

CHAPTER 2

Towards Effective Diaspora Engagement Policies in Africa: Lessons in Policy Design

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Abstract

Sub-Saharan African countries are at various stages of developing Diaspora engagement policies. There are very few – if any – cases of success stories with the engagement of the Diaspora. A review of African experiences with Diaspora engagement shows a persisting trend of constraints ranging from lacking Diaspora databases, unfavourable investment climates characterised by political and economic risks, and limited investment in e-government development for virtual interactions with Diaspora communities. This chapter takes a qualitative approach underpinned by extensive literature reviews on African experiences with Diaspora engagement in selected country cases from Asia and Latin America. These countries not only had Diaspora policies for longer periods but have also recorded notable successes with Diaspora engagement. Experiences of the reviewed international cases indicate that foundational efforts in Diaspora engagement have encompassed determining the Diaspora's size, capturing citizens' comprehensive personal details abroad, and building advanced virtual interactive platforms for information exchange. Results show that the policy architecture of Diaspora engagement initiatives of the selected international cases is anchored in four broad dimensions: political, economic, socio-cultural and administrative, and some of the definitive policy initiatives under these dimensions include adjustment of immigration laws and foreign policies, granting dual citizenship to Diaspora communities, creating Diaspora administrative institutions, building Diaspora networks, and creating socio-cultural events promotive of home-Diaspora 'reunions'.

Keywords: Diaspora, engagement, policies, Africa, Latin America, Asia

1 Introduction

The Diaspora phenomenon has gained significance in the past four decades following the increasing migration of people within and across continents. There are both pull and push factors driving the migration trends across the world today. Some regions and countries suffer conflicts and economic turmoil, while others enjoy peace amidst economic gains. Migration flows have further benefitted from the enabling effect of globalisation and the liberalisation of people and goods across borders (Wiarda 2004). It has resulted in the ‘de-territorialisation of personnel’, enhanced inter-state trade, deepened regional integration, and strengthened bilateral and multilateral exchanges at political and economic levels (Sengupta 2001). Initially, in the migration matrix, sending states appeared like outright losers when their best brains left for bigger economies of the Global North. It raised questions on how sending countries would benefit from the emigration of their citizens. While it was natural for citizens to support families left behind financially, it was not obvious how savings by citizens abroad would translate to economic gains for the homeland. This trend marked the birth of the migration-development discourse, centring around the conversion of the supposed ‘loss of personnel’ that migration seemed to project into economic development gains for the sending states. Countries took specific actions to engage their citizens in foreign countries to tap into economic benefits from citizens abroad (Edeh *et al.* 2021). This need for engagement saw the formulation of Diaspora policies, the creation of administrative structures for Diaspora affairs, the reform of migration laws, and the designing of Diaspora-focused economic programmes, among other numerous efforts (Sendhardt 2021). The migration-development discourse also drew attention at the global level, resulting in the creation of the United Nations Global Commission on International Migration (GCIM) in 2003. Following an almost unanimous recognition of the importance of the migration-development linkage, it was resolved that the Global Forum on Migration and Development (GFMD) be created as a consultative platform for governmental exchanges on international migration and its trade-offs with development. Generally, global experiences show that countries worldwide have different histories with Diaspora engagement. Use of the term ‘Diaspora’ was originally associated with the Jewish, Armenian, and Greek historical dispersion.

Comparative analysis and available statistical data on the impact of Diaspora engagement initiatives worldwide reveal trends where Latin American, Asian, and European countries are recording good economic returns

from their state-Diaspora relations (World Bank 2019; Palop-García & Petroza 2021). The ever-rising levels of remittances are one indicator of the results of those relations. Credit is given to the deliberate efforts to create laws, policies, and institutional structures for pursuing the Diaspora engagement agenda. Of course, one cannot ignore the effect of the size of the Diaspora when it comes to the number of investments coming from abroad. In this chapter, the author is interested in the architecture of Diaspora engagement policies and how international best practices may inform sub-Saharan African Diaspora engagement initiatives. To date, countries in sub-Saharan Africa are at various stages of developing Diaspora engagement policies, and a tiny fraction may count as ‘success stories’ in the stricter sense of it. Analysis of Diaspora engagement efforts in Africa reveals challenges ranging from a lack of inclusivity in policy formulation and limited investment in the engagement efforts to significant stocks of political and economic risks that serve as deterrents to external investments. The author first describes concepts such as the ‘African Diaspora’ and ‘Diaspora engagement policies’ in this chapter. He then describes the migration-development nexus in the African context and reviews the engagement efforts made so far at continental and national levels. Focus on engagement efforts in Africa ends in examining the challenges faced by countries pursuing Diaspora engagement. After that, international experiences are analysed, highlighting the major definitive initiatives underpinning the Diaspora policies of selected country cases. That is followed by describing the findings and conclusion on the constitutive elements of effective Diaspora engagement policies guided by tried and tested international practices.

2 A Methodological Note

This chapter takes a qualitative approach to gathering and analysing data. It relies on reviewing secondary material in journal articles, books, book chapters, and online databases on migration and development.

2.1 Conceptual Definitions

2.1.1 African Diaspora

The concept of ‘diaspora’ has generated contestation among scholars of Diaspora and cultural studies. An ontological debate arose, pitting those who look at Diaspora as ‘discreet entities or groups’ and those who take a constructivist

perspective of viewing the Diaspora as a ‘social construction’ (Grossman 2019:1264-5). The term ‘diaspora’ originates in Greek, where it originally meant ‘scattering of seeds’ (Anthias 1998). In its earliest usage, the term referred to Jewish, Greek, and Armenian dispersion, but that exclusive understanding has since been subjected to dilution, broadening and stretching to include the emigration, dispersion, or scattering of wider racial and ethnic groups across the globe. Some scholarly opinions have indicated that stretching the meaning of Diaspora has been done ‘to accommodate the various intellectual, cultural and political agendas’ (Brubaker 2005) in various geopolitical spaces. Diaspora’s meaning has manifested in three dimensions: semantic stretch, conceptual dispersion, and disciplinary dispersion (Brubaker 2005). As a result, the term has taken multiple yet loosely related meanings often carried in such terms as ‘transnationalism’, ‘dispersal or immigration’, ‘community’, ‘exile’, ‘displacement’, ‘group identity’, ‘homeland orientation’, ‘boundary maintenance’. These terms are currently used across different fields and sub-fields in humanities and social sciences, from history, sociology, anthropology, and education to religion and philosophy (Tölölyan 1996).

In making sense of the concept of Diaspora, the author of this chapter relies on the definition by the African Union Technical Workshop on the relationship with the Diaspora, which defined the African Diaspora as the geographic ‘dispersal of peoples whose ancestors, within historical memory, originally came from Africa, but who are currently domiciled, or claim residence or citizenship, outside the continent of Africa’ (cited in Adisa 2017:43-44). Salient features from this definition characterise the African Diaspora as ‘Africans living outside Africa’ whose roots can be traced to the continent. Practical meanings of ‘Diaspora’ often relate to transnationalism, homeland orientation, and, sometimes, retention of group identity by extraterritorial populations (Grossman 2019).

Some ascribe the creation of the ‘original African Diaspora’ to historical developments involving the slave trade between the 16th and 19th centuries (Bolaji 2015). In post-independent Africa, the African Diaspora has further been maintained and strengthened by voluntary migration necessitated by the pull of educational and job opportunities in the developed economies of the Global North (Kamei 2011). In some instances, however, it has been a clear case of forced displacements induced by political instability and civil wars in the home countries, often resulting in the creation of groups of refugees seeking political asylum in countries within and outside the continent (Mohamoud &

Osman 2008). Africa – specifically south of the Sahara – has seen migration taking place in three forms determined by destination: internal, intra-regional and international (Beyene 2015).

2.1.2 Diaspora Engagement Policies

After appreciating the African Diaspora concept, it is necessary to unpack how their home governments officially engage the group or groups described as ‘African Diaspora’. This understanding concerns specific state policies and concrete actions to engage citizens outside a particular country’s borders meaningfully. The combined efforts of a government to reach out to citizens beyond its borders, constitute what are described as ‘Diaspora engagement policies’ (Sendhardt 2021), and according to Gamlen (2008b:3), these are defined as ‘state institutions and practices that apply to members of that state’s society who reside outside its borders’. In this chapter, we define Diaspora engagement as the collection of legal, institutional, and administrative efforts by the home country to communicate, involve, and consider its citizens and descendants living abroad, with the idea of opening up space for their participation in national activities and programmes to foster socio-economic and political development of a country. There are multiple motivations behind a state’s engagement with its Diaspora.

On the one hand, the state has private and national interests to pursue; on the other, it has obligations to fulfil for its citizens at home and abroad (Gamlen 2006; 2008a). From Diaspora engagement, there is immense potential for states to gain economic and political support as well as enhanced social capital at two levels: first, among compatriots abroad, and second, between states and their citizens (Qstergaard-Nielsen 2003). However, before states invest in engaging their Diasporas, they normally have a few considerations to make, for example, the size of the Diaspora community and the level of skill and professional knowledge from which a state may benefit through knowledge transfer, brain gain or brain circulation (Tiwari 2013).

In practice, Diaspora engagement policies have included several strategies, such as the legal provisions for dual citizenship, which aim to grant non-resident citizens a nationality status and allow them to return, vote, invest, own property or pass citizenship to posterity. A cursory review of available legal provisions for dual citizenship shows that they are never uniform across countries, although the effects may be similar in many respects (Nilsson 2011).

Diaspora engagement may also provide administrative machinery in foreign countries by creating Diaspora offices or using diplomatic missions to assist the Diaspora (Gamlen 2008a). Some countries have given full political rights to citizens abroad by allowing them to vote and participate in their home countries' political activities and affairs. Governments have also played facilitatory roles – albeit indirectly in some cases – in encouraging money transfers or remittances from abroad (Kassegn 2021). Assistance has come in the form of favourable laws, reduced cost of sending money, reduced charges on recipients of remittances and allowing unfettered operating space to money transfer agents.

Diaspora engagement has also been pursued through investment programmes that target the Diaspora community. These include selling Diaspora bonds to mobilise external private finance for local development programmes, especially under limited capital financing from local sources (Ketkar & Rath 2011). Sending states have also partnered with the Diaspora to implement community development projects. A few countries have brokered fair pension portability for their Diaspora, increasing their citizens' chances of return (Nilsen 2011). Pension portability comes against the backdrop of a lack of social security benefits for some members of the Diaspora communities. Diaspora engagement has also been pursued in the form of the promotion of homeland cultural practices in foreign countries. One good example is India's *Know India Programme* run under the Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs, which seeks to engage second-generation Indians born abroad to know their country of origin and cultural practices. Countries such as the USA have also collected expatriate taxes on their citizens based outside the US. Other countries may not necessarily have that kind of tax but put charges on Diasporans' remittances.

3 The Diaspora in African Development

The 'migration-development nexus' (Sørensen *et al.* 2002) or generally the 'migration for development' discourse has been gaining traction over the last four decades, with a shared recognition of the role of migration in driving the development agenda of homelands (Fargues & Rango 2020; Lavenex & Kunz 2008). The migration-development nexus has presented an additional development paradigm that recognises migration's agency in the development discourse (Sinatti & Horst 2015; Faist & Fauser 2011). In the wake of the continuing brain drain trend, Africa appears to have recognised the intellectual capital, technical capacity and financial potential that now lies beyond its shores (Edeh *et al.*

2021). The Diaspora is now being seriously considered as an avenue to be leveraged in spurring the economic development of homelands through remittances, capital market investments, philanthropy and humanitarian assistance, reconstruction and various other economic initiatives (Gnimassoun & Anyanwu 2019). International experiences of countries such as China, India and Israel validate the positive correlation between Diaspora and development. As Muzondidya (2011:124) explains:

In these countries, Diaspora communities have gone beyond the traditional support for home countries via private transfers of funds, goods and equipment. Diaspora investors and entrepreneurs have played a critical role in attracting FDI, setting up joint ventures and promoting export of domestic companies. Both Chinese Diaspora returnees and overseas Chinese diasporians have played an active role in technology transfer, trade and investment in China.

The growing importance of the Diaspora in Africa can be read from the recognition the AU has accorded them in its programmes, declarations and statutes. There are explicit references to the connection between Diaspora and development. For a start, one of the AU's definitions of the African Diaspora unambiguously emphasises that connection thus: 'The African Diaspora consists of peoples of African origin living outside the continent, irrespective of their citizenship and nationality and *who are willing to contribute to the development of the continent* and the building of the African Union' (AU 2005:7, emphasis mine). While most available definitions of the Diaspora generally do not emphasise the link between Diaspora and development in home countries, the AU's position deliberately foregrounds and makes the intention to leverage African Diaspora for economic transformation loud enough.

Additional efforts were made at the policy level by the AU. In 2006, for example, an Experts' Meeting on Migration and Development led to adopting the Draft African Common Position on Migration and Development. This step covered many thematic policy areas such as migration and development, human resources and brain drain, labour migration, remittances, African Diaspora, migration and human rights, and migration and gender, among others (AU 2006). The initiative would work in a complementary, if not mutually reinforcing fashion with the 'Migration Policy Framework for and Plan of Action 2018-2030', which seeks to promote the free movement of

people, inter-regional cooperation, and facilitation of the participation of the African Diaspora in the development of their home countries.

The drive to give special recognition to the African Diaspora may have been motivated by the recognition of the continuously increasing numbers of African migrants in other regions. The World Migration Report (2020:54) notes that more than 21 million Africans live in other African countries. Africans living outside the continent grew from around 17 million in 2015 to 19 million in 2019, with Europe accounting for at least 10.6 million African-born migrants, Asia with 4.6 million, and North America with 3.2 million. These numbers become even more relevant after recognising that remittances have become one of Africa's major sources of external financial flows. At the start of 2009, remittances constituted more than 5% of GDP in at least 15 African countries (Kas-segn 2021). In the same year, 2009, the IMF recognised that the African Diaspora had become the greatest contributor to foreign investment inflows in Africa (Okpewho & Nzegwu 2009). It is not an isolated development if international experiences are considered. For example, about a decade ago, 60% of China's FDI was estimated to come from 55% of its Diaspora (Muzondidya 2011).

4 Diaspora Engagement in Africa

Efforts to engage the Diaspora in Africa can be seen at the AU level first, then at individual member states' level. The section below describes the efforts made so far at these two levels.

4.1 Engagement Efforts and Initiatives at Continental Level

Several initiatives aiming at advancing the Diaspora engagement agenda at the continental level started with the AU's adoption of the African Diaspora as the continent's sixth region. This effort has gone together with calls for promoting 'global Pan-Africanism' across continents (Bolaji 2015). Mangala (2017) notes that when the proposal to integrate the sixth region within AU structures was introduced, it resulted in a heated debate concerning its implications. It was a challenge because the 'African Union, more often than not, operates on the basis of consensus politics' (Mangala 2017:41). Further problems emanated from the uniqueness of the sixth region, whose nature sharply contrasts with the other five regions. Besides its global spread, it is characteristically diverse and heterogeneous because it comprises citizens drawn from different countries

across the continent. This diversity made integrating the sixth region within the continental structures problematic (Bolaji 2015).

Following the developments at the UN level, marked by the creation of the GCIM and GFMD, the AU instituted initiatives to engage key actors of the Global North, specifically the European Union (EU) and its member states. The EU-Africa dialogue on migration and development resulted in the establishment of the Partnership on Migration, Mobility and Employment (PMME), which was adopted in Portugal in 2007 at the second EU-Africa Summit (Mangala 2017:4). In December 2002, the AU-Western Hemisphere Diaspora Forum was launched in Washington D.C. with full representation of African Diasporas in the regions of Latin America, the Caribbean, the USA, Canada, and Central America. The main agenda was establishing win-win relationships for the African Diaspora, the AU, and African countries. The AU has further produced policy documents such as the Declaration of the Global African Diaspora Summit, adopted in 2012 in South Africa. The objectives of the amended AU Constitutive Act have also covered the participation of the African Diaspora in building the AU. Article 3(q) states that one of the objectives of the AU is to: ‘invite and encourage the full participation of the African Diaspora as an important part of our Continent, in the building of the African Union’ (AU 2003).

The other key development at the continental level has been the creation of the Economic, Social and Cultural Council (ECOSOCC), whose responsibility is to facilitate the engagement between the AU, African governments, and their people within and outside the continent. ECOSOCC mobilises African people to participate in the continent’s transformation, policymaking and development agenda. Article IV(1a) of the ECOSOCC statutes enables these roles, which provide that out of the 150 seats in the ECOSOCC General Assembly, 20 should be reserved for the African Diaspora. Unfortunately, the ECOSOCC Diaspora participation initiative has not taken off in practical terms. Ikome (2009) notes that between 2005 and 2008, there was no Diaspora representation in the Interim ECOSOCC Assembly.

Moreover, there was no involvement of the Diaspora in the consultative and electoral processes of the ECOSOCC. It appears these challenges have been compounded by the fact that in addition to the lack of unambiguous criteria for filling the 20 Diaspora seats, stakeholders have no consensus on how the issue should be resolved (Ikome 2009). Different meetings of stakeholders such as Diaspora networks, consultants and others have produced almost irreconcilable proposals. Fair and inclusive criteria is needed to ensure equitable seat distri-

bution among representatives of the heterogenous African Diaspora.

Through the Citizens and Diaspora Directorate (CIDO), whose work is intricately connected to that of the ECOSOCC, the AU came up with the Diaspora Engagement Project, which sought to assist AU member states with building their capacity to design and implement Diaspora engagement initiatives at a national level. One notable development in CIDO's operations is the development of the Diaspora engagement self-assessment tool (DESAT), which member states can use for self-evaluation to ascertain their level of Diaspora engagement and take corrective measures where necessary. The DESAT is made up of six pillars which have specific weighted indicators under them. The pillars are:

- (a) the political will to engage the Diaspora;
- (b) a Diaspora friendly environment;
- (c) a national Diaspora strategy;
- (d) Diaspora consultation mechanisms;
- (e) a mobilising outreach strategy; and
- (f) Diaspora-oriented programmes.

As of 2019, CIDO applied the DESAT on a sample of 11 African member states, and the aggregate scores revealed that only Rwanda showed consistency across the six pillars, recording an average score of 3.3 which, according to DESAT score descriptions, reflects 'a good level of implementation' of Diaspora engagement programmes. Scores for the other ten members ranged from an aggregate of 1.0 which reflects the mere existence of plans towards Diaspora engagement, to 2.4, which reflects little effort to implement Diaspora engagement programmes (AU 2019). However, it is instructive to note that the DESAT as a tool only provides a generic template to all African member states without necessarily capturing country-specific nuances that should normally be considered in Diaspora engagement processes. In addition, it is also not quite easy to positively ascertain the appetite to seriously embrace and apply the DESAT among member states since it is not necessarily mandatory for African countries to adopt it.

4.2 Engagement Initiatives at National Level

At a national level, several African countries have made efforts and put in place

a variety of initiatives that seek to create avenues to foster a development-focused relationship between the home country and its Diaspora. One of the developments has been creating Diaspora focal persons and dedicated Diaspora offices in government ministries in at least 45 African countries. In 2016, CIDO held its first continental workshop, bringing together the Diaspora focal points of the AU member states. Morocco established the Ministry for Moroccans Living Abroad in 1990 and, later, the Council of the Moroccan Community Abroad (Hanafi & Hites 2017). Rwanda also created the Department for the Diaspora within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Ethiopia established the Ethiopian Expatriate Affairs Division in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. In Kenya, the government has ensured that every Kenyan embassy has a dedicated Diaspora portal.

All AU member states have formulated Diaspora policies, which have operated with migration policies. A study of Diaspora and development policies in ECOWAS's 15-member states conducted by Schöffberger (2020) found that each of the 15 states had either a policy or strategy on migration, Diaspora and development. Each of them had certain provisions for the Diaspora. The study also noted that Diaspora policies have generally received less attention over time than immigration policies. In addition, the scarcity of data on Diasporians was a major hindrance to effective policymaking on Diaspora engagement.

African countries have also instituted several Diaspora mobilisation programmes to foster mutually beneficial engagement with the Diaspora. In 2019, the Government of Nigeria established the Nigerians in Diaspora Commission (NIDCOM) to facilitate and promote mutually beneficial developmental relations between the Diaspora and their homeland. Before this development, the government had already set aside the Nigerian Diaspora Day on the 25th of July every year as part of the broader effort of mobilising and actively promoting the participation of the Diaspora in national development activities and programmes (Kamei 2011). There have been knowledge transfer programmes in sectors such as education and health. For example, Ghana has had the Migration for Development in Africa programme (MIDA) in the health sector, which was created through joint efforts of the Ministry of Health and the International Organisation for Migration to promote knowledge transfer and to address the adverse effects of brain drain (Teye, Alhassan & Setrana 2017). In the Nigerian education sector, efforts were made to promote knowledge transfer between Nigerian experts and academics abroad and local Nigerian universities.

Experiences also show that in actualising the benefits of Diaspora engagement efforts, African countries have designed development programmes

and opened avenues for the participation of the Diaspora in the economic development of their homelands. In 2013, the Nigerian government launched the Diaspora National Development Strategy to encourage Diaspora investment in local long-term development projects (Ogen 2017). The government sold a USD 100 million Diaspora bond to mobilise financial resources to finance infrastructure development as part of that strategy. Between 2008 and 2017, Ethiopia, Kenya, Ghana and Nigeria issued Diaspora bonds to raise finances for infrastructure development in the energy, water and irrigation, and transport sectors (Rastomjee 2018).

Nigeria has had other initiatives meant to engage and harness the developmental potential of its Diaspora. Of course, other efforts did not necessarily originate with the government. Rather, it was purely an initiative of the Diaspora to mobilise compatriots and participate in national development back home. An example is the Nigerians in the Diaspora Organisation (NIDO) and the subsequent creation of the Nigeria Diaspora Investment Fund (NDIF) by the European Chapter of NIDO.

5 Critical Issues and Challenges in Diaspora Engagement

As with most development programmes, obtaining a comprehensive picture of Diaspora engagement policies' effectiveness, performance, or impact is extremely difficult (Vezzoli & Lacroix 2010). There are data availability constraints owing to the lack of commissioned research at the country level that gives a full picture of the situation in African countries. To an extent, it may be too soon to talk about or expect noteworthy results from African Diaspora engagement policies because many of them are relatively young to have generated any notable impact yet. The study by Schöfberger (2020) of the 15 West African states' policies on Diaspora showed that out of the 15 policies and strategies found in those countries, 13 were formulated between 2013 and 2020, with 10 of these coming between 2016 and 2020. The time factor becomes critical if one considers that engagement initiatives such as tapping into Diaspora savings for homeland investment are long-term, multi-year processes that further depend on political, economic and technical factors in a particular context (Rastomjee 2018).

The indicative successes of Diaspora engagement policies are quite limited despite significant figures of annual remittances to Africa over the years. Generally, the value of global remittances to sub-Saharan Africa has increased significantly in the past two decades, recording USD 4.8 billion in 2000, USD

20 billion in 2005, USD 32 billion in 2010, USD 42 billion in 2015, USD 48 billion in 2019, then dropping to USD 37 billion in 2020 due to Covid-19 pandemic-related drawbacks (Tittel-Mosser 2021; World Bank 2019). Research further shows that remittances to sub-Saharan Africa are still consumptive and meant to primarily support Diasporians' kith and kin back home (Kamau & Kimenyi 2013), yet internationally, remittances to other developing countries outside Africa are making significant contributions to economic development thanks to pragmatic development frameworks designed by the governments of those countries (Edeh *et al.* 2021). In addition, the objectives of some of the African Diaspora policies sometimes lack clarity on the intended form of development (Vezzoli & Lacroix 2010), which effectively complicates the channeling of received remittances towards programmatic activities for economic development.

The political environment has not helped matters concerning Diaspora engagement and its benefits. Political instability has marred prospects of Diaspora-driven local investments by raising the level of risk and, in the process, killing potential Diaspora participation in economic development initiatives. Manifestations of instability have ranged from civil wars and coups in West and Central Africa to troubled political spaces of the Horn of Africa (Mills & Norton 2002; Plaut 2013). Literature on African politics classifies some states as 'chronically unstable', 'failed', and 'ungovernable' (Wiarda 2004). Some African states have been described as 'parasitical, patrimonial, predatory, cronyist, prebendal, and anti-developmental' (Agbese & Kieh 2007). For obvious reasons, these descriptors are not consistent with the agenda of attracting foreign direct investment.

Tittel-Moser (2021) argues that challenges affecting Diaspora engagement policies also manifest in a lack of trust between Diaspora communities and their home governments, resulting in a lack of drive to positively respond to calls for investment in the homeland. Negative political perceptions of the political leadership of home governments normally work against investment inflows. Several African countries still have bureaucratic pathologies that often come married to corrupt practices, raising the cost of investing in such countries. Following the creation of multiple structures tasked with the Diaspora engagement agenda, there have been policy implementation problems emanating from difficulties associated with inter-agency cooperation where multiple ministries and other structures are involved in implementing Diaspora engagement policies. Joint implementation of policy is normally pro-

blematic because of coordination challenges (O'Toole 2003).

In most cases, African governments do not have adequate data about their Diasporas (Tittel-Mosser 2021), yet when Diaspora instruments and strategies are crafted, amounts of information are required about 'the size, locations, and economic and demographic characteristics of the migrated Diaspora, including migrant age, gender, skills level, intended destination, level of retained savings, financial assets and liability' (Rustomjee 2018:4). Lack of this information normally fails to adapt government programmes to Diaspora needs and circumstances (Tittel-Mosser 2021).

Diaspora engagement policies have also been affected by challenges related to developing e-government in Africa. Besides a few cases where significant investments were made in developing websites serving Diaspora communities, African countries have Diaspora webpages that are less accessible, less informative, and not advanced enough to enable smooth virtual interactions with Diasporeans. The 2020 United Nations E-Government Development Index shows that no African country reached the top 75. Of the bottom 25 countries with the lowest rankings on the global index, 21 were African.

6 Selected Cases of Diaspora Engagement in Asia and Latin America

Three case studies – China, India, and Mexico – have been selected in this chapter to serve as international success cases with Diaspora engagement policies. These three countries are among those that have leveraged their huge Diaspora populations in national economic development. The combined totals of Diaspora populations for the three countries triple that of the whole of Africa. Their success stories with Diaspora engagement in economic development are a direct result of huge Diaspora populations and astute policymaking underpinned by strategic management of Diaspora engagement processes (Dubey 2008). Recent data shows that China, India and Mexico were the top three countries in Diaspora remittances, with USD 79 billion, USD 67 billion and USD 36 billion, respectively (World Bank 2019). A study of the degree of adoption of emigrant policies in 14 Latin American and Caribbean countries showed Mexico recorded the highest score on the Emigrant Policy Index in 2017 (Palop-García & Petroza 2021). Available evidence on the three selected case studies further tells the story of countries that have capitalised on and are reaping the benefits of the migration-development trade-off. For instance,

India's sectoral approach to harnessing Diaspora investments has seen its IT industry grow from nothing in the 1970s to a USD 100 billion industry, thanks to the active participation of its Diaspora (Pande 2014). The three cases of China, India and Mexico are used in this chapter for analytical and demonstrative purposes as we attempt to deduce the constitutive elements of the countries' Diaspora engagement efforts. The tangible results of their Diaspora engagement efforts, as demonstrated by the value of their remittances, and the successes with various other socio-economic programmes further justify their selection in this study.

The Chinese Diaspora was created by the voluntary migration of citizens searching for jobs and economic opportunities and forced migration during tyrannical warlords in rural China (Venkateswaran 2007). Globally, China has the biggest Diaspora population, estimated to be around 60 million in 2014 (Liu & van Dongen 2016). China's long history of engaging its Diaspora goes back to the years of Yuan Shikai when laws, regulations and administrative machinery were established concerning Chinese overseas affairs (Guotu 2012). The urge to pursue engagement with citizens overseas may have been further spurred by the reported economic success of Chinese nationals overseas. The combined economic output of the Chinese overseas was estimated to be USD 400 billion in 1991 and rose to USD 600 billion by 1996 (Guotu 2012).

In India, the Diaspora evolved cumulatively through four historical phases of migration, beginning with the indentured labour migration of the colonial era, followed by the reconstruction period of the post-Second World War and the post-independence period. The third phase came during the oil boom period in the Middle East and North African (MENA) region. Lastly, Indian migration has continued with the movement of knowledge workers (Kahali 2017). There are at least 25 million Indians who are resident in 110 countries. There was a realisation of the economic development potential of the Indian communities abroad, and the government prepared a collection of directives and initiatives meant to guide Diaspora engagement (Sahai 2013). Diaspora engagement efforts have a long history dating back to the early 1980s when practical engagement between the Indian government and Indian citizens outside the country started. The Emigration Act was enacted in 1983, resulting in the establishment of the Protector General of Indians. During the Indira Gandhi regime, foreign exchange shortages led to the formulation of a 'remittance-centric policy' and increased dependence on Diaspora remittances (Sharma 2009).

In the Mexican context, poverty is one major factor that fueled the mi-

gration of citizens into at least 30 countries in the world, but into the United States, where more than 30 million are currently domiciled. With that population, the United States automatically accounts for at least 97% of Mexican emigrants globally (Israel & Batalova 2020). It has prompted the Mexican government to place special focus on immigrants in the USA, resulting in the development of close ties between Mexico and the USA through special bilateral arrangements, agreements, joint operations, and even adjustments to foreign policy and immigration laws by Mexico. Mexico is regarded as one of the countries particularly active in building relationships with its Diaspora communities. However, that comes with a particular bias towards the US-based Diaspora (Bravo & de Moya 2018; Palop-García & Petroza 2021).

6.1 Dimensions of Diaspora Engagement in China, India, and Mexico

6.1.1 Political Dimension

Political actions involve governmental initiatives in the form of policies, regulations, and laws in areas such as citizenship, Diaspora, investment, trade, migration, and foreign relations. China established a policy on Chinese overseas affairs as far back as 1927. Numerous laws and regulations were also passed to cover areas such as migration, investment, Chinese labour, education, and Chinese voluntary organisations. The government also removed restrictions on the emigration of Chinese nationals. India also launched the Persons of Indian Origin (PIO) in 1999 to cater for descendants of Indian migrants. The card came with the benefit of a 20-year visa for a small fee, and holders could access economic, educational, and financial facilities using it (Tiwari 2013). India liberalised money transfers back in 2000 to facilitate global remittances, removing obstacles and creating smooth channels for transmitting money into the country. Another significant political development has been granting dual citizenship to Diaspora communities in India and Mexico. India granted dual citizenship to the Indian Diaspora in the category of Overseas Citizens of India (OCI). Mexico also granted its Diaspora communities electoral rights, allowing them to vote while in foreign countries. Mexico further made arrangements and put in place mechanisms to defend the rights of its citizens in the US.

Multiple strategies and tactics involving state and non-state actors in building relationships with the Diaspora community have been used (Bravo & de Moya 2018). The Mexican government demonstrated strategic sensitivity to,

and astuteness in portraying its Diaspora as a hardworking group of Mexicans abroad which had attained the position of ‘strategic partners’ of the state, ‘business partners’, ‘agents of development’, and ‘agents of change’ (Bravo & de Moya 2018). Pakistan a similar approach and portrayed the identity of its diasporic population as ‘a prized instrument’, ‘strategic asset’, and ‘agent of development’ (Qaisrani 2020). Mexico further applies traditional and digital public diplomacy in engaging its Diaspora. The latter involves interaction with citizens abroad using social media and other digital interactive platforms.

Following the emergence of the United States as the most popular destination for emigrating Mexicans, the Mexican government adjusted its foreign policy towards the US. It instituted mechanisms to improve bilateral relations and deepen cooperation (Délano 2011). This step has seen the creation of binational commissions such as the Working Group Regarding Migration and Consular Affairs and the signing of Safe and Orderly Repatriation Agreements and Memoranda of Understanding with the United States.

6.1.2 Economic Dimension

Cases of China, India and Mexico also drive their Diaspora engagement through economic initiatives, mostly meant to boost remittances, increase foreign direct investment and spur economic development. China realised the potential to leverage the huge financial capacity of the Chinese Diaspora and went on to establish four special economic zones in the traditional emigration areas. 39.1% of USD 5.22 billion invested in special economic zones between 1979 and 1987, came from Chinese nationals abroad (Guotu 2012). China prepared special rules and offered preferential treatment to foreign direct investment from Chinese nationals overseas –the preferential treatment applied to the taxation of investments and land rentals. There were also sector-specific special benefits. India also took a sectoral approach, as it sought to develop the area of science and technology. It leveraged the talent of Indian scientists in the Diaspora in developing local IT technologies with tremendous success (Pande 2014).

A critical development in Diaspora engagement is the effort to establish the size of the Diaspora and data banks containing citizens’ information in the Diaspora. Mexico and India developed databases with information on their experts, professionals, and state and non-state organisations operating in the Diaspora. Mexico created the Mexican Researchers Abroad Catalogue. India appointed a high-level committee on Indian affairs in 2001, tasked with map-

ping the Indian Diaspora and noting their expectations and prospective areas of engagement (Sahai 2013). Its role extended to establishing the Diaspora's preferred policy options mutually beneficial to them and their home government. Database development in India led to a knowledge network involving resident citizens and highly skilled professionals in the Diaspora. Those in the knowledge network formed sectoral clusters based on areas of specialisation and expertise (Sharma 2009). In addition to creating Diaspora databases, the Mexican government communicates and shares information with its Diaspora communities. It effectively uses all available channels to provide information to the Mexican Diaspora community regarding government policies and programmes supporting Diaspora communities. It also provides information on how citizens abroad can vote, how to send remittances home, and how diasporians can invest in Mexico (Bravo & de Moya 2018).

6.1.3 Socio-Cultural Dimension

Countries like China and India have capitalised on their homogeneous religious and cultural traditions as rallying points for mobilising citizens abroad. China indigenised international broadcasting to help publicise Chinese culture – creating and promoting a global Chinese identity (Ding 2015). India created symbolic cultural activities and Diaspora awards given at special cultural events. The government further designated certain days for cultural commemorations. Nevertheless, besides the cultural focus of the commemorations, the events are equally meant to bring together business people, entrepreneurs, and the generality of Indians to an interactive forum where economic development issues can be shared. In addition, cultural programmes such as *Tracing the Roots* and *Know Your India* are created under the Ministry of Indian Overseas Affairs to enhance socio-cultural links between the country and its diasporic population.

6.1.4 Administrative Dimension

Diaspora engagement also benefits immensely from state and non-state institutions implementing Diaspora policies by creating networks of citizens abroad and providing critical information on homelands. China created several administrative structures for handling Diaspora affairs. Examples include the Chinese central and local governments established the Overseas Affairs Chinese Bureau, Overseas Chinese Affairs Office, State Council for Overseas Chinese Affairs,

Overseas Affairs Chinese Committee, All-China Federation of Returned Overseas Chinese, China Overseas Exchange Association (Liu & van Dongen 2016). The government of Mexico created the Institute of Mexicans Abroad, not just as a link with the Diaspora but also as a structure to help diasporians organise themselves (Délano 2011). Other important structures have included the National Council for Mexican Communities Abroad under the Secretariat of Foreign Affairs and the Beta Groups for the Protection of Migrants created by the Mexican National Migration Institute.

India created the Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs as an administrative structure to oversee the protection of the Indian Diaspora, promote Diaspora engagement and enhance the development impact of the Indian Diaspora. The Indian government also relies on a series of organisations created to assist the Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs with Diaspora engagement. These include the Overseas Indian Facilitation Centre, Indian Development Foundation of Overseas Indians, Indian Council of Overseas Employment, Global Indian Network of Knowledge, Prime Minister’s Global Advisory Council, and Overseas Indian Centres (Vezzoli & Lacroix 2010).

Table 1: Summary of Key Policy Initiatives in the Selected Country Cases

Dimensions of Diaspora engagement initiatives	Specific policy actions		
	China	India	Mexico
<i>Political Dimension</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diaspora policy • Public <u>diplomacy</u> • Reformation of immigration laws 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comprehensive Diaspora <u>policy</u>/ Emigration Act • Dual citizenship • PIO card scheme • Voting rights • Return migration policies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Suffrage • Protection of Diaspora rights • Traditional and digital public diplomacy • Review of foreign policy towards <u>USA</u> • Strategic framing of Diaspora identities • Emigration support • Return migration policies

Economic Dimension	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Remittance attraction <u>programmes</u>• Special economic zones• Knowledge transfer <u>programmes</u>• Diaspora tax incentives	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Remittance attraction <u>programmes</u>• Liberalisation of money transfer• Diaspora tax incentives• Issuance of Diaspora bonds• Strategic databases of <u>diasporians, programmes, investment opportunities</u>• Knowledge transfer <u>programmes</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Remittance attraction <u>programmes</u>• Investment <u>programmes</u>• Strategic databases of <u>diasporians, programmes, and investment opportunities</u>• Multiple communication platforms and information sharing
Socio-Cultural Dimension	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <u>Programmes promoting global Chinese identity</u>• Diaspora networks & partnerships	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Cultural commemorations and Diaspora awards• Cultural <u>programmes</u>• Diaspora networks & partnerships	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Diaspora networks & partnerships• Social services for emigrants• Cultural events• Transnational sports tournaments
Administrative Dimension	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Dedicated state institutions for Diaspora affairs• Municipal offices for Diaspora affairs• Networks of Chinese <u>Diaspora organisations</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Dedicated ministry of overseas affairs• Consulate Diaspora offices• Committee on <u>overseas affairs</u>• Networks of non-state <u>organisational structures</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Consulate Diaspora offices• Sub-ministry level Diaspora offices• State-level offices for expatriate affairs• Quasi-government Diaspora institutions• Networks of non-state <u>Diaspora organisations</u>

Source: Author’s compilation

7 Description of Findings and Conclusion

Informed by the review of selected country cases, the chapter concludes that at the heart of the Diaspora engagement agenda in sub-Saharan Africa is the question of policy capacity, which broadly encompasses the government's ability to scan the environment, set strategic directions, make intelligent choices, assess implications of policy options, and properly use knowledge to design effective policies (Wu, Ramesh & Howlett 2015). Policy capacity is further underpinned by competencies (analytical, operational and political skills) and capabilities (resources critical in supporting policy implementation). Of these two, Africa is glaringly found wanting on the latter, where countries are not only falling short in designing effective Diaspora policies but are also failing to adequately provide resource support for the effective implementation of the same policies. Efforts made so far show progress in creating state administrative structures, which have been complemented by Diaspora-based non-state organisations and networks of citizens abroad in driving the Diaspora engagement agenda.

Africa is not necessarily short of Diaspora policies, programmes and engagement initiatives. What is worrying, however, is the performance and impact these are having on the target population. Efforts have been let down by limited investments in developing ICT and e-government infrastructure to enable virtual engagement with Diaspora through website interactions, social media, and other avenues. Also, policy initiatives are unilateral and non-inclusive. However, international practice indicates the need for mobilising Diasporas and meeting them to exchange ideas and learn their preferences regarding investments and possible socio-economic programmes. Some countries have yet to address trust issues fully, and in some cases, even government legitimacy issues. The enduring trust and legitimacy issues explain Diaspora's unresponsiveness to calls for investment in the homeland. Normally, trust and legitimacy issues carry perceptions of political risk and weigh down investment prospects badly.

From the reviewed international cases, Diaspora engagement is approached from multiple angles, with well-coordinated actions pursued within a clearly defined framework of objectives, goals and national developmental programmes. In all the cases and several others from the same regions, there is a specific emphasis on the 'migration for development' agenda. Engagement efforts are strategically taken from the policy level to investment programmes targeting the Diaspora communities. However, the available literature shows

that few countries have a comprehensive, dedicated Diaspora policy despite clear, demonstrable efforts to practically engage citizens overseas. In cases where a comprehensive policy is not there, what is normally found is an array of initiatives that inform and guide state action in pursuing Diaspora engagement.

Diaspora engagement efforts in the cases of China, India and Mexico effortlessly demonstrate that numbers matter. With a combined population of over 100 million Diasporeans, the potential financial and economic returns are hard to resist for these countries. The size of the Diaspora determines how far a country may go in committing to the Diaspora agenda. Establishing the size has normally been followed by collecting personal details of members of the Diaspora community, resulting in the eventual creation of Diaspora databases, mostly for the highly skilled professionals who ordinarily do not only have the potential to invest back home but can also participate in the processes of skills transfer, technology transfer, and brain circulation. It is one aspect that many countries in Sub-Saharan Africa are yet to fully implement, mostly owing to resource challenges. Documenting individual details of all experts and skilled professionals abroad enables sending states to determine what can be estimated or expected from a particular group of diasporas regarding remittances and investments. The Mexican digital atlas of highly skilled Mexicans abroad is evidence of the advancement that can be reached in creating Diaspora databases.

Progress in engagement efforts also hinges on the nature of state-Diaspora relations and interactions. The thriving of the state-Diaspora relationship is dependent on many factors. For a start, the Diaspora perception of political leadership in the homeland and issues of trust and legitimacy are critical in securing citizens' goodwill and political support abroad. As China seriously considered enlisting its Diaspora population in national development, it had to institute legal and political reforms to project an accommodative stance towards the Diaspora, who were once sidelined at the political level. Reforms under Jinping have helped create bridges between the government and Diaspora and, in the process, opened the platform for reaching out to citizens overseas to establish their expectations and potential participation in building the Chinese economy. Once a platform for exchange is created, governments strategise and decide on the best medium for reaching out and the content of messages sent to diasporians. At this point, the Mexican strategic framing of Diaspora identities served to project a positive government perception of its

citizens abroad. It works hand in hand with packaging messages from the government to the Diaspora. Content that appeals to ideals of patriotism, belonging and ‘attachment to the homeland’ drives the engagement narrative. Reviewed cases and others in Asia show that many countries have exploited religious and cultural attachments to revive oneness and unity with Diaspora communities. Global experiences further reveal that creating a favourable political and socio-economic environment for the Diaspora communities is one of the most important tasks for governments, and it touches on reducing or eliminating political and other risks to inspire faith in the security of investments in the home environment.

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