



# **AFRICAN PEOPLES ADVOCACY (APA)**

## **ANNUAL REPORT**

**SEPTEMBER 2009 – SEPTEMBER 2010**

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

---

APA Board of Trustees – September 2009 - September 2010.....	2
Chair’s Report.....	3
Executive Director’s Report.....	4
APA: “Engaging and Educating African Communities”.....	6
APA Projects and Activities.....	8
• Afro-Beat Isolation.....	8
• End the Immigration Detention of Children and No to DNA Database Discrimination Campaigns.....	12
• African Women Writing Resistance.....	15
• APA Website and Newsletter.....	18
APA Staff, Volunteers and Members.....	19
Income and Expenditure Statement for Financial Year Ended 31 <sup>st</sup> March 2010.....	21
Note on Income and Expenditure Statement and Appendix.....	22
Contact Details.....	23

## APA BOARD OF TRUSTEES – 2009/2010

**Ms. Betty Okot, MSc** –Betty Okot became Chairperson of APA in December 2009. She is an experienced Research and Policy Officer who has worked with Oxford University, the Royal African Society, Birkbeck College and Keele University, amongst many other institutions.

**Mr. Don Flynn, BSc (HONS)** –Don Flynn has been a Trustee of APA since September 2008, and became its Executive Secretary in December 2009. He is also the Director of the charity Migrants Rights Network, and Chair of the UK Race and Equality Network.

**Ms. Sylvie Aboa-Bradwell, MA, MPhil** –Before founding APA in September 2008, Sylvie Aboa-Bradwell worked as UK Co-ordinator of the Centre for Democracy and Development, and Assistant Manager for AMI in Spain. She stepped down as a Trustee of APA in March 2010, and has been working as its unpaid Executive Director since.

**Mr. John Mensah, BA, MBA** –John Mensah was the Chairman of APA from its creation till December 2009, when he resigned as an APA Trustee. He has continued to support APA as a Member, while also working as Director of the community consultancy Outreach Management Services.

**Dr. Peter Olusina Alakija, MBBS, MRC Psyc** –Peter Alakija is a Child and Adolescent Psychiatrist and a Trustee of APA since September 2008. Peter is also Chairman of Pride Foundation.

**Dr. Ola Sholarin, MSc, PhD** –Ola Sholarin has been a Trustee of APA since September 2008, and became the APA Treasurer in December 2009. He is also a Senior Lecturer at Westminster Business School.

**Ms. Zara Dada, MA** –Zara Dada became a Trustee of APA in December 2009. She has first-hand and in-depth knowledge of UK African Muslims, and many years' experience working with and advocating for UK Black and Ethnic Minority groups.

## CHAIR'S REPORT

Looking back on 2009 – 2010, I am very proud of the efforts and achievements of the Trustees, Staff, Volunteers, Members, Partners and Supporters of APA. This is barely our second year; yet we already have an impressive track record as a platform for the promotion of equality and diversity, as well as the education and engagement of African communities on issues that are of relevance to them.

During this year, we were able to foster knowledge of African culture and help people in Gillingham, Chatham, Rochester and other Medway areas overcome loneliness through our Afro-Beat Isolation project, thanks to a grant given to us by Big Lottery Fund through its Awards for All Programme. We also managed to establish APA as a reference point for the elimination of racial discrimination thanks to the success of our No to DNA Database Discrimination and End the Immigration Detention of Children in the UK campaigns. In addition, we successfully collaborated with like-minded partners, such as the Royal African Society and Pambazuka, to generate awareness of gender discrimination and other challenges currently facing women in Africa. We did so by proposing, organising, co-ordinating and advertising the public launch of the anthology African Women Writing Resistance, in which these issues feature prominently.

The aforementioned achievements are even more impressive when we highlight the fact that the creation of APA coincided with the ongoing economic downturn. As we endeavour to consolidate and expand our work, we are confident that having strived under these circumstances, we can only go from strength to strength.

Our heartfelt thanks go to Sylvie Aboa-Bradwell. Though she formally stepped down as a Trustee to work as unpaid Executive Director in March 2010, she had been fulfilling this role since the creation of APA. I would also like to thank our Members, Volunteers, Donors, Trustees, Partners, and the many individuals who have supported us throughout this year.

**Betty Okot**  
**Chair**

# EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

The following headline work streams provide an overview of the work undertaken at African Peoples Advocacy (APA) during the year 2009 – 2010. Further details are provided in the specific project and activity pages of the annual report. For maximum clarity, the work streams have been categorised under the relevant strategic aims of APA as follows:

## 1. Promoting Knowledge and Mutual Understanding between Different Racial Groups:

The **Afro-Beat Isolation project**, which APA began to implement in December 2009 in Medway, Kent, falls within this strategic aim of our organisation. We are extremely grateful to **Big Lottery Fund** for supporting this project. As detailed later, its success and positive outcomes have exceeded all our expectations. Suffice to say that **we were congratulated by Prime Minister Gordon Brown** for this project's work.

## 2. Eliminating Discrimination on the Grounds of Race:

The first project undertaken under this aim was the **No to DNA Database Discrimination campaign**, launched in August 2009, to demand the removal of all innocent people from the national database. The second was the **Campaign to End the Immigration Detention of Children in the UK**. We launched this project in October 2009, following the case of the 10-year-old Nigerian girl **Adeoti Ogunsola**, who was in immigration detention against medical advice, and became so distressed that she attempted suicide.

We secured the support of prominent policy and decision-makers including **Lord Nigel Jones of Cheltenham, Keith Vaz MP, Chair of the Home Affairs Select Committee, and Rehman Chishti MP,**

who kindly brought our campaigns to the attention of the Home Secretary, Theresa May MP, and the Minister for Immigration, Damian Green MP.

### 3. Advancing Education and Eliminating Gender Discrimination:

Under these strategic aims, we organised, in collaboration with the Royal African Society and Pambazuka Press, the launch of **African Women Writing Resistance** in September 2010. This is the first trans-national anthology to focus on women's strategies of resistance to the challenges they face in Africa. I have the honour of being one of the contributors alongside prominent African women such as **Wangari Maathai**.

My sincere thanks are extended to the APA Trustees, Volunteers, Members, Funders and Partners, who have all played key roles in supporting the work of APA throughout 2009 – 2010.

**Sylvie Aboa-Bradwell**  
Executive Director

## 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 in order to achieve the above objectives and strategic aims 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 PROJECTS AND ACTIVITIES

The projects and activities of APA throughout the year September 2009 – September 2010 include:

### I. AFRO-BEAT ISOLATION PROJECT

We developed this project in accordance with our strategic aim to promote diversity by fostering good relationships, knowledge and mutual understanding between different racial groups. The main aim of Afro-Beat Isolation is to encourage lonely people to attend sessions of African culture as a way of reducing isolation and meeting new people.

Thanks to a **grant of £8,500** given to us in early December 2009 by **Big Lottery Fund** through its Awards for All Programme, we were able to start implementing this project in the area of Medway, Kent. We advertised the news of the grant and the forthcoming start of the project on our website; we also sent press releases to local media including BBC South East, BBC Radio Kent, Kent Messenger, Medway Messenger, and Kent TV. We also printed hundreds of leaflets which we left in many places including local churches, community centres, libraries and the Medway Council. In addition, we met with the leaders of several groups and organisations to enlist their support for our project.

We launched this project at the 44TWO Social Club in Gillingham, Kent, on 11<sup>th</sup> February 2010. The **Minister and MP for Gillingham and Rainham, Paul Clark**, gave the keynote speech, and commended us “for promoting community cohesion in Gillingham and other areas of Medway through this project”.

There were firebrand performances by **Kanko Arts**. In addition to the Minister, other high profile speakers included **Ms. Jocelyne Ngassa**, CEO of Cameroon Forum, Goldsmiths’ **Professor Tim Valentine**, and the Life Coach and Lecturer **Ms. Ngozi Keri**. They all encouraged attendees (42 in total) and all interested Medway people to participate in this project.

The news of the launch featured in several media, including Medway Messenger ([http://www.medwaymessenger.co.uk/medway\\_messenger/news/2010/february/24/project\\_to\\_help\\_you\\_learn\\_about.aspx](http://www.medwaymessenger.co.uk/medway_messenger/news/2010/february/24/project_to_help_you_learn_about.aspx)) and Nubia Magazine (March / April 2010 issue).

APA hosted the first of the planned four series of free African culture sessions in the Medway areas from April to May 2010 in **Gillingham**. The second series took place in **Chatham** in July, and the third series, which we hosted in **Rochester**, ended in August. We are finalising preparations for the start of the last series of African culture sessions. We will be hosting them in **Gillingham** throughout October, to coincide with the Black History Month.

The lessons have, so far, proved to be a major success: given that no other organisation had ever carried out such activities in either Gillingham or other Medway areas, we thought we would be lucky to get an average of 18 participants. But, to our surprise and delight, **the average number of participants has been slightly above 30.**

The first series of sessions took place twice per week, with sessions lasting 2 hours. However, following feedback from participants, who came from a wide variety of ethnic and social backgrounds, we decided to host only 1 session of 3 to 4 hours per week. Attendees had a unique opportunity to meet new people, and received free first-class lessons in topics such as African History, African Story Telling, African Languages, African Peoples and African Philosophy.



*Dr. Ama Biney (standing right, with a white coat) with participants.*

The African History lessons, delivered by **Dr. Ama Biney**, who has 15 years of lecturing experience in the areas of African and Caribbean History at Oxford University, have proven to be particularly popular. The African Story Telling sessions, given by the Cameroonian-born writer **Susan Akono**, and

the African Philosophy lessons, delivered by **Ms. Sylvie Aboa-Bradwell**, Director of APA, have also received very positive feedback.

Feedback received from the 96 people who have so far attended our African culture sessions reveals that they have benefited enormously: many have expressed their satisfaction because they have managed to reduce their isolation by making new friends; others have become more active by volunteering for APA, many others have discovered African culture, and deepened their understanding of African communities. The latter demonstrates that there have been wider benefits, including strengthening of social cohesion and establishing better relationships between African and other UK communities.



The benefits for our organisation so far have exceeded all our expectations: we received an invitation from, and were **congratulated by the British Prime Minister Gordon Brown** for “promoting community cohesion in Medway” through this project when he visited several Medway Towns in April 2010.

*APA Director with Paul Clark MP, Prime Minister Gordon Brown, Sara Brown, and 2 assistants of Paul Clark*

In addition, we have raised the profile of our organisation and substantially increased interest in our work throughout Medway. For instance, we have been invited to talk about our work to several groups, including the **Medway Multiple Sclerosis (MS) Society** in July 2010. We have increased the **number of volunteers, from 4 last year to over 10 this year.**

Thanks to the Afro-Beat Isolation, we have been acknowledged by local authorities and communities as one of the organisations serving Medway communities with professionalism and dedication. For instance, we were invited by the **Medway Council** to participate in the **Medway Independence Fair**, which took place on **17<sup>th</sup> March 2010** at the King Charles Hotel in Gillingham.

Participation in the Medway Independence Fair gave APA an opportunity to advertise the Afro-Beat Isolation project, and talk about our organisation and work to the high profile guests who attended the event. These included the **Disability Minister Jonathan Shaw MP**.



## II. END THE IMMIGRATION DETENTION OF CHILDREN AND NO TO DNA DATABASE DISCRIMINATION CAMPAIGNS

In accordance with our strategic aim to promote equality and diversity by undertaking anti-racial discrimination campaigns, APA launched two campaigns this year. The first was **No to DNA Database Discrimination**, which we started in September 2009.

Following the case of **Damian Green MP**, the then shadow Immigration Minister, who had his DNA profile removed from the national database after a few weeks in August 2009, our organisation launched the **No to DNA Database Discrimination (No 2 DNAD) campaign** to demand the removal of all innocent people from the national database. One in four black people are on the DNA database in the UK, as opposed to one in twenty white people.

We wrote to several policy and decision-makers, to raise awareness of our concerns, and enlist their support for the No 2 DNAD campaign. We were delighted to receive the backing of **Lord Jones of Cheltenham**, who highlighted our concerns at the House of Lords in October 2009. Details of his questions are available online on the below link:

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/ld200809/minutes/091019/ldordpap.htm>

The second campaign launched by APA was **End the Immigration of Children in the UK**. We began this campaign in October 2009 following the case of **Adeoti Ogunsola**. Adeoti, a 10-year-old Nigerian girl placed in immigration detention for a second time against advice of medical experts, was found trying to hang herself at Tinsley House immigration removal centre near Gatwick on Sunday 18<sup>th</sup> October 2009.

APA collaborated with like-minded organisations including **Migrants Rights Network** and **AFRUCA** (Africans Unite Against Child Abuse) to condemn the mistreatment of Adeoti, and organise a meeting

at the Houses of Parliament to enable members of African communities to express their support for Adeoti, as well as demand the end of the immigration detention of children.

We were able to secure the support of **Keith Vaz MP**, Chairman of the Home Affairs Select Committee, who agreed to host us at the House of Commons in January 2010. Unfortunately, following the case of Umar Farouk Abdulmutallab, the “Christmas Day Bomber” in the US, and the subsequent international anti-terror meetings, Keith Vaz’s schedule became too busy. Furthermore, by November 2009, Adeoti and her mother had already been granted leave to remain in the UK, albeit temporarily.

After carrying out further research on this issue, we discovered that the overwhelming majority of children detained for immigration purposes in the UK were of African origin. APA decided to continue the campaign to end the immigration detention of all children. To maximize our chances of success, we joined the **OutCry! campaign**, led by **the Children's Society and Bail for Immigration Detainees**, in February 2010. We were thrilled at the agreed policy of the new coalition Government, published on 12<sup>th</sup> May 2010, which included commitments to "**end the detention of children for immigration purposes**" and adopt "**the protections of the Scottish model for the DNA database**". The adoption of the Scottish model for the DNA database means that except in very specific, special cases, all innocent people will have their profile removed from the database.

We wrote to **Rehman Chishti, new MP for Gillingham and Rainham**, in May 2010, to thank and congratulate the new Government for taking these overdue steps towards a more humane treatment of vulnerable children, and the preservation of innocent people’s rights and privacy. We did also express our desire to know exactly how the planned changes would be implemented, and how long it would take for them to become effective.

Rehman Chishti forwarded our letter to the **Home Secretary, Theresa May**. **Damian Green MP**, the Minister for Immigration, replied on behalf of Theresa May in June. He kindly gave details of the Review underway to find alternatives to the detention of children, and explained that the Home

Office was seeking Parliamentary time to make changes to legislation to enable the move to the Scottish model of DNA retention.

APA is currently collaborating with the **Association for Visitors to Immigration Detainees**, and many other groups to co-ordinate and support the **Parliamentary Meeting on Detention Reform**, to be hosted by **Julian Huppert MP** at the House of Commons on **8<sup>th</sup> November 2010**.

### III. AFRICAN WOMEN WRITING RESISTANCE

After many months of discussions, preparations and co-ordination, led by APA, we were able to organise the launch of the anthology **African Women Writing Resistance: Contemporary Voices** on 14<sup>th</sup> September 2010 at the School of Oriental and African Studies, in collaboration with **Royal African Society** and **Pambazuka**. Our decision to promote and disseminate African Women Writing Resistance (AWWR), and foster discussions revolving around this anthology, was in line with our strategic aims to advance education and eliminate gender discrimination.

The book, published by Pambazuka, is a collection of essays, poems, folktales, testimonies, interviews and short stories which deal with the methods African women use to resist issues stemming from social and economic oppression in contemporary Africa, as well as in the Diaspora. These issues range from intertribal and interethnic conflict to female circumcision, polygamy, domestic abuse, exile and life under Sharia Law.

Contributors to this anthology include internationally recognised authors and activists such as **Wangari Maathai** and **Nawal El Saadawi**, as well as a host of vibrant new voices from all over the African continent and from the African Diaspora, amongst them the **APA Director, Sylvie Aboa-Bradwell**.

**Dr. Margaret Busby OBE** chaired the 14<sup>th</sup> September event and began by introducing the four panel members to the sixty-strong audience.

The first speaker was **Anne Serafin**, a teacher of African literature in the US who has led the African Literature's Study Group at the Newton Free Library since 1996 and who has published numerous reviews and essays on African literature. She co-edited AWWR and explained how 5 years ago the vision for a book was born. She then highlighted the thematic divisions of this anthology as follows:

- (1) Engaging with Tradition;
- (2) Speaking out: Young Women on Sexuality;
- (3) Challenging the Institution of Marriage;
- (4) Survival: Female Health Issues;
- (5) Taking a Stand: Women as Activists against Environmental Damage, War and Conflict;
- (6) Writing from a Different Place: Perspectives from the Diaspora and Exile;
- (7) Transcription of a Discussion Called 'We Are Our Grandmother's Dreams: African Women Envision the Future'.

Second speaker was **Ellen Banda-Aaku**, a Zambian national, now living in the UK who won the Women Writer's Prize For Africa in 2004 and whose first novel *Patchwork* has just won the 2010 Penguin Inaugural Prize for African Writing. She read a section from the short story that she submitted to the anthology. Her story is about women who are unable to have children and the social implication of such issues in her native Zambia.

Third speaker was **Sylvie Aboa-Bradwell** (pen-name Susan Akono), another contributor to the anthology. The APA Director spoke about the trials and tribulations facing African, especially female African, writers. She described her own story of resistance, of how she persisted in trying to get published when she moved to Madrid, in the face of linguistic and cultural barriers and Spanish racism against the first generation of African immigrants. She went on to describe her current work with NGOs, and highlighted her efforts to transform APA into a reference point for the education and engagement of African communities.

Fourth speaker, novelist and documentary film-maker **Yaba Badoe** spoke briefly about her novel *True Murder*. She echoed the APA Director's point about the need for a writer to find their own space, both socially and mentally, from which great, individual writing can emerge.

Margaret Busby then opened up the floor to questions.

The most controversial question asked was whether the panel feared that African feminist writers were attempting to pander to the rhetoric of Western feminists of the 1960s and 70s, to which Sylvie answered that any similarities were as a result of the universal nature of female oppression and the common emotional reactions that are stimulated by such oppression. Similar narratives and writing styles thus emerge as a human, heartfelt resistance to oppression, whether in the East or the West, and are not indicative of Africans aligning themselves to a discourse established by white feminists in the West.

One audience member went on to state that female resistance has been a feature of African societies dating back to pre-colonial times and is deeply embedded in many African cultures. It is not an invention of Westerners which African women are adopting for themselves.

Another question came from a woman who works with Diaspora groups. She asked whether the editors had noticed any significant difference in the texts they received, between the methods of resistance adopted by the African Diaspora and Africans living in Africa. Anne Serafin said that the issue had not been raised at meetings but the question was an important one, and worthy of further investigation.

The book launch was rounded off with a reception.

## IV. APA WEBSITE AND NEWSLETTER

In view of our increasingly high profile, our success in transforming APA into a reference point for the education and engagement of African communities, our plans to carry out and disseminate research on African issues, and our desire to listen and give a platform to African communities' voices, we took the decision to redesign the APA website and newsletter in June 2010.

The old website and newsletter proved to be very cumbersome, old-fashioned, difficult to update, and hardly reader/ user-friendly. The registration of the domain **apadvocacy.org** is due to expire on 30<sup>th</sup> October 2010. It was decided that APA would have it hosted and managed by a new IT service provider, who would provide APA with more attractive, modern and, above all, interactive website and newsletter.

The deadline for the new website and newsletter to be fully operational is **30<sup>th</sup> November 2010**. In the meantime, the details of the past work of APA would be accessible through the link <http://apa.periapt.co.uk>

## APA STAFF, VOLUNTEERS AND MEMBERS

**Ms. Aboa-Bradwell** had overall responsibility for the day-to-day management of APA as an unpaid Executive Director. Her duties included the implementation of the strategic goals and objectives of the organisation. Following permission from the Big Lottery Fund in April 2010, the APA Trustees agreed to pay her £3,000 between April and November 2010 for co-ordinating the Afro-Beat Isolation project.

We are very grateful to the following individuals for helping APA as Research and Administration Volunteers:

- **Ms. Sophie Toke, BA:** March 2010 –present
- **Mr. Tom Pollard, MA:** April 2010 –Present
- **Mr. Gerald Ebo Bruce-Baiden, MBA:** August 2010 –present
- **Ms. Sheela Wilson-Waite, BA:** September 2010 –present
- **Mr. Amarh Sheriff, MPhil:** September 2010 –present
- **Mr. Victor Diran, BA:** October 2009 –March 2010
- **Ms. Sarah Darby, BA:** January –February 2010
- **Ms. Carole Fuentes Essola:** February –April 2010
- **Ms. Betelhem Ketsela, MA:** January –June 2010
- **Mr. Ayo Johnson, MA:** February –April 2010
- **Ms. Efe Nani, MA:** January –July 2010

Though the Trustees of APA remained the most dedicated members of the organisation, we were thrilled that once more, 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.

## African Peoples Advocacy

### Income and expenditure statement for the financial year 1st April 2009 to 31st March 2010

---

<u>INCOME</u>	£	£
Individual Donations	466	
Big Lottery Fund	8500	
Total Income		<u>8966</u>
<u>EXPENDITURE</u>		
<u>Afro-Beat Isolation Expenses</u>		
Venue Hire	298	
Equipment Hire	300	
Part time Project Coordinator	-	
Volunteer Expenses	1012	
Participant Expenses	425	
Publicity Expenses	323	
Total Afro-Beat Isolation expenses		<u>2358</u>
Insurance **	97	
<b>Total Expenditure</b>		<u>2455</u>
<b>Net Incoming Resources</b>		<u>6511</u>
Transfer to Savings account		<u>5000</u>
<b>Balance per Current account</b>		<u>1511</u>
<b>Balance per savings account</b>		<u>5000</u>

\*\* Insurance expenses are all covered by Individual donations



## CONTACT DETAILS

Email: [info@apadvocacy.net](mailto:info@apadvocacy.net)

Telephone: (+44) (0) 1634 5736 19