

## AD3 2020

# Scaling Fences: Exploring New Pathways for African Migration

### July 3<sup>rd</sup> 2020 – Online Meeting via Zoom

#### Chair Introduction

**Stella Opoku-Owusu**, Deputy Director, African Foundation for Development (AFFORD)

#### Co-host Introduction

**Elizabeth Donnelly**, Deputy Director, Africa Programme, Chatham House.

Chatham House's 100<sup>th</sup> year, thanks you for its contribution to development in Africa

#### Chair House Rules and Speaker Introductions

- **Dr Jesper Bjarnesen**, Senior Researcher, Nordic Africa Institute
- **Dr Jide Okeke**, Regional Programme Coordinator for Africa, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)
- **Professor Francis Omaswa**, Executive Director, African Center for Global Health and Social Transformation (ACHEST)

#### Opening Remarks – Stella Opoku-Owusu

- Jobs are central to development currently the African continent has approximately 1.2 billion people with 20,000,000 people who come into the job market every single year.
- According to the World Bank data, by 2100 the African continent will need to find somewhere in the range of 100 million jobs per year for new entrants into the workforce.
- COVID-19 is having an impact on the world of work globally including in Africa with no firm indication of when economies will bounce back to life.
- There is also an acute need for Labour mobility however it's important that we acknowledge that we have what we describe as a dysfunctional global framework which allows for movement of goods, services and capital, but there seems to be no equitable movement of Labour.
- At AFFORD we advocate consistently for a new approach to labour mobility from Africa. We support our young people to develop enterprises, provide them with more relevant economic opportunities at home.
- The UNDP report scaling fences has documented a number of motivating factors from those young people who have made the journey into Europe via irregular routes and it explores the push and pull factors from a human lens to discuss practical suggestions on what this means for young Africans

## Speaker 1 - Dr Jide Okeke, Regional Programme Coordinator for Africa, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)

- The research was to provide evidence that would allow us to make a connection and better understand what migration means to development and what development means to migration.
- It is important for us to begin to understand our collective history in order to also understand how to shape migration policies that would be more fit for purpose in the future.
- It was important to focus on irregular migrants to better understand the psychology of migration and the voices of those that are often marginalised when it comes to the discourse on irregular or illegal migration.
- Methodology
  - We looked at the experiences of irregular migrants and their social circumstances from their countries of origin. This was one of the factors that shaped our conclusions.
  - The second was from their own narrative and from their own experiences analyse their motivations for travelling to Europe irregularly.
- All respondents that we interviewed were based in Europe. We interviewed over 3000 respondents and their own self-declared analysis looked at what shaped their aspirations.
- Respondents interviewed were from across 17 locations in Europe across 13 countries and despite how deliberate we were in this research, it has limitations.
- As there was no predetermined list of irregular migrants, there was no way of conducting random sampling and this has an impact on the report. It is also important to emphasise that some of the respondents that we interviewed were in the process of filing or actually had filed an application for asylum in their country of residence and so this may have affected or shaped their responses too.
- Only 23% were women whilst the rest were male. In terms of routes, to Europe 91% came via sea and 2% came via air using fake passports.

### Core Findings

1. Contrary to expectation 85% of irregular migrants came from urban centres.
2. Most of those interviewed had some level of education. 57% had at least a secondary school education and this reflected in their aspirations and their development needs.
3. The third point was around their relationship with their governments. 77% of those that we interviewed, felt that they were not sufficiently represented by their governments and had very low confidence. This breakdown between the social contract between state and society tends to influence why people want to leave.

4. Half of those that we interviewed worked back in their country of origin. Therefore unemployment was not the primary driver for irregular migration. Emphasis can be placed on the mismatch between interviewee aspirations and the opportunities in their country of origin.
  5. Most left relatively good jobs, some of them were civil servants in their country of origin, but in Europe the irregular migrants were likely doing unskilled labour - cleaning, picking fruits and other manual jobs.
  6. Respondents experienced deprivation and loneliness associated with irregular migration but despite that, most of the irregular migrants felt that this was a pathway for fulfilling their aspirations.
- To conclude, we really need to rethink the overall discourse and notion of migration.

## **Speaker 2 - Dr Jesper Bjarnesen, Senior Researcher, Nordic Africa Institute**

Comments were organised around 2 broad points,

1. The findings of the report resonate with established migration and mobility research
  2. Reflections on the strategic potential of this report
- The expectation that the people who crossed the Mediterranean towards Europe from Africa would be the poorest of the most desperate people has been debunked in academic research.
  - A certain amount of resources to be able to migrate are needed in the first place and that migrants are predominantly quite well educated urban based and have a higher income than the national average. This resonates with established migration research.
  - The report confirms the understanding that the vast majority of people who endeavour this kind of dangerous journey are well aware of the risks they are taking and they make a qualified decision about the risks they take on the basis of what they might achieve from that journey.
  - It is important to challenge the idea that campaigns to disincentivise migrants on the African continent will be effective. The sort of video campaigns or newspaper articles arguing that 'You know the journey is too dangerous don't try it' do not really work and I think the findings here confirmed that.
  - I think the report also confirms that even irregular migrants eventually do become assets to the receiving communities and that integration happens also with the next generation.
  - One advantage that the UNDP has over academic research is efficiency in bringing the data and these findings out to readership. Academic publishing is famously slow so you will probably see similar findings and similar arguments coming out from academics in 2-4 years.
  - There is a clear bridge between policy and research that we at the Nordic Africa Institute are also trying to bridge.

- I think that this report and the UNDP's position is an obvious bridge between the 2030 agenda for sustainable development on the one hand and migration governance on the other. Bringing in a more holistic view of human development into the migration governance field could be a valuable contribution.
- One of the main obstacles to good policy and migration is public opinion in Europe and I think that the communication skills and the sort of elegance of this kind of report could help inform public opinion in Europe to enable policymakers and decision makers to move forward on more efficient policies.

### **Speaker 3 - Professor Francis Omaswa, Executive Director, African Center for Global Health and Social Transformation (ACHEST)**

- There is now what is called a global health workforce crisis. There is a widespread shortage of health professionals, the working conditions are problematic and, often, where there are health workers their treatment is not always fair.
- At the World Health Assembly there was discussion over how to share a global pool of health workers and they agreed to develop what is called the [WHO code on the international recruitment of health workers](#). This code is comprehensive and takes care of our health workers who are migrants. In the countries where the health professionals are recruited it addresses strengthening health systems where health workers are heading but also in the countries from where health workers come from.
- The code also addresses the drivers.
  - The code looks at demographic realities and the fact that northern countries, do not have sufficient young people. They have ageing populations and young people who would rather get jobs in investment or banking.
  - Because of ageing population, northern countries will need health workers from other parts of the world.
  - Africa has a large proportion of young people who are not sufficiently trained or in the case of those are trained as nurses and doctors they are not able to retain their job because of the inability to pay.
- Many professionals in Africa find that they have skills which are needed globally but are not fully appreciated by the indigenous people. Awareness of this demand places pressure on individuals by family to migrate to Europe and earn money to help the family.
- I would like to end by appealing to AFFORD, partners and also my friend from Norway, lets share the global pool of health workers, let the rich countries work with the poorer countries to train this large pool of young people.
- 80% of all member states have signed up to each write reports annually about what they are doing about health recruitment but the behaviour is different when we passed this 10 years ago there was a lot of enthusiasm. The USA promised to train 140,000 new health workers in Africa, the Scandinavian countries also, including Norway, gave money to countries as did Japan and so on, but in the last five years this interest has died.

- Money has dried up for partnerships and yet they are needed now more than ever. I want us to refer to the global compact for safe and orderly migration. This is an opportunity which those young people in the UNDP study can be helped better because they are needed where they are going. Let us create a better life both for people in the South and us in the North in a win win partnership.

## Discussants - Helen Dempster

In general there is a massive lack of evidence on irregular migrants, their drivers and what happens to them after they move. We see global development has long worked on both the inter relationship between migration and development and also that there is the need for new legal migration pathways.

Today evidence shows that immigration and development actually go hand in hand up to a point, as people become richer and more educated they gain more desire and more ability to move and I think this can clearly be seen in the report's findings with many of the respondents being more educated, richer and more urban than the average population.

Europe needs these migrants. Europe is suffering from huge demographic decline and the skills gaps in a number of professions such as health workers, is a great example that OECD countries are going to need hundreds of thousands of doctors nurses and care workers in the coming decades, so to make sure that migration in the future is both legal and safe, and contributes to development in both continents, we need to create new legal pathways and couple this with robust border enforcement.

Click here to watch the [AD3 Event: Scaling Fences – Exploring New pathways for African Migration](#)

## Next Steps

AFFORD will be carrying on the dialogue with our event partners, UNDP and Chatham House, to look at how to take these conversations and recommendations forward. To stay connected and kept up to date with AFFORD events, resources and policy work please sign up to our database <https://www.afford-uk.org/contact-us/>.

In the health sector AFFORD is particularly interested in supporting ACHEST in its campaign to enhance the take up of the voluntary WHO Global Code of Practice on the International Recruitment of Health Personnel, as well exploring the opportunities compensations schemes for poor countries with fragile health systems who lose their health workers after investing in training them.

Finally, it is interested to explore support for regular pathways for much needed health care sector workers and the provision of targeted training as part of an overall programme of improving vocational training programmes for young people, which would enhance opportunities for regular migration.

## Further information

### About AFFORD

AFFORD is a registered charity with offices in the UK and Sierra Leone. Our mission is to expand and enhance the contributions that Africans in the diaspora make to Africa's development, especially supporting enterprises to create sustainable jobs.



## About Chatham House

Chatham House, also known as the Royal Institute of International Affairs, is a not-for-profit and non-governmental organisation based in London whose mission is to analyse and promote the understanding of major international issues and current affairs. It is the originator of the Chatham House Rule.

## About UNDP

The United Nations Development Programme is the United Nations' global development network. It advocates for change and connects countries to knowledge, experience and resources to help people build a better life for themselves.

## Speaker Bios

**Dr Jide Okeke, Regional Programme Coordinator for Africa, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)** For over 15 years, Dr. Okeke worked for leading academic/research institutions, international/ regional organizations and governments, where he lent his expertise on governance, peace, and security across more than 20 countries in Africa. Recently, he was the Head of Policy Development/Civilian Coordinator on Peace operations at the African Union Commission in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. Dr. Okeke holds an MPA from Harvard University, MA in Conflict Resolution (Bradford), and a PhD in Development Politics from Leeds University, UK.

<https://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/librarypage/democratic-governance/ScalingFences.html>

**Dr Jesper Bjarnesen, Senior Researcher, Nordic Africa Institute** Jesper Bjarnesen is an anthropologist working mainly on migration and mobility through wartime and peace in West Africa. Other interests is wartime displacement, intergenerational relations, rural-urban connections, informal labour recruitment, transnational migration and urban land rights. Jesper is Co-founder of the AMMODI network [external link, opens in new window.](#)

<https://nai.uu.se/>

**Professor Francis Omaswa, Executive Director, African Center for Global Health and Social Transformation (ACHEST)**

Francis Omaswa is the Executive Director of the African Center for Global Health and Social Transformation based in Kampala, Uganda. Previously he has served as founding Executive Director of the Global Health Workforce Alliance at WHO, Geneva, Director General of Health Services in Uganda, President of the African Platform on Human Resources for Health and Chancellor of Busitema University in Uganda. He is a member of the Expert Advisory Group that reviewed the relevance and effectiveness of the WHO Code on the International Recruitment of Health Personnel.

<https://www.achest.org/>



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