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**Diaspora Health Professionals:
Contributing to Health System
Strengthening in Africa**

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Outline

- Introduction
- Study: diaspora engagement in Ghana and Northern Somalia
- Common issues
- Challenges
- Lessons learnt



Key message

- Diaspora health professionals have a role to play in health systems strengthening



Diaspora health professionals as stakeholders

- How?
 - Temporary returns
 - Direct services provision
 - Knowledge transfer (teaching)
 - Financial and material resources (equipment)





IOM MIDA Initiative



- *Migration for Development in Africa (MIDA)*
- HR capacity-building initiative
- Demand-driven
- Match local needs with skills in diaspora
- Assignments between 1-12 weeks
- Skills transfer based on Training of Trainers
- MIDA Ghana Health project
- MIDA Health Somaliland and Puntland



Diaspora for health sector strengthening

Objective:

- Understand diaspora engagement for the health sector in different political and economic contexts

Methodology:

- 2-month study
- Comparison: Ghana and Northern Somalia
- Literature review
- 8 in-depth interviews with diaspora health professionals (MIDA participants)





Findings: Ghana

- Ties to Ghana
- Temporary returns: 1-6 weeks
- Desire to « give something back »
- Lack of time
- Positive experiences

Types of Assignments

- Teaching/ TOT
- Public Health education
- Research
- Clinical Practice

Types of Skills

- Public Health specialist
- Surgeon (Urology)
- Lecturer mental health and economics
- Geriatric care



Findings N. Somalia

- Ties to Somalia
- Temporary returns up to 3 months
- Desire to « do something »
- Lack of infrastructure
- Positive experiences

Types of Assignments

- Teaching
- Public Health education
- Research
- Clinical Practice

Types of Skills

- HIV and TB
- Systems management (Admin.)
- Medical lab technician
- Dentist



Common issues

- Strong motivation
- Crucial: networks and contacts
- Welcoming the support of an institutional framework
- Security issues are not a deterrent
- High expectations can be a source of frustration



Challenges: different but similar?

- Ghana:
 - Lack of time and equipment
 - Lack of commitment in local staff

- N. Somalia:
 - Lack of infrastructure
 - Opposition from local staff



Lessons learnt

- Challenges
- Strong motivation, readiness, commitment
- Added value of diaspora
 - Networks and contacts
 - Ability to work in culture and language of country of origin



Recommendations



- Enabling policy environment
- Acknowledging the role of diaspora
- Strengthen institutional frameworks



Thank You!



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