Connected through Service: Diaspora Volunteers and Global Development

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Acknowledgments

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Executive Summary

About 1 million Americans volunteer overseas each year. Research shows that immigrants are more likely to volunteer abroad than native-born US citizens and nearly 200,000 first- and second-generation immigrants volunteer abroad each year. These donations of time, expertise, and energy reflect the meaningful personal ties that Americans have developed around the world. But international volunteers also have substantial impacts on the communities where volunteers serve and are a common feature of international development programming.

Extensive — if often scattered — evidence documents how diasporas spend time working on community development projects and providing pro bono professional advice and training to institutions in their countries of origin. Diasporas often have the connections, knowledge, and personal drive to volunteer outside the framework of organized volunteer programs. But many also volunteer through established programs as well. The experiences of these diaspora volunteers are incredibly diverse, but fall roughly into four clusters of volunteer programs. Some are targeted specifically to diasporas; others rely on de facto diaspora participation.

One group of diaspora volunteer programs focuses on attracting highly skilled expatriates for relatively short but intensive volunteer missions aimed at transferring knowledge and building capacity in developing countries. Programs target diaspora volunteers to provide advice to entrepreneurs and business owners, build public health or higher education capacity, advise post-conflict reconstruction and recovery, or provide public policy advice. Another group of diaspora volunteer programs focus on attracting diaspora youth who spend time in the ancestral country working with community groups or grassroots organizations. In contrast to volunteer programs for highly skilled diasporas that focus on immediate skill transfer or capacity building, youth programs aim to provide a formative experience that leads to long-term engagement. Of course, some programs attract both skilled and youth volunteers from the diaspora.

International volunteer programs have long been an integral component of international development and foreign aid policies. International organizations and development agencies, including US Agency for International Development (USAID), have tended to focus on identifying and mobilizing skilled volunteers while youth volunteer programs tend to be managed by non-profit organizations. (A notable exception of a government-run youth volunteer program is the US government's Peace Corps.) Skilled volunteer programs have often relied on diasporas (both intentionally and informally), but youth volunteer programs targeted to diasporas are a more recent phenomenon.

As skilled migration and the number of US youth with ancestors in the developing world grow over the coming years, the potential for both skilled diaspora volunteers and youth diaspora volunteers will increase. Similar to earlier waves of immigrants, many will likely undertake volunteer work in their countries of origin on their own initiative. But there is also a clear opportunity for USAID and other US government programs such as the Peace Corps and the President's Emergency Plan for Aids, Malaria and Tuberculosis Relief (PEPFAR) to cooperate with these diaspora volunteers to maximize their development impact.

I.   Introduction

Nearly 1 million Americans spend time volunteering abroad each year, including about 110,000 immigrants residing in the United States and about 76,000 second-generation immigrants.[1, 2] Indeed, researchers at the Center for Social Development (CSD), which studies volunteering, recently found that immigrants are 46 percent more likely than native-born US citizens to volunteer internationally.[3] (Immigrants and their descendants also represent a substantial portion of volunteers who donate time to efforts within the United States.) *These donations — of time, energy, and often more tangible resources as well — reflect the meaningful personal and community ties that Americans of all national origins have developed and maintain around the world*. The data used to calculate the number of international volunteers do not specify precisely where the volunteer work is performed abroad (see footnote 2). But it is safe to assume that a substantial portion of voluntary work performed abroad by immigrants — including, to a lesser extent, second- and higher-generation immigrants — is undertaken in their countries of origin.

Extensive — if often scattered — evidence documents how diasporas spend time working on community development projects and providing pro bono professional advice and training to institutions in their countries of origin.[4] Many more spend time in their country of residence volunteering for causes related to their country of origin or raising funds for philanthropic activities there. Often diaspora volunteers have the contacts and the capacity to undertake volunteer work outside of formal programs. But diasporas also volunteer in their countries of origin through a wide range of nonprofit and community-based organizations, including ethnic community-based groups, hometown associations, professional associations, alumni networks, and religious organizations. Other members of diasporas volunteer through corporate or government volunteer programs. Some of these programs are specifically targeted toward immigrants and their descendants, while others are more broadly focused but still attract significant numbers of diaspora members.

On balance, there is little doubt that diaspora volunteers make valuable contributions to both national and community development objectives in the countries where such work is undertaken and that such activities often have a positive spillover effect in their countries of residence as well. Yet despite the proliferation and contributions of diaspora volunteers, there has been (to our knowledge) no systematic analysis of the volunteer work undertaken by diasporas in their

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[1] The US Census Bureau defines the foreign born as individuals who had no US citizenship at birth. The foreign-born population includes naturalized citizens, lawful permanent residents, refugees and asylees, legal nonimmigrants (including those on student, work, or other temporary visas), and persons residing in the country without authorization. The terms *foreign born* and *immigrant* are used interchangeably. The term *second-generation immigrant* refers to native-born US citizens with at least one foreign-born parent. There is no consensus on the term *diaspora* but for the purposes of this report we consider it to include immigrants and their descendants who self-identify as members of a geographically dispersed kinship group.

[2] MPI analysis of data from a pooled sample of data from the 2004 to 2008 September Volunteering Supplements to the US Census Bureau's Current Population Survey (CPS). The CPS is a monthly sample survey of about 60,000 US households conducted by the US Census Bureau. Since 2004, the September administration of the CPS has included a supplemental survey on the volunteer work of US residents. The results reported here average data from the September CPS administered from 2004 to 2008. The analysis is limited to the population aged 16 and older.

[3] Amanda Moore McBride and Benjamin J. Lough, "Access to International Volunteering," Center for Social Development Working Paper No. 08-30, George Warren Brown School of Social Work, Washington Univ., Saint Louis, 2008, http://csd.wustl.edu/Publications/Documents/WP08-30.pdf.

[4] See Manuel Orozco and Rebecca Rouse, "Migrant Hometown Associations and Opportunities for Development: A Global Perspective," *Migration Information Source*, February 2007, www.migrationinformation.org/feature/display.cfm?ID=579 and Will Somerville, Jamie Durana, and Aaron Terrazas, *Hometown Associations: An Untapped Resource for Immigrant Integration?* (Washington, DC: MPI, 2008), www.migrationpolicy.org/pubs/Insight-HTAs-July08.pdf.

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countries of origin — certainly not from a policy perspective. Many questions remain unanswered, and it is not immediately evident what policymakers can or should do to foster this phenomenon. This report represents an initial attempt to survey how diasporas volunteer in their countries of origin, to identify their impact where possible, and to weigh the potential merits and limitations of policy interventions.

The report is divided into three principal sections. First it discusses the impact of international volunteers and identifies common motivations for greater inclusion of diasporas in formal volunteer programs. In its second section the report maps out a range of programs that offer volunteer opportunities for diasporas, both intentionally and inadvertently. Some of these programs were started and are operated by community organizations and diaspora-led nonprofit groups, while others were founded and are run by larger identity-based organizations such as professional associations and religious groups, national governments, or international agencies. In some cases, governments have partnered with community- or identity-based organizations. A third section draws lessons from the experiences described in the preceding section and discusses potential policy implications.

This study does not attempt a comprehensive evaluation of the impact or effectiveness of these programs, many of which are too small and too recently launched to be judged on the basis of random sampling, sound experimental design, or baseline assessment. The fact that many programs are the product of long-standing unstructured efforts by individuals and community organizations further complicates impact assessment. Moreover, diasporas may differ from development agencies or mainstream volunteer organizations in their view of what constitutes a desirable development impact. But based on available — often anecdotal — evidence as well as interviews with key stakeholders and program participants, we draw informed conclusions and identify promising practices that merit further inquiry. Still, readers should bear in mind that more research is needed to evaluate specific programmatic outcomes.

II.   International Volunteering: Definitions, Motivations, and Impacts

Volunteering is an intuitive but conceptually elusive concept. The *Oxford English Dictionary* considers a volunteer anyone who "of his own free will takes part in any enterprise." This definition, however, may be too broad, as it makes no reference to motivations for participation and could include normal paid labor (as in a volunteer army). The *Merriam-Webster Collegiate Dictionary* frames the term more narrowly as "one who renders a service or takes part in a transaction while having no legal concern or interest." But this definition also fails to recognize that individual motivations for most activities are complex, multifaceted, and often impossible to isolate. As Jacqueline Copeland-Carson observes, "good intentions and self-interest coexist, albeit sometimes quite uncomfortably, through the world's philanthropy."[5] The same can be said for the world's volunteer work.

Conceptions of community service and giving vary dramatically across countries and cultures. Nevertheless, there are several widely accepted elements that can contribute to a common working understanding of what exactly constitutes volunteer work. After reviewing the official

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[5] Jacqueline Copeland-Carson, *Kenyan Diaspora Philanthropy: Key Practices, Trends and Issues* (The Philanthropic Initiative and the Global Equity Initiative, Harvard Univ., March 2007), http://www.tpi.org/downloads/pdfs/Kenya_Diaspora_Philanthropy_Final.pdf

definitions of *volunteer* used by the statistics offices of the United Kingdom, Canada, Denmark, the United States, Mexico, and the United Nations, the International Labor Organization (ILO) proposed five essential features of volunteer work. The following features are drawn from ILO's 2008 *Manual on the Measurement of Volunteer Work*.[6]

- *Volunteer work must involve work*. Volunteer work produces something of potential economic value for a recipient.
- *Volunteer work is noncompulsory or nonobligatory*. Volunteer activity must involve a significant element of choice. People engage in these activities willingly, without being legally or institutionally obligated or otherwise coerced to do so. Social obligations such as peer pressure, parental pressure, or expectations of social groups do not make an activity compulsory.
- *Volunteer work can occur informally or through formal organizations*. Individuals can volunteer directly with other individuals or through nonprofit or other types of organizations.
- *Volunteer work is unpaid*. While there is general consensus that volunteer work is without monetary pay or compensation, the issue of remuneration of volunteer work is particularly complicated. Volunteers may receive nonmonetary benefits from volunteering in the form of skills development, social connections, job contacts, social standing, or psychosocial rewards. Some volunteers may receive reimbursement for out-of-pocket expenses of the volunteer assignment (e.g., travel, equipment) and living allowances or stipends to cover lodging. Compensation, however, cannot be "significant," is largely symbolic, and is not contingent upon market rates or the quantity or quality of the work. Whether compensation is considered "significant" is highly subjective and depends on a range of individual and community perceptions.
- *Volunteer work does not include work done for members of one's household or immediate family*. For obvious reasons, household work and unpaid work in family businesses are not considered volunteering.

Even ILO's precise definition may fail to take into account important gradations between voluntary and paid work on two fronts: discounted services and skills development. For instance, should providing services at a discounted rate with partial philanthropic or voluntary impulses be considered volunteering? What about volunteer work that offers the volunteer nonpecuniary rewards such as training or skills development? These commitments of time clearly represent some degree of voluntary impulse but do not fall within ILO's definition of volunteering, as compensation will likely surpass the "significant" threshold. Still, they might be considered partial donations if the compensation is far below the volunteer's normal remuneration.

Changes in the labor force in recent decades have also contributed to blurring the distinction between voluntary and paid work on the one hand, and education and training on the other. ILO's definition accepts that volunteer work can contribute to skills development if volunteers are unpaid or receive only symbolic compensation or expense reimbursement. In the past an apprenticeship might have fallen under this definition, although it is intuitively not volunteer work. In the context of a modern service economy, it is not clear if internships or fellowships — which can have altruistic motivations but are also typically considered career-building activities — should be considered volunteer work.

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[6] ILO (International Labor Organization), International Conference of Labor Statisticians, *Manual on the Measurement of Volunteer Work*, Room document prepared for the 18th International Conference of Labor Statisticians, November 2008, 12—13, www.ilo.org/global/What_we_do/Statistics/events/icls/lang--en/docName--WCMS_100574/index.htm.

In practice, it is often difficult to draw a clear distinction between volunteer work and other types of work. This report does not attempt to resolve these ambiguities, but simply recognizes their existence. Ultimately, unified definitions are not a prerequisite for good policymaking. Volunteers in all forms and degrees of commitment are an unavoidable reality, and many make meaningful contributions to development efforts worldwide. The Johns Hopkins University Comparative Nonprofit Sector Project estimates that volunteers contribute $400 billion to the global economy each year.[7]

There are also many nonmonetary benefits of volunteering — both to individuals and to communities at large. According to ILO, volunteer work has many positive side effects, such as the following:[8]

- Providing employment training and a pathway into the labor force
- Contributing to the global fight against poverty and addressing the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)
- Providing services not easily provided by paid workers, such as mentoring
- Enhancing social solidarity, social capital, political legitimacy, and quality of life
- Serving as a means of social inclusion and integration of minority or excluded communities
- Providing a sense of personal satisfaction, fulfillment, well-being, and belonging to persons who volunteer

In addition to these benefits identified by ILO, an emerging body of evidence suggests that international volunteer service has a positive impact on individual volunteers, the host communities where the volunteer work is performed, and in many instances, volunteers' communities of origin. The preliminary results of a major study by Washington University in St. Louis' CSD suggests that international volunteer work broadens the global perspective of international volunteers, orients their career prospects, and contributes to building human links across countries.[9] Ongoing research by CSD is examining the impact of international volunteers on health and education outcomes in host communities.

International volunteers take their experiences home as well. As generations of Peace Corps volunteers have powerfully illustrated, youth who spend a formative period of their lives volunteering abroad often engage in a lifetime of volunteer work both domestically and internationally; many Peace Corps volunteers also pursue professions in public service or medicine. From a more narrowly focused strategic perspective, international volunteering is a vital tool of US soft power. The Peace Corps' Office of Strategic Information, Research and Planning recently reported that Peace Corps volunteers improve the image of the United States abroad. "By living and working within local communities, Peace Corps Volunteers foster positive relationships with host country nationals, dispel myths about Americans, provide a broader context for understanding stereotypical American characteristics (e.g., being hard working)," the report concluded. "During their service, Volunteers share and represent the culture and values of the American people, and in doing so, earn respect and admiration for the United States among

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[7] Lester M. Salamon, S. Wojciech Sokolowski, and Regina List, *Global Civil Society: An Overview* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins Center for Civil Society Studies, 2003).

[8] ILO, *Manual on the Measurement of Volunteer Work*.

[9] Amanda Moore McBride, Benjamin J. Lough, and Margaret Sherrard Sherraden, *Perceived Impacts of International Service on Volunteers: Interim Results from a Quasi-Experimental Study* (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution of Global Economy and Development and Washington Univ. in Saint Louis Center for Social Development, May 25, 2010).

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people who otherwise may have limited contact or exposure to Americans and American culture."[10]

III.   What Role for Diasporas?

Extensive anecdotal evidence suggests that diasporas are an important subset of international volunteers. For instance, writing for Harvard University's Global Equity Initiative, Nick Young and June Shih, describe how Chinese diaspora physicians in the United States, Hong Kong, Taiwan, and Southeast Asia independently travel to China to provide pro bono, hands-on training to Chinese doctors.[11] Similarly, a recent report from the German Agency for Technical Cooperation (GTZ) cites examples of Afghan physicians residing in Germany and Italy who operate clinics in Jalalabad, Mazar-e-Sharif, and the Chewa refugee camp, and of Ethiopian university professors who spend their summers teaching courses at Ethiopian universities.[12]

Much of this volunteer work takes place outside organized international volunteer programs. Diasporas often have connections in the communities, understand local needs, can easily enter and leave the country, and are not afraid of traveling alone in their countries of origin. As a result, they often do not require organizational support and their international volunteer work occurs under the radar of public attention. Many of these extraordinarily committed individuals are motivated by genuine voluntary impulses, community ties, and a deep understanding of on-the-ground needs. Indeed, the independent, spontaneous, and needs-driven nature of many diaspora volunteers is part of the allure of the concept of diaspora volunteering.

But individual diaspora volunteering initiatives can also be chaotic and unorganized, and have unintended consequences. While the decentralized nature of diasporas' voluntary initiatives may be a benefit in some circumstances as it directs attention and resources to traditionally underserved communities, there are doubtless benefits from greater coordination (or at least mutual awareness) among volunteer initiatives. As the literature on diaspora entrepreneurship suggests, a desire to engage with the country of origin does not always translate into effective or sustainable engagement. Support structures may be particularly necessary for diasporas without immediate personal ties to the country — such as historic diasporas (e.g., the Armenian and Jewish diasporas) or the descendants of immigrants. Over the years a number of arguments have been forwarded as to why diasporas deserve particular focus in international volunteering programs. Below, we outline these arguments and discuss their merits.

A.   Diasporas Provide Discounted Technical Advice

In the 1970s, many developing countries believed that the costs associated with hiring international development experts were unnecessarily high and represented a misuse of foreign development assistance. Thus, as the migration of highly skilled workers increased, some of these countries looked to their diasporas for discounted expertise and the first diaspora volunteer

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[10] Janet Kerley and Susan Jenkins, *The Impact of Peace Corps Service on Host Communities and Host Country Perceptions of Americans* (Washington, DC: Peace Corps, Office of Strategic Information, Research and Planning, June 2010).
[11] Nick Young and June Shih, "Philanthropic Links between the Chinese Diaspora and the People's Republic of China," in *Diaspora Philanthropy and Equitable Development in China and India*, ed. Peter F. Geithner, Paula D. Johnson, and Lincoln C. Chen (Cambridge, MA.: Harvard Univ. Press, 2004).
[12] Tatjana Bauralina, Michael Bommes, Heike Daume, Tanja El-Cherkeh, and Florin Vadean, *Egyptian, Afghan, and Serbian Communities in Germany: How Do They Contribute to Their Countries of Origin* (Eschborn, Germany: Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit, 2006) and Nathalie Schlenzka, *The Ethiopian Diaspora in Germany: Its Contributions to Development* (Eschborn, Germany: Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit, 2009).

programs emerged. This concept of a "patriotic discount" is well documented — for instance, diasporas have invested in and lent money to their countries of origin at a discounted rate, although it is often less than expected.[13] Presumably, the diaspora discount operates for services as well as for finance. But a 2003 United States Agency for International Development (USAID) report concluded that the expenses associated with international volunteer programs are not always less than the cost of directly hiring a consultant.[14] As this report discusses later, the diaspora discount for volunteers may apply only in the long term — that is, if and when volunteers remain active after the mission ends.

B.   Diasporas' Linguistic and Cultural Familiarity Makes Aid More Effective

A second, widely accepted line of argument claims that incorporating diaspora volunteers into development projects increases the effectiveness of development aid by capitalizing on diasporas' cultural and linguistic familiarity with their countries of origin. International agencies operating in dangerous, war-torn, or volatile regions — such as Somalia and the Caucasus — have long employed members of the diaspora both directly and as intermediaries because of their language skills and ability to easily blend into the general population. An early review of diaspora volunteers in Turkey found that 24 out of 30 host organizations considered diaspora volunteers more effective than other foreign volunteers.[15] Interviews conducted for this report with several programs that recruit diaspora volunteers suggest that members of diasporas typically require less-intensive predeparture and postarrival orientation. Moreover, some programs encourage diaspora volunteers to lodge with family members or friends, further reducing costs.[16]

The argument that diaspora volunteers' cultural familiarity and linguistic skills make them more effective than other volunteers is often overstated, though. Migrants who have been away from their countries of origin for extended periods of time — and to an even greater extent, second- or higher-generation immigrants — may have only basic linguistic and cultural knowledge. As a number of the diaspora volunteer programs described in this report have learned, it may be counterproductive to require that volunteers speak the language of the ancestral country or to assume that volunteers will adjust seamlessly to life there. Bob Awuor of the UK-based African Community Development Foundation notes that "diaspora distractions," or personal or family concerns, can sometimes consume diaspora volunteers while on assignment.[17] In an early review of diaspora volunteers, Solon Ardittis of ILO points to the potential for patronage and favoritism in diaspora volunteer programs that allow host organizations to select volunteers based on personal connections rather than merit.[18]

C.   Diaspora Volunteers Counter the Effects of "Brain Drain"

The argument that diaspora volunteerism can compensate for perceived development losses stemming from "brain drain" has been advanced for decades. But it remains controversial.

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[13] Suhas Ketkar and Dilip Ratha, eds., *Innovative Financing for Development* (Washington, DC: World Bank, 2008).

[14] Jill Keesbury, *The Value of International Volunteerism: A Review of Literature on International Volunteer-Sending Programs*, Report, US Agency for International Development (USAID) Development Information Services, July 1, 2003, http://pdf.dec.org/pdf_docs/Pnacw574.pdf.

[15] Solon Ardittis, *Le retour assisté des migrants qualifies dans leur pays d'origine: Les programmes multilatereaux du PNUD et du CIM* (Geneva: ILO 1984), 26.

[16] MPI interview with Tedla W. Giorgis, founder, Network of Ethiopian Professionals in the Diaspora (NEPID) and Visions for Development, Inc., Washington, DC, January 27, 2010.

[17] MPI interview via telephone with Bob Awuor, executive director, African Community Development Foundation, January 26, 2010.

[18] Ardittis, *Le retour assisté des migrants qualifies dans leur pays d'origine*, 27.

Several high-profile initiatives target highly skilled and technical professionals from the diaspora for short- or medium-term consultancies in their countries of origin — often as volunteers. These programs grew out of the 1970s concern that the departure of highly skilled individuals represented a substantial human resource loss for many developing countries.

More recently, debates about the development implications of highly skilled migration have become more balanced, although they have certainly not disappeared. Scholars and policymakers have come to recognize three important points:

- Many skilled migrants continue to contribute to and maintain ties with their countries of origin after departure ("brain circulation").[19]
- Had their migration options been restricted, fewer people would have been able to develop their skills.[20]
- The prospect of increased opportunities for skilled migrants may influence the educational decisions of youth in some developing countries, yielding higher overall educational outcomes and a more skilled domestic workforce ("brain gain").[21]

It is impossible to completely dismiss concerns about the human resource and development implications of skilled migration. A systemic scarcity of highly skilled and technologically savvy workers likely impedes research and innovation in the developing world (although the net effect is probably small relative to broader trends in international trade and investment shaping the developing world's economic prospects).[22] Even in the context of typically weak labor markets resulting from the global financial crisis that began in late 2007, employers across the developing world — including Argentina, Costa Rica, Mexico, Peru, Poland, Romania, and South Africa — consistently cite challenges in finding skilled workers.[23] (The economic crisis has proved to be far less severe in the developing world than in industrialized countries.) But this phenomenon may be limited to the short term — particularly in some important sectors, such as education and health care, which suffer from the effects of emigration in so many developing countries. In the longer term, concerns about brain drain may be misguided.

D. Volunteering Is an Entry Point to Long-Term Engagement

Some programs promote diaspora volunteering in the country of origin to increase volunteers' long-term engagement with their homeland via diplomacy, advocacy, investment,

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[19] Michael A. Clemens, *Skill Flow: A Fundamental Reconsideration of Skilled-Worker Mobility and Development*, Human Development Research Paper 2009/08, United Nations Development Program, April 2009, http://hdr.undp.org/en/reports/global/hdr2009/papers/HDRP_2009_08.pdf.

[20] See generally UNDP (United Nations Development Program), *Overcoming Barriers: Human Mobility and Development* (New York: UNDP, 2009), http://hdr.undp.org/en/reports/global/hdr2009/.

[21] Oded Stark, Christian Helmenstein, and Alexia Prskawetz, "A Brain Grain with a Brain Drain," *Economics Letters* 55, no. 2 (1997): 227—34.

[22] The concept of a labor shortage is notoriously imprecise and complex. Shortages presume an undersupply of labor relative to demand. But as Ruhs and Anderson (forthcoming 2010) point out, there is a "dynamic and mutually conditioning" relationship between labor demand and supply. "Employer demand for labor is malleable, aligning itself with supply, as labor supply adapts to the requirements of demand. Moreover, these relations are situated within regulatory systems that may themselves be equally flexible," they write. Admittedly, this analysis is primarily concerned with labor shortages in developed countries, but it also holds particular relevance for discussions on the implications of skilled migration for developing countries. See Martin Ruhs and Bridget Anderson, eds., *Who Needs Migrant Workers? Labor Shortages, Immigration and Public Policy* (London: Oxford Univ. Press, forthcoming 2010).

[23] Manpower Research Center, *2009 Talent Shortage Survey Results* (Milwaukee, WI: Manpower Inc., 2009), http://files.shareholder.com/downloads/MAN/817822014x0x297372/dab9f206-75f4-40b7-88fb-3ca81333140f/09TalentShortage_Results_USLetter_FINAL_FINAL.pdf.

entrepreneurship, or even permanent return. These programs are justified in terms of the country of origin's long-term interests rather than its immediate development needs.

Emerging, but still largely anecdotal, evidence does indeed suggest that *volunteer programs that aim to create a formative experience in the country of origin for diaspora youth may contribute to long-term interest in, commitment to, and engagement with the ancestral country*. For instance, a former Peace Corps volunteer of Armenian ancestry whom the Peace Corps allowed to serve in Armenia eventually established an independent program to facilitate shorter-term volunteer opportunities in Armenia for the diaspora. Similarly, one Indian American youth volunteer who served in Indicorps — a yearlong community-based service fellowship for Indian diaspora youth — paired a passion for education (fostered while working for Teach for America in the United States) with a passion for India and now works with Teach for India, that country's equivalent of the well-known US education reform movement. Another Indian American who volunteered in India in 2001 through the American India Foundation's (AIF) William J. Clinton Fellowship now serves as a political officer in the US embassy in New Delhi.

E. Overcoming Coordination and Collective Action Challenges

A final argument for including diaspora volunteers in organized volunteer programs revolves around the challenges of coordination and collective action. The focus of spontaneous efforts by diaspora volunteers may differ substantially from the priorities of national development authorities and/or foreign aid agencies. Without passing judgment on which priorities should take precedence — diasporas may have a better understanding of local needs whereas foreign aid agencies and national governments may have a broader perspective — working together can achieve some alignment of objectives and better allocation of resources. To this end, formal volunteer organizations should work to form true partnerships with diaspora community-based organizations. The experience of the US Department of Health and Human Services' Office of Refugee Resettlement and its various community-based partner organizations provides an instructive case of how productive such relationships can be.[24] The Mexican government's experience working with diaspora community-based organizations under the Three-for-One program is another good example of such cooperation.[25]

IV. The Mechanics of Diaspora Volunteering

In this section we review the experiences of over a dozen volunteer programs that provide volunteer opportunities for diasporas, intentionally or otherwise. The aim of this section is not to generate an exhaustive list of volunteer opportunities for the diaspora but rather to compile a range of examples that offer important lessons for policymakers or merit further study.

The experiences of diaspora volunteer programs are incredibly diverse. But there appear to be four "clusters" of programs, each one focused on a different type of diaspora volunteer.

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[24] We are indebted to Tedla W. Giorgis for this point. For further information on the Office of Refugee Resettlement's work with community-based organizations, see Kathleen Newland, Hiroyuki Tanaka, and Laura Barker, *Bridging Divides: The Role of Ethnic Community-Based Organizations in Refugee Integration* (Washington, DC: MPI and the International Rescue Committee, 2007), www.migrationpolicy.org/pubs/Bridging_Divides.pdf.
[25] See Francisco Javier Aparicio, and Covadonga Meseguer, "Collective Remittances and the State: The 3x1 Program in Mexican Municipalities," Working Paper, Centro de Investigación y Docencia Económica, Mexico City, 2008.

- The *first* cluster includes programs that target subgroups of highly skilled volunteers — including those with expertise in entrepreneurship and business growth, public health, post-conflict relief and recovery, higher education, and public policy advice and capacity building. These diaspora volunteers often resemble discounted consultants in providing expert insight (and occasionally services) and the missions are relatively short although occasionally repeated.
- The *second* cluster includes programs that target youth volunteers from the diaspora for a period of community-based service work in their ancestral countries. The terms of service for diaspora volunteers in these programs are typically longer and aim to provide a formative experience for the volunteers and a transformative interaction for the host communities.
- Another *third* cluster of diaspora volunteer programs are "multipurpose" in that they aim to attract a wide range of diaspora volunteers including both youth and highly skilled diaspora volunteers.
- Finally, a *fourth* cluster includes volunteer programs that do not explicitly targeted to diaspora volunteers, but that rely heavily on diaspora volunteers as a matter of reality and diasporas participate heavily in the programs.

A. *Highly Skilled Diaspora Volunteer Programs*

Many of the most familiar diaspora volunteer programs target highly skilled migrants and there is a rich and diverse policy experience with these programs at the international, national, and community levels. Skilled diaspora volunteers provide advice to business and entrepreneurs, build public health capacity, assist in post-conflict relief and recovery, contribute expanding access to and improving higher education, and provide public policy advice in their countries of origin. Some of these experiences are described below.

1. The International Executive Service Corps and the Volunteers for Economic Growth Alliance

The International Executive Service Corps (IESC) was established in 1964 to mobilize American business expertise and private sector acumen for international development efforts.[26] The brainchild of Chase Manhattan Bank president David Rockefeller, Xerox Corporation chairman Sol Linowitz, and Senator Vance Hartke of Indiana, IESC is a private, not-for-profit organization that works closely with USAID. Since 1964 IESC has completed over 25,000 technical and managerial assistance consultancies in over 130 countries; it currently maintains a database of 8,500 volunteer experts.

Several members of IESC's staff are part of diasporas, and the organization actively recruits diaspora volunteers for its programs in Ethiopia, Lebanon, and Sudan. For instance, since 2006 IESC has partnered with USAID's Volunteers for Economic Growth Alliance (VEGA) to recruit Ethiopian American business owners to provide technical assistance and mentoring to Ethiopian businesses wishing to market export-oriented products. The initiative also provides technical assistance to Ethiopian banks, helping them understand US credit ratings as part of a USAID

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[26] The information presented in this section is based on the Web site of the International Executive Service Corps (IESC), www.iesc.org as well as MPI interviews with Tarek Nabhan, vice president for global program operations, IESC; Sujeewa de Alwis, senior director of program operations, IESC; David Hartingh, senior director of program development; and Erin Spinnell, senior global program manager, IESC, March 25, 2010.

initiative to expand bank lending to Ethiopian diaspora entrepreneurs.[27] Similarly, IESC's Access to International Markets through Information Technology initiative in Lebanon aimed to develop that country's information and communications technology (ICT) sector by linking Lebanese ICT companies with global markets. Following the Comprehensive Peace Agreement ending the war between Sudan and Southern Sudan in 2005, IESC worked to create a database of skilled Sudanese expatriates in North America who might be able to volunteer their time toward the reconstruction and redevelopment of Southern Sudan (again in partnership with VEGA). IESC's partners have also registered and mobilized Sudanese expatriates living in other African countries such as Egypt, Uganda, Tanzania, and South Africa — a rare example of south-south migration and development efforts.

While many of IESC's efforts to work with diaspora volunteers have been successful, others have faced obstacles. First, business owners in developing countries may question the credibility of advice from diaspora volunteers more than that offered by nondiaspora members. Second, populating databases of skilled expatriates is a daunting challenge, as is keeping the databases updated. (Contracting members of the diaspora community as recruiters to populate the databases is among the more successful methods.) Third, there must be buy-in from the country of origin. In the case of its database of Southern Sudanese diaspora professionals, IESC eventually handed the database over to the Government of Southern Sudan, which then lost the data.

2. American International Health Alliance HIV/AIDS Twinning Center and the Network of Ethiopian Professionals in the Diaspora

The American International Health Alliance (AIHA) is a nonprofit organization based in Washington, DC, that relies on volunteer health professionals — including nurses, physicians, hospital administrators, educators, allied health professionals, and public health experts — to build sustainable health-care capacity in developing countries.[28, 29] The HIV/AIDS Twinning Center is an AIHA program that pairs organizations in developed and developing countries that are working on similar or related issues in the global effort to improve services for people living with or affected by HIV/AIDS.[30] The Twinning Center's Volunteer Healthcare Corps (VHC) currently operates in Ethiopia, Tanzania, and South Africa and is piloting programs in Mozambique and Botswana. It provides volunteers with coach airfare; vaccinations and other preventative medical treatments when necessary; visa and work permits; travel, accident, and medical evacuation insurance; basic housing or a housing allowance; a modest stipend; and preassignment orientation and in-country support.[31] Volunteers are not recruited or placed on a preestablished cycle; rather, the Twinning Center works with individual volunteers and host institutions to develop a program that meets both needs. Table 1 provides basic administrative data on the five programs.

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[27] For further details, see Aaron Terrazas, *Diaspora Investment in Developing and Emerging Country Capital Markets: Patterns and Prospects* (Washington, DC: MPI and USAID, 2010).

[28] The information presented in this section is based on interviews with Tedla W. Giorgis, founder, Network of Ethiopian Professionals in the Diaspora (NEPID) and Visions for Development, Inc., Washington, DC, January 27, 2010, and Aazamina Rangwala, project associate, American International Health Alliance (AIHA) and HIV/AIDS Twinning Center, Washington, DC, January 27, 2010.

[29] AIHA receives in-kind and financial support from USAID; the US Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS); the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA); the World Health Organization (WHO); the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria (GFATM); and the German Society for Technical Cooperation (GTZ). More information on AIHA can be found on its Web site at www.aiha.com.

[30] HIV/AIDS Twinning Center, "Twinning against HIV/AIDS," www.twinningagainstaids.org.

[31] American International Health Alliance (AIHA) and HIV/AIDS Twinning Center, "The VHC Program," www.twinningagainstaids.org/vhc_overview.html.

Table 1. Volunteer Health Corps Missions

Country	Program Inception	Number of Volunteers Placed	Number of Placement Sites	Total In-Kind Professional Time Volunteered (days)
Ethiopia	Sept. 2006	44	30+	14,434
Tanzania	May 2007	18	14	4,525
South Africa	Feb. 2008	14	15	2,977
Mozambique†	Feb. 2009	3	1	266
Botswana†	Sept. 2009	4	4	816

Notes: Only the Ethiopian program actively recruits diaspora volunteers. Data current as of July 31, 2010.
†Indicates that the program is in the pilot phase.
Source: Courtesy of the AIHA, HIV/AIDS Twinning Center.

In 2006 the Twinning Center partnered with the Network of Ethiopian Professionals in the Diaspora (NEPID), a nonprofit association, to recruit diaspora volunteers with health-care expertise to work on VHC programs in Ethiopia.[32] (It is currently exploring opportunities to launch similar diaspora volunteer programs for Nigeria and Tanzania.[33]) NEPID is responsible for the outreach, recruitment, and selection of volunteers using its extensive networks among the Ethiopian diaspora. Particularly in countries with volatile political environments, it is important to select volunteers dedicated to the program's specific mission rather than to broader political or personal agendas in the country of origin. NEPID's part in selecting such candidates appears to be essential. NEPID also assists in identifying promising partner institutions in Ethiopia.

Since its launch, the partnership has placed 36 diaspora volunteers in Ethiopia. Although the majority of participants have been Ethiopian Americans, the volunteer program has also included members from the Ethiopian diaspora residing in Australia, France, and the United Kingdom. The partnership has found that diaspora volunteers require less orientation and case management upon arrival in the country of origin and generally take responsibility for their own lodging. Tedla Giorgis, founder of NEPID, also argues that diaspora volunteers may lead to more sustainable capacity building because they are more likely than other volunteers to develop relationships that continue beyond the volunteer program.

The Twinning Center is supported by the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR), the US government's multi-billion-dollar global effort to combat HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, and malaria.[34] In the past, VHC has also worked with Volunteers for Prosperity (VfP), a presidential initiative launched in 2003 to encourage international voluntary service by highly skilled Americans in support of US foreign assistance priorities, particularly in the areas of global health and development.[35] VfP provides limited assistance in disseminating volunteer opportunities. Although VHC is supported through PEPFAR — a federally funded foreign assistance program — the Diaspora Volunteer initiative was the brainchild of NEPID and its founder, Tedla Giorgis.

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[32] NEPID is a project of Visions for Development, Inc., a private consultancy.

[33] Current as of January 2010.

[34] President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) was first approved by Congress in 2003 and was reauthorized in 2008 at a funding level of $48 billion over the period 2008 to 2013.

[35] In addition to PEPFAR programs, Volunteers for Prosperity (VfP) volunteers support the African Global Competitiveness Initiative, the Water for the Poor Initiative, the Digital Freedom Initiative, the Middle East Partnership Initiative, the Millennium Challenge Account, and the President's Malaria Initiative. Executive Order 13317 of September 25, 2003, available at www.volunteersforprosperity.gov/news/eo13317.htm.

3. Canadian University Service Overseas and Voluntary Service Overseas: Canada's Emerging Diaspora Volunteer Programs

In 2007 the Canadian University Service Overseas and Voluntary Service Overseas Canada (CUSO-VSO) launched a much smaller diaspora volunteer program than VSO-UK's Diaspora Volunteering Initiative, with support from the International Development Research Center (IDRC) and local diaspora associations in Canada.[36] (CUSO-VSO receives general operating support from the Canadian International Development Agency [CIDA] and is currently exploring the possibility of expanding its work with diasporas.[37]) As of January 2010, CUSO-VSO was piloting three diaspora volunteer programs, in Ethiopia, Guyana, and the Philippines, While CUSO-VSO's work with the Filipino diaspora is still in the developmental stages and has yet to produce concrete plans, the group's experiences in Ethiopia and Guyana provide several lessons.[38]

In collaboration with VSO-Ethiopia and the Ottawa-based nonprofit Academics for Higher Education and Development (AHEAD), which focuses on "mobilizing and channeling resources and expertise available within the Ethiopian diaspora in Canada," CUSO-VSO launched an 18-month pilot and feasibility study on recruiting, selecting, and training volunteers from the Ethiopian diaspora in Canada to support the development of the health-care sector in Ethiopia. As originally envisioned, volunteers would work for up to six months in Ethiopia to train Ethiopian physicians and medical students in specialist topics. But in its early stages, the program failed to attract the expected interest from the Ethiopian diaspora in Canada, so CUSO-VSO had to recalibrate its expectations for the program. Program Coordinator Rosa Candia believes many prospective volunteers felt the duration of the missions was too long.

CUSO-VSO has had more success working with the Guyanese diaspora in Canada. A pilot project is to build on the work of a community association of retired teachers of Guyanese origin, the Canada-Guyana Teacher Education Project (CGTEP). Since the 1980s CGTEP has been organizing teachers of Guyanese origin residing in Canada to undertake summer volunteer work to train teachers and expand educational opportunities in rural areas of Guyana. CUSO-VSO's initiative aims to identify longer-term volunteer placements.

4. The United Nations Development Program's Transfer of Knowledge through Expatriate Nationals Initiatives

The United Nations Development Program (UNDP) Transfer of Knowledge through Expatriate Nationals (TOKTEN) is arguably the oldest formal program aimed at facilitating diaspora volunteerism. It organizes short-term volunteer consultancies by expatriates in their countries of origin; these consultancies typically last anywhere from three weeks to six months. According to an early review of TOKTEN by Solon Ardittis, then at ILO, the program initially had four principal objectives:[39]

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[36] Canadian University Service Overseas and Voluntary Service Overseas Canada (CUSO-VSO) was formed in 2008 from the merger of two Canadian volunteer development agencies. CUSO was established in 1961 and VSO-Canada was established in 1995. CUSO-VSO also directly recruits volunteers from the United States and indirectly from India (through IVO), Ireland (VSO-Ireland), Uganda (VSO-Jitolee), and Australia (AVI).

[37] MPI telephone interview with Rosa Candia, diaspora volunteering program coordinator, CUSO-VSO, January 19, 2010.

[38] CUSO-VSO, "Diaspora Volunteering," www.cuso-vso.org/about-cuso-vso/how-we-work/diaspora-volunteering.asp; CUSO-VSO, "Promoting Volunteering from within the Ethiopian Diaspora in Canada," Proposal submitted by the Academics for Higher Education and CUSO-VSO to the International Development Research Centre (IDRC), provided to the MPI by CUSO-VSO.

[39] Ardittis, *Le retour assisté des migrants qualifiés dans leur pays d'origine*.

- To lower the cost of technical advice
- To allow developing countries to gain access to consultants who would be more effective than other consultants due to their linguistic or cultural competencies ,
- To seed potential return of skilled expatriates or their long-term engagement with their country of origin
- To depoliticize development-oriented volunteer work as the aegis of UNDP allows political autonomy.

TOKTEN was launched in 1977 in Turkey with a focus on scientists, technology experts, and managers of Turkish origin residing abroad, and has since expanded to at least 50 other developing countries.[40] On balance, government interest in TOKTEN appears to have peaked in the 1980s and then gradually waned.

The program is administered by UNDP offices in participating countries with support from the United Nations Volunteers program (UNV) and the governments of participating countries, as well as third-party donors and, in some cases, the private sector.[41] As a result, the national programs vary substantially in their organization, management, and outcomes.[42] But all share a basic framework and key operating procedures. Standard features include the following:

- *Establishing, populating, and maintaining a database of potential volunteers.* All start-up TOKTEN programs face the challenge of creating a current database of potential diaspora volunteers. Although this task has become substantially easier with the advent of the Internet and new communication technologies, it continues to require substantial outreach. Through consular networks, community and professional associations, and university alumni associations, members of the diaspora are invited to submit their curricula vitae to the database. As a result, a strong online presence is now an essential component of any TOKTEN program.

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[40] There is no centralized information source on the range of national Transfer of Knowledge through Expatriate Nationals (TOKTEN) programs. The following list of national TOKTEN projects was compiled by a comprehensive search of existing national TOKTEN documents and is accurate to the best of our knowledge. Argentina, Armenia, Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Benin, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Brazil, Cambodia, Central African Republic, Cape Verde, China, Czech Republic, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Egypt, Ethiopia, Ghana, Greece, Grenada, Guinea-Bissau, Guyana, India, Iran, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Lebanon, Liberia, Mali, Madagascar, Moldova, Morocco, Nepal, Nigeria, Pakistan, the West Bank and Gaza, Philippines, Poland, Rwanda, Saint Lucia, Senegal, Sri Lanka, Somalia, Sudan, Syria, Trinidad and Tobago, Uganda, Ukraine, Uzbekistan, and Vietnam. Many of the national programs are no longer in operation.

[41] International donors to recent TOKTEN programs in Mali and the Palestinian territories have included the governments of France, Japan, and Norway, as well as the European Union (EU) and United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). (In Mali TOKTEN volunteers contributed to projects funded by USAID although the agency did not fund the volunteers directly.) TOKTEN programs in Lebanon, Rwanda, and Sudan examined for this report were largely funded by UNDP and governments of the countries receiving volunteers. Mali's TOKTEN program has also received funding from the online philanthropic aggregator platform, GlobalGiving. TOKTEN programs in Afghanistan have been funded through Rapid Deployment Facility funds provided for Afghanistan by the governments of Belgium, Japan, Luxembourg, and Germany. The international development agencies of the Netherlands, the United Kingdom, and Canada have supported Sudan's TOKTEN program.

[42] International coordinating meetings for the various national TOKTEN programs have been held in Istanbul, Turkey (1978), Islamabad, Pakistan (1982), Cairo, Egypt (1985), New Delhi, India (1988), and Manila, Philippines (1991). The sixth meeting was held in Beijing, China, in 2000 hosted by the Government of China and UNDP. It included representatives from 13 TOKTEN program countries and aimed to exchange lessons learned and best practices of TOKTEN implementation, to assess the achievements of TOKTEN, and to explore future directions for the project. To the authors' knowledge, no publicly available evaluations or guidelines resulted from the meeting and no subsequent meetings have since been held.

- *Volunteer requirements.* Volunteers must typically be expatriate nationals (i.e., individuals born in the developing country and residing permanently and legally abroad; the program is not open to second- or higher-generation expatriates), over age 25, with at least a bachelor's degree, a record of excellence in their field, and a minimum of five years of relevant work experience. They must also display a genuine interest in contributing to the development of their countries of origin.

- *Identification and prioritization of volunteering needs.* Agencies requesting a volunteer typically provide terms of reference to the TOKTEN management detailing the services being requested and minimum qualifications. A committee composed of representatives of UNDP and government agencies approve projects. (The precise composition of the committee varies by country.) Programs may aim to support a recovery from war or disaster (e.g., Sudan, Afghanistan) or may seek longer-term improvement in living standards (e.g., Mali, Rwanda). In some programs the requesting agencies are allowed to access the database to select a volunteer; in others, the TOKTEN management gives the requesting agencies several volunteer options.

- *Completing the TOKTEN consultancy.* The TOKTEN program provides volunteers with roundtrip airfare, lodging, and a stipend during their consultancy. Upon completing their consultancy, both the TOKTEN volunteer and the requesting agencies draft brief reports on the experience and submit them to the TOKTEN management. TOKTEN guidelines require that stipends to volunteers be substantially below remuneration levels for comparable international experts. UNV-Ghana estimates that because their services are volunteered, TOKTEN experts typically cost programs 50—75 percent less than international technical experts.[43] But some evidence also suggests that the fees of even TOKTEN experts remain at or above local wage rates in many developing countries.

In its early years, TOKTEN was guided by the philosophy that (1) volunteers should complement national development plans rather than direct development objectives, (2) consultancies should be purely temporary in nature without obligation for permanent return, and (3) remuneration for TOKTEN projects should be substantially below salaries in developed countries and in line with standard rates for comparable consultancies by private firms or international organizations in developing countries.[44] But experience suggests that some TOKTEN programs deviated from these founding objectives over time.

Ardittis documents how in the case of TOKTEN-Egypt the program became a much more active promoter of services than originally envisioned, violating TOKTEN's original mission to provide technical support rather than be a policy development program.[45] Similarly, the program is ostensibly neutral regarding permanent returns, but many of the national programs appear to view permanent return as a favorable (if unintended) outcome: about one-third of volunteers in Rwanda's program in 2006 returned permanently, and about one-fifth of TOKTEN volunteers in the Palestinian territories ultimately settled there.[46]

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[43] UNV (United Nations Volunteers) — Ghana, "TOKTEN Programme," http://ghana.unv.org/how-to-volunteer/in-ghana/tokten-programme.html.

[44] Rastam Lalkaka, *Transfer of Knowledge for Development through International Volunteerism* (New York: UNDP, 1987) cited in Bernard I. Logan, "An Assessment of the Potential Application of the Transfer of Knowledge through Expatriate Nationals (TOKTEN) Programme in Sub-Saharan Africa," *Applied Geography* 10, no. 3 (July 1990): 223—36.

[45] Ardittis, *Le retour assisté des migrants qualifiés dans leur pays d'origine*, 52.

[46] Katim S. Touray, *Final Evaluation of the Support Project to the Implementation of the Rwanda TOKTEN Volunteer Program*, Final Report to the UNDP, March 2008; Sari Hanafi, "Physical Return, Virtual Return: The Palestinian Diaspora

The question of remuneration is particularly complex: insufficient stipends or cost reimbursement could hinder recruitment of some (although certainly not all) highly skilled expatriate volunteers, but at the same time, unnecessarily generous stipends undermine the program's *raison d'être* and can cause friction between volunteers and local workers concerned about displacement. For instance, a 2006 evaluation of Sudan's TOKTEN program notes that the daily living allowance provided to volunteers is "extremely high" in some parts of the country and suggests that the stipend be adjusted to the local cost of living. Other TOKTEN programs, such as in Rwanda, have already adjusted the allowance to local costs of living.[47] It is important to recognize that providing diaspora volunteers with stipends above local wage rates is sometimes justified, notably when their skills are truly scarce (or nonexistent) in the developing country or when they provide unique insights or global connections. But moving too far in this direction risks diluting the distinction between volunteers and paid consultants who would best be recruited in standard markets.

On balance, there is some evidence that volunteer hosts do receive a substantial discount on the services that TOKTEN consultants provide. Citing the case of TOKTEN-Palestine, UNV-Ghana estimates that the average TOKTEN volunteer costs about $3,000 per month — roughly one-quarter the cost of an international expert in the Palestinian territories.[48] UNDP-Sudan estimates that the average cost for each volunteer assignment of one and a half months was $7,357.[49] Estimates vary according to the length of the assignment, but there is little doubt that the cost is less than that of a similarly qualified international expert (though international assignments are inevitably expensive due to the cost of international flights and lodging). Individual TOKTEN programs have innovated two approaches to ensure that program costs are minimized without sacrificing the quality of volunteers: Focusing exclusively on high-value-added volunteers, and encouraging volunteers to build upon their missions and establish deeper institutional relationships

- *Targeting high-value-added volunteers.* Lebanon's TOKTEN program distinguishes between "junior" and "senior" volunteers.[50] Junior volunteers are required to have at least five years of active experience and "important" professional achievements. By contrast, senior volunteers are required to have at least 10 years of active experience with "outstanding" achievements in their field of specialty. According to the director of TOKTEN-Lebanon, the program is increasingly focusing on attracting and placing senior volunteers to meet the needs of a developing country with comparatively high levels of education.[51] These highly skilled and experienced volunteers typically contribute strategic analysis and planning support rather than direct service. The program recruits most from the diaspora residing in North America and Europe (rather than in the developing world) since these individuals are more likely to be at the top of their fields and have access to state-of-the-art technology. Yet, as noted by the director, the diaspora in the developing

and the Homeland," in *The Palestinian Diaspora in Europe: Challenges of Dual Identity and Adaptation*, ed. Abbas Shiblak (Jerusalem and Ramallah: Institute of Jerusalem Studies and the Shaml Palestinian Refugee and Diaspora Center, 2005).
[47] Gopi K. Sedhain, *Assessment of Preparatory Assistance Phase Implementation Process: Transfer of Knowledge through Expatriate Nationals*, Report submitted to UNDP Sudan, Khartoum, November 23, 2006, www.sd.undp.org/doc/prodocs/dg3%20TOKTEN/Doc.26-35.pdf.
[48] Ibid.
[49] Sedhain, *Assessment of Preparatory Assistance Phase Implementation Process.*
[50] Further discussion of Lebanon's TOKTEN program can be found in Paul Tabar, *Immigration and Human Development: Evidence from Lebanon*, UNDP Human Development Research Paper 2009/35, August 2009, http://hdr.undp.org/en/reports/global/hdr2009/papers/HDRP_2009_35.pdf.
[51] MPI interview via telephone with Ariane Elmas, director, TOKTEN-Lebanon, January 8, 2010.

world might also have specific expertise necessary for Lebanon's development. She cited the example of a Lebanese engineer residing in northern Iraq with expertise designing urban traffic systems for cities in emerging countries.

- *Promoting long-term relationships.* In some cases TOKTEN merely provides a platform for members of the diaspora to leverage outside funding for volunteer work they are eager to undertake. For instance, one TOKTEN Mali volunteer coupled his TOKTEN work in Mali with research funded by a US university and later used the consultancy to establish a joint research project between that university and the University of Bamako. Similarly, a TOKTEN volunteer in Lebanon collaborated over the course of two years on a joint project between a US-based medical research institution and the Lebanese government to develop chemotherapy treatment standards for Lebanon. Clearly, these arrangements — whereby volunteer service leads to more substantive institutional cooperation — have the greatest long-term development potential but are limited by their dependence on the efforts of extraordinary individuals. Longer volunteer missions may be a key determinant of whether a volunteer engages in a broader undertaking. An evaluation of Rwanda's TOKTEN program finds that one of the greatest constraints on the program's effectiveness is the relatively short term of assignments, which averaged less than two months.[52]

5. The International Organization for Migration's Migration for Development in Africa Program

In addition to TOKTEN, another initiative that aims to facilitate short-term volunteer work among highly educated diasporas is the International Organization for Migration's (IOM's) Migration for Development in Africa (MIDA) in the Great Lakes region of Africa. (MIDA Great Lakes is one of several MIDA programs launched by IOM starting in 2001.[53]) It is much smaller and more narrowly targeted than TOKTEN, but it is similarly structured.[54]

The MIDA Great Lakes project was launched by IOM's Brussels office in 2001 with support from the Belgian Federal Ministry of Foreign Affairs, International Trade, and Development Cooperation.[55] A formal evaluation of the program was requested by the 2007 Global Forum on Migration and Development, hosted by the Belgian government. This discussion draws the formal evaluation's outcomes.

The project sought to involve the Rwandan, Burundian, and Congolese (from the Democratic Republic of the Congo, DRC) diasporas in three categories of transfers that the project's designers

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[52] Touray, *Final Evaluation of the Support Project to the Implementation of the Rwanda TOKTEN Volunteer Program*.
[53] Migration for Development in Africa (MIDA) grew out of the International Organization for Migration's (IOM's) Return of Qualified African Nationals (RQAN) initiative in the 1980s, which aimed to assist African expatriates return permanently to their countries of origin. On the origins of the MIDA programs, see IOM, Office of the Inspector General, *Evaluation of the Migration for Development in Africa Initiative as an Illustration of IOM's Approach to Making Migration Work for Development*, Final Report, Geneva, August 2007. Other MIDA projects are generally considered to have been failures. See for example, IOM, Office of the Inspector General, *Evaluation of the MIDA Italy Project* (Final report, Geneva, May 2005).
[54] Another IOM program based upon a similar model and with similar results is the Temporary Return of Qualified African Nationals to Sierra Leone program. See Robyn Joanne Mello, *Reaping What's Been Sown: Exploring Diaspora-Driven Development for Sierra Leone*, thesis submitted to the faculty of the Univ. of Delaware in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of bachelor of arts (honors) in sociology with distinction, spring 2009, http://dspace.udel.edu:8080/dspace/bitstream/19716/4237/3/Mello,%20Robyn_2009_Thesis.pdf.
[55] This discussion of the MIDA project draws on Société d'Études et d'Évaluation sarl., *Evaluation du Programme MIDA Grands Lacs, Phase III*, Final Report to IOM, Luxembourg, August 2008.

considered essential for development in the Great Lakes region of Central Africa: (1) physical transfers via temporary returns to the country of origin to engage in volunteer work, (2) skill transfers through long-distance volunteering, and (3) financial transfers, namely in the form of investment. The volunteers focused on three sectors: higher education, health, and rural development. Under the MIDA Great Lakes program, IOM's Brussels office developed and maintained a database of skilled Rwandans, Burundians, and Congolese residing abroad. This database eventually grew to include over 1,000 individuals. Local IOM offices would advertise the program and collect volunteer requests. A local advisory committee (whose composition varied in each of the three countries) would then review the requests and prioritize needs. IOM Brussels would then prescreen candidates and provide between two and five options to the requesting agency.

The project's third phase — between 2005 and 2006 — supported 160 volunteer missions: 49 in the DRC, 15 in Burundi, and 14 in Rwanda. Among all volunteers in the three countries, over two-thirds (67 percent) worked in universities and higher education, 14 percent worked in ministries and public sector agencies, 10 percent in NGOs, 9 percent in hospitals, and the remaining 3 percent in the private sector. Project funds supported travel and a small stipend for volunteers. The entire process — from the initial volunteer request to the arrival of the expert — typically took about six months, which the evaluation criticizes as unnecessarily protracted. The missions varied in length from 4 to 190 days; the average mission was 55 days long. A 2008 independent evaluation of the program estimates that each placement cost about €10,321 (about $15,000) compared to about €15,000 (about $22,000) per volunteer for TOKTEN-Rwanda.[56] The final evaluation of the first phase of the TOKTEN-Rwanda project (for the funding period December 2005 to December 2007) does not include direct estimates of program costs per volunteer.[57] But data available in the report suggest that 52 missions were conducted over the course of three years with a total available budget of $592,000 of which $557,000 was spent. This yields an estimated cost per TOKTEN volunteer of $10,711 (about €7,320) — half the estimate cited in the MIDA Great Lakes evaluation. Differences between the two programs in the average time spent volunteering as well as currency fluctuations account for some of the difference. On balance, MIDA's claim of cost savings is probably overstated and the cost difference between the two programs is likely minimal.

Overall, the 2008 independent evaluation of the MIDA Great Lakes program pointed to disappointing results: the virtual skill and financial transfer components of the project evoked little interest from the diasporas, and capacity to support the virtual volunteers was extremely limited. For instance, attempts to launch several distance courses taught by instructors from the diaspora suffered from limited access to computer technologies and patchy Internet access in the Great Lakes region. Similarly, plans by one diaspora physician to provide online anesthesiology instruction to medical students and professionals at the University of Lubumbashi (DRC) were hampered by insufficient medical facilities and supplies. The evaluation of the skilled-diaspora volunteer component of the project was more positive, though it was suggested that the program increase volunteer terms and improve coordination with development priorities.

Another MIDA program — MIDA in the Horn of Africa — aimed to recruit members of the Somali diaspora living in Finland for medical and public health volunteer missions in Somaliland and

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[56] Euro-dollar conversions are calculated at average daily interbank exchange rates in 2008, the year of the evaluation: about €1.47 per dollar and $0.68 dollars per euro.
[57] Touray, *Final Evaluation of the Support Project to the Implementation of the Rwanda TOKTEN Volunteer Program*.

Puntland.[58] With support from the Finnish Foreign Ministry; the Association of Somali Healthcare Professionals in Nordic Countries; and IOM offices in Helsinki, Hargeisa, and Bossaso, the program placed 22 volunteer missions ranging from 3.5 weeks to 3 months between August 2008 and December 2009. IOM estimates that about 500 doctors, hospital nurses, laboratory technicians, nursing and medical students, and about 1,000 patients in Somaliland and Puntland benefited from the volunteers.

6. The Advisory Council of the Institute for Mexicans Abroad

Some developing countries have mobilized diasporas to serve on volunteer public policy advisory councils.[59] In a groundbreaking study on the institutions developing countries have established to maintain ties with their diasporas, Dovelyn Agunias of MPI recently identified a number of such advisory bodies, the most notable of which is the Advisory Council of the Institute for Mexicans Abroad — CCIME by its Spanish acronym.[60] The council is composed of members of the Mexican diaspora elected to represent various consular jurisdictions and to provide public policy advice on issues of concern both in Mexico and across the diaspora.

7. USAID Efforts to Mobilize Diaspora Volunteers for Post-Conflict Relief and Recovery

Admittedly, not all diaspora volunteer programs are successes. Over the past decade USAID has undertaken two extremely small projects to encourage diaspora volunteers in their countries of origin. Both projects described here were framed in terms of promoting diaspora volunteers as a means to building relief-and-recovery capacity in the country of origin. The limited publicly available information on the two programs suggests that neither was particularly successful in promoting diaspora volunteers.

Starting in 2001, the nonprofit development group America's Development Foundation (ADF) partnered with USAID to launch the Community Revitalization through Democratic Action (CRDA) Program in the Vojvodina region of eastern Serbia. The program leveraged over $50 million in public and private resources over six years to promote agriculture development projects, small- and medium-size enterprise creation, trade promotion and market access, tourism development, economic infrastructure expansion, and a variety of other targeted interventions.[61] As part of the program, ADF attempted to recruit skilled volunteers from the Serbian diaspora residing in the United States. In 2005 ADF advertised volunteer opportunities via a variety of ethnic media — including newspapers and Serbian-language television — and at community centers. Volunteer opportunities were flexible both in terms of placement and duration, and ADF expressed willingness to adapt the mission to the particular needs of the individual volunteer. But after several months of advertising, only two diaspora volunteers had

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[58] This paragraph draws on Thomas Lothar Weiss, ed., *Migration for Development in the Horn of Africa: Health Expertise from the Somali Diaspora in Finland* (Helsinki: IOM, Regional Office for the Nordic and Baltic States, 2009). We are also indebted to Frantz Celestin of the IOM Office for North America and the Caribbean for bringing this initiative to our attention.

[59] We are grateful to José Borjón of the Embassy of Mexico in Washington, DC, for this point. See José V. Borjón, "Volunteering in the Diaspora: The Case of Mexico," essay provided to MPI, March 2010.

[60] Dovelyn Agunias, ed., *Closing the Distance: How Governments Strengthen Ties with Their Diasporas* (Washington, DC: MPI, 2009).

[61] ADF (America's Development Foundation), *Community Revitalization through Democratic Action Economy Program*, Final report to USAID under agreement 169-A-00-01-00124-00, October 2007, www.adfusa.org/content/document/detail/812/.

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been identified, and the initiative was terminated.[62] ADF officials suspect that the relative lack of interest among the Serbian diaspora relates to an inability to sacrifice several months of paid work in the United States to undertake volunteer work in Serbia.

USAID undertook a second project to work with diaspora volunteers in 2006 and 2007. The Diaspora Skills Transfer Program for South Sudan, which was implemented by the Academy for Educational Development (AED), was more narrowly targeted at mobilizing diaspora expertise to support reconstruction efforts in South Sudan following the Comprehensive Peace Agreement signed in 2005. The program aimed to select up to 150 highly skilled members of the South Sudanese diaspora to provide technical support for reconstruction and redevelopment efforts at the Southern Sudanese ministries of education and health.[63] The program was open to South Sudanese expatriates residing around the world; between February 2006 and the program's termination in early 2007, 88 volunteers were sent to 25 locations in Southern Sudan for one- to eight-month assignments.[64] The coordinating agency — in this case AED — undertook the tasks of identifying priority volunteer opportunities, compiling a database of potential volunteers, and selecting and placing volunteers.[65]

B. *Diaspora Youth Volunteer Programs*

Volunteer programs designed to attract diaspora youth are a more recent phenomenon and the policy experience is much thinner. Most of these volunteer programs are managed my community organizations based in the country of origin. Three experiences are described below.

1. Indicorps: Targeting Diaspora Youth Volunteers for Community-based Development Work

Established in 2002 by US-born siblings Anand, Sonal, and Roopal Shah, Indicorps is a nonprofit organization based in Ahmedabad, India, that encourages diaspora Indians to actively participate in India's development.[66] It places youth from the Indian diaspora with grassroots community organizations across India, generally for one-year fellowships (though some fellows decide to extend their term by an additional year and others have more recently held shorter fellowships over the summer). The fellowships are strongly rooted in traditional Gandhian precepts — particularly in the ideas that the fellow should strive to "be the change that you want to see in the world" and that service is a two-way process of mutual learning. It is expected that fellows will both culturally enrich and learn from their host communities, as well as gain invaluable personal experience, strengthen their ties with India, and deepen their sense of civic responsibility both at

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[62] This description of the Serbian diaspora volunteer program is taken from an MPI interview via telephone with Marina Cukic, office manager, ADF, February 1, 2010.

[63] This summary is based on information available on the Academy for Educational Development's (AED's) Web site at http://cit.aed.org/forecast_sudan_faq.htm. To our knowledge, no formal evaluation of the program was undertaken.

[64] AED (Academy for Educational Development), "Program Volunteer Alumni," http://cit.aed.org/forecast_sudan_program%20alumni.htm.

[65] To the author's knowledge, no final evaluation of the project was conducted. No response was received from several attempts to contact AED staff.

[66] This description on Indicorp's guiding philosophy, work, and experience is drawn from Indicorp's Web site, www.indicorps.org, as well as an MPI interview with Roopal Shah, executive director of Indicorps in Washington, DC, on October 30, 2009; Indicorps, *Perspectives: Indicorp's 2008—2009 Reflections on Change*, program brochure provided to the authors; and MPI interviews with several former Indicorps volunteers, including Neil Jain, Aazamina Rangwala, Priya Jindal, Sheela Prasad, Sahil Chaudry, Ashish Gupta, Chetan Shenoy, and Pulkit Agrawal.

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home and within the global Indian diaspora.[67] The program aims to "engage the most talented young Indians from around the world on the frontlines of India's most pressing challenges" and "nurture a new brand of socially conscious leaders with the character, knowledge, commitment, and vision to transform India and the world."[68]

Indicorps is a small program, with only 26 fellows in 2009—10 (up from four in the program's first year). The intensive application process — involving the submission of a résumé, several essays, and letters of recommendation, as well as an interview — results in an applicant pool that is highly motivated. Most of the fellows have been recent college graduates (the oldest thus far was 31), and although the majority of them have hailed from the United States, some were first-, second-, and higher-generation migrants whose ancestors had settled in Australia, Canada, Ghana, Guyana, Hong Kong, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, South Africa, the United Arab Emirates, the United Kingdom, and the Virgin Islands.[69] (More recently Indicorps has begun accepting a limited number of applications from urban youth within India who wish to volunteer in India's rural regions.) Over half (75 of 121) were female, and all had at least a university-level education.[70] Some had traveled to India frequently and were familiar with the country, while others were the first of their families to return to India in several generations. To facilitate travel to India, volunteers are normally required to have nonresident Indian cards, which serve as multientry visas and grant work authorization.

Among the 121 Indicorps fellows placed between 2002 and early 2010, most did their service in rural areas. Some appeared to be interested in careers in international development and likely viewed their volunteer work as similar to an internship; others likely viewed it as an escape from routine life in the United States (for instance, several volunteers left jobs in finance or consulting to spend time volunteering). Still others had more personal motivations (for instance, one volunteer was inspired to work with the blind in India because of his own Indian-born grandfather's blindness).

Indicorps fellows are expected to live simply. Fellows pay for their own airfare and health insurance, and the partner organizations with which the fellows work provide housing. Indicorps itself runs a month-long training and orientation session upon fellows' arrival in India, including language training when necessary. Fellows receive a small monthly stipend of about 2,000 rupees (about $43). Indicorps' annual budget of about $75,000 is drawn from individual donations; the group relies on volunteers for some strategic planning work. During their volunteer placements Indicorps fellows abstain from alcohol and tobacco and are prohibited from engaging in intimate personal relationships with members of the communities they serve. In interviews, current fellows and former fellows said that they largely adhered to these rules; however, many recognize that this is likely a function of the small size of the program, the intense application and orientation processes, and a system of mutual accountability whereby fellows are in regular contact with their peers as well as former volunteers.

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[67] Indicorps publications cite the following quote, which is attributed to Australian Aboriginal activist Lila Watson, to describe their idea of service work: "If you have come here to help me, you are wasting your time. But if you have come because your liberation is bound up with mine, then let us work together."

[68] Indicorps, *Perspectives: Indicorp's 2008—2009 Reflections on Change*.

[69] The 1.5 generation was born in the country of origin but immigrated before age 12 and was accordingly raised and had formative life experiences in the destination country. The second generation was born in the destination country to one or more foreign-born parent. See Ruben Rumbaut and Alejandro Portes, *Ethnicities: Children of Immigrants in America* (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 2001).

[70] These data are derived from MPI analysis of fellow profiles available on the Indicorps Web site (www.indicorps.org/ourfellows.php).

Fellows typically work on specific, localized projects — for instance, helping orphans in rural Gujarat, forming an Ultimate Frisbee league for urban children in Ahmedabad, or developing literacy curricula for the children of migrant workers in Maharashtra. These small projects likely have a large impact in the host communities, but are not necessarily connected to broader development objectives. Other Indicorps assignments are more closely aligned with the program's mission of applying the brightest young minds from the diaspora to India's pressing development challenges. For instance, one fellow helped the city of Hyderabad improve the accessibility of its metropolitan bus system. Thanks to Indicorps' partnership with the Grassroots Development Laboratory (GDL) based in Bagar, Rajasthan — a small village in northern India — other fellows innovate small-scale demonstration projects for solutions to problems such as potable water access, sewage and sanitation, and enterprise development that, if successful, could be more broadly replicated across India (see Box 1).[71]

Box 1. Indicorps' Partnership with the Grassroots Development Laboratory in Bagar, Rajasthan

Indicorps aims to create opportunities for socially aware diaspora youth to serve India by using their skills, time, and resources to advance grassroots projects and sustainable strategies for change in India. The partnership between Indicorps and GDL in Bagar, Rajasthan, is a powerful example of how the energies of diaspora youth can be mobilized to address development challenges.

GDL is a project of the Piramal Foundation — the philanthropic initiative of the Piramal family, a prominent Indian industrialist family — and focuses on implementing small-scale social enterprises to address the development challenges of rural India. It is located in the village of Bagar, Rajasthan (about 10,000 residents), which faces many developmental challenges including access to basic health care, potable water, solid waste management, and employment.

The partnership operates with a team of Indicorps fellows, other international volunteers, interns, and local staff. GDL volunteers identify rural development needs and then develop market-based, sustainable solutions. GDL teams must thoroughly research project proposals and write detailed plans with specific goals, progress benchmarks, and budgets.

Indicorps fellows have been instrumental in launching three social enterprises in recent years (two of which have since evolved into independent companies), including the following:
- A *vocational training institute* that provides the industry-focused computer literacy skills demanded by employers yet not included in basic education curricula
- A rural *business process outsourcing* (BPO) company, Source for Change, that provides employment for rural women
- A *purified water distribution* business, Sarvajal ("water for all"), which has developed a model to reduce barriers to entry in the drinking water distribution business

Further information about GDL, Source for Change, and Sarvajal can be found at www.piramal.org.in, www.sourceforchange.in, and www.sarvajal.com, respectively.

Sources: Grassroots Development Laboratory (www.piramal.org.in) and Migration Policy Institute (MPI) interview with Ashish Gupta, Indicorps fellow 2006—07, via telephone, March 9, 2010.

Indicorps has not undertaken any evaluation of its fellows' impact on the communities where they serve, but anecdotal evidence gleaned from interviews with former volunteers suggests that the program is a formative experience in the lives of most fellows. In some respects, the program

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[71] Grassroots Development Laboratory (GDL) is the initiative of the Piramal Foundation, a philanthropic initiative of the Piramal family, a prominent Indian industrialist family.

is designed to have a long-term rather than an immediate effect on development in India. Although it is still too early to draw definitive conclusions about Indicorps' long-term impact, some early evidence suggests that former Indicorps volunteers continue to be engaged with India. One example is Sheela Prasad, who discovered a passion for education during an Indicorps fellowship. After working with Teach for America, she eventually returned to India to work for Teach for India, the group's Indian equivalent.[72] Other former Indicorps volunteers recently launched a series of "Engage in Change" events in the United States to promote a culture of grassroots activism and community engagement within the Indian American community.

2. The Armenian Volunteer Corps and Birthright Armenia

The Yerevan-based Armenian Volunteer Corps (AVC) was established in 2000 to promote volunteering in Armenia by the diaspora.[73] AVC grew out of the experience of Rev. Fr. Hovnan Demerjian (formerly Jason Demerjian), who first arrived in Armenia as a Peace Corps volunteer in 1996. Initially the Peace Corps had declined to place Demerjian in Armenia, upholding its policy of not placing diaspora volunteers in their countries of origin, but in this case the group responded to lobbying on Demerjian's behalf and eventually sent him to Armenia, where he developed the idea of creating a more accessible way for diaspora Armenians to volunteer in their homeland. AVC was launched with initial funding from the Fund for Armenian Relief, an Armenian American charity established in the aftermath of the devastating earthquake of 1988.

Unlike most Indicorps volunteers, who are typically second-generation (in some instances first-generation) immigrants and have active roots in India, most AVC volunteers have much more distant roots in Armenia, dating to the early twentieth century. Moreover, most diaspora Armenians in the West trace their roots to historic Western Armenia rather than the modern Armenian state directly to its east. (Historic Western Armenia was located in the modern states of Turkey, Syria, Iraq, and Iran.) As a result, few diaspora Armenians are willing to undertake volunteer work in Armenia outside the framework of an organized program.

As of December 2009, the AVC had helped about 300 volunteers work in about 150 community organizations throughout Armenia. AVC is more broadly focused than Indicorps, accepting applicants aged 21 years or older (most of the volunteers are in their 20s and 30s) for service projects (in schools, nonprofit groups, churches, and the private sector) that range from one month to one year. A primary focus is providing English-language instructors to rural Armenian schools. AVC does not provide stipends, but does provide housing for placements outside of Yerevan. There is no language requirement (although Eastern Armenian language courses are encouraged) and the program is not officially limited to individuals of Armenian ancestry, although almost all participants have been from the Armenian diaspora.

Although AVC's program is not explicitly targeted to the Armenian diaspora, its partnership with Birthright Armenia offers special services and support to diaspora Armenians who volunteer with the program. Birthright Armenia is a nonprofit group that promotes ties between diaspora youth and Armenia. It offers a limited number of fellowships for diaspora youth who choose to volunteer or intern in Armenia. Participants must be high school graduates between the ages of 20 and 32, must be of Armenian heritage (defined as having at least one Armenian-born grandparent), and cannot previously have participated in any Birthright Armenia programs.

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[72] On Teach for America, see www.teachforamerica.org. On Teach for India, see www.teachforindia.org.
[73] The information presented here is drawn from the Web site of the Armenian Volunteer Corps (AVC), www.armeniavolunteer.org and from MPI interviews via telephone with Sharistan Melkonian, executive director of AVC, on January 26, 2010; with Rev. Fr. Hovnan Demerjian (formerly Jason Demerjian), cofounder of AVC, on February 26, 2010; and with Thomas J. Samuelian, cofounder of AVC, on March 2, 2010.

First-generation immigrants are not eligible for participation, although the 1.5 generation (i.e., former Armenian citizens who emigrated before age 12) may participate. Birthright Armenia participants must commit to a minimum eight-week stay in Armenia — of which at least four weeks must be for volunteer work.

Through the partnership, AVC places volunteers while Birthright Armenia provides Armenian language courses and arranges for lodging with an Armenian family. Participants must commit to at least 30 hours of volunteer work per week and participate in community meetings. As of late 2009, volunteers with Birthright Armenia came overwhelmingly from the United States (68 percent), and to a lesser extent from Canada (12 percent), Europe (11 percent), the Middle East (5 percent), South America (3 percent), and Australia (1 percent).[74] They served mainly in nonprofit community groups (44 percent), but also in government agencies (26 percent), the private sector (16 percent), and international organizations (14 percent).[75]

Birthright Armenia asks participants who have completed the program to contemplate their future engagement with the country. According to the program's Web site, "The experience in Armenia is meant to serve as a basis for life-long commitment to Armenian affairs. In that context, each participant must submit a 1—2 page proposal on how he/she intends to stay continually involved in Armenia affairs, whether in Armenia or in the Diaspora. The proposal must be a realistic, sustainable, and achievable roadmap for the volunteer's post-experience phase."[76] There is little concrete evidence that these commitments translate into measurable outcomes, and the program's lifespan and scale is likely too small for meaningful inquiry into these concerns.

3. Ayala Foundation's Filipino American Youth Leadership Program

Between 2004 and 2006 the Ayala Foundation, one of the Philippines' largest philanthropic organizations, operated a youth volunteer program for second- and third-generation Filipino American youth between the ages of 18 and 25.[77] The Chevron Corporation and the corporate social responsibility branch of the Luzon Brokerage Corporation, a Filipino-owned and California-based shipping conglomerate, supported the initiative. The program aimed to help outstanding Filipino American youth rediscover their roots, better understand the social challenges facing the Philippines, and "become global advocates of the Philippines in the United States."[78]

Over its three-year term, the program placed 21 Filipino American youth with grassroots nonprofit organizations in the Philippines for six to eight weeks. The volunteers worked in areas such as health care, livelihood (economic subsistence) counseling, and education, as well as in the community organization of indigenous peoples. Volunteers were expected to cover some of the costs of the program, including airfare and transportation, although need-based scholarships (both full and partial) were available.

The Ayala Foundation eventually terminated the program because it found the process of identifying volunteer opportunities, selecting and matching volunteers, and monitoring the volunteer program too time intensive (and the impact not sufficiently significant). But according

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[74] Birthright Armenia, "Participant Statistics," www.birthrightarmenia.org/pages.php?al=statistics.
[75] Ibid.
[76] Birthright Armenia, "How it All Works: The Experience," www.birthrightarmenia.org/pages.php?al=how_works.
[77] The information presented here is based on a review of Ayala Foundation annual reports between 2004 and 2006 (www.af-usa.org/annual_reports.asp) and MPI interviews with Vicky Garchitorena, president, Ayala Foundation USA.
[78] Ayala Foundation USA, *Annual Report 2005* (Redwood City, CA: Ayala Foundation USA, 2005), www.af-usa.org/annual_reports.asp.

to the Ayala Foundation president, Vicky Garchitorena, Filipino American families remain eager for opportunities for diaspora youth to volunteer in the Philippines, and many are willing to fund travel and lodging independently. The Philippines has a long history of volunteer work — particularly through religious institutions such as the Jesuit Volunteer Corps and the University of the Philippines' Pahinguhod Volunteer Program — and the foundation is exploring avenues to link members of the diaspora with these existing volunteer programs.[79]

C. *Multipurpose Diaspora Volunteer Programs*

In at least one instance that we are aware of, a mainstream international volunteering and development organization — Voluntary Service Overseas (VSO) — has partnered with a national aid agency to focus on recruiting diaspora volunteers through a wide variety of volunteer programs that target both highly skilled and youth volunteers. The experience is described below.

1. DFID's Diaspora Volunteering Program

In recent years, VSO and DFID have pioneered a program that aims to involve diasporas in community-based volunteer work in their ancestral countries. VSO, an international nongovernmental organization (NGO), was established in 1958 in the United Kingdom to promote independent volunteering; it has since expanded to include branches in Canada, the Netherlands, the Philippines, and Kenya. As it has expanded abroad, VSO's mission has increasingly focused on improving living standards and reducing poverty through volunteer work in the developing world.

VSO volunteers have diverse origins; however, research conducted in 2004—05 for VSO-UK found that participation by immigrant and ethnic minority communities in VSO programs was low despite significant interest from these populations in volunteer work.[80] Moreover, the study found that immigrants and ethnic minorities felt excluded from traditional volunteer opportunities and wanted to have their own volunteer programs rather than be integrated in mainstream programs. They also tended to have development priorities that differed from those of mainstream development organizations, based on their own personal experiences and interaction with friends and family members abroad.[81]

VSO took the idea of a diaspora-specific volunteer program to DFID, and in 2006 the UK government's White Paper for DFID proposed to "expand opportunities for . . . diaspora communities to volunteer in developing countries."[82] This commitment was reaffirmed in 2009.[83] DFID's commitment to diaspora volunteering was framed in terms of promoting awareness of international development concerns in the United Kingdom. Accordingly, VSO-UK's diaspora

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[79] More information on the University of the Philippines' Pahinguhod Volunteer Program is available at http://pahinungod.org/aboutus.htm.

[80] Ethnicity in the United Kingdom is a multifaceted concept that relates to country of birth, nationality, language spoken at home, parent's country of birth in conjunction with country of birth, skin color, national/geographic origin, racial group, and religion. For a variety of historical and sociological reasons, ethnic minority communities are traditionally conceived of as including non-European immigrants and their descendants. See UK Office of National Statistics, *Ethnic Group Statistics: A Guide for the Collection and Classification of Ethnicity Data* (Newport: HM Statistics Office, 2003), www.ons.gov.uk/about-statistics/measuring-equality/ethnic-group-statistics/index.html.

[81] Dee Jethwa, *International Volunteering and the Asian Community (UK): Views, Attitudes, Barriers, Needs*, final report to Voluntary Service Overseas (VSO) from the Asian Foundation for Philanthropy (AFP), March 2006.

[82] DFID (Department for International Development), *Eliminating World Poverty: Making Governance Work for the Poor* (London: DFID White Paper, July 2006).

[83] DFID, *Eliminating World Poverty: Building our Common Future* (London: DFID White Paper, July 2009).

program was launched with multiple objectives: to encourage volunteering among ethnic minority communities in the United Kingdom while at the same time raising the awareness of international development among all members of the UK populace. VSO also recognized the risks inherent in skilled migration such as perceived effects of the brain drain and the benefits that diaspora volunteers potentially bring with them in terms of language skills and cultural competencies.[84] The diaspora volunteer program is supported by a three-year £3 million (about $5.6 million) grant from DFID for the period 2008 to 2011. It has also received a five-year grant of about £485,000 (about $730,000) from the UK's national lottery fund and recently received support from the European Commission (EC) to support Dutch efforts on diaspora volunteering. (The UK government is currently implementing deep budget cuts across all government agencies in response to deteriorating global financial conditions and it is not clear if the program will survive the austerity measures.)

For the purpose of the program, diasporas are broadly defined to include anyone who self-identifies as such, including those with current connections to or distant origins in a country other than the United Kingdom as well as those with emotional, family, or financial links with a country or continent of origin.[85] This expansive definition includes first- and second-generation immigrants, the spouses of immigrants, or anyone with substantive personal links to a developing country; the term is not considered to be synonymous with race or ethnicity.

Through the Diaspora Volunteering Program, VSO-UK provides support to community-based diaspora organizations in five main areas:

- Assisting community-based diaspora organizations to conduct research on the needs of partner community organizations in their focus country, including research visits and the implementation of pilot volunteer programs
- Developing and implementing volunteer management systems — including monitoring and evaluation of partners; placement; volunteer recruitment and assessment; and volunteer orientation and training
- Training and supporting fund raisers to ensure that the programs are sustainable
- Providing in-country support from DFID and VSO offices
- Raising the awareness of international development issues in the United Kingdom

Box 2 describes in detail the process through which community-based diaspora organizations partner with VSO. VSO-UK established several criteria to ensure the good governance and accountability of community-based diaspora organizations. Among other requirements, these include having clear links with a diaspora from Africa, Asia, Latin America, or any non—European Union (non-EU) developing country outside these regions; having a clear focus on addressing disadvantage or poverty; being a registered charity or nonprofit group in the United Kingdom; having a functioning board of directors or other governing structure that meets regularly; and producing annual financial reports.[86] These requirements reflect many of the common challenges that governments face in working with community organizations. However, as of March 2010, VSO-UK had identified 20 partner diaspora organizations working in Bangladesh, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Ethiopia, Ghana, Guyana, India, Malawi, Nepal, Nigeria, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, Sri

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[84] VSO (Voluntary Service Overseas), *The DfID Diaspora Volunteering Programme in Partnership with VSO* (London: VSO, 2008), www.vso.org.uk/volunteer/diaspora-volunteering.
[85] Ibid.
[86] VSO-UK, "Diaspora Volunteering Program: Partnership Criteria," www.vso.org.uk/images/diaspora-volunteering-partnership-criteria_tcm79-23688.pdf.

Lanka, Tanzania, and Zimbabwe[87] and had placed 329 volunteers. The program aims to place a total of 600 volunteers through its partner organizations by the end of the DFID grant period in 2011.[88]

Box 2. VSO-UK Support of Community-Based Diaspora Organizations

Partnerships between VSO-UK and community-based diaspora organizations to coordinate diaspora volunteers evolve following five steps:

1. A diaspora organization expresses interest in partnering with VSO.
2. VSO assesses the diaspora organization's eligibility and capacity to engage in the program.
3. A partnership agreement is signed.
4. VSO works to help develop the partner diaspora organization's skills and knowledge in areas such as volunteer programs, volunteer management, organizational development, strategic planning, HR policies and practice, work management skills, governance, and UK development awareness.
5. The partner diaspora organization has the opportunity to apply for grants for research, piloting, and/or implementation of volunteer programs and development awareness activities:
   a. *Research grants*. Grants to perform overseas needs analysis, partnership and placement development, risk assessment, and UK research, for example, to assess the supply of volunteers. Such grants are awarded after a capacity-building baseline has been attained.
   b. *Pilot grants*. Grants that give organizations the opportunity to pilot programs with a small number of volunteers and to then review the work and capacity-building plans before implementation.
   c. *Implementation grants*. Grants that allow partners to run full volunteer programs, maintain clear program area plans, tighten monitoring and evaluation systems, and formulate strategies for fund-raising and expansion.
   d. *Development awareness grants.* Diaspora organizations and returned volunteers undertake activities in the United Kingdom to raise general awareness of international development issues, known as "development awareness." (VSO-UK describes development awareness as activities undertaken in the United Kingdom that "increase people's understanding of global issues and encourage them to take action.")

Note: The above description is an overview of the partnership process from beginning to end. If an organization is already a partner or has advanced organizational skills, it may enter the process at a later stage.
Source: VSO-UK 2008.

VSO-UK's Diaspora Volunteering Program is a relatively recent innovation, so drawing definitive conclusions about its impact would be premature. However, a close examination of one VSO-UK partner, the Asian Foundation for Philanthropy (AFP), reveals some promising early results. Formally established in 2005, AFP grew out of community efforts in 2001 to mobilize humanitarian aid from the Indian diaspora in the United Kingdom following devastating earthquakes in Gujarat. AFP has several programs that involve the South Asian diaspora in the United Kingdom, including its volunteer initiative, the "Paropkaar" Program.[89]

When it became a VSO partner, AFP began an exhaustive review of potential partner organizations in the four places where most of UK's Indian diaspora originate: Delhi and the

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[87] MPI communication with Matt Lesslar, deputy program manager, Development Awareness Team, Communications Division, DFID, March 4, 2010.
[88] For a full list of VSO-UK partner organizations, see www.vso.org.uk/volunteer/diaspora-volunteering/diaspora-volunteering-alliance.asp.
[89] For more information on AFP's work, visit www.affp.org.uk.

states of Gujarat, Karnataka, and Uttar Pradesh.[90] The research — which took place over the course of about five months and was conducted by AFP's director, Bala Thakrar, and a lecturer from the Delhi School of Economics — ultimately identified 12 partner community organizations in India that focus on education, young child and maternal health, disabled persons, and livelihood strategies (employment and entrepreneurship). AFP works with the partner organizations to identify precisely where volunteers could be used and continues to monitor the partner organizations once volunteer placements have begun.

Once volunteer opportunities had been identified, AFP accepts applications from potential volunteers. Volunteers typically learn of AFP's work via word of mouth. The group has discovered that returned volunteers are among the program's most effective recruiters. About 25 volunteers are selected each year, and each must participate in predeparture orientation. The orientation is designed to prepare volunteers for the inevitable cultural adjustment that occurs upon arrival in India. Although diaspora volunteers are commonly perceived to have deeper familiarity with the culture and language of the developing countries in which they volunteer, AFP's experience suggests that there are gaps in their knowledge. For instance, AFP's orientation warns volunteers about living conditions and linguistic differences (many volunteers speak Hindi or other regional languages but may be unfamiliar with local dialects). In addition, AFP has learned that it is essential to work with the families of volunteers — particularly when the volunteers are second- or higher-generation immigrants. Diaspora volunteers' parents may have left the country of origin under traumatic circumstances or may harbor negative stereotypes; such conditions can be a significant impediment to mission completion.

The 70 volunteers that AFP placed over the course of its first three years brought a wide range of experience to their volunteer work. Their ages ranged from 18 to 73, but on average they were in their early 30s. Most had university-level educations, although AFP's director recognizes the value of life experience and is adamant about selecting volunteers from across the socioeconomic spectrum, including those without formal language skills or education. She cites the example of one middle-aged female volunteer without a postsecondary education but who had extensive experience setting up small corner stores. This particular volunteer's mission focused on working with underprivileged women to establish their own corner stores.[91] With support from VSO, AFP is able to assist volunteers in paying for international flights, training, and in situ support, but volunteers are also expected to contribute financially toward the mission.

Upon their return to the United Kingdom, Paropkaar volunteers are encouraged to become involved with the foundation's Jagruti — or development awareness — program. Through seminars, conferences, exhibitions, community talks, and business networking events, the Jagruti program aims to raise awareness in the United Kingdom and among ethnic minority communities of the MDGs, development issues in India and South Asia, and the UK's international development policy. Jagruti events are designed to be accessible to a nontechnical audience. More recently, AFP and DFID have developed two specific projects within the Jagruti program: the Sudarshan project and the Naitika project. Translated as "leading by example," the Sudarshan project promotes social responsibility among Asian-owned small and medium-size businesses, while the Naitika ("ethical") project promotes development awareness among ethnic minority youth groups in the United Kingdom, particularly with respect to clothing and fashion. All of VSO-UK's partners are

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[90] This description of AFP's work was compiled from a review of AFP's Web site and annual reviews (www.affp.org.uk/resources?location=All&type=22&topic=all) and an MPI interview via telephone with Bala Thakrar, founder and director, AFP, October 7, 2009.
[91] For a review of diaspora entrepreneurship see, Hiroyuki Tanaka and Kathleen Newland, *Mobilizing Diaspora Entrepreneurship for Development*, MPI report to USAID, February 2010.

encouraged to facilitate development awareness programs among returned volunteers. These programs appear to be particularly effective at working with diasporas to raise consciousness about international development concerns in the developed world through person-to-person interaction.

AFP's Paropkaar program is the flagship initiative within VSO's diaspora volunteer program. Other partner organizations are diverse, ranging from small community groups with narrow objectives to larger associations that grew out of student movements or promote human rights. Compared with AFP, volunteer work appears to be less central to the missions of these larger groups, which tend to focus on broader development challenges.

D. "De Facto" Diaspora Volunteer Programs

Many programs not aimed at diasporas still support (and occasionally rely heavily on) first-, second- and higher-generation immigrants to volunteer in their ancestral countries. Data on diaspora participation in these general volunteer programs are spotty, since diaspora involvement is rarely advertised and data on the origins of volunteers is almost never collected. As a result, the only available evidence comes from individual examples the authors were able to locate and the impressions of program managers. With these caveats in mind, we highlight several cases of diasporas volunteering through broadly focused youth, professional, and faith-based volunteer programs.

In some cases, diasporas may choose to volunteer through programs that are not diaspora based because they are unaware of diaspora-specific programs; because no diaspora-specific programs exist; or because they are strongly anchored in alternative identities including generational, professional, religious, regional, or corporate identities.

- *Youth.* The American India Foundation's (AIF's) William J. Clinton Fellowship for Service in India is designed to facilitate ten months of grassroots volunteer work in India for young Americans. The program aims to "serve as an exchange of technical skills and intellectual resources which aims to build the capacity of Indian NGOs while developing American leaders with an understanding of India." AIF provides training and technical support to fellows; ongoing supervision; and a stipend to cover housing, food, travel, transportation, and supplemental health insurance. In 2008-09, as many as 12 of the 23 fellows were of South Asian origin despite the fact that the program does not specifically target diaspora youth.[92]

- *Professionals.* The Vermont-Oxford Network is a professional association of neonatal medical specialists.[93] Launched in 2009, the Network's Black Lion Project sends professional volunteers for three to four weeks twice a year to support neonatal care at the Black Lion Hospital, Ethiopia's largest urban hospital. A former Peace Corps volunteer who served in Ethiopia and who has maintained personal contacts in the country launched the project. It has also attracted at least two neonatologists from the Ethiopian diaspora in the United States.

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[92] AIF (American India Foundation), "Serve in India," http://www.aifoundation.org/programs/signature/fellowship.htm.

[93] Information provided by Georgis Kefale, associate neonatologist, Fairfax Neonatal Associates and Volunteer, Vermont Oxford Network Black Lion Project, interview via telephone with MPI, March 3, 2010. For more information, see www.vtoxford.org/about/about.aspx.

- ***Faith based.*** Some faith-based nonprofit groups have served as a conduit for diasporas to volunteer in their countries of origin. For instance, through its network of universities and hospitals across the world, the Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA) places skilled volunteers as needs emerge. (Missions are entirely demand driven.) Reportedly, diasporas can play a role in these programs and utilize their language skills and cultural familiarity, although a specific national origin is clearly not requisite.[94] The worldwide network of Adventist universities also provides a platform for diaspora academics to teach courses, on a volunteer basis, in their countries of origin. For instance, the Massachusetts-based nonprofit organization Here and Home, Inc., provides a conduit for African diaspora academics to lead courses in Adventist universities throughout Africa.[95] (Although the focus is on recruiting diaspora professionals, non-Africans who have ties to Africa through missionary or humanitarian work also volunteer through the program.) According to the president of Here and Home, Inc., Issumael Nzamutuma, the idea for the diaspora volunteer program grew out of a religious duty for missionary work and a personal desire to contribute to his country of origin, Rwanda.[96]

- ***Regional.*** The Florida Association of Voluntary Agencies in the Caribbean and the Americas (FAVACA) is a private, nonprofit organization established in 1982 by then Florida governor Bob Graham.[97] FAVACA's Florida International Volunteer Corps enjoys statutory authority under Florida state law and receives an annual appropriation from the state to send about 200 skilled volunteers per year to Latin America and the Caribbean. (FAVACA was established largely in response to the growing presence in Florida of immigrants from the Caribbean region and a desire among state authorities to help address the root causes of immigration from the region.) Most of the association's work is project based and placements are demand driven. FAVACA then works with the requesting party to develop focused terms of reference for the volunteer and identifies skilled volunteers from its volunteer database and community networks across Florida. While the organization does not track the origins of its volunteers, many are members of diaspora communities. As Florida's demographics have evolved over the past two decades, increasing numbers of skilled immigrants and their descendants are volunteering through FAVACA, according to FAVACA's director of development, Rebecca Reichert.

Although the author was unable to locate specific examples, we suspect similar trends may be observable in corporate volunteer programs.[98] In particular, members of diasporas may act as catalysts within corporations, identifying volunteer opportunities in their countries of origin that

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[94] Based on MPI communication with Tricia Hayes, associate director for recruitment, Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA).

[95] This information is drawn from Here and Home, Inc.'s Web site, www.hereandhome.org, as well as an MPI interview with Issumael Nzamutuma, president, on March 11, 2010.

[96] According to Nzamutuma, Here and Home, Inc., also believes that successful immigrants are better placed to contribute to their countries of origin. As a result, the organization is launching a summer mathematics tutorial program for African diaspora youth in the United States with support from Atlantic Union College.

[97] This information is drawn from the Florida Association of Voluntary Agencies in the Caribbean and the Americas (FAVACA's) Web site, www.favaca.org, as well as an MPI interview via telephone with Rebecca Reichert, director of development, on March 5, 2010.

[98] For a review of corporate volunteer programs, see Greg Hills and Adeeb Mahmud, *Volunteering for Impact: Best Practices in International Corporate Volunteering* (Boston: FSG Social Impact Advisors and Pfizer, Inc., September 2007), www.brookings.edu/~/media/Files/rc/papers/2007/09volunteering/Volunteering_for_Impact.pdf.

are in line with corporate social responsibility objectives and then promoting these opportunities among nondiaspora colleagues.

V.   Lessons Learned and Policy Conclusions

This paper has surveyed the range of organized programs that provide opportunities for diasporas to volunteer in development projects in their countries of origin. Although they are, for the most part, small scale and it is impossible to draw comprehensive conclusions, a number of them demonstrate promising approaches to attaining development goals. On balance, however, no clear models emerge from the review. Rather, the individual programs demonstrate strengths and liabilities, and the different approaches appear more or less suitable for different circumstances and different ends. We discuss some of the principal challenges and unresolved questions below:

A. Lessons Learned

1. Development Impact

It is difficult (if not impossible) to measure the development impact of many of these programs. Most development projects are measured by little more than a summary of financial accounting. Yet individual volunteers, program organizers, and development agencies may have different ideas about what constitutes a successful programmatic outcome. Some diaspora volunteer programs attempt to address immediate development challenges directly — such as programs that recruit professionals in hopes of mitigating "brain drain" — while others take a longer-term perspective by connecting highly motivated diaspora youth with community-based volunteer opportunities in the country of origin. This latter group of programs aims to facilitate a formative experience for diaspora youth that will serve as the basis for a lifetime of meaningful engagement.

2. Balancing Priorities

A common criticism of the volunteer work undertaken by diasporas is it is often haphazard, unprofessional, and insufficiently coordinated with broader development objectives. These critiques are not always justified, but there is little doubt that there are benefits from aligning the development priorities of diaspora volunteers with the priorities of other actors. But even alignment can create challenges, especially when it is between development agencies (both from developed and developing countries) and community groups. In these cases, whose priorities should volunteers address? In light of their personal ties, diasporas may be more attuned to community-level challenges whereas national authorities may have a better appreciation of the macroperspective. A simplistic view is to cede authority to whomever contributes the lion's share of resources, but the experiences of other collaborative efforts between governments and community organizations suggests that true stakeholder buy-in is essential.

3. Matching Volunteer Demand and Supply

The challenges faced by all international volunteer programs — of which diaspora volunteer programs form a subset — are to (1) identify community needs, and then (2) match individuals with volunteering opportunities in an efficient and timely manner. The digitization of personnel databases has doubtlessly facilitated the matching process, yet populating these databases

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remains a challenge. Partnering with diaspora organizations can substantially facilitate the identification of potential volunteers. But these relationships can also complicate program management since many diaspora community organizations are themselves volunteer based with limited capacity. Conflicting priorities may complicate the volunteer placement process. The risks of these partnerships increase when diasporas are highly politicized. Identifying needs remains a complex undertaking that technology has not yet been able to fully resolve. The highest demand is generally for the most skilled volunteers, but experience suggests the value of evaluating both demand and volunteer characteristics more closely. As an early report on USAID's Diaspora Skills Transfer for Southern Sudan project concluded, "there are hundreds of graduates and experienced South Sudanese in the Diaspora who may be willing to come back. Realistically however, there are few positions requiring highly skilled personnel in the public sector available for them to fill at present. Unfortunately, as of yet, there is also no enabling environment in the private sector to encourage them as entrepreneurs."[99]

4. Structuring Programs

The programs reviewed for this study suggest a variety of organizational structures for diaspora volunteer programs. Some — such as the partnership of DFID, VSO, and diaspora community organizations in the United Kingdom — build the capacity of organizations to recruit volunteers and manage programs with technical support from VSO, which has substantial expertise in managing international volunteer programs. DFID provides a broad framework for program objectives and allows diaspora organizations substantial autonomy in targeting volunteers. Other programs — such as the partnership between the HIV/AIDS Twinning Center and NEPID — similarly pair expertise in volunteer management with an in-depth knowledge of the diaspora and health challenges in Ethiopia. This occurs within the narrowly framed objectives of PEPFAR. Still other programs, such as TOKTEN, leverage the development expertise (and, perhaps more importantly, operational autonomy) of international organizations such as UNDP. While UNDP may lack expertise in volunteer management (though it receives some support from UN volunteers) or access to grassroots diaspora networks, its autonomy is clearly important in countries such as Lebanon, where the diaspora is politically divided and may lack confidence in government. The community-based organizational structure of youth volunteer programs like Indicorps and Birthright Armenia allows these programs the flexibility to make long-term investments in meaningful relationships with highly motivated diaspora youth, while also helping to meet short-term development needs. Finally, a reliance on independent community organizations can facilitate volunteer placements in especially dangerous or volatile countries such as Somalia.

5. Cost-Effectiveness

International volunteer programs bear the high costs of international travel, lodging, and coordination across countries. (Even facing the competitive pressures of the private sector, many businesses have been unable to reduce the costs of short-term assignments overseas.) Indeed, a 2003 USAID report concluded that the expenses associated with an international volunteer are not significantly less than those for a consultant.[100] These costs, however, need not be prohibitive — individual programs have explored a number of ways to make diaspora volunteer assignments more cost-effective without sacrificing quality. These include both strategic innovations — such

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[99] Lynne Cogswell, Richard Hailer, Robert Holm, James Purcell, and Don Smith, *Training and Capacity Development Needs Assessment for the USAID Sudan Field Office*, report to USAID, Development Associates, Inc., Arlington, VA, February 2005.
[100] Keesbury, *The Value of International Volunteerism*.

as targeting higher-value-added volunteers — with operational changes such as encouraging (or even requiring) longer-term placement and volunteer contribution toward transportation and lodging. The focus on diaspora volunteers is also often considered a cost-saving measure as diasporas are assumed to have superior cultural and linguistic knowledge, which means they require less orientation and can "hit the ground running." While valid, this case is often overstated. There is little doubt that a common language facilitates volunteer work, but the true benefit may not be cost savings but rather the more meaningful relationships that diaspora volunteers are able to develop with their counterparts. Accordingly, a more realistic case could highlight diasporas' greater likelihood of long-term engagement based on personal connections with peers in the country of origin.

6. Scalability

In recent years it has become clear that a perpetual challenge for development policymakers is how to replicate successful demonstration projects. As former World Bank president James Wolfensohn has stated, "We have to discover how we move from our feel-good successes, how to scale up these initiatives to a depth and breadth where we can really have an impact of poverty."[101] On this issue, many questions about the development potential of diaspora volunteer programs remain outstanding. Among all programs, the most promising appear to be led by dynamic, motivated, committed, and savvy individuals. Many require the exhaustive review of candidates and opportunities, and then the labor-intensive matching of the two. It is unclear whether and under what conditions these programs can be scaled — or if it is even advisable to do so. The optimal size of diaspora volunteer programs may be small, in which case it will be important to consider whether the various models can be replicated or if their central concepts can be exported to other countries. The one case of a diaspora volunteer program that has been widely replicated is TOKTEN, but the experience has been mixed. A limited number of programs appear to have taken root while the majority of programs have failed to attract more than a handful of volunteers.

B. *Implications for US Government International Volunteering and Diaspora Engagement Programs*

Over the past half-century the United States has promoted a wide range of international volunteer programs as a means to advance its foreign policy goals. These goals ranged from containment during the Cold War to democracy promotion and counterterrorism since September 11, 2001.[102] But development assistance has been the most common and omnipresent justification for most international volunteer programs. In some cases the US government has designed and managed international volunteering programs (include the most well known, the Peace Corps). In other cases it has partnered with civil society groups (for instance, through Volunteer for Prosperity). Some have promoted international volunteering in general, but the most have been more targeted toward specific issues or objectives (e.g., Farmer-to-Farmer Volunteers and the HIV/AIDS Twinning Center Volunteer Health Corps).

US-government-sponsored international volunteering programs tend to target two categories of volunteers:

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[101] James D. Wolfensohn, "Foreword," in *Reducing Poverty on a Global Scale*, ed. Blanca Moreno-Dodson (Washington, DC: World Bank, 2005).

[102] For a summary of this view, see Lex Rieffel and Sarah Zalud, "International Volunteering: Smart Power," Brookings Institution, Policy Brief No. 155, June 2006.

- Experienced professionals (i.e., "highly skilled" volunteers) for short-term technical assistance missions

- College-educated youth (often considered "less skilled") for longer missions (volunteer programs for less-educated youth, such as AmeriCorps, tend to be domestically focused)

Highly skilled international volunteers — for instance, those that work through the Farmer-to-Farmer program, IESC, and Financial Service Volunteer Corps — typically aim for immediate development impact and transfer of knowledge or technology (although they often develop long-term relationships as well). By contrast, youth volunteers abroad — for instance, through the Peace Corps — typically carry out routine or frontline development work and often develop lasting relationships with the communities they serve, leading to lifelong engagement.

As the experiences described in this report suggest, there is little doubt that diasporas constitute a significant pool from which to draw volunteer manpower and talent for international development efforts, and that many are already engaged in such efforts, whether by their own initiative or through civil society groups. This may be particularly true for skilled members of the diaspora who have active professional, academic, and personal networks in the country of origin. But several questions remain. Where do diasporas fit into USAID international volunteer programs? How might USAID more actively promote diaspora volunteering in development projects? Two complementary approaches appear particularly promising: *encouraging greater diaspora participation in existing international volunteer programs*, and *partnering with civil society groups (such as diaspora-community-based organizations, professional associations, and faith-based groups) to promote new volunteer opportunities for diasporas*. Admittedly, in some instances, this will require minor policy changes such as a greater willingness by the Peace Corps to place diaspora youth in their ancestral countries.

The experiences described in this report suggest that USAID initiatives often rely (intentionally or inadvertently) on diaspora volunteers. USAID and other international development agencies have extensive experience working with international volunteers. In many respects, diasporas are no different from other volunteers: They typically require some sort of remuneration — although this is often psychic rather than monetary or substantially below market rates—and the benefits are more likely to be substantial if the volunteer remains engaged long after the volunteer mission ends. But diasporas also differ from other volunteers in many ways. And the informal role of diasporas in US government volunteer programs is not well understood or documented. USAID- and PEPFAR-funded programs have experimented with recruiting highly skilled diaspora volunteers for specific projects. These efforts led to considerable success in some instances (e.g., the HIV/AIDS Twinning Center's VHC) but evinced little interest in other cases (e.g., Serbian Diaspora Volunteers). *The most successful examples of recruiting diasporas for international skilled volunteer programs appear to be the result of partnerships between agencies with expertise in placing international volunteers and with an on-the-ground presence in developing countries (e.g., USAID, VSO) and organizations with deep community roots in the diaspora (e.g., some ethnic community-based organizations, professional networks, faith-based groups).*

While USAID has extensive experience working with nongovernmental partners, this discussion does not aim to address the entire range of good practices for development partnerships. Diasporas are, however, distinct from typical partners for several important reasons. First, they are rarely impartial outsiders; rather, they have complex relationships with their countries of origin. Part of their advantage as international volunteers is their unique ability to carefully balance insider credibility with outsider perspective. Reliable partners help navigate these complex politics. Second, as is typically the case, partnerships allow USAID projects to leverage

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greater resources since they imply community buy-in. But the selection of partners is a particularly sensitive process of which governments must be aware to avoid fully dependent relationships. Third, diaspora partners may have different development priorities than USAID. Attempts to redirect diaspora volunteers toward support of USAID objectives are unlikely to succeed unless there is meaningful consultation. A more fruitful strategy may be to *identify successful initiatives launched by NGOs that align with USAID objectives and build upon these programs* or to *offer incentives for NGOs with a record of success in promoting international volunteering to expand into strategic sectors*. Finally, it is necessary to recognize that partnering with individual diaspora organizations may make sense where diasporas have sufficient critical mass. But where diasporas are small — as remains the case for many African diasporas in the United States — greater participation in existing programs may be the most realistic option.

Often, the critical barrier to recruiting diaspora volunteers is identifying them. Databases of skilled expatriates with a desire to volunteer must be populated and maintained, and matched with volunteer needs. USAID country missions have the capacity to identify volunteer opportunities but it may prove necessary to partner with community groups or, in some cases, country-of-origin governments to establish databases of potential volunteers. To this end, developing countries' consular networks in the United States or alumni associations from universities may prove particularly valuable. Of course, the collection and maintenance of data on individual members of the diaspora requires careful safeguarding and privacy protection.

The programmatic experience with diaspora youth volunteers is much less extensive. The Peace Corps typically shies away from placing diaspora youth in their ancestral countries (or entertaining any specific request for placement) although it has done so in at least once instance. In that case, the Peace Corps mission served to catalyze a much deeper level of engagement between the volunteer and the country of origin, eventually leading to the founding of AVC. The experiences of NGOs — such as AVC, Indicorps, and AIF — with diaspora youth volunteers suggest that community service work by diaspora youth often leads to a lifetime of engagement with the country of origin.

Americans of all national origins undertake international volunteer work and diasporas are an important — if discrete — subset of these volunteers. Without unduly privileging diaspora communities, international volunteer programs cannot afford to overlook this constituency, particularly in light of the unavoidable demographic shift underway in the United States. In the coming decades, a growing share of the US youth (and eventually adult) population will be second-generation immigrants: Between 1990 and 2008 the number of native-born US citizen children with at least one foreign-born parent doubled from 6.3 to 13.9 million (or from 10 to 20 percent of all children under age 18).[103] In 2008 about 12.7 million children — over 90 percent of children with immigrant parents and about 18 percent of all US children — had a parent born in a developing country.[104] *As these children age into young adulthood, the pool of potential diaspora youth volunteers with proximate roots in the developing world will only increase.* And contrary to claims that there is a trade-off between community engagement in the country of origin and the country of residence,[105] the two seem to complement each other. Extensive interviews with

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[103] MPI Data Hub, "Children Age 17 and under in Immigrant and Native Families by State: 1990 to 2008," www.migrationinformation.org/datahub/historicaltrends.cfm.

[104] MPI analysis of 2008 American Community Survey data.

[105] In particular Stanley A. Renshon of the Center for Immigration Studies suggests that it would be preferable if immigrant and second-generation youth volunteered in domestic volunteer programs such as Teach for America rather than perform volunteer work in their countries of origin. Our research suggests that the perceived trade-off between community service work in the country of origin and the country of residence is overly simplistic and that there are in fact

former Indicorps volunteers conducted for this report suggests that Indian American youth volunteers are equally concerned about community involvement in India and in the United States.

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