SPOTLIGHT ON
AFRUCA

AFRUCA IN 2012

First Edition 2013
Dear Supporters,

Welcome to our first Newsletter of the year 2013. This edition highlights AFRUCA’S work and achievements in the previous year.

One of our main achievements before the close of 2012 was the successful seminar held at the House of Commons to discuss the problem of the over-representation of African children in the child protection system. This event brought together various stakeholders within the African community. We officially launched the AFRUCA Manual on Child Protection for African Parents in the UK at this event.

In 2012, AFRUCA welcomed the publication of the UK National Action Plan to tackle child abuse linked to faith or belief. AFRUCA will continue to work to protect children at risk of being branded as witches or as possessed by evil spirits. Here, we feature our response to the publication of the National Action Plan.

In this edition we also highlight our work with African children and families at our Centre in Manchester. Additionally, in 2012 we commenced a new project with London Borough of Newham to safeguard victims of abuse linked to witchcraft branding. Here, we have outlined the objectives of what is now known as the “Dove Project” and its expected outcomes.

AFRUCA’s ongoing work on the trafficking of African children from Africa to the UK continued to grow during the course of the year. Our Survivors’ Corner features phase two of the innovative theatre for development project which commenced at the beginning of January 2013. Do watch out for the final drama performance by the young people in June 2013.

Finally, we would like to say a huge thank you to all our funders, trustees, staff and supporters for supporting our work in 2012. Your commitment to improving the lives of African children in the UK has been extremely valuable.

Hope you enjoy reading!
Call for Action to Tackle Over-Representation of African Children in the Child Protection System.

Participants at an AFRUCA seminar held at the House of Commons on 23rd October 2012 called on the Government to act to address the over-representation of African children and families in the child protection system.

The AFRUCA event was hosted by former Children’s Minister Meg Hillier MP and attracted over 100 members of the African community in London who were unanimous in lamenting the huge devastation the removal of children was having on families and the African community. Participants were concerned about the long-term impact on society at large as a result of children being removed from their families. A key issue that arose was the link between looked-after children and young Africans involved in crime and criminality – especially gangs and knife crimes.

AFRUCA’s new Manual on Child Protection for African Parents in the UK was launched at this event. Although, it does not contain information on Scottish legislation, efforts are currently being made to explore the production of a Scottish version.

Lisa Nandy MP, Shadow Children Minister who gave the keynote speech stated, “It is clear that more must be done to tackle the links between child abuse, the child protection system and the involvement of young Africans involved in crime and criminality”. She commended the work of AFRUCA in helping to raise awareness and educate parents who have to deal with child protection cases, and emphasised that AFRUCA’s new Manual on Child Protection for African Children in the UK will help keep children safe in their homes and out of care.

More must be done to tackle the links between child abuse, the child protection system and the involvement of young Africans involved in crime and criminality.

Meg Hillier MP, former Children’s Minister and event host asserted that “It is clear that parents want support on how to discipline their children without using physical force. AFRUCA’s guide is a useful tool for parents and plays an important role in opening the debate on the issues around physical abuse within some African families”. She emphasised that children deserve protection and the manual would help achieve this while also supporting parents.

Debbie Ariyo OBE, Director of AFRUCA also noted that this was a landmark event addressing a very sensitive issue in the African community and that parents who abuse children should not be allowed to go “scot-free”. However, she asserted that there was a need to imbibe a “carrot and stick” approach in dealing with child protection cases so children removed from families who have to return home can be free of abuse, live happily with their families and not have to return into the care system. She added that there should be more emphasis on prevention and early intervention programmes to deter child abuse and support families experiencing difficulties.
AFRUCA recently produced a bilingual step-by-step guide to help improve the knowledge and skills of African parents on child protection. The manual was officially launched at the House of Commons on 23rd October 2012.

The manual is a product of more than a decade of AFRUCA’s direct experiences working with African parents in the child protection system and the provision of training to help build the skills of parents in successfully bringing up their children, thereby removing the need for contact with statutory agencies and ultimately helping to reduce the number of African children entering the child protection system.

“What is done to children, they will do to society”
Karl Menninger

The manual is divided into 10 sections.

Section 1 provides an overview of AFRUCA’s work with African parents in the UK and explores their experiences of raising children in the country.

Section 2 looks at the legal and policy frameworks which serve as guidelines for the protection and safeguarding of children in the UK and how this affects African parents in raising their children.

Section 3 examines the roles and responsibilities of the key players in child safeguarding.

Section 4 looks at different stages of child development and how a lack of understanding of these stages can lead to children being abused including being branded as witches.

Section 5 examines the issue of leaving children at home alone and provides some safety tips for parents to consider.

Section 6 looks at the impact of the internet on children and how children can be protected online.

Section 7 examines the issue of discipline or physical punishment which is quite common among African families.

Section 8 explores how to manage behaviour and suggests various skills parents can successfully employ to do so.

Section 9 provides 20 ideas on being a great parent without resorting to physical punishment.

Section 10, the final section, lists additional resources for parents to get further information on parenting from.

This publication is available in both English and French

To order your copy at £4.99 each please contact: info@afruca.org or call: 02077042261
AFRUCA Welcomes National Action Plan to Tackle Abuse linked to Faith or Belief

In 2012, AFRUCA welcomed the publication of the UK National Action Plan to tackle child abuse linked to faith or belief. We were happy that the Government took this initial step to address the issue of branding children as witches or as possessed by evil spirits. AFRUCA will continue to work with partners in the statutory and voluntary sectors, with community organisations across the country as well as internationally to address this issue including campaigning for a change in legislation to protect vulnerable children. It is our firm belief that culture and religion should never be an excuse to abuse children. Based on this, our efforts to address this issue in different ways as part of the National Action Plan continued unabated.

AFRUCA Activities in this area included:
A pilot project in partnership with Newham Children and Young People’s Services (CYPS), and Newham Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS), to support children and families affected by abuse linked to belief in witchcraft or spirit possession. The aim is to ensure children and families who are victims of witchcraft abuse can access appropriate services so they can rebuild their lives psychologically and become fully integrated in the community. This project commenced in September 2012 and is funded by Trust for London.

Our National Training Programme for Practitioners helped to raise practitioners’ level of knowledge and confidence to enable them to engage effectively with families where there are concerns of abuse linked to branding children as witches or possessed by evil spirits.

Our Yorkshire and Greater Manchester programme worked with faith organisations to raise their knowledge and skills around child protection and safeguarding. It also helped to put in place necessary procedures to protect children who attend their services.

As an organisation in Special Consultative Status with the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), we used our position to raise this issue at the international level for the betterment of the welfare of African children.

AFRUCA continued to push for a change in legislation to address this terrible phenomenon in order to bring to account people who needlessly brand children as witches under the guise of culture and religion. They should be made to face the full force of the law for their abusive acts.

National Action Plan Executive Summary
This action plan was produced by the Government to help raise awareness of the issue of child abuse linked to faith or belief and to encourage people to take practical steps to prevent such abuse. It has been developed in partnership with members of the National Working Group on Child Abuse Linked to Faith or Belief including central government and local statutory partners, faith leaders, voluntary sector organisations and the Metropolitan Police Service.

The Action Plan sets out activities which are being led by the Working Group members, both at a local and national level. It looks at tackling abuse linked to faith or belief from the perspective of the child, parent, community, faith group members and child practitioners. It is organised into four themes: engaging communities; empowering practitioners; supporting victims and witnesses; and communicating key messages.

The plan identifies key problems and solutions under each of the 16 actions and includes a number of short case studies profiling some of the work already being undertaken to tackle this type of abuse. It highlights areas where more needs to be done by government, local agencies, voluntary organisations, faith and community sector partners to address this horrific form of abuse. The plan is owned collectively by the Working Group on Child Abuse Linked to Faith or Belief led by Government.
AFRUCA Centre for African Children and Families in Greater Manchester

The Centre has been co-ordinating and implementing projects and activities in the North of the country. It currently runs two faith based projects in Greater Manchester and Yorkshire.

In Greater Manchester, the first year of the two year project of Working with African faith organisations to safeguard African children has come near its completion. Started in January 2012, this project has managed to work at an in-depth level to help build the capacities of more than seven faith based and community organisations around child protection.

The second phase of the project started in March 2013 and identification of potential project partners and preliminary outreach work have already begun.

The Centre has also co-ordinated and implemented this same project in Yorkshire in areas such as Huddersfield, Leeds and Sheffield. The second year of the five year project has successfully been completed.

Generally, in 2012 the Centre supported a total number of fifteen faith groups in Greater Manchester and Yorkshire areas raising awareness of child protection issues to more than 671 African parents and 217 faith leaders and workers.

The popularity of the Centre continued to grow thanks to our sustained campaigning and networking across the region.

Consequently, we have been approached by people from different organisations including the police, children services, solicitors, voluntary sector organisations, and African parents for advice and information on a wide range of issues including cases of physical abuse, neglect, child trafficking, and witchcraft related abuse. The Centre has received referrals for family support work from all areas of Greater Manchester such as Rochdale, Manchester, and Salford including Stock-on-Trent, Leeds and Sheffield.

The Centre worked relentlessly to produce a Manual for African faith based organisations operating in the UK. The final version of the document will be published before the end of March 2013 and circulated widely.
Supporting Victims of Faith-Based Abuse
A project developed and jointly delivered by AFRUCA & London Borough of Newham.

There has been a rise in the number of reported cases involving children of African origin experiencing extreme forms of abuse following accusations of witchcraft or of being possessed by evil spirits. To be called a witch in the context of African communities in particular implies that the person is evil, responsible for wicked acts such as causing suffering and distress on other people, even death. Once a child has been labelled a witch, a catalogue of abusive actions follows in response to what people believe to be a way of countering evil. The most extreme abuse has included murder like in the cases of Victoria Climbie and Kristy Bamu in 2010.

While perpetrators of abuse are held to account for child abuse, there is no service in place to support children to deal with the traumatic experience of being falsely accused of being a witch. Equally, there is no support for families going through the traumatic experience of having children taken into care or living with children accused of being witches to ensure that there is a loving environment for the child in the home. There is a knowledge gap among professionals, in identifying children abused due to a belief that they are possessed by witchcraft and evil spirits.

To this end, AFRUCA, Newham Children and Young People Services as well as Newham Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) designed a service that attempts to meet the social, psychological and spiritual needs of the children who are victims of witchcraft abuse.

The project is led by AFRUCA but delivered in partnership with Newham Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) as well as Newham Children and Young People’s Services (NCYPS). This pilot project, which will be delivered in the London Borough of Newham, has two elements namely:

a) A Team Around the Child (TAC)
b) Outreach work to raise awareness of the problem of witchcraft branding and its devastating effect on children and families.

The TAC involves engaging with existing service providers via regular reflective sessions to assess progress and challenge practices, where appropriate, in the delivery of services which will meet the mental health, faith and social needs of the child. The team will also act as a resource that service providers can call on for advice in cases which may involve abuse linked to accusations of witchcraft and spirit possession.

The second element involves awareness raising by the AFRUCA Family Support and Outreach Worker (FSOW) among practitioners working with children in settings such as schools, youth and children centres, and health services. The aim is to raise the knowledge level of professionals, to empower them to detect and support child victims of faith based abuse. This element involves the FSOW running workshops/seminars, making presentations on the phenomenon of branding children as witches.

The project aims to achieve the following outcomes:

- Improved identification of cases involving abuse linked to a belief in spirit possession.
- Qualitative improvements in the child’s life. Some of the evidence of improvement in the quality of life will be the child’s involvement with statutory services. For example, the ending of a Child Protection Plan or the end of a period of being ‘looked after’ due to decreased risk.
- Improved school attendance by a child who previously had irregular attendance due to the traumatic experience of being branded a witch or possessed by evil spirits.
- Improved partnership working and professional knowledge of faith-based abuse issues.
- The development of a model for early identification and intervention to support victims linked to a belief in witchcraft or spirit possession.

Challenges

It will always be a challenge to ensure that the reintegration of a child in a family is done without jeopardising her/his safety. It will also be challenging to identify and find faith leaders who are genuinely motivated by the desire to help children and families and not to reinforce the fears of the child and family.
AFRUCA Rolls Out Regional Child Trafficking Awareness Campaign in London and South East of England.

The trafficking of African children in the UK has continued to be a growing problem in the country. Hence, we all need to join forces to protect and assist victims to access appropriate services whilst putting strategies in place to stop this crime that deprives countless victims of their freedom, dignity and human rights. According to the recent UK Human Trafficking Centre assessment report on trafficking, Nigeria, Morocco and the Democratic Republic of Congo represent the three prevalent African countries of origin for potential child victims of trafficking (SOCA, 2012).

We believe that community members have a major role to play in tackling the problem of child trafficking for various forms of child exploitation within the UK through early identification and signposting victims to appropriate services. The community members have a great role to play in tackling the problem of child trafficking

Consequently, AFRUCA rolled out a regional awareness campaign that seeks to educate African communities and faith groups in London and South East England about this issue in terms of understanding what trafficking is all about so that they are better empowered to identify and protect victims within their communities.

Some of the key learning outcomes included:

- Increased awareness of what child trafficking is, its impact on child victims and how it affects the African community.
- Increased knowledge of issues around trafficking for domestic servitude, sexual exploitation and other forms of exploitation.
- Increased knowledge of how to identify child victims of trafficking.
- Increased knowledge of how to respond appropriately when you have identified a child victim of trafficking.
- An awareness of AFRUCA’s support services for victim of trafficking.

This project is funded by: Comic Relief and The Esmee Fairbairn Foundation.

If you would like your organisation to be involved, please email AFRUCA at info@afruca.org for more details. We will be very happy to meet you and discuss how we can work together and empower the community we live in to help safeguard our children. You can also visit AFRUCA’s website www.afruca.org to learn more about child trafficking.

Help stop child-trafficking: Report suspected cases of child exploitation immediately
DRAMA PROJECT AND THEATRE FOR DEVELOPMENT

Young people who have been trafficked face extreme exploitation and abuse as they are held as domestic slaves, forced into prostitution or other illegal activities. The road to recovery begins from escaping the exploitation. But this is only the beginning; such survivors of trafficking need sensitive forms of support which is essential for complete recovery and progress. With this in mind, AFRUCA launched a Theatre for Development Project in 2011 to complement our menu of support for Survivors of Trafficking. This project is run in partnership with leading theatre practitioners.

The project offers an alternative to therapy through the medium of dance, drama and music as a creative means to address some of the psychological, emotional and socio-economic needs of the survivors of trafficking. Many African people are unfamiliar with the concept of therapy or counselling. Moreover, some therapists are not aware of the intricacies of trafficking in addition to not being aware of many of the cultural and religious needs of young Africans. Too often for the young people, their immigration issue is more of a priority rather than accessing mental health services. However, AFRUCA recognises that young people need to focus on addressing their mental well-being despite all the above difficulties.

Theatre has always played an important role in the cultural and social well-being of African people. It has not only served as a social platform but is also a popular art form and vehicle for passing on culture, information and tradition. Many of our young people, based on their origin, are very familiar with the use of drama and dance as part of day-to-day life in Africa. For this reason, this project focuses on drama and dance as a non-clinical, non-formal and non-intrusive alternative to therapy. It complements other forms of support that we provide to young victims/survivors of Trafficking at AFRUCA. The project and workshops this year will commence from January and will be held twice a month.

The workshops play an important role in learning and in helping participants develop new skills such as assertiveness, communication, problem solving, focusing, team working, voice projection, confidence building and planning. The young people are working towards a specific goal which is a production to be performed at an AFRUCA variety night in June 2013.

DO YOU KNOW ANY YOUNG PERSON WHO CAN BENEFIT FROM OUR SERVICES?

- Signposting and Referral
- One-to-One Support
- Survivors’ Forum
- Theatre for Development
- Expert Assessment and Report

To make a referral to AFRUCA
Please Call: 0207 704 2261
Or email: lola@afruca.org
Debbie Ariyo
Awarded OBE

Debbie Ariyo
At an AFRUCA event in HOC 18th April

Debbie Ariyo
At an AFRUCA Seminar in the HOC 23rd October

Participants at a training in London May 2012

Training at a church in Manchester February 2012

Delegates at a house of commons event

Delegates at a house of commons event
Debbie Ariyo CEO of AFRUCA awarded OBE for her work with children and families.

Inauguration of AFRUCA Council of Elders.

Opening of the Manchester Centre for Children and Families.

Awards: AFRUCA awarded Social Entrepreneur of the year 2012 by Black Business Initiative.

AFRUCA seminar in the House of Commons to discuss the over representation of African Children in the Child protection System hosted by Lisa Nandy MP and chaired by Meg Hillier MP 23rd October 2012.

House of Common and AFRUCA summit hosted by Chuka Umunna MP to end violent witchcraft abuse 18th April 2012.

New Project: AFRUCA and Newham Joint project to support victims of faith based abuse commenced in November 2012.

New Funders:

Training: we trained over 300 practitioners in 2012.

Community Engagement: we reached over 1000 people in the African community in 2012.

Policy / advocacy work:
1. Contribution to the National Action plan to tackle faith based abuse

New Publications:
1. Parents training manual (launched 23rd October 2012)
2. what is Physical Abuse?
**Upcoming Trainings/Events**

**London**

11/01/2013

Salford

Working with Black African Children and Families.

15/01/2013

Salford

Working with Black African Children and Families.

22/01/2013

In-House Training (Redbridge)

Safeguarding Children from Abuse linked to a belief in Spirit Possession

11/02/2013

In House Training (Newham)

Cultural Competence in Safeguarding.

07/03/2013

In House Training (Newham)

Witchcraft, Juju and Working with Faith to Safeguard African Children.

25/03/2013

In House Training (Newham)

Assessing the Needs of Children in the Context of Religion and Culture.

29/06/2013

Fundraising and Variety Night

Amnesty International

6-10pm

All Year Round Community Event

Safeguarding African Children Trafficked and Exploited in the UK.

**Manchester**

28/01/2013

In-House (Salford)

National Training

Witchcraft, Juju and Working with Faith to Safeguard African Children.

AFRUCA will be speaking at these events:

London borough of Enfield

20th March 2012

9:30 am - 3:30 pm

Conference Room Enfield Civic Centre

Our training events can be tailored to meet various organisations’ need.

To find out more about our training programmes please visit:


Or email: training@afruca.org
AFRUCA - A Big Thank You:

For supporting our work in tackling Witchcraft Abuse

For supporting our Anti-Child Trafficking Project

For supporting our work

For supporting our work with Faith Organisation to Safeguard Children in Yorkshire & Greater Manchester

For continued support of our programmes and events and a Big “Thank You” to our dedicated VOLUNTEERS
AFRUCA
Africans Unite Against Child Abuse

Head Office:
Unit 3D/F Leroy House
436 Essex Road
Islington, London N1 3QP

Tel: 0207 704 2261
Fax: 0207 704 2266

AFRUCA CENTRE FOR AFRICAN CHILDREN AND FAMILIES:
Unit 98-100
23 New Mount Street
Manchester M4 4DE

Tel: 0161 953 4712
Email: info@afruca.org

Support our Work
Donate Securely at: WWW.JUSTGIVING.COM/AFRUCA
You can also donate by texting: AFRU01+ the amount you wish to give to 70070 its free on all Networks.

WWW.AFRUCA.ORG

AFRUCA is a UK registered charity number 1093027 and a company limited by guarantee number 4306536.

AFRUCA promotes the Rights and Welfare of African Children in the UK and in Africa.