

MIEUX Case Study Malawi (2014-2016)

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How to read this case study?

MIEUX Thematic Areas



Migration and
Development



Legal Migration
and Mobility



Irregular Migration
and Trafficking in
Human Beings



International Protection
and Asylum Policy



Horizontal
Interventions

Ten features of good practice in MIEUX Actions

- 1 There should be ownership on the part of the partner country
- 2 Actions should provide an opportunity to be innovative in their context
- 3 Actions should be able to be replicated
- 4 Actions should provide tangible results
- 5 Actions should be endorsed at a high level
- 6 Actions should be integrated into existing priorities
- 7 Actions should be based on the highest levels of experience
- 8 Actions should complement and be in synergy with other initiatives
- 9 Actions should provide EU added value
- 10 Actions should act as a catalyst for the acquisition of knowledge through the exchange of experiences

A NEW NATIONAL DIASPORA ENGAGEMENT POLICY

Malawi (2014-2016)

The Diaspora Affairs Unit of Malawi requested support from MIEUX to formulate a new policy that would govern and structure the relationship with Malawian diaspora groups abroad. The Action allowed the partner to reinforce its links with its citizens and to design a policy based on the needs they declared whilst feeding other ongoing policy development processes.

Context

The magnitude of the diaspora's potential contribution to the national socio-economic development of Malawi tuned the Government of Malawi into the value of systematic engagement with diaspora groups. This realisation promoted the creation of structured mechanisms to manage relationships with Malawians abroad, and tap into the skills and resources of migrants. For these purposes, the Government set up a Diaspora Affairs Unit (DAU) under the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 2012, and addressed a request to MIEUX to provide the unit with capacity building on diaspora engagement issues as well as support in the development of its Diaspora Engagement Policy as a pillar to guide future action in this area.

Action Design

The Action comprised a mixture of thematic workshops to provide capacity building on how to strengthen ties with the diaspora, drafting sessions to develop the policy, and study visits to Ethiopia and Ireland to benefit from an exchange in mutual experiences.

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MIEUX
FEATURES



- During the fact-finding mission, 20 high-level meetings with institutions directly or indirectly connected to diaspora activities, including the Ministries of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, of Finance, Economic Planning and Development, of Justice and Constitutional Affairs, of Labour, as well as the Immigration Department, the Central Reserve Bank, offices up to the Office of President and Cabinet, were organised in Lilongwe and Blantyre. This enabled the experts to get a realistic view of their understanding and expectations in order to create a coherent roadmap for the subsequent phases of the project.
- The series of thematic workshops that ensued aimed to increase the knowledge of participants as well to gradually contribute to the drafting of the diaspora policy. Starting with a mapping and stakeholder engagement exercise, other topics were presented, such as the role of diplomacy and the use of embassies in diaspora outreach, investment promotion and political rights of diaspora groups.
- The study visits to Ethiopia and Ireland were conceived as both learning and outreach opportunities. Participants from the DAU were able to learn from the practices set up by their peers in Ethiopia and Ireland while establishing closer links and promoting their new unit and policy to the sizeable Malawian diaspora groups in both countries.
- The draft policy was presented during the final workshop, which focused on drafting a roadmap for implementation whilst networking and promoting the policy among other partner organisations.

Practices

- **Social marketing and national brand:** The Ethiopian and Irish experts underlined the importance of creating a positive image of the country and employing marketing techniques to encourage the diaspora to invest. Furthermore, they recommended selecting specific eminent Malawians as 'ambassadors'.
- **Consultations with diaspora groups in multiple locations:** The profile of Malawian diaspora groups in Europe diverged from that of Malawians in Ethiopia. The former is composed of a working age population which remits cash and resources to Malawi, and the latter has an overwhelming proportion of persons working for international organisations based in Addis Ababa, who were likely to return to Malawi at the end of their careers. The two groups had distinct needs around issues of dual nationality, short-term investment opportunities and provision of services upon return to the country. These perspectives helped the DAU to more clearly understand the views of the Malawian diaspora, which then fed into the policy provisions and enabled them to create a more targeted drafting process.
- **Triangular cooperation:** Ethiopia is considered to be one of the regional success examples in terms of mobilisation of investment opportunities from its diaspora. Ireland's vast expe-

rience in diaspora matters, combining public/private institutions and NGO actors was an informative case study for the Malawian Government.

Impact

The Malawian Government showed strong political will to push the process forward, which enabled a strong interagency approach and the active engagement of all actors. The final policy was adopted in February 2019, although some elements of it were already being implemented by Malawian diplomatic missions abroad.

- **Diaspora outreach:** Through the exercise of policy creation, the DAU was able to greatly widen its network with several vital actors, on the one hand through work with the embassies in disseminating the policy, on the other through the diaspora round-tables during the two study visits to Ethiopia and Ireland. Due to the strengthened ties, Malawi can now continue its outreach work and broaden its network, as well as spreading awareness of the policy more widely. The multiplier effect gained by associating diaspora organisations to the process, as word about the policy spread through the network, was very beneficial for the acknowledgement, buy-in and future adoption and implementation of the policy.
- **Enlarging the network of international actors:** On the other hand, the DAU was able to network with various international organisations in the area of diaspora, such the Citizens and Diaspora Directorate (CIDO) of the African Union, and the Irish organisations which expressed interest in staying in touch with Malawi in the future and to hear more about the progress of the policy with a view to working together on potential future projects.
- **Adaptation to local context:** Through the sessions with the experts and with the other institutions involved in the action, the DAU was able to establish its own methodology on policy drafting which was adapted to the Malawian context. As the funds to organise major drafting sessions were limited, the drafting was led by one member of the DAU who consulted widely with other institutions and diaspora members throughout the process. Frequent input was sought by email and during the MIEUX workshops. This type of electronic involvement is a convenient approach in countries that do not have the budget to organise regular drafting sessions. The core group of institutions that took part in the MIEUX activities were closely associated with the drafting process and therefore they will be able to transpose the methodology adopted to future policies drafted in another context. It is particularly important to note that the DAU deemed it necessary to involve many stakeholders in the drafting in order to have a transparent and inclusive process.
- **Policy coherence:** The Ministry of Foreign Affairs decided to wait for adoption of the policy until the new Foreign Policy of Malawi was developed, which is directly complementary to the Diaspora Engagement Policy and therefore both documents should be coherent.

- The policy was officially adopted in early 2019 but implementation had partly started before that, as the embassies began to take on a more active role to reach out to the diaspora.
- Implementation of the policy foresees a number of long-term plans for diaspora engagement, for instance the establishment of a national diaspora council to play an advisory role to the government on issues affecting Malawians abroad.

Lessons Learnt

- **Knowledge base about policy development and policy cycle:** In capacity building projects, when requested to undertake formulation of strategies, the planning of activities should include sessions on policy cycle methodology as participants may be unsure about what needs to be included or not, given the concepts of policies or strategies may feel vague.
- **Diaspora is diverse and might have several needs:** Evidence-based policies require a sound understanding of the final beneficiaries and their needs. Governments wishing to develop diaspora engagement strategies need to base the provisions included in the policy, and should invest in the mapping and profiling of their diaspora groups whilst taking into account the diversity of socio-economic profiles, and mainstreaming gender into their analyses.
- **Policy coherence:** Integrating several issues related to diaspora engagement, such as the feasibility of dual nationality into other sectoral policies (in the case of Malawi, its Foreign Policy), ensures policy coherence and reinforces buy-in from constituents.



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Since launching operations in 2009, the Migration EU expertise (MIEUX) Initiative has provided space to request capacity development activities and EU expertise, allowing the sharing of knowledge and practices between peers working in institutions in and outside of Europe.

The adoption of the Global Compact on Migration and the creation of the UN Network on Migration coincided with MIEUX's ten-year anniversary. To mark the occasion, MIEUX undertook a comprehensive analysis of its achievements, methodologies and practices.

By delving into MIEUX's portfolio of over 100 interventions, this series of case studies intend to offer a glimpse of the broad range of tools, methodologies and approaches that can inspire or be used by governments and migration and development practitioners to advance a cooperative and sustainable international architecture of migration.