

The Potential of Diaspora Advocacy and Lobbying

A research paper by



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Introduction

African diasporas are increasingly acknowledged as important actors in development circles in relation to their countries of origin. Organised in numerous civil society organisations, diasporas have considerable capacity and potential to affect positive change within home communities. This is not to say, however, that their voice is automatically or adequately heard within the development field and at policy level. The diaspora must consider the importance of advocacy and lobbying in achieving its development aims, and realise that proper understanding and planning is necessary to implement an effective advocacy strategy. For this reason, this African Diaspora Policy Centre (ADPC) paper highlights a selection of best practices within the field of advocacy and lobbying and discusses some of the strategic methods and instruments that African diaspora development organisations can implement to improve their advocacy techniques and, consequently, improve the reach and influence of their organisation.

As previously mentioned, African diasporas are important actors in the positive development of countries of origin. At home in both host and home countries, diaspora members are able to navigate both environments and act as a bridge between the Global North and South. Increasingly organised within civil society diaspora organisations, the African diaspora has become a recognised actor within development circles. That said, many diaspora organisations are run on a volunteer basis and often lack the capacity and professional skills to be accepted as an equal partner and to communicate their message. Helping these organisations acquire better advocacy skills is therefore imperative. “Diasporas direct their advocacy efforts primarily at the governments of origin and settlement countries, but they also engage with international organizations, mass media, businesses, and other potential allies such as labour unions, churches, and NGOs. In turn, diasporas gain strength when governments and other organizations court their support.”¹ Advocacy is a key part of the work of many diaspora organisations, so it is paramount that they acquire the skills to do this effectively.

Many people mistakenly use the terms advocacy and lobbying interchangeably. However, advocacy encompasses a much wider range of activities than lobbying:

Advocacy in all its forms seeks to ensure that people, particularly those who are most vulnerable in society, are able to; have their voice heard on issues that are important to them, defend and safeguard their rights, and have their views and wishes genuinely considered when decisions are being made about their lives. Advocacy is a process of supporting and enabling people to; express their views and concerns, access information and services, defend and promote their rights and responsibilities, and explore choices and options.²

Evidently, effective advocacy is a critical tool for African diaspora organisations. This paper will first elaborate on why the diaspora is such an important development actor, before discussing specific advocacy methods and instruments as well as giving examples of best practices from within diasporas and from other civil society organisations. The experiences and challenges of the African diaspora are then shared in relation to advocacy activities, after which this paper analyses the best ways to progress this important issue and tackle some of the challenges facing diasporas using the examples given.

What is Advocacy?

- Organised effort to influence policy change
- Action directed as a changing approach of individual / institution / group
- Process to persuade all influential individuals / institutions / groups through dialog to adopt an effective approach to an issue

¹ Newland, K. (2010), 'Voice after Exit: Diaspora Advocacy'. Migration Policy Institute, p.6.

² SEAP Advocacy, available at: <http://www.seap.org.uk/im-looking-for-help-or-support/what-is-advocacy.html>.

The African Diaspora: A Critical Development Actor

Over several decades, African diaspora organisations have played an increasingly critical and evermore recognised role in the development of their countries of origin. By emphasising the important role they play, this paper presents strong arguments for why the African diaspora should utilise its unique position and understand the potential impact of employing strategic advocacy and lobbying methods and instruments. Diaspora development practitioners are well-versed in the establishment of community development projects and joint ventures in their countries of origin, and they make major contributions to these communities through the transfer of both social and financial capital. By linking up with diaspora practitioners, local communities enjoy exposure to new financial resources, expertise, innovative trade practices and valuable networks abroad. Consequently, the African diaspora is now involved in hundreds of local community projects across Africa. In particular, they are active and employing their resources in fragile, post-conflict regions, areas where assistance is most required. The diaspora has greater understanding of local needs compared to traditional development agencies, and therefore African diaspora organisations can legitimately advocate on behalf of their communities. Thus, the work of the diaspora can be seen as complementary to the advocacy work already being undertaken by larger development agencies. Despite this, African diaspora groups often lack the capacity or relevant knowledge for effective advocacy and lobbying and therefore often miss crucial opportunities to influence public opinion and policymakers.

In addition to diaspora organisations having positioned themselves as critical actors within development circles, they are also contributing considerable capital. According to a recent World Bank Migration and Development briefing paper, African diaspora remittances are set to grow by 3.6% in 2016, reaching the substantial figure of US\$36 billion.³ This is noticeably more than Official Development Assistance figures. With the African diaspora providing such extensive support, through practical actions and financial remittances, it is imperative that their voice is clearly heard and listened to in both national and international settings. Moreover, sensitizing the diaspora to the importance of advocacy is imperative.

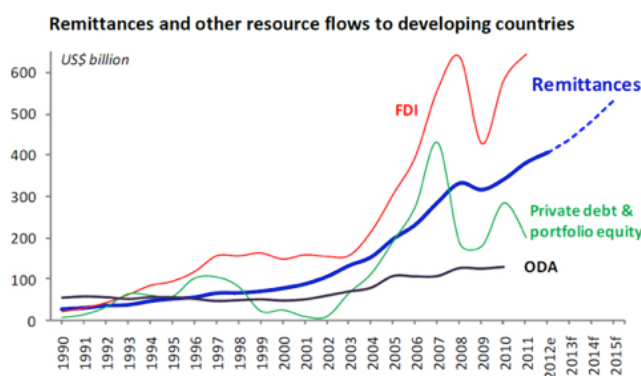


Figure 1, Source of Data World Bank

The increasing success of African diaspora organisations is, in part, due to them becoming better organised as well as an increase in funds from donor agencies. The African diaspora is now organised in numerous structures, from home town associations to professional groups. With this improving structural organisation and increased funds, African diaspora development organisations (ADDOs) are in a strategic position to be bridge builders between North and South and key advocates of development in countries of origin.⁴

³ For more detail, see the World Bank report 'Migration and Development Brief', 26 APRIL 2016.

⁴ ADPC (2014), 'Diaspora Organisations as Strategic Agents of Development'.

The above explanation of the work of ADDOs and their position in development circles aims to show the clear potential they have to increase the impact of their work through improved advocacy and lobbying techniques. The diaspora is well placed to be key advocates on a number of issues affecting Africa. It is the intention of this paper to highlight this and suggest ways this important aim can be achieved.

Strategic Methods and Instruments for an Effective Advocacy and Lobbying Plan

Organisations need to go beyond simply understanding the important role advocacy and lobbying can play in their quest for greater recognition of the issues they deal with. Indeed, African diaspora organisations must go further and enhance their capacity and become well-versed in the strategic methods and instruments that constitute effective advocacy and lobbying. Diaspora organisations need not start from scratch in this endeavour, nor should they seek to reinvent the wheel. During the research for this paper, it has become evident that there are numerous established strategies and resources for advocacy and lobbying that African Diaspora organisations can adopt, almost immediately, that will greatly improve their advocacy profile. Although different sources vary on the exact nature of the model for effective advocacy, the central themes and process remain aligned. This section will therefore examine the most salient points that any effective advocacy strategy should include.

Broadly speaking, any advocacy campaign should be broken down into three main components or stages.⁵ Firstly, one must seek to fully understand the issues and arguments regarding the particular topic of interest. Secondly, once a clear understanding has been achieved, a thorough planning phase is required, with the implementation of advocacy activities making up the third component. After elaborating on these three stages, this paper will then outline the specific methods that can be undertaken.

In order for an advocacy campaign to gain traction, it is imperative that it is based on an in-depth understanding of the issues concerned. Organisations can enhance their reputation within development circles by becoming an authoritative source of knowledge on a particular issue. It is acknowledged that many African diaspora organisations have limited capacity and therefore choosing the right issues to focus on is hugely important. By focusing on a particular issue or cause, African diaspora organisations can use their resources efficiently in order to maximise the effectiveness of an eventual advocacy campaign. Once the correct issues have been identified the next step is gaining the correct knowledge. Knowing who to speak to about the issue is crucial. As already stated, the diaspora is in a unique position in that it has access to information and policymakers in both the host and home countries. This can be capitalised on within an advocacy campaign. With knowledge at a grass-roots level within home communities, the diaspora has a greater understanding than other development actors of the issues on the ground. This is a key advantage and should be exploited in any advocacy campaign. Of course, to become truly acquainted with an issue it is important to seek a variety of sources, so choosing the correct experts to collaborate with is also an important decision that needs to be made in the understanding phase of any plan.

It is also important to consider that knowledge does not automatically come from talking to the right people, but also from asking the correct questions and from researching the topic in the correct way. Undertaking reliable research is a topic in its own right and diaspora organisations must be well-versed in this field in order to ensure a correct understanding of the issue to be tackled. Selecting the right evidence and methodology should not be taken lightly by any organisation, and this paper advises all diaspora organisations to think carefully about this point.

Once the issues have been identified and researched sufficiently, the problem or problems that the organisation seeks to address can be identified. A basic criterion for any advocacy campaign is that an organisation must be confident of the position it wants to take on a specific issue. Examples of how to do this include the PEST model or employing an objective or problem tree.⁶

⁵ PLAN Advocacy Toolkit 2014.

⁶ Ibid., p.43.

Once a diaspora organisation has a thorough knowledge of the facts, it should be ready to move to the planning stage of the advocacy process. Planning activities in a strategic and complimentary way will enhance the eventual results of the campaign and therefore effective planning can make an enormous difference. It is not sufficient to merely identify the problem that you wish to address, one must also state what change is needed and how this change can occur. Identifying the necessary change is therefore the first part of any planning stage. Once this is done, further planning can take place and should include some core elements. Firstly, the correct audience should be chosen for your campaign – who are you trying to influence and why? This audience will vary for different campaigns and could include local, national or international political bodies, home or host governments, local communities in host or home countries, the media, etc. This is a crucial step because the audience being targeted determines how you plan to go about influencing them with your advocacy campaign. Choosing the correct method for the specific target audience is of paramount importance, and this is taken into account in the next section on different methods of advocacy.

Specific Methods and Instruments

Knowing the correct methods and when to employ them is critical for effective advocacy and lobbying. Broadly speaking there are four types of activities: lobbying, whereby an organisation tries to influence key decision makers; campaigning, which can be used to raise awareness about an issue; mobilising, whereby you strengthen your position by utilising partnerships and a wider community; and finally, strategic media and communications. This section details some of the key methods within these categories that are deemed most relevant to diaspora organisations.

- **‘Inside-Outside Strategy’**

The ‘Inside-Outside’ strategy⁷ is perhaps the most obviously applicable method for African diaspora groups to improve their advocacy voice. As already stated, different audiences require different forms of advocacy. Similarly, organisations also have different strengths and therefore, like many diaspora organisations, are only effective in a particular type of advocacy activity. For this reason, the ‘inside-outside’ approach can be effective in harnessing the combined forces and strengths of several different organisations. In this way, organisations complement each other’s assets and therefore increase their voice. The ‘inside’ aspect of the approach entails starting a dialogue about the issue at hand. This should be done by an organisation that has the knowledge and capability to engage with the relevant decision makers and stakeholders in the private or public sectors. The ‘outside’ aspect concerns mobilising public opinion from the outside to create pressure for action to address the problem. By teaming up and working together in this manner, organisations are able to complement their efforts and stand a much higher chance of success. Clearly, diaspora organisations differ greatly in their capabilities and, as such, can perform an ‘inside’ or the ‘outside’ role in this strategy depending on the particular circumstance. In many cases, a particular organisation will refrain from one aspect of a strategy in order to focus on the other. For example, leaving public pressure action to other organisations in order to maintain a cordial relationship with the decision makers they wish to have a dialogue with is part of the ‘inside’ strategy. An example of this type of strategy is detailed later in this paper.

- **Becoming an Authoritative Voice**

Making sure that your organisation has the requisite knowledge of an issue in order to advocate effectively is not the only potential benefit of ensuring your organisation understands the issues. As already discussed, an organisation must be well-versed on a topic in order to plan its advocacy effectively. However, this knowledge can be used further as a tool within an organisation’s

⁷ See FGG Advocacy and Lobbying

advocacy plan. If recognised as a source of accurate information on a particular topic, policymakers and politicians who, due to their wide remits, cannot be experts in every field may seek quality information from an authoritative source. If an organisation is able to maintain accurate information about the topic they are interested in, then becoming a recognised partner within the circle of decision makers becomes a clear benefit. Greater access to key decision makers is a significant advantage for anybody attempting to lobby for a particular cause. For example, the Indian diaspora has used this method to their advantage in the USA, details of which are explained in the subsequent section of this paper. Another example is the method employed by the UK-based think tank Migration Watch, which is well-versed in data concerning migration to the UK. Despite having an anti-immigration agenda, the organisation is used by politicians and the media alike as a source of 'reliable' statistics concerning migration. This is an excellent example of being able to shape the debate by becoming an authoritative figure on a specific issue.

- **Creating Flexible Alliances**

As already explained, it is imperative that an organisation defines its goals and objectives for any intended advocacy action. Having said this, alliances with organisations with seemingly different objectives should not be discounted and, in fact, can be crucial in a successful campaign. Although two organisations may seemingly focus on different areas, there will invariably be some sort of overlap of issues. In this case, organisations can collaborate on the particular issue of shared interest and increase the potential audience of their campaign and wage a campaign on many fronts. For example, an African diaspora organisation may wish to highlight the plight of a region of their home country experiencing drought in order to bring about action to relieve a food crisis caused by failed crops. The issue of the drought may also be of concern to a climate change organisation, which views it as an effect of global warming and therefore can also see the benefit of raising awareness about the situation. Therefore, the two different organisations could conceivably work together on this shared issue, highlighting the problem to a greater audience and on several different levels.

- **Utilising the Diaspora Skills**

Mobilising all available resources is an obvious step that any organisation should implement. This is something that the diaspora should take to heart. Amongst the diaspora there is a vast array of talent and skills. From doctors and scientists to footballers and musicians, the diaspora comprises a wide variety of individuals. With capacity a perennial problem for diaspora organisations, they should seriously consider utilising the skills of diaspora members. Diaspora members are frequently concerned with the state of their home country, whether they take formal action through a diaspora organisation or not. Therefore, diaspora organisations should reach out to the wider diaspora in their attempts to advocate and lobby successfully. Be it a diaspora member who works in the office of a politician in the host country, a footballer with thousands of social media followers, or an academic who is an expert in a particular field, the diaspora has an important part to play in advocating for the positive development of the country of origin. Mobilising supporters for a campaign is a key part of any advocacy plan, and given the wide range of talents that the diaspora has to call on, it is a logical initial step to take.

It is important to note that the above is only a selection of the most relevant methods that can be employed as part of an advocacy plan. There are numerous others that can be effective, depending on the goal and target audience. For further information on other methods, please refer to the list of resources at the end of this paper.

Examples of Advocacy and Lobbying Best Practices

As detailed above, this paper has set out several distinct instruments and innovative methods that can be implemented by African diaspora organisations and, in doing so, greatly improve the chances of their advocacy and lobbying campaigns being successful. By becoming adept at advocacy and lobbying techniques, the African diaspora will gain recognition, make progress in other aspects of their development work, and become strategic agents of change. This section is intended to show just how successful implementing advocacy and lobbying instruments can be, by describing several examples of best practices to illustrate their effectiveness. Examples are drawn from other diaspora communities as well as organisations working on other issues and those members of the African diaspora who are already undertaking successful advocacy and lobbying activities.

Examples from Other Diaspora Communities

The success of other diaspora communities in advocating for their particular causes should serve as inspiration for the African diaspora and highlight what is possible through strategic advocacy and lobbying. There are several notable cases where diaspora communities have organised themselves into an effective lobbying and advocacy force, and this section highlights some of the best examples.

One of the most notable examples is that of the Indian diaspora in the USA. As Mira Kamdar states in her 2007 article,⁸ “forget the Israel lobby, the hill’s next big player is made in India.” The fact that the Indian diaspora’s efforts are being spoken about in the same breath as the well-known influence of the Israel lobby in the USA, is testament to their efforts and growing stature. It is an example of how a diaspora can effectively lobby the government of a host country and, in doing so, positively advocate for their position as a diaspora in the host country as well as for recognition and awareness of issues in their home country. The US India Political Action Committee (USINPAC) represents the 3.2 million-strong Indian diaspora in the USA. They advocate and work on issues that are of concern to their Indian community – issues relating to the diaspora in the host country and issues they are concerned about in their country of origin. It must be stated that in comparison to African diaspora organisations, which have largely emerged in the apolitical development field, USINPAC has its roots in a more political sphere. Founded in 2002, its mission is to represent the voice of the Indian American grassroots in Washington. Although more political in nature, USINPAC nevertheless serves as an excellent example to African diaspora organisations in terms of how to engage with policymakers and get issues on the political agenda.

USINPAC⁹ has had a number of successful advocacy campaigns on a host of different issues. They have successfully fought for change on topics effecting both Indians in the USA and also India itself. Notable exploits include: successful advocacy to suspend a Department of Homeland Security Special Registration Program that would have required special registration for Indian citizens in the United States and also for those seeking entry into the United States from India; organising and hosting legislative briefings on Capitol Hill to update lawmakers and staff on crises in India, leading to a resolution in the House of Representatives; and successfully advocating for greater allocation of resources to fight HIV/AIDS, including a \$29 million increase in foreign aid funding to fight HIV in 2007. These are just some of the organisations highlights, and the full body of their advocacy work is indeed impressive. However, what is more important with respect to the goal of this paper is to discuss the techniques that USINPAC used in order to achieve their successes. A major component of USINPAC’s success is the enabling environment that has been created for them within the political structure in Washington. Influencing policy can only succeed if your counterpart acknowledges your legitimacy. This is something they have clearly understood, and have therefore sought to build ties with all political parties in the USA, thus

⁸ <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2007/09/28/AR2007092801350.html>.

⁹ <http://www.usinpac.com/>.

legitimising themselves as a critical actor on any issues related to India or its diaspora in the USA. It is also clear from USINPAC's work that much of their success is based on expert and in-depth knowledge. Effective policy influencing requires in-depth research and knowledge development, and this is something that USINPAC has clearly demonstrated. It is also clear that USINPAC understands the need for perseverance in relation to their advocacy efforts. Their successes have not been achieved overnight, moving others to become aware of a particular problem, developing a vision, and a solution takes time, especially in the multilayered political environment in which they operate. In terms of relating USINPAC's experiences to African diaspora organisations, and using them as an example of best practice, it is clear that USINPAC are a much larger organisation with greater resources than most African diaspora groups. That said, their experiences can be learned from. The same principles apply to all levels of advocacy and therefore the African diaspora has much to learn from its Indian counterpart.

The Mexican diaspora, the majority of whom reside in the USA, provides another example of best practice from which lessons can be drawn. The achievements of the Mexican diaspora are certainly impressive in relation to assisting development in their home country, as well as advocating for their own rights in the USA. As already discussed, being able to influence policy is only possible if there is an enabling environment where your legitimacy is recognised by your counterparts, in this case home and host country governments. The Mexican case is an excellent example of this. The Mexican government has understood the importance of the diaspora and therefore created an enabling environment by addressing the question, "Who speaks for the diaspora?", by sponsoring the Consultative Council of the Institute for Mexicans Abroad (CCIME), composed primarily of elected leaders from diaspora communities. The council makes recommendations to the government about its policies toward the diaspora and helps set the agenda of the Institute for Mexicans Abroad (IME), a branch of the Foreign Ministry."¹⁰ By being properly recognised, the diaspora have a truly meaningful voice in terms of policy formation, the evidence of which can be seen in several flagship policies that have been implemented by the Mexican government. For example, the '3x1 scheme ensures that every dollar raised by the diaspora for development projects in the home communities is matched both by national and local government. This scheme is a result of the diaspora being legitimately recognised, and it allows the diaspora to target government funding by determining which projects they deem important. Another issue relevant to the African diaspora is that knowledge is the basis of any successful advocacy campaign. The success of the Mexican diaspora's advocacy efforts has been greatly increased by "new generations, better prepared educationally, who understand the steps to follow and the political rhythms of the U.S. system."¹¹ By harnessing the knowledge and skills of younger generations of Mexicans, who have benefitted from higher levels of education in their host country, the Mexican diaspora has become a much improved force both in Mexican and US politics. This is clearly an example that the African diaspora can follow. Many second-generation Africans living in Europe or North America have benefitted from a high level of education. If this expertise can be properly harnessed, then African diaspora organisations will be in a strong position to advocate and influence policy. By mapping the skills and abilities within a diaspora community, it is possible to discover in which fields the expertise lies and, subsequently, create an effective advocacy and lobbying strategic plan.

Examples from Organisations in Other Fields

If African diaspora organisations are to improve their advocacy and lobbying techniques, there are a vast number of examples to choose from that highlight best practices of the discipline. However, some of the most well-known examples of effective advocacy and lobbying are associated with negative agendas. Perhaps two of the best known examples are the group of tobacco manufacturers who for so long were able to effectively lobby for minimal regulation of their products despite the negative health

¹⁰ Newland, K. (2010). 'Voice After Exit: Diaspora Advocacy', Migration Policy Institute, p.4.

¹¹ José de Jesús López Almejo, Mexican Lobbying in the U.S. A New Generation Understanding the System, p.105.

consequences, and the National Rifle Association (NRI) in the USA, which has successfully influenced gun control debate in American politics. This is not to say that advocacy and lobbying are the preserve of those perceived to be defending somewhat suspect principles. In fact, as has been explained within this paper already, advocacy and lobbying are important tools for any organisation wanting to achieve its aims, and there is a plethora of examples of successful advocacy campaigns that the African diaspora can learn from. To highlight this point to the fullest, examples have been chosen from organisations of a similar size and scope to many diaspora organisations. Although not necessarily working on the same topics as diaspora groups, they do work in a similar development environment, and also have a limited capacity. These examples highlight what can be achieved with a strategic and comprehensive advocacy and lobbying plan, and therefore will hopefully serve to inspire African diaspora organisations to continue and improve their efforts.

ICCO International¹² is an organisation that works towards development cooperation goals. They connect enterprising people in the Netherlands and in developing countries and work closely with local civil society organisations, including development organisations, educational institutions and businesses. Arguably, they are a good example for African diaspora organisations in terms of advocacy strategy, as they operate in a relatively similar environment. ICCO is well aware of advocacy issues and has produced guidelines for NGOs on the topic.¹³ It also has a track record of implementing successful advocacy and lobbying campaigns themselves, which serve as excellent examples of best practice. One such campaign was to progress the negotiation of the Economic Partnership Agreements (EPA) between the European Union and regional trade blocks in Africa, Latin America and Asia:

Due to the technical language involved in these trade agreements, one of the major challenges for ICCO has been how to translate this complex language into concrete examples decision-makers can understand and feel compelled to act on. ICCO opted to proceed by providing concrete examples of the impact of EPA provisions on the daily lives of people, like small farmers in Cameroon. By “unpacking” and translating the agreements’ highly technical language into simpler language and self-explanatory illustrations of their implications, ICCO contributed to a better understanding among policy-makers and politicians of the EPAs’ potential harmful consequences.¹⁴

ICCO has also fostered stronger alliances between EU and Southern policymakers, as well as increasing the capacity of Southern high-level negotiators and coordination between southern trading blocks. By carrying out these activities, ICCO has successfully aided the advancement of EPAs, whilst also benefitting development in the southern countries that they target. Thus, clear objectives, in this case better development cooperation, targeted goals and an appropriate target group, and implementing the correct instruments are key to a successful advocacy campaign. In this case, ICCO set their objective, from where they were able to define the problem they needed to overcome and, subsequently, create the correct strategy and solution. By following this example, African diaspora organisations will be well placed to maximise the effectiveness of their advocacy strategies. A further example taken from ICCO is their work advocating for security sector reform (SSR) in the great lakes region. “ICCO is engaged in a lobby and advocacy campaign aimed at enhancing the participation of the local population and civil society organisations in SSR, in order to establish more sustainable reconstruction and development processes. A more participatory approach will contribute to enhanced (public) support for the necessary reform and reconciliation between the various parties involved.”¹⁵ Currently, ICCO focuses most of their lobbying efforts on this issue towards Dutch foreign ministry officials and research institutions. In doing so, they have succeeded in putting inclusive SSR on the agenda and have managed to sensitise several other leading development organisations in the Netherlands to these issues, which offers scope for co-

¹² <http://www.icco-international.com/int/>.

¹³ <http://www.icco.nl/Portals/1/Documenten/Lobby%20and%20advocacy%20guidelines.pdf>

¹⁴ ICCO Advocacy Guidelines, p. 38.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 40.

alition-building. By keeping up to date with the issues and maintaining well-documented records, ICCO has acquired an in-depth knowledge of SSR and, consequently, has been asked on several occasions to provide background information to governmental meetings. This shows the clear benefit of being well-versed in the details and ongoing situation within the particular area of focus. By being seen as an expert figure on a topic, ICCO have gained access to high-level policymakers and thus furthered the cause for which they are advocating.

A further example of best practices that African diaspora groups can effectively harness to their advantage is the 'complimentary approach'. Diaspora groups, which are generally based in the Global North, should understand the benefit of complementing the work of organisations with the same goals but located in their country of origin. "The strength of a complementary approach is that northern and southern NGOs divide tasks and therefore have a larger variety of interventions at their disposal to influence policy."¹⁶ Not every civil society organisation, including those from the African diaspora, has the necessary tools to undertake an effective advocacy campaign. Each organisation has its own skills and strengths, so combining efforts with groups with similar aims can be beneficial. To illustrate this point, one can turn to the example of POSCO, a Korean steel company that intended to buy a steel factory and harbour in the Indian province of Odisha. This takeover would have led to the loss of local livelihoods and have an adverse effect on the local natural environment. The lobbying campaign against this development was fought in two complementary ways. Firstly, "civil society organisations lodged complaints with the National Contact Points of South Korea, Norway and the Netherlands. In South Korea, the complaint was mainly aimed at POSCO, while in Norway and the Netherlands, it targeted pension funds for their role as institutional investors in POSCO."¹⁷ By doing this, they were able to effectively communicate that the potential purchase of the factory was in contravention of OECD rules on damage to the local environment. At a local level, Indian NGOs used a strategy of mobilising public opinion and non-violent protests to raise awareness of the issues surrounding the potential purchase of the factory. By coming together in an alliance, the group of NGOs were able to successfully pursue their agenda with complementing actions, and thus gain significant traction with their campaign. This can also be referred to as an 'inside-outside' strategy, where pressure is applied on different fronts, perhaps by organisations with different focuses, but with a similar current objective.

"Effectively exerting influence on policy often requires action to be taken on several fronts – and civil society organisations can benefit tremendously from dividing their tasks and roles and complementing each other's work". If African Diaspora groups are able to take on board this message and create alliances with each other, as well as other organisations on the ground in their countries of origin, there is no doubt that they will be able to achieve their advocacy and lobbying aims more effectively.

There are numerous other examples of excellent advocacy and lobbying best practices that could have been used to highlight the various advocacy and lobbying techniques explained in the earlier section. The above examples, however, are most relevant to the nature and work of diaspora organisations. For further examples, please see the list of resources at the end of this paper.

Examples from the African Diaspora

Although this paper has made clear the need for African diaspora organisations to improve their advocacy and lobbying skills in order to further their development goals, there are indeed organisations that have already heeded this advice and that are utilising advocacy techniques to strategically and successfully achieve their aims. African diaspora organisations are increasingly seen as critical actors in development circles, actors who can act as a bridge between home and host country. As a result,

¹⁶ FGG Lobby and Advocacy, p.6.

¹⁷ Ibid.

they are now systematically included in international development and cooperation discussions. International summits on migration regularly allow space for diaspora input, the recent 2015 EU-Africa Valletta Summit on Migration being a case in point. This has been achieved through a sustained and strategic advocacy and lobbying campaign by prominent African diaspora organisations, and this paper will now detail a selection of the most notable examples of African diaspora organisations and the advocacy and lobbying best practices they have implemented. The need for diaspora representation within international development dialogue has already been targeted by numerous African diaspora organisations, and as already stated, is increasingly becoming the norm. The African Foundation for Development¹⁸ (AFFORD) has been at the forefront of advocating towards this goal it is an excellent example of how to implement an effective advocacy and lobbying strategy. AFFORD's strategy has been well devised and encompasses several different strands, reflecting the need for targeting different stakeholders in differing ways.



Figure 2, AFFORD's Gibril Faal addresses UN High Level Dialogue and Migration and International Development



Figure 3, Officials of IGAD member states discuss better ways of engaging Diaspora at an ADPC Consultation Meeting

As explained earlier, establishing who you aim to target and what your objectives are is a key initial step, and AFFORD's strategy has certainly benefitted from this straight forward but important stage. The organisation has in place several different projects that target different stakeholders in differing ways, whilst maintaining the overarching goal of improving the recognition of the African diaspora and the important role they can and should play. For example, AFFORD identified the need to challenge popular perceptions of developing countries and their peoples, as portrayed by the media and international aid agencies in the UK. This can be seen as a clear attempt at 'agenda setting', a critical step in the cycle of advocacy and eventual policy implementation. Through their 'Aiding and Abetting' programme, AFFORD sought to create spaces for artistic dialogue about the values and practices that underpin contemporary development interventions in Africa. Using a mix of research publications and artistic exhibitions showing the work of the diaspora, AFFORD aimed to promote developing countries in a positive light, and emphasise the role the diaspora can play. Although not specifically targeted at policymakers, this example of AFFORD's advocacy activities highlights the need to raise awareness at a more general level first, which, in turn, gains an organisation recognition and influence within high-level

policy and development circles. Within AFFORD's strategy to advocate on behalf of the diaspora, they have also identified the need to empower more African diaspora organisations with improved advocacy and lobbying skills. Working together in alliances to increase the collective voice is certainly an important part of the advocacy and lobbying strategy of any organisation with limited capacity. It is fair to categorise the majority of African diaspora organisations as small with limited capacity, and thus the need for a collective voice is self-evident. Under the 'Diaspora Engagement and Capacity' programme, AFFORD has established a series of advocacy, capacity building and engagement projects, including an annual African Diaspora and Development Day (AD3). By identifying the need to improve advocacy capacity amongst the diaspora community, AFFORD has strengthened its own position of influence by being able to add extra weight to their alliance. AFFORD



Figure 4, Participants in discussion at a DAP Lobbying and Advocacy Workshop

¹⁸ <http://www.afford-uk.org/>.

is by no means the only African diaspora organisation to realise this. ADPC,¹⁹ part of the Diaspora Academy Programme (DAP), has also initiated a capacity building scheme for diaspora organisations to improve their lobbying and advocacy skills.

Like AFFORD, ADPC also employs a range of tools in their efforts to advocate for a bigger role for diaspora in development in Africa. As previously highlighted, an organisation must identify whether direct awareness and lobbying campaigns are the most suitable form of advocacy, or whether a subtler approach is required. ADPC has been at the forefront of raising awareness and sensitising African governments to the positive role that the diaspora can play in a country's development. Rather than lobbying from afar, through their 'Strengthening Policy Making Capacity of the Emerging Diaspora Ministries in Africa' (SEDIMA) programme, the ADPC has sought to train government officials within African Foreign Ministries on migration and diaspora issues. This has strengthened diaspora departments within African Foreign Ministries and, in turn, raised the issue of diaspora involvement more generally within African governments. This has created a more receptive and enabling environment for diaspora organisations to get involved in their country of origin and further emphasised the important role that the diaspora has to play in development.

Although, as already stated, African diaspora organisations have much to learn to improve their advocacy and lobbying techniques, it is clear from the above examples that progress is being made. Advocacy plans have been devised and implemented, with different tools being used for different target audiences, with the result that AFFORD and ADPC's goal of achieving more recognition and involvement of diaspora in development is on the way to being achieved. As alluded to earlier, the diaspora now has a voice at many high-level international policy meetings on migration, and African governments are now much more receptive to diaspora involvement.

¹⁹ <http://www.diaspora-centre.org/>.

African Diaspora Advocacy Experiences and Challenges

The purpose of this paper is to research the innovative methods and specific instruments that African diaspora organisations can harness in order to successfully get their advocacy message across. In order to assess the most appropriate methods and instruments recommended for use by the diaspora, it is first critical to understand the current level and scope of advocacy efforts by the diaspora. As part of the Diaspora Academy Programme (DAP), ADPC has conducted several advocacy and lobbying workshops, which have served as excellent forums for understanding the past experiences of the diaspora in their advocacy efforts, and for discovering some of the challenges that they have faced. It has become clear from discussions with diaspora development practitioners that there are a number of challenges and knowledge gaps shared by a large number of diaspora organisations. By identifying these challenges, it is possible to assess which aspects of the advocacy and lobbying process require the most attention.

A significant barrier facing African diaspora organisations is a lack of knowledge regarding the procedures and formalities of engaging with policymakers. The diaspora maintains strong links with countries of origin and clearly has the motivation and desire to assist development efforts. Translating this desire into concrete and impactful action, however, has proved difficult. Diaspora are not necessarily development practitioners and are not necessarily aware of how to engage with counterparts in development circles. This has led to a lack of access to policymakers and, consequently, many of the attempts to effect change through advocacy have not had the desired impact. This is understandable given that many of these organisations are staffed by volunteers, who sometimes lack the professionalism of larger actors in the development field. Therefore, building the capacity of the diaspora is crucial for such organisations to establish themselves in development circles and be recognised as the critical actors that this paper believes they are. With the correct advocacy skills, the diaspora has the potential to become a true agent of change.

Another challenge is the problem of coordination and fragmentation. Concerns have been raised about the difficulty of communicating with those who you wish to represent, which, in turn, can lead in a failure to reflect the interests of those you are advocating on behalf of, consequently raising questions about the legitimacy of your mandate to advocate. Effective engagement of the community is therefore a critical and logical first step for any African diaspora organisation attempting to gain legitimacy and success with its advocacy plan. Enabling environments are being created for diaspora groups; however, they must first prove their legitimacy in order to gain recognition in development circles.

Perhaps the biggest issue facing the African diaspora's attempts to advocate effectively is the relatively small voice that the numerous organisations have. Usually formed as home town associations (HTAs) or organised along ethnic lines, the impact of these groups is limited due to their relatively small size and capacity. As already discussed, working with others to effectively pool resources and complement efforts is an important tool for successful advocacy and lobbying. African diaspora groups can enhance their voice by pooling their skills and resources in order to gain better recognition for their work.

Analysis and Recommendations for Successful African Diaspora Advocacy and Lobbying

Much has been discussed about the various techniques that can be employed for effective advocacy, all of which have relevance to the work of African diaspora organisations. However, during the research for this paper, it has become evident that there are two major challenges that the diaspora faces in relation to implementing effective advocacy. Firstly, the lack of capacity to implement a comprehensive advocacy plan, and secondly that the diaspora's voice is rarely heard amongst the many other organisations vying to get their message heard. An analysis of the advocacy methods discussed reveals a number of relatively straightforward steps that diaspora organisations can undertake in the short term in order to immediately strengthen their advocacy voice.

Firstly, Diaspora organisations should consider collaborating with other organisations whose goals align with theirs. By working together, they can amplify their voice and gain better recognition amongst key decision makers. Within any potential collaboration, however, diaspora organisations should think strategically about how they to maximise their resources. They should consider the strategies discussed in this paper, most notably, the 'inside-outside' approach whereby different partners within an advocacy plan focus on different methods and target audiences. They should also be flexible and open in their search for potential advocacy partners. There are numerous organisations who work in different fields to the diaspora, but which have similar aims on certain issues, and with whom ad hoc collaboration could be possible.

Secondly, the building of capacity of African diaspora organisations in relation to advocacy is a key step. This can be done by seriously considering the information provided within this paper and remembering that understanding and planning are critical before undertaking any advocacy action. Figure 5 below neatly summarizes this process and is a good reference point when planning your advocacy campaign. Suitable training on the issue is also recommended. As already mentioned, several organisations, including ADPC, provide advocacy and lobbying training for African diaspora organisations and this should be seriously considered for all diaspora organisations looking to improve their advocacy work.

Conclusion

The African diaspora's potential to affect positive development within their countries of origin is unquestionable, and so, therefore, is the need to improve their advocacy and lobbying capacity and presence within development circles. The examples and recommendations covered within this paper serve as a starting point for African diaspora organisations wanting to understand the importance of advocacy and lobbying. They are intended to spur further research on the topic and produce effective advocacy plans. By combining efforts while simultaneously increasing advocacy capacity, the African diaspora will continue to improve its position within development circles and will ensure its voice is heard.

ADPC Resource library

Below you will find various documents outlined in the research.

[What is Advocacy](#)

[Key steps in advocacy](#)

[Diaspora Experiences and Challenges](#)

[Voice after Exit](#)

[SEAP Advocacy](#)

[AFFORD Advocacy Handbook, G. Faal 2016](#)

[ICCO Guidelines on Advocacy](#)

[FGG The Strength of Advocacy and Lobbying](#)

[PLAN Advocacy Toolkit](#)

[Voice after Exit: Diaspora Advocacy. Newland, K. \(2010\)](#)

[CARE Advocacy Tools and Guidelines](#)

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