



Diaspora Academy Reflection Meeting

Diaspora as Agents of Change: Reflecting on the Achievements of the Diaspora Academy

Date: 20th April, 2017

Venue: The Hague Institute for Global Justice, The Hague

Time: 9:30 – 17:00

Background

Increasingly over the last 15 of years, many African diaspora organisations in Europe and beyond have been operating as critical agents of change in their countries of origin. They have been involved in all kinds of development activities that often cut across both social and financial sectors. For example, diaspora-driven organisations have become active to varying degrees in community development, health, education, employment promotion, micro-entrepreneurship and business, etc. They are also involved in a broad range of development-related activities at the local, sub-national and national level. Consequently, the involvement of the diaspora in homeland development has grown from simple to very complex and dense processes.

This is partly the result of diaspora becoming better organised in the host countries through such structures as professional or development-oriented associations. In addition, diaspora organisations and associations in the host countries are gaining access to considerable financial resources which enables them to sponsor, in a sustainable manner, development projects they implement in their respective homelands. It is also the growing realisation among the diaspora that they have a responsibility to contribute to the development of the continent that they have left physically but not emotionally. This emotional attachment is the source of the spirit that prompts the diaspora to maintain ties with their countries of origin which is translated into obligations and thus into concrete commitments and actions through projects and activities. Diasporas feel that they are now in a strategic position to facilitate the process of trans-national activities and networks and act as development bridge-builders between the host and home countries. The strategic position particularly enables them to mobilise considerable resources (capital, knowledge and networks) for the development of the homelands. Furthermore, as a result of inexpensive transportation and communications technology, diasporas consider themselves to be at home and abroad at the same time.

The growing involvement and visibility of the diaspora in the development of the homelands has helped them to position themselves as critical development actors within development policy circles

in the developed countries. In this regard, diasporas have become the key drivers for a diaspora-led development sector that can be considered separate from the traditional development cooperation sector within the domain of Western donor governments. The **Diaspora Academy** has therefore helped to upscale the capacity of diaspora organisations so that they can contribute more to the development of their respective countries of origin in a professional manner.

About the Diaspora Academy

The African Diaspora Policy Centre (ADPC) in cooperation with the Hague Academy of Local Governance (THA) and The Network University (TNU), launched the Diaspora Academy in May 2014. The initiative has been generously supported by the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Municipality of The Hague. The duration of the programme is three years and will end in April 2017.

The overall objective of the Diaspora Academy (DA) is to upgrade and strengthen professional skills and competences of diaspora organizations in Europe engaged in the development of their countries of origin. The uniqueness of the programme is that it was initiated to address the knowledge and capacity building needs of the diaspora development practitioners and organisations in Europe active in the field of development. The activities of the Diaspora Academy have included capacity building training to diaspora organisations; evidence-based research; outreach activities; facilitation of workshops; and smart development partnerships between diaspora and sub-national development entities in homelands. The target beneficiaries of this programme have been diaspora development actors across Europe active or interested in areas of peace-building and post-conflict reconstruction, advocacy, lobby and alliance/networking building. A total of 78 diaspora have been trained over the course of the three years of the Diaspora Academy.

Objectives

The objective of the meeting is to give a platform to the stakeholders of the Diaspora Academy, most importantly the Diaspora organisations that have benefitted from the training workshops, in order to learn how the work of the programme has strengthened skills and capacities in their development activities. The meeting will capture the experiences of participants who have gone through the training workshops, which will serve to highlight their importance as agents of change in peacebuilding, social development and advocacy. It will also provide a unique chance to learn about the positive impact of the Diaspora Academy in order to better improve the quality of future activities targeted at enhanced diaspora capacity for development. In this regard the meeting will facilitate reflection on impact, achievements and lessons learned from the Diaspora Academy, and help to guide future work aimed at empowering the Diaspora's place in the wider development of their homelands.

The reflection meeting will seek to garner ideas, suggestions and insights to improve the follow up activities of the next phase of the Diaspora Academy.

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Moderator: *Jasmin Nordien*

Time	
09h30-10h00	Registration & coffee
10h00-10h30	Welcome Remarks <i>Paul van Tongeren, Chairman of the Board, African Diaspora Policy Centre</i> <i>Awil Mohamoud, Director, African Diaspora Policy Centre (ADPC)</i>
10h30-11h00	Keynote Speaker: Diaspora as Agents of Change <i>Gibril Faal, Director of GK Partners & Chairman of African Foundation for Development (AFFORD)</i>
11h00-11h30	Question and Answer with Discussion
11h30-11h45	Diaspora Academy: Summary of the Programme <i>Constance Formson-Lorist, DAP Programme Coordinator</i>
11h45-12h30	The Voices of Peace Diaspora share their peacebuilding efforts and how the Diaspora Academy has impacted their work.
	Stephanie's story <i>Stephanie Mbanzadore, Burundian Women for Peace and Development (BWPD)</i>
	Masud's story <i>Masud J.S.I. Abdi, Kismayo Foundation</i>
	Salome's story <i>Salome Mbugua, Founder of AkiDwa and Wezesha</i>
12h30-13h00	Discussion
13h00-14h00	Lunch
14h00-14h45	The Voices of Change Agents: Potential of Diaspora Advocacy Diaspora share their lobbying efforts and how Diaspora Academy has helped them get a step closer to their goals.
	Celestine's story <i>Celestine Ugochukwu, African Diaspora Council of Switzerland</i>
	Gisma's story <i>Gisma Ruphael Mou Mou, Voice of South Sudanese Diaspora (VoSSD)</i>
	France's story <i>France Mutombo Tshimuanga, 'Foundation for Africa'</i>
14h45-15h15	Discussion
15h15-15h30	Coffee break
15h30-16h15	Reflection session This session is facilitated by the moderator and reflects ways to improve the programme design and impact. It is carried out in plenary for easy flow of discussion and sharing of ideas. <i>Moderator, Jasmin Nordien</i>
16h15-16h30	Wrap up and closing <i>Abubakarr Bangura, Chairman of Sierra Leone Central Union</i>
16h30	Networking opportunity <i>With Refreshments</i>