



Articles submitted to Global Diaspora Day 2016

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1. AFFORD Business Centre (ABC)

Category: Diaspora and migrants' role in job creation, enterprise, investment and public policy

The AFFORD Business Centre (ABC) was set up in 2011 as a social enterprise to support fast-growing SMEs in Sierra Leone that were likely to create between 10 to 50 jobs. Over 400 jobs have been created in Sierra Leone, despite the numerous challenges in the entrepreneurial eco-system in the country.

***Unisa Dizo-Conteh** is the UK coordinator for ABC. He recently authored a study assessing the impact of the Ebola outbreak on local and diaspora businesses in Sierra Leone, and helped form the Sierra Leone UK Diaspora Ebola Taskforce.*

Diaspora investment is a boon for developing economies

The role diaspora communities play in development is being increasingly recognised. From remittances to humanitarian work, diaspora contributions are making a real difference, changing many lives in their countries of origin. So too is diaspora direct investment – creating jobs and wealth for people in their home countries.

Often developing countries focus on attracting foreign direct investment (FDI) as if they can provide a silver bullet to addressing poverty. FDI tends to enjoy a range of incentives including tax breaks, reduced administrative cost of registration of a new business, among others. Sadly, less attention has been paid to diaspora direct investment (DDI), despite the significant potential of this in developing economies.

There are two key challenges for developing economies. Firstly, in rallying adequate resources to support development through a combination of domestic and foreign investment; secondly, and beyond this, the investment has to be sustained to ensure it supports economic growth for the long term. So, what can DDI bring to the table?

In 2015, a [World Bank survey](#) of Sierra Leoneans in the diaspora across the UK, Canada and US, in investment and trade, reported that 40% of the study sample were already investing in Sierra Leone, with businesses spanning across the country in various sectors including in the real estate sector. For example, the Sierra Leonean UK-based International Development Enterprise Associates (<http://www.idea-uk.com/>) is investing an estimated USD 40 million and employing 400 people in Sierra Leone.

It's important for developing economies to know that they cannot go forward by relying on FDI alone. DDI isn't just an extra pair of hands. It is a vital component of inward investment, aligned to long term economic development.

Notes and links:

- Diaspora direct investment (DDI) involves investment in the country of origin made directly by diaspora individuals, enterprises or companies where the diaspora hold top executive positions
- ABC is a joint programme of AFFORD - The African Foundation for Development UK and AFFORD Sierra Leone, whose core mission is to enhance and expand the capacity of Sierra Leoneans at home and abroad to contribute to national development through enterprise and job creation.

2. Afrikatu Kofi Nkrumah (Prague, Czech Republic)

Category: Diaspora and migrants' role in job creation, enterprise, investment and public policy

Category: Beyond Xenophobia - social inclusion of diaspora and migrants

Baffour Ankomah, editor at large, New African magazine

Afrikatu Kofi Nkrumah has done more for Africa than most people. He is a Ghanaian by nationality but he is only enveloped in a Ghanaian skin – his real citizenship is pan-African as the Ghanaian tag is too limiting for him, at least according to the work he has done so far, which I have known for almost two decades.

From his base in Prague, and prior to that in Munich, Kofi has worked indefatigably to connect Africans (both continental and Diasporan) to the African and 'black' cause (black, for the lack of a better word). I, as editor of New African over 15 years, benefitted a lot from Kofi's work and support.

He never tires of the work to build a better image for Africa and Africans abroad, many times at the expense of his own personal interests. Blood flows in the veins of all human beings, but for Kofi, Pan-Africa flows in his veins. He eats it. He sleeps it. He works it. You don't get many people like him who have dedicated their lives to building a better image for Africa and black people, and understanding between Africa and Europe where he has lived for many years now.

A superb human being, I have known him when he set up an "African shop" in Prague to service African needs. I have known him when he started an "African library" in Prague to service the needs of both Africans and Czechs who wanted to know more about Africa. I have known him by his writings and the agency he set up to propagate positive stories about Africa globally. The centre that he and his wife started in Prague has grown to cover many other African-Czech political/social/cultural activities beneficial to all.

His work with African ambassadors in Prague is commendable, trying to make them do more to enhance Africa-Czech relations than what normal diplomatic relations call for.

His humanitarian work in Ghana and other African countries have brought much-needed help to disadvantaged school kids who would not normally be in a classroom. Kofi deserves to carry the name of Nkrumah, as his name-sake, the first president of Ghana and Africa's man of the 20th century, would have been proud to see Kofi's work if he were still alive.

He is a good comrade, a born leader, and he gets things done, as I have known him. If only Africa can have many of his type.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ozx6JD8newY>

3. Als ik daar ben (When I'm there)

Category: Job creation - migrants contribution to home country,

Category: Beyond xenophobia - social inclusion of diaspora and migrants

Als ik daar ben (When I'm there) is a documentary for release in autumn 2016 in the Netherlands and Morocco, which tells the tales of Amar, Saïda and Gyzlene, migrants to the Netherlands who are trying to give back to their native Morocco

*Producer and director **Marjolein Veldman** is also a trainer and consultant on international migration at MDF Training & Consultancy*

I studied international migration, and worked with people from the Moroccan diaspora for years before I realised I could do something more with their stories. The Moroccan diaspora is the second biggest in the Netherlands after the Turkish, and before the Surinamese diaspora.

Yet it is being Moroccan which almost always has negative connotations in the Dutch media. During my time at the Morocco Foundation I met three very unique Dutch citizens, who were born in Morocco. Amar, 39, came to the Netherlands as a young man aged 23. Saïda, who is in her fifties, moved here when she was 28 to join her family. Gyzlene, 33, also came to the Netherlands to join her family; she was 9. A former Miss Maghreb, she is now a team coach at Rotterdam Academy, and has given back to her roots by opening a foundation in Morocco, called Share a Smile.

There are over 220 million migrants all over the world. In the Netherlands, the government recognises that migrants can become an asset to both home and host country. The documentary that I did of these three unique members of the diaspora, is to show that they belong. They have multiple identities.

Three key things can drive the debate about diaspora and migrant contributions. As part of this project, it's about the search for identity, the feeling of belonging, and all of that in the context of a more general Dutch public debate, which can be dominated by a certain 'us versus them' thinking. International migration has a language of its own, and it would have you think that Morocco, for the three main figures in this documentary, is a home country. Yet they were born there; so what does that make the Netherlands, where they have spent decades, if not a home country? Travelling with them in Morocco, I saw how they were perceived as European and Dutch.

We led a round of crowdfunding for this documentary, and happily met our targets. Fascinatingly, there were about 60 donations from people who really wanted to contribute to a project which can signify that the 'us versus them' thinking is over. In an increasingly diverse society, we have to think and act along the lines of working together. People want more stories about migrants which don't stand up to how the 'other' is depicted in Dutch media. They want to support stories in which they can recognise themselves.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=19&v=rhII RauBhkA

4. Beyond remittances in Bangladesh

Category: Diaspora and migrants' action on job creation, enterprise, investment and public policy

Mohammad Atiqun Nabi, Executive Director, INAFI Asia and Bangladesh

Migration is a common phenomenon, ever since the dawn of civilisation. Globalisation and the market economy have enhanced the process of migration in recent decades. The movement of people across international borders has enormous implications for growth and poverty alleviation in both origin and destination countries.

According to the United Nations, more than 230 million people were living outside of their countries of birth in 2013. Over 700 million migrate within their countries. In the coming decades, demographic forces, globalisation and climate change will increase migration pressures both within and across borders.

Migration has a multifarious impact on the socio-economic and political scenario of both the country of origin and country of destination. Remittances generally reduce the level and severity of poverty and lead to: higher human capital accumulation; greater health and education expenditures; better access to information and communication technologies; improved access to formal financial sector services; enhanced small business investment; more entrepreneurship; better preparedness for adverse shocks such as droughts, earthquakes, and cyclones; and reduced child labour.

A study by MADE and the African Diaspora Policy Centre reveals that migration is increasingly seen as having important positive contributions to development. Over the decades, the contribution of migration to development has been seen through the positive effects of diaspora and migrant remittances on the well-being of families in countries of origin.

In Bangladesh, there are two types of migrants. Firstly, the temporary migrants who come to Bangladesh for labour purposes, often originating from Gulf countries. Secondly, there is the Non-Bangladeshi Resident (NRB). We don't often use the word 'diaspora', but this is what the term refers to, about Bangladeshis living most commonly in the US, UK and Canada. Around 10 million Bangladeshis are living abroad. An article in the Wall Street Journal in 2015* estimated they sent around \$14 billion in remittances to Bangladesh annually, according to a source from Bangladesh Bank, the country's central bank.

Within two years, our organisation linked 1200 migrants with a bank and microfinance institutions and loan systems. We also have a government-backed 'migrants welfare bank', which provides loans to migrants in other countries.

The Bangladeshi government has some good policies around migrants, but implementing the policies is difficult, and there is a necessity for more neutral organisations to facilitate questions such as; how do we mobilise migrant money for the good of the economy? For example, we have a good potential for SMEs.

Various studies have shown that the Non-Bangladeshi Resident (NRB), or diaspora, are more interested in investing in philanthropic schemes. Their next area of business interest is in fixed assets, such as real estate, hotels or commercial shopping malls. Temporary migrants, or returnee migrants, do tend to focus their investment in small businesses.

*<http://blogs.wsj.com/frontiers/2015/09/30/non-residents-banks-channel-diaspora-investment-to-bangladesh/>

5. Global Somalia Diaspora (GSD)

Category: Diaspora and migrants' role in job creation, enterprise, investment and public policy

*Established in Istanbul in 2014, with offices in London, Minnesota and Mogadishu, GSD's aim is to harness the power of Somalia diaspora for the reconstruction of the country. **Abdihakim Ainte** is former policy advisor of the Office of Somalia Diaspora (ODA) at the ministry of foreign affairs in Somalia.*

Somalia's diaspora: turning the tide

The vast majority of Somalis in the west were the first generation to escape after the civil war in 1991, and some have become remarkable migrants. Take Ahmed Hussen*, a lawyer and community activist who was elected to Canadian parliament, or award-winning Kenyan-born Somali poet Warsan Shire, a Londoner who was recently featured in Beyonce's album.

It is diaspora figures like Sadia*, a hot sauce entrepreneur who moved to the US in 1999, whose investment is keeping Somalia's economy alive. Sadia gave 10% of her proceeds for aid during the Somali famine. Indeed, in almost every major city in the world, from Nairobi to Dubai via London, Melbourne or Cape Town, you can find small Somali shops, a business mentality which has earned Somalis the reputation of entrepreneurial nomads*.

In the UN and international aid community, the jargon about Somalis is that they are 'resilient'. For two decades, the 1.5 million-strong Somali diaspora threw the country a lifeline by wiring a few hundred dollars to families and relatives. With this money, families can foot basic bills such as food, rent or sending children to school. The largest diaspora members, who live in Europe and North America, send a whopping almost 2 billion USD dollar per year*, rendering them one of the largest remittance-sender diasporas in the world.

After two decades abroad, the rapid return of the diaspora to their homeland is primarily driven by two motives: to navigate their roots and identity, and to contribute to the ongoing reconstruction effort with the aim of exploring business opportunities and participating in public institutions. While there is no substantive data on how much of the diaspora has returned to Somalia, their impact on the ground is measurable and widely seen. The overwhelming majority of current cabinet, police and military have lived abroad, including the prime minister, who spent years in Canada. In civil society, the recently launched Fursad Fund* is the first independent trust fund initiative arranged by members of diaspora, with the support of locals.

There is also small-scale investment in real estate, restaurants, home delivery pizza, coffee shops, laundry, ICT sector and even fresh flowers via a florist*. As result, for the first time in two decades, the IMF* reviewed Somali economy with a 2.7% growth projection, a quantum leap for a country still struggling with political instability, weak institutions and recurrent droughts.

Links:

*<http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/toronto/toronto-s-ahmed-hussen-1st-somali-canadian-elected-to-parliament-1.3281260>

*<http://sadiassauce.com/about-sadia/>

*<http://roguechiefs.com/2012/01/06/somalia-doesnt-have-to-fight-to-conquer-somalis-are-already-africas-small-kings-and-queens/>

*<http://www.theguardian.com/global-development/poverty-matters/2012/feb/20/what-role-somalia-diaspora-rebuilding>

*<http://www.ibtimes.com/somalias-first-independent-trust-fund-offers-hope-unemployed-youth-raises-concerns-2328283>

*<http://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/nov/01/somalia-first-florist-romance-mogadishu>

*<http://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/survey/so/2015/CAR072915B.htm>

6. Humanitas Afrika

founded in Prague, Czech Republic as a civic association in 2000 with the objectives of promotion of respect, understanding and tolerance between the Czechs and Africans

Category: Diaspora and Migrants' role in job creation, enterprise, investment and public policy

Category: Beyond xenophobia - social inclusion of diaspora and migrants

Humanitas Afrika covers education, health, creation of job opportunities, human resource development, child care programmes, and women's empowerment in Africa (Ghana, Mali, Burkina Faso & Kenya). The organisation hosts educational programmes, as well as socio-cultural events in the Czech Republic.

Emmanuel Hayford is the country coordinator for Humanitas Afrika.

Humanitas Afrika has transformed the lives of many people in rural communities in Ghana, Benin, Burkina Faso and Kenya. For example, in 2007 and 2008, Humanitas Afrika collaborated with two local schools in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso on an initiative called 'Bon Départ', which trained over 100 women who were school leavers in basic administrative and computer skills. Many participants went on to gain employment in small businesses, government agencies and schools amongst others.

Then, there was a micro-finance scheme in Ghana, called 'Afrika Women Association of Obom'. Women in rural communities in Accra are given yearly loans for their economic activities, such as petty trading. Also in Ghana, 'Humanitas Afrika Dressmaking Project', launched in 2003, has seen many apprentices successfully completing their training to become professional dressmakers with certificates. Others graduate and get jobs, as mechanics or in electronics.

Over the years, about 522 children in deprived areas have received school materials on an annual basis. This educational support extends to some who progress to senior high school, and termly school fees are fully catered for. Some of the students who successfully progress to tertiary institutions every year are also supported financially.

Finally, the African Information Center in the Czech Republic is a well stocked 'African Library' which serves the needs of many people who want to learn about Africa. Educational programmes are regularly held at the premises, such as the current affairs programme 'Across Africa in a Month'.

<http://www.humanitasafrika.cz/>

7. Somali entrepreneurs in South Africa

Category: Diaspora and Migrants' role in job creation, enterprise, investment and public policy

Sub-categories:

- **Diaspora and migrants as entrepreneurs and investors**
 - **Diaspora and migrants action on job creation and entrepreneurship – policy and practice**
- **Enabling environment in countries of origin/residence/interest**
 - **Incentives for diaspora and migrant enterprises in countries of origin/residence/interest**
- **Access to capital and resources**
 - **Examples of transboundary financing**

With about 50 active researchers, the Department of Economic History at Lund University is most probably the world's largest department in economic history. For many years it has developed large research programmes in structural, development and population economics, amongst others.

***Benny Carlson** is professor of economic history at Lund School of Economics and Management, Lund University, Sweden. **Abdu Hikam** is PhD student in development studies at University of the Witwatersrand in Johannesburg, South Africa*

The Mayfair district in Johannesburg is a junction in the business activity of the Somali diaspora in South Africa, a junction which connects producers and wholesalers with retailers and customers, city with township, Somalis in the world with Somalis in the country. Somalis play an important role in the South African economy. However, they encounter crime and xenophobia, which amplifies their need to stick together. It contributes to the image of a group not keen on integrating in society.

Interviews with a number of Somali entrepreneurs in Mayfair (conducted in late 2015) demonstrate that, in most cases, they stem from families involved in business. Their educations vary from religious, primary and secondary school to college and university. They often pursued different business activities before their arrival in South Africa. The interviewee's motives for entrepreneurship revolve around independence, learning and self-confidence and – of course – self-sufficiency. Their strategies for information gathering and learning vary: local contacts, friends abroad, the internet, advice from consultancy firms, university seminars. Their plans for the future are disparate: share 'business secrets' with South Africans, write the economic history of Somalia, launch an institute for business education, expand to other countries or just pay the rent.

The literature on Somali entrepreneurship in South Africa has carved out some pregnant characteristics, but the entrepreneurs are individuals with different educational backgrounds and plans for the future. What they have in common, aside from religion, culture and language, is the 'mentality' which characterises entrepreneurs in general – to invoke the neoclassical economist Alfred Marshall – the will to be the smith of one's own future. What they expect from government is the maintenance of law and order and a stable currency.

This article grew out of a seminar, organised by the Swedish and Somali embassies in South Africa, where the differences in business activity among Somali immigrants in the two countries were discussed. In Sweden, quite a lot of support for small businesses is available, but this is also combined with requirements and control regarding education and business plans before starting a business. In South Africa and many other countries, it is easy to start out from scratch in a more or less informal sector. Yet, Sweden can offer security, whereas South Africa can be blighted by crime and violence.

The article is part of a research project on comparisons of Somali entrepreneurship in different countries, funded by The Kamprad Family Foundation for Entrepreneurship, Research and Charity.

[Read the full article here](#)

8. Uganda and diaspora

Category: Diaspora and Migrants' role in job creation, enterprise, investment and public policy

Let Them Help Themselves Out of Poverty enables communities to deal with day-to-day challenges that prevent them from becoming economically active, and currently works in Ruhanga, a remote village in South West Uganda

Ida Horner is the founder and Chairperson of Let Them Help Themselves Out of Poverty

The shrinking time and space between national boundaries, widely referred to as globalisation, has not only contributed to the rising of diaspora communities, but crucially, it has allowed easier financial contribution by the diaspora to their countries of origin. Statistics indicate that in some instances remittances by diaspora exceed the 'official development assistance' from donors; for example, remittances to Uganda were valued at US \$0.9 in 2014.

The downside of this phenomenon is its contribution to brain drain phenomena, as most developed countries have immigration conditions that mostly attract skilled labour, especially in financial and health sectors. Developing countries are left with an insufficiently skilled, in many cases crucial workforce.

Both developing and developed countries have recognised the importance of striking the balance between exporting labour and retaining critical workforce in developing countries. A lack of resources means that there is very little to incentivise the workforce to remain in their home countries, when they have better conditions of service and pay in developed countries. This sometimes leads home countries to initiate policies that do not necessarily make it easy for the diaspora to engage, due to a lack and breakdown of trust.

For instance, up until recently Uganda did not recognise dual nationality. Whilst that policy has changed, those seeking a dual nationality visa have to pay a prohibitive fee of \$500, and even then

their rights are limited. Whilst the government recognises the value of tapping into the diaspora skills set, its policy in this area remains rigid and unfavourable for diaspora that surrendered their Ugandan passports, who do not yet have a dual nationality visa. They are still treated as foreign nationals, so companies looking to hire them have to justify hiring them over Ugandan nationals.

Uganda recognises the value of its diaspora, but no robust policies are in place to harness this. This is contrary to the findings of a United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) report in 2012, on the least developed countries (LDC). The report argues that for LDCs to benefit from their diaspora, as well as the skills they possess, and how such skills can be mobilised. In particular, the report focuses on knowledge transfer networks. Beyond these, LDCs can benefit from informal diaspora networks, so long as they can commit to uncovering such networks.

I founded LTHTP to help rural women in Uganda be economically active. The charity is run by four African women in the UK, and has engaged women in the village of Ruhanga SW Uganda, in income generating activities, by leveraging our networks for finance and skills.