

Engaged diasporas: Catalysts of development Prospects and initiatives from North and West Africa

Host country: Guinea Conakry

Moderator: Enabel, Belgian development agency

Participants:

- OECD Development Centre
- Forum of International Migration Solidarity Organisations (FORIM)
- GRDR: Migration - Citizenship - Development
- The Directorate-general of Guineans abroad (DGGE), Guinea Conakry
- Mapubi
- African Foundation for Development (AFFORD)
- PEM WECCO' (diaspora entrepreneur: Eduwide)
- International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD)

In connection with [Round Table 3](#) on the engagement of diasporas as actors of social, economic and cultural development, Enabel and the Guinean Ministry of Foreign Affairs/DGGE (Direction Générale des Guinéens de l'Etranger) organised a side event at the 14th Summit of the Global Forum on Migration and Development (GFMD) aimed at *exploring strategies for mobilising diasporas to contribute to sustainable development and identifying the roles of the different actors involved*, highlighting the strategies, practices and experiences of mobilising diasporas of different actors, including public actors in charge of relations with the diaspora and interested in assessing the impact of this mobilisation on the deployment of other sectoral public policies.

Belgium, represented by its Special Envoy for Migration and Asylum, introduced this side event by recognising the importance of the diaspora for local cultural, social and economic development in and from the partner country. However, the commitment of diasporas to the development of their countries of origin requires the promotion and implementation of various strategies.

What?

All the actors invited to the GFMD recognise the importance of the diasporas as actors in development. With this in mind, the OECD Development Centre began by demonstrating the relevance of integrating diasporas into human mobility and development projects in general.

Despite this, analyses of existing mobility programmes and the various national development plans reveal limited direct involvement of diasporas in the national strategies of countries of origin and migration-related projects (9% out of 56 programmes analysed), but indicate a learning trend and a growing political will to integrate diaspora (48% of the 158 development plans analysed use the term *diaspora*).

Mobilising diasporas as actors of development therefore implies (1) integrating them more into development and human mobility (OECD) projects and initiatives, as experienced by Guinea-Conakry in particular through the actions of its Direction générale des Guinéens établis à l'Étranger (DGGE) which aim to involve the Guinean diaspora in sectoral themes, but also (2) to support initiatives emanating directly from these diasporas as undertaken by local actors and civil society organisations such as AFFORD, FORIM or GRDR, or cooperation agencies such as Enabel through development projects.

How?

- ❖ Understanding diasporas and their interests, needs and expectations: Mapping of diaspora actors, as developed by diaspora associations such as AFFORD, not only stimulates investment, but also provides an understanding of their aspirations, needs and contributions in the country of origin and destination. Initiatives such as EUDiF (ICMPD), PEM Wecco' (Enabel) and PAMMOD (Enabel/GRDR) are also moving in this direction, with the aim of encouraging the exchange of ideas, the sharing of competences, the creation of sustainable partnerships and the mobilisation of diaspora professionals.
- ❖ Taking diasporas into account in government strategies to involve them in national socio-economic development and in the coordination of migration governance within the framework of sectoral policies (DGGE). In practice, this commitment is highlighted in particular through digitisation and the creation of collaborative spaces that can help to alleviate the problem of 'brain drain' and move from a logic of knowledge transfer to one of sharing and exchange (Mapubi).
- ❖ Learn to quantify the contributions of the diaspora beyond financial transfers: diasporas are able to create opportunities for the countries of origin and their young people, in particular through exchange journeys, as organised by associations such as Mapubi, or mentoring and exchange programmes between entrepreneurs, as in the PAMMOD project (Enabel, GRDR, DGGE).

Challenges

- ❖ Need for greater commitment on the part of support mechanisms for diaspora initiatives.
- ❖ Need for reliable and up-to-date data on diasporas and their interests and needs (e.g. methodology developed by the ICMPD to establish profiles of diaspora members' skills and their willingness to participate in the development of their country of origin).
- ❖ The relations between diasporas and trade union organisations must be strengthened in order to ensure respect for fundamental rights, particularly those linked to labour law, of its members and the migrant workers who may make up the diaspora.
- ❖ To avoid the creation of new structures or new programmes and the duplication of actions already implemented by local structures, and thus avoid wasted effort due to a lack of coordination.
- ❖ Pay particular attention to the perverse effects of diaspora mobility in the context of development projects which do not always contribute to the development of the country of origin and are in contradiction with the aspirations to an improved standard of living of many potential migrants to Europe.
- ❖ Communication: optimising and improving the use of the media and popularising diaspora actions to ensure their visibility in countries of origin.