

(she gives back)

Migrant women's
philanthropic practices
from the diaspora

Research report

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philanthropic practices
from the diaspora

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Colophon

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Background and acknowledgments >

(she looks back)

The conceptualization of this research report (she gives back) started from Mama Cash' encounters, collaborations and partnerships with black, migrant and refugee women's rights activists and organizations in the Netherlands. It was these women from whom we learned about the range of innovative, pioneering projects women take up to change and improve not only their own lives and that of other women in the Netherlands, but also that of women in their countries of origin and globally. It was here that the idea for (she gives back) originated.

In November 2005, the (she gives back) project was launched with a public debate in Felix Meritis in Amsterdam, focusing on the subject of women's diaspora philanthropy in the Netherlands, gathering women active in diaspora philanthropy initiatives; philanthropists and development organizations. At the same time, a group of researchers came together for a first meeting at Mama Cash. They laid the foundations for a European research study in five European countries: the Netherlands, the United Kingdom, Germany, France and Italy. The result of their valuable efforts is combined in the underlying research report (she gives back); migrant women's philanthropic practices from the diaspora. Mama Cash is proud of this report. It has generated valuable knowledge on the influence of migrant women on social change in their countries of origin – knowledge that was not available previously.

(she thanks)

Key in the conceptualization and initiation of the project (she gives back) was Nancy Jouwe, at that time deputy director of Mama Cash. Deeply committed to the subject, she laid the foundation for this project, being involved first as a project coordinator, and later on as an engaged counterpart, a member of the editorial board, and a source of inspiration. Mama Cash is deeply grateful for her valuable contributions. Also the other two members of the editorial board, Halleh Ghorashi and Lorraine Nencel (grantmaking advisor of Mama Cash), have been of great help in the development of this report and very generous in offering their knowledge, their experience as academics, and their willingness to discuss. We especially want to thank Lorraine for her advice on the research methods. Esther Vonk, programme officer for Europe at Mama Cash and (she gives back) project coordinator, has been involved in the project from the start, focusing primarily on the research and publication components of the project.

Regarding the content of the report (she gives back), we are extremely grateful to the seven researchers who gathered all the information, executed the interviews and wrote the different chapters: Cigdem Esin and Aygen Kurt (United Kingdom), Cassandra Ellebe-Dueck and Judy Gummich (Germany), Charito Basa (Italy), Carol Mann (France) and Anja Rudnick (the Netherlands). Anja joined the project a bit earlier than the rest and was also involved in the process of finding the researchers for the other countries. All of the researchers have offered so more than anticipated, in terms of time, knowledge and

engagement. Whilst undertaking the research, they were captivated and inspired by the subject of women's diaspora philanthropy, and particularly by the amazing, strong and resourceful women they met and interviewed. The research, therefore, became so much more than just research. As Charito Basa, the researcher for Italy, states:

In many cases, the discussions with the respondents became organizational work for finding new strategies or to strengthen existing efforts.

Aimee Rindoks has been intensively involved in particularly the last stages of the research project, as an editor of the five research papers and as co-author of the introduction and conclusion to this report with Esther Vonk. She engaged with the texts on a most intimate level as well as being extremely cooperative, flexible and a great pleasure to work with.

The public debate on women's diaspora philanthropy in November 2005, was an important first step in the project (she gives back). We want to thank all women who contributed to this event: Esther Lubenau who organised the event; Fadumo Alin, Grace Cabactulan, Marjan Sax, Mechtild van den Hombergh, Fenna Ulichki, Mavis Carilho, Halleh Ghorasi and Anja Rudnick who shared their expertise and experience during the evening; and Funda Mujde and Bad Brya.

Last but by no means least, we want to express our gratitude to the Levi Strauss Foundation Europe, in particular Zoltan Valcsicsak and Oxfam Novib The Netherlands, who were willing to invest financially in this project.

Introduction > (she gives back)

Migrant women's philanthropic practices from the diaspora¹

by Aimee Rindoks and
Esther Vonk

In Europe, philanthropy is usually seen as something that is reserved for wealthy white people – men, in general. This image disregards the reality of diaspora communities' involvement in philanthropic practices. Giving for the benefit of others has been part of migrants' practices since the first arrivals of migrants in European countries and societies and has included both women and men. Various diasporic communities representing diverse migrant groups frequently send money and goods to family, friends and communities in their countries of origin. These resources are used for a variety of purposes: from consumption and direct support of the household, to community development purposes, to broader social causes. Migrant women's groups and organizations are important players in these practices: in a variety of ways, they are philanthropists contributing with funds and other resources to positive social change. This reality contradicts the image of the migrant, in particular the migrant woman, as passive 'receiver' but on the contrary shows that they are 'givers' and agents of change. Nevertheless, the participation and contributions of migrant women to communities and societies in Europe as well as in countries of origin are often overlooked or ignored.

In the context of current political developments in Europe, with immigration policies that are becoming more restrictive and political as well as public discourse tending to increase the gap between groups of citizens and growing intolerance and exclusion of black, migrant and refugee groups, it is of great political importance to invest in the visions and initiatives of migrant communities.

From remittances to philanthropy

According to the World Bank, 175 million migrants globally sent \$230 billion back to the countries where they came from in 2005. This stream of money – known as *remittances* – is collectively one of the largest cash flows in the world and is certainly indispensable for many economies, and especially families, in the global South. The growing interest in remittances, both from financial institutions as well as in the world of development work, has resulted in a number of studies and publications on this subject. However, no attention is paid to the philanthropic dimension of this cash flow and to the social change aspects. Moreover, the role of women in particular in making these changes happen is largely invisible. Especially in the European context, there is virtually no gender perspective on diaspora philanthropy, or any attention to the connection between gender and ethnicity within this subject. In other words, this topic reflects an area where new knowledge urgently needs to be developed.

New studies are beginning to emerge on the broader topic of migrant organizations' contributions, although research on it is still thin at best and there is only limited recognition of the initiatives or understanding of how they develop and operate. Activities related to 'diaspora philanthropy' have not been widely documented. Understanding the role of diaspora philanthropy can therefore help provide a more holistic picture within discussions of remittances and aid and, quite crucially, reveal contributions that have been overlooked, have not received the

attention that they deserve, or, in other cases, are only recently emerging.

The gender dimension has often been overlooked in migration studies in general as well as in issues specifically related to remittances and development. Underlying the lack of attention to the role that women are playing in diaspora philanthropy is the unspoken assumption that migrant women have no money or are not in a position to decide how the money is invested. However, migrant women are increasingly economically self-sufficient all over the world. They are undoubtedly, regardless of the size of their salaries, active in 'giving back' to their hometowns and current communities in many ways. Therefore, relationships between gender and remittances are only beginning to be discussed and are inconclusive (for a brief overview, see Ghosh 2006, p. 23–24), while data and information on women's practices of diaspora philanthropy are fully missing.

The information presented in this report is therefore at the crux of two areas of increasing policy and research interest: the role of migrants as philanthropists for social change and the role and contributions of migrant women specifically.

Situating Diaspora Philanthropy

Little discussion on diaspora philanthropy exists in Europe and in the United States the concept of diaspora philanthropy has received only slightly more attention². Concepts related to 'diaspora philanthropy' are still developing. Kathleen Dunn (2004) follows Prina Werbner in characterizing diaspora communities as different from ethnic communities because they are, as Werbner points out, "usually highly politicized social formations." The civic actions of the diaspora are central to Werbner's study. Diasporas exist in their ability to mobilize and rally fellow diaspora members to common cause. From here, Dunn defines 'diaspora philanthropy' as "a value-based philanthropy that connects the diaspora member to his or her community, religious group, or country of origin"³. A specificity of philanthropy is that it refers to the contributions, in money, goods, time and/or expertise, to public causes. Philanthropy thus extends the household and individual cause. Importantly, Dunn's work introduces and expands the concept of 'diaspora philanthropy.' However, the concept she employs is narrow in that it is largely limited to activists. It is possible that other contributions are made by people driven by any variety of motivations and in many senses conducting 'diaspora philanthropy,' in a broader sense of making significant contributions to social change, on either an occasional or frequent basis. In this study, diaspora philanthropy is therefore defined even more broadly as those contributions from diaspora communities that extend the household and aim to contribute to broader social change.

In order to create a framework for further defining and understanding diaspora philanthropy and its organization, it is important to also discuss how various forms of development assistance can interact. Support or aid for community needs can be seen as originating from a few main areas: aid and development assistance, private

remittances, and diaspora philanthropy. Projects and contributions within these various forms of assistance can be seen as part of a continuum, however conflicting or contradicting in approaches they may be in some cases. International aid activities and official development assistance typically involve governmental forms and reflect a highly structured, institutionalized form of giving, whereas remittances lie on the complete opposite end, and are comprised of private resources, offered by individuals and are often utilized on a more micro-level (typically families and in some cases communities). Diaspora philanthropy is interesting in that it falls somewhere in between on this continuum. Diaspora philanthropy can both complement and differ substantially from development assistance, international aid and financial remittances.

How does diaspora philanthropy differ from development aid and private remittances in terms of allocation? As with remittances, diaspora philanthropy has the possibility, (although it is not restricted) to operate on a smaller, more local or micro-level. In many ways, it blends the individual nature of spending for remittances with greater issues of social change and structural developments, ideally leading to maximized impact because of the efficiency of not having to work through heavy, slow and expensive structures while at the same time being able, because of the direct connections, to invest in ways that can be unconventional but highly effective. Furthermore, diaspora philanthropy, like remittances, often (although not always) rests upon personal connections and shared interests, which can be related to any number of goals, including those related to social change, economic development, infrastructure, and political movements; projects often build from personal experiences, efforts and interests. At the same time, diaspora philanthropy also involves the collective level, in terms of the members involved in the projects, relationships with the recipients/community and, in some cases, accountability to those funding the activities.

However, understanding issues of allocation becomes more complicated when mixed with concerns related to funding and accountability to donors or partners. As this report will show, diaspora philanthropy can be funded through a variety of means, including individual resources, the pooling of money, fundraising activities, and by obtaining funds from governmental sources, such as those in the country of residence, which assist migrant associations or other groups. Again, it therefore involves a complex and ranging degree of accountability as well as practices. While recent policy documents reiterate that remittances are private resources and governments should not intervene while governmental development aid is formed by public funds and must be allocated 'carefully and properly', diaspora philanthropy falls in the grey zone in between. In an IOM (2002) study on relationships between migration and development, the issue of partnership and allocation of funds as related to migrant initiatives and development aid arose as one of the key dilemmas hindering collaboration between migrant groups and aid organizations:

The second dilemma is also related to the aid allocation issue: Comparing the motivations of aid donors and migrants, it seems that migrants' remittances and investments in their countries of origin may follow paths that replace, supplement or even undermine aid. Remittances sent by low skilled migrants to poorer areas of origin are likely to be for social and livelihood purposes, and their allocation is unlikely to follow the geopolitical and/or commercial political and economic objectives of aid donors. The dilemma is that allocation decisions are taken in different spheres and that the decision-makers have little experience with collaboration and coordination. (p. 33)

This statement exemplifies the recent developments in the relationship between the development aid organizations that have been receiving government subsidies to distribute development assistance funds on the one hand, and migrant organizations that are becoming players of growing importance in this 'market' more recently. Achievements, expertise and professionalism of migrant organizations operating in this field tend to be unacknowledged by both governments and development aid organizations and it is emphasized that development cooperation is a profession – not to be taken up by 'just anyone'.

For the women involved in projects, the issue is at least equally, if not more, complex. Although there is an increasing interest in the role of diaspora philanthropy, leading to potential partnerships with larger aid agencies, and in some cases funds available from governmental sources in the country of residence, there are very few concrete guidelines as to how successful such partnerships currently are, or an assessment of the differing expectations and motivations – translated in donor requirements and criteria that may not necessarily be in line with the needs of the organizers – that may hinder the development of the work and the success of such collaboration. Furthermore, access to national governmental funding for migrants varies by country. Further research on diaspora philanthropy is therefore paramount to this discussion, not only to better understand what is occurring, but also for all involved to be better equipped to handle the pitfalls that arise from having these different viewpoints and look for forms of cooperation that better fit the needs at hand.

Women's diaspora philanthropy: Looking for the missing links

Within the European context, research and information on diaspora philanthropy are still in their infancy; more so, the role of women in it is hardly discussed at all. The underlying research report contains a first look at women's diaspora philanthropy activities in five European countries: France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, and the UK. This report contributes to the discussion of diaspora philanthropy and specifically focuses on the work of migrant women and their organizations in this area, to better understand both the process of diaspora philanthropy as well as its effects, as related to empowerment, development and social change. It includes organizations both with a focus on women's rights issues and gender equality, as well as projects targeting broader groups and issues. In order to map out the variety of initiatives in the area of diaspora philanthropy and to assess what is hap-

pening in different European countries, all offering different opportunities and difficulties given the different contexts, Mama Cash has conducted exploratory research in the area of the philanthropic initiatives by black, migrant and refugee women's groups in five European countries.

Mama Cash and (she gives back)

(she gives back) builds upon three of Mama Cash's core values:

- she practices philanthropy for social change
- she leverages resources for women's rights worldwide
- she sees women as agents of change, also in philanthropy

Mama Cash has always strived to 'change the face of philanthropy'. Mama Cash was founded thanks to the financial means of a feminist philanthropist and has invested in the initiation and development of a network of women philanthropists in the Netherlands. Mama Cash starts from the conviction that women are very capable to further their rights and position and sees women as agents of change, also in the area of philanthropy. Mama Cash has been leveraging resources for women's rights since its foundation in 1983, while investing in groundbreaking, women-led initiatives around the world. What these initiatives have in common is that they are all rooted in the strength and ambition of women and the will to make the world a better place. With relatively limited resources, they are achieving results.

The current lack of funding for women's initiatives is therefore a troubling development. In a recent study, 'Where's the money for women's rights', the Association for Women's Rights in Development reports that governments, public institutions, development organizations and funding groups all over the world are allocating less money for women's rights. Fifty percent of women's groups and organizations currently receive less funding than they did five years ago, an area of concern, especially as women's human rights need continual attention.

The goal of this research is to answer a number of pressing questions within the context of the five European countries included: In what ways are migrant women involved in philanthropic activities? What motivates them and what are their goals? In which ways are they contributing to positive social change? What is the impact of these practices on the position of women, both for those involved in it in Europe, and for the women in the countries where the projects are being carried out? What strategies are being used, what are the stumbling blocks, and what is needed in order to achieve the desired goals and impact?

The researchers have collected qualitative data about diaspora philanthropy through contacts and extensive discussions with relevant organizations. The country reports begin with background information and secondary research related to the migration policies, foreign population statistics, and remittances sent from that country. Each researcher has also conducted fifteen

interviews on average with women active in diaspora philanthropy. This approach has allowed the researchers to present insights, outcomes and recommendations, as well as examples of inspiring practices of women's organizations that are making sustainable contributions to social change in countries in the South as well as in Europe.

(she gives back) in short

Activities

1. Public event around women's DP activities with development cooperation organizations, migrant women's organizations and other stakeholders
2. Exploratory research: mapping of women's practices of 'giving back' in five European countries: France; Germany; Italy; the Netherlands, United Kingdom
3. Grantmaking for diaspora philanthropy projects focusing on women's rights and empowerment
4. Publication of report and presentation of research findings

Research method

- 15 interviews per country
- women involved in DP through women's organisations, migrant organisations, or informally organized women
- women from different backgrounds (country of origin, with diverse migration histories, including both first and second generation migrants)
- active in different parts of the world
- different types of activities, different aims

Aims of the project

- insight into and visibility of the various diaspora philanthropy activities and strategies of black, migrant and refugee women in Europe
- strengthened network around women's diaspora philanthropy, linking stakeholders from different sectors: funding agencies, development aid organizations, black, migrant and refugee women's organizations in different countries in Europe, and women's organizations in countries of origin
- growing investment in women's diaspora philanthropy initiatives by philanthropic communities in Europe

Aims of the project

The project was designed to provide insight into the existing diaspora philanthropy practises of black, migrant and refugee women in Europe, including the strategies used to create social change; the forms of cooperation and partnerships; the inhibitors and accelerators; the needs and examples of inspiring practices.

The 'she gives back' project also aims to stimulate linking and learning in this field, connecting different stakeholders, in order to strengthen women's organizations active in this area, to create opportunities for exchange and collaboration between different organizations and to strengthen and jointly develop new strategies and initiatives. Following from this, the (she gives back) project hopes to contribute to leverage resources for women's diaspora philanthropy activities, both through a greater

visibility of existing activities among interested funds and through stimulating cooperation and partnerships with development aid organizations. Mama Cash will continue the (she gives back) project and increase our investments in the philanthropic initiatives of immigrant women in Europe. We hope that this research report will also inspire other foundations and development organizations to invest in, and work more closely with, women's organizations that are active in diaspora philanthropy.

Research approach and contributions

The concept of 'giving back', as indicated in the title of the project, allowed for a broad understanding of diaspora philanthropy which has made it possible to contribute to advancing understandings of various types of diaspora philanthropy. Women's diaspora philanthropy efforts can and do vary in terms of motivations, conceptualization, activities and strategies, goals, and types of partnerships involved. The focus on 'giving back' allows an inclusive view and the possibility to incorporate any of the formats that may exist, to include both individual and collective efforts and organizations in various stages of development and operation. It also allows discussion of various activities, including migrant organizations primarily focusing on activities in their communities of residence as well as those focused on activities abroad. This broad-based look has allowed for numerous findings to emerge related to the forms and processes that diaspora philanthropy takes, as well as the chance to gain a glimpse of the setbacks and personal frustrations that limit the capacity to act further and contribute to development or social change. In conducting their interviews, the researchers of the country reports have found that many of the women actively involved in such activities or organizations do not identify their work as 'philanthropy,' as much of their work is done on voluntary basis and oftentimes addresses communities and causes they feel a part of, leading to a strong sense of reciprocity between the organizers or activists and their counterparts in the communities they are working with. These issues will be illuminated further throughout the country reports, pointing to the limited theorization and understandings that currently exists on the activities, experiences, and contributions at stake, as well as to the understanding of 'philanthropy' as a concept not inclusive of these practices.

The country reports also focus on detailing the context through empirical information on the personal, organizational, social and political factors that influence diaspora philanthropy practices. The studies therefore help develop a range of issues: who the individuals are, what projects they implement, how their activities are possible (or limited) in terms of partnerships and funding, and why the women and organizations are motivated to act.

Scope and limitations

From the research a range of initiatives emerge, showing both the diversity and innovation involved, as well as highlighting a few common concerns that frequently appear across contexts and countries. Many projects address physical well-being, healthcare and education,

on either an individual or collective level in the countries of origin. Other projects have a more macro-outlook consisting of projects contributing to economic development or infrastructure improvements. Some groups hold strong political stances, others do not. While the focus of the exploration is on women's philanthropic activities, the activities they are involved in include both those with a clearly gendered or feminist approach, such as advancing equality for women, women's rights and bodily integrity, as well as those addressing more general issues related to physical well-being, community development, or increasing economic viability.

While the reports are not strictly comparative, the differing national contexts allow for a few general differences to emerge, especially as related to institutional factors and regulatory structures related both to immigration policies and histories as well as organizational requirements (such as those that influence a group's recognition by the government and possibilities for funding).

The approach used also has a few limitations. The relatively small sample size limits the possibility of making generalized statements. The interviews were often conducted via the snowball method, meaning that the contacts built on existing contacts, and therefore there is not necessarily an even or complete representation of countries of origin, diaspora communities, and types of projects in each report.

Furthermore, it is important to note that the interviews were only conducted in one location, namely, the European country where the women involved live and work. To fully evaluate the effectiveness of the diaspora philanthropy activities and projects identified is neither an intended part of this research nor possible given that in order to do so, it would be necessary to have the 'missing' side of the story – that of the partner organization and community in the countries the philanthropic initiatives are targeting. However the information that is provided, when coupled with an understanding of the role of the women involved as agents of change, furthers the understanding of both the types of work women are involved in and the concerns and needs faced by migrant women involved in diaspora philanthropy.

Given the multiplicity of factors involved in diaspora philanthropy, including organizational, regulatory, and other institutional factors as well as the intersections of gender, ethnicity, migration history, generation and culture, analyses tend to focus on each aspect to differing degrees. This is true both of the articles in this report and in publications elsewhere. These differences are based both on the researchers' own backgrounds and the context of the country involved and information revealed through interviews. The French and Dutch reports, in this context, include a greater focus on policy, including a look at recent changes in immigration discourse and policies that have guided the development of migrant associations in general in each respective country. The Italian report also addresses policies, largely noting that immigration is a relatively new phenomenon in Italy and therefore some institutional structures supporting it are still lacking. The German and UK reports instead focus more on other factors, including those

related to identity. The German report uses intersectional theory to show how identity and social positioning have impact on motivations as well as project outcomes. The UK report focuses on the multiplicity of forms the women's initiatives take and ways that their activities differ from formalized aid.

All in all, the five country reports broaden the understandings of diaspora philanthropy, through detailing various projects that have emerged across continents and also by addressing both motivations and the organizing factors, partnerships and funding involved. This report contributes to furthering understanding of 'diaspora philanthropy' as it entails a broad look across initiatives in differing stages of development, within an array of project types, and with a focus both on local and transnational issues. Furthermore, it is one of the first pieces of research to contribute to furthering understandings of migrant women as actors of social change connected to philanthropy. As the reports clearly demonstrate, women have been able to actively find solutions, addressing complex social, political, and economic issues, including issues related to the marginalization of women as well as to community well-being and development as a whole.

¹⁾ We thank Nancy Jouwe, whose contributions in earlier stages of the (she gives back) project formed part of the building blocks of this introduction.

²⁾ Issues related to diaspora philanthropy in the US have primarily been studied through hometown associations in Mexico and Latin America. In the US, as well as in Europe, there are still many gaps in understanding a broad range of migrant initiatives and the ways in which they operate.

³⁾ idem Dunn (2004)

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(she gives back)

1 > (she gives back) Diaspora Philanthropy in Italy

by Charito Basa

Introduction

This research report on diaspora philanthropy (DP) in Italy reveals that female migrants and exiles¹ have been 'giving back', contributing to their home countries through productive investments as associations and as groups and offering individual development assistance among family members, for many years now. In contrast to priorities for remittances, which correspond with the family's needs for food, clothing, housing, education and health, this study focuses on broader development support to the countries of origin for the women interviewed.

I used my personal network of migrant women's associations in order to locate women involved in diaspora philanthropy in Italy. Preliminary contacts were made through phone interviews, followed by face-to-face interviews. Italian development cooperation NGOs in Rome, including the office of the National Associations of Local Governments, were also contacted to find out whether the decentralized international cooperation programmes were involving migrant women or migrant associations as promoters and partners in development projects in poor countries.

No information of any kind related to diaspora philanthropy was found in Italy. Web searches pointed mainly to informational projects related either to the socio-political and economic conditions of migrants or to activities and records related to the social and political facets of migration in Italy.

This research proved to be the first ever attempt to find migrant women in Italy who are involved in transnational cooperation, and as such, the research has received great interest from the migrant women's organizations contacted. As I am a migrant woman from the Philippines and also involved in development and organizing work of migrant women at the local and national levels, I knew many of the women before this study. I chose to interview the women in a very conversational manner. During the interviews, I emphasized the role of women like "us" and the lack of recognition of "our" contribution. Questions were formulated in such a way that the discussions promoted awareness of the concept of 'giving back.' In many cases, the discussions became organizational work for finding new strategies or to strengthen existing efforts.

The main promoters of DP represented in this report include 21 women leaders in migrant communities in Rome, Milan, Venice and Turin. They are from Albania, Argentina, Brazil, Cape Verde, Chile, El Salvador, Eritrea, Ethiopia, the Philippines, Peru, Somalia, Sri Lanka and Ukraine. They are the founders of women's associations and leaders in migrant communities. They are migrant workers, ex-students and former exiles and entrepreneurs who have settled in the country. The majority of the contributions sent from Italy are used to support the poor populations in their communities of origin and target the weakest members of their societies. Several projects focus specifically on women and children.

This paper presents a profile of these migrant women's transnational philanthropic activities. The paper begins with an overview of migration in Italy. It then focuses on diaspora philanthropy, discussing the types of projects the women undertake, their motivations, the different ways they work, and the obstacles faced. The report ends with an overview of the impacts of their actions and future goals for their philanthropic work.

Migrants in Italy

Italy's immigration history reflects a clear shift from being a mass emigration country to a major receiving one. Analysis of data in the past years shows that the majority of migrants came from developing countries, specifically from North Africa, and that there is a relative concentration in the northern regions of the peninsula such as Lombardy, Piedmont, Emilia Romagna and Veneto. After the economic upswing in Italy in the beginning of the 1970s, Italy found itself hosting nearly 144.000 migrants; in 1980 there were 300.000. In 1987, the first amnesty programme boosted the number up to 572.000 (Pittau, 2005).

Migrant women from African countries started to arrive in the mid-1970s. Many Eritrean and Ethiopian women came to Italy to escape the violence of war. Cape Verdean and Filipino women filled domestic worker positions as Italian women increasingly started to work in the private sector.

The 1990s represented a decade of steadily increasing immigration, often as a result of people fleeing from armed conflict or poverty. In the 1990s the number of migrants from the East European countries also increased, mainly due to the conflict in Yugoslavia. The long civil war in Somalia has also brought about a mass of women and men seeking refuge in Italy. Immediately afterwards, the Albanians, Romanians, Polish and Ukrainians also emigrated – their presence is highly recognizable in Italy in terms of numbers now.

There were 1.360.049 adult migrants in Italy in 2001; 1.512.324 in 2002; 2.193.999 in 2003 and 2.325.000 in 2004 (Dossier Statistico, 2005).

As of January 1, 2005, Italian Statistics Office (ISTAT) revealed that Italy hosted 2.402.157 immigrants, of which 1.226.712 were male and 1.175.445 were female (see annex A). Eighty per cent (80%) are migrant workers employed in domestic and care giving positions (Pittau, 2005).

Remittances within the Italian context

One of the most apparent ways migrants support their home communities is through submitting financial remittances. In 2004, the main destinations for the remittances² sent from Italy were to countries within Europe and Asia (see Annex A, Table 2). In the last ten years, Filipino migrants have been the biggest community sending remittances. The low level of remittance flow to Eastern Europe countries is not surprising. Despite repre-

senting 30% of the migrant residents in Italy, the remittances to Eastern Europe represent only 1% of the total data. Eastern Europeans do not normally use banks to remit their money, but instead send them through friends/relatives, couriers or other informal financial intermediaries. (Dossier Statistico, 2005).

How have women contributed to the remittances sent, and how have these contributions been utilized? Notwithstanding the widely acknowledged impact of gender relations on almost all aspects of social and economic issues, the gender dimension for remittances is just beginning to be discussed. Although support from international migrants have had long been practised and general financial statistics on remittances are recorded, there has been a very little attention to the specific contributions for investment and development. This report highlights various initiatives by migrant women living in Italy and exemplifies that remittances, other funding, and materials sent are not only of great benefit for the families, but also significantly contribute to the social and economic development in the migrants' hometowns.

The Diaspora Philanthropy of migrant women in Italy

Migrant women leaders in this study have multiple roles and make a wide range of contributions. They not only provide professional and voluntary support services outside of their usual paid work to their migrant communities, but also are actively performing diaspora philanthropy activities in their countries of origin, both as individuals and by starting or participating in various organizations.

The research reveals a great array of contributions by migrant and exile women in Italy. They have funded several activities for poor women and other marginalized groups in their countries of origin: scholarships for poor students, supplying educational materials, reconstruction of schools, construction of factories and medical laboratories, reconstruction of houses of marginalized families, and establishment of training and social centres for empowerment and livelihoods support programmes.

Annex B shows the list of CMR women contacted by the researcher. Table 1 lists the women who were interviewed and whose philanthropic activities fall within the categories established for this study. Table 2 shows a list of other women who are doing diaspora philanthropy on an irregular basis, either as promoters of fundraising activities for emergencies or as "bridges" that link with Italian development agencies for cooperation in special projects in the countries of origin. Some have had interesting activities, but at the time of the interview they had no DP projects in the works. Some of them were not available for an interview after months of follow up and insistence. Although less information is available, their contributions are felt to be relevant to this study.

All in all, there were twenty-one women interviewed: six of them originated from Africa (Eritrea, Ethiopia, Somalia, Cape Verde and Senegal); eight of them are from Latin America (Peru, El Salvador, Nicaragua and Brazil); five

from Asia (Philippines and Sri Lanka); one from Albania and one from Ukraine. Thirteen of these have contributed much to this research not only because of their availability for interviews, but also because their activities have focused on giving back to their migrant communities in Italy and in their countries of origin for many years now.

The African diaspora organizations, such as Union of Eritrean Women and Tigray Women's Associations, involve second-generation migrants. They have been leaders of community actions and have expanded to join other migrant women's groups in Milan and in Rome. The leaders, Ainom Maricos and Tzhainesc Casai, became involved through their mothers, and their groups have continued to support the empowerment of women in their countries by raising awareness and by sending concrete development support as presented below. The Somali Women in Rome, led by Osman Lul Mohamed, also conducts the same activities, while Faduma Dirie of Associazione Spazio Solidale leads women in Milan from Somalia as well as other countries of origin by providing literacy and language lessons for children and adults. Through her association's support, she has been able to undertake DP activities in Somalia and Mali.

All four women are active professional intercultural mediators, while Ainom and Osman Lul also engage in entrepreneurial activities. Ainom created the Cooperativa Tropico, employing migrants that provide cleaning, maintenance and caregiving services in Milan, while Osman Lul has her own store selling African products in Rome.

Maria de Lourdes Jesus, a journalist by profession, migrated to Italy when she was fifteen years old to work as a domestic helper. She then founded the Organization of Cape Verdean Women in Italy in the mid-1980s. In 2004, she shifted from organizing women's activities to establishing a development NGO that now provides support to the poor population in Cape Verde.

Lucy Rojas, an exile from Chile, had always maintained active work on social issues. In 1991 she founded Cooperativa Proficua, along with other migrant women, in Milan. Cooperativa Proficua provides professional services to help professional migrants in Milan receive recognition for their educational titles and offers support for other legal issues, such as compilation of income tax returns, requests for citizenship, translation services, and intercultural education for students. The cooperative also provides refresher courses for migrant doctors, nurses, teachers and lawyers who want to work and exercise their professions in Italy. She later founded the ALPI/ANDES Comitato Pro Gemellaggio Milano/Val Paraiso, which conducts twinning and educational exchange activities between Milan and Val Paraiso in Chile.

Alica Patora, a physical therapist by profession and an exile from Argentina, is a member of Candelaria, a mixed migrant women's association that provides legal and intercultural mediation services, leadership and computer literacy training for migrant women workers in Rome. Although she operates her DP activities solely, Alicia has had collaborated with others as a volunteer providing support services and in sharing experiences with other

women at the Italian Refugee Centre in Rome. Zuleima Margarita Mira from El Salvador came to Rome to work as a domestic helper. Later, her employing family had hired her to work in their lamp factory. She founded the Associazione Senores Salvadorenas y Italianas (ASSI), which was initiated by the request of the El Salvadorian Embassy in Rome in their search for development support for disaster-inflicted areas in El Salvador.

Likewise, Nelly de Lima, a Communications university graduate in Peru, had the same initial work experience, working as a domestic helper in Italy. She ventured to learn more. By participating in training activities, she was able to become a professional intercultural mediator and now works with an organization named Punto Rosso which provides legal and counselling services in Milan. She initiated her DP activities alone, first establishing a library in her native mountain region of Apurimac. With the support of her son, she is currently providing scholarships and school materials for the poor children of emigrants from the Andes now living in Lima.

Minda Teves, a native of Surigao del Sur, Mindanao, The Philippines, is the leader of the biggest Filipino community in Turin. Joined by 43 of her family members (42 female and 1 male), whom she all assisted in coming to Italy to work as domestic helpers, Associazione Culturale Filippini del Piemonte provides family counselling services and actively contributes to cultural activities organized by local governments. She is a key contact both for the community and Italian institutions and has become a member of the Piemonte Regional Consultancy Committee in the area of migration and culturally related discourse. She leads her group in the DP activities by sending material and monetary support in her community of origin in Mindanao.

Dava Gjoka from Albania migrated to Italy to pursue her studies, and she later founded and currently chairs the Associazione Culturale Albanese Skanderbeg. This organization is composed of Albanian migrants and promotes socio-cultural links between Italy and Albania. Furthermore, Dava joined a group of intercultural mediators and also works with some of the women interviewed in this study. She works independently to find a supportive partner for her development educational programme for women in Albania that she now coordinates.

What are the women's motivations?

The principles of cooperation and solidarity interact as the women actively seek to respond to a combination of social, economic, political and cultural problems in their countries of origin. Women in DP may have limited resources, but the little they can contribute, as argued by all of them, makes a lot of difference to their own lives and to the lives of those who live in poverty.

Lives of these migrant women are touched by the harsh reality witnessed during their infrequent visits to their countries of origin. Maria de Lourdes of Tabanka Onlus said that Cape Verde has few resources and poverty is everywhere on the islands. Zuleima of ASSI explained that when she visited her hometown in El Salvador after

the earthquake, the children had not been able to attend school for many months already. Furthermore, despite investments made by the Italian government, other countries and organizations, development support still does not reach many poor areas, such as in the Albanian Province of Mirdita, from where Dava Gjoka originates. She further confesses that the socio-economic condition of the country continues to deteriorate. Very few social services are currently available for women in the country, as compared to during the communist regime. As a consequence, emigration has become the goal for many Albanians.

'Empowerment' for women was clearly associated with gender roles and challenging gender disparities in rights. 'Fighting patriarchy' was a common motivation and response from four women interviewed and involved in women's economic empowerment and awareness-raising projects. Ashoka Ponnemperuna of Non Solo Donne said that women in Sri Lanka have very limited rights and are mostly dependent on their "macho" and oftentimes violent husbands. Tzhainesc Casai, Ainom Maricos, Faduma Dirie and Dava Gjoka, who all explained that they come from patriarchal societies of Ethiopia, Eritrea, Somalia and Albania, further express that women need to be empowered, to 'build on their capabilities,' to 'help them become aware of their rights' and 'become independent.'

Empowerment may also be achieved through political action. Political activism has been important for Lucy Rojas from Chile, Alicia Patora from Argentina, and Osman Lul and Faduma Dirie, both from Somalia. Their experiences of collective political action and social organizing in their countries of origin are extended in Italy. Alicia affirms that their search for justice and legal protection of the victims of human rights violations in Argentina remains an important concern, even after moving to Italy.

Another striking motivation and type of empowerment was related to the sense of community. This topic emerged in the interview with Maria de Lourdes Jesus of Tabanka Onlus, who was concerned with the negative perception on migrants:

It is necessary to get away from the stereotyped image of migrants. We are seen as poor and only dependent on services of the host countries. We also need to raise the level of our own consciousness, especially those of the second and third generations by way of promoting socio-cultural exchanges between the countries of origin and where we live now.

As these examples show, migrant women choose to actively 'give back' to their countries of origin and communities, not only in the form of provisions but also in a way that challenges existing inequalities and disparities and leads to longer term impact.

What are their transnational projects?

The transnational projects undertaken are diverse, both in the issues addressed and in contributions. As the following section shows, female immigrants in Italy have long been contributing to a wide range of diaspora philanthropy activities, with some initiatives beginning several

decades ago. Their initiatives are related to youth and education, construction, healthcare, and training and economic development, each of which is discussed in more detail below.

1 > Supporting education, combating illiteracy and preventing juvenile delinquency

Educational initiatives were priority projects for the DP women in Italy, as revealed by the number of transnational projects found in this research. All of the women interviewed maintained that if no investment is made on the education of children coming from extremely poor families, the impact would weigh heavily both on the family and on society. Children's rights to basic education, food, clothing and shelter are basic needs that require substantial attention and resources. Of the twelve projects discussed by the women, seven are operative and five have been completed.

Some of the activities focus on ways of offering material support for children and their education, often implemented in unique, creative ways. One example is the "A pencil in exchange of a smile for the children of El Salvador" project of the ASSI women in Rome. This programme offers cash rewards in exchange for literary and artwork of children. The association has been supporting school children in very depressed and remote areas in El Salvador since 2002. Another example is Tabanka Onlus' support of Centro Nho Gunga. The centre hosts 150 street children in Cape Verde and provides food, training materials and school supplies. The initiative also includes the volunteer work of second-generation migrant women.

Other examples of support involve providing financial contributions, either individually or through pooling resources, to teachers or students. The support of Faduma M. Dirie, an intercultural mediator in Milan, along with other Somali women of Associazione Spazio Solidale, provides for the salaries of teachers and educators who offer literacy and skills training programmes for young girls and women in Mogadishu. Nelly de Lima, a Peruvian interviewee who has lived in Milan for 15 years and is another intercultural mediator working with Punto Rosso and Un Altra Lombardia, has been assisting in the college education of a young man. Simultaneously, for years now, she and her son have supported poor children of emigrants from the Andean mountains attending elementary schools in Lima. Minda Teves and the other 43 members of her family in Turin are providing financial support to pay the tuition fees and educational materials of twenty-four high school students (22 females and 2 males) in the town of Madrid, Surigao del Sur province in Mindanao since 2002. The other women interviewed have, in the past, supported elementary and college educations of poor students in their hometown communities in Chile and Sri Lanka and the street children in Brazil. In one concrete example from the 1970s, Lucy Rojas and other Chilean co-exiles in Italy, offered financial support for the university education of a young student, now a medical doctor who provides free medical services to people who have no access to healthcare in Santiago. As these examples show, financial contributions appear to be a common form of philanthropy, whether undertaken individually or collectively.

2 > Supporting post-conflict/disaster rehabilitation and construction of infrastructure

The second most common focus of attention of transnational development programmes that emerged from this research was projects for reconstruction, repair and maintenance of damaged structures. The common objectives were to provide structures and support to the local population most affected by conflicts and to contribute to the rehabilitation of areas devastated by natural calamities, such as ASSI's initial project in El Salvador. The women interviewed have witnessed that a lack of structures and adequate spaces for training thwart development and prevent community organizing. Quite importantly, reconstruction efforts after wars and civil conflicts were crucial interventions for diaspora communities from Somalia and Eritrea.

The Eritrean Women's Union in Italy initiated massive fundraising activities to finance the construction of a number of projects in Eritrea between 1978 and 1996. Projects included construction of a range of facilities, such as factories that produced materials for women, oil and medicines and a community radio station, which engaged in awareness raising and health prevention campaigns addressing women. The estimated total amount spent on the projects reached over 1 million Euro. Although Ainom Maricos, the ex-Chairperson of the Union during that time, cannot recall now the exact figures (the records are in the hands of the current Chair), she mentioned that they continued to send large contributions from Italy to Asmara and other war devastated areas in Eritrea before the country's independence in 1996.

Similar recounts came from Osman Lul Mohamed, Vice Chair of the Somali Migrant Women's Association in Rome; her association in Italy sends 300 Euro every 3 months for 8 years now to support the rehabilitation and maintenance of the women and children's wards in the Benadir Hospital in Mogadishu. In the past years, her association has also provided support to the establishment of a training centre for dressmaking for women in also in Mogadishu.

Tabanka Onlus recently financed the reconstruction of ten housing units for marginalized families in the Town of Praia, Cape Verde, a project totalling 63.000 Euro. The project was inaugurated in May this year. Another 8.000 Euro were provided for the restoration of the Community Institute on the Island of Principe in the Gulf of Guinea, West Africa, where 65% of the inhabitants are immigrants originating from Cape Verde.

Projects discussed also involve building various structures for children or education in their home communities. ASSI co-funded the reconstruction of a school in Canton Los Huatales in 2003 and raised additional money for the repair of two other nearby schools in the same region that were destroyed by an earthquake. ASSI contributed US\$10.000, with a comparable contribution provided by the local government in the form of labour. Nelly de Lima sent approximately 250 Euro to build a library in her native Andean community. In 2002, Minda Teves' family, who work as migrant domestic workers in Turin, funded the reconstruction of the social hall in their town in

Mindanao, The Philippines and also constructed a basketball court for young boys in the community. Both projects amounted approximately 250 Euro.

After completing her studies in Milan, Dava Gjoka chose to stay on and single-handedly conducted a search for an Italian NGO partner who could help her set up A House for Women's Culture, Health and Work in Mirdita, now an on-going project that requires a total of 50.000 Euro, of which 14.000 Euro of seed funding has been received to date.

3 > Supporting specific health needs of poor women and children

Several diaspora philanthropy projects in the past focused on health issues of women and children in marginalized communities in Africa. Some activities are based on general health concerns, such as work towards prevention of the spread of diseases and awareness-raising for women on health issues, as mentioned by Ainom Maricos of the Eritrean Women's Union. Other initiatives are based on more specific issues, related to views of gender empowerment as well as health, such as those linked to reproductive health in general or female genital mutilation specifically.

Two of the structures established in Eritrea respond to specific healthcare needs of women during the war. One factory built from the support of the Eritrean Women's Union in Asmara produced sanitary napkins and underwear for women during the war. To avoid the high cost of importation, another smaller structure was established to support the production of medicines for endemic illnesses, such as malaria and flu.

Alicia Patora of Rome has raised 15.000 Euro to cover the costs of purchasing medical equipment for reproductive healthcare for the most marginalized women in Cordoba through fundraising in Italy. A house for women's culture, health and work in Mirdita in Albania also offers health education and primary healthcare seminars for women in the area.

The Somali Women's Association in Rome regularly supplies Benadir Hospital with materials and medicines and helps to provide medical care for poor women and children by sending 300 Euro every three months to Hinna Women's Association in Mogadishu. Faduma M. Dirie's groups in Milan Mamma Somale (Somali Mothers) and Associazione Spazio Solidale support the Galcayako Education for Peace and Development in Somalia, which provides education on peace, nutrition, environment and campaign against female genital mutilation.

The Tigray Women's Association's main objective is to raise the awareness of women on health and reproductive issues with particular attention to prevention of female genital mutilation, and other violence related problems confronted by poor women in the region of Tigray, Ethiopia. They continue to send financial contributions for the overall campaign of their worldwide network to purchase medicines and medical supplies.

4 > Skills training projects for women's economic empowerment

Giving women the voice and the opportunity to discuss and improve their situation is important to the development of the country. The active participation of women for the social and economic wellbeing of communities is a reflection of development.

Faduma M. Dirie of Associazione Spazio Solidale and the Somali Women's Association in Rome separately support skills training programmes for economic empowerment of women in Somalia. Faduma explained that her country has always treated men with great importance and that after the war, every family tried to invest in the men instead of dividing the already scarce resources between men and women. Therefore, the diaspora philanthropy efforts give priority to supporting women so that they can participate equally and contribute to the development of the country, as well as to help support their own families. As Faduma explains,

Women have always done it in their everyday life, anyway – because they are the ones who have 100% responsibility at home, they take charge of the economic affairs of the family, i.e., they'll sell what they produce manually in the market, do the buying and selling of fruits and vegetables, etc.

The association of migrant women from Sri Lanka, Non Solo Donne, in Rome provided financial support in 2003 to buy sewing machines for a women's centre in Ashoka's hometown in Sri Lanka. Tabanka Onlus funded the purchase of sewing machines and supports the training activities for women at the community institution they established on Island of Principe in 2005. The Women's House in Mirdita also will provide vocational training courses for women: "We have to teach them how to fish and not give them fish all the time," explained Osman Lul Mohamed, who also sends extra funds from her own pocket to contribute to the efforts of Hinna Women's Association's skills training projects in Mogadishu.

5 > Boxes of food and material aid

Providing food and material aid are some of the most common forms of gift-giving activities by women. Minda Teves' family sends 21 big boxes of material and food supplies to poor areas in Southern Mindanao each year. Nelly de Lima spends about 1.200 Euro yearly for the material goods, mostly school supplies and used warm clothing, she sends to Lima for the children of poor emigrants from the Andes. The Senegalese women in Rome also send material goods such as clothing and medicines to their hometowns on an occasional basis. Other than those doing actual DP activities, such as Tigray Women's Association, Eritrean Women's Union, and several women from table 2 in annex B, mostly send material and food aid for distribution to their countries of origin (Ukraine, Nicaragua, Philippines, Brazil) in times of emergency.

6 > Other projects and partnerships

Some very unusual but relatively important projects have been initiated and continue to be supported by women in exile from Chile and Argentina. For Alicia Patora, it is important to preserve the political and historical memories of mass disappearances and violations of human

rights. Both of them, who have been living in Italy since the time of their exile and who have very little support from their own communities, affirmed that their experiences with political activism in their earlier years have helped them to continue to serve their countries. The project is called Archive of Memories on human rights violations of the military regime in Argentina and has established a multi-purpose centre in Cordoba, Argentina. Volunteers at the centre provide free, professional legal support to family members of those who disappeared, and continuous investigation and research for those still missing. These programmes are partially implemented now, and the centre also serves as a health clinic that provides psychological and reproductive healthcare for poor women in the area and its greater vicinity.

Lucy Rojas' dream began when she first brought a group of Italian professionals for tourism purposes to Val Paraiso, Chile in 1997. Her NGO, the Comitato ALPI/ANDES Pro Gemellagio Milan-Val Paraiso has established twinning projects among three secondary schools in Val Paraiso and in Milan that enhance professional teachers' and health operators' work in adapting curricula to provide specific approaches for tackling problems of the high school students on the verge of social exclusion. The students are assisted during the learning process and are helped individually so that they confront their own needs and problems in a practical way. The strategy is to disseminate information on the activities, so as to solicit more involvement of professionals in Milan.

One other interesting project being supported since 2004 by 56 members of the Eritrean Women's Union is the distance adoption of elderly orphaned women, which supports women whose family were killed during the war with Ethiopia. Every month, individual contributions of 25 Euro each are sent through the Eritrean Consulate to provide decent living allowances for the elderly women in Asmara.

How they do it

Resources and Partnerships

The availability of time, space and sufficient human resources are fundamental to the success of any project. Almost all the women interviewed are doing their DP work on a voluntary basis and many of their efforts are largely dependent on individual resources. The prevalent strategy used by women involves establishing partnerships, whether in Italy or in the project countries, and include family members, human rights movements, and local and national NGOs. Many partnerships are formed within their own community, along with some Italian solidarity groups and individuals. Funding agencies that financially contribute to the transnational projects are also considered as partners in this report. The remainder of this section will further elaborate on the various resources and partnerships available for the organizations and philanthropic activities discussed in this report.

Tabanka Onlus is an organization benefiting from a relatively high amount of financial and office resources. This organization has acquired office space within a large Italian NGO and currently supports a part-time paid staff. With larger resources available, Tabanka Onlus is able to follow up project proposals and organize fundraising activities without great difficulties. Their host NGO also offers technical support. The organization also reaches out to a community of volunteers. It recruits second-generation migrants to do volunteer work in Cape Verde, a double strategy for raising the awareness of the younger generation of migrants on the socio-cultural condition of the country and bringing them closer to their country of origin. Tabanka Onlus' partners include the funding agencies such as Fondazione Aiuto Italiano, the Immigration Office of the Province of Pescara, the Italian NGO Movimondo and Italian cultural groups. In Cape Verde and in the Island of Principe, the project implementation is managed and coordinated locally by two members of the organization who were ex-migrant workers and have since returned to Cape Verde.

Comitato Pro-Gemellaggio ALPI/ANDES twinning projects in Milan and Chile involve alliances with individuals as well as a collective of teachers from secondary schools and professors from universities, professional health and social workers, and a mixed migrant women's cultural association. Participants in Comitato Pro-Gemellaggio ALPI/ANDES' twinning exchange programmes use their own resources by combining visits and tours during the summer vacation period when it is full winter in Chile; Chilean partners come to Italy during their summer holidays. They negotiate with travel agencies on costs of tickets, and Chilean and Italian partners practise mutual exchange of accommodation – a direct manner of learning from each other through cultural exchange. Cittadini del Mondo, an organization composed of migrants from different countries of origin in Milan, is also a supports fundraising efforts of the Comitato Pro-Gemellaggio ALPI/ANDES twinning projects. In Chile, Comité Cafe Riquet coordinates links with partner schools in that country.

Dava Gjoka was hired by an Italian NGO, Crinali, who helped her prepare the project proposal that was consequently given a seed grant by the City Council of Milan. In Albania, the project's partner is the Gruaja per Progres (Women for Progress) based in the province of Skanderbeg.

ASSI's institutional partnerships primarily focus on relationships with the educational institutions they support. In Italy a partnership has been formed with an elementary school, Scuola Annibale Tonna, in the town of Messina in the southern part of Italy. Their direct partners in El Salvador are the administrations of all three schools they support in Canton Los Huatales, Loma Alta and San Vicente. ASSI has formed good contacts with some Italian cultural associations as well.

Alicia Patora's multi-purpose centre in Chile has raised 30.000 Euro from the Valdese Church in Rome, as a funding partner in Italy, while the activist association of Hijos Desaparacidos is the implementing partner in Cordoba. Alicia continues to seek support from other

Argentinean women in Rome and goes back for six months a year to provide voluntary services at the centre.

The Union of Eritrean Women, Tigray Women's Association of Ethiopia and the Association of Somali Women in Rome solely depend on the support of their migrant communities familiar with the incidents or impacts of recent wars. Up until now, no support for the efforts of these women has been received from any Italian institution. However, various organizations within the community form partnerships. The national secretariats of the Eritrean Women's Union, Tigray Women's Association and Hinna Women's Association are very important partners of EWU, TWA and the Somali Women's Association in Rome respectively.

Migrant women also work with local governments in some project areas. For example, for the ASSI reconstruction project in Canton Los Huatales in El Salvador, partnership was formed with the local municipal office, which provided the manpower for construction. The Sri Lankan counterpart of Non Solo Donne is the Ministry for Equal Opportunities, where requests for support mostly originate. When requests for support officially come from the embassies and consulates of the governments of El Salvador and Cape Verde, the women of ASSI and Tabanka Onlus are provided with logistical support for fundraising initiatives by these offices. The Eritrean Consulate is responsible for the distribution of funds to the appropriate government offices responsible for the implementation of projects in Eritrea. In several instances in the past, funds were coursed through the General Eritrean Women's Union (BEWU) based in Asmara, who coordinated the implementation of women-specific projects in Eritrea.

Awareness Events and Fundraising Activities

The most popular strategy used by many women interviewed to find potential partners involves organizing awareness-raising seminars and promotion of other cultural programmes between migrant and Italian communities. ASSI and Tabanka sponsor several events for fundraising. ASSI and Tabanka receive performances, free-of-charge, from some artists and bands as contributions for fundraising activities. Common promotional strategies for the events include flyers, posters and migrant community radio programmes. Many women also organize social events for fundraising purposes such as handicraft sales, social dinners, theatre presentations and concerts. Holiday events, such as Independence Day celebrations also contribute to the efforts of ASSI.

Impact of the efforts of migrant women in diaspora philanthropy

The impacts of the diaspora philanthropy were felt to encompass both individual emotive rewards as well as physical developments in the project countries. Although some of the impact can best be perceived as 'expected impact,' others have seen concrete examples of development and social change.

Increased empowerment and self-esteem

All the women interviewed said that having led campaigns to support development projects in the countries of origin involve practical skills acquired through the organizing work. According to Zuleima of ASSI, "We need to know more from each other, from those success stories – but this is already a good start." For Dava Gjoka, becoming the project Coordinator of the activity in Albania was very fulfilling and has increased her self-esteem.

Recognition and respect

The recognition, enthusiasm and respect of the beneficiaries, the community and local governments, and seeing the positive results of big and small projects implemented infuse encouragement and inspiration to several women to continue their transnational philanthropic activities. Dava, Ainom, and Tzhainesc expressed such feelings.

The Somali community in Rome appreciates the efforts of the, so Osman Lul continues to receive support for the activities of the association. For Zuleima of ASSI, it was very gratifying to see that local newspapers in her country of origin have recognized the organization's effort. The group received awards of recognition from institutions that they supported; and letters of appreciation she received from some Salvadorian immigrants in the United States likewise moved her.

Reconnection and increase of social consciousness

Several women confessed that they were touched by what is seen when they go back home, and there is a strong feeling of being reconnected with their country of origin and a sense of social consciousness. Tabanka Onlus promotes social consciousness of the socio-economic condition of the country of origin. Their strategy of involving young volunteers in their DP activities back home has enhanced the rediscovery of cultural identity and has attracted enormous interest from the second and third generations to help development in Cape Verde.

Social impact in communities of intervention

The women interviewed visit their hometowns whenever possible; however, much feedback can only be received through family members and project partners who send reports and photographs of the projects. Based on the observations of the women interviewed, there were evidences of the benefits of investments they have sent to their communities of origin.

Awareness-raising activities for health and the well-being of women have been the primary focus of projects in Somalia, Ethiopia and Eritrea. Despite the continuing decline of the socio-economic and political condition in these countries and the scarcity of international aid, the women interviewed said there have been changes in the attitudes and social consciousness of women in the com-

munities. As a result, certain cultural traditions that push women more into the margins, such as seen with the issue of female genital mutilation, are being combated.

Although assistance is received from the diaspora at the global level, the support coming from Italy has also contributed to change in Eritrea and in the Tigray Province of Ethiopia. For their contribution, TWA in the diaspora worldwide won an award from the African Women Educationalists Association, because their projects influenced societal attitudes toward harmful traditional practices and early marriage in their areas by raising awareness of the problems and consequences.

The skills training provided to women in Somalia, Eritrea, Tigray Province and in Sri Lanka have taught women to become economically active. According to Faduma Dirie and Osman Lul, the women they have helped are now contributing economically to sustain family needs through small-scale businesses. The women beneficiaries to dressmaking skills projects in Island of Principe and in Sri Lanka have become economically productive, rather than fully relying on their husbands' insufficient income for their families and are now able to help support the primary education of their children.

Community empowerment

In the mountain village of Apurimac in Peru, the local people are using the centre as a meeting and study place for their empowerment and to sustain their social consciousness around issues affecting them. In Albania, Dava's project in Mirdita has brought about unity and community empowerment as evidenced by the active participation of the community and women's groups in the region. Based on the interviews with women involved in DP, projects introduced in Chile, Argentina, Somalia, Cape Verde and Island of Principe are other examples where community empowerment were evident based on the women's interaction with their communities of origin.

Education of children and women

For the majority of the projects supported by the migrant women and their associations in Italy, some changes are already visible even though their physical and monetary contributions are limited. Children are motivated to study hard, pursue further education, and achieve good grades through the twinning projects in Chile, as declared by Lucy Rojas and as evidenced by an increase of requests for similar projects by other schools. She observed that the approaches in their programmes are viewed positively and that other institutions also want to apply similar methods. In El Salvador, creativity was encouraged when a literary writing contest for school children was launched by ASSI. The projects supported in Somalia and Rwanda have contributed to the fight against illiteracy even if on a small-scale. In Cape Verde and Brazil, street children are provided shelter and education, instead of living in streets where they have little protection and are at risk of social exclusion and juvenile delinquency. All these projects have also further empowered teachers in recipient communities by providing extra time and dedication for teaching and guidance.

Improved infrastructure

The construction of factories in Eritrea have created thousands of jobs for unemployed women and men and provided the local population with cheaper materials and medicines. The establishment of centres in Albania, Island of Principe and Argentina provide free health services and skills training activities for women and men. The rehabilitation and improvement of facilities of the elementary schools has kept the children in schools. The reconstruction of ten housing units in Praia, Cape Verde now provides a very decent living environment for extremely poor families.

Advocating human rights

Other benefits include promoting an active awareness of human rights violations. The creation of the Archive has aroused interest in conflicts and history among the younger generation and has led them to be active in the search for justice for the victims of the earlier generation. Today there are many professional volunteers, such as psychologists and lawyers, who are contributing to different activities of the project, the majority of whom are remaining family members and supporters of the quest for justice of the human rights victims during the dictatorship regime in Argentina.

Obstacles

Voluntary work in the DP faces several pressures due to the economic and legal circumstances of the women and members of their communities. In general, a major barrier is the absence of resources (i.e., lack space, time, money and adequate and capable human resources.), which has unfortunately also caused the weakening of several migrant women's organizations. It has also thwarted interest from many community members to join such groups, as explained by many of the women interviewed. The majority need regular paid work to maintain residency rights in Italy and meet their economic needs. Overall, a lack of economic resources is seen as one of the major roadblocks preventing migrant organizations from implementing further work.

For many of these women, Dava, Zuleima, Minda, Tzhainesc, Ashoka, Nelly and Cristina, their own homes have become their working place, where most of the work is done during their time off from other employment and through using their own resources. Other than huge telephone and communication expenditures, most have invested their own money to buy computers and other office equipment to sustain their organizing work. The women interviewed complained of having been in a very 'stressful' situation, admitted that they are 'exploiting themselves' and are 'sacrificing their private lives.'

Cultural issues are also felt to influence a 'lack of consciousness and interest' from migrants to join and participate actively in organizing work. Among the interviewees, Ashoka mentioned that it has something to do with the patriarchal mentality 'imported' to Italy by her male counterparts. In her country, women are powerless and there-

fore are not allowed by their husbands to join organizations. As a sad consequence, she is hardly able to recruit other women from her community in Rome to support her endeavours.

Another perceived barrier is the lack of participation and interest among the second/third generation of immigrants, which seems to point to weaker ties with the country of origin among those who were born and raised in Italy. Although two women leaders interviewed in this research come from second generation of the Ethiopian and Eritrean communities, the majority of the migrant organizations are still led by the first generation of migrants in many communities in Italy. Ainom and Tzhainesc have tried to influence the younger generations' involvement but have faced great difficulties. Maria de Lourdes of Tabanka Onlus also mentioned the same problem, so her association has started to involve the youth directly in awareness-raising projects in Italy. Unfortunately, there is little investment either from the Italian government or from the migrant communities for cultural education of the young migrants who are mostly absorbing the Italian culture taught in schools.

Another major constraint expressed by the majority of the interviewees is the shortage of skills for project proposal writing, management and evaluation of projects. Due to the lack of resources, they are not able to properly monitor the activities they support. According to Ainom Maricos of the Eritrean Women's Union, these shortages result in many errors in monitoring and evaluating projects.

The lack of information and almost exclusion of migrant organizations in participating in 'calls for proposals' are other barriers in building the capacity of migrant organizations. All the women interviewed claimed that the Italian development cooperation working in many poor countries are employing only Italian development "experts" and not considering the expertise or promoting the participation of migrants from the global South to work in their own countries of origin. As it appears today, supporting diaspora philanthropy projects is not part of the national government's development policy.

In several instances, partnerships with governments of origin were perceived as problematic. ASSI does not want to work with their local government anymore because promises were not fulfilled, at times not delivered at all; the Eritrean Women's Union said it is even more difficult to evaluate and monitor the work implemented with government counterparts because of lack of transparency. These difficulties may represent an uneven balance of power or may simply reflect the inexperience of partnering between governments and diaspora based organizations.

Future Perspectives

"Quraansho aruurtay mulac ayey jiidaa!//Many ants can move a lizard!//Unity is strength," recited Faduma Dirie at the end of the interview. She sees slow progress in such activities, but she does not lose hope that with more work, new skills and strong determination, she would be

able to help convince others in the community to help support projects in her country. She said that even small amounts of support can help rebuild her country because it will attract others to support other initiatives as well. Osman Lul and Tzhainesc said that there are no barriers that can stop them. They will continue to give back to their countries ravaged by poverty and wars.

Diaspora philanthropy is a continuing effort. The Eritrean Women's Union in Italy wants to create projects that will support women in the country of origin, especially for young women who have no access to resources and services on reproductive health issues, which is a problem of great concern in many African nations. They want to especially continue working with community organizations in their worldwide network at the international level. Yet they now need partners outside of the migrant community.

"It's different when you have the structure", boasted Maria de Lourdes of Tabanka Onlus. Their experiences so far showed that they can do the work professionally, and they aim to gain more skills in fundraising. Their next project will involve supplying ten computers to a learning centre for youth in Cape Verde; a local government institution in Naples has already committed funding for the project.

Comitato Pro-Gemellaggio ALPI/ANDES will continue promoting partnerships, cultural and professional exchanges of teaching methodologies. Lucy Rojas believes that the projects need to be enhanced and partnerships multiplied because many development cooperation projects do not deal with these particular issues. The social impact for students and families and that of societies is life-long. They continue to raise the awareness of professionals in Milan and to convince the local government of Milan to fund twinning projects.

Nelly de Lima is currently trying to find partners who are willing to support her future project when she returns to her country of origin for good. She wants to begin a community radio project that could reach many women and men in the region of Apurimac and educate the local people on the issues of health and raise the awareness of the poor population on other socio-political issues.

Zuleima, Dava, Faduma, Osman Lul, Nelly, Ashoka, Minda and Cristina hope to learn more from this research. For them, this is another step forward. The same women have suggested that the women interviewed and those interested should form a working group to collectively find strategies to enhance the diaspora philanthropy work.

After her project, Dava has decided to continue to find other means to help her country: "Because I believe that will work out! And I believe on the work and determination of women!" She was further encouraged by the interview and believed in the objectives of the (she gives back) project. "You've converted me! Thank you for giving me the opportunity to contribute to the research. I've learned so much during our conversation, I want to know more about what other women do, probably even meet with them in person." Before the interview, Dava was on

the point of giving up. Her sense of commitment to what she started has now become even stronger.

Alicia has decided to continue, and she works hard to convince other women from Argentina living in Rome to contribute to her efforts. She is now working with a migrant women's organization, Candelaria, on the design of a project that will strengthen the centre's support of specific reproductive health issues for disadvantaged women in Cordoba.

Minda Teves' family in Turin is presently organizing a group of second-generation family members and will also involve the migrant community to continue the work. At the time of the interview, several second-generation members were inspired by the discussions and wanted to improve their work by establishing an organization that will do the DP activities. To be able to do so, the groups would first need training and other capacity-building activities and a request to find links and support was made through the researcher.

The objectives of this study have provided the women a clearer vision of where they were versus what they would like to achieve in the future. They were interested in meeting with each other, and have requested the researcher to convene a meeting with all the interviewees, to learn from each other and strategize together to find other means to move forward. Furthermore, the feedback received from all those contacted, but not working in DP, was also very positive. They would like give back to their countries of origin as well, and have asked the researcher to keep them informed of any future collective meetings.

Conclusion

It is widely acknowledged that migrant women work to contribute to the development of their countries of origin through their remittances and to host countries through their labour and skills. Yet very little is known about their role and contribution in the context of development and the social impact it brings to societies of origin.

It is important first to highlight the already outstanding contribution of migrant women's organizations and the women migrants interviewed in this research and the invaluable support they provide to their migrant communities' struggle for equality and human rights (with particular attention to women's rights). Moreover, many of the women interviewed or encountered during this study have also been leading agents in promoting and bringing development in their countries of origin for many years. This research has affirmed that the influential factors of 'giving back' are a part of "a woman's instinct" – their moral obligation to respond to poverty as a consequence of war, civil unrest and natural disasters in their countries of origin had become their passion.

From the information gathered, activities that support education of poor children holds primary importance, because a lack of investment in education leads to further marginalization. For many it is a fundamental right that cannot be denied to poor children and women in poverty-stricken countries where the women interviewed originate.

Evidently women are seriously affected by poverty in any given situation. Whether collectively or individually, many of the projects sustained focused on the empowerment of women because women have little or no access to resources and therefore need support. This is particularly true to the activities of women from the African diaspora, where greater sensitivity to women's needs could be seen in many of the DP projects identified in this report. Women exiles (and refugees) also play a critical role in building peace and restoring social and economic order following the end of hostilities. The opportunity to rebuild anew on equality and respect for human rights have also been found in the activities supported by the Somali, Eritrean, Tigray and Argentinean women interviewed.

Although the women reach out to their own communities and Italian development institutions for support, very little success has been obtained, as could be seen in the quantity and the amount of contributions sent to areas of intervention. Other than the experiences of Dava Gjoka and Maria de Lourdes Jesus, who have received support from NGOs and other institutions, the majority of women interviewed carry out activities mainly on their own, with minimal help from their communities, a few Italian friends and solidarity groups.

Local governments provide little support for projects initiated by migrants. At the national level, development funds are not available and projects funded by the European Commission are not accessible to migrant organizations. Whereas Italian NGOs also struggle in their survival due to the scarcity of funds, diaspora philanthropy activities have not had the space to compete at all.

All the interviewees expressed concerns related to structural problems and lack of technical know-how in project organizing and management. In almost all cases, women migrants work on a voluntary basis in their own homes during their days off, and therefore had very limited time to concentrate on their initiatives. As a result, the increased stress has major effects on the outcomes of their activities.

Volunteer work is not sustainable and repeated experiences of a decrease in the number of memberships have been apparent. Understandably, with the increase in migrants' legal and financial insecurity in regular paid work for their own subsistence and that of their families hindered participation to migrant community organizations. How much this affects the building up of successful leaders is another issue faced by these women.

Partnership is another crucial concern of the women interviewed. Many women relied on family members, the simplest source of information to understand the impact and the realization of projects. This research showed that government institutions in countries of origin were not ideal partners and that good practices of networking and partnership maintained with women's movements and NGOs in many experiences have proved to be functional. The lack of trust and interest shown by migrant women to pursue and explore partnership with Italian development institutions seemed to be by force, not by choice, because access to development support is almost exclusively reserved for Italian NGOs.

In this research, the overriding message conveyed by all the women interviewed is the call for capacity building for empowerment to enhance community organizing and as productive development bridges between home and host countries. Nevertheless, this research initiative has become an inspiration to the women interviewed and to many other female migrants and leaders who have expressed their interest in giving back to their countries as well.

What could be done to support the women in diaspora philanthropy?

In order to strengthen and promote the development contributions of women in the diaspora, joint actions are needed to develop structures for sharing information, knowledge and experiences based on evaluations of existing programmes and policies which link migration and development. Support could be sought from programmes promoted by multilateral agencies such as the UN-IFAD, the International Organization for Migration (IOM), Migration for Development in Africa (MIDA) and initiatives in Italy linking remittances and development cooperation.

It is important for the women in the diaspora philanthropy to insist in establishing partnership with Italian NGOs. Approach strategies should be developed, because decentralised development cooperation funds of local governments in Italy are available through NGOs. Likewise, establishing partnership with private institutions and foundations can be explored, a major source that migrant women interviewed did not consider in the past.

The importance of linking women in the diaspora and learning from the positive experiences of other women involved is an important encouragement that the (she gives back) project could follow through.

At the time of research, discussions were initiated by the researcher with the head of the Women's Division of United Nations' International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), who expressed interest to support initiatives to increase the capacity of women migrants who would like to pursue their work to promote transnational development cooperation. Further, IFAD's person in charge of Latin America dealing with remittances and rural development issues also declared her interest in meeting with Latin American women in diaspora philanthropy to provide orientation and relevant information on projects supported by the programme. Therefore there is hope for women in the diaspora in Italy to be empowered and their philanthropic activities to persevere.

There are openings for opportunities, and indeed there is great hope among women in the diaspora in Italy to maximize their contributions for social and economic changes in their countries of origin.

Case studies

“My heart is always in Albania”

The experience of Dava Gjoka

After obtaining degrees in Political Science and Law in Albania, Dava Gjoka migrated to Italy in 1993 to do a Masters in Immigration Policies at the Bocconi University in Milan. As she was finishing her studies, she contemplated the idea of returning home afterwards with a project that would help improve the condition of women in her home province of Mirdita. Not long afterwards, she became closely involved with the Albanian migrant community and thus decided to do a professional course on Intercultural Mediation, which led to work as a cultural mediator with various migrant and Italian institutions. In 1999, she founded and chaired the Associazione Culturale Albanese Skanderbeg, a volunteer organization that promotes Albanian culture and provides voluntary support services to the Albanian migrant community in Milan.

Dava knew the situation she left behind. Frequent visits to her homeland confirmed the continued deterioration of socio-political and economic conditions of her country. Since the fall of the Communist regime, many factories have closed down, there are no more social services for the poor families, and women are trafficked into prostitution. The dire situation has pushed the local women further out into the margins. Development support from neighbouring European nations over the past decade has not reached many remote areas, including her home province.

With her heart and mind always dedicated to Albania, Dava started to search for non-governmental organizations (NGOs) which could help her set up a development project at home. For six years, she looked for support and did not give up. She observed that the difficulty was also due to the stereotypical image of Albanians, who were perceived as traffickers and prostitutes who lived illegally in Italy. No one from the NGOs or local government institutions became interested in her proposal, until she finally came across an Italian feminist development NGO, CRINALI, which accepted her challenge to develop a project for the women in Mirdita.

The project proposal, “A house for women’s culture, health and work in Mirdita”, amounting to 50,000 Euro was designed by CRINALI with Dava’s participation and was submitted to the City Council of Milan, from where it received a seed funding of 14,000 Euro. The project was launched with that money, with Dava serving as the coordinator of the activities.

This project sets out to empower women by providing a space where training and cultural activities can be organized to allow women to become more conscious of their roles and rights, to organize public events to raise the awareness of the general public on the condition of women, to support and coordinate the various activities of the informal women’s groups which already existed in the territory, and to provide and disseminate information on the activities to better include the younger women in Albanian villages.

To provide CRINALI with a thorough orientation of the issues that needed to be addressed, Dava accompanied a team of Italian women to visit the area of intervention, met with the local women and established a partnership with Gruaja Per Progres (Women for Progress), an association of local women in the Province of Skanderbeg which was put together by this project. The counterpart from Mirdita also visited Milan several times for further exchanges of experiences, leadership training and orientation seminars – a participatory approach that helped effectively design follow-up activities organized in Mirdita.

Often women in poor areas are challenged by the support of women from the West, as is what happened during the first encounters and visits of the Italian women in Mirdita. The Albanian women were curious and sceptical about the presence of Italian women and doubts such as “What do they want from us?”, “They come now and will never do anything concrete...”, were rumoured within the community. Her expertise in intercultural mediation was exercised fully and worked perfectly, especially during the earlier period of encounters between the Italian and the Albanian women. The local women accepted the project and started to collaborate on the planning of activities.

Dava’s migrant association Associazione Culturale Albanese Skanderbeg has become the backbone of support for the project. The community members have helped organize fundraising events for the visits and accommodation of Albanian women in Italy. Such participation has also helped raise awareness in the community about the importance of their role as contributors to the project in their home country.

The centre was set up in April 2006 through the formal presentation of the project with the participation of local government officials. The community organized a big celebration for the event. For eight consecutive days, participatory discussions with direct feedback on the activities and modalities of implementation were organized. The activities helped the project gain more interest and acceptance – processes of which were new to women in Mirdita.

Local women were trained as social organizers. Training on women’s organizing, leadership and women’s rights were organized for both professional and non-professional women who also took part in the implementation of succeeding activities. Specific training for medical and para-medical volunteers provided orientation and information on specific reproductive healthcare. Trained women leaders are now working with other grassroots women in different areas of the province.

The enthusiasm that the project brought forth is changing attitudes and practices in Mirdita. The local government and the community as a whole were grateful for the activities, and their approval and consensus are to be commended. Dava explained that in the rural areas of the country, organizing was almost impossible. Most interestingly, the project has brought about unity in the local population, which was not expected by the project partners. There is a continual increase in participation of professionals within the health sector, such as doctors,

nurses, gynaecologists and midwives, all on a voluntary basis.

Women's curiosity about and interest in the project continue to grow. The project activities included several meetings with other women's groups outside Mirdita. Gruaja Per Progres has now formed alliances with women's groups in Tirana and Scutari.

While women in Mirdita were highly appreciative of the outcome of the first months of the project, they particularly valued the impact it had on their status within the community. Participation in focus group discussions and seminars improved local women's decision-making abilities, gave women new knowledge about reproductive health issues, and initiated solidarity among women. Mutual respect and the sharing of responsibilities have started to become visible at household and community levels. Local women participate actively in social organizing, while team building has become part of the process and paved the way for successful work.

The struggle to find other funds to fully implement the project has not been an easy task for Dava and CRINALI. After receiving partial funding, there has literally been no contribution received, other than the counterpart contribution of the Albanian migrant community. Local government development funds continue to be scarce and finding more support is challenging.

Other than financial needs, Dava still requires to learn new skills in organizing and negotiation, project proposal writing and management. She wants to learn from the experiences of other migrant women who are doing philanthropic activities in their countries of origin.

Through her initiative, she believes she has raised the awareness of local people. Her project has empowered women, and as a consequence, it has empowered the community. Most of all, she believes that the project will have a strong impact on social change because she believes in the work of the women. She will continue to look for partners who will support her work now and in the future, still for the benefit of the poor and marginalized women in her country.

The gratitude and joy of the community in Mirdita has given Dava more encouragement. She states that the (she gives back) research has contributed to her empowerment. The recognition and promotion of diaspora philanthropy activities such as hers have long been awaited. She felt the interview and prolonged discussions with the researcher were extremely empowering, and she was very thankful she was able to contribute to this important work.

Reconstructing a war-torn nation: The Eritrean Women's Union in Italy in the fight against poverty and marginalization of women in Eritrea

An interview with Ainom Maricos

Ainom Maricos, originally from Asmara, Eritrea joined her mother in Italy in 1973 when she was still a young girl. She continued her studies in Milan and became a professional social worker. She has worked for many years as a consultant for the Immigration Office of the City Council of Milan. A strong leader who raised voices of women migrants, she is an active member of the migrant women's movement at the local and national levels, and collaborates with various social and research institutions on the issues faced by migrant women and their children. She co-founded and for twelve years now has chaired Cooperativa Tropicco, a multiethnic cooperative that provides professional and technical services in Milan. She is also a theatre actress and one of the moving spirits of Movimento Cittadini del Mondo, an association of mixed migrant and Italian women that promotes intercultural exchange activities in Milan. In 1997, she was elected Councillor of City Council of Milan, where she served until 2001, extensively contributing to work of the commissions on social services, education, security and commerce.

As Chairperson of the Eritrean Women's Union from 1977 till 1993, she directed and coordinated the creation of a national network of Eritrean women that provided support and raised awareness on the condition of migrant women by organizing seminars and debates and conducting literacy education activities in Eritrean language for the Eritrean community in Italy.

At the height of political and social unrest in her country of origin, aggravated by the conflict with Ethiopia in 1977, the Eritrean Women's Union's (EWU) network in Italy and in other countries played an important role in combating poverty and in liberating the country. The government was unable to respond to the needs of the country in distress, so they felt it was their moral obligation to help the country, and, thereby consolidated their efforts and mobilized among themselves.

Under Ainom's dynamic leadership, the EWU in Italy organized several massive fundraising campaigns to support rehabilitation projects that targeted poor women in the country of origin. Women who were left behind were deprived of any social service: they had no work, no pensions, and many had no families to depend on.

The funds raised primarily came from EWU's membership fees. Ainom also recalled their efforts, knocking on every door of every Eritrean and families in Italy to collect monetary and material contributions. They have successfully organized social dinners and theatre presentations to raise funds, inviting migrant and Italian friends to support their initiatives. To be able to help relieve the country against poverty, huge amounts of money coming entirely from the Eritrean diaspora were invested in the following projects during and after the hostilities:

- Establishment of a factory that supplied sanitary napkins for women in 1978 during and after the war through an estimated investment of 100,000 Euro;

- Construction project of a factory in 1985 that produced women's clothing and undergarments – estimated at 200,000 Euro;
- Setting up of a radio communication programme that raises the awareness on health and prevention issues, investing between 150,000 – 200,000 euros;
- Building of a factory that produced cooking oil;
- Shipment of used garments for distribution to the population in poverty stricken areas;
- Developing a small laboratory that produced medicines to cure the most common and endemic illnesses such as malaria and flu.

Ainom could not remember the exact amounts of some of the development projects they have sent to Eritrea. Records at the time of the interview were with the current Executive Officers of the association. Many declarations the researchers gathered from other Eritrean women migrants in Rome substantiated what Ainom recounted. The movement was strongest during times of civil conflict when the community contributed more financially. Ainom estimates that throughout those years, they were able to collect over a million Euro, plus the capability to provide big shares to other projects initiated by other EWU network in some European countries that supported micro-finance projects for poor women in Eritrea, including reforestation of woodlands destroyed during the war.

Since 2004, Ainom together with fifty-five (55) other women from her network, have continued to support the community by adopting old and very poor women orphaned by war and conflicts. Each of them sends 25 Euros every month, and Ainom hopes the elderly women are able to live their remaining years decently. She only has the name and address of the woman she is supporting and looks forward to visiting the old woman during her next trip to Eritrea.

Having received requests from the government through the Eritrean General Consulate in Italy, Ainom confesses that she was not sure if the money sent through this channel ever reached the target beneficiaries. Other than some very general presentation of the outcomes and some photos, there seemed to be lack of transparency in the records of activities implemented.

Considerable amounts of contributions from Italy were given through the General Eritrean Women's Union (GEWU), the highest executive constituent of the network based in Addis Ababa. The GEWU had a strong structure and a wide national network that helped implement the projects sustained by contributions from the women working abroad. The partnership proved functional.

After the independence in 1993 and up until 1996, the support of the Eritrean women in the diaspora declined rapidly. Ainom finds it difficult to organize activities related to diaspora philanthropy collectively within the community now. There is less unity among the community members in Italy and many women have left the movement.

Further complications in organizing resulted from lack of space, human resources and skills in project management. Ainom also claimed the need for information on where to obtain resources for support.

Access to development cooperation projects was not available for migrant organizations; there was no help obtained from the local governments for any of their initiatives.

Ainom had witnessed the visible changes brought about by the projects and positive impacts on women that the network supported during her visits in her home country in the previous years. The awareness-raising activities have empowered women and the construction of factories have trained and created thousands of jobs for women and men in Eritrea. Most of all their support contributed to raising the awareness of women on issues of rights, equality, health-care and prevention.

There was a feeling of fulfilment for Ainom, knowing that she and the members of EWU are able to contribute to the social improvement in their country. Those who remained with Eritrean Women's Union at the national level in Italy continue to meet every six months, and they have started to discuss the possibility of renewing their forces to bring new projects to Eritrea again. While the political situation in Eritrea has continued to worsen, the socio-economic situation for women has become more drastic. Awareness raising and technical support on reproductive health issues are extremely urgent. Teenage pregnancy has become a major issue for the young women and girls; and children are abandoned because there are no resources available to raise them.

Eritrea remains a very poor nation and new political problems have set-in. As a consequence, many Eritreans migrate to other countries to help support their families left behind.

Ainom and the Eritrean Women's Union are faced with many challenges. They are aware that if they continue, they become an instrument of hope for the women who have no resources at all. To be able to carry on, the network needs to be strengthened, and in order to strengthen the network, outside resources need to be explored.

¹⁾ As many were not officially recognized as refugees, the term exile was used by a two of respondents when describing their situation and will be therefore be used throughout this report.

²⁾ It is necessary to underline that the data does not include remittances sent through international money order services provided by the Italian post offices. It is impossible to count the operations separately from all the other post office money transactions for organizational reasons. Considerations are based only on official data supplied by the Banca d'Italia and Italian Bureau of Exchange (Ufficio Italiano Cambi – UIC).

³⁾ <http://demo.istat.it>

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ANNEX A >

Table 1 > **Countries with more than 30.000 citizens legally residing in Italy, 1 January 2005**

Country	Male	Female	Total
Albania	182.145	134.514	316.659
Morocco	182.630	112.315	294.945
Romania	123.452	125.397	248.849
China	59.750	51.962	111.712
Ukraine	15.516	77.925	93.441
Philippines	33.334	49.291	82.625
Tunisia	52.250	25.980	78.230
Macedonia	35.090	23.370	58.460
Serbia Montenegro	32.618	25.556	58.174
India	34.154	20.134	54.288
Senegal	45.350	8.591	53.941
Peru	19.908	33.470	53.378
Ecuador	19.592	33.628	53.220
Egypt	38.659	14.206	52.865
Poland	13.307	37.487	50.794
Sri Lanka	25.521	20.051	45.572
Moldova	11.759	26.212	37.971
Bangladesh	25.625	10.160	35.785
Germany	13.759	21.800	35.559
Pakistan	25.487	10.022	35.509
Ghana	19.031	13.723	32.754
Nigeria	12.994	18.653	31.647

Source: ISTAT3

Table 2 > **Remittances to main geographical areas, 1995–2004** (In thousands of Euros)

Area	1995	2000	2004
Europe	54.5	192.8	1.407.570
Africa	18.6	35.3	11.815
Asia	88.7	258.2	512.241
South America	12.7	12.5	34.908
North America	29.7	82.7	120.439
Oceania	4.2	6.5	5.792
Others	—	—	932

Source: Banca d'Italia statistics (2005)

(she gives back)

ANNEX B >

Table 1 > **Table of women / organizations interviewed in Italy**

Name	Organization	Activities of the organization
1 Maria de Lourdes Jesus	Tabanka Onlus	Development cooperation action/support activities in Cape Verde; promotion of intercultural education for second generation in Italy
2 Zuleima Margarita Mira	ASSI Onlus	Voluntary organization carrying out fundraising actions to promote and support socio-educational and cultural activities for the needy children of El Salvador.
3 Faduma Dirie	Associazione Spazio Solidale	A voluntary org providing literacy and intercultural education and mediation services to migrants in Milan
4 Nelly de Lima*	Punto Rosso	PR provides intercultural mediation services to migrants in Milan
5 Ainom Maricos	Unione Donne Eritrei /Cooperativa Tropico	UDE a political movement of Eritrean women at national level promoting cultural and recreational works; supporting of feminist philanthropy in Eritrea COOP TROPICO employs women and men migrants providing cleaning, maintenance and care-giving services in Milan.
6 Tzhainesc Casai	Tigray Women's Association, Italy	TWA promotes empowerment, women's rights dev education activities in Tigray region of Ethiopia; performs feminist philanthropy in community of origin
7 Ashoka Ponnemperuma	Non Solo Donna	Voluntary org providing information, mediation, referral services to female and male Sri Lankan migrants in Rome on labour and legal rights.
8 Osman Lul Mohamed	Assoc. Donne Somale Immigrate a Roma	Voluntary organization that also provide referral and information services as to legal, labour and health rights of Somali migrant women and refugees in Rome.
9 Lucy Rojas	ALPI/ANDES Pro Gemellaggio	AAPG was created to promote partnership and educational twinning programmes between Milan and Val Paraiso, Chile. COOP PROFICUA provides both professional and voluntary legal and information services to women and men migrants in Milan.
10 Dava Gjoka*	Assoc Culturale Albanesi Skanderbeg	ACAS promotes Albanian culture, provides voluntary support services to Albanian migrant community in Milan
11 Alicia Patora*	Candelaria Onlus	Candelaria provides voluntary intercultural mediation and legal services; provides training on leadership and intercultural mediation to migrant women of mixed origin in Rome; does lobby and advocacy works as well.
12 Minda Teves	Assoc Comunità Filippina	ACFIL promotes Phil culture and integration of migrants into Italian society; provides information on migration issues, counselling and pastoral services to the Filipino community in Turin
13 Cristina Silva	Centro Internazionale di Orientamento e Difesa delle Donne Straniere	CIODS voluntary intercultural and information services to migrant women from different countries of origin, lobby and advocacy; promotion of and transnational support such as provision of food and materials to orphanages and poor women in Rio de Janeiro.

* Individual promoters of DP projects

Current Position	Country of Origin	City of residence in Italy
Chairperson	Cape Verde	Rome
Vice Chairperson	El Salvador	Rome
Intercultural Mediator	Somalia	Milan
Intercultural Mediator	Peru	Milan
Chairperson	Eritrea	Milan
Chairperson	Tigray-Ethiopia	Rome
Chairperson	Sri Lanka	Rome
Vice Chairperson	Somalia	Rome
Coordinator	Chile	Milan
Chairperson	Albania	Milan
Member	Argentina	Rome
Ex-Chair	Philippines	Turin
Chairperson	Brazil	Venice

(she gives back)

Table 2 > **Table of other (irregular) diaspora philanthropists found**

Name	Organization	Activities of the organization
1 Jociara Lima de Oliveira	Candelaria Onlus	Candelaria provides voluntary intercultural mediation and legal services; provides training on leadership and intercultural mediation to migrant women of mixed origin in Rome; does lobby and advocacy works as well.
2 Paz Brosas	Philippine Association Service	Promotes Philippine culture through theatre and cultural presentations; provides training on acting for children; provides support to some projects in the Philippines (distance adoption, scholarship)
3 Linda Rivera	Bayanihan Mutual Association	Provides services to Filipino migrants in Milan such as processing of legal documents, provides catering services
4 Tamara Pozdnyakova	Ucraina Più	Provides support and information services for Ukrainian migrant women in Venice, cultural (they have a choral group) and sports promotion; opened book and video library
5 Mimi Ndiaye	Never available face-to-face for interview	Senegalese Women's group No other information obtained after many attempts. But was confirmed by the community that she has been sending materials to country of origin.
6 Charito Basa	Filipino Women's Council	Support services for Filipino women, training on empowerment and entrepreneurship, research, advocacy, lobby work, networking, intercultural mediation
7 Lydia Obando	Not available face-to-face interview	Assoc Donne Nicaraguense Support services for migrant women from Nicaragua, intercultural mediation
8 Rosa Mendez	Not available for face-to face interview	Associazione Donne Brasiliane Support services for migrant women from Brazil, intercultural mediation

Position	Country of Origin	City in Italy	Description
Board Member	Brazil	Rome	Broker, Finding partners of Brazilian NGO working for street children in Rio de Janeiro for 2 projects
Chairperson	Philippines	Turin	Started this year (2006), distance adoption campaign to support street children
Chairperson	Philippines	Milan	Has been funding education of poor children in the Philippines
Chairperson	Ukraine	Venice	Sending used clothing and food aid to a home for the aged in Kiev; toys, clothing and used computer for children in orphanages
	Senegal	Rome	Sending used clothing and food aid to poor families in very poor villages in Senegal
Vice Chair	Philippines	Rome	Broker for an awareness-raising programme in some communities of origin, support for research and development education for children of migrants left behind in the Philippines
Chairperson	Nicaragua	Rome	Sending used clothing and food aid to families in emergency cases only in Nicaragua
Chairperson	Brazil	Rome	Sending used clothing and food aid to families in emergency cases only to Brazil

(she gives back)

1

2 > Multiple Ways of 'Giving Back' among Immigrant Women in the UK

by Cigdem Esin & Aygen Kurt

Introduction

Britain is a diverse society which can be further defined in terms of various Black and Ethnic Minority communities (ONS, 2005). The presence of these communities can be traced back several centuries, with concentrations emerging in London and other urban places.

The UK is a culturally diverse country with 4,6 million people (7,9% of the whole UK population) from a variety of non-White backgrounds and 4,9 million people born abroad (ONS, 2005). Table 1 illustrates the composition of the UK population by ethnic group in 2001. According to the data shown in table 1 (see annex A), the largest ethnic population is accounted for by Asians, numbering nearly 2,3 million. Table 1 also indicates that all Black or Black British groups account for nearly 1,15 million and the sum of the Chinese population together with the Other Ethnic Groups consist of nearly 480 thousand. The 2001 geographical distribution of the ethnic population shows that nearly half of the total minority ethnic population (45%) live in the London region, where they also comprise 29% of all London residents (Sport Structures Ltd., 2005). Furthermore, according to disaggregated raw data for foreign nationals living and working in the UK, 53% of all the foreign nationals living and working in the UK are females (Salt in Kofman et al., 2005:10). As the focus of this research is on understanding the women's experiences of philanthropic activities in diaspora communities, it therefore is crucial to note that the number of women's organizations and the nature of their activities, mainly targeting the communities in the host countries, are also linked to high percentages of female migrants in the UK.

As the number of ethnic groups increase, their needs and demands also increase. These organizations often work where the government agencies and human resources are insufficient to supply the necessary services. In this report, we aim to investigate the features of such organizations in the UK specifically run by women. Our main objective is to document the philanthropic activities of women's ethnic community groups and of immigrant women giving back to their countries of origin. In order to do so, we have first provided the general picture of the distribution of ethnic population in the UK. The following section will describe our research process of the philanthropic and community-oriented activities in the UK.

The field research was conducted in two stages. In the first stage, the goal was to collect information on the women's organizations and identify individual women active in diaspora communities.

The initial list of organizations was compiled from umbrella institutions such as National Alliance of Women Organizations, Women Resources Centre, Asian Women's Resource Centre, Refugee Women's Network, Caribbean Women's Network, and Africa Diaspora Association. We e-mailed and called approximately 80 organizations, and also contacted academics, professionals and relevant individuals who might lead us to our narrower research group that would include 10–15 participants. The process took much more time and labour than originally anticipated. Gatekeepers played an important role in reaching

most of our interviewees. As PhD students from Turkey, we did not have the connections that might have guided us in our search for possible interviewees. We developed a standard explanation about the research for our initial phone calls. However, personal contacts and referrals were more efficient in recruiting interviewees than the phone calls. Most of the organizations and individual women we contacted during the initial phase were either not available or were not interested. The women who agreed to take part in the research were usually part of organizations that were interested in networking and new opportunities.

The list of organizations presented is therefore not necessarily representative of all activities of migrant women in the UK; nonetheless, it provides information on some of the contributions made. Our research group in this report includes twelve organizations and individual women from African (Nigeria, Ghana), Caribbean, Turkish, Greek, British, and Central American descendants (see annex B). All our participants are based in London. This was not the initial plan; however, 45% of the ethnic groups living in the UK are in London (ONS, 2005) and availability during the research process came from London-based individuals and organizations. Through the 'snowball' technique in approaching the possible participants, the research group was largely self-selected. That is to say, we did not guide the selection process, but rather followed the line proposed by our contact persons and referees in the snowballing process. As a result, the majority of the research group consists of African women.

During the interviews, the participants told us about their philanthropic activities, projects, and future plans in detail. They were quite elaborate and explicit in detailing their projects and positions.

Following from this brief overview of the methods used, the next section (Part B), explores the philanthropic experiences of our research group. It provides an overview of the types of projects and additional attention is paid to specific projects which address gender inequality. The discussion then addresses the motivations behind philanthropic activities, major differences in approaches and the multi-dimensional character of the 'giving back'. After an overall view is given about the sources used to mobilize 'giving back' activities, the report ends with a brief section on the impacts of their work.

Experiencing the 'Giving Back'

The types and strategies of 'giving back' were quite diverse in our research group and multiple levels of contributions from the migrant women interviewed can be distinguished. It is possible to group the 'giving back' activities of immigrant women in our research group in two levels. The remittances compose the first level of 'giving back' while 'non-elite philanthropy' are usually organized in the second level of 'giving back'. As discussed by Dunn (2004:6), diasporas have created a 'non-elite philanthropy' by gathering in-kind contributions of political and social remittances.

'Remittances' are amounts of money sent by those working and living in the host country back to their countries of origin (DFID, 2005). Dunn (2004:11) argues that although the remittances sent home by the individual members of diaspora communities are usually utilized for consumption, they are philanthropic in nature as they address inequalities in home countries, which governments and other actors are unable to sort out. Therefore, the individual remittances are seen as vital for the development work as the approaches of diaspora philanthropy change.

On the other hand, the contributions made are not limited to sending money but also include various forms of 'social remittances,' (Levitt cited in Dunn, 2004:5) which are at times denoted by new and innovative methods of diaspora philanthropy. Social remittances may address legal, social or cultural problems that immigrant communities face in host countries.

In this second level, several types of development oriented work are conducted. Immigrant women aim to contribute to the development of the communities in their home countries through support in the form of money, other materials, information and awareness raising projects. The activities, projects, and approaches of the research group will be examined in the following section.

Diasporic philanthropy may also involve assisting their current communities. In a comprehensive survey of 173 women's organizations in London, black and minority ethnic organizations comprised the largest sector of the 2001 database (Soteri, 2001). The same survey revealed that the women organizations reported 388 issues "to improve the status and situation of women", and only 20 organizations mentioned their involvement in "international issues" (Soteri, 2001:9-10). During our fieldwork, we have observed that the majority of the women's organizations support projects in their own communities in Britain. These organizations assist with issues as diverse as citizenship, domestic violence, health, training, community development, and entrepreneurship.

Empowerment Approach

It should also be noted that the 'traditional' notion of philanthropy has been challenged by discourse on 'development' and 'empowerment'¹ (Narayan, 2005). The idea of helping 'others' with less opportunity has been evolving into a notion of 'giving back' which includes the principle of working with the people themselves in order to contribute the empowerment of communities in home countries (Dunn, 2004:6).

Abiola Ogunsola, who works as the UK coordinator in a collaborative Higher Education Link between Nigeria and the UK, explains her reservation about the common understanding of philanthropy as empowerment,

I'm reluctant to call it empowerment (...) Empowerment is problematic for me. That sounds somebody has power when somebody else loses power. Women can be very clear about what they need (...) Women know what they want. They don't need to be empowered. What they need is to have the obstacles they face removed.

Although we cannot generalize this approach, we think that it is an important underlying factor for the changing notion of 'giving back'. As she clearly states, it is important to reveal the power relations (within empowerment) and to help people make their own decisions through raising awareness, rather than imposing a situation or solution on them.

The women leading these activities are 'insiders' who know the necessities and problems of the societies they come from. They are part of the local culture, which helps them to understand what does not work with the notion of empowerment, as it may be imposed. They also experience the culture of the host country where they are able to make comparisons and combine their experiences of both cultures. This appears to be an asset in creating their strategies for 'giving back' activities.

Ways of 'giving back'

Our research found several main ways of contributing to development and social welfare of residents in the UK and communities in the home country.

Raising awareness

Sending material such as information leaflets to raise awareness on a number of issues is a common strategy in a few of the organizations we interviewed. We were told that in most of the awareness raising activities, the target is giving information and providing people with resources and options in their efforts to take action. For instance, African Women's Welfare Association (AYOKA) has been sending leaflets on Sickle Cell Disease as part of a Public Health project aiming to provide people in both Africa and the UK with information on this disease. As the Director of AYOKA, Theresa Shiyabola explains,

This is important in feeding back your people. It is not only 'feeding' them back. It is also feeding them with information. They need to know about this disease. Young people should be warned about this.

AYOKA also sends leaflets about private fostering as an informational campaign. Private fostering is seen as a critical problem that African immigrants in particular face when they arrive in the UK. It is a common practice in Africa where the relatives and/or neighbours take care of the children when parents have to work or go to school. This is done within a support network among African families, which is established on the principles of solidarity and support in raising children. They look after each other's children when the parents have difficulties in raising their children, as a temporary solution. It may be defined as an informal version of fostering in the British system. This practice turns into a problem for African immigrant families when they want to continue with it when they arrive in the UK. Due to their financial instability, these immigrant families seek for families who will look after their children until they are able to find jobs to make a living for their children. However, most of them are unaware of the official procedures of fostering in the UK. They entrust their children to the families without any official arrangements or documents. These families are

mainly UK-resident white families with better living conditions.

However, African immigrant families who give their children away to foster families unofficially could face maltreatment due to their legal illiteracy about the UK system (African Women Welfare Association Newsletter). There have been many cases when they could not claim their children back. There are also children who are at risk of being taken into authority care and put up for adoption because of their being unlawfully fostered. In order to tackle this problem, AYOKA has prepared leaflets to warn and inform the prospective immigrants against the danger of losing their children. This activity also is a form of solidarity between communities living in home and host countries.

Another example of the dissemination of information about health issues is the Central American Woman's Network's (CAWN) project in Nicaragua for raising awareness about HIV/AIDS among young people. CAWN funds action projects specifically targeting women workers' rights in Central American countries. CAWN is also lobbying through collaboration with grass-root organizations and women in Central America and supports programmes about issues such as violence, labour rights and economic literacy.

The larger goal of reducing poverty is a significant area in the projects and one of the main motives for being involved in philanthropy, particularly for the African women's activities in our research group. There are many forms of activities targeting poverty reduction in Africa. The assistance ranges from sending leaflets or organizing seminars and conferences to using mass media channels to reach women.

Adwoa Adu is establishing a political network, bringing experts and local people to various women living in Africa (particularly Ghana and South Africa) and the UK. Adwoa Adu's main aim is to reduce poverty in Africa through effective networking between women with positions in decision-making processes, such as Members of the European Parliament, Members of Local Governments and non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and grass-root organizations in Africa, as well as in the UK. She also helps students from Africa to fund their university education both in African and British universities.

Janet Narh addresses issues, such as women's rights, poverty and gender inequality in Africa through her media programmes. Janet Narh is the producer and presenter of radio and television programmes based in London. Her TV programme, 'Women's Hour,' and radio programme, 'Platform Africa', aim to create political consciousness, particularly among African women. She has a pre-scheduled theme for each week's programme in relation to the issues mentioned above. In her programmes, she invites experts working with African women and their circumstances, such as solicitors, academics, political activists and politicians, to discuss the theme of the week. The programmes are designed in a live, interactive format where the viewers and the listeners can contact and join in the discussion. These programmes are broadcasted in a number of African countries as well as in the

UK. In addition to poverty, a number of issues such as political participation and gender equality are addressed in her programmes.

Micro-finance programmes, business development and skills training

Entrepreneurship skills training and micro-finance project assist in advancing economic empowerment and developing hometown communities. For example, Central American Woman's Network (CAWN) funds activities for the purpose of improving women's economic literacy in Central America. Two women, Olukemi Atijosan and Ayoka Grace Ajayi, told us their stories of 'giving back' in which they combine their professional experience and their belief in offering support to local communities developing their own economic activities. This belief is based on their perspective against the idea of funding them and imposing their own agendas.

The result is the establishment of a micro-finance project in their home village in Nigeria where the beneficiaries are able to develop their local businesses. The project includes an information technology (IT) skills training centre run by Ayoka Grace Ajayi in her Internet Café in Nigeria. They also give small interest free loans to local groups who need money to start or develop their small businesses in their home village in Nigeria.

AYOKA mainly carries out skills and entrepreneurship training and runs a charity shop with the help of women from different communities in London and Africa (see the detailed information in Box 1).

Political participation

Political participation is expressed as a component of several projects which could be linked to the participants' understanding of women's empowerment. It is drawn on the general argument of gender inequality which states that women have historically been excluded from political mechanisms. Therefore, women's voice and gender specific problems have been missing in decision making processes. This exclusion increases the level of gender inequality and in various forms is reflected in the daily life practices of the women. Motivating women for more and effective political participation has been one of the priorities of gender and empowerment programmes. The male-centred organization of politics is defined as one of the obstacles in front of women's active participation, and these programmes have been seeking multiple ways to support women in this process. The participants have also talked about their work, aiming to present different forms of political participation.

Apparently, the work on political participation requires a concrete interaction between the women's organizations and the beneficiaries. As in the experience of Alice Ukoko, this interaction may involve taking part in demonstrations; or as it happens in Janet Narh's radio and TV programs, this interaction may result in raising voices via these mass media applications.

Education and health

Education and health are the main focus of development activities and support to the women's communities in Britain. Few of the organizations and individual women only collect and/or send money. Greek Women's Philanthropy Association, a charity organization aiming to help people in need both in the UK and Greece, and women like Gwynneth Hamilton of the St. Vincent & The Grenadines Association (SVGA-UK) are examples. Gwynneth Hamilton's projects are a combination of fundraising activities at personal and organizational levels. Her main aim is to help the poor and ill people in home country who are 'less fortunate'. The idea is not transforming the lives of the communities or women, but helping them to solve immediate problems.

Sending money and educational material such as computers and books is another means to contribute to the development of people in the countries of origin. There are different ways of supporting the education in home countries. As in the example of Association of Turkish Women in Britain, financing education could mean contributing to the modernization of their country of origin. This organization mainly runs fund raising activities to support education for the Turkish community in London and in Turkey.

Individual women who send money and other material particularly target the women in home countries who are in need of positive discrimination, or in other words, women who need to be given priority in the distribution of resources and support for the elimination of gender based inequality they face. Irmak Gulcin from Turkey who sends money to support the education particularly of the girls working in the streets as vendors in Turkey is an example of this type of purposeful 'giving back'.

Abiola Ogunsola works with the Nigerian diaspora in London and is exploring their contacts, links and support for Nigerian institutions on issues of gender. Her most recent work is a 'Higher Education Link' project between Nigeria and the UK involving organization of workshops and seminars for the purpose of reducing poverty and promoting gender equality in collaboration with a local Nigerian university, civil society and the Nigerian government. In her words, it is an institutionalized action-research project which aims to investigate why girls are not participating in education in Nigeria and what the barriers might be.

Multidimensional Character of Giving Back

One of the distinctive characteristics of our sample in the UK is that they all seem to have multidimensional and multi-sited 'giving back' activities. Half of the research participants conduct activities that contribute both to their communities in the UK and in their countries of origin. These projects are synchronized in two or more countries. There are connections between the activities in different countries in terms of objectives, allocating resources, networking, and collaboration. For instance, the projects aiming to raise awareness about poverty often involve a dimension focusing on the impact of

gender inequalities in reducing poverty. The networking initiations by Adwoa Adu and the media projects of Janet Narh, which aim to mobilize women to raise their voice particularly in decision-making processes, both represent this standpoint combining various categories.

Box 1

AYOKA (African Women's Welfare Association)

As Theresa Shiyambola explains, AYOKA runs a wide range of activities with a 'holistic' approach through her determination to empower African women by training and awareness-raising programmes (AYOKA Newsletter, 2004). Their activities range from 'traditional' 'giving back' in the form of sending clothes to people in Africa who are in need, to activities 'raising awareness' by sending information leaflets on specific problems, such as sickle cell disease and private fostering.

Like most of the organizations participating in this research, they run activities targeting both women in the UK and in their countries of origin. What makes AYOKA different is their innovative ways of combining activities for the two communities. They do not make a separation between these two levels, but instead extend the scope of the projects towards linking these two communities. For example, the charity shop they run in London is the main source for collecting clothes to be sent to Africa. It is also a gathering space for the volunteers and participants from several skills training courses of AYOKA. In this way, they transfer the money, energy, and creativity of the volunteers of the organization into new projects for both communities.

By creating a sense of solidarity through sending clothes and gifts, they are able to make a difference in women's lives in Africa. Simply, this sense of solidarity and connection beyond geographical distances is emotionally significant for both sides. It provides a sense of empowerment which gives them the strength to stand up for better lives. In addition to this sense of solidarity, their information leaflets contribute to the awareness raising process of women in Africa. These leaflets show them the possible dangers of a disease and a possible problem they may face in their migration to Britain. This type of information is quite efficient in showing the women that they have options in life and the right to choose, forming the basis of an 'empowerment' process.

Projects advancing gender equality

The projects planned and carried out with a gender approach are the ones targeting to improve the living conditions of women in home countries as well as host countries. Their main focus in doing so is to point out gender inequality as the basis of major problems women face. After the realization of these gender-related problems, the projects with gender approach centre on the inclination of self-confidence, improving education level and empowerment of the women beneficiaries.

Alice Ukoko, Adwoa Adu, Janet Narh, and Abiola Ogunsola directly referred to 'gender equality' in their interviews, and their aim is to advance gender equality in their home countries. For that purpose, they run awareness raising projects targeting gender inequality in different areas such as education, workplace, political institutions and economic activities. The formats of these projects range from sending documents, organizing conferences and seminars, producing radio-television programmes, gender equality training projects, and establishing networks between groups to mobilize women in a particular community for direct political action as Alice Ukoko did.

Motivations

Reviewing the motivations behind the philanthropic activities of our research group provides us with insights to better understand the scope and organization of the activities. The research indicates that there is a range of motivations, from personal backgrounds to networks and status within the communities.

Although our sample was limited, our initial observation is that there are generational differences in the motivations and the issues migrant women address in their activities. Women from the first generation, who migrated from the countries of origin themselves, focus on more 'traditional' ways of 'giving back'. Their priority is to address vital problems such as health and poverty. On the other hand, women from the second generation who were socialized and educated in Britain focus on more 'universal' and political problems. Although they do not deny the importance of vital issues, their perception of these problems reflects a broader socio-political analysis. In addition to the individual backgrounds, their interaction with different groups, the influences of changing discourses on migration, women's rights and social inequalities, and their ability to use technical facilities are other factors influencing their worldviews. However, there are also numerous continuities and similarities, which are caused by the nature of the problems. For example, poverty has been a problem crossing the boundaries of the differences between generations or different political worldviews.

There is another influential factor in determining these differences: the cultural differences within the research group. There are variations even within the same community. They account for differences between the groups' priorities, their perception of the issues and their ways of 'giving back'. For instance, Association of Turkish Women in Britain contributes to the improvement of education through supporting the state schools in Turkey. On the other hand, reducing or eliminating poverty is a priority for African women. Two of our research participants, Alice Ukoko of the Women of Africa (WOA) and Olukemi Atijosan, mentioned their reservations about governmental institutions as collaborating bodies in their activities. The Women of Africa mainly aims to enhance the ability of African women to meet the socio-economic challenges of rapidly changing world, whereas Olukemi Atijosan founded a trust in London in order to provide micro-finance loans for small businesses in her hometown in Nigeria. Gwynneth Hamilton stated that in addition to her

fundraising activities in the UK for St. Vincent and Grenadines Association (SVGA), she wanted to achieve her own fundraising activities to help the people in SVGA on a personal level.

The life trajectories of the individual women involved in these activities are very much linked with their reasons they initiate these activities. Their activities reflect their experiences in different phases of their lives and in their experiences living in another country. They are drawn to act, to do something themselves to overcome the problems they faced and to be connected to their home countries. As Theresa Shiyambola's (AKOYA) account of her 'first cultural shock in Britain' expresses,

When we came here, we had expectations, high. The first cultural shock was in the street seeing these people, and greeting them. We greet them, and they don't answer us. The people you greet wouldn't answer. There's no answer such as 'Hi. How are you?' They just look at us as if we're useless; as if we're bad (...) that was the first cultural shock. So, we have to feed them back at home 'Look! How we do at home is different from here. You can't just meet and say hello to them.

Her own experience of 'cultural shock' has been a motivation for Mrs. Shiyambola to initiate philanthropy activities targeting her community in their adjustment to the UK system and providing them with necessary skills for economic independence in this system.

The satisfaction felt as a result of 'giving back' might be the reason for the sacrifice we observed among the participants. It brings a strong self-esteem and makes them strong, respected members of their community, both in home and host countries. None of the respondents mentioned the word 'sacrifice' although they told us the problems related to having limited time and energy. This limitation is expressed as an obstacle in improving their work and starting new and wider projects. The other projects they have in mind have to be postponed because of the limited time and energy.

As Abiola Ogunsola explains, 'giving back' does not necessarily mean being 'selfless'. The charity activities contribute to the life of the people in these activities in one way or another. It may be a link to the country of origin:

I don't like the word philanthropy. Because it denies the reality that when people get involved with charity activities or voluntary work, they get something out of it. The notion that you're doing something being selfless; I disagree with it.

It seems that they do get something out of their 'giving back'. Giving and receiving is mutual for both sides. While the members of the communities they work with benefit from the services and outcomes of the projects, the project's organizers find more possibilities to access to several networks and become known in those networks.

It is also significant to understand that the women who put their creativity, energy and time into 'giving back' activities are 'empowered' women in that the degree of education does not seem to matter in their motivation. These are all determined women with an aim in life and

know-how to allocate the resources they have in order to survive. The degree of their commitment guides them to go one step further, to initiate 'giving back' activities with limited resources.

Box 2

Adwoa Adu

The work of Adwoa Adu is another example of the multi-dimensional and multi-sited 'giving back' in the UK. Her approach combines multiple dimensions in combating gender inequalities in Africa. Her projects involve political activism, which aims to embrace the idea of solidarity among all African women to eradicate poverty. Her activism involves giving a voice to African women's struggle to participate in decision-making processes. In doing so, she collaborates with women (African and non-African) who have well-established occupations and status in society. She believes that women should play a leading role in the development of Africa as well as in governing their own lives.

Her understanding of solidarity does not imply an isolated community, but an international networking between women "in the global justice struggle to make poverty history." For her, empowerment will come gradually through awareness of the universal problems of women.

Her experience as the leader of All African Students' Union in Ghana is quite influential in her seeing the need to establish a network between students and women in Africa and other countries. Networking activities include sending books and leaflets and organizing conferences in Africa and Britain to raise awareness on the role of women in the elimination of poverty in Africa. We participated in Women in the Global Justice Struggle to Make Poverty History conference on 24 March 2006, which she had organized. She is one of the leading coordinators of the Sheroes Heritage Learning International Convention² (SHLIC), which was initiated to celebrate the activism of important African women in history. Her networking activities also involve facilitating contact between groups from Africa and Britain. In this way, she opens a path for exchanging ideas and experiences of political activism.

Adwoa neither has institutionalized, structured, and regular financial resources to run her activities, nor does she work with a well-established team. However, her strong commitment and enthusiasm guides her in pushing forward with only limited resources and contacts. She mobilizes various channels such various organizations, people in politics, local government and community leaders and notes that it is not always a smooth process.

Her 'giving back' activities have the transformative effect of raising political awareness among African women. By being politically active, she hopes to transform African women's own perspectives about their roles in decision making.

Mobilizing Resources

Both material and immaterial resources have been mobilized in the implementation of the projects through funding as well as collaborations at community and institutional levels.

Funding

One of the most important elements of organizing and running the activities is funding. Fundraising may take more time than the organizations spend on the project itself.

Each organization, group or individual has its own ways to mobilize the community to contribute through utilising informal and internal connections for fundraising. According to the organizations we contacted, community events are the most common way to bring potential sponsors and volunteers together. However, it is important to note that personal contacts, energy and charisma of the individual women are also fundamental in these organizations' success.

Fundraising at the institutional level involves different pre-conditions. Contact and communication with fundraising institutions, organizations and governmental bodies necessitate extensive project management and negotiation experience. Having been granted 'charity' status is another condition for receiving a government subsidy in the UK. However, we were told that achieving this status is a long and detailed process in which the organizations have to prove their structural sustainability. Moreover, the accessibility of these funds depends upon certain knowledge of the British system. Although some organizations' founders are familiar with this system, such as CAWN (Central America Women's Network) or the Association of Turkish Women in Britain, it is a significant barrier and concern for many individual women and smaller initiatives.

There are always small practical problems, which take time and energy in the organization of activities. These problems include the high bank transaction costs for money transfers, shipping of the material, and logistical problems in the organization of conferences, meetings. However, the women are quite efficient in creating solutions to these problems. For example, the most common solution to high money transfer charges entails taking money with them or sending it with people whenever they visit the home countries. As we mentioned much earlier, in a recent survey traditional ways of sending money home are found to be highly preferred and it is difficult for the UK government to regulate such channels (UK Remittance Working Group, 2005).

Partnerships

Partner organizations, institutions, local groups and individuals chosen by the women and organizations, particularly in the countries of origin, are important for reaching the target groups. The choice of the partners depends on numerous reasons, including practical ones. The partners

establish the initial contacts and partnerships and act as the major link with the beneficiaries. Therefore, their reliability, political orientation and ability to run the activities are the determining criteria in collaborations. Various forms of partnerships and reasons for activating each type of alliance are further explained below.

There are organizations founded by mixed ethnic groups, bringing the British and minority women together, or involving the cooperation of women in different countries. CAWN (Central America Women's Network), which was founded collaboratively by Central American women and British women who were born and grew up in Central America, aims to develop and sustain a solidarity between these women. Adwoa Adu's work aims to establish a network in order to support the women to stand up for their rights in the countries of origin.

Most of the organizations and women in our research group prefer to work with women's and human rights non-governmental organizations (NGOs) active in their home countries. They are not necessarily large organizations. For instance, Adwoa Adu collaborates with a number of women's and students' associations in Ghana to establish a network with similar groups in Britain. African Women's Welfare Association (AYOKA) works with a human rights' organization to disseminate their leaflets in Africa. CAWN collaborates with a women's NGO in Nicaragua for their domestic violence project. Irmak Gulcin sends money to support the education of children working in the streets in a less developed city in Turkey via a local NGO working with the children.

There are women who prefer to contact the communities or women themselves directly whenever possible. Alice Ukoko continues her political awareness activities in Nigeria without any partners there. As a member of the community, she meets the women who are community leaders there. Olukemi Atijosan and Ayoka Grace Ajayi run their IT skills training and micro-finance projects in their own village in Nigeria. Being a member of the village helps them to communicate with the people directly. They express their distrust in institutions because of the corruption seen in African institutions.

Other organizations, such as the Association of Turkish Women in Britain, prefer to send money and material through national and supra-national institutions. These institutions help to ensure the security and safe arrival of the money or materials.

Partners in Britain are mostly agencies which provide funding. The organizations range from governmental agencies such as the Department for International Development to National Health Services and British Council. National NGOs, individual sponsors and volunteers are other partners in Britain. For instance, Gwynneth Hamilton's partners are all based in the UK. She also collaborates with a team of individuals to organize activities such as bike rides and cricket matches to raise funds. Janet Narh broadcasts her programmes through a sponsorship of media and communication companies in the UK and Ghana.

Some of the respondents expressed their concerns about the lack of interest in their work within their local communities or the reactions of local groups and community members to their activities in home countries. Abiola Ogunsola recalled a dialogue between the project team and one of the local participants in the launch of their 'Gender Security Project' in Nigeria, which underlined some crucial points of this problem. A local man stood up against the project claiming that it was not possible to talk about gender based problems that women face in Nigeria. He believed that the project team could not know what was happening there in real life and that their approach was academic. As this example shows, there may be differences between the perceptions of the beneficiaries and the individuals or groups 'giving back'. These differences might be seen as specific to the objectives of the projects or the way they are operated. Nevertheless, these problems seem to be the effects of perceived socio-cultural differences.

Conclusion

Our research shows that there are a number of 'giving back' activities ranging from more traditional philanthropic activities to a variety of 'non-elite philanthropy' aiming to support the people/women in the home countries and pointing out the changing context of 'giving back'. In our sample, a few main forms surfaced: activities focusing on building awareness, projects that work to reduce poverty, micro-financing and skills training, projects addressing education or health, politically-based activities, and those that address facets of gender inequality.

The research also offers insights into the women's perceptions of the notion of philanthropy. The stories of 'giving back' tell us that particularly the women who initiate 'giving back' activities with political purposes, challenge this idea of 'giving' as 'donating'. They believe that this type of 'giving' has created a culture of silence where the people in their home countries are accustomed to waiting to receive rather than becoming actively involved themselves. None of the women we interviewed believed that receiving funds would bring empowerment to the beneficiaries. Empowerment is described as a long process for which the targeted communities work themselves. We were told that in terms of the projects and programmes, it would be the outcome of long-term collaboration with equal participation from both sides, the beneficiaries and the project initiators.

It is particularly important to note that the organizations that we interviewed run multi-dimensional activities. Most of them run different projects targeting both the communities in the UK and in their countries of origin. This 'multi' characteristic of the organizations enlarges their capacity to run their 'giving back' activities. They are able to transfer their experiences and resources between different activities. Various projects help them to fund the projects. Particularly the activities which bring these women and organizations with the people in their home countries together inspire and guide them in designing new 'giving back' projects.

The picture of the activities and approaches of our research group shows that there are differences between the 'giving back' activities of the first and second generation in terms of their focus and approaches. While the women from the first generation have more traditional ways of 'giving back', the women from the second generation have more innovative ways to give. These differences are also linked to the differences in their approaches and priority areas of action.

The 'giving back' activities of immigrant women are based mostly on their own experiences. These experiences include migration (not necessarily of themselves, but also of their families) and/or experiences of volunteer or professional work experience in the countries of origin. This is advantageous in their planning of the project-based, long-term activities. These experiences guide them in defining the scope of the projects and the beneficiary group to be targeted.

Despite a number of difficulties, including financial, immaterial and personal constraints, the women we interviewed work hard to 'give back'. All of our participants juggle their activities in addition to their other responsibilities in life. Most of them work professionally and have a family to look after. It is literally not possible for them to allocate full-time energy to 'giving back'. However, with their amazing enthusiasm and faith in what they do, they sacrifice their own leisure time.

Acknowledgements

We would like to thank the twelve participants who shared their ideas, projects, and enthusiasm with us.

¹⁾ The definition of 'empowerment' varies in relation to the perspectives of the women and organizations. In general terms, we take empowerment as being 'about the extent to which some categories of people are able to control their own destinies, even when the people with whom they interact oppose their interest' (Mason 2005: 90).

²⁾ <http://www.shlic.org>

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ANNEX A

Table 1 > **Population of the UK by ethnic group, April 2001**

Ethnic Group	Total population	Total population (%)
White	54,153,898	92.1
Mixed	677,117	1.2
All Asian or Asian British (Indian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi, Other Asian)	2,331,423	4.0
All Black or Black British (Black Caribbean, Black African, Black Other)	1,148,738	2.0
Chinese	247,403	0.4
Other ethnic groups	230,615	0.4
All minority ethnic population	4,635,296	7.9
All population (N)	58,789,194	100

Source: UK Office for National Statistics (ONS), Focus Ethnicity Report, March 2005 Dataset, p.1.

ANNEX B

Table 1 > **Table of women / organizations interviewed in the UK**

Name of interviewee or organization	Country of Origin	About the organization
Abiola M O Ogunsola	Nigeria	Higher education and civil society, promoting education for all: Higher Education Link between UK and Nigeria aiming to reduce poverty and to promote sustainable development
Adwoa Adu	Ghana	Coordinating Secretary of the Sheroes Heritage Learning International Convention which is a network working to reduce poverty and to promote African women's political participation.
Alice Ukoko, Women of Africa (WOA)	Nigeria	As a registered charity in the UK, WOA's roots go back to the year 1994 when Alice Ukoko had a starting aim to empower Nigerian women in the UK and in Nigeria. WOA is named after the Women of Nigeria International (WONI). Its vision is to enhance the ability of African women to meet the socio-economic challenges of the world.
Ayoka Grace (Ajayi) Bolodeleu	Nigeria	Individual attempt for the improvement of IT (information technology) skills of local people in Nigeria
Association of Turkish Women in Britain	Turkey	The association was established in 2002, with the aim of serving the Turkish speaking community in Britain. The organization runs education projects, seminars, fundraising activities and projects (for Turkey) with the collaboration of Turkish women living in Britain. It also acts as a networking organization between several other Turkish organizations, projects, and women.
Central American Women's Network (CAWN)	Britain and Central America	Established in 1991, CAWN addresses female workers' rights in Central America. It is a UK-based network of women united by a commitment to women's human and labour rights worldwide and to a desire to support, publicize and learn from the struggles of women in Central America in the defence of their rights.
Greek Women's Philanthropic Association	Greece	Main aim is to financially assist people in need within the Greek community.
Gwynneth Hamilton (St. Vincent and the Grenadines Association – UK)	St. Vincent and the Grenadines	She developed a passion for helping her fellow Vincentians and joined the St. Vincent & Grenadines Association (SVGA UK), whose main objective is to encourage members to take an active interest in the socio-economic developments and other problems of St. Vincent & the Grenadines and its citizens in Britain.
Irmak Gulcin	Turkey	Individually sending remittances to help female, child street vendor's education.
Janet Narh	Ghana	Producer and presenter of two shows on radio and TV targeting African women in the UK and Africa. Her shows are called 'Woman's Hour' (TV) and 'Platform Africa' (live-radio).
Olukemi Atijosan	Nigeria	Founder of a trust aiming to help Nigerian people with micro-finance projects.
Theresa Shiyabola (African Women's Welfare Association – AYOKA)	Nigeria	The organization runs a wide range of activities by a 'holistic' approach with the determination to empower African women through training and awareness raising programmes.

Diaspora activities

Organization of courses, workshops, seminars in collaboration with a local university, civil society and government in Nigeria to raise awareness on poverty, gender inequality, gender security and development.

Networking between women in Africa and the UK. Organization for raising awareness and activities for African women. Support for young women's higher education in Ghana and UK.

Provides legal advice and support to the African community in the UK. Supports political participation and activism of women in Africa as a form of empowerment. Also organises local seminars, meetings and conferences in Africa where women can find a platform to raise their voice.

Running her own Internet café in Nigeria with services like easy access to technology, training programmes, and also running a micro-finance project to support entrepreneurs and local businesses in a Nigerian village. Collaboration in a micro-finance project with Olukemi Atijosan.

Activities include (but not limited to) building a school in Turkey, fundraising activities to help poor in Turkey and an education support project for Turkish pupils in British schools.

Supporting programmes targeting women in Central America about violence, labour rights, trade union issues by lobbying, advocacy work and disseminating newsletters. Specific projects include development of women's economic literacy, reduction of violence and poverty in Honduras, raising awareness in health issues (particularly HIV among young people) and fundraising activities in the UK.

Activities are mainly in the UK in the form of regular gifts to poor and people in need of medical treatment. Supporting Greek women in the UK and also targeting projects to Greece and other countries (i.e. Pakistan during the Tsunami attack) to help poor and less advantaged people.

Fundraising for SVGA (UK) and for various charities in SVG in order to help people in need, such as AIDS Victims and disadvantaged children in SVG.

She collaborates with a local organization in Turkey in order send small amounts of money to contribute to the education expenses of female children working in the streets.

Her activities aim to raise awareness of issues which directly affect women living in Africa and the UK. These issues include (but are not limited to) poverty, political participation, gender equality, and domestic violence.

Runs a micro-finance project in a local village in Nigeria to help local people to develop their entrepreneurial skills and their businesses.

Sending clothes and gifts to Africa, running a charity shop in London, training courses about sewing (traditional African clothing), informational awareness raising projects in the UK and Africa on sickle cell disease and private fostering.

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3 > Diaspora initiatives in the Netherlands: Building bridges for change

by Anja Rudnick

Introduction: Immigration to the Netherlands and Background to Study

By 2005, among the Netherlands' 16.3 million inhabitants, approximately 1.7 million people, or 10% of the total population are of non-Western descent, i.e., they or at least one of their parents were born outside the Netherlands (see annex A).¹ This group currently consists of people from approximately 130 different countries. Another 1.4 million people, 9% of the total population in the Netherlands, originate from Western countries² (Garssen, Nicolaas & Sprangers, 2005).³

Broadly speaking, three flows of immigrants from non-Western countries can be distinguished in Dutch modern history, sparked by local and global political economic developments: the decolonization of former Dutch colonies; the need for labour migrants due to large economic growth rates in the late 1950s/1960s; and political upheavals in several regions in the world in combination with the increasing limitations on people's cross border movements.

Former colonies

In the wake of Indonesia's independence in 1949 a significant number of people left for the Netherlands; approximately 25.000 annually throughout the 1950s (de Beer & Sprangers, 1993:11). The vast majority arrived in the Netherlands shortly after Indonesia's independence. Many were of mixed descent and although they were generally born in Indonesia, they were considered to be repatriates who 'returned'. The Indo-Europeans and Indonesians have largely been considered 'well integrated' in Dutch society and are statistically and in terms of policy formulations regarded as 'non-Western'. There are currently 399.000 people in the Netherlands with Indonesian roots, of whom the large majority belong to the second generation.

In the wake of political and economic uncertainties surrounding independence in 1975 and shortly thereafter, immigration from Suriname increased significantly. By 2004, 325.000 people of Surinamese descent were living in the Netherlands.

Guest workers

In the late 1950s Dutch employers recruited Italians, Spanish and Yugoslavs to fill vacancies in the coalmines, the textile industry and shipbuilding companies. As elsewhere, migration was assumed to be a temporary phenomenon. Recruitment agreements were first signed with Spain and Italy and later with Turkey (1964) and Morocco (1969) as well. Initially, many migrants did indeed return to their countries. Turkish and Moroccan guest workers often did not return; many originated from rural areas with few employment prospects (De Beer, 1998:242).

Two out of three Moroccans and three out of five Turks who came to the Netherlands during the past 50 years have stayed (CBS, 19-07-2004). The oil crisis of 1973 and the subsequent rising unemployment and dwindling economic growth rates put an abrupt halt to immigration.

Since 1973, labour migration has been only permitted in special cases of proven need for specialized skilled labour. Immigration from Turkey and Morocco, however, did not stop at this point. Due to family reunion, immigration continued to grow. Whereas approximately 100.000 migrants from Morocco and Turkey had come to the Netherlands from 1965–1973, during 1974–1982 close to 170.000 migrants arrived from these countries. During the mid 1980s another migration inflow occurred, as many in the second generation reached the age of marriage and chose their spouse from the country of origin (Entzinger, 2002: 27).

Refugees and asylum seekers

During the last two decades of the 20th century, the number of people who sought asylum increased dramatically. In 1980, approximately 1.000 people sought asylum, by 1994 it peaked to slightly more than 50.000. War and political upheaval in many people's countries of origin were the leading reasons for the increase in asylum seekers. Whereas refugees historically came from surrounding countries, since the mid-1980s refugees increasingly have arrived from countries outside of Europe, which had no previous migration history with the Netherlands (Garssen, Nicolaas & Sprangers, 2005). In recent years, immigration laws have been amended and sharpened. The government felt that the Netherlands had become known as a relatively receptive country for refugees and asylum seekers, which was believed to attract increasing numbers of asylum seekers who, in the eyes of government officials, often were economic migrants instead of political refugees. By 2004 the number of asylum seekers had dropped from 43.600 in 2000 to 9.800 in 2004 – the lowest since 1988.

Changing policies and perceptions concerning migrants

Up to the late 1990s, integration policy purported integration with preservation of one's own culture. This approach was based on a longstanding tradition in Dutch society (pillarization); groups of various religious backgrounds form separate schools, hospitals, media and other institutions. A similar attitude was taken towards newcomers. Resources for organizations were made available to immigrants along ethnic and especially religious lines on the basis of equality. By 1997 the government had explicitly labelled the Netherlands as 'multi-cultural' (Doomernik, 2005:35). After the events of September 11, 2001 and the 2002 death of the populist politician Fortuyn, who had gained much support for his anti-multiculturalism stance, the political climate changed drastically.

Former integration policies became labelled as having failed and the country as having been too tolerant. Public debate on the topic of immigration and immigrants became considerably polarized. People of foreign descent, generally indiscriminately referred to as 'allochtones', have been blamed for a host of problems. Multi-culturalism became a non-item and the policy focus shifted entirely towards 'integration' and migrants' responsibility to become full Dutch citizens. While previously, the

concept of integration was primarily linked to employment and education, presently, loyalty is emphasized. It is assumed that one should make an unambiguous choice to be part of Dutch society by giving up dual nationality and outside cultural practices (Doomernik, 2005:35). What is referred to as integration is indeed a call for complete assimilation. Whereas previous immigration policies have not always led to the desired result and a relatively large percentage of migrants are unemployed⁴, many migrants have built their lives in Dutch society. They have jobs, pay taxes, speak the language; i.e., they are 'integrated'. Due to the current political climate many feel increasingly excluded. Ironically, this often has a negative effect on feelings of belonging, on feeling 'Dutch,' a pivotal goal in current policies.

Contributions to the 'home' country

Immigrants contribute to their countries of origin in a variety of ways. One of the most common contributions made are remittances, often financial contributions given to relatives or the home community. Other migrants contribute through their support of new programmes and buildings.

Remittances

An estimated 1,5 billion Euro are remitted annually from the Netherlands (Bieckmann & Muskens, 2004). Due to fewer ties with the country of origin, the second generation migrants are believed to remit less than their parents, as is observed in the Surinamese and the Cape Verdean community (Vuijsje, 2004; Reis Chantre, 2005).

Although Moroccans and Turks have increasingly been found to spend and invest their money in the Netherlands (Alloctonen weblog, 5 Sept. 2005), for many others find that supporting relatives in the country of origin remains necessary. In 2003, Turks remitted 13% of their total income and Moroccans 24% (NCDO, 2005:13). Apart from sending money, many migrants offer other support to their relatives. In the words of Abdellah Tallal, originating from Morocco, "If one were to unpack the heavily loaded cars of Moroccans who in summer drive down to Morocco to visit their relatives, one would find many items for the family. Some are luxury goods, others are badly needed items such as, for example, orthopaedic shoes for one's aunt." There are generally a few items as well for acquaintances or neighbours in need, which can range from a pair of glasses to a wheelchair, Abdellah says. Many migrants relate how the many requests they receive from non-relatives for assistance can be rather burdensome (cf. Vuijsje, 2004). Not everyone has the means to assist and not all requests are regarded as legitimate. Nevertheless, apart from sending money to one's relatives, many migrants desire to contribute positively to their country of origin, even if only in a small way.

Organizations and development

It is unclear how many immigrants in the Netherlands organize, set up or support initiatives in the country of origin. No comprehensive research has been conducted on this topic, and the information available is scattered and partial. Moreover, given the informal character of many initiatives, it is not always easy to find out about their existence (cf. Bouzoubaa & Brok, 2005). Nevertheless, the number of such initiatives is estimated to exceed a few hundred, if not a few thousand⁵. The scale and impact of migrant initiatives vary widely; however, their annual budget typically does not exceed a couple of thousand Euros (Bieckmann & Muskens, 2004). While many initiatives appear to be initiated by first generation migrants, second-generation migrants are also found to be involved (cf. Van der Meer, 2004). However, only minimal detailed research on this topic exists.

Contextualizing the study

This report will examine the activities of various immigrant organizations in the Netherlands, focusing on the development of the countries of origin, especially as related to needs of women and children, as illuminated through interviews. This section will highlight the profiles of the women involved and the activities undertaken, as well as more practical aspects of how the projects are managed, including the partnerships and sources of funding involved.

A snowball method was used; 14 migrant women and 3 migrant men were interviewed from 12 women's migrant organizations and three mixed migrant organizations. Men and mixed organizations were included when some of their initiatives specifically targeted and entailed a clear gender perspective. The migrants interviewed originally came from Morocco, Turkey, Suriname, Somalia, Somaliland, Burundi, Congo, Bolivia, the Philippines, Sudan and Ethiopia – a list of all interviewees with details on their organizations and diaspora activities can be found in annex B.

Whereas the researchers in the other countries encountered considerable difficulties in terms of locating and contacting migrant women who engage in transnational initiatives, as a researcher in the Netherlands, I had a fairly privileged position. For one, Mama Cash is based in the Netherlands and is well connected, providing many important contacts. Secondly, given the fact that the issue is a rather topical one in the Netherlands, with many seminars being organised and much information to be found on the Internet, I could locate potential respondents relatively easily.⁶

As feminist researchers have convincingly argued, research is never entirely objective or value free. Like any other social interaction, research is embedded in the constitution of social identities. Respondents actively shape their own representations; the way they want to be regarded by others. Likewise, who the researcher is, how she/he represents her/himself, and the way she/he is perceived by the research-subjects, is of influence too (Wolf, 1996:4; Nencel, 2001; Rudnick, forthcoming). The fact that the study was conducted on behalf of

Mama Cash, a respected women's foundation well-known by the respondents, influenced my positionality and had both advantages and disadvantages. On one hand, trust was easily created; Mama Cash' Philosophy was often regarded to be largely in line with that of the organizations interviewed. On the other hand, the fact that Mama Cash is a foundation and thus a (potential) funding partner for one's projects, at times may have made respondents more inclined to limit details about setbacks in their initiatives.

Whereas I, a white Dutch woman, and the respondents had different backgrounds, sharing an interest and passion for the topic at stake led to a communality, i.e., a shared subject-position, which made way for lively interviews (cf. Wolf 1996:18).⁷

It should be noted that since it was beyond the scope of this study to also visit and interview migrants' partner organizations in the country of origin, the findings presented here, inevitably, may remain somewhat one-sided. Furthermore, the initiatives discussed in this report cannot be regarded as representative of female or gender related transnational initiatives in the Netherlands, nor can the findings be generalized. Despite these limitations, the study aims to provide a fair impression of this newly emerging field and will hopefully incite future research and interest.

Migrants' diaspora engagement: Findings of the study

Diaspora activities: The 'who' and 'why' questions

Of all the respondents, eight held paid jobs, one was retired and six were unemployed. Of the latter, four had come to the Netherlands as refugees; two of them had held prestigious jobs in the country of origin. Almost all respondents were well-educated. Clearly, respondents' education, work experience and class were of great advantage in their transnational engagement.

As in many other countries, migrants in the Netherlands have widely organized themselves to accommodate the needs and interests of their community.⁸ It was found that two-thirds of the respondents had been actively involved in their own communities in the Netherlands before their transnational activities took shape. Focus points of their activities in the Netherlands varied from assisting one another and others encountering difficulties to become accustomed to Dutch society and its institutions to supporting specific women's issues.

Florence Andrews' story from Sudan is exemplifying. She was studying in the Netherlands during the civil war in Sudan. She saw many Sudanese women coming to the Netherlands and aspired to bring them together. Before her organization, Swan, began its empowerment activities, she conducted a small survey among women to find out about their needs and concerns. For many respondents, engaging in transnational activities with partners in their countries of origin was a natural next step.

Ozden Kutluer, a woman of Turkish descent who has been active in the women's movement both in the Netherlands as well as internationally for over 25 years, stated that to her there is no "here" and "there", but rather "it is one integrated whole". Ozden's work has recently involved establishing a job-coaching programme for 500 women in four regions of Turkey. For this project, partnerships were formed among women's organizations and universities in Turkey and the Dutch employment centre (CWI).

Fenna Ulichki makes a similar point. Fenna moved with her family to the Netherlands when she was one year old. She is involved in the Moroccan Women's Association in the Netherlands (MNVN):⁹ "We cooperate with women's groups in Morocco on women's legal rights and law enforcement. Cooperating for change 'there' also affects us 'here.' Moroccan women in the Netherlands benefit from it as well."

In order to engage transnationally, several women stressed the need to first build an organizational base in the Netherlands. It cannot be achieved by individuals acting alone. Veronique Walu from the Democratic Republic of Congo presents the following idea for forming transnational initiatives:

I need the women from my community in the Netherlands. To get them interested we need to first take care of the problems and issues that concern women here. The things they encounter in their everyday lives in the Netherlands. Then, together, we can move on and do something along with women in Congo.

Speaking the Dutch language and familiarity with Dutch society were also found to be other prerequisites for successfully engaging in transnational activities. This is in line with other studies that find 'integration' is a precondition for successfully setting up transnational initiatives. Relatively successful and 'integrated' migrants are more likely to have the time, know-how and resources to become active in transnational activities (Ghorashi, 2005; de Haas, 2006:91).¹⁰

Motivations for engagement in transnational initiatives are based on solidarity and feeling part of one interconnected transnational community. Women that came to the Netherlands more recently due to war and conflict often feel particularly led to contribute to the rebuilding of their native countries. Fadumo Alin was a successful, rich business woman before the war in Somalia started. Her experiences during the war changed her. As she said, "During the war we often hid in the bushes together, women and children. I could not forget about them when I came here. I needed to do something for those who stayed behind."

Instead of using her talents to rebuild her business career, she has invested all her time and energy in co-creating projects for women and disabled people in Somaliland (see Box 3).

For many organizations assisting women and children in particular, feelings of solidarity, the need for gender equality and the belief in women's power to build their countries, were frequently raised as motivations.

As Stephanie Mbanzadore from Burundi (see also Box 1) related,

We were highly educated women who were in the position to leave during the war. First, I was in Kenya where we started to organize women, but we had to stay in (refugee) camps. I then came to the Netherlands. I want to focus on women because 90% of the active population in Burundi, those who feel responsible for their families, are women. But they are largely underrepresented in public life including politics. I believe that women can play an active role in creating peace.

Or as the words of Safiya Axmed Cumar from Somalia (see also Box 3) express,

I feel very strongly about women. I have a feeling that 'woman' is very strong. If a woman is in a position where she thinks she is nothing, or less worthy, she needs to find her power. The women from my country are naturally strong as well. They have gone through so much. We have seen so many atrocities taking place in front of our eyes and yet we managed to raise our children alone. We became strong. I simply want to do things where I can be of assistance.

It was found that migrant organizations consisting of both male and female migrants involved in diaspora activities, often are gender sensitive as well and engage in initiatives targeting women and gender equality. Interviewees from mixed organizations stressed that change in the country of origin can only come about if women's rights and needs are taken into account. As Abdellah Tallal from Morocco explains,

We believe in equality between men and women. The emancipation of women and men is an integral part in striving for a better future. It is not easy for women in Southern Morocco to participate in public life and be economically engaged and independent. We assist our local partners in their efforts to make those changes come about.

Aknarij is involved, along with others, in literacy programmes for women and is also in the process of co-creating a women's training centre, together with local (women) organizations and migrant organizations from France.

The initiatives

A wide range of activities are being initiated, and many respondents' organizations are engaged in more than one transnational initiative.

Initiatives generally start out small. In the process, ideas and goals become more developed. Initiatives, which focus on children's education and activities aiming to benefit women, feature most prominently.

Of the fifteen respondents, nine were engaged in projects related to education. Education was widely regarded as crucial to a child's individual future as well as the development of one's country of origin as a whole. Different kinds of initiatives were undertaken towards this end:

- setting up schools where there are none (see Box 1);
- paying for children's school enrolment
- helping to set up specific programmes;
- initiating partnerships between schools in the Netherlands and the country of origin.

Sylvia van den Berg-Ortega from Bolivia's example exemplifies how ideas evolve:

We were three women who wanted to do something for our country. In the beginning we didn't really know how. We started out by sending containers full of goods to Bolivia. Although people were happy with the clothes and things we sent, after a while we felt that it didn't contribute anything in the long run. Once the clothes were worn out, they had to be thrown out. We then felt we needed to do something more sustainable. We asked our friends, family and wider network in Bolivia to brainstorm what was really needed and to send us their ideas. We received many ideas and it became clear that education was desired.

A few years later, their organization, Ayni, which in the indigenous Bolivian language Aymara means 'reciprocity', together with their partner in Bolivia, have implemented an ICT project. The project has created 20 computer labs involving about 50 schools in low-income areas in the region surrounding the town of Orore. 3000 teachers have been trained to teach and more than 17.000 children have become computer literate, enhancing their future possibilities. The labs are run by the schools and boards of parents and teachers, and small fees are paid. The project will soon be self-sustaining. The project has received recognition from the Bolivian President and is considered an example of 'good practice' of development cooperation by the Dutch and Norwegian embassies in Bolivia.

Stephanie Mbanzadore from Burundi and Doris Alfara from the Philippines both engage in activities that encourage and develop partnerships between schoolchildren in the Netherlands and children in the country of origin. Through these projects, they actively engage diaspora and Dutch youth in the Netherlands. These projects hence serve multiple goals. By raising funds via fairs and activities organised by Dutch and migrant children and their parents at their schools, financial means are gathered for the overseas partner schools, while migrant children and their parents provide information on their countries of origin by creating exhibitions and giving talks. Doris Alfara from the Philippines explains,

Through these activities children learn about other cultures in a playful way, while gaining a better understanding of the countries their migrant classmates come from.

It was found that many organizations actively try to involve their youth in their transnational activities. Several interviewees recalled how in the process, young people's self-awareness had improved; they ultimately also felt more at home, part of and valued in Dutch society.

Twelve of the fifteen respondents were engaged in initiatives which can be described as 'feminist philanthropy'; initiatives aimed at bringing about positive social change for women.

For analytical purposes, these initiatives can be divided into the following categories:

> Micro-finance: Seven respondents were engaged in micro-finance projects and two were in the process of finding financial means to set up micro-finance schemes (for examples, see Box 3).

- > Women's centres: Five respondents had financially assisted the establishment of women's centres. These venues serve as a place for women to meet. Trainings of various sorts are conducted, ranging from sewing courses to literacy and empowerment trainings. In Bansalan, the Philippines, as Corazon Dee relates, the centre which is now coming about, will also be a place where women can sell their produce and rooms will be rented out to make some additional money. In Southern Morocco, according to Abdellah Tallal, the centre is a safe 'women-only' space, so that women will not encounter opposition from (male) relatives for going there. Two centres also include mother and child healthcare.
- > Emancipatory campaigns/trainings: Several respondents had co-assisted in setting up activities with an awareness raising or emancipatory character, the foci were on female genital mutilation (see Box 2), involving women in politics and conflict resolution (see Box 1) and HIV/AIDS awareness-raising campaigns.
- > Literacy and vocational training: Ozden Kutluer from Turkey, as briefly mentioned earlier, co-created a programme in which women in Turkey received vocational trainings, job coaching and assistance in finding appropriate employment. 500 women were involved. Aknarij is involved in literacy programmes for adult women.

Some projects, such as the partnership between schools described above, actively aim to involve and reach out to people in the country of origin as well as people in the Netherlands within one's own community and Dutch society at large. Raising awareness and increasing mutual understanding are important motivations driving the projects. An interesting example comes from the Ethiopian migrant organization Dir. Dir means 'thin thread' which refers to an Ethiopian saying: many thin threads together can tie a lion. Dir conducts many activities in the Netherlands such as an employment-creating project. Recently, Dir has started a 'socially just' company, including a café called Buna Bet, Ethiopian coffee for a change. The tastefully furnished establishment in the Amsterdam neighbourhood 'the Pijp' offers fair trade coffee, which is roasted by a partnering roasting house in Addis Ababa. The roasting house is part of an alternative employment creation project for twenty-four women who formerly engaged in prostitution. They and their children are often ostracized and receive no support. Together with the women, a training programme was developed to address both skills enhancement and empowerment issues. Mintwab Aliyou, from Dir explains, "The women want to regain their confidence. Their experiences are put central. Single mothers are often stigmatized. These women are showing that they can be economically successful and build something, which also sets an example."

Through Buna Bet, Dir accomplishes multiple objectives transnationally. Income generation for Dutch Ethiopians who are working in the café and raised awareness among the general public in the Netherlands are achieved simultaneously with advancing fair trade, income generation and social change for a group of women and their children in Ethiopia.

Some migrant groups were found to align with migrants (organizations) in the wider diaspora (in other countries) to set up transnational initiatives together. One example is Aknarij. In the Netherlands, Aknarij's focus is on second-generation youth from Southern Morocco. Each year Aknarij organizes a cultural festival in Southern Morocco during the time of year when many migrants visit their relatives. In cooperation with local NGOs, workshops on social issues are conducted. Over the years several ideas and projects have come into being through these encounters. By the request of local doctors and healthcare workers, a caravan, including theatre, was organized. The caravan visited different towns and villages to raise awareness on HIV/AIDS, an issue considered to be taboo. During the summer visits, as Abdellah Tallal explained, one also meets with migrants living in France. Together with the French migrant organizations and in cooperation with the local partners, Association Amal Dades and the women's organization, Association Femmes Dades pour le Developpement et la Solidarité, funds and books were organized for a literacy programme and library for 400 women. In the area, about 85% of all women are illiterate. The same partners have also constructed a women's centre.

Lastly, most female respondents' activities stretch beyond their own community. Whereas often migrant organizations and initiatives primarily focus on their own country of origin, they also organize platforms with migrant women from various backgrounds. The aim is to learn from one another and to combine knowledge and resources for common goals. Similar forms of cooperation have increased rapidly over the past few years. Some examples include: Tiye, Platform of the National Organizations of Black, Migrant and Refugee women in the Netherlands (see Box 3); MIND, Migrant Women Initiatives in the Netherlands for Development; and the Multicultural Women Peacemakers Network in the Netherlands (MWPN) (see Box 1). Another example is Seva Network Foundation, an umbrella organization of mixed migrant organizations from the Hindu diaspora. Seva started off as an ad hoc cooperation following the earthquake in Gujarat, India in 2001. Several years later, Seva has grown to become a significant player in the field of development, recently receiving a governmental grant of more than 4 million and becoming the first migrant development organization to be officially recognized by the Dutch government. Projects are geared towards the worldwide Hindu diaspora, with projects in multiple countries, including India, Nepal and Suriname. Additionally, Seva runs a fund where migrant organizations, irrespective of their background, can apply for funding for their transnational initiatives.

In short, the respondents' transnational initiatives are diverse. While children and women are the primary beneficiaries, many respondents' organizations aim to link and support both countries and cultures they are part of.

Box 1

Burundian Women for Peace and Development (BWPD)

Stephanie Mbanzendore, the founder of BWPD, fled Burundi when the country became torn by a vicious civil war following the assassination of its first democratically elected leader, Melchior Ndadaye, in 1993. The former bookkeeper and her children came to the Netherlands and obtained refugee status in 1998. Determined to do something for the women in her country, Stephanie located Burundian women in the Netherlands and in the wider diaspora who would want to pool their energy for the peace process in Burundi. As Stephanie expresses, "I believe that we women can play a key role in obtaining peace." In 2004, BWPD, in cooperation with the Dutch-based organization Multicultural Women Peacemakers, initiated an international delegation of women to Burundi. Four Burundian refugee women and four women from various backgrounds visited Burundi for ten days. The mission's theme was 'women and political participation,' and the aim was to build future partnerships for peace and development. The delegation attracted much media attention. The international mission was unprecedented and came to symbolize solidarity. A public discussion on women's roles in society and politics followed with supported by women's groups, whose number had been growing in recent years. During a capacity building workshop with women from various sectors and classes, participants brainstormed common goals and strategies to enhance women's participation in the political process as well as the nomination and election of women in the upcoming elections. Cooperation towards this end continued after the workshop. Stephanie was elated: "The success was overwhelming; in fact all the women who were supported by the groups were elected. It was a unique experience." BWPD received a prize for this project from COS, the Centre for Development Cooperation in the Netherlands. Oxfam Novib, who had financed the project, partnered in a follow-up project. Together with the local partners, Association des Jeunes Orphelins du Burundi (AJOB) and Groupement des Femmes pour la Ravalorisation des Valeurs Ethiques (GROFERE), ten women were chosen to be trainers on conflict resolution and cooperation, to enhance social cohesion and peace between the different communities in Kirundo, Northern Burundi. This province bordering Rwanda continues to suffer from the consequences of the genocide; animosity between the different ethnic groups is still prevalent. Stephanie recalls, "It was not easy in the beginning. Obviously, there was much pain. Half of the women were Hutus and half of them were Tutsis. The women were traumatized by the war. At first there was tenseness. The aims of the five-day training were to work through the pain and discover our commonalities; after all, we have to live together. We cried so much, but by the end of the training it was as if the women had recovered from a long illness. Before they did not talk to each other, now they say: 'It is us who give life, it is us who need to protect it.'"

The women now assist other women with organizing self-help groups. One municipality has started to consult them weekly on community affairs. The project was a pilot project with the aim to conduct the same training >>

in seven other municipalities. Meanwhile, BWPD and her donor partners are looking into establishing micro-finance schemes to assist the women in creating income-generating activities.

Another project BWPD is engaged in concerns a youth project linking schools and youth in the Netherlands and Burundi.

In the Netherlands, the work is done by a handful of women who also conduct empowerment activities for Burundian women in the Netherlands. All work is conducted on a voluntary basis.

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Building partnerships

In the majority of cases, migrants had met with potential partners in the countries of origin to discuss future plans. Some ideas and partnerships came about rather spontaneously as in the example of Abdellah Tallal of Aknarij mentioned above. Meeting each other at the annual cultural festival, local organizations and migrants had a chance to meet and ideas evolved which later turned into new projects. Some migrants knew their partners from before they left the country of origin; others did not. These women tried to go back at least once a year once the initiatives had begun.

Fadumo Alin of Doses of Hope went to Somaliland to see how she could become actively involved:

I knew I wanted to do something. So I went there to hear from them. What they need is different from what I may think they need; it's like oranges and apples. We went to several places. By talking to many women we understood that what they needed most was some cash to rebuild their lives, make a living by creating income-generating activities. Some women clearly wanted to become active; we fell in love with them. We had no idea how it would evolve, but we were willing to try. Initially there were three of them, later they were with five. They did the groundwork, talked to many women, listened to their priorities and then wrote a proposal. They were highly educated; they understood what was needed. That made it easier.

Talented and experienced people were found rather easily in Somaliland, but what was lacking in this post-conflict area were the means and the infrastructure. While the women in Somaliland started Doses of Hope Somaliland, Doses of Hope in the Netherlands started to look for funding. Now more than 4500 women have been assisted through micro-credit schemes (see also Box 3).¹¹ While in some instances new organizations were founded, as in the case of Doses of Hope, many respondents worked with existing organizations.¹² Florence Andrews from Sudan explains,

We have co-initiated an HIV/AIDS project in Yei, Sudan, which is implemented by our local partner Hope Education Trust-Africa (HETA). They are based in neighbouring Uganda. Uganda has a very open approach to combating AIDS. HETA has been involved in HIV/AIDS education and awareness raising since long ago and is very experienced. HETA does the work. Sost (her organization) assisted in drawing a plan and gathering the funds.

A crucial point made by virtually all respondents is the basis of equality and reciprocity between them and their partners in the country of origin. It is regarded the

premise of their work.¹³ Fenna Ulricki of the Moroccan women's association in the Netherlands (MVVN):

The women's groups with which we work in North Morocco have vision and knowledge, they don't need analyses; what they need are some means. With that we try to assist. We learn from one another; it is a partnership based on equality.

The focus of their organizations, many respondents emphasized, is on combining talents and resources across transnational axes.

Mulugeta Asmellash from the Ethiopian migrant organization (Dir) ascertains:

Cooperation and networking are key. One should not want to reinvent the wheel. Our approach is partnership. We don't believe in donor-receiver relationships. We want to involve everybody – discuss, listen and design a project together so that it is commonly owned. Only if everyone feels that they are part of it, it can unfold and become successful.

Equal partnership and reciprocity are based on the premise that partners are equally committed to invest their energy, talents and networks to make the initiatives work.¹⁴ Sylvia Ortega-van den Berg from the Bolivian migrant organization Ayni affirms the importance of reciprocity in their approach:

While looking for partners, enthusiasm and commitment were certainly important aspects. We do things voluntarily; we don't have bags full of money and neither do we want to create such dependencies. The problem with many development aid NGOs is that they have a lot of money to spend, so the partners also think about money. We arrive with a different mindset and different conditions. We say we can only do something if you do something too. That way the partnerships are built on equality, together we strive towards the sustainability of the projects; we have to. Corruption cannot arise so easily. Our partners are the ones who took it on and made it work.

Mainstream development aid was often criticized for not being effective, being expensive and even having 'failed'. According to the Somali scholar Mohamoud (2004), the limited results of official development aid over the past 40 years demand new, innovative ways of development cooperation, and new partnerships are required.

According to many respondents, their strength in building successful partnerships and hence projects, lies in their embodiment of two cultures. Their familiarity with and the knowledge of the local culture, structures and conditions of the country of origin, in combination with their current residence in the Netherlands, including knowing one's way around and being in a position to gather necessary funds as well as the human resources, were felt to be key to the success of their partnerships, as explained below. Mulugeta Asmellash (Dir):

We have both cultures united in us. It is easy for us to move in both environments. Easier than for, say, Dutch development workers in Ethiopia.

Fatumo Farah, from the Somali organization Hirda (see also Box 2):

If you are from the country, you know how to approach people. You know how to talk to them, for white people who are not familiar with the culture that can be harder; also to see whether a project is being well implemen-

ted or not. They (the Somalis) know they cannot mess with us; we don't have much money from which people can gain without doing anything in return. We won't accept non-commitment. For us that is easier. You know, we have been living in the Netherlands for a while now; we have become Dutch too. Here, we had to deal with so many situations. A simple example: Here, we have to paint the rooms in our houses as no one is going to do that for us. So now we do. If a partner in Somalia says, 'Oh, there are some repairs to be done here or there around the school, someone should come and do it', if it is minor, we say, 'Why don't you try and do it yourself?' All these factors combined resulted in some of our projects, like the school project, to come about quickly and very effectively. That is why UNICEF has asked our assistance to set up schools in other regions in Somalia as well.

In the eyes of the respondents, their social capital¹⁵, shaped by their dual embeddedness and in combination with personal human resources, i.e., education, work experience etc., can potentially make them important catalysts for development and social change in countries of origin. Ghorashi (2005) in this respect refers in her work on the Iranian diaspora, to the 'hinge function' migrants engaged in transnational activities feel they have, connecting communities in both countries. Or in the words of Fenna Ulrichki of the Moroccan organization MVMN: "For us it is not theory, nor an idea – it is the context in which we were brought up. (...) We desire to build bridges between the different communities."

To briefly summarize how migrant women and men interviewed defined their diaspora activities and their own role in it, it indeed could be formulated as just that – being a bridge between partners 'here' and 'there'.

Box 2

Hirda, Himilo Relief and Development Association

A few Somali intellectuals and refugees who had visited Somalia wanted to do something for the redevelopment of their country. They founded Hirda in 1998. They started off by raising money from within their own community in the Netherlands; 300 people paid a monthly fee of 5. A school was set up in cooperation with local partners and teachers. Since there is no government, there is no official educational system. To expand their activities, Hirda applied for funding with Oxfam Novib. They supported the initiative and became the first of several partners. Currently, there are nine schools, including secondary schools, and a carpentry school in Abudwak and Bardera. Recently, Hirda started to assist UNICEF with their request, setting up schools in other regions as well. In Somalia, Hirda has around 120 paid employees, including teachers, doctors, janitors and campaigners; the work in the office in the Netherlands is carried out by a few highly committed Somalis on a voluntary basis. Fatumo Farah, a young Somali woman who studied business in the Netherlands and who holds a job in this field, is one of the leading people within Hirda in the Netherlands. Amongst others, she coordinates the women's projects. Currently, Hirda is training more women to become teachers as to help eliminate the gender imbalance among the teachers. An empowerment centre was also started two years ago and provides a

space for women to get together. Various courses and health and empowerment trainings are conducted in which women are trained to negotiate and organize themselves. In 2004/5 a project against female genital mutilation (FGM) was carried out.

Fatumo: "Our partners in Somalia, the teachers and trainers, asked for it (the empowerment centre) as they witnessed the problems of their female pupils. We said, 'Okay, you write a proposal and we will try to find the money.'"

About 95% of all women in Somalia are circumcized; openly opposing genital mutilation is a taboo. Hirda aims to raise awareness on this topic, point out the dangers and offer alternatives. The project was carried out in three different regions: Gedo, Galguduud and Lower Jubba. Workshops were conducted with women organizations, traditional and religious (male) leaders, as well as traditional midwives. Including leaders proved to be a successful method; they supported the campaign and assisted in obtaining the communities' attention. The (religious) leaders explained that FGM is not an Islamic practice. During the workshops, ways were discussed as to how one would bring a halt to the practice. Participants stated that for the first time, women talked publicly about their pain and problems due to circumcision; it deeply moved the groups.

The results of the project were stronger than initially expected, awareness was widely raised and commitment to stop this practice was large. One of the main recommendations that came from the participants of the workshop was to retrain the circumcisers. Talking alone was not enough. As Fatumo says, "We learned that the women who conduct the mutilations needed to be included in the project. They were the ones resisting the campaign, as they feared their jobs and influence would cease to exist." A follow-up project is now being implemented in which prominent women who conduct genital mutilation participate in a retraining course to become midwives and health assistants. The condition is that the course will be completed and that they stop the practice of circumcision. Local leaders again support this project. After the course Hirda will employ some of the women, while UNICEF who is actively involved in healthcare in the region has offered possibilities to immediately hire women as well. For the first FGM project, Hirda obtained 12.000 Euro from Hivos, a Dutch development NGO, and raised an additional 2.519 Euro from within their own community. They also won a prize for the project, granted by Dutch development NGOs, for inspiring migrant development projects, for which they received 7.500 Euro for the follow-up project. Hivos covered the additional costs of 10.000 for the follow-up project.

The example of Hirda shows how a small initiative can become an impressive force in development. Drawing on their own resources and social capital, and working closely together with local partners while obtaining some assistance from international partners (NGOs, UNICEF) much has been accomplished with relatively small financial means. For more information and additional projects by Hirda see: <http://www.hirda.org/> <<

Obtaining funds and resources

In fundraising, one can differentiate between gathering money through fundraising with more formal requirements, such as grants from private or public funds versus from within one's own ranks or the general public, such as by organizing various events.

Public and private funds

The majority of the initiatives presented in this study were found to have received private funding to some extent, predominantly from Dutch development agencies. This is not necessarily a representative reflection of migrant initiatives at large; many (small) initiatives may continue to rely entirely on private funding. It appears that a large percentage of migrant organizations in the Netherlands finance part of their transnational initiatives with grants received from development agencies and foundations. This trend is closely related to Dutch development policies, which in recent years have actively stimulated citizen's access to government funding for private development initiatives. Although this was part of a general policy shift to lower the threshold between the professionals in development and Dutch civil society as a whole, migrants have benefited as well; their access to development funding has increased (de Haas, 2006:98).

The Netherlands currently spends a fixed budget of 0,8% of Gross National Product on development. In 2003, this amounted to about 3,8 billion. Whereas the bulk of the money is spent bi- and multilaterally, about 11% of the budget is allocated to six development agencies, who receive about 500 million a year (NCDO, 2006). Within the parameters set by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs¹⁶, these agencies are rather independent in the allocation of the funds. 'Building partnerships' has increasingly become a key concept in Dutch policies for development cooperation. One group of potential partners are citizens; their involvement in development activities is actively stimulated. The aim is dual: increasing public support for development cooperation and increasing access to funding of private initiatives (Minbuza, 2006). In 2003, the main development agencies, Oxfam Novib, Cordaid, ICCO, Hivos, Plan Nederland and NCDO, the National Commission for International Cooperation and Sustainable Development, have jointly initiated the digital office of Linkis via which potential applicants can access the organizations' respective front offices. Linkis aims to lower the threshold for private initiatives and engagement by giving advice and support in developing projects and raising funds. The projects each receive a maximum of 50.000 Euro. Over a period of three years, more than 1.500 small-scale projects have been financed, including migrant organizations. While it had not been a specific governmental aim to improve migrants' engagement in development, they have benefited. Moreover, several development agencies do have policies which specifically target the involvement of migrants and migrant organizations in development cooperation (de Haas, 2006:45).

The amounts which migrant initiatives portrayed in this study received from development agencies generally ranged from a few thousand to 15.000 Euro per project. As

can be seen from the project directory at the Linkis website, transnational initiatives are seldom sponsored with more than 10.000 Euro per project.

Apart from development agencies, some organizations also received funding from foundations, such as the Rabo Bank Foundation. Sylvia van den Berg-Ortega, whose organization Ayni co-initiated the ICT project at schools in Bolivia as described earlier, received funding from The Hague based International Institute for Communication and Development (IICD), which aims to enhance ICT in developing countries. Some luck was involved, as they happened to be looking for a partner in Latin America when she contacted them. Their budget was close to 200.000 USD.

Some organizations such as Hirda and Doses of Hope, working in Somalia and Somaliland respectively, also receive funding from international organizations such as UNHCR, UNDP and Care International.

Fundraising from within one's own community

The interviews revealed that many initiatives start by raising money from within their own community and from friends. Also after having successfully applied for funding elsewhere, most continue to gather funds, from one's own ranks – partly because this often is a condition set by funding agencies.¹⁷ Some have members who commit to monthly donations, which is how the Somali organization Hirda started out (see Box 2). Other means of raising money include organising cultural events, fairs and sport activities at schools or collecting in churches and asking friends, colleagues and companies to contribute. Leila Rispens Noel, originally from the Philippines, has been actively engaged in diaspora activities for many years. She is currently working for the Dutch development agency Oxfam Novib and actively supports migrant initiatives in the Netherlands – both, professionally and privately/voluntarily. Meeting Mexican migrants from the region of Zacatecas,¹⁸ Leila was inspired to form her own 'hometown association'. Through the Internet, she became connected with other Filipinos that had left their common hometown, Bansalan and are scattered over the world. Within a few months, her virtual home association had fifty-five active members and had raised almost 2500. So far, two initial projects have evolved, the renovation of a sports building at the local school and primary school enrolment for fifty children whose parents cannot afford the fees.¹⁹

Other resources

Finally, although gathering financial means is often a key step for these initiatives viability, it is not the only way of forming new initiatives. In other words, resourcefulness can take on a variety of forms. The interior of Buna Bet, the Amsterdam café, 'Ethiopian coffee for a change,' for example, was designed by a well-known design bureau, which did so for free. Likewise, the building for the coffee roasting house in Addis Ababa and the women's accommodation were made with bricks, which were donated. Similarly, the library, which came about through Aknarij's

cooperation with migrants in France and local partners in the Dades Valley in Southern Morocco, received a donation of 16.000 books from a Paris library. Another interesting example are the alliances built by Surinamese migrants between hospitals in the Netherlands and Suriname; when the former obtains new medical equipment, the old equipment, which although not the latest model, is still operational, will go to Surinamese hospitals (personal communication, Machtild Cairo).

The respondents in this study have been relatively successful in obtaining funds. While some have successfully received large grants, it should be noted that generally the grants are relatively modest, which makes their effective allocation all the more pertinent. The relative success in fundraising seems to be due to a combination of viable and innovative plans and talented people. Three of the respondents had longstanding professional experience in migrant or development organizations, which is a definite advantage in fundraising.²⁰ Others have had to find their own way, which often takes a long time and is tedious. Although the work is largely conducted by volunteers,²¹ a certain professionalization seems to be a premise for success.

Obstacles and tension

The majority of the initiatives presented in this study were found to have received private funding to some extent, predominantly from Dutch development agencies. This is not necessarily a representative reflection of migrant initiatives at large; many (small) initiatives continue to rely entirely on private funding. Aiming to obtain funds from development agencies, however, appears to be an increasingly salient characteristic of diaspora initiatives in the Netherlands. A closer look seems to be called for.

Success is not guaranteed, with limitations found both on the end of the organizations and also in the system or bureaucracy involved. Major hurdles had to be overcome to obtain funds as well as to receive recognition as equal and knowledgeable partners in development.

A criticism regularly heard from migrants at debates and conferences on the issue, is that obtaining funding can be arduous; not all migrants are experienced in writing funding applications, conditions can be rigid and the attitude of contact persons at development agencies are sometimes perceived to be rather condescending. Conditions to receive funding from any of the Linkis partners, apart from having a viable plan, include having a (registered) organizational base in the Netherlands²², raising money oneself, creating support for the project among the wider public in the Netherlands, and closely cooperating with registered partner organizations in the receiving countries.

Those who want to apply for funding to set up a transnational initiative and who desire counsel in developing a viable plan and project proposal can go to the Centre for Development Corporation (COS). This service is free. COS aims to involve citizens in international solidarity and development cooperation and has 15 regional centres throughout the country. Doris Alfafara from the

Philippines who works at COS Utrecht, states that about 105 citizens came for advice in 2005, of which 60–70% were migrants. Forty eventually submitted an application and twenty-one were approved. Some migrants had good experiences, such as Stephanie Mbanzondore from Burundi. She reckoned that without the help of COS Rijnmond, her organization would not have come about. Another respondent found the COS in her city, Den Haag, to be unhelpful. According to Radj Bhondoe, originally from Suriname and director of the Hindu migrant organization Seva Network Foundation, the particular situation of migrants is not always understood at COS offices. Bhondoe explains, “COS, apart from some exceptions, is like most development agencies, ‘too white’, and that has its consequences for migrants.” To fill the perceived gap in assistance for migrants, Seva, gives advice free-of-charge and conducts trainings in developing viable project proposals for migrant organizations from all backgrounds.

Several respondents had not yet managed to receive funding for initiatives they had been working on. As the war in Southern Sudan seemed to come to an end, Florence Andrews visited the area. The women she met had many ideas on income generating activities. There, however, is no infrastructure yet. Florence Andrews recalls,

Finding an established partner in a war-torn country is not easy. Yet a partner is needed logistically and in order to obtain funding from donors, for whom the latter is a prerequisite. It is hard to explain that to the development agencies.

Fadumo Alin from Doses of Hope also found it difficult to find support for their projects in a war-torn country:

It took about two to three years before they listened to us. They first wanted to see proof. In a way, I understand it, but it is a bit like a vicious cycle. Since there is no well functioning government and infrastructure in Somaliland, donors don't want to get involved so easily. It is like that for initiatives in post-conflict areas. Sometimes it seems they [i.e., development agencies/funders] expect that everything is easy, which is a bit of an irony, as these areas especially are in need.

Some do not have the resources to make trips and confer with potential partners in person or to answer all questions of funders. The Internet is often not available and talking over the phone is expensive. Safiya Axmed Cumar has co-initiated a micro-finance project in a village in Somalia (see Box 3). She and her partner predominantly communicate via fax. Safiya:

“We have applied for funding for a mother and childcare programme in the village. It was rejected. They said, ‘You are new to us.’ They wanted to know a lot of things, which I cannot answer without going there.”

The idea was developed three years ago and when I met her in February 2006, Safiya had a trip planned. Valuable partnerships with donors have been built; however, relationships between migrant organizations and development agencies do not always come about easily. Migrants have repeatedly criticized the traditional development players for not taking them seriously as partners in development (cf. Mohanoud, 2004). Stephanie Mbanzondore from Burundi said,

In the beginning it was hard to be heard by the development NGOs. One could feel them to be sceptical. They did not trust us. They believed we lacked the capacity to do so. If someone has that view it is not easy to convince him. You have to try hard.

Some people working at development agencies have repeatedly stated that development is a 'profession' to be carried out by 'experts'²³ (cf. NCDO, 2005: 11). Hein de Haas (2006:56), in his study on governmental and development agencies' support to diaspora initiatives for development, cites an interviewee working for a development agency in the Netherlands, who remarks: "(...) This is often raised in debates by white organizations, but in the perspective of what migrants are already doing (in development) and in the perspective of their strengths this is somehow a non-debate."

Another of his interviewees, also a development professional, states, "In some sense, we create our own competitors in the development field, and the ultimate goal is that they make us superfluous" (de Haas 2006:57). Respondents in this study repeatedly referred to this tension and feelings of bitterness it evokes. As one respondent expressed,

You see, the big development agencies have their own people in the country, white people — development is their job. There is some tension, if the agency gives too much attention to native people's expertise than they will become superfluous. That is one reason they always keep some distance. You go there, you are there and you are heard, but not too much. That is the tension. They call themselves 'professionals' who know more than us. I tell you, how can they be more knowledgeable than people from the country itself?! Development is an industry in itself. Recently there was a conference on 40 years of development aid in Africa, the result was found to be low; there is only more poverty. As you know, development agencies often spend € 100.000 or more on a project with little result. We spent € 10.000 and the results can be witnessed.

However, it was also mentioned that once one receives support, and it is seen that one has qualities that lead to results, things become much easier and relationships become more sustainable. It needs to be acknowledged however, that over the past year(s) a lot of effort has been made by both development agencies and migrant organizations to improve the relationship. Many workshops and debates have been organized. While awareness has risen that (some) migrant organizations are making a difference, the tone of the debate seems to be changing (cf. NCDO, 2005:21).

Some notes of critique

As mentioned earlier it was beyond the scope of this study to interview partners in countries of origin, let alone visit sites. As De Haas (2006:56) has noted, so far, no external evaluations of development projects initiated by migrant organizations are available to the public. This fact makes it difficult to judge the effectiveness, lessons learned, as well as to critically assess the extent of the added value diaspora initiatives have. Whereas many projects presented in this study have been positively evaluated by the donors and their added-value is seen as a 'fact', not all projects initiated by migrants are automatically successful, i.e., meeting the original goals and/or bringing about sustainable social change, more generally.

The critique, which has been raised regarding migrant organizations and their transnational initiatives, includes three different areas: fund-raising and ownership of initiatives; content and impact of initiatives; and cooperation with (potential) partners 'here' and 'there'.

Leila Rispens-Noel, Corazon Dee and Doris Alfara, all from the Philippines, feel that migrants in the Netherlands look too quickly for funding from development corporations without trying to gather funds themselves first. This is considered an unfortunate side effect of the relative availability of funds: "It can make migrants lazy."

Filipino migrants often draw on money raised among themselves. The organization, Damayan, that started in the 1980s and in which Doris Alfara is engaged is completely self-reliant.²⁴ It is argued to serve a dual purpose: one owns the project and one creates a strong organizational base, which is seen as an important premise for successful transnational initiatives. According to Doris Alfara, it is about ownership; collective activities create communities and collective responsibility. These in turn lead to more sustainable and empowering results. Doris also works at COS Utrecht, where she advises migrants who want to apply for funding. She relates that many migrants who come for advice have not thought through their plans well: "Some come with one sentence concepts." They have no organization and or have only one contact person in the country, which is not workable, she says. Leila Rispen-Noel from the Philippines, privately engaging in transnational initiatives for 25 years and working at Novib Oxfam, makes a similar point. Migrants, women and men alike, sometimes do not realize what the actual implementation of their ideas would entail. She gives the example of micro-finance in which many want to engage nowadays, not realizing that one also needs to conduct financial literacy trainings and find partners familiar with finance.

Obviously migrant initiatives are not automatically 'pitfall-proof'; pitfalls witnessed among 'general' aid initiatives can be found among migrant initiatives as well. When projects have not been thought through, they may fail in the process. For example, goods may have been gathered, but collecting the money for shipment has been forgotten (Vuijsje, 2004). In another example, money was raised by a migrant group for an ambulance, but finding a driver and the maintenance costs and gas were neglected (Bieckmann & Muskens, 2004). Valentina Mazzucuto, from the University of Amsterdam, is sceptical about the nature and impact of development projects initiated by migrants. In her study²⁵ amongst migrants and their families in Ghana, she came across a few successful initiatives, but felt there were more failed projects. Schools, which were built but remained empty because there were no teachers; a village computer lab had no air conditioning system and the computers were damaged. Meanwhile, she says, the name of the person who donated it is painted in big letters on the door. Prestige can be an important motivator. Initiators of these projects, she found, often do not listen to what local people feel they need (personal communication May, 2006).

A point of critique regularly raised from the side of donors as well as migrants is fragmentation. Although, in recent years a clear increase can be witnessed in collaborations and platforms by migrant organizations focussing on the same region, factions among migrants from some countries of origin remain (cf. Bieckmann & Muskens, 2004; NCDO, 2005).

Box 3

Micro-finance for income generating activities for women

People without many resources can rarely access financial services through the formal financial sector. Many are dependent on informal lending which generally includes exorbitant interest rates. It was found that many migrants are involved in micro-finance projects; they are found to be effective in assisting women to improve their economic as well as social position.

Fadumo Alin of Doses of Hope had to flee her country during the civil war in the 1990s. She desired to do something for the benefit of those left behind. She went back to Somaliland to meet up with women and see how she could be of assistance.

Fadumo: "You have to see first, listen to them and assess their needs. Basically what they were saying is that 'We have skills. We have talents. We have done things before the war. We can do it now, but we need some money to get going.'"

The request came from the women; they desired to set up income generating activities to sustain their families but in this post-conflict area there was no access to loans. Five women joined together and became the local partner; they talked to other women and listened to their priorities. Meanwhile, Fadumo and her friends in the Netherlands looked for funding. This took quite a while; as donors and development organizations felt it was risky to invest in a post-war area. Fadumo persisted and eventually the Rabo Bank Foundation and Mama Cash became their first partners. "For the programme," Fadumo explains, "we have developed a plan that fits the culture. The women participated in the design. We explained the concept and they gave us ideas of how it could be doable for them; how it fit with their lives and situations. You see, you cannot simply take the design of how it, for example, is done in the Philippines and implement it here. One thing refugees struggle with is the loss of confidence. So what we do besides financial trainings, we gear the training towards assisting them to regain their confidence, so that they know that they can do it, that it is possible. Having lost so much there is a lot of insecurity. We are trying to crack that feeling." The micro-finance scheme started with 150 women in 1999 and has benefited more than 4500 people in total. After some time, when they have made their own savings, the women graduate from the scheme. They can be on their own and a new group of women can be taken on. The programme is almost self-sustaining now and aims to be entirely so in a year or two. The outstanding capital is approximately 200.000 USD. >>

Not all micro-finance schemes are this large. Safiya Cumar of the Buhodle women and development society from Somalia together with a teacher in Somalia who moved to a village during to the war, have created a micro-finance project for village women. Safiya: "There is a saying that says: 'If you change a woman, you change a village.' In Buhodle this can be witnessed." Seventy-five women received micro-finance loans and set up little shops, poultry or goat farms and tailoring businesses. The programme includes a savings funds to sent children to school. Safiya: "In a village of 10.000 people, the difference is felt. The women are respected in the community. I receive cassettes from women telling me how their lives have changed. It is very moving."

Leila Rispen Noel works at Oxfam Novib and is a Filipino migrant who has been closely involved in a micro-finance initiative that has been running for thirteen years in her home area and has benefited about 800 women. She says that it is not that simple to set up micro-finance schemes. "At Oxfam Novib we receive a lot of grants of organizations who want to engage in micro-finance. Not everybody realizes that it involves a lot work and expertise." Women engaging in micro-finance need training in financial literacy and assistance in developing their business plans. Experienced trainers in this area are required, which not everyone realizes, Leila says. Oxfam Novib currently finances and co-conducts a project with Tiye, (Platform of the National Organizations of Black, Migrant and Refugee Women in the Netherlands) and local partners, focussing on a 'train-the-trainers trajectory and the realization of micro-finance schemes. This pilot project will run in seven countries, including Suriname, Ethiopia, Ecuador, Turkey and Somalia.

Micro-finance does not only concern loans, as Corazon Dee from Ercmove explains, it also entails saving schemes and alternative investment. Ercmove assists migrant organizations by sharing information and conducting workshops on micro finance. Together with MilamDek Foundation in the Philippines they started a project in which they stimulate Filipino migrants in the Netherlands to submit their savings to a rural private bank in the Philippines for at least 5 years. While they obtain interest and the money remains theirs, the bank can utilize it for micro-investments in the community, for example in housing for low income families, as done by Ercmoves' partner, the Xavier Punla Rural Bank.

While increased earnings are not automatic, studies have shown that reliable sources of credit provide a fundamental basis for planning and expanding business activities, which improve women's financial position as well as status within the family and the community (NPM, 2006). <<

From here to where?

As the research has shown, many initiatives have an ad hoc character, entailing for example, a one time fund-raising event following a natural disaster in the country of origin. Other initiatives evolve into long-term projects. All organizations are engaged in follow-up or new initiatives. As projects evolve, new initiatives spin-off as the

examples portrayed in Box 1 and 2 clearly show. Ideas abound, but funding remains an issue. Fatumo Farah from Hirda says,

We indeed are successful and recognized for what we do by the Dutch and international aid organizations. However as we grow, the workload is growing as well. We are trying to find funding for one full-time position in our office here; the workload is becoming too large. We all have our regular jobs as well.

Fadumo Alin from Doses of Hope makes a similar remark. Funding is an ongoing issue. As to guarantee the continuity for their 20+ employees in Somaliland, they are now looking for ways to create an income generating activity, a business, so that they can be more self-sustaining and salaries are guaranteed. Apart from striving for self-sufficiency, alternative funding for new projects may be necessary. The funds which development agencies allocate via Linkis are comparatively small while the number of applicants is increasing (de Haas, 2006:55).

As seen in this study, without having consciously intended to enlarge migrants input in development, Dutch development policies have created an environment which is relatively conducive for migrant initiatives. Despite some criticism, the availability of external funding has positively impacted the migrants' initiatives discussed in this study. The question whether these initiatives would also have come about if migrants had ended up not receiving these grants, or living in other countries, is a hypothetical one. Stephanie Mbanzendoro from Burundi states,

Wherever I would have gone, I would have tried the same thing. When one has a vision, an idea, one can make it work, no matter what. I truly believe this.

I was impressed by the interviewee's passion, determination, respect and hard work. Several were single mothers living off minimum wages, raising children while working very long hours for their diaspora projects. Others have regular jobs while conducting diaspora activities on the side, which often are part-time jobs in themselves.

In platforms such as MIND (Migrant Women Initiatives in the Netherlands for Development) women from various backgrounds increasingly support each other. Experienced migrant women inspire and assist others who are in the process of setting up migrant initiatives.

Although in recent years migrant initiatives are increasingly being discussed, in most studies of migration and development the gender dimension is largely ignored (de Haas, 2006:5), as are women's initiatives. This study shows that women are actively engaged in transnational initiatives and that they do make a difference. A gender perspective, i.e., achieving societies in which women and men are equally valued and have equal chances, is often taken on, including by mixed migrant organizations. As to better understand migrant organizations and the impact of their transnational initiatives, more theoretical and practical research is needed, which should include a gender perspective (cf. Orozco, 2000; de Haas, 2006). Clearly much is taking place. In the words of Fadumo Alin of Doses of Hope, "We are learning everyday. A lot is happening. We are moving in the right direction."

¹⁾ The Dutch Bureau of Statistics as well as policy formulations are based on a definition of immigrants, in which a distinction is made between Western and non-Western immigrants, as well as the first and second generation based on the place of birth of the parents. Thus, if one is born in the Netherlands but one of the parents is born in say Morocco or Suriname, one is still considered a migrant. To statistically distinguish this group within the population, the term 'allochtonen' was introduced versus 'natives' who are referred to as 'autochtonen'. Choosing to refer to people with at least one foreign parent, as 'allochtoon' is somewhat random and not entirely unproblematic. Whereas the term actually also refers to Western migrants, it has become heavily loaded and widely misused in public debates and the media as a synonym for unwanted people of non-Western foreign descent, creating a rift between what are considered 'them' versus 'us'.

²⁾ The largest groups being Indonesian/ Euro-Indonesian, who are statistically and in policy formulations counted as 'Western' due to colonial ties and their socio-cultural background, Germans and Belgians.

³⁾ Estimates of the number of undocumented immigrants in the Netherlands vary widely, ranging from several ten thousands to 150.000.

⁴⁾ In 2000, 50% of all non-Western immigrants held employment compared to 58% and 65% for Western immigrants and Dutch respectively. Unemployment rates among non-Western immigrants in 2004 were 16% compared to 5.2% among native Dutch. Second generation immigrants have higher employment rates than the first generation which is due to their higher educational levels, although they lag behind their native Dutch peers (Garssen, Nicolaas & Sprangers, 2005).

⁵⁾ A study by the University of Amsterdam as cited in NCDO (2005:20) found that approximately 3000 migrant organizations in the Netherlands are engaged in transnational initiatives in Suriname.

⁶⁾ Whereas I tried to include initiatives from outside the circle of migrant organizations, which partly draw on funding from agencies and foundations, it proved difficult to locate them and get in touch with key persons. In this regard, this experience is similar to the situation faced by the researchers of the other country reports in this volume.

⁷⁾ The interviews on average took 1,5 to 2,5 hours.

⁸⁾ The number of migrant organizations in the Netherlands varies depending on the size and history of the immigrant group. There are an estimated 1.125 Turkish organizations, 880 Surinamese and 720 Berber organizations, i.e. from Morocco, in the Netherlands. Some of the more recently arrived communities such as the Somalis and the Congolese have more organizations, relatively speaking. The organizations generally have particular areas of interest or focus points, such as religion, youth, education, elderly people and/or women. Of all Moroccan, Turkish and Surinamese organizations about 5% are women's organizations (van Heelsum, 2004).

⁹⁾ The quotes by Fenna Ulrichki are from a public event organised by Mama Cash concerning 'She Gives Back' on November 29th, 2005 in Felix Meritis, Amsterdam.

¹⁰⁾ Integration here, is not defined in the reductionist and arguably naive way it nowadays often is referred to, i.e. the need to entirely give up one's culture and ties before one can become a full Dutch citizen, fully taking part in Dutch society, but is based on parameters such as speaking the language, abiding by laws, engaging in public life, which are not regarded as being in conflict with one's native culture and related activities as well.

¹¹ The partners also founded a rehabilitation centre for disabled and handicapped people, providing prostheses, mostly to people who have lost limbs due to mines, and giving physiotherapy and rehabilitation courses.

¹² Seven respondents worked primarily with existing organizations, four with new organizations, and three with both types.

¹³ Several respondents hence could not identify with Mama Cash's project name 'She Gives Back', neither did they feel comfortable with being called philanthropist – the latter to many implied a one-way and top-down connotation.

¹⁴ It should be noted, that while the respondents carried out the work voluntarily, they generally ensured that the partners in the countries of origin were reimbursed/ paid a salary, as they were dependent on an income for their living.

¹⁵ Social capital can be defined as the social resources, which emanate from a person's personal ties that enable him or her to achieve a desired goal (Lin: 1999:34).

¹⁶ By the Directorate General for International Cooperation, DGIS

¹⁷ Some funds will double or triple the money raised internally.

¹⁸ In 2005, a group of Dutch migrants went to Zacatecas to visit the initiatives of The Federacion de Clubes Zacatecanos del Sur de California Zacatecan. This is a well-known example of migrant initiatives; the money the migrants gather from within their community is doubled or tripled by local Mexican authorities.

¹⁹ An example of a migrant initiative, which entirely bases its activities on funds gathered privately, is the foundation Wiesje, initiated by the Dutch actress/singer Gerda Havertong, who is of Surinamese descent. Wiesje is run by ten volunteers focusing on setting up sustainable care-taking for people with Alzheimer in Suriname. The main source of fundraising is the organization of an annual 'charity brunch' at which guests are served a Surinamese meal with live entertainment. At this evening, a lottery and an auction in which goods that have been donated are being sold are also held. One also regularly conducts lectures for which one obtains a fee. Additionally, networking, especially with prominent members of the Surinamese community, takes a prominent role. Finally, the fact that Gerda Havertong is a well-known actress/singer is beneficial (Egelie, 2006:55).

²⁰ Often, however, it is also the other way around: because of their commitment, hard work and gained experiences migrants have created successful diaspora activities, which for some also led to paid positions in general development organizations.

²¹ Funds generally do not pay for salaries in the Netherlands. However three respondents had paid positions within their migrant organizations. The Ethiopian organization Dir obtained funding for staff, mainly due to a large-scale employment creation project they conduct in the Netherlands. Seva Network foundation, as mentioned earlier, the only migrant organization which received a large grant from the government to conduct development projects has several paid employees in the Netherlands. Fadumo Alin of Doses of Hope used to receive social security. Den Helder, the town she lives in, has converted this into a 'salary' for her work for Doses of Hope.

²² Having one's organization registered involves costs, which range between 400-500 Euro, for which some borrow money.

²³ Statement repeatedly made by someone working at a leading development agency during a conference on migrants and development. The statement created much outrage by attending migrants engaged in transnational development initiatives.

²⁴ Damayan sponsors the education of some indigenous children in the Philippines and has developed partnerships between schools here and there. Financial means are raised via memberships, and activities organised with the partner schools in the Netherlands such as annual fares; at a recent sponsor run 6000 Euro were raised.

²⁵ For more information on her project, Ghana TransNet, please see <http://www2.fmg.uva.nl/ghanatransnet>

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ANNEX A

Table 1 > Documented population of non-Western descent in 2004 – Twenty largest immigrant groups based on their country of origin

Country of origin	Population in the Netherlands	First generation		Second generation	
		Female	Male	Female	Male
Non-Western Total	1.668.000	498.000	524.000	317.000	330.000
Turkey	352.000	93.000	102.000	76.000	81.000
Suriname	325.000	102.000	86.000	68.000	70.000
Morocco	306.000	77.000	90.000	69.000	71.000
D. Antilles and Aruba	131.000	43.000	41.000	23.000	24.000
Iraq	43.000	14.000	22.000	3.000	4.000
China	42.000	16.000	14.000	6.000	6.000
Afghanistan	36.000	14.000	18.000	2.000	2.000
Iran	28.000	10.000	14.000	2.000	2.000
Somalia	25.000	8.000	10.000	4.000	4.000
Cape Verde	20.000	6.000	6.000	4.000	4.000
Hong Kong	18.000	5.000	5.000	4.000	4.000
Pakistan	18.000	4.000	7.000	3.000	4.000
Vietnam	18.000	6.000	6.000	3.000	3.000
Ghana	18.000	6.000	6.000	3.000	3.000
Egypt	18.000	3.000	8.000	4.000	4.000
India	13.000	4.000	5.000	2.000	2.000
Brazil	12.000	5.000	2.000	2.000	2.000
Ethiopia	10.000	3.000	4.000	1.000	2.000
Dominican Rep.	10.000	5.000	2.000	1.000	1.000
Colombia	9.000	4.000	2.000	1.000	2.000

Source: Centraal bureau voor de Statistiek (2005) 'Allochtonen in Nederland'

(she gives back)

ANNEX B

Table 1 > **Table of women and men / organisations interviewed in the Netherlands**

Name of interviewee and organization	Country of origin	About the organization
Fatumo Farah Hirda: Himilo Relief and Development Association	Somalia	Immigrant organization founded in 1998, aims to assist in rebuilding Somalia; a partner and mediator for international organizations working in Somalia and local Somali NGOs; also assist Somali community integrating in NL; organizing activities with Somali youth in NL, helping youth find their way as well as raising their interest for development issues
Florence Andrews Southern Sudanese Women Association (Swan) and Sudanese Orphans Support Trust (Sost)	Sudan	Swan, founded in 2001, organizes activities for Sudanese women in NL regarding general needs, gender and empowerment related issues. Sost, founded in 2000, is an initiative by Sudanese students in the NL geared towards activities for the benefit of orphans and women in Sudan.
Stephanie Mbanzendore Burundian Women for Peace and Development	Burundi	Officially founded in 2001. Assist women and children integrating in the Netherlands; Participating in peace building in Burundi; assisting in the re-development of the country; strengthening the role of women
Machtild Cairo Abongra Kot Odo	Suriname	This foundation was initiated to help a researcher study Surinamese proverbs; when approached by Marron women while being in Suriname, it was decided to set up a project. Abongra is assisted by Tiye; Platform of the National Organizations of black, migrant and refugee women in the Netherlands.
Ozden Yalin Kutluer Tiye, Platform of the National Organizations of black, migrant and refugee women in the Netherlands; MIND (Migrant Women Initiatives in the Netherlands for Development)	Turkey	Ozden is part of many different networks, organizations and boards. She is an advisor to LINKIS the joint initiative by Dutch development NGOs as to finance development initiatives by Dutch inhabitants including migrants.
Sylvia van den Berg-Ortega Ayni MIND	Bolivia	Ayni is a foundation by Bolivian women in the Netherlands assisting the implementation of development initiatives in Bolivia.
Veronique Walu Redeem (Congolese Women), MIND	Congo	Redeem is a newly founded initiative by Congolese women to support one another in the Netherlands
Safiya Axmed Cumar Buhodle women and development society	Somalia	Safiya has initiated various activities in the Netherlands as well under the name of 'Stichting Vrouwen platform Somalie', ranging from organising holidays for Somali women and their children in the countryside, sewing and language classes, to cooking classes for Dutch people to learn from each other and an exhibition of refugee artists paintings.
Fadumo Alin Doses of Hope	Somaliland	Founded in 1997 by a group of women who desired to do something for women, children and disabled people in Somaliland; in Somaliland 24 people are employed.

Diaspora activities in cooperation with local partners (list is not necessarily exhaustive)

Setting up and running schools; women empowerment centre; campaign against female genital mutilation; re-training circumcisers; female teacher training; mother-child programmes; awareness campaign AIDS/HIV; with UNDP: sponsoring professionals from within the diaspora to go to Somalia and share their expertise for a period of three months; youth projects. <http://www.hirda.org/>

Swan is in the process of establishing a partnership with women in Sudan focusing on income generating activities. Sost is assisting orphans in Sudan obtaining education, technical and vocational trainings; their partners conduct trainings and awareness raising campaign on HIV/AIDS; currently setting up a multi-purpose community centre for women: trainings and income generating activities.

Bringing Burundian diaspora women together to strategize on assisting Burundi in peace; international peace mission to Burundi, workshops with women organizations strategizing to enhance women's political engagement and election; campaign concerning girls school enrolment; training of female trainers concerning conflict resolution and social cohesion; youth project, developing partnerships between Dutch and Burundian schools

Support of indigenous Surinamese women in the interior of Suriname by assisting them to improve infrastructure in order to sell the produce from their lands; training in financial management; micro-finance

Job coaching programme for 500 women in Turkey; Dutch employment centre (CWI) trained the instructors; additionally, in cooperation with universities in Ankara, an empowerment training was conducted for highlyeducated women; media project in cooperation with Flying Brooms in Turkey, established journalists gave trainings to women from the country who then reported from their; radio programmes were made as well. <http://www.tiye-international.org/profile/content.html>

Setting up computer labs in 20 institutions, hosting 50 schools in poor areas in and around Orote, to conduct an ICT programme; so far 3.000 teachers have been trained and 17.000 children have been taught to work with computers. The labs are self-sustaining; by request of local authorities in the process of setting up similar programme's in other regions; together with local Rotario Club Educational and health centre in poor neighbourhood Orote; a micro-finance project for women. 10 people are employed by Ayni Boliva.

Redeem is in the process of strengthening its base and investigating with partners in Congo on future initiatives concerning abandoned children and HIV/AIDS

Together with her local partner in the town of Buhodle, a micro-finance scheme was implemented which has benefited 75 women. The programme now is self-sustaining. Small businesses have been set up ranging from poultry farms to little shops; the scheme includes a fund for children: the education of 24 children has been paid for; plans for setting up a mother child health centre are in the making.

Micro-finance programme started off with benefiting 150 women and has to date reached more than 4500 beneficiaries; financial literacy trainings are conducted.

The programme is now almost self-sustaining; the project has a running capital of almost 200.000 USD; a centre geared towards the rehabilitation of disabled people, many injured by mines; arm and leg prostheses and orthopaedic shoes are made, rehabilitation trainings are conducted, so far more than 1000 people have been treated; next year a centre for the blind to learn Braille will start.

(she gives back)

Name of interviewee and organization	Country of origin	About the organization
Corazon Dee ERCMOVE (Economic resource Centre for Migrants and Overseas Employees), MIND	Philippines	ERCMOVE aims to foster the economic empowerment of migrants in the Netherlands as to enable them to contribute to the sustainable development of local communities in their home countries through innovative micro-finance and alternative investment schemes.
Doris Alfafara Cos Utrecht, Damayan, MIND	Philippines	Doris is a consultant at the Centre for Development Cooperation (COS) Utrecht, she advises migrants who are in the process of setting up development initiatives. She has been active in Damayan a Filipino migrant organization that was founded in 1986 focusing on trafficking of women and activities, both, geared towards women migrants in the Netherlands and the Philippines.
Radj Bhondoe, Seva Network Foundation	Suriname, Hindu diaspora	Seva is a platform of migrant organizations geared towards dev initiatives within the Hindu diaspora, Seva is the first migrant organization in the Netherlands which has been officially recognized by the government as a partner in development, receiving a 4.5 million Euro grant for education programme's in India and Nepal; Seva is also assisting migrant organizations from other diaspora's with training and advise; Seva is currently launching it's own fund to finance migrant initiatives from the Netherlands. Seva has 5 paid staff in NL.
Leila Rispens-Noel Oxfam Novib	Philippines	Leila is a programme officer at Oxfam Novib, she has been initiating Philippine diaspora activities with various groups for more than 25 years. She has initiated many activities and networks to bring migrants and organizations in the Netherlands together as to assist and learn from one another concerning diaspora development initiatives.
Mulugeta Asmellash Mintwab Aliyou DIR	Ethiopia	DIR has been active among the Ethiopian community in the Netherlands since the early 1990s working on a large employment creation project; a women empowerment project and Buna Bet, coffee for change, a café; Dir also organises trainings with other diaspora groups. In NL, Dir has 5 paid employees.
Abdellah Tallah Stichting Aknarij	Morocco	Aknarij focuses in particular on youth in Dutch cities originating from the South of Morocco, organises cultural events; and activities geared towards mutual understanding; campaign for raising awareness regarding HIV/ AIDS.

Diaspora activities in cooperation with local partners (list is not necessarily exhaustive)

Building a multi-purpose centre in Bansalan for the member-borrowers of Kapatiran micro finance program, and other actors and residents; raising awareness, conducting workshops and assisting migrant organizations on the implementation of micro-finance; Mobilizing Micro-savings from Filipino migrants in the Netherlands for micro-finance in Northern Mindanao. <http://www.ercmove.nl/>

Activities include raising funds for the education of indigenous people in the Philippines; Linking schools in the Philippines with schools in the Netherlands, the latter getting involved in fund raising for the former, while children learn about life and culture in Philippines; Savings project among Filipinos. Women in the Netherlands- after a year the savings will be invested in an income generating project in the Philippines.

Seva's members and Seva itself conduct more than twenty projects in Suriname, India, Nepal and Bangladesh as well as other countries in the diaspora concerning poverty alleviation and education. Seva employs a gender perspective in its projects. For more information: <http://www.sevanetwork.net/index.php>

She has been involved in the setting up of a micro-credit scheme for women in the Philippines with Kapatiran; recently she initiated an Internet diaspora hometown association for the town she comes from, Bansalan, 55 members raise money, so far a local sports complex has been renovated and money has been raised for the school enrolment of 50 children whose parents cannot afford their education.

Trainings of teachers at schools for visually and physically impaired people; several sports events for handicapped people, Paralympics team; alternative housing and an employment creation for women who previously were employed in prostitution, pilot project: they are running a coffee roasting house (for the café in Amsterdam) and bakery; Dir is in the process of looking for ways to assist a women self-help group.
Dir Ethiopia has about 30 paid staff in Ethiopia; <http://www.dirnet.nl/index.html>

Organizes an annual cultural festival in South Morocco during summer when migrants visit their hometowns, which includes workshops on social issues; co-organized a theatre caravan aiming to raise awareness concerning HIV/AIDS; setting up a library in the Dades Valley together with migrants and organizations in France and local partners; conducting literacy classes among 400 women; in the process of building a women centre; including a health centre, literacy classes and micro-credit programme <http://www.aknarij.com/>

(she gives back)

4 > (she gives back) Diaspora Philanthropy in Germany

by Cassandra Ellerbe-
Dueck and Judy
Gummich

Introduction

Immigration to Germany

The migration discourse in Germany supported the idea that Germany was a country of emigration and not immigration. For many years, the German government conducted its policies (*Ausländerpolitik*) in accordance with the long-believed myth that guest workers, recruited by the German government in the 1950s and 1960s, did not constitute part of Germany's populace because they would eventually return to their countries of origin¹. Moreover, the Bonner administration did not consider Germany's immigration policies to be comparable to the United States. Therefore, the myth that Germany is "*kein Einwanderungsland*" ("not a country of immigration") was propagated well into the late 1990s. However, in reality, Germany has a sizable foreign or 'non-ethnic German' population.

With the arrival of guest workers, immigrants and asylum seekers from the developing world, the 'ethno-racial' dynamics of German society have changed. The descendants of Turkish guest workers constitute a large percentage of the immigrant population in Germany. Africa and Asia also play significant roles in the composition of the resident non-White population of immigrant descent in Germany. Immigrants from the African continent, primarily from Morocco, Nigeria, Ghana, Cameroon, Eritrea, Ethiopia and Somalia, have also contributed to diasporic communities residing in Germany.

According to the Statistisches Bundesamt Deutschland (Federal Statistics Office Germany, 2005), the entire population in Germany for 2004² totaled 82.500,8. The foreign population is calculated at 7.288. Foreign nationals constitute 8,9% of the German population. (See annex A). Statistics for emigration to and migration within Germany have also been greatly affected by modification of German citizenship laws (1.1.00), the downfall of Socialism, the Balkan war, the shifting and erasure of borders, a returning Aussiedler³ population and more diversity in nationalities of asylum seekers.

However, it is not only the national background of settlers and political stances that have changed immigration to Germany in recent decades. First, global and traditional patterns of migration, which were previously male dominated, now indicate an ascertainable shift, which has been referred to as the feminization of migration (Castles & Miller 1993; Gender Equality Incorporated⁴; INSTRAW, 2005). In the past, this phenomenon was primarily linked with family reunification, whereby the female partner was reunited with male spouse who had immigrated. However, Lutz (1997:100) has pointed to the increase of female migrants entering into informal economies (domestic workers and caregivers for children and the elderly) of highly industrialized territories like Europe, as the driving force behind this phenomenon. The feminization of migration runs parallel with research on the topic of diaspora philanthropy amongst migrant women. Second, definitions of 'immigrant' underwent a significant change in Germany due to amendments to German citizenship and naturalization legislation⁵ in 2000.

Research overview and method

This research identifies various forms of diaspora philanthropy in Germany. Special attention is paid in this report to organizations addressing the situation and needs of marginalized groups and also those groups focused on feminist philanthropy. In this report, feminist philanthropy is used broadly and includes any organization whose primary aim is to improve the social or economic conditions of women in particular, whether through general forms of social and economic assistance or development or by taking a certain stance on a specific gendered issue.

The organizations were located through desk research and the “snowball” method, which entailed personal contacts, referrals, and information from websites. Interviews were conducted with members of organizations⁶ that could offer a view of the diaspora philanthropy activities of migrant women. The interviews were primarily conducted in person with duration of two to three hours. The interviews focused primarily on personal motivations and the organization’s goals, activities, funding, and partnerships. Although we initially strived for geographical as well as diasporic diversity within our sample groups, given our time constraints, we found ourselves limited to the groups or organizations which responded to our inquiries and agreed to participate in our interviews. In addition we encountered mistrust at times, pertaining to our questions about the groups and the funding of their projects. Although the sample is not complete or representative of all migrant groups in Germany, it nonetheless presents an introductory view to ‘diaspora philanthropy’ among migrant women, including both projects aimed at development (countries of origin) and assistance for migrants in Germany.

We also find it important to mention our position and location as female researchers of African diasporic origins. This factor along with our proficiency in English, Spanish and German was an added plus in making contact and gaining access to these organizations. By mentioning our interest in the socioeconomic empowerment of women in Europe and abroad, particularly regarding women of “colour”, we experienced an incredible amount of hospitality and a willingness to participate in this research project. However, making contact with a few of these groups, i.e. SOLWODI and NUEW Gi, and gaining access to their spokespersons was not an easy task.

For purposes of clarification, the term migrant within the scope of this report is not limited to people with foreign citizenship. Migrant within this context also includes those individuals who constitute part of the permanent resident German population with migrant backgrounds. Many of the women we interviewed are or find themselves in the process of becoming German citizens.

In this report we investigate the various ways diasporic women practise feminist philanthropy within their home and local communities. We will introduce the various organizations in accordance with their specific methods and aims in “giving back” to their communities. We were able to recognize several dominant themes that surfaced in our samples regarding the migrant women’s philanthropic practices: women’s personal and economic autonomy

and the protection of women’s rights; providing education and healthcare for future generations; and maintenance of cultural identity. Each theme is described through a case study approach below, highlighting not only how the topic is addressed by the organizations, but also the partnerships, resources, and activities involved, as well as general information on the women involved, their backgrounds and motivations.

The Various Ways in Which Women “Give Back”

“Educate a girl, you empower a nation.”

Oprah Winfrey (2006)

Autonomy and the Protection of Women’s Rights

Countering trafficking and exploitation of undocumented migrant women

This example in “giving back” can be described as a form of ‘social remittance’, offering support in other forms than money.

Nivedita Prasad is spokesperson of Ban-Ying e.V., (Thai for House of Women). She explains that Ban Ying is an organization active in the struggle to prevent the trafficking of women and the exploitation of migrant women in Germany working in the sex and care industry. Founded in 1988 Ban-Ying began as a project funded by the German government to counsel female sex workers. German social workers realized that many of the women they counselled were from other ethnic and cultural backgrounds (primarily from South East Asia at that time), and had been forced into the sex industry via trafficking. The idea arose to start a project that would address the specific needs of these women. The Ban-Ying staff now consists of fifty percent women of colour and fifty percent white German women. Ban-Ying considers itself to be a feminist and anti-racist organization. Ban Ying offers housing (when necessary) and free legal and psychosocial counselling for Thai⁷, Filipino, Cambodian, and Laotian women. Ban-Ying offers a safe space for women who have been trafficked by offering anonymity in the services received. This encourages women to contact the organization without feeling threatened. In Ms. Prasad’s view women of colour are more exposed to violence (she views racism as a form of violence) while having less access to justice than white women.

Nivedita Prasad informed us that the organization also seeks to provide women with information for informed migration: Thai speaking Ban-Ying staff members participate in a radio programme that is broadcasted in Bangkok. The programme discusses the realities of migration to Europe and offer helpful and necessary information for women considering to emigrate. According to Nivedita Prasad, “informed migration” is an act of empowerment for women and Ban-Ying assists in that empowerment. Ms. Prasad stated that many of the women who wish to emigrate, do so because they are marginalized in Thai society. This fact is often a push factor for

migration.⁸ The acquisition of information allows women to weigh the pros and cons related to migration, thereby allowing these women to make informed choices as to where and how they will choose to live abroad and in finding alternatives that allow for a stable and productive life.

Ban-Ying's services are extended not only to women contemplating emigration, but also for those who have already arrived and need information and assistance regarding their legal residency or marital rights in Germany. Ban-Ying created and distributes a *Wegweiser* (guidebook) for Thai women in Berlin. Ban-Ying's staff is aware of the cultural and linguistic diversity of South East Asia and provides potential female migrants with informative leaflets and counselling in various South East Asian languages, i.e. Thai, Tagalog. Furthermore, Ban-Ying's geographic reach has expanded beyond South East Asia. Since the opening of the Central and Eastern European countries, Ban-Ying provides leaflets and information in Eastern European languages such as Russian and Ukrainian. Thus far the organization has been able to provide counselling for women in approximately twenty-seven languages. Ban-Ying also provides translators and interpreters in legal matters when necessary.

Ban-Ying is funded by public donations and the Department of Women of the Berlin City Parliament. Nivedita Prasad expressed to us that Ban-Ying would like to become more involved in assisting projects and initiatives in the countries of origin of the women they counsel and assist in Germany, but due to a lack of funding, Ban-Ying has not yet been able to expand its network of assistance to more South East Asian countries. Ban-Ying's current budget only allows sufficient funding to maintain its office in Berlin.

Ban-Ying co-operates with various international organizations such as THARA (Thai Women Abroad) SOLIDAR.org. and PICUM.org. Nivedita Prasad also travels from time to time to Thailand in order to cooperate with Thai NGOs and state institutions. Ban-Ying considers the Global Alliance against Trafficking of Women (GAATW) to be a close partner and ally. In cooperation with GAATW, Ban-Ying assists "returnees", often formerly trafficked women and undocumented domestic workers, in the repatriation process. Ban-Ying also actively participated in the drafting of anti-trafficking legislation and works closely with various Southeast Asian countries.

Assistance for rural women in Cameroon and Togo

In 2002, while completing an internship for the NGO CERAD Centre d'Étude, Action et Développement in Cameroon, Charlotte Njikoufon had the idea and desire to create an umbrella project and network for women residing in rural areas of Cameroon and Togo. She had personally experienced the difficulties which Cameroonian and Togolese⁹ women encounter in their respective countries, i.e. insufficient prenatal and postnatal healthcare, formal education, and know-how in entrepreneurship. Ms. Njikoufon stated that she was personally motivated by the lack of cohesive organizational structures and networking amongst Cameroonian and Togolese women and wanted to act as an agent in coordinating and bringing together various women to

form projects and initiatives. Ms. Njikoufon also stated that she is often touched by the willpower of many of these women to strive for change despite the various obstacles they encounter. Access to financial support is one of these. She gave an example, recounting her experience of being taken to a makeshift maternity ward created by women in a rural area of Cameroon. The women were proud of their accomplishment despite the lack of basic necessary supplies. Ms. Njikoufon felt dismay when she saw that the maternity ward lacked basic necessities, for example, beds and mattresses, and that a mother with her new-born infant was obliged to lie upon a soiled cloth spread out on the earthen floor.

The project was titled KONE (Bamoun¹⁰ language for "Solidarity") and strived to unite African and European women in seeking and finding solutions for what Ms. Njikoufon referred to as "*Prioritätsprobleme*" (priority problems), e.g., water wells, mills for grain and ambulant healthcare stations in Cameroon and Togo. The acquisition of a communal corn mill was a pressing request, because it would enable the women in rural areas in Cameroon to grind and sell corn in the vicinity of their homes instead of travelling long distances by foot to grind and sell the grain at the market. Furthermore, it would enable these women to gain economic control and autonomy over their lives by securing a sufficient and regular income.

Due to a lack of funds from her home community in Germany, Ms. Njikoufon decided to apply for funding for KONE from the German government. The stipulations for granting funds were that Ms. Njikoufon or someone having comparable skills must remain in Cameroon or Togo as a contact partner. In addition, the women were required to evidence that their organization was a registered organization (*eingetragene Verein*) in Germany. The organization would then have to prove that it had a minimum of three years experience in the creation and execution of small pilot projects. This demanded that the women residing in Germany fund a pilot project with their own money before they would be eligible to receive funding from the German Federal Government. She could not meet these requirements at the time. After an unsuccessful attempt with a Fair Trade organization, Ms. Njikoufon stated that KONE folded due to insufficient funding.

Sociopolitical activism advancing the empowerment of women

Forward Germany e.V. is an international organization (NGO) dedicated to initiating socio-cultural attitudinal changes within African societies/communities (on the continent and abroad) where female genital mutilation (FGM) and forced marriages are common. The highly contested topic of FGM is a point of contention both from those outside the African community and also amongst African women and African diasporic women as well. Forward Germany e.V. is one of those women's organizations which promote a strong stance on a contested, gendered issue. While these organizations also aim to provide social or economic assistance to women, their activities are also based on building a broader awareness for the issue at hand. In our research,

opposition against female circumcision, also called female genital cutting or female genital mutilation, emerged as one such contested, gendered issue. Forward Germany e.V. is furthermore involved in the distribution of supplies and perishable goods directly via the method of “hand-to-hand” to Somali families in the Ogden area. This area is located on the border between Ethiopia and Somalia. They also provide women in the Ogden area with opportunities for economic advancement and independence.

Fadumo Korn is one of the spokespersons for Forward Germany e.V. in Munich and has gained celebrity status in Germany with the 2004 publication of her autobiographical account, *Geboren im Großen Regen, Meine drei Leben*¹¹. Born into a nomadic family in Somalia, Fadumo considers herself a survivor of female genital mutilation (hereafter FGM), and considers her story to be a source of inspiration to other African women to forego this practice. A political activist, Fadumo Korn is a political dissident and left Somalia in 1979. She is currently not able to return to Somalia to assist in the distribution of the goods and supplies that she helps organize. The distribution of supplies and goods occur via partners, both women and men, in Somalia. Fadumo Korn utilizes the venue of her book readings, lectures and any possibility within her means to call attention to this practice and to raise funds for the organization’s projects in Somalia and Ethiopia.

Forward also sponsors the project *Hühnerfarm* (chicken farm) that benefits Somali women located in Shilabo, Ogden (Ethiopia) area. The project provides Somali women with the possibility to attain a degree of economic independence. Women involved in this project can earn their own money via the sale of poultry. These women gain not only economic, but social stability in their respective societies as well.

In addition the organization has also founded and constructed a school and provides additional vocational training for young girls. The school project began as a project exclusively for young girls. The school’s motto is “Bildung statt Beschneidung” (education instead of genital mutilation). The school project in Somalia encourages not only the formal education of Somali girls, but modifications in socialization as well, i.e. abandonment of the practice of genital mutilation. The school does not discriminate against young girls that have already been subjected to this practice, but it does encourage the parents of other young girls to consider refraining from this practice. However, Fadumo Korn stated that female contact partners in Somalia soon realized if they did not also educate their young men that suitable future partners for their daughters would not exist. According to Fadumo Korn, mothers who want their daughters to attend the school sponsored by the project are not in favor of the practice of FGM. Moreover, Forward Germany e.V. works frequently with organizations such as (I)ntact e.V., Menschen für Menschen e.V. and Terres de Femmes towards the prevention of female genital mutilation.

Forward’s activities are financed via donations, membership dues, occasional paid lectures conducted by Ms. Korn or her colleagues, Forward e.V. provides necessary supplies and goods to individuals and families in need in Somalia.

Promoting Women and Girls health rights in the Gambia

Asia Abdulkadir is the spokesperson for the Association for Promoting Women and Girls in the Gambia. Founded in 1999 by a private sponsor, Ms. Adukadir joined the project in 2001. Ms Abdulkadir, a Ph.D. candidate of Eritrean descent, travels to the Gambia and partakes in a women’s healthcare awareness project. The project provides funding for awareness regarding the health-related consequences of FGM and information on breast-feeding, HIV-prevention and testing. It also funds a youth camp for adolescents in rural areas of the Gambia. The aim of the youth camp is to discuss alternative thinking in regard to FGM and male circumcision as initiation rituals. Asia Abdulkadir volunteers her time for this project and receives only a budget, which covers her travel costs to the Gambia and a stipend for the short time she spends there twice a year.

Asia Abdulkadir has a contact partner in the Gambia (Binta Yammeh-Sedebe), who decides along with several other women from various rural areas how the funds will be used. Funding is provided by the German sponsor and is allocated for transportation to and from the youth camp, furniture, i.e. tables, beds, rent for indoors accommodations for lectures, and necessary print materials.

Similar to the case with Ban Ying e.V., Asia Abdulkadir is working in a project linked to an ethnic group that differs from her own, thus demonstrating no direct transnational connection. Asia Adulkadir stated that at first the Gambian women did not readily accept her, as she originally comes from Eritrea. Abdulkadir felt caught between two sides. On one hand she was seen as the “European controller” (emphasis hers) and on the other, when her Gambian colleague failed to hand in the yearly report within the designated time period, Ms. Abdulkadir was expected to demonstrate understanding for the difficulties of African daily life, such as power shortages and other delays.

Asia Abdulkadir volunteers her time for this project and receives only a budget, which covers her travel costs to the Gambia and a stipend for the short time she spends there twice a year.

Economic, Social and Cultural Values in Germany and Kenya

Maisha e.V., which in Swahili means “life”, was founded by five East African women during the mid-1990s. Maisha became an officially registered organization in 1996. The founding members of Maisha were primarily of East African descent, but the organization now encompasses women from West African nations, i.e. Togo and Benin. Maisha’s supervisory committee consists of women from both East and West Africa and includes one male member from Eritrea. Maisha exemplifies a project contributing to the development of communities in Germany as well as in Africa.

According to Virginia Wangare-Greiner¹², one of the organization’s founding members, Maisha offers assistance to African women in the Frankfurt area and provides a sense of cohesiveness among African women experiencing

isolation and marginalization in German society. According to Ms. Wangare-Greiner¹², the situations of many Africans, women in particular, are dire and difficult and Africans remain “invisible” to a certain degree in German society. In order to alleviate the situation, Ms. Wangare-Greiner along with several other women, decided to become part of the solution by creating their own method of collecting and saving money (*Frauen Sparverein*) for African women in the Frankfurt area, who found themselves marginalized and in need. Ten women donate 100 each month from their personal income. In the form of a rotating lottery, each woman then receives a number from one to ten, which corresponds to the months January through October. Each of the ten women receives one thousand Euro in accordance with the number of the month she selected. If a sudden emergency arises and one of the women needs the money earlier, she may exchange her number with another woman in the group. This practice demands total trust and honesty from the participating women. An additional emergency loan fund also exists to cover sudden costs for airfare, should one of the women suddenly need to travel to Africa. The organization also distributes care packages to mothers and their new born in Frankfurt and the vicinity.

Maisha’s project in Kenya provides twenty young Kenyan girls in the rural area of Kasambara with school fees for their primary school education. Each of the twenty girls chooses a God-mother, a woman from the community who makes sure that the girls attend school and successfully complete their school assignments. The God-mothers of the girls also acts as the project’s contact partners in Kenya and work directly with Maisha e.V. The girls also maintain direct contact (via letters) with Ms. Wangare-Greiner and her colleagues, who travel once a year to the area to distribute gifts to the girls and additional supplies that might be needed. This yearly visit also entails meetings and healthcare awareness seminars with the twenty girls in order to find ways to better meet their needs.

The young girls sponsored by Maisha will not be subjected to the practice of female circumcision. The families of the girls are in agreement with abstaining from this practice. Having received an education, the girls will have the opportunity to one day provide for themselves and exercise choice whether to marry or not. Maisha has future plans to find funding that can cover high school and university fees for several of the girls wanting to pursue higher education.

Maisha networks with the umbrella organization, Africa Diaspora in Europe, which consists of ten smaller groups. One of these groups, Mwangaze (“spark” in Swahili), functions as Maisha’s sister organization. Mwangaze has chapters in Paris, France and Antwerp, Belgium. Travel costs for meetings in France or Belgium are defrayed by the organization Weltrat der Kirchen, of which Maisha is also a member. Maisha relies on funds raised from benefit concerts, private donations, and their own personal income to fund projects for women in Frankfurt and the near vicinity and for the young girls in the rural region of Kasambara near the city of Nakuru, Kenya.

Box 1

Oromo Frauen Frankfurt (Oromo Women Frankfurt)

Established in 1998, the Oromo Frauen group is currently in the process of registering as an official organization in Germany (*eingetragene Verein*). The organization began when Oromo women in Frankfurt started a school project for Oromo children in Ethiopia.

In this project, each member of the organization becomes a mentor for one family and guarantees the mother of the family the yearly school fees for her children for a minimum of three years. The fees for one year are paid in full directly to the mother, regardless of the absence or presence of a male partner or spouse. After the receipt of the school fees, the mother must promise to send her children to primary school and ensure they follow the complete three year programme. Currently twenty Oromo women receive funding for their children from Oromo women in Frankfurt, and as of yet all of the children have completed the mandatory three years and some have even continued with their schooling.

In this case, remittances manifest as monetary assistance, but with a far-reaching social impact on the Oromo community in Ethiopia. Moreover, the fact that only the mother of the family may receive the school fees, points to a step of empowerment for women, because it is the female member of the family unit that is now in a position to assist in securing a better future of her children. We find this important because this also demonstrates to young girls that women are capable of managing their lives with or without a partner. Of particular interest, the women/families that received support from abroad must in some way help another woman/family in need. This can be compared with a positive domino effect.

Kulani Gudina considers herself an Oromo-German, meaning she considers herself equally Oromo as well as German. She believes that her position in German society is a strategic one, because she can pass on her skills and assist Oromo women with their adjustment to and integration into German society. Assistance with acquiring language skills, self-confidence and learning assertiveness etc., are a few of the ways that Oromo Frauen offer support to the Oromo female population residing in Germany. Oromo Frauen Frankfurt, functions not only as ‘safety net’ for the Oromo community in Frankfurt, but also as an intergenerational transmitter of Oromo cultural competency as well.

Ms. Kulani Gudina also expressed that their project was an important way in which to maintain cultural links along with maintaining a sense of cultural identity. She involves not only her own children in the project, but also other Oromo children residing in the Frankfurt area. The children are involved in fund-raising events, i.e. baked goods sales, where Oromo cultural traditions are practiced (i.e. language, cuisine) and also donate part of their allowance to the project. Kulani Gudina stated that this is important because by participating in the project her children learn a sense of community-based responsibility. >>

This is indicative of what we will refer to as “two-directional”¹³ form of remittances. Oromo women like Kulani Gudina are not only giving back to their community in the Horn of Africa, but are also providing social remittances in their local community.

Kulani Gudina also points to the organization’s wish to network with other women’s group, migrant or German religious organizations. However, she also feels it is essential to maintain the group’s autonomy in co-operative endeavours. <<

Socio-cultural initiatives for future generations – Providing formal academic and healthcare education

The second theme of women’s diaspora philanthropy practices entails socio-cultural initiatives and proactive involvement in the future of one’s community in the country of origin. The needs of their countries of origin are very much present in the minds and concerns of the projects. Several of these groups are concerned with the future socio-economic and political development of their countries of origin and actively participate in projects and initiatives thereof.

Assisting street children

Dolly Obregón of the Strassenkinderprojekt e.V. (Street Children’s Project) in Berlin began her work in Columbia when she was fourteen years old. Since 1984, Dolly Obregón has been actively engaged in assisting homeless children in Columbia and Bolivia. In 1996, Ms. Obregón initiated a similar project in Guatemala. Dolly Obregón is currently the director of the International Street Children’s Archive.

Dolly Obregón’s initiatives are prompted by personal concerns for the well-being of children. Obregón’s work is not gender specific and as young boys constitute the majority of homeless children on the streets of Latin America, her work benefits homeless male as well as female children. Dolly Obregón, a mother herself, strives to make a lasting and worthwhile contribution towards the child’s future. In Dolly Obregón’s view, “It’s really about the children.”

Ms. Obregón feels that it was not only her responsibility, but also of those individuals that had the capacity to “give back” and attempt to “meet the needs” of individuals who are less fortunate. She adds that it is not necessary to wait for governmental organizations to intercede and bring about change. In many instances, women as well as men in several Latin American countries where she has worked, have decided to also become involved in improving conditions for the children of their “home” communities.

In addition Obregón created the Fundación Arca de Salvación (Eng. Arch of Salvation Foundation), where she along with some of her siblings, who also reside in Europe, donate a monthly sum from their private income. The money is paid directly to single mothers and utilized to cover the school fees of her children. By providing children with a safe place to sleep or have a meal – and a single mother with the necessary school fees for her chil-

dren – Dolly Obregón, her colleagues and family members, are investing in the future of Columbia. A future investment will be made in the form of offering support and providing opportunities for Colombian society’s youngest members.

Maintaining Cultural Identity and a Link to the Diaspora

Creating social and therapeutic space

In looking at the aims and motivations of diasporic women’s organizations in Germany, our research also points to what Halleh Ghorashi (2004:330) has described as “safety nets” for Diasporas living in different countries abroad. Ghorashi maintains:

Diaspora organizations often serve as safety nets for diasporas living in different countries, act as intermediary organizations between individuals and the states, and play an essential role in the new forms of identity and belonging created by diasporas.

These projects can be viewed not only as a form of diaspora philanthropy, but also as an effort in supporting cultural identity.

The Hilfsorganization Oromo Relief Association e.V. Berlin (H-ORA) was founded in 1980 and is the continuation of the organization Oromo Relief Association established in Khartoum, Sudan during the late 1970s. This self-help organization was created to assist and provide Oromo refugees with goods and supplies in the Horn of Africa. Interview partner Arfasse Gamade and her husband Terfa Dibaba left Ethiopia in 1979 and eventually settled in Berlin, Germany. Arfasse Gamade is a registered nurse and worked in Sudanese refugee camps during the mid 1990s.

Due to her experiences in refugee camps, and witnessing the pressing needs of displaced individuals, Arfasse Gamade decided to continue the work of ORA via the organization H-ORA in Germany.

As a worldwide organization, ORA has provided assistance to thousands and enabled many of the displaced to survive the ravages of war and famine in Ethiopia in the 1980s and early 1990s. However the group was denounced in 1995 by the Ethiopian governing body at that time. This led to the enforced closure of all of ORA’s projects and the organization was blacklisted. Nearly 150 of the organizations workers found themselves without a means of gainful employment. Many were politically persecuted and forced into exile where they continue to work on behalf of the Oromo people in Ethiopia, Germany and other countries as well.

Due to the political situation in Ethiopia, H-ORA can only support projects for the Oromo people in neighbouring countries such as Kenya and the Sudan. Part of the funding raised by H-ORA benefits Oromo women in Kenya, who wish to manage and operate small snack bars where refugees can receive a free meal. The creation of snack bars run by women can be seen not only as a step in the procurement of economic autonomy for Oromo women, but also as a space for social gathering.

The case of H-ORA's snack bar project demonstrates how such initiatives in the "home" countries can provide not only basic necessities, but also a therapeutic outlet in dealing with sentiments related to forced displacement. Although the issue of mental health in regard to persons experiencing forced displacement cannot be fully investigated within the scope of this research, it certainly plays a role in the ability for an individual to cope not only abroad, but in the "home" countries as well.¹⁴ Furthermore, in coming together to distribute goods, many of the Oromo refugees also had the opportunity to talk with one another and share their sentiments and concerns.

The snack bars are primarily financed via cash remittances from individual Oromos or through public donations. The necessity to transfer funds via a secure venue prompted H-ORA to exercise an alternative transferral method. The organization used a system known as "Al-Barakah" to transfer monetary funds from Germany to Ethiopia. In the "Al-Barakah" system¹⁵, one pays an amount to the person departing (in this case to Ethiopia) for a low minimal fee and the recipient is notified that the cash is on its way. This system is important to mention because it underlines the necessity of a safe and secure means for the transferral of funds particularly in war ravaged areas, which lack functioning and intact infrastructures, particularly in regard to the transferral of monetary funds.

H-ORA networks with Brot für die Welt, Oxfam and church based organizations such as Berliner Missionswerk, Evangelische Erwachsenenbildung Oldenburg/Ostfriesland and Lutherstift Falkenberg.

ADEFRA women practised a form of "giving back" by contributing to the diasporic identity development and knowledge of Afro-German youth through their 1998 and 1999 summer exchange programme, Afro-German youth were sponsored by African-American families in the United States, which contributed to the creation of intra-diasporic (African-America – Afro-German) relationships as well. Unfortunately due to insufficient funding the project is no longer active.

ADEFRA Berlin has also been active in assisting refugees in the Potsdam and Hellersdorf areas. In 2002 ADEFRA members collected clothes and toys for refugee children. In addition, the organization offers suggestions in seeking legal advice and assistance. Furthermore, their Black Butterfly project provides computer courses for women of colour. Spokesperson and Chair of ADEFRA Berlin, Ekpenyong Ani, informed us that the computer courses they provided for refugees residing in the Berlin vicinity demonstrated a positive ripple effect. The acquisition of knowledge and proficiency in IT technologies prompted a group of refugees to open their own Internet Café where resources and information pertaining to German asylum and immigration policy can be exchanged.

ADEFRA remains active in networking with national and international groups of women of colour in Germany and abroad. Political education seminars, intercultural dialogue at Universities (Hamburg, Berlin, Munich, Frankfurt etc.), women-only retreats, are a few other examples of this organization's contribution and support in the creation of a sense of community for women of the African Diaspora in Germany. <<

Box 2

Forging Diasporic Links

The Afro-German¹⁶ organization, ADEFRA (*Afro-Deutsche and Schwarze Frauen in Germany*, Afro-German and Black Women in Germany) was founded in 1986 and has been essential in providing Afro-German women with a space for self-introspection, a socio-political forum and in the creation of the Afro-German/Black German narrative in Germany society. ADEFRA was created as a nationwide forum where lesbians of the African Diaspora and other women of colour¹⁷ could openly express their concerns, frustrations and combine a collective strength to address issues specific to politics of their location. Even today, racialization of German identity continues to present difficulties for non-white individuals claiming German identity.

The Afro-German socio-historical trajectory has been mostly overlooked and marginalized within the context of German history. Unlike all other diaspora organizations examined in this report, Afro-Germans cannot be readily linked with one particular African ethnic group or nation-state. Afro-Germans and the active members of ADEFRA have created an "imagined" diasporic community and seek to network not only with women of African descent, but other women of colour groups as well. >>

Key Findings

Personal characteristics and motivations

What personal characteristics do the women possess and what is the primary focus of their initiatives? First of all, women with migrant backgrounds initiated and manage the organizations explained in this report. Second, many of women we interviewed from these organizations were either academics (held Ph.D.'s) or had completed other forms of higher studies and demonstrated a command of German as well as their mother tongues. This observation points to the relevancy of education as a source of power and empowerment amongst women. Third, many of these women not only work outside the home while simultaneously raising and caring for their children, but also to the prevalence of many of these women directing and running these groups on a voluntary basis.

As seen throughout most of the cases, humanitarian motivations are often crucial drivers to action. Coming from areas of war, conflict, or poverty, many of the women felt compelled to contribute what they could to help remedy and alleviate the situation for those still in the country of origin. Apart from the humanitarian aspect, aspects related to identity and social ties were also important. As Kulani Gudina replied when asked her >>

additional motivations, “Wir haben das Projekt gemacht damit wir die ‘Verwürzelung’ nicht verlieren”¹⁸ (We created the project in order not to lose our roots). The term “roots” accompanies the identity dynamic not only for Kulani Gudina, but for many individuals with migrant backgrounds.

Fostering Change

How have migrant women in Germany brought about change in their local communities and home countries? In looking at the various organizations we found and contacted in Germany, the issue of “giving back” amongst migrant women presented itself in a multitude of interesting as well as innovative forms. The various initiatives and projects we researched were not only concerned with remittances in the form of Euros or Dollars, but also with social remittances. Under the category of social remittances various issues surfaced: Mental and physical healthcare, well-being, formal education, transmission of know-how, the encouragement of awareness and self-esteem, social, cultural changes, women’s self-empowerment and one that is often forgotten in such discussions – hope.

The philanthropic practices of migrant women, in all the various forms outlined in this report, were often seen as a means of providing women in the local communities as well in the communities of “origin” with forms of education and self-empowerment. In the context of this report, education does not only mean formal schooling, but more generally refers to experiences and exposure to information and ideas that served or will serve as a catalyst for social change in either their current residence or ‘home’ communities and therefore serves as a form of social remittance.

Our findings point to the significance of the access to sufficient funding. Insufficient funding forces many of these women to assume the role of “Wonder Woman” where they often must attempt to do it all. Sufficient funds or the lack thereof also underlines the economic disparity that migrant women often encounter in Western societies. This can be seen not only in the procurement of gainful employment for their own personal lives, but also in respect to raising funds in order to “give back”.

The work done by these women can be considered not only as steps towards securing essential needs for now and in the future, but also as inspiring feminist practices to support and further the empowerment of present as well as future generations of women.

Networking and Issues of Discrimination

Networking was also an aspect pertinent to the survival and success of these groups’ organizations. These women demonstrated a readiness to network and connect with other organizations and expressed to us that they were well-aware of the strength in numbers. We found that the aspect of gender played a minimal role in networking and forming alliances in terms of “giving back” to their communities. The topic of racism, paternalistic attitudes from German authorities and the necessity for autonomy were also issues touched upon in our interviews and have played an influential role in the various ways migrant women in Germany organize networks and activities.

Several of the women we spoke with were concerned with the balance of power when contemplating a cooperation, and at times shunned or were apprehensive about working with white German¹⁹ organizations. According to our informants this was linked to their experiences with predominately German groups, which tended to patronize migrant groups. Several women we contacted mentioned the aspect of racism and discrimination when dealing with German authorities or looking for additional funding sources in Germany. Moreover, many expressed their concerns regarding the current socio-political climate that many perceived as racist. Nearly all the women that we interviewed expressed to us that they were more prone to taking matters into their own hands regarding forms of assistance to their “home” communities/countries and did not want to become dependant upon German governmental bodies or help organizations. Autonomy was the key word when working with German religious organizations or federally funded organizations.

Many women felt well-equipped to tackle social problems in their countries of origin, due to their first hand knowledge and experience with the issues. For example, Ms. Korn mentioned that Forward Germany has been desperately looking for Somali women, who are willing to speak out against the practice of FGM and discuss the situation of women who have experienced FGM in Somalia. Fadumo Korn maintained that the topic of female genital mutilation is not one to be approached merely by theoretical assumptions. In her view, it is necessary that women, who are survivors of this practice, take the initiative to speak out against this practice by educating the male and female members of their communities. In regard to the practice of FGM, Fadumo Korn, a Somali born survivor of this practice has an understanding, which enables her to speak out as a member of the African Diaspora. Moreover, her life experiences in Germany (Ms. Korn came to Germany as a political refugee) enable her to speak from a double perspective. In addition, Fadumo Korn maintains that her community would more likely respect individuals speaking on the subject from the Somali community than someone from outside the Somali community. According to Ms. Korn, FGM awareness work conducted by Somali women is not only an act of empowerment for the current generation, but also for future generations of Somali girls and women.

Ms. Njikoufon (KONE) stresses the necessity for Africans to initiate solutions for the “problems plaguing the continent.” She states that many individuals involved in German developmental agencies, which support and fund projects believe that Africans are less knowledgeable, viewed as unequal partners, incompetent, and need Europeans to show them the path towards development. She herself felt that the flow of knowledge was definitely not a one-way street. During her stay in Cameroon, she remarked that the women she encountered were resilient and hungered for opportunities to sustain and improve their lives, and that she was able to also learn much from these women.

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Conclusion

Within the scope of seminal research on the topic of diaspora philanthropy amongst migrant women's organizations in Germany, our findings point to several issues. In conclusion, we found the following issues to be most pertinent in this report:

- Autonomy (personal and economic) and protection of women's rights;
- Marginalization and empowerment;
- Physical and psychological healthcare;
- Networking and partnerships;
- Maintenance of cultural identity.

Based upon our sample, women of colour and women with migrant and refugee backgrounds, were very much involved in the struggle against marginalization and the quest for empowerment and autonomy. Struggle and empowerment are multifaceted and multi-layered terms that constitute the purpose and goals of many of these organizations and groups. Moreover, we have seen that these groups are not only concerned with the improvement of their socio-economic and socio-political situations in Germany, but also with the long-term socio-economic-political situations in their countries of origin. Nearly all of the groups involved in this study are active in Germany as well as on an international level. We also conclude that this was by no means a one-sided interaction. Our study points to a continuous give-and-take from both sides, which served to maintain a connection to the "home" country as well as to foster mutual learning and empowerment.

"Money makes the world go round": The gendered aspect regarding economics and economic disparity within this context cannot be ignored. Evidence of an economic factor can be seen not only in the procurement of gainful employment for women's personal lives (particularly for women of colour or with migrant/refugee backgrounds), but also in respect to raising funds in order to "give back". KONE was a clear example of a project, which faltered due to a lack of sufficient finances. Moreover, insufficient funding forces many of these women to assume the role of "Wonder Woman" where they often must attempt to do it all on little or no budget.

Encounters with racism and paternalistic attitudes from German authorities and administrative bodies were also issues touched upon in our interviews and were indicative and influential in the various ways migrant women in Germany organize according to their own standards and self-determined ways of "giving back" to their communities.

In terms of intersectional theory, one could say that the intersection of these women's 'racial' designation and the value ascribed to this designation comes to the forefront in this aspect. In addition, we have found that overlaps with the intersections of "race", gender, sexuality, ethnicity, nationality, educational level and instances of social class came to the forefront in this seminal study. We point to the significance and overlap of the intersections of "race" and gender, because these constructions lead to forms of discrimination that would not necessarily be encountered by white migrant women or migrant males

of colour. It is important to underline these social axes of signification here because they determine the societal positions of these women and are indicative of the access or non-access many of these women have to certain societal benefits and privileges.

The topic of religion only surfaced in our sample as a significant factor for the H-ORA in Berlin. While the Oromo people were colonized by the Amhara people (Coptic Christians) of Ethiopia, Oromos, according to Arfasse Gamade, continue to practice their own religion and look to their religion as a source of guidance and strength in social as well as political matters.

Nearly all the women that we interviewed expressed that they were more prone to take matters into their own hands regarding forms of assistance to their "home" communities/countries and did not want to become dependent upon German governmental bodies or help organizations. 'Autonomy' was the key word when working with German religious organizations or federally funded organizations. We found that the aspect of gender played a minimal role in networking and forming alliances in terms of "giving back" to their communities. Although women created, organized and kept many of these groups functioning, they did not separate themselves completely from working with male members of their communities, nor were women and girls exclusively the sole benefactors of such initiatives or projects. This finding became quite evident to us in looking at projects that benefited children regardless of gender, e.g. Dolly Obregón's Street Children's Project. We attribute this factor to the necessity and expediency in regard to the needs of "home" communities over the aspect of gender relations. Gender often plays a secondary role in the common struggle to aid and attend to the needs of members of the "home" or local communities.

Most outstanding in our findings was the tendency for East African women to organize and create projects not only for their communities in the Diaspora, but also for their communities at home²⁰. In regard to Latin America and the Caribbean, Dolly Obregón was the sole interview partner we found from this region.

Based on the experiences of women's organizations encountered within the frame of our research, we view the activities of these migrant women's groups as forms of "sustainable development"²¹. Quoting two of our informants, Charlotte Njikoufon and Virginia Wangare-Greiner, we employ this term within the context of the conclusion, because we view the activities of these groups not only as steps towards securing essential needs for now and in the future, but also as inspiring feminist practices to support and further the empowerment of present as well as future generations of women. Furthermore, we also see another layer in the definition of sustainable development, a topic primarily associated with developmental assistance coming from the industrialized nations. We believe that the work done by these women makes use of a potential, which has been long overlooked and underutilized, diaspora philanthropy as practised by women.

- ¹⁾ Although the vast majority of it former guest workers decided to return to their countries of origin (70% of thirty million returned between 1960 and 1999) (www.integrationsbeauftragte.de 2001.5), the remaining 30% constitute Germany's current population of migrant descent.
- ²⁾ See update 26.1.06. www.destatis.de/basis/e/bevoe/bevoetab4.htm.
- ³⁾ The term Aussiedler (often translated as resettlers) refers to groups of ethnic Germans, who settled in countries such as Romania (Siebenbürgern), parts of Poland, the former Yugoslavia, Czech Republic and Russia. The late 1980s and the early post-reunification years witnessed the return of a significant number of these Groups, who were by "blood" – ius sanguinis – German. However, due to deficient German language skills and their Eastern European socialization, Aussiedler were often not readily accepted nor considered German by many West Germans.
- ⁴⁾ [http:// www.genderequality.ca](http://www.genderequality.ca)
- ⁵⁾ On January 1, 2000 Germany modified its longstanding citizenship laws, which were rooted in the principle of ius sanguinis (law of blood) with elements of ius solis (law of soil). Therefore granting vast numbers of long-term migrant residents the possibility to obtain German citizenship.
- ⁶⁾ German abbreviation for (eingetragene Verein) and indicates an officially registered organization. Many of the organizations we contacted were registered organizations, while others were not.
- ⁷⁾ Ban-Ying remains, as of now, the sole counselling centre for Thai women in Berlin.
- ⁸⁾ The existence of racism within Thai society plays a significant role in cases of forced migration stemming from Thailand. Ms. Prasad told us of a case where an Afro-Thai woman was ostracized in her village due to her 'mixed-race' background and wanted desperately to leave Thailand. This woman did not have access to information on informed migration and became entangled in a trafficking ring in Germany and later sought assistance from Ban-Ying in Berlin. According to Ms. Prasad this problem exists also for individuals of Thai-White European and Thai-Japanese descent.
- ⁹⁾ Ms. Njikoufon particularly stressed the necessity for projects and initiatives in Togo due to the political domination and exploitation during the Eyadéma military government. Under Eyadéma's rule Togolese, non-governmental organizations were forbidden.
- ¹⁰⁾ The Bamoun people of Cameroon represent one of the hundreds of Cameroonian ethnic groups located in the Western area of the country.
- ¹¹⁾ Fadumo Korn donates part of her book revenues to help finance Forward's projects.
- ¹²⁾ We find it important to mention that on June 29, 2006 Virginia Wangare-Greiner received the Bundesverdienstkreuz (English: Federal Cross of Merit). It is awarded in honor of exceptional political, economic, cultural, intellectual and volunteer achievements and is the sole state decoration of the Federal Republic of Germany.
- ¹³⁾ By "two-directional" we make reference to the direction of remittance not only abroad, but also to the local diaspora and community.
- ¹⁴⁾ Afasse Gamade, a registered nurse who has worked in Sudanese refugee camps during the mid 1990's,ascertains that therapeutic outlets for individuals subjected to forced migration and displacement are important due to the emotional and psychological repercussions. She believes that one's mental health is equally important as one's material needs.
- ¹⁵⁾ Due to the restrictive legislation regarding money transfers after the September 11th attack on the World Trade Center in New York City, the "Al-Barakah" system was abandoned because non-official systems of monetary transferal became illegal.
- ¹⁶⁾ Coined in 1985, the term Afro-German, until a few years ago, pointed to persons of 'mixed-race' backgrounds, who stemmed from one White German parent (mostly the matrilineal side) and one parent from the African diaspora (mostly the patrilineal side). This is no longer true. The term has expanded to include anyone of African diasporan heritage, who self – identifies as German (in terms of socialization and location) regardless of the 'origin' of one's parents.
- ¹⁷⁾ Women of the Asian and Jewish Diaspora have are also been invited to work together within the realm of ADEFRA.
- ¹⁸⁾ Interview excerpt with Kulani Gudina 30 April 2006 .
- ¹⁹⁾ We employ the term White German to demonstrate that not all Germans citizens are socially constructed as White and that the German population reflects a variety of non-White individuals, who identify as German.
- ²⁰⁾ This is not to say that West African women do not organize on behalf of their communities. We merely point to the fact that we were only able to find one project/ initiative created by a West African woman (Charlotte Njikoufon). This is important because in terms of statistics (see diasporic population table), West African diasporic communities in Germany outnumber diasporic communities from East Africa.
- ²¹⁾ "Development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. It contains within it two key concepts: the concept of 'needs', in particular the essential needs of the world's poor, to which overriding priority should be given; and the idea of limitations imposed by the state of technology and social organization on the environment's ability to meet present and future needs" (Brundtland Commission,1987).
- ²²⁾ The spokesperson of the organization (Charlotte Njikoufon) made reference to the term sustainable development.
- ²³⁾ Bundesministerium für wirtschaftliche Zusammenarbeit und Entwicklung.
- ²⁴⁾ English: Intensification and Further Development of Psychosocial Support for Refugee Women.
- ²⁵⁾ English: European Refugee Fund.
- ²⁶⁾ English: Stop forced marriage.

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ANNEX A

Table 1 > German non-nationals in Germany

Countries of Origin	Total Population
Europe (EU nations)	5.375.180
Turkey	1.764.041
Africa	
Morocco	71.639
Ghana	20.609
Nigeria	15.544
Cameroon	14.272
Ethiopia	10.964
Eritrea	930
Somalia	5.613
Latin America and the Caribbean	
Brazil	28.902
Columbia	9.578
Cuba	8.792
Dominican Republic	5.822
South Central and Eastern Asia	
India	40.099
Pakistan	30.034
Philippines	20.233
China	73.767
Kazakhstan	59.370

Source Federal Statistics Office Germany, 31.12.2005.

ANNEX B

Table of women / organizations interviewed in Germany

Interview partner/ and Organization	Country of origin / Geographical area
Nita Prasad Ban Ying e.V. Berlin (1988)	Southeast Asia
Dolly Obregón Strassenkinderprojekt e.V. Berlin (1994)	Columbia and Guatemala
Arfasse Gamade Hilfsorganization Der Oromo Relief Association e.V. Berlin (1980)	Oromiyaa, Ethiopia
Ekpenyong Ani ADEFRA e.V. Berlin (1986)	Berlin, Germany
Kulani Gudina OromoFrauen (e.V) Frankfurt (1998)	Oromiyaa, Ethiopia
Virginia Wangare Greiner MAISHA e.V. Frankfurt/Selbsthilfe Gruppe afrikanischer Frauen in Deutschland (1990/became registered in 1996)	Various African countries
Fadumo Korn Forward Germany e.V. Munich (1998)	Somalia
Charlotte Nijikoufon KONE "Solidarität" (2002)	Cameroon/Togo

Purpose of the organization**Diaspora activities**

Provides a support network of legal and psychosocial assistance to women who have been trafficked or have been victimized by domestic violence.

Trafficking prevention and informed migration. Ban Ying is partially financed by a German Federal State (Berlin) institution and private contributions. The organization networks with various NGOs, i.e. GAATW, SOLIDAR, PICUM.

Street Children's Project provides financial assistance (school fees) for primary school education. Provides clothing, food and shelter for homeless children.

Socio-cultural and economic investment in the future of Colombia and Guatemala.

The project Fundación Arca de Salvación is funded by Obregón and her family members in Europe. Ms. Obregón networks with local partners in Berlin area ,e.g. Berlin Hausprojekt KUB e.V, Jugendamt Berlin, Streetworker/Innen, Alexanderplatz AG Krisen CONIS GmbH., Piranha GmbH. (Empresa Hogar) sponsored by the Argentine NGO Sosteniendo Juntos.

Support and monetary assistance to Oromo refugees in the Horn of Africa. Documentation of human rights abuses.

Maintenance of cultural links to the Oromo population in Ethiopia. Garneres public awareness and media attention to the situation of the Oromo people. The members of H-ORA participate in fundraising activities, i.e. art exhibitions. Some funding is secured via private contributions from individual members.

Building international and national networks with other women of colour groups. Political education, homophobia and anti-racism awareness, computer courses for women of colour.

Intercultural exchange with countries having significant African diasporic populations, i.e. United States. Source of funding: ADEFRA membership dues and occasional sponsors

Monetary support to Oromo women and self-empowerment

Mentoring of Oromo families in Ethiopia, intergenerational transmitter of cultural goods. Self-empowerment tactics for Oromo women in Ethiopia and in the Frankfurt/Hessen area. Personal financial contributions of the Frankfurt area's members.

Mutual support and assistance to African women in economic, social and cultural matters, i.e. employment, education, German bureaucracy and authorities, crisis management, and issues regarding societal integration.

Participation in political events in the respective African countries of the organization's members. Finances elementary school fees for young girls in Kenya. MAISHA raises funding primarily from private donations by the women of MAISHA. Emergency travel fund, Frauen sparverein, Mother/child fund Travel budget for conferences or meetings is financed partially by Weltrat der Kirchen.

Awareness and prevention of FGM. Social and economic empowerment of women in Somalia.

School project for girls, discussion and negotiation of FGM practices and Hühnerfarm (Chicken farm project).Funding secured by membership dues, lecture fees, (a percentage of Ms. Korn book revenues) public and private donations.

Assistance for "priority problems" of women in rural areas, i.e. water wells, mills for grinding corn etc., healthcare services. Also formal education and training in management and entrepreneurial skills. Creation of an umbrella organization amongst women from various ethnic groups in Cameroon residing in rural areas. There exists a similar parallel project in Togo

Self-empowerment and sustainable development²² for women in Cameroon and Togo. The women of KONE attempted to raise funding via their own personal donations.Unfortunately the funding was insufficient and the group therefore did not qualify for additional funding by the German developmental funding body BMZ²³.

Table of women / organizations interviewed in Germany

Interview partner/ and Organization

Country of origin / Geographical area

Dorothee Helou
SOLWODI
e.V. Germany (1987)
Chapter can be found in Boppard,
Mainz, Koblenz, Ludwigshafen,
Duisburg, Osnabrück and Bad Kissingen.

Kenya

Charlotte Njikoufon
KONE 'Solidarität' (2002)

Cameroon/Togo

Asia Abdulkadir
Association for Promoting Women and Girls Advancement in the Gambia (1999/2001)

The Gambia

Isil Yildirim/Jea Soon Joo Schauen
AGISRA (1993)
Arbeitsgemeinschaft gegen internationale sexuelle und rassistische Ausbeutung

AGISRA supports and assists refugee,
migrant, Jewish and African diasporan
women from various countries.

Purpose of the organization

SOLWODI was created in 1985 in Kenya together with Kenyan women and Dr. Lea Ackerman (a Catholic sister) to aid women, who found themselves with little or no choice other than to find work in sex tourism in Kenya. In 1987 a chapter was established in Germany to assist and protect migrant women (largely from Africa) who came to Germany either as irregular migrants, forced sex workers, or catalogue brides.

In 1997 SOLWODI acquired NGO status in Kenya. SOLWODI Deutschland began and remains a co-operation between migrant and German women. Assistance and support network to African (Kenyan) women seeking to leave the sex tourism industry.

1987 – Chapter established in Germany to assist and protect migrant women (largely from Africa) who came to Germany either as irregular migrants, forced sex workers, or catalogue brides.

1997 – SOLWODI became an NGO in Kenya

Assistance in attending to “priority problems” of women in rural areas, i.e. water wells, mills for grinding corn etc. healthcare services. Also formal education and training in economic management and entrepreneurial skills.

Healthcare awareness

AGISRA's primary purpose is to assist migrant and refugee women in protecting themselves against various forms of violence, i.e. racism. One of the few legal and psychosocial information centres, which support and free consultation centres from migrant women for migrant, refugee, Jewish and African diasporan women in Germany. Streetwork (Street or telephone contact to sex workers primarily with migrant backgrounds), AGISRA provides healthcare information and psycho-social support.

Diaspora activities

Rückkehrprojekt
Repatriation project for African women to return to their countries of origin. Partially funded by the public donations. SOLWODI networks with the following organizations: Aktion Mensch e.V., KOFIZA Munich, AGISRA Frankfurt and Cologne, Sozialdienst katholischer Frauen Informationszentrum Stuttgart and AIDS-Hilfe.

SOLWODI launched a nation-wide campaign, “Rote Karte” to protest the exploitation and trafficking of women for the sex sector during the 2006 World Soccer Championships in Germany.

SOLWODI Deutschland began and remains a co-operation between migrant women and German women.

Creation of an umbrella organization amongst women from various ethnic groups in Cameroon residing in rural areas. A similar model project in Togo.

Self-empowerment and sustainable development for women in Cameroon and Togo. The women of KONE attempted to raise funding via their own personal donations, which were unfortunately insufficient and therefore did not qualify for funding by the German developmental funding body BMZ

Youth camp for Gambian adolescents. Intends to create additional projects in the future. The project is funded by a private foundation.

Recent Projects: “Intensivierung und Weiterentwicklung der psychosozialen Unterstützung für Flüchtlingsfrauen”²⁴

Legal consultation and psychosocial assistance to refugee women: August 2004-September 2005. Two paid positions for the project were partially funded by the Europäischen Flüchtlingsfonds (EFF)²⁵ and the North Rhine Westphalia state employment centre.

Current Project: “Stoppt den Zwang zur Heirat”²⁶

Forced marriage and honor related violence against girls and women. The project began in 2004 and was extended. It is scheduled to run from May 2005-December 2006. AGISRA finances its projects via volunteer work, fees received from workshops and seminars donations, membership fees and partial financial support from the German Federal State of North Rhine Westphalia.

Erratum

Amsterdam, December 6th, 2006

Unfortunately an error has occurred in the research report **(she gives back)**. The French organization referred to as **'Femmes d'Ici et d'Ailleurs'** in the following chapter 5: 'Diaspora Philanthropy and female migrants in France', is since November 2006 called **'Solidarité Entre-Elles'**.

During the printing of the report **(she gives back)**, it was not known to this group that there was already an organization called 'Femmes d'Ici et d'Ailleurs' in France. Once they found out, they have changed their name to 'Solidarité Entre-Elles', registered in Paris.

Mariama Coulibaly, the organization's president, extends the group's apologies for any confusion.

5 > Diaspora philanthropy and female migrants in France

by Carol Mann

Introduction

This report charts an ongoing process, describing the complexities of the role of female migrants in diaspora philanthropy, which is in very early stages in France. Philanthropic projects have been undertaken by men, especially in sub-Saharan Africa and the Maghreb, since the 1970s and initially concern aid to communities in home villages, in fact extended family. As women are generally the recipients, being mothers/wives of migrant men, they have been the unofficial partners (if not managers) in such projects in the home base. Their efforts will prove to have lasting consequences on their self-confidence, their families and their communities and will be explored further in this report.

The report is based on twenty-two interviews with women involved in community and development activities through associations. Although the original intention was to map diaspora philanthropy, it became clear through the interviews that the women had much to say about constraints and the institutional structure of France as well as perceived cultural barriers. Finding groups has been exceedingly difficult: For a start, many that are listed in directories or online no longer function; then when contacted, many are reticent to give any kind of information. The present political agitation in France and the growth of xenophobia is part of it, backed by the policies of rightist Interior minister Nicolas Sarkozy. Finally, in the interviews it became clear that much of their energy goes into programmes to aid integration or to be afforded state subsidies, while most of those seeking to 'give back' in the country of origin remain at the planning stage. Nevertheless, I have been able to find a few remarkable projects in the process of being carried out that reflect the exceptional ambition and clear-sightedness of those women who have both the vision and drive to organize them from start to finish. Although some of these factors may not be unique to the situation in France, it is clear that they form the premise under which migrant organizations perform and speak about their philanthropic activities in France.

This report begins by giving some background information on immigration to France and the political discourse and statistics surrounding it. It then broadly discusses the contributions migrants make to their countries of origin through remittances, organizations and aid. The third section then relays the information collected through the interviews regarding the women's motivations, activities, backgrounds, and organizational aspects. The final part of the report highlights various constraints, related both to their gender, status as a migrant, and available resources, as expressed by the various migrant women involved in philanthropic activities as interviewed for this report.

Discourse and policy on immigration in France

The first part of this report starts by considering essential factors regarding immigration in France, through which the place of female migration specifically can be considered. The paramount importance of 'integration' in

France, for instance, makes it important to understand how these women are made to fit into French society and the evident failure of this national project in recent years. Multiculturalism as in the British model has never been the aim, but rather the French model runs on quite contrary premises. The growth of migrant 'associations', during Socialist President Mitterrand's mandate has had unique consequences on French civil society that need to be explained. After explaining the general history of immigration in France, this section will look more specifically at two types of migration relevant to this specific research on diaspora philanthropy, the economic or family based migration of women and politically based migration.

Who is an immigrant in France?

According to French government definitions "the immigrant population is made up of persons who live in France and who were born with a foreign nationality in a foreign land."¹ This entails that they may retain the nationality of origin or become French without affecting their migrant status. The law regarding the nationality of children was changed twice between 1990 and 1999. Today, children born in France from foreign-born parents are deemed foreign at birth and may acquire the French nationality at 18, which counters traditional French assimilationist policy. In the same family, children of migrants born before 1990 may hold French passport whereas their younger siblings retain their parents' nationality. This means that 'migrants' continue to be born in France, with complex and potentially conflicting allegiances. True integration is problematic. Even when they have been granted French nationality (about one third of the total and women more than men), they are still considered as migrants and may face prejudice, even discrimination. The same holds true of their children who are not considered in official migrant census, but may well consider themselves as migrants. These problems, largely unacknowledged by the authorities, are all the more exemplified in the long-standing ban on collecting data on ethnicity. Migrants from French territories in the Caribbean and Africa (La Réunion) of African origin, being French nationals, are not included in these statistics, but may be numerous. So it is hard to evaluate the true figures and officially, since 1975, the migrant population is deemed to have been constant at around 7,4% of the total population which totals around 60 million inhabitants.

References to nationality in the present paper describe people holding non-French passports whose older children or long-established parents may hold French passports: the absence of true ethnic statistics blurs the reality. Officially, the latest statistics show that most registered migrants to France come from Europe (45%) with a majority of Portuguese (13,3%) and about the same number from former Eastern-bloc countries which unlike the others are dominantly female migrants countries. The African continent provides 39,3%, with 13,4% from Algeria, 12,1% from Morocco and 9,1% from sub-Saharan Africa. 8,7% migrants are from the Far-East (including 3,7% from Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia) and 4% hail from Turkey (INSEE, 2005).

Brief history of immigration to France

France has a long tradition of immigration, due to a dual process that appears to have been unique in Europe, the simultaneous drop in birth rates and the rise of industrialization starting from the late 18th century. In fact, until 1950, France was by far the country in Europe which received the greatest numbers of migrants.

Well before other countries in Europe, foreign migration to France was encouraged from the mid 19th century onwards. Contrary to Germany for instance, assimilation into the French nation seems to have been the aim from the start through compulsory schooling which stressed French values and history and the comparatively easy acquisition of French nationality; in this way social ascension was intended to coincide with access to French identity. In French egalitarianism, there is little or no room for non-French influence in state education and institutions and an explicit prohibition of any kind of visible religious insignia is enforced by law, and religious or cultural education has to be undertaken privately.

The state sought actively to bring in migrants from neighbouring countries after World War I when about one million and a half Frenchmen had been killed or maimed in the war. Treaties were signed with other European countries, workers were brought in from the colonies in the Maghreb and established trends in migration that continued until the 1970s. For instance, different forms of migration include Polish communities established in the mining areas of the north of France and eastern France in the 1920s and 1930s and labour intensive crops in the South which attracted seasonal workers from frontier regions. This kind of seasonal configuration only concerned male workers, although some work situations were flexible and they ended up settling, bringing over dependants, as the presence of old-established Italian and Maghreb communities in the southern provinces of France

In the late Thirties, migrants represented nearly 7% of the total French population, close to what it is today, and higher than what it was in the United States at the same time. With the economic crisis, the government sought to restrict immigration; at the onset of World War II, many migrants left the country and in 1945 represented only 5% of the French population (INSEE, 2005).

In the post-war years, France had an urgent need for help in reconstruction and recruited labour, especially Italian, Spanish, Portuguese, but these proved insufficient. With the rise of the standard of living all over Europe after the founding of the European Community these migrants were no longer so motivated to come to France, even though Italians were still the dominant immigrant group, representing about one third of the total number of migrants. Henceforth immigration was to be carefully monitored and regulated through the Office National de l'Immigration (ONI), founded in 1945 which allows for family migration. Whilst other European countries were creating closer links with their neighbours, France did the opposite receiving fewer immigrants from Europe and more from its former colonies in north and Sub-Saharan Africa and South-East Asia, namely the

Maghreb (North-West Africa: Algeria, Morocco, Tunisia), certain countries in Sub-Saharan Africa (what is today mainly Senegal, Mali, Ivory Coast, Burkina-Faso) Indochina (Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos) and the DOM-TOM (Départements d'outre-mer and Territoires d'outre-mer) like Guadeloupe, Martinique and French Guyana (in the Caribbean) and Reunion Island (in the Indian Ocean). Single workmen, especially the growing number of Algerians were housed in infamous state-run hostels built by SONACOTRA (Société Nationale de Construction pour le Logement des Travailleurs) designed for single male workers in order to discourage migration of families, but families nevertheless kept migrating.

The migration of women

In the mid 1970s, because of the economic crisis following the sharp rise of petrol prices, migration was restricted to family groupings (which it actually encouraged), which means that henceforth, women, at that time as dependents and later as independents were the main migrants to France, reversing the traditional trend. Polygamous husbands were tacitly allowed to bring in multiple wives, which generated innumerable problems as France had not considered the gender implications of its immigration policies, including lodging which became catastrophic. The newly arrived Maghrebi, African and DOM-TOM (Départements d'outre-mer and Territoires d'outre-mer) communities were relocated in poorer neighbourhoods in Paris and especially the new outlying suburbs expressly built. The younger generation developed a sense of urban community establishing transcultural solidarity links with their contemporaries largely through school, housing blocks and local social structures, something which the renowned film 'La Haine' shows well.

From the middle 1990s, a new trend has been observed, the increasing independent migration of women replacing men as heads of households and including unattached women with career agendas of their own. The transnational focus of today's migration allows for the active maintenance of links with the communities of origin, especially through cheaper telephone calls, internet and travel (INSTRAW). Today the numbers of male and female migrants on French soil are about the same, with an expected growth on the female side. This is due to the ageing population, and increasingly independent female migration since 1990 especially from South-East Asia and the former Eastern bloc, as well as the unregistered predominantly female Filipina migration (INSEE 2005).

Political migration to France

In addition to post-colonial and labour migration, the migration of refugees and those fleeing for political reasons have also contributed to the migrant population in France. In 1952, France signed the Geneva Convention and established the Office français de protection des réfugiés et apatrides (OFPRA) which decides on who may receive the status of political refugee (as opposed to economic migrant) and therefore be entitled to aid from the state. Migration to France for political reasons has been continuous. 1973 saw the first major wave of non-

European refugees from Chile; after the fall of Saigon in 1975, the French government accepted, through a quota system, refugees from Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia. In the 1980s, the numbers of entries tripled as a result of conflicts in Africa (Angola, Zaire), Sri-Lanka, Haiti, Turkey (Kurds), followed by ex-Yugoslavs and refugees from other world conflicts.

Today, there are about 100.000 political refugees. Half of them come from four main countries: Sri-Lanka, Cambodia, Vietnam and Turkey. However, these statistics do not reflect the numbers in transition on temporary permits of which about 60.000 are filed every year and concern mainly Russians, Algerian intellectuals, and those from conflict zones in Africa, Turkey and China.

Remittances, organizations and aid

The second part of this paper considers the link between remittance economy and migrant organizations in broad lines. In this part, the history of collective action of specific groups in France is briefly examined and the ways women first remit to help their families and later move on to undertake some kind of organized aid are discussed.

History of collective action in France

In colonial days and immediately afterwards, the middle-class migrants coming for their education established expatriate groups designed to help members of their own community. Because of a law stipulating that such associations be presided by French nationals, this role was often taken by French men and women who had lived in the colonies. Much philanthropic work today in former colonies (especially in South-East Asia) continues to be undertaken by former colonialists who have preserved strong ties with these countries.

In 1980 Socialist president François Mitterrand came into power, reversed the law and allowed non-French migrants to create their own associations; as a result thousands were created throughout the 1980s. It is hard to deduce how many such associations have been created by women, but in the last official listing RNAF (Registre national des associations françaises) dated July 2004, there were 1.828 groups including the word 'femmes' (women) of which 401 appeared to be linked to migrants, integration and development alike². Because of the ease in which such community organizations can be started, many, perhaps half or more, exist just for one project and then disappear.

Remittances and philanthropy

Migrants working away from their home base remit money to their families and their communities in four distinct manners, which may concur separately or in a related manner: First of all, many migrants regularly send a variable portion of their income to relatives through formal or informal ways; others invest in enterprise in their own name or for their families; some remit in an occasional manner following catastrophes (earthquake or

war); and finally, collective remittances are sent by migrant associations to support selected initiatives. These remittances represent a large circulation of funds, which has been the focus of study in recent economic literature. The gender dimension is an insufficiently researched aspect and this report attempts to review the situation in France where female migrants are about to outnumber their male counterparts and are increasingly involving their own incomes in remittances in one form or another.

It is significant that there is no direct correlation between the levels of employment and of remittance. Communities that fit into the highest or the lowest levels of employment appear to contribute the highest remittances. This is the case for migrants from Portugal (lowest level of unemployment in France), Turkey (highest level of unemployment) or Philippines (undocumented) which all receive the highest volume of remittances.

This absence of direct correlation, indeed asymmetry, between employment, level of income and remittances is particularly significant when focusing on the contributions of women. Countless migrant women are working in the informal economy, in shops, the service sector, or in their homes, especially in piecemeal garment manufacturing (Merckling 2003). Family businesses run by Turkish, Indian, and to a lesser degree Pakistani and Maghreb all employ their female relatives, but it is doubtful whether their contribution is indicated in statistics that only list market activities, traceable through recorded cash transactions. Domestic sector work disappears from statistics, and women working in these informal sectors are registered, in the French official statistics, as 'sans profession', without occupation. In this situation, the income that they generate is rarely quantified and is poured into the general flow of remittances³.

Creating aid projects and contributing money outside the family often requires collective effort. Aid projects combine aspects from both forms of donation: the long-term from family remittance and the sense of urgency from sudden disasters. All over the world, immigrants have contributed to their own burial societies which across the years have been transformed into credit unions and informal health insurance providers. This organized form of remittance is especially important for sub-Saharan African communities who have been drilling wells and rebuilding the villages of their extended families in this way. At home, women are the main recipients of remittances, as the men are abroad, so they also administer the funds. Villages are often organized in local associations and indeed women are used to lead and promote collective action, something they will be able to duplicate in part when they migrate in groups, especially if they come from the same village. On whatever basis, be it culture, origins, education or political principles, cohesion and solidarity are essential when envisaging collective aid projects. Migrants have always sent money home when wars or natural catastrophes hit their home countries: Filipinas and Turks reacted collectively after earthquakes, just as the Sri Lankans responded massively to the tsunami. Churches and mosques with migrant congregations are particularly active in this respect.

While acknowledging multiple ways migrants contribute to their countries of origin, this report focuses primarily on migrants involved in diaspora philanthropy through organizations they have set up in France. Unlike remittance economy conducted on a personal level, philanthropy projects as a form of collective remittance depend on a positive relationship both with the country of origin and that of destination. This topic will be explored further in the next section.

Migrant women and diaspora philanthropy

Women's diaspora philanthropy is just beginning to be documented in France. This section considers the philanthropy projects in themselves – whom they are started by, what it takes to succeed and equally important, why some organizations have not fully succeeded for the time being. The associations interviewed are listed in appendix B.

Much information was given by very helpful umbrella organizations (FORIM) and agencies to help project elaboration (GRDR, IFAFE). FORIM is the main state-sponsored intermediary which attempts to bring the migrant associations together and circulate information; unfortunately much of this is not kept up-to-date. RAJFIRE (*Réseau pour l'autonomie des femmes migrantes immigrées et réfugiées*) is creating a database on women's associations in France. GRDR is a particularly efficient non-profit, area-specific aid agency working in Senegal, Mali and Burkina Faso. Additional information was offered by structures designed to help migrants (IFAFE works with African women, ACCORT for Turkish Migrants, IDD for Moroccans).

Motivations and Projects

In this study, the migrant women interviewed in France are far more involved in projects concerning their immediate environment that can help their children at school or in their neighbourhood; however, a number of projects focused on their communities of origin or international development were also found.

Amongst the organizations interviewed, four main lines of motivation were identified, as listed below:

1 > *The limitations of remittance to the family*

The question here is to ascertain when the step from helping one's kin leads to envisage aid to the community. Many women interviewed separate help to the family in the home country from aid issues. "The family remains the family, that's sacred, they'll always be the priority," says Fanta (Segou à Paris). Yet sometimes, this simply is not enough. Madeleine Kankolongo Ndaye explains, "The family is just one unit, you have to look around; put it this way, if you're the only one who's healthy amid people who are all sick, it doesn't make you happy, does it." Help can become a mutually taxing burden.

Munkahtuya Baasankhue (Senna) from Mongolia laments:

I've been here ten years and sending money to my family back home; I thought it would help them to become more independent, but in fact it's made them more passive and demanding. When I suggested starting a project, they said what for? It's easier if you send the money directly. So that put me off helping them, as I realized I was simply fuelling their passivity. My family just can't imagine how little money I have here and how hard life is. But I've always wanted to help my country, so I thought of exporting crafts made by women. I went to the poorest areas of our capital city Ulan-Bator where women make traditional clothes from yak felt: I suggested ways of modernizing designs for children's booties, bags and hats suitable for the French market. They responded enthusiastically, I commissioned and purchased a first consignment and brought these objects over to France to sell, but I didn't realize how difficult that would be.

Nafi Ba (Pepinières Vertes du Sahel) echoes some of this. She does not believe in just sending remittances and prefers investment in income-generating projects for women. Her aim is to introduce fruit trees, small scale-farming and husbandry in desert areas to make these remote villages self-sufficient:

It has to be done on a small scale, village by village, each carefully chosen. Initially as an experiment, we chose the poorest family, one that had no well and planted a few trees on their compound which they looked after. Then others wanted the same... I soon realized that if you give plants away, people don't respect them. However if they have to buy it even at a nominal sum, they look after their hard-earned investment instead of squandering a gift.

Nafi Ba organizes the sale of plants and saplings, carefully chosen in relation to the environment, and teaches the women how to cultivate and benefit from them. In one successful case, she encouraged a school to invest in citrus trees. "The whole school got involved in planting the trees and today the sale of lemons, an expensive commodity in that part of Africa, contributes to school supplies and the upkeep of the building." She is hoping to generalize this practice in the region.

2 > Advancing development and well-being in country of origin

When migrants decide to launch themselves into some kind of aid action, the initial motivations are spontaneous and emotional; they generally come from a realization of the gap of material development between the country of origin and the country of residence. The desire to 'give back' is particularly strong amongst migrant women who feel that they want to share what they have achieved in the country of migration: minimal comfort, education or professional competence. "Our kids have everything here, in Ségou they have nothing, we have to do something about that" says Bakia of 'Ségou à Paris'. Ouarda Kanoui (Action pour l'humanité) says,

I had such a hard childhood; I know how children feel when they are confronted with violence. I have been able to survive and make a life for myself here in France and that's why, in my own way, I want to help street kids in Casablanca where I come from.

Help is often geared towards the future. Women who become involved often cite their children as the starting point, saying: "We want to build a better world for our

children." This remains a way of maintaining positive links with the country of origin. Fanta's (Segou à Paris) reaction, expressing a broader concern with what is going on at home, is also quite typical: "We want to save the poor children. You have no idea, so many homeless kids with nothing to eat; they're going to die if we don't do anything." Or, as Ouarda Kanaoui (Action pour l'humanité) voices, "I'm so upset about the street kids, the boys, the girls who end up in prostitution, the kids who get beaten at home, I want to help them all."

Some projects focus on one specific need. Nhu-Mai Nguyen Dac of UGVF is a retired chemical engineer working on projects countering the effects of dioxin (agent orange) in Vietnam. Born in France, Chaadia Arab of Crepuscule, a social sciences graduate, wanted to share some of the advantages she had grown up with by building a library and play centre for a small Moroccan village: "We knew we could bring the idea of playing to children whose families had no idea that this was a vital learning experience for them."

Several projects establish new forms of economic development in impoverished areas. Nafi Ba of 'Pépinères Vertes du Sahel,' a trained agronomist and specialist in desertification, felt her skills could be put to great use: "The northern part of Senegal needs an ecology-sensitive approach and I feel this is what I can bring, after years of working in this field." Marie Duhammel (TADDART), daughter of an Algerian migrant, started her solidarity-based travel agency on a simple idea: "Traditional tourism exploits local people. I wanted to reverse this process by turning it into an aid to localized development." TADDART's project organizes trips to remote locations in Mali, Morocco, Albania and Ecuador in order to aid local development and generate small scale enterprise and crafts. Caravanserail des Femmes' and Sanna's projects are based on a similar motivation. Caravanserail des Femmes, as Nadia Chabaane explains, seeks to encourage women's handicrafts for the local market, not the fluctuating tourist trade. As Munkahtuya Baasankhue's (Sanna) expresses about their project, "Nobody knows much about Mongolia here; women's handicrafts seemed to be a good introduction, especially working with women from the poorest neighbourhood who are encouraged by interest from abroad."

3 > Political motivations and war

Wars in the country of origin generate spontaneous collective action on behalf of migrants concerned. Whereas natural disasters (earthquakes in Turkey, tsunami in South East Asia) spur single acts of generosity, involvement with a war is a long drawn-out affair as the charity often acquires some kind of political representation.

Political refugees are granted a particular legal status, which gives them immediate access to health services and government grants. They therefore begin life in France on a comparatively privileged basis, however meagre in real terms.

Many political migrants are middle-class and educated with different aims than economic migrants. The women interviewed tended to create projects supporting the opposition. AMULP (Asociación Mujeres Uruguayas

Lourdes Pintos) is a particularly successful example of this kind of configuration. It was founded in 1983 by political refugees from Uruguay who wished to create a social health project consistent with the ideology they had originally been persecuted for. AMULP has been successful in developing projects which stimulate local economy whilst aiding abroad. They have created employment through apprenticeships for young people in the rough suburb Aulnay-sous-Bois where AMULP is situated, and therefore they have received help from local authorities. Because of the continued value to their community both in France and in Uruguay, their projects have been able to evolve over the years and accommodate positively the changes in the government in the country of origin. This uniquely enterprising group also runs a successful catering service specialized in South American food using Fair Trade products. Their customers are informed about the health projects that the group is supporting in Uruguay. The ambulant polyclinic they fund through their catering service continues to function, and they were able to add new projects when the government changed. Another organization, La Source, was founded by Madeleine Kankolongo Ndaye from Congo DRC who had been prominent politically before the fall of Mobutu in 1997. The aim is to continue to support the school she had founded in the Kananga region, despite the fall of the political party she had been a part of.

Another politically influenced premise often driving involvement abroad is that governments at home are considered inefficient or corrupt. It follows therefore that migrants can and should make a substantial contribution towards change. As Bakia (Segou à Paris) put it: "When we saw all those orphans from the madrasa begging in rags in the street, we felt we had to do something, as all the mayor was busy with was putting up traffic lights in the main street." Similarly AMC's project in the Congo-Kinchassa was in response to the complete unavailability of medical help for a cluster of twenty-five villages. "If we don't do anything, nobody will, as our country still has not recovered from the war," says Emilie (AMC).

Sadija Ombasic (SSVDS) has similar motivations: "The Bosnian government doesn't care about the widows of the Srebrenica massacre; all the help they get comes from associations like mine. We just can't let them down." Sadija, founder of SSVDS, is a settled migrant from ex-Yugoslavia who came in 1967 and has been working since the early 1970s as a caretaker. A Bosnian herself from the Tuzla area, she felt compelled to help the widows and children of the men who had been massacred in Srebrenica in the 1995 conflict. As a result, she was met with hostility by members of the Serb community in France, with whom she had formerly been close. At one point, she was involved in a course for Bosnian Yugoslav immigrant children, designed for the upkeep of their language and traditions. Otherwise, she has been sending convoys full of medical aid, clothing and food-stuffs to the Tuzla area. Much of the money raised was spent on hiring trucks, since the clothing is being donated and food is purchased through wholesalers who collect supermarket surplus for charitable donations. Her organization also acts as a centre for information about the local situation. "As a result, I've been called 'Mama Bosna.' Journalists call on me before going to Srebrenica, and I give them all the contacts they need."

Political motivations also continue to underlie many projects which originated in militant student organizations. Dr. Thérèse Ky, who came from Vietnam to study in France in 1950, belonged to such groups and became one of the founder members of the UGVF (Union Générale des Vietnamiens de France) which was started in 1976 to reconstruct post-war Vietnam. The anti-colonial political stance of the Sixties and Seventies was carried through later when former female students such as Khadi Sako and Damarys Ma also became involved in programmes specifically geared to helping other migrant women construct their own aid projects. "We are less political now, we help women whose projects are more grounded in immediate practical issues here in France or in Africa," explains Khadi Sako. The present trend seems to exemplify that associations with a political background are branching out towards development.

Mariama Koulibala's (Femmes d'Ici et d'Ailleurs) new project, building a crèche for Bamako's Women's prison, shows real social and political vision: "The idea is that the prisoners can build the crèche and then learn a trade while their children are being looked after; they'll need that as when they come out, they are outcasts, rejected from society." The charity hopes to provide the money for the women themselves to build the crèche.

4 > Assistance for other migrants in France

For many organizations started by migrants, the priority is generally aiding women to settle in France, obtain health coverage and organize schooling. The action is done informally. At the next stage, when the women feel settled enough to look further than their own predicament, projects directed towards the country of origin are envisaged. As Buni Kogbe (Nigerian Women in Paris) explains, "Our association is the first place Nigerians come to when they arrive here; we help them find their way around Paris. It's only later as a group that we thought we could address health issues in our own country." Nadia Chabaane (Caravanserail des Femmes) mentions in a similar vein, "We wanted to create a forum for like-minded women in Paris, to talk about the problems in our part of the world. It soon became obvious we had created projects empowering women in the Maghreb; that's how we chose to promote Touareg crafts, made and sold by women without the usual intermediaries." AMC (which stands for Aide Médicale au Congo)'s initial aim was to help Congolese people fleeing the war to settle in France. It is only when hostilities ceased that they were able to envisage local social projects in the region from which most of the members come from.

Two successful associations interviewed emerged from largely immigrant neighbourhoods, Femmes d'Ici et d'Ailleurs in Paris and Crepuscule in Angers. Both have been started by daughters of migrants who grew up in France and achieved university education. 'Femmes d'Ici et d'Ailleurs' engages in development work as well as work in their neighbourhood in Paris.

Some women were able to address needs particular to the migrants from their countries of origin, issues which often require an understanding of underlying cultural issues. As Chadia Arab from Crepuscule says, "Young immigrant people like us have such a negative image;

you only hear about riots and burning of cars. We wanted to show not only our families but also the rest of French society what we can do. Likewise, for the Moroccan villages where we work, we wanted to bring the positive institutions we grew up with in France, such as a library and play centre.” Before joining FORIM, Khadi Sako founded one such association which taught literacy, political awareness and campaigned against female genital mutilation (FGM) in the country of origin as well as in France. Fighting FGM, for instance, was and remains important in both places. The influence works both ways, as the information is relayed from one place to the other. The French government criminalizes this practice, which has had a ripple effect in Mali. Unfortunately, some women have decided to circumcise their daughters at the age of six instead of infancy, since once they start school there are no obligatory medical controls conducted by the French health authorities. Daughters of these West African migrants often say that their parents are more rigidly conservative in France than their counterparts in the country of origin.

Who are the women starting development projects?

Successful attempts at diaspora philanthropy are conditioned by a number of factors, some coming from personal background, others the result of empowerment through education and familiarization with opportunities available in the country of migration.

Age and availability

In the associations interviewed for this report, at least half were run by powerful middle-aged women (AMULP, Nigerian Women in Paris, Segou à Paris, SSVDS, La Source, Pepinières Vertes du Sahel) some in their early sixties, or even more, as in the case of the Vietnamese UGVF. The age group of the aid activists indicated that they have more time and resources to get involved. As Saïd of IDD, which works principally with the Moroccan community, explains, “You can’t expect a mother with many small children at home to do much; it just adds to her other chores, for which she is not getting any help from her husband. But after fifty it’s another matter.”

Migrants who came in groups, such as political refugees benefited from internal family support in bringing up their children. Corinna Devitta (AMULP) described her arrival to France with a group of Uruguayan political refugees: “When our children were small, we organized a kind of informal crèche; it allowed us to get on with our project.” In other configurations, grandmothers or mothers-in-law are essential, bringing an extra measure of matriarchal type support to these ventures. Munkahtuya Baasankhue (Senna)’s three year old is looked after her own mother who has recently come from Mongolia.

The contribution of the daughters of first generation migrants

A few organizations included the daughters of migrants, born or brought up in France from early childhood, who have sought to benefit not just from education, but from local aid programmes designed for children growing up in difficult neighbourhoods, such as Mariama Koulibali (Femmes d’Ici et de Là-Bas) and Chaadia Arab (Crépuscule). ‘Femmes d’Ici et d’Ailleurs’ has likewise brought together young women in their late teens and early twenties from Malian, Turkish and Tunisian backgrounds who all live in the same neighbourhood. This second-generation migrant solidarity is the result of the French egalitarian ethic which has been integrated into the way of thinking of migrant communities, especially amongst those born and educated in France. For these ambitious girls born in France from illiterate or semi-literate parents, education has made them shift social class and expectations, which empowers them to initiate projects, possibly more so than the older generation. On top of this, they can be actively helped by local social workers specialized in youth: This has been the case for both Chaadia Arab in Angers (Crepuscule) and Mariama Koulibali in Paris (Femmes d’Ici et d’Ailleurs), both students who have displayed a remarkable level of organization and resourcefulness.

Furthermore, according to Nhu-Mai Nguyen Dac of UGVF, the younger highly educated generation is involved in setting up all kinds of technological and development projects in Vietnam. “Maybe it’s because we come from Confucianism, the cult of ancestors remains very important for us.”

La Source is unusual, because it is run by a mother and daughter team. Madeleine Kankolongo Ndaye, the mother, had been living in Germany for the last five years and came to Paris regularly whilst her daughter, Petronille Mbuyi, handles day-to-day operations from Colombes, the suburb where she lives and where her mother has now joined her.

Whilst children are often supportive of their mothers’ activities to help the home country, they do not always get involved. As Emilie (AMC) summarizes a recurring attitude, “Kids born in France are French. They want to succeed here. The poverty we have run away from scares them.” Nafi Ba (Pepinières Vertes du Sahel) described how she had to patiently win over the next generation. Her group organized a trip to the Sahel region based on a high school exchange (as opposed to a visit to the family) and links were established between teenagers. Likewise, children of political refugees may have heard only negative reports about the country their parents came from were felt to do their utmost to integrate and create a territorialized identity firmly rooted in France.

Employment

The women active in diaspora philanthropy have been involved in a wide range of paid employment in France. Bakia (Segou à Paris) works in a suburban old age home, a workplace that employs many African caregivers.

Sadija Ombasic (Association de soutien aux Survivants de la Drina, SSVDS) has been working as a caretaker in the same building for over thirty years, the kind of job frequently held by migrant women as it comes with tiny lodgings included in the pay. Vietnamese Dr Thérèse Ky, (UGVF, Union générale des Vietnamiens de France) trained in Paris as a medical doctor and has practised as a paediatrician all her life in Paris, and Nhu-Mai Nguyen Dac of the same association is a chemical engineer. Emigration of professionals is seen to simultaneously signify financial improvement at home through remittances and the loss of trained staff in their country of origin (Omelianuk, 2005). However, various relationships can exist. Ophthalmologist Dr. Buni Kogbe (Nigerian Women in Paris) has worked most of her life in a leading Parisian hospital. Likewise, Nafi Ba (Pépinnières Vertes du Sahel) is an agronomist and has taught sciences in a Parisian high school. During her long vacations, which came with the teaching profession and now during her retirement, she uses her professional skills for development in Senegal.

Education

Education achieved in the home country before migration both provides individuals with various skills and facilitates a higher level of autonomy.

Thus, women such as Corinna Devitta (AMULP) or Dr. Buni Kogbe (Nigerian Women in Paris) were university graduates in Uruguay and Nigeria respectively. As Buni Kogbe explains, “My husband and I come from respected families, comfortable enough to have different members studying all over the world. This certainly gave me confidence essential for tackling such a bureaucratic country like France.” Others completed their education in France, such as Nadia Chabaane (Caravanserail des Femmes) who comes from Tunisia. All the women in this category say that higher education constitutes a preparation to accessing bureaucracy in France by providing self-confidence and tools permitting research and organization, essential for any project. This is even more the case for women who came for studies in France, as did Nhu-Mai Nguyen Dac and Dr Thérèse Ky (UGVF) and Nafi Ba (Pépinnières Vertes du Sahel). Each had to work through the complexities of the educational system and face the competition for finding employment. Students have also come from ex-colonies or traditionally Francophile countries, such as Khadi Sako (FORIM) or Damarys Ma (IFAFE) who came from Senegal and Cameroon respectively in the 1980s and were originally active in students’ unions before starting migrant women’s groups in France.

Being highly educated is not the universal rule for involvement in diaspora philanthropy. There are examples of courageous women who have had little education, such as Sadija Ombasic (SSVDS), who has been able to conduct aid projects. But upon closer inspection, they are often helped by their own children who have been educated in France and are familiar with Internet as well as social structures that enable them to get financial and logistical help.

Project management and barriers to further project development

In addition to personal experiences and motivations, the women interviewed explained various structural, organizational as well as cultural aspects which influence their activities. However, the latter can also act as constraints to their philanthropy and development work. In order for diaspora philanthropy to develop and thrive, several factors need to evolve. Various stages need to be addressed for projects to come to fruition, namely conceptualizing projects, applying to the aid agencies for advice, and receiving active support or involvement from the population in the country of origin the project addresses.

Starting up

Registering a non-profit charity as an association is a relatively simple matter in France. Statutes, a model of which is easily obtained, need to be filed in the local prefecture along with proof of identity and address. A publication in the official journal confirms its existence. A bank account can be opened with this document. An association needs a president, a treasurer and a secretary and preferably group members who pay a yearly sum – but in reality, practically none of the associations encountered do so. A number have been started by a husband and wife, simply because the husband is the principal wage-earner and his name is on the rent papers. Those who head these associations are not allowed to receive any form of payment and any profits (through sales and otherwise) have to be farmed into the association’s resources. It is possible to apply for funding but allocating the sources for obtaining grants is extremely complex.

According to Damarys Ma (IFAFE), a number of associations are started by women hoping to create a career for themselves and pay themselves with the funds they hope to raise. Such enterprises are rarely successful, unless they manage to generate some form of income. AMC is exceptional in that it actually employs and pays two-part time helpers. TADDART is a cross between charity and small ethical business, and therefore profits can be used to pay staff. This type of set-up is what Munkahtuya Baasankhue (Sanna) was hoping for, but it has not taken off accordingly: “I am not getting anywhere, because realize I need to learn about running a business, even though I’m trying to help back home. I trained in literature, not in commerce.”

All the associations interviewed were started by one person with a vision who managed to build up her support group from neighbours and/or members of her own family or community. The strength and continuity of the group hinges around one person who appears to be doing most of the work and planning, with others helping on an occasional basis. The group founder usually has difficulty in delegating but worries about the responsibility she carries on her own and generally discreetly complains about the lack of help from within her group. Meetings are generally held in her home, especially if she is older and has enough space.

Partnerships

Partnerships in the women's home countries reflect the degree of conceptualization and organization of their project. When associations work together for a common cause, especially those with a socio-political aim, the activities in Paris are part of the French chapter of a larger association. This is the case for AMULP, whose head office is in Montevideo, Uruguay. Money, accountability and continuity are clear; reports are received on either side in a regular manner. In a comparable manner, Sadija Ombasic, (SSVDS) works in collaboration with the women's association of victims of the Srebrenica massacre based in Tuzla and serves as these women's representative in Paris. For La Source, the French chapter is in fact the head office with a branch situated in the Democratic Republic of Congo. Mariama Koulibali (Femmes d'Ici et d'Ailleurs) is working directly with the director of the women's prison in Bamako where she spent two months to understand how it worked.

In other cases, when the link is informal, the issue of partnership is simultaneously a political and a logistical one and needs to be renegotiated constantly. This process was often mentioned by the African organizations, many who are from politically unstable areas. Furthermore, for Sadija Ombasic, founder of SSVDS, cooperation with other small charities seeking to help Bosnia has not always been easy as aid is often based on personal contacts and can lead to a conflict of interests.

Looking for Funding in France

The problems in organizing diaspora philanthropy are reflected in the needs expressed by most aid activists. Damaris Ma (IFAFE) who advises women on the construction of their projects summarizes this point. She explains that the main problem of many would-be diaspora philanthropy activists is the disparity between good intentions and action: a number of women encountered have no idea of how to work through their plans and after a few months become discouraged and give up. Between the beginning of this research late in 2005 and nearly one year later, some of the women interviewed have dropped their projects. In fact, few women are equipped to actually see these projects through. Positive capacity building is what is needed, basic information about accounting and organization are called for.

When they are asked about problems faced, the first answer is usually 'funding' and then only when asked if some level of further education regarding accounting, business management would be useful did they agree that this may be part of the problem. This may be due to France's social policy of the 1980s which has led many associations to depend on grants rather than on self-financing. They are sometimes not prepared them to face cuts in grants and resources, and entrepreneurship is something which needs to be developed. Sometimes, a contradictory attitude emerges, especially within the African projects. Whilst encouraging financial independence for women at home through agriculture, some organizers continue to wait for government grants rather than seek some

scheme that will turn an aid project into a mutually beneficial development scheme. An exception is the UGVF which lives entirely off the revenue of its numerous members and does not ask for outside grants, and AMULP, which supports many of its programmes through money from its catering service in Paris.

In the highly complex centralized state such as France, applying and receiving grants is extremely complicated and implies navigating through intricate bureaucracy. The extent of the bureaucracy comes as a shock to practically all associations. The ease with which it is possible to register such structures hides the true difficulties: "When we started up, everyone around us said that we'd automatically get funding, so members of our community felt they did not need to help. They can't imagine that this is not the case," says Madeleine Kankolongo Ndaye (La Source).

The first potential sponsor is the local town hall, especially if the mayor of the 'quartier' or suburb belongs to the Socialist or preferably Communist party. This can ensure a form of representation when municipalities organize fairs. Most aid activists have little or no idea how to apply for funds and do not know that there are umbrella associations designed to help them format their projects. I was able to act as an informant of these possibilities to a number of associations.

Gaining support and cooperation

Help from migrant members of one's community is not always forthcoming if they are not directly implied in the project. Communities cannot be considered as national/ethnic blocks: all the social and political problems at home are exported and sometimes exacerbated, especially in the case of war and civil strife. For example, the ex-Yugoslav community started to divide after 1991 with the break-up of former Yugoslavia according to ethnic and political lines: Charities were started to help the respective communities amidst enormous antagonism. According to Berthe and Emilie (AMC), the post-war situation of Congo-Kinshasa creates an atmosphere of suspicion: All political parties are represented in the diaspora and these make work on a communal project difficult. As Dr. Buni Kogbe (Nigerian Women in Paris) discovered, "In my own living room, I saw inter-ethnic conflict amongst professional women who were supposed to help together on projects together for home! We were supposed to devise a plan for sending medical aid in the middle of a crisis to Nigeria and instead, I had to calm down women who were arguing about tribal issues!"

Some women felt that passivity among the recipients can become a problem and that this can largely be avoided by giving the recipients an active role in the project. As Madeleine Kankolongo Ndaye (La Source) summarizes: "We're still in the post-colonial stage in Africa, waiting for help to arrive. But women all over the continent are making profound changes, more so than men." When Nafi Ba (Pepinières Vertes du Sahel) put together her remarkable project of planting trees with village women in desert regions of northern Senegal, she made them responsible for the projects, stressing that they had to

contribute with their own finances and look after their investments in saplings and seedlings.

By and large, women coming with projects are well received, but sometimes the expectations they create are too wide. As Marie Duhammel (TADDART) explains,

I always tell the women we work with that having paying guests in their house can only be considered as a supplement to their income, we don't want to turn their village into a full-scale tourist venture.

Furthermore, there is also a sense of responsibility towards those whom they are helping. It can be a heavy burden, especially if the project does not go as planned.

I feel badly for those women in Ulan-Bator who thought I'd be able to sell their production easily and therefore help them economically. It hasn't worked out and I'm landed with all those lovely Mongolian felt accessories cluttering my home.

complains Munkahtuya Baasankhue (Sanna).

The role of migrant women in development and its impact

As has been mentioned previously, little work has been done on the role of migrant women in France and their organizations' roles in development in their home countries. In speaking with various women involved in such projects, it became clear that they often felt that they faced constraints, relevant to their particular statuses, both as migrants and as females, working in development. This section will express a few examples that were given on their roles, cultural or community expectations, and the resulting impact on the projects.

Gender roles vary by country and some women faced more constraints than others in becoming involved in diaspora philanthropy. In view of the patriarchal structures of the country where aid operates, money usually goes through the male representatives of power, even in societies where most men have migrated, leaving villages filled with women and children. In the Maghreb and sub-Saharan Africa, many of the projects are run by the women, leaving as we have seen, for the sake of appearances, the official power structure intact in order to maintain social cohesion and continuity. As Marie Duhammel (TADDART) summarizes it, "In Morocco, in Mali, money first goes through the men even women are actually the ones who carry out the practical aspects". In contrast, in Mongolia, in view of the Communist heritage, women are used to running projects. Munkahtuya Baasankhue (Senna) explains that she works directly with a women's association with no other intermediaries who can receive money and manage their projects. The same holds true for Bosnia where women who grew up in Communist system were used to taking responsibility. Sadija Ombasic (SSVDS) complains about the Bosnian authorities: "They are completely useless, I work directly with the women involved in the project."

In Africa and the Maghreb, the children of migrants born in France are oftentimes seen in a negative way. Girls face stigmatization and are considered contaminated by

Western values. Mariama Koulibali (Femmes d'Ici et de Là-Bas) says, "Before we could start anything at all, we had to show them that even if we did not grow up in the village, it did not mean we were French tourists and immoral." The daughter of Malian migrants, she went for her first trip to set up a kitchen garden with a group from her association to a Malian village: "When the women saw us trying to dig clumsily with our hoes, they realized that we were serious and they decided to teach us how to work the earth. After that, we were accepted."

Chaadia Arab (Crépuscule) went to a Moroccan village by truck with three girls from her association in Angers and encountered a more extreme situation:

I called a meeting for our library project; I wanted girls to be there as well as boys as we were building this together. At 7 o'clock, there still were only boys, so I said, 'I'll take the truck and go and pick up the girls.' Then I was told, 'Our girls don't go out at night.' So I answered 'Well, what about me then?' only to be told, 'You're not a girl, you're a boy. It's not the same.'

This was the village from where her father came, but as the daughter was brought up in France and is an independent woman, she had effectively been rejected, which was very painful for her.

Furthermore, there are also limitations due to the physical distance to the country of origin. First of all, aid activists often cannot go to their home country more than once a year, at best, often less, especially in a war or conflict zone such as the Congo where many have not returned since 1997. The contact is kept via increasingly cheap telephone connections or sometimes mainly by Internet (South America, South-East Asia). As Thérèse Ky (UGVF) says "Our bodies may be in France, but our souls are in Vietnam." When they visit home, they are generally perceived as being well-off and often as capable of donating more than truly possible. Migrants often complain that it is the volume of gifts they are expected to bring, not the airfare, that makes going home too expensive. Second, the situation in France sometimes makes getting involved for causes abroad problematic. As Sadija Ombasic (SSVDS) has remarked, "How many times people have said to me, 'Why don't you look after the poor in France?'" As this statement indicates, the activities of migrants dedicated to their country of origin may not be fully appreciated and supported in the country of residence.

Do gender and migrant status help or hinder the women? This is difficult to determine. GRDR, which works in Africa, has noted the low level of success of projects initiated. The reason usually given is related to perceptions of gender roles and power differentials between men and women. Nafi Ba's (Pépinières vertes du Sahel) experience reflects this constraint:

I did not go to see the men in France because they might have wanted to control the operation, but I went straight to the villages where their wives live and told them, 'you have to participate in this project from your resources,' that is to say the money your husbands send home. And as women are our partners and principal beneficiaries, they allocated the necessary funds, but made the transactions go through the elders, the oldest men who had remained in the villages.

On the other hand, sometimes it was felt to be easier to work in aid as a migrant rather than as a resident inside the country of origin. As Nadia Chabaane (Caravanserail des Femmes) explains, “I became active in France because in Tunisia the government controls everything and makes any project very difficult to carry through.” One of the members went to the Touareg villages to help the women sell directly in the local markets and also adjust their production to new needs. “We do sell some of their products in France, but we realized the local market was the most important and sustainable one.” Their partners are the older women in the villages, even though as elsewhere in Africa, they often have to go through the men who officially handle the finances. In Vietnam, according to Nhu-Mai Nguyen Dac (UGVF), in the early years they met with passive expectation but working together on organizing help for the dioxin victims has empowered women locally, and they work very independently at present.

It is possible that some of the women’s activities are masked. Traditional societies, especially abroad or in difficult conditions, including war, need to preserve intelligible forms of respectability. That is to say men need to appear in control of things so that the honour of the entire group may be preserved, even at the apparent cost of recognition of women’s contributions.⁴ As Mariama Koulibali, (Femmes d’ici et d’ailleurs) who grew up in Paris in a Malian household of seventeen children remembers, “When we were little, our father was not very present; our mothers ruled at home. And even in our social activities to raise money for our project, the men hardly turn up but let us get on with it.” TADDART is a solidarity-based travel agency which takes travellers to remote places and has them living with the local population, and its director, Marie Duhammel, encounters the same problem:

When we organize trips to remote locations, the men are inevitably the intermediaries, even though once we’re there, the women take over the organization of the living conditions and feeding of the travellers we bring to them.

In France, it was also felt that the interface women have with French bureaucracy and institutions through daily confrontation has given them the practice and the social capital to go further. Women are the ones lining up in the social security offices, working their way through the grants and hand-out systems; as in Africa, they are the ones who are primarily perceived as care-givers. As Berthe from Cameroon and a member of AMC, which is trying to build a dispensary for women and children in the Mululu area, pointed out, “When a kid wants to eat, she’ll always say ‘Maman I’m hungry,’ not Papa I’m hungry. In Africa or here, we’re used to taking that kind of responsibility.” Echoing this Madeleine Kankolongo Ndaye (La Source) says, “I’ve see this in politics as well. Men look after the general lines and women settle the details.” An increasing number of African women are starting their own associations aimed at changing things in the country of origin. For the moment, the Sub-Saharan female migrants I spoke with are mainly at the planning stage, but the basis for further action is there.

It is quite possible that women are just as active but have chosen not to appear so in France where poverty, difficult social conditions have been repeatedly undermining the men’s confidence, so the only way for them to preserve any form of dignity is to be seen contributing actively to aid schemes for the village of origin.

Conclusion

Unlike remittance economy conducted on a personal level, philanthropy projects as a form of collective remittance depends on a positive relationship both with the country of origin and that of residence. Building a project of any kind is only possible for migrants who have a certain social ease in the country of residence and can build up group support. This implies a far greater degree of integration and often several years experience of life in France, something which became clear during this research. In French egalitarianism, there is little or no room for non-French influence in state education and institutions and an explicit prohibition of any kind of visible religious insignia is enforced by law. Religious or cultural education has to be undertaken privately. This is the main work of the innumerable non-profit groups in France, primarily designed to keep up links with the home country whilst aiding in adaptation to French society and institutions. In order to understand the place of projects and initiatives undertaken by migrant women in France, it is necessary to consider their relationship to French institutions in the field of work and education within the different categories of migration. These are crucial experiences they share as migrant women and this will be reflected in the way they conceptualize projects.

Many female migrants involved in the organizations interviewed began their philanthropy projects by assisting other migrants from their community in France obtain housing, education, healthcare and other services to facilitate their lives in France (ACORT, Nigerian Women in Paris, UGVF). These organizations have also expanded to also support projects in their countries of origin. Other organizations assist migrant organizations in starting viable operations and obtaining funding (FORIM, IFAFE and GRDR).

Despite difficulties faced in France, a number of migrants have also undertaken projects related to development in their countries of origin. One aim is the economic independence of women or the region in general. These projects may also be able to be sustained in the long run. Some associations sell products manufactured by women in the countries in which they operate (Sanna, Caravanserail des Femmes, TADDART). The crèche in Bamako (Femmes d’ici et d’ailleurs), built by inmates themselves will also allow them to attend vocational courses which aids in their employability once they leave jail. The kitchen gardens and new varieties of trees introduced in the Sahel by Pepinières Vertes du Sahel stand to revolutionize standards of survival in the whole region. Other projects provide services to impoverished communities. Crepuscule has built a library and play centre in a village in the Atlas Mountains in Morocco, to enrich the experience of children living there. Segou hopes to support children in Mali in a comparable manner.

Another type of project is built on political motivations. These projects are often run by refugees, who have experienced the conflict at home first hand and may be in a better position to support either their political ideology or even reconstruction and development whilst living abroad. This type of project has been exemplified by AMULP in Uruguay or SSVDS in Bosnia. Other organizations support development in countries torn by conflict. AMC, for example, has provided medical help in the Democratic Republic of Congo, while La Source supports schools in that same country.

The associations described are significant not only by the originality of the concepts, but especially in that they are making women visible and giving them a new measure of recognition which allows them to go further. While the extent of women's contributions to remittances as well as to development work remains undocumented and often invisible, for a variety of reasons ranging from informal employment and unregistered income to social and cultural barriers related to both their gender and migrant status, women are a significant force in diaspora philanthropy.

Although various barriers are faced, diaspora philanthropy, whether successful or still in the early stages of conceptualization, has given a formidable sense of empowerment to the women who have attempted projects. It gives them the desire to go further. Mariama Koulibali, (Femmes d'ICI et d'Ailleurs) expresses, "It has been so enriching, realizing you can actually do something. The whole world is opening up." As Dr. Buni Kogbe (Nigerian Women in Paris) says, "I learnt that I really do want to change the world and go beyond any fixed perception."

¹ Definition of the Haut Conseil à l'intégration of 1991 INSEE (2005): Les immigrés en France: définitions.

² Information kindly contributed by Claudie Lesselier of RAJFIRE (Réseau pour l'autonomie des femmes migrantes immigrées et réfugiées)

³ Is it possible, even probable that remittances to the home country from communities that are theoretically the most exposed to unemployment come from insufficiently documented and unrecognized women's varied contributions? This goes contrary to the INSTRAW report's assertion that 'women in this group have little relevance.'

⁴ This author, in her field research, has seen the same process at work in wartime Bosnia or in Afghan refugee camps

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ANNEX A

Table 1 > **Table of women / organizations interviewed in France**

Interview partner / and Organization	Geographical area
FORIM (Forum des Organisations de Solidarité Internationale issues des Migrations) Khady Sako > looks after the African sector	Various
GRDR (Groupe de recherche et de développement rural) For women's projects > Aissata Ba, Samba Yatera	Africa
ACORT : L'Assemblée Citoyenne des Originaires de Turquie President of women's section > Zeynep Ersoy-Keherve	Turkey
AMC , Aide Médicale au Congo (DRC) Responsible staff > Béatrice Moto, Emilie Mungala	Democratic Republic of Congo
AMULP (Asociación Mujeres Uruguayas Lourdes Pintos) President > Corinna Devitta	Uruguay
ASSOCIATION CRÉPUSCULE President > Chaadia Arab	Morocco
ASSOCIATION DE SOUTIEN AUX SURVIVANTS DE LA DRINA (SSVDS) President > Sadija Ombasic	Bosnia
FEMMES D'ICI ET D'AILLEURS President > Mariama Koulibali	Mali
IFAFE Fédération Initiative des Femmes Africaines de France et d'Europe - President > Damarys Ba	Various
LA SOURCE President > Petronille Bashale Mbuye	Democratic Republic of Congo
NIGERIAN WOMEN IN PARIS President > Buni Kogbe	Nigeria
PÉPINIÈRES VERTES DU SAHEL President > Nafi Ba	Senegal
SANNA President > Munkhtuya Baasankhue	Mongolia
SÉGOU À PARIS President > Bakia Yagodo	Mali
TADDART President > Marie Duhammel	Morocco, Mali, Ecuador
UGVF UNION GÉNÉRALE DES VIETNAMIENS DE FRANCE > Women's section President > Dr Thérèse Ky with Nhu-Mai Nguyen Dac	Vietnam
VUYAZI 'CARAVANSERAIL DES FEMMES' Contact > Nadia Chabaane	Algeria and Niger

Purpose of the organization	Diaspora activities
State-Subsidised Organization started by the French government Gender section: Groupe genre et Migrations	Information for various possibilities for non-profit associations and coordinating agent There are different people responsible for different countries
State-Subsidised Organization started by the French government Several people responsible for different sectors	Rural development mainly in Mali, Burkina Faso
Started by a group of educated Turkish migrants www.acort.org	Defence and help of Turkish female migrants in France, with a section for women and youth
Started by political refugees from Congo DRC.	Medical help for Congo: building of dispensaries, especially in the Mulutu area
Started by political refugees from Uruguay. http://members.aol.com/aamulp	Health project, especially mobile health unit in Uruguay. Money raised through extensive catering service in Paris and surrounding areas. Also have created local employment through apprenticeships for young people in the rough suburb (Aulnay-sous-Bois), where they are located
A charity started by French born daughters of Maghrebi migrants	Directed specifically towards Morocco: a library and play centre have been built so far in a village in the Atlas Mountains
Started by a migrant worker from Bosnia after the massacre in Srebrenica www.ssvds.org	Help the widows and survivors of Srebrenica accumulation of material leading to the indictment of perpetrators of the massacre. Provides food, clothing and medical aid
A charity started by French born daughters of mainly Malian migrants (but also Turkish and other nationalities)	Helping female prisoners in Bamako prison, building crèche within the prison
Started by a business woman from Cameroon	Helping African women start non-profit structures
Started by female political refugees from Democratic Republic of Congo	Funding of schools in DRC, in Kananga (East Kasaï)
Started by a Nigerian ophthalmologist who moved to the Paris area and brought up her children in France	Help for Nigerian women moving to Paris but also health and aid projects for Nigeria
Started by a Senegalese agronomist who worked as a high school science teacher all her life in France	Agricultural projects with women in the Sahel desert. Introduces fruit trees and small scale-farming and husbandry to make remote villages self-sufficient
Started by a migrant Mongolian woman	Promoting Mongolian felt crafts, clothing and accessories made by women in a poor area of Ulan-Bator
Started by migrant workers from Mali in the Paris area	Helping children from the Segou region in Mali
Started by a daughter of a Maghrebi migrant www.taddart.com	Ecologically-minded travel in Morocco, Mali, Ecuador, developing local women's crafts & specialties
An old association originally started by then-colonial migrants, revitalized after the end of the Vietnam War www.ugvf.org	Aims (of the women's section): Specific family geared projects in Vietnam, including dioxin victims
Started by intellectual Maghrebi women who originally came to France to study. www.vuyazi.free.fr	Empowerment of migrant women in France, especially artists and writers from the Maghreb with a specifically feminist outlook and aid projects with Touareg craftswomen in Algeria and Niger

(she gives back)

Conclusion (she gives back)

Achievements, directions and future perspectives

by Aimee Rindoks and
Esther Vonk

Approaches to 'giving back'

The five reports reveal cases which indicate the importance and intersections of personal and institutional factors with the availability of resources, and the ways that these combined can lead to outcomes, often described as empowering by those involved in the diaspora philanthropy projects. Different approaches to 'giving back' can be distinguished based on the findings, strongly connected to the motivation of the women engaged. A key diver-sifier seems to be the distinction between approaches that are, to different degrees, conceptualized in a 'top-down' model versus those projects in which reciprocity is the basis of the relationship between the partners, meaning that both women's organizations based in Europe and the partners and groups the activities target are equally invested in the work, working on equal basis and both gaining – in resources, knowledge and capacities – from the endeavour. Both forms and a variety of in-between forms, figure in the different reports. The methods and strategies used are closely linked to the question of motivation: Why do women engage in giving back activities? What are their aims?

Various ways of 'giving back'

When positioning discussions of diaspora philanthropy within the broader context of 'giving back' practices from the diaspora, three 'levels' can be differentiated:

- 1 > Remittances: giving back along the family lines, sending money and goods to own family in country of origin, supporting the household.
- 2 > Development oriented philanthropy along ethnic lines: support in money, goods, time and expertise to community or society in country of origin as well as community support activities of black, migrant and refugee women in the country where they reside, with and for their own ethnic community.
- 3 > Diaspora philanthropy using diasporic transnational networks but not necessarily targeting the own ethnic community or country of origin only, with a social change or development dimension. Diaspora philanthropy may involve direct transnational links among a community, such as those that have been documented in other research on hometown associations, or more broadly, it may utilize diffuse transnational networks and partnerships without specifically targeting one's own ethnic group or country of origin.

It is important to note that – although often a development from one approach to the other over time appears – these 'levels' do not represent, as it were, necessary chronological 'stages' or exclusive dimensions in the development and conceptualizing of philanthropic practices. On the contrary, most migrant women will continue to send remittances also if they are engaged in other diaspora philanthropy practices, and many organizations' work represent a mixture of these forms. In quite a few of the organizations discussed, a shift between different forms and approaches is explicitly addressed. In the UK, some of the women refer to a development oriented form of philanthropy, in which reciprocity between the partners is crucial, as more empowering than plainly sending money; Charito Basa (Italy report) encountered in some

of the women she spoke with the notion that for the women engaged in ‘giving back’, philanthropic activities working towards generating actual social change are much more empowering than just sending money in the form of remittances.

The reports discuss a small number of examples of activities that exceed the links with countries of origin or the own national or ethnic community. However, many women’s groups are active both in the country where they live and in countries of origin. The activities in countries of residence can also be seen as a form of ‘giving back’ especially where linked directly to supporting own communities or, broader, aimed to further the position of migrant women and being part of the (migrant) women’s movement. For many groups, activities in the country of residence were a substantial part of their work and this was perceived as extremely beneficial for the organizations’ work both ‘here’ and ‘there’.

Feminist philanthropy, aiming to bring about positive social change for women, to further women’s rights, to empower women and to challenge gendered structures and gender roles, is a cross-cutting category. The transformative dimension of the activities is crucial here. The activities that would fall under the heading feminist philanthropy make up a relatively small part of the diaspora philanthropy initiatives described in the reports, but they were found in each of the countries and those examples are of specific interest from Mama Cash, given her mission to support women’s rights globally.

Key Findings

Key Themes

- Intersecting influences and personal motivations
- Organizational factors and partnerships
- Transnationalism builds
- Bridging effect
- Learning and capacity building

Intersecting influences and personal motivations

First of all, migration history and individual backgrounds clearly play a strong role in the types of projects targeted. Refugee women in particular were found to be very active in diaspora philanthropy. They were found often to have high education levels as well as an intimate knowledge of the problems facing their countries of origin – often connected to war and conflict. As areas of conflict tend to have a range of disparities and are in need of both conflict resolution and physical infrastructure reconstruction, refugee women were often in a position to offer assistance where assistance may not have otherwise been available, due to concerns of outside aid agencies of safety, lack of understanding of local issues or lack of acceptance by the community involved, or because of the limited amount of resources that can be provided to conflict areas. Groups involved in such circumstances oftentimes hold a strong political view, countering the current government at the time. Given the complexity of the position of many women who fled war and conflict and the dire need for even basic necessities and infra-

structure that arises after war, even very small diaspora philanthropy projects were seen to have notable results. At the same time, these groups face many barriers in their activities, given the very political and often sensitive nature of the conflict that has led to the increasing disparities. Each of the country reports offers examples of these efforts, and contains voices of women helping areas that have recently faced diverse conflicts, including Bosnia, Burundi, Rwanda, Ethiopia and Eritrea.

Diaspora philanthropy was also found to span different generations, with the first and second generation often having different priorities, and only occasionally working together on initiatives. Among the sample provided in this study, second generation migrants were more likely to work on neighbourhood or urban issues linked to social issues (such as unemployment, education, women’s rights, local violence, and other local concerns) and often in cooperation with individual women and groups of various backgrounds and positions. While first generation migrants were found to be involved in their current neighbourhoods as well, their activities were often in some ways linked to migration processes, providing support and networks for new migrants, rather than more general community development. Again, this range of initiatives reflects not only one of the complexities of studying diaspora philanthropy, but also one of the reasons it is of paramount importance. The activities initiated often address the needs of people and communities not likely to be addressed by other forms of aid and public assistance. In this way, diaspora philanthropy efforts complement and supplement other forms of aid and assistance and often fill in the gaps in social structures and support, including from (local) governments, addressing different populations and tackling different issues. First generation migrant women sometimes complained about the difficulty in getting the second generation to be actively involved in these issues. This finding points to a possible relationship that may exist between migrants’ status, identification and integration and their choices to focus on different issues, based both on their own sense of identity as well as their experiences and environment.

This said, although personal and migration factors are of influence, there is little that can be said about the profile of a ‘typical’ woman involved in diaspora philanthropy. In fact, the women interviewed came not only from various countries, but also had a wide range of professional and educational backgrounds. A common theme that evolves from the reports points to the intersections of gender, ethnic, educational and class positions and the resulting opportunities and dilemmas for the diaspora philanthropy work. The intersection of gender and ethnicity, as connected to identification of core issues as well as to forms of gendered racism women encounter, was particularly significant in the ways in which the women were able to and chose to shape their work. However in all cases multiple dimensions overlap and construct the specific framework of opportunities and constraint with regard to diaspora philanthropy practices. Gender was not necessarily the decisive in the networking and alliance building in the context of ‘giving back’, as is pointed out particularly in the German report but also in other cases in each of the countries.

Taking on multiple responsibilities and roles, 'giving back' is almost always done in addition to other responsibilities relating to work and family life, rather than as a paid profession, as found by the researchers of all five country reports. Immaterial resources are therefore of critical importance in diaspora philanthropy work. More often than not the women are involved in the initiatives or organizations on a voluntary basis which requires much of their personal time, and often also individual contributions in cash. Their personal time, expertise and networks are invested to build each individual project.

'Giving back' involves not only the identities and activities of the women and organizations, but also hinges on the relationships made, which are the catalysts for successful action. As our research shows, various problems may arise in these relationships, tied to one's role or identity and to therefore being accepted as an 'insider' or seen as an 'outsider.' While many women involved stressed that they felt well-equipped to handle situations in their community, setbacks were also noted, related to issues such as navigating around patriarchal expectations and the ways migrating has affected their identity as well as their familiarity within the community. For example, Dava Gjoka, who lives in Italy but works with rural Bosnian communities, first had to establish trust, as the women were sceptical of why someone living in Italy would be interested in their community. Dr. Buni Kogbe of Nigerian Women in Paris has witnessed ethnic struggles expressed within her organization in France, despite that they are now in a different context. In contrast, some organizations aim intentionally to bring together groups in conflict, such as that achieved by the Burundian Women for Peace and Development, as mentioned in the Netherlands report. This group brought together two previously warring ethnic groups, the Hutus and Tutsis and facilitated greater understanding after the ethnic conflict. Gender roles also can be significant here. For example, as the UK report mentions, Abiola Ogunsola found her understanding of gender disparities in Nigeria questioned, where local men refuted the possibility that she, as an academic and living outside the country, could really understand the local situation.

However, the barriers faced by individual women in relation to their identity are far from detrimental to diaspora philanthropy – in complete contrast, they also point to ways the women and organizations act as bridges, building relationships not only transnationally, as is often mentioned in similar studies, but also bridging various social and gender constraints to advance further individual and community empowerment and cooperation. The migrant women at times can address issues that others may be less equipped to handle, such as those related to the sensitive issue of female genital cutting. For example, the German report tells of activities of Fadumo Korn from Somalia who critically addresses issues related female genital cutting, as she maintains, a topic which receives less resistance when initiated by someone who has gone through the procedure herself and at the same time, enough of an 'outsider' to be able to criticize existing practices. Furthermore, migrant women may have access to resources that locals do not, as demonstrated not only in financial contributions such as remittances but also in the types of organizations that emerge. The women and

organizations interviewed therefore not only undertake activities that may complement or supplement other development projects but also can address the needs in different ways, given their identity and relationships with the communities.

Organizational factors and partnerships

What was observed in regards to organizational factors, including resources and funding, and their access to the various migrant women interviewed?

As mentioned in the previous section, the relationships between migrant women and communities in their countries of origin are not a given factor for initiatives and the migrant women cannot necessarily be viewed completely as 'insiders' with unlimited access to the communities they address, but instead require, paired to in-depth knowledge of local situations and disparities, extensive efforts in relationship building. A common theme for success and acceptance seems to be related to the level of reciprocity involved in the projects. Successful projects, those exhibiting sustainability and growth, often grew from the premise that the recipients were active and equal partners in the work conducted. In this way, the best practices of 'giving back' often entail sharing of burdens and goals, rather than simply providing the means. Many of the women interviewed stressed the importance of reaching out to the women, both to understand their needs and to be sure they are not only benefactors, but equal partners in the efforts made. However, it is also important to mention that as is the case with any relationship, reciprocity takes time to build and various types of interactions and conflicts may occur within the process.

Many of the researchers found that organizations with initiatives in their home countries were initially involved in supporting activities in the country they currently live in. Furthermore, activities in the country of residence were found most likely to be lead by migrants 'integrated' in the country where they currently live, having a good command of the local language and being familiar with the institutional structures. This finding adds another dimension to the study – transnational diaspora philanthropy is often a gradual development, not only in that it involves a blending of personal knowledge and history, coming from being familiar with two countries (and hence a degree of integration after migration), but also in that the daily operational elements first often start with a local (current community) focus and only later expand both to include activities with organizations of other (ethnic and interest) backgrounds in their current place of residence; cooperation with organizations in other European countries and projects in the country of origin.

Structural and institutional factors

National differences can be observed as related to funding options, ranging from the Netherlands offering a relatively large possibility for migrant organizations to gain government funding, to Italy reporting a complete absence of government channels for migrant organiza-

tions to gain funding. Women's status as 'migrants' affect the way their work can be organized and at times limit their involvement, such as through exclusion from funds, as mentioned in the Italian report, or from lack of knowledge of the institutions in the country of residence. Furthermore, different types of migration status can lead to the availability of different resources. In an admittedly generalizing view of the influence of migration status, individuals with official refugee status often had more access to governmental resources in Europe but limited possibilities to visit their home countries, whereas labour migrants may have more income and international mobility, but less time available, and undocumented migrants have to meet daily needs within an atmosphere of strong exclusion. Although the reports are not complete or representative, the country reports seem to point to a few interesting observations regarding intersections of regulatory (migration or organizational) and personal factors. Notably, a number of the women interviewed in the Italy were currently employed as domestic workers, one of the largest employment options that exists for migrant women in Italy. In contrast, the women interviewed in the Netherlands were felt to have had a large degree of integration, fluency in Dutch and knowledge of local institutions, to facilitate their work. Again, this difference may in part point to differing regulatory structures, since migrant organizations in the Netherlands have had relatively more access to government funding and the individuals interviewed were largely those that had been successful in securing funds from different sources including governmental ones. Again, being able to access such facilities requires both an in-depth knowledge of proposal writing and organizing, as well as the capability to navigate through the local institutional structures. Although these capacities may not always be precursor to involvement in home communities¹⁾ it does seem to be necessary for funding from organizations in Europe. These factors are important to mention, as again, our research points to the wide diversity of types of 'diaspora philanthropy,' and the barriers faced are closely connected to regulatory structures.

Intersections: Bridges and Barriers between 'here' and 'there' in diaspora philanthropy

As is highlighted in many of the reports, the transnational dimension of activities tends to build. Many of the organizations began by addressing needs of others from their community or neighbourhood in the current country of residence. It is often only after gaining a stronger organizational base locally that the groups then expand and also address needs in their countries of origin. An exception to this rule is sometimes formed by refugee women, who in some cases literally upon arrival in their new country of residence start setting up activities targeting to help those that are 'left behind' in conflict-torn areas – as far as circumstances allow.

Once transnational activities are undertaken, they too build, often beginning with supporting or sponsoring one or a few individuals to further their education or to meet daily needs. From these initiatives, further efforts often arise, likely due both to the improving capacity of the organization to organize such activities as well as more

in-depth understandings of the disparities and problems faced in the communities they are addressing. Furthermore, the process also seems to be influenced by institutional factors. The availability of funding for migrant initiatives varies greatly by country, but in general there is a requirement to prove both the viability of the idea as well as to already have strong partnerships established in order to receive outside funding, especially from governmental sources. Naturally, the groups that can meet these needs already have a great deal of experience, either from being part of growing organizations or from personal work experience in development or other professional experiences and careers that form the cornerstone of their 'giving back' activities.

Opportunities and Needs

However, individuals involved in diaspora philanthropy are not only acting between the 'here' and 'there' of various communities, but also in between the 'here' and 'there' of development support and discourse. As this volume of reports has expressed, diaspora philanthropy efforts are currently felt to be perceived as happening on the margins of other aid initiatives. At times, the women experienced a patronizing relationship when working with aid organizations; in other cases, some projects found that aid organizations approaching them for ideas on how to best address the issues at hand. When problems occur, they are likely related both to the current lack of recognition and understanding of diaspora philanthropy projects as well as, in occurring cases, to the need for more capacity building activities to strengthen current initiatives. Many of the women interviewed expressed a strong interest in being involved in capacity building activities and recognize that their efforts would be strengthened through related new resources and skills in proposal and grant writing and other areas related to project implementation. In this respect they are no different from many women's organizations in that 'there is a huge need and demand for fundraising support and skill building in proposal writing. Furthermore, many women's rights advocates feel they do not have the necessary information or connections to raise money effectively' (AWID 2006, p.97). Besides fundraising skills and the information and, many organizations expressed a need for capacity building and linking and learning opportunities in other areas such as strategic planning. As their involvement in this research project demonstrates, the women have a desire to learn more from each other as well as from others involved in efforts with similar goals, to facilitate their projects and strengthen the outcomes.

In summary, the (she gives back) project has produced many new insights in order to better understand diaspora philanthropy efforts of migrant women in various European contexts. It has illuminated the range of activities that occur, with large impacts to be seen both from individual or less structured efforts, as well as those initiated by (migrant) organizations. It has advanced understandings of how diaspora philanthropy can contribute to local disparities and limit marginalization, issues which require a better understanding of communities and issues that are often overlooked, either because of the limited resources that reach them or because of the nature of the

physical or cultural conflicts in which they are situated. The report, while also pointing to the obstacles women encounter in running their diaspora philanthropy projects, shows evidence of the successes and impact of many of the initiatives quoted. Women's diaspora philanthropy activities are efficient: relatively small investments lead to significant changes. No money is wasted on expensive consultants, and the women work closely with local partners, allowing them to respond to local needs.

Women in the diaspora function as bridges between organizations and structures in two different countries. Their position, while not always easy to negotiate, in both societies and systems, allows them to act as social entrepreneurs, bringing together the right people and resources in innovative and effective ways to address existing needs and generate change.

¹⁾ Other research has also found 'integration' in the country of residence to be a precondition for successfully organizing transnational activities (Ghorashi, 2005)



(she gives back)

Migrant women's philanthropic practices from the diaspora

Research report

In Europe, philanthropy is usually seen as something that is reserved for wealthy white people – men, in general. However, practices of 'giving back' from diaspora communities have existed for many years. Migrant women's groups and organisations are important players in these practices: in a variety of ways, and often in close cooperation with women's groups in transnational networks, they are philanthropists contributing to positive social change both with financial means and through investing time and knowledge and leveraging their networks. Nevertheless, the participation and contributions of migrant women to communities and societies in Europe as well as in their countries of origin are often ignored.

With the intention to leverage more visibility and support for migrant women's philanthropic contributions, Mama Cash initiated the project (she gives back). One of the project aims was to map the variety of women's initiatives in the area of diaspora philanthropy in five European countries. Therefore Mama Cash conducted an exploratory research in the Netherlands, the United Kingdom, Germany, France and Italy.

The goal of the research, carried out by five researchers, was to answer a number of pressing questions. In what ways are migrant women involved in philanthropic activities? What motivates them, and what are their goals? In which ways are they contributing to positive social change? What is the impact of these practices on the position of women, both for those involved in it in Europe, and for the women in the countries where the projects are being carried out? What strategies are being used, what are the stumbling blocks, and what is needed in order to achieve the desired goals and impact?

The results of this mapping exercise are gathered in this report (she gives back).

(who is she?)

She is Mama Cash. Mama Cash is an international women's fund which supports groundbreaking and innovative projects conceived by women for women. She's focused on social transformation and advancing women's rights worldwide. Mama Cash strives for a peaceful and just world where women are free to make their own choices and secure their human.