Focus on Migration is published by the International Organization for Migration (IOM) in the Netherlands with news and views about voluntary return of migrants, resettlement of migrants to the Netherlands and temporary assignments of migrant to their countries of origin. The magazine is sent to IOM’s relations and other interested parties four times a year. Migratie Info is made possible with financial contributions from the Dutch Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.
PREFACE

During the past years recognition of the linkages between migration and development is increasing. More insight has become available how migration affects development and vice versa. That this relationship is not negative, is among others shown by the positive role migrants play in both their country of residence and in their country of origin. Their participation contributes to technological development, economic activities and cultural enrichment. Many migrants remain strongly connected to their country of origin. They send money back home, but also transfer skills, start up businesses and share their experiences.

This issue of Focus on Migration provides some interesting examples of the engagement of the diaspora for development in their countries of origin through temporary return assignments, partnerships with institutions from both sides and other contributions. Attention is also given to the impact of this engagement on development efforts and how they make it sustainable in the longer term. Governments of countries of origin explain how to see the role of their diaspora and what they do to harness its potential. In this way, IOM hopes to contribute positively to the linkages between migration and development.

Martin Wyss,
Chief of Mission IOM in the Netherlands

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**MORE INSIGHT INTO THE POSITIVE LINKAGES BETWEEN MIGRATION AND DEVELOPMENT**

More and more migrants and migrant organizations are becoming actively involved in the development of their countries of origin. Despite the economic crisis, the amount of money alone, which migrants transfer to family at home each year, makes that relationship very visible. The strength of the ties is also apparent from support for development projects, migrants own initiatives and temporary return and transfer of knowledge.

Ralph Welcker, Zia Gulam and Hans Eijkhout of the Labour Migration & Human Development Department of IOM in the Netherlands have received positive reactions to the temporary assignment of resource persons to their countries of origin. Both the participants and the organizations in those countries, as well as the donors of the projects, are positive about the results so far. More research is required however, into the many relationships between migration and development and also into the long-term effects such as, for example, reduction of poverty.

For a number of decades now, IOM has been looking at the positive relationship between migration and development. Migrants who have rebuilt their lives in the country of destination, begin to take an interest to play a role for their home country. Their attention is stimulated by the worldwide discussion, such as that in the Global Forum on Migration and Development (www.gfmd.org) a United Nations platform jointly organized by IOM. The attention can also be seen in the Dutch Migration and Development policy and the interest of the diaspora for projects such as IOM’s Temporary Return of Qualified Nationals (TRQN).

**Opportunities for governments**

As an international organization, IOM learns a great deal from practical experience. “The experience gained in our projects is extremely valuable for further development of policy regarding migration and development. Practical examples have resulted in an IOM handbook for governments in countries of origin, on the involvement of their diaspora in development of the country. This requires a change of attitude of course, because many of the countries of origin do not necessarily always take a positive view towards those people who left the country for different reasons or are not fully aware of the potential of the diaspora. The handbook gives insight into the opportunities and means of the diaspora and how to deal with these”, says Welcker.

Another option for governments is to make their country more attractive for commercial investment by the diaspora. Potential investors are often hindered by all kinds of legislation or bureaucracy, while governments are capable of lowering such thresholds. The same can apply to countries of destination. “Participating in temporary return assignments from the Netherlands for instance is sometimes difficult for people due to their working obligations or a loss of benefit payments in case people are unemployed.” “It is all about creating a situation in the country of origin which makes it attractive for migrants to return temporarily and to deploy their means and expertise,” Welcker emphasises.

**Benefits of temporary assignments**

Welcker refers to the TRQN project for Afghanistan as proof of the effects of temporary return assignments. Although the country has great problems, many Afghan people in the Netherlands are helping with rebuilding their native land. “We have assigned persons at strategic positions at local level, for improvement of the infrastructure or creating employment in the city of Kabul.” They positively influence the change process, helping the city to continue to develop, in the interests of the people who live there or who wish to invest there.” Realization of such assignments requires effective cooperation with partners in the country of origin, and particularly with local and national governments and other stakeholders such as local NGO’s. The intergovernmental character of IOM is of great value in the process. Welcker: “We have networks in many countries, which allows us to offer a structure in which the migrants can work.”

**More evidence needed**

When asked about the results of this placement in Afghanistan, Welcker refers to the research by Katie Kushminder of the Maastricht Graduate School of Governance, entitled ‘The Role of the Diaspora in Knowledge Transfer and Capacity Building in Post-Conflict Settings: The Temporary Return of Qualified Nationals to Afghanistan’ of December 2011. The TRQN project is shown to have made a significant contribution to Afghanistan and to be highly valued by the participants and host organizations alike.
Important elements for such success are the demand orientated methodology and the qualifications and experience of the participants. Kushminder’s recommendations are clear: continuation of the project will result in tangible benefits for Afghanistan. The assignment should preferably last longer than the average three months in order to meet the requirements of the host organizations even more effectively. Further research is necessary in order to gain insight into the long-term effects of these types of projects, concludes Kushminder. Welcker agrees with her. “Migration and development is subject to all kinds of relationships which have been insufficiently researched so far. We wish to gain better understanding, as IOM. The projects do give more and more insight into what is happening.”

Gulam refers to the final meeting and debriefing with participants, regarding their personal experiences and findings. “The response is so positive that everyone is willing to undertake a further assignment, or they are already taking their own initiatives to continue the contacts. They see it as a personal enrichment, it gives them recognition of their qualities and experience and it gives them the opportunity to contribute to their home country development and foster valuable links. This applies in particular to people who cannot find employment at their level of expertise in the Netherlands. This represents recognition of that expertise. And let us not forget: people feel acknowledged, they have positive experiences and that can increase their own career opportunities.”

‘Agents of change’
In terms of the number of participants, the current projects for temporary assignments (see boxes) have been successful. For TRQN, this over 370 up to the end of the extension to June 2012. MIDA Ghana will have over 250 participants up until the end of 2012, and almost 40 participants were placed for MIDWEB until now. Not only these numbers but also the impact and experiences are important for the receiving organizations. IOM has already made a contextual impact assessment for TRQN and MIDA Ghana. Eijkhout: “The receiving organizations are positive about the results. However, they agree with the conclusion of Kushminder’s research that the duration of the assignments is sometimes too short. Three months would indeed be sufficient for the transfer of knowledge alone, but the projects entail more than just that. By now, we know that migrants support the host organization in a broader sense. They introduce ideas, initiatives and strategies, which is why we call them the ‘agents of change’.”

IOM has many contacts with diaspora organizations in the Netherlands, particularly those organizations aimed at the development of the countries of origin. The projects for temporary assignments have also resulted in mutual contact between the experts themselves. “People who met each other during their posting to Sierra Leone have now established a professional organization of their own with our assistance, based on their profession and expertise”, explains Eijkhout. Gulam notes that the resource persons have become more professional and more realistic. “In general they are rather ambitious. They have learned that they cannot always realize everything they planned to achieve. They are aware that they must devise feasible plans and must set to work step-by-step.”

“We know that migrants support the host organization in a broader sense.”

Reinforcing relationships
With a view to the positive evaluations of the various projects, IOM will develop a new project proposal. Welcker: “The Dutch government has indicated its wish to reinforce the relationship with the countries of origin. We can play a role as IOM, as governments are often already partners in our programmes. We can offer extra support in, for example, the design of migration policy or capacity building at the ministerial level. This could be particularly aimed at creating an environment that makes it more attractive for migrants to return.”

IOM is also looking at other target groups in the innovation of deployment for development. Eijkhout: “Think in terms of businesses for the creation of employment in the countries of origin, for example. An improved economic situation certainly is relevant, as people are then less likely to leave and it becomes...
more attractive for people to return. Not only conflict situations but also the economic circumstances often give cause for migration.” Experience gained in similar IOM projects is of course used when working out proposals. Welcker: “IOM wants to combine the experience and expertise. We have gained many best practices and valuable lessons learned by now. That’s very much in keeping with IOM as an operational organization.”

Projects IOM in the Netherlands

IOM’s demand driven temporary return projects:

– are flexible and demand driven based on identified needs and gaps in priority sectors of countries of origin;
– work actively with the diaspora and its resources and networks;
– facilitate contacts and cooperation between the diaspora and their home countries
– strongly focus on building capacity of stakeholders in countries of origin;
– stimulate cooperation and partnerships between institutions in countries of origin and knowledge institutes in the Netherlands and other EU countries.

Temporary Return of Qualified Nationals (TRQN II)
The TRQN project offers qualified migrants in the Netherlands the opportunity to help with the development of their country of origin. This is realized through temporary return assignments where the migrants as so-called resource persons share their experiences, skills and knowledge with local organizations. Target countries are Afghanistan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Ethiopia, Georgia, Sierra Leone and Sudan.

MIDA Ghana Health III project
The MIDA Ghana Health III project contributes to the development of human resources in the health sector in Ghana. Ghanaian and other African migrants in EU countries can transfer knowledge, skills and experience through temporary assignments to Ghana. Also, health workers from Ghana have the opportunity to engage in specialized training at health care institutions in the Netherlands, Germany or the United Kingdom.

The project is implemented by IOM in close cooperation with the Ministry of Health of Ghana and Ghanaian diaspora groups in Europe.

Project Migration for Development in the Western Balkans (MIDWEB)
The temporary and virtual return component of the MIDWEB projects offers a temporary placement opportunities for 60 qualified professionals from Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and UNSC Resolution 1244 administered Kosovo, and who live permanently in Austria, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Switzerland or the United Kingdom. Participants can share their skills and expertise to contribute to the development of their country of origin.

For more information about these projects please contact:
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Obangs Bangura from the Netherlands working with local partners to establish a poultry farm in Sierra Leone.
GROWING AWARENESS OF THE POSSIBILITIES OFFERED BY DIASPORA

“The migration debate is changing. That is apparent in the migration and diaspora policy applied by governments, in the image of migrants and in the spending pattern of remittances. There is a growing consciousness of the relationship between migration and integration of individuals and resultant development aspects such as longer term poverty reduction.” Valeska Onken, Migration and Development Specialist at IOM Head Office in Geneva and Tauhid Pasha, Labour Migration Specialist, sketch the changes.

An important development is taking place in the governments of both countries of origin and destination. Pasha: “The beneficial effects of migration are now the concern of a number of departments across governments who are working at an inter-ministerial level to promote the positive effects of migration. Moreover, an increasing number of governments in countries of origin are forming a unit for diaspora, in order to formulate policy to involve migrant communities in the development of their countries of origin. Such units are often focal points for colleagues within other ministries, in the field of education and health, for example. The units frequently have contact with diaspora abroad, whom they try to involve in the national development process.”

Diaspora as source of development
Awareness of the potential of diaspora is growing not only at the national but also at the international level. Onken refers to the Global Migration Group, a UN inter-agency group that fosters a cooperative relationship in which IOM and UNDP also participate. One of the results of the cooperation is the guide produced for governments of countries of origin and destination, to facilitate the incorporation of migration policy in their development planning. Onken: “The special diaspora unit of the ministry for foreign affairs of Jamaica has developed a long-term vision and policy in the field of migration and development for the coming twenty to thirty years, for example. IOM plays a support role in that, together with UNDP.”

IOM receives increasing numbers of requests from member states in the development of projects. “Countries of origin in particular are increasingly aware that diaspora are a source of development, ranging from remittances to the transfer of knowledge and temporary return, cultural exchanges and trade projects.”

On the other hand, there is only a limited number of destination countries which donate to IOM projects. “It is extremely positive that The Netherlands supports IOM in the development and implementation of these projects.”

Migrants as bridge builders
According to Onken and Pasha, the image of migrants is changing. Although migrants are often still seen as a threat to the labour market and to safety, a U-turn is taking place globally. Migrants are now more likely to be seen as bridge builders and as people who can contribute to both their country of origin and their country of destination. This obviously is a great stimulus for migrants to really make an effort.” These effects, based on detailed data, are described in the Migration and Remittances Factbook 2011 published by the World Bank. (See textbox on page 6).

The IOM organisation is very aware of how migrants react, thanks to its close contact with them. “When asked about their ideas for deployment in the country of origin, a ‘suitcase full of opportunities’ is opened. Most migrants want to work for and invest in their country of origin, but they are held back by a gaping hole in the communication with government bodies. IOM can help initiate the communication and make the migrants’ voices heard in government circles.”

IOM can also stimulate the countries of origin to provide an environment conducive to investment. Adaptations in the field of taxes or legislation may be required, for example, or systems to facilitate remittance of funds. Such measures will make it
attractive for migrants to invest or to deploy their knowledge and skills.

Protection of migrants also stimulates deployment

Migration and development now plays a role in all aspects of migration, also when it comes to protection of migrants’ rights. “If a migrant is in a vulnerable position, as the victim of trafficking for example, or is employed as an irregular immigrant under poor conditions, he or she is not capable of contributing to the country of origin. As soon as that situation improves and the migrant can generate income or knowledge, the households in the country of origin will also benefit.” This serves to emphasise the importance of a stimulating and protective migration policy in the country of destination. “It is important that we invest in the migrant in a human, financial, cultural and social manner, which will allow him or her to deploy that capital in the countries of origin and destination.”

IOM is aware of the skills and knowledge that diaspora groups possess, due to its many forms of contact with migrants and migrant groups. IOM then deploys the knowledge to support the government and in projects aimed at transfer of knowledge and skills in combination with temporary or permanent return to the country of origin. The area of application is diverse, ranging from health care to education and from water management to agricultural know-how. “The booklet ‘Migrant Stories’ published by IOM in the Netherlands gives many fantastic practical examples. While the modes of implementation may vary, the idea is always to combat the effects of brain drain.”

Possibilities for remittances

IOM is also in direct contact with migrants looking to transfer funds and with the households receiving money. “Thanks to these contacts, we know that such remittances are more broadly deployed than simply for presumed private consumption. A great deal is invested in health, education and starting up small businesses, which represent an investment in the community and in the future of young people. We also know that, besides formal remittances such as through banks, large sums of money are sent informally to countries of origin.” IOM’s role is aimed at providing information for both migrants and their households back at home, on the potential for savings and investment for example.

Measuring results

IOM has a need for more information on the long-term effects of the various programmes in the field of migration and development. The fact that IOM is a project organisation makes it difficult to measure the long-term effects however. Onken: “A project is generally carried out for a limited period and once it has ended, there are often no opportunities to measure the impact on poverty, for example. The projects do however result in great practical experience and often positive reactions. Happily, the Belgian government is financing a large study of a long-running IOM migration and development programme in Brussels, while the Dutch government is also evaluating its migration and development policy. These evaluations will hopefully provide information on what the longer-term achievements and what is possible. We would like the positive experiences to be backed up by scientific research showing the value of migrants for development of the countries of origin and destination.”

Valeska Onken: “IOM can help initiate the communication and make migrants’ voices heard in government circles.”

Tauhid Pasha: “Countries of origin in particular are increasingly aware that diaspora are a source of development, ranging from remittances to the transfer of knowledge and temporary return, cultural exchanges and trade projects.”

World Bank: Remittances Remain Robust

Remittances to developing countries were a resilient source of external financing during the recent global financial crisis, with recorded flows expected to reach $325 billion by the end of this year, up from $307 billion in 2009, according to the World Bank’s latest Migration and Remittances Factbook 2011. Worldwide, remittance flows are expected to reach $440 billion by the end of this year. The World Bank estimates that, after recovering by the end of this year, recorded remittances to developing countries will rise further in 2011 and 2012, possibly exceeding $370 billion in two years’ time. The top remittance sending countries in 2009 were the United States, Saudi Arabia, Switzerland, Russia, and Germany. Worldwide, the top recipient countries in 2010 are India, China, Mexico, the Philippines, and France. As a share of GDP, however, remittances are more significant for smaller countries - more than 25 percent in some countries.
ETHIOPIA: ALEM DESTA

When times are tough in the village of Hawzien, young women leave for the city. Their lack of employable skills means they are treated very badly, sometimes ending up as servants or forced into prostitution. My original idea was to build a general training centre for the girls and women of the village to prevent this happening. But then I found out about the honey.

The women of Hawzien have been farming high-quality honey for generations. At the moment, it is only sold locally, where it is used mainly to make Ethiopian mead. If the entire process can be upgraded so that standardization, packaging and quantity can be improved, the women can market their honey throughout Ethiopia and the world.

The women of the village are very enthusiastic about the center and cannot wait to get started. Now they have the opportunity to gain what they deserve and sell not only high-quality honey but bees’ wax, royal jelly, candles and Ethiopian mead. The bees themselves are relatively low maintenance, making it easy for them to combine beekeeping with housekeeping and childrearing.

I am really happy for the opportunity provided by IOM’s TRQN project that allowed me to travel to Ethiopia and develop the syllabus. Now our project is becoming a reality. The training centre, which we have named Queen Bees, is around one-third complete and I am currently in the process of putting the syllabus together. People’s positive responses have made me even more passionate and energized about this project.

GHANA: CHARLES AGYEMANG

What is most important about my work is trying making a difference, making sure that people who don’t have a voice can be heard. I specialize in public health. My work is mainly focused on looking at migrant health and chronic disease in Africa.

The migrant population in Western Europe tends to have poorer health than the general population. When migrants initially move, they are healthy but as time goes on, their health gets worse. This is due to several factors. Migration is stressful. Stress can come from many sources - discrimination at work, problems with neighbours, poor working conditions and family issues. People change their eating habits when they migrate, as well as their patterns of physical activity.

I return to Ghana every year with the help of IOM’s MIDA Ghana Health project to teach and collaborate with other health workers and experts. Chronic diseases - diabetes, hypertension and also cardiovascular diseases - are on the rise in Africa. Many African countries are in transition and that means people’s behaviour and eating patterns and everything are changing. It is very important that we educate people about their health and their rights. I do this by going out into the community, both here and in Ghana, with my colleagues and speaking to people directly. We also give interviews and provide information via African radio.

One of the best things about science is that your results will read and be used. Our work is necessary and needed, and has even had a direct impact on public policy.
H.E. Enayatullah Nabiel, Ambassador for the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan in the Netherlands

Diaspora can stimulate economic growth and development

“An important aspect in the development of a modern nation is the opportunity to transfer knowledge, skills and know-how. When these migrants then return to their country of origin and transfer their knowledge and know-how to partners in Afghanistan, it can lead to economic growth and more trade relationships.”

The Ambassador for Afghanistan in the Netherlands, Mr Enayatullah Nabiel, is an enthusiastic advocate of projects such as the Temporary Return of Qualified Nationals to Afghanistan. He monitors developments and has regular contact with participants, host organizations and IOM. “It is very valuable for the countries of origin because people with expertise and skills that have been gained in the Netherlands can then utilize these in Afghanistan. I know many Afghans who have done so and this has benefited Afghanistan and the Netherlands in almost every case.”

He genuinely hopes that the project will be continued. As far as he is concerned, however, assignments could be extended and he argued this point during the presentation of Katie Kuschminder’s presentation of her research about temporary return to Afghanistan. “During the meeting, I agreed on her recommendation reviewing the duration of temporary assignments because the three or six month time span is not always sufficient to effectively exchange skills and help people with the actual tasks involved.” According to Nabiel, it is better to limit the number of participants and, instead, extend the period of assignment. “I’m thinking about universities in particular! For a master’s degree, an expert must be present from the beginning to the end of the semester. Three or six months may be long enough in other institutions or for other professions. A surgeon in a hospital may carry out an operation in the presence of his students or fellow doctors. We must, therefore, determine the time required on a case-by-case basis.”

Demand-driven assignments

The needs of the country of origin, in this case Afghanistan, are the determining factor. According to Nabiel, bodies and organizations must indicate and substantiate needs effectively. “IOM Kabul contacts ministries and institutions and inform them about the possibilities associated with the temporary return of Afghans and the benefits that this can bring. The institutions in turn indicate where efforts are required.” There is a huge need for home-grown experts from host countries such as the Netherlands in the public and private institutions in the country. “The needs of the healthcare sector are enormous; the same goes for education and water management. The country also has huge issues with information technology and many ministries are struggling with this area.” IOM is also very strict when it comes to criteria in relation to the experts that are seconded. “Checks are carried out on whether those involved are genuinely qualified in the areas that are in demand. This is important because those without adequate expertise cannot make a suitable contribution.”

The Afghan government stimulates the global diaspora to contribute to capacity building in Afghanistan through public outreach activities. “The Afghan government tries to remind Afghans living abroad that they have a responsibility vis à vis their country. Afghanistan informs them about the tremendous opportunities for diaspora who want to do business in my country. Those
who are qualified could even be appointed to high and important government positions.”

**Independent mediation**
The role of IOM as a mediator and organizer of temporary assignments is vital. Nabiel: “IOM is a specialist in this area and has a great deal of expertise. It is good to work together with an international organization. IOM can play a significant role in identifying needs in the country of origin.”

IOM’s vision that migration benefits all parties involved receives heartfelt support from the Ambassador. “It’s not just about exchanging knowledge but also about accumulating contacts. An Afghan in the Netherlands also sees opportunities for doing business during the assignment. The Netherlands is a great market for Afghan products such as dry food and Afghan rugs. Trade is on the increase. So migration is a great phenomenon for everyone. Business, governments, individuals; everyone can benefit from it.”

Remittances and investments
Alongside the use of knowledge and skills, migrants can also contribute via money transfers back home or so-called remittances. This primarily involves labour migrants working in Gulf States or in Bangladesh and the Philippines. The Ambassador is satisfied with the supportive role that IOM plays for the Ministry of Employment in Afghanistan when sourcing employment opportunities. He would, however, also like to see greater investments by the Dutch and Afghans in the Netherlands in the country of origin. “Investment creates jobs and, as a result, prosperity and affluence. We have to stimulate these things; there are so many opportunities in Afghanistan. People who invest now will only see benefits because huge efforts are being made in terms of peace and security in the country.”

“**It’s not just about exchanging knowledge but also about accumulating contacts.”**

Nabel has asked the Dutch Minister for Immigration and Asylum, Minister Leers, to shine the spotlight on Afghans in the Netherlands training women leaders in Sudan. The percentage of criminality among Afghan migrants is virtually zero. They have earned a positive approach.” The minister is happy to share the positive development of these migrants. Whether he responds positively to Nabel’s request to be more generous in terms of Afghan asylum seekers and family reunification remains to be seen.

**Added value of diaspora**
Nabel refers to the added value that these experts can provide in relation to western development workers, for example. “As nationals, they are familiar with the culture, language and sensitivities. They do not need a translator in order to transfer knowledge. Moreover, the added value is that they can independently decide to stay longer, at their own expense, to build up a business, for example.”

It is clear that those who have taken part have usually provided a permanent contact between the Netherlands and Afghanistan. The people in Afghanistan thus know more about the Netherlands and those in the Netherlands are up-to-date with the latest developments in Afghanistan. “I would love to see this happening more frequently and the further expansion of business relations between Afghanistan and the Netherlands. Temporary return could thus function as the basis for more growth, the expansion of relationships and, primarily, improved understanding between the people and the countries.”

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“Migration is a great phenomenon for everyone. Business, governments, individuals; everyone can benefit from it.” Eisa Ekhlas Osman from the Netherlands training women leaders in Sudan.
IMPROVING THE HEALTH SECTOR IN GHANA

The Ghanaian government is one of the cooperation partners behind the MIDA Ghana Health project (‘Migration for Development in Africa’) initiated in 2005. The Ghanaian government decided to cooperate in this project as part of the efforts towards a healthy population for national development. “In order to realize this vision, the Human Resources for Health (HRH) will need to be reinforced and motivated in order to make an effective and efficient contribution. Unfortunately, Ghana is classified as one of the countries confronted with a Human Resources for Health crisis,” says Kwesi Asabir, Deputy Director of Human Resources for Health Development of the Ministry of Health.

According to Kwesi Asabir, international migration weakens the contribution made by human resources. “It really is essential that we transform these negative effects of international migration into positive ones. That is the reason behind the Ghanaian government establishing this project together with IOM in 2005. Our aim is to encourage Ghanaian health workers in the diaspora to make a contribution to health care in their country of origin. Capacity building also takes place through offering health workers in the country itself the opportunity to study abroad briefly. This is how we plan to arrive at a positive migration balance”, explains Kwesi Asabir. Ghana particularly needs more health experts, further capacity building, increased salaries and residential facilities close to health care institutions.

Knowledge transfer
Following the successful MIDA Ghana Health I and II project, IOM started the MIDA Ghana III project in 2008. This project contributes to the reinforcement of human resources development in the health care sector, mainly through training and transfer of knowledge. There have been more than 250 temporary return assignments in Ghana within the scope of MIDA Ghana so far. “The receiving hospitals and health care training institutions in Ghana are very positive about the impact of knowledge transfer by the Ghanaian diaspora”, explains Kwesi Asabir. “It has certainly contributed to a better quality of the health care. Another great result was the relationships established with organizations and companies in Europe, who offered equipment and facilities to the institutions where the Ghanaian diaspora worked.”

Committed government
The ministry supports when needed facilities for the benefit of the experts coming to Ghana.

Ghana wins Innovation Award

The Health Worker Migration Policy Council has selected Ghana as a winner of the Innovation Award at a ceremony in Geneva in May this year. The Health Worker Migration Policy Council Innovation Award celebrates progress made by countries addressing the challenges of health worker migration. This highly competitive, non-monetary award honours innovative and scalable approaches, highlighting promising practices. The Council is a partnership between the World Health Organization, the Global Health Workforce Alliance, the Health Workforce Advocacy Initiative and the International Organization for Migration.

Though the Council received many strong nominations, Ghana’s nomination stood out for impressive efforts, which included: improving basic health infrastructure, re-engaging returnees, collaborating on the MIDA Ghana III project and the Diaspora Engagement Project, both IOM to encourage the return of health workers, and collaborating with civil societies to increase awareness.

The government also ensured that health workers travelling abroad for extra education or study purposes within the scope of the MIDA project, keep their income and their position in Ghana. The MIDA Ghana Health Task Force - comprising of the Ministry of Health, Ghana Health Services, the medical and nursing councils and the Christian Health Association of Ghana - meets regularly to monitor and evaluate the project.

Moreover, the Ghanaian government facilitates re-establishment of the country’s diaspora who wish to continue to work in the Ghanaian healthcare sector. The government is also developing a special website to keep the Ghanaian diaspora informed of the latest opportunities in the health care sector. “We will be very grateful if IOM continues the cooperation to facilitate the return of diaspora health workers.”

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The Agency for Foreign Investments and Exports Promotion

PROMOTING MACEDONIA AND ATTRACTING INVESTMENTS

The Agency for Foreign Investments and Exports Promotion Macedonia - Invest Macedonia in short - is involved in the “Migration for Development in the Western Balkans” project (MIDWEB) of IOM Invest Macedonia was established in 2004 with the aim to attract investments and to promote export.

The Agency’s staff was very pleased to have the opportunity to work with knowledgeable professionals with practical experience with export promotion. The professionals were Anastasia Skaitatzi, an independent consultant in Strategy and Business Development, and Igor Sazdov, an International Sales Manager/Business Consultant. Both live in the Netherlands. “The experts already assisted Macedonian companies with the export of their products.

For us it was especially important they were of Macedonian origin and are familiar with the Macedonian economy, industry and the development of potential markets. Because they studied and worked abroad they have valuable experience relating to foreign markets and companies,” says Ana Lazarova from Invest Macedonia.

The main activities of the so-called resource persons included benchmark activities with similar agencies, interactive training sessions with the Agency and setting up parameters. They also developed a structure for market reports of potential export markets. Ana Lazarova: “The objectives were completely met and the work of the experts was in full accordance with the Agency’s requirements.

The most important result is the development of an easy to use database containing detailed information about Macedonian companies already exporting their products and services or companies potentially interested in exporting their business. The database will be publicly available online via our web portal.”

Independent monitoring
Invest Macedonia emphasizes IOM’s role as independent facilitating party. “IOM helped us with identifying the capacity building needs and matching human resources with Macedonian experts living in the Netherlands and other countries. Also, it is important that IOM is monitoring the process. Not only by recruiting the right experts but also by closely following the implementation of the project and the execution of the activities by the experts in accordance with our objectives.”

In Macedonia, IOM works closely with the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs and other stakeholders to identify capacity building needs of institutions and match them with available expertise of Macedonians living outside Macedonia.

MIDWEB coordinator Sonja Bozinovska from IOM Skopje and Igor Sazdov.
“The development of tourism is one of the priorities of the Georgian economy, which is why the support of the sole internationally certified Georgian mountain guide, Archil Tsintsadze, is so important. This Georgian living in Germany was placed via the TRQN scheme, and has been of great assistance to the Georgian Association of Mountain Guides in Tbilisi. His efforts also resulted in a specialized course for mountain guides being provided at one of the universities in Georgia. A brief report by Irakli Ugulava, director of the Georgian Association of Mountain Guides and Khatuna Didbaridze, project coordinator of the IOM mission in Georgia.

Irakli Ugulava was delighted with the Georgian expert on temporary assignment in Georgia within the scope of the IOM TRQN project. “This man is the only Georgian mountain guide with an internationally recognized qualification and is familiar with modern methods. Thirty of our staff members received intensive training and a mountain skiing course from him. He taught them the principles of training for avalanche and rescue operations.”

The targets of the expert’s assignment have certainly been met. “He translated the pedagogical and methodological training material into the Georgian language and adapted the texts where necessary, while sharing his experience with Georgian colleagues wherever possible. As a result of his support, the Ilia State University has developed a professional training course for mountain guides. The first group of students will begin training in mountain rescue work and guide skills as of September 2012” Ugulava proudly explains.

**Strengthening ties with diaspora**
The assignment of this highly qualified mountain guide of Georgian origin is very much in keeping with the strengthening of ties with Georgian diaspora and the sharing of experience and knowledge. “It fits in the Georgian policy of reinforcing relationships with the Georgian diaspora”, says Khatuna Didbaridze from IOM in Georgia. “The TRQN project offers an interesting opportunity for transfer of skills and expertise by qualified diaspora members. Their potential can be effectively deployed for furthering the development of Georgia. They offer substantial human capital in a social, financial and economic sense. Their philanthropic aspirations and strong desire to remain involved and contribute to the progress of their country of origin is of inestimable value.”

This assignment in the tourist sector was important, as tourism is one of the priorities of the Georgian economy. There is growing interest among the diaspora members willing to become involved, and various assignments have already been realized in Georgia, in public institutions, media and PR companies, NGOs, arts and culture, and micro-financing.

**Mutual trust is crucial**
IOM Georgia was responsible for liaising with host institutions in Georgia and the resource persons on their arrival in Georgia, providing technical support as well as monitoring the assignments.

In Khatuna Didbaridze’s opinion, a balanced approach is required in order to form positive relationships between countries and their diaspora. “Development of mutual trust is crucial for that purpose, especially in the ‘blossoming relationship’ stage. IOM can play an important role here as an independent party. Our experience and competence in reinforcing partnerships between parties in countries of origin and destination leads to effective matching and a maximum contribution to economic development.”
UNESCO Chair in Water Resources affiliate of Omdurman Islamic University (OIU) and the Sudan University for Science and Technology SUST – College of Water and Environmental Engineering

DIASPORA CONTRIBUTES TO WATER MANAGEMENT

Within the scope of the IOM Netherlands Temporary Return of Qualified Nationals (TRQN) project, two Sudanese universities have deployed Dutch know-how on water quality. The expert was Iglal Ashmage, water management specialist from the Netherlands. She worked at the UNESCO Chair in Water Resources affiliate of Omdurman Islamic University (OIU) and the ‘Sudan University for Science and Technology SUST – College of Water and Environmental Engineering’. Burhan Adem works for IOM in Khartoum, and asked the universities about their experiences.

For the UNESCO Chair in Water Resources affiliate of Omdurman Islamic University the Sudanese resource person from the Netherlands contributed to evaluation and improvement of the functioning of the water laboratory, by increasing the capacity of the facilities and training the employees.

Using diaspora expertise
“The Unesco Chair in Water Resources of OIU is extremely satisfied with the know-how introduced and the effective realization of the TRQN project. This project also stimulates the exchange of know-how with experts abroad. The Unesco Chair in Water Resources of OIU believes it is very important to make use of this diaspora expertise, as capacity development is essential for improvement of the organization”, explains Burhan Adem.

The College of Water and Environmental Engineering of SUST is equally delighted with the opportunity to welcome an expert. “Our national institute was provided with the necessary expertise, which certainly had great added value for the employees. This has resulted in extra capacity among the staff and thereby more transfer of knowledge to the students”, they told Burhan Adem.

The Unesco Chair in Water Resources of OIU also clarified on the concrete activities. Burhan Adem: “The expert help included the establishment and functioning of the Water Quality Laboratory. Staff were trained in new methods for analysis of the water quality, with approximately thirty employees from various departments being provided with standard training on various aspects of this field”.

Concrete activities
A number of concrete activities concerned the formulation of lists of all chemicals, equipment and glass work, which enabled evaluation of the laboratory capacity. The Dutch resource person drew up instruction sheets and laminated them, in order that the laboratory equipment could be labelled, making it accessible and safe in use. An example is the laboratory manual drawn up by her, giving the latest requirements regarding procedures and quality standards for water analysis. Also she provided a support function for staff and students. The university has informed us that four extremely useful and well organized training sessions were given, which were attended by more than one hundred participants, also from other water sector institutions.

A bonus result was the improvement of the performance of the Water Resources Laboratory. Via the network of the resource person in the Netherlands, the Delft-based Institute for Water Education (UNESCO-IHE) also contributed by having a Dutch water expert provide part of the training.”

According to Burhan Adem both universities have found IOM to be an independent party which plays an effective facilitating and coordinating role for both the host organization and the posted expert. They hope that IOM will continue to organize such projects.
SIERRA LEONE: MOHAMED KUNOWAH-TINU KIELLOW

I always make it clear that I don’t make any political statements, I make legal statements. Where there is a rule of law, people will get political, social and economic justice. After graduating from law school, I had the opportunity to get a very good job in the Netherlands. But the TRQN project attracted me as well. So I decided to temporarily go back to Sierra Leone.

Human rights activists in Sierra Leone are able to recognize a human rights violation but they don’t know how to tackle it because they lack the legal knowledge. Sierra Leone’s domestic violence laws, for example, are very comprehensive and provide a lot of protection. Much of my work included organizing legal training for various organizations, with emphasis on the role of human rights in national and international development.

IOM’s TRQN project helped me find myself. If I had never participated, I would never have had the courage and the zeal and the enthusiasm to go back to my country. I now have a sense of responsibility towards a society that really needs my expertise.

AFGHANISTAN: ZAKIA ALIZADA

Faryab was not safe. I had to wear a burka every time I went outside. The guest house in which I stayed was guarded. I couldn’t ride a bike or drive a car to work. Even so I returned to Afghanistan.

I am a gynecologist and obstetrician with extensive experience in all aspects of women’s health. I grew up and used to live in Sar-e-Pol in northern Afghanistan. I returned to the north for three months with IOM. They placed me in the Faryab provincial hospital teaching women how to be midwives. They received lessons in theory and hands-on practical instruction, and they all did quite well. The other days I spent with first- and second-year doctors.

They were concerned about carrying out the many procedures relating to women’s health and pregnancy, including surgery. I guided them through delivering babies, performing curettage and caesarean sections, and applying stitches. I also taught them how to take proper notes on patients and the warning signs of any potential problems with a pregnancy. It was very hard work and I had to closely monitor each student’s progress every step of the way.

When I initially met with IOM, I told them how much I was interested in the TRQN project in Afghanistan and how much the people there needed me. My trip was originally going to last for three months but the head of the hospital said: “We really need you”, and IOM kindly allowed me to extend my visit.

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GHANAIAN HEALTHCARE RECEIVES SUPPORT FROM UK DIASPORA

Over the next few years, approximately fifty Ghanaian doctors are to be trained both in Ghana and in London. If the plans are successfully carried out, it will mean a U-turn in the brain drain of highly educated professionals from sub-Saharan Africa, according to Dr. Paul Ofori-Atta, founder and director of Motec Life, a medical charity based in the United Kingdom.

Paul Ofori-Atta was born in Ghana and now works as an orthopaedic surgeon in Hertfordshire (UK). Over the years, many doctors and nursing personnel have left the coasts of Ghana behind them. "There most certainly is a brain drain in the Ghanaian healthcare sector. However, we can make it work to our advantage. Ghanaian doctors who have further developed their skills and experience abroad are familiar with both worlds and are probably the most suitable parties to help develop healthcare in Ghana, making it better and safer."

Since its establishment, Motec has complied with requests from organizations in Ghana to work with local staff members on improvement of medical care, nursing, physiotherapy, public health care and dentistry. This takes place through knowledge transfer, information and support for clinical health care institutions.

**Unique training in London hospitals**

Motec also offers Ghanaian doctors and nurses the opportunity to gain experience and know-how in the United Kingdom. Following various requests, a work group was formed, comprising Motec UK, patron Peter Dyson, Professor Nigel Standfield as director of the London School of Postgraduate School of Surgery, and a retired Ghanaian surgeon Dr. Mkrumah-Mills. In October 2011, this work group collaborated with representatives of the Teaching Hospital in Accra, the University of Ghana Medical School, the Board of Directors of the Ghana Health Service, the authorities of the 37 Military Hospitals VRA district hospital and the offices of the President of Ghana, to define the scope of assistance required. They then jointly developed this education scheme.

Ofori-Atta: "In October 2012, the first Ghanaian post-fellowship surgeons will begin a two-year training programme in London hospitals. The programme is intended for specialists, nurses, anaesthetists, microbiologists and pathologists. It will form a direct link between the teaching hospitals in Ghana and the London Postgraduate School of Surgery. A National Vascular Centre annex training centre has been established in the 37 Military Hospital for this purpose. The unique cooperation is also due to the support of the MIDA (Migration and Development in Africa) Ghana project of IOM." (See also on page 10). Ofori is proud of the role played by the people of the diaspora in the United Kingdom. "They are offering training support to those surgeons following the course in the UK and to surgeons who have returned to Ghana after training." With Motec’s support, the Ghanaian College of Surgeons has also been able to establish a training programme for junior doctors.

**Template for development programmes**

"If the programme is successfully carried out, it will have a very positive impact on the healthcare system. Together with the diaspora with their valuable knowledge and experience, local volunteers, local governments, NGOs and governmental organizations we’re working on a template that can be applied in other development programmes for emerging economies all over the world."

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“We’re the second generation of Cape Verdeans living in the Netherlands. We want to help Cape Verde but we also want something in return, because it’s important that we also learn from the situation.”

Intercambios International was founded by Margarida Silva Mendes in 2005. During her training period on the island of Sal, she witnessed enormous poverty yet great hospitality of the people who shared all that they owned. “I realized that I needed financial and human resources from the Netherlands in order to do something about the situation. And that is how the Intercambios group came to be.” The ten islands of Cape Verde are home to more than 500,000 people. Many Cape Verdeans have emigrated after being faced with the hardship of recurring droughts, food shortages and unemployment. Nowadays, more Cape Verdeans live abroad than in the country itself.

Intercambios is a well-known organization both in Cape Verde and in the Netherlands by now. When a request is received from Cape Verde, the organization looks for volunteers and experts in the field in question, via the church, social organizations or the corporate community. Contact has been established with De Woonbron Housing foundation in Rotterdam for example, for a village which urgently required social housing. This foundation has experience with this type of housing projects in developing countries. This has resulted in 10 social housing units being built. “A precondition was that the people themselves would help, and that they pay rent and maintain the houses themselves.

It provided us with insight into and know-how on demand and supply, and on the legal aspects surrounding social housing. And so it was actually a learning process for us as well.” The problems with regard to drugs and HIV/AIDS on the island of Sal resulted in a project in collaboration with the mental health care (GGZ/Addiction care) and the GGD (municipal health service) in Rotterdam. “An information project was initiated together with these institutions and a group of students, and implemented in Cape Verde. And us? We gain insight into drug use and the work carried out by addiction care institutions and the GGD.”

Perspectives in own country
Ninety percent of the roughly 35,000 Cape Verdeans living in the Netherlands can be found in Rotterdam and the surrounding area. Silva Mendes knows for sure that almost all of them want to help their country. She herself was one of the 30 people temporarily posted to Cape Verde within the scope of the IOM ‘DIAS de Cabo Verde’ project. She has been able to convey her know-how in the field of project-based work to various local authorities and NGOs. A Cape Verdean GGD staff member was also temporarily posted by IOM. He provided information on HIV and STDs, among other subjects, in youth centres. While some of the young Cape Verdean population have work, many young people have fallen by the wayside. “We are now working with the local authorities on Sal to find a way to offer young people alternatives. They need to have a future in Cape Verde and to contribute to the development of their own country.”

Sharing know-how
“I think Cape Verde is on the right track. A minister for diaspora has recently been appointed, with whom we have established good contact. We are being kept informed of the possibilities for sharing our know-how in Cape Verde. We can follow the developments in the country daily, in English, via internet. Programmes such as the IOM ‘DIAS de Cabo Verde’ project really lift the country to a new level. Cape Verde has the potential to develop extremely quickly if the country continues to make use of its diaspora”, says Silva Mendes.
Santo Deng, President of Diaspora Forum for Development

Migrants are transnational and make a contribution

"We want to prove that migrants can certainly contribute economically, socially and politically to Dutch society and in their countries of origin. That makes us the transnational migrant. You not only make an effort in your country of destination but also in your country of origin, to which you might return in the future. There is not enough awareness of that as yet."

Santo Deng is President of the Diaspora Forum for Development (DFD) in the Netherlands, founded in 2007. The reason behind setting up a central platform was the desire by many migrant organizations to have a joint voice in the migration and development debate. "The platform subsequently proved to meet the needs of policy makers and development organizations as a body speaking on behalf of the migrant organizations", Deng explains. Diaspora Forum for Development has more than forty member organizations, including nine platforms each representing a number of migrant organizations. All in all, more than two hundred migrant organizations are involved.

Intermediary for government and diaspora

Diaspora Forum for Development has achieved a great deal over the past five years, and Deng is very proud of that. "Considering it was a completely new platform, we are very pleased with the results. The platform is a visible representative of migrants and migrant organizations. A constructive dialogue has now been initiated with policy makers, development organizations, the private sector and other interested parties. All member organizations work together and share their experiences. There is increasing cooperation between the diaspora organizations in the Netherlands and beyond the national borders. The member organizations of DFD represent migrants from Africa, Asia, Latin America and now also Eastern Europe. The organizations often carry out projects together with local partners in the countries of origin." DFD is also working at improving the image of migrants. "In recent years, the political climate has given migrants a somewhat negative name. We want to prove that migrants can certainly contribute both to Dutch society and to our respective countries of origin."

Stimulate circular migration

One of the tasks of DFD is to stimulate circular migration as a win-win solution for the three parties involved. The concept of circular migration concerns ‘forms of legal labour migration from country of origin to country of destination’. Deng: “With a view to the conference ‘Circular migration and the triple win discourse’ organized in 2010, DFD sought projects in the Netherlands which encouraged circular migration. We found almost none, the IOM TRQN project and the MIDA Ghana Health project were one of the few examples of stimulation of this form of migration. This type of temporary migration, in which a migrant deploys his know-how and expertise in his country of origin and then returns to his country of destination, should be encouraged.” Deng believes the temporary assignment..."
of migrants from destination countries, the Netherlands in this case, to be a supportive form of development cooperation. “Especially now there is so much pressure on development aid in the Netherlands. The Netherlands could make very good use of migrants in this way.”

“It is high time the world starts to understand the reasons that can lead to irregular migration rather then simply seeing an ‘illegal’ migrant.”

Supporting development processes
For the country of origin, circular migration often means support of the development process there, which Deng believes may be an answer to irregular migration. ‘Irregular migration occurs when people are forced to migrate due to war, the climate or great poverty. It takes place irregularly because people are not going to travel for days to get a passport when faced with the threat of imminent death. It is high time that the world starts to understand the reasons that can lead to irregular migration. Circular migration can help the situation. People can deploy the know-how amassed here in order to contribute to economic progress, for example. That will be successful if there is room for people to be assigned temporarily without having to return for good. It requires more flexible legislation and more understanding for the problems in the country of origin.”

Extra attention is also needed at the international level. “That is already the case in the Global Forum on Migration, which meets annually. However, its disadvantage is that the agreements are not binding, each country is free to decide which agreements it will implement and which not.”

Innovate temporary assignments
DFD also works together with IOM, in the coordination of the conference on circular migration in 2010, for example. “We have ideas for the TRQN project and suggestions for its expansion. After all, you do not have to be South Sudanese to go to South Sudan. There may be a great need for very motivated professionals in a different country.” Deng also recognizes innovation in terms of own projects initiated by migrant organizations in their countries of origin. “Using their know-how and often limited financial means, migrants contribute to the development of those countries. I know of various organizations which work for a school or which give children the opportunity of professional education in a neighbouring country. These types of projects could also be innovated by having migrants temporarily assigned there.”

Most importantly of all, Deng believes that migrants should be seen as one of the development instruments. “While the migrant organizations may never take the place of the large-scale development organizations, they can most certainly play a role.”

Deng comes back to the negative associations about migrants in the Netherlands. It has had a negative effect on the results and processes achieved but it has not affected his motivation. “Migrants will not be stopped, they will simply become more creative. They will look for friends and family or other migrant communities to continue projects. DFD does the same. We will establish more partnerships with migrant platforms in Europe and gain access to local funds in those countries. That is another direction in which we wish to innovate. Migrants will not give up. And we, as their platform, certainly will not!”

Santo Deng: “We want to prove that migrants can certainly contribute both to Dutch society and to our respective countries of origin.”
Looking back at the progress concerning migration and development in recent years, Brinkerhoff refers to the research by the George Washington University ‘Diaspora Research, Policy, and Practice: The State of the Moment.’ (GW Diaspora Research Program Working Paper, March 2009). “We have distinguished between three areas, namely research, policy and the practice. On the research front, we found most people agreeing that the research continued to be segmented according to discipline, overly case-study-based, and far too academic to inform policy and practice. I believe we have made a lot of progress on this front, with more multi-disciplinary and comparative research and some examples of policy-oriented analysis. We still have a lot of room for improvement. As policy and practice advance, so, too, must the research so we can appropriately inform each with the other.” On the policy maker and practical worker side, research has shown that more and more governments are interested in the diaspora in their countries. “Some countries, such as the Netherlands, France, Italy and the United Kingdom acknowledge and realize the potential of these residents in making a unique contribution to the development agendas”, says Brinkerhoff. What this acknowledgement means in practice varies. “Some countries have organized consultative bodies; others have more proactively invested in organizing and building the capacity of these migrant organization sectors. Changes in the political economy of some countries have led to some reversals of progress.” In other instances, these initiatives allegedly moved little beyond rhetoric. “The United States has been behind this curve for some time. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton’s 2011 Diaspora Forum was a step in this direction though what it means for policy and practice is yet to be determined.”

Fear for instrumentalization of migrants
Brinkerhoff’s main concern on this policy front is the potential to merely instrumentalize migrants to meet the development objectives of host country governments. “Like the broader NGO sector before them, working too closely with government/donor agendas may lead to a lessening of migrant organizations’ comparative advantages. It will be important, going forward, for these organizations to work as true partners and not just instruments in these development agendas.” Brinkerhoff recognizes a number of advantages in which general rhetoric becomes specific practice. “For policy makers, ‘migration and development’ is a very broad field. Some governments and donors are looking into the possible contributions by migrants in conflict situations, for example, or the use of their expertise with regard to health and agricultural sectors. The U.S. Agency for International Development will soon be releasing specific policy guidance on engaging with diasporas in conflict settings.”

In the dialogue with policy makers and practical workers on migration and development, Brinkerhoff has repeatedly indicated that we must ‘target the mobilized, not mobilize the targeted’. “In their initial enthusiasm on the ‘migrants’ potential’, many policy makers talk of mobilization of migrants in order to contribute to development. To me, this posed a risk of wasting human resources rather than focusing on the specific possibilities and advantages migrants offer. By starting with migrants who have already organized themselves around these targets, policy makers can avoid the costs and

“"I certainly believe that the potential of the diaspora can make a very useful contribution to long-term development. However, we must be clear about why we are working with diaspora, and must ensure that this leads to ‘comparative advantages’ for countries and migrants alike. These mutual advantages are essential for the maintenance and broadening of the impact of migration on development in the long term.” Jennifer M. Brinkerhoff is Professor Public Administration and International Affairs and Director Diaspora Research Program at the George Washington University in Washington D.C.
complexity of working with individuals. And so they can demonstrate the interests, capacities and advantages of these groups.”

If donors can be specific about why they are looking to engage with diasporas and what specifically they expect from them, they can focus on selection criteria for partnering with and funding these selected groups and organizations. Brinkerhoff: “In my research, I have identified a check list of potential comparative advantages that both donors and migrant organizations can use. I believe the migrant organizations need to be empowered to know specifically what they offer that others may not do as well, and so be able to engage more strategically and as partners rather than contractors. Protecting these comparative advantages over the long run is imperative to sustaining and broadening migrants’ development impact.”

Brinkerhoff sees more and more policy makers and migrant groups increasingly using analyses and practical experience. “Migrants learn from their own experience and that of other migrants. I think that is one of the most important contributions of the Civil Society Days of the Global Forum on Migration and Development, simply to offer a forum for these organizations in order that they can share experience and lessons informally, and enjoy continuous contact and consultation.”

**Exploring the diaspora’s potential**

In her book ‘Diasporas and Development: Exploring the Potential’ Brinkerhoff discusses three subjects, namely the
reaction by diaspora to conflicts in their country of origin, strategies with a view to effective investments and direct diaspora participation.

According to Brinkerhoff, migrants have been contributing to conflict settings all along and for better or for worse. “What is new however, and this also applies to migration in general, is the ease with which such contributions are possible, thanks to telecommunication and travel. This means that diasporas are both more and sometimes less visible to policymakers. Those members of the international community who intervene in conflict situations (international donors, governmental organizations, governments and those financed by ODA (official development assistance) must be better able to identify what the diaspora are doing and whether their contributions are positive or negative. After all, the reality is complex. Diaspora can provide sustenance during the conflict and can lay important foundations for redevelopment of the economy following the conflict. They form vital reservoirs of knowledge and skills which may prove essential to redevelopment of the country. At the same time, they may also complicate peace negotiations and can either support or prolong the conflict.”

Effective investment in the country of origin Brinkerhoff notes that the understanding of diasporas’ economic contributions among those who have worked in the migration and development arena has moved beyond merely remittances. “Luckily, the insight of those working in the field of migration and development has been extended to more than simply remittances. While remittances were indeed a very functional way of gathering attention for potential diaspora, the situation sometimes became exaggerated to the point where some policy makers tried to ‘capture’ these funds for support of their own development.”

“It is vital that migrant organizations can work together as true partners, rather than being simply instruments in the development agendas.”

Nowadays there is more awareness of the migrant potential in an economic sense rather than a general sense. There is attention for starter companies, but also for less intensive contributions by means of investment funds and the introduction of diaspora bonds, for example. “The latter, in particular, is beginning to capture the attention of sending governments and is receiving appropriate promotion and technical support from the World Bank, for example. Sending governments are learning, sometimes through trial and error, about how to incentivize diasporas’ economic investments. In Ethiopia, for example, some previously offered privileges have been scaled back due to perceptions of inequity with continuing resident-citizens and the realization that not all of those who were benefiting from these privileges were investing as expected.”

Be realistic and strategic
As far as the temporary return of diaspora and their direct participation in development efforts is concerned, Brinkerhoff’s advice is that training should be offered on how to convey know-how and skills. “It has always surprised me that the donor community seems to assume that just because someone is a diasporan and a professional that they will automatically know how things work on the ground and, most importantly, that they somehow already know how to do technical transfer.”

Brinkerhoff dreams of a global fund for the diaspora and of programmes based on carefully chosen selection criteria. “Migrant organizations could submit specific proposals for targeted projects. They would be required to identify their own comparative advantages for the specific proposal. In other words, they would have to demonstrate why they would be more appropriate to execute the proposed work than other professionals.”

“I do believe in the potential of diasporas to contribute very meaningfully to development, and over the long haul. But I believe we need to be realistic and strategic about expectations and engagement. Knowing why we are engaging diasporas and what we expect to achieve by partnering with them is simply good practice.”

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Interview Dutch Bosnian filmmaker

Mustafa Hadziibrahimovic films ‘Temporary return to Bosnia’

MIGRANTS FORM IMPORTANT LINKS

"Contributing to the development of both Bosnia and the Netherlands and at the same time realizing your dream. That is what motivates people to participate in the IOM project Temporary Return of Qualified Nationals (TRQN)." In his film entitled ‘Temporary Return to Bosnia’, Mustafa Hadziibrahimovic shows the methodology and results of the temporary assignments of Muamer Cviko and his wife Lejla Vandic-Cviko. “These people are the links, it is the best possible type of development cooperation.”

Hadziibrahimovic came to the Netherlands as a 15 year old refugee 1994. He gained his Master’s degree in Journalism in a cross-media news field at the Media Academy in Hilversum. He then became employed by Dutch regional broadcaster ‘Omroep West’ and the current affairs tv programme ‘Pauw & Witteman’, among others. He now works for the Dutch national television. In 2005, he returned to his birthplace Brcko in northern Bosnia, where he filmed the documentary entitled ‘Back to Brcko’. In 2008, he made the documentary entitled ‘Land of the Missed’ about the quest for missing persons in war-torn Bosnia-Herzegovina. “So much for the past. In the film entitled ‘Temporary Return to Bosnia’, we look to the future and we see what temporary return can mean. After all, many migrants want to put what they have learned or earned in the Netherlands to good use. But they don’t do it. They’ve built up a life here in the Netherlands, and to go back to Bosnia would mean starting all over again. That’s why TRQN is such a good project. It gives people a chance to do something for their country and at the same time to discover whether repatriation is an option.” Of course it needs to fit in your life. “That’s something I discovered when I registered for the project in 2007. My employer was not willing or able to miss me for a number of months, and there was no room for it in my private life either”, says Hadziibrahimovic

Establishing relationships
On attending one of the often very well-attended IOM information meetings at the Bosnian embassy, Hadziibrahimovic became aware there was no film material on the temporary return. And so the idea for his film was born. In it, he shows how Muamer Cviko and his wife Lejla Vandic-Cviko, who are both very successful in the Netherlands, returned to Bosnia for six months. Cviko is an engineer, with expertise in the field of corporate processes and strategy. “Muamar successfully modernized the business processes in a natural stone company, which had gone unchanged for many years previously, resulting in time and cost savings. He also opened up networks with the Netherlands, Germany and other Western European countries.” His wife Lejla Vandic-Cviko has experience in the world of banking, among others, and headed for Bosnia with her agency for trade relations between the Netherlands, Germany and other Western European countries. “Lejla too has carried out pioneering work, establishing new relationships between companies and showing them how to invest in each others’ countries and approach new markets. In the film, you see how employers and the Netherlands embassy are becoming increasingly aware that much more can be done with the Bosnian diaspora in Western Europe.”

Support from both governments
In Hadziibrahimovic’s opinion, an IOM project such as TRQN should be financed not only by the Dutch but also by the Bosnian government. “It is a case of investing in human potential. Many Bosnian diaspora members have good jobs, from which Bosnia can also profit. Moreover, temporary assignments offer both countries economic advantages. These people are the links, who show what the countries can offer each other. And that is how trade relations are formed.”

Mustafa Hadziibrahimovic: “Employers in Bosnia are becoming increasingly aware that much more can be done with the Bosnian diaspora in Western Europe.”
MACEDONIA: ANDRIJANA NIKCHEVSKA

The aim of the project called ‘No wrong door’ is to ensure that civil servants in Macedonia become more helpful. Andrijana Nikchevska, who received her law degree in Germany, helped to bring about this change in attitude in her native country. “In Germany, everything is perfectly regulated; all the government employees try to help me. Why couldn’t it be that way in Macedonia?”

Andrijana Nikchevska is very pleased that the MIDWEB project allows her to do something meaningful for her homeland. She spent a month in Macedonia at the Ministry of Information Society and Administration in Skopje where she worked as a consultant for ‘No wrong door’. She trained 140 civil servants from various ministries and municipalities.

“I can’t help you”
Nikchevska says everyone in Macedonia knows how frustrating it is to stand in a queue for a long time only to receive poor assistance. “The attitude of civil servants often is: ‘You have come to the wrong door - I cannot help you.’ It is an annoying attitude left over from the Communist era when people were routinely confronted with a civil servant who could not help them.”

Private sector
Nikchevska taught participants for instance the best way to deal with various kinds of people. Her PR experience at Daimler in Macedonia, her previous employer, prepared her well. “When you work in the private sector, you make sure you are always friendly and helpful; otherwise your customers will simply go elsewhere. We want to introduce this way of thinking in the public sector.”

ALBANIA: IDLIR PEĆI

Idlir Peçi has been teaching trainee judges in his native country of Albania. In this project, his aim is to contribute to the creation of a legal culture in which it is natural to ensure that a judgement is supported by sound reasoning.

Idlir Peçi is an lecturer at Utrecht University where he has had positive experiences with legal clinics: projects in which talented students conduct research for important legal authorities such as the International Criminal Court. These clinics are informative practical experiences that often produce useful recommendations. The idea of introducing this teaching method in his native country developed when he as having a cup of coffee with an Albanian colleague. “IOM’s MIDWEB project gave me the chance to really implement my idea”, he says. Idlir Peçi was guest lecturer at The School of Magistrates in Tirana.

New standard
According to Peçi Albania has a high level of education, but it is rooted in the classical tradition. “The instructor comes in, gives his theoretical ‘sermon’, and leaves – and the students are tested at the end of term. Neither students nor judges are used to conducting research and pronouncing an academically supported judgement. We wanted to use this project to introduce changes.” The clinic is now a standard element in the teaching programme. Peçi will probably return for another visit to train the instructors so that they can introduce these new standards themselves.
Developing a Road Map for Engaging Diasporas in Development: A Handbook for Policymakers and Practitioners in Home and Host Countries

Dovelyn Rannveig Agunias, researcher at IOM, and Kathleen Newland, researcher at the Migration Policy Institute (MPI) published a handbook for engaging diasporas.

The handbook presents a carefully selected menu of viable policy and programme options based on actual experiences from around the world. The handbook, which draws from an original survey answered by 62 national governments as well as in-depth interviews with government officials and non-governmental actors, aims to highlight good practices, challenges, lessons learned, and promising cases that can be refined and adapted to suit local contexts.

The handbook also outlines a strategic “road map” for successful diaspora engagement; reviews the legal and institutional frameworks that governments have established to facilitate relations; and examines key areas in which diasporas have played positive roles in development: remittances, direct investment, human capital transfer, philanthropy, capital market investment, and tourism. The report was officially launched in Brussels in June 2012.

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In March IOM the Netherlands had the pleasure of hosting a Train the Trainer meeting for three cultural orientation trainers from IOM Jordan, Turkey and Russia.

The training took place in the framework of the IOM’s Netherlands cultural orientation (NLCO II) project and provided the trainers with the opportunity to familiarise themselves with the Dutch resettlement structure as well as with Dutch culture and society. The specifically designed four day CO curriculum was discussed in-depth together with trainers from COA. IOM organized house visits with resettled refugees in Nieuwegein and visited Schiphol to learn more on the arrival procedures. During the training IOM also launched the NLCO II website: www.nlco.iom.int. The website serves as a long distance learning tool for all NLCO trainers.

After the ToT meeting the IOM CO trainers acquired a good understanding of the project goals and will be able to provide cultural orientation to the refugees being resettled to the Netherlands.

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A delegation of the government of the Czech Republic visited the Netherlands to research the Dutch return and repatriation policy. Objective of the visit was to make policy and operational recommendations about voluntary return of migrants from the Czech Republic.

The delegation familiarized themselves with the cooperation between COA, the Repatriation and Departure Service DT&V and IOM with regard to reception centres, the counseling of migrants and design of return policy.

They were also interested in the positive examples with reintegration assistance which the Dutch institutions provide for returnees.

The exchange of experiences will facilitate the successful establishment of efficient return centers in the Czech system.

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**Annual Report 2011**

IOM’s Annual Report on 2011 has been published and is available online: www.iom-nederland.nl.
Colophon

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Ethiopia
IOM Relocates Sudanese Refugees

IOM has begun to relocate Sudanese refugees from the Al Damazin Transit Center located on Ethiopia’s western border with Sudan to a new camp.

Northern Iraq
Appeal for Aid for Syrian Refugees

The Kurdish Regional Government in Northern Iraq appealed to IOM and other international agencies to cope with growing numbers of refugees arriving from Syria.

Iran
Migration and Development Training for Iranian Officials

IOM, in collaboration with the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran, organizes a workshop on ‘Enhancing Institutional Knowledge of Migration and Development Issues’.

Peru
Emergency Assistance to Flood Victims

IOM is providing emergency assistance to displaced families in Peru’s Amazon region of Loreto, which has been hit by heavy rains.

Switzerland
Panel Aims to Dispel Myths about Migration

The British Council and IOM host a panel discussion to create a space for dialogue and to develop new perspectives on dispelling migration myths.