



Ministerie van
Buitenlandse Zaken

IOM International Organization for Migration
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OIM Organización Internacional para las Migraciones

INTERNATIONAL DIALOGUE ON MIGRATION Intersessional Workshop

Migration and Development: Mainstreaming Migration into Development Policy Agendas*

Panel 3

Partnerships in migration and development

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Partnership in Migration and Development

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Up to the present, I am afraid to say, there is very little partnership in migration and development. To establish it will be a long way to go.

Why do I open my statement with such a pessimistic outlook? Because unfortunately the principle of sustainability has not yet found its way into national migration policies. If the existent migration regimes actually happened to have some beneficial development impact it was not because policy makers took development issues into consideration. These effects were purely side effects of migration regimes which were exclusively designed according to the needs of host countries and sometimes of the migrants themselves. Up to now, there is still very little coherence between migration and development policies. Just look at the ongoing recruitment of health professionals in southern Africa undermining a great part of the efforts to combat the HIV/AIDS pandemic.

I fear that also in the near future migration policies will be designed in the rather narrow interest of nation states. In an increasingly competitive environment migration policies might be determined more and more by economic considerations. Only a multilateral approach could create solutions avoiding competitive disadvantages. But to achieve such agreements will still take a long time.

If we take that as a point of departure, what could the value of partnerships in migration and development be? Who are the partners?

As I mentioned before, development goals of the sending countries have rarely served as guidelines for migration policies in host countries. Nevertheless, these policies have produced effects, which in some cases have been conducive to development. If we look for partnerships, we first have to identify the most important stakeholders:

- Most of the beneficial effects of migration derive from the activities of migrants' communities or Diasporas, as they are usually called nowadays. From a business but also from a development point of view, Diasporas form a kind of bridge head between both sending and receiving countries. They link two countries with each other. Thus they are the central stakeholder. At this point we probably will find one of the major, if not the crucial problem in the whole migration and development issue. Who exactly is the Diaspora? Migrants are not only scattered geographically but also politically, socially, professionally, ethnically and so forth. Some are not organised at all, others have set up hundreds of associations, clubs and initiatives, most of them difficult to assess in respect of their capabilities and their potential contributions to development objectives. So the first step to be taken is to find the appropriate partners in a very complex social environment. This should be done by carefully analysing or mapping the respective Diasporas. There is a lot of talk about cooperation with the Diaspora but at least in Germany and in Europe I haven't seen much profound research on this so far. Most of the existing literature is dealing with problems of integration but very little with the specific activities of Diasporas in their respective countries of origin. Most of what can be found is not much more than common sense based considerations. They show the right direction but are not sufficient for designing a precise cooperation programme.

- Once you have got an insight into the structure of a migrants' community you may look for concrete partners. Who could be such a partner? Well, there could be all kinds of them: We could only deal with some few examples at a GTZ-conference last year in Berlin, like the association of Egyptian businessmen in Germany in Frankfurt or the so called "Egyptian House", a kind of umbrella organisation of the Egyptian Diaspora in Germany. The German Agency for Technical Cooperation (GTZ) is going to commission a mapping study including the Afghan, the Egyptian and the Serbian Diaspora in Germany. The study will be completed in November this year. It will gather important information for further consideration whether and how cooperation between GTZ and Diaspora communities should be designed. Although I am expecting some promising results, I assume that the degree of organisation at least in many Diasporas in Germany will be low. As a consequence you may have a more or less incoherent group of people to deal with. Hence the exercise might be to find tools to cooperate with people who haven't organised themselves. Print media such as special newspapers for the respective Diaspora and the internet might be an option to deal with this challenge.
- Once you have analysed the structure and the capabilities of the most important Diasporas based in your country you will be in the position to identify partners for them. Business oriented associations will be interested in partners like chambers of commerce or similar organisations of the private sector in host countries. They will also be interested in partnerships with private sector organisations or investment or privatisation authorities in sending countries. Academic Diaspora organisations might be interested in cooperation with universities and other educational or training institutions in sending and in receiving countries.
- What is the role of host country governments? Could they build partnerships with Diaspora communities? Although I am not so familiar with the question of integration I could imagine that partnerships could play a positive role in this matter and should most certainly play a major role in the development business. When the GTZ last year organised a conference on the topic of "Cooperation with the Diaspora" we discovered that there were hundreds of initiatives of the Afghan Diaspora in Germany working in the same fields as the GTZ: for example the health sector, the education and training sector and so on. But there was virtually no joining of the respective efforts. GTZ and Diasporas didn't even know what the other party was doing. Linking these activities would have added value to the activities of both players.
- What is the role of the sending country's government? Could it build a partnership with its Diaspora? More and more sending countries try to do so, with more or less success. We learnt from our Brain Drain Conference that there are some basic requirements for building partnerships between these two successfully:
 1. Of utmost importance is building trust between the sending country and the Diaspora. At worst, many sending countries' governments have seen their Diasporas as a source of income without any service in return. The price of such an attitude is very high, since it will take a long time to re-establish trust. As a consequence of the freezing of foreign currency accounts of the Serbian Diaspora in former Yugoslavia, more than ten years later the Serbian Diaspora still refuses to commit its money to Serbian banks but sends it with bus drivers from Frankfurt Central Station, meanwhile the receivers of remittances keep them under their mattresses or use them as means of payment without converting them into Serbian currency - from a macroeconomic point of view certainly a harmful behaviour.
 2. People should have the option to stay and to make their living at home. People are not an

article for export. Other policies will hardly succeed in building up sustainable partnerships. Therefore sending countries should carefully consider all the consequences before encouraging large-scale export of migrant workers.

3. The Indian example shows quite clearly the limited effects of a Diaspora policy that is not embedded in sound economic policy. Indian migrants started to invest their money in India only when economic reforms were tackled and the overall investment climate improved. If all these conditions are fulfilled then partnerships can play a major role.

Let me close by quoting Saurab Srivastava, a very successful Indian entrepreneur, who migrated to the US and later founded several Indian IT- companies and the Association of Software and Service Companies in India. He said at one of the GTZ Migration and Development conferences: “It must be remembered that if all that we had seen was the migration of Indian professionals overseas and not the flow of work back to India or the entrepreneurial activity that created companies on the ground in India and the U.S., then this would have been a one way traffic.”