

## 7. NIDO Germany

**Category: Diaspora & 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**

*NIDO-GERMANY is part of a global Nigerian diaspora network, the largest of Nigerians worldwide. Under the motto 'In Pursuance of National Development', it brings together professionals, academics and entrepreneurs globally, harnessing Nigeria's human resources for the development of their homeland*

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The way different Nigerian groups in Germany came into being has an impact on how they contribute to their homeland.

After the Second World War, the new Federal Republic of Germany gave two-year vocational training programmes to young Nigerians in the civil service, for the needs of the country's economy. These 'bridge-builders' between Nigerian and German industry took crash language courses and were offered vocational training programmes by the Carl-Duisburg Gesellschaft, founded in 1949.

Some Nigerians went on to study at German universities, leading to the creation of dynamic and critical Nigerian students' unions in Berlin and Hamburg, amongst others. Many returned to Nigeria afterwards, since the German Foreigners' Act made no provision for further work.

From 1980, it became an admissions requirement to have an intermediate level of German language when applying to German tertiary institutions. Under the regime of Babangida, a military leader who took power in Nigeria in a coup, an International Monetary Fund loan and its accompanying structural adjustment programmes led to emigration from Nigeria. The first Nigerian refugees (158) entered Germany in 1985.

These 'Ausländer' (foreigners) evolved into 'Migranten' (migrants), leading to the further establishment of groups such as the Nigerian Community in Berlin (1990), Nigerian Community Germany (1991) or the Association of Nigerian Doctors in Germany to quote some.

The annulment of the 1993 presidential elections in Nigeria, followed by the hanging of the environmentalist Ken Saro-Wiwa and his Ogoni contemporaries two years later, further led to the formation of political groups, such as: the Association of Nigerian Authors (Hanover); Nigerian Common Cause (Berlin), Coalition of Nigerian Democrats in Germany (Aachen), Nigerian Association in Niedersachsen (Hanover), Project Nigeria (Stuttgart), The Voice Forum (Jena) on refugee issues, the German Section of the Worldwide United Democratic Front of Nigeria (UDFN), amongst others. Nigerian cultural groups also formed in Germany.

The global acknowledgement of the contribution of the diaspora to national development, for example via remittances to the homeland, led to the African Union adopting the diaspora as a Sixth Region (making it an entity equal to the five traditional existing regions - North African, West African, East African, Central Africa and Southern African).

After a long process, in March 2016, a Memorandum of Understanding was signed by the Nigerians in Diaspora Organisation (NIDO Germany) with the Independent Corrupt Practices and other related Offences Commission\* in Nigeria. Diaspora cooperation in the fight against corruption now exists under the new government. From a development perspective, there is funding from the German Agency GiZ, for example, in income generation through cassava and vegetable production by rural women in Benin City, Edo State, or youth empowerment programmes in renewable energy.

Some further recommendations: the Diaspora Commission and the government of Nigeria should monitor the reintegration process of returning experts for at least the first three years; no infrastructure is in place for this. There could be a National Youth Service Corp (NYSC) waiver for children of Nigerian descent. There should be more engagement in a policy dialogue between Germany and Nigeria (in line with the Policy Advisory component of the migration programme for development). This need to work together goes back to the colonial history of Africa's partition, which happened in Germany; Germany and Nigeria need to work better together to enhance diaspora benefits to both countries.

*Links and references:*

<http://icpc.gov.ng/>

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Personal Experience as a Migrant