

Success Capital Organisation

“Return Migration and Socio-Economic Development: An analysis of how African
Diaspora can be reduced through return migration”

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INTRODUCTION

This paper has been developed to explore the rising challenge of return migration and socio-economic development. The focus of the paper is on the socio-economic matters that affect migrants of third world countries, more especially African Diaspora. It has become increasingly evident that Africans are migrating to first world countries or economically advanced African countries. The significance of African Diaspora and research thereof is due to the lack of economic growth and development of Africa states. Several states have identified the impact of graduates migrating abroad and not returning to contribute towards the improvement and development of their home nations. Various studies have observed the trends in migration and more work needs to be done on establishing the trends of return migration. This paper comprises of three sections framed around three ideals; the first, is aimed at establishing the current context and status of migration. The second is aimed at reviewing the challenges faced by the current mechanisms in place for managing and improving the state of migration within the context of development and the third comprises of the opportunities available and those yet to be explored to improve and facilitate return migration to stimulate economic and social growth in home countries.

BACKGROUND

Observations over the last few decades note that migration was prevalent since World War One, as citizens fled their home countries and continued residence in host countries (Gmelch, 1980: 135). Gmelch (1980, 135) further noted that return migration became a phenomenon after the World War when 4 million Europeans moved back to their home countries from the United States.

Migration and development have traditionally been classified as primary economic issues, this related to the need to focus on economic growth, investment, earnings and levels of employment in order to understand and explain these two related phenomena. There is increasing evidence and acknowledgement that social factors, including those relating to household and family structures, play a critical role in determining patterns of migration, development and in influencing outcomes. For example, a major development problem in Africa is the lack of capital and investment, and migrants might be seen as generating capital for investment through remittances (Tiemoko, 2004: 155).

Migration influences the quality of life for Africans, with select interventions steered by State organs and civil society aimed at improving the impact on the well-being for citizens and migrants it continues to pose challenges and opportunities. Within the scope of Migration, this paper focuses on the African Diaspora, with consideration for reviewing

developments of migrants in other regions. Furthermore, the paper aims to establish the current status of engagement of Diaspora, in view of their return to their home countries. This includes the current mechanisms in place for improving the state of migrants, both in their home countries and their host countries, and identifying previous successes of return migration.

CURRENT STATE OF MIGRATION

The role of diaspora groups in the development of country strategies has increased interest from African Governments in recent years. This is a result of improved data collection and the realization of the importance migration has played within the context of civil unrest, political instability, poverty in home countries and the opportunities provided for by host countries. This section of the paper explores the engagement of diaspora through Government and Civil Society.

It is estimated that 30 million Africans have migrated within and outside the continent. This comprises of voluntary migrants and international refugees. Two-thirds of migrants from Sub-Saharan Africa remain within the region whilst 90% of migrants from North Africa travel to countries outside the region. Whilst data is scarce, Governments have noted that a significant portion of these have moved to neighbouring countries without the use of official border posts and therefore move about as undocumented migrants. In addition, it has been observed that the impact of migration includes the supporting of family members in home countries and therefore challenging efforts of measuring their contribution to the economic status of their host nation and their countries of origin.

CHALLENGES FOR RETURN MIGRANTS

Migration laws continue to change significantly across different countries; migrant workers and students find themselves forced to return home due to changes in legislature or political environment in their host countries. Some migrants however return home on their own volition due to their great sense of patriotism. Whether voluntary or not returning migrants encounter various challenges influenced by one's educational background, reasons for migrating in the first place (i.e. reasons for leaving their native country) and the innate desire for self-actualization. Cultural assimilation is the first great challenge that migrants

face upon their return to their native countries. They (migrants) are challenged by language barriers especially where one finds themselves lacking fluency in speaking and or writing the language; these results in limited social interactions especially in rural and remote areas that have high literacy gaps. Loss of touch with one's native language often stirs up social rejection due to the loss of a common identity that is often expressed through oneness of language and expressions. Cultural assimilation also dictates the socially acceptable patterns of behaviour such as dress and mannerisms which although gradually change over time continue to remain constant. Returning migrants often find themselves having adapted to the culture of the cosmopolitan societies of the host countries which may not be accepted causing them to be constantly alert and conscious of their surroundings and how and whom they can interact with.

The volatility of the world economy has significantly reduced the availability of employment opportunities especially for fresh graduates without any work experience. Returning migrants in most instances except in the case of graduates, who have never been employed, experience job loss. For some returning migrants unemployment may be temporary while some experience prolonged periods of unemployment and find themselves competing for the limited jobs available and on some extremes struggling to find employment to due to the lack of industries that match their skills and trades of academic training. Where employment opportunities are available returning migrants often complain of the uncompetitive remuneration, poor working conditions and workload in comparison to their prior environments. The result of this is an unmotivated workforce and poor service delivery.

Infrastructural advancement is one of the key indicators of development which on its own can be a great incentive for migrants to return to home. However for migrants who return from first world countries to developing countries the gap in technological progress is often a shock and a limitation to the contribution they (returning migrants) can make in terms of their expertise to their native countries due to the lack of resources. The limited infrastructural development also trickles down to other public services such as the quality of education and health care one would expect to receive which continue to have the greatest shortcomings in comparison to first world countries. An example of infrastructure challenge faced by most African countries is electrical power shortages where supply cannot demand and in turn affects most industries especially mining which is the highest revenue earner for most African countries.

The legal environment in one's native country also acts as challenge for returning migrants. Few countries in the world allow for dual citizenship, for migrants who had stayed in other countries long enough to be awarded citizenship having to give up the citizenship of the host country which offers greater benefits than their native country is highly undesirable and a great deterrent to returning home. People of who identify with sexual orientations and expressions that are considered illegal are also challenged when they return to their native countries as they are at risk of imprisonment and death depending on the penalty attached to such. The full enjoyment and access to human rights by such returning migrants is greatly compromised if not fully denied. Some environments also prohibit the practice of certain religions which then stirs up civil unrest and social divisions' overtime.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR RETURN MIGRATION

The 2015 UK prime minister debates gave platform to the prime minister candidate to discuss migration and the threats and opportunities it poses to their economies. Although migrants in pursuit of higher learning were highly welcome as it is a high-income earner for the economy. However the leaders in question saw a problem in international students not returning home. This sparked further debate on how countries can tighten migration laws in order to control migration without compromising good international relations and opportunities for foreign direct investment. Developed countries often want to enjoy the benefits of the contribution of migrant labour to their economies without offering them any permanent settlement. In light of these developments international students are then faced with various challenges upon completion of their studies such as limited access to job opportunities ranging from the legal aspects which prohibit employment of foreign nationals in some professions or visa restrictions which prohibit one to seek employment in the host country after completion of studies. International students are then forced to return home and are there faced with a new set of challenges some of which are unemployment which is worldwide issue, cultural integration and technological progress or lack thereof. In light of these challenges the overarching is culture and cultural integration, which dictates the nature of all developments and access to these especially in networking and looking for employment and entrepreneurial opportunities. There are cultural clashes due to language use, technological advancement, mannerism and dress. It is therefore important to develop intense cultural integration and assimilation processes for returning migrants.

While there are various benefits to being migrants especially at tertiary level they are grave concerns for the graduate migrants upon return home or to their country of origin. Some of the more notable challenges for migrants are the social assimilation challenges, cultural

difference (resulting from becoming assimilated in a culture that wasn't that of the home country) and economic challenges that are faced when trying to penetrate the job market.

The challenge that is faced by migrants is similar to the challenge faced by expatriates at the end of an assignment and the said expatriate has to begin the repatriation process. In the event that the individual is not properly repatriated a number of numerous challenges may arise and the individuals will most likely find that they would rather return to the country that they originally stationed and become a working class citizen there rather than being at in their home country with no true sense of belonging.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Returning migrants provide a great opportunity in terms of economic and financial investments for their native countries from the accumulated savings in the form of foreign exchange while in first world countries. Returning migrants have higher prospects of becoming entrepreneurs and creating job opportunities. This is due to the fact while abroad they have better opportunities to benchmark industries and services that may be lacking or limed in their native countries and therefore find themselves with access to opportunities of investing in to franchises or establishing new enterprises altogether tailor made to suite the context of their native countries. This on its own gives returning migrants a comparative advantage in the local market because they have differentiated skills, better access to alternative markets in terms of their supplier of their products or services. This therefore makes returning migrants better placed to significantly contribute to the economic welfare of their native countries through enterprise development, skills transfer and job creation.

Innovation at policy, practice, technology and process level

In light of the technological boom and progress within the 21st century the challenges of return migration can be better addressed through the design of information sharing platforms.

- Innovation could be used such as mobile applications to keep external scholars up to date with the social events and developments back in their country of origin. This greatly helps to nurture and maintain social ties. The mobile applications with pictures and the individuals that are from the host country, the picture should include a brief idea of how the business would work in Botswana. The design and maintenance of the application would be at the cost of public and private partnerships they are better resourced and stand benefit significantly from the returning migrants, in terms of skills and resources.

- The development of a post-migration alumni network that is inclusive of local entrepreneurs and external entrepreneurs which acts as an idea forum, where people capture things that they think are applicable business to the country. Alumni meetings would create an opportunity for ideas exchange as well as networking.
- Repatriation processes should be provided before migrants' return, similar to that multinationals give returning expatriates. The process will provide an opportunity to emotionally and financially prepare themselves for an environment different from their current one.

CONCLUSION

This paper outlined the context of the African Diaspora through discussion of the current state of migration in Africa. The paper has also discussed the effects well as the challenges and opportunities presented by returning migrants. In conclusion it is noteworthy to highlight that migration is a daily occurrence especially in Africa that cannot be avoided or halted altogether because of the benefits of provides when well-managed. This paper therefore calls for the development of processes that would make it easier for returning migrants to easily assimilate and integrate into the way of life of their respective societies of origin.

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