals. The survey was random and stratified in line with the overall population pattern of the African Communities in the United Kingdom.

The main conclusions drawn from this research, whose report was completed in June 2009, are as follows:

- 1) There is an overwhelming need for a work aimed at increasing the levels of civic engagement, in particular electoral participation, amongst UK African communities. The survey shows that many people are not engaged; many more would like to become involved in the UK civic life, and many do not vote, even those who claim to be engaged.
- 2) There is clearly a need and opportunity for an African-led initiative to tackle the problem of lack of civic engagement amongst UK African communities.
- 3) The African Peoples Advocacy has shown leadership, capacity, vision as well as determination in carrying out this groundbreaking research, despite limited human and financial resources. The survey was conducted by committed volunteers, and all the costs, including transport, were covered by donations from APA Trustees.
- 4) With appropriate means, our organisation could undertake a programme that will promote civic education and social responsibilities amongst UK African communities and help foster social cohesion amongst various ethnic groups in the United Kingdom.

III. MEMORIAL OF DR. TAJUDEEN ABDUL-RAHEEM

The African Peoples Advocacy participated in the organisation, co-ordination and advertising of a memorial to celebrate the life and legacy of the renowned Pan-Africanist, **Dr. Tajudeen Abdul-Raheem**, which was held in London on 5th July 2009.

The memorial was jointly organised, in the spirit of Pan-Africanism, by Friends of Tajudeen, including his widow Mounira Chaieb, Justice Africa, African Peoples Advocacy, Centre for Democracy and Development, the Pan African Development Education and Advocacy Programme, the Royal African Society, and Pambazuka News. It was supported by many other organisations, including AFRUCA, Africa Centre and Akina Mama wa Afrika.

The day comprised a number of invited speakers, performance poetry, traditional African music and an opportunity for friends and colleagues to pay short personal tributes to Dr Tajudeen Abdul-Raheem.

The below anthem written by the APA Founder was published in several media, including Pambazuka News.

We Are Proudly Perched on a Rare African Baobab

We are proudly perched on a rare African baobab. Charisma, vivacity and integrity spout from him like water from the Mosi-oo-Tunya. His unforgettable presence, wisdom and brilliance constantly guide us through life.

We are proudly perched on a rare African baobab. His majestic tangle of branches shelters us from self-doubt, and spurs us to fight for freedom, human rights and justice.

We are proudly perched on a rare African baobab. His two beautiful daughters are far from being his only fruits. From his robust branches dangle millions for whom he is an everlasting source of knowledge and inspiration.

We are proudly perched on a rare African baobab. From his imposing trunk ooze an infinite love for Africa and a passionate belief in its peoples that fill us with strength and courage on all occasions.

We are proudly perched on a rare African baobab. From his mighty Pan-African roots we draw the energy and determination to heed his advice - organise rather than agonise-, and constantly shout like him, "Nothing for us without us!"

Sylvie Aboa-Bradwell

25th May 2009

IV. APA AS A PLATFORM FOR MEMBERS OF AFRICAN COMMUNITIES

Throughout this year, APA has constantly fulfilled its flagship function of providing a platform for members of African communities to play an active role in society, raise awareness of challenges confronting them,



become engaged on issues that are of relevance to them, and celebrate their achievements.

One of these occasions was the **Africa Night**, organised in London on 14th August 2009 by APA in collaboration with several African-led organisations, including the Centre for Democracy and Development.

The aim of this event was to highlight and celebrate the achievements of members of UK African communities. The African Peoples Advocacy was able to secure the presence of the architect of Ghanaian origin, **Elsie Owusu OBE**, as keynote speaker.

Keynote speech: Elsie Owusu OBE

Other members of UK African communities whose achievements were acknowledged included **Mr. John Mensah**, Chairman of APA, and **Dr. Ola Sholarin**, Trustee of APA.



Intervention: Dr. Ola Sholarin



Addressing guests: Mr. John Mensah

APA also managed to raise awareness of issues related to African communities, and provide a platform for voices of members of African communities to be heard.



For instance, the APA Founder and Trustee, **Ms. Sylvie Aboa-Bradwell**, expressed the concerns of members of UK African communities about the Draft Immigration and Citizenship Bill when she gave **oral evidence to the Home Affairs Select Committee** on 11th November 2008.

Making a point: Sylvie Aboa-Bradwell at a debate with BBC's Stephen Sackur



Ms. Sylvie Aboa-Bradwell also spoke on several occasions about the need for African countries to become more democratic. This will enable African citizens to scrutinise the use of resources by their leaders, benefit from their wealth and thus, reduce poverty.

These included a debate on democracy and development, chaired by the **BBC journalist Stephen Sackur**, and the presentation "The Democratic Challenge in West Africa," at an event hosted by the Orpington Branch of the **Women's International League for Peace and Freedom** on 27th January 2009.

Presentation: Sylvie Aboa-Bradwell

FUNDRAISING

Our main aim this year was to provide the organisation with a framework that would maximise our accountability. Thus, we took the strategic decision not to start submitting grant applications until the registration of APA as a charity.

As this did not happen until August 2009, all our expenses were covered by donations from APA Trustees. All our income this year (£385) was used to cover the costs of the Civic Engagement amongst UK African Communities survey (£250); purchase the domain apadvocacy.org (£20) and pay for the design and construction of the website of APA by **Mr. Jonathan Lunn** (£115).

As we prepare to start fundraising from external organisations following the registration of APA as a charity, **we are determined to follow our fundraising policy outlined in our Strategic Development Plan for 2009-2010**, whose recommendations include:

- The underlying principle of APA's fundraising strategy is that fundraising activities should be consistent with APA's vision and goals without compromising, distorting or subverting the organisation's autonomy, independence, identity, integrity and values in the process.
- In developing funding proposals, APA will take into consideration our capacity to implement the project being proposed and the matching resources we have to offer.
- APA will seek to develop relationships and partnerships with its major supporters by striving towards an understanding of each other's work and values. Funders will be considered as important stakeholders in the organisation's work, and will be regularly kept abreast of developments and trends in the organisation.
- APA will not knowingly seek funding from sources that it believes might compromise the integrity of the organisation.

APA VOLUNTEERS AND MEMBERS

We were extremely fortunate to secure and maintain the support of talented volunteers. Their professionalism and dedication helped us enormously throughout the year. These volunteers are:

Mr. Tom Pollard, M.A: Tom served as an unpaid intern at APA from September 2008 to March 2009, and still works occasionally as a volunteer for us. He contributed enormously towards the research and report of the Civic Engagement amongst UK African Communities survey.

Mr. Arinze Ngube, B.A: Arinze served as an unpaid intern at APA from October to December 2008, and conducted most of the interviews of the Civic Engagement amongst UK African Communities survey.

Ms. Nardos Hagos, MA: Nardos worked as a volunteer for APA from October 2008 to February 2009, and helped us with administration and research work.

Mr. Steven Jovic, MA: Steven worked as a volunteer for APA from June to August 2009, and helped us with research work.



APA team: from left to right, Tom Pollard, Sylvie Aboa-Bradwell and Steven Jovic at the Africa Night

Ms. Aboa-Bradwell had overall responsibility for the day-to-day management of APA on an unpaid, voluntary basis. Her duties included the implementation of the strategic goals and objectives of APA, and the provision of direction and leadership towards the achievement of the organisation's mission, vision and strategy, as well as its annual goals and objectives.

Though the Trustees of APA remained the most dedicated members of the organisation, we were thrilled that dozens of individuals, mainly based in the UK, became members of our organisation. Their feedback and constructive observations have proved extremely useful towards the consolidation and improvement of our work.

Membership of APA was and will remain free and, in accordance with the APA Constitution, open to African individuals, groups and organisations working in the United Kingdom, as well as other groups or individuals who support the goals and principles of APA.

CONTACT DETAILS

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