



# Reflection Meeting Report Peace building/ Lobby & Advocacy

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The Hague



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## Introduction

In May 2015, the African Diaspora Policy Centre (ADPC) in cooperation with the Hague Academy of Local Governance (THA) and The Network University (TNU), launched the Diaspora Academy. The initiative has been generously funded by the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Municipality of The Hague. The time span for the program is for three years and will end in April 2017.

The main objective of the Diaspora Academy (DA) is to upgrade and strengthen professional skills and competences of Diaspora organizations in Europe engaged in the development of their countries of origin. The main aim of the program was to support and address the knowledge and capacity of Diaspora organizations which is needs for the Diaspora development practitioners organizations in Europe. The activities such as evidence-based research; outreach activities; facilitation of workshops; and smart development partnerships between diaspora and sub-national development entities in homelands was included in the program. The target beneficiaries of this program have been Diaspora development actors across Europe and they are active or interested in areas of peace-building and post-conflict reconstruction, advocacy, lobby and alliance/networking building. A total of 78 Diaspora have been trained over the course of the three years of the Diaspora Academy. As the DAP program is coming to an end, a meeting was organized to reflect on all the activities which were covered during the Diaspora Academy Program.

## Objectives of the meeting

The objective of the meeting was to give a platform to the stakeholders of the Diaspora Academy, most importantly the Diaspora organizations that have benefitted from the training workshops, in order to learn how the work of the program has strengthened skills and capacities in their development activities. The meeting will capture the experiences of participants who have gone through the training workshops, which will serve to highlight their importance as agents of change in peace building, social development and advocacy. It will also provide a unique chance to learn about the positive impact of the Diaspora Academy in order to better improve the quality of future activities targeted at enhanced Diaspora capacity for development. In this regard the meeting will facilitate reflection on impact, achievements and lessons learned from the Diaspora Academy, and help to guide future work aimed at empowering the Diaspora's place in the wider development of their homelands. The reflection meeting will seek to garner ideas, suggestions and insights to improve the follow up activities of the next phase of the Diaspora Academy.



## Training Description and summary of the program

The DAP capacity building workshops are interactive participatory trainings. Both trainings are 5 days in length. A collaborative learning approach is applied in the lobby and Advocacy training, which facilitates highly interactive sessions that provide ample space for discussion and exchange of experiences amongst participants. The peace building training adopts an elective participatory methodology. The elective participatory approach is highly participatory and assumes all participants are resource persons who bring their knowledge, experience and skills to bear the training and group

learning process. The approach focuses on collaboration and learning together while developing ideas into concrete plans, tapping into the group's collective wisdom and experience to shape and sharpen the plans. Within DAP, the objective is to up-scale and strengthen the professional skills and competences of Diaspora organizations in Europe. This encompasses providing access to targeted knowledge, useful and relevant information, viable contacts, and networks to boost their contribution to overall development in their countries of origin. In providing the peace building and the lobby and advocacy trainings, the projects provided participants with the requisite knowledge, skills and networks to effect this change. The activities undertaken within



the DAP project were 8 training workshops, four peace building and four lobby and advocacy. Two seminars which covered, the potential of diaspora in peace building towards homeland and the potential of diaspora advocacy. Lastly, two evidenced based research which covered diaspora building peace and potential of diaspora advocacy.

### **Lobby and advocacy Workshops**

The trainings were designed in a manner which equipped participants with the knowledge and skills to design and implement their own advocacy action plans, and to formulate their priorities effectively with regard to the migration and development agenda. It is expected that gaining sufficient knowledge in advocacy, lobbying and alliances building will greatly increase the capacity and influence of diaspora so they can position themselves as indispensable change agents for the development of their countries of origin. Generally, the training provided participants with advocacy and lobby instruments, methods, techniques and practical skills they can use to influence policy and practical change conducive to their particular cause. They can also use the gained advocacy and lobbying knowledge and tools to increase their profile, visibility and influence within development cooperation circles both in the host and home countries. In addition to that, the training provided participants with insights and approaches of building up strategic partnerships and alliances with like-minded organisations/stakeholders in order to constantly leverage support in promoting a common agenda. In this regard, there is clear indication that the participants took away critical skills and competencies that will move their respective causes forward.

Evaluations of the four training workshops indicate that participants were overall very satisfied with the training and came out committed and motivated to effect change. They expressed that the interactive and participatory nature of the training provided the opportunity to engage in open discussions with each other. Likewise, most of them responded that they benefited from the theory of the course and were happy with the extensive knowledge, experience and expertise of the trainers, as well as the overall organization and logistics of the workshop.

### **Peace building Workshops**

The workshop was aimed at strengthening the peace-making capacity of diaspora peace activists/brokers, and supporting them in the application of the gained skills in peace-building activities that they are involved in their countries of origin. By increasing the peace building capacities of diaspora peace activists, it is expected that diaspora interventions contributing to peace and social stability in their countries of origin will become more effective and enduring. Acquiring adequate conflict transformation techniques, skills and practical tools will enable diaspora peace activists and their counterparts in the home countries to operate more efficiently in their peace making activities. This would also help to widen the number of peace-building actors in the homelands by incorporating the diaspora in the process in a more structured and formal manner.

Evaluation of the four training indicated that participants strongly felt that the training provided them with much needed knowledge on peace-building and conflict transformation. Beyond that participants expressed that the practical exercise and information sharing among them were greatly valuable and served as a source of inspiration. In addition, the training workshop provided a unique networking opportunity and created the needed bridge to connect peace activists. Overall once again participants graded the training a 4 on average on a scale of 1-5; with 1 being terrible and 5 being excellent. This indicates the very high quality of the training, as well as the extra skills that the participants were able to take away with them.

## Peace building efforts, The Voices of Peace

**Case study 1: Stephanie's story:** Stephanie is part of the Burundian diaspora based in the Netherlands. She founded the non-profit organization “Burundian Women for Peace” and Development” (BWPD). Over 16 years Stephanie has been an active diaspora member in her community, she contributed to post-conflict reconstruction and sustainable peace in Burundi. Stephanie participated in the peace building training in 2015. In her presentation she highlighted the impact of the Diaspora Academy in her peace building activities. She shared how she improved the development of her country with the training received. She expressed how the program gave her a different view of experience and motivated her to continue peace building and development activities in her homeland. She noted she used the tools provided in the training to teach the community about conflict resolution and how to build peace among one another but also peace towards their neighboring countries.



**Case study 2: Masud's story:** Masud is the founder of Kismayo foundation, a non-profit organization registered in Denmark. It was established by the members of the Somali Diaspora community to address the humanitarian needs of their homeland. Masud took part in the peace building training of October 2016. In his presentation he shared how he gained valuable knowledge with the Peace building training. He highlighted the quality deliverance of the training and how broad the workshops and the materials provided were. He was able to use the knowledge gained to create a platform in his home country, using the conflict and analysis tools provided at the training to create a study concerning structural changes in their activities and humanitarian aid access. Also he was able to provide increased opportunities for disabled people by involving them in the peace building activities.

**Case study 3: Salome's story:** Salome is the founder of two equality based organizations, AKiDwA and Wezeshu. An African Diaspora led development organization based in Ireland working with women affected or likely to be affected by conflict and violence both in DRC and Kenya. She has expressed that attending the peace building workshop has benefitted her greatly, it equipped her with relevant and useful knowledge to put into practice. She learned how to use the concept of soft power to shape the preferences of others to help achieve shared objectives. She was able to identify several stakeholders and engage them in her projects. She highlighted, how she created a platform for dialogue and discussions in order to share projects ideas to improve overall quality. She used the networking opportunities from the workshops to increase their project developments and reach.



## Lobby and Advocacy efforts, The Voices of Change

**Case study 4: Celestine's story:** Celeste is a lawyer in migration law, a leader of African diaspora in Switzerland. He highlighted a success story on how the lobby and advocacy influenced their activities concerning migration policies in Switzerland. After the workshops they have been able to secure working permits for African migrants to enable them to work. He expressed the major challenge African diaspora is facing, is Africa being a huge continent with a lot of countries that shares different ideas. It is therefore very difficult to bring all the ideas together in order to reach an agreement. He also mentioned that because funds are received on project based and most people working on the project work voluntarily, in a long term they quit, because they need jobs that can finance them. Therefore most diaspora organizations lack qualified employees.

**Case study 5: France' story:** France is an active member of the African community in Hungary. He is the founder of ' Foundation for Africa'. It was founded to make African migrants members to the Hungarian society and to contribute to economic development of their home countries. He expressed how he struggled to find African migrants in Hungary because they were few in the country. He found out Hungary had no strategy for African countries because they were not aware of the existences of such countries. After establishing diaspora organization in Hungary, the objectives were not properly structured. With the help of the lobby and advocacy workshops, he was able to structure the objectives of the organization. He could also differentiate between the vision and mission of the organization. He acquired more skills and knowledge to enable him redefine the activities of the organization.

**Case study 6: Gisma's story:** Gisma is the co-founder of Voice of South Sudanese Diaspora. The VoSSD aims to bring the South Sudanese diaspora together in order to work towards lasting peace in South Sudan. After attending the lobby and advocacy, Gisma and her colleague Biar have been able to set up 32 diaspora organizations in Europe. The knowledge and skills gained from the workshops made their work more structured and effective and more importantly they were able to utilize the knowledge to contribute to the peace process in their home country.



## Diaspora Achievements and Recommendations

The stories of the participants reveals that the Peace building and the Lobby & Advocacy trainings facilitated through the DAP are both effective and relevant. Their stories clearly indicated that the project has selected its change agents well, and have taken on board individuals in a position to make key decisions within respective organizations. The evidence further reveals that the project's change agents engage in the context of diverse stakeholders providing opportunities to potential influence policy direction.

Participants of both trainings rate the trainings as very good/excellent and suggest the trainings have provided them with the requisite knowledge, competencies and tools to effect change. Participants particularly valued the interactive and participatory nature of both trainings which facilitated sharing of experience and best practices. Participants also used the networking opportunity that the training afforded them to learn from each other. The various diaspora organizations were able to share ideas on methods of improvements in order to contribute to the project development in their home country.

Participants also provided valuable suggestions and recommendation on ways to improve the next phase of the Diaspora Academy. The following suggestion were recommend by the participants.

- ADPC to be broad in their activities by also focusing on mediation and governance skills
- Focusing on the youth generation to participate in diaspora activities
- Flexibility in both peace building and lobby and advocacy training, to enable the two groups to have the opportunity to also have the experience of both trainings
- Stabilization of the return of qualified diaspora experts
- Create space for discussion, dialogue and sharing of information, experience and identification of gaps
- Maximize and establish meaningful intervention for Diaspora work towards prevention of conflict, violence and war
- Focus on gender equality in addressing conflict for sustainable peace
- ADPC to offer peace building and lobby and advocacy trainings in countries abroad
- ADPC to offer trainings to diaspora experts
- Practical solutions in the diaspora activities
- Activities to be done in a technical and systematic manner
- Widen the approach of fundraising and suggest sources of funding
- Joint proposals and programs with other diaspora organizations
- ADPC to offer a collective project that could be implemented in every country
- ADPC to offer global training, to enable trainers to travel to other countries to give training
- Engagement of private sector development in Africa
- Develop a database of African Diaspora organizations and their respective projects, especially in Africa



## Conclusion

The presence and active involvement of participants during the reflection were duly acknowledged as well as the insightful information and knowledge shared by the presenters. The conclusions of the reflection meeting are summarized as follows:

a) The organization has provided education and capacity building for high profile diasporans in Europe and beyond. The knowledge gained from such activity has helped diaspora experts to build and develop a mindset to lobby and facilitate peace in their home country.

b) Diaspora engagement has been captured on UN high-level forum, EU agreement, Valleta declaration. The UN is currently working on a new compact, however, the framework, regulations, rules and procedure on diaspora agreement are very prominent at every high-level forum. But accordingly, those policies are still not practical. The ecosystem is very fragmented, making it extremely difficult to implement result oriented policies for both government and diaspora.

C) Recommendations needed are practical tools and instruments, which relate to/for:

- A more robust program to facilitate greater diaspora engagement with the governments of homeland and destination countries.
- A designed program that will focus on the young generation
- Develop new programs to attract different target groups, to be implemented in different geographical areas.
- Develop a diaspora fund to support high profile diaspora initiatives
- Diaspora organizations needs to build partnership with mainstream organizations
- Finally, diaspora should develop a mindset of being operational excellent through education and capacity building



## Appendix 1: List of Participants

Name	Email	Organization
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## Appendix 2: Resource Persons and ADPC Staff

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## Appendix 3: Programme Overview

Time	
09h30-10h00	<b>Registration &amp; coffee</b>
10h00-10h30	<b>Welcome Remarks</b> <i>Paul van Tongeren, Chairman of the Board, African Diaspora Policy Centre</i> <i>Awil Mohamoud, Director, African Diaspora Policy Centre (ADPC)</i>
10h30-11h00	<b>Keynote Speaker: Diaspora as Agents of Change</b> <i>Gibril Faal, Director of GK Partners &amp; Chairman of African Foundation for Development (AFFORD)</i>
11h00-11h30	<b>Question and Answer with Discussion</b>
11h30-11h45	<b>Diaspora Academy: Summary of the Programme</b> <i>Constance Formson-Lorist, DAP Programme Coordinator</i>
11h45-12h30	<b>The Voices of Peace</b> Diaspora share their peacebuilding efforts and how the Diaspora Academy has impacted their work.
	<b>Stephanie's story</b> <i>Stephanie Mbanzadore, Burundian Women for Peace and Development (BWPD)</i>
	<b>Masud's story</b> <i>Masud J.S.I. Abdi, Kismayo Foundation</i>
	<b>Salome's story</b> <i>Salome Mbugua, Founder of AkiDwa and Wezesha</i>
12h30-13h00	<b>Discussion</b>

13h00-14h00	<b>Lunch</b>
14h00-14h45	<p><b>The Voices of Change Agents: Potential of Diaspora Advocacy</b> Diaspora share their lobbying efforts and how Diaspora Academy has helped them get a step closer to their goals.</p> <p><b>Celestine's story</b> <i>Celestine Ugochukwu, African Diaspora Council of Switzerland</i></p> <p><b>Gisma's story</b> <i>Gisma Ruphael Mou Mou, Voice of South Sudanese Diaspora (VoSSD)</i></p> <p><b>France's story</b> <i>France Mutombo Tshimuanga, 'Foundation for Africa'</i></p>
14h45-15h15	<b>Discussion</b>
15h15-15h30	<b>Coffee break</b>
15h30-16h15	<p><b>Reflection session</b> This session is facilitated by the moderator and reflects ways to improve the programme design and impact. It is carried out in plenary for easy flow of discussion and sharing of ideas.</p> <p><i>Moderator, Jasmin Nordien</i></p>
16h15-16h30	<p><b>Wrap up and closing</b> <i>Abubakarr Bangura, Chairman of Sierra Leone Central Union</i></p>
16h30	<p><b>Networking opportunity</b> <i>With Refreshments</i></p>