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MIGRATION AND THE DIASPORA: INVOLVEMENT OF THE TANZANIAN DIASPORA IN NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Dennis Lazaro Londo



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Email: dlondo358@gmail.com

Abstract

As international migration is progressively increasing African countries are sending more of their citizens out of their countries. The Diaspora discussion is in equal measure gaining prominence within African governments. This study endeavors to review the available policies and initiative taken by the Tanzanian government to engage its Diaspora in home activities. The major argument in this study focuses on the performance of the policies set; are they successful or more has to be done? This study reviewed relevant literatures on the policies set by the Tanzanian government to engage its Diaspora in order to accomplish the purpose intended. Most of the Tanzanian Diaspora still feel there is much that needs to be done by their government to engage them in National Development. Their experiences suggest that they are not comfortable with the current existing policies and would urge the Tanzanian government to make adjustments where necessary. Findings from this study provide necessary information for the Tanzanian government to improve existing measures.

Keywords: *Migration, Diaspora, national development, Tanzania*

Introduction

For a long time, African governments did not take the issue of migration and the Diaspora seriously (Madichie & Chinedu, 2017). To begin with, the history of migration in Africa has not been always good. A good number of Africans are considered to flee their countries as opposed to voluntary migration. This has been due to mainly political reasons like oppressive ruling regimes or even political wars (Flahaux & Hein, 2016). Due to such kind of migrations that are initiated by reasons other than voluntary, most African countries never had a record of their citizens outside their respective countries. More so, not even the emigrants wanted to register with their home embassies of their presence in foreign countries (Flahaux & Hein, 2016).

This relationship between the Diaspora and the home countries was not at the best interest of both. Currently, it is no longer the case as the Diaspora are increasingly being seen as an integral and essential part of the home country (International organization for migration, 2006). Their contributions to the home economies directly and indirectly have been felt and a result we are seeing recognition of the Diaspora in home countries.

In most origin countries, the perception of the Diaspora cannot be mistaken to demean them since their contributions, especially in private sectors is huge to ignore (Jennifer, 2008). In most African countries, the Diaspora own large businesses that have contributed to the creation of employment and generation of government revenue. In order to keep the Diaspora engaged with the home government, most countries have adapted strategies that give a guideline for their Diaspora (Agunias & Newland 2012). This strategy equips the Diaspora with directions on how to create a relationship of trust between them and governments of both origin and destination countries. Once a solid foundation of trust has been established, the capacity of the home government and various Diaspora organizations can develop a working environment that will strengthen the connections between the two parties (African development Bank, 2010). Given such a setting, most African governments are now developing policies to accommodate the Diaspora in their national development plans.

When Tanzania is weighed on the scales in terms of Diaspora engagement, it is worth noting that still there seems to exist some gaps that need to be filled (Harold & Darlene, 2015). Of recent past we have had the number of Tanzanian immigrants increasing especially within neighboring countries and in Europe with some also settling in North America (Gabagambi, 2015). Such a diverse distribution of the Diaspora needs a consolidative framework so as to connect with the home government. The establishment of various Diaspora organizations has been one of the moves encouraged by the Tanzanian government in order to keep in touch with its Diaspora (Gabagambi, 2015). Tanzanians migrating to various destinations have been motivated by factors such as employment or better educational opportunities. Once they arrive in their destination countries, the government of Tanzania requires that they register in the nearest diplomatic missions so as that they may be known that they are staying in a specific place (Harold & Darlene, 2015).

Even with all these measures, the Diaspora are not still well represented in the Tanzanian national development (Gabagambi, 2015). Government records from various Tanzanian diplomatic missions do not have all of the Tanzanian immigrants captured because not all of them adhere to the registration requirements. Some of the Diaspora have expressed their views to reflect the failure by their government to facilitate the traveling process makes them feel detached once they arrive in their destination countries (Hendrick, 2013). With a deep look into reasons that make migration possible, this paper reviews literature to ascertain if the Tanzanian government has met the needs of the Diaspora. Precisely, the study explores initiatives and policies set by Tanzanian government to engage its Diaspora in home matters in the current social, economic, political and cultural context.

Understanding the term Diaspora

Diaspora has been used extensively in different contexts to mean a lot of things. Throughout the process of international migration, we have had the use of this term to refer to people who leave their home country voluntarily or forcefully to go and live in another country (Nihal, 2017). In order to give accurate qualitative and quantitative data this term ought to be properly defined. The various use of the term in different contexts, as already mentioned, makes the term to lack a definite meaning. Practitioners and researchers have therefore been left to make interpretations on their own since there exists no legal recognition of the term (Harold & Darlene, 2015).

Different countries, in their Diaspora programs have endeavored to give meaning of the term Diaspora in their consolidative strategies. For example India has defined Diaspora to mean as non resident Indians who are legally citizens of the Republic of India but are living outside the country for an unknown period of time for employment, education or other reasons. They extend the scope of Diaspora to include persons of Indian origin whose family or ancestors were once citizens of the Republic of India (The Republic of India, 2010).

In another perspective, the Rwandan government as well gives another understanding of the term Diaspora. According to the Rwandan government, Rwandese Diaspora are said to be all people of Rwandan citizenship that moved out of that country to live in another country voluntarily or forcefully. The Rwandese government has further divided the Diaspora into two categories: the first category comprises of Rwandese that are out of their country for a specific time that is known like students and diplomats. This category is called temporary Diaspora. The second category, called the permanent Diaspora represents those citizens that are away for an indefinite period of time. They include people that fled political instability, people who migrated because of better employment opportunities, in search for advanced education levels and foreign children with one parent holding valid Rwandese citizenship (Republic of Rwanda Ministry of Foreign affairs, 2012).

In Kenya, according to the Kenya Diaspora Policy (2014) Diaspora is defined as any person of Kenyan origin staying outside Kenya and non-resident Kenyans. Persons of Kenyan origin are further elaborated to designate foreign citizens of Kenyan origin or descent. Similarly, non-resident Kenyans is a set for Kenyan citizens holding a Kenyan passport and/or having dual citizenship and residing outside Kenya whether for employment, business, vocation, education or any other purpose (Kenya Diaspora Policy, 2014).

International organization for Migration (IOM) in line to Diaspora explanation gives also a definition for the term. It says that these are “members of ethnic and national communities who have left, but maintain links with their homelands.” The African Union has not been left out too. In its migration policies, the Union defines Diaspora as “consisting of people of African origin living outside the continent irrespective of their citizenship and nationality and who are willing to contribute to the development of the continent and the building of the African Union.” (Kenya Diaspora Policy, 2014).

Global outlook

In the past 4 decades, international migration has been increasing over time. United Nations (2009) estimates that number of people living outside their country of birth has increased from an estimated 75 million in 1960 to nearly 215 million. This shows how much international migration is becoming a global phenomenon with time. It is also estimated that about 30 million of African are living in other countries other than their home countries (IOM & KNBS, 2014). A study of these figures readily shows how crucial international migration has become at this era where people are continuously on the movement across country borders in search of employment. This therefore calls for the introduction of policies by various responsible authorities to manage international migration (International Agenda for migration management, 2004).

Among the many agendas, the issue of international migration has now become a daily discussion in many countries of origin, transit and destination (Harold & Darlene, 2015). If left unchecked, the possibility of their being unbalanced outcomes out of migration cannot be evaded. Governments of both the sender and receiver of migration are continually reviewing their policies to manage migration for the mutual benefit of both parties (Kritz, 1987). The notably increased level of labor migration has been specifically a big concern for many governments. In order to properly manage it for the benefit of the migrant and the state, both the origin and destination government have therefore been compelled to put up policies, legal and institutional mechanisms so as to have the movement of people regionally and internationally being managed (Kritz, 1987).

The African Union set pace for African governments to introduce initiatives and policies that will engage the Diaspora in national development in home countries. In a summit of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the African Union held in February of 2004, the African Diaspora was declared as the sixth development region of the continent. This declaration opened

way for the African governments to realize the potential in the Diaspora and move proactively to develop policies that would later incorporate the Diaspora into their developmental plans (Rotimi, Fasil, Baker & Shriner, 2016). In 2012, the Global African Diaspora Summit similarly emphasized the importance of including the Diaspora in the home government plans. This initiative put African governments into challenge for the setting up of mechanisms that will aid sustainable connection between the African government and the Diaspora (Gabagambi, 2015).

Diaspora office in the home government

The inclusion of the Diaspora in their home countries' governments is not an instant action. It is a process that calls for a lot of efforts from the government. For a better relationship, many governments have strived to establish offices that deal with the Diaspora issues directly (Mesfin, 2019). Governments setting such offices gives a good impression for the government's commitment to engage the Diaspora in national development in their home countries and it shows the beginning of a good relationship between the Diaspora and their home countries (Ionescu, 2006).

Up to more recently there still exist many African countries without a Diaspora office in their governments (Harold & Darlene, 2015). The absence of Diaspora representation in their home countries creates disconnection between them and their home governments. With time the separation increases and most Diaspora even consider losing citizenship of their home countries because the government indicates no concern for them (Harold & Darlene, 2015). Belai (2007) reports that there are a few African countries with Diaspora offices in their governments that are mandated to discharge services directly for the coordination of Diaspora activities. The countries include: Benin, Burkina Faso, Egypt, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Morocco, Nigeria, Rwanda, Senegal, and Tunisia. This report shows disturbing information about most African governments in regard to engagement of the Diaspora in home affairs. It is quite clear that most African governments have not yet taken the call to consider the importance of their Diaspora (Rotimi, Fasil, Baker & Shriner, 2016).

The Tanzanian government is no exception. For a long time the government had no solid plan of identifying the Diaspora and involving them in their national development programs (Gabagambi, 2015). The first office that was introduced in the government as an initiative to coordinate with the Diaspora was set in place in 2010 (Harold & Darlene, 2015). This was a special department that would later be involved in the coordination of Diaspora activities and provision of services for the Diaspora that was set in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Development.

While the Tanzanian government acknowledges the importance of Diaspora engagement in national development, it still lacks the capacity to set sufficient measures to accommodate and meet the requirements of the Diaspora (Sonia & Ratha, 2006). Most of the Diaspora communities in different countries have expressed their dissatisfaction over the Tanzanian government when

handling their issues (Sonia & Ratha, 2006). Amongst the many concerns raised are the reluctance on the side of the government to reach out to the Diaspora and evacuate them in times of trouble in the destination countries. This does not only apply to Tanzanian governments but also, in a great extent it affects many African governments (Rotimi, Fasil, Baker & Shriner, 2016). In comparison, most Western governments have developed coordination between them and their Diaspora that in case of calamities the evacuation process is initiated instantly. The lack of such a capacity in African governments, in this case the Tanzania government shows that still the Diaspora feel cut off from their home countries once they step out of their territories (Harold & Darlene, 2015).

It is notably identified in this section that despite there being in place home representation of the Diaspora a lot of efforts need to be directed towards connecting with the Diaspora. The Tanzanian government has not yet impressed in terms of the Diaspora representation in the government. More offices have to be set and they should act proactively to identify all Diaspora and involve them in home activities and not only in remittance returns.

Diaspora organizations

So far, within many Diaspora communities, Diaspora organizations have been the most successful means of bringing the Diaspora together (Mesfin, 2014). Despite these organizations being an initiative of the Diaspora themselves, they have expanded to connect with their home governments in order to coordinate their activities. The involvement of the Diaspora in their organizations have impacted positively in home countries whereby essential information helpful has been transferred to include innovative ideas, intellectual materials, technological skills, business ideas, disaster management and democratic habits (Harold et. al, 2015).

Diaspora organization is a more powerful actor because they work for both the country of origin and destination countries (Rotimi et. al, 2016). In destination countries, such organizations provide institutional attachment for the Diaspora and they provide a framework for them to integrate into the host country's social sphere (Kleist, 2009). Such interactions provide a platform for exchange of different ideas between the Diaspora and natives of their host countries. The Diaspora can contribute a lot in many ways in building the citizenry of the host countries through the exchange of those ideas. Through networking, the Diaspora organizations develops links that are necessary for policy making and contact establishment within the host country and not only does it end there but also expand to the countries of origin where they successful establish activities that they are involved in directly (Kleist, 2009).

Most governments have come out to encourage Diaspora organizations, with some governments creating other organizations in order to link with the Diaspora (Gabagambi, 2015). The Kenyan government has encouraged Diaspora organization and it has been recently active in engaging the Diaspora through their various established organizations. Members of the diplomatic core from Kenya have arranged meetings that happen annually where they meet the Diaspora in their various

host countries and exchange ideas while gathering information on the state of affairs (Kenya Diaspora Policy, 2014). Doing this increasingly over time puts the government at a pedestal and encourages the Diaspora to participate more and voluntarily in national development (Kleist, 2009).

Tanzania has a few Diaspora organizations but still not all of the organizations engage with stakeholders within the government so as to promote partnership between the Diaspora and the Tanzanian government (Gabagambi, 2015). There is a lack of coordination at the top leadership level which has left a gap that needs to fill. A few known examples of the Tanzanian Diaspora organizations are commonly from developed western countries like the Tanzania association in the United Kingdom called (TA-UK) and the Diaspora Council of Tanzanians in America (DICOTA). Through some of these organizations the Diaspora has been able to establish links between them and the host countries but not so much with the home country (Harold & Darlene, 2015). For instance the Scottish section of the Tanzania association in the United Kingdom has been beneficial to the Diaspora and the home country through organization of scholarships at the University of Edinburgh which have helped a lot of young Tanzanians aspiring to further education in the University (Harold & Darlene, 2015).

As much these Diaspora organizations are doing great work to contribute to the development of their home countries, the Tanzanian government has not fully set structures to recognize their channels and facilitate them (Kleist, 2009). The Tanzanian Diaspora experience suggests that there is a failure by the government to engage the Diaspora in national development. Statistically, there exists few Tanzanian Diaspora organizations as compared to the number of Tanzanian Diaspora (Mesfin, 2019). Furthermore, only very few Diaspora organizations, amongst the existing ones are contributing to development in Tanzania.

There are probably reasons behind this trend but the main reason falls within the Tanzanian government failure to identify these Diaspora organizations and connect with them wherever they are in their host countries (Harold & Darlene, 2015). Another reason could be lack of motivation that results in the Tanzanian Diaspora not to see any reason of being in an organization because it does not earn them any recognition or an extra benefit. This has left most of the Diaspora out of the Diaspora organizations and instead focus on individualistic efforts to live through their daily lives in their host countries (Madichie & Chinedu, 2017). While scattered it becomes hard to engage the Diaspora in national development since people will be more focused on personal lives than on anything that has to do with their home country.

The Tanzanian government, like many other African countries have given room for international donors and non-governmental organizations that have taken over the development arena, leaving no room for the Diaspora contribution which is often regarded as insignificant by the government (Buffardi, 2011). Most governments prefer that they put policies in place that are friendly to international investors and other organizations that can make direct negotiations with the

government than they would engage their Diaspora (Awumbila & Teye, 2014). Leaving out the Diaspora then disconnects them from their home countries and this affects the Diaspora engagement in national development.

In a move to sort things out, the Tanzanian government in a Diaspora stakeholders meeting held in June of 2010 engineered a way to reintroduce and encourage the formation of new Diaspora programs in host countries (Harold & Darlene, 2015). The government urged former Diaspora to act as stakeholders and encourage the Diaspora to form organization and mobilize them to make sure they belong to at least an organization (Oucho & Mtatifikolo, 2009). Since then, there has been an improvement on Diaspora organizations and most Tanzanian Diaspora now belong to an organization. The stakeholders also formed an ex-Diaspora organization also that has also been coordinating with various Tanzanian Diaspora organizations in the world (Gabagambi, 2015). Since then, the government has established formal communication with the Diaspora and has been able to receive their input in matters that concern the Tanzanian government. This has indeed boosted the relationship between the Tanzanian Diaspora and their government and consequently engaging them in national development (Harold & Darlene, 2015).

The Tanzanian government lately allows and encourages more Diaspora organizations to be opened up and it has in a way set strategies to recognize them (Gabagambi, 2015). Despite most of the Diaspora still feeling that a lot has to be done, the government welcomes Diaspora organizations that are directly involved in national development like in contributing to the betterment of education, health and infrastructure (Plaza & Ratha, 2011). Most Diaspora are now able to engage in national development through Diaspora organizations. Without Diaspora organizations it would be even impossible for the Diaspora to be involved in national development in their home countries (Plaza et. al, 2011). If home governments need the hand of the Diaspora in their development program all they need is to encourage the formation of the Diaspora organizations so as to make it easy for the governments to connect with the Diaspora (Flahaux & Hein, 2016).

Diaspora policy

For any government to succeed in engaging the Diaspora in national development it needs to set in place friendly and supportive policies that will incorporate the Diaspora in their national development agenda (Ragab & Siegel, 2013). The Diaspora need connection with their home countries and it cannot be possible if the home government cannot provide room for that. Without well formulated and tenable Diaspora policies the Diaspora engagement in national development becomes an impossibility (Schrover & Vermeulen, 2007). Diaspora activities need coordination and a well formulated Diaspora policy plays the role of connecting the Diaspora with their home governments.

Many African countries have come out more recently to acknowledge the importance of a well formulated Diaspora policy (Flahaux & Hein, 2016). Yet still, most of the African governments have not yet attained the required capacity to implement the policies in order to engage the Diaspora in their national development (Plaza, 2009). In most of the governments, the policies have been formulated and they exist on paper but most of the policies formulated have not been fully implemented (Plaza, 2009). This explains the difficulty faced by the Diaspora in initiating connection with their home governments as most of the policies are not favorable or do not apply practically. Agunias & Newland (2012) postulates some requirements for Diaspora policy to be effective. They say that all relevant stakeholders including Diaspora organizations, home country institutions that are involved in policy making should be involved when there is planning and drafting of the Diaspora policy.

In Kenya, the Diaspora policy is based on 5 objectives which include:

- i. To develop and implement strategies to engage, empower and mainstream Kenyans abroad into national development process
- ii. To mobilize Kenyans abroad to form town, city or country specific umbrella associations which have a national outlook as well as regional and global umbrella associations for effective engagement and representation
- iii. To develop measures to enhance protection of Kenyans abroad
- iv. To develop mechanisms for dialogue and partnership with Kenyans abroad
- v. To establish the necessary institutional mechanism for co-ordination and administration of issues affecting Kenyans abroad (Kenya Diaspora Policy, 2014).

This policy was formulated to engage the Kenya Diaspora in their home affairs but still it faces challenges because the Kenya government has not fully implemented it.

Rwanda is another Eastern Africa country with a Diaspora policy that has been geared towards consolidating the Rwandese Diaspora and engage them in national development (Harold & Darlene, 2015). The Rwandese Diaspora policy stands on three pillars: the cohesion of the Rwandan Diaspora, to ensure that the Rwandan Diaspora is equipped with accurate information about their motherland, and to recognize that the Rwandan Diaspora is playing a significant role in the socio-economic development of Rwanda (The Republic of Rwanda, 2010). Again, just like in Kenya the policy still faces challenges because the Rwandan Diaspora has not been fully represented in national development.

Moving to Tanzania, it is regrettable that Tanzania lacks a Diaspora policy and this has been a problem resulting to poor Diaspora engagement in national development (Ippmedia, 2014). This has left out the Tanzanian Diaspora in most of home affairs hence affecting their engagement in national development (Gabagambi, 2015). A clear and well formulated Diaspora policy would be connecting the Diaspora with the Tanzanian government to identify the necessary needs that the

Diaspora are obliged to and provide room for the Diaspora engagement (Harold & Darlene, 2015). Lack of a Diaspora policy has left gap and posed a challenge to the Tanzanian government to act upon quickly and ensure that a stakeholder is set up to steer the drafting and implementation of the Diaspora policy.

Conclusion

Diaspora contributions towards home countries cannot be underestimated. From remittance returns to private sector projects in both public and personal levels the Diaspora have a hand in many activities that goes on in their home countries. In host countries they are equally subjected to tax payments which help to raise revenue for the host countries. All over the world, the role of the Diaspora in the development of communities can be felt everywhere. More concern has been put on the efforts of the home country governments to incorporate the Diaspora in their national development plans. Most African countries have tried all they can in order to include their Diaspora in the national development plans.

Despite attempts by African governments to have their Diaspora involved in their national development plans, there is still a gap that need filling. Most of the African countries lack well formulated Diaspora policies to help in establishing solid partnership with their Diaspora. This has led to poor engagement of the Diaspora in national governments. The policies already existing are weak or sometimes not implemented leaving the problem of Diaspora engagement in home affairs unsolved. In other cases, the Diaspora feel unrepresented in their governments and hence lose the motivation to participate in national developments in their home countries.

The Tanzanian government has over time tried its best to engage the Diaspora in national development but still it lags behind in Diaspora engagement. The already few existing initiatives and strategies to engage the Diaspora in national development have not done much and a challenge is left for the government to draft and implement more policies that will work. More needs to be done and the entire Tanzanian Diaspora community is left looking up to the government to provide solutions that will for once end the Diaspora problems. If more Diaspora have to be engaged in the national development, the Tanzanian government has to do more in terms of policy formulation.

Recommendations

With the increasing rates of international migration, the issue of Diaspora needs to be given equal consideration within the governments of countries of origin. In the West, most governments have formulated elaborate and well formed Diaspora policies that have helped to keep the connect ion between them and their Diaspora intact. In Africa, most countries have not yet attained that level, despite Africa being the continent that loses a lot in numbers for the gain of other continents like North America and Europe. Lack of clear leadership strategies has been a major problem for most African states.

More research is needed on this line of Diaspora involvement in order to provide the relevant governments with scientific information and a head start for suitable Diaspora policy drafting. In order for the Tanzanian government to engage its Diaspora in national development, it needs to build collaboration with Diasporas and other relevant stakeholders to draft policies that are based on realistic objectives, tools and timeframe.

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