

Nigerian Professionals In The Diaspora And The Challenges Of Nation Building

Written By Uche Nworah

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Introduction

Rena Singer of the American Christian Science Monitor (February 26, 2002) estimates that 15 million Nigerians (more than 1 in 10 Nigerians) live abroad, these figures are validated by other sources such as Africa Action, they recently wrote that no one knows the exact numbers, but it is estimated that as many as 15 million Nigerians live outside the country, in neighbouring countries and across the African continent, in Britain and throughout the Commonwealth, in other European countries, and in many Asian countries as well.

Some of the Nigerians in the diaspora are actively engaged in different professions as practicing professionals in their host countries or 'new found homes', some of these professions are medical and health care, banking and financial services, journalism and media, teaching and education, engineering, information technology, computing sciences, sports and so on. Just like other diasporas, most of the Nigerians in the diaspora still maintain strong ties with their families, friends and relatives in Nigeria, they also try in various ways to influence the social, political and economic development of Nigeria, this confirms what Safran (1991) wrote that diasporas believe that they should, collectively, be committed to the maintenance or restoration of their original homeland and to its safety and prosperity, and also that they continue to relate, personally or vicariously, to that homeland in one way or another, and their ethno - communal consciousness and solidarity are importantly defined by the existence of such relationships.

This paper will seek to define who a professional is and identify what makes a person a professional, also the paper will attempt to define the meaning of diaspora, with a view to placing the Nigerian professional in the diaspora within a globally acceptable framework, finally the paper will describe the contributions Nigerian professionals in the diaspora are making towards the development of Nigeria (nation building) as well as the challenges they face in the process.

Theoretical Assumptions

The first theory underpinning this paper is the *social responsibility theory*, this theory originated in America around the 1940s and was previously applied only to the media, however as a result of the rise in the power of the professions and professionals, the theory began to be applied to other areas; this has given rise to corporate social responsibility in the business sectors. The basic assumptions of the theory as applied to the professions is that professionals have a wider social function beyond their call of duty to comment on and contribute to public policy and welfare, Professionals should accept and fulfill certain obligations to society. The society and the public have a right to expect high standards of performance from the professionals.

The second theory underpinning this paper is the *development theory*, just like the social responsibility theory, the development theory was originally applied only to media practice; it was formulated as a result of the discrepancy in expectations from the media in the developing countries, compared to the developed countries, this theory was therefore considered to be most appropriate and suitable as it took into consideration the development needs of the developing countries. Such expectations do not just apply only to the media, but also to the professions, the development theory proposes that the professions should accept and carry out positive development

tasks in line with nationally established policies. This paper will therefore assume that Nigerian professionals in the diaspora can and do contribute to nation building.

Methodology

My target sample size was 100 but I sent 300 questionnaires through the email to identified Nigerian professionals in the diaspora, and also gave out 20 questionnaires to Nigerian professionals that I knew personally to complete. The email questionnaires enabled me to reach respondents living in distant countries at minimum costs, part of the problems I encountered was overcoming the feeling of intrusion into the spheres of respondents' private email boxes as I had not received the email addresses directly from them, being that most of the respondents were not known to me personally, I tried to appeal to their sense of patriotism. In order to obtain the email addresses; I joined four Nigeria- focused Yahoo groups, and was therefore able to post my questionnaires on their forums. I also obtained additional addresses by skimming through some other Internet websites dedicated to the Nigerian cause; I was therefore able to get email addresses of some of the contributors who had clearly identified their location as being outside Nigeria. Although I tried to take the most care, the questionnaires still ended up in the email boxes of some professionals living in Nigeria who did reply to say that they were not in a position to complete them, because of their location. It wouldn't have been possible to include all Nigerians in the diaspora as my sample, for reasons of time, costs, and other logistics. I chose convenience sampling as my sampling method, this though has its limitations which is that it may not be truly representative of the entire population of study, however, I considered it to be suitable for my purposes and also for the objectives of the paper.

Review of Related Literature

Khachig Tololian cited in Clifford (1994) writes that diasporas are the exemplary communities of the transnational movement, and also that the term that once described Jewish, Greek, and Armenian dispersion now shares meanings with a larger semantic domain that includes words like immigrant, expatriate, refugee, guest-worker, exile community, overseas community, ethnic community. Tololian's explanation of the origin, current meaning and usage of the word, diaspora tries to put it into context. While not agreeing totally with this explanation, Clifford (1994) argues that diaspora is different from travel (though it works through travel practices) in that it is not temporary, it involves dwelling, maintaining communities, having collective homes away from home (and in this it is different from exile, with its frequently individualistic focus). He supports his arguments with the example of the Jewish diaspora communities whose history he says shows selective accommodation with the political, cultural, commercial, and everyday life forms of 'host' societies. We begin to see a clash of cultures in Clifford's explanation between the Jewish and African diasporas in Britain, according to him, while the Jewish diasporas accepted their fate and tried to maintain their culture, the African diasporas struggled with cultural identity, claiming 'British' and something else (African and Caribbean) at the same time. As a result Clifford concludes that the term diaspora is only a signifier of political struggles to define the local as distinctive community, in historical contexts of displacements and not just simply of transnationality and

movement as stated by Tololian. There however seems to be a common agreement on the origin of the diaspora movement; this has been traced by various writers to the Jews in biblical times, Cohen (1996) writes that the idea that 'diaspora' implied forcible dispersion was found in Deuteronomy (28:25), an Old Testament warning to the Jews of 'scattering to other lands' as a punishment from God for a people who had forsaken the righteous paths and abandoned the old ways, according to him, until recently, the word diaspora were characterized and associated with catastrophic origins and uncomfortable outcomes. This according to him applied also to the Greek diaspora who dispersed from their homelands mainly as a result of poverty, overpopulation, interstate war, military conquest, colonization and migration. Also according to Cohen, the Jewish diasporic experiences were much more diverse and complex, such that despite their enduring economic and professional achievements, they are still filled with anxiety and distrust, he says that however long settled they are in peaceful surroundings, it is difficult for many Jews in the diaspora not to 'keep their guard up', not to feel the weight of their history and the fear that reminds them of their murdered ancestors. Not only the Jews, all people in the diaspora feel this unease and tension in their host countries, there is the fear of 'what tomorrow holds', especially with the rise in nationalist movements and xenophobia in some of these countries. Consequently, the diasporas according to Cohen find protective cover in the bosom of their immediate communities; this fear also breeds an in-group mentality which leads to distance, suspicion and hostility. This victim tradition of the Jewish diaspora has also been linked by Cohen to other groups who suffered traumatic experiences that led to their dispersion; there are the African diasporas and the nightmare of the transatlantic slave trade, The Armenian diaspora and their experiences during the late nineteenth century massacres and the traumatic famine experiences of the Irish. Thompson (1992) uses the term 'diaspora' synonymously with dispersion, and like Cohen traces the origins to Jews in the Bible, he quotes from the Book of Deuteronomy 28:25...'*The Lord shall cause thee to be smitten before thine enemies: thou shalt go out one way against them, and flee seven ways before them; and shalt be removed into all kingdoms of the earth*'. For the African diaspora, he asserts that the forces which drove them abroad (slavery and imperialism) are similar to those which dispersed the Jews.

Cohen's classifications of the common features of a diaspora will be adopted in this paper; his classification stems from previous classical models as well as the insights of William Safran (1991). These common features of a diaspora are: (1.) Dispersal from an original homeland, often traumatically, to two or more foreign regions. This is mostly true as my findings indicate that Nigerian professionals were resident in almost all the major developed countries of the world. (2.) Alternatively, the expansion from a homeland in search of work, in pursuit of trade or to further colonial ambitions. My findings also indicate that some of the Nigerian professionals left Nigeria as economic immigrants rather than as political refugees. (3.) A collective memory and myth about the homeland, including its location, history and achievements. My findings also show that Nigerian professionals have a strong home coming mentality and of patriotism, they still maintain social and religious ties with their fellow Nigerian diasporas and also with relatives and friends back home.

(4.) An idealization of the putative ancestral home and a collective commitment to its maintenance, restoration, safety and prosperity, even to its creation. My findings also show that Nigerian professionals in the diaspora still contribute in different ways,

individually and collectively towards Nigeria's socio-economic development. (5.) The development of a return movement which gains collective approbation. While this may not yet be happening in great numbers as a result of the current state of affairs in Nigeria, there are strong indications and wishes by Nigerians in the diaspora to relocate back to Nigeria eventually, some have even moved back. (6.) A strong ethnic group consciousness sustained over a long time and based on a sense of distinctiveness, a common history and the belief in a common fate. This has been variously demonstrated by intra- marriage relationships and friendships amongst the Nigerians in the diaspora, also by the setting up of community associations which serve as social organisations as well, Nigerians still maintain and promote their culture in their new countries of residence, they still dress up in native attires to churches and to weddings, have Nigerian names and speak their native languages with one another, except for the generation born in the new lands, who are torn with the issue of double identity. (7.) A troubled relationship with host societies, suggesting lack of acceptance at the least or the possibility that another calamity might befall the group. This fear has been fuelled further amongst Nigerians by the rise in xenophobia and nationalist thinking amongst the citizens of their host countries, this situation is further made worse by institutional racism and existence of the glass ceiling which hinder their professional growth, as a result, home coming is currently gaining currency amongst the Nigerian professionals in the diaspora. (8.) A sense of empathy and solidarity with co-ethnic members in other countries of settlement. This can be seen in the increasing number of web groups and Internet sites, which bring the Diasporas from different countries together. (9.) The possibility of a distinctive yet creative and enriching life in host countries with a tolerance for pluralism. While this appears to be the case for many Nigerian professionals in the diaspora living in North America and Europe, it is not the same for some others even in these same countries and in some other countries, again professional success is not absolute as the so called professional 'failures' may feel otherwise being that they at least have the opportunity to operate and function in a professional environment, something they were not able to do back in Nigeria, therefore the clear line of career progression in these developed countries will continue to give them hope and the belief that they could still succeed. However, I agree with Cohen, that not all diaspora groups will exhibit all these features, but Nigerian professionals in the diaspora, who are the focus of this paper, appear to exhibit all the characteristics and features

For the African or Nigerian in Diaspora in modern times, there appears to be other factors which now motivate and drive them to leave their homelands, these factors are different from those of the old times, some of these factors have been generally identified by Ajibewa & Akinrinade (2003) as growing unemployment or underemployment, stagnation or decrease in earnings for those employed, disappearing job security, increasing poverty, reduction in access to health care, education, public transportation, housing, elimination of public benefits or 'safety nets' for those without access to employment, increasing marginalisation and exclusion. Writing on the Importance of diasporas, Ninian Smart cited in Vertovec & Cohen. ed. (1999) agrees and says that amongst these diasporas, there is an element of exile. In some cases it is the harsh economic realities in which overseas communities have grown up, in other cases political persecution has driven folk abroad, and also that people have migrated without extreme pressures for reasons of economic opportunity. He went on to assert that in the last twenty-five years a different dynamic has also been important, travel has become much easier, so even rather poor

communities can maintain cultural contact with the homeland more easily. Nigel Harris (1985), cited in Ajibewa & Akinrinade (2003) asserts that increased migration is inevitable in an integrating world economy, that is increasingly characterised by widening inequalities between the rich and poor nations. Ajibewa & Akinrinade also quote from Lenin's thesis, which states that migration is a function of the laws of uneven development caused by capitalism and that the high level of technological development attained by industrialised countries confer on their people and workers in particular, a high level of per capita income which attracts migrants (labour) from less developed countries.

Nigeria has a high migrant or diasporan population all over the world, this however was not always so, according to Kombo Mason Braide (2003), before the end of the first Nigerian Civil War (1967-1970), despite affirmative action by the LBJ government, very few Nigerians bordered to reside permanently in the United States of America, mainly because of institutionalised racism, and perceived crime levels in that country. Kombo's statement captures exactly the prevailing conditions at the time as Nigeria witnessed an oil boom during the 1970s, infrastructural development was still high on government agenda at the time, universities were still centers of excellence and students were recruited by companies and organisations while still in their final year of study. Corruption had not yet become widespread, discipline and order were still cultural attributes of Nigerians, it was during this period that the Nigerian government was credited with the statement that Money was not Nigeria's problem, but how to spend it. Nigerians at this time only went abroad for holidays and for studies. Things however took a downward trend in the eighties and nineties, the global economic depression hit home in Nigeria, coupled with widespread social and political unrest, these periods witnessed successive repressive military regimes which largely impoverished Nigerians and thus opened the floodgates for their mass exodus. During this period also, most Nigerians that had originally gone abroad to study with the hope of going back to Nigeria on completion of their studies never did, choosing to stay back in their now adopted countries. Braide's views are supported by Ajibewa & Akinrinade (ibid.), they write that the Babangida regime in Nigeria (1985-93) contributed to the massive emigration of Nigerians to other lands in two major ways. First was the introduction of the IMF-inspired Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP), and that the regime provoked massive emigration of Nigerian citizens with its dishonest implementation of its political transition programme that failed to reach its expected conclusion after more than eight years and the expenditure of billions of Naira.

To place the Nigerian professional in the diaspora in context, it is important to build on my earlier definition of the word professional. Friedson (1994) writes that professionals are experts: indeed, 'profession' as opposed to 'amateur' connotes not only earning a living by one's work, but also a superior skillfulness, or expertise at doing a professional as opposed to an amateurish job. Friedson's explanation therefore suggests that professionals are different from amateurs. He also writes that it is the specialised skills, knowledge and expertise of the professional that confers him with the status of professionalism. Such knowledge and skills are usually obtained after extensive periods of training or studying. Nigerian professionals therefore, just like their counterparts in their respective countries of residence owe a duty to society according to Friedson. Fulfillment of these roles and duties is part of the factors that Macdonald (1995) described as other activities, which may be undertaken in ways

that will be of significance for the evaluation of the occupation by others, or for the morale and self-image of the members. And also that the professions need to present itself to the public in the way most likely to maximise its business returns and its social standing; the most significant section of the public is clearly its potential clientele.

Regarding the Nigerian professionals in the diaspora and their performing some of these other tasks in Nigeria, it will be not so much for the reason given by Macdonald above (to win clientele) since they no longer reside in Nigeria, nor expect patronage from Nigerians still living in Nigeria, they do these things as part of their wider social function, and also to fulfill the social responsibility roles expected of every profession, particularly in their case which is to advance the Nigerian society further and help contribute to its development. Braide states the expectations from Nigerian professionals in the diapora in this clear terms for the Nigerian diaspora, (whether in the USA, the EU, the Middle east, or indeed anywhere else in the world), there are very many lessons yet to be learned. The effective emancipation of Nigeria, (from the strangle grip of a new wave feudalism, characterised by the callous indifference, and megalomania of predatory autocrats that claim to represent Nigerians), would depend on the catalytic effect of the 'guidance' provided by an enlightened and aware Nigeria diaspora, in facing the task of re-inventing Nigeria for the better... the Nigerian diaspora can only be complacent at its own peril.

Several other writers agree with this social responsibility model of the professions. Downie (1990) in his typology of the characteristics of the professions writes that the third characteristic of a profession consists of its social function. It is clear that a profession will be concerned, as I have said, with the interests of specific clients, but it also has a broader social function. This broader social function involves the duty to also speak out with authority on matters of social justice and social utility.

In this sense, some Nigerian professionals in the diaspora have been quite active, Ajibewa & Akinrinade (2003) write that in many instances, diaspora communities have lent their support to pro-democracy and anti-government (not necessarily anti-state) activities in their home states, Nigerian diaspora based human rights and pro-democracy movements were in the forefront of the struggle against military dictatorships in Nigeria. Their views correspond to those of Kole Ahmed Shettima (1999) who writes that Nigerians in the diaspora form branches of political parties, and also political parties court the diasporic community for their support. Similarly, Nigerians in the diaspora have always organised on the basis of radical political movements and ethno-national cultural and political organisations.

I will adopt Downie's classification of the characteristics of a profession as a basis for describing the Nigerian professionals in the diaspora as belonging to a globally accepted group of professionals. (1.) *The professional has skills or expertise which proceed from a broad knowledge base.* Some of these Nigerian professionals in the diaspora were identified in my survey to be engaged in professions such as medical and health care, banking and financial services, education, engineering etc. Also the Minister of Health in Nigeria, Prof. Eytayo Lambo recently claimed that over 8,000 Nigerian doctors are currently practicing in the United Kingdom and United States of America. Critiques however think that the figures are much higher. (2.) *The professional provides a service to clients by means of a special relationship which consists of an attitude (a desire to help plus a sense of integrity) and a bond.* The

Nigerian professionals in the diaspora will normally do these in the normal course of their duties in their different countries of residence. (3.) *To the extent that the public does recognise the authority of the professional he or she has the social function of speaking out on broad matters of public policy and justice, going beyond duties to specific clients.* My findings show that the Nigerian professionals in the diaspora are engaged in social, economic and political processes aimed at making Nigeria a better place. (4.) *In order to discharge these functions, the professional must be independent of the influence of the state or of commerce.* This may not be the case amongst all the professionals, it will also depend on their countries of residence, increased autonomy and independence may be found more in developed countries, and less in developing countries where most professionals still rely on government patronage for their economic survival, in fulfillment of the saying that he who pays the piper dictates the tune. (5.) *The professional must also be educated as distinct from merely trained in a narrow sense.* Some of the Nigerian professionals in the diaspora have studied for degrees, higher and doctorate degrees for a duration of 4 and more years.

Findings

Research question 1: What were your main reasons for leaving Nigeria?

The main reasons given by the respondents for leaving Nigeria were education, better opportunities in other countries, lack of government support, and political instability. Only about 5% said they left Nigeria in order to join their spouses and family members. Although education was given as a reason by 90% of the respondents, it is also important to distinguish amongst those Nigerians that left Nigeria in the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s solely for the purpose of studying abroad, and those that came later who were rather driven out of Nigeria by the worsening economic conditions, the latter however needed to acquire new skills in their new found countries through retraining and getting further education in order to function effectively in the new countries. Another distinguishing feature amongst the two categories of Nigerian emigrants are that, those that left Nigeria in the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s solely for the purposes of acquiring western education with a view to going back to Nigeria eventually, were sponsored at the time by either the government of Nigeria or the government of the host countries under one of their scholarship, student aid and grant schemes, (these however seem to have either stopped or have become more competitive) or they were solely sponsored by their families who could still remit money to them because at the time, the Nigerian economy was still fairly strong and stable and the Nigerian currency (the Naira) was still very strong or even stronger than the Dollar or the pound. The latter day emigrants on their part left Nigeria at a time of economic depression and had to work or ‘hustle’ to support their families back home and also themselves, (including paying tuition fees), this latter period witnessed a reversal of fortune of sorts for both the emigrants and their families. My findings therefore are consistent with what Braide wrote concerning Nigerian emigrants, he writes said that for the Nigerian immigrants (i.e. the ‘Andrews’) of the 1980s, and 1990s, their motivation for migration was primarily economic survival (not educational advancement, as most Nigerian immigrants did in earlier generations). In most cases, the physical, emotional, material, and financial costs of leaving Nigeria were disproportionately high, considering their very low incomes, low employment opportunities, near – zero job mobility, escalating inflation, excruciating and dehumanizing visa application procedures etc, for some of them who left Nigeria

for the 'greener pastures' in the USA, the EU, the Middle East, South Africa, and several others overseas, particularly in the 1980s and the 1990s, their bitter memories of those dismal moments in their lives (during the predatory dictatorships of Buhari, Babangida, Shonekan, Abacha, and Abubakar), cannot be wiped out easily, they are simply bitter; and are rightly so. In 1984, the then military government of Buhari and Idiagbon, conscious of the growing phenomenon of mass emigration, as well as the consequences of the brain – drain syndrome on the socio-economic development of Nigeria mounted series of propaganda campaigns in the mass media, aimed at promoting nationalism and patriotism and dissuading Nigerians from leaving or 'checking out'. A popular Nigerian actor (Enebeli Elebuwa) was drafted to play the role of "Andrew", an aspiring immigrant who later saw reasons not to, as he was about to 'check out' of Nigeria. While the T.V series became popular with Nigerians, especially because of its use of humour, it however failed to dissuade Nigerians from leaving in droves, because the government at the time did not match action with words, as the economy continued on its downward slide. Research question 2: Do you think that as a professional, you have a wider social function and role beyond your normal professional duties? 92% of the respondents agree that they have a wider social role beyond their normal professional duties, while only 8% answered in the negative. This is consistent with the social responsibility theory of the professions; the findings also support Downie's views about the broader social functions of the professions. It may be as a result of this perceived role of their 'power' and 'influence' in the socio-economic development of Nigeria that have made the Nigerian professionals in the diaspora to speak out all the time on matters of public policy, while at the same time contributing in several ways (as a way of giving back) to the development of Nigeria. It may seem also that the Nigerian government has finally recognised the importance or the role that the Diasporas can play in nation building, the Obasanjo government has appealed to them on several forums to get actively involved in the development of Nigeria. On a trip to South Africa during one of the government's many trips abroad in search of foreign investors, the President's wife, Mrs. Stella Obasanjo made an appeal to Nigerian expatriates, she said ... "Even if you cannot relocate to Nigeria immediately, visit home to see in which way you can lend us a helping hand in rebuilding the country". It is encouraging also to see that such a large percentage of the respondents recognise their wider social function, they try to discharge such societal functions in both their immediate countries of residence and additionally in Nigeria, their home country. This is commendable because it becomes an additional burden on their personal and professional time and resources to be socially responsible, both at home and abroad. Such levels of commitment to Nigeria, their home country can only signify their high sense of patriotism.

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However, the few respondents who have responded in the negative to this question may have their reasons, such reasons usually will be based on their perception of the extent of their power and influence over positively contributing to the society, there may also be other reasons including those of their capitalistic thinking, and also that labour in whatever form must and should be rewarded, they may also believe that expertise is a scarce commodity, which should therefore be offered to whoever is willing to pay for it, such beliefs are contradictory to the social responsibility theory of the professions. It is however consistent with the raging argument in the Business world, over the ability of businesses to meet the interests of all stakeholders, on the one hand are the shareholders who want a quick and high returns to their investments, the shareholders favour less investments and contributions to social causes as such contributions would affect their dividends. On the other hand, are the government, the customers and the wider society who expect businesses to be socially responsible and contribute to social causes.

Research question 3: Do you think that as a professional you can contribute to nation building? (Building the Nigerian Nation)

The respondents responded to this question in similar ways to research question 2. A slightly higher number (94%) agree that as professionals, they can contribute to nation building, while only 6% responded in the negative. The findings therefore will support the hypothesis that Nigerian professionals in the diaspora who believe that they have a wider social function beyond their normal professional duties are more likely to contribute to nation building. The findings are also consistent with the theoretical assumptions of the development theory as related to this paper, which is that Nigerian professionals in the diaspora can contribute to nation building. I would also like to add here that certain categories of Nigerian professionals in the diaspora who can contribute to nation building but are not currently doing so may be as a result of their past perceptions and negative experiences in Nigeria, distrust of the Nigerian government and its intentions was high among the reasons identified, there is a still a growing disillusionment amongst these professionals and disappointments with the government, to demonstrate this, I will reproduce the texts of the email I received from one Nigerian professional in the diaspora on his reasons for not being able to respond to the questionnaire... *I received your mail, but because I no longer identify myself as a Nigerian, I must decline your request. Although by birth and name, I was a Nigerian, I left the country so long ago that I do not see any need for me to claim to be a Nigerian any longer, more so when the way the country is run gives one no joy; and the country continues to be plundered and given constant negative image by various groups, including the 419, the ruling class, the religious bigots, to name but a few. I apologize that I cannot be of assistance, therefore best wishes with your research. Name (withheld for confidentiality)* The onus therefore is on the Nigerian government to try to get its act together so that Nigeria does not continue to lose her citizens to other countries, the other expectations of the Nigerian professionals in the diaspora from the Nigerian government will be looked at in research question 6.

Research question 4: In what ways have you been contributing to nation building in Nigeria?

All the respondents obviously associate sending money home to support family and friends as part of their contributions to national development, this is rightly so, especially as the issue of foreign remittances back to Africa has become a subject of interest in the international community. According to a recent report (Migrations and Development) by the International Development Select Committee (UK), over \$300 Billion was sent from developed to developing countries in 2003 by diasporas living in the developed countries. Global remittance, the report maintains is growing faster than official development assistance from the developed countries, also global remittance is the second largest source of external funding for developing countries, behind Foreign Direct Investment (FDI), and also accounts for as much as 27% of the GDP for some African countries. The report also says that global remittance accounts for 5% of GDP in Nigeria, this figure is predicted to increase in the coming years. A U.S government official recently claimed that Nigerian diasporas remit back to Nigeria the sum of \$12 billion annually, while other sources claim that Nigerians send a total of \$3Billion annually through the official channels of the Western Union and other financial institutions. While there appears to be different conflicting figures with regards to the exact amount of such capital outflows or global remittances back to Africa and Nigeria in particular, the fact remains that it is a phenomenon that is on the increase and also one that is good for the continent, sadly though, such remittances have not been channeled effectively by the recipients to areas that will yield long term benefits and sustainable growth. In a different but related survey carried out by Africa Recruit, only 6% of such remittances are invested, probably as a result of mismanagement of the funds by entrusted family members or friends or due to what the Africa Recruit survey identified as the weak linkage between the diaspora and investment opportunities on the continent, as well as the diaspora's lack of awareness of the various opportunities available.

Kole Ahmed Shettima in his paper says that material support for the home country organizations is (also) very important. This has become critical partially due to the collapse of the Nigerian economy, while Hatzipanayotou et al. cited in Vertovec & Cohen submit that the volume of remittance from migrants has now become so important that in many cases they determine the development prospects of villages, towns and entire regions. The respondents also identified other ways in which they have been contributing to the socio-economic development of Nigeria as volunteering their time and skills whenever they visit Nigeria, writing and commenting in the media on good and bad practices by the Nigerian government and citizens, propagating ideals based on their experiences of living and practicing abroad, contributing money to their respective community associations. Such funds are then used to build town halls, churches, village roads, hospitals, markets, class rooms and boreholes for community use. Others award scholarships to indigent students to study in Nigeria and abroad, donate books and equipments to schools and hospitals. Only 3 % of the respondents feel that they have not been contributing to nation building outside sending money home to their family and friends, there reasons being that they were being limited by resources and also, they think that they have not been presented with a real opportunity to do so. The findings here are consistent with the social responsibility and development theories of the professions.

Research question 5: What challenges do you face in your efforts to contribute to nation building?

The findings here will confirm already held notions that time and money are scarce resources, almost all (98%) of the respondents said they could have done more in terms of contributing to nation building if they had enough time and resources to do so, they mention family and professional commitments in their resident countries as the main issues. This is quite understandable as their primary allegiance and commitment will be to their immediate families and employers. Also the work ethics and professional demands/expectations in the developed countries are quite high and demanding, these may be the reason therefore why less time is left to be committed to pursuing Nigerian causes by the diasporas. Also despite their high professional remuneration and salaries, there is also a corresponding income tax and living standard to contend with, such that the Nigerian professional in the diaspora though he or she may earn huge salaries, there may not be enough left at the end of the month to be committed to Nigeria and nation building, after income tax, mortgage, credit cards, insurance and other bills have been deducted. Interestingly, but not surprisingly, all the respondents took issues with the Nigerian government, they stated that they would be more committed to nation building if the government of the country shows the way, through leading by example. All the respondents identified corruption as the main cause of their worry and disappointment with the Nigerian government, the issue of corruption though, has been identified by the respondents as the biggest drawback and challenge to their nation building efforts, this is rightly so too. According to the 2004 Transparency International corruption Perceptions Index, Nigeria still ranks as the 3rd most corrupt country in the world in a survey of 146 countries, coming only ahead of Haiti (the most corrupt country) and Bangladesh (the 2nd most corrupt country). Nigeria's current position is only a slight improvement from its previous positions as the 2nd most corrupt and the most corrupt country in the world in 2003 and 2002 respectively. According to Peter Eigen, The Chairman of Transparency International, *"Corruption robs countries of their potentials... Corruption in large-scale public projects is a daunting obstacle to sustainable development, and results in a major loss of public funds needed for education, health care and poverty alleviation, both in developed and developing countries"*.

There is therefore a higher expectation from the Nigerian professionals in the diaspora from the government of Nigeria, which may seem to support the view that Nigerian professionals in the diaspora are more likely to contribute to nation building if the government of Nigeria is transparent and less corrupt. At about the time that I was completing this paper, the Nigerian government had already started taking some actions aimed at seriously tackling corruption, The Inspector-General of the Nigeria Police (Tafa Balogun) has been removed from office and is currently facing trial on a 50 count charge of corruptly enriching himself to the tune of over 10 Billion Naira (\$100M), also the Minister of education, Prof. Fabian Osuji and four others, Senators Ibrahim Abdulazeez, John Azuta Mbata, Emmanuel Okpede, Badamasi Maccido and a member of the House of Representatives, Dr.Garba Shehu Matazu, and the senate president (Senator Adolphus Wabara) have all been implicated in a 50 Million Naira (\$500,000) bribery scandal, the senate president has had to resign as a result and is currently being prosecuted at an Abuja High court by the Independent Corrupt Practices and other Related Offences Commission (ICPC), alongside the other accused senators and Minister. Also the Minister of Housing and Urban Development,

Mrs. Mobolaji Osomo has been sacked over the manner in which her ministry handled the sales of federal government houses in Lagos.

Research question 6: What are your expectations from the Nigerian government towards encouraging and supporting your nation building efforts?

100% of the respondents (the Nigerian professionals in the diaspora) mentioned eradicating corruption and enthroning of transparency as their biggest expectation from the Nigerian government. The government of Nigeria on its part has introduced some anti-corruption measures including the setting up of The Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), The Independent Corrupt Practices and other Related Offences Commission (ICPC) as well as The Office of Due Process, Budget Monitoring and Implementation in the presidency. According to recent reports, the Office of Due Process has so far saved Nigeria over 125 Billion Naira (\$1B) in the past 3 years. These efforts on the part of the government however, appears not to be noticed by Nigerians at home and in the diaspora, leading to the statement, made recently by Francis Arthur Nzeribe, a Nigerian Senator, to the chairman of the EFCC. The senator said that the “*EFCC goes after "small thieves" and spares bigger thieves in government.*” ...*We have heard all these things you have said since 20 years ago. You are simply rendering lip service to the fight against corruption and going after small boys who just collect small money*”.

It may seem therefore, that there is a lack of political will on the part of government to tackle corruption, there have also not been serious and concerted efforts to prosecute known offenders, who are widely believed to have stolen billions of dollars from government treasury and stashed them away in foreign bank accounts. Most regrettably, this complacent and lukewarm attitude to the issue of fighting corruption continues. The other expectations mentioned by the respondents are for the government to provide security of lives and property, provide social amenities and infrastructures (and thereby lessen the burden on them to provide these amenities for their local communities), provide jobs and social security, create an enabling environment, formulate people - oriented policies, make technology the driving force of a future Nigeria, maintain and uphold the rule of law, eradicate poverty, integrate and involve the diasporas in the decision making and implementation process, tackle the issues which lead to constant labour disputes and therefore the disruption of economic life. While the government, as I indicated earlier might claim to be doing something in these directions, the general feeling still, is that it is not doing enough. Although the Development theory suggests that that the professions should accept and carry out positive development tasks in line with nationally established policies, there are constant clashes and conflicts of interests between these professions and Nigerian professionals in the diaspora and the Nigerian government who though need but distrust each other. The Diasporas feel that government policies are both mediocre in formulation and implementation, and hence they are not susceptible to follow or applaud them, the government on its part feel that the diasporas are too critical of its policies, and may therefore be harbouring other agenda (political), or that they may just be representing the selfish interests of foreign governments and big corporations.

Conclusion

I have tried in this paper, through my findings to describe how Nigerian professionals in the diaspora contribute to nation building, and the challenges they face in the process were identified. The growing trend of Nigerian professionals going abroad still continues, this is because of the existence in Nigeria of harsh economic conditions and other variables which drive the professionals to seek for better opportunities abroad. It is my opinion that there is not much the government of Nigeria can do to stem the outflow of human capital also known as brain drain, this is because, with the advent of globalization, faster means of communications and easier travel access, Nigerian professionals, just like their counterparts in other countries will continue to avail themselves of the better opportunities that may exist in other countries, labour in the context of globalization is a migratory resource, this therefore appears to be the key motivator of these professionals, who will rather regard their sojourn abroad as brain gain for Nigeria rather than brain drain. However, the Nigerian government can only seek for ways to build a viable and rewarding relationship and partnership with these professionals in the diaspora. There appears to be recognition of this fact by the present Nigerian government, according to the President of Nigeria, Chief Olusegun Obasanjo; *“Nigerians in the Diaspora is a formidable group of Nigerians that will play an indefatigable role in the search for viable solutions to the economic, political, social and technological problems retarding our national development.”* To this end, the Nigerian government has started several initiatives aimed at promoting a mutual partnership with Nigerian diasporas. Most notably, the Nigerian government has appointed a Special Assistant to the President on Nigerians in the Diaspora.

The government also sponsored the setting up of the Nigerians in the Diaspora Organisation (NIDO). The NIDO was conceived as a veritable vehicle for the mobilisation of Nigerians abroad for development process at home, it also aims to ensure proper liaison and coordination of the efforts of the Nigerians in the diaspora and to tap from their abundant talents and resources for the development of the country. The government has also set up the Nigerian National Volunteer service (NNVS) to give the Nigerian professionals in the diaspora a formal avenue within which to volunteer their skills while in Nigeria on a short or extended visit. The government is at the moment compiling a database of all Nigerian professionals in the diaspora to be entitled - Nigerian-Diaspora Database. The Nigerian government has begun the process through the NNVS of creating a database on the contribution of Nigerian groups and individuals in the diaspora to national development. The coordinator of the project appealed to all Diasporan groups and individuals who have carried out any developmental project (individually or as a group) dating back to 1999 to send details of such activities to its office in Abuja, Nigeria. Such information should be in the following format: *Name of the organisation or individual, Project description, Project location, Year of commencement, Year of completion, Name of beneficiary (i.e. community, local or state government) and the Total cost of the project.* Finally, the Nigerian government has appointed some Nigerian professionals in the diaspora into high level government positions, as a way of keeping faith with the Nigerian diaspora community, most notable is the appointments of Dr. (Mrs.) Ngozi Okonji-Iweala as the Finance Minister, Dr (Mrs.) Iweala was recruited from the World Bank where she was a Vice President, Also Mrs. Oby Ezekwesili was recruited from Harvard University where she was a Director to come and champion

government's Due Diligence efforts. Mrs. Ezekwesili is the head of the Office of Budget Monitoring and Implementation in the presidency. On their part, the Nigerian professionals in the diaspora have set up several informational sharing internet groups and websites, where they exchange information mainly on Nigerian issues, experiences from those who have gone back to Nigeria are freely shared, and job opportunities and information are provided, government's current efforts in several areas of the national life of Nigerians are also heavily scrutinised, praised or criticised.

Finally, the diasporas also do engage directly in politics in Nigeria, they do sometimes sponsor fellow diasporas to stand for elected positions in Nigeria, they also set up their own political parties and support existing political parties through making financial contributions, in addition to setting up local branches of the political parties in their respective countries of residence.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Uche Nworah is a freelance writer and brand scholar. He teaches Marketing Communications at the London Metropolitan University. He is also an EdD candidate at the University of Greenwich, with research interests diasporas, place branding and educational change management. He can be contacted on info@uchenworah.com

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