

Diaspora support programmes in development cooperation

Examples from Denmark, France, Germany, Italy, Switzerland
and from the European level

SUMMARY

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Water Revolution in Africa: the project that the Austrian diaspora initiatives CHIALA and Radio Afrika TV are implementing in Cameroon in cooperation with the Austrian company Vitalaris aims to provide the general population with access to clean drinking water and at the same time create a source of income. More information:
www.radioafrika.net/water-revolution-ein-wasserprojekt-von-radio-afrika-tv-chiala-und-vitalaris

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Basic issues: discussion papers on development policies, international cooperation and south-north cultural exchange, as well as anti-racist campaigning.

The views expressed in this publication are those of the author, and not necessarily those of the editor/VIDC.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This study on diaspora support programmes in development cooperation is part of the Vienna Institute for International Dialogue and Cooperation's focus on diaspora policies and is financially supported by the Austrian Development Agency (ADA). It aims to provide practical guidance to institutional actors on the development of a diaspora support mechanism for Austria and to stimulate innovative forms of funding. The study examines current European Commission diaspora support programmes and focuses on those in five European countries: Denmark, France, Germany, Italy and Switzerland, based on which recommendations are developed.

The literature and policies of the aforementioned countries show that diasporas are recognised as development actors due to their transnational characteristics which enable them to establish relations between their countries of origin and residence and to play important roles in transferring knowledge and skills. Diasporas, individually and collectively, help improve the living conditions of their families and communities in their countries of origin through remittances and investments. Development agencies have thus created support mechanisms to enable diasporas to realise their potential and increase the effectiveness of their development activities. Diasporas are also active in integration processes in their host countries; this study however focuses exclusively on development cooperation and humanitarian aid.

Research for this study was conducted during April and May and the report was finalised in June 2021. The report consists of four sections: firstly, an introduction which describes the subject and research methods; secondly, definitions of diaspora and Diaspora Organisations (DOs), their potentials for development, and support approaches in the selected countries. The third section presents examples of current initiatives; this is based on a desk study, and both uses pre-existing data and reviews the policies of the selected countries. In the fourth section, the study provides recommendations related to diaspora engagement in development cooperation.

A review of examples in Austria's neighbouring countries and other EU member states showed that the countries covered in this report are particularly active

in this area and involved in a range of initiatives. Examples in which diasporas play key roles, or are the main beneficiaries, are included in this report. France and Switzerland also consider gender dimensions in their initiatives. In France, for instance, funding for particular projects is available in the fields of education and health for women and girls.

The initiatives and level of support vary from country to country and depend on the focus of the projects. Most fall within the policy frameworks of the selected countries and include capacity building programmes, networking and advocacy, project funding, diaspora entrepreneurship, and partnerships with the Global South to pave the way for diaspora engagement in their countries of origin. In the following, we present initiatives and support approaches on European level and in five selected countries.

Denmark

The Danish Development Cooperation engages diasporas as actors in development and humanitarian aid. Two examples of such engagement are the Diaspora Program and the Diaspora Emergency Action & Coordination (DEMAC) initiative.

Diaspora Programme

Diaspora Programme is a diaspora-specific initiative established by the Danish Refugee Council (DRC) and funded by the Danish International Development Agency (Danida) to support Afghanistan and Somalia DOs. It provides financing for diaspora-led development projects, networking, capacity building and support for diaspora entrepreneurs. The programme has a funding mechanism called 'Action Track', which provides small grants of up to DKK 100,000 (EUR 13,500) to less experienced DOs and larger grants of DKK 100,000-500,000 (EUR 13,500-67,240) to DOs with more experience. Applicants for large projects are expected to contribute 15 to 20 per cent of the project budget, either as cash or in kind.

Diaspora Emergency Action & Coordination

DEMAC is an initiative promoting diaspora engagement in humanitarian actions. It is funded by the Unit-

ed States Agency for International Development (USAID) and run by the DRC. The budget for the 2020-2022 phase of DEMAC is USD 1.48 million (EUR 1.22 million). The initiative seeks to involve DOs in humanitarian responses and to facilitate coordination between DOs and humanitarian institutions. To this end, DEMAC works to strengthen the capacities of DOs, to raise awareness of their capabilities, and to advocate for their engagement in humanitarian activities.

France

In France, diasporas are supported as partners in the development process. This report addresses two different initiatives which are currently being implemented: firstly, an umbrella organisation for DOs, and secondly, a diaspora entrepreneurship initiative:

Forum of Migrants' International Solidarity Organisations

The Forum of Migrants' International Solidarity Organisations (FORIM) is an umbrella organisation connecting DOs in France, through which the French Development Agency (AFD) provides capacity building programmes for DOs. Each year, FORIM sponsors DOs to implement more than 75 micro-projects - contributing EUR 15,000 per project - in the fields of education, health, water supply, agriculture and diaspora entrepreneurship.

European Mobilisation for Entrepreneurship in Africa – MEET Africa

MEET Africa is a platform supporting African diaspora entrepreneurs, co-funded by AFD and the EU, and implemented by Expertise France, Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) and the Anima Investment Network. MEET Africa connects diaspora entrepreneurs, provides counselling, workshops and grants for business start-ups in Africa. MEET Africa's total budget from 2020 to 2023 is EUR 8.5 million, and it is expected to fund 150 projects in 2021.

Germany

With regards to diaspora engagement, Germany has the most diverse and extensive initiatives in Europe, at both federal and state levels. These include a funding mechanism for DOs, the moveGLOBAL e. V. umbrella organisation, and support for individual diaspora

members in the form of diaspora entrepreneurship and training for diaspora experts.

Programme Migration and Diaspora

Programme Migration and Diaspora (PMD) has a budget of EUR 69 million from the German Federal Ministry of Economic, Cooperation and Development (BMZ) and is being implemented by GIZ and its partners between 2019 and 2022. The PMD provides a fund of up to EUR 44,000 for DOs to implement projects, as well as capacity building programmes and consulting. DOs must contribute 10 per cent of the project budget. The PMD also supports diaspora members who want to start businesses, in addition to diaspora experts who carry out short-term development assignments in their countries of origin.

The Expert Fund Migration and Diaspora (FMD)

The FMD is being carried out by GIZ during the period 2019-2024. It has a total budget of EUR 19 million and helps diaspora experts through training and salary top-ups to return and contribute to the development of their countries of origin in the Global South. This programme has been running since the 1980s and has enabled around 15,000 specialists to return.

WIDU.africa online platform: Promoting direct investment in Africa

This project is being implemented between 2018 and 2021 by GIZ. With an estimated budget of EUR 2 million, the platform helps African diasporas living in Germany, Austria, France and Switzerland to invest in Africa. Since the platform's launch, around 9,000 sponsors and entrepreneurs have registered and 1,300 projects have been approved and are currently being implemented.

Support to the African Union on Migration and Displacement

This project is funded with a grant of EUR 6 million from BMZ and is being implemented by GIZ in partnership with the African Union (AU). It supports the AU to lead migration governance in Africa through training and assistance in the implementation of the Migration Policy Framework for Africa (MPFA), as well as promoting the MPFA at the regional and national levels in AU member states and strengthening the focus areas of diaspora cooperation, labour migration and protection regimes.

State Level: moveGLOBAL e. V.

moveGLOBAL e.V. is an example of networking between DOs. It is an umbrella association of the Entwicklungspolitischer Ratschlag e.V. (BER) in Berlin, which enables coordination between its 31 DO members. moveGLOBAL e.V. supports and empowers these DOs through counselling, networking, workshops and conferences, as well as advocating for their recognition and visibility at municipality and national levels.

Italy

According to Italian law (No. 125, adopted in 2014) the diaspora is recognised as a development partner alongside other development organisations. Following are two examples of initiatives that are currently being implemented in Italy, mainly focused on diaspora entrepreneurship, mapping and mobilisation.

Invest in Senegal

'Invest in Senegal' is a programme which supports the Senegalese diaspora to establish small and medium-sized businesses in their country of origin. The programme is funded by the EU with a grant of EUR 1.2 million and is being implemented by the Italian Agency for Development Cooperation (AICS) in Dakar and its partners. In 2021, fifty applicants will receive between EUR 5,000 to 30,000 - depending on their capabilities and experience - to set up businesses in six regions of Senegal.

Connect Albania

This project is funded by AICS and implemented by the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) in Albania and the UN Migration Agency. The project maps the Albanian diaspora in Italy, France and Belgium, connects them through the Connect Albania online platform, and encourages them to invest in Albania and to attract foreign investment.

Switzerland

The Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) has established a framework for diaspora engagement in countries of residence and origin. Below are three examples that focus on advocacy and the creation of a framework for diaspora involvement in development cooperation.

The Africa-Europe Diaspora Development Platform

The Africa-Europe Diaspora Development Platform (ADEPT) is a network of more than 200 African DOs and individuals based in the EU, including in Norway, Switzerland and the UK. ADEPT is co-funded by the SDC and the EU and aims to professionalise African Diaspora Development Organisations (ADDOs) and to influence policies and practice in order to increase their development activities in Africa. The budget for the current phase of the project, which began in early 2018 and will continue until the end of 2021, amounts to CHF 1.85 million (EUR 1.7 million).

Bosnia and Herzegovina Diaspora for Development

The Bosnia and Herzegovina Diaspora for Development (BiHD4D) project is in its second phase (2016-2022) and is co-funded with grants of USD 5.05 million (EUR 4.15 million) from SDC, USD 461,513 (EUR 380,09) from the UNDP and USD 180,529 (EUR 148,68) from the IOM. BiHD4D aims to increase socio-economic opportunities for the people of BiH and to improve their living conditions by increasing diaspora engagement. The project's three main activities comprise liaising with the diaspora and government agencies through the Ministry of Human Rights and Refugees and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, assisting municipalities to include the diaspora in development policy, and encouraging diaspora entrepreneurship in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Moldova – Making the Most of Migration

The aim of this project is to help the Moldovan diaspora to mobilise and cooperate with the Moldovan government in migration and development policies, as well as to encourage diaspora engagement in development and policy implementation. It also enables the Moldovan diaspora to help improve reintegration services for returning migrants. The project has a budget of CHF 7 million (EUR 6.38 million) and is currently in its second phase, which began at the start of 2019 and will continue until the end of 2022.

The European Union

The EU recognises diasporas as partners in development cooperation and sponsors diaspora support programmes in various countries. The EU Global Diaspora Facility (EUDiF) is an example of a diaspora-specific

project at the European level funded by the European Commission.

The EU Global Diaspora Facility

EUDiF is a pilot project currently being implemented by the International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD) with a budget of EUR 5 million for the period 2019-2022. EUDiF maps and publishes information about diasporas in 100 countries. It also provides capacity building programmes, networking and dialogue between DOs, and supports diaspora professionals who want to share their knowledge and experiences with their countries of origin.

Recommendations

After studying these initiatives, the author has concluded that with the necessary facilities and conditions, diasporas can effectively contribute to economic growth in their countries of origin. The researcher has developed four recommendations in relation to Austria:

R#1: A survey or community-specific surveys should be conducted on the backgrounds, capabilities, activities, and structures of DOs, as well as on opportunities and challenges faced in developing diaspora support policies in Austria.

R#2: Based on the findings, a support mechanism should be developed on state and regional levels in Austria that provides the right conditions and necessary resources to engage DOs in development cooperation and humanitarian aid. The proposed mechanism could cover the following approaches for DOs and individuals:

DIASPORA ORGANISATIONS

Networking: there should be a platform to connect DOs, other development NGOs and the ADA, in order to provide opportunities to exchange knowledge and experiences, as well as to build partnerships. The platform could be in the form of a government body dedicated to diasporas, or an umbrella organisation.

Capacity building programmes: The needs of DOs should be identified and based on these requirements. Trainings, workshops and conferences on various issues should be offered in order to enhance organisational and operational skills.

Funding development projects: A funding mechanism should be established to support small and medium-sized development projects in partnership with DOs, or led by DOs and their local partners in order to conduct development activities in countries of origin.

INDIVIDUAL MEMBERS OF DIASPORAS

Diaspora entrepreneurship: Financial support and advice should be provided to diaspora entrepreneurs to create small businesses in their countries of origin and contribute to the economic growth of those countries in the Global South.

Mobilising diaspora experts: Support and advice should be provided to diaspora experts who wish to voluntarily share their knowledge and experience with organisations in the Global South. This support can be both for experts who would like carry out short-term projects, or those who wish to return to their country of origin.

R#3: Cooperation and coordination with diaspora countries of origin should take place in order to remove internal barriers to the development activities of diaspora members and organisations. This can be in the form of awareness campaigns for relevant departments in those countries, or through cooperation to create a strategy for the diaspora to be included in the development cooperation.

R#4: Partnerships with donors from other countries should be developed. This will help to share the costs of diaspora support programmes and development projects, as well as to enable diasporas to share experiences.