

MOVING FROM 'IDEAS' TO 'REALITIES'

Elmina Beach Resort, Central Region, Ghana
23 - 27 January 2012

TRANSCODE 2

Transnational Synergy and
Cooperation for Development

Thirty-six participants from Ghana, the Netherlands, Italy and the Philippines met in Elmina, Ghana for a four-day live-in workshop for the second Transnational Synergy for Cooperation and Development (TRANSCODE) on the 23rd to the 27th of January, 2012. The Elmina workshop was organised by the Centre for Migration Studies (CMS), University of Ghana and the Representative Council of Ghanaian Organisations (RECOGIN) with the support of the Transcode Steering Committee members. This Ghana workshop is the first of two Transcode workshops scheduled for 2012.

The TRANSCODE programme aims to enhance the discussion and understanding of the migration-development nexus, with the specific features of promoting the involvement of multiple stakeholders and fostering cooperation across transnational contexts. It is a joint initiative started in 2009 by the Scalabrini Migration Center (SMC) in the Philippines and the Radboud University (RU) in the Netherlands. The Scalabrini International Migration Institute (SIMI) in Italy came on board during the planning and implementation of the Netherlands workshop (Soesterberg) in 2010.

The programme for TRANSCODE 2 has evolved into three components:

- (1) Interface workshops,
- (2) Facilitation of spin-off projects , and
- (3) Research and publication.

Prior to the Ghana workshop, under the umbrella of TRANSCODE 1, two workshops were held in 2010 in Tagaytay City (Philippines) and in Soesterberg. Upon the recommendation of TRANSCODE 1, SMC, RU and SIMI drafted the programme and sought funding for TRANSCODE 2 which includes the Ghana workshop with the aim of opening up the initiative to participants from a new set of origin and destination countries. Ghana and Italy were chosen on the basis of several considerations including the existence of a sizeable Ghanaian Diaspora in Italy, an emerging migration infrastructure in Ghana, and the participation of local governments in migration and development projects.

The 36 delegates were drawn from Ghana, the Philippines, the Netherlands and Italy. They represented 4 national government agencies, 2 local government authorities, 2 non-governmental organizations, 13 Diaspora and migrants associations, 1 private sector, 7 from the academia, and 3 researchers.

The workshop aimed at offering a learning process to facilitate the exchange of experiences from different stakeholders and provide a platform for debate on concepts for transnational approaches to development, the constitution of stakeholders, and the exploration of workable approaches. The workshop conceptualized and began the initial development of spin-off projects that were relevant to the TRANSCODE projects. The four-day programme began with an opening session by Prof. Mariama Awumbila, the Director of the Centre for Migration Studies (CMS), University of Ghana. She welcomed all participants present with a brief introduction to Elmina, a town in the Central Region of Ghana. She said that Elmina is the crossroads between Africa and Europe, and its development has a connection with the European trade with West Africa. She continued with an overview of the four-day workshop. The opening session ended with the sharing of the workshop objectives and programme by Dr. Lothar Smith of Radboud University Nijmegen.

The programme included presentations from key resource persons, working group sessions and field visits. The presentations highlighted migration and development (M&D) policies and practices in the context of TRANSCODE being undertaken in Ghana, Philippines, the Netherlands and Italy. On the first day, the programme focused on policy issues in the field of M&D and key issues arising from current M&D initiatives in specific countries. The inputs were given by resource persons from the academe, national governments and the civil society. Dr. Fabio Baggio of SIMI presented M&D issues from a theoretical perspective followed by Prof. Awumbila who



gave an overview of the Ghana M&D policies. For his part, Mr. David Agorsor of the Migration Unit, Ministry of Interior of Ghana, talked about the Ghana's initiatives on M&D such as establishing a Migration Unit to coordinate migration-related initiatives of all government units. Mr. Frits van Bruggen, representing the Ambassador of the Kingdom of the Netherlands in Accra, talked about the M&D policies of the Netherlands while Ms. Maria Luisa Reyes of the National Reintegration Center for Overseas Filipino Workers made a presentation on Philippine migration policies, thrusts and directions. Key issues arising from current M&D initiatives for specific countries were presented by Dr. Ton van Naerssen (Netherlands), Dr. Baggio (Italy), Dr. Marla Asis (Philippines) and Dr. Osman Alhassan (Ghana).

The second day had 17 presentations by representatives of development NGOs and Diaspora organisations about their work, projects and initiatives related to M&D. The projects range from large-scale food production development initiatives, small- and large-scale entrepreneurship and capacity building activities related to migration issues such as irregular migration and migrants rights.

In order to ensure full participation of all participants, much time within the programme was dedicated to workshop sessions for in-depth discussion on the projects and initiatives presented during the second day. The first session provided participants the platform to critically discuss and share their respective experiences on the M&D projects assigned to the various working groups. These projects were discussed on the basis of the criteria *WHAT* (development impact), *WHO* (multi-stakeholder approach), *HOW* (transnational engagement) and *WHERE* (Bi-directionality).

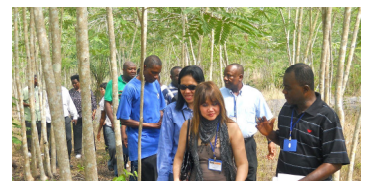
The second session gave participants the opportunity to create new spin-off projects (collaborative and transnational project ideas) on the basis of the key TRANSCODE criteria. One project idea on *Transnational Partnership on Migration and Human Development* will look into the migration process, food security and employment in sending communities, dialogues and active citizenship in receiving countries, and reintegration of migrant returnees. The second project idea, *Transnational Initiatives for Sustainable Development in Ghana*, aims to create a platform to enhance information and resource sharing and to strengthen coordination among the different stakeholders in supporting livelihood, investments, brain gain and other development initiatives in Ghana. The third, *A Micro Credit Project or Micro Financing for Selected Projects*, seeks to develop a more substantive transnational approach to an existing micro-credit project format of one of the participants in the workshop. Another proposal, *Expanding and Adopting New Modalities for the Burundi Project on Women, Peace and Security*, builds cooperation between various stakeholders, from different countries, who were involved with reintegration programmes for women who have been subjected to negative social processes related to migration.

Working group members were tasked to develop a concept paper to develop these ideas into concrete projects and to facilitate fund sourcing. Further concretization of the Concept Notes will be discussed during the follow-up workshop which will be held in Rome, Italy on 23-25 April 2012 under the auspices of the SIMI.

Participants also took a study trip to the Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA) woodlot project, Central Region Development Commission (CEDECOM) handicraft industry and the Elmina-Gouda City Twinning drainage project. The first two are private sector development partners offering opportunities (be it administrative, counselling, land acquisition or other facilitation) to the Diaspora to contribute to the development of Ghana. Participants at the workshop resolved to continue to explore opportunities for closer collaboration. They also called for the integration of gender perspectives in migration research especially on remittances.

In sum, the workshop was a useful follow-up to TRANSCODE 1, moving from 'ideas' to 'realities'. The workshop offered an opportunity for interaction which was concretized into proposals for 4 spin-off projects to be developed further. It also offered opportunity for networking among participants for future collaborative projects.

The Centre for Migration Studies and Recogin are grateful to all participants for ensuring a successful workshop.



For more information:

- ▶ TRANSCODE Ghana workshop:
Center for Migration Studies
Prof. Mariama Awumbila
<http://cms.ug.edu.gh/>
- ▶ TRANSCODE Secretariat:
Malu Padilla
malu.transcode@gmail.com
tel. +31 6 285 60 897



www.facebook.com/pages/Transcode-Programme/312142875509912

Text: M.B. Osei Kyei (CMS)/TRANSCODE
Photos: G.A. Atiim (CMS)/TRANSCODE
Lay-out: M.B. Osei Kyei/M. Padilla