

STAND PROJECT



STAND
Project:
A Report on
the training
of
Minority
Ethnic
Leaders to
become
specialist EDI
and
Anti-Racism
facilitators.



This project was achieved thanks to support and funding from



Facilitators from CAN and training supports were funded with the support of



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Stand Project Director's foreword.



It is with heaps of pride that I read this report and reflect on my many uplifting encounters with this beautiful constellation of bright, energetic, curious and forthright advocates who have been brought together and supported on this journey by their very capable navigator, the immensely skilled Maria-Elena Costa Sa. In my wildest dreams, I couldn't have imagined better outcomes from this unique project which brings together community development principles and an encyclopaedic anti-racist understanding of Ireland, its society and policy framework into a leadership programme which delivers our first cohort of fierce advocates and activists, poised to drive change through our institutions and society by building alliances and coalitions of solidarity for change, clear and confident in their forensic understanding of the issues and methods required.

Little did I anticipate that I would experience some of the outcomes so soon, so directly and practically on my doorstep. Already the STAND Programme's Minority Ethnic Leaders (MELs), some of whom are drawn from INAR's member organisations, have energised their organisations such that our Network meetings and members' events are more palpably vibrant, thanks to their keen engagement around the key issues, and their infectious zest for change. Already, INAR is experiencing the change that we hope for across Ireland. It really has been an honour for me to have met and engaged with this unique group of individuals and to have witnessed the transformative energy they have unleashed in themselves, the STAND Programme, the INAR membership, and soon across Irish society.

Shane O Curry Director

Support Training Advocacy Network Development -STAND project aim.

Social issue:

INAR seeks a fair, equal and inclusive society, where our minority ethnic communities enjoy parity of esteem; and realise their fundamental rights and freedoms, protected by institutions that work to eliminate racial discrimination. This project is a leadership development project which amplifies minority ethnic communities' voices in order to tackle racism, through community development and training.

Our iReport data is collected directly from communities and evidences the widespread racism and discrimination of being faced by each minority ethnic group in Ireland. Our membership network, research and data corroborate this. It also shows that systems put in place to protect racialised communities often fail when people try to get a remedy for discrimination. This leads to disillusionment with systems and disengagement from institutions and breeds a lack of trust in communities. This institutional failure to remedy racism embeds structural racism.

Our research has shown that racist discrimination and violence are manifested across Ireland and have serious and lasting life impacts on all racialised minorities. These include Travellers, Roma, People of African descent, Muslims, migrants, undocumented migrants, and asylum seekers. Our data also shows that the effective institutional responses are often lacking and that people are discouraged from reporting discrimination. This perpetuates 'racism denial' and obscures system failures, reproducing the cycle of marginalisation and rendering the problem entrenched and intergenerational.

Project Description:

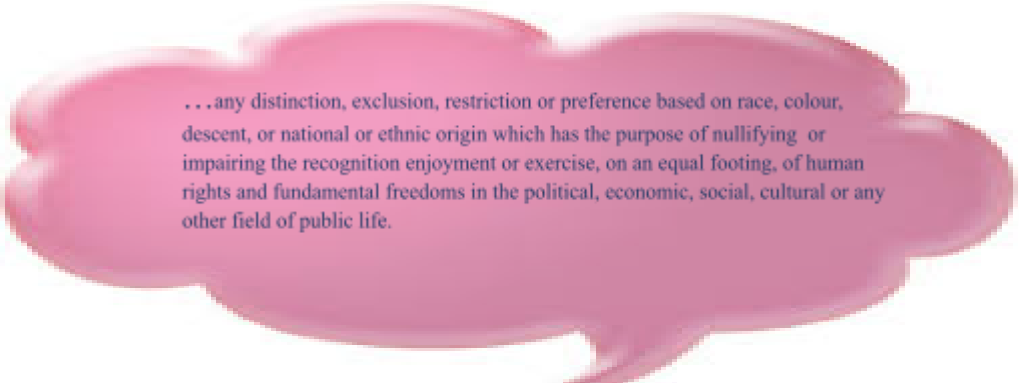
The STAND pilot project centres on using the lived experience, representation and voice of people who are from racialised communities to become community leaders and to create an anti-racism discourse that reflects their lives. The project has empowered minorities to lead partnerships that drive social change through our institutions. It has built on INAR's existing knowledge and tools for empowering and supporting minorities, to build better alliances with civil society groups, and together devise ways to address institutional racism.

This report details how the programme has developed the capacity of a cohort of Minority Ethnic Leaders (MEL) in a three year training and leadership programme. The leaders attended a fourteen session training of facilitators programme to learn to use INAR's anti racism advocacy resources. Now at the end of their second year, they have started to apply their learning by delivering training, based on INAR's resources, tailored to suit key stakeholders within their local community area (e.g. Citizens Information Services, Family Resource Centre, Youth Projects, Community Development initiatives, tenants' rights groups, community Gardai etc). The leaders and their community contacts are forming a network of activists and advocates, who can support communities to tackle racism.

The principles and ethos behind the project.

Human rights.

This training is embedded in a human-rights based model and recognises racism according to the CERD definition:



...any distinction, exclusion, restriction or preference based on race, colour, descent, or national or ethnic origin which has the purpose of nullifying or impairing the recognition enjoyment or exercise, on an equal footing, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural or any other field of public life.

Fundamental to this is the principle of participation where human rights and equality principles are promoted and protected by those from affected communities.

Participation and empowerment

The STAND programme reflects community development principles, recognising that true empowerment requires transferring power to allow agenda setting, decision making and resource distribution to the community. STAND challenges the traditional top down, institutional approach that replicates structural racism, by allowing the peer facilitators to steer the course.

Participatory action and peer co-creation.


This project supported the co-creation of anti-racism peer resources by members of minority ethnic communities, based on research and consultation, as demonstrated by organisations like Pavee Point. The method can help to avoid creating material that reflects bias, and at the same time to tell the stories that each community group feels are relevant, in their own voices. It attempts to capture the diversity within communities and isn't extractive, since community members are credited with their work and present their issues. The training modules reflect the knowledge from each minority community member and since those communities are changing, the material evolves with each training session and is tailored to each session. Here minorities are valued as the experts in their field and their in depth knowledge highlights the nuances between racialised communities.

Leadership.

The under-representation of minority ethnic leaders in the Irish workforce, the public services, in political and public life cannot be addressed without customised leadership programmes that acknowledge the barriers and structural racism that perpetuates this.

STAND minority ethnic leaders have a lived experience of racism and the course allowed participants to reflect on that experience, their own beliefs and values and whether their experience of trauma had informed their career choices and self-confidence. The course has allowed participants to read their lived experience through the lens of our data and analysis, thus becoming actors with real 'Lived Expertise' Many of the group returned to leadership training and capacity building, in two specialist trainings, carried out with the ULEX project, in Spain, at the end of .

The training recognised their expertise and fostered self- confidence. Being in an environment where they were able to talk to other experienced minority ethnic leaders from different nationalities, who could help them to identify common experiences, navigate problems, value their inputs and share their experience was invaluable.



STAND has created opportunities for me to connect with other activists. G.

Meaningful outcomes.

Wholly eradicating racism is unrealistic, but in INAR, we hope to draw a thread between the reporting of racism and support for communities experiencing racism, to access justice through taking a case and vindicating their rights.

What the minority ethnic leaders hoped to achieve.

At the end of the training we hoped that our minority ethnic leaders would be able to:

- Spark community development work, bringing their communities together.
- Facilitate anti-racism training sessions in organisations that their groups identified.
- Collect iReport data and persuade community members to report racism.
- Speak out about their experiences and the racial discrimination that they faced.
- Understand their experiences in the context of wider systemic racism
- Look for targeted solutions to tackle forms of institutional racism.
- Help provide the data for reports through research.
- Help individuals who had made an iReport to get legal advice and to take a case, where appropriate, to the Workplace Relations Commission.
- Form a network of activists that can support each other and changemakers in institutions, to respond to racism.

This deeply ambitious project was inspired by two models of work. One was a model of partnership with different stakeholders and community groups in the Rialto area, the Canal Communities Against Racism (CCAR) model, which has used community development principles as a lens.

The second model is that of the Traveller Communities Primary Health Care for Travellers Projects that have demonstrated a strong commitment to community development, community leadership and the capacity of peer members to effectively advocate for their rights.

What was in the training programme?

The Training programme will be published as a module in the next six months. It used the Responding to Racism module as a basis for starting the training. However, since the trainers were required to have a high level of understanding of the issues, in order to be ready to field questions in the practical world, this training was extended over 14 sessions. As sections were delivered, participants discussed the significance of the inclusion of certain sections of the programme. One key approach was to analyse the historical legacy of the colonisation of Ireland and countries in the Global South, and to look at the history of public policy in the State. This was an important lead into discussions about institutional and structural racism.

The course will be written up and published within Responding to Racism 2, following the completion of the year three training sessions, which will add peer delivered sessions on working with asylum seekers and with the Traveller community.

The layout roughly covered:

- Human rights conventions.
- Irish Equality Legislation.
- Anti-racism, Racism and its manifestations.
- The history of racism, colonialisation and the emergence of false ideologies e.g. scientific racism.
- Manifestations of racism, hate crime and anti-racist approaches.
- Racialisation of the Irish and other identities.
- Unconscious and conscious bias.
- Language and experience, the truth behind microaggressions.
- Intersectional issues including the impact of gender, sexuality and class and nuanced racism.
- Institutional racism, ESA and EEA legislation, Public Sector Duty, and taking a case to the WRC.



Participants drew on their extensive experience to share stories, experiment with techniques and to develop materials that were appropriate to their world view. This also involved dissecting life in Ireland from the perspective of those from the global south.

The minority leaders practiced their skills during the programme, delivering short sessions as part of the 14 week programme. They have subsequently started training, delivering sessions in conjunction with INAR's team. These sessions will refine the training, add wider perspectives and be written up as collective learning.

Outcomes:

The STAND training minority ethnic leaders have reported the following outcomes:

1. INAR's minority ethnic leadership programme has resulted in a much wider range of voices, from diverse communities, where speakers are able to draw on their lived experience and comment on the underlying institutional and structural racism causing them. This has amplified voices less often heard in discourses on racism, demonstrating a better representation of all of our minority ethnic communities.
2. We have seen members of marginalised communities who have been given opportunities to speak for themselves, often at high level meetings, pinpointing effective action and solutions, with the support of civil society stakeholders.
3. Our training has sparked a change in organisations, who have used the opportunity to have conversations on policy reform, for example, where there is poor minority ethnic representation in staffing, particularly at decision making level.
4. The minority ethnic community leaders are strong advocates for iReporting, INAR saw an increase in reporting of hate crime and discrimination cases in 2022.
5. Those experiencing racism have been encouraged to take a case to the Workplace Relations Commission (WRC) following an iReport. INAR provided WRC Adjudicators with anti-racism training, after the WRC learnt about the Equal Access Project. In 2023, INAR made a number of referrals to take cases and supported the taking of an employment equality case against an educational institution.
6. STAND minority ethnic leaders have met with TD's, Local Authority Councillors, key stakeholders, public service providers, policy and decision makers. They have engaged with them to promote a better understanding of the impact of racism on their communities in Ireland and to lobby for the resourcing and implementation of a new National Action Plan Against Racism, with timelines and monitored outcomes.
7. STAND minority ethnic leaders have increased an awareness of the importance of Anti Racism Training, that should be delivered by professionals from minority ethnic communities. They have added to the anti-racism materials being delivered and have provided a wealth of experience that will inform the new Responding to Racism 2 Booklet to be written up in the next six months.
8. The group are now peer training Longford minority ethnic community members, providing anti-racism training for Local Authority staff nationally, one on Public Sector Duty & Islamophobia and another on political rights and representation.



The value of including experts from Community Action Network (CAN) to deliver group work and facilitation skills.

Group Building.

From the outset CAN facilitators paid attention to building a learning community within the twenty participants. They created exercises to foster a safe space for learning, sharing ideas, having difficult conversations and tackling different viewpoints in a very diverse group. Their work contributed to building relationships and solidarity between trainees that has extended far beyond the life of the learning group.

This learning environment was achieved through participants sharing their hopes and fears for the course, creating a group agreement at the outset and revisiting this each time that it became necessary. Participants also had the opportunity to check-in at a personal level at the beginning of each session in recognition of personal issues that can often arise and get in the way of learning and progress.

The check-in process became increasingly valuable for group members individually especially when wider issues started to impact on the course. For example the course took place when many community activists were simultaneously , such as the activities of far-right groups. In the same vein there were regular check-out sessions undertaken to allow participants to encapsulate the learning and/or any feelings arising from the session content.

This attention to group building was responsible for such a high retention rate of participants. Only two people left the program, and they did so at a very early stage. The group met as a large core group. Attendance by a small number was sporadic at times, mostly due to the challenges of being a migrant to Ireland. Whenever there were learning gaps, extra sessions were provided, online.

Importance of facilitation skills as a trainer.

While the emphasis in this course was on building learning in relation to racism, equality and iReporting, there was equal importance attached to building awareness, knowledge and skills in relation to group facilitation. This was considered necessary to help participants to confidently work with groups and deal with challenges that inevitably arise.



The following content was key to this work:

- Identification of personal learning goals.
- Regular reflection using a learning journal,
- Theoretical input on facilitation; facilitator roles; the importance of preparation and planning; creative exercises for use with groups; identification of challenges that can arise.

- Reflection on experience of facilitation through a range of different lenses, that of being a facilitator, working with others in a one-to-one relationship, a group member and the learning that ensued.
- Small group work where participants processed learning for themselves and heard from others.
- Practice Clinics – where participants had the opportunity to explore their lived experience and explore with others where they are challenged and how best to respond.

All participants had the opportunity to practice their budding skills by facilitating a session on a part of the course that they had covered. They were asked to design an anti-racism session and deliver a twenty minute piece that was a part of the program, to demonstrate their understanding of institutional and structural racism. This was followed by questions and answers from the training group. They received feedback on this from course tutors and peer learners.

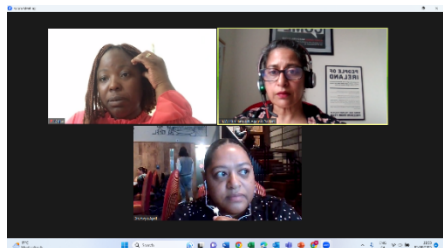


In addition to this, all participants had to facilitate an energizer or group warm-up exercise at the beginning of each session, over the course of the programme. This increased their confidence in group facilitation and led to greater group ownership.

...it was so humbling to be among game changers who despite our challenges, they still called Ireland home. It shows how much they love this country. If only the haters knew that. At the same time it was sad to feel fear in people...it was very real. I hope we can have more regular sessions because I also learned a lot and understood... Thank you for creating such space. M. Intercultural worker. CCAR.

Progress.

This project was funded for a three year period by Rethink, with additional funding from the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission. So far, it has already demonstrated the capacity to form a sustainable social enterprise model that is capable of delivering lasting change to racialised minority ethnic communities that are fighting socio-economic barriers.



Each programme is tailor made for the audience. The minority ethnic leaders involved in the training first conduct a needs assessment, then having defined the purpose of the training, they plan the sessions to cover organisational objectives. required. Every session is unique, peer-led, and examines individual, institutional and structural racism.

Anne @ Friends of the Earth. The whole team found the event very useful and inspiring. It was 'pitched' right for our group as per our prior discussion. There was clear added value in the session being facilitated by people with lived experience. The team found in particular that they felt more educated and empowered to take action beyond mere intentions."

Social Enterprise Model.

INAR charges for its training on a sliding scale. Minority ethnic community trainers now receive a fair wage for the training that they provide and their resource development. INAR subsidises this training for organisations that would struggle to cover the cost, where we share mutual community development goals or where we feel we can effect a wider societal change by addressing structural racism. For example, the training with Dublin City Community Co-op was in an area where the community had experienced community tensions, prompted by far right groups.

Noel @ Dublin City Community Coop. "We were very impressed by the calibre and professionalism of the STAND trainers, we highly recommend them.

Examples of how the outcomes were achieved:

Spark community development work, bringing their communities together.

Handa has worked not just with the Traveller community development project that she is employed by, but her work has spread to other members of her own, Mongolian community. Three Mongolian women have attended capacity building and leadership training to date, with two planning to attend further anti racism training in 2023/2024, sparked by Handa's initial work with STAND. They are beginning to devise anti racism training for their own community,



who are exploring the ways in which Mongolian nationals have experienced racism in Irish society. This is a very new area of work for INAR, which demonstrates the power of participants to identify further potential minority ethnic leaders.

Facilitate anti-racism training sessions in organisations that their groups identified., collect iReport data and persuade community members to report racism. Then to help provide the data for reports through research.

Niera had already started work with the Amal Women's Group (serving Muslim women) identifying and reporting racist incidents using the iReport. She has used her platform to identify the needs of women in her group who experience daily discrimination and Islamophobia, particularly related to their dress. This group has brought improvements to iReporting on hijab related hate crime and discrimination, and the iReport increase is attributable to STAND members work. Niera has also taken part in specialist training and research with the Salaam Project, on a national anti-racism training project, with local authorities. A strong advocate for the project, she has represented INAR at high level events including speaking at the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission.

Speak out about their experiences and the racial discrimination that they faced.

Bronwyn's experience as a minority ethnic community leader has been materially shaped by her life in South Africa as a woman of colour. Whilst INAR does not support the re-traumatising of minority ethnic communities, by forcing them to speak of their experiences, it recognises that these experiences, when carefully managed, can spark group insights. She has used this experience to powerfully narrate the experience of racialised discrimination in her life, drawing on it to discuss discredited notions of scientific racism and the parallels between apartheid regimes, in order to illustrate that there is only one human race. Her work has also distilled learning from other organisations, such as the National Youth Council of Ireland Racial Justice Training. One of the most accomplished trainers, she

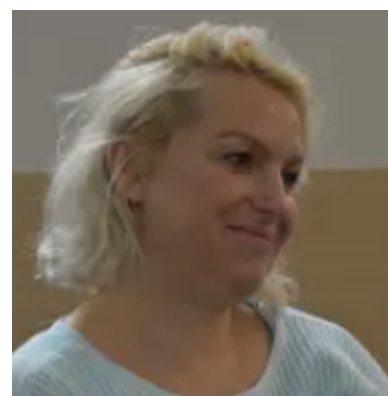
pushes INAR's work into a brave space, working in communities that have experienced racial tensions and where difficult conversations between community workers are encouraged.

Look for targeted solutions to tackle forms of institutional racism.

Daniela, leveraging her professional experience in the mental health field has looked at her area of work to identify areas in the field that advocates could promote organisational and institutional change, particularly when working with minority ethnic communities. She has both run in-house training, and looked at changing practice, by increasing representation by inviting minority ethnic leaders to attend working groups on specialist issues.

Developing a network of advocates and activists.

The presence of asylum seekers and refugees on the training ensured that a community development and a pilot training programme for asylum seekers and refugees would emerge from the programme. Still in its infancy, the concerted efforts of community leaders such as Siphwe, Olubunmi, Ewa, Bronwyn, Desire and other key peer leaders has shaped INAR's response, prompting a small scale project to provide rights based information in select areas where asylum seekers are living. This work is un-funded and piecemeal. INAR is aware that asylum seekers will be referred to services like FLAC, MRCI, NASC and others that are already overstretched. This is a matter that requires better State public policy, since it has highlighted many areas of rights infringements and institutional racism.



Help individuals who had made an iReport to get legal advice and to take a case, where appropriate, to the Workplace Relations Commission.

Whilst INAR does not have the resources to become an organisation that can provide legal and information services, especially given the role of the State in providing those services, it has encouraged member organisations to support people making an iReport to take their case to the Workplace Relations Commission to vindicate rights under the Equal Status and Employment Equality Acts. Key referrals covered racist discrimination in employment, access to mainstream education, access to shops, leisure facilities and pubs. The STAND project has also worked with FLAC this year to highlight the need for changes to Equality legislation and the mechanism that hears cases, to make it more accessible and improve outcomes for those impacted by racism.

Amplifying Voices.

The training has also benefited Traveller and Roma communities and Asylum seekers. They have often been denied access to the labour market, owing to structural and institutional racism. Training of trainers programmes offer them a firmer foothold by creating a new area of work.

Other voices.

Smaller minority ethnic community groups have since started to work collaboratively with STAND. This has helped them to present their unique experience and their voice has been amplified through the programme.



Rosana Pinheiro Machado U.C.D.

“Handa and Maria-Elena gave an excellent talk on NGOs and INAR to UCD students. They raised insightful questions on social justice and racism and stimulated critical debates among students. As a UCD professor, I am indebted to their generosity, patience, and sharp knowledge of the subject.”

The Equal Access Project and Free Legal Advice Centre.

In INAR's experience people often felt doubly wronged, not just because they had experienced racism, but also because they encountered a vacuum, when they should have received the information, and support needed to seek redress. Travellers and Roma, migrants, refugees, and People of African Descent, might find INAR if they tapped "reporting a racist incident" into Google. But they still felt that simple access to justice wasn't there for them. Only a few still understand that the WRC is the body that should realise their rights.

The project has the capacity to effect a wider change, by drawing a thread from making an iReport to vindicating rights by taking a case to the Workplace Relations Commission. INAR first became involved in the Equal Access Project because analysis of the data showed the very low success rate for our minority ethnic communities trying to take a case under the "race" ground through the WRC.

INAR's membership work in the regions also highlighted massive unmet need in access to justice. This included for example asylum seekers and refugees, and migrant workers, who are at risk of exploitation in employment, Roma, or Muslim women who face racism and Islamophobia because of their appearance; and many minority ethnic communities who receive substandard public services or encounter problems with getting people to serve them because of the colour of their skin, or their accent.



Since working on the EAP project INAR has changed its pattern of work. There is now a clear thread that runs from the reporting of racist incidents, to getting member agencies to support people to take a case to the WRC, with the support of advocates who received the first round of training. It has had a trickle-down effect. An example of this is when INAR staff recently supported a young black woman to take a case to the WRC against her public sector employer, under the race ground.

The STAND minority ethnic leaders now work with the pool of advocates. In the final year we hope to set up three hubs across the regions in Cork, Longford and Wexford, to bring local EAP advocates together with STAND Anti racism trainers and other INAR member groups in those areas, to provide anti racism training and to facilitate iReporting and the taking of cases.

In the long term the outcomes of the work of the network could inform policy submissions to the State on the effectiveness and efficiency of the current complaints structure, as well as inform the relevant sections within the National Action Plan on Racism.

It could use this on the ground experience to determine where there are areas of potential discrimination that could be used as a test case by FLAC and IHREC, to bring about lasting change.

Unexpected Outcomes

Wider representation by minority ethnic communities.

INAR's group of anti-racism trainers bring voices that were largely previously unheard into the field of EDI training. These voices are also questioning some of the underlying assumptions of EDI. Their work is analytical, critical and reflective of the needs of their communities.

Since they are grounded in their communities, they have created new areas of work for INAR and new employment opportunities for themselves, as well as responding to calls for training from organisations who contact INAR.

Brid Technical University Dublin. "Olubunmi co facilitated an anti-racism workshop that allowed valuable learning, discussion and powerful sharing of lived experience"

Change makers.

INAR now has a small network of empowered, active, and resilient voices within its larger network, advocating to advance structural and institutional change. They use the iReport data to record incidents, then critically analyse them to see if they could lobby for training of staff or for policy change within organisations. They encourage minority ethnic communities in conjunction with partner agencies, to take a case to the Workplace Relations Commission.

Improved service delivery.

The training has highlighted changes needed to the iReporting form and following comments from community members and stakeholder groups, there will be a new Responding to Racism resource to support iReporting of incidents.

Community Development and Empowerment Model.

The team have begun to develop a network of advocates and activists based on similar work done in local stakeholder partnerships, such as the Canal Communities Against Racism (CCAR) partnership in South Inner City Dublin. Its work is embedded in the principles of community development, affected community leadership, solidarity and capacity building in civil society and key stakeholders.

Leadership.

Some trainers have demonstrated strong leadership qualities and have represented INAR at talks and conferences.

Demand.

The demand for INAR's training service has sometimes outstripped its capacity to provide sessions. State services have approached INAR to provide training designed to change policy when they experienced racism within the organisation or when experiencing activity by "far right" activists. This project has evidenced a need for the State to ensure public sector staff attend anti-racism training, in line with the National Action Plan Against Racism recommendations.

Recommendations and Next Steps.

The Minority Ethnic Leaders are now considered experts in the field and are rolling out the training in Institutions that they have identified as in need of priority actions. As an example, Niera and the Salaam Project identified that Local Authority staff would benefit from tailored anti racism training, particularly on Islamophobia. The idea is that facilitators trained by the SALAAM project will be part of a pool of anti racism trainers that can be called upon by Local Authorities.

State agencies have approached the project to look at anti racism training that will shape service provision. In social work and social care provision STAND trainers planned and delivered training to a foster care project; social workers; social care staff and students on social care courses at TUD.

Muslim women who experienced hate speech because they were wearing a hijab were encouraged to report Islamophobia.

Next year, if successfully funded, Handa and Liliana hope to provide anti racism training in Local Authorities, to minority ethnic communities including those in direct provision, to inform them of their electoral rights, Employment and Equality legislation and how to report racism, taking a case where necessary.

It is suggested that this community development model, where peer minority ethnic community leaders meaningfully drive change through society, be used as a model for similar projects nationally and receive multi annual funding through the State, to help the State meet the objectives listed in the National Action Plan Against Racism. 2023, in respect of anti racism training for all publicly funded organisations.

It was a privilege to become a trainer with STAND because being an asylum seeker, at the beginning it seemed impossible.. But INAR made it possible,

STAND Trainer Olubunmi,



Thank you for supporting the STAND Project from the Team.

Credits.

Photography: Ella Tiger Costa Sa Ryan.