

# **‘Spotlight on the Young and Skilled: Kenyan Diaspora Members in the South’**



# The study

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- **Objective of the study:** To enhance understanding of the role of the Kenyan diaspora residing in the ACP region and other developing countries, in promoting human development in Kenya and to help craft related policies.

# Methodology

- ❖ Literature review & Diaspora mapping
- ❖ Online interviews
- ❖ In-depth interviews
  - respondents were Kenyan **diasporas in 10 African countries**
  - Selected on the **highest concentration of Kenyans** in the diaspora based on estimates of migrants from the **World Bank** for the period 1960-2000 and the **Global Migrant Origin database**
  - list of names and email addresses of known people in the selected countries was collected
  - small numbers of Kenyans within the Caribbean & the Pacific, thus these ACP regions **NOT** considered in the study.

# Encountered Challenges

- ✓ Interviewees were contacted via email & invited to take part in the study
- were also requested to pass on information **about the survey to their friends and acquaintances**. (This method did not achieve many responses.)
- efforts **accessing Kenyan migrants through foreign missions** via the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Headquarters in Nairobi **were not successful because of:**
  - **delay in sending** the questionnaires directly to the foreign missions
  - within the missions, the general feeling is that **information on diaspora contacts is confidential** and preferred that such information be accessed through the diaspora organizations.
  - there was **too much bureaucracy** at the missions.
  - **some missions** promised to cooperate but **did not live up to their word**.
- Generally, **unwillingness from the missions** to take part in the study.

# The Kenyan Diaspora

- Historical destination: dominantly the UK before and just after independence
- Those people contributed to independence
- Diversification in destination and specially increase in numbers is a relatively recent phenomenon.

# Distribution of Kenyans in the diasporas

Regions	1960	1970	1980	1990	2000	2007 (GMOD)
Africa	54,245	84,506	94,683	104,773	538,128	876,695
Asia (including China and India and the Middle East)	3,678	38,608	30,830	21,801	966	92,731
Europe (Including Eastern Europe)	788	30,834	22,367	12,678	920	70,674
America (including Latin America)	302	4,006	6,299	8,762	161	19,329
Caribbean	35	163	768	1,431	21	2,496
Australia & New Zealand	216	427	226	0	6	849
Pacific	11	25	12	0	0	262
Total	59,275	158,569	155,185	149,445	540,202	1,063,036

Source: World Bank Migration Data (1960-2000) and Global Migration Origin Database (2007).



# Distribution of Kenya's diasporas across Africa

Countries	1960	1970	1980	1990	2000	2007 (GMOD)
Uganda	28,535	33,323	39,950	46,795	351,083	33,571
Tanzania	17,062	39,074	38,473	37,313	61,151	123,410
Sudan	2,286	312	1,936	3,714	48,296	n.d
Somalia	2,259	1,610	1,874	2,144	36,512	n.d
Ethiopia	871	4,634	6,026	7,493	20,332	n.d
Rwanda	643	512	953	1,431	4,634	n.d
Congo, Dem. Rep.	572	477	860	1,275	4,108	7,005
Burundi	551	534	867	1,226	3,973	2,743
Mozambique	311	n.d	329	691	2,253	n.d
Nigeria	235	n.d	249	522	1,694	1,019
Cote d'Ivoire	2	n.d	2	4	14	4,147
Ghana	n.d	n.d	n.d	n.d	n.d	4,128
South Africa	n.d	n.d	1	2	7	1,066
Zambia	57	n.d	61	127	415	1,035
Burkina Faso	2	n.d	2	4	14	2,006
Guinea	6	n.d	6	13	44	1,694
Others	853	4,030	3,094	2,019	3,598	7,515
Total	54,245	84,506	94,683	104,773	538,128	189,339

Source: World Bank Migration Data (1960-2000) and Global Migration Origin Database (2007).

# The samples

- A total of 202 samples from 10 African countries
- 54 in-depth interviews were conducted in Tanzania and South Africa.
- participants selected based on their locality, age, and occupation and willingness via recommendations through the Kenyan embassies, Diaspora associations, referrals by some of the participants.
  - South Africa : Jo'burg, Pretoria, Durban and Cape Town.
  - Tanzania: Dar es Salaam & Arusha
  - 6 Kenyan diaspora organizations interviewed 3 in South Africa, and the others in South Sudan, Rwanda and Burundi.

# DISCOVERING THE KENYAN DIASPORAS

## Why mostly Tanzania & S. Africa?

- Availability of university admission and funding to pursue further studies in those countries (31%)
- increased employment and business opportunities (26%).
- existence of relatives, friends
- cost considerations
- **nearness** to Kenya and **political stability** especially in Tanzania.
- However, in both Tanzania and South Africa, some Kenyan migrants said they **experienced discrimination from locals** who perceive them as a threat when competing for jobs.

# The samples

General characteristics of Kenyan diasporas			
		Frequency	%
Gender	Male	148	73.3
	Female	46	22.7
	No response	8	4.0
Total		202	100
Age	18-29	87	43.1
	30-39	53	26.2
	40-49	37	18.3
	50-59	15	7.4
	> 60 years	4	2.0

# The samples: Education

Education Level	Freq.	%
Secondary	5	2.5
College(certificate/Diploma)	34	16.8
University(bachelor's degree)	79	39.0
University (Master's degree)	48	23.8
University (PhD or doctorate degree)	19	9.4
Others (students, etc.)	7	3.5
No response	8	4.0

# Employment

Employment Status	Freq.	%
Employed	111	54.4
Self Employed	29	14.2
Unemployed(seeking employment)	13	6.4
Students	45	22.1
Retired	3	1.5
Others( Pastor, volunteer)	2	1.0

# OCCUPATION AND INCOME

In terms of average annual income:

- the majority (51%) earn less than USD 20, 000.
- Many (34%) earn less than USD10, 000 per annum,
- nearly 35% earn more than USD20, 000 per annum and
- nearly 18% earn more than USD40, 000 per annum, high salaries by most African standards.

# REMITTANCES

- 62% of the respondents have sent remittances to Kenya
  - 58% sent on a monthly basis
  - 20 % remit quarterly
  - 13 % whenever a need arises
  - annually (4%), weekly (3%) or even bi-monthly (1%).
  - **On average, each migrant remits USD11, 608 annually or USD960 per month.**
  - Meridian amount is 5, 000 USD compared with Botswana (USD980) and Lesotho (USD 915)
  - small number of large remitters: 17% remit between USD10, 000 and 30,000 per annum
  - and 14% remit more than USD30, 000 per annum.
  - monthly remitted amounts range between a minimum of USD 50 and USD 5, 000.



# USE OF REMITTANCES

- Remittances are believed to contribute in many sectors.

Example to:

- **education (24%),**
- **housing (15%),**
- **health care provision (14%)**
- **child care (14%)**
- **strengthening of religious organisations (10%),**
- **development of community infrastructure (9%)**

# DIASPORA INVESTMENT

- **About two thirds of migrants have property, assets or investments in Kenya**
- **92% interested in making private investments in Kenya.**
  - **Areas:**
    - ❖ commercial agricultural and horticulture sector (24%),
    - ❖ financial services (14%),
    - ❖ manufacturing (12%),
    - ❖ tourism (12%)
    - ❖ supplies (11%).
    - ❖ real estate (11%)
    - ❖ transport (9%)
    - ❖ mining (2%)
- **Contributing or donating to development projects in Kenya:**
  - ❖ 42% interested in contributing or donating to development projects
  - ❖ 15% said they had no interest.
  - ❖ 30% willing to support development projects through religious organizations, non-government or women associations and microfinance initiatives via skills transfer (48%) and financial support (32%).

# Diaspora Investment: the obstacles

- ❑ (36%) indicated that there existed barriers or restrictions that could stop them from contributing:
  - ❖ Lack of finances (44%).
  - ❖ Work commitments (25%)
  - ❖ Political or legal circumstances (14%).
- Other reasons include:
  - ❖ level of corruption,
  - ❖ lack of accountability,
  - ❖ improper use of tax payers' money,
  - ❖ lack of a policy framework,
  - ❖ unfavourable political and social climate
  - ❖ lack of information and contribution channels.

# Kenyan Diaspora Associations/Networks

## Kenian Diaspora Associations in Africa

Name of Association	Country	Membership
Association of Kenyans	Rwanda	3000
New Vision Kenya	South Sudan	6000
Kenya Diaspora( KEDASA)	Pretoria/Jo'burg-South Africa	2000
Kenya & Friends Association (KEFA)	Durban	1500
Kenya Community	Cape Town-South Africa	3000
Associations of Kenyans	Burundi	500

# The Seven Key Findings

## Number 1: There is limited formal engagement between the Government of Kenya and its members in the diaspora in Africa.

- The Government needs to know and understand its diaspora in order to engage effectively with them.
- Kenyan embassies need to be diaspora focused, and working with diaspora associations

## Number 2: Kenyan migrants to the South tend to be below 50 years of age and unmarried.

- main reasons for migration are: search of employment, business opportunities, pursue further education.  
frequent visits to Kenya, at least once in every two weeks and usually stay for a period of that does not exceed two months.
- Have jobs abroad matching their skills.
- their remittances are still high.
- maintain contact with family and friends mainly via telephone and internet based communication.
- own investments in Kenya and are interested in national development.

# The Seven Key Findings

## Number 3:

- **the cost of sending remittances (money and goods) to Kenya is still very high.**
- Main channels: Western Union and Money-Gram and sometimes bank transfers especially when dealing with large sums of money.
- M-PESA has become increasingly popular with significant impact on internal remittances, it is yet to have a similar effect in the international arena.
- the government needs to consider ways of reducing the cost of sending money home and increasing the use of M-PESA in the international arena might be a worthwhile idea.

## Number 4:

- **migrants would be interested in contributing to national development through skills transfer programmes.**
- The Government should initiate programmes targeting the sectors that are of interest to the diasporas: Such programs should not run for more than a year, but would be useful in the transfer of capabilities from the migrants to citizens in Kenya. Government should also be able to assist creation of opportunities, within the education, health, infrastructure and childcare where it can partner with migrants for development.

## Number 5:

- **most of the migrants within developing countries do not generate very high incomes. Most of them earn less than USD 10,000 per annum.**
- Therefore it is important for the government to create investment opportunities within their reach. Example: in infrastructure bonds, the diasporas should be given a chance to invest in small affordable denominations.

# The Seven Key Findings

## Number 6:

- **dual citizenship and voting rights are important elements for diaspora engagement.**
- Inclusion of **dual citizenship** in the new constitution will provide an important link between the diasporas and their home country as it implies a **sense of belonging**. Voting rights provide the diasporas with an **opportunity to make their voices heard**, in election of candidates that can best articulate their concerns.

## Number 7:

- **There is a need to facilitate constructive debate on the diaspora within their countries, though the Kenyan embassies working with diaspora organizations, to give them a change to articulate their wishes**
- Gov't need to pursue policies that will lead to job creation at home, so that migrants can have more options to choose from.
- Political instability, corruption, and lack of accountability discourage migrants from returning and investing in Kenya.

# Key Recommendations

- Urgent need to have an **up to date record of Kenyan migrants** in each of the countries.
- The need for greater **collaboration between the embassies and the diaspora associations**.
- Kenyan embassies can spearhead the **establishment of diaspora associations** in countries that they do not exist.
- **Reduce the cost of sending remittances** to Kenya and **enhance mobile money transfer** services such as M-Pesa
- The Kenyan government in association with foreign embassies and diaspora associations should **facilitate 'skill development transfer programmes'** to take advantage of enormous skills in possession by its diasporas.
- There is need to **develop financial instruments that are within reach of the diasporas** in the South most of whom are low income earners.
- **Dual citizenship and voting rights** are important avenues for diaspora engagement.
- **Job creation and improvement in political and social environment** are important incentives for returning migrants.



# INNOVATIVE POINTS

- Diaspora members -- young & skilled and employed in their skills
- High remittances, of 980 USD / month or 10,500 USD/annum despite low income
- Most like to transfer their skills
- Migration figures of Kenyans in the South are often understated. For every one person registered (Embassy, Diaspora Associations, etc. ), there are at least six others who are not registered.
  - For the government is to engage its members in the diasporas successfully, an important starting point would have to be the creation of an up to directory on migrants' profiles.