

The *Danish Institute for International Studies (DIIS)* has the pleasure of inviting you to a seminar on:

**Agents of Change?**  
**African Diaspora Organizations and Homeland Development**  
**Friday, 3 April 2009, 12.30-15.30**  
Danish Institute for International Studies  
Main Auditorium  
Strandgade 71, ground floor, 1401 Copenhagen K

### **Background**

Diaspora organizations are often praised as central development actors, perceived to bridge the gap between foreign donors and the local population. Ranging in scope from pan-African or regional organizations to hometown or village associations, their affiliations and activities vary. While some organizations engage in investment, job creation, or development projects, others celebrate cultural traditions and offer social activities for their members. And while some organizations address local problems and unequal power relations, their potential for change might be challenged by traditional, social and policy limitations that demand conformity. Likewise, the very notion of diaspora involvement itself raises questions – both in relation to who is identified as part of the diaspora and as a development actor and in relation to the accountability of the so-called diaspora.

Much attention has been given to Latin American hometown associations, yet less is known about African diaspora organizations. This seminar discusses the development potential of African diaspora involvement, presenting some of the positions in the debate with perspectives from diaspora organizations, receiving societies and researchers. The following questions are explored: What is the development potential of diaspora organizations? What are the activities and visions of the different stakeholders? And what are the major challenges?

**Nauja Kleist** is a Project Senior Researcher in the Migration Unit at DIIS, working with migration and development and diaspora mobilization. She is currently studying Ghanaian diaspora organizations and migration-development policies as part of the research programme [Mobilizing African Diasporas as Agents of Change](#). Kleist has published on transnationalism, diaspora, gender, and migrant associations.

**Onyekachi Wambu** is Journalist, Editor, and Television Producer. He is currently working as information officer for the London-based African Foundation for Development ([AFFORD](#)), a charity established to expand and enhance the contributions Africans in the diaspora make to Africa's development. Wambu has edited *Empire Windrush: Fifty Years of Writing About Black Britain* (Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1998) and *Under the Tree of Talking: Leadership for Change in Africa* (British Council, 2007).

**Samuel Zan Akologo** is Country Director of the Social Enterprise Development Foundation of West Africa ([SEND](#)) in Ghana, which is a public policy research and advocacy organization. He has over 20 years of social development experience in human rights, organizational development, community driven development initiatives, and policy analysis. Akologo has studied government and economic reform processes and published a study about diaspora contributions to community development.

**Oliver Bakewell** is Senior Research Officer at the [International Migration Institute](#), University of Oxford. He has been working with refugees and migrants for over fifteen years as both a researcher and practitioner. Bakewell's research interests include the changing patterns of migration within

Africa, migration and development, and the interface between migration policy and migrants' behaviour. He has published widely on these and other issues concerning African development.

## **Programme**

12.30-13.00 **Introduction: African Diaspora Organizations in Denmark and Beyond**  
[Nauja Kleist](#), Project Senior Researcher, DIIS

13.00-13.30 **The Diaspora at Work: How AFFORD Supports Enterprise Development and Job Creation in Africa**  
[Onyekachi Wambu](#), Information Officer, African Foundation for Development, London

13.30-14.00 **African Diaspora as Agents of Change: Who is Changing?**  
[Samuel Zan Akologo](#), Country Director, Social Enterprise Development Foundation of West Africa, Ghana

14.00-14.15 **Coffee Break**

14.15-14.45 **Which Diaspora for Whose Development? Some Critical Questions About the Roles of African Diaspora Organizations as Development Actors**  
[Oliver Bakewell](#), Senior Research Officer, University of Oxford

14.45-15.30 **Discussion**

Chair: [Peter Hansen](#), Project Researcher, DIIS

This is the second seminar in the *2009 Migration Seminar Spring Series "Revisiting the Migration-Development Nexus: visions, challenges and prospects"*. The series critically explores visions and practices concerning migration and development. In recent years, the development potential of migration has gained much interest among policy makers, international development organizations and researchers. However, the discourses of migration and development revolve mostly around financial remittances, often ignoring local practices and migrant perspectives. These seminars revisit the migration-development nexus. Based on cutting-edge research and ongoing policy involvement, the seminars present current policy development as well as migrant responses and practices, questioning common sense assumptions and presenting new perspectives.

## **Practical Information**

The seminar will be held in *English*.

Participation is *free of charge*, but *registration is required*. Please use our [online registration form](#) no later than **Thursday, 2 April 2009 at 12.00 noon**.

Please await confirmation by e-mail from DIIS for participation.

Sincerely,

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The Conference Section

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Feel free to forward this invitation to others with a potential interest in the seminar.

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