Role of Diaspora in Development: International experiences

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Structure of presentation

- Key messages
- Development contributions by diaspora to countries of origin
- Challenges faced
- Lessons learned and good practice
- Way forward.
Key Messages

- There is still a vast knowledge gap on diaspora profiles.

- Diaspora communities are quite diverse: initial migration motives, skills, ethnic profiles, duration of stay (old and new diasporas), migratory status, destinations (South–North & South-South diaspora (Africa)).

- All diaspora groups make contributions to home countries – they are not a monopoly of the skilled /scientific /intellectual diaspora only.

- There is still a wide gap between promise and delivery of diaspora contributions.

- Diaspora communities also need support for effective engagement with home countries.

- Both origin and destination countries need to play pro-active roles in facilitating diaspora engagement.

- Diaspora contributions are only one among several contributions of migration to development policies (remittances, return migration, etc).
Beyond remittances: Identifying diaspora contributions

- **Positive**
  - Economic
    - Remittances, investments, exports, tourism
  - Intellectual
    - Skills, know-how, knowledge networks
  - Social: building up civil society.
  - Philanthropy – charity and donations;
  - Political
    - Lobbying, advocacy, mediation
  - Cultural

- **Negative**
  - Sustaining conflict in origin countries.
### Diaspora contributions by skill profile

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Contribution</th>
<th>Low-Skilled</th>
<th>High-Skilled</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Financial Remittances</td>
<td>+++</td>
<td>++</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business &amp; trade promotion</td>
<td>++</td>
<td>++</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Investments/FDI</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>++</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Home visits &amp; tourism</td>
<td>+++</td>
<td>++</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outsourcing</td>
<td></td>
<td>++</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge exchange and transfer - networks</td>
<td></td>
<td>+++</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political – advocacy, lobbying, democratic reform</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+++</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Philanthropy- HTAs</td>
<td>+++</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social capital</td>
<td>++</td>
<td>++</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Indicators of transnational engagement – Five Ts (M. Orozco)

- Five Ts
  - Transportation,
  - Telecommunication,
  - Tourism,
  - Transfer of money
  - Trade (home country goods).

- Indicators: frequency of contacts with home country, investments, remittances and businesses in the home country and membership of diaspora or hometown associations (based on surveys in Latin American & Caribbean & Ghana diasporas)

- Bur fails to capture knowledge exchange and transfer of skills and technology, probably as they are based on information gathered at household level.
Level of transnational engagement for Ghanaians (source: Orozco 2006).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Germany</th>
<th>U.K</th>
<th>U.S.A.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Calls once a week</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sends over $300</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buys HCG (home country goods)</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Travels once a year</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Spends over US$1,000)</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belongs to HTA</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

as per cent of total diaspora respondents?
Diaspora knowledge networks (DKN)

- Enables virtual linkages, participation and return
- Diaspora initiatives easy to start but difficult to maintain momentum unless concrete results materialize
- Problems identified by Lowell and Garova
  - Inactivity: 34% inactivity rate (21 out of 61 DKNs)
  - Failure: 27% of govt. assisted Networks have failed (4 of 15)
- Examples:
  - South African Network of Skills Abroad (SANSA); survey showed 46% of 2440 email contacts not working; only 428 responded and 40% of those mentioned rarely or never accessing the website.
  - UN supported Digital Diaspora Network for Africa (inactive);
DKNs – evidence from the Geneva Academic Research Network research

- The study carried out primary surveys of scientific diaspora from Colombia, India and South Africa in Switzerland.

Main findings

- High motivation for contributions.
- Contributions mostly limited to individual initiatives, esp. India, South Africa.
- Stable employment and residence status crucial in determining commitment.
- State support from both origin and destination limited.

Good practices identified

- The Swiss-South African Bilateral Research Programme
- South African Department of Science and Technology and the Swiss State Secretariat for Education and Research
- Association of Colombian Researchers in Switzerland (ACIS)

http://www.acis.ch
Constraints on diaspora contributions

- Problems of integration into host society; language issues.
- Constraints due to heavy workload workplace stress
- Lack of institutional support; private sector companies
- Unstable employment and residence status
- Lack of active commitment by origin countries
- Lack of unity among diaspora members. E.g. with non skilled.

Gabriela Tejada / Jean-Claude Bolay (eds), Scientific diasporas as development partners: Skilled migrants from Colombia, India and South Africa in Switzerland: empirical evidence and policy responses, Peter Lang, Bern, 2010
Challenges in diaspora engagement

- Mapping the diaspora; numbers, locations, profiles.
- Divisions in the diaspora: rivalry, political, ethnic, skillwise.
- Duplication with several trying to do the same thing.
- Weak capacity in origin country institutions to interface with the diaspora. Esp. conflict countries. Weak role of embassies - WB survey-
- Underestimation of resources (human & fin.) needed to keep networks active. See Kuznetsov.
- Lack of sustainability & local ownership; continued dependence on donor funding.
- Women diaspora invisible in most initiatives.
- Rigid visa policies of host countries affect circular & temporary returns.
- Mistrust between governments and political activism of some diaspora organisations.
- Ineffective monitoring and follow up mechanisms.
How are origin countries promoting diaspora engagement?

- Creating special ministries and units:
  - Armenia, Bangladehs, India (MOIA), Mali, Senegal
- Giving special recognition to diasporas:
  - African Union Charter, China- special status to Overseas Chinese,
  - Special incentives & concessions: dual citizenship
- Convening annual fora of diaspora: India – annual Pravis Bharatiaya Divas since 2003.
- Engage advisors from diaspora in policy bodies – formal and informal. (Philippines, Senegal)
- Focus on engagement, not return only. China shift from « Return and serve the mother land » (Huiuo fuwu) to « Serve the motherland » (Weiguo fuwu).
How can host countries help?

- Mapping diasporas:
  - *EC communication on migration and development*: Helping developing countries map their diasporas and build links with them.

- Mobilising diaspora in technical/development cooperation programmes. GTZ guidelines for practice - cooperating with diaspora communities; DFID policy paper.

- Supporting formation and development of diaspora networks
  - *EC communication on migration and development*.
  - UN-EC Joint Migration Development Initiative; capacity building of small actors.
  - IOM MIDA programme.

- Ensure and policy coherence between immigration and development policies and agendas:
  - Integration policies for migrant communities and respect of their rights.
  - Secure visa status and circulation-friendly visa regimes. EU long term residents.
A Road Map for Diaspora Engagement

- Identify goals and capacities (e.g., investment, knowledge, remittances).
  - Consultations
  - Research

- Know your diaspora.
  - Coordination within govt
  - Capacity building

- Build trust.
  - Pilot projects
  - Time
  - Capacity building

- Mobilize stakeholders (government, diaspora, civil society).
  - High profile events
  - Diaspora spokespersons
  - Sponsored travel for opinion leaders, youth
  - Promoting partnerships

- Effective engagement of diaspora in development.
  - Strengthening and inventory of existing diaspora institutions and programs
    - National
    - Regional
    - Local
  - Analysis of census data
  - Mapping of diaspora organizations
  - Skills inventory
  - Dual citizenship
  - Services to the diaspora (documents, classes, social services)
  - Privileges to nonresident expatriates and descendants
  - Active consular networks
  - Creation or adaptation of government institutions (consular networks, ministries, councils)
  - Facilitation of investment (one-stop centers)
  - Integrating diaspora into development planning and policy implementation

Source: Copyright Migration Policy Institute 2009
Mainstreaming diaspora in development: PRSPs

Review of 84 PRSPS by Black and Sward for UNDP HDRP 2009/38

- Disconnect between intentions to develop diaspora policy and concrete policy initiatives: 17 countries refer to diasporas.
  - 7 countries mention only intentions to engage diaspora.
  - 3 mention MIDA and TOKTEN.
  - Benin and Cape Verde more attention to diaspora policy.
- Out of 7 Sub-Saharan countries with ministries/depts to deal with diaspora affairs, only two (Benin and Burkina Faso) mentioned them in PRSPs.
- Limited mainstreaming in development agendas. Armenia HDR – most focus is on remittances by diasporas.
Selected good practices

- India – knowledge base on diasporas and policy shifts through High Level Committee on the Diaspora 2001.
- EC-UN Joint Migration Development Initiative (JMDI) project database.
  - http://www.migration4development.org/content/project-database
- IOM Migration for Development in Africa (MIDA) programme.
- UNDP TOKTEN – Transfer of Knowledge Through Expatriate Nationals: long established programme.
- Dual citizenship – 47 countries in 2008. Yet voting rights only in some.
- Co-development policies: e.g. mobilization through ‘brain circulation’ of the Malian scientific diaspora for the benefit of the University of Bamako: France/UNDP
- Scientists & Technologists of Indian Origin based abroad (STIOs). Dept of Science and Technology, http://stio.nic.in/
Home Town Associations - HTAs

- Started by Mexicans in US.
- A model of economic partnership between Mexican diaspora and homeland - philanthropic organizations of Mexican immigrants to raise money in the US to benefit their communities of origin in Mexico.
- Matching grants by local (provincial, state, municipal) and federal governments for funds donated. 3x1 programme.
- The activities focus on basic health, education and public infrastructure;
- Resources raised small in volume, but significant in rural communities.
- Collective money remittances sent by HTAs function as a substitute for the lack of government support in rural communities.
Good practices – continued.

• Creation of special ministries and agencies
  • India – Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs since 2004;
    Armenia – Ministry of Diasporas in 2008; African countries
  • Philippines: Commission on Filipinos Overseas (since 1980); chaired by Minister of Foreign Affairs.
  • Institute for Mexicans Abroad in Ministry of Foreign Affairs established in 2002.
    • Consultative Council of IME – elected leaders from diaspora communities.
    • Coordinates a network of 56 consular offices in North America
Way forward for policy

- Generate & share better information on diaspora communities.
- Ensure better integration of diaspora communities in host countries and ensure respect for their rights for best outcomes:
  - More active cooperation between origin and host countries
  - Countries of origin to provide an enabling environment for diaspora engagement
  - Interface with stakeholders and govt at all levels – central, provincial regional, municipality and community.
  - Host countries to support diaspora mapping, support to diaspora organizations, and adopt circulation friendly visa policies
  - Embassies of origin countries to perform bigger role
  - Support capacity building; diaspora elite groups also should help other groups.
  - Mainstreaming to be undertaken more seriously: in PRSPs, etc.