Participation of Diasporas in Peacebuilding and Development

A Handbook for Practitioners and Policymakers

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Text Boxes

Abbreviations

ADPC	African Diaspora Policy Centre
ADV	Afrikanischer Dachverband
BICC	Bonn International Center for Conversion
CeSPI	Centro Studi di Politica Internazionale
CSO	civil society organization
DPP	Diaspora Partnership Programme
GTZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft fur Technische Zusammenarbeit
IOM	International Organization for Migration
JYU	University of Jyväskylä
MGFFI	Ministry for Intergenerational Affairs, Family, Women and Integration (NRW)
NGO	nongovernmental organization
NRW	North-Rhine Westphalia
PPP	Pilot Project Pakistan
PRIO	Peace Research Institute Oslo
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme

Glossary

External actors – International, intergovernmental, national and subnational institutions, intergovernmental organizations, nongovernmental organizations and smaller civil society organizations.

Diaspora – Expatriate minority communities that have been dispersed from the homeland, have a collective memory, believe in an eventual return, are committed to the maintenance or restoration of their homeland through transnational activities, and have a collective identity, group consciousness and solidarity.

Diaspora organizations – Voluntary as well as professional organizations. In the case of organizations with mixed membership, an organization is considered to be a diaspora organization when the majority of its board members have a diaspora background.

1. Introduction

This handbook follows a range of other reports and publications on diaspora involvement in development and peacebuilding (COWI, 2009; De Haas, 2006; GTZ, 2009; Sinatti, 2010; Sinatti et al., 2010). It has been written mainly for European practitioners and policymakers, and was developed as a result of our observation that there is now a markedly increased interest among European actors in 'engaging diasporas' that is not necessarily matched with confidence on how to approach the task. During our research for the handbook,[1] a common refrain that we heard was: 'Our organization is very interested in engaging the diaspora, but we need to gain experience on how to do this.' In this document, examples are presented from various projects within five European countries: Finland, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands and Norway. In these countries, most diaspora-focused initiatives are relatively recent. By bringing together lessons learned from the experiences in these five countries, we hope the present document will facilitate an exchange of knowledge and experience between different European actors.

The handbook focuses on diaspora engagements in both peacebuilding and development, as the two are intrinsically linked. We define peacebuilding as 'activities aimed at the sustainable transformation of structural conflict factors and patterns. It presupposes a long-term commitment, on the part of both local and external actors, to a process that simultaneously addresses the material and the attitudinal level of a conflict' (Horst & Gaas, 2009: 2; see also Warnecke, 2010: 9–10). One consequence of using such a broad definition is that, rather than understanding peacebuilding and development as two separate fields, we see them as being located along a shared continuum. Furthermore, many European policy initiatives focus on diaspora engagements in general, and target both diasporas from conflict-affected regions and diasporas originating from countries that have not experienced recent conflict.

The term 'handbook' is perhaps slightly misleading, as we do not intend to provide factual information or rigid guidelines on 'how to engage diasporas'. After all, 'strict instructions and frameworks on how to do something tend to block innovation and so lead to standardisation' (Pretty et al., 1995: i). Instead, we see the handbook as a document that provides relevant information on issues that external actors who interact with diasporas in development and peacebuilding will encounter. We do not present simple replicable techniques, tools or instruments; rather, we aim to explain the underlying philosophy and aspects of process involved in facilitating participation of diasporas in development and peacebuilding (Pretty et al., 1995: ii). How to best apply these principles will vary from context to context. The document is based on experiences with various diaspora communities in the five European countries noted above, though many of the examples we chose to cite focus on the Somali diaspora and, more generally, on diasporas originating from Africa. A number of those experiences are described in detail in separate text boxes.[2]

The handbook has been written in such a way that it can be read conventionally, from start to finish, but users of the handbook can also simply consult the sections or chapters in which they are particularly interested. Each chapter is written as a separate unit with ensuing recommendations, and the Table of Contents facilitates easy navigation of the subject matter. Following this introduction, the handbook is divided into three main parts: Chapter Two provides a general background to the topic of diaspora participation in peacebuilding and development, as well as explaining why this is important. Chapter Three discusses the specificities of dealing with issues of peacebuilding and working with diasporas from conflict regions. Chapter Four then provides an overview of all the activities in which we have found actors in this field engaged, including activities that focus on knowledge-building, strengthening capacities, implementing development and peacebuilding projects, and the inclusion of diasporas in mainstream development and peacebuilding.

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[1] The handbook has been produced within the 'Diasporas for Peace: Case Studies from the Horn of Africa' (DIASPEACE) research project, a three-year collaborative project that has received funding from the European Community's 7th Framework Programme. For further information, see http://www.diaspeace.org.

[2] For information on the sources used in writing the text boxes, see Appendix I.

The terms 'diaspora' and 'external actors' are used extensively throughout the document. 'Diaspora' refers to expatriate minority communities who are engaged in their countries of origin through transnational economic, political and/or socio-cultural contributions. These engagements are individual or collective, and the handbook thus focuses on both organizations and professionals with a diaspora background. The term 'external actors' is used to refer to international, intergovernmental, national, subnational and larger nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), as well as smaller civil society organizations (CSOs).

It is clear that the concepts thus hide a considerable level of heterogeneity in the characteristics, roles, levels of engagements and interests of the different actors included. Furthermore, different European countries use different models of peacebuilding and development cooperation, with varying levels of decentralization. When we talk about 'diaspora' and 'external actors' generically, it is not our intention to deny these facts. Accordingly, the information provided in the text – and especially in the text boxes – presents a variety of national, subnational and international examples to illustrate this heterogeneity. We hope that the reader can make use both of the general principles outlined and the specific examples provided in order to facilitate increased participation of diasporas in peacebuilding and development.

2. Diasporas Engaging With Their Country of Origin

2.1. Background

Diasporas can be defined as transnational communities of a particular kind.[3] Through their commitment to the maintenance or restoration of their homeland, members of a diaspora engage transnationally in a number of ways. Diaspora contributions to development and peacebuilding take many shapes, with variations occurring in who acts, how, doing what, why and where (see Figure 1). Contributions are often made by individuals – for example, through the sending of remittances to family members – but may also be done collectively, such as when diaspora organizations implement projects in the country of origin, for instance improving access to water, healthcare or education. The activities engaged in can be both direct and indirect (Ostergaard-Nielsen, 2003: 70). Direct transnational engagements occur when diaspora individuals or groups send money, goods or ideas to their country of origin directly. Indirect transnational engagements occur when diaspora individuals or groups urge others, including European governmental and nongovernmental actors, to undertake activities of benefit to the country of origin.

Transnational contributions can furthermore involve material, financial and in-kind contributions, as well as social capital – the last, for example, being illustrated by the case of Somali PhD holders among the diaspora who contribute virtually, through electronic communication and the provision of online learning opportunities, to help establish Mogadishu University or to teach at the University of Hargeisa. Another important element is that diaspora engagement takes place not only from the country of settlement but also through (temporary) return. A number of characteristics may combine together frequently: diaspora organizations, for example, are collective actors that largely function on a voluntary basis, and human capital may best be transferred through (temporary) return. But, in principle, examples of any combination of these characteristics can be found.

Considering the wide variety and high level of diaspora engagements with development and peacebuilding, it is not surprising there is great interest in the topic among European governmental and nongovernmental actors. There are a number of reasons for this interest, which relate to remittances, return, resources, recognition and reputation, and we will address each of these in turn. First, remittances have widely been acknowledged as a major source of finances at the national, regional and household levels (De Haas, 2007; Ratha, 2005; Rua, 2010). International actors have attempted to tap into this resource, but have now largely recognized that, since much of this funding stream is private money sent for private purposes, such an approach is problematic (De Haas, 2007; Dutch MFA, 2008: 11). More successful efforts have focused on lowering the costs of remittance transfers and increasing legal options for sending money.

Actors	Method	Kind	Compensation	Location
Individual	Direct	Material capital	Voluntary	Country of settlement
Collective	Indirect	Social capital	Paid/Profit	Country of origin
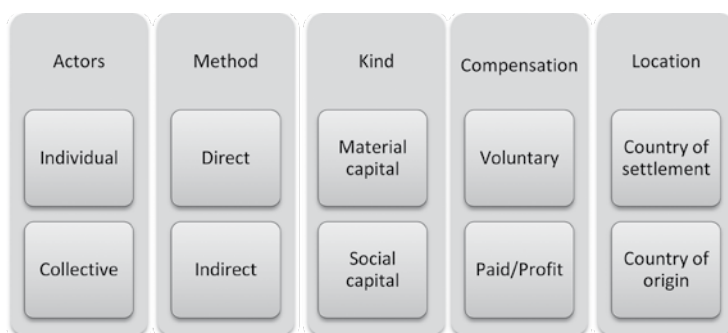
Figure 1. A schematic representation of diaspora contributions to development and peacebuilding

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[3] The concept 'diaspora' refers to expatriate minority communities that have been dispersed from the homeland, have a collective memory, believe in an eventual return, are committed to the maintenance or restoration of their homeland, and have a collective identity, group consciousness and solidarity (Horst, 2006: 32–33). Kleist (2008) rightly points out that diasporas are as much 'imagined' as they are real communities.

A second reason for the great level of interest in diaspora engagements is related to the issue of return, discussed also in Section 4.4.3. The Netherlands, a country that has often anticipated trends by developing cutting-edge policies and programmes on migration–development links, has until recently displayed a strong interest in voluntary permanent return migration (De Haas, 2006; Sinatti et al., 2010: 18). Furthermore, many of the initiatives set up by international actors focus on return migration as a kind of win–win–win situation – addressing issues of 'brain drain', making proper use of migrant resources that are often underutilized in countries of settlement, while simultaneously addressing migration-related concerns of Western governments. The QUESTS-MIDA project [4] (see Text Box 19), for example, facilitates temporary return migration for interested candidates through a programme that allows them to contribute human capital to their country of origin.

Third, the wish to make better use of the resources of migrants is another factor influencing current levels of interest. Policy documents by various European countries stress this, for example when stating that 'double allegiances, multiple identities and experiences from war and conflict have so far not been identified as a resource, but rather as a social challenge' (Norwegian MFA, 2009b: 70).

A fourth and related fact is that partnering with diasporas in development and peacebuilding provides recognition of the important contributions made by diaspora members as citizens of both their countries of settlement and their countries of origin. By recognizing the new reality of European countries, where many citizens may have transnational ties, this fact can be turned into a strategic political resource (Sinatti et al., 2010: 24).

Fifth, states also focus on the topic to maintain their reputation internationally, as international interest in migration–development links has increased significantly over the past decade. This can be seen, *inter alia,* in the ongoing Global Forum on Migration and Development, actions taken by a number of UN bodies, and various initiatives by the European Union and/or the African Union (see Text Box 1).[5] European governments are thus stimulated to develop policies on and provide funding for diaspora-related initiatives.

In quite a few countries – including, for example, Somalia – contributions from the diaspora and international aid programmes have constituted the two main sources of development assistance. These international and diaspora contributions further have an important impact on peacebuilding processes. As they have generally worked as two separate, parallel systems, an important question is raised: 'Could the impact of both diaspora contributions and external assistance programs be increased – were the two to explore opportunities for better facilitation, synergy and partnership?' (Hammond et al., 2010: 4–5). The assumption is not that this would automatically be the case, but that in some instances a more comprehensive approach that incorporates contributions from both diaspora and external actors could lead to the provision of more effective and efficient assistance to development and peacebuilding. This handbook therefore aims to contribute to the exploration of opportunities for better facilitation, synergy and partnership.

2.2. Value Added of Diaspora Engagement

With the increased interest in diaspora engagement, it is important to reflect not only on the underlying reasons for this interest but also on the benefits of diaspora participation in development and peacebuilding. Sometimes these benefits are described in policy documents, but often this is not the case, which is problematic as benefits cannot simply be assumed. Furthermore, there are critics of the approach who are quite sceptical of the assumed value added of diaspora engagement. Their viewpoints need to be taken into consideration, especially if they are among the actors who are supposed to facilitate the participation of diasporas in development and/or peacebuilding.

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[4] This is a joint project of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the International Organization for Migration (IOM).

[5] Although this handbook largely focuses on initiatives by European countries of settlement, it is important to realize that many countries of origin also have elaborate diaspora-engaging policies and practices.

Text Box 1. African Union migration and development policies

As the main intergovernmental body of the Africa continent, the African Union (AU) plays a determining role in reaching out, together with its member-states, to the global African diaspora. Although the foundation for AU–diaspora relations can be traced to the organization's Constitutive Act, and the prominent role given therein to Africa's civil society, current policies can be directly linked to the AU's definition of the African diaspora: 'The African Diaspora consists of peoples 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 (African Union, 2005).'

Accordingly, the AU has tied its understanding of the diaspora to the concepts of migration and development, classing the diaspora as a dynamic actor in the future of the continent, a source of both intellectual and financial wealth, and the continent's sixth geographical region. Major recent policy initiatives have acknowledged the potential of diaspora participation in the affairs of the AU. The establishment of Economic, Social and Cultural Council of the African Union (ECOSOCC) in 2004, along with Africa Citizens Directorate (CIDO), its secretariat, set forth permanent institutional structures to promote AU–diaspora interaction. Further, since its inception and through its multi-annual Strategic Plans (2004–07, 2009–12), the AU Commission has highlighted the need to engage the African diaspora as a source of 'scientific, technological, and financial resources', and as a link between Africa and the rest of the world.

AU migration policy has logically also focused on the positive role that the diaspora can play in Africa's development. The Migration Framework for African (African Union, 2006b) and the African Common Position on Migration and Development (African Union, 2006a) set out clear and practical guidelines for promoting the migration–development nexus. Cooperation with intergovernmental organizations such as the International Labour Organization (ILO) and the International Organization for Migration (IOM), the development of resource databases, integration of migration elements in national development plans and enhanced remittances-management practices are among several such initiatives.

At the international level, the AU has also sought partnerships with, for example, the European Union/European Commission. The Africa–EU Joint Declaration on Migration and Development (African Union and European Union, 2006) and the Africa–EU Partnership on Migration, Mobility and Employment (African Union and European Union, 2007) both set the grounds for interregional cooperation in migration and development.

Today, this progressive policy framework is beginning to bear fruit. The African Diaspora Health Initiative (2008) and the African Remittances Institute (2010) are two programmatic efforts led by the African Union meant to mobilize the human and financial resources of the diaspora for Africa's development.

It is important to note that the value added of diaspora engagement is context-specific; it is also not necessarily the same for all actors involved. For small and medium-sized civil society organizations, benefits offered by and constraints on cooperation are often different from those for larger development NGOs. As is commonly pointed out, diaspora members are not necessarily natural born development workers, and it is thus important to distinguish between professional and voluntary initiatives. Whereas larger NGOs may wish to mainly target and invest in diaspora professionals or in professionalizing voluntary efforts, smaller European CSOs can benefit greatly from partnering with voluntary organizations. The role of government actors could then be to facilitate both forms of cooperation by developing the necessary policy framework (Sinatti et al., 2010: 42), establishing forums for exchange and interaction, monitoring progress and making sufficient funding available.

2.2.1. Context-Specific Knowledge

Diasporas are credited with possessing invaluable context-specific knowledge. Their members have great advantages when working towards development or peacebuilding in the country of origin because of their in-depth knowledge of cultural practices and expectations, language, current developments, etc. Illustrating the importance of this point, it is beyond doubt a great advantage to be able to follow broadcast media or newspapers in local languages, either during visits in the country concerned or electronically (Erdal & Horst, 2010: 9), while at the same time being able to put the information gained into a historical perspective. External actors can benefit from this knowledge, as diaspora organizations may be in a good position to determine acute needs in their country of origin, and can also keep external actors abreast of the latest developments – especially in relation to peripheral areas and/or issues not covered in international news media.

On the other hand, this insider perspective is not always considered positive, and there are concerns that it diminishes the level of distance diaspora members can maintain. Sceptics further argue that migrants should not automatically be considered to be on a par with local actors. They may not have lived in or even visited their country of origin for many years, perhaps even decades, meaning that their knowledge and networks may be outdated, especially in situations of conflict where rapid changes occur. Furthermore, living abroad for many years may have altered their habits and viewpoints, hampering a full understanding of the local context. Indeed, it is important not to take knowledge and experience for granted, as not everyone remains connected to and updated on their country of origin, through return visits or transnational means.

2.2.2. Transnational Networks and Building Bridges

Diaspora resources include networks in the countries of both origin and settlement. In the country of origin, 'both individuals and organizations have good contacts with key milieus' (Norwegian MFA, 2009a: 101). These networks, which may include regional and local authorities, civil society actors and potential beneficiaries of development projects or peacebuilding initiatives, are invaluable. In addition, having good networks in the country of settlement provides diaspora members with an opportunity to act as bridge-builders, as has been acknowledged in various policy documents. A Dutch policy memorandum states that 'migrants' added value can also consist in a bridging function' (Dutch MFA, 2008: 55), a view that is echoed by the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation in its 'Principles for Norad's Support to Civil Society in the South' (Norad, 2009: 19). However, truly benefiting from such networks does require a certain level of trust between external actors and diaspora members. External actors are in fact often concerned about the insider position of diaspora members, fearing that insider contacts and knowledge will not be used appropriately.

Residence outside the country of origin allows migrants to develop new competences, skills and values, and it is often assumed that these can be transferred – a factor commonly referred to as 'social remittances' (Levitt, 1998). External actors often see such transfer of social knowledge and values to the country of origin as a crucial role that diasporas can play in the country of origin (GTZ, 2009: 5; Norad, 2009: 19). In the country of settlement, on the other hand, governmental and nongovernmental actors at times regard diaspora individuals and groups as potentially important actors for drawing the general public's attention to the situation in their country of origin, as illustrated in Text Box 24 on the Italian NGO CISP.

2.2.3. Sustainable Efforts through Long-Term Commitment

A further value added that is often mentioned and experienced relates to the fact that diaspora members frequently have a level of emotional commitment and personal motivation that is unmatched by other actors. Direct experience of conflict, hunger and/or underdevelopment or seeing the effects of these factors on loved ones adds a dimension to people's motivations and dedication that should not be underestimated (Brinkerhoff, 2006; Erdal & Horst, 2010: 10). This may translate into greater sustainability of efforts, as diaspora members are less susceptible to

worsening conditions in the country of origin or in the country of settlement. While, for regular NGOs, the continuation of projects may be subject to the availability of funding, diaspora projects are often continued even after external funding runs out, as remittances continue. Though the global financial crisis was expected to have a huge effect on remittance sending, remittances to sub-Saharan African countries decreased by only 3% in 2009 and are expected to return to pre-crisis levels during 2010 (Ratha, Mohapatra, and Silwal, 2010).

Another way in which diaspora members aim to increase the sustainability of development projects is through transference of their skills and know-how to locals – for example, in the context of healthcare projects, institutes of higher education and (electronic) media projects.

Sceptics argue that sustainability is in fact far from guaranteed, as diaspora organizations are highly unstable. Furthermore, they are concerned about the transnational commitments of the second generation. Organizational instability is indeed a substantial concern, but can be addressed through the provision of institutional development support to diaspora organizations to assist them to develop systems for decisionmaking, information-sharing and organizational sustainability. And, while in some cases personal motivation and dedication to development and peacebuilding in regions of origin may decrease with the second or third generations, in others the descendants of migrants are interested in contributing to development on humanitarian or religious grounds, and may possess capacities for such work that their parents or grandparents never had, while being in a position to overlook some of the allegiances their parents or grandparents may have felt obliged to maintain.

2.2.4. Access to Inaccessible Areas

Another potential benefit of diaspora engagement in development and peacebuilding stems from the fact that diaspora members often have better access to inaccessible areas – both those that are geographically isolated and those that are marked by high levels of risk. In Somalia, for example, bilateral development cooperation is not feasible, and international actors almost solely operate out of Nairobi rather than having a presence in South/Central Somalia. One of the very few exceptions is the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC), whose personnel point out that the organization can only operate in South/Central Somalia because of its employment of Norwegian Somali staff members, who are much better able to gauge the security situation than non-Somali staff, face much less local scepticism and are less easily targeted. Similarly, in Finland, representatives of ministries and large development NGOs alike indicate that the Somali diaspora is seen as an important channel for the distribution of aid to Somalia because of the security situation in that country.

An important concern here, however, is that diaspora members should only be taking over tasks in inaccessible areas when they genuinely face fewer risks. Otherwise, we are simply speaking of risk transfer, which takes place when, for example, the UN delegates an inherently dangerous operation to an international NGO, which then delegates it to a diaspora organization. Accordingly, individual and case-by-case decisions should only be made after a proper evaluation of the risks involved.

Furthermore, it is important to remember that the issue of better access by diaspora members is context-specific. For example, whereas this may be true for members of the Somali diaspora at certain times in certain regions, it is currently far from true for the Ethiopian and Eritrean diasporas. In Ethiopia, the 2009 'Proclamation To Provide for the Registration and Regulation of Charities and Societies' prevents organizations that receive more than 10% of their funding from abroad from engaging in human rights and advocacy projects. This is obviously a great obstacle for almost all diaspora organizations seeking to work on such issues in Ethiopia, given that most of their funding comes from outside the country's borders. Similarly, in Eritrea, the state exercises considerable control over diaspora contributions, limiting the access diaspora organizations and individuals can have (Schmitz-Pranghe, 2010).

2.2.5. Legitimacy of External Engagement

Another value added mentioned by actors in the field of development cooperation is that external engagement is often legitimized locally through the participation of diaspora individuals and organizations: 'People in the homeland are more accepting and willing to listen to advice from members of the diaspora than other foreigners' (Bercovitch, cited in Sinatti et al., 2010: 40). In this sense, diaspora engagement can be touted as signifying a break with the often unequal structures of development cooperation, transforming its 'objects' into 'actors' (Sinatti et al., 2010: 43). Interestingly, diaspora participation in development is then understood as a sign of local ownership, with members of the diaspora viewed as representing locals. Research on diaspora involvement in peacebuilding in Somalia indicates that diaspora members can indeed be seen as representatives for local communities, as the fact that members of the diaspora have also experienced and suffered from the war 'gives them the moral authority to speak against the continuation of the conflict' (Abdile, forthcoming).

The question, however, is whether the perception that diasporas represent locals is based on reality or whether this perception is guided by existing discourses on development – where migrants, by virtue of their origins, remain objects rather than actors in development cooperation. Sceptics, including some diaspora members and external actors, argue that diaspora members neither represent locals nor legitimize external engagement (Mezzetti & Guglielmo, 2010: 25). A lack of legitimacy is partly related to the previously noted fact that diaspora members' local knowledge is not always up to date and they may make decisions that cause conflict locally (Abdile, forthcoming). Furthermore, tensions between locals and diaspora members may also arise when diaspora members get involved in local political processes (Ibrahim, 2010: 38–39). Questions of power and ownership are important in this sense, and diaspora members are at times criticized for taking opportunities away from locals (Pirkkalainen, 2010a: 40). In terms of representation by the diaspora, the issue of fragmentation also comes up in the country of origin quite strongly. For example, there are cases where parts of the local population have accused diaspora organizations and individuals of favouring residents with certain backgrounds over others.

2.2.6. The Value Added of Diversity

A final value added to note is related to the richness that diversity in general creates. The personally lived experiences of diaspora members often influence their perspectives, causing them to focus on issues that might be invisible or underestimated in the eyes of a person lacking those experiences. Additionally, as diaspora members have not generally been part of mainstream development and peacebuilding circles, they are more likely to think out of the box. Diversity allows for the advance of new and creative ideas, as different perspectives get a chance to interact. European development cooperation and peacebuilding circles, including research environments, NGOs and governmental institutions, are commonly very homogeneous. An environment that consists solely of people with very similar backgrounds will not necessarily be conducive to innovation (Essed, 2002; Ghorashi, 2007).

Facilitating the participation of diaspora organizations and individuals in development cooperation and peacebuilding will lead to greater diversity in the countries selected for engagement, as these organizations and individuals are likely more motivated to work in fields and regions that may be unattractive to other civil society actors – for example, in situations where there is an ongoing conflict. For countries of settlement, it is similarly important to facilitate participation of migrants in all aspects of society, including within development cooperation and international relations. Europe is home to large numbers of immigrants, including Europeans with migrant backgrounds. Recognition of the new reality of a diverse Europe, in which many citizens have transnational ties within and beyond the continent, can make it possible to turn this situation into a strategic political resource.

2.2.7. Recommendations

1. It is important not to simply assume the value added of diaspora engagement, as this will differ from individual to individual and from case to case. At the same time, it is also important not to reduce the added value of diaspora engagement in development and peacebuilding to knowledge of language and culture. There are many other potential benefits.

2. Whereas NGOs need to establish ways of incorporating diaspora individuals and groups into their day-to-day activities, government actors can best focus on enabling diaspora organizations to access funding mechanisms, enabling networking, monitoring general progress and creating the necessary policy framework to facilitate greater participation.

3. Recognizing diversity and the transnational engagements of diasporas can have a positive effect on migrants' participation as citizens in their country of settlement.

2.3. Transnational Engagement and Integration

2.3.1. Links Between Transnational Engagement and Integration

The transnational engagements of diaspora members and their level of integration in the country of settlement are intrinsically linked in two obvious ways: First, successful long-term engagement with the country of origin presupposes a minimum degree of economic and social integration. Those who are most integrated in and familiar with existing opportunities and structures in their country of settlement are in the best position to contribute transnationally, as they have the necessary resources and networks to do so (Hall, 2010).

Second, transnational engagements, especially those that make use of resources in the country of settlement, increase civil-political and possibly even socioeconomic integration (Snel, Engbersen & Leerkes, 2006). For example, looking for potential cooperation partners or supporters for transnational projects creates incentives for migrants to get involved in local civil society structures. Transnational engagements on the part of diaspora members and organizations may also provide a means of access to the public sphere in the country of settlement that would otherwise be more difficult to obtain, as in the cases of Senegalese and Ghanaians in Italy and Moroccans and Algerians in France (Lacroix, 2010; Mezzetti, 2010). Finally, recognition of the civic contributions of diasporas in development cooperation is crucial in this debate, as Text Box 2 illustrates.

The links between transnational engagement and integration have been debated extensively in various European countries, with implications for practices aimed at facilitating diaspora participation in development and peacebuilding. One question in this regard is whether specific measures or funding schemes should exist to enable diaspora individuals and organizations to be involved in peace and development work in their countries of origin. Most European governments consider mainstreaming support for diaspora organizations as the ultimate goal, but there are variations in how this goal is to be achieved. In Finland and in some local contexts in Italy, for example, access to funding is obtained through mainstream funding structures for civil society organizations, rather than separate funding opportunities for diaspora organizations. This requires organizations and individuals to be well integrated and has led to a situation where diaspora individuals have sought to improve their chances of receiving funding by, for example, persuading a Finnish CSO to set up a project rather than creating their own organization (see Text Box 20) or appointing Italian development experts as directors of diaspora organizations (see Text Box 24).

There is a mutually reinforcing, positive link between integration and transnational engagement. However, in many European countries, the barriers for accessing local civil society structures are often rather high, ranging from a lack of information about opportunities offered by local authorities, or about the activities of other CSOs, to more general obstacles in terms of language, different forms or modes of organization, lack of relevant networks, reduced access to the labour market, etc. Enhancing integration of migrants into local civil society structures and networks can be accomplished on individual and collective levels. In Germany, migrants from less developed countries have higher levels of formal education than other migrant groups; nevertheless,

levels of unemployment among this group are considerably higher than those experienced by most migrant and non-migrant groups (InWent, 2008: 17). This situation may be addressed by improving the system of accrediting education and job experience obtained abroad. On the collective level, different approaches to overcoming relevant barriers and facilitating cooperation between migrant organizations and local authorities are currently being developed and tested (see Text Box 8 on the GTZ Pilot Programme and Text Box 12 on Regional Conferences in North-Rhine Westphalia).

Text Box 2. Pilot Project Pakistan: transnational engagement and integration in Norway

During 2008–09, the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) produced two White Papers on foreign policy and development cooperation, in which diaspora engagement was extensively discussed. In addition, a pilot project for the inclusion of diasporas in Norwegian development cooperation was launched in June 2008 by the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (Norad). The pilot focused on one of the largest and most established migrant communities in Norway: the Pakistani community. In June 2010, an evaluation report was published (Erdal & Horst, 2010). In the second half of 2010, a decision will be made on how to make opportunities available for other migrant groups in Norway.

The overall goal of Pilot Project Pakistan (PPP), as it is known, was to assist Norwegian-Pakistani organizations that support development in Pakistan in ways that would improve the development impacts of their contributions and put them in a stronger position to compete for regular Norad funding schemes. The idea was to do this through increased competence-building and by making better use of the expertise and experience of these organizations –the final aim being to establish a broader support scheme, available for all diaspora groups. A secretariat was set up and a Pakistani advisory board appointed. Financial support was provided to seven organizations through matched funding, and training was offered to these and other organizations. In addition, resource organizations in Norway (the Development Fund) and Pakistan (Sungi) provided individually customized support to the diaspora organizations and their local partners, gradually moving from intense competence-building to monitoring and evaluation roles.

At the time of the evaluation, it was too early to assess whether the project had succeeded in achieving its development aims, as the last project to receive support only commenced in 2010. However, while it may not yet be possible to ascertain the project's development impacts, there are positive signs that the pilot has been seen as a powerful tool for furthering inclusion in Norwegian society. The fact that through this project the Norwegian government and relevant NGOs acknowledged the hard (voluntary) work and considerable amounts of private resources contributed by the Pakistani community has been as important as the effects of the project in Pakistan. While integration in local civil society structures takes time and ultimately requires full participation in development cooperation not just through small, voluntary channels but also through the recruitment practices of mainstream development actors, the individuals involved in projects like Pilot Project Pakistan benefit directly as their efforts are being recognized. The importance of recognition can be illustrated through a quote from a participant in another diaspora-targeting activity, conducted by the Nansen Peace Centre (see Text Box 7): 'This is the first time somebody from a Norwegian organization is actually interested in us. Interested in us not as refugees, as people who need help. But as a resource, as people who want to do something for their country of origin.'

2.3.2. Policy Incoherence

The mutually reinforcing link between integration and transnational engagement entails that initiatives in one field may affect the other. Accordingly, an integrated approach to policies and programming in the fields of immigration and integration, on the one hand, and foreign policy and development cooperation, on the other, is required. In practice, however, there is considerable incoherence between policies. Moreover, initiatives to support migrant transnational activi-

ties often fall between the organizational mandates of the most relevant actors, as institutions working on integration in Norway cannot fund initiatives in the country of origin, while those that work on development cooperation cannot fund diaspora organizations in Norway. This problem of falling between mandates is also relevant for nongovernmental actors. For example, an organization like the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) finds it difficult to fit engagements by refugees with their country of origin into its programming, as the NRC's international section does not deal with refugees in Norway while the national section does not relate to activities in the region of origin. Since there is no actor that has clear responsibility for this issue either within individual organizations and institutions or between them, this issue easily falls between the cracks, with no one body to take responsibility or be held accountable.

At the national, provincial, regional and local levels of the administrative sectors of many European countries, the separation and division of competences related to issues of immigration and integration, on the one hand, and development cooperation and foreign policy, on the other, frequently hinders the potential for engaging and empowering diasporas. Often, the different sectors do not work together in synergy and are unaware of what policy documents other sectors produce, how they operate or what they are focusing on. This produces incoherence between policies, hindering the potential for empowering diasporas in the long run. For example, whereas fostering circular migration is high on the agenda in the field of development cooperation, permissions to stay are not readily granted in the light of immigration priorities. Although some countries, such as the Netherlands, have developed overall policies in an attempt to overcome such contradictions, in most cases immigration and integration priorities prevail over those related to development cooperation.

Interestingly, in the German state of North-Rhine Westphalia (NRW), many initiatives targeting diaspora engagement in development and peacebuilding are partly carried out by actors who are also responsible for fostering integration. In NRW, the Ministry for Intergenerational Affairs, Family, Women and Integration (MGFFI) was created in 2005 and is responsible for both integration and international cooperation. Furthermore, a project entitled 'Migration and Development on the Local Level' (see Text Box 3) created a situation where local integration commissioners and mayors were asked to look into not just the local but also the transnational engagements of migrants living in their towns and cities. However, in most cases, low levels of socioeconomic and civil-political integration of migrant groups within the local milieu have been the top priority here – with integration often being seen as a requirement for transnational engagements.

2.3.3. Diasporas as Transnational Actors

It should be noted that the high degree of transnationalism among diaspora organizations and individuals may lead to ways of organizing that are very different from those of other development and peacebuilding actors. There is growing awareness of the need to recognize this, as a Norwegian policy document indicates: 'We must recognize that the identities of the future will extend beyond the national ones and that many people will have strong ties to several countries and communities' (Norwegian MFA, 2009b: 70). The intensity of transnational engagement and networking at the individual level has implications for how people want to and are able to organize and engage.

Transnational networks are of great value in that they allow diaspora members in different countries of settlement to draw on the resources available in these different places. If foreign policy lobbying is more successful in one country while funding opportunities are greater in another, truly transnational organizations and individuals can draw on both. Furthermore, they can also draw on resources that diaspora members in different places can offer because of their potentially different backgrounds and opportunities. Fundraising among the diaspora may be very successful in some countries of settlement owing to their relatively well-off economic positions enjoyed by diaspora members there, whereas members in other countries can more easily contribute human capital.

Text Box 3. Accessing local structures: the role of German municipalities

The Service Agency Communities in One World (*Servicestelle Kommunen in der Einen Welt*, SKEW) assists local authorities in Germany to strengthen their development activities and to establish international partnerships with communities or municipalities abroad, as well as with local migrant groups. Founded in 2001, the Service Agency is based at InWEnt's (Capacity Building International) headquarters in Bonn and is co-financed by the Federal Ministry for Development and Economic Cooperation and several state governments.

In relation to diaspora organizations, the agency has launched a programme entitled 'Inter-cultural Capacity Building in German Local Governments: Cooperation with Diasporas'. From 2007 to 2009, a pilot project entitled 'Migration and Development on the Local Level' was implemented to improve the cooperation between One World's development initiatives, local institutions and migrant organizations through a series of networking events and seminars. The project was implemented in five 'model' communities (Kiel, Munich, Leipzig, Bonn and the district of Dueren). Although the objective of the pilot was to link up the development activities and capacities of migrant organizations and other actors, feedback from many migrant participants reinforced the assumption that, at present, many African organizations in NRW primarily seek support in their integration efforts and when trying to access local institutions and civil society structures (InWent 2008).

The overall results of the pilot will not be published before late 2010, but there are already signs of improved cooperation in Kiel, the district of Dueren and Munich, where migrant organizations were involved in organizing local events and activities. The success of these cooperation efforts largely depends on the willingness and capacities of local authorities, and requires continuous support by local integration commissioners, mayors and/or other local representatives. A central finding of the pilot project was that these networking and exchange initiatives can only be implemented through long-term dedicated efforts at grass-roots levels. Such initiatives also have to acknowledge the limits faced by voluntary organizations in terms of time, energy and resources available for developing and implementing projects. In addition, it is vital to focus the networking process on specific issues, themes or projects, as networking otherwise runs the risk of becoming an end in itself and loses its original momentum. For this reason, the issue of 'Migration and Development on the Local Level' will become one of the three core working areas of the Service Agency

2.3.4. Recommendations

4. Policies and practices in the fields of development cooperation and integration are related in a number of ways. Develop an approach to discovering these relations and coordinate relevant areas of policy and practice, while dedicating a part of diaspora-supporting initiatives to integration-related aspects.

5. Ensure that activities targeted at diaspora organizations and individuals simultaneously target other relevant actors – for example, by including small CSOs – allowing for networking opportunities.

6. Make use of the transnational nature of diaspora networks, through openness to collaboration and exchange across different countries of residence.

3. Diasporas in Peacebuilding

3.1. Conflict-Induced Diasporas

As indicated earlier, we see a continuum between development and peacebuilding activities, and we argue furthermore that many policy initiatives that focus on diaspora engagements in general will need to address both, because in most European countries diasporas are present that originate from conflict and non-conflict settings. Explicitly focusing on peacebuilding initiatives, however, may be challenging for two reasons. First, peacebuilding is a highly political project towards the country of origin, and may be one that many members of the diaspora cannot or do not wish to engage in openly. This obviously depends on opportunities and constraints faced in the country of origin. Second, as peacebuilding is such a political project, it also often clearly brings out the internal divisions existing within the diaspora. We will discuss this issue of fragmentation in a later section.

3.1.1. Conflict versus Non-Conflict Settings

There is a wide range of literature on the complex role of diasporas in conflict settings (reviewed in Abdile & Pirkkalainen, 2009). Kaldor (2001) and Duffield (2002) have suggested that diaspora members may provide support to conflicting parties directly, through the provision of money and arms, or indirectly, when family remittances are misappropriated and used for military purposes by the warring parties, through taxation or extortion. It has been claimed by some that as diasporas do not have to directly face the consequences of a given conflict, and in some cases are 'insulated' from local conditions, they are more likely to take more extreme stances on a conflict and actively support the parties they favour (Anderson; 1992; Collier, 2000; Demmers, 2002; Lyons, 2007). Other literature has focused on the more positive impacts that diasporas can have upon conflict situations and peacebuilding (Smith & Stares 2007), while more recent work has attempted to balance both viewpoints (Horst, 2008).

Though the debate on whether diaspora contributions have a positive or negative impact is ongoing, it is clear that there are a number of differences between diasporas created by and/or related to violent conflict and diasporas that do not have such a background. The legal status of asylum seekers, who often have temporary and limited rights in countries of residence, affects their ability to engage with their country of origin. Furthermore, many refugees who have escaped (ongoing) conflicts or oppressive regimes continue to fear government surveillance or repression. In the case of the Ethiopian diaspora, for example, there have been a number of reports of surveillance of the diaspora through consulates and embassies. Similar observations have been made in the case of the Eritrean diaspora (Koser, 2007). Regardless of the validity of these concerns, this has heightened levels of distrust and hampers cooperation and dialogue within the Ethiopian diaspora.

In situations of conflict, there are greater and more acute needs that must be catered for – for example, owing to the need to migrate from insecure areas, health-related expenses in the event of injuries, and inflation in the event of scarcity (Carling, Erdal, and Horst, forthcoming). At the same time, there is often no functioning state to fall back on, nor is there generally speaking local assistance to be had, as everybody tends to be affected by the same crises. This also means that the numbers of people who are living in dire conditions or face the risk of sudden crises, and thus need regular or occasional assistance, are larger in conflict settings. Furthermore, opportunities for making a living are scarce in areas affected by conflict. These factors all combine to make diaspora engagement in development and peacebuilding initiatives very urgent and much needed.

Another relevant point of difference is that an individual's own experience of conflict and violence may have a deep impact on the responsibility he or she feels to support others who may still be facing such conditions. A related issue is that conflict-induced diasporas may have a greater level of political engagement due to the fact that they wish to see structural changes in their country of origin. Sometimes, such political engagement translates into actual political contributions, such

as the sending of remittances to support peacebuilding initiatives or returning to take part in the new administration in a post-conflict situation. Often, however, contributions are more local and low-key attempts to contribute to sustainable transformation of structural conflict factors and patterns – for example, by building a well where water scarcity has been a cause of conflict in the past or supporting education for youth otherwise at risk of recruitment by conflictual parties (Horst, 2008; Pirkkalainen, 2010b).

Development inputs by non-conflict induced diasporas are more likely to trigger local development dynamics in the countries of origin. An IOM 'Migration for Development in Africa' (MIDA) programme funded by the Italian Cooperation provides an example of success in this context. Between 2002 and 2007, Ghanaian and Senegalese migrants residing in Italy were engaged in 18 local development initiatives for the benefit of their villages of origin. Existing practices of transnational migrants, including contributing collective remittances for the purposes of local community development, were supported through the provision of technical assistance and matched funds by Italian national and subnational cooperation actors. Monitoring and evaluation are possible with relative ease in such a setting, which is not the case with projects that are implemented in situations of armed conflict.

3.1.2. Proactivity in Engaging Third Parties

In Figure 1, we distinguish between direct and indirect transnational engagements by diaspora organizations. Indirect activities – that is, those that occur when diaspora individuals or groups urge European governmental or nongovernmental actors to improve conditions in the diaspora's country of origin – are a vital part of successful participation. Interestingly, there seems to be considerable variation in how active diaspora individuals and groups are in engaging third parties – which has implications both for how successful they can be and for how active external actors will be in relation to a particular field or country.

Somali organizations and individuals in various European countries have been very active in their efforts to secure access to European governmental and nongovernmental actors. Some organizations carrying out projects in Somalia have networked with international organizations working in Somalia and/or Nairobi, such as UNICEF, the World Health Organization and the Red Crescent. Some of these have been able to get extra support, such as tools and donations for projects, as a result. There are also cases of Somali organizations getting national experts on board to help with the initiation of a project. An illustrative example of the impact of proactivity on the part of diaspora individuals and organizations is provided by the Finn Church Aid (FCA) peacebuilding project (see Text Box 4).

> **Text Box 4. Recruitment of diaspora professionals by a large development NGO in a peacebuilding project: the case of Finn Church Aid**
>
> The realization of the Finn Church Aid (FCA) peacebuilding project was facilitated by the proactivity of the Somali diaspora in Finland. A small group of Somalis had approached FCA in 2007, indicating their concerns about the humanitarian situation in Somalia and asking why one of Finland's largest development organizations was not working in the country. This led to several follow-up meetings, and ultimately to the initiation of the peacebuilding project in 2008. The project, which provides support to traditional and religious leaders in peace processes in Somalia, is carried out in Somalia by Finnish Somalis who have been selected on the basis of their qualifications and expertise. Most staff members do not have formal training in peacemaking techniques, but have been identified as being capable of developing techniques based on their knowledge of both the local context and Somali customary law (Abdile, forthcoming). These individuals are employed as FCA staff. The project has local institutions in Somalia as partners, and the work is carried out in cooperation with the Danish Refugee Council. The Finnish MFA, which is funding the project, considers this particular peacebuilding project important and innovative – particularly since it is the only one of its kind. However, the project has faced criticism and scepticism from some members of the Somali community in Finland.

3.1.3. Recommendations

7. It is important to bear in mind that there are differences between diaspora groups originating from conflict settings and those that do not come from such settings, and that there are further differences between diaspora individuals or groups whose transnational activities relate to an ongoing conflict setting and those whose activities relate to a stable context.

8. Explicit peacebuilding projects may be extremely difficult to implement because of complexities in relations between the diaspora and the authorities in the country of origin, as well as within the diaspora itself. At times, an explicit political focus is best avoided.

9. At the same time, projects with an implicit peacebuilding aim are worth supporting. Examples include more local and low-key attempts that do not focus on a conflict and its causes directly, but rather tackle a conflict in a more indirect way, addressing structural conflict factors and patterns, such as resource scarcity or livelihood opportunities for young people.

3.2. Fragmentation

The most common concern that external actors voice in relation to conflict-induced diasporas is the fact that organizations or individuals belonging to such groups are religiously motivated, 'politicized', 'fragmented' or simply 'biased' towards their own families, clans or ethnic groups. This is a concern mainly for two reasons: First, when relating to members of the diaspora, external actors do not want to create internal frictions and they want to be sure that the people they relate to are 'representative' of the diaspora community as a whole. Second, there is concern about the implications in the country of origin of supporting biased or politicized diaspora members without having sufficient knowledge of their position. At times, such concern is heightened by tensions in relations between the governments of the countries of residence and origin. The following sections discuss the realities of fragmentation, as well as successful initiatives that address this fact.

3.2.1. Fragmentation: A Reality

Discourses on development stress that neutrality is fundamental in development cooperation, and development actors are therefore very concerned with the question of whom the diaspora organizations they support or cooperate with represent. While this, of course, is a very legitimate question, there are a number of issues that need to be taken into account in this context. First, in development practice there is often an unspoken assumption that someone cannot be impartial if they are dealing with their own country of origin, especially if that country of origin lies in the global South (Erdal & Horst, 2010: 11). This assumption is problematic, and in order to establish cooperation with immigrants who wish to work in their countries of origin, Western development actors need to learn to trust their diaspora counterparts. Second, diaspora groups often operate within local realities on the ground, where clan-based trust or religious affiliation does matter, and it may be counterproductive to insist that they act otherwise (Erdal & Horst, 2010: 11).

While internal diaspora biases, conflicts and inequalities certainly exist and can give rise to genuine concerns, this should not lead to the conclusion that diaspora actors cannot be partners in development. Rather, these issues need to be engaged with – especially since the economic, political and socio-cultural engagement and influence of diasporas in their countries of origin is a worldwide reality (Bernal, 2006; Brinkerhoff, 2004; Gran, 2007; Jazayery, 2002; Lyons, 2007). There are two, closely linked, aspects to this question: fragmentation and politicization.

The Somali and Ethiopian diasporas provide examples of a high degree of fragmentation along regional, clan, socioeconomic, religious, gender, generational and political lines. This fragmentation is considered a major obstacle for actors who are thinking about supporting transnational engagements, and often, in order to receive support, projects are expected to include representatives from all parties, while diaspora organizations are required to cooperate in umbrella structures (Erdal & Horst, 2010: 41). In the case of Somali organizations, for example, the inclusion or support of all major clans is often a requirement if an initiative is to secure funding. This policy risks doing harm, however, because it intensifies existing conflicts over resources along

clan lines, solidifying dividing lines that in Somalia are often quite fluid. Furthermore, such a top-down approach can be an obstacle for reaching true and equal collaboration. Another way in which fragmentation has been addressed is through a focus on gender as a unifying factor. Such an approach, however, can also be problematic (see Text Box 5).

Text Box 5. Gender as a way to overcome fragmentation? ADEP's Experience, Italy

In 2006, the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) engaged the Somali diaspora directly in the project 'Gender and Peace in Somalia: Implementation of Resolution 1325'. The former under-secretary for international cooperation and a group of Somali women activists met in Bamako during the World Social Forum, where they discussed the possibility of launching a project to support dialogue between women of the Somali diaspora in Italy, women's organizations in Somalia, representatives from Somalia's Transitional Federal Government and international stakeholders.

The MFA encouraged a select number of the Somali women to further engage the Somali diaspora in this process. These women organized themselves into a Somali women's umbrella association, *Associazione Diaspora e Pace* (ADEP). Based in Italy, ADEP was officially formalized in April 2008, with a mandate to work towards the empowerment of women, both in Somalia and in the diaspora. ADEP's objective was to promote the participation of women in ongoing peace and state-building processes in Somalia, as well as in the Somali elections, which were originally announced for November 2009.

Despite this objective, ADEP failed to involve other members of the Somali community in Italy, and this gave rise to criticism within parts of the Somali community, which felt excluded by the MFA's initiative. Without intending to do so, the MFA was responsible for creating a hierarchy among the leaders of the diaspora's women's groups – leading to the exclusion of other actors, who felt less involved and eventually left the initiative. This engagement dynamic had the ultimate effect of legitimizing one group of individuals as leaders and delegitimizing others, fostering destructive competition between different diaspora groups.

This episode suggests that the ministry's assumption that *gender* can reduce fragmentation and competition within the Somali diaspora was questionable. Internal divisions within the Somali diaspora (social, political and generational) represent a serious problem that donors will have to face, even in relation to groups that are assumed to have an affinity for one another, such as women's organizations. Despite this, the project 'Gender and Peace in Somalia', promoted by the Italian undoubtedly had the positive effect of bringing attention both to the situation in Somalia and to the potential involvement of Somali women in transnational political processes.

When it comes to politicization, the Sri Lankan case offers a good example, as the Tamil diaspora throughout the years has been highly active politically. In this case, the level of politicization is a key concern, often leading to decisions not to engage.[6] Indeed, for European actors operating in Sri Lanka, it is highly problematic to be seen to engage with the Tamil diaspora, as the relationship between this diaspora and the Sri Lankan government is problematic (Erdal & Horst, 2010: 42). Such a situation, of course, is not uncommon among refugee populations, and the issue thus merits attention in any examination of key challenges facing actors wishing to engage with conflict-induced diasporas. The role of a conflict-induced diaspora may be important in political developments in the country of origin in both positive and negative ways (Horst, 2008; Koser, 2007; Lyons, 2007; Orjuela, 2008; Ostergaard-Nielsen, 2003; Smith & Stares, 2007). Thus, though it may be extremely difficult to address these issues – for example, through informal diplomacy efforts between diasporas and the government in the country of origin or its representatives at the local embassy – not addressing them may prove to be equally problematic and potentially harmful.

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[6] The Tamil diaspora's involvement with its areas of origin throughout an armed conflict that has lasted for more than two decades has been well documented; see, for example, Orjuela (2008); Sriskandarajah (2002); Wayland (2004).

3.2.2. Initiatives to Deal with Fragmentation

Although dealing with fragmentation is one of the major challenges associated with working with conflict-induced diasporas, there are interesting examples of initiatives that have found successful ways of doing just that. Alternatives include using the quality of applications and organizational capacity as selection criteria, as has been done in Finland with some success (Mezzetti et al., 2010), or focusing on professional links rather than political divisions (see Text Box 6). Also, participatory exercises in which a community is asked to identify its main challenges and to come up with solutions to those challenges – as have been conducted in the USA among Somalis – offer promising results (Hammond, Ford & Mahboub, 2004). In addition, extensive dialogue efforts, such as those undertaken by the Nansen Peace Centre (see Text Box 7), can represent a way of addressing lines of fragmentation in a constructive fashion. Finally, of course, it goes without saying that though high levels of fragmentation within diasporas are often regarded as problematic, diaspora contributions to conflict areas are substantial (Schmitz-Pranghe, 2010).

Text Box 6. Creating depoliticized spaces: the case of the IOM's MIDA project, Finland

The IOM's Helsinki office coordinated a one-year pilot project within the MIDA health programme 'Strengthening the Health Sector in Somaliland and Puntland Through the Engagement of Somali Diaspora Health Professionals from Finland'. The project was launched in 2008 and funded by Finland's Ministry for Foreign Affairs (MFA). During the duration of the project, a total of 22 short-term assignments of Somali health professionals from Finland to local health institutions in Somaliland and Puntland were realized.

The project had to deal with the fragmentation of the Somali community, particularly in terms of diverse regional affiliations and political visions concerning Somalia. Such fragmentation can very easily lead to the politicization of projects and cooperation efforts. For example, in this MIDA project, while participants could not be sent to Puntland at the start of the project because of UN security recommendations, some people suggested that this was because the MFA and the IOM were biased in their support to Somaliland. The IOM, which has the status of an intergovernmental organization, was obliged to guarantee the safety of the participants, and thus UN security procedures had to be followed. The implementation of the project in all regions of Somalia was simply not feasible for security reasons.

The challenge presented by the fragmentation of the community along regional lines was overcome, however, through the creation of 'depoliticized spaces' and through the construction of the project around a certain profession – in this case, health professionals. Differences in views on the status of regions and political fragmentation were overcome through a focus on common causes: health needs in the country and the humanitarian pledge of health professionals. The selection criteria for participants were clear, based as they were on professional requirements and expertise. Moreover, the returnees were expected to be 'committed to their work and [to] perform it in an unbiased manner, free of any personal and political consideration' (IOM, 2008). Although some critical voices were heard on why the project was implemented only in the northern regions of Somalia, and in particular why most returnees were sent to Somaliland, one key achievement of this project was that people originally from South/Central Somalia went to work in health institutions in Somaliland, and no one questioned their background in relation to clan and regional origin.

The Finnish Somalia Network (see Text Box 9) can be mentioned as another attempt to deal with fragmentation. The aim of this network has been to bring together different organizations working in different parts of Somalia. In order to facilitate cooperation and information exchange, Somali politics were purposefully left outside the network's 'agenda', while the bridging theme within the network is development cooperation/humanitarianism. This can be seen as an attempt to create a 'depoliticized space' within which it is hoped that lines of fragmentation will become less visible. Obviously, finding a bridging theme does not automatically erase lines of fragmentation. To some extent, lack of trust between Somali organizations continues to be observed. And,

although the Finnish Somalia Network has brought many organizations together, not all Somali associations are members. Moreover, concrete cooperation within the network remains limited. Fragmentation may also be indirectly addressed through the work of umbrella organizations that bring together diasporas from different national groups to work together on a shared theme. This issue is further discussed in Section 4.3.3.

Text Box 7. Nansen Centre for Peace and Dialogue: acknowledging fragmentation

The Nansen Peace Centre was formally opened in June 2010, following the fusion of the Nansen Dialogue Network and the Norwegian Peace Centre. The Nansen Academy in Norway, established in 1995, is an educational institution for adult students with different political, religious and cultural backgrounds. The Nansen Dialogue Network consists of a network of ten centres in the Balkans that grew out of the Academy's work and has been engaged in the 'Dialogue in Segregated Societies' project since 1998. The Norwegian Peace Centre provides peace education training and is engaged in long-term peace education processes with a variety of groups, including refugees and asylum seekers, as well as Norwegians working with these groups. The Centre also hosts a network for refugee students from around the world, which allows refugee students to meet and exchange information and provides them with training in conflict management and related subjects, as well as networking opportunities in the field. There have been internship projects for students from Iraqi Kurdistan and Afghanistan, and in the future similar opportunities are planned for Sri Lanka. Finally, the Centre is engaged in networking, consultancies, giving lectures, etc., and has recently started a dialogue process focused on ethnic minorities in urban contexts.

As an organization working on peace education and conflict resolution in conflict areas and with people in Norway originating from conflict areas, the Nansen Peace Centre is well placed to acknowledge and understand fragmentation among immigrant communities from conflict regions. One of the longer-term projects it is involved in focuses on the Somali community in Norway. The former Norwegian Peace Centre has been actively involved with the Somali diaspora in facilitating dialogue meetings – first within the Hawiye clan, while more recently the Nansen Peace Centre has continued this work with dialogue meetings between Hawiye and Darod. After the first process with the Hawiye, a request for follow-up was received from a Hawiye organization, which asked for external support to enable discussions between different subclans in Norway. In these processes, the Nansen Peace Centre acts as a facilitator – creating a neutral space in which the different parties can meet, as well as providing useful training, for example in dialogue skills. The processes were funded by Norway's Directorate of Integration and Diversity. To a certain extent, the most recent dialogue process has been driven by the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, within whose Horn of Africa section there has been quite a strong push for the creation of umbrella organizations that represent all clans.

The main lesson learned from these experiences is that dialogue processes take a very long time. Furthermore, it seems that those that are supported internally – or, ideally, are requested by the parties themselves – have a much stronger chance of succeeding than those that are strongly pushed by external actors. Often, external actors have a tendency to want to see results too quickly, while at the same time it is impossible to understand all the dynamics going on inside the dialogues and between the parties involved. The strength of the Nansen Peace Centre's approach lies in the fact that it acknowledges the reality of this situation and takes quite a humble approach towards its own role, as well as in the fact that it does not shrink from the task of working with and along lines of fragmentation within societies – whether in the country of origin or in the country of settlement.

3.2.3. Recommendations

10. Issues of fragmentation and politicization are often linked to the root causes of a conflict, and thus must be addressed in a constructive manner. Some lines of fragmentation are deeply engrained within society; they may form part of existing social systems for resource distribution and cannot be changed overnight. Some redistributive systems do no harm, while others cause great inequalities and injustices. Accordingly, it is important to focus only on fragmentation lines that are actually problematic.

11. A common response to dealing with fragmentation is simply to demand the creation of umbrella organizations, which is however an insufficient and problematic approach. When the creation of umbrella organizations is deemed important as a means of overcoming fragmentation, this approach needs to be supported – for example, through the facilitation of dialogue initiatives.

12. Focusing on professional engagements may offer a constructive way of reducing the implications of fragmentation and politicization. Taking such an approach does not automatically dissolve all differences, but it can help to reduce the central role they may otherwise play.

4. Activities

4.1. Background

Before discussing the range of activities in which external actors engage in order to facilitate the participation of diasporas in peacebuilding and development, it is important to discuss the concept of 'participation'. Though a wide range of activities are considered participatory, these vary widely in terms of the level of actual participation involved (see Table 1 for a common typology of participation in development). Diaspora individuals may be invited to participate by providing basic information, as often takes place in mapping exercises, or they may be involved to a slightly greater degree through consultations. Participation in development can however also refer to a type of engagement that is based on equal cooperation between diaspora organizations and external actors. We thus need to look closely at the level of participation involved in activities by and/or for diasporas in development and peacebuilding.

Table 1. Typology of Participation

	Typology	Characteristics
1	Passive participation	Participation entails being told what is going to happen or has already happened. Information is provided in a unilateral announcement.
2	Participation in information-giving	People participate by answering questions posed by extractive researchers using questionnaire surveys or similar approaches. Findings are neither shared nor checked for accuracy.
3	Participation by consultation	People participate by being consulted, and external people listen to their views. These external professionals define both problems and solutions, and may (or may not) modify these in the light of people's responses.
4	Participation for material incentives	People participate by providing resources in return for material incentives. People have no stake in prolonging activities when incentives end.
5	Functional participation	People participate by forming groups to meet predetermined objectives related to the project. Such involvement takes place after major decisions have been made, and the groups tend to be dependent on externals but may become independent.
6	Interactive participation	People participate in joint analysis, which leads to action plans and the formation of new local institutions or the strengthening of existing ones. These groups take control over local decisions, and people have a stake in maintaining structures and practices.
7	Self-mobilization	People participate by taking initiatives independent of external institutions to change systems. They develop contacts with external institutions to secure resources and technical advice they need, but retain control over how resources are used. Such self-initiated mobilization and collective action may or may not challenge existing inequitable distributions of wealth and power.

Source: Pretty et al. (1995: 61).

Of course, not all activities aimed at the facilitation of diaspora participation in development and peacebuilding intend to be participatory in their approach. Some – for example, knowledge-building – are seen as providing the basis on which increased participation in development cooperation can take place, without the activities themselves necessarily requiring participation by members of a particular diaspora. Nonetheless, in all types of activities, participation by diaspora members is possible and benefits the process as a whole.

Here, it is important to remember that the present handbook was produced with an audience of European practitioners and policymakers in mind, and accordingly mainly focuses on *their* attempts to facilitate the participation of diaspora individuals and groups in development cooperation and peacebuilding. However, this does not imply that the participation of one set of actors, diaspora members in Europe, is restricted or enabled solely by another, non-diaspora European governmental and nongovernmental actors. As Figure 2 illustrates, both diaspora actors and external actors engage in development and peacebuilding activities independently of one another. Furthermore, each side is trying to engage with, facilitate or develop synergies and cooperation with the other. While we largely refer to initiatives by external actors in the remainder of this document, it is important to acknowledge the existence of this two-way process.
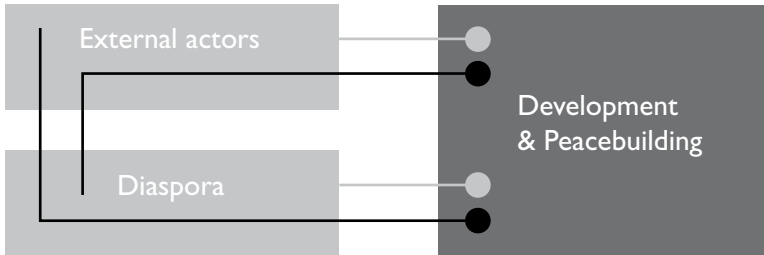

Figure 2: Schematic representation of actors and how they interact

In this chapter, we will discuss a number of common activities in which European governmental and nongovernmental actors commonly engage – or might engage – when interested in facilitating the participation of diaspora individuals and organizations in development and peacebuilding. These include, first, knowledge-building activities, such as engaging in research, mapping and pilot projects (see Section 4.2); second, activities focused on strengthening the capacities of migrant organizations and individuals through training programmes, networking events and the establishment of umbrella organizations (see Section 4.3); third, activities that are targeted at the implementation of projects, such as selection procedures, funding schemes, partnerships in implementation and decisionmaking, and temporary return programmes (see Section 4.4); and, finally, activities that focus on the inclusion of diasporas in mainstream development (see Section 4.5).

4.2. Knowledge-Building

One sentiment that seems quite widespread among practitioners and policymakers alike is that current levels of existing knowledge regarding how to facilitate the participation of diasporas in peacebuilding and development are inadequate. There is concern that there is insufficient information on 'the diaspora' or specific diaspora groups, their positioning, their divisions and their capacities, as well as on the best ways of engaging with these groups and supporting their efforts. In many European countries, therefore, research is commissioned and organizations, projects, individuals and funding opportunities are mapped. Furthermore, in countries where the topic is relatively new, pilot projects are set up in order that experience might be gained and lessons learned systematically recorded for all actors involved.

4.2.1. Research and Mapping

In recent years, both national governments and international bodies such as the European Commission (EC) have funded and at times commissioned research on diaspora engagements. For example, in the EC's 7th Framework Programme for Research on Human Rights, Conflicts and Security, two out of ten funded projects on human rights and violent conflicts focused on the role of diasporas. Diasporas are seen to play a central role in fostering reconciliation, peacebuilding and human rights protection, or contributing to the exporting of conflict (European Commission, 2008: 12).

The first of these two projects – the International Civil Society Forum on Conflicts (INFOCON) – is the result of extensive consultations and discussions between members of civil society (notably groups or individuals representing transnational communities and NGOs working in the fields of minority rights or conflict resolution) and leading scholars in various disciplines. The second –

the 'Diasporas for Peace: Patterns, Trends and Potential of Long-Distance Diaspora Involvement in Conflict Settings: Case Studies from the Horn of Africa' (DIASPEACE) project – examines the role of diasporas in conflict resolution and peacebuilding. These projects have focused both on creating knowledge on the role of diasporas in conflict and peacebuilding, and on creating practical tools to facilitate positive aspects of this role – for example, through the creation of an electronic networking tool for diaspora organizations[7] and the present handbook.

As part of these and other projects, mapping exercises have been carried out in order to create an overview of the field. As mapping efforts ideally need to be updated regularly, the use of online databases with possibilities for actors to do their own updating represents a promising approach in this context. The African Diaspora Policy Centre's online database, which includes details of individual experts and organizations within the African diaspora, and a similar database in NRW (see Text Box 12) provide good examples of such electronic initiatives. Mapping tools are mainly created for the purpose of systematizing information, enabling networking and facilitating the selection of individuals and organizations for specific projects. The biggest challenge with any of these tools involves ensuring that the different actors who can benefit from them make use of them over time.

4.2.2. Pilot Projects

When knowledge and experience related to the facilitation of diaspora engagement in peacebuilding and development cooperation are limited, often governmental and nongovernmental actors decide to start by piloting a new idea. Pilot projects are generally set up with a limited timeframe and limited resources, and include an elaborate evaluation and reporting phase. On the basis of the evaluation, decisions are made on whether and how to move on with a particular initiative. By keeping pilots small-scale, large risks in terms of costs and commitments are avoided. Furthermore, the fact that something serves as a pilot leads to a greater focus on and awareness of 'lessons learned', enabling actors to test and further develop innovative forms of cooperation. Text Box 8 illustrates what lessons can in fact be learned – both by the actors directly engaged but also more widely – from the establishment of a pilot. Even when no pilots are set up, process tracking of a new initiative is highly valuable, especially if results are shared widely.

There are a number of issues, however, that should be kept in mind when setting up a pilot project. First, it is important to remember that – like other initiatives that may not have a limited timeframe – pilots do create expectations. Therefore, actors need to be certain that there exist both commitment to and resources for the next phase of the initiative. If this is not the case, it might be better not to engage in the first place; otherwise, an institution or organization that wishes to establish relationships with diaspora individuals or groups may risk doing more harm than good. Furthermore, if a pilot involves supporting organizations and their projects financially, it is important to recognize that such projects are not started with the idea of piloting in mind but with the idea of improving conditions in the country of origin. Accordingly, the issue of what will subsequently happen with supported projects needs to be discussed at the start of any pilot.

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[7] See http://www.here-there.org (accessed 20 October 2010)

Text Box 8. German Technical Cooperation (GTZ) pilot programme

In 2007, under commission from the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development, GTZ established a Sector Project on 'Migration and Development' in order to devise and test innovative migration and development policies. Within this framework, a GTZ pilot programme was launched to stimulate engagement with not-for-profit diaspora organizations. This programme targets organized diaspora groups in Germany and provides them with an opportunity to implement projects in their countries of origin in collaboration with GTZ. Besides financing selected projects, an additional focus lies on collecting experiences of cooperation with diaspora organizations to aid the development of long-term strategies and mechanisms for inclusion. The overarching rationale is to foster the development and transfer of knowledge and skills from diasporas to their countries of origin through financial support and GTZ's development expertise. Likewise, GTZ and other development actors can benefit from the specific knowledge of migrant organizations and their new inputs to the development agenda.

The programme finances and advises charitable projects that accord with the agenda of German development cooperation in its official partner countries. Diaspora organizations must be registered associations that partner with organizations in countries of origin, and they must be able to contribute 50% of the costs of a supported project (40% of all costs can be covered through voluntary work). GTZ funds individual projects with up to a total of € 25,000.

Information on the pilot programme was primarily disseminated via presentations and events, or targeted towards existing contacts with migrant organizations. In addition, GTZ also sought to contact interested migrant organizations through intermediary actors, such as umbrella organizations. So far, 26 projects have been funded out of about 100 applications. Successful applications usually focused on capacity-building and/or harnessing specific diaspora expertise and skills (as opposed to general infrastructural measures), and included a wide range of issues and approaches – such as offering vocational training in Senegal and Rwanda, agricultural capacity-building for women in Nigeria, or capacity-building in the field of renewable energies in Serbia and Afghanistan.

In many cases, project ideas were further developed to tap into a diaspora organization's particular abilities and capacities. A central aspect contributing to the success of the programme was the ongoing intensive contact and support between one of GTZ's experts and the migrant organization throughout the application and implementation process, as this helped to build knowledge and trust on both sides. On the other hand, initiatives and ideas for actual projects were to be developed and devised by the migrant organizations themselves, as knowledge transfer from the diaspora to its country of origin, the proximity of diaspora organizations to local structures and contacts, and their specific capacities lay at the very heart of the programme. The GTZ project primarily accompanies the project development and implementation process, and also organizes diaspora meetings to discuss previous experiences and the scope for networking and cooperation. The programme was evaluated following the conclusion of its second stage in May 2010. According to this assessment, the pilot programme represented a suitable means of harnessing diaspora potential, and also had a positive impact on migrant organizations themselves by creating new incentives, improving capacities and providing stimulating positive examples to other organizations. Among the challenges and needs are further training and professionalization seminars for migrant organizations and an ongoing exchange regarding mutual perspectives on and approaches to development. In terms of financial capacities, it was noted that some organizations lacked the necessary resources to make a successful application. A practical guide entitled 'Cooperating with Diaspora Communities' (GTZ, 2009) was published, summing up GTZ's experiences and recommendations.

4.2.3. Recommendations

13. In research and mapping exercises, the participation of diaspora members and groups is vital. This is likely to lead to a greater sense of ownership in relation to subsequent developments, as well as more accurate findings and analyses.

14. Searchable online databases of qualified professionals, diaspora organizations, and opportunities available for diaspora individuals and organizations represent a valuable tool for systematizing information and making it widely available, enabling network and facilitating selection processes. However, they require active and ongoing engagement by all involved parties to keep them updated and relevant.

15. Pilot projects are a great way of learning about how to facilitate the participation of diasporas in development and peacebuilding at relatively low levels of risk and with considerable opportunities for learning. However, they do require a long-term and intensive commitment. Otherwise, it is better to refrain from launching such projects to avoid raising false expectations and damaging trust-building processes between diaspora and external actors.

4.3. Strengthening Capacities

After a first phase of knowledge-building, activities most commonly engaged in by European actors tend to focus on strengthening the capacities of diaspora individuals and groups. This focus stems from an assumption that there are three important reasons for why there is only limited participation by diaspora individuals and groups: first, that these are often not professional development or peacebuilding actors and thus lack the capacity to engage efficiently; second, that diaspora groups are too fragmented and divided; and, third, that owing to their position as migrants, diaspora members often lack the necessary networks to access opportunities available in the country of settlement. Increased participation in peacebuilding and development is often seen as best achieved through capacity-building measures, along with the creation of umbrella organizations and networking opportunities. The Finnish Somalia Network provides an illustration of a network in Finland that encompasses all three (see Text Box 9).

4.3.1. Capacity-Building

It is important to note that, with few exceptions, the majority of diaspora organizations are run by volunteers. This has serious implications for what such organizations can achieve, as it means the amounts of time and resources they have available may be particularly limited (Horst, 2008; Terrazas, 2010). Furthermore, organizational skills, experience with development cooperation and peacebuilding, and knowledge of relevant structures in place in the country of settlement may also vary among these organizations. To address such constraints, a common focus in existing programming aimed at facilitating diaspora engagement is on capacity-building.

Numerous examples of capacity-building initiatives can be cited in this context. These include the activities of the Finnish Somalia Network (see Text Box 9), the 'Development School' available for diaspora organizations and other small-scale civil society organizations in Norway (see Text Box 10), or more targeted and individualized types of capacity-building, such as the proposal-development assistance provided by various organizations involved in the Linkis platform in the Netherlands (see Text Box 11). General courses are useful in providing basic introductions to the field of development cooperation or organizational management more generally. Furthermore, when they target mixed audiences and include representatives from both diaspora and non-diaspora CSOs, they often also provide good spaces for networking. Such general courses, however, are more difficult to gear towards the specific needs of all participants involved, who frequently are (also) in need of more targeted and individual support and for whom at times the language of instruction is also a hindrance.

Besides these initiatives focusing on project development and implementation in relation to development, there are others that focus specifically on peacebuilding. In the Netherlands, for example, various NGOs, CSOs and universities have established joint training programmes that offer peacebuilding-relevant tools targeted to the diaspora (Sinatti et al., 2010: 21). A peacebuilding training programme initiated by Oxfam Novib in 2002 and an international peace conference co-organized with various other organizations led to the establishment of the Multicultural

Text Box 9. Umbrella organizations as a tool for capacity-building and networking: the case of the Finnish Somalia Network

The Finnish Somalia Network was established in 2004 by Somali and native-Finnish NGOs/CSOs working on development in Somalia. It was hoped that the network would improve cooperation and coordination among associations working in Somalia, and facilitate the production and exchange of information on issues relating to the country. Among its activities, the network arranges training courses and seminars on issues that include project management, reporting, auditing and fundraising. Since 2005, it has received funding from Finland's Ministry for Foreign Affairs (MFA). The network can be regarded as a tool with which the MFA can provide capacity-building for and assist in empowering Somali associations (see Text Box 17). It is the only network of its kind in Finland, and no similar capacity-building measures have been set up or funded for other diaspora groups in Finland.

From 2004 to 2009, the network was coordinated by a large native-Finnish development NGO with projects in Somaliland. In 2009, the network registered itself as an association, and in 2010 a native Finn with a long research background on Somalia was employed as executive director, tasked with strengthening the network and securing future funding. The MFA hopes that the network will be able to stand on its own, without funding from the Ministry. Financial support for an additional three-year period was recently refused, as the initial funding was seen as temporary in nature and the MFA has stated that it does not have a suitable funding mechanism for ongoing support to this kind of network. The future of the network is thus uncertain, as it has only recently been registered and funding sources have not yet been secured.

In September 2010, there were 28 member associations in the network (25 Somali associations and three native-Finnish associations). Since the estimated number of functioning Somali associations in Finland is around 40–50 (Pirkkalainen, 2009), with many of these engaged in activities in Somalia, it is clear that not all Somali associations are members. Some Somali associations outside the network are suspicious of it and thus have not joined. Moreover, particularly in its first years, the network has not been easy to coordinate, owing to differences in expectations and preferences among the member organizations on, for example, how funds should be used.

In terms of the network's achievements, however, several points might be mentioned: first, the network has brought together Somali organizations from different regions of Somalia; second, training programmes arranged by the network have raised the capacities of member Somali associations, which has been reflected in a rise in the number of Somali associations accessing funding from the MFA; third, the network has helped to increase trust between Somali associations and the MFA, as well as between Somali associations themselves.

Women Peacemakers Network (see Text Box 14). The African Diaspora Policy Centre (ADPC) and the United Network of Young Peacebuilders (UNOY) have also conducted peacebuilding training programmes for many years. 'The courses not only allow diasporas to enhance their peacebuilding skills, but they also serve as an important opportunity for contact to be established between diaspora organizations and potential external collaborators' (Sinatti et al., 2010: 21).

Capacity-building is indeed a useful way of bridging the gap between diaspora organizations and mainstream development or peacebuilding actors. Training on organizational management, peacebuilding skills, leadership, and national bureaucratic procedures and requirements, etc., plays a valuable role in providing diaspora individuals and organizations with new or additional tools for organizing and engaging. At the same time, the value added of diaspora engagement often lies in diaspora organizations' access to better local knowledge, networks and legitimacy than is possible for many European actors, as well as in the tendency for diverse environments to be more dynamic as a result of the fact that 'outsiders' to a particular field may question what is often taken for granted by 'insiders'. This value added may be lost when capacity-building

Text Box 10. Capacity-building efforts in Norway: *Bistandsskolen*

The Norwegian Development Network *(Bistandstorget)* is a resource and competence network whose activities are targeted at its 76 members – a number of whom are small civil society organizations – as well as other actors in the field of development cooperation. One of its main aims is to increase levels of professional knowledge related to development work among its members and other relevant actors, and thus to increase the quality of development cooperation. In 2009, *Bistandstorget* started *Bistandsskolen* (the Development School): a series of weekend courses on the basics of professional development cooperation. The target group included diaspora organizations and small Norwegian voluntary organizations, with diaspora members ultimately making up roughly two-thirds of all participants. The main goal was to enable participants to develop good projects in collaboration with partners in the South, to apply for funds and subsequently report to the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (Norad), and to successfully implement their projects. Courses have been held on the following topics: introduction to development cooperation, the project cycle, financial management, measuring results and cross-cutting themes (gender, 'do no harm', environmental issues, corruption, etc.). The courses were funded by Norad and the Development Fund's Pilot Project Pakistan budget (see Text Box 2).

The initiative is now in its second year and has catered for about 35 representatives of diaspora organizations, including many Somalis. Participants have been particularly pleased with the ability to share experiences and get to know each other, and the atmosphere has generally been described as excellent. Having a mixed group of participants, drawn from both diaspora organizations and Norwegian organizations, has been viewed as particularly positive, as this created opportunities for networking and getting to know and respect each other. Room for improvement has been identified in the area of the content of the course, which participants did not always find relevant. This could possibly be improved through an assessment of training needs among small (diaspora) organizations, although the considerable variation in levels of experience among these voluntary organizations remains a challenge. A further challenge is that much of the free time that the individuals involved have is already spent on the work of their organizations, which limits the amount of time they can spend, for instance, on capacity-building.

training programmes are one-way endeavours, in which premises as to how things should be done are predefined and inflexible. There is also a risk of 'cloning' (Essed, 2002) mainstream development and peacebuilding practices, thus negating the value added of the promise of diversity in perspectives and approaches that diaspora participation holds out.

Castles & Delgado Wise (2008) argue that adopting perspectives from the South means questioning the dominant understanding of 'development' as a replication of the past trajectories of today's 'developed' countries. In addition, it means questioning conventional ways of measuring development – for example, in terms of growth of GDP per capita, which provides no insight into growing inequalities or local or regional transformative processes (Escobar, 1995). Willingness to engage diaspora members and organizations in development as equal partners might lead to redefinitions of some of the core principles of current aid practices (Horst, 2008).

Accordingly, capacity-building exercises may need to be redefined as knowledge-exchange exercises, ideally involving European governmental and nongovernmental actors, diasporas and local actors, since an open approach to what development or peacebuilding means locally and how they might best be achieved in a given context may be of benefit for all actors involved. In this way, any suggestion of a patronizing approach (De Haas, 2006: 92) is also avoided.

Text Box 11. Combining funding with capacity-building: the Dutch Linkis system

Established in 2004, Linkis is a digital information platform aimed at 'improving [the] involvement of citizens and small organizations in the field of development cooperation' (De Haas, 2006: 41). As well as listing opportunities for individuals wishing to engage in voluntary work within established organizations, Linkis assists smaller civil society organizations (both diaspora and non-diaspora) to identify the most suitable donors for their own project ideas. The participating funding organizations (Cordaid, Hivos, Impulsis, NCDO, Oxfam Novib, Wilde Ganzen) each have a Front Office dealing with funding requests and are free to set their own selection criteria. They provide contributions of up to a maximum of €100,000 per project.

Most of the funding organizations allocate part of their overall budgets to projects presented by diaspora organizations, therefore qualifying Linkis as the main funding channel by which the latter can secure resources for their activities. The involvement in Linkis of COS Nederland, moreover, allows civil society groups to benefit from assistance in developing their project proposals through services delivered throughout the country thanks to this organization's decentralized structure. Specific support targeted to the diaspora is also available thanks to the participation of two migrant organizations that have already established themselves as fully fledged NGOs (the Hindu organization Seva Network Foundation and the refugee-initiated *Stichting Mondiale Samenleving*). The Linkis website also allows users to navigate a database of small-scale projects that have already been funded.

An interesting alliance between different organizations, Linkis has benefitted from the previous expertise that many of its participating organizations had gained independently while setting up Front Offices of their own to provide funding and 'back office' assistance to accompany private initiatives in development cooperation. A number of lessons can be drawn from the Linkis experience. First, coordination between different funding organizations makes it much easier for diaspora and other civil society groups to know where to seek financial and other support. It also avoids the duplication and overlapping of initiatives from the viewpoint of donor organizations. Second, the combination of funding opportunities with tailored assistance and capacity-building measures has allowed many diaspora organizations to learn while simultaneously gaining direct hands-on experience.

Some of the most prominent funding organizations within Linkis (notably Cordaid, NCDO and Oxfam Novib) have also been working with migrant organizations through other channels, providing training and favouring the establishment of diaspora platforms and networks. Participation in Linkis has therefore allowed these organizations to develop an integrated approach that combines efforts aimed at diaspora empowerment and access to project funding, which enables diaspora organizations to build a track record. Some of the organizations involved in Linkis suggest that supporting diaspora projects has the added value of diversifying the reach of private initiatives, as other civil society organizations often find it unattractive to engage in, for example, countries affected by conflict and fields such as peacebuilding and reconciliation.

4.3.2. Networking Events

In most European countries, increased diaspora participation is tackled through a focus on networking. Migrant organizations are often at a disadvantage in terms of access to networks in countries of settlement, and networking events provide a valuable tool for addressing this and improving collaboration among scattered diaspora organizations. Such events are set up in different ways, sometimes as large-scale conferences and sometimes as much smaller forums for interaction. Conferences and seminars are organized by governmental and nongovernmental actors alike, as illustrated in the case of the German state North Rhine-Westphalia (see Text Box 12). Bringing people together around a certain topic is seen to create opportunities for them to exchange ideas and contacts. The next step is often to actually create networks of people or organizations that can cooperate in various ways.

Text Box 12. Regional conferences in North Rhine-Westphalia (NRW)

In the German state of North Rhine-Westphalia (NRW), the Unit for Migration and Development was commissioned by the Ministry for Intergenerational Affairs, Family, Women and Integration (MGFFI) to foster and accompany networking and empowerment processes among African diaspora and migrant organizations working on development-related issues by providing assistance, training seminars and exchange forums. In 2006, a first workshop was organized in Düsseldorf to bring together interested actors from NRW, and regional conferences followed in late 2006. Targeted actors included migrant organizations, development associations (*Eine-Welt-Initiativen*), universities, churches, charitable organizations and local councils.

The conferences were organized with a strong focus on participatory approaches, with small voluntary steering committees composed of interested local actors working together. In each region, the conferences have provided a platform for actors to get to know each other and examine areas of potential cooperation. The steering committees have also ensured follow-up processes in the aftermath of the conferences. This networking process was supported by the development of an interactive online directory for organizations and individuals looking for partners, events and information on Africa in NRW, available at http://www.afrika-nrw.de. Another vital pillar for this process was the identification of so-called diaspora multipliers – that is, renowned individuals with widespread access and acceptance among different diaspora communities and other actors. In 2007, a special training programme for multipliers was launched, covering fundraising, public relations, and project and association management.

Among the prime successes resulting from these activities was the establishment of regional African networking associations in different parts of NRW, initiated by diaspora members (e.g. *Deutsch-Afrikanisches Ruhr-Forum*, Afrikeyes, Afroedu). Another recent success that was partly supported through the networking activities was the inclusion of African representatives in the newly elected integration councils in ten cities/municipalities in early 2010. Among the challenges have been fluctuations in the memberships of several organizations, rivalries between voluntary and professional workers, and differences in motivations and objectives – for example, seeking to increase the visibility of African migrants in Germany vs. collaborating in development cooperation.

In collaboration with InWEnt, the Service Agency, the MGFFI, the *Stiftung Umwelt und Entwicklung* and local authorities, capacity seminars have been organized to improve the professional skills of organizations as an additional follow-up to the regional conferences. These seminars are in great demand among diaspora representatives and usually focus on formulating applications for funding, specifying a project's objectives and purpose, and generally understanding funding priorities and pertinent bureaucratic procedures. While these seminars clearly have a technical focus, they are also important networking events for overcoming barriers between African diaspora communities and other institutional actors.

Participating actors have argued that it is vital to involve diaspora actors already in the early stages of policy development to ensure that new programmes are tailored to their needs and capacities, as well as to prevent unrealistic expectations, redundancies and frustration. A specific added value of this initiative is its decentralized and participatory character, which allows actors to connect locally/regionally according to their own agendas and activities. However, considering the high expectations that might result from an initiative like this, it is important to make concrete offers and formulate clear objectives when initiating networking processes, as these can otherwise run the risk of becoming ends in themselves.

However, if such events are not followed up by other activities and more practice- or policy-oriented engagements, continuously organizing such events may be counterproductive, and diaspora members may become de-motivated if they see that events to exchange views do not lead to concrete outputs or next steps. The risk is that networking becomes an end in itself (see Text Box 12). Furthermore, when networking events are organized for or by the diaspora, it is often that case that few external actors participate, whereas when they are organized *on* diaspora participation, the participation of diaspora members is relatively limited. This limits the potential of these events as occasions for successful networking between governmental, nongovernmental and diaspora actors engaged or seeking to engage in peacebuilding and/or development cooperation.

There is more space for successful networking, however, in situations where people engage in shared competence-building or problem-solving activities. Such activities, including training sessions and consultation processes, are not necessarily set up as networking events, but may be very valuable for networking purposes when they involve mixed groups of people. In the case of *Bistandsskolen* (see Text Box 10), for example, participants consisted of both Norwegian and migrant organizations, and in the process of joint training programmes they learned a lot about each other and each other's work. Rather than engage in activities that target diaspora individuals or organizations, then, it may be more productive to engage in activities that are set up to benefit individuals or organizations with similar types of needs.

4.3.3. Umbrella Organizations: Representation and Empowerment?

The need for umbrella organizations is very commonly felt and expressed among European actors working with diaspora groups. There are two reasons for this: First, it is difficult to know whom to talk to and considered highly problematic to talk to all groups and individuals engaged separately. Second, there is an assumption that uniting in an umbrella structure requires greater coordination, leads to an organizing of dispersed efforts and increased cooperation, and thus allows small diaspora organizations to have a stronger voice in affairs that affect them.

Some European actors take a rather top-down approach and insist that diaspora organizations unite in umbrella structures. At other times, European actors engage in more bottom-up facilitation of diaspora-initiated processes whereby diaspora individuals and organizations seek to coordinate and/or combine their efforts. The first approach is generally informed mainly by the need of external actors to reduce the number of people and organizations they have to engage with, being a tool for representation and the dissemination of information (see Text Box 13). The second is generally more informed by an understanding that organizing in larger structures enables smaller organizations to achieve more. Initiatives come both from European actors and from diaspora communities (see Text Box 14).

Experience shows that top-down approaches often do not yield results and can even be harmful, as in the case of the creation of a Somali women's umbrella organization in Italy (see Text Box 5). A key question that needs to be addressed concerns which actors have common interests and goals and thus benefit from cooperating in an umbrella organization. Whereas the answer provided by external actors may be that 'diaspora organizations', 'African diaspora organizations' or 'Nigerian diaspora organizations' have common interests and goals, this may not in fact be the case. Often, attempts at creating umbrella structures are based on general categorizations like 'migrant', 'Muslim' or 'African' that seek to reduce the complex nature of people's identities to simple terms. Being an African migrant, for example, might not play a major role in a given individual's civic transnational engagement in setting up a maternity ward in a hospital, whereas being a doctor or a woman might.

Successful umbrella organizations, then, tend to arise in an organic fashion out of a realization of shared interests – as in the case of the Multicultural Women Peacemakers Network in the Netherlands (see Text Box 14). Furthermore, such organizations may be more successful when they clearly distinguish their own role from the roles of their members. Whereas individual diaspora organizations are largely developers and implementers of projects, umbrella organizations can

help them build their capacities, network and lobby around shared interests. Sometimes, it can be beneficial if the umbrella organization is not a diaspora umbrella organization but rather, for example, an umbrella organization for NGOs focusing on gender.

Text Box 13. The complexities of creating umbrella organizations: German experiences

In North Rhine-Westphalia (NRW), the first steps towards the creation of a state-wide umbrella association for the African diaspora were taken in 1999 with the conference 'Citizens of African Origin in NRW', which led to the establishment of the *Initiativkreis Afrika* (Working Group Africa) and later of the All-Africa Forum. The core objectives of the Forum were to represent the African migrant community vis-à-vis other actors, to promote the exchange of experiences and information among the different migrant organizations, and in the long run to establish some kind of representative body at the regional level (Oji, 2000: 134).

In 2005, the African diaspora umbrella organization *Afrikanischer Dachverband NRW* (ADV) was founded, in response to an initiative by the state's former integration commissioner. In its early stages, about 80 organizations were registered as members of the association. Currently, ADV has around 180 member associations, the majority originating from and/ or focusing on West and Central Africa. However, apart from offering advisory services to member organizations, ADV's ability to function as an umbrella organization has been severely limited by ongoing internal power conflicts and rivalries.

A major challenge appears to result from the gap between external actors' expectations and the rising political aspirations of several migrant representatives, on the one hand, and the voluntary nature and overall diversity of purposes, positions and objectives among migrant organizations, on the other. While functioning networks depend on long-term grass-roots commitment on the part of all actors and organizations involved, much of the momentum for the new umbrella organizations seems to have originated in a top-down manner from prominent political actors both at the state and at the federal level. In particular, governmental actors (e.g. ministries) prefer to collaborate with umbrella organizations that are able to represent larger networks and disseminate information among members.

While a more systematic form of collaboration might help heighten the profile and visibility of African migrants in public life and hence contribute to their empowerment, a large portion of African organizations are not interested in or willing to subscribe to an umbrella association. This may be because they prefer to remain independent in terms of their objectives and strategies, or due to limited personnel resources that are mostly invested into their project work. The heightened interest by external political actors has put too much emphasis on political representation and the creation of formalized structures, as well as raising expectations. Small-scale local or regional forms of cooperation, such as the 'Forum of Cultures Stuttgart', are more realistic and beneficial in terms of supporting voluntary organizations than top-down approaches to creating state-wide (political) representation that seeks to speak on behalf of a hugely diverse set of actors and communities.

Text Box 14. The Multicultural Women Peacemakers Network, the Netherlands

In the Netherlands, external actors have facilitated the establishment of a number of diaspora network and platform organizations. Among these, the Multicultural Women Peacemakers Network (MWPN) represents a positive experience that is particularly interesting on account of its peacebuilding focus. The MWPN was born out of a series of peacebuilding training sessions initiated by Oxfam Novib in 2002 and followed by an international peace conference co-organized by Oxfam Novib with the Women Peacemakers Programme of the International Fellowship of Reconciliation (IFOR), *Nederlands Expertisecentrum Alternatieven voor Geweld, Vrouwen voor Vrede Nederland* and *Vrouwen voor Vrede op de Molukken*. These events facilitated the establishment of links between diaspora women who were already active in peacebuilding in the Netherlands and were engaged in projects in their countries of origin, who formed a coordinating committee. The MWPN network was officially registered in the Netherlands in 2006, with a mission 'to work for genuine peace based on a just and non-violent resolution of [the] conflict, respect for human rights, and equal rights for men and women' (MWPN, 2010: 17). The MWPN acts as an umbrella organization and currently brings together 24 diaspora organizations representing a dozen different nationalities.

The MWPN works for the empowerment of women and their active participation in peace processes. Concretely, it tries to achieve these goals by (1) providing capacity-building training to its member organizations, as well as to women in the diaspora and in their countries of origin; (2) building bridges between women working for peace in the diaspora and in their countries of origin and stimulating the participation of women in politics and administration; and (3) lobbying for the implementation of UN Resolution 1325 by assisting countries in the definition, adoption and execution of national action plans. Today, it is among the organizations that are actively participating in the Working Group on the National Action Plan adopted in 2007 by the Dutch government. Alongside numerous activities organized in the Netherlands, the MWPN has held three peace conferences in the Philippines, Indonesia and Burundi. Similar initiatives are anticipated for Asia and the Horn of Africa.

Donors are keen to encourage diasporas to work together in the form of a network, consortium or federation, because sharing between organizations enables exchange of experiences and best practices, networking, and a stronger and more critical voice in lobbying and advocacy efforts. Not all attempts to establish diaspora network organizations in the Netherlands, however, have been as successful as the MWPN. According to one interview partner, a network is only 'as strong as its weakest member', and it is essential that there is true ownership and genuine commitment around a unifying goal. In the case of the MWPN, gender has been a strongly binding source of commitment for all members. Among other success factors for the MWPN has been the clear division of roles and responsibilities between the network and member organizations, which has ensured that the network has not become a new organization competing for the same resources: members work directly on their own country cases insofar as this requires knowledge of the context and situation, and the network is responsible for cross-cutting events, such as large conferences or public debates.

Over time and thanks to the initial and ongoing support of various different organizations and individuals, the MWPN has managed to establish itself in its field. Having reached a key stage in its development, however, the MWPN now faces the challenge of entering the peacebuilding arena in a fuller way. Whereas it clearly has a good track record with various donors who have provided assistance in building the organization's capacity, it now aims to establish itself on a par with NGOs that are already active in the peacebuilding field.

4.3.4. Recommendations

16. Capacity-building is an important aspect of facilitating participation in peacebuilding and development. It can best be handled through a combination of training and opportunities to apply the skills acquired through such training, for example through access to funding. Capacity-building is best approached by understanding it as a process of knowledge-exchange between all actors involved.

17. Umbrella organizations should be created first and foremost because of the shared interests of the member organizations, not because of the needs of external actors. Accordingly, bottom-up approaches with support from external actors are more appropriate than top-down approaches. Organizations created from such bottom-up approaches should first be centred around an internal pragmatic objective before seeking to extend their activities to political lobbying.

18. The best networking opportunities are those where people actively engage, rather than just listen. Accordingly, conferences may not represent the best approach to networking, whereas targeting both diaspora and other small civil society organizations in capacity-building exercises may create much more effective networking forums.

4.4. Establishing Development and Peacebuilding Projects

Besides creating knowledge and strengthening technical and organizational capacities, there are other types of activity that focus on cooperation in the actual establishment of projects. There are various aspects to this, including the selection of cooperation partners, identifying what funding mechanisms are available and temporary return schemes. Whereas previous sections have included a focus on both diaspora organizations and individuals, this section primarily focuses on initiatives targeting diaspora organizations, who are the main actors in implementing development projects.

4.4.1. Selection Procedures

Attempts to select diaspora groups or individuals to support, cooperate with, consult, etc., are complex for two main reasons. First, European government and nongovernmental actors often feel they lack sufficient knowledge to establish who among the various groups and individuals are most qualified. Interaction has largely been limited or is very recent, and official selection criteria are often not met. Experiences from Oxfam Novib, GTZ, Cordaid and elsewhere indicate that extensive interaction over a long period of time is needed for relevant parties to get to know and trust one another. This is complicated by the fact that individuals involved on both sides, but particularly among European governmental and to some extent nongovernmental actors, by and large do not work in the same position or engage in the same role for similarly long periods of time.

Second, selection is a very political process, as it provides some people and organizations with access to certain resources and networks, while excluding others. Particularly owing to the high level of fragmentation observed in diaspora groups, and especially those from conflict regions (see Section 3.2), this may create problems in relationships with parts of the community. Selection thus ideally requires a good understanding of existing internal divisions within the community, particularly if actors are to successfully predict what impacts they might expect as a result of their actions. However, such an understanding is difficult, if not impossible, to obtain for European governmental and nongovernmental actors dealing with diaspora groups with which they have not established long-term relationships, particularly those dealing with a wide variety of diaspora groups.

Although there is no easy solution to this issue, a general rule of thumb may be that the more open the procedures and the higher the degree of participation by a wide range of diaspora members throughout the process, the less likely it is that problems will arise. While it is not uncommon to rely on one or two individuals within a given community to assist in making a selection, such an approach is best avoided (see Text Box 15). The main selection criteria should be determined by the European actors' requirements for engaging in support provision, cooperation and consultation. Accordingly, the most qualified individuals and groups need to be identified through an open and transparent procedure (Sinatti 2010).

Text Box 15. Handling the selection process: evidence from two initiatives led by institutional actors in Italy

When engaging diaspora members in development activities, institutional actors and public authorities often face a delicate and important phase during the process of selecting which stakeholders are to be involved. In Italy, this process has been conducted in different ways. One example is provided by the project 'Gender and Peace in Somalia: Implementation of Resolution 1325', where the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) encouraged a few select Somali women to further engage the Somali diaspora in peacebuilding in Somalia (see Text Box 5). This initiative was criticized, especially by others members of the diaspora, as the selection process lacked transparent criteria and also had involved the appointing of leaders, and thus had legitimized some individuals/organizations rather than others.

A second example is provided by the IOM's 'MIDA–Somalia' project, which is managed by the IOM's regional office in Rome and funded by the Italian MFA. This project aims at mobilizing Somali women's diaspora associations towards development projects in Somaliland. The first phase of the project produced background research information and mapped women's organizations in several Italian cities (Milan, Rome, Torino, Naples and Florence), organizing consultation meetings with potentially interested diaspora members. The second phase, which started in May 2010, includes networking, empowering and capacity-building activities.

A mapping exercise was carried out through a cooperation agreement with a respected Italian NGO. This organization has good connections with the Somali diaspora, has been historically present in Somalia managing various development projects, and knows the context and current situation. Both the IOM and the MFA learned from the problems experienced during the earlier initiative on engaging Somali women, and they realized that it would be essential for the success of this project to pay attention to the issues exposed in the first case, as the second initiative was perceived as a continuation of the first.

For the IOM, it thus became fundamental to acknowledge difficulties in the selection of partners, and to lead the process by building new trustworthy relationships with Somali actors. These are extremely time-consuming processes, which have however proven crucial for the IOM's ability to conduct the work.

4.4.2. Funding Schemes

In most countries, there exist funding schemes for initiatives in development cooperation and, to a lesser extent, peacebuilding.[8] Most often, diaspora organizations are expected to access these, as is the case in Finland (see Text Box 17). As diaspora organizations find it extremely difficult to access such funding (Sinatti et al., 2010: 32), however, there are often extra measures installed to facilitate the process. Such measures might include general capacity-building training and networking events, as well as the provision of more customized support in relation to application writing and such. Often, support that is more customized to specific needs comes with separate funding streams. Here, the examples from GTZ's pilot programme (see Text Box 8) and Pilot Project Pakistan in Norway (see Text Box 2) are illustrative. In both cases, employees from mainstream organizations provided support in the application phase, as well as in later phases, within a funding scheme that included project development and implementation specifically targeting diaspora organizations. As illustrated by the case of the Finnish Somalia Network (see Text Box 9), the ultimate goal is often to enable organizations to access regular nongovernmental funding schemes.

Ways in which funding schemes for development cooperation are arranged vary considerably from country to country. In the case of Italy, development cooperation and its related funding is highly decentralized (see Text Box 16), while in other cases, such as in the Netherlands, related

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[8] Examples in this section mainly refer to development cooperation.

arrangements are far more centralized. While the actual source from which an organization receives its funding ultimately may not matter so much for its activities, what is important is how much information is available among diaspora organizations on what funding options exist and how they might access this funding. The Dutch Linkis scheme (see Text Box 11) provides an example of a system whereby information on both funding opportunities and capacity-building opportunities is systematically available to small-scale civil society organizations, including diaspora organizations.

Text Box 16. Decentralized cooperation: the cases of the province of Trento and the municipality of Milan

In the Italian province of Trento, the recent development of NGOs and associations has been the result of efforts by local authorities aimed at enhancing diaspora participation in development. The Province of Trento, for example, established a dedicated budget for financing decentralized cooperation activities with third countries (Mezzetti & Ferro, 2008). By law, 0.25% of the regional budget is annually devoted to international cooperation, which in 2009 amounted to € 10 million for development and € 200,000 for emergency interventions. NGOs and associations wishing to implement development/peacebuilding projects can apply for funding under this budget by following specific guidelines and completing a one-off registration procedure that certifies the capacity of the organization to operate at the international/transnational level. Diaspora associations and professional diaspora NGOs have also been encouraged by the local authority to actively participate in the annual call and have been provided with start-up funding and training initiatives for their eventual empowerment. Trento's laudable diaspora-engagement model has in fact generated a range of diaspora NGOs that directly apply for local government funding and implement development and peacebuilding projects in their countries of origin. Successful examples come from diaspora groups from Guinea-Bissau, Côte d'Ivoire, Togo, Brazil and the Balkan region.

In 2007–08, the municipality of Milan launched a three-year programme on co-development for co-funding projects developed by diaspora organizations towards their countries of origin, with the aim of simultaneously sustaining initiatives that have an impact on migrants' integration processes in their places of residence. Two calls for proposals have been realized between 2007 and 2010, with an overall budget of over € 2 million. Organizations were expected to provide 30% of the funding: 10% in cash, 10% through labour, and 10% through overhead costs. Following the first round, the municipality decided to organize a training course on how to draft projects and how to manage associations, with the aim of empowering diaspora organizations that had good project ideas but little capacity to translate ideas into projects. The municipality funded diaspora organizations directly, but it also tried to favour – as a guarantee factor but also in a broader cooperation approach/vision – partnerships with autochthonous NGOs, universities and the private sector, as well as with diaspora organizations operating at the transnational level.

In the first call for proposals, two projects on Somalia were presented by diaspora organizations but were not financed. In the second call for proposals (2009–10), one project has been funded that was presented by a Somali diaspora organization in partnership with an Italian NGO that has competence in the relevant area and a history of activity in Somalia. The Somali diaspora organization participated in the training/capacity-building course that followed the first call, demonstrating how the empowering exercise resulted in upgrading this diaspora organization's ability to build strategic partnerships and alliances.

Another issue of importance in connection with funding is the question of co-funding requirements. Most mainstream funding schemes require participating organizations to raise some of their funding themselves. Usually, the amount required is in the range of 10–15% of the total funding for a project. In diaspora-specific funding schemes, however, the percentage is often much higher; indeed, in GTZ's pilot programme and Pilot Project Pakistan, the figure was 50% in both cases. The justification given for this is that many extra resources are required for facili-

tating diaspora participation in development, such as the resources required to build capacities. However, capacity-building and other types of support are also often provided to non-diaspora organizations, so this argument is debatable. In any case, there are often differences in how the requisite amount is to be provided: in the case of the GTZ pilot, 40% of the own contribution (in other words, 20% of the total costs) could be provided through voluntary work, which was not the case for Pilot Project Pakistan, where participants were expected to provide a 50% cash contribution.

Text Box 17. Accessing mainstream funding: the case of Finnish MFA–NGO development funding

In Finland, there are no specific and diversified diaspora-funding structures. All the examples of diaspora engagement in peace and development work that we identified took place within existing mainstream structures. Somali diaspora organizations, for example, compete with native-Finnish NGOs/CSOs when trying to gain access to development-related project funding from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA). Within this system, project proposals from all NGOs/CSOs are evaluated on the same basis. Those with the best project proposals and implementing capacity get funding, and there is no separate quota for diaspora associations.

Since 2000, some Somali associations have received funding for small development projects in Somalia. The Somali diaspora is particularly proactive and engages in networking with external actors more extensively than many other diaspora groups in Finland. Over the past couple of years, the NGO Development Unit at the MFA has received a large number of development project applications from Somali diaspora organizations relative to applications from other diaspora groups (such as Kurdish, Ethiopian and Ghanaian organizations). The success of some Somali diaspora organizations in accessing MFA development funding has been the result of their improved capacities in writing high-quality applications and their experience of running projects in a professional manner.

The problem from the MFA's point of view has been the limited capacities of Somali diaspora organizations when it comes to the demanding bureaucratic procedures associated with running associations and development projects. However, in recognition of the potential of Somali associations to deliver aid to places that are difficult for other actors to access, the MFA provided support to the Finnish Somalia Network in the period 2005–10 (see Text Box 9). The network can be seen as a capacity-building measure for associations (see also the case of *Bistandsskolen*, in Text Box 10). In addition, the development of capacities is to some extent facilitated by existing networks of Somali organizations. Somalis have been active in contacting officials at the MFA, showing their motivation to be engaged in development processes in Somalia, and they have also networked with other actors, such as NGOs and individual development professionals.

However, accessing external funding and running projects require considerable efforts from individuals active in organizations in terms of time, commitment, motivation, resources and networks. Although there are many examples of Somali associations that have developed their capacities and work in a professional manner, only a few Somali organizations are able to function in the long run. Many organizations are set up, but as they largely depend on the efforts of specific individuals, many cease to exist over time, when activists lose their motivation or have less time available. Moreover, it is important to note that even though some Somali diaspora associations have accessed Finland's mainstream funding system directly and have benefitted from capacity-building measures, the specific projects funded represent only a small share of the total budget line of the MFA. Most organizations receiving funding are native-Finnish NGOs, and the amounts Somali organizations have received are rather small compared to those received by native-Finnish NGOs.

> **Text Box 18. The value added of returnees: the case of the Italian NGO COSPE and the Somali NGO IIDA**
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> COSPE, an Italian NGO based in Tuscany, developed a long-term engagement strategy with members of the Somali diaspora in Italy. COSPE's intervention in Somalia can be traced back to an explicit request from a Somali woman who was living and studying in Italy during the early 1990s. At the time, this woman was active both socially and politically within Italy, but when civil war erupted in Somalia she felt she had to help her people and returned to live in Somalia, where she co-founded the NGO IIDA Women's Development Organization-Somalia in 1991. IIDA was launched in partnership with COSPE, and continues to cooperate both with COSPE and other international and local partners. Joint activities ranges from development work and emergency assistance to facilitating the political engagement of women from the Somali diaspora in Somalia's fragile political setting. In 2007, a related organization, IIDA-Italy, was established in Italy.
>
> Two important elements of the relationship between COSPE and IIDA should be highlighted. The first relates to the role of returnees in establishing initiatives that can act as a bridge between the country of origin and residence, especially in terms of social networks, ties and alliances. Returnees are able to understand two different country contexts simultaneously, and thus bring to organizations the social capital they have established both 'here' and 'there'.
>
> A second noteworthy element is that, in this relationship, key decisions are taken and the agenda is determined in Somalia by IIDA-Somalia, while COSPE provides a supporting role for the Somali NGO. Similarly, IIDA-Italy – which is administratively autonomous from the 'mother' organization – is not perceived by governmental and nongovernmental institutions in Italy as a diaspora organization, but rather as a branch of IIDA-Somalia that supports and enhances the mother organization's work.

4.4.3. Temporary Return Programmes

Many European NGOs nowadays work through local partners and require diaspora organizations to do the same – either to work with existing local partners, such as village associations, educational institutions, hospitals or municipalities (GTZ, 2009: 9), or to create an organizational branch in the country of origin. The diaspora organizations are then expected to support their local partners transnationally, with funding and advice, as well as through occasional field visits. While these types of diaspora engagements mainly take place transnationally, from the country of settlement, others are based on the idea of temporary return. Temporary return programmes often focus on knowledge-transfer by members of the diaspora. The GTZ pilot programme, for example, mainly supported the transfer of knowledge and skills from a diaspora to local partners (see Text Box 8), and such activities are often seen as providing a valuable contribution to development processes in the country of origin.

(Temporary) return is valuable for a number of reasons and takes place both with and without the support of external actors. Text Box 18 describes the case of a returnee from Italy who set up an NGO in Somalia while maintaining close cooperation with an Italian NGO. Interestingly, more recently an Italian branch of the Somali organization has been established by Somalis and Italians living in the Italian city where the returnee formerly resided. Transnational engagement of this type, which is triggered by return, has so far received much less attention than transnational engagement conducted while in exile. While it is very interesting to see how returnees can make use of networks they established while in Europe, return is often an extremely complex process and a sensitive topic for immigrants. Activities that aim to facilitate the participation of diasporas in their countries of origin and that have permanent return as their main objective are thus highly problematic. While temporary return for professional purposes is often an interesting option for those who have obtained citizenship and are interested in finding ways of contributing to their country of origin, this is not necessarily the case for those without legal security in the country of settlement.

Text Box 19. The UNDP/IOM QUESTS-MIDA project for temporary return

The international community's most comprehensive initiative in relation to the temporary return of qualified Somalis from the diaspora is the QUESTS-MIDA project, which is jointly implemented by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the International Organization for Migration (IOM). Formally launched in 2009, this initiative builds on the experiences of the former UNDP QUESTS project (2004–08), while integrating the IOM's operational and diaspora-outreach capabilities. Like its predecessor, QUESTS-MIDA is part of UNDP Somalia's wider Governance Programme, and more specifically the latter's Somalia Institutional Development Project (SIDP). It is also part of the IOM's 'migration for development' programme in Somalia.

QUESTS-MIDA seeks to support capacity-building efforts in priority institutions across Somalia through the temporary return and placement of highly educated and experienced Somali nationals from the diaspora, especially in the fields of public policy, human resources and financial management. To achieve its goals, the project endeavours to assess human resources limitations in Somalia and at the same time to reach out to the diaspora to recruit qualified candidates for specifically advertised vacancies. These positions are identified jointly by UNDP, the IOM and relevant local authorities in Somalia, and advertised at the project's website (www.quests-mida.org). The IOM manages a database of skilled applicants and maintains communication with the assistance of a global diaspora liaison desk.

Since its initiation, the project has actively sought to overcome some of the weaknesses identified in the previous QUESTS phase (2004–08) in relation to the transparency of recruitment processes, the attractiveness of remuneration packages for selected experts, and the breadth of the outreach strategy. As a result, the response from the Somali diaspora has been encouraging, and an enhanced sense of trust between the diaspora and the implementing agencies now exists. Expressions of interest have been received from Somali nationals in more than 100 countries. And, for the first 18 positions advertised, more than 300 applications were formally submitted. The project's website has received over 70,000 visits in 12 months. To date, the QUESTS-MIDA project has facilitated the temporary return of a total of 18 experts from the USA, Finland, the UK, Canada, Switzerland and Sweden.

Parallel to its successes, the project has also faced obstacles inherent in the complex dynamics of diaspora communities. In particular, the limited number of Somali nationals with the relevant professional experience required for participation in the project, especially in the area of public administration, limits the number of return assignments and the overall impact of the project. In addition, the fact that Somali diaspora members are usually not organized along professional lines tends to complicate the outreach process.

UNDP and the IOM actively support individuals who wish to return temporarily to contribute to their country of origin – *inter alia*, through the QUESTS programme (see Text Box 19). Similar programmes run by other organizations give diaspora members a chance to return to their countries of origin on a temporary basis in order to provide professional support within a range of sectors. Such programmes are not just about the contributions diaspora members can make: they also offer excellent opportunities for exchange. Particularly for individuals who have not lived in their countries of origin for some time, such programmes provide an opportunity to reconnect while sharing knowledge with local colleagues. At the same time, return is both an emotionally and practically challenging process. As a consequence, temporary return programmes for professionals do not always have the results originally expected.

From the Somali diaspora itself, the IOM receives occasional messages of frustration from prospective participants who regard either the number or the type of vacancies published as insufficient. Many believe that the focus on a limited number of professional fields limits participation, since there are large numbers of highly skilled or technically trained Somalis in the diaspora who are successful professionals in fields not yet included in the project – for example,

health and education. Also, youth in the diaspora feel left out since relevant work experience is a primary requirement. These issues are signs of natural limitations in the project, but also confirm the level of interest that the project has generated throughout the diaspora. In response, the IOM is facilitating return assignments to Somalia for different types of professionals through other migration and development projects.

4.4.4. Recommendations

19. Selection procedures should be as participatory, open and transparent as possible. Selection criteria should be based on the level of competence or qualification needed to do a certain job, rather than on a wish to avoid conflicts within the diaspora over the selection.

20. There are a number of reasons why European actors often prefer not to create separate funding mechanisms for diaspora organizations. If diaspora organizations are expected to apply for funding through mainstream funding mechanisms, considerable resources should be devoted to reducing the barriers that diaspora organizations currently face in this process. At a minimum, this would include making information more readily available and providing customized support to organizations. Here, the Dutch Linkis system provides a good example (see Text Box 11).   In addition, a system in which a certain percentage of funding is reserved for diaspora organizations may be considered as a way of overcoming initial underrepresentation.

21. Temporary and circular return programmes are excellent ways of allowing diaspora members to contribute their expertise to the betterment of their countries of origin, as well as providing opportunities for knowledge-exchange and reconnection with those countries. Participation in such programmes must be voluntary.

4.5. Inclusion of Diaspora in Mainstream Development and Peacebuilding

Activities aimed at facilitating the participation of diaspora individuals and groups in development and peacebuilding usually start from the assumption that diasporas generally do not participate in these fields. However, as Figure 2 illustrates, diaspora individuals and organizations are involved in development cooperation and peacebuilding independently of initiatives to engage them – such as when collective remittances are used to support the provision of education in Senegal or when Somali professors return to their country of origin to help set up a new university. The inclusion of diasporas in mainstream development and peacebuilding starts from existing discourses on development and peacebuilding and our understanding of what these concepts refer to. It is crucial to recognize diaspora contributions as civic contributions, as contributions individuals make as citizens of their countries of settlement, rather than as contributions that stand apart from 'real development' activities – for example, because they are (assumed to be) directed at kin, townsmen, or the region or country from which a particular individual comes.

The previous sections have shown that European actors who wish to facilitate the participation of diasporas in development and peacebuilding tend to focus on knowledge creation, along with capacity-building for diaspora organizations. Genuine involvement of diasporas in mainstream development aid and peacebuilding engagements, however, remains limited (Sinatti et al., 2010: 33). 'Currently, diasporas are considered as "resources" or "tools" for the development of their countries of origin and not as genuine partners' (Groot & Gibbons, cited in Sinatti et al., 2010: 33.) Accordingly, in this section we discuss areas in which achievements have been less: genuine partnerships among CSOs and/or NGOs in project development and implementation, as well as recruitment and consultation processes in mainstream European development cooperation and peacebuilding.

4.5.1. Partnerships in Project Development and Implementation

When looking at the level of participation of diasporas in development and peacebuilding projects, one important question to ask is 'Who does what?' In other words: How are tasks divided when it comes to who provides the funding? Who develops the project? Who implements it? And who generally makes the main decisions? A further question then arises: 'Who sets the development agenda?' There is typically considerable variation in the level of participation in the different stages – ranging, for example, from situations where European actors fund a project that is developed and implemented by diaspora organizations, with minimal cooperation and exchange, to instances where there is much more collaboration and learning between the partners.

Figure 2 shows that activities in which external actors and diaspora members participate together in development and/or peacebuilding can be initiated by either group. In reality, it is often difficult to distinguish who initiates what. Text boxes 20–22 provide examples of initiatives in which there has been considerable cooperation between diaspora and non-diaspora partners in Europe. The first concerns Finnish Somalis who, rather than creating their own organization, teamed up with small existing Finnish organizations to implement projects in Somalia. What is noteworthy here is how Finnish Somalis developed a range of strategies to secure resources that would enable them to work in Somalia. And, it is largely because of the high level of proactivity among Somalis in Finland that a number of projects and cooperations have materialized in that country (Mezzetti et al., 2010; Pirkkalainen, 2009).

Text Box 20. Alternative strategies: involvement of Somali individuals in small voluntary CSOs in Finland

In Finland, a number of Somali individuals have rather innovatively aimed to have diaspora-initiated projects incorporated within the activities of Finnish CSOs. They have chosen not to create their own associations to pursue the common path to funding (as described in Text Box 17), opting instead for a different way of accessing NGO funding from Finland's Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA). There are cases of individuals who have initiated projects within or brought their project ideas to existing native-Finnish CSOs or intercultural organizations. In all identified cases, these were small voluntary-based CSOs rather than large professional NGOs.

The first project of this kind, funded through the MFA, started in 2003. In the few identified cases, Somali individuals have been active in approaching existing associations, and cooperation has been based on tight and trusted personal relationships between native Finns and Somalis. Coordinating development projects in Somalia in collaboration with a well-established association that has a sound organizational structure can prove to be more beneficial than starting up one's own association. The last option often requires considerable efforts in terms of fulfilling the bureaucratic requirements related to managing an association and raising one's own funding that are stipulated as conditions for receiving MFA funding.

This sort of strategy has furthermore been successful because many small voluntary-based CSOs see an added value in involving diasporas in their work. In many cases, the active native Finns in the organizations concerned stated that without Somalis they would not be working in Somalia at all – not only for security reasons but also for lack of local contacts. The case is different for larger professional development NGOs that have international branches and local offices in developing countries.

The second example (Text Box 21) describes a smaller Italian NGO that recruited a Somali organization to provide healthcare services it could not provide itself, while the final example describes how CARE Netherlands, a large NGO with considerable experience, implemented an initiative in partnership with the Somali diaspora organization NedSom. This project was aimed at strengthening local capacities in Somalia by enabling Somali-Dutch professionals to return to Somalia to work with local governmental, nongovernmental and commercial actors. Of these three examples, one is diaspora-initiated, one is initiated by a small (Italian) CSO, and one jointly by a large (Dutch) NGO in collaboration with a diaspora organization. Since such partnerships are relatively rare, evaluating them properly is crucial, and process tracing should be considered. In this way, lessons learned focus not just on the development or peacebuilding impacts of the projects, but also on the levels and practices of cooperation between diaspora and external actors.

Text Box 21. When Somalis do the technical part: Stella Bianca

When approaching the Somali diaspora, Western institutions commonly believe that what Somalis need is increased professionalism. However, while capacity-building programmes are undoubtedly useful for many Somalis, there are also cases where the technical part of a development project has been implemented – and at times funded directly – by Somali diaspora organizations themselves. This has been the case with the NGO Stella Bianca, which is based in Alessandria (Piemonte Region), Italy.

Stella Bianca was established by and is composed of many Somalis who came to Italy as medical doctors in the post-independence period. From the very start of its existence, Stella Bianca has collaborated with a non-diaspora NGO from Trento, Water for Life (WFL), by assisting the WFL health programme in Ayuub village. Ayuub village is an orphan-care centre that was set up by WFL with the help of Maana Sultan, a charismatic Somali woman from Merca. Today, Ayuub represents an oasis of peace in devastated Somalia, with its modern governance systems, water facilities and a school for thousands of children. The development of a health system in Ayuub is part of WFL's development strategy, and Stella Bianca has recently been asked to take full responsibility for funding and implementing Ayuub's village health programme.

So far, Stella Bianca has built a health post in Ayuub that is able to perform first aid and emergency surgery for women and children in the area. In addition, Stella Bianca is committed to funding the running costs of Ayuub's health facility, including the salaries of the medical personnel working there, and to equipping the structure with advanced medical facilities.

4.5.2. Recruitment

Often, the composition of European governmental and nongovernmental institutions working on development and peacebuilding does not reflect the contemporary composition of European societies. Among academics, consultants, practitioners and policymakers, there is considerable underrepresentation of Europeans with migrant backgrounds from the regions in which development and peacebuilding projects are implemented. This may be related to the general constraints that migrants face in finding work, yet levels of underrepresentation seem particularly acute in these fields. Among possible reasons for this may be that dominant understandings of development, discussed in Section 4.3.1, make it less likely that European actors can see beyond migrants as 'objects' of development and/or peacebuilding policies.

Furthermore, there is a concern with what some practitioners term the 'paradox of proximity', that is, the phenomenon whereby closeness to a region means greater knowledge but often also a lack of objectivity. A number of European actors are of the opinion that efforts must be made to ensure that staff members – both diaspora as well as non-diaspora – are sufficiently distanced from the context in which they are working to avoid excessive involvement in local dynamics. In this sense, some organizations are willing to utilize migrant staff as a valuable resource for providing colleagues with advice and information on the local context rather than giving them responsibility for projects related to their countries of origin. As noted earlier, the assumption that individuals cannot be neutral if they are dealing with their own countries of origin, especially if the country concerned lies in the global South, is highly problematic. Trust-building processes take a long time and are often influenced by levels of integration (Païvi, Mezzetti & Guglielmo forthcoming).

Recruitment of diaspora individuals brings value added to existing development actors. A healthy diversity in terms of cultural and religious identities within an organization is often seen to be in line with the international nature of development work itself. It also allows cultural bridges to be crossed more easily. The ease of contact with other diaspora organizations, as well as with communities in the home countries, that this permits is also often seen as an advantage. It is widely recognized that one of the basic requirements if a diaspora to effectively bring value added is that its contribution must be professional. In this sense, Cordaid's recruitment policy (see Text

Text Box 22. Care Nederland and NedSom: the experience of the Diaspora Partnership Programme

Running from February 2006 to August 2008, with financial support from the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Diaspora Partnership Programme (DPP) was jointly developed and implemented by CARE Nederland and the Somali diaspora organization NedSom. The project aimed to contribute to the establishment of a peaceful and secure society in Somalia through the involvement of members of the Dutch-Somali diaspora in the reconstruction of their country. This aim was achieved by strengthening the capacity of local partners (government, private sector, NGO and CSOs), and linking them to suitably qualified individuals from the Somali diaspora who returned temporarily to Somaliland and Puntland.

According to the external evaluation conducted after the conclusion of the project, the DPP was successful in increasing the involvement of the Somali diaspora in rehabilitation and development thanks to the transfer of skills and knowledge, as well as the provision of technical assistance, to a wide range of organizations. CARE Nederland's relationships with Somali diaspora organizations was also reported to have benefitted from the project, as the organization was able to rely on the efforts already undertaken by NedSom to break the barriers of clan divisions when publicizing the programme among the Somali diaspora community and selecting candidates for temporary return.

The project yielded results that were effective beyond its 30-month duration, as more than 30% of the participants were found to be still living and working in Somaliland or Puntland after the project's completion. In addition, some beneficiary organizations found that the involvement of the diaspora in the region favoured the establishment of more durable and stable links with potential partners and donors in Europe. More importantly, however, the project offered a testing ground for collaboration on an equal footing between a traditional NGO and a diaspora organization. This partnership did not always work smoothly and was described by both parties as a mutual learning encounter in which organizational and cultural differences led to mismatches in hopes and expectations that were often not made explicit. Both organizations, however, showed a willingness to be flexible in responding to these challenges, as well as in taking up the many opportunities offered by the DPP. In particular, partnership with CARE allowed the diaspora organization a unique opportunity to access funding and resources for a relatively large-scale project with a budget of over € 750,000.

Despite the huge innovative potential represented by this programme and the explicit recommendation contained in the final evaluation that new projects should build on this experience, the DPP has remained without a follow-up. It is hoped that other partnerships of this kind may be established between existing NGOs and diaspora organizations, enabling further evaluation of the value added offered by such collaboration.

Box 23) can be seen as a long-term diaspora-empowerment measure that has led to the birth of a diaspora development organization with professional standards.

Another example is provided by CrossOver, a programme that was initiated in 2006 by PSO, an association of 60 Dutch development organizations that focuses on developing the capacities of CSOs and NGOs. The CrossOver programme aims at enhancing diversity within organizations working in the development sector through the provision of funding, advice and coaching. In particular, the programme has earmarked specific funds for posting migrants to projects in the South, and migrants are currently assigned to posts in Uganda, Ethiopia, Brazil and Kosovo to provide capacity-building and support to local NGOs. An evaluation of CrossOver (Broekhuis and Nijenhuis 2009) was extremely positive. The main adjustment suggested, and later implemented with the approval of all parties involved, involved merging the separate funding flows for migrant organizations and PSO member organizations, many of which are non-diaspora NGOs.

Text Box 23. Recruitment as a diaspora-empowerment strategy:
Cordaid and SEVA Network Foundation

A number of mainstream Dutch NGOs have adopted active internal recruitment policies that favour the employment of candidates with a diaspora background. On the basis of the long-term nature of its experience, Cordaid offers particularly interesting insight into the possible long-term effects of similar staff policies.

Cordaid has a history of collaborating with diaspora organizations that dates back to the 1980s, when cooperative activities were established with Dutch Hindu and Muslim migrants. At the time, the diaspora association Himos was allocated a space within Cordaid's offices, allowing the two organizations to work together and giving diaspora individuals an opportunity to 'learn the trade' and acquire relevant skills. At a certain point, however, the need for Himos to remain a separate unit was questioned, and its staff was integrated into Cordaid's, which adopted an explicit diversity policy. For 10–12 years, this allowed individuals with a diaspora background to support migrant initiatives from within Cordaid, until some expressed a desire to develop a separate constituency and find their own way. In 2002, Cordaid therefore started supporting the establishment of SEVA Network Foundation, a Hindu-based organization with a mission to reduce poverty and to encourage socioeconomic emancipation of disadvantaged groups. Since its initial foundation, SEVA has grown considerably and has become an established actor on the Dutch development scene. The organization has also gained direct access to structural funds available to development-cooperation organizations in the Netherlands, therefore earning recognition as a fully fledged diaspora-initiated NGO (de Haas, 2006). SEVA's successful experience was made possible thanks to the strong mobilizing capacity of its founder, a skill that may not be easily replicable.

Although other organizations have pursued recruitment strategies similar to those of Cordaid, workers with a migrant background still remain underrepresented within the Dutch development sector. In addition, SEVA's desire to become an autonomous organization shows that inviting migrants to 'do development' according to the established ways of external development actors may thwart the independence of diaspora agendas. Cordaid's experience also shows that in order to promote an autonomous role for the diaspora in development through recruitment, long-term investment is required.

Interestingly, recruitment is not always a one-way activity in which diaspora individuals or organizations are recruited by European actors. Diaspora organizations also consider making use of European actors in ways that go beyond networking and cooperation. In Italy, for example, a number of diaspora organizations recruited Italian directors with considerable expertise in development cooperation in order to benefit from their knowledge and networks (see Text Box 24). In general, mainstreaming diaspora organizations also involves ensuring that these organizations are no longer seen purely as diaspora organizations. Having a staff and/or membership that includes both Europeans and non-Europeans encourages this process.

4.5.3. Consultation Processes

Another crucial step in mainstreaming diaspora engagement in peacebuilding and development has to do with where European actors turn when they need advice on their organizations and projects. Board members and membership of advisory committees are crucial in this context, and here again we find diaspora members underrepresented (see Text Box 2 on Pilot Project Pakistan for an example of an exception). At the same time, there has been increased awareness of the importance of consulting diaspora members in relation to issues that affect their countries of origin. Informal consultation processes are in fact quite common. In Italy, for example (see Text Box 25), both government employees and NGO staff working on projects or programmes related to a given country frequently consult members of that country's diaspora. Such communication is often based on personal contacts, and mostly restricted to a

Text Box 24. A two-way recruitment model: strategies adopted by institutional actors and diaspora organizations in Italy

Italian NGOs began working in Somalia in the early 1980s, and since then have often recruited local Somali personnel, with whom consolidated relationships have been established over the years. These relationships continued during the Somali civil war, when Somali officers became essential human resources for activities run by Italian NGOs in Somalia. In Italy, a few NGOs have adopted recruitment strategies that have included the employment of Somali professionals, usually in senior positions, and more informal recruitment of political analysts for policy advice. At the same time, Italian professionals have been recruited by diaspora-founded NGOs.

An interesting example of recruitment of Somali professionals into NGOs in Italy is the case of the Italian NGO CISP (International Committee for the People's Development, Rome). CISP has been recruiting Somali aid workers at its headquarters in Rome on the basis of their professional skills, but also to act as mediators between the NGO and the Somali diaspora. Thanks to initiatives by CISP personnel with Somali origins, the NGO has succeeded in raising awareness of Somalia's humanitarian crisis among the Italian public.

A clear example of this can be seen in an exhibition organized in Rome in 2006. Entitled 'Somalia of Peace', the exhibition was realized in partnership with two associations: 'El Vagón Libre', an intercultural organization that includes Italians and immigrants with different backgrounds, and the 'Forum Italia–Somalia', an Italian-Somali lobbying and advocacy organization. This was a small and low-cost activity that had positive effects in terms of involving the Somali diaspora in awareness-raising initiatives, presenting a different image of Somalia to a larger public, contributing to the NGO's positive image among the Somali community, and establishing new patterns of partnerships between actors that were not used to working together.

What is interesting in the Italian case is that 'recruitment' has been used as an engagement strategy is two ways: by Italian NGOs who recruit Somali nationals into mainstream development projects, and by diaspora groups who have started to recruit Italian members as a strategy for maximizing their outreach. In the city of Trento, two organizations – 'Una Scuola per la Vita' and 'Kariba' – have been founded, led and managed by Somali women. In both cases, the position of president was later strategically relinquished in favour of an Italian president with significant experience among local NGOs or cooperatives, who was thus able to lobby effectively at the regional and even national level, and who brought into the organization his or her entire social capital. In these cases, the president establishes contacts with local institutions and serves as a 'trustee' of the NGO. The Somali 'promoter' in turn brings into the organization the workforce and local Somali networks. This model seems to represent an alternative to the more frequent model of diaspora-based organizations, whose fortunes depend on how sensitive local or national authorities are towards diaspora and migration issues.

few trusted individuals. The risk of such informal procedures, however, is that others are not given a chance to express their views, and there is thus no way of checking what the different views within a certain community are and how much agreement or disagreement there is.

Some European governments and NGOs also engage in more open consultation processes. These are conducted partly for the sake of giving members of the diaspora a chance to express their views and partly to get input on policy and/or project development. At times, these consultation processes are quite ad hoc, organized when an issue arises and often without clear follow-up. At other times, consultation is conducted in a more systematic way. The Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, for example, holds yearly consultations on development cooperation and has also established processes within regional units to engage diasporas in foreign policy development (see Text Box 26).

Text Box 25. Examples of 'consultation' processes in Italy

Within the Italian context, most institutions lack official and structured mechanisms for engaging diasporas in development and peacebuilding activities. The Somali diaspora, however, has often been informally approached in consultation procedures by Italian institutions and NGOs seeking to better understand the Somali conflict and the community's internal dynamics. The Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, for example, has developed a range of contacts with the Somali diaspora. It has established strong ties with the Somali embassy in Rome, which was reopened in late 2009 after years of inactivity, as well as with key Somali individuals, who act as 'key informants'. These relationships aid Italian actors to better analyse the information on Somalia provided by Italian embassies based in Africa, and to continuously monitor the dynamics of the country's ongoing conflict.

In addition, a number of Italian NGOs engage in informal consultations with Somali diaspora members in order to strengthen their political analysis and peacebuilding policies. Interestingly, this engagement pattern is addressed almost exclusively to a particular group of the Somali diaspora in Italy, one composed of Somalis who came to Italy before or in the immediate aftermath of the collapse of the Siad Barre regime. These individuals are professional, well-educated and in some cases second-generation immigrants, and though they are part of the diaspora in Italy they are not perceived by Italian actors as such.

Text Box 26. Yearly consultations of the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs

The Dutch government has an established tradition of consulting with diaspora associations. In relation to domestic issues such as integration, for instance, the National Ethnic Minorities Consultative Committee (*Landelijk Overleg Minderheden*, LOM) was set up in 1997 to provide minority groups with a channel for expressing their views and opinions in relation to policy resolutions that concern them. This model has more recently served as an inspiration for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) in activating consultation processes with the diaspora in relation to migration and development.

The participation of the diaspora in development is grounded in a government policy memorandum that states that 'it is important that the government has partners for dialogue in the migrant community.... This would be a means of sharing thematic or country-specific migrant knowledge and expertise with ministries and other appropriate organisations' (Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2008: 55). In this spirit, annual consultation days are promoted every year by the Division for Consular Affairs and Migration (DCM), in which diaspora individuals and associations get actively involved. This reflects migrants' disposition to organize themselves to promote their role in the field of development cooperation and policy formulation. The *MOS-Overleg*, for instance, was established for such a purpose in 2004 and represents a base of over 200 migrant and refugee organizations. The consultation days promoted by the DCM have recently allowed migrants to actively take part in pre-consultation processes ahead of the most recent Global Forum on Migration and Development, ensuring that the diaspora could voice its concerns at a policy level as well as on the international scene.

Alongside directly promoting the participation of diaspora members in development cooperation, the DCM also attempts to mainstream migrant participation within other divisions of the MFA. A successful example is provided by the meetings and workshops organized by the Division for Sub-Saharan Africa (DAF) in which national diaspora groups are consulted in the definition of policies and programmes regarding their home countries. Following a study exploring the peacebuilding potential of diasporas from the Horn of Africa and the Great Lakes Region (Mohamoud, 2005), migrants from Sudan and Somalia have been consulted in an effort to develop a constructive approach to peace processes in those countries that includes dialogue with the diaspora.

4.5.4. Recommendations

22. Acknowledge and treat diaspora contributions to development and peacebuilding as civic contributions, rather than as separate initiatives driven solely by private interests and family links. Many of the ways in which diaspora individuals and organizations engage with their countries of origin have similarities with civic engagements by small national CSOs.

23. Invest significant time and effort in improving recruitment strategies to ensure greater diversity in organizations working in the field of development cooperation and peacebuilding.

24. Consultations with a range of diaspora members are important, both on an organizational and on a project level, and can be best achieved by having diaspora board members and systematic consultation processes.

5. Final Recommendations

1. Adopt long-term strategic approaches to diaspora participation
Diasporas participate in peacebuilding and development activities in their countries of origin independently of external actors, but 'their engagement is highly favoured by the adoption of clear policies and measures favouring diaspora engagement at the national level' (Sinatti et al., 2010: 42). Pilot projects or programmes such as those undertaken by GTZ (see Text Box 8) represent an important starting point for gaining experience and knowledge, but there should be both a commitment to and resources for a subsequent phase before such activities are carried out. Initiatives create expectations, and governmental and nongovernmental actors who wish to establish relationships with diaspora individuals or groups risk doing more harm than good if they do not adopt a long-term strategic approach.

2. Sustain diaspora participation in all phases of the process
Currently, it is not uncommon that contributions to peacebuilding and development by diaspora and external actors take place in parallel systems, while initiatives to facilitate diaspora participation are generally developed and implemented for members of diasporas by European actors. In order to guarantee greater participation in development and peacebuilding, though, it is crucial that we look closely at the existing levels of diaspora participation in the activities discussed in this handbook. This means that diasporas should also have a role in agenda-setting, knowledge-creation, analysis, planning, implementation and evaluation of development and peacebuilding engagements.

3. Recognize diaspora participation as civic participation
An ultimate aim is that the contributions of members of diasporas to peacebuilding and development activities be acknowledged and treated as civic participation and engagement, rather than as *diaspora* participation. Like other citizens in European countries, citizens with a migrant background engage themselves with issues of national and global importance. Acknowledging and knowing about the ways in which diasporas participate in development and peacebuilding activities independently is crucial, as is supporting these engagements as an integral part of mainstream peacebuilding and development cooperation initiatives, for example along the lines of Linkis (see Text Box 11).

4. Address fragmentation and politicization
The fact that conflict-induced diasporas are often characterized by fragmentation and politicization is not surprising. These realities are often linked to the root causes of a conflict, and thus must be addressed in a constructive way. Focusing on professional competences or finding other ways of creating de-politicized spaces is one way of doing this, as exemplified in the IOM's MIDA projects in Finland (see Text Box 6).

5. Support professionals by improving recruitment policies
Diaspora contributions are carried out not just on a voluntary but also on a professional basis, and both types of engagements can be facilitated. Staff members with a background from the countries in which key European development and peacebuilding actors do most of their work are currently underrepresented within those organizations. Not just voluntary engagements but also the participation of professional diaspora members in development and peacebuilding is crucial. Greater organizational diversity requires sustained and deliberate efforts, but also offers great potential benefits, as the examples of Cordaid (see Text Box 23) and CISP (see Text Box 24) illustrate clearly.

6. Support voluntary efforts through an integrated approach
Of the many initiatives to facilitate the participation of (largely) voluntary diaspora organizations in development cooperation and peacebuilding, those that have an integrated approach that combines capacity-building and organizational support with funding schemes seem to have the best results. As an example from Finland's Ministry of Foreign Affairs shows (see Text Box 17), such an approach can enable a selected group of voluntary organizations to further develop their professional skills.

7. Support bottom-up umbrella organizations

Umbrella organizations should be created first and foremost because of the shared interests of the member organizations involved, not because of the needs of external actors. Accordingly, bottom-up rather than top-down approaches are preferable. Such bottom-up approaches should first be centred around an internal pragmatic objective before seeking to become a tool for political lobbying.

8. Understand capacity-building as knowledge-exchange

Capacity-building is an important aspect of facilitating participation in peacebuilding and development. It is best handled through a combination of providing training and offering opportunities to apply the skills acquired, for example through access to funding. Capacity-building is an activity that has an impact upon all actors involved and is best understood as a form of knowledge-exchange. This maximizes the potential of diaspora participation, leading to greater levels of diversity and innovation in peacebuilding and development.

9. Invest in temporary return programmes for professionals

Temporary and circular return programmes represent excellent ways of allowing diaspora members to contribute their expertise to the betterment of their countries of origin, as well as being opportunities for knowledge-exchange and reconnecting with countries of origin. These must be voluntary, and must provide individuals with genuine opportunities to return and contribute. The QUESTS programme (see Text Box 19) provides an interesting example of this.

10. Acknowledge the links between diaspora engagement and integration

There are numerous links between policies and practices in the fields of development cooperation and foreign policy, on the one hand, and integration and immigration, on the other. Develop an approach to discovering these relations, and seek to coordinate relevant areas of policy and practice while dedicating a part of all diaspora-supporting initiatives to integration-related issues. The case of Pilot Project Pakistan (see Text Box 2) shows how support for engagements by diaspora members with their countries of origin can be a tool for inclusion in the host country.

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Appendix I: About the Text Boxes

The text boxes presented throughout this publication were created on the basis of data gathered specifically for the DIASPEACE project, in addition to information contained in a range of documents and Internet sites. If you have been inspired by the examples of initiatives taking place in Finland, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands or Norway, and wish to learn more, below you will find details about the sources of our case study descriptions, as well as contact details for some of the organizations or individuals involved who are willing to share their understanding and lessons learned with you.

Text Box	Organization/ Initiative	Further Information Available at:	Contact information:
1	African Union	http://www.africa-union.org	
2	Pilot Project Pakistan, Norway	http://www.utviklingsfondet.no/filestore/AReviewofPilotProjectPakistan.pdf	
3	Municipalities, Germany	www.service-eine-welt.de/en/home/index.html	
4	Finn Church Aid, Finland	www.kua.fi	Jussi Ojala jussi.ojala@kua.fi
5	ADEP, Italy	http://www.un-instraw.org/gps-somalia-1325/project-page http://www.un-instraw.org/gps-somalia-1325/project-page/gender-and-peace-in-somalia-implementation-of-scr-1325.html	
6	IOM-MIDA, Finland	http://iom.fi	
7	Nansen Centre for Peace and Dialogue, Norway	www.peace.no	post@peace.no (+047) 61265430/ (+47) 61059850
8	GTZ pilot, Germany	http://www.gtz.de/de/themen/wirtschaft-beschaeftigung/28723.htm http://www.gtz.de/de/themen/wirtschaft-beschaeftigung/28697.htm	
9	Somalia.Network, Finland	ttp://www.somaliaverkosto.net	Marja Tiilikainen marja.tiilikainen@helsinki.fi Abdirizak Hassan Mohamed abdirizak.moh@gmail.com
10	*Bistandsskolen*, Norway	http://www.bistandstorget.no/newsread/news.asp?docid=10947	
11	Linkis system, Netherlands	www.linkis.nl	
12	Regional conferences, NRW, Germany	www.afrika-nrw.de http://www.institut-fsi.de/site.php?siteID=28 www.sue-nrw.de www.inwent.org www.mgepa.nrw.de	
13	Umbrella organizations, Germany	Afrikanischer Dachverband NRW e.V www.adv-nrw.or Forum der Kulturen Stuttgart e.V. www.forum-der-kulturen.de www.eine-welt-netz-nrw.de	
14	MWPN, Netherlands	www.mwpn.nl	

Text Box	Organization/ Initiative	Further Information Available at:	Contact information:
15	Selection process, Italy	OIM MIDA-Somalia Italy: http://www.italy.iom.int/ http://www.cooperazioneallosviluppo. esteri.it/pdgcs/italiano/eventi/viewevento. asp?idx=3378 CISP Comitato Internazionale per lo Sviluppo dei Popoli: http://www.sviluppodeipopoli.org	Tana Anglana TANGLANA@iom.int Midaitalia@iom.int Deborah Rezzoagli rezzoagli@cisp-ngo.org cisp@cisp-ngo.org
16	Decentralized cooperation, Italy	Municipality of Milan http://www.comunedimilano.it/portale/ wps/portal/CDMHome Province of Trento	Ufficio Cooperazione e Solida- rietà Internazionale Marco Grandi Marco.Grandi@comune.milano.it Ufficio.Soci@comune.milano.it Servizio Emigrazione e Solidarietà Internazionale Luciano Rocchetti Luciano.rocchetti@provincia.tn.it
17	MFA–NGO funds, Finland	http://www.formin.fi/Public/default. aspx?nodeid=15339&contentlan=2&cultu re=en-US	Matti Lahtinen matti.lahtinen@formin.fi
18	COSPE and IIDA, Italy	COSPE http://www.cospe.it/ IIDA http://www.iidaonline.net/	Cospe, Firenze Lara Panzani panzani@cospe-fi.it cospe@cospe-fi.it IIDA Italia Onlus Torino iida.italia@gmail.com (+39) 3466247343
19	UNDP IOM QUESTS- MIDA	http://www.quests-mida.org	
20	Recruitment, Finland		
21	Stella Bianca, Italy	http://associazionestellabianca.it	associazionestellabianca@gmail.com
22	Care/NedSom, Netherlands		
23	Cordaid/SEVA, Netherlands	www.cordaid.nl www.sevanetwork.net	
24	Two-way recruitment, Italy	Kariba http://www.donneperlasolidarieta.it/index. php/it/la_comunita/organizzazioni_della_ rete/kariba_associazione_di_volontariato Una scuola per la vita http://www.unascuolaperlavita.org	Nasra Abdillah associazionekariba@gmail.com Sareeda Cali info@unascuolaperlavita.org
25	Consultations, Italy		
26	Consultations, Netherlands		

DIASPEACE

About the project

Diasporas for Peace: Patterns, Trends and Potential of Long-distance Diaspora Involvement in Conflict Settings. Case Studies from the Horn of Africa (DIASPEACE) is a three-year research project looking into how diaspora groups can foster peace and development in their countries of origin.

DIASPEACE seeks to generate policy-relevant, evidence-based knowledge on how exiled populations from conflict regions play into the dynamics of peace and conflict in their countries of origin. In a globalised world such diaspora have become new forces shaping the interactions between countries, regions and continents. In the mainstream literature, diaspora are often seen to fuel conflict and exacerbate tensions through radical mobilisation along ethnic and religious lines. New research findings, however, show that diaspora groups are playing an increasingly prominent role in peace and reconciliation processes. In DIASPEACE the focus is on positive initiatives, while keeping in mind also the non-intended and negative impacts.

The project has an empirical focus on diaspora networks operating in Europe, which extend their transnational activities to the Horn of Africa. This is a region where decades of violent conflict have resulted in state collapse and the dispersal of more than two million people. The project involves six partners from Europe and two from the Horn of Africa and is based on field research conducted in both Europe and Africa.

DIASPEACE aims to: a) devise and test methodologies of multi-sited comparative research and to develop the conceptual framework for researching migrant political transnationalism in a conflict context; b) facilitate interaction between diaspora and other stakeholders in the Europe and in the Horn of Africa; c) provide policy input on how to better involve diaspora in conflict reso

lution and peacebuilding interventions, and how to improve coherence between security, development and immigration policies.

DIASPEACE consists of five main research components:

- Defining joint analytical tools and research methodologies;
- Providing a comparative assessment of transnational diaspora networks from the Horn of Africa and their interfaces with European civil society and state institutions;
- Case studies of diaspora as agents of conflict and peace from the Horn of Africa;
- Interaction between European institutions and diasporas in conflict resolution and peace building;
- Synthesis and dissemination of the research findings and identification of further research directions.

The project aims to generate new knowledge to better understand diaspora's potentials, expectations and experiences as bridge builders between countries of residence and countries of origin.

Participation of Diasporas in Peacebuilding and Development: A Handbook for Practitioners and Policymakers

This handbook aims to provide individuals and organizations interested in working with diasporas with the tools they will need to do so effectively. Drawing on lessons learned from a range of development and peacebuilding projects in Finland, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands and Norway, the handbook presents answers to many of the questions that practitioners and policymakers interacting with diasporas will encounter. These include: What is the value added of diaspora engagement? How can we best deal with fragmentation within diaspora communities? How do we select suitable partners? And how can we best make use of the invaluable resources of diaspora individuals and groups? The authors hope that readers will be able to benefit from both the general principles outlined and the specific project examples provided in order to facilitate increased participation of diasporas in peacebuilding and development.

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