

# EMPOWERING WOMEN AND CHILDREN IN AFRICA— TO SUSTAIN HEALTH AND DEVELOPMENT



## WEZESHA LTD ANNUAL REPORT 2012

## Introduction:

This annual report covers the work of the organisation from its founding times to December 2012. Been the 1<sup>st</sup> annual general meeting the report gives analysis of the tremendous work and highlights achievements of this young organisation.

In 2007 Egide Dhala former Education Manager with Spirasi and Salome Mbugua CEO AkiDWA met in Brussels while attending a 3 days conference on poverty alleviation in Europe. These two representatives from Ireland had the opportunity to discuss the work they were doing for vulnerable migrants, especially women who struggled to integrate in the Irish society as a result of profound trauma from countries of origin. They thought that they could extend the skills, expertise, experience and resources they have developed in supporting and empowering migrants to their home countries, as the big majority of people who have suffered from abuse and persecution may not be able to move to safe places such as Ireland and would be condemned to live in the margin of the society.

In October 2008 Salome received a letter from Lucy, a young lady that she had worked with in Kenya back in early 1990, her email provoked the initial idea of supporting women and children in Africa, below is a section of her letter:

*"I am writing this mail because I just want you to know that the love you showed has gone a long way to make me the person I am today. Well, today am at the University of Nairobi, am glad am here there are so many openings in my life. I worked hard because you were always there at the back of my mind urging me to go for the best. There is one thing that I mostly want to thank you for. When you worked with us in the girl's project, the medical results showed I was HIV/AIDS positive and am quite sure you knew this. But you did not discriminate me even as other staff proceeded to do so openly even after you left. Thanks a lot. Although they expected me to dead along the way, much of the times I was side lined.*

*I would be honoured to work with you to improve the lives of other girls disadvantaged by life circumstances. Sometimes I look back and I don't believe it. Life has been one big challenge but I thank God am where I am".*

While Lucy letter touched many of the people that are involved with Wezesha, she did not only end up writing this letter. In 2009 Lucy volunteered to undertake research on sexual reproductive health and gender based violence in Kenya. Her research has greatly influenced and informed the work of Wezesha and the organisation overall mission and vision. Lucy research was conducted at a time when Kenya was recovering from the aftermath of the 2007 elections that left 1,500 people dead and more than 500,000 evicted from their homes after a disputed presidential election. Most affected were women and children. Her research included interviews with those that were affected: *"My daughter is a survivor of sexual abuse, she became pregnant and miscarried, we know who assaulted her, but she has lots hope that she will find justice"*. Women faced sexual and gender based violence on a vast scale, the wounds of which will last a long time. The Nairobi Women's Hospital Gender Violence Recovery Centre noted that altogether they attended to over 650 cases of GBV related to the post-election crisis.

Wezesha directors have been meeting since 2009 and Since 2010 Wezesha has been making direct contacts and links with groups and organisations in Africa, particularly in Kenya and DR Congo, to identify needs and areas where intervention can be made. It was therefore agreed that Kenya and D.R. Congo will be pilot project countries for Wezesha. D.R. Congo has the highest rate of violence and conflict and in particular rape on women in the world. Kenya is a host and hub for most of the

international bodies including UN that has their headquarter offices in Nairobi while they operate, provide services and support most African countries in particular those that are still affected by conflict and violence, such as Sudan and Somalia.

Wezesha main objective is to engage in promotion of health, advancement of education and relief of poverty for women and children and in particular women and children who are affected or are likely to be affected by violence and conflict in Africa.

In the last three years Wezesha has advanced its objective through **organisational development, awareness raising, networking and establishing partnership**, this report is a narrative of activities and work carried out by Wezesha that covers the three headings.

## 1. Organisational Development

Since 2009 Wezesha has engaged five volunteers, they have carried out research, designed programme and updated data on situation of women and in particular on economic empowerment of women, sexual and gender based violence on women in Kenya and D.R. Congo. These reports and documents are available for view.

Field visits, meetings and focus group discussions were held in Kenya and Congo in 2010, 2011 and 2012. The objective of the visits was to explore the situation of women and children in these two countries, make linkages and develop relationships with the groups on the ground and identify gaps. The field visits have helped Wezesha in designing its work as well as defining clear objectives and setting up mission and vision for the organisation. Specific field visits reports for both Kenya and D.R. Congo are available too.

In May 2012 Wezesha applied for company status with the company registration office, the organisation therefore operates as a limited company by Guarantee and not having capital share. Company Number: 513496.

Wezesha board of directors has held meetings regularly and on a monthly basis in 2012. A strategic and planning day was held in September 2012, the meeting was opened to members and those that had expressed interest to the work of the organisation, an external facilitator facilitated the half-day session, and a follow up meeting was held by directors in December 2012 to finalise the strategic plan for the organisation.

Board members continue to increase their capacity on governance and to ensure they comply with Irish company regulations. One of the director attended meeting organised by Wheel at Carmichael house in 2011. Wezesha filled 2012 returns to the company registration office in October 2012 and is exploring on applying for a charitable status.

Over the last two years women were mobilised and encouraged to support the organisation through self-fundraising, eight women participated and collected money through sponsorship during Flora women mini marathon in June 2012. **A push to the right direction-** fundraising event was held in September 2012 and money raised was granted as contribution to St Joseph Fistula Clinic, Kinshasa, D.R. Congo.



### Mini marathon 2012

Website was designed, developed and launched and a bank account was opened with bank of Ireland in 2012.

An Article covering the field visit to D.R.Congo was published in Metro Eireann Newspaper in December 2012

## 2. Awareness raising and capacity Building

In January 2010 three focus group discussions were held with women from Majengo slum in Nairobi. The meeting that also acted as education and awareness raising brought seventy-two women together and they discussed women reproductive health and Gender based violence. Six young women in the group had dropped out of school due to lack of resources of which three were placed back to boarding school with support from Okuda Kenya, an Organisation initiated by Wezesha following focus group discussions with women and that would act as its local partner in Kenya. Wezesha director worked with Okuda board members in developing a work plan for the group and in 2011, Okuda Kenya was supported by Wezesha directors with the planning, organisation and delivery of the conference entitled: **“Vote for Peace, Stop Gender based violence now”**. One hundred and twenty people attended this conference held in Majengo, Kenya.



**Focus group with Young women from Majengo Kenya- Jan 2010**

In 2010 Salome Mbugua, director of Wezesha, was selected to represent Ireland on Eisenhower women leadership programme, during her two months visit to United States of America. Salome distributed Wezesha leaflets and raised awareness on the plight of women and impact of sexual and gender based violence on women and children in particular in D.R. Congo.

In October 2011 a whole day meeting was held with Congolese women in Ireland. The purpose of the meeting was to support Congolese women in Ireland and to identify collaborative efforts in raising awareness on rape as a weapon of war.



**Linking up with Congolese women in Ireland**

In May 2012 during Africa Day Ireland Wezesha exhibited its work and raised awareness on the work of the organisation. More than ten thousand people participated on Africa Day, majority of these people got information from Wezesha stand and brochures and leaflets were distributed widely.



**Africa Day 2012**

Wezesha directors travelled to D.R. Congo in October 2012 for a field visit where they met with Government, non-governmental organisations and women groups. The directors wrote an article that was published by Metro Newspaper in December 2012.



**Wezesha Directors visit to D.R. Congo 2012**

Wezesha has supported Okuda Kenya with sharing and transfer of skills mainly through a mapping exercise on income generating activity for women in Githurai 44. With support from Wezesha, a questionnaire was administered and quantitative research was carried out with thirty six women that are running small businesses in Githurai 44, a suburb of Nairobi. The outcome of the research will be shared in a conference that is being organised to take place in 2013.



**Wezesha and Okuda joint Conference on Stop gender based violence Nairobi Dec 2012**

### **3. Networking and establishing partnership**

Wezesha has been involved with Sub Sahara Advisory panel (SSAP) since 2010. This organisation is based in Cardiff and has been working on International Development & African Diaspora, mainly on influencing policy for better change. Wezesha directors have represented the organisation in three international summits on Africa diaspora for international development held in Cardiff by SSAP. Wezesha work in the two African countries was highlighted and information distributed during the events.

Wezesha directors have established relationship with Irish Governmental and non-governmental organisations working in Africa, notably Africa Centre, Irish Gender Consortium, VITA, TROCAIRE, Irish Aid-Department of Foreign Affairs. Wezesha directors have also been involved in discussion and development of Ireland international policy on Development with Joe Costello, Minister for trade and development.



**Engaging with decision Makers on Debate for Africa, Africa day**

Strong partnership ties have been established with Okuda Kenya in the last two years. The directors have identified and made links with Federation of Women Lawyers Kenya (FIDA), Plan International, Department of Gender, Caritas D.R Congo, St Kizito & Annuarite School (DR Congo), Department of Health (DR Congo) and St Joseph Fistula Clinic, Kinshasa (DR Congo).

#### **Governance:**

Wezesha has three directors (Flora Lamba, Salome Mbugua and Egide Dhala) and eighteen committed members.

#### **Volunteers:**

Wezesha would like to thank all the volunteers that have supported the organisation with its work over the years, they include-

Niamh Ruairc- research and development, Shalott Cecchini-research and events coordination, Cyndi Njoki- administration and fundraising, Seema Bansal- Research and development, Susan McKay, fundraising and development, Faith Mwangi- Fundraising, Kellen Gorman and Sinead Moore-Fundraising

## Financial Report: 2012

Since its establishment in 2010 Wezesha has not applied or secured public Fund. In June 2012 Wezesha opened a bank account with Bank of Ireland. A total of 834.75 Euro was secured in 2012 mainly from self-fundraising. Costs towards company registration and website development have been spent from this amount.

The directors have used their own resources and funded their own country visits to Kenya and D.R Congo in 2010, 2011 and 2012. All the financial contribution and support granted to Okuda Kenya in 2010 and 2011 has been individual donation by Wezesha directors.

Money raised from Wezesha fund raising event on 29<sup>th</sup> September 2012 was presented and given as a contribution to St Joseph Fistula Clinic, Kinshasa in October 2012 during the country visit by Wezesha Directors. This was to go towards the dietary programme of the 26 women that were undergoing Fistula reconstruction.

The directors are in the process of establishing a funding raising strategy, a financial committee has been established to work towards the development of financial policy and management.

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