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Facilitating Participation of Diasporas in Peacebuilding

Berlin Summer Dialogue 2010

Municipal Cooperation with Migrant Networks

Opportunities for Development, Peace and Integration Policy

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Outline

• Introduction
• Fragmentation and Politicization
• Formal peacebuilding engagements are few
• Recommendations:
  – Value local and regional level contributions
  – Cooperation cannot be forced but it can be facilitated
  – There is room for supporting both professional and voluntary engagements
  – There is a wide range of peacebuilding activities to be supported – at times preferably without calling it ‘peacebuilding’
Introduction

- **Actors**
  - Individual
  - Collective

- **Method**
  - Direct
  - Indirect

- **Kind**
  - Financial capital
  - Human capital

- **Compensation**
  - Voluntary
  - Paid/Profit

- **Location**
  - Country of settlement
  - Country of origin
Cooperation with diasporas from conflict-settings often seen as problematic for two reasons: fragmentation and politicization.

**Fragmentation: Somali example**
- Observed along regional, clan, socio-economic, religious, gender, generational and political lines.
- Considered a major obstacle for supporting transnational engagements.
- Often dealt with by demanding umbrella organizations or clan representation.
- Policy risks doing harm because it increases the conflict over resources along clan lines, solidifying dividing lines that in Somalia are often quite fluid.

**Politicization: Sri Lankan example**
- Strong political engagement over the years from Tamil diaspora.
- Problematic when working in Sri Lanka to be associated with this diaspora.
- Yet not engaging problematic as diaspora does play a role.
A wide range of peacebuilding activities

- DIASPEACE research found very little formal project-based peacebuilding engagements – hardly ever self-identified as peacebuilding activities
- Reasons why it is not labeled as peacebuilding:
  - Very political and highly contested term in country of origin and diaspora
  - National level less important than local/regional levels – more ‘bottom up’ approaches
- Peacebuilding = activities aimed at the sustainable transformation of structural conflict factors and patterns. It presupposes a long-term commitment, on the part of both local and external actors, to a process that simultaneously addresses the material and the attitudinal level of a conflict
Recommendations

1. Value local and regional level contributions

2. Cooperation cannot be forced but it can be facilitated:
   - Focus on specific professions (education, healthcare etc)
   - Support own initiatives (eg Nansen Peace Centre)
   - Accept the fact that this takes time – after all, there is a conflict!

3. There is room for supporting both professional and voluntary engagements
   - Recruitment practices
   - Enable diaspora organizations to access funding

4. There is a wide range of peacebuilding activities to be supported
   – at times preferably without calling it ‘peacebuilding’
Interested in More?

• ADPC Policy Paper – G. Sinatti et al (in print)
• PRIO Handbook – C. Horst et al (forthcoming)
• PRIO Policy Briefs 2008 and 2009
• …And many more earlier publications from partners, including JYU, BICC, CeSPI, ADPC, PRIO, MPI and APD