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# *An Assessment of Initiatives to Combat the Brain Drain in Ghana*

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February 15, 2012
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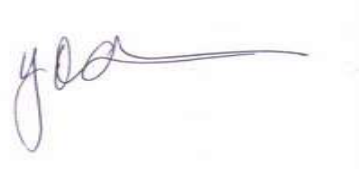
## ABSTRACT

Today, it is estimated that annually, 70,000 skilled Africans depart their nations of origin to pursue professional and educational opportunities abroad. Many leaders, policymakers and developmental practitioners believe that this steady stream of emigrants—commonly referred to as brain drain—has a substantial impact on the ability of African nations to develop. As such, brain drain is rapidly becoming one of the most salient issues on the African development agenda. Conventional wisdom had it that once nations improved their political, economic and social conditions, brain drain would abate. Yet, some countries, which have succeededin advancing socio-economic reforms and political freedoms, are seeing an increase in skilled emigration. The West African nation of Ghana is one nation that is experiencing this problem, to the detriment of key areas such as education and healthcare.

In an effort to curtail the impact of brain drain on development, several entities have undertaken initiatives to mitigate the effects of the phenomenon.This research will assess efforts to ameliorate the effects of brain drain in Ghana. Specifically, it examinestwo programs facilitated by the International Organization for Migration—the Return of Qualified African Nationals initiative and Migration for Development in Africa—as well as interventions by the Republic of Ghana. The purpose of the study is to better understand the objectives of these brain gain initiatives, how the programs are facilitated and their impact in order to extrapolate lessons that can assist future actors in formulating more effective measures to combat brain drain.

## DECLARATION

I declare that this research is my own unaided work. It is being submitted for the degree of Master of Arts in the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. It has not been submitted before for any degree or examination in any other University.



Y. Obenewa Amponsah
Johannesburg
February 15, 2012

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Of course, I can never express enough appreciation for my family, especially my mother Ivy Ashie Amponsah, for raising me to be who I am; as well as my brothers and sisters Alex, Stephanie and Gabriel Amponsah and Mary Amponsah-Fox for walking with me through life.

Finally, this work is dedicated to Pan-Africanists everywhere, in the belief that one day we will realize the vision of a prosperous, united and peaceful Africa. In the words of Kwame Nkrumah, "forward ever, backward never."

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# 1 Introduction

The brain drain is rapidly becoming one of the most salient issues on the African development agenda. Originally a term coined by the British in the 1960s to describe the emigration of their scientists and intellectuals to the United States,[1] the brain drain is today a phenomenon in which skilled professionals, often the most educated in a society, depart their nations of origin to pursue professional and personal opportunities in more economically developed countries. One very prevalent school of thought is that this steady and growing stream of emigrants is having a substantial impact on the ability of African nations to develop; and that the current trend in the international movement of people, particularly in the fields of science and technology, medicine and education, has served to enhance the economies and capacities of developed nations, at the cost of developing countries.

In response to the development challenges precipitated by brain drain, African states have undertaken a variety of measures. Nations such as South Africa have made official diplomatic appeals to Western governments to stop targeting their citizens in recruitment campaigns, in the hopes of stemming the tide of emigration. Multilateral actors have also joined in the discourse around the brain drain. The Commonwealth Group launched an initiative, Africa Recruit, in an effort to entice African professionals back to the continent. Yet, the numbers of Africans departing for Western nations does not appear to be on the decline, currently it is estimated that 70,000[2] skilled African professionals depart the continent for advanced industrialized countries annually, with no sign of abating. In fact, despite the myriad of initiatives that have been undertaken to address the brain drain; as well as the social, economic and political improvements in some of the countries most affected, brain drain seems to be on the rise.

Given the urgency of the brain drain and its negative impact on development, this research will examine why brain drain mitigation strategies have been largely ineffective in one of the continent's most successful democracies, the West African state of Ghana. The purpose is to extrapolate lessons that can assist future actors in the creation of more effective programs to combat the negative effects of the phenomenon.

[1]Ammer, C. The American Heritage Dictionary of Idioms, Houghton Mifflin Company, 2002, http://dictionary.reference.com/search?q=brain drain.
[2]Kwenin, C. "Youth in Diaspora," International Organization for Migration, May 2005, http://www.uneca.org/itca/youth/Documents/Youth%20in%20Diaspora_Bonn%20Youthh%20Presentation.ppt.

## 1.1 Brain Drain in Perspective

As previously indicated, the phenomenon of mass migration is not a new one, nor is migration an entirely negative occurrence. Throughout history, the interactions of disparate groups of people in new environments have frequently given rise to innovations such as the technologies emanating from Silicon Valley, an area with significant numbers of immigrants. The rapid advancement of Asian nations such as Malaysia and Singapore has in part been credited to the periodic movement of other Asian nationals to the region and the subsequent infusion of new ideas and methodologies.[3] Today, the vast majority of North and South America is populated by the descendents of European immigrants who, from the 17th through 20th centuries, departed their countries of origin for the "new world."

The contemporary wave of migration, however, looks vastly different than that of the pre-industrial period. Modern immigration features citizens of the global south travelling to northern countries in pursuit of opportunities unavailable to them in their homelands. While this pursuit of elusive opportunities is not unique to Africa's current brain drain, the profile of the modern African emigrant is quite different than the typical immigrant of previous centuries. Europe's mass emigration, which generally speaking, saw the disenfranchised, the landless and the less educated leaving to pursue opportunities within the framework of relatively (assuming you were not a person of African or Asian descent) open economic and political systems. This trend is reflected in the famous inscription at Ellis Island in New York, the entry point for millions of immigrants into the United States:

> *Give me your tired, your poor,*
>
> *Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free,*
>
> *The wretched refuse of your teeming shore.*
>
> *Send these, the homeless, tempest-tost to me,*
>
> *I lift my lamp beside the golden door!*[4]

[3]Davis, A.M. "Brain Drain or Brain Circulation? The Silicon Valley-Asia Connection" Harvard University Asia Center, 29 September, 2000. http://www.ischool.berkeley.edu/~anno/speeches/braindrain.html.
[4]Lazarus, E.*The New Colossus*, New York, 1883.

In stark contrast, today's immigrants from Africa are among societies' most skilled and educated. According to the International Monetary Fund, "the biggest migratory flows from Africa to the United States are from Egypt, Ghana and South Africa,[5] with more than 60 percent of immigrants from those three countries having a tertiary education. Migration of Africans with only a primary education is almost nil."[6]

These emigrants also depart their nations of origin is search of better opportunities. The impact, however, on African countries is significant. Already faced with tremendous challenges in terms of capacity, the departure of the most skilled makes achieving developmental objectives more difficult. Some sources note that if the current trend continues, particularly in regard to the hard-hit healthcare sector, Africa will be unable to meet the Millennium Development Goals.[7]

While official estimates on the number of Africans who emigrate as part of the brain drain are difficult to come by, the consensus seems to be that on an annual basis, the continent losses at least 20,000 of its most skilled citizens to western nations. Today, more than 300,000 Africans live outside of the African continent, with an estimated 30,000 of them holding PhDs. [8] This figure has grown substantially since the era of African independence, and does not appear as if it will ebb at any point in the near future. According to the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa and the International Organization for Migration, between 1960 and 1975, 27,000 educated Africans left the continent. Between 1975 and 1984, the number of departures had risen to 40,000. By 1990, the estimate was at least 20,000 a year.[9] A decade later in 2000, it was estimated that 65,000 African doctors, and 70,000 African nurses had emigrated to work in developed economies. This figure represents 20 and 10 percent of all physicians and nurses, respectively, born in Africa.[10]While various figures are cited, several sources state that

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[5] With the end of Apartheid some might assume that the impact of the brain drain on South Africa would be mitigated; yet, information from the Southern African Migration Project indicates that South Africa is among the nations hardest hit by the phenomenon. However, South Africa's migration patterns do require additional analysis in that the nation is also a recipient of migrations from other African nations. Overall, though, the country appears to suffer a net loss of skilled professionals. http://www.queensu.ca/samp/migrationresources/braindrain/.

[6]Carrington, W. andDetragiache, E., "How Big Is the Brain Drain?" in *Finance and Development*, Vol. 36, No. 2, (June 1999) Accessed February 1, 2012, http://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/fandd/1999/06/index.htm.

[7]Mulama, J., "World Health Day: Kenyan Medics Deplore Low Pay, Scarce Incentives",April 5, 2006http://www.ipsnews.net/print.asp?idnews=32785.

[8] Shinn, D. "African Migration and the Brain Drain." Paper Presented at the Institute for African Studies and Slovenia Global Action, June 20, 2008, accessed January 2, 2012, http://sites.google.com/site/davidhshinn/Home/african-migration-and-the-brain-drain.

[9]Mutume, G. "Reversing Africa's 'Brain Drain': New Initiatives Tap Skills of African Expatriates", *Africa Recovery*, Vol.17 No. 2, (July 2003), Accessed February 1, 2012 http://www.un.org/ecosocdev/geninfo/afrec/vol17no2/172brain.htm .

[10] Shinn, D. Op. Cit.

70,000 African professionals now depart the continent annually. In total, an estimated 33 million people born in African now reside in the Diaspora.[11]

### 1.1.1 The Human Cost

According to the Southern African Migration Project, the impact of the brain drain varies by sector. Seemingly most impacted, however, is the healthcare sector. Also adversely affected by the migration of skilled professionals are the educational as well as science and technology arenas. This is reflected in the fact that by 1998, there were 20,000 Nigerian academics in the United States alone; 300 Ethiopian doctors practicing in the city of Chicago, and 700 Ghanaian physicians practicing throughout the United States.[12] Since the mid 1990s, 45,000 Algerian academics and researches have left the country.

When evaluating the impact of the number of African emigrants, it is important to note that African nations, relatively speaking, have small populations. In *Regionalism and Africa's Development: Expectations, Reality, and Challenges*, S.K.B Asante points out that, "Africa has most of the world's mini-states"[13]seven counties with a population of less than one million and 20 with a population of less than ten million.[14]Only eleven African states have populations of over 30 million and one with a population over 100 million. In short, with small populations, and even smaller educated populations, the impact of losing significant portions of the skilled work force is not easily mitigated. In several nations, the number of people emigrating comprises over 50 percent of the professional workforce. This is true of Cape Verde, Gambia, Seychelles, Mauritius and Sierra Leone.[15]

Additionally, while Africa houses 24% of the world's disease burden, the continent has only three percent of the globe's medical professionals.[16] In the under resourced nation of Malawi, 95% of doctor's positions and 35% of nursing jobs are vacant. In this scenario, one doctor caters to the medical needs of 50,000 people. Contrast this to the World Health Organization's (WHO) recommendation that a nation's doctor to patient ratio ought to

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[11] International Fund for Agricultural Development, *Africa,* Accessed on January 2, 2012, http://www.ifad.org/remittances/maps/africa.htm.
[12]Gedamu, A. "Causes and Consequences of Brain Drain - How long should Africa tolerate this?" November 2002, http://chora.virtualave.net/brain-drain7.htm.
[13]Asante, S. "Regionalism as a key element of African development Strategy," in *Regionalism and Africa's development: Expectations, Reality and Challenges* (London: Macmillan, 1997) p. 29.
[14]Researching Virtual Initaitives in Educations, *All Countries by Population*, Accessed February 8, 2012, http://www.virtualcampuses.eu/index.php/All_countries_by_population.
[15] IOL, "Brain drain deprives Africa of vital talent," April 24, 2006, http://www.queensu.ca/samp/migrationnews/article.php?Mig_News_ID=2862&Mig_News_Issue=16&Mig_News_Cat=1.
[16]Ibid.

be 1:5,000.[17] Unfortunately, Malawi's lack of medical professionals is not an isolated occurrence. In neighbouring Zambia, one doctor serves 14,000 residents as over 30% of Zambia's physicians work outside of the nation. In Kenya, the current doctor to patient ratio is 1:100,000 and the nurse to patient ratio is 49:100,000. By the World Bank's account, skilled workers, such as medical professionals, comprise four percent of the continent's total workforce, yet they account for 40% of emigrants.[18]

The resulting impact of the lack of medical professionals in Africa is unpalatable. According to the UN Millennium Development Report, a child in Africa dies every 30 seconds from malaria. In the course of a year, more than one million African children die from this disease. Currently, a woman on the continent has a one in 16 chance of dying during pregnancy, whereas women in North America only face a one in 3,700 risk. Right now in Sub-Saharan Africa, only 50% of the population has access to medical facilities.[19] Clearly, Africans are paying for the dearth of medical attention with their lives.

### 1.1.2 Lost Opportunities

While the impact of the brain drain on the medical sector is most appalling, there are a variety of other ways in which Africa misses opportunities based on its nationals emigrating to the west. A primary example of that is the case of Dr. Phillip Emeagwali, the "godfather" of the internet. Emeagwali is largely credited with creating the supercomputer which gave rise to the internet. A scientist based in the United States, Emeagwali emigrated from Nigeria to attend school, and never returned home. Instead, he and 35 members of his family now reside in America.[20] While one cannot assert that Emeagwali would have invented the supercomputer had he remained in Nigeria, his accomplishment does highlight the calibre of individuals that are departing the continent. And, further causes one to wonder, that given his abilities, what impact would Emeagwali—and the millions of other talented emigrants like him—have accomplished had they remained in Africa? As articulated by Aderanti Adepoju of Nigeria's Human Resources Development Centre, "For poor countries – especially Africa and Asia – the loss of specialists in IT, and in engineering and medicine, has impacted far beyond the

[17]Mulama, J. Op. Cit.
[18]IOLOp. Cit.
[19] United Nations Millennium Project, *Fast Facts: The Faces of Poverty*http://www.unmillenniumproject.org/press/press2.htm.
[20]Emeagwali, P. "How Do We Reverse the Brain Drain?" October 2003, http://emeagwali.com/speeches/brain-drain/to-brain-gain/reverse-brain-drain-from-africa-2.pdf..

numbers involved. This brain drain migration process denies these poorer regions the optimum utilisation of the skills of those now in Diaspora."[21]

### 1.1.3 Counting the Costs

Given the aforementioned statistics, it is clear that Africa is witnessing a significant departure of its most skilled immigrants. However, there is notable debate over the actual impact of their absence on least developed countries (LDCs). In light of the effect that the brain drain is having in the healthcare sector alone, one would assume that most of the international community would agree that "something" needs to be done. However, there is a growing body of literature, which submits that the ill-effects of the brain drain are actually countered by other, positive factors; primarily, the remittances that Africans in the Diaspora send home. It is believed that these funds, which are in the region of40 billion US dollars annually [22] compensate for the absence of skilled professionals by providing resources for their families.

While remittances are an important source of income for the continent, the funds do not make up for the dearth of skills and experience. The shortage of skilled professionals further exacerbates the continent's lack of capacity in the public and private sectors as well as civil society. In fact, according to Soumana Sako, Executive Secretary of the African Capacity Building Foundation in Zimbabwe, "whatever the school of thought, empirical evidence suggests that in sub-Saharan Africa, the brain drain has a significant negative effect on the growth rate of the source country's economy and can potentially retard its long-term development."[23]

Further confirming that remittances do not sufficiently mitigate the impact of the brain drain is that Africa spends over four billion U.S. dollars every year (some sources place the figure at over five billion U.S. dollars) to hire expatriates to work on the continent. This, against a back-drop of 70,000 trained Africans departing annually.

Moreover, the losses incurred because of the brain drain do not begin once a professional departs his or her country of origin. Instead, when considering the economic costs, one must take into account the financial investment a nation makes in educating an individual. More than one scholar has noted that Africa is in effect training doctors,

[21]Adepoju, A."Highly Skilled Migration: Balancing Interests and Responsibilities and Tackling Brain Drain" 2007, Accessed February 1, 2012, www.gfmd.org, p. 1.
[22]International Fund for Agricultural Development.Op. Cit.
[23]Sako, S. "Brain Drain and Africa's Development: A Reflection" *African Issues*, Vol. 30, No. 1(2002): 5, Accessed January 1, 2012, http://www.jstor.org/stable/1167086.

scientists and teachers for the west. In fact, Zambian health official, Simon Miti, has contended that: "Our approach is that if you (the west) poach one, then you must help us train four so that we can increase our numbers."[24]

Considering the impact that emigration has on home countries, why do African professionals opt to immigrate? Dominant literature provides a variety of reasons for the current exodus from the continent, which generally fall into five categories: lack of professional opportunities/economic hardship; political instability; inadequate social services; afro-pessimism, and opportunities facilitated by the global north, all of which will be explored in greater detail in the next section.

## 1.2 Dominant Theories on Brain Drain

### 1.2.1 The Migration-Development Nexus

Prevalent in the literature is the concept of the migration-development nexus, i.e. the impact that the global movement of people—in this case skilled professionals—has on a sending nation's ability to achieve various social and economic benchmarks. In assessing the causes of the brain drain, it is important to note that there are many entities in the international community that do not view brain drain as a problem to be addressed. John Gibson and David McKenzie for instance, in their 2011 Policy Research Paper for the World Bank, *8 Questions About Brain Drain*, argue that the problem of brain drain is not particularly severe, nor have rates substantially increased in recent years. Instead, Gibson and McKenzie argue that there can actually be a *brain gain* from the benefits of emigration by skilled migrants. Among the benefits cited are incentives for individuals in sending countries to excel academically in order to have the option of going abroad. Remittances are also credited as an advantage of emigration, in that they can help to improve the quality of life for family members at home. The pair further views increased capacity and innovation through knowledge sharing as instances of brain gain.

The view that the emigration of qualified personnel can incentivize individuals to become more professional competitive, in this instance healthcare workers, is supported by Michael Clemens of the Centre for Global Development. In their 2008 paper, *Is the Brain Drain Good for Africa,* William Easterly and Yaw Nyarko argue that brain drain has had no effect on the skills gap between Africa and the rest of the world and that remittances more than make up for the cost of educating an individual.

[24]IOL.Op. Cit.

The aforementioned view is, however, in conflict with an opposing body of literature that outlines the detrimental effects of brain drain on LCDs. This is a perspective that is espoused by Bhagwati and Hamada, Grubel and Scott, as well as McCulloch and Yellen. Notably, institutions such as the International Organization for Migration (IOM), the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) and several African states cite the detrimental effects of brain drain, particularly in key sectors such as healthcare.

### 1.2.2 Causes of Brain Drain

Prevalent in the literature are also a number of theories as to the causes of brain drain. Most dominant is the view that poverty, economic challenges and a lack of professional opportunities are the key drivers of brain drain. While these are the most referenced factors, issues of afro-pessimism and opportunities in the global north are also drivers of the phenomenon.

#### *1.2.2.1 Economic Hardship*

Low wages, combined with demanding workloads and insufficient resources often cause professionals to seek other environments in which they are better able to practice their trade. In the case of Kenya, it has been cited that entry-level physicians can earn as little as $121.00 USD a month, yet are expected to be on call around the clock.[25] Further exacerbating the issue are donor agencies such as the World Bank, which often require the employment of expatriates as part of its conditionality. The frustration with seeing foreigners—or nationals who emigrated—hired for roles they could fill, at much better salaries and with considerable perks, is also a determining factor. In short, lack of professional opportunity and poor remuneration are among the leading causes for the brain drain. Many Africans emigrate in order to improve their economic position.

#### *1.2.2.2 Political Instability*

Political instability and social unrest are also major factors in the decisions of Africans to emigrate. One need only look to the example of Zimbabwe, which in the last decade, as political turmoil has grown, lost 1,500 of its nation's 3,000 social workers.[26] Similarly, Algeria's loss of 45,000 academics is largely attributed to the government's protracted

[25]Mulama, J. Op. Cit.
[26]Mutame, G. Op. Cit.

conflict with Islamic insurgents.[27] In contrast, Africa Recovery notes that the 2002 inauguration of Mwai Kibaki, "spawned a period of euphoria and a wave of returns by exiles hoping to rebuild a country that had all but collapsed under the weight of 24 years of rule by former President Daniel arap Moi."[28]Kibaki himself appealed to Kenyans in the Diaspora, proclaiming that Kenya needs, "the genius of its citizens wherever they are. It's time for healing and we need every hand on deck."[29]

For many professionals and intellectuals, the repressive environments that often co-exist with poor governance make life unpalatable. Africans, therefore often make the decision to emigrate because of fear of violence and insecurity.

#### *1.2.2.3 Insufficient Social Services*

In addition to low wages and undesirable political conditions, Africans often choose to leave home because of a lack of basic social services. Ostensibly, most professionals would have more resources at their disposal than their poorer neighbors, to obtain healthcare and education for their families. However, in countries like Zambia, where there is one doctor per 14,000 people, adequate medical facilities would still be hard to come by. Professional opportunities, coupled with access to medical and educational services for their families, are key factors in African emigration.

#### *1.2.2.4 Afro-Pessimism*

Of lesser prominence, but present in the literature is the assertion by some scholars that the legacies of slavery and colonialism—which portray the west as "better"—contribute to the proliferation of the brain drain. Dei and Asgharzadehin particular attribute the departure of so many skilled Africans to a lack of commitment to their communities. This lack of commitment is traced back to the marginalization of African cultures during colonialism as well as the skewed and revisionist history that Africans are taught. This condemnation of African societies and development (or lack thereof) is constantly reinforced by the media and its messages that western, consumer cultures and lifestyles are most desirable and should be aspired to.[30]

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[27]IOL.Op. Cit.
[28]Mutame, G. Op. Cit.
[29]Mutame, G. Op. Cit.
[30]Sefa Dei, G.J. and Asgharzadeh, A. "What Is to Be Done: A Look at Some Causes and Consequences of the African Brain Drain" in *African Issues*Vol. 30, No. 1 (2002): 31-36, Accessed January 6, 2007 http://www.jstor.org/stable/1167087.

#### *1.2.2.5 Opportunity*

As some actors have dubbed the causes outlined above as "push" factors, i.e. those that compel skilled professionals to leave home; there are also "pull" factors, those reasons that a person will chose to settle in a particular country. One of the primary pull factors is the labor shortage being experienced in the global north. The United Kingdom for example has experienced a chronic shortage of healthcare workers. In 1998, to fill the demand, the government enacted the *National Health Service Plan*, a component of which provides for the recruitment of foreign healthcare workers.[31] According to Micah Bump of Georgetown University's Institute for the Study of International Migration, the UK's approach, "has been controversial because it poses serious challenges for health care provision in the migrants' home countries."[32] The United Kingdom is not the only nation to have been censured for the recruitment of foreign doctors, as previously indicated the Canadian government has also come under fire for its recruitment of healthcare professionals.

These instances illustrate that the policy environment, special recruitment programs and dearth of certain skill sets in the north, create a climate in which it is much easier for African professionals to emigrate, contributing to the brain drain.

In summary, the brain drain exists in large part because two primary elements of human security, freedom from fear and freedom from want, are tenuous in many African nations. Further exacerbating the problem is that the very conditions which the elite are seeking to escape are intensified by their departure, creating a vicious cycle. With every healthcare professional that leaves the country, the doctor to patient ratio worsens, with every teacher that emigrates, fewer children have access to educational resources and with every engineer that departs, one less infrastructure project is completed. The diagram below, adapted from a presentation made by Charles Kwenin, IOM Addis Ababa's Chief of Mission, in May 2005 accurately portrays how the "push" and "pull" factors of brain drain act in a cyclical manner to reinforce one another.

[31] Bump, M. "Ghana: Searching for Opportunities at Home and Abroad," *Migration Information Source,* March 2006, Accessed February 3, 2012, http://www.migrationinformation.org/Profiles/display.cfm?ID=381.
[32] Ibid.

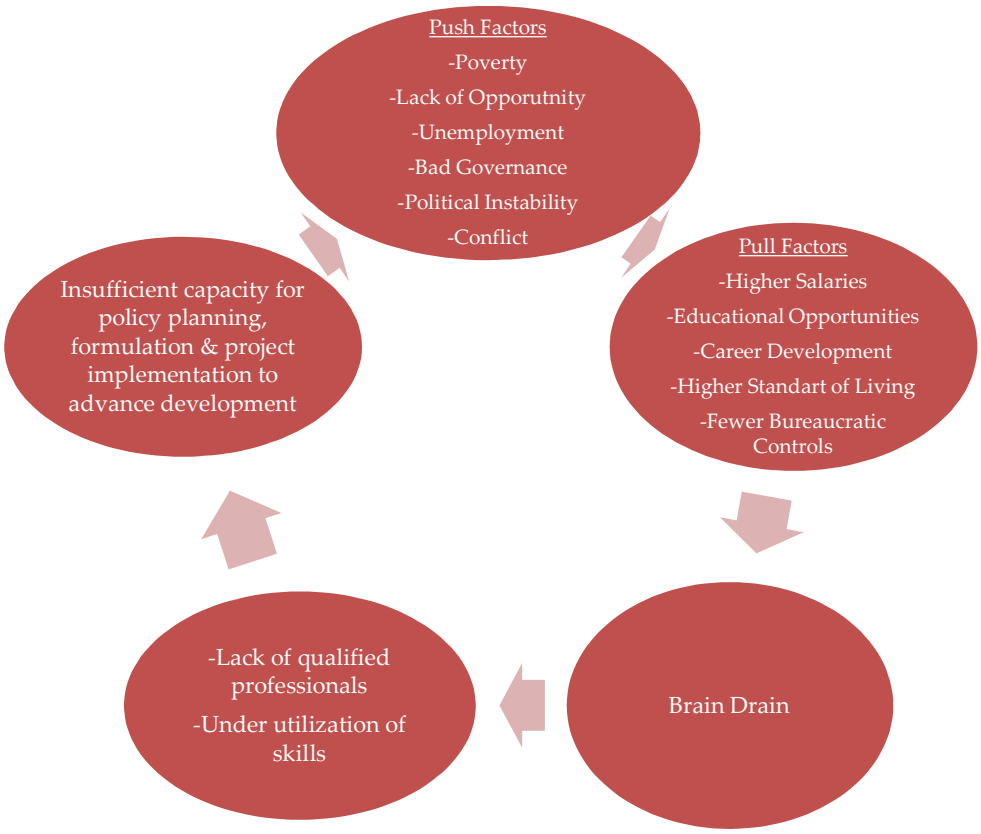



**Figure 1: Adapted from *Youth in the Diaspora*[33]**

## 1.3 The Contribution of this Research

It is against this backdrop that this research is grounded. As indicated, there are five primary drivers of brain drain: economic instability; political repression; scarce social services, afro-pessimism and opportunity. Over the past two decades many African nations have seen an improvement in their economies, the provision of social services, and the establishment of open, multi-party democracies; factors which one can assume would help to improve an individual's sense of national pride. Similarly, but to a lesser extent, some African governments have begun to address the pull factors related to the migration of their skilled nationals. Given the causes the dominant literature espouses for the phenomenon, it stands to reason that there would be a reduction in the brain drain or, that at the very least the number of skilled professionals flowing to the north would have reached a plateau. Yet, that is not the case. With the achievement of greater stability, some countries have actually seen an increase in the number of individuals emigrating.

[33]Kwenin, C. Op. Cit.

In Africa, Ghana is but one nation which is experiencing greater brain drain alongside greater prosperity.

This research will therefore examine the contemporary brain drain in the West African state and the measures that have been undertaken by various actors to reverse the phenomenon. The purpose of this examination is to highlight causes of brain drain, which are currently not dominant in the literature, shortcomings in existing brain gain interventions and best practices in order to contribute to the creation of more effective brain drain mitigation strategies.

To this end, the following chapters will provide a brief history of Ghana in order to contextualize brain drain trends in the country. It will then give a cursory review of the various brain drain initiatives that have taken place in the West African nation since the 1980s, providing insight into their successes and shortcomings. Specifically, the interventions under review will be those facilitated by The Republic of Ghana, and the International Organization for Migration (IOM). Based on the experiences of these actors, the research will identify gaps in current brain drain initiatives before highlight other aspect of the brain drain that would benefit from additional study.

## 2 The Study

*An Assessment of Initiatives to Combat the Brain Drain in Ghana,* is based on the premise that the phenomenon of skilled migration from Ghana is caused by three of the five commonly cited causes: lack of professional opportunities/economic hardship in the country of origin; political instability; as well as opportunities in the global north. Accordingly, any solution to the emigration of skilled professionals must adequately address these factors—some of which are more pressing in particular contexts than others. Given that two of the factors that drove much of Ghana's emigration—political instability and economic decline—have been addressed to a large extent, the hypothesis of this work is that past and current programs to curb the brain drain have been ineffective in part because they are not comprehensive in nature, target the wrong constituencies within the African Diaspora and are not fully rooted in the changing paradigm of migration in the 21st century.

### 2.1 Approach

This study will take the form of an atheoretical case study. As described by Alexander George and Andrew Bennett, this type of study is useful in providing "descriptions that might be used for subsequent studies for theory building," but as singular efforts do not

directly result in a theory.[34] While such studies may not directly result in the production of a new theory, they can certainly contribute by challenging existing paradigms and highlighting new avenues for theory development. In order to evaluate the key facets of brain drain interventions in Ghana—namely their design and impact— types of interventions by two key actors, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and the Republic of Ghana, are interrogated.

## 2.2 Case Selection

This research focuses on the ongoing phenomenon of brain drain in Ghana rather than other nations for a number of reasons. First, Ghana is at an interesting point in its economic development. Having been through five multiparty elections in the past 20 years—which were widely credited with being free and fair—and in 2011 achieving the status of a middle income nation, within the context of a stable social environment, all indicators are that Ghana is well on its way to being a success story. These factors, combined with Ghana's new status as an oil producing country, provide an opportunity for further growth and development, for which skills are required; so there is a renewed interest in mitigating the challenges of brain drain.

A second impetus behind the selection of Ghana for this study is that the trends witnessed in the nation are becoming typical of the experiences of other African nations; which tended to see a rise in brain drain during years of political and/or economic instability in the post independence period.[35] Conventional wisdom had it that once these conditions improved brain drain would begin to abate. However, in the 21st century, the flow of émigrés has continued with the growth of communities and linkages in the Diaspora, even after the establishment of more stable conditions in the country of origin.[36]

Finally, Ghana presents an ideal context in which to examine contemporary brain drain because numerous actors, from the state to international and multilateral entities, to regional bodies and the Diaspora itself, have undertaken brain gain activities. Yet emigration of skilled workers still continues, despite greater national stability and concerted brain gain efforts.

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[34] Alexander L. George and Andrew Bennett, *Case Studies and Theory Development in the Social Sciences*(Cambridge: Harvard University: 2005) 75.

[35] By way of example, an atypical example of brain drain is that of South Africa, which has seen the departure of skilled professionals—primarilyfrom the white minority community—since 1994 with the advent of a more stable political and economic outlook.

[36]Peil,M. "Ghanaians Abroad," *African Affairs*, Vol. 94, No. 376 (July 1995): 345–367, Accessed February 4, 2012, http://www.jsotr.org/stable/723403

The brain gain interventions that will be examined during the course of this study were selected based upon the desire to represent a variety of strategies from different sectors of the development community. Hence, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) is included because it is recognized as a leading non-governmental organization (NGO) in the field of international migration. Due to the fact that one of the primary responsibilities of any state is to create an environment in which socio-economic development can take place, this research will also provide insight into what the government of Ghana itself is doing to combat the negative effects of brain drain.

When initially conceptualized, this research intended to assess the brain gain interventions undertaken by New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD). It was included to represent the approach of a multilateral institution mandated to represent the interests of African actors. Yet, while brain drain is specified as an area of concern for the continental body, in the years since its establishment in 2001, little concrete action has been undertaken to facilitate brain gain, beyond partnership with initiatives such as Africa Recruit. Given the underdeveloped nature of NEPAD's work in the area of brain drain, this research will not interrogate contribution in the area.

# 3 Brain Drain in Ghana

Several of the causal factors of the brain drain outlined above are unfortunately well known to Ghanaian society, in particular those related to political instability and economic decline. Ghana is a costal nation located in the western region of Africa. Known as the Gold Coast during the colonial era, it became the first nation in sub-Saharan Africa to obtain its independence in 1957. Today, it is a nation of 25 million people,[37] with a gross domestic product growing at 13.5% annually.[38] Historically, Ghana's main exports have been gold and cocoa. Today these commodities, alongside tourism and—in the near future—oil, are the main drivers of the Ghanaian economy.

## 3.1 A Brief History of Ghana

The founding president of the Republic of Ghana was the late Pan-Africanist, Dr. Kwame Nkrumah. Despite leading the country to independence, Nkrumah was overthrown by a military coup in 1966, having declaring himself "President for Life" two years prior. This

[37]CIA World Factbook, Accessed February 1, 2012 https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/gh.html.
[38]Ibid.

led to a prolonged period of political upheaval and instability in the country. With the assumption of the presidency by Flight Lieutenant Jerry Rawlings through a military coup in 1981 (the second successful one he facilitated) some measure of political stability, albeit with extensive repression and human rights violations, was found. Rawlings led Ghana as a military dictatorship throughout the 1980s, which proved to be challenging times in which the nation suffered from widespread shortages of food and other essential goods.

In the early 1990s, after the fall of the Soviet Union, the World Bank and other entities in the global north placed severe pressure on the Rawlings regime to democratize. In 1992 multi-party democracy was reinstituted and the first election in 13 years held. Rawlings won both the 1992 and 1996 elections, under the aegis of the newly formed National Democratic Congress (NDC); but was unable to stand again in 2000 due to constitutional term limits.

In 2000, President Rawlings was succeeded in Osu Castle—the seat of Ghana's government—by John Kufour, a member of the rival New Patriotic Party. This represented Ghana's first peaceful political transfer since independence in 1957. Fortunately, orderly electoral processes have become the norm in Ghana, with President Atta Mills of the NDC taking office in 2008 after Kufour served two terms.

With the establishment of political stability in the country, Ghana's economic outlook began to improve and the country has experienced comparatively high levels of growth during the 1990s and throughout the 21st century.

## 3.2 Trends in Migration

This brief political history of Ghana is relevant in that the nation's political and economic fortunes had a significant impact on the migration patterns of Ghanaians, often being the driving factors behind emigration

While Ghanaians have lived and worked throughout the West African region since pre-colonial times—mainly as artisans, traders and nomadic peoples—brain drain became an increasing and detrimental phenomenon in the latter half of the 20th century. According to Micah Bump, until the economic challenges of the mid-1960s, Ghana was an attractive destination for many migrants in the region. Bump cites Ghana's 1960 census when asserting that 827,481 people, or 12 percent of the then population were, foreigners.[39]

[39]Bump, M. Op.Cit.

During the mid 60s, the economic decline and attendant social ills—which were precipitated by Nkrumah era policies and exacerbated by political instability—made Ghana an undesirable location not only for migrants, but for Ghanaians themselves. At this point, Ghana began to lose professional talent, a trend which has continued unabated until the present. Among the first emigrants were physicians, administrators, lawyers and educators. They left West Africa for locations in the eastern and southern portions of the continent, namely Botswana, Nigeria, Uganda and Zambia.[40]

The trend of migration only increased during the 1970s, with approximately two million Ghanaians leaving for Nigeria and Côte d'Ivoire between 1974 and 1981. The movement of people in the region was exacerbated by the policy environment. In 1975, with the formation of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) migration within the region became easier for citizens of member states.

During the 1980s one of the major drivers of Ghanaian emigration continued to be the political instability in the country. According to migration expert Bump, "The majority of Ghanaians who fled the country did so in the 1980s because of fears of politically motivated executions, disappearances, imprisonment without trial, confiscation of property, and public flogging." He further notes that the United Nations High Commission for Refugees registered in excess of 90,000 applications for asylum from 1982 to 1991.[41]

The political repression in Ghana in the early 1980s was further exacerbated by a declining economic situation and a number of adverse environmental factors. 1982 and 1983 were particularly difficult years in which Ghana experienced its worst drought in half of a century, crops were also destroyed by fires and cocoa prices were abnormally low. These factors, combined to create an environment in which essential goods were scarce, the nation experienced soaring inflation—116% at its highest in 1981[42]—andthere was a decline in workers real wages. The International Organization for Migration (IOM) notes that during this period "migration had become a coping strategy for individuals and families."[43]

In order to stabilize the economy, during the Rawlings era, Ghana obtained conditional loans from the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, which led to a period

[40] Ibid.
[41] Ibid.
[42] Ghana – The Economy, Accessed February 13, 2012, http://www.mongabay.com/reference/country_studies/ghana/ECONOMY.html.
[43] International Organization for Migration, "IOM Ghana Strategic Plan, 2011—2015," Accessed February 8, 2012, http://publications.iom.int/bookstore/free/GhanaStrategicPlansforweb_28July2011.pdf.p. 26.

of structural adjustment. While these funds did leave Ghana heavily indebted, the economy experienced a period of stabilization, growing at approximately six percent per annum during the 1980s.[44]

Ghana was not the only nation in the region experiencing hardship during this time, many countries were in fact faced with deep economic crises. Some, blamed migrants for diminishing employment opportunities. Nigeria, a major recipient of Ghanaian émigrés, was but one nation that held this view; and in between 1983 and 1985 expelled 900,000 to 1.2 million Ghanaians from its borders.[45] According to some scholars, the inhospitable environment in the region led to many Ghanaians looking further afield—mainly to Europe and North America—for stability, security and economic opportunities.[46]

Yet, with the return of multiparty democracy to the country and vastly improved economic conditions, the rate of migration did not slow. Rather, the 1990s through to the present is a period classified by the IOM as the "period of intensification and diasporization of Ghanaians."[47]

Today, it is estimated that approximately 12 percent of the nation's people, about three million Ghanaians, live outside of the country.[48]While Ghanaians can be found in 33 countries around the globe,[49] the vast majority—as illustrated in Figure 2 below—live outside of Africa. The largest groupings reside in Europe—Germany, the UK and Italy being major recipients—as well as the United States. The International Organization for Migration estimates that with 46 percent of the highly skilled Ghanaians emigrating, the West African nation has one of the highest rates of brain drain.[50]

[44]Ghana – The Economy.Op.Cit.
[45]Higazi, A. "Ghana Country Study: A Part of the report on Informal Remittance Systems in Africa, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) Countries" *Centre on Migration, Policy and Society,* January 2005, Accessed February 4, 2012, https://www.dfid.gov.uk/R4D/PDF/Oututs/EC-PREP/InformalRemittanceGhanaStudy.pdf, 3
[46]Ibid.
[47]International Organization for Migration.Op.Cit..26
[48]Akurang-Parry, K.O. "The African Brain Drain to the North: Pitfalls and Possibilities," *African Issues,*Vol. 30, No. 1 (2002): 57, Accessed February 1, 2012, http://www.jsotr.org/stable/1167092.
[49]International Organization for Migration.Op.Cit..26
[50]International Organization for Migration.Op.Cit..26

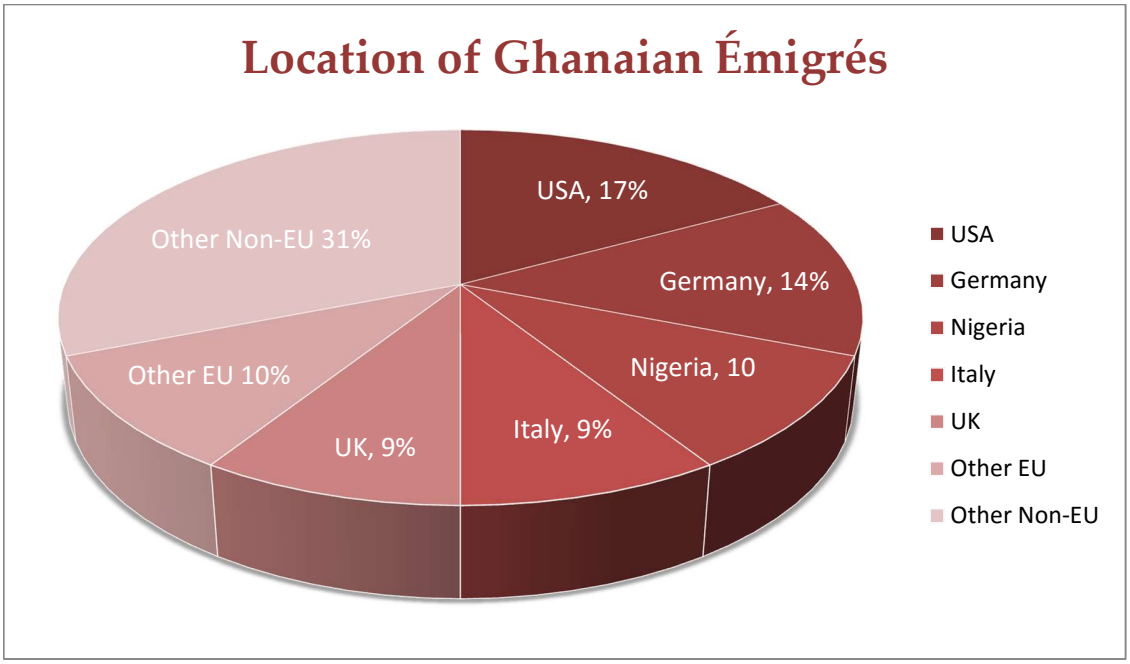



**Figure 2: Adapted from *Ghana: Searching for Opportunities at Home and Abroad*[51]**

In 2005, van Dalen et al, released a study outlining the reasons for migration in four African countries, one of these nations is Ghana. Entitled *Out of Africa: What Drives the Pressure to Emigrate,* Figure 3 sourced from the study, highlights the main reasons that Ghanaians opt to emigrate include economics, familial motivations and other reasons (other reasons referring to education, adventure and fear of persecution, etc.)[52]

[51] *Source:* Commission of the European Communities: Eurostat, Netherlands Interdisciplinary Demographic Institute (NIDI). 2001. Push and Pull Factors Determining International Migration Flows, "Why and Where: Motives and Destinations." Taken from Bump, M. Op. Cit.

[52] Van Dalen, H. et al. "Out of Africa: What Drives the Pressure to Emigrate?" Tinbergen Institute Discussion Paper, 2003, Accessed February 4, 2012, http://repub.eur.nl/res/pub/6704/2003-0593.pdf, p. 36

| Who Wants to Emigrate (or Not) and Why? | |
|---|---|
| *Intention to Migrate* | 41% |
| *Motivation to Migrate:* | |
| Economic Reasons | 79% |
| Family Reasons | 5% |
| Other Reasons (Education, adventure, fear of persecution, etc.) | 15% |
| *Motivation to Stay:* | |
| No Financial Needs | 10% |
| Lack of Means | 23% |
| Family Reasons | 23% |
| Other Reasons (Old age, legal challenges of emigration, do not like living abroad, etc.) | 45% |

Table 1: Adapted from *Out of Africa: What Drives the Pressure to Emigrate*[53]

The study further highlights that 41% of those surveyed have an intention to migrate, with 13% intending to migrate within two years. While this study does not delineate between the intentions of skilled professionals who are considered part of the brain drain, and unskilled migrants who are not, the figures still highlight the extent to which outward migration is a feature of life in contemporary Ghana. In fact, *Out of Africa: What Drives the Pressure to Emigrate* notes that Ghana has developed a "culture of migration,"[54] highlighting the extent to which brain drain is an issue that the nation will have to contend with on a protracted basis. Further, any initiatives to curb the detrimental effects of the phenomenon will have to take into account what will clearly be a growing Diaspora.

[53] Ibid. p. 36.
[54] Ibid. p. 25.

| Intentions of Ghanaians to Emigrate | |
|---|---|
| Intention to Emigrate | 41% |
| Intention to Emigrate Within Two Years | 13% |
| Has Taken Actual Steps to Emigrate | 8% |

Table 2: Adapted from *Out of Africa: What Drives the Pressure to Emigrate*[55]

## 3.3 Impact of Brain Drain on Ghana

### 3.3.1 Negative Consequences of Brain Drain

As with other nations, the impact of the brain drain on Ghana has by and large been detrimental. The majority of those skilled professionals who emigrate are in their most productive working years, ostensibly depriving the Ghanaian economy of their contributions. Further, what is most challenging about the nature of brain drain are the ripple effects of the loss of talent. Among the sectors hardest hit by the emigration of professionals is healthcare; which—as illustrated by its prominence in the Millennium Development Goals—is an essential block of any prosperous country. Moreover, deficits in this area will have consequences for generations to come. Similarly, the ability of a population with a high disease burden to be economically productive is minimal.

Today, it is estimated that 700 Ghanaian doctors are practicing in the US, this is nearly 50% of Ghana's entire physician population, highlighting the impact of the brain drain on the healthcare sector.[56]Table 3 below illustrates that between 1995 and 2002, Ghana lost nearly a quarter of the healthcare workers trained during that same eight year period.

**Emigration Rates of Ghanaian Health Professionals**

| Profession | 1995 | 1996 | 1997 | 1998 | 1999 | 2000 | 2001 | 2002 | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | GPs/Medical Officers | | | | | |
| Trained | 93 | 104 | 84 | 85 | 113 | 84 | 67 | 72 | 702 |

[55]Ibid. p. 36
[56]Ite, U.E, "Turning Brain Drain into Brain Gain: Personal Reflection on Using the Diaspora Option," *African Issues,* Vol. 30, No. 1, (2002): 77,Accessed January 6, 2012, http://www.jstor.org/stable/1167096.

| | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Emigrated** | 56 | 68 | 59 | 58 | 68 | 50 | 60 | 68 | 487 |
| **Leaving (%)** | 60.20 | 5.40 | 70.20 | 68.20 | 60.20 | 59.50 | 89.60 | 94.40 | 69.40 |
| | | | | **Dentists** | | | | | |
| **Trained** | 10 | 13 | 9 | 9 | 12 | 9 | 7 | 8 | 77 |
| **Emigrated** | 2 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 4 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 21 |
| **Leaving (%)** | 20.00 | 23.10 | 33.30 | 33.30 | 33.30 | 22.20 | 28.60 | 25.00 | 27.30 |
| | | | | **Pharmacists** | | | | | |
| **Trained** | 67 | 65 | 80 | 120 | 120 | 120 | 120 | 120 | 812 |
| **Emigrated** | 29 | 27 | 35 | 53 | 49 | 24 | 58 | 77 | 352 |
| **Leaving (%)** | 43.40 | 41.50 | 43.80 | 44.20 | 40.80 | 20.00 | 48.30 | 64.20 | 43.30 |
| | | | | **Medical Laboratory Technologists/Technicians** | | | | | |
| **Trained** | 31 | 37 | 38 | 45 | 46 | 46 | 45 | 51 | 339 |
| **Emigrated** | 8 | 9 | 4 | 6 | 9 | 16 | 14 | 0 | 66 |
| **Leaving (%)** | 25.80 | 24.30 | 10.50 | 13.30 | 19.60 | 34.80 | 31.10 | 0 | 19.50 |
| | | | | **Environmental Health Specialists** | | | | | |
| **Trained** | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| **Emigrated** | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| **Leaving (%)** | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 100.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 100.00 |
| | | | | **Environmental Health Technologists/Technicians** | | | | | |
| **Trained** | 100 | 112 | 108 | 109 | 139 | 145 | 135 | 144 | 992 |
| **Emigrated** | 2 | 6 | 6 | 3 | 3 | 0 | 2 | 3 | 25 |
| **Leaving (%)** | 2.00 | 5.40 | 5.60 | 2.80 | 2.20 | 0.00 | 1.50 | 2.10 | 2.50 |
| | | | | **Nurses/Midwives** | | | | | |
| **Trained** | 975 | 911 | 868 | 814 | 1,073 | 1,037 | 1,124 | 1,074 | 7,876 |
| **Emigrated** | 195 | 182 | 174 | 161 | 215 | 207 | 205 | 214 | 1,553 |
| **Leaving (%)** | 20.00 | 20.00 | 20.00 | 19.80 | 20.00 | 20.00 | 18.20 | 19.90 | 19.70 |
| | | | | **Total** | | | | | |
| **Trained** | 1,276 | 1,242 | 1,188 | 1,182 | 1,503 | 1,441 | 1,498 | 1,469 | 10,799 |
| **Emigrated** | 292 | 295 | 281 | 284 | 349 | 299 | 341 | 364 | 2,505 |
| **Leaving (%)** | 22.90 | 23.80 | 23.70 | 24.00 | 23.20 | 20.70 | 22.80 | 24.80 | 23.30 |

**Table 3: Adapted from *Emigrating Ghanaian Healthcare Workers as a Percentage of Those Trained That Year*[57]**

[57] Bump, M. Op. Cit. Original Source Institute of Statistical, Social and Economic Research at the University of Ghana, 2003.

### 3.3.2 Benefits of the Brain Drain

While the brain drain has had very serious consequences for Ghanaian development, most notably in the area of healthcare, there have also some residual benefits. While it is not the finding of this research that these benefits outweigh the detrimental effects of the phenomenon, it is important to highlight these trends in an effort to craft more effective brain gain initiatives in the future.

#### *3.3.2.1 Remittances*

It is currently estimated that remittances make up the third largest source of foreign direct investment in Ghana. While migrants remitting money is by no means a unique feature to the West African nation, Micah Bump of Georgetown University notes that Ghanaians tend to remit money over a longer period of time than other migrants, regardless of the nation in which they settle.[58]At $119 million in 2010[59] annually, remittances do help to meet day to day living expenses of many Ghanaians; thereby improving their quality of life. Additionally, during the most challenging economic years, remittances would have provided a relatively stable source of income for families with members abroad. As articulated in 2001 by Mr. John Kufour, the then President of Ghana, in the 1980s remittances, "made the difference between the country going down completely and keeping afloat."[60]Kufour went on to note that even in the 21st century remittances make, "the difference between a reasonable standard of living and a life of deprivation." [61] Kufour's assertions are affirmed by the IOM, which reports that remittances increased recipient household income by over 50% in Ghana.[62]

Remittances have made such a difference in the lives of many Ghanaians, that families have been known to pool their resources in order to send one member abroad.[63] The expectation in turn is that this family member will assist in alleviating poverty at home through remittances and in due course potentially sponsor other members of the family to move abroad.

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[58] Bump, M. Op. Cit.
[59]World Bank, *The Migration and Remittances Factbook, 2011*, Accessed February 13, 2012, http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTPROSPECTS/Resources/334934-1199807908806/Ghana.pdf.
[60] "Homecoming Summit: The Presidents Speech," July 23, 2001, Accessed January 10, 2012 www.ghanaweb.com/GhanaHomePage/NewsArchive/artikel.php?ID=16839.
[61]Ibid.
[62]Epstein, D. "Harnessing Financial Resources from the Diaspora for the Socio-Economic Development in Africa: Insights by the International Organization for Migration"Accessed February 4, 2012, http://www.upap-papu.org/burkina_faso/presentations_burkina_faso/Remittances%20Presentation,%20February%202022%20v2%20reduced.ppt.
[63]Akurang-Perry, K.O. Op.Cit. 59.

#### *3.3.2.2 Facilitating Entrepreneurship*

Many sources note that an added benefit of skilled professionals emigrating is that they facilitate entrepreneurship within Ghana. Often migrants assist family members to start businesses, mainly micro enterprises, through capital they provide. Alternatively, there is evidence that those migrants whom do return to the nation, often themselves become entrepreneurs, bringing skills, new ideas and new products to the Ghanaian market and in the process creating jobs.

# 4 Interventions to Curb Brain Drain

Despite the two trends highlighted above, in the case of Ghana there seems to be consensus—as outlined in international discourse, national policy statements and undertakings by the Diaspora—that brain drain does have a detrimental effect on development. The common sentiment is that action should be taken to stem the loss of skills that are fundamental to economic and social growth needs to be done.

As previously articulated, this research will examine previous and existing brain drain interventions in order to understand the nature of the programs and their impact in an effort to learn from their experiences and to deduce lessons for the future.

## 4.1 Repatriation: The International Organization for Migration

One strategy to reverse the brain drain that has been employed with mixed results is that of repatriation. Generally, repatriation falls into two main categories, permanent and temporary return. In Ghana, IOM has employed both strategies in the form of the *Return of Qualified African Nationals* (RQAN) program and *Migration for Development in Africa*(MIDA).

By way of background, IOM was formed in the wake of World War II, when Europe was faced with the task of resettling approximately 11 million people affected by the armed conflict. The Provisional Intergovernmental Committee for the Movement of Migrants from Europe (PICMME), as IOM was originally known, became the Intergovernmental Committee for European Migration (ICEM) in 1952, then in 1980 the Intergovernmental Committee for Migration (ICM) finally adopting its current moniker in 1989.[64] The

[64] International Organization for Migration, *History*, http://www.iom.int/jahia/Jahia/about-iom/history/lang/en.

naming and renaming of the institution over its five decades of existence is reflective of the organization's expanded mandate and its current position as a leader in the field of international movement.

As articulated in their mission, "IOM acts with its partners in the international community to:

- Assist in meeting the growing operational challenges of migration management.
- Advance understanding of migration issues.
- Encourage social and economic development through migration.
- Uphold the human dignity and well-being of migrants."[65]

While IOM cites a dozen areas of strategic focus, those that are most relevant to this study include the organization's commitment to:

- "Undertake programs which facilitate the voluntary return and reintegration of refugees, displaced persons, migrants and other individuals in need of international migration services, in cooperation with other relevant international organizations as appropriate, and taking into account the needs and concerns of local communities."

- "Promote, facilitate and support regional and global debate and dialogue on migration, including through the International Dialogue on Migration, so as to advance understanding of the opportunities and challenges it presents, the identification and development of effective policies for addressing those challenges and to identify comprehensive approaches and measures for advancing international cooperation."

- "Assist States to facilitate the integration of migrants in their new environment and to engage diasporas, including as development partners."[66]

This work is carried out with 146 member states in over 450 offices around the world.[67]

[65] Ibid.
[66] Ibid.
[67] Ibid.

While IOM'S 2000 *Migration Policy Framework for Sub-Saharan Africa*, complains of a small African membership, today, there are 50 African nations who are full members of the international body and one that holds observer status[68].

IOM's work in sub-Saharan Africa is facilitated through three regional offices in: Dakar, which caters for West Africa; Nairobi, which oversees programs for Central and East Africa; and Pretoria, which carries out initiatives in the Southern portion of the continent.

IOM began working in Ghana in 1987, establishing an office in the capital city of Accra.[69] The organization's initial engagements with Ghana were through RQAN. Since then, IOM Accra's offerings have grown to include issues such as migrant resettlement, policy development, labor migration, as well as migration and development among many others. Given that IOM's repatriation efforts are exclusively designed to address brain drain, this research focuses on the organization's efforts to facilitate the physical return of skilled Africans, rather than other aspects of IOM's work.

### 4.1.1 Return of Qualified African Nationals

#### *4.1.1.1 Program Objectives*

In brain drain literature, one of the most often cited repatriation programs is IOM's *Return of Qualified African Nationals* intervention (sometimes referred to as the Return and Reintegration of Qualified African Nationals program). In recognition of the negative effects of brain drain on the ability of African nations to develop due to a lack of skilled human resources, RQAN was designed to explicitly link migration with development.[70] While IOM literature notes that the organization itself is not the impetus behind an African national's decision to return home,[71] they assist by removing barriers and navigating the challenges of an international move. The initiative is based on the notion that generally Africans would like to return home, but lack knowledge about employment opportunities, or the means to fund the logistics involved in the move.

[68]International Organization for Migration, *Member States,* Accessed February 8, 2012, http://www.iom.int/jahia/membberr-states and International Organization for Migration, Observer States, Accessed February 8, 2012, http://www.iom.int/jahia/jahia/partnerships/governments/observer-states.
[69] International Organization for Migration, *Ghana,* http://www.iom.int/jahia/Jahia/ghana.
[70]International Organization for Migration, *Migration Policy Frameworkfor Sub-Saharan Africa,* November 2000, Accessed February 4, 2012, http://www.iom.int/jahia/webdav/shared/shared/mainsite/about_iom/en/council/80/MC_INF_244.pdf,. . 14.
[71]Evaluation of Phase III of the Programme for the Return of Qualified African nationals, January, 2000, p 33.

#### *4.1.1.2 The Program*

Piloted from 1983 to 1987 RQAN's objective was to assist African professionals to return to three "target" countries. This initial phase was funded by the European Union (EU),in the amount of 3.3 million European Currency Units (ECU); and was designated to assist 200 people to return within a two year timeframe. Due to savings in administrative and operational costs, the target was increased to repatriate 300 skilled professionals over four years.[72]

While it seems as if IOM reached its target during the pilot phase, exactly how many African professionals were repatriated during this time is ambiguous. Some sources, emanating from IOM, note that the pilot was successful in returning 535 African professionals (excluding their dependants) to their nations of origin.[73] Yet, an evaluation of Phase III carried out in 2000, also by IOM, cites the number of relocated professionals at 351.[74][75]

In December 1986, when the Pilot Phase was completed and being assessed, in order to "sustain momentum," IOM choose to pursue bridging finance from the EU to implement the program in the interim. Funding in the amount of ECU 450,000 was awarded for the period of January 1987 through October 1987.[76]At this point in the project's life, Ghana, Uganda and Zambia were added to the list of participating nations.

RQAN was subsequently extended to a second Phase, which ran for three years from 1988 until 1991. Again funded by the EU, this time in an amount of ECU 7.3 million, Phase II of RQAN was to aid 300 professionals in returning to the designated nations. Also, an additional 120 people were to be repatriated to "non-target countries."[77]At the conclusion of Phase II, 619 African professionals—again excluding their dependants—were relocated to the continent through RQAN.

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[72]Ibid. p. 6.
[73] International Organization for Migration, Migration Policy Framework for Sub-Saharan Africa, Op. Cit. p. 14.
[74]Evaluation of Phase III of the Program for the Return of Qualified African National, January, 2000, pg 6.
[75]Discrepancies of this nature are reflected in the same assessment and in variations among other IOM statistics. The particular report, which indicates that IOM did not have a central database despite its intention to do so, noted that information between headquarters and field offices was noteasily shared. Rather, for the duration of the program, information was sent from all of the field offices to the central office where data was again captured. As such, conflicting data on the number of returnees as well as the status of various candidates was found during the evaluation. For the purposes of this study, exact figures are not paramount to the findings; what are most relevant are the general trends as well as the lessons that can be learned. With that said, in efforts to understand and combat brain drain, lack of information or inaccurate data is one of the issues that continually stymies policy formulation and assessments of effectiveness.
[76]Evaluation of Phase III of the Program for the Return of Qualified African National, January, 2000, p. 6.
[77]Ibid.

Due to a delay in confirming the extension of the project to a third Phase (the literature is silent on what precipitated this delay and if it had anything to do with the effectiveness of the project) a Bridging Phase was facilitated from 1992 through 1993. It was funded by monies earmarked for Phase III of the project.[78] In sum, 100 skilled Africans were repatriated during this two year period.

Phase III of RQAN, with an allocation of ECU 13,430,000 was then carried out from 1995 until 1999. A further 898 people were to be assisted in returning to Africa during this Phase; but along the way this target was reduced to 631 for reasons that are unknown.[79]In addition to the countries that were included in the Pilot and Phase II, a number of others were added. Again due to reasons that are not stated, the intention was to target 11 African nations; yet only ten countries took part in the program, they were: Cape Verde, Ethiopia; Ghana; Kenya; Malawi; Mozambique; Tanzania; Uganda; Zambia and Zimbabwe.[80] The third Phase was also extended by a year in order to meet reduced targets.

In total, RQAN facilitated the return of slightly more than 2,000 skilled African professionals. Again, the figures of the exact number of returnees differ in various IOM documents.

In the interest of brevity the assessment of RQAN will focus primarily on Phase III of the initiative. This approach has been adopted because having been through both a pilot and second Phase, Phase III is ostensibly the most refined version of the intervention. Additionally, Phase III took place immediately prior to the adoption of a new repatriation approach by IOM.

As explicitly stated in its *Policy Framework for Sub-Saharan Africa*, IOM's objective was, "to enhance the role and utilization of skilled, qualified and highly-qualified African nationals in the development process of their countries, as well as to support participating African countries through:

- Facilitating the return and reintegration of qualified nationals;
- Ensuring their gainful employment or self-employment at home.
- Enhancing the social and cultural reintegration of the returnees;
- Assisting African countries in establishing and strengthening institutional frameworks for the return of their own qualified nationals."[81]

[78]International Organization for Migration, Policy Framework, Op.Cit.p.14.
[79] Evaluation of Phase III for the Programme for the Return of Qualified African Nationals, January 2000, p. 1.
[80] Again, IOM documents differ in stating which countries were involved in RQAN. Those listed here are named in the evaluation of Phase III and have been verified through data presented for each country.
[81]International Organization for Migration Policy Framework. Op.Cit. p.14-15.

In support of these objectives, RQAN provided airfare for the returnee and their dependants, logistical support and job placement. IOM also provided a salary supplement of up to $800 a month for six months to a year. [82]While each package is negotiated with the returnee, generally IOM's allocation was $100,000 per case.[83]Candidates were recruited from North America and Europe through "recruitment missions" carried out by IOM staff. Similarly, "placement missions" were undertaken in target countries in order to identify entities that would benefit from the skills of returnees. By Phase III of the project, IOM had adopted an approach of working with governments to understand which industries were of priority to them and recruiting accordingly. Candidates were sought not only for government employment, but parastatals and the private sector benefited as well. Notably, a number of returnees were not employed in existing institutions, but undertook entrepreneurial initiatives upon their return home. This was not only the case in Ghana but in other countries in which RQAN was facilitated.

#### *4.1.1.3 Program Impact*

Based on RQAN's objectives as stated by IOM, the impact of the program can be assessed based on four key areas: the return of nationals; employment of returnees; the contribution of repatriated professionals to their various institutions and the nation as a whole; the reintegration of returnees into society; and RQAN's contributions to enhancing the policy frameworks of various nations.

**Return**

As relates to the physical return of nationals, RQAN Phase III was not successful from a quantitative point of view in achieving its repatriation targets. In Ghana for example, the repatriation target for the third phase was 68, yet at the time of evaluation, only 62 individuals had returned to the country through RQAN.

As noted in IOM's evaluation of the project, while repatriation targets for Ghana and other nations were not achieved, some nations—namely Zimbabwe—were more successful in meeting targets than others. Aspects of this can be attributed to changing socio-economic and political conditions within the country; indicating that greater attention would need to be paid to the selection of participating nations in the future. Given that Ghana was still under a military dictatorship in 1987, and the high number of

[82]Ngujiri, P "African Returnee Inaugurates a Ground Breaking Practice," ABG *Newsletter,* November 2004 Edition, accessed February 5, 2012, http://www.utexas.edu/conferences/africa/ads/83.html.
[83] Delete, kept same for consistency in numbering

asylum seekers originating from the country, it is somewhat surprising that the nation was included in RQAN.

Another factor that is not adequately addressed in the available literature is the length of time that returnees are expected to remain in their nation of birth. At the time of implementing the program did IOM have an expectation that RQAN would result in permanent migration or a temporary move home?[84]As noted in one media report, some professionals after returning home migrated elsewhere after being assisted by RQAN.[85]

**Employment**

A second factor that can be used to assess the impact of the program is the extent to which opportunities were secured for returnees and the length of time in which they stayed in those positions. Based on the evaluation of Phase III, this figure was rather difficult to determine as the post-settlement surveys of returnees—intended to be completed at 12 and 24 months, had low rates of completion. Structured follow up beyond those surveys then varied from mission to mission. But based on the information that was available to the evaluator, 64percent of Phase III returnees had remained in the country and were still working two to five years after their repatriation.

**Reintegration**

Another of RQAN's stated objectives was to assist in the reintegration of African professionals into their nations of origin. However, what was meant by reintegration remains unclear. As noted in the evaluation of Phase III, returnees in a number of countries established "Returnees' Associations." This was a direct result of recommendations made during the mid-term evaluation of Phase III. In forming these bodies it was understood that IOM would not bear the financial or administrative burden of facilitating them, rather the activities of the associations would be at the discretion of the members.

In Ghana, the association was registered as an NGO and was somewhat ahead of their counterparts in other nations, as some of those groups never even met. Unfortunately, information from IOM conveys that despite these concerted efforts by returnees the association had no impact.[86]

**Institutional Contribution**

A specific area in which RQAN seems to have had a significant amount of success is in the positive contributions of returnees in their various institutions. During the evaluation

[84] Evaluation of Phase III of the Programme for the Return of Qualified African Nationals, January, 2000, p. 12.
[85]Ngunjiri, P. Op.Cit.p. 3.
[86] Evaluation of Phase III of the Programme for the Return of Qualified African Nationals, January, 2000, p. 12.

of Phase III, it was reported that returnees, "were mostly specialized personnel in top and middle management…Almost (93.6%) all the returnees transferred both new knowledge, technology and management skills to the organizations and were…competent in doing so." [87] Overall the performance of returnees was deemed "outstanding." By implementing cost saving measures or strategies to generate additional revenue, 79.8% of RQAN assisted professionals contributed to the financial growth of their employer. 24.8% were regarded as having brought new skills while 39.8% were thought to have transferred those same skills.[88]

**National Initiatives**

The final objective outlined by IOM was to improve national frameworks and initiatives to address brain drain through RQAN. Yet the literature is quite clear that this did not happen. The lack of uptake of the initiative is deemed to have stemmed from a variety of factors. The first being that most states recognized that they could not afford to match IOM's offerings, so why invest time in learning to facilitate a program that could not continue?[89] The IOM evaluation further stated that while governments were generally supportive of RQAN few were actively involved. This is in part attributed to the lack of a defined role for governments in terms of an active partnership in facilitating the program.

In fact, IOM stated that there were no indications that governments would utilize recruiting abroad as a brain drain mitigation strategy moving forward. If recruiting was done, it was undertaken by a specific government department or institution of higher learning. Most commonly used were informal networks of nationals in the Diaspora or embassies and these recruitment efforts tended to take place when donor funding for the position was available. As part of their remuneration packages, the most candidates living abroad were able to obtain in most cases were airfare and housing. In many instances, the individuals recruited did not necessarily originate from the country to which they were recruited.[90]IOM's 2000 evaluation summarizes the situation stating, "There is almost no evidence that the activities of the programme itself with be continued by the governments of the countries concerned, in spite of efforts to provide exposure and training. This is in large part due to the very limited input that countries of return have in the programme." [91]

[87] The African Centre of technology Studies, Return & Reintegration of Qualified African Nationals Porgramme (RQAN III) Conclusions of the Survey and Their Accuracy: September 1999—January 2000 P. 3.
[88] Evaluation of Phase III of the Programme for the Return of Qualified African Nationals, January, 2000, p. 12.
[89]The African Centre of Technology Studies.Op.Cit.
[90] Evaluation of Phase III of the Programme for the Return of Qualified African Nationals, January, 2000, p. 22.
[91] Evaluation of Phase III of the Programme for the Return of Qualified African Nationals, January, 2000, p. 2.

#### *4.1.1.4 Lessons in Facilitating RQAN*

In assessing the efficacy of RQAN, it becomes clear that numerous challenges were encountered in facilitating the program. First, repatriation initiatives tend to be expensive. By IOM's admission, it was indeed a complex intervention that required extensive logistical coordination. Not only was IOM required to carry out recruitment missions to source candidate returnees in Europe and North America, it also had to act as a recruitment agency, keeping current records of human resources abroad and opportunities in Ghana and other host countries. The design of the program further required that program officers conduct multiple placement missions to Ghana and other participant nations. All of these factors meant that overheads were high, with administrative/staff needs comprising approximately 55% of the budget. From a monetary point of view, RQAN had a low rate of return for investment.

With that said, the success of the program should not be viewed only in terms of finance as it is impossible to calculate the cost of not having the necessary skills and human resources in developing nations.

In addition to the cost of the program, another lesson from RQAN appears to be the importance of a coordinated information strategy. As previously noted, lack of information about migration, and brain drain in particular, are problems entities in the field encounter on a daily basis. What was unexpected, however, was that within IOM's own documents there are discrepancies in the data. With significant variations in the number of returns facilitated during the pilot phase, one does wonder about the accuracy of the data and the conclusions drawn from such data. In addition to contradictions in the data, obtaining information—which would likely help to improve future brain gain activity—regarding these initiatives proved to be difficult. As Christophe Franzetti noted in correspondence, a number of IOM's reports are in hard copy only, with distribution reserved for member states.[92]

Other issues raised by the IOM experience relate to the extent to which people intend to remain in their country of origin after being repatriated. Given that program participants are highly skilled and internationally mobile, what is their propensity to relocate after being assisted by RQAN? This is an important question to examine in creating future repatriation programs. Given that considerable resources, up to $100,000 are deployed to assist individual returnees, there is an opportunity cost in their return being funded over another developmental initiative taking place. As such, one condition that could be explored is contracting émigrés to remain in their home country for a specified period of

[92]Christophe Franzetti, Email Message to ObenewaAmponsah, February 7,2012.

time. Otherwise, should they depart within a year or two of return, the very brain drain policymakers are seeking to alleviate will be exacerbated; because in addition to the skills they originally departed with, the émigré will now have utilized additional financial and human resources and an opportunity that could have been better leveraged by another returned professional. Finally, the importance of data collection cannot be over emphasized. Without accurate assessments of returnees experiences and mechanisms to track them in the future, the impact of initiatives such as RQAN cannot be empirically substantiated; making it difficult for future policymakers to effectively learn from these efforts.

### 4.1.2 MIDA

In 2001 the International Organization for Migration launched a second repatriation initiative to combat the brain drain: *Migration for Development in Africa*. Given the poor rates of repatriation, and the question of returnees again migrating after being assisted by RQAN, MIDA is intended to promote temporary and/or virtual rather than permanent repatriation.

#### *4.1.2.1 Program Objectives*

The primary objective of the program is to utilize migration to advance development through partnership with the Diaspora. Specifically, MIDA, "advocates for a comprehensive long-term strategy. This includes a broad range of actions and concepts, such as the transfer of financial and human capital, the transfer of technology and specific work skills, and migration for development."[93]

#### *4.1.2.2 The Program*

The program itself is facilitated by IOM's office at The Hague, with implementation by the Ghana team, and focuses on a range of issues as outlined in Figure 3 below.

[93]Ndiaye, N. et al. Op.Cit p. 231.

## MIDA FRAMEWORK

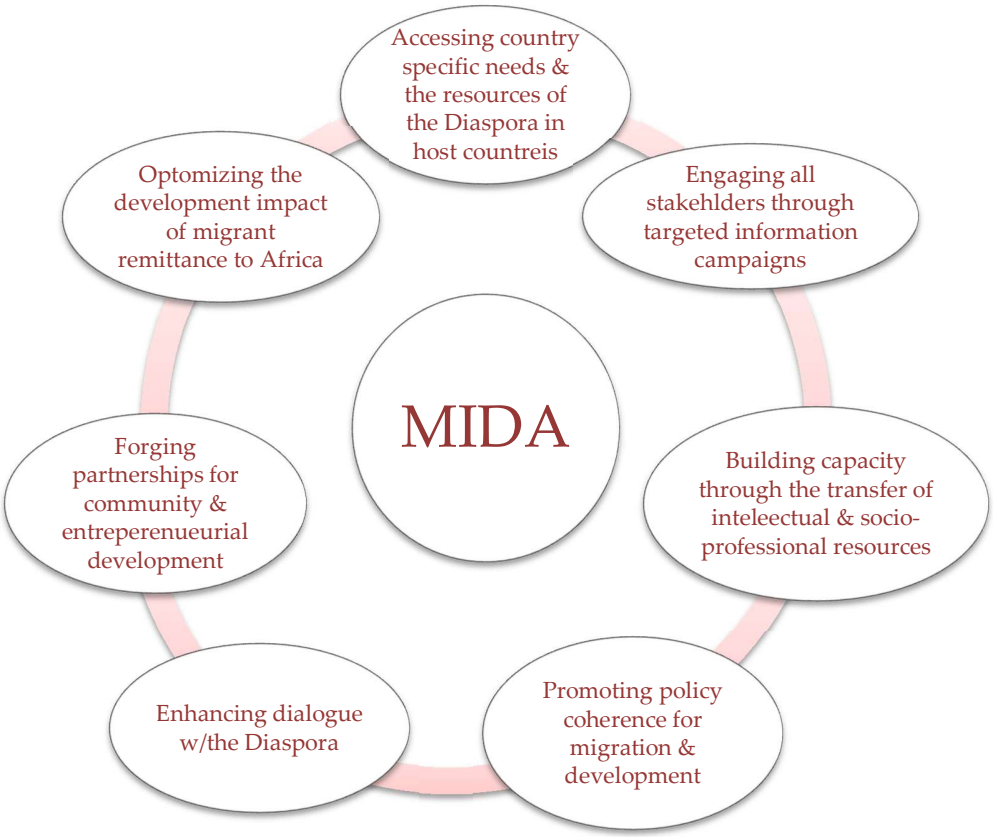



**Figure 3: Adapted From *The Migration for Development in Africa Experience and Beyond*[94]**

While MIDA touches on several aspects of migration, the focus of the program falls within three broad categories: partnering with sending governments; engaging the Diaspora; and transferring capacity.

In the case of Ghana, the program addresses migration primarily mainly in agriculture and health. For the purposes of this research MIDA's work in Ghana will be explored primarily in regard to the medical sector given the impact of the brain drain in that arena and that participants in this sector more readily fit the criteria of skilled personnel.

Specifically the MIDA Ghana Health Project targets doctors and nurses with the aim of facilitating temporary return of skilled émigrés. Engaging Ghanaian medical professionals in the European Union, the intervention enables these healthcare practitioners to travel to Ghana for up to three months. During their time in West Africa,

[94] Ibid. p. 232.

they engage in a variety of activities depending upon their competencies. These include training counterparts and students in various methods; performing procedures; and transferring technologies.

When the program began in Ghana in 2005, it reached out to Ghanaian health professionals in the Netherlands about the possibilities of volunteering in Ghana. In Phase I of MIDA Ghana, which ran from 2005 to 2008, the international NGO facilitated the temporary return of 65 émigrés. During the current and third phase of the initiative, the objective is to facilitate 150 short-term returns.[95] The current phase of MIDA is scheduled to conclude in 2012. To date, the main financial support of the project has been the Dutch government.

Beyond these temporary repatriation missions, MIDA also provides for the transfer of skills utilizing technology. By employing videoconferencing for instance, migrants abroad can teach courses at home, confer with colleagues and facilitate training, all without the cost of a return flight.

**Partnering with Governments**

As noted in the overview of RQAN, one of the challenges with the program was government ownership of the initiative. Unlike its predecessor, MIDA works more closely with nations impacted by the brain drain to target the sectors that are most in need of skilled personnel. In Ghana, therefore, the project focuses extensively on the field of healthcare.

**Diaspora Engagements**

One of the critical factors that has been acknowledged by policymakers is the seminal role then Diaspora will play in any brain drain mitigation strategy. Given that they will ultimately be the implementers of any brain gain strategy their input is invaluable. As articulated in *The Migration for Development in Africa Experience and Beyond*, "migrants are the chief agents in the establishment of linkages between migration and development, and without their strategic interventions it is not likely that initiatives on development and migration can succeed or achieve the expected results."[96]

Further, émigrés are likely to find adapting to the local environment and establishing beneficial relationships to be simpler than their counter parts who originate elsewhere. Also, members of the Diaspora tend to have a higher level of commitment to development at home, which manifests itself in that they often utilize annual leave or take unpaid leaves of absence to assist at home.

[95] Ibid p. 238.
[96] Ndiaye, N et al. Op. Cit p. 232

In order for the Diaspora to play a leading role in development, however, there are instances in which trust between émigrés and governments needs to be established. IOM's own MIDA evaluation notes that the lack of trust between Diasporas and governments is present in virtually all areas, namely, the, "political, economic and social and cultural spheres."[97] As previously noted, during the 1980s, the United Nations Human Rights Commission received nearly 90,000 asylum applications from Ghanaians. Anecdotal evidence indicates that many Ghanaians who sought political asylum would not even consider visiting the country until the then President, Rawlings, left office. Given this history, one would understand why many members of the Diaspora would have a mistrust of government and would require a period of dialogue before becoming engaged in repatriation initiatives.

Research has noted that the Diaspora has a strategic advantage in facilitating developmental projects in that "The cultural and linguistic affinity of Diaspora members and migrants with their society of origin and their ability to tackle legal barriers more easily are distinct advantages they have over more traditional development experts."[98]

The extent to which members of the Diaspora are engaged in their host communities is critical in that those who have ties with institutions can more easily mobilize assistance for Ghana. Those who are citizens of host countries have an even greater role to play in that through lobbying and voting they can influence policy towards the continent and Ghana in particular.[99]

One of the means IOM uses to build these relationships is to host videoconferences between members of the Diaspora and stakeholders in Ghana so that a common understanding of the needs, approach and overall rapport can be built. Given the expense associated with MIDA's predecessor, videoconferencing also represents a cost effective way to engage migrants with happenings at home.

In establishing relationships with communities in the Diaspora, another aspect of IOM's work has been to develop a database of individuals who are interested in participating in MIDA, their skill sets and where they are located. Currently, this database focuses on émigrés in Europe and North America.[100][101]

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[97] Evaluation of the Migration for Development in Africa (MIDA) Initiative, p. 5.
[98] Ndayie, N. et al. Op.Cit.p. 238.
[99] Ibid. p. 233.
[100] Ibid. p. 235.
[101] Beyond the database being built for the purposes of MIDA, IOM in conjunction with the International Labor Organistion has developed "African Women at the service of Union" a database featuring female leaders who are willing to contribute to the advancement of the AU's objectives. This database while not officially part of the

**Training**
A third feature of MIDA is the training and educational opportunities it affords Ghanaian medical professionals who opt not to emigrate. In particular, IOM facilitates internships and other training programs in the Netherlands and the United Kingdom. Alongside financial resources, the NGO assists with: visas and work permits; travel, accommodation and other logistics; and internship oversight.[102]

**Remittances**
In recognition of the role remittances can have in facilitating economic development, MIDA seeks to channel remittances for "specific developmental purposes." In the long-term, MIDA aims to encourage the creation of savings and loans products for families that receive funds from abroad. In tandem with the development of these services, MIDA is also facilitating enterprise development and SMME training in Ghana and other locales for the benefit of those that receive remittances.[103]

**Policies**
The final area in which MIDA seeks to have an impact is in the area of policy creation. Specifically, IOM aims to make migration an integral part of national development policies such as Poverty Reduction Strategies.[104]

Beyond influencing unilateral migration policy, MIDA also facilitates bilateral cooperation between sending and host countries and promotes multilateral activity as well. Regionally, MIDA seeks to harness the energy of African emigrants living elsewhere on the continent for the development of their home countries through fostering south-south engagement.[105]

In recognition of its efforts, MIDA was endorsed by the African Union in 2001. Further, in 2002, the 25th Ordinary Session of the Labour and Social Affairs Commission recommended that African states incorporate MIDA into their own policy making processes[106].

#### *4.1.2.3 Program Impact*

MIDA Ghana initiative is at the disposal of the Ghanaian and other governments. Additionally, the database also addresses a growing issue in the field of international movement, *The Feminization of Migration*
[102]Ndiaye, N. et al. Op. Cit. p. 239.
[103]Ibid p. 245.
[104]Ibid p. 247.
[105]Ibid p. 231.
[106]Ibid p. 248.

In terms of the impact MIDA has had thus far, indications are that it is making a difference in providing skills and learning opportunities to the health sector in Ghana. In September 2011, Dr. Kwesi Asabir, Deputy Director of Human Resources for Health Development in the Ghanaian Ministry of Health highlighted a number of MIDA's achievements during an International Dialogue on Migration. Dr. Asabir contends that through the intervention Ghanaian interns have acquired new competencies for healthcare delivery. Healthcare institutions have also benefited from equipment donations. Opportunities for future collaboration have been established through Ghanaian healthcare practitioners taking part in exchange programs and building relationships.

From a quantitative perspective, since Ghana began participating in MIDA in 2005:

- 150 temporary returns have taken place
- Over 180 émigrés have registered to participate
- A needs analysis and database detailing the needs of 90 medical facilities has been established
- 40 Ghanaian institutions are direct beneficiaries
- 10 Ghanaian students have undertaken internships in the EU
- 21,000 students and practitioners have taken part in skills development benefited from capacity building programs[107]

Commendably, MIDA's activities are not confined to Ghana's urban centers, but all 10 regions of the country have benefited from the return of skilled émigrés.[108]

The Ministry of Health also notes that there has been closer collaboration between themselves and IOM in facilitation of this program. Yet, despite the successes of short-term repatriation, the Ministry of Health is still desirous of examining long-term return of émigrés.

#### *4.1.2.4 Lessons from MIDA*

Based on the performance of MIDA thus far as articulated by the Ghanaian government, it seems as if the program has successfully built on lessons from RQAN III. Since the inauguration of the program in Ghana in 2005, MIDA has on a temporary basis returned over twice the number of people that it did during RQAN. Further, the impact has been considerable, with 21,000 individuals and 40 institutions benefiting from the capacity building programs. Some of the improvement perceived in the MIDA program may be due to better record keeping as a central database of returnees and needs has been successfully created (something which was planned but never implemented during RQAN) and improved reporting.

[107] Asabir, K. "The Case of Mobility for Health and Care Work: Ghana's Perspective," Migration Initiative Appeal 2010, Accessed February 1, 2012, http://www.iom.int/jahia/webdav/shared/shared/mainsite/mmicrosites/IDM/workshops/economic-cycles-demographic-change?session-4-Kwesi-Asbir.pdf.

[108] Ibid.

It seems, however, that the real success of MIDA lies in its very collaborative relationship with the government of Ghana, and that its initiatives speak to national priorities in a way that its predecessor did not. Further through MIDA, IOM has managed to engage the Diaspora in a manner that enables émigrés to be involved in a variety of manners that do not require radical changes for them or their families.

It is also apparent that MIDA will need to be a long-term intervention if gains from other areas of its work—i.e. structuring financial packages for beneficiaries of remittances and policy formulation—are to be realized and their impact assessed. However, MIDA is scheduled to conclude in 2012 with the possibility of other IOM temporary repatriation initiatives being facilitated in the future.

Despite the achievements of MIDA thus far, there are some who are unconvinced that a program of this nature can facilitate sustainable brain gain. As noted in *Migration & Development in Africa: An Overview*, "While this programme [MIDA] seems, in principle, to have a higher likelihood of success, its effectiveness has yet to be tested. In general, it seems likely that formalized skills return or linkage schemes coordinated by international organizations are not going to have a major impact in reversing or ameliorating the effects of the brain drain."[109]

While the findings of this research, do not agree fully with this sentiment, as MIDA has demonstrable success in building capacity in Ghanaian health institutions; there are questions about how MIDA—or similar programs can—be expanded. Expansion of these efforts is critical in that on average, Ghana loses nearly a quarter of its medical force annually; so while it is impressive that MIDA has trained 21,000 people over a seven year period, in order for the effects of brain drain to be *reversed*, much more will need to be done.

## 4.2 Initiatives by the Ghanaian Government

In the case of Ghana there seems to be consensus—as outlined in the literature, national policy statements and undertakings by the Diaspora—that brain drain does have a detrimental effect on development. The common sentiment is that government should do "something" to stem the loss of skills that are fundamental to economic and social growth. In his 2002 article, *Passionate Voices of Those Left Behind: Conversations with Ghanaian Professionals on the Brain Drain and Its Net Gains*, Kwabena O. Akurang-Parry cites a series of interviews he held with professionals in Ghana noting that, "One

[109] Southern African Migration Project, *Migration & Development in Africa: An Overview,* http://www.queensu.ca/samp/sampresources/samppublictions/mad/MAD_1.PDF, P. 99.

recurring theme of the discussion was that the Ghanaian government should do 'whatever it can to retain doctors, nurses, teachers, and others who are highly needed to keep the country going.'" Further, discussants noted, "that no efforts should be made to retain the large number of lawyers, journalists, accountants, administrators, bankers and other professionals who cannot find employment at home."[110]

From various pronouncements by the Ghanaian government there appears to be a similar perspective that brain drain within certain sectors can have a negative impact on the nation's development. Yet, there is also a point of view which clearly articulates that migration does not necessarily have to lead to have harmful outcomes; rather, Ghanaians living abroad can in fact help to facilitate improvements at home. Remittances are cited by several government sources as one of the positive aspects of brain drain in that they have helped to improve the living standards of many in the West African nation.

Therefore, in an effort to respond to the challenges precipitated by brain drain, the Ghanaian government has acted in a number of ways that speak to professionals at home and abroad. Broadly, its activities can be classified into four categories: Legislative and Policy Measures; Incentive Programs; Diaspora Linkages; and Repatriation. While brain drain affects many aspects of Ghanaian life, the most disastrous effects have been in the area of health; ostensibly this is why government has focused on the bulk of its efforts in this arena.

As relates to initiatives to repatriate Ghanaian nationals, the government of Ghana's primary vehicles have been the RQAN and MIDA programs facilitated by the International Organization for Migration and addressed in section 4.1 of this work.

### 4.2.1 Policy Measures

In exploring the measures the Ghanaian government has taken to stem the emigration of skilled migrants it is clear that the government is cognizant of the need to address brain drain in all of its complexities and is utilizing policymaking as a tool. In 2011, on the occasion of IOM's 60th anniversary, the Honorable Papa Owusu-Ankomah Ghana's Minister of the Interior, reaffirmed the importance of policy in his address, stating,

*"Understanding this complex interplay between migration and development is important for policy makers, particularly in the ongoing efforts to promote development through poverty reduction, because the actual impact of migration will depend on the policy environment…Policy*

[110]Akurang-Parry, K.O. Op. Cit., p. 57-58.

*choices made now will help to determine whether migration will maximize benefits or whether it would continue to remain a source of concern and cost."*[111]

In fact, over the years a number of policy interventions have been undertaken by the Ghanaian government. The government's approach to brain drain appears to be a collaborative one, in which a number of government entities address the issue within the ambit of their broader mandates.

**Formation of a National Migration and Development Policy**

Historically, Ghana has not had a comprehensive policy addressing migration. However, reports are that the formulation a National Migration and Development Policy is underway. It is anticipated that it will be completed during the course of 2012.[112]

**Dual Citizenship**

Even in the absence of this overarching framework, a number of other measures have been taken to harness the human, intellectual and financial assets of skilled migrants for development. A key intervention was in the form of the 2002Citizenship Regulation Act, which enables Ghanaians to hold dual citizenship. Prior to 2002, Ghanaians who obtained citizenship in their host nations, were required by the Ghanaian government to relinquish their citizenship in the West African state. This was the requirement regardless of whether a Ghanaian took citizenship in a nation that allowed dual status, such as the United States and the United Kingdom, or in countries such as the Netherlands that require exclusivity in citizenship. In implementing this act, Ghana has followed the lead of nations such as Mexico, the Philippines and India who have large migrant populations.

By creating provisions for dual citizenship, the government has created a channel for Ghanaians living abroad to influence foreign policy toward Ghana through voting and lobbying in their host nation while remaining fully vested members of the Ghanaian community.

#### *4.2.1.1 Industry Specific Policies*

Beyond national policy undertakings to mitigate against brain drain, the Ministry of Health has been most aggressive in developing policies for their practitioners to ensure that the nation benefits from their skills.

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[111]Owusu-Ankomah, P. "Promoting Policy Coherence– The Importance of Migration to the Achievement of the MDGs," Address atthe International Dialogue on Migration, November 30, 2005, http://www.iom.int/jahia/webdav/site/myjahiasite/shared/shared/mainsite/microsites/IDM/sessions/90th/docs/pdf/Ghana_90th.pdf.

[112]Owusu-Ankomah, P. Op. Cit.

Housmanship Policies

But one such policy pertains to *housemanship.* As is the practice in many nations, upon finishing their coursework, Ghanaian medical and dental practitioners are required to undertake an internship under the tutelage of more advanced professionals. In 2004the Ministry of Health reverted to previous practices and extended the housemanship term from one year to two. The policy document is explicit in stating that the return to the longer period of service is in part due to the shortage of personnel in rural and other underserved communities. With greater numbers of interns, the Ministry of Health will have additional personnel to attend to the needs of communities. Further, by extending the housemanship period it is anticipated that new professionals will build a better foundation for their careers and ostensibly improve the quality of their care.[113]

The Ministry of Health's approach further provides for punitive measures against candidates who do not complete their housemanship before emigrating. By way of example, in one year 17 doctors and dentists were required to retake the Medical and Dental Council's examination and to fulfil their housemanship term because they failed to do so previously.[114] Similarly, recent graduates who fail to begin their housemanship within two months of graduation must take another examination before being allowed to register with the Medical and Dental Council.[115] Registration with the Council is critical because the national body approves qualification verifications from abroad.

Along these lines, the Ghana Nurses and Midwifes Council refuses to verify the qualifications of nurses who go abroad to practice but do work in Ghana for a minimum of two years impacting their ability to secure employment.[116]

While there is some evidence that these measures are effective in delaying the migration of healthcare professionals, gaps exists in the system which make them unreliable means of skills retention. First, the data collection and management system to monitor that healthcare practitioners have fulfilled their requirements is lacking by all accounts; so it is difficult to track who has actually complied with the policy. Further, the implementation of the policy is inconsistent, enabling many healthcare professionals to emigrate without making the required national contribution.

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[113]Medical and Dental Council Ghana, *HousemanshipTraining Policy,* January 2008, Accessed February 7, 2012, http://www.mdcghana.org/pdfs/MDC%20Ghana%20Housemanship%20Policy.pdf.

[114]Anarfi, J. and Kwankye, S. "Migration from and to Ghana: a Background Paper," Development Research Centre on Migration, Globalisation and Poverty, December 2003, Accessed February 6, 2012, http://www.migrationdrc.org/publicatins/working_papers/WP_C4.pdf, p. 32.

[115]Ibid.

[116] Bump, M. Op. Cit.

Although some may view such measures as being punitive and unfair to the individual who desires to emigrate, it is important to remember that health training in Ghana is free to the student with the costs borne by the state. Therefore, an expectation around a specified period of national service is reasonable.

A National Human Resources for Health Plan

As part of the brain drain mitigation effort, the government of Ghana has developed and is phasing in a new plan to ensure that the health sector is adequately resourced. In addition to increasing the number of students—which is challenging considering there has not been an increase in the available financial resources—the plan calls for further capacitating existing personnel. Specifically, the National Human Resources for Health Plan indicates that mid-level health practitioners—medical assistants—should be trained to take over some of the duties currently performed by doctors. Reports indicate that this has been a successful strategy in other parts of Africa as mid-level professionals, tend to emigrate less than doctors and are more willing to undertake assignments in underserved rural areas.[117]

This same plan also calls for salary increases and more incentives to encourage professionals to remain in the country.

### 4.2.2 Incentives

Incentives began in earnest in 2000[118],among the incentives that have been called for is a general improvement in the conditions of service for health professionals. Some of the specific measures the government of Ghana hopes to implement are improved pay as well as better equipped facilities. These incentives are, however, to a large extent contingent upon the government mobilizing the necessary resources.

In the interim, government has instituted an *Additional Duty Hours Allowance*, which seeks to pay doctors and nurses for overtime work. Currently, the remuneration structure of Ghana's medical service is rather flat, with professionals generally not being paid more for heavier workloads or practicing in rural areas. The Additional Duty Hours Allowance was meant to speak to some of this disparity. While it is reported that the program was initially popular with doctors, it had little effect on nurses' patterns of behavior because their salaries were so low to begin with.[119] There is currently little information on the

[117] Global Health Workforce Alliance, *Country Case Study Ghana: Implementing a National Human Resources for Health Plan,* Accessed February 7, 2012, http://www.who.int/workforcealliance/knowledge/resources/casestudy_ghana/en/index.html, p. 2.
[118] Bump, M. Op. Cit.
[119] Ibid.

specific impact of the Additional Duty Hours Allowance, however, since 2000 emigration among healthcare professionals has continued unabated as detailed in Table 3.

Similarly a plan to provide affordable vehicles to registered members of the Ghana Medical Association by purchasing them and then leasing them to healthcare practitioners has had seemingly little effect on nurses because a limited amount of vehicles were made available to them.[120]

### 4.2.3 Bilateral & Multilateral Agreements

Yet another tool utilized by the Ghanaian government to combat brain drain is bilateral agreements. As reported in the Ghanaian media in 2007, Germany—one of the major host countries for migrant Ghanaians—has committed to ensuring that Ghanaians who spend five years or more in the European nation return home for at least one year to lend their skills to Ghana.[121]This pronouncement builds upon several years of collaboration between the two countries to mitigate the effect of the brain drain.

### 4.2.4 Diaspora Outreach

A third area in which government has made demonstrable strides is that of engaging the Diaspora. As articulated by Ndayie, et al in their assessment of MIDA and its effectiveness, the Diaspora is the central determinant in whether emigration leads to development or decline. This is particularly relevant in the case of Ghana, in which approximately 12 percent of the nation's people—excluding second generation Ghanaians—live outside of the national borders. Historically, even before Ghana became a nation of emigration, the Diaspora has played a key role in the progress of the country. Ghana's first President, Kwame Nkrumah was himself a repatriated national. Having studied at Lincoln University, a historically black institution in the United States, Dr. Nkrumah then studied at the London School of Economics. It was during these times abroad that he was influenced by the ideas of people such as Marcus Garvey and George Padmore, who inspired his involvement in the liberation project.

In the contemporary era, as an initial step in harnessing the skills of the Diaspora, the government hosted a *Homecoming Summit* in 2001, in which Ghanaians living abroad came to Accra to discuss how they can facilitate economic development. During the

[120] Ibid.
[121] "Germany will Partner with Ghana to Curb the Brain Drain," January 2007, Accessed February 2, 2012, http://www.ghananewsagency.org/details/Economics/Germany-will-partner-Ghana-to-curb-brain-drain/?ci=3&ai=2224.

course of the summit, then President John Kufour, himself a returned migrant, affirmed the role of the Diaspora stating, "All of you Ghanaians, living abroad, members of the Diaspora, for want of a better term, constitute the single most important development partner of the nation."[122]

In 2003, as an outcome of the summit, a Non-Resident Ghanaians Secretariat was created to serve as a structured means for ongoing engagement between stakeholders in Ghana and those that live abroad. As noted in media reports, the Secretariat was moved to the Ghana Investment Promotion Centre (GIPC); yet GIPC "is chronically under resourced." This state of affairs has resulted in the Secretariat being without staff or a budget.[123]

It should be noted that to a large extent, the government's embrace of the Diaspora began in earnest at the turn of the century, when the Rawlings regime was succeeded in office by the New Patriotic Party. This is in many ways unsurprising given that Ghana's rate of outmigration grew exponentially during the years of the Rawlings government and that many members of Ghana's Diaspora were fleeing persecution at home. It is unclear whether the lack of outreach to the Diaspora during Rawlings' terms of office is related to political considerations—many émigrés were considered enemies of the state—or to the benefits gained through remittances at a time when the nation was in dire need of foreign exchange. However, given the extent to which mistrust features in discussions around the Diaspora's engagement with countries of origin, it is unlikely that a structured engagement of Ghanaian's living abroad would have had substantial results during those years.

Ghana has also extended its outreach to the Diaspora beyond individuals of Ghanaian origin; rather, the country is making appeals for all people of African descent to consider the West African nation home. There is historic precedent for this approach given that Ghana is widely considered the home of Pan-Africanism and its founding father Kwame Nkrumah one of the leading practitioners of the ideology. As far back as the 1950s and 1960s, prominent African-Americans such as Maya Angelou and Malcolm X visited Ghana.[124] Notably W.E.B. DuBois, the eminent African-American educator, philosopher and activist, relocated to Ghana in 1963 and is laid to rest there. At the notorious Elmina Castle, from which many Africans departed for the Americas through the door of no return, government has been at pains to rebrand the portal, *the door of return.*

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[122]"Homecoming Summit: The President's Speech," July 23, 2001, accessed January 10, 2012, www.ghanaweb.com/GhanaHomePage/NewsArchive/artikel.php?ID=16839.

[123] Benjamin, C. "Brain Drain and Remittance Revenue: Cost, Benefit, Analysis" *The Statesman,* June 1, 2007 http://www.thestatesmanonline.com/pages/news_detail.php?newsid=1913&section=7.

[124]Polgreen, L. "Ghana's Uneasy Embrace of Slavery's Diaspora," *The New York Times*, December 27, 2005, Accessed September9, 2007, http://www.nytimes.com/2005/12/27/international/africa/27ghana.html?pagewanted=all.

In reaching out to both people of Ghanaian descent and broader African descent, the government is encouraging people to think of the nation as a place to "visit, invest,, send their children to be educated and even retire…"[125] To make this vision a reality, Ghana is considering options to provide special lifetime visas for members of the Diaspora and to modify requirements of citizenship, which currently require residence, Ghanaian birth or parentage.

### 4.2.5 Lessons from Ghanaian Brain Gain Interventions

In examining Ghana's various efforts to stem brain drain, there are three major factors that seem to hamper these initiatives. The first is a lack of reliable data with which to craft and subsequently measure the impact of initiatives. So opportunities to modify failing aspects of programs are lost as is the potential to build upon elements that have helped to retain skilled professionals.

The second matter that further bedevils Ghana is the pull factor, which will continue to drain the nation of its talent without a concerted intervention by policymakers. The lack of tools with which to address the pull factors also highlights another shortcoming in Ghana's brain drain mitigation efforts: the lack of a cohesive policy. While a National Migration Policy Framework is purportedly in the works, to date brain gain activity has been conducted by a number of actors at the national level in a seemingly ad hoc manner. While positive in that the myriad of interventions is evidence that the problem of brain drain is one that relevant actors are cognizant of and acting on, the disparate approach has meant that individual efforts do not benefit from a well defined strategy, collective action or the pooling of resources.

A final matter restraining government interventions is that of funding; which ironically is one of the foundational causes of brain drain. Without adequate resources to implement national policies and incentives programs, the likelihood of any intervention being successful is nil. The challenge for Ghana then is to find alternative means to fund these activities without further straining already burdened budgets.

# 5 Lessons from Existing Interventions to Mitigate the Brain Drain

[125] Ibid.

As outlined above, a number of measures to mitigate the negative effects of Ghana's brain drain have been implemented for more than two decades; yet the migration of skilled professionals has not only continued, but grown. Despite the fact that none of these efforts have yet produced a "definitive" response to brain drain, they do offer a number of valuable lessons that can assist in formulating future brain gain activities. From this research four key areas of intervention to mitigate the effects of brain drain have been identified: a paradigm shift; data collection; increased bilateral and multilateral action; and redefining the target audience of initiatives.

## 5.1 Paradigm Shift

Based on this research it is clear that in order to manage the ill effects of brain drain, a paradigm shift in the way policymakers and developmental experts think about migration is required. While Ghana's migration patterns in the latter half of the 20th century were largely fuelled by hardship at home; it is becoming increasingly clear that migration today is driven less by negative conditions and more by opportunities. As van Dalen et al note, Ghana is a nation that over the years has developed a *culture of migration*. In short, many people want not only the economic benefits of working abroad, but also the sense of experience and adventure that comes with it. With improved economic conditions in the country, emigration is increasingly becoming an attainable goal for many Ghanaians. Further expanding the opportunities for Ghanaians to migrate are the large communities that can be found in North America and Europe. Family members established in northern nations often sponsor other members to emigrate and assist by linking them to networks that provide employment prospects, educational opportunities and social support. While Europe and North America have historically been the main hosts of emigrant Ghanaians, contemporary literature on brain drain as well as emerging evidence indicate that there are also growing Ghanaian communities in the Middle East and other places in Africa.

In short, migration is not a trend that looks like it will abate with improvements in Ghana's socio-economic conditions, rather it will only increase. With that in mind, policymakers and development practitioners need to begin to examine the emigration of skilled professionals as opportunities for further growth and development. Additionally, the opportunities need to be viewed beyond the conventional benefits of the repatriation of a few skilled individuals or remittances. For instance, the government itself could be a sender of skilled migrants within well defined parameters. Additional thoughts on specific interventions that can be created based on this new paradigm, which is increasingly being referred to in the literature as brain circulation, are elucidated below.

## 5.2 Availability of Information

A second area in which concerted action is required is in the provision of information to would be returnees and members of the Diaspora. In each of the initiatives reviewed here, as well as in the dominant literature, it is clear that by and large Ghanaians maintain strong ties with their country of origin, and if the opportunity were to present itself would consider return immigration or other substantial means of engagement with the West African nation. Yet, although Ghana has policies and bare bones structures such as the Non-Resident Ghanaians Secretariat in place, these have largely been ineffective because their offerings are inaccessible to the average member of the Diaspora. As noted by Bump, despite the existence of temporary or permanent repatriation channels, when polled generally Ghanaians are unaware of them.

Rather, Ghana should look at the creation of one central unit that would coordinate all brain gain activity for the nation. These activities would entail collecting statistics on inward and outward migration; mapping the Diaspora; as well as providing Diaspora investment, relocation and employment information—basically establishing a one stop shop. This proposed migration management unit would also be responsible for coordinating all migration related policies across the various ministries and monitoring and evaluating the impact of brain drain mitigation efforts. Further, the migration management unit would liaise with other key entities, such as embassies, high commissions, NGOs and businesses seeking to recruit in Ghana to ensure that procedures and policies are clear and adhered to. Conversely, the migration management unit could also serve as a listening agent for government and development practitioners, incorporating feedback about barriers to return emigration, unethical hiring practices and best practices into Ghanaian brain gain initiatives moving forward.

## 5.3 Increased Bilateral Action

Yet another tool the Republic of Ghana can use more effectively is that of bilateral and multilateral action. As highlighted above, the German government has made overtures to Ghana regarding the deployment of Ghanaians living in the Western European state to assist in development efforts at home. There are, however, more aggressive positions that can be taken by Ghana, particularly in the area of recruitment of essential personnel by foreign governments.

For some time, recruitment practices of nations in the global north, particularly as relates to the health sector, have been heavily criticized. In particular England, whose National Health System faces a chronic shortage of medical professionals, has been on the

receiving end of such criticism. In 1999 the UK issued recruitment guidelines to all those involved in health recruitment. These guidelines indicated that direct recruitment should not be undertaken in South Africa, who had previously made diplomatic appeals about the harmful effect of the migration of its medical professionals. In the case of the UK this was one of the earliest initiatives aimed at creating a national, ethical, framework to address these concerns.[126]

According to a 2002 study on the UK's recruitment of nurses, "Registration data suggests that the 1999 guidelines may have had some short-term impact in reducing recruitment from South Africa and the Caribbean, but that this recruitment activity may have then been displaced to other developing countries."[127] Ghana was one of those nations that saw an increase in the emigration of its skilled personnel to the United Kingdom. So, in addition to implementing proactive retention strategies, Ghana must guard against consequences of other nations taking more stringent action against brain drain.

Further, in line with a paradigm shift around skilled migration and its potential benefits, the Ghanaian government should begin to view training for migration as a viable revenue generator. As evidenced by the exodus of Ghanaian medical professionals and the recognition of their qualifications in foreign countries, Ghana should consider training healthcare workers specifically for migration to partnering countries. Partnering countries, for instance the UK, would be nations that have chronic shortages of health personnel and already recruit within Ghana. The understanding would be that these personnel would be trained in Ghanaian norms and standards as well as those aspects of health care that are specific to the United Kingdom. In exchange for this steady flow of personnel, the host government would cover the fees for the cost of training each medical professional as well as a substantial fee that would be deployed to train additional personnel and to improve the general conditions of service in the Ghanaian health system. From graduates, candidates would then be selected by the receiving government with strict provisions around the length of their stay abroad. In the event that individuals opt to stay for longer than the agreed upon period, punitive measures—implemented by the host government—such as a tax on wages or once off fee would apply. These funds would then revert to Ghana to provide further training in the healthcare sector.

In this scenario, which would clearly require deeper inquiry and financial modeling, the host government would benefit from a steady supply of healthcare personnel, while adhering to ethical practices, and in all probability reducing their recruiting costs while alleviating pressure on their medical systems. Ghana would benefit by ensuring that

[126] Buchan, J. "International Recruitment of Nurses: United Kingdom Case Study," July 2002, Accessed February 4, 2012, http://eresearch.qmu.ac.uk/18/1/JBreport.pdf.
[127] Ibid. p. 18.

brain circulation takes place and additional funding is available to increase wages, improve facilities and in the long run address the underlying challenges of brain drain.

### 5.4 Target Audience

Finally, in an effort to mitigate the brain drain, Ghana should consider targeting different age groups within the Diaspora. To date, most interventions seem to focus on mid-career professionals. However, brain gain initiatives should pay more attention to individuals nearing retirement or beginning their careers. Generally, mid-career professionals would be in their 30s or 40s, focused climbing the professional ladder and in most cases would have dependents to cater for. These circumstances would make permanent or even temporary migration challenging. However, those professionals that are nearing the end of their careers may be more willing to return to Ghana. This is evidenced throughout the literature in which many people indicate they would like to go home at some point. Given exchange rates, many Ghanaians living abroad may consider moving back to the country because their retirement savings would go that much further. This fact—coupled with incentives such as free land to build homes, duty free importing of personal effects and provision of specialized medical care—could induce many Ghanaians to spend the last five years of their careers—or to work for an additional two or three years beyond retirement—in Ghana.

Similarly, Ghana should consider equivalent measures to attract young people in the Diaspora who are beginning in their careers. While they would not bring the wealth of professional experience that their seniors would, this constituency would certainly bring energy and innovation. Employing a model similar to the Peace Corps, the government of Ghana could invite young professionals of Ghanaian or other descent to work in strategic industries for two to three years in exchange for housing and a stipend. More cost effective than hiring permanent employees, this strategy would increase the capacity of key industries while providing young people with valuable and much sought after international experience.

## 6 Conclusion

Through this research it has been demonstrated that while brain drain has historically been driven by one or more of the following issues--namely economic hardship, political instability, inadequate social services, questions of African identity and opportunities presented by the north—there are other factors that underlie today's brain drain. One of the main ones in Ghana is that the nation has developed a culture of migration. This cultural phenomenon is underpinned by historic factors, contemporary opportunities

and the ever growing networks of Ghanaians outside of the nation. As such, any measures that seek to mitigate brain drain must contend with this new reality.

In order to better understand what interventions have taken place to date, and to extrapolate lessons for the future, this research explored measures taken by Ghana and the International Organization for Migration. While learnings have occurred over the years and improvements made to various measures, much still remains to be done to ensure that the nation is not crippled by the exodus of skilled personnel; but that all Ghanaians, regardless of geographic location, are agents of development.

Among the areas identified for improvement are: a paradigm shift in how the migration of skilled professionals is viewed; the provision of comprehensive information detailing the many ways in which the Diaspora can contribute to national development; increased bilateral action; and a broadening of the audience targeted for brain gain initiatives.

While this research does provide some cursory concepts on how the effects of brain drain can be better addressed, it is by no means comprehensive. Brain drain is in itself a complex and at times contested issue. This research is therefore meant to be an initial foray into examining how the various initiatives work together to ensure that sending nations benefit from the skills of their nationals. Other avenues for investigation that would enhance this dialogue include initiatives undertaken by actors beyond the IOM and Ghana's national government.

First, this research focused primarily on measures to combat brain drain within Ghana's healthcare sector given the profound impact the phenomenon has had in that industry. Other industries such as science and technology as well as education are also beginning to become the focus of brain drain interventions—although to a lesser extent—and would benefit from additional study.

There are also a number of other efforts underway by non-governmental institutions within Ghana such as the Justice and Human Rights Institute; which is running the *Equal Work, Equal Pay* campaign to ensure that Ghanaians hired within the country are remunerated at the same rate as expatriates who hold comparable positions in Ghana. Further, members of the Diaspora have engaged in countless initiatives to advance development at home and these efforts are also deserving of a platform for greater dialogue and deliberation.

With that said, the issue of brain drain—in Ghana and elsewhere—would also be better understood if other aspects of human movement were explored. For instance, the feminization of migration, and its attendant patterns of remittance, repatriation and

culturization will help in predicting, and therefore planning for, the long-term effects of the increasing rates of emigration among women. Similarly, what happens to the flow of remittances and the propensity of skilled migrants to return home in times of economic crisis, such as the world has experienced since 2008 would be another relevant area of study. Finally, with the diasporization of Ghanaians to new locations, such as the Middle East, what are the opportunities for strategic engagement in new industries or the acquisition of new skill sets to advance development?

These, and many more questions, represent just a few of the possible avenues for ongoing research into the seminal topic of brain drain. In the interim, the experiences of IOM and the Republic of Ghana provide valuable insights that can be utilized in crafting more effective interventions to ensure that Africa is able to benefit from its most valuable resource of all: its people.

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