



The course on 'Optimising Actual, Virtual and Circular Diaspora Return' was:
Produced by GK Partners, accredited by CDP-UK, with AFFORD as the registered training provider:



ACCREDITED TRAINING

OPTIMISING ACTUAL, VIRTUAL AND CIRCULAR DIASPORA RETURN

The main aims of the training are:

- Understand the nature and processes of actual, virtual and circular return
- Gain skills required to facilitate productive diaspora return
- Understand how to effectively support sustainable diaspora return

The main topics covered in DAY 1 are:

- Understanding productive diaspora return: actual, virtual and circular
- Return to set up commercial or social enterprise
- Return to take up public or private sector job or role
- Return for semi or full retirement

The main topics covered in DAY 2 are:

- The key conceptual and practical challenges to diaspora return
- Government policy priorities to optimise productive diaspora return
- Stakeholder best practices to optimise productive diaspora return

1. Understanding productive diaspora return: actual, virtual and circular

1.1 Defining Diasporas

Key and common characteristics relating to the definition of 'diaspora', include:

- 'Scattered' and away from 'homeland'
- Permanence or semi-permanence in current home
- Sense of belonging to an external entity
- Hyphenated identities
- Duality between 'nationality' and 'nationhood'

All migrants may be deemed to be part of a diaspora, but not all diasporas are migrants. As such, diaspora populations are larger than migrant populations.

Settled diasporas are different from recent or circular migrants and sometimes they identify more with indigenous communities than with new migrants.

1.2 Home and Belonging

As regards the modern nation-state, the characteristics of diasporas (as identified above) may create complementary, competing or even conflicting loyalties.

Nation-states are in general protective of their sovereignty and jealous about the loyalties of their citizenry. Thus the concept of diasporas may become contentious in given circumstances.

In the twenty first century, greater numbers of people find themselves in a state of transnationality, whereby the discrete definitions of single or multiple nationality fail to capture their sense of identity and the reality of their living. Policy and practice is emerging to reflect and capitalise on the opportunities of transnationality.

1.3 Development Interest in Countries of Residence

Factors that influence diasporas' interest in countries of residence include:

- Motivation for success in order to help kith and kin
- Capitalisation on existing and extraordinary opportunities
- Anxiety about wanting to improve perceptions of 'nation'
- Keenness to demonstrate loyalty to new 'home country'
- Desire for upward mobility in new community
- Sense of duty to make life easier for future generations

1.4 Development Interest in Countries of Origin or Heritage

Factors that influence diasporas' interest in countries of origin or heritage include:

- Sense of belonging to a 'nation'
- Family and social connections in 'origin/heritage' countries
- Actual or potential citizenship of a 'state'
- Obligation to be a 'nation-builder'
- Aspiration for 'active' return
- Possibility of 'passive' return.

1.5 Main Forms of Diaspora Contributions

- Financial payments
- Economic ventures
- Skills and aptitudes
- New approaches and outlooks
- Politico-economic advocacy
- Socio-cultural influence.

1.6 Defining the African Diaspora

In 2005, the African Union gave a 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."

The AU considers the diaspora to be the 'sixth region of Africa'. The AU definition is inclusive, generous, politically-correct and general. However, it replicates the complexities of diaspora definitions. It is almost impossible to implement practically, but gives a clear steer for the African diaspora to be viewed within the context of socio-economic development.

1.7 Diaspora Memory and the Classification of the African Diaspora

To have a better understanding and more practical definition of the African diaspora, it may be useful to have a framework that links African migratory history, African diasporas and contemporary socio-economic development of nation-states.

'Diaspora Memory' as a concept encapsulates the emotional, cultural and practical affinity people have with 'origin or heritage countries'. 'Diaspora Memory' also directly correlates to the historical and significant waves of African migration. As such, 'Diaspora Memory' can be a practical criterion for classifying the African diaspora in a manner that links diaspora to contemporary socio-economic development of Africa.

1.8 New Classification of the African Diaspora

'Primordial Diaspora':	Genetic Memory
'Prehistoric Diaspora':	Anthropological Memory
'Oriental Diaspora':	Historical Memory
'Atlantic Diaspora':	Ancestral Memory
'Post-War Diaspora':	Parental Memory
'Post-Cold War Diaspora':	Natal Memory
'Cosmopolitan Diaspora':	National Memory

1.9 Diaspora Memory and the Framing of Development Policy

- Prioritise diaspora engagement with those with national, natal and parental memory
- Reconcile factors that influence development interest in both 'sending and receiving' countries
- Create technical vehicles for aggregating individual diaspora contributions
- Extract investment capital from consumptive contributions
- Create enduring and sustainable legacies from current contributions.

The above section is based on:

Faal, Gibril (2006) 'A New Definition and Classification of the African Diaspora'; Paper delivered at the 'Conference of African Intellectuals and the Diaspora (CIAD II), Salvador da Bahia, Brazil; Conference organised by the African Union, UNESCO and the Brazilian Government.

2. Return to Set up Commercial or Social Enterprise

Governments, agencies, trade, diaspora and other organisation should consider the following:

- **Published Enterprise Opportunities:** Provide information and guidance on opportunities for commercial and social enterprise investment in specific sectors that generate socio-economic benefits. The guidance should include: products and services to be provided; amount of investment needed; expected financial and social returns; prospects for expansion and progression; specific risks and opportunities; and general market and operational intelligence. (These diaspora guides are different from the standard multimillion dollar investment schemes promoted by national investment bodies). Targeted diaspora enterprise options matches the needs of the country with the actual specialisms and interests of diaspora entrepreneurs, and ensures that the capital/investment requirement is realistic for them.
- **Tenders and Public Sector Procurement:** Provide current and timely information on government, public and private sector procurement and tender opportunities. This enables diaspora entrepreneurs to make relatively low risk one-off 'start-up' ventures to find their way into in-country investment. It also enables them to create national financial and business presence, seek local partners and undertake joint ventures.
- **Diaspora Trade Missions:** Trade missions are a conventional means of promoting bilateral trade. These schemes can be modified to optimise diaspora enterprises. Firstly, trade missions from countries of residence (host countries) need to include diaspora entrepreneurs. This strengthens integration and opens up untapped potential. Secondly, specialist diaspora-focussed missions can be designed, the circumstances, resources and priorities of the diaspora. Thirdly, specific social enterprise business missions can be designed, to promote innovation and sustainability.
- **Diaspora Public Private Partnerships:** Many countries have or are developing frameworks for PPPs. This trend is further encouraged by global agreements such as the 2015 Financing for Development global agreement. To mitigate capital flight risks and encourage a socially responsible and inclusive approach, specific PPPs need to be developed for Diaspora, SMEs and social enterprises. Similarly, national enterprise strategies and legislation that incorporate local content need to be implemented in ways that specifically taps into the dual identities of the diaspora.
- **Social and Commercial Franchising:** There are many migrants and diasporans who are not avid social and commercial entrepreneurs, but have the resources, need and aspiration to undertake private enterprise. For these, the enterprise risks can be reduced through the provision of franchising options, which provide ready products and services, and structured marketing and operational support. New franchise options can be developed to address local needs, opportunities and priorities e.g. in sanitation, construction or agri-business sectors.

- **Structured Investment Products:** There are migrants and diasporans who are not interested in running a business or social enterprise, but have the resources, need and aspiration to invest in their country of origin or heritage. For these, structured investment products from the central bank, commercial banks and other regulated financial institutions maybe suitable. These products range from standards interest earning bank accounts, to treasury bills to government bonds. Furthermore, governments can create specialist diaspora products such as Diaspora Bonds, thereby focussing on the interests, needs and expectations of the diaspora.
- **Diaspora Business Support:** All enterprises need ongoing support on core business, management and functional themes. However, diaspora entrepreneurs need additional specialised support in areas including: transboundary regulatory frameworks; remote and virtual management and supervisory systems; trust-building and partnership working; managing differences in enterprise culture and work ethic; balancing social obligations with commercial discipline; preventing corrupt and unethical practices.
- **Business Financing:** Provide diaspora and trans-boundary financing schemes, including business loans, social enterprise grants, match-funding packages, subsidised interest rates and SME equity funding. Such financing options may target particular priority sectors that need economic stimulation e.g. healthcare, environmental protection and infrastructure maintenance. Generally, all financing for diaspora enterprise should seek to promote the creation of long term, sustainable decent jobs.
- **One Stop Solutions:** Provide one-stop business support services, covering company and tax registrations, operating licenses and permits, and connections to essential utility services. One stop solutions ensure effectiveness and transparency and are particularly needed by diaspora entrepreneurs as non-resident business visitors. This approach also reduces bureaucracy and costs, and addresses the issues of actual and perceived corruption.
- **Hubs and Clubs:** Create business clubs and industry hubs as facilities for exchange of formal and informal enterprise intelligence, ideas and activities. The hubs and clubs bring together the issues and themes relevant to diaspora entrepreneurs and foster an attitude of positive action. The concentrated and intensive focus on core enterprise issues is an efficient way of stimulating and energising diaspora action. Furthermore, experimentation and success from the hubs tend to stimulate further productive ventures, in line with cluster-based development.