



Federal Ministry  
for Economic Cooperation  
and Development



# Ethiopian Diaspora in Germany – Commitment to social and economic development in Ethiopia

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Around the world, societies are changing and individuals are on the move: around 250 million people currently live outside their country of origin. This evolving situation presents opportunities for all concerned: diversity and exchange across national borders provide impetus for economic, political and social progress – both in host countries and in countries of origin.

Migrants themselves play an important role in building bridges between countries. Through their expertise, ideas, experience and contacts, they stimulate sustainable change. In a variety of ways, they help their countries of origin to remain competitive, while simultaneously shaping society in their host countries. This interaction offers great potential for development. On behalf of the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), we support the activities of migrants from emerging and developing countries and advise our partner countries on how to use migration to advance sustainable development.

The Migration for Development programme focuses on four areas of activity:

- Knowledge transfer through returning experts
- Cooperation with diaspora organisations
- Migrants as entrepreneurs
- Migration policy advice

## *Acknowledgements*

I would like to thank all interview partners for their trust, time, and willingness to answer my questions and provide me with additional information and contacts. I hope that the final report accurately reflects their experiences and inputs. At the Center for International Migration and Development (CIM) and the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH, Johannes Schilling, Stephanie Deubler, and Bianca Kunz have accompanied the project and provided valuable comments and feedback.

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# List of Abbreviations

<b>BAMF</b>	German Federal Office for Migration and Refugees
<b>BMZ</b>	German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development
<b>CIM</b>	Centre for International Migration and Development
<b>BMI</b>	Federal Ministry of the Interior
<b>GIZ</b>	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit GmbH
<b>DAAD</b>	German Academic Exchange Service
<b>EPRDF</b>	Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front
<b>TPLF</b>	Tigray People's Liberation Front
<b>EOC</b>	The Ethiopian-Orthodox Church
<b>AEEG</b>	Association of Ethiopians Educated in Germany
<b>DÄV</b>	Deutsch-Äthiopischer Verein e.V.
<b>DEAG</b>	Deutsch-Äthiopische Gesellschaft e.V.
<b>DEAGD</b>	Diaspora Engagement Affairs General Directorate
<b>EIA</b>	Ethiopian Investment Agency
<b>HRW</b>	Human Rights Watch
<b>CSP</b>	Charities and Societies Proclamation





# Introduction

In the past decade and a half, diasporas and their contributions to social and economic development in their countries of origin have received considerable attention by international and bilateral development agencies. At the same time, in the academic community, a wealth of studies has focused on what is usually referred to as the ‘migration-development nexus’, i.e. the contributions of diasporas to the economic development of their countries of origin in the form of remittances, knowledge and skills transfer, project work, or direct investments.

Yet, while there is little doubt as to the capacities and enormous potential of such transfers that at times surpass the sum total of foreign aid and direct investments received by developing countries, the focus on figures alone risks masking a number of challenges or specifics of diaspora engagement. To begin with ‘the diaspora’ is usually not a homogeneous actor, but usually fragmented along a number of (demographic, political, ethnic etc.) lines, particularly in cases of involuntary migration or flight. As a consequence, there are usually not only diverse views regarding where and how to engage, but also limitations with regard to the willingness and scope of cooperation with other diaspora actors and with relevant actors and authorities in the country of origin. Secondly, while the amount of remittances transferred to countries of origin is undoubtedly significant, these are primarily transfers of a personal nature, i.e. between family members, and can only partially be harnessed for large-scale development purposes. Thirdly, there often seems to be a gap between the aspirations and objectives of diaspora organisations on the one hand, and the resources and capacities required for their implementation on the other. Most diaspora associations are organised on a voluntary basis and often require a significant share of members’ time in addition to their personal and professional lives. This can be particularly challenging when diaspora associations seek to cooperate with professional governmental and non-governmental institutions tied to demanding bureaucratic practices. On the part of the diaspora association, the successful implementation of projects is hence very often dependent on the willingness and ability of a small number of key actors to dedicate significant personal resources, as well as on their sufficient knowledge of these organisations and of the bureaucratic processes required for such cooperation.

The following study posits that successful cooperation between diaspora associations and governmental and non-governmental (development) institutions requires a reasonable degree of mutual knowledge. While diaspora associations need to have a sound understanding of and better access to information regarding funding and/or cooperation opportunities, professional development agencies seeking to engage with diaspora communities originating from a particular country need to be aware not only of the kinds of associations and their activities, but also of the specific objectives and potentially contested perspectives on the social, economic, and political development in their countries of origin.

Following this rationale, the Center for International Migration and Development (CIM), a joint operation of the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH and the German Federal Employment Agency has commissioned a study on the Ethiopian diaspora community in Germany. In addition to providing a general overview of the size and composition of the Ethiopian community, the primary purpose of this study is to map and assess the activities, capacities, and perspectives of diaspora associations with regard to their commitment to social and economic development in Ethiopia.

## Scope of study and methodology

The study is divided into five sections. The first section will provide a profile of the Ethiopian community in Germany, including its size, demographic composition, patterns of immigration, and potential political, religious, and ethnic divisions. As indicated above, as with most immigrant communities, the ‘Ethiopian community’ or ‘diaspora’<sup>1</sup> is not a homogeneous social group, but divided along political, ethnic, and religious lines that largely mirror those in Ethiopia. In addition, both terms, i.e. Ethiopian community or diaspora, imply a degree of self-identification. On the one hand, members of specific ethnic groups might identify as Afar (who also originate from Eritrea and Djibouti), Oromo, or Somali-Ogaden etc. rather than as Ethiopians. On the other hand, particularly among the second generation, i.e. children born to parents of Ethiopian origin, several respondents identified as Ger-

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<sup>1</sup> Sheffer (1986) defines ‘diasporas’ as “ethnic minority groups of migrant origins residing and acting in host countries but maintaining strong sentimental and material links with their countries of origin”, cited in Chacko & Gebre 2013: 495).



man rather than Ethiopian or both. Against this backdrop, the terms Ethiopian community and Ethiopian diaspora are used interchangeably in this context and primarily as a heuristic device: While including all individuals of Ethiopian origin (both naturalised and non-naturalised), the study seeks to be mindful of differences regarding self-identification.

Following this overview, the second part of the study analyses the forms of social organisation among the diaspora. Based on a comprehensive mapping of Ethiopian diaspora associations in Germany, the study develops a typology of organisations and explores the degree of cooperation and networks between them and with additional actors in Germany and Ethiopia.

The third section explores the types and modes of diaspora engagement in Ethiopia in more detail, focusing particularly on the areas of social and economic development, (humanitarian) aid, education and academic exchange. While there is only a limited number of business enterprises run by diaspora members in Ethiopia, to the extent possible, the study also discusses their experiences and needs, particularly vis-à-vis Ethiopian authorities. Secondly, in an effort to better understand the scope for cooperation and support, this part of the study also seeks to provide new insights into the motives and expectations that drive the engagement of diaspora associations /individuals on the one hand, and the degree to which links between actors in the diaspora and in their country of origin exist.

The fourth and final section provides a brief overview of the policies and programmes of the Ethiopian government in the field of diaspora cooperation, particularly its recent efforts to increase diaspora investments. In this

context, the study also takes into account experiences of interviewees in the areas of return, investment, and cooperation in Ethiopia. In conclusion, I will discuss these findings regarding the scope of diaspora engagement in Ethiopia, focussing particularly on the needs and recurring challenges of diaspora actors as identified in the interviews. This discussion will conclude with a number of recommendations for tailoring pertinent programmes to the needs identified during the qualitative research and for establishing links to interested associations and individuals.

The study is based on a comprehensive mapping of Ethiopian diaspora associations in Germany. A list of approximately 150 Ethiopian associations with contact details was compiled based on internet research and contacts established in the frame of an earlier research project.<sup>2</sup> To the extent possible, these associations were contacted by phone and email to verify the obtained information and enquire about current activities. The turnout of this initial phase was overall low. Many organisations appear to be inactive or have altogether ceased to exist. In sum, the mapping has yielded 97 associations (see section 2). In February 2015, 15 interviews were conducted with members of diaspora associations (including ‘German-Ethiopian’ associations) and with a representative of the Ethiopian Embassy in Berlin. Additional interviews were conducted via phone and Skype. These qualitative data were complemented by quantitative data on immigration and foreign residents, asylum, employment, and education in Germany.

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2 DIASPEACE (*Diasporas for Peace, 2008-2011*) was a collaborative research project, funded by the European Commission under its 7th Research Framework Programme. For further information, see <[http://cordis.europa.eu/project/rcn/89503\\_en.html](http://cordis.europa.eu/project/rcn/89503_en.html)> and <<https://www.bicc.de/research-themes/project/project/diaspeace-40/>>.

# 1 The Ethiopian diaspora in Germany in Figures

## MIGRATORY FLOWS, DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS, EMPLOYMENT, AND EDUCATION

According to the German micro census for 2013 (Destatis 2014c, table 16), the Ethiopian community in Germany is estimated to range at about 16.000 individuals. This figure includes 10.980 individuals with Ethiopian citizenship<sup>3</sup> and about 5.000 German nationals with a 'migration background' from Ethiopia, i.e. persons who have either migrated to Germany or are descended from immigrant parents or grandparents (Destatis 2014c Annex 1: 667f.). However, in contrast to the micro census, most German statistics only distinguish according to citizenship status and do hence not contain separate information on individuals holding German citizenship and having a migration background from Ethiopia or other countries. For this reason, and unless otherwise specified, the following paragraphs in this section (1) only refer to Ethiopian citizens residing in Germany.

### The Ethiopian Community in Germany

In total, 10.980 Ethiopian nationals were residing in Germany in 2013, with an average age of 32.9 years and an average length of stay in Germany of 11.3 years.<sup>4</sup> By contrast, in 2000, there were 15.305 Ethiopian nationals living in Germany whose number constantly decreased during the following five-year period (Destatis 2008). As

argued elsewhere (Warnecke & Schmitz-Pranghe 2011: 193), this decrease is most likely due to changes in the German citizenship law in 2000, as the number of Ethiopians obtaining German citizenship doubled in the five-year period following the new legislation to approx. 500 p.a. compared to less than half that number in the five-year period preceding the new law (ibid.).

### Movements and recent migration patterns

In the period from 2006-2013, the number of Ethiopian nationals residing in Germany has largely remained constant, decreasing slightly with an overall low of 9.900 Ethiopian nationals residing in Germany in 2009 and then increasing again to the current figure (see table 2.). While it is difficult to account for this decline and subsequent increase, it is most likely not due to the number of naturalizations, which has undergone a similar decline and increase in the same period and currently ranges at 397 naturalizations in 2013, the last year for which data were available (see table 3). In this context, it is interesting to note that the decline and increase has been more pronounced among male Ethiopian nationals, while the number of female Ethiopian nationals has remained relatively constant before increasing as of 2011.

Table 1: Ethiopian nationals residing in Germany, 2013

Gender	Total	Average		Share of		
		Age	Duration of residence	single individuals	married individuals	individuals born in Germany
		by years		percentage		
male	5 211	33,8	12,4	63,1	25,9	11,3
female	5 769	32,1	10,2	48,4	36,7	9,0
Total	10 980	32,9	11,3	55,4	31,6	10,1

Source: Destatis 2014a.

<sup>3</sup> Ethiopia does not recognize dual citizenship. Instead, persons of 'Ethiopian origin' can apply for an Origin Card, which was introduced in 2002 (see section 4 of this report).

<sup>4</sup> Destatis, 2014, *Ausländische Bevölkerung 2006-2013 nach Staatsangehörigkeit und Geschlecht (Fachserie 1, Reihe 2)*, Statistisches Bundesamt: Wiesbaden <<https://www.destatis.de/DE/Publikationen/Thematisch/Bevoelkerung/MigrationIntegration/AuslaendBevoelkerung.html>>.



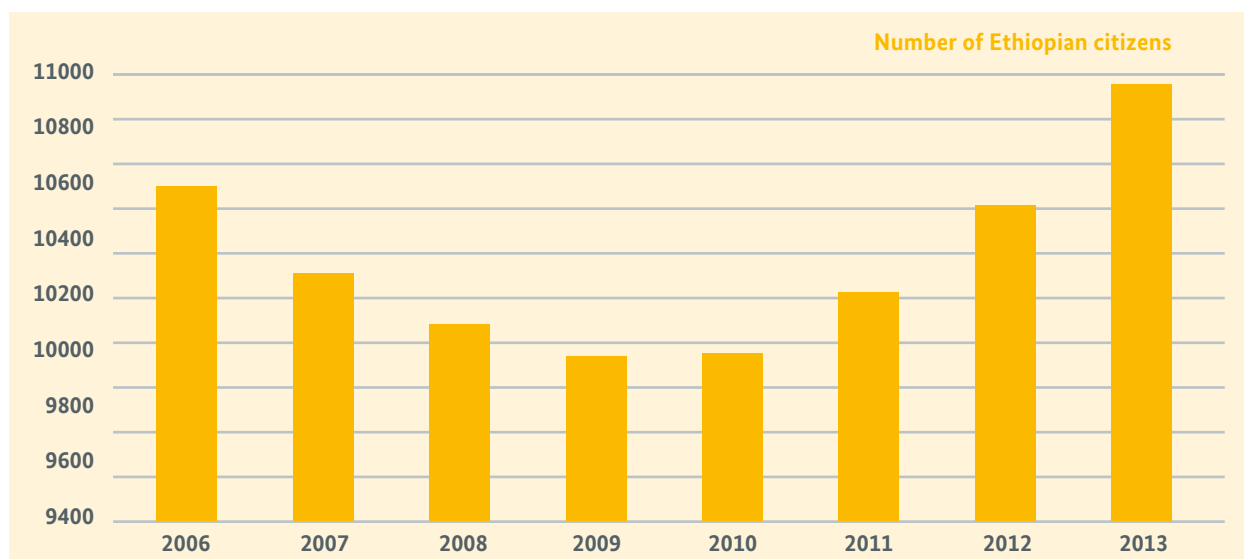


**Table 2: Number of Ethiopian nationals residing in Germany, 2006-2013 (as of 31. December)**

Year	Total	Male	Female
2006	10.609	5.305	5.304
2007	10.293	5.079	5.214
2008	10.115	4.898	5.217
2009	9.990	4.767	5.223
2010	10.004	4.745	5.259
2011	10.228	4.844	5.384
2012	10.532	4.972	5.560
2013	10.980	5.211	5.769

Source: Destatis 2014a.

**Figure 1: Number of Ethiopian citizens residing in Germany, by year**



**Table 3: Number of naturalisations of Ethiopian nationals in Germany, 2006-2013**

Year	Total	Male	Female
2006	444	203	241
2007	411	198	213
2008	338	153	185
2009	358	175	183
2010	362	160	202
2011	370	173	197
2012	347	143	204
2013	397	174	223

Source: Destatis 2014b.



According to the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge, BAMF) and the German Federal Statistical Office (Destatis), in 2013, overall migration flows to Germany reached their highest peak since 1993, with a total net migration saldo of +428.607 immigrants.<sup>5</sup> In the same year, migration to and from Ethiopia amounted to a net saldo of +747 individuals, of which only two held German citizenship (see table 4).

The total net migration saldo is slightly higher when looking at movements of Ethiopian nationals to and from Germany in the same period, which stood at +757, of which 352 were male and 405 female. Both with regard to migration to and from Germany, the age group of Ethiopian nationals aged 25-50 years is the most dominant one; in 2013, of the total number of 1.337 Ethiopian immigrants, 791 belonged to that category. Similarly, among Ethiopian nationals leaving Germany, 412 out of 580 were between 25 and 50 years of age.

**Table 4: Movements between Germany and Ethiopia, 2013**

Entering Germany			Leaving Germany		
Total	German nationals	Non-German nationals	Total	German nationals	Non-German nationals
1.435	152	1.283	688	150	538

Source: Destatis 2015a.

**Table 5: Movements of Ethiopian nationals to and from Germany by gender and age group, 2013, own compilation**

Age	Entering Germany			Leaving Germany		
	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female
	1.337	712	625	580	360	220
< 18	235	111	124	75	37	38
18-25	269	116	153	49	25	24
25-50	791	472	319	412	275	137
50-65	33	12	21	37	19	18
65 >	9	1	8	7	4	3

Source: Destatis 2015a.

More detailed information on the nature of these movements can be found in the balance of movements of non-German nationals ('Bewegungsbilanz für die ausländische Bevölkerung'). However, the figures vary when compared

to the movements of Ethiopian nationals for the same period (2013), as the balance of movements also includes births, deaths, and changes of citizenship status (see table 6 on the next page).

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<sup>5</sup> Destatis press release no. 179, 22.05.2014, <[https://www.destatis.de/DE/PresseService/Presse/Pressemitteilungen/2014/05/PD14\\_179\\_12711.html](https://www.destatis.de/DE/PresseService/Presse/Pressemitteilungen/2014/05/PD14_179_12711.html)> and Destatis 2015a>.

**Table 6: Balance of movements of Ethiopian nationals to Germany by gender and migration status, 2013**

Gen-der	Total 31.12.12	Change of citizen- ship	Addition to AZR1 in 2013					Removals from AZR in 2013				Birth sur- plus	Net immi- gra- tion	Total 31.12.13	
			Total	Of which:			For in- form. only:  Arriv- als & de- part. in 2013	Total	Of which:						
				First migration from abroad	Return	Birth			Depar- ture  Abroad	Dereg- istra- tion	Death				Re- moval from regis- ter
Male	4.972	– 31	736	581	66	89	54	466	149	109	21	187	+ 68	+ 389	5211
Fe- male	5.560	– 30	642	543	33	66	46	403	103	57	11	232	+ 55	+ 416	5769
Total	10.532	– 61	1378	1124	99	155	100	869	252	166	32	419	+ 123	+ 805	10980

Source: Destatis 2014a.

## Historical patterns of migration

In historical perspective, migration from Ethiopia has primarily, though not exclusively, been conflict-induced. Until the overthrow of the monarchy and the establishment of a socialist council of soldiers (Derg) in 1974, Ethiopians migrating to the US and Europe had mostly been temporary migrants, including diplomats, students, and other members of the political and educated elite (Terrazas 2007; Warnecke and Schmitz-Pranghe 2011). According to data compiled by Abye (2004: 27), these migratory flows rose from 200 to about 5.000 individuals between 1942 and 1970, most of which returned to Ethiopia. Emigration increased significantly with the coup d'état and the coming into power of the Derg. In subsequent years, and triggered particularly by the Derg's campaign to root out opposition movements (so-called 'Red Terror', 1977-82), both members of the old establishment as well as of competing left-wing groups left the country and were usually recognized as political refugees in Western countries (Matthies 2005).

In the same period, the Derg under Mengistu Haile Mariam intensified the campaign to quell the resistance and independence struggles of marginalized ethnic groups, particularly in the Northern provinces (Tigray, Eritrea) and the south-eastern regions (Oromia, Ogaden). These campaigns against ethnic rebellions included large-scale forced resettlements, which, together with the Ethio-Somali (Ogaden) war of 1977-78, reinforced and significantly contributed to the famine<sup>7</sup> caused by the droughts of 1983-1985, spiking the numbers of Ethiopians (including Eritreans) seeking refuge abroad (de Waal 1991; Abye 2004). As the compilation of the Global Migrant Origin Database (2003)<sup>8</sup> for the year 2000 shows, the most important destination countries for Ethiopian migrants (refugees) were the United States, Canada, Sweden, Germany, the UK, the Netherlands, and Italy in the West, while Israel, Saudi Arabia, and Jordan were the most important receiving countries within the region, followed by Sudan and the DRC.

6 AZR = Central Register of Foreign Nationals (Ausländerzentralregister).

7 According to de Waal (1991), the famine of 1983-85 preceded the drought and was in large part attributable to government policies.

8 The data provided in the Global Migrant Origin Database refer to the year 2000.

**Table 7: Number of Ethiopian Foreign Born Migrants by Country of Residence, circa 2000**

United States	73,066	Australia	3,544	Belgium	1,022
Israel	58,900	United Arab Emirates	3,363	Russia	919
Saudi Arabia	21,992	Pakistan	3,211	Zimbabwe	791
Canada	14,486	Lebanon	3,088	India	783
Sweden	11,281	Côte d'Ivoire	2,511	Iraq	735
Germany	9,542	Greece	2,507	Kenya	723
Jordan	8,781	Ghana	2,499	Uzbekistan	721
United Kingdom	8,122	Switzerland	1,972	Finland	694
the Netherlands	7,592	Zambia	1,661	New Zealand	657
Italy	6,310	Kuwait	1,483	South Africa	638
Sudan	5,112	Yemen	1,233	Egypt	636
Congo, Democratic Republic	4,196	Burkina Faso	1,201	Nigeria	617
France	3,715	Serbia and Montenegro	1,108		
Norway	3,575	Guinea	1,023		

Source: Global Migrant Origin Database, Development Research Centre on Migration, Globalization, and Poverty, University of Sussex 2003, cited in Warnecke (ed.) 2010.

Following nearly two decades of civil war and counter-insurgency, in 1991 the Derg was defeated by the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF), a coalition of rebel groups<sup>9</sup> led by the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF), which subsequently became the ruling party and has ruled the country ever since. In a 1993 referendum supervised by the United Nations, Eritrea gained independence from Ethiopia. In 1994, Ethiopia adopted a new constitution, implementing the principle of ethnic federalism. Multi-party elections were first held in 1995, and subsequently in 2000, 2005, and 2010, with the next election being scheduled for May 2015.

Following the overthrow of the Derg in 1991, some migrants returned to Ethiopia, particularly from neighbouring Sudan. However, opposition to the dominance of the Tigray-based TPLF/EPRDF government is rife among Oromo, Ogaden, and Afar groups, but also among urban-based opposition parties. In recent years, not only the war with Eritrea (1998-2000), but particularly the crises surrounding the 2005 so-called 'stolen elections' and

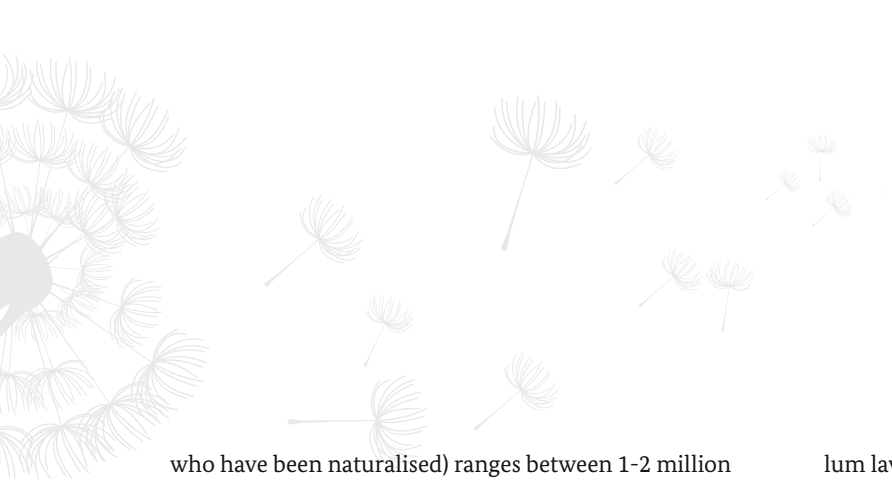
subsequent political violence have prompted further emigration (Lyons 2007). The 2010 elections remained largely peaceful, but had been preceded by intensive government intimidation and led to a stunning EPRDF victory at 99.6 percent of the vote.

According to data provided by the World Bank, in 2010, Germany ranged 8th among the top ten destination countries of Ethiopian migrants.<sup>10</sup> By contrast, Ethiopians returning from abroad mostly migrated from neighbouring countries: Eritrea, Somalia, Sudan, Djibouti, and Kenya (World Bank 2011). Based on figures provided by the CIA World Fact Book, the total net migration rate for Ethiopia was – 0.23 migrants per 1,000 inhabitants in 2014 and has hence remained relatively unchanged in the last decade.<sup>11</sup> Today, it is estimated that the Ethiopian diaspora worldwide (including Ethiopian nationals and persons

<sup>9</sup> Alongside the TPFL, the EPRDF coalition government comprises the Oromo Peoples' Democratic Organization, the Amhara National Democratic Movement, and the South Ethiopian Peoples' Democratic Front.

<sup>10</sup> The top ten countries being Sudan, the US, Israel, Djibouti, Kenya, Saudi Arabia, Canada, Germany, Italy, Sweden, see World Bank Migration and Remittances Fact Book 2011, <<http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTPROSPECTS/Resources/334934-1199807908806/Ethiopia.pdf>>.

<sup>11</sup> CIA World Fact Book 2014. <<https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/et.html>>; see the World Bank database on net migration, 1980-2014: <<http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SM.POP.NETM/countries/1W-ET?display=default>>.



who have been naturalised) ranges between 1-2 million persons worldwide and is particularly strong in the Middle East and the United States (approx. 250.000 to 500.000 persons), and to a lesser extent Europe (Kuschminder 2010: 1).

## Asylum

Figure 2 provides an overview of the long-term development of (first-time) asylum applications of Ethiopian citizens in Germany. The total number of applications has greatly declined since 1991, peaking again in 1995 and 1996 (i.e. following the first multi-party elections in Ethiopia), declining again to an all-time low in 2008, before reaching their highest level since 1997 in 2013 with 717 applications.

A number of factors have to be taken into account when trying to make sense of these figures. First and foremost, the overthrow of the Mengistu regime undoubtedly contributed to a decrease in applications, albeit with some delay. Secondly, however, Bauer (2004, cited in Warnecke & Schmitz-Pranghe 2011) estimated that up to 1991, about 80% of Ethiopian nationals who were granted asylum in Germany were Eritreans. Statistics were adjusted following Eritrea's independence, hence accounting in part for the decline. Thirdly, in 1993, the German government added the so-called 'Drittstaatenregelung' to German asy-

lum law, according to which asylum seekers who have entered Germany from 'safe' third countries are obligated to seek asylum there. This provision, which anticipated the Dublin II provision, led to a further decline in the number of applications, as did the fact that the (asylum) recognition rate in the case of Ethiopian nationals has been rather low in the past decade, ranging highest at 3,6% in 2006<sup>12</sup> and lowest at 0.6% in 2012<sup>13</sup>, granting asylum mostly to members of the main opposition parties (Friedrich 2008, cited in Warnecke & Schmitz-Pranghe 2011). For 2014, the recognition rate is 0.8%.

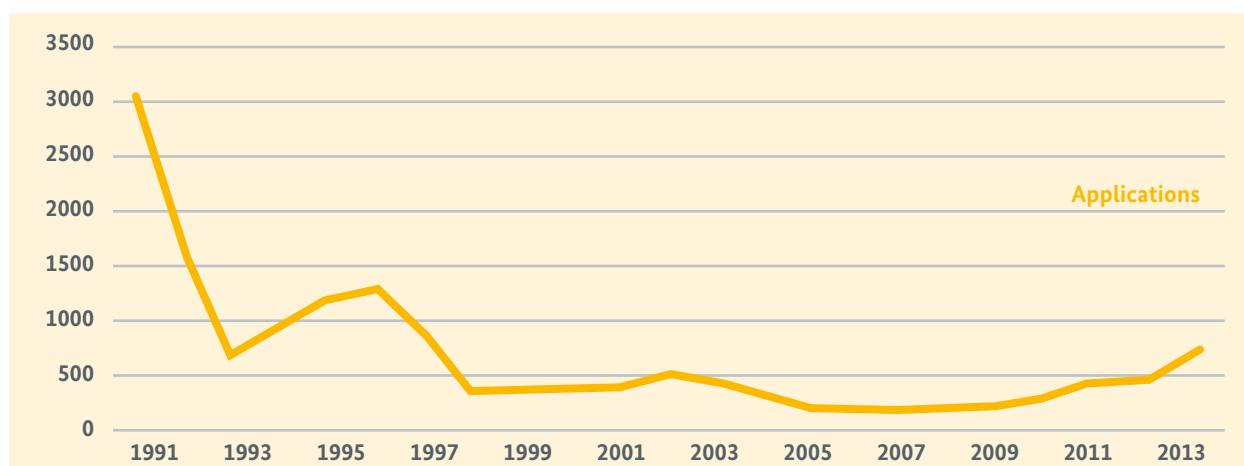
However, the so-called total 'protection rate', which includes successful asylum applications, but also the provision of refugee and subsidiary protection or the suspension of deportations, has been considerably higher in the entire period, ranging at 41% in 2009, averaging at roughly 25% in subsequent years and currently standing at 31% for the first two months of 2015.<sup>14</sup> Putting these figures into context, the overall 'protection rate' of refugees and

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<sup>12</sup> To put this into perspective, the overall recognition rate was 0.8% in 2006, and 6.3% if other forms of protection are taken into account (including suspension of deportation, the temporary/subsidiary protection of refugees etc.), see Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung (<<http://www.bpb.de/nachschlagen/zahlen-und-fakten/soziale-situation-in-deutschland/61634/asyl>>).

<sup>13</sup> Data provided by BAMF upon request, 28.02.2015.

<sup>14</sup> All figures provided by BAMF upon request.

Figure 2: Total number of asylum applications by Ethiopian nationals in Germany, 1991-2013



Source: BMI 2013: 263ff.





asylum seekers from all countries of origin stood at 24.9% in 2013, while the rate of successful asylum applications ranged at 13.5% (BMI 2014: 109). In regard to Ethiopia as a country of origin, the overall protection rate was almost identical at 24.3%, however, the (asylum) recognition rate only stood at 1.6%, i.e. did not follow the general trend.<sup>15</sup> In sum, Ethiopian nationals are more likely to be granted refugee status than political asylum in Germany.

More recent data<sup>16</sup> on asylum applications and refugee and subsidiary protection were provided by the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (BAMF) upon request. According to the latest data of February 28, 2015, the number of asylum applications of Ethiopian nationals has continued to increase, albeit much more significantly, jumping from a total of 748 applications in 2013 to 1.213

in 2014. In the first two months of 2015 alone, as many applications have been filed as were submitted annually between 2005 and 2008. Most of these applications are filed by first-time applicants (96.8% in 2014).

### Demographic characteristics

As discussed above, given the nature of available data, the following sections exclusively focus on Ethiopian nationals residing in Germany.<sup>17</sup> In 2013, the average age of Ethiopian nationals residing in Germany was 32.9 years, the average length of stay 11.3 years. Of these, about one third were married, while slightly more than half were single. Only about 10% of Ethiopian nationals were born in Germany.

**Table 8: Number of Ethiopian nationals residing in Germany by gender, average age, length of stay, and marital status, 2013**

Gender	Total	Average...		Share of...		
		age	length of stay	unmarried	married	born in Germany
		in years		in %		
Male	5 211	33,8	12,4	63,1	25,9	11,3
Female	5 769	32,1	10,2	48,4	36,7	9,0
Total	10 980	32,9	11,3	55,4	31,6	10,1

Source: Destatis 2014a.

**Table 9: Total number of Ethiopian citizens, and number of Ethiopian citizens born in Germany, by age**

Ethiopian nationals								Of which born in Germany:							
Total: 10.980								Total: 1.112							
of which aged between ... to less than ... years								of which aged between ... to less than ... years							
< 6	6–10	10–15	15–18	18–21	21–25	25–65	65<	< 6	6–10	10–15	15–18	18–21	21–25	25 <	
751	369	373	340	448	678	7806	215	540	216	177	73	38	25	43	

Source: Destatis 2014a.

<sup>15</sup> By contrast, the former figure was 13.5% for 2013, the latter 24.9% (BMI 2014: 109), with overall protection rates being particularly high in the cases of Eritrea (72.3%) and Somalia (49.3%).

<sup>16</sup> The figures provided by BMI and BAMF are not entirely compatible as the latter are continuously modified.

<sup>17</sup> While the German Statistical Office has begun publishing data on individuals with a migration background, these yield hardly any information regarding persons with a migration background from Ethiopia as groups of less than 5.000 individuals cannot be included for methodological reasons (see Destatis 2014c, Hinweis zur Hochrechnung des Mikrozensus 2013).

**Table 10: Ethiopian nationals in Germany by length of stay, 31.12.2013**

Length of stay in years, min ... to less than...												Average
< 1	1–4	4–6	6–8	8–10	10–15	15–20	20–25	25–30	30–35	35–40	40 <	
1.078	2.468	907	663	608	1.584	1.537	1.089	603	335	75	33	11,3

Source: Destatis 2014a.

### Employment and education

As of mid-2014, a total of 5.047 Ethiopian nationals were employed in Germany. This figure includes 1.421 so-called marginal (part-time) employments. The ratio of employment to marginal employment is 2:1 for women, while for men it is 4:1. Across all groups, the number of persons employed in Eastern Germany (including Berlin) is extremely small.

With regard to the larger Ethiopian community, i.e. Ethiopian nationals residing in Germany and German citizens with a migration background from Ethiopia, the 2013 micro census estimates that out of a total population of 16.000 individuals, 9.000 are part of the labour force, of whom 8.000 are employed (Destatis 2014c, table 16).

### Students, academic staff, and German-Ethiopian academic cooperation

According to data compiled by the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD), in 2013, there were in total 526 students with Ethiopian nationality at German universities. Of these, 458 were considered 'Bildungsausländer', i.e. students who had obtained their higher education entrance qualification outside of Germany, while 68 of them had obtained it in Germany ('Bildungsinländer').<sup>18</sup> In 2012, 185 Ethiopian nationals had newly enrolled at German universities (first-year students), 176 so-called 'Bildungsausländer' and only nine of them 'Bildungsinländer'.<sup>19</sup> In the same year, 124 Ethiopian nationals successfully graduated from German universities (112 / 12).<sup>20</sup>

In terms of academic disciplines, engineering and natural sciences including maths have continued to be the most popular disciplines, followed by the social sciences (including law and economics). However, given their rather small share of the overall student body in Germany, forestry, agricultural and nutritional sciences continue to attract a disproportionately high share of students with Ethiopian nationality.

**Table 11: Number of Ethiopian citizens employed /marginally employed in Germany 2014, 30.06.2014**

	Employment			Marginal employment		
	... of which in:	Western Germany	Eastern Germany	... of which in:	Western Germany	Eastern Germany
Total	3.626	3.469	157	1.421	1.358	61
Male	1.956			537		
Female	1.670			884		

Source: Bundesagentur für Arbeit 2015.

<sup>18</sup> DAAD, 2014, Wissenschaft weltoffen, data available from <<http://www.wissenschaftweltoffen.de/daten/1/2/1>>.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.: <<http://www.wissenschaftweltoffen.de/daten/2/2/1>>. Figures are not yet available for 2013.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.: <<http://www.wissenschaftweltoffen.de/daten/3/2/1>>.



**Table 12: Number of Ethiopian Students in Germany by discipline, 1998-2013**

	Languages & humanities	Law, economics & social sciences	Mathematics & natural sciences	Engineering	Medicine & health sciences	Forestry, agriculture & nutritional sciences
WS	Number of students					
98/99	58	141	153	224	43	88
99/00	51	129	138	188	47	86
00/01	52	115	137	163	39	82
01/02	41	98	126	154	35	77
02/03	47	90	131	153	30	83
03/04	47	90	131	153	30	83
04/05	37	83	111	152	32	80
05/06	30	73	103	133	23	65
06/07	29	76	111	115	19	68
07/08	26	66	101	111	21	76
08/09	34	78	123	104	19	72
09/10	37	83	112	126	20	64
10/11	45	68	116	154	24	63
11/12	42	76	126	148	28	70
12/13	45	102	127	151	23	78
13/14	49	98	115	147	33	74

Source: Destatis 2014d; table: BMBF Datenportal <<http://www.datenportal.bmbf.de/portal/en/kwresult.html#intro>>. WS = winter semester

According to the DAAD21, in 2012, 53 Ethiopian nationals were working as academic staff at German universities / institutions. However, as data regarding academic staff by nationality are so far not systematically compiled, it is likely that this figure is considerably higher, particularly when taking into account individuals who do not participate in any exchange programme (or in the case of the diaspora, have obtained German citizenship).

With regard to institutional academic cooperation, according to the German Rectors' Conference (*Hochschulrektorenkonferenz, HRK*), there is at present no cooperation with an Ethiopian academic umbrella institution at this level (information provided by the HRK upon request, Feb 2015). However, according to the HRK, there are at present 43 individual partnerships or collaborations between German and Ethiopian universities.<sup>22</sup>

21 DAAD, 2014, Wissenschaft weltoffen.  
<<http://www.wissenschaftweltoffen.de/daten/5/2/1>>.

22 A full list including contact details and brief information on the nature of the cooperation is available from <<http://www.hochschulkompas.de/internationale-kooperationen/kooperationen-nach-staaten.html>>.



**Box 1: Academic cooperation: DIES Partnership programme**

The SEPT-Programme<sup>23</sup> (Small Enterprise Promotion and Training) at the University of Leipzig cooperates with six African universities in five countries (Ghana, Tanzania, Kenya, Rwanda, and Ethiopia). The project, entitled iN4iN Africa Network, is funded by the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) under the DIES partnership programme and seeks to support entrepreneurship in developing economies through knowledge exchange. In particular, the programme enhances cooperation between universities and the local private sector and the establishment of train the trainer facilities for managing investments at the participating African universities. In Ethiopia, the Adama Science and Technology University participates in the programme, which runs from Jan 2013 – Dec 2016. Further information on the programme is available from SEPT at the University of Leipzig (<http://www.sept.uni-leipzig.de/About-SEPT.314.0.html>), a list of contact details of all partners is provided by the DAAD ([https://www.daad.de/imperia/md/content/entwicklung/dies/partnerschaften/u\\_leipzig\\_-\\_afrika\\_dt.pdf](https://www.daad.de/imperia/md/content/entwicklung/dies/partnerschaften/u_leipzig_-_afrika_dt.pdf)).

.....  
<sup>23</sup> <<http://www.sept.uni-leipzig.de/About-SEPT.314.0.html>>.

# 2 Community Life and Associations: Ethiopian Diaspora or Diasporas?

In Germany, most members of the Ethiopian / Ethiopian-German community live in large metropolitan areas such as Frankfurt am Main, Cologne, Berlin, and Munich, Würzburg and Nuremberg in Bavaria. As there are no statistical data available regarding those members of the community who hold German citizenship, it is difficult to assess the size of these communities. According to concurrent estimates provided by several interviewees, it can be assumed that the community in Frankfurt (M) comprises at least 5.000 members<sup>24</sup>, and about 1.000 individuals in the cases of Cologne and Munich. Accordingly, most Ethiopian nationals reside in Hesse, Bavaria, and North-Rhine Westphalia (cf. table 14 which provides an overview of naturalizations of Ethiopian nationals by state).

By contrast, and leaving aside Berlin, very few Ethiopian nationals reside in the Eastern German states. During the 1980s, approximately 4.000 Ethiopians studied in the German Democratic Republic (GDR). However, more specific numbers are not obtainable since the GDR census did not provide citizenship information.<sup>26</sup>

As argued above, the evolution of the Ethiopian community in Germany as a largely conflict-generated diaspora has doubtlessly had significant ramifications for its social composition and cohesion/fragmentation. While it is not to claim that the history and patterns of migration determine the scope of cooperation in the diaspora or with actors and authorities in Ethiopia, many divisions and conflict lines that were or are relevant in Ethiopia unsurprisingly continue to influence discourse and practices in Germany.

## *Ethnicity and political conflict*

The dividing or conflict lines within the Ethiopian diaspora are usually understood along ethnic or ethno-political lines (Lyons 2007; Lyons 2009). According to different estimates, there are about 70 to 80 different ethnic groups in Ethiopia, the largest of which are the Oromo (34.4%), Amhara (27%), followed by Somali (6.2%), Tigrinya (6.1%), and Sidama (4%) (CIA World Factbook 2014: Ethiopia). While the history of ethnic relations in Ethiopia goes well beyond the scope of this paper, ethnic tensions are seen to have been greatly exacerbated by the system as enshrined in the 1995 constitution and propagated by the ruling EPRDF coalition which is led by the Tigray-based TPLF (ibid.).

The view that political power is heavily accumulated in the hands of Tigrinya (and to a lesser extent Amhara) elites and largely benefits the development of the Northern ('Abyssinian') regions is widely held among the diaspora in Germany and beyond (Lyons 2009). However, the issue of political power and clientelism not only pits ethnically defined diaspora associations (such as most Oromo, Ogaden-Somali, or Afar groups) against the current government, but also supporters of urban-based opposition groups whose support base is heavily diaspora-based in view of the closure of political space in Ethiopia following the 2005 elections (and in the current run-up to the 2015 elections, HRW 2015). As two interviewees explained, irrespective of ethnic affiliations, the major fault line appears to be to either act in support or defiance of the EPRDF/TPLF. In Germany, several interviewees referred to the

**Table 13: Number of naturalisations of Ethiopian nationals in Germany 2013 by German federal states**

		Baden-Wuerttemberg	Bavaria	Berlin	Hamburg	Hesse	North Rhine-Westphalia
Total	397						
Male	174	36	65	22	16	185	55
Female	223						

Source: Destatis 2014b.

<sup>24</sup> These numbers are based on estimates obtained during the interviews. In the case of Frankfurt (M), some respondents assumed that the Ethiopian community had considerably grown in the past decade and comprised considerably more than 5.000 individuals.

<sup>25</sup> Federal states with five and less naturalizations in 2013 have been deleted from the list.

<sup>26</sup> Cf. Warnecke & Schmitz-Pranghe 2010: 61, FN 70; estimates cited in <[http://www.leipzig.de/imperia/md/content/01-4\\_ref\\_europ\\_int\\_zusammenarbeit/staedtepartner.pdf](http://www.leipzig.de/imperia/md/content/01-4_ref_europ_int_zusammenarbeit/staedtepartner.pdf)> accessed 21.10.2009.





existence of a large ‘silent majority’ on the one hand, and a small number of political activists aligned with the major opposition parties, who usually announce meetings and events in a few well-known Ethiopian restaurants or cafés. Similarly, there are restaurants and cafés that are largely frequented by supporters of the present government. In terms of associations, the Tigray Development Association e.V. (TDA) is seen as closely aligned with the ruling party, an assumption that appears to be justified in view of the close cooperation of this association with the Ethiopian Embassy and the presence of Ethiopian government representatives at the association’s annual conferences.

### Forms and types of social organisation

Compared to other immigrant communities<sup>27</sup> in Germany, the Ethiopian diaspora is comparatively small, albeit seemingly well connected. On the one hand, several interviewees pointed out that the most important networks and contacts among the diaspora function on an informal basis. One example that was repeatedly mentioned during the interviews, was support to newly arriving refugees and/or migrants, who usually access diaspora networks and organisations based on individual contacts in Germany. Similarly, while most political (opposition) parties are not organised in Germany on a formal basis, individual cafés and restaurants function as meeting places and are well known among the community.

On the other hand, there are approximately 100 diaspora organisations, most of which are constituted as registered associations (*eingetragener Verein*, e.V.) in Germany, displaying various degrees of activity and formal organisation (cf. mapping), which can roughly<sup>28</sup> be grouped in five categories:

27 According to the 2013 German micro census, the most important countries of origin for persons ‘with a migration background’ are Turkey (2.877.000 persons), Poland (1.590.000), and the Russian Federation (1.197.000). In Africa, the most important countries of origin are Morocco (153.000), Tunisia (53.000), Ghana (44.000), and Nigeria (42.000) (Destatis 2014c, table 16).

28 It is not always possible to clearly delineate between the different types. Many community and most faith-based groups also collect donations for charitable purposes in Ethiopia or have at some point attempted to conduct development projects. Similarly, many ethnically defined associations combine a focus on community life and support in Germany with raising awareness of political repression and human rights violations in the Horn of Africa.

### 1 Community groups

The mapping uncovered about 25 Ethiopian community groups in Germany, the ongoing existence of most, albeit not all, of which could be verified. While not the primary focus of this study, a few observations can be summarised: Of the above-given number, about half of the organisations explicitly identify as ethnically defined groups, including five Oromo groups, two Somali-Ogaden, three Tigrinya, and one Afar and Amhara group each. In addition, there is at least one Ethiopian self-help or ‘Iddir’ group in most German cities that host a sizeable Ethiopian community, whose activities range from the organisation of cultural festivals, language courses, school support, to providing assistance to refugees and individual community members. Several respondents stated that particularly in the last three years, the plight of newly arriving refugees and asylum seekers had become a central focus of their activities in view of their significantly increased numbers (as corroborated by data provided by the BAMF, see section 1). From the point of view of diaspora cooperation, there are two observations worth pointing out in regard to community organisations: on the one hand, these community groups could provide an entry point to establishing contacts with members of the diaspora interested in temporary return and/or business cooperation. Secondly, and perhaps more importantly, however, there appears to be a high demand for support on the part of refugees/new arrivals on the one hand and a high degree of willingness and expertise of community groups on the other to actively support the integration of Ethiopian migrants. Examples include the Oromo Horn von Afrika Zentrum (Berlin), the Äthiopische Gemeinde Rhein-Main Gebiet e.V., Ethio-Cologne, and the Oromo Hilfsinitiative Frankfurt e.V. While not in the purview of development agencies, the potential and civil engagement of diaspora associations in this field appear to be one of their key competences that should not be overlooked, particularly given the ongoing increase in the number of refugees and asylum seekers arriving in Germany and the by now well-established interlinkages between integration as a prerequisite to and often a result of development activities conducted by migrant organisations (see Vollmer & Warnecke 2011, particularly p. 13ff.).



**Box 2: Äthiopische Gemeinde Rhein-Main-Gebiet e.V.**

The Ethiopian Community Rhein-Main e.V. was founded in 1995 as a community organisation and meeting group. In its heyday, the group had about 500 members, the number of which has recently dwindled significantly. In January 2015, a new chairperson has taken over and is presently seeking to revive the association. Due to the increasing number of Ethiopian refugees arriving in Germany in the past two years, the association is currently most actively involved in providing individual support to individuals living in refugee homes (for instance with regard to interacting with German authorities, social and legal information). According to the chairperson, a recurrent concern derives from the psychosocial problems of new arrivals. To this end, the association has begun to cooperate with the German “Telefonseelsorge” (telephone helpline) in an effort to provide psychosocial counselling in Amharic and additional Ethiopian languages.

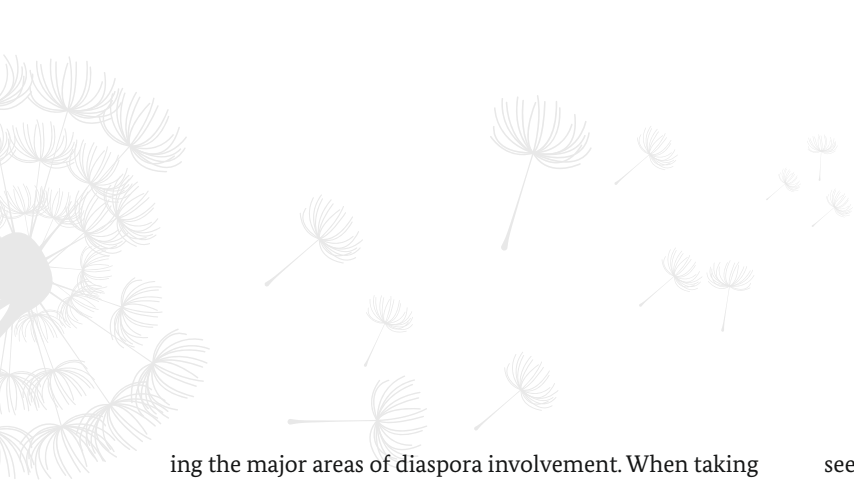
**Box 3: Oromo Horn von Afrika Zentrum**

The Oromo Horn of Africa Centre was founded in 1985 in Berlin and has traditionally been strongly involved in supporting refugees in Germany and beyond, as well as raising political awareness for human rights violations in Ethiopia. In recent years, in addition to its cultural work, the Centre has been strongly involved in the counselling and support of refugees in Berlin, cooperating with the churches, the City of Berlin and a number of organisations, for instance in developing and publishing a brochure for refugees. With a view to the Oromo community in and around Berlin, the Centre organises language courses, school tutorials, and computer classes and is involved in anti-racism seminars at schools. Due to its long-standing history, the Centre is widely known among the Oromo community in and beyond Germany and is frequently contacted by individuals seeking help. At present, there are two permanent staff and two volunteers.

**2 (Development) Cooperation with Ethiopia**

The mapping uncovered 16 diaspora organisations that are presently actively conducting projects in the area of social development in Ethiopia. With the exception of ethnically defined organisations, whose development activities focus on specific regions such as Tigray or Oromiya (*Tigray Development Association e.V.*, *Hilfsorganisation der Oromo Relief Association in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland e.V.*, *H-ORA*) and who have a larger membership base, diaspora organisations conducting develop-

ment projects are usually very small, having no more than 10 members. In fact, for the most part, these initiatives originate with individuals or bi-national couples who then enlist the support of friends or colleagues to conduct developmental or humanitarian measures based on their professional expertise or personal ties. Most activities of these groups are concentrated on Addis Ababa and surroundings, with support to families and street children through education and social work (six), medical aid (three), and sustainable ecological development (three) be-



ing the major areas of diaspora involvement. When taking into account the initiatives of German associations vis-à-vis Ethiopia, these topical priorities are largely identical.

### 3 Academic and professional associations

There are about four<sup>29</sup> networks of a professional and/or academic nature, which largely pursue related objectives. Among these, the oldest association is the *Arbeitskreis Afrikanischer und Asiatischer Akademikerinnen* (AAAAA, Working Group of African and Asian Academics), which was originally founded in Göttingen in 1974 as a body of the African-Asian Studies Group (*Afrikanisch-Asiatische Studienförderung e.V.*<sup>30</sup>), which in turn dates back to 1959. Until 2007, the Working Group has cooperated with the World University Service (WUS) and the Center for International Migration and Development (CIM) with regard to supporting the return and reintegration of students and academics upon the conclusion of their studies in Germany. In recent years, the Working Group has encountered difficulties in obtaining funding for such activities and has primarily focused on organising workshops and seminars as well as an intercultural friendship and exchange group. Due to its long-standing history and experience, there is a strong network with African and Asian academics, including Ethiopians, in Germany and their countries of origin. In addition to re-viving its activities in the area of return and reintegration, a representative of the working group also highlighted the need to actively support the integration of foreign students and academics in Germany as a key area of concern.

The second oldest group, the *Gesellschaft zur Förderung der Medizin, Ingenieurs- und Naturwissenschaften in Äthiopien e.V.*, was founded in Mainz in 2000 by a group of scientists of Ethiopian origin with a view to organising temporary return and providing teaching and research materials to Ethiopian universities. Like the Working Group, this association organises seminars and events at German universities, and has tried to develop a project in cooperation with an Ethiopian university. However, a representative of the association reported recurrent difficulties in organising the transport of donated scientific materials such as instruments to Ethiopia, which largely

seem to result from a combination of bureaucratic barriers or insufficient knowledge thereof, as well as problems in finding suitable partner organisations in Ethiopia. One potential approach to addressing these obstacles might be to explore the possibility of joining the existing networks between Ethiopian and German universities as listed in the *Hochschulkompass* of the German Rectors' Conference (*Hochschulrektorenkonferenz*).<sup>31</sup>

Among younger and second-generation diaspora members, the Ethio-German Students and Academics e.V. (*Deutsch-Äthiopischer Studenten und Akademikerverein, DÄSAV*) has succeeded in attracting a large membership base. Based on informal contacts through social media such as the former German StudiVZ, the association brought together Ethiopian students in Germany, Austria, and Switzerland who subsequently founded the association in 2008. At present, the association has about 150 members, most of which are based in North Rhine-Westphalia, Berlin, Stuttgart, Munich, Frankfurt and Switzerland and are organised in regional groups. In addition to providing support to their members, the association organises an annual conference and has recently launched an E-Learning project in cooperation with the *Cameroon Association of Engineers and Computer Scientists e.V.* (VKII e.V.) and supported by CIM. At present, the association also seeks to focus on supporting academic entrepreneurship between Germany and Ethiopia.

The *Ethiopian-German Forum e.V./ EG-Forum* similarly pursues an agenda in the area of economic cooperation and entrepreneurship, both by offering conferences and workshops (on topics such as migrants in politics, investment etc.), and offering advice and contacts to entrepreneurs seeking to invest in Ethiopia. In the past, the Forum also had a focus on development cooperation and fostering entrepreneurship in the framework of projects and financial literacy trainings. However, according to information provided by the chairperson, the present activities prioritise economic cooperation and investment, conducted on a voluntary basis and addressing a limited, more specialised audience.

While there are personal contacts among the latter two associations, the former two, i.e. the working group and

29 In addition to these diaspora-based associations, there is also the Association of Ethiopians Educated in Germany (AEEG), an alumni-network based in Addis Ababa which cooperates with a range of German educational, cultural and developmental institutions.

30 For further information, see <[www.aasf.de](http://www.aasf.de)>.

31 A full list is available from the HRK website: <<http://www.hochschulkompass.de/internationale-kooperationen/kooperationen-nach-staaten.html>>.



the *Gesellschaft*, do not appear to maintain contacts amongst each other or to the latter two. Particularly with a view to identifying contacts to academic institutions in Ethiopia, an idea worth pursuing appears to be to enhance the exchange of experiences and information amongst these organisations, possibly including some of the partners /partnerships as listed by the German Rectors' Conference (HRK) or from the *Association of Ethiopians Educated in Germany* (AEEG).

#### 4 Churches and faith-based groups

While some authors have noted an increase in inter-faith tensions in Ethiopia during the last decade (Feyissa 2011), no such evidence could be found in the case of the Ethiopian community in Germany. According to the 2007 census, roughly two thirds of the Ethiopian population are Christian (of which 43.5% Ethiopian-Orthodox and 18.5% Protestant/evangelical Christians), while one third are Muslims (33.9%) (see Feyissa 2011: 1896).<sup>32</sup> Among the Ethiopian community in Germany, there are several Ethiopian-Orthodox and Protestant congregations as well as one Catholic association (Stuttgart). However, no Ethiopian-Muslim faith group or association could be identified and none of the interviewees seemed to be aware of the existence of any.<sup>33</sup>

The *Ethiopian-Orthodox Church* (EOC) in Germany was founded in Cologne in 1982 and maintains communities in Frankfurt, Berlin, Stuttgart, Nuremberg, Wiesbaden, Kassel, Darmstadt, Hamburg, Karlsruhe, and Leipzig. According to information provided by the archpriest, who has founded and led the church for more than three decades, the congregation in Cologne comprises 150 regular

members, with important festivities such as the Ethiopian New Year attracting up to 1.000 diaspora members. The church maintains good contacts with German Protestant and Catholic Churches, but has no links to other Ethiopian churches or faith groups. The churches also organise religious and language (Amharic) education and provide support to monastic schools in Ethiopia. In addition to the EOC, there are also branches of the 'alternative' *Ethiopian-Orthodox Medhanealem Church* in Frankfurt, Stuttgart, and Munich. The latter broke away from the EOC, when the new EPRDF government ousted the former patriarch of the EOC (who now resides in the US), accusing him of having supported the *Derg*. The other important Christian denominations are Protestants /Evangelicals of different confessions. In Germany, there appears to have existed a sizeable network of Oromo Protestant Churches, however, several of them have been disbanded in the past decade and a half. Among the above-mentioned groups, none seems to be actively engaged in Ethiopia, however, most provide some form of assistance or financial support to their coreligionists in Ethiopia.

#### 5 Political activism, human rights, and parties

Due to the sensitive nature of the matter and the kind of extensive field work required to adequately assess ethnically-defined opposition groups, party politics and affiliations, it is not possible to make any general claims regarding the existence of Ethiopian (opposition) parties in Germany. While a number of lobbying and campaigning groups are active in Germany and seek to advocate on behalf of the Afar, Oromo, and Ogaden people, political prisoners (*SOCEPP*), and the Ethiopian Human Rights Council, none of the parties has a visible presence in Germany. However, in light of information gathered during the interviews, it can reasonably be concluded that these networks exist informally, particularly in Frankfurt, Berlin, Munich, Cologne, and online.

There are two major opposition online media in Germany, *ethiogermany.de* which is based in Frankfurt, and *ethiomunich.com*. While the former was initiated in June 2005, the latter was founded after the 2005 election crises in March 2007. According to Skjerdal (2011: 734), both editors left Ethiopia after the regime change. On the pro-government side, the most influential news site is *aigaforum.com*.

32 These numbers are, however, contested, with Muslim representatives arguing that their numbers have been purposefully underreported (*ibid.*).

33 On the European level, there is the *Network of Ethiopian Muslims in Europe* which is based in Haarlem in the Netherlands ([www.ethiopianmuslims.net](http://www.ethiopianmuslims.net)), but it is not clear to what extent it is active in Germany. Other than that, there are diaspora associations with a largely Muslim membership base, such as the *Afar Forum*. However, religion/ Islam is not part of the Forum's political agenda on behalf of the Afar people in Djibouti, Eritrea, and Ethiopia. The same appears to apply to the associations of the Somali-Ogaden communities (e.g. *Ogaden Direkt-hilfe e.V.*).



**Box 4: Linkages between political activism, community support and humanitarian engagement: Afar Forum and Afar Fürsorgeverein e.V.**

The *Afar Forum* was founded in Paris in 1991, comprising a membership base of ethnic Afar from Djibouti, Eritrea, and Ethiopia. Alongside other national chapters in the Netherlands, Belgium, Sweden, the US, and Canada, the German branch was founded shortly thereafter in Seeheim-Juggenheim close to Frankfurt am Main and presumably comprises all Afar residing in Germany, of which 30 are active members. Most of these are at the same time organised in the *Afar Fürsorgeverein e.V.* based in Munich. The founding purpose of the Forum was to ‘monitor the EPRDF’s compliance with the constitution’ and to help protect the interests of the Afar community in the Horn of Africa. To this end, there appears to be a de facto division of labour. The Afar Forum seeks to provide a neutral forum for all Afar and organises a large biannual international conference in Brussels, the upcoming one scheduled for 2016 and drawing up to 400 members from the community. In addition, it also seeks to raise awareness for the plight of the Afar by contacting Western governments and develops a biannual work plan to that end. The *Afar Fürsorgeverein e.V.* is more directly engaged in providing aid to Afar in the Horn of Africa, particularly to refugees. Activities include the support of a school for Afar refugees in Yemen, humanitarian aid after a volcanic eruption in the Afar region about three years ago, as well as successful efforts to freeing a number of Afar refugees who had been detained in Yemen. An important vehicle for organising community support across Europe and aid to refugees, are the discussion groups organised via [www.paltalk.com](http://www.paltalk.com). All activities by the *Forum* and by the *Fürsorgeverein* are financed by membership fees and members’ donations. A recent development is the creation of the *Afar Youth Organization* in 2010.

## 6 German-Ethiopian associations

While not belonging to the diaspora in the narrow sense, there are a number of German or German-Ethiopian associations that conduct projects in Ethiopia which largely resemble the developmental activities of their diaspora counterparts discussed above in terms of their size on topical foci. As these are usually small-scale private endeavours, there seems to be hardly any cooperation among any of these groups. However, there are two larger associations, the *Deutsch-Äthiopischer Verein e.V.* (DÄV) and the *Deutsch-Äthiopische Gesellschaft e.V.* (DEAG), both of which are very well connected among diaspora and other German actors. The former was founded in 1995 by a group of former development professionals. While not conducting projects of its own, the DÄV publishes

a bulletin with information on Ethiopia and German-Ethiopian cooperation thrice yearly (*DÄV Informationsblätter*) and organises a yearly conference in Kassel which brings together a broad range of diaspora associations and individuals. By contrast, DEAG, founded in the same year, primarily focuses on vocational training and cooperation between Ethiopian and German actors in this field, particularly with the North-Rhine building trade associations (*Baugewerbliche Verbände NRW*). In addition, the association conducts a project in the area of sustainable construction in Addis Ababa in cooperation with a local partner organisation (WeSMCO), as well as a range of cultural activities. In light of their long-standing engagement and networks, both associations are important interfaces





for diaspora actors and those wishing to get involved in German-Ethiopian cooperation in the field of development and economic cooperation.

### *Networking and contacts between groups*

There is no umbrella organisation among Ethiopian groups (see section on divisions and cohesion) and despite the existence of strong ties and networks among parts of the diaspora, many respondents did not seem aware of the existence of similar groups working in related fields.

Beyond the news and discussion platforms mentioned above, the internet as the “diasporic medium par excellence” (Sreberny 2001: 156, cited in Skjerdal 2011: 729) is particularly used to raise awareness and funds at short notice. In this respect, particularly paltalk.com was mentioned repeatedly as a means for dispersed networks of the political opposition or marginalised ethnic groups to collect donations and other forms of support, following natural disasters and other humanitarian emergencies, for instance in response to the internment of Eritrean Afar

refugees in Yemen. While paltalk.com is used by members of ‘first-generation’ diaspora groups, social media such as Facebook and previously StudiVZ play a bigger role among younger or second generation diaspora members and very often were instrumental in setting up and subsequently managing ‘offline’ associations (e.g. Ethio Soccer Europe), at least in those cases where no official website has been set up.

By contrast, the internet as a means of communication seems only haphazardly used by the Ethiopian Government. While there is for instance an official website advertising the Grand Renaissance dam, or information provided on the embassy and MFA websites such as the diaspora brochure (see section 4 below)<sup>34</sup>, much information appears either outdated with links being a lot of broken or otherwise inaccessible (for instance the diaspora portal)<sup>35</sup>. The only exception to this, appears to be the website of the Ethiopian Embassy in the United States.<sup>36</sup> By contrast, the Ethiopian Embassy in Germany provides hardly any diaspora-related information, and none of it in German.

34 <<http://www.mfa.gov.et/diaspora/>>.

35 Portal: <<http://www.ethdiaspora.org.et>>; Ethiopian Expatriate Affairs, EED, Ministry of Foreign Affairs: <[www.mfa.gov.et/Ethiopians-Origin\\_Abroad/Ethiopia-Origin.php](http://www.mfa.gov.et/Ethiopians-Origin_Abroad/Ethiopia-Origin.php)>.

36 <[http://www.ethiopianembassy.org/ConsularServices/Consular-Service.php?Page=ID\\_01.htm&left=2](http://www.ethiopianembassy.org/ConsularServices/Consular-Service.php?Page=ID_01.htm&left=2)>.

# Contributions to Development: Motivations, Scope and Challenges

The overwhelming majority of Ethiopians or Germans of Ethiopian origin interviewed in the course of this study and for the purposes of a previous project expressed a strong sense of belonging and commitment to Ethiopia. For instance, several respondents expressed the wish to return to Ethiopia upon their retirement. While the number of organisations working on issues of development is relatively small, almost all organisations claim to send financial support to charitable or humanitarian causes in Ethiopia, most of which in the context of natural disasters and humanitarian emergencies. While the single most important motivation to engage in Ethiopia is certainly to be found in supporting diaspora members' own communities of origin, Chacko and Gebre (2013) summarise their findings on diaspora motivations for investments as follows: "The business investments made by Ethiopians in the diaspora in their home country are driven by a complex mix of opportunities, motivations and intentions that include a desire to establish viable businesses that could be managed by transnational or returning entrepreneurs, the availability of special incentives for diasporan investors to start businesses in Ethiopia and a desire to help their home country and home communities through investments" (2013: 502).

Most of these motivations are present among diaspora groups in Germany, however, the extent of investment efforts in Ethiopia appears to be rather limited so far. By contrast, several associations sought to respond to the incentives created by German development cooperation and other funding agencies of the past years, seeking support for projects in Ethiopia. Particularly the surge in attention that the migration development field has received in the past decade among policy makers at different levels of government and on the part of funding agencies seems to have fostered the creation of new associations or the re-orientation of existing ones, albeit with very limited success in terms of actual projects implemented. In this regard, a number of interviewees expressed a sense of frustration with the proliferation of conferences and meetings and the limited number of actual projects being successfully conducted.

In many cases, a part of the problem appears to have resulted from the fact that the surge in policy interest and available funding has also led some organisations to apply for project funding without having the institutional capacities or resources to successfully do so. In this

regard, an important driving force for some organisations to become involved in development work appears to be the quest for the recognition of their organisations and efforts, which is unsurprisingly particularly pronounced among migrant organisations whose membership originates from countries not usually seen as constituting a significant migrant group in Germany. In many cases, the mere fact that a study is being conducted on a particular diaspora community naturally raises hopes and expectations for a higher degree of recognition by and cooperation with German institutions. As the interviews for this and previous studies showed, it is hence important to clearly communicate the kind and extent of possible support mechanisms and, perhaps most importantly, a clear list of eligibility criteria as well as the overall purpose of such cooperation or support.

When viewed against the entire spectre of diaspora organisations, the number of sixteen Ethiopian groups that actively conduct projects in Ethiopia is relatively small. As argued above, most of these activities are conducted by a small group of individuals. While organised as registered associations (e.V.), for the most part, and excluding the two ethnically-defined groups mentioned above, these associations are hence not membership organisations but could more adequately be described as private and largely self-contained endeavours. One example of this type of organisation is *Addis Hiwot Kinderhilfe e.V.* (Berlin), which conducts three-year support programmes to families at risk in Addis Ababa with a view to improving their economic self-sufficiency and ensuring the education of their children. Similarly, *Listros e.V.* (Berlin), the *Mannheimer Förderverein für Selbsthilfeprojekte Äthiopien e.V.* (Mannheim), and *Ethiopia Arise e.V.* work with street children and orphans, respectively, or support educational facilities (*Akaki e.V.*) The second group of projects conducted in Ethiopia focuses on sustainable agriculture and ecological measures, including *Enat Afer e.V.* and *Meno Lopho e.V.*. The issue of sustainable development and ecological protection is also one of the concerns of the *Gesellschaft zur Förderung der Medizin, Ingenieurs- und Naturwissenschaften in Äthiopien e.V.* in Mainz, which currently explores opportunities for conducting a project on knowledge-transfer in the area of sustainable energies. In the private sector, *Ecopia* (Jena) invests in and supports the production of organic foods and cosmetic and has established an additional association (*ElJOJOFE e.V.*) to provide technical and financial assistance to local producers.



In contrast to these smaller associations, the *Tigray Development Association e.V (TDA)* which is a branch of the bigger umbrella organisation of the same name founded in Washington DC in 1989 and closely cooperates with the Ethiopian government, is a large membership-based organisation with approximately 150 members in Germany which has conducted numerous projects in the Northern region of Tigray, some of which in cooperation with bilateral agencies such as USAID, SIDA and US-American NGOs.

A notable finding during the interviews was the impression that many organisations that have previously attempted to conduct developmental projects in Ethiopia have cancelled such efforts for the foreseeable future and have undergone a period of reconstitution, many of which resolving to focus on issues of integration and community support rather than development cooperation. While it is hardly possible to draw overarching conclusions based on a limited number of interviews, it can reasonably be concluded that this development is in part a result of the often unfulfilled heightened expectations or hopes regarding the cooperation with German development institutions in the past decade. Several respondents stated that they had dedicated considerable resources towards fulfilling the institutional requirements for obtaining external funding without any apparent success. Particularly in view of the voluntary basis of almost all associations portrayed here, establishing and managing projects from abroad appears to overstretch the resources of many associations. At the same time, as one respondent noted, very little efforts had been made to build stronger networks with local partners in Germany, particularly on the communal level, with only few associations being aware of the more informal forms of support provided by the churches or city councils among others.

In the course of the mapping exercise, aside from *Ecopia* and *Kaffee Pura*, no charitable private enterprises from the diaspora that are presently active in Ethiopia could be un-

covered. A number of interviewees reported earlier private attempts to invest in Ethiopia in the form of small-scale enterprises. However, most of these efforts had eventually been cancelled due to excessive time delays on the part of Ethiopian authorities in processing applications, as well as to unexpected regulatory changes. Several respondents observed that the Ethiopian government and/or embassy was primarily interested in attracting sizable investments and did not provide assistance to smaller enterprises.

By far the biggest potential for cooperation in and with Ethiopia seems to exist in the form of temporary return and knowledge transfer /academic exchange programmes. In addition to the professional and academic networks discussed above (section 3), a number of Ethiopian academics and students live and work in Germany. Most interviewees seemed convinced that there was a high interest among the diaspora to return or move to Ethiopia in the framework of a temporary knowledge exchange programme (although not permanently). In regard to the current political situation, most respondents who do not belong to one of the marginalized ethnic groups, while expressing considerable reservations regarding the democratic performance of the present government, expressed a 'pragmatic view', prioritizing a concern for the country's socio-economic development over a participation in political controversies.

The major problem in this regard seems to be that most associations are not aware of similar efforts undertaken by other actors from the diaspora and beyond. At the same time, the limited resources of individual associations very often seem to be a major obstacle to conducting larger cooperative projects on their own. One useful approach would hence be to invite a number of associations to get to know each other, exchange useful information regarding contacts in Ethiopia, and possibly explore the scope of a targeted collaboration.

# 4 Diaspora Policies by the Government of the Federal Republic of Ethiopia

In January 2002, the Diaspora Engagement Affairs General Directorate (DEAGD, formerly named the Ethiopian Expatriate Affairs General Directorate), was established within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) with a mandate to “serve as a liaison between different federal Ministries, regional Diaspora coordinating offices and Ethiopians in Diaspora; Encourage the active involvement of the Ethiopians in Diaspora in socio-economic activities of the country; Mobilize the Ethiopian community abroad for a sustained and organized image building.”<sup>37</sup> In September 2011, the DEAGD published a booklet containing ‘Basic Information for Ethiopians in the Diaspora’.<sup>38</sup> This booklet provides detailed information on investment procedures and incentives, customs duties and tax procedures, the Origin card, Diaspora bank accounts, remittance service providers, and the bond programme for the ‘Grand Renaissance Dam’.

Since 2013, the Ethiopian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) has been entrusted with steering diaspora policies, which had formerly been steered by several bodies across the government (Kuschminder 2010) and issued the first overarching *Diaspora Policy of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia*.<sup>39</sup> In several countries, including Germany, there is also a specific diplomat in charge of diaspora affairs (Ragunias 2009), although few of the individuals interviewed in Germany seemed to be aware of this provision. According to a member of staff of the Ethiopian embassy, the primary objectives of the government in the field of diaspora cooperation are technology transfer, investments, and the facilitation of peace and stability. About 800 Ethiopians from the diaspora are believed to have registered with the embassy.

## Ethiopian Origin Identity Card

While Ethiopia does not recognize dual citizenship, in 2002, the government introduced the *Ethiopian Origin Identity Card* (also known as ‘Yellow Card’, Proclamation No. 270/2002). The card grants visa-free entry, the right to residence, employment and to purchase real estate. Hold-

ers of the card are also entitled to receiving public services (Manby 2010). However, the card does not grant the active or passive suffrage and excludes the right to hold office in key government functions. The card can be obtained at the cost of USD 500 for the initial five-year period and subsequently extended biannually for USD 200. Figures regarding the number of distributed cards vary. According to Kuschminder (2010: 3), by 2010, about 21,000 cards had been issued. By contrast, Chacko and Gebre (2013), citing MFA data from mid-July 2011, provide a figure of 10,990, about half of them issued to individuals residing in the US (ibid.: 499).

## Diaspora investment

The body in charge of aiding and advising in regard to all foreign and domestic investments, including work permits to foreign employees, is the Ethiopian Investment Agency (EIA). The diaspora brochure details the necessary requirements for investors, treating holders of the *Ethiopian Origin Identity Card* as domestic investors (ibid.: 8-11). To encourage (diaspora) investment, the Government grants exemption from income tax and from customs duties to investments in “manufacturing or agro-industrial activities, [...] information and communication technology development or the production of agricultural products” (see ibid. for details: 12). To a limited extent, such exemptions also pertain to imported vehicles. In sum, these incentives specifically target the productive sectors (particularly export-oriented activities and those in the poorest areas of the country) and largely exclude the service sector (ibid.: 15-16).

According to Chacko and Gebre, writing in 2012/13 based on data provided by the EIA, the percentage of diaspora investment compared to domestic private and foreign direct investment is low with an average share of 3 % in total, while Addis Ababa has attracted the most substantial part of diaspora investment flows, accumulating to 10% of investments (ibid.: 500). Diaspora investments increased in response to government policies after 2001, but fell by half their previous amount in the aftermath of the contested 2005 elections and post-election violence (ibid.).

Chacko and Gebre also provide detailed information on the allocation of diaspora investments by sector (based on EIA data) for the period 1994-2008. As these figures show, diaspora investment prioritized construction machinery

37 Website of the Ethiopian Ministry of Foreign Affairs <[www.mfa.gov.et/Diaspora/more.php?newsid=7](http://www.mfa.gov.et/Diaspora/more.php?newsid=7)>.

38 The brochure is available from the website of the Ethiopian embassy in the US: <<http://www.ethiopianembassy.org/pdf/doc-information-book-diaspora-2012.pdf>>.

39 The policy document is available from the website of the Ethiopian embassy in the US: <<http://www.ethiopianembassy.org/PDF/diaspora%20policy.pdf>>.



leases and real estate development (68%, see *ibid.*: 500), leaving the second-biggest manufacturing sector far behind (12%), a trend which the government presumably seeks to revert by strongly favouring the manufacturing sector as proclaimed in the 2011 brochure (see above). Almost 90% of all diaspora investments were directed towards Addis Ababa (*ibid.*: 501). Particularly the sale of land below the market price as a means of attracting investment, has attracted considerable criticism from segments of the diaspora and was repeatedly addressed in the interviews.

In terms of impediments to investment, Chacko and Gebre (2013) cite “access to land, access to finance, and contract enforcement” in addition to what they refer to as the “knotty relationship” between the Ethiopian government and the diaspora (*ibid.*: 503). In the course of the interviews conducted among entrepreneurs in the Ethiopian community, several respondents highlighted the frequent delays and extensive waiting times when trying to secure the necessary paperwork, as well as a measure of arbitrariness in the change and enforcement of laws and prohibitions, which in some cases led to the cancellation of projects due to unexpected obstacles. In this context, it is also worth noting that the perceived role of the Ethiopian Embassy in Germany varies quite significantly. While individual respondents highlighted that the embassy provided useful and sufficient services to putative investors, in total, most respondents were highly sceptical of the support available to them, ranging from outright rejection for largely political reasons to the conviction that the embassy was primarily interested in large-scale investors rather than smaller enterprises.

### *Diaspora accounts*

There is also the option for diaspora members to open a foreign currency account in Ethiopia (in USD, EUR, and GBP), offered both to natural persons and companies, as well as a ‘Non-Repatriable Birr Account’ to be used for local payments only (*ibid.*: 29ff.). Both options are available to Ethiopian nationals residing abroad and to holders of the Ethiopian Origin Identity Card.

### *Formal Remittance Service*

With a view to facilitating remittances of Ethiopian nationals and diaspora members, the National Bank of Ethiopia seeks to recognize ‘Remittance Service Providers’ that fulfill a list of criteria pertaining to the transparency of the services rendered to customers (regarding terms, tariffs, and transferral time, the exchange rate), and requiring no more than 24 hours to transfer remittances (see *ibid.*: 38ff.). To this end, the brochure provides a list of service providers including details on their fees. However, it is not clear to what extent the Government has taken any pro-active steps in facilitating remittances or lowering the costs.

### *Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam Bonds*

Until 2018, the Government plans to have completed the construction of the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam<sup>40</sup> in Benishangul-Gumuz Regional State, to produce electricity on the Blue Nile, ideally making Ethiopia a net exporter of electricity. As the Government has not attracted foreign investors for this project, it has in part sought to finance the project by issuing so-called ‘Millennium Bonds’ at home and abroad since 2008 (Terrazas 2010). These bonds are valued at EUR 500 (and USD 500 respectively in the US). It is, however, not possible to obtain any information on the success of this enterprise. According to two interviewees, the Ethiopian Embassy in Berlin facilitated the organisation of a small committee of well-connected diaspora members to disseminate information and increase sales. However, this initiative has come to a halt in Germany. In this context, it is interesting to note that the section detailing the bond programme in the diaspora brochure is the only one in Amharic and can hence not be summarised and discussed here.

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40 For official information on the project which was previously entitled ‘Millennium Dam’, see the Government’s project website (<<http://grandmillenniumdam.net>>). For a critical appraisal of the ecological, humanitarian, and political implications of the project, including its financing, and further reading, see: <<http://www.international-rivers.org/resources/the-grand-ethiopian-renaissance-dam-fact-sheet-8213>>.





### Land use / condominium programme

Chacko and Gebre (2013) discuss the Government's initiative to encourage diaspora groups of 12-32 individuals to invest in shared residential property by providing land leases free of charge in Addis Ababa and other cities (ibid.: 499). This initiative met with a strong response from the diaspora, which led to the suspension of the programme in Addis in 2008. This condominium programme was mentioned by several interviewees in Germany, complained about lacking information and transparency as individual projects are continuously postponed. While it was not possible to obtain information on the volume of individual investments, respondents stated that they had saved up a considerable share of their personal funds and had also made plans regarding their personal relocation, the future of which was now unclear.

As the preceding discussion has shown, the efforts by the government of Ethiopia have strongly focussed on attracting remittances and (diaspora) business investments. By contrast, both the 2011 diaspora brochure and the 2013 Diaspora Policy place little<sup>41</sup> emphasis on fostering social engagement. In this regard, a central problem that has attracted ongoing criticism (HRW 2010; 2015 and the reports of the Universal Periodic Reviews of the UN

Human Rights Council) is the enactment of the *Charities and Societies Proclamation* (CSP) in early 2009. This proclamation forced all NGOs to re-register with the new Charities and Societies Agency and effectively prohibits Ethiopian NGOs that receive more than 10% of their budgets from outside Ethiopia to work on issues of human rights (including such issues as domestic violence, disability or the rights of children) and governance. As HRW reports, the "effects of the law on Ethiopia's slowly growing civil society have been predictable and devastating" (HRW 2011), forcing NGOs to alter their mandates or altogether discontinue their work. According to HRW, enforcement of the law has been intensified in 2014 (HRW 2015). This trend has also affected researchers and academic institutions in the country and is likely to further increase in the run-up to the elections in May 2015.

In the course of the interviews, particularly respondents who are involved in project work in Ethiopia reported that the CSP had forced them to alter the focus of their work. In one instance, a diaspora organisation discontinued its cooperation with a local NGO and has re-constituted itself as an entirely German organisation that carefully avoids addressing any of the issues prohibited by the law so as to be able to continue its project work.

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<sup>41</sup> Philanthropy and development associations are mentioned in the Diaspora policy, but only in the context of non-political 'good-will' donations, see section 5.7. of the policy.



# Conclusions

As this report has argued, there is a well-connected and dynamic Ethiopian diaspora community in Germany. About 80-10042 organisations could be identified in the course of this research. While it has only been possible to verify the association's continued existence in most, but not each individual case, it is also likely that there are indeed additional, more informal associations (particularly women's groups). All in all, about 20 associations are actively conducting or planning to conduct development projects in Ethiopia. However, with the exception of two larger ethnically-defined groups, these are mostly very small groups of friends or colleagues who have established themselves as a registered association (*eingetragener Verein, e.V.*) under German law. By contrast, most larger, membership-based diaspora associations focus on the concerns of their membership base and of new refugees and migrants in Germany. Similarly, with the two exceptions mentioned above, entrepreneurial activities appear to be largely conducted on an individual basis, and thus far with limited success. In this regard, almost all respondents who tried to invest in Ethiopia reported considerable delays due to lengthy bureaucratic procedures and a shortage of information regarding applicable laws and regulations.

As argued above, the biggest potential for diaspora cooperation seems to exist in the form of knowledge exchange and professional /academic cooperation, both based on the associations and networks that have been set up to this end, and in light of the number of Ethiopian and Ethiopian-German academics in Germany. With regard to the return of Ethiopians who had received all or part of their education in Germany, the *Arbeitskreis Afrikanisch-Asiatischer Akademikerinnen und Akademiker* in Göttingen has considerable experience in the areas of return and reintegration. However, like the other professional and academic associations interviewed for this report, at present, the principal focus is on supporting the integration of Ethiopian academics and professionals in Germany. With regard to long-term return, there also appears to be a degree of ambiguity: particularly among the older generation of people of 50 years of age and older, several interviewees stated a general wish to return to Ethiopia upon retirement. At the same time, however, the same

interviewees also acknowledged that they were unlikely to actually do so. With regard to the younger generation, there seems to be an overall high interest in participating in a short-term work placement in Ethiopia for up to six months, which is, however, also dependent on the level of remuneration.

On a fundamental level, a central obstacle to diaspora cooperation in Ethiopia seems to be the disaffection with the government and the embassy in particular. As Chakro and Gebre (2013) have argued, "the circumstances that led to the diaspora leaving their home country (better opportunities, war, natural disaster, discrimination) [and] the characteristics of the people who left (elite, educated, poor, skilled/unskilled)" amongst others greatly influence their capacity and willingness to get involved (*ibid.*: 497), and, perhaps even more importantly, the form and nature of such involvement. Among the interviewees in Germany, several diaspora members pointed out that policy makers and institutions wishing to engage with the diaspora ought to acknowledge and respect such divisions. These divisions are most prevalent among marginalised ethnic groups such as Oromo, Afar (representatives of Ogaden groups could not be interviewed), but not limited to them.

As Ragunias (2009) has pointed out, "[o]rigin governments, guided by modesty and pragmatism – and the awareness that members of their diasporas may distrust them – should start with obtaining information about their citizens abroad and what they would like from the government" (*ibid.*: 11). This observation seems particularly relevant for the case of the Ethiopian diaspora in Germany, several members of which expressed the belief that the embassy was not there to represent their interests or serve their needs, but was primarily interested in harnessing their financial potential.

A similar, although slightly less pronounced perception appears to prevail in regard to cooperating with German development actors. Following the surge of interest in the migration development nexus and issues of diaspora cooperation, several associations have tried to apply for funding or devise specific projects, often adapting or modifying the original purpose of their group to meet funders' (perceived) requirements. Apart from a good deal of miscommunication or confusion as to the institutional requirements and expectations that such a cooperation entails, the fact that many project ideas and/or applica-

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42 The higher number includes German-Ethiopian associations which, while not diaspora associations in the narrow sense, often have Ethiopian or German-Ethiopian members.



tions have remained unsuccessful has left several associations with a sense of disillusionment or disappointment, leading to (or at least enhancing) the stagnation of the respective association's level of activity and sense of purpose. In this regard, several representatives reported their associations' decision to give up their developmental aspirations and focus on issues of integration and community support instead.

Bearing these caveats in mind, there is a generally strong interest to get involved in Ethiopia and to contribute to the countries' social and economic development. Likewise, German developmental agencies are considered as highly desirable partners for diaspora cooperation. In this regard, future programmes for facilitating cooperation should be designed based on the diaspora's actual capacities and information needs, rather than based on ideal outcomes

in terms of development projects. In other words, in the field of diaspora cooperation, it seems that it is necessary to decide whether the cooperation and inclusion of the diaspora or the implementation of development projects are the primary objective of a particular programme. While this is not to say that the two necessarily mutually exclude each other, particularly in the case of the membership-based associations, there very often appears to be a gap between the capacities and resources available on the one hand and the desire to conduct projects in Ethiopia on the other. In this regard, another way of looking at it might be to discern between the types of diaspora organisations to cooperate with and develop a two-pronged cooperation strategy for small, project-oriented organisations and the bigger membership-based associations, respectively.

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**Diaspora Policy 2013 of the Government of the Federal Republic of Ethiopia:** <<http://www.ethiopianembassy.org/PDF/diaspora%20policy.pdf>>

**Diaspora Brochure of the Government of the Federal Republic of Ethiopia:** <<http://www.ethiopianembassy.org/pdf/doc-information-book-diaspora-2012.pdf>>

**Diaspora Portal of the Ethiopian Government:** <<http://www.ethdiaspora.org.et>>

**Diaspora Section of the Ethiopian MFA:** <<http://www.mfa.gov.et/diaspora/>>

**Ethiopian Chamber of Commerce and Sectoral Associations:** <[www.ethiopianchamber.com](http://www.ethiopianchamber.com)>







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