

CONFERENCE: MIGRATION POLICY & DEVELOPMENT: THE IMPACT ON ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND LOCAL ECONOMIES

INTRODUCTION

Ngopee Foundation in Sierra Leone with IntEnt and Wanda Foundation organised a conference . The conference aims at highlighting the overall demographic impact of migration flows on the local/regional level. Moreover we would like to discuss about the (new) role of migrants in the international, multicultural and competitive world. While acknowledging that differences that will and should remain, there is a need for exchange to identify the specific areas of common ground in order to strengthen development efforts and combating poverty in country of origin by promoting the MDG's schemes.

BACKGROUND

International migrants are an important channel for the transmission of technology and knowledge. The so-called "brain drain" associated with better educated citizens of developing countries working in high-income countries is acute in some developing countries. However, Developing countries benefit, from the temporary migration of managers and engineers; the return of well-educated emigrants; and contact with a technologically sophisticated Diaspora. Remittances sent by migrants also promote technology diffusion by making investments more affordable.

Along with international trade and foreign direct investment (FDI), international migration is an important channel for the transmission of technology and knowledge. However, the direction and scale of technology flows that result from international migration are less clear than for FDI and trade.

On the one hand, the out-migration of better educated citizens of developing countries can result in the so-called "brain drain", which is acute in some (mainly smaller) developing countries. On the other hand, return migration and the immigration, albeit often temporary, of managers and engineers that often accompanies FDI and contact with a country's technologically sophisticated Diaspora are positive sources of technology transfer.

Returning migrants can be a major source of entrepreneurship, technology, marketing knowledge, and investment capital (Brinkerhoff 2006a and 2006b, Kapur 2001). Returning migrants or members of national Diasporas who are still abroad have made major contributions to technological progress in their home countries.

The Diaspora's political engagement in home countries can also improve local technological absorptive capacity, both through return and by exercising pressure on home country politicians from afar. Many leaders of developing countries were educated abroad and have returned to strengthen political institutions in their countries of origin (Easterly and Nyarko 2005).

In addition, migrants have often played a valuable role in the transfer of market-based institutions, such as venture capital, entrepreneurship, and corporate transparency, to their countries of origin.

WHY THIS CONFERENCE

Today's migration is closely linked to the evolution of globalization. Beyond market liberalization and political interconnection, revolutions in transport and communication have brought societies and economies closer to each other. In parallel, during the last decade, there has been rising awareness that more migration will occur- and be needed- in the future; and the international community has shown increasing interest in this issue, departing from strict unilateral or bilateral approaches and from exclusively security-based responses. Also, the need to achieve the Millennium Development Goals has shed a new light on migration as a tool for development.

In this context, the purpose of this conference is to familiarize development practitioners with this timely issue and introduce some basic concepts and options to handle the migration and development nexus (M&D) with regard to irregular migration, labor migration, remittances and Diaspora's entrepreneurship and investments. To that end, the conference will be mainly on knowledge transfer, interaction, discussions and exchange of information.

CONFERENCE OBJECTIVES

- To bring together policy makers, diaspora organisations, development agencies, public and private sector organizations, academia, and other relevant stakeholders in order to enhance common understanding of the issues at stake and policy gaps related to Migration and development policies and entrepreneurship;
- To raise awareness among the participants on the impact of the enterprises in many African countries, which have been running by entrepreneurship driven by the desire to survive rather than by people trained and skilled in business management.
- To highlight good practices and analyze mechanisms of migrants in the light of Migration and Entrepreneurship;
- To explore possible policy interventions aimed at addressing the impacts of the crisis of irregular migration and the consequences for development and Economic growth of the countries of origin.

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