

Migration and
Development

*Mainstreaming
Diaspora Initiatives
Into Development
Cooperation Policy
Towards Africa*

**Evidence from Britain, France,
Germany and The Netherlands**

African
Diaspora
POLICY CENTRE



August 2011

Contact us for more information.

Introduction

This paper is synthesized from fieldwork and research undertaken in Britain, France, Germany and the Netherlands between January and June 2010, which analyze the mobilization strategies of Diaspora for homeland development, with the aim of identifying ways in which home governments can effectively reach out to their diasporas to harness their initiative for homeland development.

The Diaspora refers to individuals, groups and communities of people dispersed from their original homeland to reside in other lands different from their own. However, they continue to maintain strong socio-economic and sometimes political ties with their countries of origin. Nowadays, it is very fashionable to talk of the role and power of the Israeli, Indian, Irish or Chinese Diaspora in facilitating economic development in Israel, India, Ireland and China. For the purpose of this paper, the Diaspora is defined as populations of migrant origin dispersed from their original homeland to foreign countries, but which are connected with their homeland through various multifarious links involving flows and exchanges of people and resources (Van Hear 1998; Vertovec & Cohen 1999).

Diaspora are comprised of a varied and sometimes complex mixture of people, who arrive at their different

locations in the host countries at different times, through different means – including legal and illegal entry –, through different channels including labour migration, asylum, and family formation and reunions and for various purposes including educational and professional pursuits and political and/or humanitarian protection. However, irrespective of the time, means and purpose of arrival, the Diaspora has become a major global factor influencing and shaping development policy calculations. Indeed, the importance and relevance of the Diaspora as important strategic stakeholders and agents of positive change within the development field in Africa is now acknowledged. In fact, there are around 3.3 million African Diaspora populations in the EU countries, with 1 million of these originating from Sub-Saharan Africa. When this number is added to the population of African Diaspora living elsewhere in the OECD countries and other parts of the world, the critical potentiality of their considerable human and financial capital resources and the benefit of their strategic position as interlocutors between their host countries and Africa for national and continental development are immense.

It is noteworthy that many African Diasporas are now in a strategic position to facilitate the process of transnational activities and networks and to act as development bridge-builders between their host country and Africa. Many are capable of

facilitating the flow of information, innovative ideas, intellectual capacities, new technological skills, smart and innovative business and trade practices, peace-making tools and techniques and democratic political habits and practices from their host country to Africa. Against the background of the complex challenges facing many African countries, there is an urgent need to harness the social capital, intellectual ideas, economic means, creative initiatives and activities of its Diaspora population for national and continental development.

This policy brief explores the tenor and terrain of the activities of the African Diaspora in France, Germany, the Netherlands and the UK within the context of the increasing emphasis within international development policy circles on the role that the Diaspora are playing – and can play – in homeland development. This is with the overall objective of highlighting the nature and organization of the African Diaspora communities in these countries and the diverse policy measures and strategic interventions adopted by them to connect their homeland for the purpose of socio-economic development. The constraining factors preventing homeland governments in Africa from effectively harnessing the real and potential benefits of their Diaspora population and the practical steps towards realizing this objective are discussed.

Country context

France

Francophone African countries have a long history of migratory links with France as a result of French colonialism. In fact, given the high demand for a foreign workforce to drive and sustain the French economy (Collyer 2003), the flow of migrants from the former French colonies was strongly encouraged by the French government through a visa waiver and work permit policy. African migration into France followed a regular pattern from 1945 to 1968 as the French government's strategy of actively recruiting foreign workers to meet the shortage of manpower, especially in the industrial and mining sector, led to an influx of migrants from Algeria, Tunisia and Morocco. As the main destination of migrants from North Africa, France is host country to more than 95 per cent of Algerian and Moroccan citizens living abroad. (de Haas 2005, 2006).

Apart from the flow of students going to study in various educational institutions in France, migratory flow to France from Sub-Saharan Africa is dominated by migrants from Mali, Senegal and Mauritania, who represent almost 80 per cent of total migrants from this part of the continent. The level of rural poverty in these countries provides an explanation for this emigration out of the River Senegal River valley, which fuels major transnational migration networks (Quiminal 1994). The migrants, mainly from rural areas of the aforementioned countries, are

mostly males who travel to France to find (temporary) work in order to raise the living standards of their families and communities. However, from the 1990s, a new dimension in the migration pattern from these countries to France became noticeable as individuals from urban areas joined the migration stock to engage in commercial self-employed activities in the informal sector of the French economy.

Migratory inflow into France also consists of migrants and refugees from the Great Lakes region of East and Central Africa. From the beginning of the 1980s and throughout the 1990s, the number of asylum seekers and refugees from this region rose drastically as the level of political and socio-economic conditions began to deteriorate. The situation was aggravated further by the civil war in the Democratic Republic of Congo, Rwanda and Burundi, as well as political instability in the West African sub-region, giving rise to a significant number of refugees and asylum seekers arriving in France from other African countries, including Nigeria. Most of the African Diaspora population in France is concentrated in the urban centres, especially Paris and Marseilles.

Germany

Germany hosts the fourth largest African Diaspora population in Europe. A migratory trend from Africa to the then West and East Germany was observed from the beginning of the 1960s when migrant workers, political refugees and

recipients of academic scholarships began to arrive in both countries. Initially, most of the new arrivals only intended to stay temporarily, but as political and socio-economic conditions in their various homelands began to deteriorate, they began to seek permanent resident status. Currently, the Moroccan Diaspora population, numbering about 120,000 members, constitutes the largest African Diaspora community in Germany. This is followed by Ghana 50,000 (20,893 Ghanaian citizens); Nigeria 35,000 (17,903 Nigerian citizens); Eritrea 30,000 (9,000 Eritrean citizens); Ethiopia 21,000 (9,990 Ethiopian citizens); Cameroon 19,000 (14,646 Cameroonian citizens); Democratic Republic of Congo 15,000 (10,892 Congolese citizens) and Togo 14,000 (10,933 Togolese citizens). A considerable percentage of the African Diaspora population are concentrated in the Ruhr Region, in the cities of Dortmund, Essen, Duisburg, Bochum and Oberhausen, as well as in the urban areas of Berlin, Hamburg and Munich (Statistisches Bundesamt 2009).

The Netherlands

The Netherlands has a long history of immigration as its economic prosperity and relative political freedom attract a significant portion of immigrants coming to Western Europe. Many of these migrants came to the Netherlands in the 1960s and 70s as labour migrants or 'guest workers', were recruited to fill labour shortages during years of economic boom in the country. Others were second-generation migrants

emanating from family reunion and family formation. Consequently, about 20 per cent of the population of the Netherlands is made up of immigrants or the children of immigrants. Morocco, with a total Diaspora population of about 330,000 immigrants, is the largest African Diaspora population in the Netherlands. (Central Bureau for Statistics CBS 2007). The Netherlands has a *laissez-faire* approach to the issue of immigration and integration into the Dutch society. Thus, as part of the Dutch 'polder' society, immigrants are allowed to maintain their cultural identity.

Over the last few years, and in spite of increasing emphasis on family reunification and family formation, there has been a noticeable decrease in the number of new immigrants into the Netherlands, which is attributable to stricter enforcement of asylum and family reunion laws and a poor economic climate. Nevertheless, it is still estimated that 39 per cent of the total population of the Netherlands is non-Western immigrants, mostly resident in the Randstad region, which comprises the cities of Amsterdam, Utrecht, Rotterdam and the Hague. It is also estimated that immigrants make up almost half of the population in Amsterdam and Rotterdam and are characterized by low labour participation, high unemployment and high rates of dependence on state welfare. (Central Bureau for Statistics CBS 2007).

United Kingdom

Africans began to arrive in the United Kingdom from the various British colonies and territories during the era of colonialism. While some came as slaves to work as domestic servants, others arrived as seamen aboard merchant ships. Others came to serve in the British armed forces during World War One and Two, and a substantial number came as students, especially in the 1950s and 1960s. The combination of these disparate immigrants constituted the first version of the African Diaspora population in the UK. The second wave of immigrants to the UK came as a result of various political upheavals across the African continent, typified by anti-colonial and anti-apartheid struggles, outbreak of civil wars and ethnic conflicts and a bid to escape from political repression at the hands of military dictatorship and one-party authoritarian regimes in Uganda and Malawi (Cohen 2008). The third wave of migrants was triggered in the 1980s and 1990s by deteriorating socio-economic conditions occasioned by the implementation of the IMF inspired-Structural Adjustment Programme in various African states. This third wave of migrants, consisting of many professionals, is generally referred to as the modern or new African Diaspora.

Currently, the UK's African Diaspora population – excluding bi-racial, as well as children and grandchildren of first- and second-generation immigrants – is estimated to be about 740,000. This represents 1.36 per cent of the

UK's total population of 61.9 million. The majority of these immigrants are resident in the Greater London area. (Office of National Statistics ONSS-UK)

Nature and organization of diaspora communities in selected host countries and their engagement mechanism for homeland development

France

Available evidence points to the existence of very strong links between the African Diaspora population in France and the respective homelands. Although the strength of such linkages varies from one country to another, it is particularly strong for Morocco, Senegal and Mali due to the direct involvement of these countries with issues of migration and the importance attached to remittances. Indeed, countries like Morocco, Senegal and Mali have established and pursued appropriate strategies to attract the involvement of their Diaspora in homeland development projects. This is premised on the belief that their Diaspora possess substantial financial resources, skills and knowledge which can be leveraged for homeland development.

The Moroccan government has always pursued an international migration policy based on political and economic considerations. For example, migration

was used as a tool to mitigate the political pressure coming from the rebellious rural Berber areas of the Rif, Sous and Southern Oases, while remittances from migrants are regarded as a positive resource inflow that is critical to the country's economy. Indeed, based on the realization that uncoordinated remittance inflow, an unfavourable investment climate in the homeland and the Diaspora's lack of confidence in government agencies are detrimental to its economic growth, the Moroccan government has created a network between its consulates and various banks in France, with a view to gaining the confidence of the Diaspora and encouraging them to send remittance transfers through established channels for profitable investments in the homeland. Furthermore, a positive attitude was adopted not only towards the lifting of restrictions on financial transactions, but also towards naturalization, dual citizenship and voting rights for the Diaspora. These policies, aimed at strengthening the links between Morocco and its Diaspora population, especially in France, were coordinated by the Ministry for Moroccans Abroad and the Foundation *Hassan II pour les Moroccans Résidant à l'Étranger*, (de Haas 2005b, 2006)

As far as the Senegalese and Malian Diaspora communities in France are concerned, they are organized for homeland development through Home Town Associations. These Home Town Associations are usually involved in the

execution of homeland development projects such as the building of schools, mosques, churches or hospitals. This is particularly true of the Malian Diaspora community in France – which is male dominated and mostly from the Kayes Region –, which organizes fundraising activities to build hospitals and/or to send medicines to the homeland. Home Town Associations also provides the Senegalese and Malian Diaspora communities in France with an avenue to socialize with each other and to exchange experiences and advice on how to integrate into French society and other sundry issues related to dual citizenship. The associations also act as mediators, facilitating the establishment of partnerships and cooperation between different towns in the home and host countries. For example, the Malian Women Association *Guidimakha djikké* works in partnership with the Municipality of Saint-Denis in the suburb of Paris to implement various projects in Mali, including the donation of educational materials and building of health centres. In addition, informal savings and loans associations, called *Tontines*, have been established among women of the Senegalese and Malian Diaspora. These associations serve as informal credit agencies, providing soft loan facilities to women in difficult financial circumstances, funded by members' monthly contributions. The *Tontines* also run basic courses in reading, writing and vocational training for members.

Germany

The African Diaspora Community in Germany is organized largely along country lines. Among the most notable Diaspora organizations are the German Moroccan Competence Network (DMK e.V.); the Ghana Council and the Ghana Union; the Nigerians In Diaspora Organization (NIDO-Germany e.V.); the Ethiopian German Forum, the German-Ethiopian Student Association and Academicals Forum (DÄSAF); the Cameroonian Association of Engineers and Computer Scientists (VKII); the Congolese Diaspora organizations Mutoto e.V. and Kitunga e.V.; and the Togolese Togoinitiative e.V.

The Moroccan Diaspora is the largest and longest established of all African Diaspora groups in Germany with the first wave of immigrants arriving in 1963 following a recruitment agreement between Morocco and Germany. Moroccan communities are concentrated around the industrial regions of North Rhine-Westphalia and Hessen and are mainly organized under the ambit of the German Moroccan Competence Network (DMK), formerly the Moroccan Competence Forum Germany (MKFD). The Organization is responsible for the coordination of all development activities and projects undertaken in the homeland by Moroccan professionals.

With an estimated population of 35,000, Nigerians represent the second largest African Diaspora group in Germany. The first wave of Nigerian migrants

were mainly Igbos, an ethnic group from southeastern Nigeria, who came to Germany between 1967 and 1970 to escape the Nigerian civil war. This group, many of whom are academics or highly skilled professionals, have integrated well into German society. The second and third wave consists of students who came in the 1970s and economic migrants and asylum seekers in the 1980s and 1990s. The Nigerian Diaspora in Germany is organized centrally via NIDO- Germany e.V., which is the German branch of Nigerians in the Diaspora Organizations (NIDO) Worldwide. NIDO- Germany e.V. is essentially involved in anti-brain drain projects, rural educational and development support, business project development, public-private partnership on project management and fundraising for Diaspora projects and empowerment. Moreover, about 90 per cent of the Nigerian Diaspora population in Germany belongs to various Christian church associations, while 7 per cent and 3 per cent, respectively, are members of cultural organizations and development associations.

The Ethiopian Diaspora, estimated at about 21,000 members, is the fourth largest African Diaspora group in Germany. Ethiopians arrived in Germany in three major waves, ranging from students or diplomats in the 1960s and 1970s to dissidents fleeing the years of Red Terror and those that left in the wake of droughts, famines and unending armed/ethnic conflicts.

Most of the Ethiopian Diaspora population is located in Cologne, Frankfurt (Main) and the larger Rhine-Main area, Munich, Hamburg and Berlin, and the communities have a relatively high degree of organization and professionalism. As many as 57 Ethiopian Diaspora Associations are officially registered in Germany. These include the Ethiopian German Forum (*Äthiopisch-Deutsches-Forum*), the German-Ethiopian Students and Graduates Association (DÄSAV) and the Ethiopian-Cologne Association (*Ethio-Cologne e.V.*), the Tigray Development Association e.V. (TDA) and the Oromo Relief Association in Germany (H-ORA e.V.)

The Cameroon Diaspora, with about 19,000 members, is the fifth largest African Diaspora group in Germany. It consists, largely, of asylum seekers trying to escape political persecution in the homeland and students or other professionals who came to Germany to study or for training. They are organized along three main lines: (1) professional associations, such as the Association of Cameroon Informatics and Engineers, the Association of Cameroon Students (VKII), the Association of Cameroon Pharmacists and the Cameroon Medical Association; (2) development associations, such as Ident Africa e.V. and Cameroon Challenge; and (3) political associations such as the Association of Cameroonians of the Rhine Region. These associations are mainly engaged in the design and implementation of development-

oriented projects in the education, health and agricultural sectors of the homeland.

With 14,000 members, the Togolese Diaspora is the sixth largest African Diaspora group in Germany. Many Togolese choose Germany as a host country due to the colonial relationship between Togo and Germany. The complex and sometimes difficult political and economic situation in Togo is strongly reflected in the nature and organization of the Togolese Diaspora population in Germany, which is characterized by pro- and anti-Eyadéma groups. The development activities of the Togolese Diaspora communities are directed at the regions and areas of origin and are dictated by ethnic considerations. Consequently, the Togolese Diaspora community is fragmented and there is no central umbrella organization (such as the Nigeria's NIDO) coordinating their activities. This has changed slightly with the formation of the German-Togolese Friendship Association, which is engaged in educational, cultural and religious activities.

The Netherlands

The nature and organization of the African Diaspora community in the Netherlands is quite diverse. The nature, organization and engagement mechanisms of the Moroccan, Ethiopian, Sudanese and Ghanaian Diaspora communities in the Netherlands are highlighted for discussion. An estimated 340,000

Moroccans constitute the largest African Diaspora community in the Netherlands. Their most notable mechanism for Diaspora engagement in the homeland is the Marokko Fonds, a Moroccan development organization formed in 2005 with the financial support of the National Commission for International Cooperation and Sustainable Development (NCDO). It is an independent, apolitical and non-religious initiative of the Moroccan migrant community in the Netherlands geared towards homeland development and encouraging cooperation between Morocco and the Netherlands. The thematic foci of the work of the Marokko Fonds are education, healthcare, clean drinking water, human rights, culture and sports and youth empowerment.

Ethiopian refugees arrived in the Netherlands in the late 1970s as a result of the Derg dictatorship. In spite of these difficult circumstances, many members of the Ethiopian Diaspora in the Netherlands are highly educated (17 per cent) or averagely educated (61 per cent), with about 53 per cent engaged in paid employment in the labour market. As a group, they tend to maintain their cultural identity and many of them belong to hometown associations and engage in homeland development through Stichting DIR, an Ethiopian-Dutch development organization based in Amsterdam and established in 2000. DIR works in the area of poverty alleviation amongst vulnerable groups in Ethiopia targeting ex-sex workers, war veterans, the

disabled, children and youth. It does this by creating job opportunities, as well as the political and socio-economic empowerment of marginalized groups. This is carried out in the context of its Diaspora Programme, a bridge-building programme funded by the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Oxfam Novib, Achmea and Stichting Doen.

There are over 7,000 Sudanese in the Netherlands, comprising first- and second-generation immigrants. As a fragile state, Sudan is a priority for Dutch foreign policy and the Dutch government is the country's biggest international donor. As such, it is concerned with promoting political stability, peace and development in Sudan. It does this by working with both state and non-state actors and in collaboration with established organizations and individuals within the Sudanese Diaspora. For example, the Dutch government works with the Inter-Church Organization for Development Cooperation and the Sahar Consultancy in order to actively engage in the peace process and provide humanitarian aid. It is also involved in the operation of the Multi Donor Trust Fund for South Sudan (MDTF-S) and the Capacity Building Trust Fund (CBTF) aimed at the reconstruction of Southern Sudan and based on the comprehensive peace agreement of 2005.

The Ghanaian Diaspora in the Netherlands is also engaged in homeland development through the Afroeuro Foundation, a migrant

development organization based in the Hague. It is involved in micro-credit and capacity building projects, which are implemented in the context of ensuring food security in the three communities of Tamale, Kibi and Kumasi in Ghana.

United Kingdom

Five African Diaspora development organizations in the UK were mapped for this study. They are the African Community Development Foundation (ACDF), the African Foundation for Development (AFFORD), Development Impact for Nigeria (DIFN), Nigerians in the Diaspora Europe Chapter (NIDOE) and Pastoralists in the East and Horn of Africa (PENHA). These organizations are formally constituted legal entities with a constitution and a Board of Trustees. In conformity with UK laws governing charities and companies, they are registered either as charity organizations (ACDF, DIFN and PENHA) or as a development company (NIDOE and AFFORD), which entitles them to receive charitable donations and benefit from tax relief provisions.

The African Community Development Foundation (ACDF) was formed in 1999 by African academics from various countries. It works among African Diaspora communities in the UK to improve livelihoods, life chances and well-being by enhancing the capacity of individuals, communities, civil society, social enterprises, NGOS, businesses and local institutions to alleviate poverty and improve the standards of living through self-reliance. From 2004,

ACDF began to engage in advocacy campaigns on Africa through the Make Poverty History Campaign and the Commission for Africa. It currently runs a Diaspora volunteer programme in Kenya.

The African Foundation for Development (AFFORD) evolved from being an unincorporated charity in 1996 into a development company in 2004. Its mandate is to harness the contribution Africans in the Diaspora can make to African development through advocacy, lobbying and capacity building. Since its establishment, AFFORD has earned a strong reputation for crystallizing appropriate strategies to inspire and generate new ideas amongst the network of African Diaspora organizations for developmental activities. It currently has programmes in Sierra Leone and Ghana.

Development Impact for Nigeria (DIFN) was established in 1999 as a faith-based organization by some Nigerian professionals working in the areas of education, health, youth and community development. It has pursued its objective by, among other things, adopting a small maternity clinic project in Lagos and through awareness campaigns on HIV/AIDS. Although its early activities were funded through regular payments, fundraising drives and support from friends, networks and churches, DIFN is currently resourced via the DFID-funded Diaspora Volunteering Programme, which

reconnects Nigerians with Nigeria as returnee volunteers, in order ‘to give something back’.

Nigerians in the Diaspora Europe Chapter (NIDOE) is the UK chapter of the Nigerians in the Diaspora Organization (NIDO) global network. Established in 2000, it aims to harness the skill, expertise and knowledge base of Nigerians residing outside of Nigeria and to promote the utilization of their economic, human and technological resources. It does this by facilitating information sharing among Diaspora members and the private and public sectors in Nigeria, which require their skills, expertise and experience.

The Pastoralists in the East Horn of Africa (PENHA) was established in 1990 as an Africa-led and African-inspired non-governmental organization by a group of scholars from Eritrea, Ethiopia and the Sudan. It is focused on the empowerment of East African Pastoralists who are marginalized as a result of seizure of their land by sedentary communities and politicians.

Constraining factors for homeland governments mobilizing their diaspora for homeland development

What emerges from this consideration of the engagement of the Diaspora in the development of their homeland is that there are various constraining factors militating against structured and constructive engagement between the Diaspora and their homeland governments for the political and socio-economic development of the country of origin. Perhaps the most fundamental constraint is lack of political good will towards the Diaspora by various homeland governments. This is especially the case when the homeland is governed by an authoritarian military regime or a one-party dictatorship. Given the fact that the selected host countries are beacons of freedom, they often attract various activists seeking refuge away from persecution from their homeland. In time, and through their various political activities, these activists became a thorn in the side of the homeland government, and this in turn destroys any prospect of engagement between the Diaspora population and their home government. This has been particularly true, at various times, of the relationship between the governments of Ghana, Nigeria, Ethiopian and Sudan and their Diaspora populations. However, as these states began to adopt positive

political reforms and embarked on the tortuous road to democratic governance, the antagonism between the Diaspora and the homeland government began to abate, making way for meaningful and beneficial engagement.

Another noticeable constraint to positive engagement between several homeland governments in Africa and their Diaspora population is the inability of the diplomatic missions of various African countries at the forefront of establishing and fostering positive engagement between the home country and their Diaspora population to provide the necessary assistance and information on how the Diaspora can apply their skills and resources to homeland development. Unfortunately, many of these diplomatic missions appear to be ill-equipped to carry out this function, either because they lack appropriate personnel and/or the requisite resources for doing so. Consequently, there is a discord in orientation and perspective between these diplomatic missions and their country's Diaspora population in the various host countries. The love-hate relationship between embassy staff and their Diaspora population is particularly true for countries where there is no government involvement in labour migration issues.

This constraint has been compounded in recent years by security fears and the absence of an identifiable central institution for dealing with

and coordinating engagement in a structured and effective manner in the homeland. It is important to note that many skilled and resource-endowed Africans in the Diaspora are integrated into the socio-economic environment of their host country. In fact, a number of them hold the citizenship of their host countries. Consequently, they are susceptible to various negative security reports and travel advisories about the homeland, as well as stories of institutional decay, bureaucratic gridlock and official corruption. This can influence their attitude to engaging with the homeland, which is often shaped by perceived threats of insecurity to life and property, as well as fears about the absence of rules and regulations governing business transactions and good corporate governance. In essence, some members of the Diaspora are prone to developing a 'bunker mentality' and lack the motivation to engage in homeland development. The burden of this constraining factor falls heavily on Nigeria where everyone is seen as a '419 Fraud star' and government financial institutions are seen as hotbeds of corruption.

Lessons learnt

Perhaps, the most fundamental lesson from the various studies of mainstreaming the Diaspora into the development policy trajectory of host countries like France, Germany, the Netherlands and the UK is the official acknowledgement of the unique

position and role of the Diaspora as agents of development. From the available evidence in the four host countries, it is apparent that the African Diaspora population, groups and communities have evolved to become critical actors in development policy circles through their direct and indirect involvement in the development of their respective homelands. This engagement not only contributes to poverty reduction through livelihood support, but it is critical to progress in terms of attaining the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

Consequently, host countries are designing and establishing appropriate policies and strategies to take cognisance of the potential of the Diaspora populations within their boundaries as a way of positively engaging their development partners abroad. Perhaps the most far reaching effort in this direction is the reformation of the immigration laws, which has been undertaken particularly in the Netherlands and Germany, and which has opened up access to citizenship to a second-generation African immigrants. Part of the new laws allow the children of German and Dutch-born immigrants to opt for citizenship and provide for third-generation immigrants to receive citizenship at birth. There is also evidence to suggest that measures such as family reunification are shifting the emphasis on the profile of immigrants away from temporary and essentially unskilled male migrants towards a new type

of immigrant, characterized by the presence of more women, scholars and skilled people. This has led not only to increased levels of political participation among various immigrant groups, but it has also created a pool of transnational experts with the requisite professional experience in the host country and necessary knowledge of the domestic political and socio-economic environment in the homeland. Ultimately, this leads to a win-win situation whereby aid programmes are effectively and efficiently implemented.

In addition, a number of host country governments have established policies and strategies of co-development facilities directed at co-financing projects undertaken by migrant groups and associations in their homelands. In fact, co-development initiatives are encouraged in this context and innovative schemes are gradually being set up with main partner countries. Specific funds also give a wider scope to projects co-financed with associations, and the schemes include mechanisms that facilitate investment in the homeland. An example of such a project is a guarantee fund for the loans promoting co-financed projects by Senegalese migrants in France. This project is linked to a micro-credit union in Senegal. Indeed, there are a number of French cooperation efforts that offer resources that facilitate highly qualified migrants to undertake projects in their home countries, organized by their employers in France in partnership with their counterparts in the homeland.

Another obvious lesson is the increasing awareness among the host countries to adopt a forward-looking strategy towards the issue of migration. With the median age ranging from 40 years in France and the UK to 41 years in the Netherlands and 45 years in Germany, the host countries are confronted with the spectre of an aging population. This problem is compounded by declining birth rates in host countries and the fact that the limited births that are taking place can be accounted for by immigrants. It is, therefore, imperative for these countries to adopt pro-active policies to deal with their Diaspora population. The Netherlands seem to be at the forefront in this regard. For example, a Parliamentary Committee report in 2004, *Bruggen bouwen* (Building Bridges), investigated the effects of integration policies over a period of 30 years. The report stated that an assimilationist approach has enabled many immigrants to integrate into Dutch society. To enhance this policy, it recommended that immigrants should be encouraged to achieve proficiency in the Dutch language and be made to observe the norms, laws and values of the Netherlands. Following another report on Dutch Identity (*Identificatie met Nederland*) in September 2007, this time by the Scientific Council for Government Policy (WRR), the issue of dual citizenship has increasingly becoming part of the debate on the integration of immigrants. In the report, the Council recommended that dual citizenship should be allowed for both

foreign immigrants into the Netherlands and for Dutch emigrants to other countries. It also recommended that the term, '*allochtoon*' should be abolished because it continuously defines people of immigrant descent as not being from the Netherlands and implies weak links with the country.

There is evidence that development agencies in host countries, whether they be government agencies, semi-governmental or non-governmental organizations responsible for the implementation of development assistance programmes, are opening up windows of opportunity for Diaspora groups and organizations to act as bridges of cooperation in fully- or partially-funded government aid programmes. In response, some Diaspora groups and organizations have had to change their focus of primary engagement away from providing advisory, community and social services for Diaspora populations in the host country towards implementing host country development aid programmes in the homeland. This is particularly true for ACDF and AFFORD in the UK. From 2004, ACDF began to engage in mainstream advocacy campaigns for Africa via programmes such as, Make Poverty History and the Commission for Africa and by developing a Diaspora volunteer programme in Kenya.

On its part, AFFORD established the Support Entrepreneurs and Enterprise Development in Africa programme

(SEEDA), and began to work in the area of social enterprise, with the aim of harnessing the energy and skills of professionals in the Diaspora in order to train entrepreneurs and to stimulate enterprise development and job creation in Sierra Leone, Liberia, Ghana and Nigeria. It also developed the Remit Plus scheme, supported by the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) to provide financial literacy and business development support to senders and recipients of remittances from the UK to the African homeland. It does this by encouraging the use of remittances to support local businesses in Sierra Leone or to support friends and family in starting new businesses.

Policy recommendations

Governments in both the host and the home countries should work together to strengthen the positive impact of the Diaspora to promote homeland development in particular and continental development in general. This could be achieved through continued consultations and policy dialogue between the Diaspora and other stakeholders in the development field. This would entail an understanding of the complementarities between the development projects undertaken by Diaspora organizations and those implemented by mainstream donor organizations in homeland countries. The promotion of dialogue between the Diaspora and development actors in host countries

would undoubtedly foster institutional cooperation between Diaspora and homeland governments. To achieve this objective, host country governments need to support the creation of an efficient and well-resourced central umbrella Diaspora organization, both at national and continental level, to serve as an advisory council with a role in the design and implementation of development aid projects.

To this end, Diaspora groups and organizations need to form networks among themselves, especially in host countries, in the areas of knowledge generation and knowledge sharing. This will enable them to gain the necessary insight into the dynamics and intricacies of the political and socio-economic situation in both the host and home countries and put them in a better position to make positive and productive contributions to aid policy formulation and the implementation processes in the host countries. To achieve this, Diaspora groups and organizations need to take seriously issues such as the creation of a database of experts and professionals. Such a platform would not only facilitate transnational communication and linkages, it makes the matching of specific professional skills and experiences with specific projects and programmes much easier to accomplish. Indeed, until very recently, engaging, hiring and employing experts from the African Diaspora as consultants, staff and advisors in the aid implementation agencies of host countries for the

design and implementation of aid projects and programmes has been a difficult task. It is hoped that a labour bureau office could be created to make accomplishing these tasks easier.

Beyond this, however, and as already highlighted in the previous section on lesson learnt, Europe is faced with the reality of an aging population and the prospect of needing to bring in migrant populations to work in certain sectors of the economy as was the case in the 1960s. Unfortunately, most of European countries are also in the throes of violent, right-wing campaigns against immigrants and immigration resulting in xenophobia among the wider European population. Certainly, labour migration between the European host countries and the African homelands will develop into a pattern that will influence socio-economic policies in both directions in the future and there is an imperative to undertake policy actions to deal with the political implications of this in a sensitive and urgent way. The host countries need to embark on aggressive enlightenment campaigns to highlight the contribution of immigrants to the economy and they need to enact and enforce strict laws to deal with issues of violence against immigrants. Indeed, it is becoming a matter of urgency for host countries to work out an effective, viable and sustainable labour-migration policy and strategy with homeland governments in order to facilitate an ordered and well-structured migratory cycle to deal with the menace of illegal migration and human trafficking. The

Africa Diaspora Policy Centre in the Netherlands, which has established itself as a formidable actor in the area of Diaspora policy engagement, is well-placed to serve as the anchor for such exchanges.

As previously mentioned, the diplomatic missions of various African countries are the front desk for encouraging and facilitating productive engagement of their Diaspora population for homeland development. Indeed, embassies are important institutions in the host countries in terms of providing information about the needs, priorities and opportunities in the homelands to the Diaspora and also in terms of facilitating the long-distance trans-national links between host countries and countries of origin. Thus, there is an imperative to address the role that embassies can play in mobilizing and connecting the Diaspora with their respective homelands through the creation of a well-staffed Diaspora Relations/Liaison Desk in each of these missions, with the sole responsibility of catering to the needs of their citizens in the Diaspora. The desk should be able to develop appropriate methodologies and strategies to facilitate interaction between the Diaspora and the various governmental institutions and agencies, as well as building partnerships between Diaspora and the private sector in the homeland.

In practical terms, these diplomatic missions must develop patience and understanding in dealing with their

Diaspora; as we have seen, some of them harbour deep frustrations and pent up anger over their exile, for which they blame the homeland government. These missions should, therefore, be prompt in responding to questions and enquiries by the Diaspora about homeland government policies and programmes. They should strive to forge closer relations with their Diaspora population through openness, understanding, accommodation and the use of ICT facilities in service delivery. Treating the Diaspora population with respect, and providing a friendly reception and improvements in the services will help to building their confidence in homeland governments and possibly convince them to make genuine commitments towards homeland development.

The role of Diaspora remittances from the host countries to the home countries cannot be over-emphasized. The importance of remittances is underscored by the various economic development activities to which they are deployed, ranging from livelihood support to resources for investment and the establishment of business enterprises in the homeland. In the face of new restrictions being placed by most OECD countries on capital flows (as a part of the measures being introduced to combat terrorism), it is imperative that the legal and unhindered flow of remittances from host countries to the homeland is secured and protected. Furthermore, efforts should be targeted at improving

and monitoring the transfer and payment systems from host countries to home countries in order to avoid abuse and fraud. This could be done by working with designated banks to ensure transparency and competition in the remittance market and through the institutionalization of appropriate incentives and benefits to foster and facilitate the use of formal channels in remittance transfer and payment.

It is noteworthy that the African Diaspora Policy Centre in the Hague, with the support of the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Cordaid and the German Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit (German Company for Technical Cooperation) is undertaking a capacity training programme for the officials of newly created institutions dealing with Diaspora related matters. Developed in response to capacity deficits affecting the performance of these emerging institutions, the training programme is aimed at strengthening the capacity of Diaspora-oriented officials across African states by providing them with the essential knowledge, skills and tools to evolve policies aimed at maximising the contributions of the Diaspora to homeland development in Africa. So far, ADPC has carried out two training programmes attended by 24 officials from 12 African countries. This training has provided a much needed avenue for officials dealing with Diaspora related matters to learn, network, exchange knowledge and information and share best practices on positive experiences

in their respective countries. Continued support for ADPC, to enable it to facilitate such training and re-training programmes is crucial as it will help in building a core of well-trained experts to manage, in an effective and efficient manner, the emerging Diaspora engagements between the host countries and the homeland.

An examination of the scope and latitude of the nature and engagement of various African Diaspora populations in France, Germany, the Netherlands and the UK reveals that there are specific trajectories and policy pursuits that can enhance the relations between host and home countries. Indeed, acknowledgement of the fact that the African Diaspora population can act as bridge builders between host and home countries can facilitate not only the improved transfer of social and financial capital of the Diaspora, but also bring about a synergy resulting in the improvement of the conduct and administration of development aid policy and projects through beneficial and sustained institutional collaboration.

Certainly, the African Diaspora will undertake development activities regardless of whether governments in host or home countries intervene or not. However, there is a need to evolve and pursue the formulation of coherent policies and strategies to further enhance the budding relationship between the Diaspora and all stakeholders in the development

policy field, including all state and non-state actors in the host and home countries, in order to foster a viable and sustainable environment for harnessing the initiatives of the Diaspora to meet the challenges of job creation and to attenuate the menace of youth unemployment and to bridge the infrastructural, entrepreneurial and managerial gaps that are so evident across the African continent. The Diaspora have the skills, links, commitment, as well as the human, social and economic capital, which can be utilized to resolve these strategic developmental challenges if their initiative is properly harnessed and focused.

References

AFFORD (2004) *Maximizing the Benefits of Migration and Development: Afford's Comments to the International Development Committee's Inquiry on Migration and Development* (London: AFFORD)

Cohen, R. (2008) *Global Diasporas* (London: Routledge)

Collyer, M. (2003) *Explaining Change in Established Migration System: The Movement of Algerians to France and the UK*, Sussex Migration Working Paper No.16 University of Sussex Centre for Migration Research

de Haas, H. (2005a) *Morocco's Migration Transition: Trends, Determinants and Future Scenarios*, Global Migration Perspectives No.28 GCIM Geneva

de Haas, H. (2005b) *International Migration, Remittances and Development: Myths and Facts. Third World Quarterly* No.26 No.8

de Haas, H. (2006) *Migration, Remittances and Regional Development in Southern Morocco*, *Geoforum* Vol.37 No.4

Office of National Statistics (ONSS - UK)

Quiminal, C. (1994) *The Role of Immigrants in Development Projects and Possible Forms of Cooperation in the Senegal River Valley*, OECD 1994

Statistisches Bundesamt 2009. Wiesbaden 2009 Zuwanderungsreport.

The Netherlands Central Bureau for Statistics, (CBS 2007)

van Hear, N. (1998) *New Diasporas: The Mass Exodus, Dispersal and Regrouping of Migrant Communities* (London: University Press)

van Hear, N. (2010) *Migration and Diasporas in Knott, K & S. McLoughlin, Diasporas: Concepts, Intersections, Identities* (London: Zed Books)

Vertovec, S & R. Cohen (1999) (eds.) *Migration, Diaspora and Transnationalism* (Cheltenham: Elgar)

www.diaspora-centre.org