

THE ROLE OF DIASPORA IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE COUNTRY OF THE ORIGIN: THE NIGERIA EXAMPLE

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ABSTRACT

Many Nigerians move into Diaspora for greener pasture (jakpa) while some could move because of insecurity, the level of poverty and abuse of human rights by the past and present Nigerian governments. The October 2020 end SARS (police brutality) a national protest mostly by Nigerian youths under President Mohamadu Buhari and the august 2024 ten days national protest against bad governance, insecurity, poverty and abuse of human rights in Nigerian. The government responded by intimidating arresting and even killing protesters instead of finding out what happens and how to solve them. The Nigerian governments have no listening ears and exclude the Nigerian citizens from governance the research work is anchored on the push and pull factors in migration the researcher reviewed many literature in migration role of Diasporas in both countries of origin and host countries the role of United Nations Agencies in Diaspora and partnership with the Diasporas for national development. The research found out that the Diasporas have been helping at family and community levels and also at national level through partnership with mostly the Nigerians in Diaspora commission. Majority of them still have interest at home and would like to come home after their sojourn in Diaspora. The federal government of Nigeria should create adequate awareness about migrating through illegal routes because many Sub Sahara Africans have died while migrating illegally through the Sahara Desert and the Mediterranean Sea to Europe and other places. They should also create enabling environment for those who choose to remain in Nigeria to stop further unnecessary and desperate migration.

Key words: Diaspora, development, Nigeria, remittance and partnership.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Development is a process that fosters growth, progress, and positive transformation in economic, environmental, social, and demographic aspects without depleting environmental resources (Amartya Sen). Dudley Defined development as the reduction or eradication of poverty, inequality, and unemployment within a nation. National development encompass the governance of a nation across various domains, including political, economic, social, cultural, scientific, and material aspects.

Nigerians in the Diaspora have significantly contributed to national progress through substantial economic transfers and participation in medical missions, among other efforts. Their contributions are frequently categorized into the transfer of economic, human, social, and cultural capital. The diaspora significantly enhances the human, social, and cultural fabric of their countries of origin, transit, and destination by establishing connections and promoting mutual understanding across diverse cultures. In addition to their recognized function as remittance senders, diasporas can also facilitate trade and foreign direct investment, foster business creation and entrepreneurship, and disseminate new information and skills.

Since antiquity, humans have been migrating individuals relocate in pursuit of employment, economic prospects, familial reunification, or educational endeavors. Individuals relocate to evade conflict, persecution, or widespread human rights abuses. Additionally, some individuals relocate due to the detrimental impacts of climate change, natural catastrophes, or other ecological reasons. Currently, an unprecedented number of individuals reside in a nation different from their country of origin. As of 1 July 2020, the Population Division of the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA) predicted the global count of international migrants to be 281 million. International migrants constitute approximately 3.5 percent of the global population, in contrast to 2.8 percent in 2000 and 2.3 percent in 1980. Although many individuals travel by choice, others do so because of necessity. The United Nations Refugee Agency (UNHCR) anticipated that, by the conclusion of 2022, the global population included around 35.3 million refugees, comprising 5.9 million Palestine refugees under the jurisdiction of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) and 5.4 million asylum seekers. For statistics reasons, the United Nations defines an international migrant as an individual who has altered their country of residence. This encompasses all migrants, irrespective of their legal status or the cause and motive of their migration.

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development acknowledges the beneficial role of migrants in fostering equitable growth and sustainable development. The fundamental tenet of the Agenda is to "leave no one behind," encompassing migrants. Numerous Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) under the Agenda encompass targets and indicators pertinent to migrants or migration. SDG target 10.7 urges nations to "promote orderly, safe, regular, and responsible migration and mobility of individuals, including through the execution of strategic and effectively managed migration policies." Additional objectives pertinent to migrants or migration encompass the health workforce in developing nations (3.c), the mobility of international students (4.b), human trafficking (5.2, 8.7, and 16.2), labor migration (8.7 and 8.8), remittances (10.c), and legal identity (16.9). Additionally, SDG target 17.8 mandates the disaggregation of data based on migratory status.

The Population Division of the UN Department for Economic and Social Affairs performs demographic research, facilitates intergovernmental processes at the United Nations regarding population and development, and aids countries in enhancing their capacity to generate and analyze population data and information. The Division emphasizes population issues to the world community by underscoring the pivotal significance of demographic trends in all facets of sustainable development. The Division disseminates datasets regarding the worldwide population and examines international demographic trends. The Population Division routinely compiles global estimates of international migrant numbers. The Division also compiles technical reports on global migration and development.

The Division assists the Commission on Population and Development in evaluating the implementation of the Programme of Action established by the 1994 International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD), along with discussions in the General Assembly regarding population, development, and migration. Founded in 1951, IOM is the preeminent intergovernmental body on migration. The IOM aims to facilitate the systematic and compassionate administration of migration, foster global collaboration on migration matters, aid in identifying pragmatic solutions to migration challenges, and offer humanitarian support to migrants in need, encompassing refugees and internally displaced individuals.

In 2016, the IOM established an agreement with the United Nations, so becoming a connected institution. The IOM functions as the coordinator of the United Nations migration network, which was formed by the Secretary-General in 2018. The IOM's recent strategy plan outlines three primary objectives for 2024-2028: to preserve lives and safeguard individuals in transit, to address displacement issues, and to promote avenues for lawful migration. As on the most recent estimates

from the Population Division, in 2020, the global count of international migrants—individuals living in a nation other than their place of origin—totaled 281 million. Female migrants comprised 48 percent of international migrants. Nearly 75% of international migrants were aged between 20 and 64 years, whereas 41 million international migrants were under 20 years of age. The majority of foreign migrants inhabit Asia and Europe (31% each), followed by Northern America (21%), Africa (9%), Latin America and the Caribbean (5%), and Oceania (3%).

The name "Diasporas" lacks a definitive meaning and has evolved much over time, complicating its measurement. The IOM characterizes Diasporas as "migrants or their descendants, whose identity and sense of belonging are influenced by their migration experiences and heritage." (International Organization for Migration Glossary on Migration, 2019) The term "Diasporas," initially denoting the coerced relocation of specific groups, today broadly refers to anyone who identify with a "homeland" yet reside beyond its borders. Definitions of "Diasporas" encompass not only first-generation emigrants but also the foreign-born offspring of these individuals, provided they retain a connection to their parent's country of origin. The links—cultural, linguistic, historical, religious, or affective—distinguish Diaspora groups from other communities.

Typically, diasporas exhibit the majority, if not all, of the following characteristics:

Migration, whether compelled or voluntary, from a nation of origin in pursuit of employment, commerce, or to evade conflict or persecution;

Aromanticized, communal recollection and/or legend regarding the ancestral domicile;

A sustained affiliation with a country of origin;

A robust collective consciousness maintained throughout time; and a sense of camaraderie with Diaspora members in other nations. Derived from Cohen, 2008.

1.1 Statement Of Problem

Not all facets of migration are advantageous for developing nations. Migration can incur significant costs for emerging nations by depleting the human capital essential for sustained economic progress. The emigration of skilled individuals may impose a considerable economic strain on developing nations, since migrants carry away the benefits of their training, frequently funded by governments with constrained resources. Although migration influences development, economic conditions serve as significant catalysts for movement. Individuals migrate for various reasons, including the pursuit of enhanced economic prospects, educational advancement, familial reunification, and the escape from violence. Individuals frequently relocate for a variety of these and additional motivations.

The anticipated economic disparity between industrialized and developing nations serves as a significant motivator for migration (Czaika and de Haas 2011a). Migration influences development, whereas development concurrently impacts migration. These obstacles encompass a persistent deficit in skills and experience within the country, insufficient data on the Diaspora to facilitate evidence-based initiatives, elevated remittance costs, difficulties in acquiring pertinent data, and the absence of an efficient information gateway.

Individuals departing from underdeveloped nations are not randomly chosen from the populace. Individuals migrating from developing nations frequently possess a high level of education. This has raised significant apprehension regarding a "brain drain" phenomenon in developing nations, where the most talented individuals emigrate to other countries. Developing nations express grievances that scientists, nurses, physicians, engineers, and other professionals, trained with scarce resources, migrate to and derive advantages in rich countries. Arguments exist that industrialized nations ought to compensate developing nations for the emigration of their highly educated professionals (House of Commons 2004).

Conversely, data suggests that numerous households receiving remittances reduce their engagement in the labor market. Individuals may become reliant on these inflows, diminishing their engagement in the labor market, potentially fostering a reliance akin to an international "welfare" system. Nevertheless, in numerous cases, a decrease in the labor supply might result in a substantial enhancement of quality of life and enable certain household members to attain greater human capital. Therefore, the possible decrease in the labor supply is not inherently a detrimental consequence of remittances.

Advocates of the perspective that remittances might negatively impact recipient economies contend that these inflows may trigger inflationary pressures or result in the appreciation of the recipient nation's currency. This effect may negatively influence the nation's export economy.

The Global Migration Statistics Portal, managed by IOM's Global Migration Data Analysis Centre, provides access to timely, comprehensive, and reliable migration statistics, integrating data from many sources. The Portal aims to assist policymakers, the media, and the public in understanding the complex domain of migration data. The IOM's Missing Migrants Project reports that since 2014, there have been 61,867 recorded migrant fatalities worldwide. The Central Mediterranean is the most hazardous migration route, with a documented death toll of no fewer than 22,871 persons. In contrast, the most hazardous migrant land route in the world is the Mexico border. Undocumented immigrants abstain from union participation due to the apprehension of deportation.

A multitude of individuals is forced to work under the constant threat of unscrupulous employers who exploit their earnings and intimidate them with the possibility of police involvement. Individuals who are apprehended and deported are regarded as undergoing shame and humiliation. Many irregular migrants lack the requisite skills demanded by their home economy and may not have acquired such competencies even after extended periods abroad. Upon returning home, they may face difficulties reintegrating into the domestic work market. The most consequential outcome of irregular migration may be the loss of life. Irregular immigrants face two significant dangers: the risk of exhaustion when traversing the Sahara Desert and the peril of shipwreck during the ocean voyage, leading to several fatalities (Boubakri, 2004). It is believed that around 2,000 Sub-Saharan Africans die in the Mediterranean each year while attempting illicit crossings to Europe. Approximately 1,000 individuals may have died between December 2005 and May 2006 (The Economist, 13 May 2006: 31).

1.2 Objectives of the Study

The primary aim is to determine the Diaspora's contribution to the development of their country of origin.

The explicit objective encompasses the following:

- i. To determine the contribution of the Diaspora to Nigeria's development.
- ii. To evaluate the transformative impact of Diaspora remittances on households and communities.
- iii. To determine if individuals in the Diaspora return home permanently following their time abroad.
- iv. To determine the impact of brain drain on the Nigerian economy

1.3 Research Question

Based on the study's aims, the following research questions were formulated:

- i. What are the contributions of the Diaspora to Nigeria's development?
- ii. What are the transformative contributions of the Diaspora at the family and community levels?
- iii. Do individuals in the Diaspora return permanently after their time abroad?
- iv. What is the impact of brain drain on the Nigerian economy?

2.0 METODOLOGY

2.1 Research Design

The paper utilizes a multi-method approach that encompassed historical, thematic critical and analytical research. The push and pull theory was employed to underlie the study.

2.2 Data collection

The study's data were derived from institutional reports and editorial articles in Nigerian publications regarding the relationship between the Diaspora population and national progress. Government involvement with the Diaspora and the influence of the Diaspora on national development. World Bank data on remittance flows and United Nations Development Program (UNDP) conducted 30 in-depth interviews with the Diaspora, including 100 returnee Diaspora and policymakers. Interviews and dialogues were conducted via Zoom.

3.0 FINDINGS /DISCUSSIONS

3.1 Findings /Result

Remittances are financial transfers from one person in a country to another person in a different country. The majority of these transactions involve negligible monetary amounts. However, for people in receiving countries, these financial transfers may represent a substantial fraction of their budget. Migrants send remittances for many objectives. In specific cases, migrants are demonstrating generosity towards their families in their nation of origin. In some cases, migrants have self-interested motives for remitting, such as maintaining their household status for inheritance or other purposes. Evidence suggests that specific migrants remit monies for investment purposes. Certain migrants may ultimately be repaying loans and other responsibilities to the household, potentially encompassing the monies used to enable their transfer abroad.

Remittances can serve as a risk-sharing strategy for household members divided by international borders (Yang and Choi 2007). By leaving their home and moving to another region or nation, the migrant will confront risks that are largely distinct from those encountered by the family; hence, both the migrant and the household can successfully diversify their risks. The overall effect of remittances on recipient countries and households is still ambiguous. Evidence suggests that remittances have a beneficial impact on recipient nations and households. Evidence suggests that remittances improve human capital development at the household level (Cox and Edwards 2003). The receiving of remittances may mitigate the household's financial limitations, potentially allowing the family to fund their children's education.

Remittances can provide the capital necessary to initiate a small business (Woodruff and Zenteno 2007) or may simply alleviate household expenses during times of unprofitability for the enterprise. Receiving remittances may allow the household to participate in more profitable but riskier ventures, as remittances can function as a financial support system for the home. The importance of remittances is especially evident in countries with undeveloped lending markets.

A primary element driving Nigerians to emigrate is the desire to enhance their own living standards and those of their extended families. Nigerians residing overseas consistently contemplate their homeland. They are concerned about the situation at home and the well-being of the dependents left behind. All of their savings are allocated for housing. They endeavor to support those remaining in Nigeria by remitting funds, which are allocated for sustenance, healthcare services, and the

establishment of local enterprises that enhance infrastructure and foster trade and commerce. This suggests that their actions contribute to the homeland's growth via remittances. Members of the Diaspora are recognized for remitting substantial funds to their home countries through various means, including investment, real estate acquisition, and humanitarian assistance.

The International Organization for Migration (IOM, 2013: 9) asserts that remittances can alleviate poverty by supplying families in their countries of origin with supplementary money for consumer goods and investments in education and health. Remittances are utilized to fund community projects, like hospitals and schools, or are invested in entrepreneurial endeavors. Augmented general resources can also contribute to the diminishment of child labor and assist households in better preparing for catastrophic environmental shocks such as droughts, earthquakes, and cyclones. A study indicated that, on average, a 10 percent rise in the proportion of international remittances in a country's GDP results in a 1.6 percent reduction in the percentage of individuals living in poverty (Adams and Page, 2005).

Worldwide, documented remittances now surpass overseas aid flows, totaling around US\$240 billion annually into the Global South (Mercier, Page and Evans, 2008:7). Nigeria is the biggest beneficiary of remittances in sub-Saharan Africa. The nation accounts for 65 percent of the legally documented remittance inflows to the area and 2 percent of worldwide inflows. Indeed, as early as 1999, Nigerians residing overseas remitted a total of US\$ 1.3 billion (Babawale 2008: 28). The Central Bank of Nigeria recorded over US\$ 2.26 billion in remittances for 2004, following the initiation of data collecting in 2002 (Hernandez-Coss, 2006: 3-4). In 2005, the amount was \$6.5 billion, which doubled in 2007 to \$17.9 billion, following a 2006 total of \$10.5 billion, and \$18.2 billion was sent to the country in 2009 (Obboh, 2011). It is important to acknowledge that the substantial sum of money that entered Nigeria over the specified times must have, in some manner,

The terms "brain drain," "brain gain," "brain bank," and "brain circulation" are often cited in the examination of Diasporas. The IOM defines "brain drain" as the migration of skilled and talented individuals from their country of origin to another, resulting in a loss of skills and resources in the former. "Brain gain," commonly referred to as "reverse brain drain," signifies the benefits accrued by the arrival of skilled individuals into a country. The extensive emigration of highly skilled or educated individuals has long been acknowledged as potentially problematic for their place of origin. However, in numerous cases, the continued involvement of Diaspora groups in their countries of origin may provide a solution to brain drain. Since the late 1990s, the advantageous effects of emigration have resulted in the development of notions such as "brain circulation" and "brain bank". "Brain circulation" refers to emigrants who return to their homeland, bringing back fresh skills and knowledge vital for advancement. Even when skilled immigrants do not return to their home countries, they occasionally provide the remaining trained professionals there with access to the invaluable knowledge gained abroad, referred to as the "brain bank." Kapur, 2001.

The modifications in the definitions of "Diasporas" are linked to the phenomena referred to as the "Diaspora turn" in policy discourse and practice. Since the 1990s, an increasing number of countries and international organizations have implemented steps to integrate Diaspora populations across various sectors, despite the existence of laws and institutions related to Diasporas since the 1800s (Gamlen, 2014). This stems from a growing recognition that Diaspora communities act as vital development agents, strengthening social, economic, and cultural ties between their countries of origin and residency. Diaspora outreach programs include traditional consular services for people abroad as well as initiatives within home ministries that focus on health, welfare, labor, education, economy, culture, and religion. Several countries, including the Philippines, Bangladesh, Canada, and Israel, possess dedicated ministries exclusively for diaspora relations.

While diaspora outreach initiatives often emphasize the use of remittance monies for development, governments are increasingly forging links through various methods. Many states have enabled the retention or accessibility of citizenship for Diaspora individuals or have established new forms of membership. Agunias and Newland (2012) Individuals able to establish ties to their countries of origin may apply for ethnic origin cards in India, Turkey, Croatia, and other nations. Some jurisdictions, such as Mexico, have reformed political representation to improve inclusivity for people living abroad. In origin states where expatriates are barred from voting, political associations may develop as alternative forms of representation.

Furthermore, operational data can augment our understanding of Diaspora populations. The IOM's Migration for Development in Africa (MIDA) program is a capacity-building project that enables the transfer of skills, knowledge, and resources from African emigrants to their countries of origin. The IOM's implementation of the Return of Qualified Nationals (RQN) and Temporary Return of Qualified Nationals (TRQN) programs has facilitated over 4,000 global postings of Diaspora, using their experience in education, health, and technology. The IOM has performed more than 120 studies on Diaspora communities, mostly in OECD member states and European countries. Examples include studies on Diaspora communities from Zambia, Angola, Morocco, and Moldova. Data from similar programs, notably the UNDP's Transfer of Knowledge through Expatriate Nationals (TOKTEN) initiative, have been employed to assess the effectiveness of Diaspora outreach and training programs in certain countries, such as Sudan and Syria.

Human trafficking epitomizes the malevolent facet of human mobility. Rising poverty, persistent unemployment, conflicts, human suffering, and grim future outlooks have fostered an environment favorable to the expansion of human trafficking. Human trafficking mostly impacts women and children, entailing the unlawful transportation of humans within and from Africa, orchestrated by third-party frauds linked to criminal enterprises. Human trafficking has progressively reached worldwide proportions, violating the rights of its victims in recent years. Three principal categories of trafficking have been identified: trafficking in children, primarily for agricultural labor and domestic servitude, both domestically and internationally; trafficking in women and minors for sexual exploitation, chiefly involving individuals from outside the region for the sex industry.

3.2 Discussions

a. The Theoretical Framework Of The Study

Everett S. Lee (1917-2007) articulated the push and pull elements of migration. The movement of migrants between two locations may be hindered by intervening impediments. The quantity of migrants is directly related to the availability of opportunities in a specific location and inversely proportional to the presence of intervening obstacles. Push factors are typically defined by insufficient job opportunities, whereas pull factors are characterized by economic prospects.

Push And Pull Factors In Migration:

Push Factors

Not enough jobs or opportunities
Famine or drought
Political fear of persecution
Poor medical care
Loss of wealth
Natural disaster
Death threats
Poor housing
Discrimination

Pull Factors

Job opportunities
higher benefit
Better living condition
Education
Better medical care
Attractive climate
Security
Family links
Better chances of marrying

War
Sickness

Corporate push factors Individuals aspire to reside within a community, whereas push factors encompass the motivations for relocating to a specific faith. Examples of push factors include poverty, insecurity, and marginalization. Push factors can be the antithesis of pull factors, which include enhanced security, employment possibilities, or the potential for an improved quality of life.

Poverty is complex. It is linked to diminished empowering capacity, a heightened risk of financial loss, insufficient access to social and economic resources, and a scarcity of employment opportunities. The Nigeria National Bureau of Statistics reported that in 2020, 40 percent of 83 million Nigerians lived in poverty due to inadequate access to basic healthcare and skilled medical experts. The impoverished in Nigeria face a multitude of health issues. Poverty in Nigeria is predominantly attributed to corruption, which arises from inadequate governance. Many Nigerians have lost their sense of shame in soliciting assistance, as numerous individuals are unable to access their farms due to conflicts with Fulani herdsmen armed with AK-47s. Additionally, Boko Haram, linked to the Al-Qaeda terrorist organization, has exacerbated insecurity, particularly in the northwest region of Nigeria. Kidnapping constitutes a profitable enterprise for criminals and young males. The marginalization of the Igbo people has prompted several Igbo youngsters to advocate for self-determination.

b. Nigerians In Diaspora Commission (Nidcom)

In order to mobilize the Diaspora for homeland development effectively, the government can do a number of things including the following:

1. Utilizing legal and regulatory frameworks impacting Diasporas, such as citizenship and voting rights, along with formal political representation, as exemplified by Mexico. For Africa to effectively engage the Diaspora in homeland development, a reciprocal or symbiotic connection is essential. The Diaspora must obtain their need for the continent to acquire its requirements.
2. The government might offer incentives to Diasporas by acknowledging them as significant stakeholders and a crucial element in growth. The government can enhance the welfare of expatriates by offering consular services in their host countries, thereby improving their quality of life. Additionally, the government can facilitate diplomatic visits to assess and address their issues, as well as establish specialized agencies or institutions to engage with the Diaspora. The government can also convene Diaspora summits. This will instill confidence in the Diaspora that their homelands acknowledge their identity and capabilities, and are also concerned for their well-being.
3. Counterpart funding for Diaspora development activities. The government can allocate counterpart money for several categories of Diaspora development efforts, wherein individuals and groups contribute a specified amount, and the government supplies the remainder to facilitate project execution.
4. Eliminate tax and tariff policies for Diaspora ventures: The government can promote Diaspora contributions to the homeland's development by providing tax and tariff exemptions for such efforts.
5. Compensating diaspora organizations and people. The government can promote Diaspora engagement in homeland development by incentivizing Diaspora groups and people that implement development initiatives in the homeland. This will motivate others to consider their contributions to the nation.

The Nigerian government has adopted a policy to engage with the Diaspora for the purpose of national development. Nigeria has also received support. For many Nigerians living abroad, their time spent overseas has not lessened their patriotism; instead, it has heightened their dedication to

their homeland. Similar to numerous Nigerians residing domestically, they express apprehension regarding the country's developmental circumstances and may possess essential talents required to tackle Nigeria's socio-economic issues. Through their cultural initiatives, they act as Nigeria's foremost cultural ambassadors and a potential catalyst for a positive foreign perception.

In 2017, Nigeria's total remittances from the diaspora were estimated at 22 billion US dollars (KNOMAD 2017). The Nigerian diaspora can function as a substantial economic catalyst. The diaspora is growing due to global acknowledgment of its substantial contributions and the impact it has on its countries of origin through remittances, foreign direct investment (FDI), skills, and technology transfer. Many nations have enacted rules and legislation to create an environment that encourages the full participation and contribution of the Diaspora to national development. Nigeria has implemented strategies to ensure the active participation of the Diaspora in economic and infrastructure development. These efforts have included the formulation of criteria for medical missions intended for health professionals seeking to improve their community's well-being through such activities.

The Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) has implemented recent measures to regulate financial remittances and international money transfers. The creation of financial instruments, such as the Diaspora bond, is an essential measure. The Diaspora band effectively formed the departmental management office to gather revenue from Nigerians overseas. The raised funds are designated for procuring relatively low-cost foreign currency to finance capital projects, while concurrently providing the Diaspora an opportunity to participate in Nigeria's growth (National Diaspora Policy (NDP 2021)).

The United Nations Development Program (UNDP) recently involved the Nigerian Diaspora at the 2024 Nigerian American Business Forum (NABF) Conference, emphasizing prospects for Diaspora investment in Nigeria. The Forum emphasized profitable investment opportunities in the nation and examined the potential of utilizing Diaspora finance for sustainable development. Highlighting the essential significance of the Diaspora. The discourse focuses on the potential of Diaspora investments to enhance Nigeria's national growth. (UNDP June 14, 2024)

Mobilizing the diaspora to promote national development in Nigeria The diaspora serves as a crucial catalyst for sustainable development, providing expertise, remittances, and investments. The information networks and customized solutions profoundly influence local development and national advancement. Remittances alone total over \$20 billion yearly, with Foreign Direct Investment (FDI). This highlights the Diaspora's vital position in the Nigerian economic environment (UNDP June 14, 2024).The Honorable Abike Dabiri-Erewa, Chairman and CEO of the Nigerians in Diaspora Commission (NIDCOM), has advocated for more strategic collaboration and engagement with the Federal...

The World Bank indicates that the Nigerian Diaspora, comprising more than 1.7 million persons, remitted \$65.34 billion during a three-year period to bolster economic operations in the country. The Bank reported that Nigerian Diaspora remittances amounted to \$24.31 billion in 2018, down to \$23.81 billion in 2019, and further fell to \$17.21 billion in 2020.The Nigerians in Diaspora Commission promotes the engagement of Nigerians overseas in the development of policies, projects, and contributions to Nigeria's progress, seeking to utilize the human capital and material resources of the diaspora for holistic socio-economic, cultural, and political enhancement.

The Diaspora may encounter difficulties in assimilating into their new communities, negotiating the preservation of their cultural identity with the necessity of adapting to their new surroundings. Racial and ethnic prejudice poses a considerable challenge for numerous Nigerians in the Diaspora.

The Nigerians in Diaspora Commission (NiDCOM) connects the Nigerian Diaspora with the country's development through a variety of programs and events:

- **Nigeria Diaspora Investment Summit (NDIS):** A platform for the Diaspora to invest in the Nigerian economy by connecting them with local entrepreneurs, SMEs, and startups. The NDIS also creates jobs and diversifies the economy.
- **Annual Diaspora Day:** Celebrated on July 25, this event celebrates the achievements of Nigerians abroad and inspires the younger generation.
- **National Diaspora Merit Award Ceremony:** An event that celebrates the achievements of Nigerians abroad.
- **Diaspora National Housing Fund (NHF) Mortgage:** A program that provides mortgages.
- **Africa Diaspora Resource Research Centre:** A center that supports research.
- **Diaspora Quarterly Lecture Series:** A series of lectures that engage the Diaspora community.
- **Returnee Intervention Program:** A program that supports returnees.
- **Badagry Door of Return:** A symbolic ceremony that welcomes African Diaspora individuals back to Nigeria.
- **Diaspora affairs:** Established in nine countries in collaboration with the International Organization for Migration (IOM).

The NiDCOM's mission is to use the human and material resources of the Nigerian Diaspora to contribute to the country's socio-economic, cultural, and political development.

The Nigerians in Diaspora Commission (NiDCOM) plays a vital role in connecting the Nigerian Diaspora for development. Established to facilitate engagement between Nigerians abroad and their home country, NiDCOM focuses on various initiatives, including:

1. **Advocacy:** Promoting the interests of Nigerians living abroad and ensuring their voices are heard in national development.
2. **Collaboration:** Encouraging partnerships between the Diaspora and local stakeholders to drive economic growth, technology transfer, and community development.
3. **Remittances:** Facilitating and encouraging remittances, which are crucial for many families in Nigeria and contribute significantly to the economy.
4. **Skill Development:** Organizing programs and initiatives to harness the skills and expertise of the Diaspora for local development projects.
5. **Networking:** Creating platforms for networking and collaboration among Diaspora professionals, investors, and entrepreneurs.

NiDCOM seeks to use the skills and resources of Nigerians overseas to bolster sustainable development initiatives in Nigeria. The Nigerians in Diaspora Commission facilitates the involvement of Nigerians abroad in the formulation of policies, projects, and the development of Nigeria, aiming to leverage the human capital and material resources of the diaspora for comprehensive socio-economic, cultural, and political advancement.

In recent decades, there has been growing acknowledgment that migration can contribute to international development. Migrants generally maintain connections with their nation of origin, and their engagement with their families and home community serves as the primary conduit through

which migration can foster development. Migrants provide a significant interchange of capital, expertise, and ideas between host and home countries. Remittances, the most tangible outcome of international migration for impoverished nations, have attained considerable magnitude on a worldwide scale. In 2010, remittances to underdeveloped nations exceeded USD 320 billion (World Bank 2011) — and this figure only accounts for those officially documented. These inflows have emerged as a significant source of foreign exchange and funding for numerous developing nations. These international flows are arguably less volatile than other capital flows, including portfolio investment, foreign direct investment, and government foreign aid (Ratha 2003, Vargas-Silva 2008).

According to Business Insider Africa., the ten foreign countries with the largest Nigerian populations are as follows:

1. United States - 353,885 Nigerians
2. United Kingdom - 215,000
3. Italy - 119,400
4. United Arab Emirates - 100,000
5. Brazil - 90,000
6. Germany - 83,000
7. Canada - 70,000
8. Spain - 70,000
9. South Africa - 31,000
10. France - 30,000

These populations contribute significantly to remittances back to Nigeria, with around \$23 billion recorded in 2023.

Nigeria has taken steps to encourage the diaspora's active participation in infrastructure and economic development. As part of these efforts, standards for medical missions have been developed for medical professionals who want to use these programs to improve the welfare of their communities. Recent regulations have integrated the Central Bank of Nigeria's (CBN) authority over financial remittances and foreign money transfers. Another important element is the creation of financial choices, like the Diaspora bond. To raise money from Nigerians living overseas, the Diaspora band set up the department management office. In addition to allowing the Diaspora to participate in Nigeria's development, the funds earned are used to obtain comparatively cheap foreign cash for financing capital projects (National Diaspora Policy (NDP) 2021). Make returns easier by putting in place a long-lasting returnee program.

Nigeria and its Diaspora will gain from the implementation of this strategy and the related action plan. The plan would enable all Nigerians living abroad to fully realize their potential in their new countries while actively participating in national development. The policy is based on the ideas of reciprocity and mutuality, even if it is recognized that the Diaspora has untapped potential to promote socioeconomic growth. Resources that Nigeria may offer through its diasporic inhabitants must be welcomed by the government. The nation will provide aid to the Diaspora, including effective complaint resolution procedures and access to relevant information. The 2021 National Diaspora Policy (NDP)

At the 2024 Nigerian American Business Forum (NABF) Conference, the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) engaged the Nigerian Diaspora and highlighted opportunities for Diaspora investment in Nigeria. The Forum explored the possibility of using Diaspora financing for sustainable development and highlighted lucrative investment prospects in the country. highlighting the Diaspora's fundamental importance. The potential of diaspora investments to support Nigeria's national development is the main topic of discussion. June 14, 2024, UNDP

Organizing the diaspora to support Nigeria's national development The diaspora contributes knowledge, remittances, and investments, acting as a vital catalyst for sustainable development. Both local and national development are significantly impacted by the information networks and tailored solutions. Together with foreign direct investment, remittances alone generate approximately \$20 billion annually. FDI, or foreign direct investment This emphasizes how important the Diaspora is to Nigeria's economy (UNDP June 14, 2024). Diaspora members can either directly or indirectly contribute to the growth of their home nations. From minimal involvement to maximum involvement, Tinajero (2013) identifies five different levels of Diaspora engagement in development:

Remittances help poor home communities meet their needs and enhance their standard of living. This includes daily needs (clothing, rent, consumption), consumer durables (television, refrigerator, and radio), healthcare (hospitalizations and prescription drugs), savings and investments, and housing (buying, remodeling). Remittances improve agricultural methods, such as irrigation systems, and build necessary infrastructure through neighborhood organizations. They also cover siblings' basic schooling (tuition, textbooks, and uniforms) (Orozco, 2007). Some migrants use their remittances to start small businesses or invest in real estate while they wait to return (IMP, 2003). Remittances are used to pay back direct loans or cooperative help, which are occasionally used to alleviate poverty in low-income households. This has multiplier effects, generating income and jobs in local communities and the national economy.

At the family, community, and national levels, remittances create a generational bond between migrants and their homeland (Adepoju, 2006a). Remittances, the second-largest source of foreign exchange after exports, are essential to the economies of the countries that send migrants. We cannot ignore the fact that emigrants face isolation, suffer inhospitable working conditions, and grow apart from their parents and kids.

The region has strong and extensive ties within the migrant diaspora return continuum. Travelers maintain relationships while abroad by sending money home and making visits when possible (Koser, 2003). Sub-Saharan African migrants, including those residing in developed countries, do not intend to stay indefinitely and leave their wives and children in their home countries in order to fulfill their goal of returning home permanently; in effect, these resident families are held hostage in order to secure the migrants' return. In Sub-Saharan Africa, migrants lead two lives: social and economic. For example, in order to preserve ownership, women in Lesotho are forced to work on the family farm.

In addition to optimizing economic benefits from both home and destination countries, migrant families maintain their extended structure in the face of manpower losses brought on by migration. Families in Senegal, Mali, and Burkina Faso use loans from family, cooperatives, and religious brotherhoods to pay for migrants' travels. These layers need to be reclaimed as soon as possible after arrival, which is why some immigrants actively and often successfully establish their businesses at their new location, causing envy among the local population. The family ensures involvement in the advantages gained by the migrant's movement by keeping close and encouraging ties with the migrant. Diaspora scientists can contribute to the development of their home countries without having to migrate by creating networks between them and their domestic counterparts.

Utilizing the knowledge, abilities, and assets of the Nigerian Diaspora to promote national development is made possible in large part by healthcare organizations like the Medical Association of Nigerians across Great Britain (MANSAG), the Canada Association of Nigeria Physicians and Dentists (CANPAD), and the Association of Nigerian Physicians in America (ANPA). Through policy advocacy, mentoring for aspiring professionals, educational conferences, medical missions, and hands-on training programs, they are focused on changing the healthcare industry. The

foundation of this is the government's creation of a favorable atmosphere through healthcare-supportive policies.

In the US, the Nigerian Diaspora has started to build an organization network. The majority of Nigerian Diaspora groups in the United States are volunteer-led organizations with limited funding because of the relatively modest and recent influx of Nigerian immigrants. None of the 67 Nigerian companies with U.S. headquarters that were selected for the RAD analysis had annual revenue of more than \$200,000. Nigerian Diaspora groups can take many different forms, such as organizations that support Nigeria's progress, encourage the country's arts and culture, empower women, or offer health and other social services to the most disadvantaged citizens of the country. Many groups highlight a shared subnational ethnic identity, such as Igbo or Yoruba, which reflects the rich cultural past and language of Nigeria.

Notable Nigerian Diaspora organizations in the US include the Elegba Folklore Society, the People's Club of Nigeria, the Foundation for Democracy in Africa, and the Anambra State Association. Under NIDO Americas, the Nigerian Diaspora Organization (NIDO) has several chapters in the United States and collaborates closely with the Nigerian Embassy and other governmental organizations. NIDO was founded by Diasporan residents at the request of the Nigerian government (IMPI 2015). The United States is the top source of remittances to Nigeria and the main destination for Nigerians migrating abroad. About \$6.1 billion was sent to Nigeria by the Nigerian diaspora in the US in 2012. Remittances from Nigeria totaled \$20.6 billion, or 7.9 percent of the country's \$262.2 billion GDP or gross domestic product.

4.0 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 Conclusion

One of the causes driving Nigerians to emigrate is the desire to enhance their living standards and that of their extended relatives. Nigerians residing overseas are concerned about people they have left behind. Many leave their wives and children at home with the hope of returning to their nation after their time abroad.

The Nigerian government have cultivated a commitment to actively interact with the Diaspora for national development, receiving backing from the United Nations, particularly the UNDP, through the Nigerians in Diaspora Commission. In addition to remitting funds to their home countries, migrants convey ideas, behavioral norms, values, and experiences. This phenomenon is referred to as social remittance. Diasporas significantly enhance the social and cultural fabric of their nations of origin, transit, and destination by establishing connections and promoting national understanding among diverse cultures. Diasporas can stimulate trade, foreign direct investment, business creation, entrepreneurship, and the transmission of new information and skills. Notwithstanding its adverse connotation and associated misconceptions, migration has consistently represented a significant aspect of human evolution. It fosters connections, transforms communities, and empowers individuals globally. Emigration significantly contributes to economic growth and sustainable development at both national and local levels. To motivate the diaspora to contribute domestically, local authorities must cultivate a relationship of trust with their expatriates and formalize and maintain engagement initiatives.

The Diasporas have contributed to the change of their local communities beyond familial households; nevertheless, the UNDP Moldova 2018 assistance framework has not been executed in most local communities in Nigeria, which presents a more favorable alternative.

4.2 Recommendations

The creation of government-sponsored websites that allow migrants to compare remittance service fees from different providers and select the best one to maximize the amount of money received by their family members is a modern idea. One example is the website www.sendmoneypacific.org, which was created as a joint venture by the governments of Australia and New Zealand. The website provides details on remittance choices for migrants living in Australia and New Zealand, with a focus on sending money to the Solomon Islands, Fiji, Kiribati, Papua New Guinea, and Samoa.

Establishing an international framework to address migration holistically and promote globalization from a humanitarian standpoint is the crucial shift. The limited size of domestic markets significantly impairs Sub Sahara African (SSA) governments' capacity to provide long-term jobs for their young people, especially in the current globalized environment. The region's development plan must be built on support for job creation activities. Improved living standards, economic growth, and the development of jobs all depend on reciprocal trade relations with wealthy countries.

A careful examination of the dynamics and underlying factors influencing migration in both the countries of origin and the countries of destination would increase the likelihood that migration and development programs would be successful. Human trafficking, the rights of migrants, the immigration of skilled professionals, and the rise in irregular migration are all major problems facing the Sahara region of Africa. Bilateral approaches alone are no longer sufficient to handle migration issues; a comprehensive plan encompassing international harmonization of migration policies is necessary. A global approach to reducing trafficking and irregular migration is required, backed by countries and international organizations and utilizing the recent increase in intergovernmental communication.

Different migratory arrangements within different sub-regions and even within individual countries present different complicated difficulties related to migration, circulation, permanent residence, and settlement, requiring different policy responses. The situation calls for a comprehensive framework to address migratory concerns as well as the coordinated implementation of policies and programs.

All parties involved are finally acknowledging the basic idea that migration is inherent and inevitable in a globalized society, emphasizing the potential benefits of migration for both migrants and their home and host countries. Coordination between sending, transiting, and receiving nations is essential to successful migration management, as is reducing the driving causes behind migration. The creation of routes for frequent mobility for both professional and unskilled migrants is necessary to combat the migratory boom, for example, by looking into the possibility of circular migration.

The national strategy on health worker migration underscores the unified dedication to addressing the complex difficulties associated with health migration. This policy emerges from a concerted effort to tackle the intricate issue of migration among healthcare workers, ensuring that the departure of our deceased healthcare professionals does not undermine the integrity of the health system and the well-being of our citizens. The policy's effectiveness hinges on efficient execution, necessitating robust governance, sufficient money, and cooperation among many stakeholders, including government entities, professional organizations, and international partners.

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