

**Research  
report**

# *Linking Local actors in Migration and Development*

**Strengthening Strategic Cooperation  
between Diaspora and Civil Society  
Institutions in Africa**

*By Antony Otiemo Ong'ayo*

**African  
Diaspora  
POLICY CENTRE**



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African Diaspora Policy Centre, The Hague, April 2013*



Although migration is not a new phenomenon in Africa (Adepoju 2010/2008a) the extent to which various actors address its various dimensions is highly disaggregated. Historically, governments in collaboration with international organisations have been the major players in terms of interventions from policy and legislative perspectives (Brinkerhoff 2012; Aquinas 2009; Boswell 2007; Brinkerhoff 2006). However, these interventions have been largely focused on the management of global migration (Hatton 2007; Bhagwati 2003) and, in particular, on border control, regulation of cross border mobility and movements caused by conflicts and disasters.

In recent years, the different dimensions of migration have intensified due to globalisation and the increased spatial connectedness of places and people. Manifestations of the various types of mobility have since generated debates about the negative and positive sides of migration. For instance, one strand of literature on migration highlights the focus on the management of migration (Bakewell 2008; David 1995). From this perspective, policy initiatives for the management of migration address such dimensions as illegal migration, trafficking and refugee flows, i.e. some of the perceived negative sides of migration. These perspectives have informed government responses in the form of agreements between migrant sending and receiving countries, especially in Europe (Adepoju et al. 2010), but also a number of initiatives by international organisations such as the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), International Organisation for Migration (IOM) and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

On the one hand, a growing body of research highlights the positive sides of migration. This strand of literature tends to emphasise the developmental potentials of migration (Alonso 2011; De Haas 2010; Bakewell 2009b; Ratha & Mohapatra 2009; Brinkerhoff 2008; De Haas 2007; Black et al. 2006; Ammassari & Black 2001). Due to the increased mobility both at global, regional and within nation-state levels, a wide variety of actors have been playing different roles as part of the intervention measures that seek to maximise the development potentials of migration while at the same time minimising its negative effects. The initiatives also transcend multiple levels. For instance, at the global level, the Global Forum on Migration and Development (GFMD) has been a critical platform for addressing migration from a multi-stakeholder perspective. It brings on board both state and non-states actors from across the globe to address the pertinent issues that are inherent in the contemporary migratory patterns and their implications for different societies. However, at the continental or regional level, Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) are missing in the migration policy processes in Africa, yet the negative impact of the various dimensions of migration is significantly felt in the continent. Most critical are internal mobilities in the form of rural-urban migration (Oucho & Gould 1993), and south-south migration (Adepoju 2008b), which are induced by climate change, conflict and constant search for better opportunities across the borders. In West Africa, countries such as Ghana continue to host large numbers of refugees from the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) region (UNHCR 2012). New dynamics are also experienced in terms of labour migration in the East African Community (Ong'ayo et al. 2013), while migration of refugees and Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) remains a consistent challenge to governments in Southern Africa (Oucho 2006/2002). Likewise, there has been a significant influx of migrants from other parts of Africa, which is both conflicted-generated, as well as motivated by the pursuit of better opportunities (Adepoju 2010). Consequently, African migrants within the south-south trajectory encounter new hierarchies of citizenship and xenophobic reactions (Oucho 2009; Nyamnjoh 2006), further violence, rape in the

refugee camps and hostile communities in the regions where they are temporarily placed.

The overall objective of this report is to address how to facilitate the strengthening of strategic alliances and close cooperation between the Diaspora and African civil society institutions in the areas of lobbying, campaigning and advocacy regarding the well-being and protection of the rights of migrants in Africa. This is urgently needed since the Diasporas and non-state actors still operate separately and rarely partner in migration-related matters across the divide. This report emphasises the fact that a joint force of Diasporas and CSOs could make a difference to the migration situation on the continent. This is particularly important as many African countries have now become, simultaneously, a source, transit point and destination, but they also experience significant impact of Diaspora remittances and various forms of development input. In this regard, the continent as a whole will need to put in place policy instruments (at different levels) concurrently addressing better migration management, protection of migrant rights, integration and migration and development in order to minimise the negative effects of migration while maximising its benefits. This report, therefore, presents a number of policy recommendations on how to support the establishment of constructive mechanisms through which the Diaspora and African civil society actors could share information, experiences and expertise in the field of migration within the context of Africa and beyond. These propositions are aimed at fostering strategic partnerships between the Diaspora and African civil society actors in their efforts at strengthening the development impacts and improving the well-being of migrants in Africa.

The report is divided into six parts. Part one presents primary reflections on the migration dynamics in Africa, which underpin the argument for the need to involve Africa civil society organisations in migration issues. Part two discusses the character of CSOs in Africa and their thematic orientation as important factors for consideration in their engagement in migration issues. Part three examines the nature of interventions in the migration policy fields in Africa. In part four, the paper provides an overview of the recent initiatives towards the facilitation of civil society involvement in migration issues with a specific focus on regional examples. Part five addresses the relationships between Diasporas and local CSOs in order to explore the likely potential areas of convergences and collaboration. Part six presents a rationale for civil society engagement in migration and highlights some of the likely benefits of their interventions. In the last part of the paper, a summary of the arguments is made with reference to the observed gaps in the current initiatives and recommendations for further research and policy initiatives that include African civil society organisations and Diaspora organisations.

# Character of African civil society and thematic orientation

To be able to verify whether civil society organisations engage in migration issues in Africa or not, it is imperative to examine the character of groups that constitute CSOs in Africa. This is because some of the issues that are dealt with in the different migration policy fields have local, regional and translocal dimensions, which could deviate from their thematic orientation. Moreover, the character of the organisations that fall under the civil society rubric is critical for determining whether they are able to engage effectively with migration as a thematic area; this entails processes that transcend the national border and are influenced by both global and local dynamics. Differentiation of the notion of civil society is, therefore, necessary due to the diverse application and interpretation of the processes in which non-state actors have been involved in the development processes in Africa.

For instance, the notion of civil society has a clear meaning in European history and liberal political thought, but this meaning is not the same in other contexts, especially in Africa. In the Western conception, the notion covers a wide range of non-market and non-state organisations and structures in which people organise to pursue shared objectives and ideals. It is a political space or sphere between government and business in which social movements become organised (UNDP 1993). Hence, in the development arena civil society is perceived primarily in terms of Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) whose missions are explicitly and uniquely developmental in character. However, in Africa, the notion covers a wide variety of groups, such as farmers' associations, professional associations, community-based organisations, women's organisations, environmental groups, faith-based organisations, labour unions, and the non-profit media groups, as well as other groups that do not engage in development work. Therefore, a suitable conceptualisation requires definitions that are context specific and relevant. As argued by Kasfir, restricting the definition to western, civic norms 'impoverishes the concept's capacity to explain social change and even the reforms it promotes' (Kasfir 1998, p.7).

Over the past three decades, Western governments, donor agencies and international NGOs have played a major role in the evaluation of the contemporary civil society organisations in Africa (Hearn 1997). This has mainly been in the form of symbolic repertoires, agenda setting, and financial resources. During the 1990s, Western governments provided funding for civil society organisations in Africa in an attempt to promote a democratisation process in the continent (Hearn 1997 p.1; Diamond 1995). During this period, CSOs became a major actor in African politics whose main role was seen in terms of democratic consolidation (Hearn 1997 p.4; Diamond 1994), and political transition in Africa (Bratton 1994/1989). The activities by these groups are often expressions of social aspirations, demands or protests articulated in distinction or in opposition to the state or to other groups perceived as dominant or threatening or aspirations to 'a viable statehood, that rests on an ingrained assumption about appropriate forms of political organisation and order' (Milliken & Krause 2002, p.762).

Taking these characteristics of CSOs in Africa into account, therefore, compels us to examine which categories are most likely to engage in migration issues. This is because the relationship between civil society and government entails contestation, while at the same time it is influenced by a legal structure, recognition and financial support. Sometimes, CSOs develop in partnership with government whereby they substitute for the failings of government.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> 'Civil Society and Government' <<http://press.princeton.edu/chapters/i7214.html>> (accessed 21 March 2013).

In the field of migration and development, CSOs can play a significant role within the confines of their diversity, capacities and geographical coverage as well as transnational interconnectedness. For instance, if civil society organisations in Africa are given the necessary recognition and role in the field of migration, their involvement could enhance the promotion of the rights of migrants. These could be informed by their needs and experiences (Thouez 2004), which can eventually facilitate the maximisation of the use of remittances from migrant families; dissemination of reliable information on the rights of migrants; sensitisation of groups exposed to the risk of illegal migration and providing support services for returnees.

## Interventions in the migration policy fields in Africa

Increased global mobility, both in their South-North and South-South trajectories, has also led to policy initiatives aimed at managing migration in various contexts. There has been an increase in the initiatives aimed at leveraging migration for development and facilitation of cross-border mobility at regional levels, especially in the countries of origin. In Africa, such moves are noted in the initiatives that target cross-border migration, for instance, in Eastern and Southern Africa (Oucho 2006) and in West Africa where there has been intraregional and inter-regional cooperation for the management of migration in the region (Adepoju 2009/2002). Other initiatives have focussed on North Africa (De Haas 2006), but also between Africa and the EU (Adepoju et al. 2010).

From the receiving countries' perspective, the main impetus for the various efforts to manage migration relate to the links between migration and security (Crépeau et al. 2007), irregular migration (Koser 2009; Miller 2008), illegal migration and trafficking (IOM 2000), migration and poverty (Newland 2003; Skeldon 2002). In recent years, there has been a significant increase in global competition for highly skilled migrants, focus on legal migration (CEC 2005a) and measures to manage economic migration (CEC 2005b) in the context of demographic challenges in most developing countries. Within Africa, the negative impact of migration is mainly observed from the perspective of environment and climate change (Castles 2002), conflict and refugees (Van Hear 2003; Akokpari 1998) and from a brain-drain perspective (Kasper & Bajunirwe 2012; Nyarko 2011; Oucho 2008; Mohamoud 2005a). Africa loses significant human capital through South-North mobilities (Adepoju 1991), especially the flight of highly skilled and professionals in sectors that are critical for socio-economic development and knowledge generation.

Interventions in the field of migration involve the participation of a variety of actors at both global, regional and national levels; however, these interventions are different and are, by necessity, constrained and moulded by the political context in each country. Moreover, the experiences with the different dimensions of migration also vary markedly between countries and regions. Thus, the different migratory dynamics in each region and country influence the responses of both government and non-state actors. International migration has been largely perceived in terms of South-North movements (Castles & Delgado-Wise 2007). Hence, the receiving country governments and international organisations significantly influence the nature of interventions on migration-related issues in the sending countries.



The local response to migration, however, remains ambiguous due to mixed perspectives that are informed by the differences in the geographical position of countries and their experiences with the different dimensions of migration in the continent. Apart from forced migration, voluntary migration is used as a household/family strategy (Kwankye et al. 2007; Snel & Staring 2001); hence the inclination to view the phenomenon from a negative perspective. Moreover, the link between migration and development (Castles & Delgado Wise 2007) through remittances highlights some of the benefits of migration, which seem to obscure nuanced perspectives on the impact of migration. Remittances also play a significant role in the economies of many countries in Africa (Ratha & Plaza 2011/2007). Therefore, interventions in the area of migration are much more focused on the facilitation of remittances, reaching out to Diasporas (Aquinas 2009) and institutional building of cooperation with Diaspora organisations (Mohamoud 2010).

In this context, engagement in migration-related policy processes and interventions that emanate from the policy recommendations is still largely an undertaking of government institutions and international organisations. In the case of Africa, the role of civil society organisations in migration-related policy fields and programmes has been very limited, yet CSOs have been very vibrant in many parts of Africa, where they address different human development challenges. Most significant has been their work in human rights, which targets the rights of marginalised groups in society, governance and the rule of law, lobbying and advocacy on such issues as environment, gender and provision of essential services that complement government interventions.

However, finding a role for African civil society organisations in the migration-related policy interventions must be placed in the broader context of the political economy of migration and wider debates concerning the issue of agenda setting, sources of the CSO resources and the extent to which migration as a thematic area could be taken up by the local CSOs. Additionally, it is imperative to examine the extent to which civil society organisations have capacities for addressing the causes, nature and implications of the various dimensions of migration. Their likely response to these issues hinges upon their grasp of the international, regional, and national legislation and regulatory frameworks for dealing with migration among other migration dynamics. While most CSOs in Africa are used to lobbying and advocacy on other social domains, migration requires approaches that have both a local and transnational orientation. This is because migration has both negative and positive sides and entails a complex institutional and actor configuration. With specific focus on Africa, the section below examines the degree to which civil society in the south has taken up migration, what initiatives exist, what are the dimensions of these interventions and what gaps exist in terms of knowledge and policy initiatives for further policy research and intervention interventions.

# Some recent initiatives towards the facilitation of civil society involvement in migration issues

As a result of the recognition of the need for participation of a wide variety of stakeholders in the field of migration, several initiatives have emerged at both global and regional levels. This has entailed a focus on migrants and allied advocates (Mandelbaum 2009) and civil society as important stakeholders on migration issues (GFMD 2008). For example, several non-governmental organisations come into daily contact with migrants and the problems that they may face in relation to human rights, human trafficking, humanitarian assistance, and the needs of special groups (GFMD 2008). NGOs are, in this sense, seen as partners for the implementation of national and international policies on the ground. This recognition derives from their experience in awareness creation, monitoring and advocacy; hence, they can increase the level of awareness on issues relating to migration. For these reasons, CSOs can play an important role in migration, through involvement in the Regional Consultative Processes (RCPs). Within such frameworks, CSOs can give inputs that range from observations, training and capacity building for local communities and target groups and deployment of the necessary resources for addressing the various dimensions of migration and their impact on development. Examples of recent RCPs initiatives that involved civil society organisations include the South-American Conference on Migration (SACM of Lima Process), the Regional Conference on Migration (RCM or the Puebla Process) (IOM 1996) and the Migration Dialogue for Southern African (MIDSA).

In Africa, especially at the continental level, the most significant initiatives have been the African Development Bank Group and the Migration and Development Initiative, which were launched in 2009.<sup>2</sup> This initiative gives priority to the promotion of remittance flows as a development tool and a link to the private sector. However, its overall objective is to maximise the development impact of remittances through productive investments, promotion of business opportunities and job creation at the grassroots level. Through this initiative, AfDB aims to promote strategic alliances and networking, and building capacity at the association and institutional levels. The Intra-ACP Migration Facility<sup>3</sup> initiative intends to support the ACP countries and regions in understanding and managing migratory flows in order to maximise their impact on development. ACP Migration is primarily focused on migration within the ACP area; namely, the 79 African, Caribbean and Pacific countries. The direct beneficiaries are national institutions, regional organisations as well as civil society organisations active in the field of migration. Indirectly, it benefits all state and non-state actors involved in the process of consultation on the theme of Migration and Development and, beyond that, the migrants themselves, their families, their communities, their countries of origin and destination. ACP Migration strives to contribute to the sustainable development of these countries and regions, and to improve rights and living conditions of both migrants and non-migrants. The Facility falls within the framework of the international dialogue on migration and responds to the willingness, shared by the ACP Group of States and the European Union, to consider migration in relation to development. Component 3 of the Intra-ACP Migration Facility aims at empowering civil society to contribute to the dialogue on migration.<sup>4</sup> By supporting civil society, the initiative aims to strengthen their ability to participate in the political dialogue on migration issues. The initiative is therefore intended to build the capacity of non-state actors at national and regional levels, based on specific needs of the civil society in order to promote the rights of migrants.

The Africa-EU Partnership on Migration, Mobility and Employment<sup>5</sup> is an Africa-EU partnership with a specific focus on facilitating mobility and free movement of people between Africa and the EU. It outlines a common understanding and commitment to manage legal migration while paying attention to fair treatment of all migrants under applicable international law, finding solutions to problems posed by irregular migration flows and human trafficking and to ensure that migration and mobility work for development. The dialogue is guided by the Joint Africa-EU Strategy agreed in Lisbon in

December 2007, the Declaration of the 2006 Tripoli Ministerial Conference on Migration and Development, and the EU-Africa Plan of Action on Trafficking in Human Beings. The most significant components of the partnership agreement are those that focus on migration management challenges and migration and development, as outlined below.

1. Addressing possibilities of generating policy coherence at international, regional and national levels, e.g. through promoting better integration of the impact of migration into development policies in respect of developing countries, and developmental aspects into migration strategies. Non-state actors at all levels should also be consulted;
2. Facilitating the role of Diasporas in order to contribute to the sustainable development of their countries of origin through, for example, supporting Diaspora networks and building the capacity of Diaspora organisations; enabling Africans in the Diaspora, especially those in highly technical fields and high demand, to carry out some of their professional activities in their home countries as well in the entire continent without necessarily needing to give up their employment abroad.

These two areas directly relate to the potential areas of civil society involvement in migration. Firstly, through the consultation processes and interventions on the ground; and secondly, by exploring the necessary mechanisms for collaboration with Diaspora organisations.

Another initiative involving Africa civil society is the Migration EU eXpertise (MIEUX). This is a joint EU-ICMPD initiative<sup>6</sup> that aims to enhance the capacities of partner countries and regional organisations to better address all areas of migration through a comprehensive approach to migration management. Following the successful completion of its initial phase, MIEUX has now entered its second phase: MIEUX II (2012–2014). MIEUX II continues to provide short-term technical assistance to both national and regional administrations worldwide, but now offers a larger and broader scope of intervention to encompass all thematic areas of migration management. In addition to technical assistance in managing irregular

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<sup>2</sup> *The African Development Bank Group, Migration and Development Initiative* <[www.afdb.org/en/topics-and-sectors/initiatives-partnerships/migration-and-development-initiative/](http://www.afdb.org/en/topics-and-sectors/initiatives-partnerships/migration-and-development-initiative/)>(accessed 20 March 2013).

<sup>3</sup> *The Intra-ACP Migration Facility* <[www.acpmigration.org/](http://www.acpmigration.org/)>(accessed 22 March 2013).

<sup>4</sup> *ACP Migration and civil society* <[www.acpmigration.org/activities/societe-civile/](http://www.acpmigration.org/activities/societe-civile/)> (accessed 22 March 2013).

<sup>5</sup> *The Africa-EU Partnership on Migration, Mobility and Employment* <[www.euromed-migration.eu/other-migration-initiatives/](http://www.euromed-migration.eu/other-migration-initiatives/)>(accessed 22 March 2013).

<sup>6</sup> *The MIEUX Initiative* <[www.icmpd.org/MIEUX-II.1672.0.html](http://www.icmpd.org/MIEUX-II.1672.0.html)> (accessed 22 March 2013).

migration and mixed migration flows, the scope now includes legal migration, labour migration, migration and development, migrant rights and asylum and protection systems. The initiative provides assistance in line with the priorities of the EU Global Approach to Migration and Mobility (GAMM) and complements current EU mid- and long-term migration cooperation initiatives by implementing quick-reaction, short-term capacity building actions.

MIEUX supports relevant ministries and bodies responsible for comprehensively managing migration in partner countries (from Eastern Europe, Asia & Central Asia, Middle East & North Africa, Sub-Saharan Africa, Latin America & the Caribbean and the Pacific). Its added value to regional and national actors in Africa includes:

- Improved understanding and knowledge-base at expert and policy levels in targeted areas of migration management
- Enhanced capacity to effectively manage migration
- Cooperation and platforms for the exchange of information and strengthened processes both at national and regional levels
- Improved capacity to craft, implement and assess national migration policy
- Partnership that reflects a common understanding and commitment to providing comprehensive responses to migration, mobility and employment issues with the particular objectives of creating better jobs in Africa and better managing migration flows

The Rabat Process<sup>7</sup>, which was started in 2006, is based on principles of combating poverty, promoting sustainable development and co-development, and respecting the rights and dignity of migrants and refugees. It is seen as a balanced, pragmatic and operational mechanism of cooperation among countries of origin, transit and destination of migrants coming from West and Central Africa.<sup>8</sup> The Mediterranean Transit Migration (MTM) Dialogue<sup>9</sup> is a flexible, consultative platform between migration officials in countries of origin, transit and destination along the migration routes in Africa, Europe and the Middle East. It covers various aspects of irregular and mixed migration, as well as migration and development.

The Joint Migration for Development Initiative<sup>10</sup> (JMDI) reflects the acceptance of and growing interest in the strong links between Migration and Development (M&D) and aims to support M&D actors to effectively harness the potential of migration for development. This programme is implemented by the UNDP and involves five other UN agencies – IOM, ILO, UNHCR, UNFPA – which support the programme with their institutional knowledge, expertise, and extensive networks to ensure its success. The initiative highlights the importance of strong anchorage of interventions with the local governments in countries of origin and destination, and in line with the essential local-to-local dimension of the M&D nexus, as the key to successful and sustainable M&D interventions. This perspective is relevant, therefore, for both Diaspora organisations as well as CSOs whose activities are embedded in the local institutional settings (Ong'ayo 2013).

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<sup>7</sup> *IMCPD – The Rabat process* <[www.icmpd.org/Rabat-Process.2049.0.html](http://www.icmpd.org/Rabat-Process.2049.0.html)> (accessed 22 March 2013).

<sup>8</sup> *The Rabat Process* <[www.dialogueuroafricainmd.net/web/the-rabat-process](http://www.dialogueuroafricainmd.net/web/the-rabat-process)> (accessed 22 March 2013).

<sup>9</sup> *The Mediterranean Transit Migration (MTM) Dialogue* <[www.icmpd.org/MTM.1558.0.html](http://www.icmpd.org/MTM.1558.0.html)> (accessed 22 March 2013).

<sup>10</sup> *Joint Migration for Development Initiative* <[www.migration4development.org/content/about-jmdi](http://www.migration4development.org/content/about-jmdi)> accessed 22 March 2013.

A recent initiative is the African Civil Society Forum on Migration, Development & Human Rights Towards A Unified Voice for African Civil Society'. The African Diaspora Policy Centre (ADPC) in cooperation with the Pan-African Network in Defence of Migrants (PANiDMR) and Migrants' Rights International (MRI) organised a Diaspora-civil society workshop in Accra on 12-13 September 2012. This unique event brought together, for the first time, representatives from the Africa Diaspora organisations in Europe and North America, trade unions and civil society organisations in Africa, Migrant's Rights International (MRI), etc. ADPC facilitated the participation of key Diaspora actors representing different organisations from the Netherlands, Belgium, France and Germany. The organisations they represented are the Diaspora Forum for Development (DFD), the Dutch Consortium of Migrant Organisations (DCMO), Le Forum des Organisations de Solidarité Internationale Issues des Migrations (FORIM), Centre de Formation et de Renforcement des Capacités (CEFOREC) and the Farafina Institute (FI). The workshop would not have been possible without the support of Oxfam Novib in the Netherlands.

The uniqueness of this initiative is that, for first time, Diaspora and African civil society representatives met at the continental level to discuss strategies to improve the environment for lobbying, campaigning and advocacy regarding the protection of the rights and well-being of migrants in Africa. Through this initiative, a joint agenda and a partnership action proposal between Diaspora organisations and African civil society actors was presented at a roundtable meeting held during the civil society days of the GFMD event in Mauritius from 19 to 20 November 2012. The outcome of the meeting included an emphasis on the strategic advantage of promoting viable partnerships between the Diaspora and non-state actors at sub-national and local levels, strengthening of the existing strategic alliances and close cooperation between Diaspora and non-states institutions in such areas as lobbying, campaigning and advocacy, the need to implement policy instruments (at different levels) addressing better migration management, protection of migrant rights, integration and migration, and development in order to minimise the negative effects of migration while maximising its benefits. The main conclusions and key ideas for action that emanated from the workshop discussions are:

- Supporting the establishment of an informal forum in which the Diaspora and non-state institutions can share information, experiences and expertise
- Facilitating the development of a mechanism that contributes to fostering strategic partnerships among Diaspora and non-state actors in the efforts to strengthen development impacts and improve the well-being of migrants in Africa
- Promoting the development of a culture of inclusive multi-stakeholder dialogues on migrant rights and integration at the national level that will help raise public awareness, and will also facilitate the formulation of better and informed domestic policy and practice in the field of migration and development
- Improving the environment for lobbying, campaigning and advocacy for migrant rights and well-being in Africa
- Realising policy and practical changes at the national level responsive to improving the well-being and the protection of the rights of migrants in Africa



# The relationships between Diasporas and local CSOs

Over the last three decades, a paradigm shift in development discourse and practice has entailed the inclusion of civil society organisations in the development and political processes in the global south. Likewise, there has been a shift in the perceived roles of diaspora organisations from welfare organisations to significant players in the development processes in the countries of origin and residence (Ong'ayo 2013). The attributes of Diaspora organisations and evidence of their developmental potentials places them within the conceptualisation of civil society category of non-states actors' (Ong'ayo 2013). Despite the recognition of the potential positive contributions of Diaspora organisations, especially in the countries of origin, no significant attempt has been made to juxtapose their participation and those of other CSOs at the different levels in which they engage and participate.

For instance, as a by-product of migration, Diasporas are constantly engaged in different processes at the local level, yet they hardly have links to local civil society organisations. Similarly, there are no linkages between the activities of CSOs and Diaspora organisations, yet they both undertake initiatives that target the same groups within specific localities. Most Diaspora organisations undertake community development projects and participate in local policy processes that complement government interventions. Diaspora activities at the local community level also address areas with fundamental impact on livelihoods as well as some of the drivers of migration, such as poverty, youth unemployment and lack of basic services. Moreover, Diaspora organisations have experience with migration through individual experiences and collective initiatives that address the root causes of migration at the community level. They are also experienced in dealing with receiving country governments, institutions and development agencies.

Civil society organisations and Diaspora organisations could find a convergence and develop frameworks for addressing migration-related issues through translocal linkages (Zoomers & van Westen 2011) in these areas. Joint initiatives between CSOs and Diaspora organisations could also enrich policy processes based on their local knowledge and experiences gained in their trajectories of migration to various destination countries. An understanding and recognition of the respective contribution of these two groups can make a significant impact through joint initiatives and institutionalised linkages for translocal development (Zoomers et al. 2011) at different levels. Within concrete frameworks for engagement, Diaspora organisations and civil society organisations in the countries of origin can become effective agents of change and jointly contribute to tackling some of the drivers of migration in the countries of origin. There is evidence from studies on the impact of Diaspora communities on peace (Warnecke et al. 2009; Cochrane 2007; Mohamoud 2005b) that suggests that Diaspora organisations have, for example, provided financial assistance to promote non-violence, through cross-community cooperation, development and reconciliation projects. Diaspora organisations have the potential to promote transnational ties that could be useful in tackling issues such as migrants' rights, refugee conditions as well as policies and legislations that impact on these conditions. Diaspora organisations also have capacity in the form of talents, skills, education, imagination and resources of different networks and target outputs to address specific needs of homeland (Cochrane 2007). These are valuable resources that local civil society organisations can tap into for local regional, national and local interventions in the field of migration and development.

# Rationale for civil society engagement in migration

In an attempt to answer the question why should civil society in Africa engage in migration policy processes, a review of past and recent initiatives reveals that CSO involvement in migration in the south, especially in Africa, is very limited. Besides the GFMD meeting in Mauritius in 2012, which brought a number of actors together, and an ADPC initiative in September 2012, there are no initiatives in different parts of Africa in which African civil society organisations are directly involved. The most visible initiatives, especially at the continental, regional and national levels, remain an undertaking of government institutions and international organisations, with the support of migrant receiving countries in the North.

Civil society organisations by their very nature represent an amorphous grouping of non-state actors whose relation to the state entails constant tension (Bratton 1994; Cohen & Arato 1992). In spite of this, they also provide a critical link between the state and the various groups that they represent, in particular the local communities. Their skills, knowledge and experiences can inform policy in ways that enrich programmes and contribute to policy effectiveness. In this case, CSOs can function simultaneously as interlocutors, as well as agents of transformation through their intermediary role.

In the field of migration and development, civil society organisations can add value to the on-going policy processes and interventions through their contribution to policy formulation and programme design. Based on their experiences in the implementation of community based programmes, CSOs contribution to migration programmes can enhance the quality of monitoring and evaluation since they have well-established networks and system of verification that are embedded within the local communities. By getting involved in the monitoring of the intervention programmes on migration, CSOs fulfil their watchdog role, which could ensure effective policy outcomes and transparent service delivery.

Moreover, CSOs can also provide the services that migrant groups in different situations require. For example, many migrants are in need of legal services, material goods and health care in the case of refugees and those traumatised in their trajectories of migration. Civil society organisations in Africa can also deploy their advocacy skills and experiences in addressing some of the implications of migration policies as well as conditions by advocating for human rights-based approaches (Paoletti 2007). This is because defending migrant rights is not only feasible within the government institutional framework, but is much likely to be guaranteed through the involvement of non-state actors whose activities are likely to demand for more action, and point out government lapses. In this regard, civil society organisations can be more effective than public authorities in identifying and denouncing abuses. CSOs are better placed to tackle issues that governments would confine to themselves, or avoid discussing for reasons of sensitivity, delicacy, protocol and fear of domestic consequences.

More specifically, civil society organisations can contribute to the field of migration and development through their involvement in the following areas:

- Labour migration and immigration issues
- Status and welfare of refugees and displaced person through services that target their well-being and rights
- Input into migration-related policy processes – formulation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation
- Lobbying and Advocacy – for rights-based approaches – on issues such as domestic work, child labour, trafficking and child solders
- Address South-South migration and development issues through regional collaboration
- Address South-North migration and development issues through transnational collaboration
- Engaging with Diaspora organisations to enhance constructive engagement through participation within the institutional frameworks. Such collaborations could contribute to
  - Increased exchange of critical information
  - Effective lobbying and advocacy beyond the national borders
  - Increased global and regional resources for service delivery
  - Increased opportunities for exchange of skills
  - Increased chances for alliance building and solidarity



This working paper sought to explore the relevance of civil society participation in migration issues in Africa. The main argument here is that civil society organisations of different persuasions and character have been critical players in the development processes in Africa; hence, their involvement in migration policy processes could provide the on-going intervention with the necessary experience-backed insights. A second argument is that although CSOs are experienced in dealing with local context development challenges, the extent to which they can take up migration as a thematic area depends on their capacities to deal with translocal issues. Moreover, their agendas and symbolic repertoires are often shaped by donors, so the inclusion of migration in their activity coverage would require a thematic re-orientation. However, these concerns can be addressed through measures that recognise their potential in the first place but also a paradigm shift in the current discourses and policy debates on migration and development in Africa.

While a number of initiatives at global and regional levels seem to recognise the importance of a multi-stakeholder approach in dealing with migration issues, very few make direct reference to civil society organisations. Moreover, despite the widely acknowledged developmental potential of diaspora organisations in the countries of origin, little effort has been made at development agency, academic and policy levels to address the disconnect between civil society organisations and Diaspora organisations in terms of their participation in migration policy processes in the countries of origin. These two significant actors already undertake activities at different levels, which have implications for local communities especially in Africa. However, their interventions remain fragmented, yet the issues that they deal with are interlinked through the impact of global human mobility dynamics at the local levels.

From the available evidence of policy initiatives and interventions in the field of migration and development in different contexts in Africa, it can be argued that the migration and development nexus is not a theme that should remain a preserve of international organisations, sending country government institutions and Diaspora organisations. On the contrary, it is an all-embracing theme that requires multiple stakeholders beyond the usual actors. Similarly, the realities of increased global mobility and its diverse consequences point to the need for multifaceted approaches in dealing with the different dimensions of mobility in Africa. In the future, policy and intervention frameworks that acknowledge the diversity of actors, while at the same time facilitating the convergence of interests and consolidation of interventions, are much more likely to contribute to the success of M&D initiatives.

# Recommendations on how to facilitate the development of a mechanism that contributes to fostering strategic partnerships between Diaspora and non-state actors

In the context of the above-observed gaps in the existing initiatives, a suitable mechanism is necessary to bolster the on-going efforts and facilitate new initiatives that could strengthen the role of civil society organisations in terms of development impacts and improving the well-being of migrants in Africa. This report draws attention to the resolutions of the conference organised by the Pan-African human rights of migrants (PANiDMR), the African Diaspora Policy Centre (ADPC) and partner organisations (DFD FORIM, CEFORC and FARAFINA) in Accra in September 2012 by providing some recommendations, the implementation of which could form the basis for a more robust intervention in this field. More specifically, the recommended interventions also target maximising the potential of a combined effort by civil society and Diaspora organisations in migration issues in Africa, which is an area that has not been explored in past and recent civil society engagement initiatives in the continent.

**1.** To give Africa an effective and united voice on migration issues at a global level, efforts should be made at regional, national and local levels to construct a shared vision and coordinated strategies among defenders of migrants' rights in Africa and the Diaspora. This should entail institutional building of cooperation that includes all significant actors in the field of migration in Africa, with African civil society organisations playing a leading role in the mobilisation of different groups.

**2.** In order to build a Pan-African platform for African civil society organisations with a focus on migration and promotion of human rights in the development discourse, there is the need for the inter-actor regional and national linkages to address the dimensions of migration that have both local and regional characteristics. This should entail efforts to build and strengthen the capacity of African civil society organisations and social movements in Africa in order to promote and defend the rights of migrants. The initiatives in this direction should undertake a process of targeted capacity-building initiatives with a focus on

- Strengthening CSO oversight on migrant rights
- Promoting information exchange
- Adopting collective advocacy for the ratification, implementation and enforcement of Conventions that apply to migrants, domestic workers and labour migrants.

**3.** To promote dialogue that includes advocacy for the right of those who are displaced by climate change, conflict or violations of their rights to land, food or their political and economic rights. There is a need to establish a consultation and dialogue framework for local civil society organisations and Diaspora organisations. This should aim at finding convergences and synergies in order to unleash the full potential of these groups in the field of migration and development.

- 4.** Promoting linkages and exchange of information among civil society organisations to promote dialogue and cooperation and promote common approaches and strategies to defend the rights of migrants.
  
- 5.** Developing effective tools for advocacy that focus on the formal link between migration, development and human rights issues in political and policy arenas both at the national and international levels. These initiatives should target such platforms as the World Social Forum on Migration (WSFM), the Global Forum on Migration and Development (GFMD) and the UN High-level Dialogue on Migration (HLD). The advocacy content also needs to target the protection and recognition of African migrants while at the same time calling for the recognition of the human rights of migrants.
  
- 6.** In order to contribute to a change in the discourse on migration at international platforms that incorporate human rights in the development agenda, there is a need for improved knowledge on migration issues among civil society organisations in Africa through active partnerships between civil society in Africa and the African Diaspora in the US, Europe, Latin America and Asia and platforms for exchange of best practices.

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International Catholic Migration Mission (ICMC)

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Platform for International Cooperation on Undocumented Migrants (PICUM)

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