Overview of skills transfer programmes - IOM perspective

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Migrants contribution to development
• value of diasporas’ transferrable skills, knowledge and network in mitigating the negative effects of brain drain, and in supporting transformative processes towards knowledge-based societies

“They’ve finally acknowledged there’s a brain drain, then”

Skills Transfer Programmes

projects whereby qualified emigrants return, voluntarily, to their home countries to share expertise and help with the development of the country on a permanent or temporary basis
Skills Transfer Programmes

- spreading skills and knowledge among local professionals
- building local capacity
- creation of joint enterprises
- virtual returns through use of modern telecommunication technology
Skills Transfer Programmes

- national development policies and strategies;
- needs and gaps in various sectors of the national economy;
- diaspora mapping;
Skills Transfer Programmes

• Provide tools for government;

• Establish cooperation;

• Build capacity;

• Forge partnerships;

• Raise awareness; and

• Assist diaspora experts
• Return of Qualified Nationals (RQN) programmes (Latin America, Africa, Afghanistan)

• Migration for Development in Africa (MIDA)
Return of Qualified Nationals (RQN)

- RQN programmes referred to ‘the transfer of skills and know-how by skilled and highly skilled expatriates’ to their countries of origin for development purposes
- Focused on permanent return
- Current RQN projects have a specific application in post-crisis and recovery situations in which needs are more easily identified and diaspora members more willing to return (once tensions and armed conflicts cease)
• launched by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in 1977
• under the management of the United Nations Volunteers (UNV) programme
• implemented in 35 countries, with many successful outcomes in countries such as Turkey, Poland, Afghanistan, China, Sudan and Lebanon
• TOKTEN Bosnia & Herzegovina (2003-2005)
Migration for Development in Africa (MIDA) aimed to mobilise the transfer of relevant skills, financial and other resources of Africans in the diaspora for use in development programmes in Africa.

- Launched in 2001, it targeted governments and private sector employment institutions in participating African countries.
- Close cooperation with government and non-government institutions and organizations:
MIDA Great Lakes Program
Mobilizing the Diasporas for the development of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Burundi and Rwanda

• Funded by the Belgian Government and implemented by IOM in coordination with national governmental institutions

• Since 2001, it has assisted in building the capacities of more than 200 public and local institutions in the Great Lakes region, with the involvement of Diaspora experts.

• Previous phases have provided a good example of close co-operation between key partners in ministries of labour in Burundi, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) and Rwanda in skills gaps and sectors with shortage skills.

• Fourth phase of the project (2008-2012) aims to build the capacities of more than 30 local institutions in the three countries by making Diaspora experts available as per the identified skills shortages.
MIDA Ghana Health Project

- Primary objective was to reverse the exodus of health professionals from Ghana and ensure the availability of qualified health professionals in hospitals and medical training institutions.
- It enabled individuals with the necessary qualifications from Ghanaian diaspora to undertake periodic/circular returns to Ghana.
MIDA Italy

• MIDA Italy (2003 -2004) was a pilot project supported by the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs.
• It targeted sub-Saharan African immigrants willing to engage in socioeconomic development in Ethiopia, Senegal and Ghana.
• End results of the project were:
  ❖ Registration of 200 migrant associations;
  ❖ Creation of a website for and a national database of Ethiopian diaspora experts;
  ❖ Assessment of more than 150 small and medium enterprise (SME) project proposals from migrant organizations.
Temporary Return of Qualified Nationals (TRQN)

- The TRQN project (2005-2012), coordinated by IOM in the Netherlands, aims to contribute to the development and reconstruction of a number of selected countries by facilitating the temporary return of qualified nationals residing in the Netherlands.
- Temporary assignments
- focus is on capacity building in sectors and areas identified by the target countries.
- Afghanistan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Ethiopia, Georgia, Sierra Leone and Sudan.
Temporary and Virtual Return (TVR) of Migration for Development in the Western Balkans (MIDWEB) project

- Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Kosovo under UNSCR 1244, living permanently in Austria, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Switzerland and the UK
- Assignments have an average duration of 2 months with an allowance covering the accommodation and living expenses
- Virtual return assignments specifically used to deliver trainings and teaching programmes, courses, curriculum development
Issues for discussion

1. Involvement of the diaspora
2. Incentives/obstacles
3. Needs assessment in countries of origin
4. Monitoring and evaluation/Impact assessment
5. Sustainability