Diaspora Engagement in a Constricted Political Space

The Case of Ethiopian Diaspora Organisations in the Netherlands

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Key messages

Participation of diaspora organisations in constricted political spaces is greatly influenced by the strategies they use, ability to adapt and creatively navigate the constantly shifting political and policy environments. They rely on capacities gained from migration experiences, status and degree of integration and participation in the country of residence.

The political and policy environment in the countries residence provide diaspora organisations with political opportunity structures that enable diasporas to mobilise the resources and capacities needed for contributing to development in both the country of residence and origin. This derives from partnerships with government bodies NGOs and communities.

The political and policy environment in the country of origin determines whether diaspora organizations can return and contribute to local development. The creation of institutions is a positive step, but political will and the government's attitude to the diasporas is crucial for the enhancement of institutional' capacities and effective diaspora engagement.

The benefits of transnational diaspora activities can be harnessed much more through bilateral relations with countries of origin that are underpinned by principles of complementarity, coherence and win-win. This derives from recognition of the added value of transnational citizenships, and scaling up the inclusion of diaspora organisations in policy dialogue

Table of Contents

List of Boxes

List of Figures

List of Tables

Acronyms

ARRA	Agency for Refugee and Returnee Affairs
AU	African Union
DFD	Diaspora Forum for Development
DFID	Department for International Development (UK)
DIASPEACE	Diaspora for Peace Building
DIR	Dir biyabir Anbessa Yasir
EC	European Commission
EIA	Ethiopia Investment Agency
EMN	European Migration Network
ENNOS	Ethiopian Netherlands Network for Development Cooperation
EPRDF	Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front
EPRDP	Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Party
EPRP	Ethiopian People's Revolution Party
EU	European Union
FRONTEX	European Agency for the Management of Operational Cooperation at the External Borders of the Member States
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GoE	Government of Ethiopia
GTP	Growth and Transformation Plan
ICCO	Inter-church Organisation for Development Cooperation
ICEDA	Integrated Community Education & Development Association
ICMPD	International Centre for Migration Policy Development
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
IOM	International Organisation for Migration
JAES	Joint Africa-EU Strategy
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
MidEth	Migration for Development in Africa-Ethiopia
NCDO	National Committee for International Cooperation and Sustainable Development
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
OXFAM Novib	Dutch Organisation for International Aid
PASDEP	Plan for Accelerated and Sustained Development to End Poverty
SEM	Stichting Ethiopia Morgen
SMS	Stichting Mondiale Samenleving
SMU	St. Mary's University, Addis Ababa
TICAD	Tokyo International Conference on African Development
UK	United Kingdom
UNDAF	UN Development Assistance Framework
UNDESA	United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNOCHA	United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
US	United States
USCRI	United States Committee for Refugees and Immigrants
VWN	Vluchtelingenwerk Nederland (Dutch Council for Refugees)

1. Introduction

This paper examines the implications of a restricted political space in the country of origin for collective diaspora engagement and participation, taking the case of Ethiopian diaspora in the Netherlands as an illustration.

The Ethiopian diaspora in the Netherlands may be characterised as both conflict-generated and regime condition-generated. Successive authoritarian regimes, political and state violence (Abbink, 1995) and the war with Eritrea (Sarbo 2009, pp.222/257/) have contributed to the forced migration of a number of population groups in Ethiopia (Bulcha, 2002). The consequence has been the formation of Ethiopian diaspora in various countries in Europe (Warnecke, 2010; Bulcha, 1988), North America (Kebede, 2010, p.8) the Middle East (de Regt, 2012) and other parts of Africa (Gebre, 2007).

Chapter 2 begins by summarising the history of Ethiopian migration and showing how the diaspora in the Netherlands attempt to engage and participate in the country of origin. Chapter 3 discusses the characteristics of Ethiopian diaspora organisations in the Netherlands, in terms of types of organisations and their legal status. Chapter 4 examines the institutional, policy and legislative framework for the management of migration in Ethiopia and its implications for diaspora return and engagement. Chapter 5 analyses the political opportunity structures in the Netherlands that facilitate Ethiopian diaspora engagement. Chapter 6 examines the implications of EU policies for diaspora organisations in EU member states. Chapter 7 discusses the challenges faced by Ethiopian diaspora organisations in undertaking transnational engagement. The paper concludes by exploring the opportunities for effective engagement strategies. It presents a number of recommendations for EU member states in terms of scaling up their policies on diaspora engagement in Ethiopia in the prevailing political environment.

The data for this paper are based on field study and interviews conducted in the Netherlands and various regions in Ethiopia where Dutch-based Ethiopian diaspora organisations have performed community development activities. Additional data and the analytical framework are taken from a PhD research project, i.e. a study of the evolution of Ghanaian diaspora organisations and their contribution to development in the Netherlands and the country of origin (Ong'ayo, forthcoming, and Ong'ayo 2014).

1.1. Diaspora engagement and participation

In general terms, the contribution of diaspora to development in countries of origin and residence is both an individual and collective undertaking whose manifestations vary markedly among different groups. It is influenced largely by background factors such as the drivers of migration, experiences during migration, the status of migrants and the degree of integration in the country of residence. These factors significantly influence the nature of diaspora organisations, their ability to mobilise resources and to engage transnationally (Ong'ayo, forthcoming). Transnational engagement and participation by diaspora organisations is embedded in practices and commitments (Al-Ali & Khoser, 2002; Vertovec & Cohen, 1999; Castles & Miller, 1993; Glick Schiller et al., 1992) most of which are observable in collective forms of organisation. These practices and commitments spring from political opportunity structures that help diaspora to form collective organisations, mobilise their resources and participate in their countries of origin and residence. This entails assemblages of social materials such as knowledge, technology and practices, which come together within these transnational spaces (Levitt 2011, p.11).

Diaspora engagement and participation in policy and development processes at different levels in the country of origin depend on a wide variety of factors. The most significant of these is the migrants' physical and psychological links to their ancestral homes (Moya, 2005) and their ability to return.

The ability of diaspora to return and engage in their country of origin is influenced by contextual factors in both the country of origin and the country of residence. In the country of residence, diasporas capitalise on their legal status, level of integration and symbolic repertoires that they encounter, including opportunities to move freely. Diasporas that are not able to return tend to use the return dilemma as a justification for perpetuating their stay in the diaspora, their organisational structure and leadership (Lyons, 2004, p.8). As some studies have noted, a lack of opportunity to return leads to inevitable assimilation in the country of residence (Lyons, 2006 and 2004; Lucassen, 2006; Portes et al. 2002; Cohen, 1997).

Diasporas that seek to engage and participate in both the country of residence and the country of origin tend to capitalise on their legal status and the political opportunity structures in the country of residence, in order to undertake transnational activities mediating between 'here' and 'there'. This is because diaspora communities act as social fields that link together the country of residence and the country of origin (Laurence et al. 2003, p.4). This linkage taps into the benefits of multiple identities and dual affinity, circular migration and the transnational transfer of resources (i.e. skills, culture, networks and opportunities) facilitated by migration. The status of individuals in a particular diaspora community whether conflict-generated (Lyons, 2006), political or economic refugees and their attitude towards the home government, also play an important role in decisions to return and engage in the country of origin.

In the country of origin, it is the prevailing political and policy environment that determines whether diaspora groups can return and participate in policy-making and development processes. This is a question of the diasporas' long-distance nationalism (Glick Schiller 2005, p.570), the political role assigned to them by the regimes (or opposition parties) in their country of origin, and the role played by diasporas in the domestic or international affairs of the country of origin (Shain 2000, p.662). The attitude taken by the government of the country of origin towards its diaspora (*ibid.*) and the value attached to the latter – especially the reliance on diaspora remittances – determine the scope for diaspora to engage in policy and development processes in local communities. This attitude may be either open or restrictive and has implications for the ability to harness the diaspora's development potential.

2. The context in which diaspora organisations emerge and participate

2.1. Migration in Ethiopia

Ethiopia had a population of 94 million in 2013(World Bank, 2014). The country was one of the top 10 migration corridors in 2010 and both a sender and a receiver of migration Ethiopia had an annual net migration rate of -0.23 migrants per 1,000 population and an annual average net migration rate of 0.8 between 2005-2010. In the same period, its stock of immigrants was estimated at 571,800 or 0.8% of the total population (UNDESA, 2013). Ethiopia's international migrant stock[1] has not changed significantly since the 1990s. The percentage was 2.4% in 1990 and 1.0% in 2000. Between 2010 and 2013, the figure was slightly lower than 1 percent, at 0.7% and 0.8% respectively (*ibid.*). The same period saw a significant shift in the annual rate of change in the migrant stock, from -5.6% in 1900-2000 to -1.3% in 2000-2010.

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[1]   This refers to the number of people born in a country other than that in which they live including refugees

However, there was an even bigger change in 2010-2013, when the percentage leapt to about 7.1%. The stock of emigrants was estimated at 620,000 in 2010, representing 0.8% of the total population (World Bank, 2011, p.114) whereas female Ethiopian migrants constituted 46.2% of the international migrant stock in 2013 (UNDESA, 2013).

Migration in Ethiopia consists of three distinct flows, namely internal (i.e. rural-urban migration, Berhanu & White, 2000), rural–rural (Casacchia et al. 2001), and regional and international (Terrazas, 2007). In 1999, rural-urban migration accounted for one million people, while there were also big rural-urban flows, representing over half a million people (Casacchia et al. 2001). Reverse migration, i.e. urban-rural migration, involved around 370,000 people (World Migration 2008, p.179). There has also been growing North-South migration, exemplified by the inflow of investors in large-scale farms.

Since 1998, the share of remittances in GDP has increased from 1.23% to 3.65% in 2013. In 2007, remittances to Ethiopia reached USD 356 million, accounting for 1.8% of GDP (World Bank, 2011). In 2010, Ethiopia became one of the top 10 remittance recipients, receiving approximately USD 0.4 billion in remittances (World Bank 2011, p.34). Ethiopian diasporas also invested about 11 million Ethiopian Birr between July 1992 and November 2007, thereby creating 35,262 permanent and 29,000 temporary jobs (ICMPD, 2008). Remittances through formal channels[2] amounted to USD 636.2 million in 2007.

Ethiopian migrants consist of both lowly and highly skilled individuals. However, a large group of migrants (10.1%) is made up of people educated to tertiary level. These include 478 (26.4%) home-trained physicians (Bhargava et al. 2010), 553 (29.7%) physicians born in Ethiopia (Clemens & Pettersson, 2006) and an estimated 1,077 (16.8%) nurses born in Ethiopia (World Bank 2011, p.114).

2.2.   The main drivers of migration in Ethiopia

Migration in Ethiopia is influenced by four major factors:

1.   conflict;
2.   regime condition (political);
3.   poor economic prospects;
4.   the deterioration of the environment in some parts of the country.

2.2.1.   The political environment

Ethiopia has been ruled by a number of authoritarian regimes since the monarchy ended in 1974. The overthrow of Emperor Haile Selassie in a military coup in 1974 ushered in a military dictatorship under the *Derg* regime (Siegfried et al., 2002). The regime conditions during the late 1970s and 1980s forced many Ethiopian to flee from persecution. Continued internal political conflicts stemming from ethnic and identity politics have also exacerbated the harsh regime conditions in Ethiopia. Today, a combination of the outlawing of political opposition to the authoritarian regime under the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Party (EPRDP) then led by Meles Zenawi, political violence (Bariabager, 1997) and politically motivated killings (Human Rights Watch, 2010) continues to produce a flow of refugees from Ethiopia. According to Freedom House, Ethiopia scored 6 out of 7 (seven being the worst score) on 'political rights and civil liberties' in 2011. This is due both to a failure to uphold the rule of law, as well as infringements of the freedom of expression and association. The establishment of federalism along ethnic lines after the promulgation of the 1995 Constitution prompted further internal migration, as communities were forced to

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2   This refers to regulated transaction channels through which migrants send money. This entails point of remittances transfer, transfer interface and point of receiving the transfer

move to their regions of origin. For example, thousands of tribal people in the Lower Omo Valley were forcefully relocated to make way for vast plantations (Oakland Institute, 2013a).

Lack of freedom of expression, assembly and association, harassment, detention, suspicious killings of activists, arbitrary arrests, torture and ill-treatment (Human Rights Watch, 2013, p.14) have also led to the exodus of many Ethiopians, especially journalists, opposition supporters and students. This was most evident in the arrest of eighty Addis Ababa University Oromo students in 2004 and the torture, detention and eventual expulsion of some 365 students from the university (Ethiopian Media, 2004). This was in contravention of Article 29 of the Ethiopian Constitution, which guarantees the freedom of thought and expression. In the aftermath of the 2005 election crisis in Ethiopia (Abbink, 2006), many opposition supporters and students who had survived the detentions and killings escaped to neighbouring countries. They eventually resettled in a number of regions thanks to UNHCR resettlement programmes[3].. In recent years, the enforcement of the Anti-Terrorism Proclamation has led to the arrest and prosecution of journalists, Muslim religious leaders and political opposition members, under trumped up terrorism–related charges (Human Rights Watch, 2010).

2.2.2. War and other conflicts

Large-scale conflicts in Ethiopia have also affected migration from Ethiopia, leading to a large outflow of Ethiopian refugees in the region and beyond. Table 1 demonstrates that the flow of Ethiopian refugees reached its peak between 1982 and 1987 (Bariagaber, 1997). This was instigated first by the overthrow of Emperor Haile Selassie in 1974, and subsequently by the 1977 and 1978 war between Ethiopia and Somalia. The suppression of the Ogaden Somali insurgency pushed an estimated 750,000

Table 1: Ethiopian refugees between 1972-2002

Year	Number of refugees
1972	55,000
1977	91,000
1982	1,081,500
1987	1,122,300
1992	752,400
1997	55,000
2002	15,000
2007	20,000

Source: Adapted from Bariagaber (1997), USCR (2007/2002/1997)

Ogaden Somali refugees across the border (Terrazas, 2007). In addition, the war of independence between Ethiopia and Eritrea in 1991 and 1998 generated some 390,000 displaced persons in the then province of Eritrea (*ibid.*). The displacement was also complicated by the nullification of Eritrean citizenship after the war of independence.

Various parts of Ethiopia continue to be affected by conflict today, namely the East Hararghe zone of Oromia and the Nogob zone of the Somali region (UNOCHA, 2013). Inter-communal and cross-border conflicts sparked by competition for resources and tensions over rights to land and property have also resulted in the internal displacement of persons through forced relocation (Oakland Institute, 2013b). According to an IOM report published in September 2013, Ethiopia then had an estimated 416,315 internally displaced persons (IDPs) (OCHA, 2013), compared with a figure of 313,560 quoted six months before. According to UNOCHA, 67% of current IDPs (i.e. 281,104 people) are the result of inter-communal conflict or natural disaster, especially flooding. About 135,211 of new IDPs in 2013 were the result of either conflict (123,754) or flooding (11,457) in 2013 (IOM, 2013)

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[3]   Interview with surviving student leader, Utrecht 2011

2.2.3.   Economic factors

Ethiopia ranks 169th out of 179 countries in the Human Development Index published by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). Although it had a GDP growth rate of 11% in 2011, 20 million people, i.e. 34% of the Ethiopian population, were estimated as living below the poverty line in that year (UN Development Assistance Framework, 2011). About 83% of the population live in rural areas. Rural-urban migration (Ezra & Kiros, 2001) has fuelled urban unemployment, thus exacerbating international migration. Income per capita in 2011 stood at USD 155 (EC Country Strategy Paper for Ethiopia 2008-2013). Disparities in living standards and the lack of good economic prospects have led many Ethiopians to seek greener pastures in Europe, North America, Australia and the Middle East, as well as other parts of Africa. The slow growth in the agricultural sector in rural areas has also induced internal, regional and international migration. For instance, although agricultural GDP has risen by 1.4% per annum during the past 40 years, it has remained below the population growth rate (*ibid.*). Sluggish economic growth in rural and urban areas has also prompted a large number of both semi-skilled and highly skilled workers to emigrate.

2.2.4.   The environment

Besides wars, conflicts and political and economic factors, migration in Ethiopia is also influenced by ecological degradation and rural poverty in both Ethiopia (Ezra, 2001b) and the wider Horn of Africa region (Berhanu & White, 2000). Drought and famine in 1984-85 and 1987-88 have been big drivers of migration in Ethiopia (Ezra, 2001a). Following the Great Famine of 1984, the Ethiopian government launched a campaign of forced resettlement and 'villagisation' (Giorgis, 1989), forcing large segments of the population to migrate internally and consequently forfeit their sources of livelihood. Displacements have also been caused by the allocation of land through political patronage by successive regimes. However, in recent years, Ethiopia has become one of the top five destinations in sub-Saharan Africa for commercial agricultural ventures (Schoneveld 2012, p.55). Ethiopia is pursuing a big land-leasing policy for foreign direct investment under the five-year Growth and Transformation Plan (*ibid.*). This has helped to boost the number of large-scale land acquisitions and leases by Chinese companies for sesame production, Dutch companies for floriculture, Pakistani businesses for sugar plantations, and Indian ventures for tea, bio-fuel, sugarcane and cotton production. Other foreign companies investing in Ethiopia are from Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Turkey, Germany, Israeli, Malaysia, Italy, the UK and Brazil (see also Van Vlerken et al., 2011; LEI Wageningen UR, 2011). Also partaking in the 'land grab' (Zoomers, 2010) are Ethiopian diasporas whose property investments have been encouraged by the government's diaspora engagement policy.

The combination of these factors continues to drive local, regional and international migration in Ethiopia. According to UNHCR, Ethiopian refugees numbered about 77,118 and asylum-seekers 48,661 in January 2014 (UNHCR, 2014).

2.3.   The main countries of destination

The Ethiopian international migrant stock for both male and females was estimated at 1,155,390, 662,444, and 580,614 in 1990, 2000, and 2010 respectively (UNDESA, 2013). Other estimates suggest that about 2.5 million Ethiopians live in the diaspora (IOM, 2013). According to World Bank estimates, the top destinations for Ethiopians are Asia, including the Middle East, North America and Europe (see Table 2).

The main countries of destination for Ethiopian migrants in the Middle East are Israel, Saudi Arabia, Yemen and Lebanon (see Table 3). In 1999, for instance, about 17,000 Ethiopian women were reported to be working illegally as housemaids in Lebanon (Kebede 2002, p.22). The majority of the Ethiopian migrant women working in the above countries are victims of trafficking. Yemen is used as a transit point for the Gulf countries. In Africa, Somalia, South Sudan, Eritrea and Sudan are the preferred destinations. Other destination countries in the region include Kenya and Djibouti (see Table 4), largely due to their proximity and their roles as refugee and transit locations.

Table 2: Recipient regions of Ethiopian emigrants, 2000-2002 (x 1,000)

Region	Number
Africa	8.6
Asia	37.5
Europe	21.4
Latin America	0.2
North America	30.7
Oceania	1.5
Total	**98.9**

Source: Adapted from World Bank (2008)

Table 3: Top destination countries for Ethiopian migrants in the Middle East in 2010 (in absolute numbers)

Israel	Saudi Arabia	Yemen	Lebanon	Jordan	UEA	Pakistan
105,500	90,000	62,000	30,000	8,781	3,363	3,211

Source: UNDESA (2013); UNHCR (2013); Terrazas (2007).

Table 4: Top destination countries for Ethiopian migrants in Africa, 1990-2010

	Somalia	South Sudan	Eritrea	Sudan	Djibouti
1990	616,940	384,266	69,681	53,857	904
2010	369,822	124,792	6,498	17,490	3,094

Source: UNDESA (2013)

Among OECD members, the favourite countries of destination are the United States, Canada, Germany, Italy and Sweden (World Bank, 2011). As far as the EU is concerned, there are large contingents of Ethiopians in Italy, Sweden, the UK, Germany and the Netherlands.

Table 5: Top eight OECD destination countries for Ethiopian migrants, 2005-2006 (x 1,000)

USA	UK	Italy	Norway	Canada	Netherlands	Australia	France	Israel	Sweden
123.0	8.6	13.9	3.2	19.3	3.9	4.8	4.1	50.3	10.7

Source: UNDESA (2013).

2.4.   Ethiopian diaspora in the Netherlands

The immigration of Ethiopians to the Netherlands (Blakely, 2005) began in 1976 and reached its peak in the 1990s (Van Heelsum, 2006, p.4). The Ethiopian population in the Netherlands has increased over the past three decades, with the effect that Ethiopians now rank sixth in the list of the top seven migrant communities from sub-Saharan Africa. As is illustrated by Table 6, the Ethiopian community in the Netherlands numbered about 8,000 in 1996. By 2012, this figure had risen to around 12,000 (Statistics Netherlands, 2012).

Table 6: Top seven sub-Saharan African migrant communities in the Netherlands (1996-2012)

| Year	1996	2000	2005	2010	2012
Cape Verde	16,662	18,242	19,966	21,006	21,494
Egypt	11,598	14,398	18,528	20,599	21,373
Ethiopia	7,978	8,997	10,292	11,345	11,970
Ghana	12,480	15,609	19,108	20,829	21,922
Somalia	20,060	28,780	21,733	27,011	33,750
South Africa	9,629	12,524	15,370	17,214	17,896
Nigeria	3,136	5,180	7,615	10,137	11,196

Source: Adapted from Statistics Netherlands (2012).

The majority of Ethiopians in the Netherlands are aged between 20 and 65 (see Table 7). They consist mainly of first generation immigrants and their children, but their numbers also include people who have come to join, reunite or form new families. Table 7 also shows that there are more males than females. There is a higher representation of males in all age brackets except for the 0-20 bracket.

Table 7: Ethiopian population by gender and age

Age	Male and females				Male				Females			
	2010	2011	2012	2013	2010	2011	2012	2013	2010	2011	2012	2013
All ages	1,328	1,263	1,255	1,306	842	769	764	811	486	494	491	495
0 to 20	81	159	164	165	80	71	79	76	101	88	85	89
20 to 65	1,144	1,100	1,086	1,136	760	695	681	731	384	405	405	405
65 and older	3	4	5	5	2	3	4	4	1	1	1	1

Source: Statistics Netherlands (2013).

A study by Van Heelsum (2006) and Statistics Netherlands data for 2005 confirm that the main motives for Ethiopian migration to the Netherlands are asylum and family formation, labour migration and study. Asylum is the most common reason for Ethiopian immigration to the Netherlands. As shown by Table 8, asylum accounts for the largest share (33%), followed by study (23%). The sample consisted of 384 respondents. Family formation is another important motive, accounting for 14% of migrants. The 'Other reasons' category makes up 22% of the total. Labour migration, family reunion and bringing family members account for 4%, 3% and 1% in that order (Van Heelsum, 2006).

Figure 1: Motives for immigration to the Netherlands
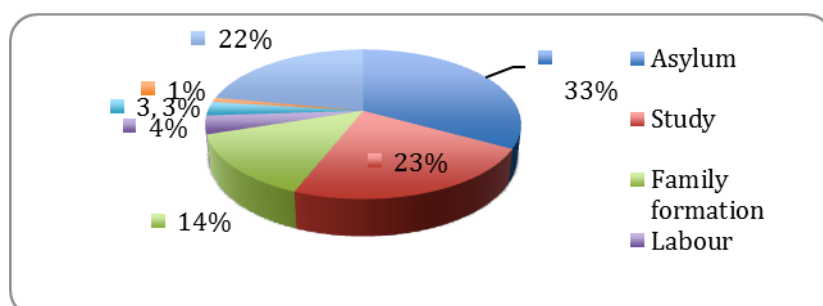
Source: Adapted from Van Heelsum (2006).

A Pilot Programme has buoyed the large numbers of asylum-seekers and refugees for the Assisted Return of Rejected Asylum Seekers, which the Dutch government signed with a number for countries in 1997.

Ethiopia was one of the few sub-Saharan African countries that signed this agreement (Khoser, 2001). Asylum applications by Ethiopians peaked in 1990, before falling from about 1,000 to around 210 in 2000. As Figure 1 shows, that number declined further to about 70 between 2005 and 2012 (Statistics Netherlands, 2013).

Figure 2: Asylum requests by Ethiopian migrants in the Netherlands, 1980-2012 (x 1,000)
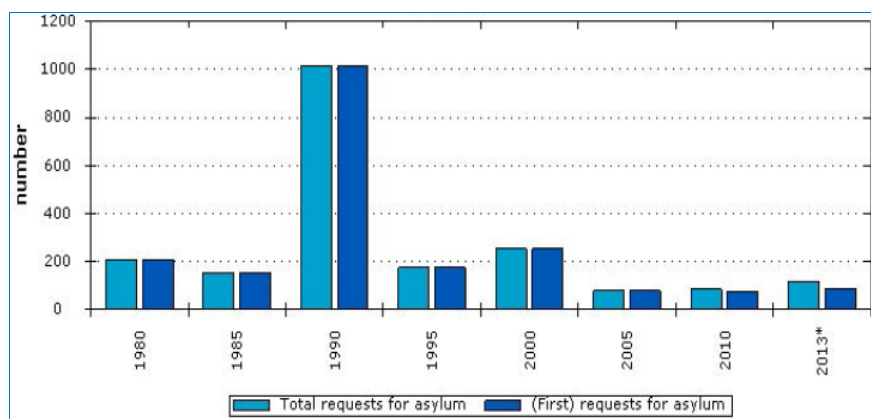
Source: Statistics Netherlands (2013).

The participation of Ethiopians in the Dutch labour market is relatively high compared with other groups. About 17% of Ethiopian immigrants define themselves as having a high level of education, 61% as being educated to an average level and 22% as having a low level of education. Over 50% hold at least a high-school diploma and a significant number are continuing their educational careers (Van den Tillaart et al. 2000, p.167). A study by Van den Tillaart, Olde Monnikhof, Van den Berg, and Warmerdam in 2000 found that most Ethiopians have adapted to Dutch society fairly well: 15% of males and 23% of females have married a Dutch citizen. Many Ethiopians live in mixed neighbourhoods, i.e. where the residents are a mix of Dutch citizens and non-citizens (van den Tillaart et al., 2000).

In many cases, the local authorities and the organisations responsible for the resettlement of refugees decide on the place of residence to be allocated to Ethiopian migrants to the Netherlands. However, most migrants tend to ask to be housed in municipalities where there is a big community of earlier arrivals.[4] This is due partly to the transnational and social networks during the migration trajectory, but also to the job opportunities in those regions. Diaspora from Ethiopia has developed networks, patterns of living and ideologies spanning their home and host societies. As a result, the majority of these organisations have links and networks in several regions, both in the Netherlands and beyond. This trend is informed by the Ethiopian diaspora community's attempts to forge and sustain multi-stranded social relations that link their communities in various locations within the Netherlands.

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[4]   Interview with a recently resettled Ethiopian migrant in the Netherlands, Utrecht, 2011

3. Characteristics of Ethiopian diaspora organisations

The formation of Ethiopian diaspora organisations is influenced by a number of factors. On the one hand, they are linked to the institutional setting and the policy environment in the country of destination, the need to address individual and communal welfare needs, and the level of integration in the Netherlands. On the other hand, the socio-economic conditions of the families left behind in the country of origin and the regime conditions in Ethiopia also acts as motives for the formation of collective organisations. These factors combine with transnational networks and collective mobilisation that transcend a number of destination countries in Europe, North America and Africa.[5] A study of Dutch-based Ethiopian diaspora organisations as part of the EU-DIASPEACE project[6] observed that 'the existing hostile political environment towards the opposition and ethnic groups that are resisting historical economic and political marginalisation' and 'the need to provide humanitarian assistance to regions hit by drought, continue to inform most Ethiopian diaspora activities in the Netherlands (Ong'ayo 2010, p.80).

Box 1: Motives for the formation of Ethiopian diaspora organisations in the Netherlands

- Welfare in the host society
- Integration in the host society
- Maintenance of culture, tradition and identity
- Collective forms of capacity-building
- Engagement with host-country institutions
- Collective humanitarian intervention in the regions of origin in Ethiopia
- Ethnic identity
- Political beliefs
- Philanthropy

The Ethiopian diaspora in the Netherlands is remarkably well organised in the shape of both formal and informal bodies (Ong'ayo 2010). The formation of a number of organisations springs from the need to empower the community in the country of residence. Such organising revolves around capacity building, cultural activities and integration into Dutch society in various Dutch municipalities. These diaspora initiatives are informed by the formation of organisations reflecting the diversity and fragmentation, which is a characteristic of the Ethiopian diaspora. The noted fragmentation among Ethiopian diasporas is explained partly by what has been observed as 'the degree of disagreements, due to strong opinions, and propensity to establish new organisations' (Ong'ayo 2010, p.80). Other organisations have been formed from personal motivations and the drive to succeed through entrepreneurship. For example, the founding directors of *Stichting Meleya* expressed their reasons for establishing *Meleya* as follows:

'My dream is to see modern businesses maintaining the original identity of Ethiopian coffee. To achieve that, we need to build a transparent, interactive and very good cooperation with investors in the coffee sector.' [Debritu Lusteau]

'*Meleya* offers a new way for different countries and cultures to meet and benefit from each other. *Meleya* brings together students and coffee-growers in Ethiopia on one side, and European students and consumers on the other.' [Michel Le Roux]

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5   Interview with Director of Gurmuu foundation, Amsterdam, 2011
6   This was an EU-funded cooperation project that studied the transnational political activities of Somali, Ethiopian and Eritrean diaspora organizations based in Europe between 2008-2011

3.1. Types of organisation

The Ethiopian community in the Netherlands is composed of different sub-nationalities, namely Oromo, Amhara, Tigray, Sidama, Ogaden Somali, Gurage and Afar. Consequently, diaspora organisations are established along ethnic lines. Most of them have the status of a foundation or an association. The number of Ethiopian diaspora organisations in the Netherlands has increased in recent years from 34 in 2004 (Van Heelsum, 2004) to 54 in 2008 (Lindenberg, 2008). In 2012, a conservative estimate reckoned that there were some 115 organisations of different types in operation. These may be classified as issue-based, ethnicity-based, umbrella organisations, regional organisations and churches. Table 9 shows that the most important categories are migrant developmental NGOs[7], ethnic organisations and umbrella organisations. Religious and professional organisations also play an important role in diaspora organisation and participation in Dutch society. Ethiopians are also active in political and societal processes in Ethiopia (Blakely, 2005). Finally, a number of organisations are based on regional affiliations linked to places and communities of origin.

Table 8: Main types of Ethiopian diaspora organisation

Type of organisation	Number
Migrant developmental NGOs	51
Regional-based	6
Ethnicity-based	16
Umbrella	13
Religious	10
Political parties	11
Professional organisations	8
Total	**115**

Source: Mapping by the author, 2009.

Ethiopian political organisations represented in the Netherlands are composed largely of groups affiliated to ethnic groups in power in Ethiopia. An example is the supporters of the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) and its affiliate parties. Groups with such affiliations combine support for local parties with an interest in human rights issues; they operate as opponents of the regime in Ethiopia. Conversely, issues-based, regional and professional organisations tend to focus on community development and humanitarian work in the country of origin (Ong'ayo 2010, p.80).

3.2. Legal status

Most Ethiopian diaspora organisations are registered as either a *vereniging* ('association' under Dutch law) or a *stichting* ('foundation' under Dutch law). The two types of legal status have implications for the type of activities an organisation can undertake and the public resource it is able to mobilise.

Associations are membership-based. Hence, the members are expected to provide resources to fund the association's activities. For this reason, they rely on membership fees and donations as their main source of funding and are less likely to be granted subsidies by local institutions.

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[7] These are diaspora organisations whose activities are focused on development in the countries of origin. . Their choice of implementation locations is based on issues (topics/themes) that transcend cleavages such as ethnicity, regionalism, and political and religious affiliations (see Ong'ayo, forth coming)

Foundations, by contrast, have no members. They rely mainly on subsidies and donations and much more likely to receive funding from local institutions and development agencies. For this reason, nearly 60% of organisations are registered as *stichtingen*, thus enabling them to acquire subsidies and other public funds. Even if their structures and functions are consistent with those of a *vereniging*, they still register as a *stichting*.

3.3.   Names

The name used is another unique characteristic. While some organisations gain their identity from Ethiopia, others adopt ethno-regional identities regardless of their legal status, i.e. irrespective of whether they are a *vereniging* or a *stichting*. This makes it difficult to find a unifying characterisation of the kind of organisational formations that Ethiopian diaspora adopt.

Table 9: Themes and activities in the Netherlands and Ethiopia

The Netherlands		Ethiopia	
Theme	**Activities**	**Theme**	**Activities**
Integration	Community meetings	Healthcare	Construction, upgrade and
Welfare: emergencies	Social support	Facilities	expansion of facilities for
Diaspora community	Sports & recreation	Capacity-building	public services
building	Language courses	Gender	Provision of educational
Culture & social	Debates, &	empowerment	and health equipment &
cohesion	presentations	Education	materials
Education: access &	Events & festivals	Agriculture	Awareness-raising
performance	Extra school lessons	Community	Skills training
Healthcare: information	Skills training	development	Business and investment
& access	Collecting material	Poverty reduction	promotion
Labour market	goods	Institutional	
participation	Fund-raising	linkages	
Gender empowerment	Business fairs		
Capacity-building	Consultations,		
Lobbying and	internships &		
advocacy	exchanges		

Source: Author's research (2012).

3.4.   Five case studies

By way of illustration, this study traced the transnational engagement and participation of five Ethiopian diaspora organisations: *Gurmuu*, *Gobez*, *Meleya*, *DIR* and *Stichting Ethiopia Morgen* (SEM) (see table 11). These organisations were selected by applying the following criteria:

1.   Formal existence, i.e. is the organisation registered with the local Chamber of Commerce?
2.   Legal status, i.e. is the organisation constituted as a *vereniging* or *stichting*?
3.   Is the organisation active in the Netherlands and Ethiopia?
4.   Is the organisation active in different parts of Ethiopia?
5.   Level of integration of the organisation's founders/leaders in the Netherlands, i.e. long stay, knowledge of language and society?
6.   Does the organisation enjoy long-term ties with Ethiopia or the region of origin?

These organisations illustrate diaspora transnational participation in both the country of residence and the country of origin. At the same time, they are also good examples of dexterity in navigating the constricted political and policy environment in their country of origin. Their operational strategies also show how the host-country policy environment can facilitate diaspora transnational participation in different regime conditions, using a variety of resources and capacities.

3.4.1. Stichting Gurmuu

Stichting Gurmuu was founded in 2008. The word *gurmuu* comes from the Oromo language, in which it means 'shoulder'. *Gurmuu* endeavours to connect like-minded people and organisations. The foundation is active in the Netherlands, as well as the Horn of Africa in general and Ethiopia in particular. At a national level, it participates in migration and development policy debates as well as in diaspora platform building as a member of the Diaspora Forum for Development (DFD) and the *Stichting Mondiale Samenleving* (SMS, the 'Global Society Foundation'). At a local government level, *Gurmuu* works with migrant communities, facilitating the integration of migrants in their respective municipalities in the Netherlands. *Gurmuu* is also active in raising awareness of migration and development, and in the integration of newly arrived refugees.

In Ethiopia, *Gurmuu* performs community development activities such as arranging vocational training for young women and adolescents in rural areas of Oromia, in partnership with local NGOs and regional government offices. *Gurmuu* obtains its resources in the form of donations from board members, including material goods, skills, time and money. However, for large-scale activities it relies on small grants from philanthropic organisations and development agencies.

Box 2: Examples of Gurmuu activities in the Netherlands and Ethiopia

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Community sports and integration

In collaboration with the *Oranje Fonds* (a Dutch social welfare charity), *Gurmuu* has organised several activities targeting integration and migrant welfare in the Netherlands. In October 2012, *Gurmuu* organised a family sports day in Amsterdam. The main aim was to bring together young people born in the Netherlands with those recently arrived with their families. A secondary aim was to assist with the integration of migrant youths and their families in Dutch society. Parents brought along their children to meet and exchange information with other children and to take part in group cultural activities.

In December 2012, Gurmuu organised an integration event for newcomers in the municipality of Sneek. Newcomers and their children were invited to meet local officials and a local Dutch organisation called Vluchtelingenwerk Nederland VWN, which supports new migrants in their new home towns and villages and helps people to better understand the new groups. The new arrivals also had an opportunity to meet compatriots who were long established in Dutch society and to learn how to participate in Dutch society. The event also involved cultural aspects such as food, music and traditional costume, thereby helping the newcomers to stay close to their culture while integrating into the new society.

On 17 August 2013, Gurmuu organised a networking workshop for women in Amsterdam, bringing together newly arrived migrant women and women who had already been living in the Netherlands for some time. The aim of the workshop was to inform newcomers about the opportunities in the Netherlands in relation to education, jobs and personal development.

Vocational skills training for women and adolescents

Acting in partnership with two Dutch NGOs (*Stichting Gered Gereedschap* and the 1% Club) and a local partner organisation called the Integrated Community Education & Development Association (ICEDA), *Gurmuu* facilitated the

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transfer of technical equipment for a vocational training centre in the Shabee area of the Jimma zone. *Gurmuu* also collected books and computers for a secondary-school library in the same region. In collaboration with Oxfam Novib, *Gurmuu* also supports women's participation in the generation of income through poultry production in rural areas outside Addis Ababa. These activities are supervised by ICEDA, which is local partner organisations working with primary schools in the Dukam area.

3.4.2. Stichting Gobez

Stichting Gobez (meaning 'wonderful' in Amharic) seeks to meet the basic needs of women and adolescents in Ethiopia, and also to address cultural and health issues affecting Ethiopian women in the Netherlands. For example, one of the health-related issues affecting women and girls of Ethiopian and Somali origin living in the Netherlands is female genital mutilation[8]. The organisation also distributes information on issues affecting Ethiopians living in the Netherlands, and alerts Dutch citizens to topical issues in Ethiopia and/or the Netherlands, including issues of a cultural, legal or medical nature. Its services to the Ethiopian community in the Netherlands also include the provision of essential information, for instance on host-country rules, regulations and culture (*ibid.*). In the area of culture, *Gobez* helps to organise and takes part in cultural events such as The Hague Africa festival, the Dunya Festival in Rotterdam, The Hague Cultural Parade, a 'multi-cultural cooking theatre' in Leidschendam, a 'World Party' in Utrecht, an Ethiopian sports and cultural festival in Amsterdam, and the 'Ethiopian-Dutch meeting days' organised by Oxfam Novib and the ENNOS foundation in Utrecht (*Gobez*, News Brief, 2009-2012).

Box 3: Example of Gobez activities in Ethiopia

Between 2010 and 2012, 70 women followed a two-year training programme funded by Gobez. The programme entailed learning English, commercial skills and bookkeeping. Of the 70 participants, 10 specialised in the preparation of food for hotels, 28 in pottery, 12 in embroidery and 20 trained as hairdressers At the end of the programme, the women were in a position to launch their own businesses with the aid of microcredits. The idea is that the women should be self-reliant and independent within two years.

This project benefits both women and their husbands and children. For example, they have money to spend on household needs and their children's schooling. They are also familiarised with health issues such as family planning and HIV-AIDS, are encouraged to engage in safe practices and motivate their partners to make use of the knowledge they have acquired.

In Ethiopia, *Gobez* supports local development initiatives (see Box 3), based on its mission of helping to create a country in which all Ethiopians, irrespective of their race, religion, gender, , can prosper, live in freedom and peace with each other. For this reason, it supports a local organisation that provides skills training as a way of creating opportunities as shown in Box 3. *Gobez* also supplies material goods so as to improve service delivery in orphanages and projects for 'street children' in Addis Ababa. It undertakes various fund-raising activities in order to mobilise the resources it needs to achieve its objectives. Its fund-raising strategies include applying for subsides and selling Ethiopian products such as carvings, bracelets and earrings. The proceeds of these sales are sent to partner organisations involved in running a training centre for women in Addis Alem.

3.4.3. Stichting Meleya

Another important Ethiopian diaspora organisation is *Stichting Meleya* (meaning 'identity'). *Meleya*'s focus is on empowerment through exchange, an objective it seeks to achieve by using institutional linkages between the Netherlands and Ethiopia (see Box 4). It operates mainly at a national level, working together

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[8]   Interview with Chairperson, Utrecht, 2012

with institutions and other diaspora organisations from African countries. For instance, it has facilitated a unique partnership between students and entrepreneurs in the Netherlands and Ethiopia, in which business students are given an opportunity to mix profit-oriented business with traditional development cooperation. *Meleya*'s efforts in the field of social enterprise have included the promotion of fair-trade, Ethiopian culture and special Ethiopian products such as wine, honey and coffee. The aim is to promote the Ethiopian identity and influence the consumerism values of young students in Europe[9].

In Ethiopia, these initiatives expose local students to international business practices and institutional linkages that facilitate innovation and creativity in business. Local farmers also benefit from these initiatives, since the exchange and use of new technologies for processing and marketing farm products increase the value of their crops, improve their access to international market and bring in more profits.

Box 4: Examples of Meleya activities in the Netherlands and Ethiopia

Resource mobilisation for social enterprise

On 5 February 2011, *Meleya* organised a 'friends and family fund-raising dinner' in the Netherlands to raise funds for the Meleya Business Idea Competition Award (November 2011) in Delikeet.

Train-the-trainer course in Ethiopia

In conjunction with St Mary's University College Addis Ababa, *Meleya* organised a Train-the-Trainer course for nine trainers (initially planned for four) to help 45 young, aspiring entrepreneurs to set up their own businesses in Ethiopia. The course was held from 25 to 29 January 2011 at the SMU School of Graduate Studies in Addis Ababa.

3.4.4. Stichting Ethiopia Morgen (SEM)

Stichting Ethiopia Morgen (*SEM*) came into being during the Ethiopian Millennium Exchange on 12 September 2007, as the result of collaboration between Ethiopians and Dutch citizens. Its main aim is to promote a positive image of Ethiopia, support development and foster reconciliation and mutual friendship.

In the Netherlands, it operates at both national and local government level, working in partnership with other Ethiopian organisations as well as Dutch NGOs. At a national level, *SEM* has evolved into an issue- and project-oriented organisation with a focus on the environment, gender, trade, coffee and culture. Partnerships between *SEM* members and Dutch nationals have resulted in a series of activities promoting cross-cultural exchange. Examples include an official reception at the Atrium in The Hague, exhibitions in The Hague and Leiden, a film festival in Amsterdam, a 'millennium meeting' in Utrecht and a series of seminars aimed at fostering peace in the Horn of Africa[10].

In Ethiopia, *SEM* works with local partners on topics such as environmental protection, bee keeping, gender issues and trade (see Box 5). In order to achieve its objectives, *SEM* mobilises resources and other capacities by forming partnerships with Dutch development agencies.

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[9] Interview with Director, The Hague 2011
[10] Interview with board member, SEM, The Hague 2009

Box 5: Examples of SEM activities in Ethiopia

The environment

SEM has worked hard in the past few years to put together a project involving the use of solar energy for cooking and heating purposes, and for marketing the related products. In order to finance this project, *SEM* established institutional linkages and partnerships with the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, private-sector businesses in the Netherlands and Dutch development agencies such as the Inter-church Organisation for Development Cooperation (ICCO). In Ethiopia, it has formed partnerships with the Science Faculty of Addis Ababa University and *Agohalma*, which have become the environmental pillars of the project. The project seeks to make a meaningful contribution to solving the environmental problems affecting the barren landscape in northern Ethiopia.

Gender

In 2008, SEM working in partnership with the Ethiopian Women Media Association and supported by, *Oxfam Novib the organsiation* produced a book entitled *Candace: Invincible women of Ethiopia*. Published in both English and Amharic, the book was presented at seminars in Addis Ababa and The Hague. In Ethiopia, *SEM* also organises courses in female leadership for students and networks of Ethiopian women while in the Netherlands, SEM support Ethiopian women to contribute actively to society through the Network Power Women 'project.

Capacity-building in agriculture

SEM undertakes capacity-building initiatives in the form of training for women in high-quality honey production and processing. The aim is to enhance local sources of income. Two Dutch NGOs, i.e. the National Committee for International Cooperation and Sustainable Development (NCDO) and *Wilde Ganzen*, supported the project with funds for the construction of a multi-purpose training centre for farmers and beekeepers (most of who are women) in Ethiopia. *SEM* mobilised €16,000 in funding, which was boosted by subsidies from *Wilde Ganzen* and other sources to the tune of €24,819.. A portion of this sum went to Women in *Hawzein Worda* in the Tigray region, who do not have many opportunities for generating an income of their own. They have not received much education, and therefore cannot find employment. This project helps women in the region to gain new prospects for improving both their own situation and that of their families, without being compelled to migrate to the cities. The project also creates opportunities in rural areas and consequently discourages vulnerable women from turning to prostitution and begging on the streets.

3.4.5.   DIR

Dir biyabir Anbessa Yasir (*DIR*), a phrase meaning 'small threads can together bind a lion', was founded in 2000. Its object is to help Ethiopians in the Netherlands by performing activities that empower them as members of Dutch society (see Box 6). In pursuit of this objective, the organisation has been active in the fields of integration, social problems, education and legal aid.

In Ethiopia, on the other hand, *DIR* has sought to bring about change in the local communities by empowering local groups to be self-reliant[11]. The strategies used by the director of *DIR* in Ethiopia include assessment of situations of need and selection of relevant social issues affecting the local populations. The organisations also adopts transparent approaches by involving local people in project management, in selecting topics and in choosing funding allocation priorities. It focuses on sustainability, capacity-building through a knowledge centre for disability (see Box 6) and projects performed in partnership with the Paralympics Association of Ethiopia. Good connections with government, especially links with the Disability Federation has helped to give *DIR*'s projects a high profile[12]. Although disability is a soft issue from a

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[11] Interview with founding Director, DIR Addis Ababa, 2011
[12] ibid

political perspective, it represents a societal need in Ethiopia. The institutional linkages that the founding director has established facilitate the transfer of skills between the Netherlands and Ethiopia[13].

Box 6: Examples of DIR activities in the Netherlands and Ethiopia

> *'Grasp the Opportunities' project*
> In this two-year project, a group of 60 young Somalis and Ethiopians (i.e. 30 of each) who came to the Netherlands as refugees were supervised in the areas of education, work and leisure as part of their integration into Dutch society.
>
> *Dires House of Sport Jan Meda sport field Addis Ababa*
> Having previously been part of the *DIR* Foundation Ethiopia, *Dires* became independent in October 2011. It offers sport facilities to the handicapped, i.e. tennis, basketball, table tennis and crutch football. Dires House of Sports is a multi-sports association for disability sports in Ethiopia. It offers physical education to disabled children and adults attending special needs schools, cluster schools and rehabilitation centres, and also for those living in homes for the disabled and in the community both in and outside Addis Ababa. In the House of Sport centre teachers are trained in physical education and sports for both mainstream and special needs schools. Courses are also given to students attending college of physical education at the same time; the centre runs a special two-year sports and activity programme for disabled women and men.
>
> *Rehabilitation of former soldiers and prostitutes*
> *DIR* constructed houses for 26 women and helped to set up a number of income-generating projects for women in five different locations in Addis Ababa. The activities include coffee selling, pastry and bakery, the idea being that they should evolve into a self-sustaining source of income. In another project, 50 former soldiers were helped, both in producing building blocks for sale and in building their own homes. The ownership of the projects passed to the participants, who kept the profits.

3.5.   Case study findings

The five case studies above show that, despite the lack of coherence in the activities performed by diaspora organisation due to their limited links with government plans, such interventions – in all their different shapes and forms – can still make a difference. Notwithstanding the limited political space available to them, the organisations demonstrate a high degree of creativity in navigating the political landscape to reach local communities with resources. Highly motivated individuals with strong links to their regions of origin in Ethiopia lead the organisations.

These diaspora initiatives illustrate the workings of the 'here and there' mix, thereby demonstrating that the degree of integration and participation in the host society is critical to the development of capacities and the mobilisation of the resources needed for performing activities in Ethiopia. These initiatives also show that collective initiatives can make a difference, due to the cumulative nature of the resources diaspora organisations are able to mobilise. These resources do not target migrant families; rather, they create opportunities for large segments of the local population in different regions.

Despite these positive outcomes, the organisations' strong focus on their regions of origin implies that some regions without significant representation abroad are less likely to benefit from the contributions of diaspora organisations. Government policy on NGOs, including diaspora organisations, should therefore take account of the potential for social transformation represented by diaspora activities beyond single locations or regions.

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[13]   Interview with Volunteer from RESPO-DIR, Addis Ababa, 2011

Table 10: Objectives and activities of organisations reviewed

Organisation	Objects	Activities In the Netherlands	In Ethiopia
DIR Year of foundation: 2000 Status: *Stichting* (foundation)	1. To empower Ethiopians in the Netherlands 2. To promote the integration of Ethiopians and Sudanese in the Netherlands 3. To help prevent and to tackle the problems of young people 4. To bring sustainable change in Ethiopia through activities that encourage self-reliance	- Project: Getting opportunities, seize opportunities - Organising sporting and cultural group activities for young people - Mobilising resources for projects in Ethiopia - Helping the Ethiopian community to meet and get information	- Supporting self-help project targeting ex-prostitutes (*Buna best*) - Rehabilitation of ex-combatants - Supporting disabled people with facilities and skills training - Supporting local bicycle federation - Capacity-building through institutional links at St. Mary's and Addis Ababa Universities - Youth programmes
Gobez Year of foundation: 2008 Status: *Stichting* (foundation)	1. To contribute to an intercultural society in the Netherlands 2. To facilitate information exchange and awareness of Ethiopians and native Dutch on current issues in Ethiopia and Netherlands 3. To improve social and economic position of Ethiopian women and young people 4. To assist in emergencies in Ethiopia, such as famines or earthquake 5. To work in Ethiopia and the Netherlands, collaborate with many organisations, on development in the whole of Ethiopia	- Cultural exchanges - Creating awareness on health issues that affect Ethiopian women in the Netherlands - Raising awareness of legal issues - Capacity-building for women and young people - Mobilising resources for Ethiopia	- Supporting women and young adults in Ethiopia to meet their basic needs themselves - Offering skills training and capacity-building - Supporting care services for orphanages - Supporting girls education - Supporting nutritional feeding programmes in Addis Ababa
Gurmuu Year of foundation: 2008 Status: *Stichting* (foundation)	1. To contribute to just and sustainable development in Ethiopia 2. To mobilise resources for community development in Ethiopia 3. To facilitate community building in the	- Informing newcomers about Dutch society, language, integration, education and work - Diaspora platform-building - Organising discussions and workshops for	- Projects on poverty alleviation - Education for girls - Vocational and skills training in rural areas - Upgrading school facilities and distributing learning

	Netherlands 4. To create awareness of migration and development 5. To encourage and promote the integration of newcomers into Dutch society, (language, civic education, school and work) 6. Motivate migrant women and men in their personal development	women and young people - Promoting the involvement of migrant fathers in their children's school activities - Organising sports activities for young people - Organising debates for young people of different ages, on different themes - Organising interactive workshops for newcomers on participation in general and women's empowerment in particular	materials - Providing financial and material support - Capacity-building, training and institution-building for local partners
Meleya Year of foundation: 2005 Status: *Stichting* (foundation)	1. To form institutional linkages and foster social enterprise 2. To exchange knowledge and impart skills 3. To stimulate and facilitate exports of the best Ethiopian products to Europe 4. To contribute to the MDG goals on poverty reduction by supporting better prices for farmers	- Facilitating exchanges that stimulate partnerships between students, coffee-growers and entrepreneurs in Ethiopia and the Netherlands - Supporting cross-cultural communication between students and institutions	- Developing a best practice scenario for North–South cooperation and co-creation - Organising student exchanges - Connecting local coffee farmers with international markets - Forming institutional links with businesses and knowledge centres in Europe
Stichting SEM Year of foundation: 2006 Status: *Stichting* (foundation)	1. To foster exchanges between Ethiopians and Dutch nationals 2. To promote a positive image of Ethiopia 3. To advocate gender equality, human rights and peace in Ethiopia and the Horn of Africa	- Undertaking cross-cultural exchanges - Organising sports events for the community (e.g. international soccer tournament) - Organising a millennium meeting and exhibitions - Publishing a book about Ethiopia - Organising seminars	- Setting up capacity-building centre for local organisations - Training in female leadership for students and women's networks - Supporting a multi-purpose training centre for farmers and beekeepers

Source: Author's research, 2011-2012.

4. Political, institutional and policy framework for the management of migration in Ethiopia

4.1. Political environment and diaspora engagement

The posture of the political establishment in Ethiopia towards the diasporas plays a very significant role in determining the policy, institutional and legislative direction of diaspora engagement and their ability to return and participate in local development processes. Perhaps most significant of all has been the view expressed by the leadership as exemplified by the two excerpts below. The political establishment in Ethiopia is a very influential institution around which all government functions rotate.

> *'Ethiopians in the diaspora need to further consolidate their efforts and do their part for the efficient implementation of the GTP, a plan which aims at extricating the country out of poverty.'* *(Prime Minister Meles Zenawi, February 2011)*

> *'Ethiopians in the diaspora should contribute their share, so that they can enjoy a lifetime experience at the success that the country will register at the completion of the ongoing five-year GTP.'* *(Haile Mariam Desalegn, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs, January 2011)*

These excerpts point to the importance of political will in terms of policy outcomes. This relates to the policy choices and initiatives undertaken by the Ethiopian government in relation to migration and development and the extent to which the leadership stands behind policies or approves of their implementation in practice. The statements by the political leadership underline the importance that the government attaches to migration and the interest taken by the government in diasporas. This interest has to do not just with the recognised development potential of Ethiopian diasporas, but also with the desire to manage the diasporas by taking forms of action that extract some obligations from them (Gamlen, 2006). In the case of Ethiopia, the direct involvement of the political leadership in policy is also a manifestation of the absence of the principle of separation of powers between the executive and other branches of government, i.e. the judiciary and the legislature. This has implications for diaspora engagement, given that the political environment is one of the main drivers of migration in Ethiopia and behind the establishment of institutions to handle migration and diaspora-related issues in particular.

4.2. Institutional framework

Recognising the development potential of its diasporas (Ethiopian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2011), Ethiopia is one of the few sub-Saharan African countries to have formulated policies on its diaspora and to have set up institutions to engage with them (Aquinas, 2009). The creation of institutions was recently proposed as a possible form of diaspora engagement and participation in countries of origin (Kuznetsov, 2006). As shown in Box 7, Ethiopia created an Expatriate Affairs Directorate-General at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Its functions include liaising between federal ministries, regional diaspora coordinating offices and Ethiopians in the diaspora; encouraging the active involvement of the Ethiopian diaspora in social and economic activities in Ethiopia; and mobilising the Ethiopian community abroad for sustained and organised image-building (Ethiopian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2011).

In 2007, 13 Ethiopian embassies opened 'desks' for reaching out to the emigrant community. Other institutions include the Diaspora Coordinating Office at the Ministry of Capacity-Building, whose role is to

support other ministries and the public sector and coordinate the temporary voluntary return of highly skilled Ethiopians from abroad. The Ethiopian Investment Agency (EIA) and the Customs Authority at the Ministry of Trade and Industry also promote, coordinate and facilitate investments in Ethiopia, but also regulate goods imports. The Immigration Department and the Agency for Refugee and Returnee Affairs (ARRA) also have migration-related responsibilities. The Federal Police and the National Intelligence and Security Service have certain migration-related 'competences'. They are directly accountable to the Prime Minister.

Box 7: Institutions responsible for migration issues

- The Expatriates Affairs Directorate-General at the Ethiopian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (established in January 2002)
- Diaspora Coordinating Office at the Ministry of Capacity-Building (established in 2005)
- EIA and Customs Authority at the Ministry of Trade and Industry
- Immigration Department
- Agency for Refugee and Returnee Affairs (ARRA)
- Ministry of Justice
- Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (MOLSA)
- The Federal Police
- National Intelligence and Security Service (NISS)

The Ethiopian government has taken an important first step towards a structured diaspora engagement by setting up a number of institutions. However, these institutions can be effective in terms of diaspora engagement and participation only if they play an enabling role. This means forming a framework in which state institutions, bilateral and multilateral agencies and NGOs work together with the diasporas in creating an enabling environment for diaspora participation. This calls for the establishment of institutions that deal directly with diaspora issues, the enactment of legislative instruments that facilitate the return of emigrants and the participation of diaspora in local political and development processes. Other possible steps would be the recognition of diaspora organisations as part of civil society and the establishment of a framework in which the diasporas can work together with local civil-society organisations (See Ong'ayo, 2013).

An institutional enabling environment also includes a legal framework that provides easy access to institutions and information, as well as a political environment and a degree of political stability that are conducive to the return of emigrants. As noted by Ionescu (2006, p.37) 'despite the initiatives in diaspora engagement, the existence of institutions targeting diasporas does not necessarily guarantee that resources and capacities devoted to diaspora policies are sufficient and sustainable.' For this reason, the direct involvement of diaspora organisations with experience in performing transnational activities will give the government an opportunity to maximise the resources targeting diaspora engagement. This calls for a reassessment of the resource capacity of diaspora organisations from policy-making and practical knowledge perspectives. This should lead to the more carefully targeted spending of resources on diaspora policy initiatives, based on an accurate assessment of needs (i.e. resources, facilities, policies, programmes and institutions).

4.3.   The migration policy framework

Ethiopia has no comprehensive migration policy but ascribes to several international instruments and conventions (see box 8). Nonetheless, it has been working on a single diaspora policy that cuts across government institutions at national and local government levels. Major policy initiatives (see Table 12 and 13) include creating special government units to deal with migration, encouraging the return of emigrants,

taking measures to attract diaspora investments and adopting a policy on naturalisation (UNDESA, 2013). At a regional level, Ethiopia currently participates in the East Africa Migration Route. This involves building partnerships, sharing information and developing joint practical initiatives among countries of origin, transit and destination within the framework of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development region. Ethiopia has signed bilateral agreements with a number of host-country governments to protect Ethiopians in the countries concerned. It also relies on the Migration Policy Framework for Africa adopted by the Assembly of the African Union in Banjul in July 2006 as a reference document.

In terms of bilateral agreements with donors on migration, the Ethiopian Immigration Department has border management agreements with several countries, as shown in the table below. These focus mainly on the management of migration.

Box 8: International instruments and conventions applicable to Ethiopia

- 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees (ratified in 1969)
- 1967 Protocol relating to the Status of Refugees (ratified in 1969)
- 1949 ILO Convention concerning Migration for Employment (revised, No.97, not ratified)
- 1975 ILO Convention concerning Migration in Abusive Conditions and the Promotion of Equality of Opportunities and Treatment of Migrant Workers (No.143, not ratified)
- 1990 International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families (not ratified)
- 2000 Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children (not ratified)
- 2000 Protocol against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Sea and Air (not ratified)

Table 11: Migration agreements and projects with EU member states

Ethiopian institution	Country	Agreement
GoE	The Netherlands (through the Dutch Ministry of Justice)	Anti-Trafficking
Ethiopian Agency for Refugee and Returnee Affairs (ARRA)	Germany	Refugees and Returnees
Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs	Spain and the UK	Legal Migration
Projects		
Ethiopian institution	**Country/International organisation**	**Name of project**
GoE	The Netherlands (Dutch Foreign Ministry) and UNDP	Migration for Development in Ethiopia (MidEth)
GoE	DFID	www.Sendmoneyhome
GoE	Japan, and Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TiCAD);	Regulating Migration
GoE	Sweden (Swedish Red Cross) and Norway (Norwegian Directorate of Immigration)	Facilitating Migration
GoE	Embassies of the United States, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Switzerland, Germany and the Netherlands	Pre-consular Support
GoE	EU	Joint Africa-EU Strategy (JAES) EU-Ethiopia Platform on Migration 2009

Ethiopian multilateral agreements with donors on migration include:

- Migration for Development in Ethiopia (MidEth), with UNDP;
- the EC-UN Joint Migration & Development Initiative in Ethiopia 2008-2011;
- the EU-Ethiopia Platform on Migration.

The Migration for Development in Ethiopia (MidEth) project seeks to support the government of Ethiopia in achieving its Plan for Accelerated and Sustained Development to End Poverty (PASDEP) and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The 'Send money home' project with DFID is a website for remittance costs in selected countries.

The Regulating Migration project seeks to improve the protection of migrants travelling through Somaliland, Puntland and Djibouti to Yemen. Ethiopia also collaborates with IOM in facilitating a family reunification programme for Scandinavian countries. There is a similar form of collaboration in pre-consular support services, involving activities such as immigration interviews, document verification, country of origin information, providing interview space and cultural orientation. Lastly, Ethiopia has a number of agreements with the EU within the framework of the 2000 Cotonou Partnership Agreement between Europe and 79 African, Caribbean and Pacific countries (revised in 2005 and 2010); these include Economic Partnership Agreements and the JAES. These agreements influence the way Ethiopia approaches migration and diaspora policy in particular, since they emphasise two critical aspects of migration policy, namely the management of migration and harnessing the development potential of migration.

Ongoing programmes in the field of migration policy include the Joint Constituency Building Forum (June 2006); the publication of an information booklet for Ethiopians & foreign nationals of Ethiopian origin living abroad; and the publication of an 'Ethiopian Investment Guide'. The government of Ethiopia also organises the Annual 'Ethiopian Diaspora Day' in Addis Ababa and abroad, which is intended to encourage Ethiopians living abroad to contribute to national development through remittances and other forms of investment. Lastly, the government has been involved since 2001 in the joint implementation of Migration for Development in Africa programme together with IOM.

The most relevant policy initiative taken by the Ethiopian government relating to Ethiopian diasporas is the issue of the 'Persons of Ethiopian Origin Identity Card' (generally known as the 'Yellow Card'). The card grants Ethiopian emigrants with foreign nationalities the same rights except for access to permanent employment in national defence, security, foreign affairs and political establishments (Ethiopian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2011).

Another significant policy initiative that could have been useful for collective diaspora engagement involving material resources was a government order issued in 2001 under which returnees were granted the right to import certain goods duty-free. However, a number of cases of abuse led to this privilege being removed in 2006.

While policy initiatives such as the privileged treatment of Ethiopian expatriates under domestic investor schemes, access to one-stop-shop services for investors, and land for the construction of residential buildings for diaspora members are important initiatives, they mainly target individuals. Diaspora organisations require additional policy initiatives that enable them to maximise their development potential. For example, a 2006 directive allowed non-resident Ethiopians to open foreign currency accounts denominated in US dollars, sterling or euros (Ethiopian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2011). This could be useful for diaspora organisations that wish to transfer large amounts for community projects. While such

resources generally go directly to the projects concerned, they also inject much-needed capital into the national and local economy in the form of good and services purchased by the recipient organisations. However, organisations are now less likely to make use of this option since the 2009 NGO Act restricts the level of external funding to local NGOs and also limits the geographical coverage of organisational activities.

Although the Ethiopian government has outlined its policy priorities for diaspora engagement, the lack of broad-based diaspora involvement in the policy process at home deprives these initiatives of input that could enhance their quality and successful implementation. The initiatives do not benefit from diaspora experiences with global human mobility and transnational resource mobilisation, as well as knowledge of destination country policies. Diasporas have also developed expertise in various fields, including policy-making in the countries of destination, where they are involved in regular consultation processes and receive capacity-building support in areas such as migration and development.

As noted elsewhere in this study, home-country governments could lead the way and foster initiatives by delegating and passing on decisions, measures and negotiations to other players, as is demonstrated by the Chinese and Indian outreach to their diasporas (Leclerc & Meyer 2007). Examples of action taken by the Chinese and Indian government include adopting a conciliatory approach with support for overseas study, encouraging emigrants to return, providing guarantees for freedom of movement, using social and digital knowledge networks' to connect with and tap into diaspora skills for home development.

Other studies have shown that effective diaspora contribution to homeland development is only possible through 'their inclination or motivation to maintain their solidarity and exert group influence' (Esman 1986, p.336). The motivation to participate in the country of origin also depends on the ability of the diaspora to access political opportunity structures in both the country of residence and the country of origin (see Ong'ayo, forthcoming). However, as Brinkerhoff observes (2008, p.243), 'diaspora members mobilise, in part, to express their identities.' At the same time, diasporas use their identity for the purpose of collective organisation and resource mobilisation: 'These are entry points which the country of origin's government can make use of to gain the trust of their diasporas by involving them in policy processes' (*ibid.*). These identities can also be reinforced by undertaking activities on behalf of the homeland (see also Leclerc & Meyer 2007).

Table 12: Policy initiatives on and legislative framework for Ethiopian diaspora engagemen*t*

Policy initiatives	Relevant legislation and directives
Creation of General Directorate in charge of Ethiopian expatriate affairs within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 2002.	Constitution of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (1994) as the legal basis for freedom of movement.
Information booklet for Ethiopians and foreign nationals of Ethiopian origin living abroad.	The 2004 Criminal Code of Ethiopia sanctions trafficking in human beings, smuggling in human beings and the forgery of public documents.
Publication of an Ethiopian investment guide.	NGO Act of January 2009.
Establishment of Information Dissemination and the Ethiopian Diaspora Day. The Ministry of Expatriate Affairs hosted the first Ethiopian Diaspora Day in Addis Ababa in 2009.	Proclamation No. 270/2002 of February 2006 'providing foreign nationals of Ethiopian origin with certain rights to be exercised in their country of origin'.
Ethiopian Origin Identity Card (Yellow Card). Grants rights to members of Ethiopian diaspora, while not granting dual citizenship.	Directive No FXD/30/2006: Provision for International Remittance Services, 28 August 2006.

Directive No. FXD/31/2006, amending Directive No. FXD/25/2004. |
| Return incentives. Permit individuals returning to | |

Ethiopia permanently to import their personal and household effects 100% duty-free.	Directive on the Establishment and Operation of Foreign Currency Accounts for Non-Residents of Ethiopian origin, 2004.
Foreign Currency Bank. Its object is to encourage investments from the diaspora and to support the international foreign exchange reserve and ease the balance of payments problem affecting the country's accounts.	Directive to Determine the Residence Status of Eritrean Nationals Residing in Ethiopia, 2004
	Proclamation No. 378/2003 on Ethiopian nationality in relation to citizenship
Diaspora Bond. Its object is to provide investment capital for the Ethiopian Electric Power Corporation.	Proclamation No. 375/2003 amending the Investment Re-Enactment Proclamation No. 280/2002: provides for advertisement through websites, brochures and Ethiopian embassies
Proclamation on Security, Immigration and Refugee Affairs Authority.	
Migration for Development in Ethiopia under (MidEth) programme in collaboration with IOM.	Proclamation No. 354/2002, 2003 ('the immigration proclamation').
	Proclamation on Private Employment Agencies, 1998. Protects the rights of Ethiopian migrant workers abroad.
	Investment Proclamation No. 280/2002 or 280/1994 EC later amended as Investment (amendment) Proclamation Establishment (1995). Provides for the administration of migration-related competences.
	Directive to Determine the Manner of Employment of Ethiopian Nationals Abroad, 1994.
	Proclamation Regulating the Issuance of Travel Documents and Visas, and Registration of Foreigners in Ethiopia, 1969.

Source: Author's research, 2011-2012.

5. Political opportunity structures and diaspora engagement

The political and legal environment in the Netherlands is conducive to collective organisation and resource mobilisation by the Ethiopian diaspora, thereby paving the way for transnational engagement in both the country of residence and the country of origin. Like other groups from Somalia and Eritrea in the Horn of Africa, Ethiopian diaspora organisations have been able to form and operate in the Netherlands thanks to legislative and institutional frameworks that facilitate such initiatives. For instance, simple registration procedures at the Dutch chambers of commerce have enabled many groups and organisations to engage on a formal basis with host- country institutions, development agencies and civil-society organisations. This has also been critical to accessing funding for diaspora activities in the Netherlands and their countries of origin.

The institutional setting in the Netherlands – although this applies equally throughout the EU – also give the diasporas access to political opportunity structures, i.e. the rights and safeguards provided by the legal system for organisations. The legal system also guarantees fundamental freedoms, especially those of association and expression, thus enabling the diasporas to engage in lobbying and advocacy. Moreover, the rights of Ethiopian diasporas, either as refugees or as naturalised citizens of the Netherlands or other EU member countries, also gives them opportunities to move freely, network and establish transnational links with people and groups with the same ethnic backgrounds in other EU countries. As one respondent pointed out:

> *'Our Dutch and EU citizen status makes it possible for many of us to travel within Europe and North America, but also enables some of us to go back to Ethiopia as visitors. During these visits we are able to verify the needs of communities in our regions of origin and develop strategies for helping them within the prevailing political and policy environment.'*

In Ethiopia, the major main political opportunity structures include recognition of the potential of diaspora to contribute to policy debates, the establishment of institutions and the formulation of policies for raising diaspora participation (See Box 5 and Table 10 in Annex ii). Incentives such as the Yellow Card scheme, under which emigrants are, treated in the same way as local investors, present the Ethiopian diaspora with an opportunity to engage and participate in both the Netherlands and Ethiopia.

Those most likely to befit from these initiatives are individuals in the countries of destination. This is due to the overemphasis, as observed in the literature on migration and development that is placed on individual contributions to development, particularly in the form of remittances. As important players in the development of their countries of origin (Portes & Zhou, 2011), collective initiatives or organisations therefore require incentives that address the structural obstacles to their participation.

Although diaspora agency plays a significant role in the creation and reproduction of certain political opportunity structures through bottom-up initiatives, the political environment in Ethiopia has the effect of limiting such positive outcomes. Diaspora creativity, innovation and enterprise thrive in an environment of freedom in which their initiatives are embedded in the local institutional setting in both the country of residence and the country of origin. For this reason, the limited space accorded to such organisations in Ethiopia makes it more difficult to harness the full potential of Ethiopian diasporas in the Netherlands and EU in general. This is because the limited constricted political space in Ethiopia inhibits diaspora motivation to mobilise resources in country of residence due to fear of persecution upon return.

Efforts such as providing capacity-building support to local community organisations, supporting essential services provided by Ethiopian diaspora organisations such as *Meleya*, *SEM*, *Gurmuu*, *Gobez* and *Dir biyabir Anbessa Yasir* (*DIR*) and their ability to undertake these activities on the ground despite a hostile political environment, demonstrate that diaspora organisation are able to create new political opportunity structures where these did not previously exist. However, the fundamental questions for policy-makers are:

How can these initiatives be expanded to raise their impact?
How can diaspora organisations be granted greater freedom of operation, so as to allow more active and explicit engagement?
Can policy dialogue help to scale up the more implicit initiatives, such as the provision of essential services in the constricted political environment in Ethiopia?

Discussions on effective diaspora engagement (Ong'ayo & Sinatti, 2010) suggest there is a need to take account of the intricate and intertwined nature of efforts on the ground, such as support provided by individuals and organisations in the diaspora The examples provided by the 5 case study Ethiopian diaspora organisations in the Netherlands makes it clear that in order for Ethiopian diaspora organisations to engage proactively and contribute to development in their country of origin, complementary institutional and policy frameworks will need to be created in both the country of destination and the country of origin. While the motives for diaspora engagement and the initiatives taken by governments may vary between the countries of residence and origin, there is a consensus on the need to manage migration and maximise its development potential. This consensus provides a platform for scaling up political opportunity structures facilitating diaspora organisation and engagement (see Boxes 1-6).

6. What do the dynamics of diaspora organisations entail for EU policies?

The Ethiopian case highlights various factors that continue to undermine EU policies on migration and development. The first factor is the political environment in the countries of origin, which is a major driver of refugees to the EU member states and at the same time, hampers diaspora participation.

Both the European Commission and the EU member states are interested in managing migration. However, recently formed organisations such as the European Agency for the Management of Operational Cooperation at the External Borders of the Member States (FRONTEX) would appear to address the symptoms rather than the root causes of the big migration flows towards Europe. The negative or unwanted forms of migration have their roots in the major drivers of migration in sub-Saharan Africa. These include poverty, political conflict and instability (Ong'ayo, 2008), a lack of local job opportunities and poor living conditions as result of dysfunctional governments. Diaspora organisations address some of the root cause of migration to Europe in the form of collective initiatives that directly affect hard-to-reach groups and regions, and the most vulnerable members of the population, for whom migration is a coping strategy (Snel & Staring, 2001).

Equally, the experiences with programmes targeting the return of migrants (whether circular or permanent) show that diaspora activities make a difference in the countries of origin where diaspora skills are used to address knowledge gaps within public service institutions. In this way, diaspora return makes an impact as the skills of returning migrants can be used to improve service delivery to the wider public. However, as is illustrated by the five case studies of Ethiopian diaspora organisations in the Netherlands in this paper, diaspora collective initiatives tend to receive much attention in migration literature, despite evidence of development potentials of diaspora collective activities. These case studies – and similar ones relation to other groups such as Ghanaian diaspora organisations (see Ong'ayo, 2013) – demonstrate that diaspora organisations and the resources they mobilise have a great potential to contribute to development as they complement government services and fill development gaps in rural areas across different regions in the countries of origin. Such collective initiatives directly address some of the root causes of migration to EU member states.

The capacities of diaspora organisations emanate from the kind of resources they are able to mobilise in the countries of residence, as well as from their ability to return. Collective forms of diaspora engagement derive their impetus from the kind of political opportunity structures they can access in the countries of destination. The capacities they develop do not accrue only to the countries of origin: the contribution of diaspora organisations is most felt at local government level in the countries of destination, where they co-implement social policies. As demonstrated in a recent study on Ghanaian diaspora activities in the Netherlands (Ong'ayo, forthcoming), diaspora organisations in the Hometown associations, migrant developmental NGOs and umbrella organisations working at municipal level contribute to local return-to-work programmes, language courses and cultural activities. Through their participation in the co-implementation of integration programmes, diaspora organisations help to ensure the better integration of newcomers and enrich the cultural mix in their local communities (*ibid.*). Diaspora organisations that engage in social enterprise and forge links with small businesses in the local area help to create jobs that are taken not only by migrants, but also by people from the host community, thus creating big benefits for the local economy.

In the country of origin, collective diaspora initiatives are capable of having a broader impact thanks to activities that enhance local employment opportunities, improve service delivery in rural areas, build capacity among local groups and other beneficiaries of transfers of money (i.e. social remittances) and materials goods. These resource complement government services.

The interests and policy priorities of the EU member states and the management of emotions and perceptions in the respective domestic constituencies are important factors to take into account in formulating migration policies. Increased global human mobility, the demographic challenge of ageing and the need to fill in gaps in the labour market require a balancing act in terms of managing the different dimensions of migration. However, acknowledging the reality that the EU population consists to an increasing extent of 'transnational citizens' (Fox, 2005) who have what has been described as 'trans-state loyalty' (Østergaard-Nielsen, 2000; Shain, 1989) would be a significant step forward in terms of harnessing the development potentials of migration.

7. Challenges for transnational engagement by Ethiopian diaspora organisations

The major challenges in relation to the transnational engagement of diaspora organisations relates to contextual factors in the country of residence and origin.

7.1. Challenges in the country of residence

The main challenge in the country of residence is the degree to which the Ethiopian diaspora community achieves visibility, is recognised by host-country institutions and is able to access the necessary political opportunity structures. There are also challenges in terms of dwindling resources, especially for those groups that depend on subsidies. As observed in the case of the Netherlands, this is mainly influenced by constant policy shifts exacerbated by the political environment, which can be restrictive in terms of government policy choices or in the non-prioritisation of immigrant integration.

At the same time, there are also challenges from within the diaspora communities. Fragmentation and the lack of a common voice pose a challenge, especially in relation to policy issues affecting the community and the country of origin that require collective organising, lobbying and advocacy. All the organisations also note that their ability to function effectively is significantly impacted upon by the complex mix of internal dynamics within the diaspora organisations in terms of competition for resources and conflicting interests in the Netherlands and the country of origin. This is exacerbated by the constantly shifting policies and priorities of donor agencies that the organisations are financially dependent upon. The divisions within the Ethiopian diaspora community in the Netherlands (Ong'ayo 2010, p.83) impede unity and the adoption of a common position, as different groups adopt different postures towards the regime in Ethiopia. Equally, the ability of Ethiopian diaspora organisations to secure the resources needed for transnational engagement also depends on their legal status (i.e. whether they are foundations or associations), since the legal status chosen at the time of their foundation determines the types of resources they can apply for. For instance, foundations (*stichtingen*) are much more likely to access subsides from local institutions, whereas associations (*verenigingen*) are membership-based, which means that their activities rely on membership fees and donations. Funds within associations are generally inadequate for undertaking large-scale projects (see Ong'ayo, forthcoming).

7.2.   Challenges in the country of origin

In the country of origin, Ethiopian diaspora organisations encounter challenges posed by contextual factors relating to the political environment. Observations in Ethiopia suggest that the situation in the countries of origin coupled with the type of issues embraced by diaspora organisations can sometimes lead to serious implementation challenges if the issues turn out to be unacceptable to the regime. This particularly relevant where there is political repression leading to conflict-generated diasporas (Lyons, 2007), a characterisation that could be applied to Ethiopian diasporas in the Netherlands and other EU countries. Depending on their political affiliation, Ethiopian diasporas find it difficult to go back and undertake activities either in their respective regions of origin or elsewhere in Ethiopia. This is because the 2009 NGO Act limits the geographical coverage of an organisational activity. Under this law, NGOs are allowed to operate only in designated locations and regions. This prevents them from providing services in regions other than that specified in the permit, even if the activity is in the same area or city. The new law also limits the amount of resources that diaspora organisations can transfer to local partner organisations, since they are required to raise 90% of their funding locally[14].

The five organisations studied use different strategies to mitigate the local contextual conditions. Some seek to adhere to the official rules and regulations, but also avoid engagement on sensitive issues. That means starting with 'soft' issues, especially service delivery in rural areas and peripheries of Addis Ababa[15]. Others use alternative terminology in their discourse and activities as a creative means of overcoming the tough requirements imposed by the government. Ethiopian diaspora organisations such as *Meleya*, *DIR*, *Gurmuu*, *Gobez* and *SEM* have established partnerships to facilitate their activities on the ground in Ethiopia. These organisations are non-political and some of their activities are perceived as promoting the country's image abroad and also attracting development aid through their partnerships with Dutch development agencies. As noted by respondents from the five organisations, their ability to undertake activities that address humanitarian needs often opens avenues for establishing a relationship with the government. This recognition derives from their input, and opens further avenues for gaining access to the regions and communities where such organisations implement activities.

From a policy perspective, engaging diaspora organisations as development partners (Ionescu, 2006) remains a challenge in Ethiopia due to the government's attitude to its diaspora. As long as some Ethiopian diaspora groups – especially those who were victims of political violence and repression – perceive government policy choices through a political lens, diaspora engagement initiatives by the Ethiopian government (Aquinas, 2009) will continue to focus on a small number of groups, thereby excluding large segments of the diaspora. The challenge here is how to change these perceptions and convince groups in opposition that they can participate in local development processes regardless of their political affiliations and ideologies.

Other challenges in Ethiopia include red tape, especially for those organisations that are active in rural areas and provide material support. Moreover, duty exemption privileges have been suspended since 2011, which means that all donations of materials and equipment are now subject to custom duties and other taxes[16]. Finally, those in need of space to set up charitable facilities cannot do so since land is no longer easily available, particularly in Addis Ababa[17].

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[14]   Interview with a local diaspora partner organisation Addis Ababa, 2011
[15]   Interview with Founding Director, DIR, Addis Ababa, 2011
[16]   Interview with a local diaspora partner organisation Addis Ababa, 2011
[17]   Interview with leader of a diaspora organisation Addis Ababa, 2011

8. Conclusion and recommendations

8.1. Conclusion

This paper has sought to investigate how Ethiopian diaspora organisations operate in a constricted political space. The way in which the organisations reviewed in the case study have been able to pursue their activities also highlights the significance of political space and the ability to return as key issues in relation to Ethiopian migration and its development potential (Taylor, 1996). The paper begins by examining the status of the Ethiopian diaspora in the Netherlands, in terms of its size and the nature of diaspora organisations. Numbering 12,000, the Ethiopian community in the Netherlands is relatively small compared to the top five communities from Africa (Statistics Netherlands, 2012). However, with a conservative estimate of 115 diaspora organisations, the Ethiopian community comes second after the Ghanaian community, which has about 237 diaspora organisations (Ong'ayo, forthcoming). Their fragmentation is the result of internal divisions, in combination with their respective ethnic and political affiliations.

The ability of diaspora organisations to operate in constricted political spaces, as shown by the experiences of the five organisations reviewed, suggests that the effectiveness of Ethiopian diaspora organisations in the Netherlands and Ethiopia is greatly influenced by the strategies they adopt. They seem to be able to adapt to and creatively navigate the challenges posed by constantly shifting political environment in Ethiopia, as demonstrated in section 4 above. This is largely influenced by the political and administrative environment in the Netherlands, which provides diaspora organisations with opportunities and capacities for transnational participation. Also important are partnerships with local actors, both government bodies and NGOs, and communities. The local partnerships facilitate access through goodwill and connections within the government system. Facing a major challenge here are groups that are not able to return to their home countries. Despite close ties with people and localities in their country of origin, the inability of certain groups of migrants to return and actually oversee their initiatives poses an obstacle to the contribution of diaspora organisations to their country of origin and local communities.

In terms of policy frameworks, Ethiopia has no comprehensive migration policy and instead relies on the 'Migration Policy Framework for Africa' adopted by the African Union in 2006 (see ICMPD, 2008). However, the government has taken a number on initiatives that address both institutional and policy gaps in the field of migration. It has created several institutions with responsibilities for and competences in migration-related issues. Although the creation of institutions such as ministries and agencies is a positive step, the lack of political will and the government's attitude to the diasporas and the enhancement of these institutions' capacities remain an obstacle to effective diaspora engagement. Attitudes towards the diaspora in general and some particular segments perceived to be in opposition to the government of the day distort the balance of diaspora participation due to the exclusion of organisations representing certain ethnic groups. The observed level of diaspora participation in the Ethiopian economy as well as the development output in the various regions reflects the imbalanced access and participation by all diasporas. For instance, those regions where ethnic groups are regarded as hostile to the regime lag behind in terms of diaspora development input due to the restricted space for engagement or the inability to return to Ethiopia.

The experiences of the five organisations reviewed suggest that the transnational engagement of diaspora organisations depends largely on the organisational landscape for facilitating transfers of material resources, skills and capacities. In the country of residence, the organisational landscape provide the political opportunity structures that enable diasporas to mobilise the resources and capacities needed for contributing to development in both the country of residence and the country of origin. Through broad

transnational connections, Ethiopian diaspora organisations have broad networks and access to diffuse sources of information and resources (Snow et al. 1986). This characteristic confirms the role that diaspora experiences and needs play in the establishment of diverse forms of associations (Moya, 2005).

8.2.   Policy recommendations

Institutional and policy frameworks should be underpinned by principles of compatibility, complementarity and coherence.

Due to the volatile migration dynamics in the Horn of Africa, Ethiopia remains an important migration corridor between Africa and the EU. The EU is more likely to address the challenges posed by different dimensions of mobility in the region if interventions that are entrenched within institutional and policy frameworks are underpinned by principles of compatibility, complementarity and coherence. This could be achieved by embedding these three elements in relations between the EU and the Africa Union (AU). At the same time, support could be given to the creation of a framework based on these three elements, for regulating the relationships between the AU and its member states at a regional level. Such an approach would provide guarantees for cooperation, reciprocity as well as the sustainability of EU initiatives for relations with the AU and African countries.

Recognise the indispensable role played by African governments in managing migration flows to the EU

The EU ought to rethink the extent to which its institutions, policies and programmes could be made more compatible, complementary, coherent and sustainable in its relationship with African governments. Its bilateral relations that focus on the management of migration could be underpinned by principles of reciprocity and mutual benefit. Policy measures and outcomes offering benefits for both parties have the potential to address some of the challenges in the management of migration, namely the need for labour migration in the context of changing demographics and addressing the root causes of irregular forms of migration.

Prioritise the participation of diaspora organisations in policy dialogue with Ethiopia and other countries

EU policies on migration and development are more likely to achieve their goals if they make provision for the engagement of diaspora organisations in their countries of origin. However, diaspora organisations cannot make a contribution without political will and the presence of the right policy environment. The EU could greatly facilitate the participation of Ethiopian diaspora organisations in Ethiopia by incorporating in its bilateral relations with the Ethiopian government discussions on civil liberties and policies that make space for the participation of non-state actors in local development processes.

Scale up political opportunity structures for the engagement of diaspora organisations

The collective forms of diaspora participation derive their impetus from the kind of political opportunity structures they access in the countries of residence. The capacities they develop accrue not only to the countries of origin, but also to the countries of residence, especially at local government level, where they co-implement social policies. In the country of origin, collective diaspora initiatives have the potential for making a broader development impact. For instance, collective remittances that are used in microcredit schemes boost local employment opportunities, while services delivered in rural areas, in fields such as education and healthcare, complement government services. At the same time, collective diaspora transfers (i.e. social remittances) contribute to capacity building for local groups, and material goods from diasporas help to improve facilities and also plug gaps in local institutions.

Recognise and maximise transnational citizenships and loyalty

EU and national policies on managing migration ought to focus on direct and indirect interventions in which multiple stakeholders are part of the solution. Diasporas have proved to be vital actors in their own right, on the strength of the development impact of their activities in both countries of residence and countries of origin. Transnational citizenship and loyalty ought not to be seen as a challenge, but rather as an opportunity for managing intricate migration issues that require knowledge and experience of both sides of the equation.

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Annex: List of interviews

Director of *Gobez*, Utrecht, June 2011

Director of *Meleya*, The Hague, February 2011

Director of *Gurmuu*, Amsterdam, July 2011

Founding board member of *SEM*, The Hague, June 2009

Ex-student leader, Addis Ababa University, Utrecht, February 2011

Director of *DIR*, Addis Ababa, November-December 2011

Beneficiaries of *Buna Best* project undertaken by *DIR*, Addis Ababa, December 2011

Beneficiary of *Gobez*, Addis Ababa, December, 2011

Members of staff of *Dires - House of Sport*, Addis Ababa, December 2011

Volunteer, *Respo International*, Addis Ababa, December 201

Social worker, ICEDA, Addis Ababa, November-December 2011

Director of ICEDA, Addis Ababa, November-December 2011

Education officers, Dukam Area, November 2011, Addis Ababa

Policy Officer, African Union, Addis Ababa, November 2011

15. Education officer, Shabee, Jimma Zone, November 2011

About ECDPM

ECDPM was established in 1986 as an independent foundation to improve European cooperation with the group of African, Caribbean and Pacific countries (ACP). Its main goal today is to broker effective partnerships between the European Union and the developing world, especially Africa. ECDPM promotes inclusive forms of development and cooperates with public and private sector organisations to better manage international relations. It also supports the reform of policies and institutions in both Europe and the developing world. One of ECDPM's key strengths is its extensive network of relations in developing countries, including emerging economies. Among its partners are multilateral institutions, international centres of excellence and a broad range of state and non-state organisations.

Thematic priorities

ECDPM organises its work around four themes:

- Reconciling values and interests in the external action of the EU and other international players
- Promoting economic governance and trade for inclusive and sustainable growth
- Supporting societal dynamics of change related to democracy and governance in developing countries, particularly Africa
- Addressing food security as a global public good through information and support to regional integration, markets and agriculture

Approach

ECDPM is a "think and do tank". It links policies and practice using a mix of roles and methods. ECDPM organises and facilitates policy dialogues, provides tailor-made analysis and advice, participates in South-North networks and does policy-oriented research with partners from the South.

ECDPM also assists with the implementation of policies and has a strong track record in evaluating policy impact. ECDPM's activities are largely designed to support institutions in the developing world to define their own agendas. ECDPM brings a frank and independent perspective to its activities, entering partnerships with an open mind and a clear focus on results.

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