



Annual Report 2014

1. Introduction

Although every day is a busy day in Afri it is still surprising to see the sum of a year's activities gathered together in one document. For a small organisation with limited resources and a small staff, our range, reach and the diversity of our work is both extensive and impressive.

Linking the local with the global has always been a cornerstone of Afri's work. The ultimate 'model' of this occurred in our early years in 1984, when a group of courageous young people took an extraordinary action on behalf of people living under an oppressive system some 6,000 miles away. These people were the Dunnes Stores Strikers. We are delighted that in 2014 a wonderful documentary, *Blood Fruit*, directed by Sinead O'Brien, was released telling the full story of the strike and revealing the extraordinary courage, commitment and generosity of these young people. They are, in the words of our patron Desmond Tutu, part of the history of South Africa's struggle for freedom, and it is very important that their victory be celebrated and their story recorded for posterity.

Among other highlights in this full and varied year was our hosting of Ireland's first 'food sovereignty assembly' in Mayo on the eve of our Famine Walk. This felt like completing of a circle - from commemorating the famine in Ireland, to linking it to contemporary issues of famine and hunger, to examining the similarity of causes, to exploring solutions - which is what food sovereignty is about. We were delighted to work in partnership with 'Food Sovereignty Ireland' and Galway/Mayo Institute of Technology on this important initiative. Another 'completing of a circle' was the opening of the gates of Delphi Lodge to the Famine Walk; for the second year in succession walkers were welcomed, as in 2013. But on this occasion a memorial to those who died on the original walk in 1849 (and those who continue to die as a result of famine) was unveiled. It is now a permanent feature in the grounds of Delphi Lodge.

Our solidarity with imprisoned whistleblower Chelsea Manning was expressed in a number of ways including the 'Manning Truthfest'. This involved thirteen musicians, singers, artists and other Manning supporters on a voyage to Wales for a series of concerts, sessions, discussions and actions to highlight Chelsea Manning's unjust imprisonment and to offer support and solidarity to her Welsh family. Solidarity through music, song, dance and theatre is something very special and the positive reaction of the family and supporters in Wales was a testament to the appropriateness of that form of solidarity.

Other highlights included our work with the Institutes of Technology in Carlow, Mayo and especially Blanchardstown, where a series of workshops led up to our Hedge School. These were effective and memorable for content, and participation, and also in terms of the Freirean methodology, which was central to all aspects of the programme. Our 'Just a Second' Secondary School programme was also very successful and ably facilitated by Rose Kelly and Pete Mullineaux. The publication of 'Just a Second: Exploring global issues through Drama and Theatre' creates a great resource and a tangible record of Pete's work with Afri over many years.

Finally, our international solidarity with the Kenya Pastoralist Journalist Network continued despite the extremely difficult circumstances pertaining in Northern Kenya. Likewise, our new partnership with IBON International (see 3.2) opens up new avenues of solidarity around common issues such as global warming and food sovereignty.

2. Development Education

2.1 International Peace Conference

Féile Bríde 2014 was entitled 'Life: Source or Resource? Enslavement versus sovereignty.' The beautiful music of harpist Fionnuala Gill opened proceedings as the Brigid flame was carried into the conference hall. Connections were made across borders, nations and nationalities, incorporating speakers and partners from East Africa to the West of Ireland, in order to tackle together the unequal distribution of global resources and the threats to food sovereignty.

Following a medley of music and words from Fionnuala Gill and Afri's Rose Kelly, Fergal Anderson spoke about food as a fundamental human right, rather than a commodity bought and sold for profit. He went on to say that our society today is out of sync and our world view is defined not by nature but by profit. He strongly emphasized the need for locally produced food for local people.

Abjata Khalif then gave a presentation on his extraordinary work supporting local 'Traditional Birth Attendants' (midwives), in Northern Kenya. With the help of Afri and others, they distribute solar lamps to help midwives carry out safe delivery at night in remote areas where there is no electricity or clean water. Solar lamps are also provided for school children, conflict widows and women ostracized from their communities because they have contracted T.B. Brian Fleming brought us up to lunch with a mesmerising musical treat on the Bodhrán: 'The Day the Apaches Rode into Town'.

After lunch attendees walked out to plant an oak tree. Kirsty Daly, from the Native Woodland Trust – with which Afri has recently formed a partnership – spoke about the need for planting native Irish trees, explaining that Ireland's current tree cover is approximately 10% compared to a European average of nearly 40%. This year Afri dedicated the planting of an oak tree to peace maker Margaretta D'Arcy, imprisoned at the age of 79 for opposing the use of Shannon as a war-port. The tree-planting was followed by theologian and campaigner Fr. Donal Dorr who gave a presentation about "Today's Hidden Slavery", showing the shocking figures of human trafficking, and highlighting the fact that there are two and a half times as many people in slavery today as there were during the height of what we call the 'slave period'.

Donal's presentation was followed by a moving contribution from Mia De Faoite, a sociology student from NUI Maynooth and campaigner against human trafficking, who is involved in the "Turn off the Red Light" campaign to criminalise the buying of sex. Mia spoke openly and honestly about her harrowing experience as a survivor of the prostitution industry. She described how this industry works, how young girls are trafficked to this country, and how she has come to know and befriend many of them.

This was followed by a World Café, providing an opportunity for participants to form groups and explore the themes of the day, while Eleanor Reilly 'harvested' a creative drawing which visually represented the ideas shared.

We had a wonderful conclusion to the day with poetry and songs from poet, dramatist and arts facilitator, Pete Mullineaux. Approximately 80 people attended the day.

2.2 I.T. Links to Carlow IT and NUI Maynooth

In a new departure, Afri began extending the reach of our annual signature events by making links with third-level institutions in various regions. Working with the I.T.s provides a new network and audience for Afri's issues. Our aim is to engage in a process of education with key events forming a series that builds on participants' learning rather than stand-alone events. Accordingly in January Joe Murray and Lisa Patten visited I.T. Carlow for a lunchtime information session to extend the reach of Féile Bríde, speaking to students and encouraging them to attend the conference.

Most interestingly, Martin Smith, the chaplain in I.T. Carlow, pointed out a famine graveyard adjacent to the college, in fact the college is built on the site of the old workhouse. We immediately saw the potential to develop links with Carlow I.T. and the Town Council around this. Thus on the Friday after Féile Bríde, Joe, Abjata and Gary White Deer of the Choctaw Nation took part in a Famine Memorial ceremony, organised by Afri, which was also attended by Martin Smith, Niamh McCrea (lecturer in I.T. Carlow) the Cathaoirleach of Carlow County Council as well as students and members of the general public.

Following an invitation from Karen Till and Alistair Fraser, lecturers in the Geography Department in NUI Maynooth, Joe gave a presentation to the Department there. Later he and Gary White Deer gave a lunch-time seminar on the relationship between geography, food and famine. Possible further institutional links are being explored, to further Afri's development education reach in the Kildare/Carlow region.

2.3 Ireland's First Food Sovereignty Assembly

Ireland's first food sovereignty assembly was held in Castlebar in May 2014 and was organised to coincide with the Annual Famine Walk in the Doolough Valley, Co. Mayo. Afri organised this event in association with Food Sovereignty Ireland. Food sovereignty practitioners from around Ireland attended and contributed to this important event.

The Assembly included a distinguished panel of speakers: Paul Nicholson, a Basque farmer who has participated in La Via Campesina since its inception; Luis Jalandoni, who has been involved in the struggle for farmers' and landless peoples' rights in the Philippines; John Brennan of the Leitrim Organic Farmers Coop, one of Ireland's most informed voices on Food and Agriculture; Rose Kelly of Afri; and Fergal Anderson of Food Sovereignty Ireland. The assembly was chaired by Dr. Mark Garavan of GMIT and explored the critical issue of food, how it works, who benefits and who loses out and why.

The idea of Food Sovereignty was launched during the World Food Summit in 1996, when farmers' organisations from different parts of the world felt the need to counteract the increasing power of corporations, agribusinesses and the WTO to dictate prices, crops and other issues to farmers. These farmers' organisations formed an International movement - La Via Campesina (the way of the peasant/small farmer) which fostered a sense of solidarity instead of competition between farmers internationally.

The reality is that our food- and agriculture system is failing consumers, the environment and farmers. Multi-national corporations such as Tesco, Nestlé, Coca Cola and a few others are squeezing suppliers and eliminating local food providers. Much of the food they sell is produced mechanically, on industrial farms, in a multitude of countries using a cocktail of agrichemicals. The industrial food system then sells heavily processed foods with dubious labels to overwhelmed consumers, who eventually discard almost a third of the food they buy.

Unfortunately, our own government and our largest farming organisation, the IFA, have completely bought into this model. We hear repeatedly of the importance of agriculture to our economy, of how we can contribute to “feeding the world” and to potential growth in exports. This message hides the reality: farmers in other countries would be happier feeding their own populations; that most of our farmers earn an average annual income of €21,000; and that the majority of our so-called high quality exports are in fact inputs to the industrial, processed food industry.

Small-scale farmers in Ireland, unlike the profitable agribusiness sector, are pushed to their limits; and should be producing food for their local communities, not an industrial ‘food system’ The Assembly was a first step in starting the discussion, and towards building a better food- and agriculture culture both in Ireland and worldwide. Approximately 50 people attended the Castlebar Assembly, from various community groups across Ireland. Afri will follow up with a second Food Sovereignty Assembly in 2015.

2.4 The Famine Walk: Opening the Gates – From Famine to Food Sovereignty

The theme this year, “From Famine to Food Sovereignty”, was well explored by the walk leaders, Emanuela Russo, Luis Jalandoni and Paul Nicholson. For example, Luis Jalandoni spoke of the 70% of Filipinos who struggle to get by on €1.70 a day in a country fertile and rich in natural resources; he spoke of the mass resistance to government policies which support big landowners and multinationals.

The Afri Famine Walk very directly links experiences of the past with the present – events in the world today arising from causes similar to those which caused and exacerbated the Great Famine in Ireland – and the future – and asks us to recommit ourselves to ending famine. There was food, there is food, and the question is who controls the food and what happens to it. Some walkers carried posters of the names of individuals who died in that and more recent famines.

All of the speakers emphasised access to adequate food as a human right, and opposed the corporate view of food as a commodity: the pseudo-economic ideology which leads to the obscene shortages of food, to the terrible struggle to survive, and to malnutrition, starvation and even death. Multinational corporations might as well try to control the air we breathe – in many cases they already control the water we drink. Food sovereignty and security should be a priority concern for Ireland.

The unveiling of a stone memorial at Delphi Lodge to the Doolough Famine Walk of 1849, linked to these urgent issues of today, was the highlight at the end of the journey. For the second year in a row the weather unleashed buckets of rain on walkers. The playing by Imogen Gunner and friends of her specially composed piece, ‘Turned away’, while participants struggled to keep musicians and their instruments dry through a canopy of umbrellas, was haunting and beautiful. It also brought to mind the old proverb ‘Ar scáth a chéile a mhaireas na daoine’ / ‘People live in one another’s shelter’.

2.5 Just A Second! Exploring Disarmament for Development

Many people are aware of Afri’s work - as detailed above. But perhaps there is less awareness of Afri’s ongoing ‘education for liberation’ work with secondary schools. This work is supported by WorldWise Global Schools and is carried out mainly by Rose Kelly and Pete Mullineaux. It involves working with students as well as training teachers.

The theme of our education programme is ‘Just a Second!’ and it focuses on the absurdity of the choices that we make or that are made on our behalf by governments and corporations. For

example, the project highlights the fact that in excess of €40,000 is spent every second on war and weapons while a billion people suffer from hunger, and lack of clean water and of adequate housing. The intention of the 'Just A Second' project is to consider the real cost of war and militarisation; to imagine the alternatives; and to come up with ways in which we can work together to help bring about those alternatives.

One of the components of the project was a 'world café'. Afri held this event in April in St. Enda's College Galway for over 70 young people from St. Enda's, Salerno and Gort Community College in Galway. The session was the culmination of months of preparatory activities including art, story, drama, discussion, creative writing and imagining.

Symbols and story played a significant part in the unfolding of the project. At the event on the 29th April, we had several of these symbols in evidence e.g. peace cranes and St. Brigid's Peace Crosses. We also included the stories of child/teenage victims of militarisation. Through their stories, we brought their presence into the room as both witnesses and inspiration. For example, the story of Aseel Ashel, a young peace activist, was explored. Aseel, who used to describe himself as a 'Palestinian citizen of Israel', was a member of the international organisation 'Seeds of Peace'. At 17 years of age, while attending a Seeds of Peace event, Aseel was shot and killed by Israeli security forces.

Other stories explored were those of six-year-old Celia Griffin who starved to death during An Gorta Mór and that of ten-year-old Sadako Sasaki who died of leukaemia, ('the A-bomb disease') a decade after the bombing of Hiroshima.

The World Cafe asked: What are the real costs of militarisation? How can we create an alternative dream? What are we going to do to make this happen? What the young people came up with together was heart-warming and hopeful. The event finished with the participants writing a message for peace on large sheets of paper which were then photographed as a contribution to the International Peace Bureau's Global Day of Action on Military Spending (GDAMS).

As part of the Just a Second programme, Dave Donnellan produced a short film (6 minutes) which is a snapshot of the project. This film can be viewed on the Afri website: <http://www.afri.ie/news-and-events/just-a-second-schools-project-film/>. It was launched as part of an event at the end of the schools project in Galway City Museum in May. In addition to the film launch, there was the first public showing of a dramatic, evocative painting by Choctaw artist, Gary White Deer, created specifically for the project. Gary White Deer spoke at this event as did Ruairí McKiernan, founder of Spunout.ie and member of the Council of State. Just A Second! Arts facilitator Pete Mullineaux also spoke about his involvement in the project and working with the students. Music and refreshments were provided.

Afri was also represented at the WorldWide Global Schools conference in April where Rose facilitated a workshop, assisted by Afri intern, Ali Hanaf. Afri also had an information stand during the day.

2.6 Just A Second! Publication

In 2014 Afri published a resource book of plays and drama methodologies written by Pete Mullineaux. *Just A Second! Exploring Global Issues Through Drama and Theatre* is a development education resource offering school groups an accessible guide to exploring global issues through drama and theatre. The book opens with coverage of Afri's 2013-2014 'Just A Second!' project, followed by the full texts of five mini-plays devised with young people taking part in Afri initiated development education projects in primary and secondary schools during the years 2005-2011.

These plays can be read or acted out, but more importantly are designed to act as a stimulus for further drama exploration, discussion and debate. With this in mind they are accompanied by multiple suggestions for follow-up activities, linking across the curriculum so that school groups, youth theatres, college students and others can explore the themes and issues raised.

Afri is delighted to have been able to publish this resource and is planning a launch (or series of launches) over the coming months. The publication is available from the Afri office.

2.7 The Hedge School: Awakened Conscience: Standing up for Justice, tackling climate change, opposing war and militarism

By coincidence, the Afri Hedge School in 2014 took place on the 96th anniversary of the 'official' ending of World War 1. Of course, a monstrous war machine of that size and ferocity doesn't suddenly come to a halt all at once. Active battle, in which several human beings lost their lives, continued well after the iconic moment of the 11th hour, on the 11th day of the 11th month on which the leaders cried 'stop!'. The fallout from that horrific war, ironically titled - in recruitment propaganda - as 'the war to end all wars', is still having a devastating impact. The trauma has traversed generations in the many insidious ways that trauma can. Palestine is just one of many, many ongoing casualties.

The lives of those men, who chose or were forced to become soldiers and were sacrificed in that war are traditionally remembered by silence and ceremonial. Afri's Hedge School chose not to hold the silence, but rather to facilitate the raising of voices. It invited the testimony of witnesses and casualties beyond those in active combat. It welcomed the awkward questions. And it framed all of this within the matrix of conscience.

Dunnes Stores Strikers, Cathryn O' Reilly and Vonnie Munroe, spoke of their conscientious action against the Apartheid regime in South Africa; Maitet Ledesma from IBON International spoke of the violence of a military industrial complex that fuels climate change and makes a casualty of Mother Earth herself; Katie O'Kelly performed her enchanting and challenging piece in which the voice of the Palestinian Olive Tree spoke on water, war and occupation; damning testimony was given by those living in the torturous limbo of Direct Provision in Ireland, waiting endlessly to hear if they are to be granted asylum in this land of the hundred thousand welcomes; while Brian Fleming's bodhrán gave voice to the numbing pain of those enduring this limbo state in his and Donal O' Kelly's piece on the same practice.

'Look no marks', was the chilling mantra in Donal and Brian's disturbing piece. It might well be a mantra for so much of the devastation of war that is disowned by the war-makers. In one short day it would be impossible to unmask militarisation in all its nightmarish reality. What the Hedge School sought to do and succeeded in doing was to remind us that war has many faces and the victims of war many voices. It was a provocation and an inspiration to conscience to become informed, to take courage and to act.

Tribute and many thanks has to be paid to the students from ITB's Social and Community Development course, together with their lecturer Liam McGlynn, for the prominent role they played in the design, promotion and facilitation of the Hedge School. The thoughtfulness, courage, warmth, intelligence and good humour with which they carried it off not only made the experience of working with them a pleasure but bodes well for the communities in which they will undoubtedly continue to share their time and talents.

2.8 Other Development Education-related Initiatives

Lisa Patten continued to attend IDEA's Community Sector Working Group on behalf of Afri. The purpose of this working group is to discuss issues relevant to development education practitioners who have a particular focus on adult and community education. It involves groups such as Lourdes Youth and Community Services (LYCS), the Latin America Solidarity Centre (LASC), Waterford One World Centre, Comhlamh, Eco-Unesco, the Donegal Change-makers, Crawford I.T., among others.

One particular piece of work published in 2014 to which Afri contributed was IDEA's *Guidelines for Good practice for Development Education in Adult and Community Settings*. In addition Afri was involved, through this group, in drafting a strategy for Irish Aid for the adult and community sector, which was submitted to Irish Aid in October.

Afri also submitted a piece on the Famine Walk for the 'Development Education in Action' section of the DevelopmentEducation.ie website: <http://www.developmenteducation.ie/feature/famine-walk/>. The purpose of sharing these case studies is to inspire others to engage in DE and to illustrate the quality and diversity of development education activity in Ireland, as well as assisting in the documentation and showcasing of this work.

3. Links Project

3.1 Kenya Pastoralist Journalist Network

Afri continued its partnership with the Kenya Pastoralist Journalist Network (KPJN) in 2014 and continued to contribute financially to KPJN's solar lamp programme which provides solar lamps (as opposed to the traditional, unhealthy and environmentally damaging kerosene lamps) to midwives and school-children in Kenya.

Afri brought Abjata Khalif, the chairperson of the KPJN, to visit in February. Due to visa difficulties Abjata could confirm his arrival to only on the Wednesday before Féile Bríde. Due to this it was difficult to organise a programme for him in advance. However, Joe managed to organise a couple of key visits at short notice. On the Tuesday following Féile Bríde Joe and Abjata gave a presentation in GMIT in Castlebar. This was another example of Afri's current approach of moving from an events-focused programme to a more sustained development education programme. Mark Garavan in GMIT was very pleased with the workshop and the student's response.

Abjata also spoke in Gort School, which is one of the schools involved in Afri's 'Just a Second' project under the WorldWise Global Schools funding. Abjata adapted his message very well for the secondary school audience. He also participated in the training day for teachers in Galway, which included an introduction by Joe, and presentations by Rose and Pete, followed by exploration of methodologies and themes. The following day there was a WorldWise Global Schools seminar in Dublin, which he also attended, and then went to IT Blanchardstown where he spoke to some of Liam McGlynn's students. Abjata also spoke at a ceremony at the Famine graveyard beside Carlow I.T on the Friday after Féile Bríde (see 2.2 for more).

The situation in Kenya is very challenging due to periodic outbreaks of violence, making it difficult for KPJN to carry out its work. In a letter to the Board in October, Abjata Khalif explained: "A renewed wave of insecurity has disrupted service deliveries to citizenry in Garissa town and its environs and many organisations have scaled down their work or closed until the situation comes back to normal. As I am writing you this letter today, 15th October 2014, senior politician and County Governor Mr Roba Ali escaped death by a whisker after his vehicle was hit by an improvised device."

3.2 IBON International

Afri has begun a new partnership with IBON International which is an NGO whose European base is in Amsterdam but whose work involves supporting social movements and people driven off their land in Africa, Asia and Latin America. Afri's contact person in IBON is Maitet Ledesma who was born and raised in the Philippines but who came to live in Ireland during the period of the Marcos dictatorship in her home country. She was actively involved with the Filipino Irish Group (FIG) and Afri during that time. Maitet is the step-daughter of Jack Hynes, a board member of Afri for many years and a major influence on the organisation's philosophy and approach. Maitet visited Ireland in November and spoke at Afri's Hedge School about climate change (see 2.7). Afri plans to continue this partnership with IBON in relation to the 2015 Famine Walk and Food Sovereignty Assembly.

3.3 'Blood Fruit' - The Dunnes Stores Strike

Members of Afri were delighted to attend the premiere of 'Blood Fruit' in Galway in July. Director Sinead O'Brien has ensured that the eventual telling of this extraordinary story on the big screen was worth the long wait. The film recounts the story of ten exceptional young workers in Dunnes Stores in Henry Street who took the courageous decision to refuse to handle 'the fruits of apartheid' in 1984. This decision was to have major consequences for the workers themselves – being locked out for more than 2 years – and internationally as the story became known around the world. It resulted in a rare and amazing victory when the Irish Government banned the importation of fruit and vegetables from South Africa.

The film, the longer version of which includes an interview with Joe, relays the experience of the daily drudgery on the picket line as well as their invitation to address the UN, their meeting with Desmond Tutu en route to receive the Nobel Peace prize and their abortive visit to South Africa where they were held by armed police before being sent home on the next plane. This is a compelling and inspiring story which should have a major impact on people of all ages, reflecting what is best in human nature – the ability to empathise with the suffering of others even in faraway places and to express solidarity to the point of making a real and significant difference.

Nelson Mandela had said that the action of the strikers had helped him during his imprisonment and, in a message sent to the strikers via Afri for the premiere, Archbishop Tutu saluted them, describing them as 'a beacon of hope' and 'part of the history of South Africa's struggle for freedom'. While the true heroes of this story are of course the strikers, Afri's organising of a meeting of the strikers with Desmond Tutu on his way to receive the Nobel Peace Prize and the subsequent invitation to visit South Africa, issued by Tutu through Afri, made a significant contribution to internationalizing the strike.

Afri is deeply saddened by the sudden and untimely death of Brendan Archbold, the trade unionist who stood by the strikers from the beginning to the end of the strike and, indeed, who supported them afterwards. Brendan died in December - we express our sympathy to his partner and two sons.

4. Campaigning

4.1 Fracking

Afri continued to raise awareness about the dangers of fracking throughout 2014. In March, Afri launched Dearbhla Glynn's short film, which we had commissioned, 'The Future for Shale?' about

fracking in Ireland. The launch took place in Manorhamilton, in Leitrim, one of the counties targeted for fracking. Dearbhla's work as an independent documentary maker has previously shone a light on human rights violations in the Congo and Gaza. See <http://www.afri.ie/news-and-events/the-future-for-shale-film/>

Members of 'Love Leitrim' Eddie Mitchell and Chair Susan Carton were at hand for a Question and Answer session after the film. The audience were also treated to a traditional music session from well-known musicians Steve Cooney and Paddy Keenan in the Glens Centre venue. An unexpected highlight of the evening was when renowned Choctaw artist Gary White Deer made a presentation of his painting entitled 'Fracking Mother Earth', commissioned by Afri, to Love Leitrim.

A second initiative undertaken by Afri in relation to fracking is the launch of a petition to ban fracking on the island of Ireland. Since its launch in August, 2014 over 2,000 people have signed the petition. A number of international scientists such as Dr Ken Caldeira from the Carnegie Institution for Science at Stanford University and Dr Marrian Lloyd-Smit, Senior Adviser at the National Toxics Network in Australia, also supported the ban, citing both the need for more sustainable solutions to the energy crisis and the health risks from the toxins used in the 'hydraulic fracturing' process. Afri hopes that the Irish government and the Assembly in Belfast will follow the lead of the French and German governments in banning fracking and will instead prioritise renewable energy sources.

Afri made contact with a local group in Fermanagh called 'LAMP' (Letterbreen and Mullaghduin Partnership). LAMP is cross-community, and is a solid organisation, which is building slowly. Unfortunately, the anti-fracking campaign is often seen as a republican/nationalist issue but it is very important that unionists be involved as the relevant Minister in 2014 was Arlene Foster of the DUP. Afri has offered to support LAMP's work. They are currently looking for help with making a short film – and they were impressed with the film that Dearbhla Glynn made about fracking and interested in exploring a possible partnership in order to make a similar film.

Rose Kelly wrote a submission to the Energy Policy Green Paper in July 2014. In this paper she emphasised the importance of Energy Sovereignty and described fracking as a 'desperate measure'. The model of local community-based systems is central to achieving energy sovereignty. For this approach to be most effective in reducing carbon emissions, meeting the challenges of climate change, protecting the environment and creating a more just system that upholds both environmental and social justice is essential. There are other measures required, including: the phasing out of destructive energy systems and energy-hungry industries, improving public transport, supporting food sovereignty initiatives and local and small scale industry and business, bringing global environmental effects into consideration when designing energy, transport and industry policies, and holding authentic consultation with communities and key players.

4.2 The Corrib Gas Project

Following the success of Donal O'Kelly's play *Fionnuala* in 2013 (which won a Fringe First in the Edinburgh festival), Afri, with the help of Donal and Richie O'Donnell (director of 'The Pipe') initiated the concept of 'Airing Erris'. The idea of this venture was critically to evaluate the role of the media in the portrayal of the Corrib Gas Project, as well as to provide a space for the community to 'get the word out' about what is really happening in Erris. Atlantic Stream, Richie O'Donnell's production company, live-streamed 'Airing Erris' over the internet, which enabled a wider audience to attend and participate. There were three 'episodes' in the Airing Erris series in 2014.

Firstly in January, *Airing Erris: The Media and Shell Corrib* took place in the Seanscoil, Ceathru Thaidgh, in Erris, County Mayo. Speakers included Harry Browne, journalist and lecturer, Lelia Doolan, documentary-maker and former CEO of the Irish Film Board, Betty Purcell, former Editor of

Features and Current Affairs RTE, and Liamy MacNally, Mayo-based freelance journalist. Afterwards, there was a space for a series of testimonies from local people detailing infringements of freedom of expression and denial of information in relation to the Shell Corrib Gas Project.

Journalist Harry Browne had this to say about the event: *'The event on Saturday 18th in Mayo wasn't just a chance for journalists like Purcell and MacNally to say how their work on the Corrib story has been resisted by PR pressure and their employers. It also gave plenty of time for others, including locals, to offer testimony about the ignorance, avoidance and distortion they have experienced at the hands of the media over the last decade.'*

Airing Erris 2 was the second instalment in the series which examined the relationship between vested interests and the media and their increasing control and interference in civil issues. Speakers at this event were Ed Vulliamy (The Observer/Guardian journalist); Richie O'Donnell (the Director of 'The Pipe'); William Hederman (journalist). The session was chaired by Joe Murray, as Andy was unable to make it on the day.

Ed Vulliamy paid warm tribute to the community in Erris who have been resisting the imposition of the Gas Corrib project on their community since 2000. Mr. Vulliamy, the journalist who broke the story of Shell's supplying large quantities of alcohol to Gardaí in Belmullet, said he was inspired by the courage and commitment of the community and the way in which they have 'joined the dots' in terms of the project and its wider implications. He also described the 'alcohol to Gardaí in Belmullet' story as an interesting bagatelle in the context of the UN Rapporteur's claim of excessive use of force by Gardaí against peaceful protesters.

Journalist William Hederman outlined examples of media distortion in relation to the project. For example, the 'rape tapes' issue was shamefully mishandled by Gardaí and GSOC and those against whom rape was 'jokingly' threatened were utterly failed, let down and undermined by elements of the media. Richie O'Donnell, whose company Atlantic Stream broadcast the event online, spoke about plans to 'be our own media' of which 'Airing Erris' is a very good example. Lorna Siggins wrote a piece about this event in the *Irish Times*.

Airing Erris 3 was held in July. This episode focused on policing and included contributions from former UN assistant Secretary-General Denis Halliday, Goldman Environmental prize winner Willie Corduff, Human Rights Monitor and former Garda Bernard McCabe, peace activist Margareta D'Arcy and investigative journalist Gemma O'Doherty. Garda Whistleblower, John Wilson, also attended, and spoke about his experiences of Garda corruption. Former Gardaí, Bernard McCabe and John Wilson, along with Rosspport farmer Willie Corduff, appealed to members of the Garda Síochána who had been assigned to police the Corrib gas project to speak about what had occurred.

Airing Erris has been effective so far; Afri is aware that officials from the Department of the Environment have watched the livestream.

Earlier in 2014 Afri issued an appeal for an independent enquiry into the policing of the project, which was supported by Desmond Tutu, Denis Halliday, Ed Vulliamy and others. Desmond Tutu recorded a short message of support which can be watched on the Afri website. Afri was also a signatory of a second petition in June calling for an independent investigation of the policing of the project. To date, no such enquiry has been held.

In addition, Benny McCabe has been visiting Rosspport on behalf of Afri as part of the 'healing' strand of the Rowntree funding. The aim is to have a community-focused event examining the impact of the 15-year trauma on people's mental and physical health sometime in 2015.

4.3 Solidarity with Imprisoned Whistleblower Chelsea Manning

Chelsea (formerly Bradley) Manning was a private in the US army and is currently serving 35 years imprisonment in Ft. Leavenworth, Kansas, for courageously exposing some of the horrors of the endless U.S 'War on Terror'. In November 2013, at the instigation of Ciaran O'Reilly, Afri hosted the Manning family, Chelsea's mother, two aunts and an uncle and was delighted to continue that support through the Manning Truthfest in Wales on the 10th to 12th of January 2014.

Donal O'Kelly had met the family, heard their story and, never one to miss an opportunity for offering support and solidarity, came up with the idea of the Manning Truthfest. This was a voyage of discovery in many ways as musicians and artists were contacted and assembled, car pools sorted and the ferry crossing arranged. From the moment we gathered, this group of artists seemed imbued with a special spirit. The Truthfest involved a 13-strong team from Ireland: Donal O'Kelly, Afri co-ordinator Joe Murray, Afri chairperson Andy Storey, sound technician Andy Cummins, Singer-songwriters Joe Black and RoJ Whelan, actor and poet Sorcha Fox, musicians Imogen Gunner, Robbie Sinnott, percussionist and playwright Brian Flemming, journalist Harry Browne, musician and radio presenter Ellen Cranitch, and human rights activist Nuala Kelly.

On arrival, the group were warmly welcomed and provided with excellent accommodation; from then on it was non-stop music. Despite the harrowing nature and the brutal treatment of Chelsea Manning there is much to celebrate in a life marked by courage and truth and it was appropriate that this Truthfest was awash with the sounds of music, song, poetry, drama, dance and drumbeat.

Among the speakers at the Manning solidarity meeting in November 2013 was Gerry Conlon who gave a profoundly moving and passionate address about his own experiences, the courage of Chelsea Manning and the importance of whistleblowers in revealing miscarriages of justice. Sadly, Gerry Conlon passed away over the summer. Afri, at the suggestion of singer-songwriter Joe Black, held an event to remember Gerry in September. Gerry was an advocate for many cases of injustice, so it seemed fitting to link this memorial with a solidarity event for the imprisoned whistleblower.

A Memorial evening for Gerry Conlon in solidarity with Chelsea Manning was held in the Teacher's Club and included a reflection on Gerry Conlon by human rights campaigner Nuala Kelly. A screening of Gerry's address in November as well as contributions from leading musicians and actors such as Joe Black, Simon Meyler, Sorcha Fox, RoJ Whelan, Paul O'Toole, Katie O'Kelly and Brian Fleming. Afri board member John Maguire spoke about the idea of creating a "book of days" for Chelsea Manning where anyone could submit a painting, poem or other creative offering for Chelsea Manning while she is in prison. At the end of the year all these offerings could be compiled into a book and physically presented to her.

Donations from the event went to the Manning Family Fund and the Giuseppe Conlon House in London (at the request of Gerry Conlon's family). We want to extend special thanks to Afri intern Clara Purcell for her excellent work in organising this event.

4.4 Shannon

Peace activist and Shannon campaigner Margaretta D'Arcy was arrested in January and brought to Limerick prison to serve a three-month sentence. She was arrested and charged as a consequence of a peaceful protest against the use of Shannon Airport by US troops on their way to and from their wars in Afghanistan and elsewhere, highlighting the Irish Government's commitment to active participation in and support for the doctrine of perpetual war. She refused to sign a bond to say that she would stay out of unauthorised zones at Shannon Airport.

Joe Murray, supporting a call for her release, wrote a piece about Margareta which was published in The Journal.ie in January:

And while it is increasingly fashionable to commemorate participants in the 'Great Wars', it is appropriate and important that we remember and celebrate the courageous spirit of peacemakers who carry that torch today...One such strong and fearless person is Margareta D'Arcy, who is serving a three month sentence in Limerick prison for the crime of opposing war and Ireland's participation in it. Margareta is a 79-year-old artist and campaigner with cancer and Parkinson's disease who relies on a zimmer frame. She refuses to accept as normal the fact that over two million US soldiers have passed through Shannon airport on their way to wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Margareta, a founding member of Aosdana, is not a criminal, but someone who seeks to highlight the fact that war criminals regularly pass through Shannon and that the full apparatus of the State is used to protect them. This is something that has been highlighted in the past by President Michael D Higgins, who attended Shannon airport protests before being elected President.

Afri called for the release of peace activist Margareta D'Arcy during Airing Erris in January and fittingly, Margareta then spoke at the third episode of Airing Erris in July (see 4.2).

In February Afri launched a petition calling for the end of the use of Shannon airport as a war-port. The militarisation of Shannon airport is illegal under both Irish and international law. Political parties and individual politicians have promised action on neutrality and flight inspections, but once in power have abandoned their promises. Afri's petition was sent to Enda Kenny and other government ministers calling on them to take action on Shannon airport.

Later in the year Board member John Maguire devised a campaign called 'PETALS' (Peaceful Endeavour to Terminate Aggressive Landings at Shannon) as a way of drawing attention to our continual participation in wreaking death and destruction on other peoples and nations. The idea was to hand out shamrock shaped information leaflets to tourists and other travellers passing through Shannon airport. John was prevented from handing these peace shamrocks to passengers in Shannon Airport in October, although there was a positive response from some of the passengers to whom he did manage to give them. Apparently war planes and rendition flights are acceptable in Shannon but not shamrocks!

4.5 'Stop Killer Robots' launch

Afri held the Irish launch of the campaign to stop killer robots in April in association with the Irish School of Ecumenics. Killer robots are the latest phenomenon in the arms race – essentially an attempt to create fully autonomous weapons which can select their own targets. The campaign was launched in 2013 by several female Nobel Peace Prize winners, including Jody Williams and Mairead Maguire. For the Irish launch of the campaign Afri invited Professor Noel Sharkey, an expert in robotics and artificial intelligence from the University of Sheffield and Chairman of the International Committee for Robot Arms Control, to speak at the event. Approximately 20-30 people attended the event, including representatives from Amnesty Ireland, Pax Christi and the Irish Red Cross.

Prof. Sharkey called on the Irish government to show leadership on the crucial issue of ensuring human control over targeting and attack decisions by banning fully autonomous weapons. Afri co-ordinator Joe Murray called for an urgent ban of autonomous weapons: "Should we allow the monumentally insane policy of developing fully autonomous weapons to be pursued then even the

element of human intervention will be sidelined and we will have war and violence of epic proportions. It is time to wake up and shout stop.”

As part of the launch events, Professor Sharkey and Irish NGO representatives met with officials from the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade and the Irish Defence Forces to discuss the new campaign and its objectives. In the meeting with NGOs, Irish disarmament officials confirmed that Ireland would participate in the first multilateral meeting to discuss concerns over these dangerous new weapons at the United Nations in Geneva soon afterwards. More than 100 nations are expected to attend the Convention on Conventional Weapons (CCW) experts meeting on ‘lethal autonomous weapons systems.’ Ireland’s delegation will be led by its new disarmament representative Ambassador Patricia O’Brien, who previously served as United Nations Legal Counsel from 2008 to 2013.

Dave Donnellan made a short film of the launch, and this is available on the Afri website. See <http://www.afri.ie/news-and-events/launch-of-the-irish-campaign-to-stop-killer-robots/>.

4.6 Stop Climate Chaos

Afri maintained its involvement in the Stop Climate Chaos (‘SCC’) Coalition throughout 2014, through participating in the steering committee meetings. The Coalition continued lobbying T.D.s and members of the Environment Committee on its main areas of concern in relation to the Climate Bill: namely, that there should be binding targets in the Bill, that the advisory committee to the government should be independent, and that the principles of climate justice should be included. In addition it organised 2 main events during the year. ‘Come Rain or Shine’ was an information event open to the public and the media about the findings of the latest IPCC report on the impacts of climate change, which was held in the Project Arts Centre in March.

In September SCC linked in with organisations such as Climate Gathering and People’s Climate Ireland and organised a picnic in Stephen’s Green, to coincide with the worldwide climate marches. Events from New York City to Rio, London to Delhi showed that people everywhere want to see world leaders doing more to tackle climate change. Approximately 1,000 people joined the picnic in Dublin, which involved live music, circus performers, artistic activities, games, face-painting and more.

4.7 Anti-militarisation

4.7.1 Submission to the review of Ireland’s Foreign Policy

Afri contributed to the Review of Ireland’s Foreign Policy and External Relations in February 2014. Afri identified militarism as one of the greatest threats to human rights and development in our world. Militarism includes war, but also the development of weapons, supporting oppressive regimes and the diversion of massive resources away from socially beneficial activities. Afri acknowledged that while being a small player on the world stage, Ireland could still make a positive contribution by discontinuing involvement in military alliances such as NATO; ending participation by proxy in wars by allowing Shannon airport to be used as a war-port; promoting disarmament and peace and conflict resolution, and challenging the destructive mindsets of both neo-liberal economics and militarism.

4.7.2 Afghanistan: The Forgotten War

Afri hosted a meeting of Voices for Creative Nonviolence members, Maya Evans and Ewa Jasiewicz, in Dublin in May. Maya and Ewa were part of a peace delegation to Kabul, where they lived and worked with the Afghan peace volunteers. They gave unique eye-witness accounts of the experience of people in Afghanistan from a grassroots perspective, based on their time spent with refugees, street children, widows, activists and civil society groups. They outlined the utter devastation caused by the US-led war and its impact on people and the environment. They also gave eye-witness accounts of people and families torn apart as a result of assassination by drones. One of their creative nonviolent responses is a campaign entitled “Fly Kites, Not Drones”. Kite-flying is a national pastime in Afghanistan, but nowadays, unfortunately, when children look towards the skies in Afghanistan they sometimes see death-dealing drones, rather than dancing, colourful kites. Though they are disturbing in content, it is very important to hear these perspectives – rarely heard in our mainstream media.

4.7.3 Palestinian Solidarity

In July Afri supported an appeal from 14 Palestinian groups including human rights groups, unions, youth groups and women’s groups for solidarity and humanitarian intervention.

As Israeli leaders give promises of moving onto a next stage in brutality, we know there are more horrors yet to come. For this we call on you to not turn your backs on us. We call on you to stand up for justice and humanity and demonstrate and support the courageous men, women and children rooted in the Gaza Strip facing the darkest of times ahead. We insist on international action:

- *Severance of diplomatic ties with Israel*
- *Trials for war crimes*
- *Immediate international protection of the civilians of Gaza*
- *We call on you to join the growing international boycott, divestment and sanction campaign to hold this rogue state to account that is proving once again to be so violent and yet so unchallenged*
- *Join the growing critical mass around the world with a commitment to the day when Palestinians do not have to grow up amidst this relentless murder and destruction by the Israeli regime.*

When we can move freely, when the siege is lifted, the occupation is over and the world’s Palestinian refugees are finally granted justice. ACT NOW, before it is too late!” (Appeal for Solidarity and Humanitarian Intervention, 12 July 2014)

It is ironic and shocking that Jewish people who have been the subject of pogroms and repression for many centuries, and then the genocidal Nazi Holocaust/Shoah, should be involved in such large-scale repression of another people today through Israeli action. Afri maintains that Under the Fourth Geneva Convention, the brutal acts against Palestinians by Israel are war crimes.

4.7.4 Depleted Uranium Campaign

Afri supported Iraq’s calls for an international treaty banning depleted-uranium weapons. In July a UN report on the “Effects of the use of armaments and ammunitions containing Depleted Uranium” was published, providing evidence of their risk to civilians. Iraq is the country most affected by wartime DU contamination, with at least 400,000kg used by the US and UK in 1991 and 2003, and has urged UN member states to adopt a proactive approach to the issue and condemn the use of

these weapons. The International Coalition to Ban Uranium Weapons (ICBUW) has also called for DU weapons to be banned, just as anti-personnel landmines and cluster bombs have been. ICBUW argues that DU weapons are inherently indiscriminate and that their legacy persists long after the end of conflict.

4.7.5 'Movement for the Abolition of War' Conference

In October Joe Murray attended a peace conference organised by the Movement for the Abolition of War (MAW). This conference critically examined the way in which World War 1 is being commemorated. Many contributions noted the attempt to 'redeem' World War 1, and to portray it as a 'good war' by those who continue to benefit from the business of war and who want to ensure its continuance as a means of 'settling' international disputes. Part of the conference was given over to honouring conscientious objectors, many of whose stories were moving and inspirational. Being a conscientious objector – refusing to kill – was not an easy option, it carried heavy consequences and great suffering.

The conference was held in the Imperial War Museum in London. A telling sign of the normalisation of war is the fact that since the Museum re-opened after refurbishment in July 2014, it has been visited by over half a million people, and while the peace event attracted around one hundred people largely in the over-50 age bracket, many visitors to the war museum were families including children of all ages, some of whom were being photographed proudly standing alongside or caressing some of the most grotesque weapons ever manufactured.

Joe wrote of his visit:

But for me the most important element was contained in the name of the main organiser – the Movement for the Abolition of War. This is a small but very important organisation which is raising a critically important issue – that of abolishing war from the face of the earth before it brings about the final destruction of both people and planet.

Many believe that this is a naive and credulous idea but such a response is neither surprising nor unexpected. As David Swanson argues in his excellent book 'War no More': 'In the late 18th century the majority of people alive on earth were held in slavery or serfdom... The idea of abolishing something so pervasive and long lasting as slavery was considered ridiculous. Slavery had always been with us and always would be... {However} by the end of the 19th century, slavery was outlawed nearly everywhere and rapidly in decline. In part this was because a handful of activists in England in the 1780s began a movement advocating for abolition'. Of course forms of slavery such as sex slavery and forced labour still survive today but institutionalized slavery has become almost totally unacceptable.

If slavery can be abolished, if Apartheid can be ended, if capital punishment can be banned in many countries and made repugnant and shameful in most, why can we not achieve the same in relation to war?

4.7.6 The Arms Trade and the Croke Park Fly-over

In June Afri expressed dismay at the revelation that the Irish army plans to spend over €4m on 'upgrading' its air defence missile system. The Army stated that the purpose of the missile system is to "take out enemy aircraft" and elaborated on this unlikely scenario by stating that the missiles in question would "deter hostile actions". Extraordinarily, this monumental waste of resources is occurring at the same time as health, education, social welfare and overseas development aid budgets continue to be cut, causing intense suffering to some of the most vulnerable people in our

society and on our planet. All this happens in the context of a Red C poll carried out for the Peace and Neutrality Alliance in 2013 showing that 78% of people support Irish neutrality, an essential element of which is non-participation in aggressive military alliances and minimal military spending. Afri called on the Labour Party to clarify where its priorities lie in terms of such spending.

In July Afri became aware of Irish companies supplying military equipment, to the US army among others. Afri first brought this issue of Irish participation in the military industry to light when it published the 'Links' Report in 1996, demonstrating the early stages of this trend of supplying such components. Afri condemns the practice of companies making profits on the back of the human suffering and misery caused by war and violence. While recognising and supporting the need for jobs in Ireland, Afri called on the Irish Government to ensure that we do not leave our consciences at the door and pursue a policy of jobs at all costs.

Afri expressed outrage at the 'fly past' by a U.S. jet fighter as part of the U.S. football match in Croke Park in August. Afri called for clarity as to who gave consent for this use of Irish airspace and was critical of the Irish Government's collusion with U.S. power, arguing that sport should be a means of bringing people together and promoting peace, not a vehicle for promoting war and militarism. Afri stated that, should a recurrence of this event happen in the future, it would mobilise people to protest. Joe Murray wrote an article about the flyover which was published in *The Journal.ie*, which had over 30,000 views. He also wrote to several people including the Croke Park management and the Minister for Foreign Affairs. Alarming, Minister Flanagan replied stating that the fly-over is in line with Irish neutrality.

5. Other events and initiatives

5.1 Tree-planting in Wicklow

As part of Afri's work in promoting sustainable development we have adopted a policy of not just planting a native tree at each of Afri's signature events, but also supporting the development of a small, native woodland forest, near Laragh, in County Wicklow. Accordingly, Afri has developed a partnership with the Native Woodland Trust, which is dedicated to the preservation of Ireland's ancient woodlands and to the planting of new trees and woods all over Ireland. Afri staff members visited the Laragh site to view the burgeoning forest in August. Afri hopes to continue and strengthen this partnership with the Native Woodland Trust.

5.2 An Evening with Dada Maheshvaranada

Afri organised a public meeting in February with monk, author and activist Dada Maheshvarananda while he was in Ireland meeting with leading activists, academics and public figures, including President Higgins. Dada was born in the U.S and as a student he adopted a radical approach to social change He was inspired to become, in the words of Che Guevara, a "true revolutionary guided by great feelings of love." In 1978 he became a monk in India, dedicating his life to the service of humanity. Since then he has continuously worked in different parts of the world, teaching meditation, yoga and other techniques for personal transformation free of charge. He also promotes the Progressive Utilization Theory (PROUT), a post-capitalist model to empower people and communities to create a better world. His most recent book, *After Capitalism: Economic Democracy in Action*, was published in 2012. His first book, *After Capitalism: Prout's Vision for a New World* (with a preface by Noam Chomsky) was published in 2003 and has been translated into 10 languages. In 2007 he founded the Prout Research Institute of Venezuela in Caracas, where he currently serves as director.

5.3 Citizenship referendum and Direct Provision

In June Afri supported the 'Remembering the Citizenship Referendum' event outside Dáil Éireann, marking the 10th anniversary of this dark day in our recent history. Many of the migrant speakers reminded us of the shocking legacy it has left of children born into a limbo state in the last decade. Comparisons were made with the treatment of children in the 'mother and baby' homes, which has been the source of such recent outrage. There were also many references to the appalling system known as 'Direct Provision', in which people are given just over €19 per week to live on. One woman who grew up in apartheid South Africa said that she felt she had left that behind, but now finds an apartheid-like approach at work in the direct provision system.

Following from the Hedge School in November, at which a woman living in the direct provision system spoke movingly, Afri agreed to arrange a meeting with Minister Aodhán Ó Ríodáin to ensure that he should not back pedal on his commitment to abolish the direct provision system.

5.4 Famine Landscape Project

In 2013, Bill Fahey from the American Committee for the Commemoration of Irish Famine Victims wrote to Afri, having read *They All Had Names: A Survey of Tithe na mBocht and Famine Graveyards*, proposing to offer a donation towards physically marking some famine graves and suggesting that Choctaw Gary White Deer would be involved in the project. The Choctaw donation of \$170 to Ireland during the famine has captured the imagination of many Irish-Americans.

After much discussion Bill donated \$2,000 to Afri in 2014 to use in whatever way Afri sees fit to mark the famine graveyards. This donation, in addition to funding received from Concern, has meant that Afri has been able to embark on a 'Famine Landscape Project'. Through this project Afri aims to support a process of identifying famine history within each locality, with a view to respectfully marking famine graves and making a contemporary link. The aim is that there would be communities throughout Ireland, drawing inspiration from our own famine history and expressing solidarity with communities experiencing famine in our world today. Activities will include organising local Famine Walks incorporating Global South perspectives, placing markers on identified Famine graves as a symbol of remembrance as well as expressing solidarity with those experiencing contemporary famine; there will also be a number of school visits. Gary White Deer, now based in Donegal, has begun working with local communities on Afri's behalf and has been involved in other Famine Landscape work such as the visits to I.T. Carlow and NUI Maynooth in 2014 (see 2.2)

6. Corporate Governance

6.1 Strategic plan updated

In January 2014 Afri used the annual planning day to revisit our general strategic plan and re-imagine Afri's goals for the next couple of years. This day was facilitated by Maureen Sheehy. The new strategic plan was finalised, and circulated at the AGM. In brief the plan outlines a number of key areas that on which Afri is committed to working for the period 2014-2016: namely, militarisation and peace; communities confronting resource extraction; and food sovereignty. The Plan includes a brief history of Afri since its inception in 1975.

6.2 Rates appeal

Afri used the revaluation of Dublin City properties in 2012 to apply for an exemption from paying rates. This process took quite some time and Afri appealed the decision to the Valuation Tribunal. The hearing of this appeal was set to be heard in December; however the Valuation Office decided to drop the case ahead of the planned hearing in the Valuation Tribunal and have declared Afri is not liable to pay rates. Due to the fact that Afri had been paying rates from the time of the appeal to mid 2014 with the notice “subject to refund should the rates appeal be successful” Afri is entitled to a refund of €2,675.82 as well as an exemption for paying further rates (approximately, €1,500 per year). Particular thanks go to Lisa for her extraordinary work on this appeal.

6.3 IDEA Corporate Governance Working Group

Lisa Patten attended IDEA’s Corporate Governance Working Group throughout 2014. It aims to support organisations to achieve the targets of the the Governance Code. A number of policies were updated, a board induction ‘pack’ was created and circulated at the AGM, and ‘corporate governance’ was kept on the agenda at all board meetings throughout 2014. Much progress was made towards full compliance.

6.4 Dóchas Code of Conduct on Images and Messages

Afri is one of the signatories of the Dóchas Code of Conduct on Images and Messages. The Code was developed by the members of Dóchas, the Irish association of Non-Governmental Development Organisations, and adopted in 2007. It supplies a framework for sound and fair communications across the NGO sector in Ireland and beyond. By signing the Code Afri commits to a set of principles, ensuring that we will avoid stereotypical or sensational images, respect the dignity and equality of all people portrayed and promote fairness, solidarity and justice throughout all our communications. Lisa Patten is Afri’s code ‘champion’. To find out more about the code: <http://www.afri.ie/dochas-code-of-conduct-of-images-and-messages/>

Joe Murray attended the annual peer-review meeting in July, as part of meeting the terms of the Code. In January 2014 Muireann De Barra undertook an audit of Afri communications in 2013, declaring that she believed Afri was compliant with the code.

6.5 Funding

In addition to the work outlined above we spent a longer than usual period in submitting funding applications to Irish Aid, WorldWide Global Schools, Concern, Trocaire and others. These applications and reports take up ever increasing amounts of time as more and more detail is demanded by some funders. But we are pleased that, despite a downward trajectory – particularly from Irish Aid – we have managed to do enough to keep the boat afloat through recent difficult years.

7. Acknowledgments

We are sad to report that Muireann de Barra has stepped down from the Board of Afri. Living and teaching in Limerick made it difficult for her to participate in our meetings recently but Afri very much appreciates Muireann’s contribution and looks forward to continuing to work with her in the future.

We are also sad to report that Andy Storey has stepped down as Chairperson but happy to report that this position has been taken by Nessa Ní Chasaide. Andy has been a wonderful chairperson, with an exceptional ability to do the business, allow all views to be heard and still keep the meeting within the allotted time! We know he will continue to make an important contribution as a Board member. We look forward to working with Nessa in the years ahead and congratulate her and Tom on the birth of Ferdia in December 2014.

We also extend our gratitude to the entire Afri board which provides support to the staff and contributes greatly in many ways, from the practical to the creative.

We had some excellent interns working in Afri in 2014: Ali Hanaf from ITB, Ehizemoya Kenneth from ISE and Clara Purcell.

As usual we extend our gratitude to Brendan Malone as we say goodbye and thanks to Fiona Stanley and welcome Brendan Kean and Fiona Devitt, from accountants Roberts Nathan.

We thank Ruairí McKiernan for his support in various ways including his invaluable social media work, and in particular promoting various online petitions Afri has created. We also thank Sean Boland for his work on the Afri website.

From Food Sovereignty Ireland we thank Fergal Anderson and Manu Russo and we look forward to continuing to work with them.

We thank Dave Donnellan for filming various Afri events, providing an invaluable resource and archive of Afri's work.

We thank Iain Atack for ably representing Afri at IPB board level and keeping the Afri board updated on IPB events throughout the year.

We thank Rose Kelly and Pete Mullineaux for their work on the *Just a Second!* Schools programme and a particular thanks to Rose for work with the students in ITB.