Migrant involvement in community development: What does it look like from the other side

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Studies on migrant-financed development

- Remittances are an important source of development funding.
- Migrants better equipped to reach grassroots.
- Migrants as potential partners in development.
- Has led to numerous studies on migrant-financed development.
- Based on information from hometown associations.
Methods

• Transnational perspective: migrant double engagement ➔ NL <> Ghana
A transnational network
Community development
The Bijlmer
(Amsterdam South East)
## Level of migrant support to 26 rural Ashanti communities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level of support</th>
<th>Size of rural community (inh.)</th>
<th>N=7</th>
<th>N=8</th>
<th>N=7</th>
<th>N=4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Very small (800-3,000)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mid-sized (8,000 - 16,000)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Large (17,000 - 36,000)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Much</td>
<td></td>
<td>100</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Little</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>88</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: The table shows the percentage distribution of migrant support levels across different sizes of rural communities in Ashanti.
## Size matters: smaller is better

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Migrant associations</th>
<th>Hometown community</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Size</strong></td>
<td>Few members</td>
<td>3,000-7,000 inh.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Informally organized</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Majority are engaged</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Leader</strong></td>
<td>Migrants have trust</td>
<td>Development-minded leader(s)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>in community leaders</td>
<td>Community has trust in leaders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Migrants have trust</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>in association chair</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Strength of ties</strong></td>
<td>Migrants have strong</td>
<td>Sanctioning institutions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>attachment to hometown</td>
<td>- Taxes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>None had houses in regional or national capital</td>
<td>- funerals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Type of projects</strong></td>
<td>Community defined:</td>
<td>Leader had direct communication with one or two migrants in association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>bottom-up</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Conclusions

• Need to look at migrant-financed projects from both sides.

• Working with migrants in development:
  – Who do migrants represent?
  – How participative is the project?
  – Are there community sanctioning mechanisms?

• If work with smaller associations:
  – Need to simplify administrative and accounting procedures

• Migrant development projects need not have same objectives as those of development organizations
  – Equity and distribution
Distribution of remittances
Ghana TransNet
www2.fmg.uva.nl/ghanatransnet/
Outline

• Ghanaians in the Netherlands
• A transnational methodology
• 4 findings:
  – Size of community matters:
    • Trust migrant ↔ home community
    • The strength of ties with home community
    • Participation of local community

• Conclusions
Ghanaians in the NL

- NL is a major destination.
- Officially 18,700 in 2004.
- Unofficially around 45,000.
- 60% in wider Amsterdam area.
- Of these 80% in one neighbourhood.
Ghanaians in the NL

• Arrived since 1980s
• Low education levels
• Men and women
• Mostly Akan from south and central Ghana
  – matriliny
The Bijlmer