

CHAPTER 4

Diaspora Philanthropy for Rural Infrastructural Developmental Projects in Zimbabwe: Trends, Challenges and Opportunities

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Abstract

In this chapter, the authors explore the trends, challenges and opportunities presented by Diaspora philanthropy in rural infrastructure development. It is noted that Diaspora contributions through remittances have become a source of development for several countries. Despite research showing that Diaspora philanthropy fosters social change and drives development in countries of origin, the authors point out that few studies have examined the relationship between Diaspora philanthropy and rural infrastructure development (such as in Zimbabwe). The chapter contributes to the growing literature on Diaspora philanthropy using Zimbabwe as a reference country. A purely qualitative approach has been adopted, employing document analysis and literature review as techniques for data collection. The findings highlight the trend in which there has been an increase in infrastructure projects supported by Diaspora philanthropy since 2015. In addition, it was found that Diaspora philanthropy can provide tremendous opportunities for developing rural infrastructure, despite the high cost of remittances, legal and policy gaps and government mistrust. Developing countries such as Zimbabwe, where Diaspora remittances are critical to economic growth, benefit from Diaspora philanthropy supporting

rural infrastructure development. Finally, it is recommended that Zimbabwe accelerates efforts to revise its Diaspora policy, enact legislation that allows citizens abroad to support rural infrastructure projects, and reduce remittance costs.

Keywords: Diaspora philanthropy, remittances, infrastructure development, migration, rural areas, Zimbabwe.

1 Introduction

The practice of migrant communities participating in the development of their home countries is not new. According to (Johnson 2007), human migration, Diaspora giving, and the culture of giving back to countries of origin are centuries-old practices. Several studies have demonstrated how Diaspora communities contribute to the development of their home countries – particularly by building physical capital and productivity and ultimately boosting employment, living standards, and economic growth in their countries of origin (Mitra 2016). For example, Gnimassoun and Anyanwu (2019) found that Africa’s African Diaspora significantly and robustly improves real per capita income. Espinosa (2016) presents Diaspora philanthropy as the new development aid. Because of the consensus on the massive potential Diaspora philanthropy holds, Johnson (2007) observes the emergency of debates among scholars and development economists on the impact of Diaspora philanthropy on poverty, development, and equity in receiving countries. What is recurring in several available studies are answers to Sidel’s inquisitions (Sidel 2021): Is Diaspora giving an agent of social change and development in communities of origin? How has philanthropy by migrants become an emerging driver of development in the communities of origin?

Even though several research case studies by different scholars – providing some answers to the above questions – show the positive effect of Diaspora philanthropy fostering social change and driving development in countries of origin (Akech, Assim, Mutambasere, Ramakhula & Tutlam 2019; Babis, Zychlinski & Kagan 2021; Espinosa 2016; Gnimassoun & Anyanwu 2019; Newland, Terrazas & Munster 2010; Shaul Bar Nissim 2019; Sidel 2021; Singh & Koiri 2018), the relationship between Diaspora philanthropy and rural infrastructure development has hardly been examined (for example, in Zimbab-

we). A study examining the trends, challenges and opportunities Diaspora philanthropy presents would significantly contribute to the existing body of knowledge. Such an inquiry would be necessary for debates attempting to revisit and reflect on the developmental capacity of Diaspora philanthropy, for example, attempts to qualify Diaspora philanthropy as equalling or a new form of development aid (Espinosa 2016), particularly its role in rural infrastructure development. Through this chapter, the authors aim to contribute to the growing literature by exploring the trends, challenges, and opportunities of Diaspora philanthropy in rural infrastructure development. The study focuses on Zimbabwe for three key reasons. Zimbabwe's migrant population has been on a sharp increase between 2016 and 2021 (Zimbabwe National Statistics Agency 2022), which has seen both a yearly increase in remittances and, subsequently, a rise in the percentage contribution of remittances to 10.1% GDP (Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe 2022).

Johnson (2007) underscores that the scholarly understanding of the 'Diaspora philanthropy' concept comes with many conceptualisations, such as homeland philanthropy, migrant philanthropy, and transnational giving. Nevertheless, in recent years, Diaspora philanthropy has attracted the attention of scholars and development practitioners associated with the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and the African Development Bank. Mitra (2016), writing on the IMF blog, delved into the debate on whether migration presents a zero-sum loss for sending countries by examining Diaspora philanthropy. Mitra (2016) argues that Diaspora philanthropy presents a developmental oxymoron of 'addition by subtraction'. An overwhelming focus in the literature has been limited to the Diaspora's contribution to investment and entrepreneurial development, skills transfer and human capital development (Johnson, Johnson, Kingman 2004; Manivannan 2006; Wescott 2006; Wescott and Brinkerhoff 2006). However, more country-specific case studies covering the trends, challenges, and opportunities of Diaspora philanthropy in developing infrastructure are lacking in the literature that must be explored. Sidel (2021) alludes to this scant evidence in the literature to difficulties in calculating total remittance flows and, most importantly, categorising money for charitable and philanthropic purposes. Espinosa (2016) explains that the reason for the limited academic focus on Diaspora philanthropy is conceptual, defining what 'qualifies as philanthropy, the underreporting of these initiatives and the anecdotal nature of philanthropic narratives'.

Against this background, the authors' primary purpose in this chapter is to investigate the trends, challenges and opportunities of Diaspora philanthropy in developing public development projects in Zimbabwe's rural areas. This chapter is structured as follows: the next section conceptualises and contextualises Diaspora philanthropy. It is followed by an outline of the study's methodology. The third part describes the study's findings by looking at an overview of Diaspora philanthropy and rural infrastructure development in Zimbabwe and reflecting on the trends of Diaspora philanthropic activities in Zimbabwe in development. The fourth section examines the findings by expounding on the main challenges and opportunities presented by the issue under analysis. Finally, the chapter concludes by presenting recommendations and indicating the implications for practice and future research.

2 Conceptualising and Contextualising Diaspora Philanthropy

Diaspora philanthropy is a concept with different understandings often associated with remittances. Sidel (2021) argues that the difference between remittances and Diaspora philanthropy is an intricate and thin line and a difference conceptualised differently in different countries. Diaspora philanthropy, as defined by Flanigan (2017:494), is 'Money, goods, volunteer labour, knowledge and skills, and other assets donated for the social benefit of a community broader than one's family members in a country or region where there is a population with whom the donor(s) have ancestral ties'.

According to Johnson (2007), Diaspora philanthropy represents the transfer of resources by migrant communities to their country of origin for civic or public purposes. Eisenstadt (2009) acknowledges the central significance of Diaspora communities and networks to Diaspora philanthropy. Espinosa (2016) accounts for the development of Diaspora philanthropy on the decline in official development assistance flows and the need to find alternative sustainable development instruments. Other literature presents Diaspora philanthropy as representing the emergence of new development actors (Newland *et al.* 2010), the continuation of debates that undermine the role of private investment in spearheading development (Johnson 2007) and part of discussions that explain the role of remittances in development. The remittances make Diaspora philanthropy agents of change and development (Muzondidya & Chiroro 2008).

Orozco (2013) sees the growth of interest amongst scholars and prac-

tioners in migrant remittances and development. Espinosa (2016) laments that Diaspora philanthropy is not getting the same scholarly reviews as remittances, although it can significantly contribute to development. According to the World Bank (2019), international migration – the movement of people across international boundaries –considerably impacts economic growth and poverty alleviation. In 2015, migrants from emerging and developing economies sent home USD 430 billion, three times as much as their home countries receive in financial assistance from other countries, representing a substantial portion of their gross domestic product (Mitra 2016). In 2018, an estimated USD 529 billion worth of remittances went to developing countries (Maune & Matanda 2022). The amount rose to USD 559 billion in 2019 (Beck, Janfils & Kpodar 2022). In terms of the overall percentage contribution to GDP, Mitra (2016) noted that Diaspora remittances represent 37% in Tajikistan, 30% in Nepal, around 25% in Tonga, Liberia, and Haiti, and 16% in Lebanon. Eisenstadt (2009) reasons that transnational communities and networks are essential in human development. Hence, despite the citizens living in distant countries, they often express their interest in developing their communities of origin. In this case, as observed by Straubhaar and Vâdean (2006) and Hidayati (2020), remittances play a crucial role as a source of income or capital for developing countries like Zimbabwe, contributing to efforts aimed at equalizing a country's development.

Participants in Diaspora philanthropy include individuals, groups, philanthropic organisations, professional associations, faith-based organisations, migrant ethnic groups and foundations. The Diaspora-based philanthropists invest their resources to finance projects in rural Zimbabwe. Some projects involve building or rehabilitating school blocks and health facilities, sinking or rehabilitating boreholes, providing piped water systems, electrifying facilities, and other developments. According to Madziyire (2015), philanthropic activities sometimes involve alum associations and individual former students assisting schools, either irregularly or for a specific project. The financier can deal directly with authorities or use intermediaries to disburse resources to develop identified projects. Johnson (2007) shares experiences from China where family members act as *de facto* intermediaries for philanthropic activities. In Zimbabwe, there are cases of community-based organisations acting as intermediaries. Some documented organisations that work as intermediaries include Citizen Initiatives (crowdfunding-based philanthropy), Uluntu Community Foundation, Community Foundation, and Delta Philanthropies.

3 Method

In exploring the concept of Diaspora philanthropy in rural infrastructure development in Zimbabwe, this inquiry follows a purely qualitative approach. The qualitative approach allows the study to ‘discover new insights into a new topic about which very little is known’ (Nieuwenhuis & Smit 2012). The approach enabled the researchers to explore Diaspora philanthropy in Zimbabwe and the trend, challenges and opportunities it presents in rural infrastructure development. Document analysis was used to investigate Diaspora philanthropy trends by examining migration, remittances and development statistics. This technique was necessary because documents represent reality’s objective reflection (Silva 2012). Only reliable documents from reputable sources were used, such as the Zimbabwe Treasury fiscal statements, Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe monetary policy statements, Zimbabwe government policies, the World Bank, OECD, African Development Bank, and the United Nations reports.

Data was also collected using a literature review method. It was used within the definition of Onwuegbuzie *et al.* (2010). Onwuegbuzie and Frels (2012:29), citing Onwuegbuzie *et al.* (2010), define a literature review as ‘an interpretation of a selection of relevant published and or unpublished information that is available on a specific...that optimally involves summarisation, analysis, evaluation, and synthesis of the information’. By ‘interpretation’ it means the researchers were active and not passive in conducting their reviews (Onwuegbuzie & Frels 2012:29). ‘Selection’ entails that the researchers will not include all available information but an adequate sample to represent the body of knowledge (Onwuegbuzie & Frels 2012: 29). Furthermore, in line with Onwuegbuzie and Frels (2012), ‘relevant’ means the collected information must be linked to the topic under study and ‘summarisation’ involves consciously and accurately describing each source of information. ‘Analysis’ means examining each selected source and determining the essential features, ‘evaluation’ emphasises rigour and trustworthiness of each source of information used in this study, and ‘synthesis’ relates to the merging of all the information that has been summarised, analysed and evaluated into a coherent narrative – into this chapter (Onwuegbuzie & Frels 2012:29).

4 Description of Findings

Kapesa, Mugano, and Fourie (2021) note that Zimbabwe needs USD 2 billion annually until 2032 to finance public infrastructure. Still, it can only afford 20%,

creating an 80% financial gap (Kapesa *et al.* 2021). This financial gap is difficult to cover through public financing of infrastructure development alone (budget allocations and grants) (Mostafavi, Abraham, and Vives 2014). In Zimbabwe, the other challenge is that the country cannot attract private sector financing of infrastructure due to many problems, such as the investment climate and lack of foreign direct investment standing at 1.3% of GDP (United Nations - Zimbabwe 2021). After reaching USD 745 million in 2018, foreign direct investment in Zimbabwe declined significantly to USD 280 million in 2019 and USD 194 million in 2020 (United States of America Department of State 2022). Despite the World Bank statistical evidence showing the general increase in official development assistance to sub-Saharan Africa (from USD 44.28 billion in 2016 to USD 66.84 billion in 2020) (World Bank 2022a), Zimbabwe has failed to net significant official development assistance because of a poor relationship with the global north countries. In addressing the resource gap, Diaspora remittances and the oil of Diaspora philanthropy, have shown 'considerable development impacts' (Tevera & Chikanda 2008).

Apart from the above, it is imperative to note the disparities between urban and rural infrastructural development in Zimbabwe, where rural areas are most affected. Therefore, Diaspora philanthropy can assist in supporting rural infrastructural development. Rural infrastructure in this study involves economic and social infrastructure with a deliberate bias on health, education, water and sanitation, and power.

There is an increasing acknowledgement that migrant remittances are becoming an important source of international capital flows for developing countries, such as Zimbabwe and have a critical impact on economic development (Beck *et al.* 2022). At a policy level, the authors of this study found that the Zimbabwean government affirms that it is ready to increase the participation of its Diaspora population in national development as enunciated in the *National Development Strategy 1 2021-2025* (Government of Zimbabwe 2020). Such participation needs to be anchored in creating an enabling environment for Diaspora philanthropy to flourish. Thus, Diaspora giving must be enabled and controlled by mechanisms, structures, policies, and rules established by national and subnational authorities (Sidel 2021). Studies and experiences from countries such as China, the Philippines, South Korea, Israel, India and Mexico have exposed the importance of having structures that allow the deployment of remittances to national development (Babis *et al.* 2021; Gnimassoun and Anyanwu 2019; Shaul Bar Nissim 2019; Singh and Koiri 2018). In Nigeria,

Alechenu (2021) stresses that the Central Bank of Nigeria has established a well-functional mechanism and incentives that augment the free flow of remittances to the country. These strategies allow more Diaspora philanthropic contributions to cover rural infrastructure developmental needs in rural areas. Hence, it is imperative to reflect on how the central government in Zimbabwe controls and supervises Diaspora philanthropic activities since certain rural infrastructure facilities, including health and education, are owned by the communities, local authorities, and faith-based organisations. For example, through Diaspora philanthropy, the government can cultivate social change and equitable rural infrastructure development in Zimbabwe's poor rural areas by attracting, incentivising, and regulating actors and activities (Sidel 2021).

5 Trends of Diaspora Philanthropy in Zimbabwe

The study examined remittance trends because of the relationship between remittances and Diaspora philanthropy. Developing countries like Zimbabwe – particularly those seeking economic growth and development – consider foreign remittances a critical component of growth and development (Maune & Matanda 2022). The World Bank (2022c) estimates that Zimbabwe received USD 1.42 billion in 2019 and USD 1.83 billion in 2022 personal remittances, recording a 29% increase. The Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe (2022) mid-term monetary policy statement figures for January to June indicate that Diaspora remittances amounted to USD 797 million in 2022, a 23% increase from USD 650 million received during the same period in 2021. According to World Bank data, there was a slight increase in the percentage contribution of remittances to Zimbabwe's GDP from 2018 to 2020 (World Bank 2021b). The data shows Zimbabwe received (percentage contribution of remittances to GDP) 7.3% in 2019 and 10.1% in 2020 (World Bank 2022b). The Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe (2021) and United Nations - Zimbabwe (2021) indicate that 2019 remittances contributed 54% of foreign receipts. The United Nations - Zimbabwe (2021) also states that in 2020 the country received about USD 1 billion in remittances. However, the literature reviewed in this study correctly notes that an unknown portion of these transfers represents social investments for the common good, such as building and funding schools, community centres, or health clinics, which has generated interest, study, and promotion of 'Diaspora philanthropy' (Johnson 2007). In the case of Zimbabwe, the study found that official figures on the exact amounts of the remittances that translate to financing infrastructural

development in rural areas are difficult to come across. Nevertheless, the study came across several infrastructural projects supported by Diaspora philanthropic arrangements in rural Zimbabwe.

The 2022 Population and Housing Census, Preliminary Migration Report showed a sharp increase in Zimbabweans moving to other countries from 2015 to 2021 (Zimbabwe National Statistical Agency 2022). Even though the research does not seek to assume causality, it, however, observes an increase in documented Diaspora philanthropic activities in rural infrastructure during the same period. For example, the study of Ncube and Gómez (2015) on the contribution of remittances to infrastructural development in the Tsholotsho District in Zimbabwe shows successful cases where the Diaspora community in South Africa financed the construction of a local healthcare centre. Through crowdfunding in Zimbabwe, Diaspora philanthropy has constructed a school block at Masibinta Secondary School in Binga district in 2021 (Citizens Initiative 2022). Citizens Initiative – a non-profit organisation – crowdfunded mostly by Diaspora communities to assist seven schools in Bikita, Chimanimani and Chipinge districts affected by Cyclone Idai in 2019. The organisation coordinated the building of classroom blocks at Rimbi Primary School and Mandara Primary School, assisted in the completion of another classroom block at Ndimba Primary School, refurbished a classroom block at Rimbi Primary School, constructed toilets at Ngangu Primary School, finished the construction of toilets at Tafara High School and supplied water pipes to connect to clean water at Ndimba High School. In Mutasa District in Manicaland Province, Madziyire's (2015) doctoral study on philanthropy, examining 29 public high schools, revealed that about two-thirds received infrastructural support. The support was on classroom blocks, library buildings, electrification of school buildings, science laboratories, teacher's quarters, toilets blocks and water supply.

Further, Hidayati (2020) emphasises the favourable influence of remittances on rural development. Although it might seem obvious that the quantum of remittance flows likely depends on two variables, which are alluded to by Straubhaar and Vâdean (2006) as migrants' ability (their income and the savings from income) and their motivation to remit savings back to the home country, there is more to it. In several countries, such as Zimbabwe, for instance, there is a link between the increase in remittances and the availability of official channels of remitting money (Kpodar & Imam 2022). However, the challenge is the presence of 'informal remittances' (Ghosh 2006). In Zimbabwe, a

significant portion of remittances is sent through informal channels and hence are challenging to account for in official statistics (Maune & Matanda 2022). Attempts to account for remittances sent through informal ways are tricky because of contested official migration statistics on Zimbabwe due to illegal migration, particularly between Zimbabwe and neighbouring countries such as South Africa and Botswana.

6 Diaspora Philanthropy in Zimbabwe's Rural Infrastructure Development: The Challenges and Opportunities

The conduct of Diaspora philanthropy in rural infrastructure development comes with several challenges and opportunities. First, in highly politically polarised countries like Zimbabwe, as shown in opinion surveys by Afrobarometer, where there is mistrust between government and citizens (Bratton & Masunungure 2018), Diaspora philanthropy is often susceptible to abuse by individuals with ulterior motives (Johnson 2007). A case is 'philanthropic contributions' aimed at political ends and not necessarily rural infrastructure development. As Johnson (2007) warns, remittances could appear to be and are counted as 'philanthropy' under local law but have much more to do with personal gain than public benefit. Musoro, Madziva, and Magaisa (2010) have argued that Diaspora citizens' engagement transcends combatant political issues and humanitarian and economic development in Zimbabwe. Akech *et al.* (2019) observe a long-existing hostility between the government of Zimbabwe and its Diaspora population, which is a stumbling block to development. For example, the ruling ZANU-PF party in Zimbabwe regards rural areas as its support base and hesitates to allow Diaspora citizens-funded projects (Muzorewa & Nyandoro 2021). These factors challenge Diaspora philanthropic activities in rural areas where developmental interventions are needed to boost infrastructure development.

Second, Diaspora philanthropy in general and Zimbabwe mainly necessitates enquiries on its long-term use as a development alternative for rural infrastructure projects, as shown by the work of Citizens Initiative in Binga, Chipinge, Bikita and Chimanimani. It can support both new projects and the rehabilitation of existing infrastructure. Still, it is unclear whether the support can be ongoing and consistent as financiers are often once-off supporters. Where commitment to support a project is shown, the fact that it is voluntary

means that members of the Diaspora can withdraw support since there will be nothing binding supporters to projects. Further, current anti-immigrant developments in South Africa will likely affect Diaspora philanthropy since the country hosts the largest share of Zimbabwe's Diaspora population. The South African government announced in 2022 that it would not renew the Zimbabwe Exemption Permit (ZEP) beyond June 2023. The ZEP allowed Zimbabweans to work legally and stay in South Africa.

Third, Akech *et al.* (2019) argue that countries of origin must remove the legal impediments that restrict the engagement of the Diasporas. Zimbabwe, for instance, must complement policies such as the National Diaspora Policy Implementation Action Plan of 2017 with supporting legislation. The Government of Zimbabwe acknowledges the criticality of reviewing the 2017 Diaspora Policy and the centrality of enacting complementary legislation to gain meaningful participation of the Diaspora in development (Government of Zimbabwe 2020:176). Currently, the Diaspora policy has no legal backing that can guide the participation of Diaspora citizens in the Diaspora to contribute to developmental activities.

Fourth, despite their importance, the costs of sending remittances are still very high, reducing their flow (Beck *et al.* 2022). Hence, the cost of remitting is a challenge that affects the contribution of Diaspora philanthropy to rural infrastructure development. According to the World Bank (2021b), sending money to sub-Saharan countries (excluding Nigeria) is expensive compared to other regions. Beck *et al.* (2022) state that the median remittance fee stood at 1% in the corridor between Russia and Azerbaijan, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Lithuania, Latvia, Moldova and Ukraine in 2020. Conversely, the World Bank (2021b) explains that in 2020, for example, in sub-Saharan Africa, sending USD 200 costs an average of 8.2% of the money. This cost is above the global average of sending remittances, standing at 6.09% in 2022, up from 6.04% in 2021 (World Bank 2022a). The World Bank (2021b) notes that it was even more expensive at a regional level, where it cost an average of 14% to send money from South Africa to Zimbabwe in 2020. South Africa hosts the lion's share of Zimbabwean migrants, and they contribute a significant portion of Diaspora philanthropy contributions. In 2022, the largest remittances company by volumes, Mukuru, charged 10% of the amount sent from South Africa to Zimbabwe. The high cost of remitting discourages Diaspora communities from participating in Diaspora philanthropy. A recent study by Kpodar and Imam (2022) estimates that reducing transaction costs to the Sustainable Development

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Goal target of 3% could generate an additional USD 32 billion in remittances, higher than the direct cost savings from lower transaction costs. Hence, such a cost reduction would broaden the share channelled to Diaspora philanthropy activities.

However, Diaspora philanthropy also presents some opportunities for Diaspora communities to contribute to improving infrastructure in their communities of origin. Diaspora philanthropy covers the developmental gap from dwindling official development assistance and foreign direct investment in developing countries. Ncube and Gómez's (2015) study in the Tsholotsho District in Zimbabwe confirmed that Diaspora remittances contribute to local development. Due to Zimbabwe's apparent gaps in rural infrastructure development, Diaspora philanthropy is an effective way to convert private wealth into philanthropic capital, thanks to the current pace and breadth of human mobility (Johnson 2007). Bonga (2020) reiterates the importance of Diaspora remittances to national development. Similarly, Ncube and Gómez's (2015) study in the Tsholotsho District in Zimbabwe shows evidence of migrant remittances improving health and water infrastructure. Hence, the authorities and policymakers in Zimbabwe must begin to appreciate the value the country's migrant population in the Diaspora can bring to rural development through their contributions.

Espinosa (2016) theorises that Diaspora philanthropy is becoming an alternative to development aid. The recent scholarly attention on Diaspora philanthropy is part of inquiries examining the link between migration, remittances, and development. According to Espinosa (2016), discussions focusing on this link pose a new form of development aid and are grounded on three identifiable global trends:

- (a) the decline of official development aid;
- (b) the ballooning of private remittances; and
- (c) the professionalisation of international labour migration.

The World Bank (2021a) exposes that remittance flows to developing countries (excluding China) exceeded foreign direct investment and official development assistance in 2020. According to the World Bank (2021a), remittances stood at USD 540 billion against USD 259 billion in foreign direct investment and USD 179 billion in official development assistance in 2020.

Zimbabwe's government acknowledges the contribution of Zimbab-

we's Diaspora to the country's development. In the *National Development Strategy 1 2021-2025* policy document, the Government of Zimbabwe envisages reviewing the Diaspora policy and enacting enabling legislation. The aim is to 'improve Diaspora participation in national development' (Government of Zimbabwe 2020). As shown earlier, remittances significantly contributed about 10% of GDP to the economy in 2020 (World Bank 2022b). At the same time, the 2022 Preliminary Report on Migration released after 2022 shows an upward trajectory of Zimbabwe professionals integrating into the global labour markets between 2016 and 2021 (Zimbabwe National Statistical Agency 2022). As more professionals join the global workforce, more remittances will likely be channelled towards rural infrastructural development in Zimbabwe. Experiences from India, China, the Philippines, Israel and South Korea have shown expatriates funnelling funds towards infrastructure development (Bonga 2020; Espinosa 2016). The same can happen to Zimbabwe.

7 Recommendations and Areas for Further Research

The study indicates that the government of Zimbabwe acknowledges the importance of improving its Diaspora citizens' participation in development. The authors recommend that the government speed up the proposed 2017 National Diaspora Policy Implementation Action Plan reviewed in this chapter. It is recommended that the new Diaspora policy be guided by rules, regulations and laws that control activities such as using Diaspora philanthropic resources in developmental projects. Similarly, the government must incentivise expatriates who want to contribute to developing the communities of origin. The government must maintain an official database documenting projects supported by Diaspora philanthropists and indicating projects that willing citizens can help. Finally, it is recommended that governments and private remitting companies must work towards reducing remittance costs. As this study has noted, reducing costs will likely attract more migrants to participate and contribute to projects in the communities of origin. Since the economic situation in Zimbabwe is still relatively unstable, more and more citizens are likely to leave the country for better economic opportunities. This growing migrant population must be mobilised to contribute towards development projects in rural areas of origin. Hence, it is recommended that creating a conducive environment that supports Diaspora philanthropy as a catalyst for sustainable infrastructural development in rural communities in Zimbabwe is critical.

In this chapter, the authors note research gaps that need further investigation. First, studies providing a framework for Diaspora philanthropy in rural infrastructure development are difficult to source. Currently, such a framework is challenging to find in available studies. Second, in Zimbabwe, just like Sidel (2021) captures in Asia, there are no significant studies to observe the evolvement of Diaspora philanthropy from *ad hoc* practices into a sustainable, structured and organised approach to Diaspora philanthropic contribution to rural areas' development. Therefore, there is a need for research and strategies that focus on translating *ad hoc* philanthropic activities by migrants living abroad into channelled activities that aid in the developmental infrastructure strategies for rural development.

Despite the evidence on Diaspora philanthropic activities in Zimbabwe, further studies are needed to explore the extent of Diaspora philanthropic activities to improve public infrastructure in rural areas and the primary type of projects attracting Diaspora philanthropist support. For example, this data must be comparable to district or provincial data on the major Diaspora countries where most philanthropists reside and their intermediaries. These studies must be empirical and possibly undertaken in line with quantitative approaches to address the above information gap. For example, such studies can address what Sidel (2021) describes as the challenges of statistically distilling money meant categorically for philanthropic activities from remittances.

8 Conclusion

The primary aim of this chapter was to examine the trends, challenges, and opportunities of Diaspora philanthropy in rural infrastructure development. Following a qualitative approach, the analysis centred on Zimbabwe. Document analysis and literature reviews were used to collect data which exposed that Diaspora philanthropy can support developmental projects in rural areas. The findings showed growth in Diaspora-supported programmes since 2015. The cost of remitting, the absence of a coherent policy framework, and uncertainty in South Africa, where the South African government decided not to renew ZEPs beyond June 2023, are some challenges affecting the conduct and sustainability of Diaspora philanthropy. It was also revealed that from the policy level in Zimbabwe, the government acknowledges the significance of improving the participation of its Diaspora population in development. Identified cases show Diaspora communities using intermediaries such as

Citizens Initiatives to build and rehabilitate rural schools in Chipinge, Chimanimani, and Binga. More so, it is recommended that the government must speed up the process of reviewing the Diaspora policy and work towards reducing remittance costs.

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