



Diaspora data: relevance in global migration and development processes

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Why are data on migration and diasporas important?

- **Increasing policy attention** to migration, diasporas and development
- **Diffusion of diaspora policies and engagement measures**, creation of diaspora institutions and mainstreaming of diaspora-related issues in development plans and strategies
- **Growing awareness of the need for quality and timely data** to inform policymaking, implementation and monitoring on migration and diasporas
- COVID-19 pandemic highlighting the **need for timely data** for policy and programming

You use a diary to record what happens day.

diaspora /daɪˈæspərə/. People of a particular nation, or whose ancestors were, but who now live in many parts of the world are sometimes referred to as a diaspora; a formal word. ...the African diaspora. ...the

diatribe /daɪˈɒtrɪb/ **diatribe**

This presentation

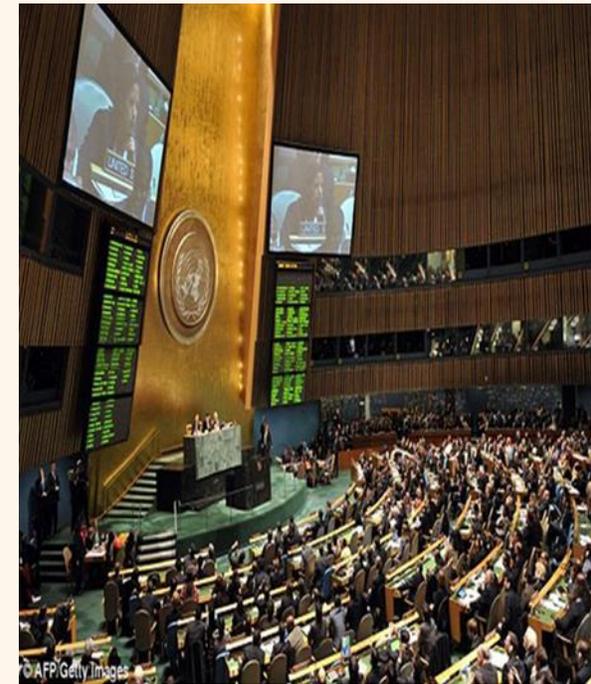
1. Policy processes and the need for data on migration and diasporas
2. Data on migration and diasporas: key concepts, definitions, and overview of sources



1. Policy processes and the need for data on migration and diasporas

Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development

- Global development framework for the years 2015-2030
- Integration of economic, social and environmental dimensions of development
- Marks the first time international migration is included in universal development goals and targets
- Recognizes the positive contribution of migrants to development and the need to mainstream migration into policymaking
- Through the principle of “leaving no one behind”, urges Governments to consider the needs of special population groups, such as migrants, and of vulnerable sub-groups (e.g. migrant children)
- Implications in terms of data and data disaggregation



Migration in the SDGs



- 60 out of 230 indicators are relevant for migration
- 7 goals explicitly refer to migration
- Target 10.7 key for migration

Direct references to migration



10.7. Increasing safe, orderly and regular migration and improving migration governance

10c. Lowering remittance costs



8.7 Combatting labour trafficking and forced labour,

8.8 Promoting decent work and migrant labour rights



4b. Increasing student mobility

The SDGs call for:

- Facilitating orderly, safe, regular and responsible migration and mobility
- Implementing planned and well-managed migration policies
- Lowering remittance transaction costs <3%
- Promoting decent work
- Combatting labour trafficking, forced labour and child labour
- Improving labour migration governance
- Increasing international student mobility through scholarships

Direct references to migration



3.c Substantially increase health financing and recruitment, development, training and retention of health workforce in developing countries

The SDGs call for:

- Improving sustainable medical health recruitment practices
- Improving coherence between health sector education system and labour markets
- Encouraging knowledge and skills transfer of health professionals in diasporas

Indirect references to migration

The SDGs call for:



5.2. Eliminating trafficking of women and girls

5.4 Value domestic work and responsibilities.

- ➔ Addressing trafficking and exploitation of women
- ➔ Providing migrants who take in charge domestic work with appropriate infrastructure and social protection.



16.2 Combatting child trafficking

- ➔ Countering all types of trafficking and exploitation
- ➔ Addressing trafficking and exploitation of children



17.18 Increasing disaggregation by migration status.

- ➔ Increasing disaggregation of data by migratory status
- ➔ Improving data across migration topics (by proxy)

Global Compact for Safe, Regular and Orderly Migration

OBJECTIVE 1

Collect and utilize accurate and disaggregated data as a basis for evidence-based policies

COMMITMENT 1.d

Collect, analyse and use data on the effects and benefits of migration, as well as the contributions of migrants and diasporas to sustainable development (...)

OBJECTIVE 19

Create conditions for migrants and diasporas to fully contribute to sustainable development in all countries

Adopted in 2018, as the first UN policy framework on migration management



GCM objective 1: recommendations

- **Harmonize methodologies** on collection, analysis and dissemination of migration-related data and indicators to achieve international compatibility between national data systems
- **Develop a global programme on national capacities** in data collection, analysis and dissemination
- Provide support, evidence and updated inputs to the Global **Migration Data Portal**
- Establish and strengthen **regional migration observatories** to collect and analyse data
- Improve national data collection, analysis and dissemination by **integrating migration-relevant questions in national censuses**

GCM objective 19: recommendations

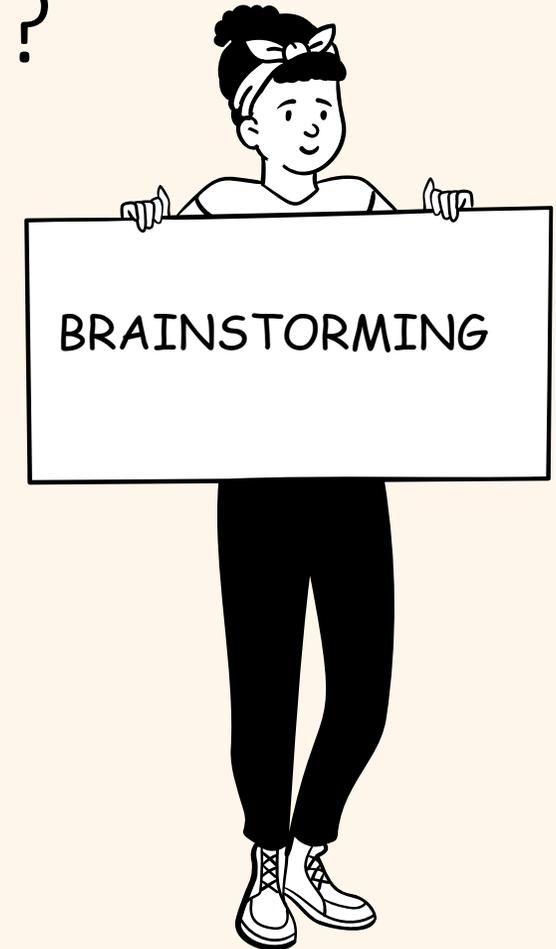
- a) **Facilitate the positive effects of migration** for the Agenda 2030
- b) **Integrate migration into development planning and sectoral policies** at the local, national, regional and global levels
- c) **Invest in research** on the impact of non-financial contributions of migrants and diasporas
- d) **Facilitate the contributions** of migrants and diasporas to their countries of origin, including through diaspora institutions
- e) **Develop targeted support programmes and financial products** that facilitate migrant and diaspora investments and entrepreneurship
- f) **Provide guidance for the financial engagement** of migrants and diasporas
- g) **Enable political participation** and engagement of migrants in their countries of origin
- h) **Promote migration policies that optimize the benefits of diasporas** for countries of origin and destination and their communities
- i) **Cooperate with other States, the private sector and employers' organizations** to facilitate professional activities and knowledge transfers
- j) **Build partnerships** between local authorities, local communities, the private sector, diasporas, hometown associations and migrant organizations to promote knowledge and skills transfer

Why do we need data on diasporas?

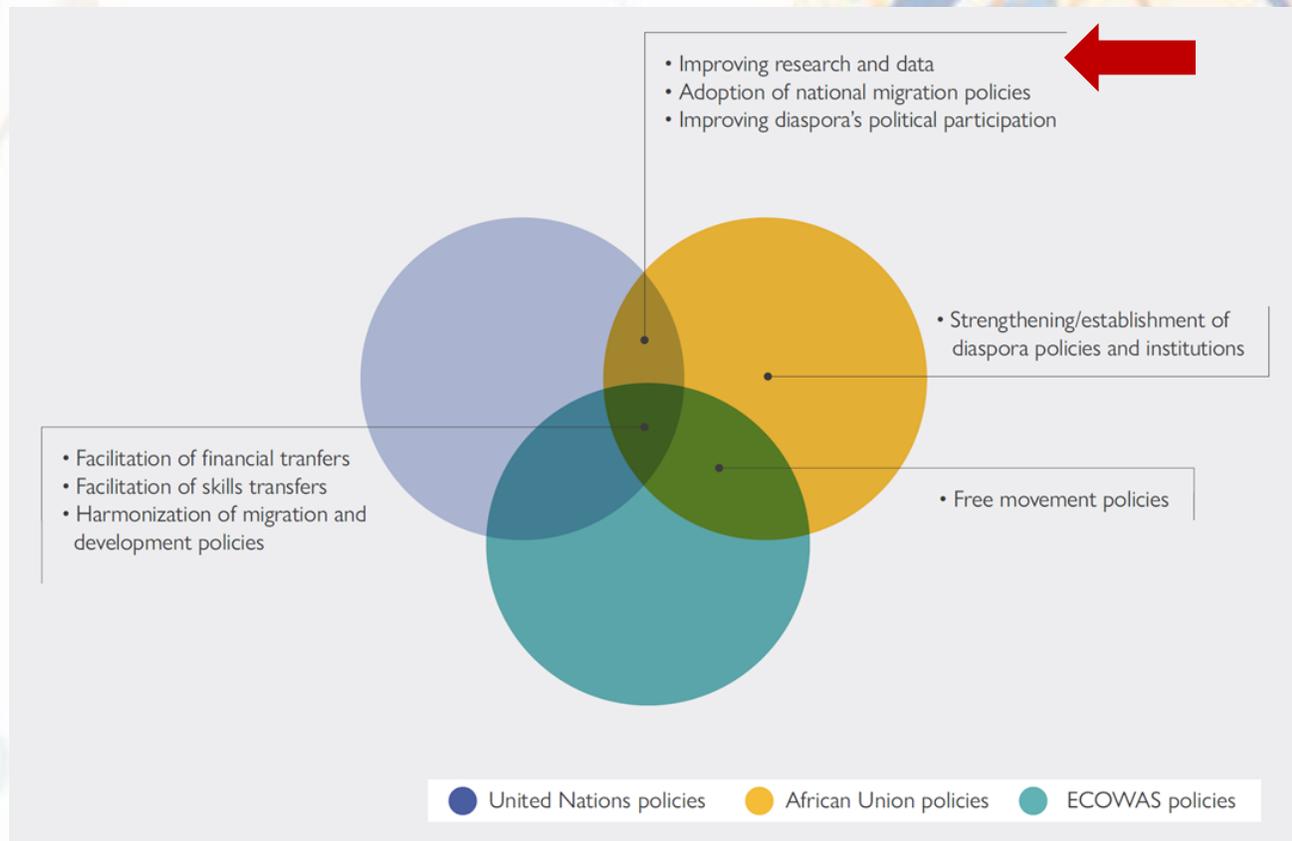
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Awareness of the need for diaspora-related data is increasing at different levels



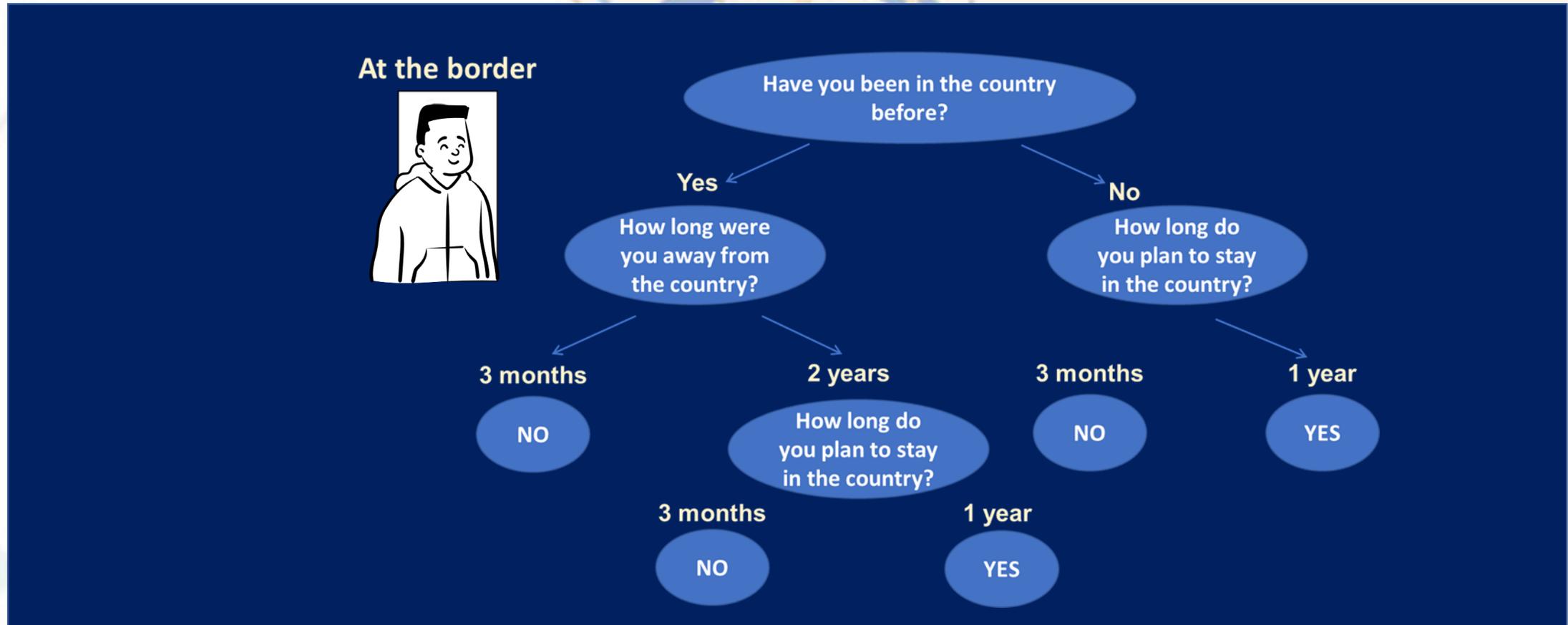
Key diaspora engagement strategies recommended in UN, AU and ECOWAS migration and development policies, and the importance of improving migration data

Source: Schöfberger, I. 2020: [Diaspora and development policies in the ECOWAS](#). In IOM: Migration in West and North Africa and across the Mediterranean



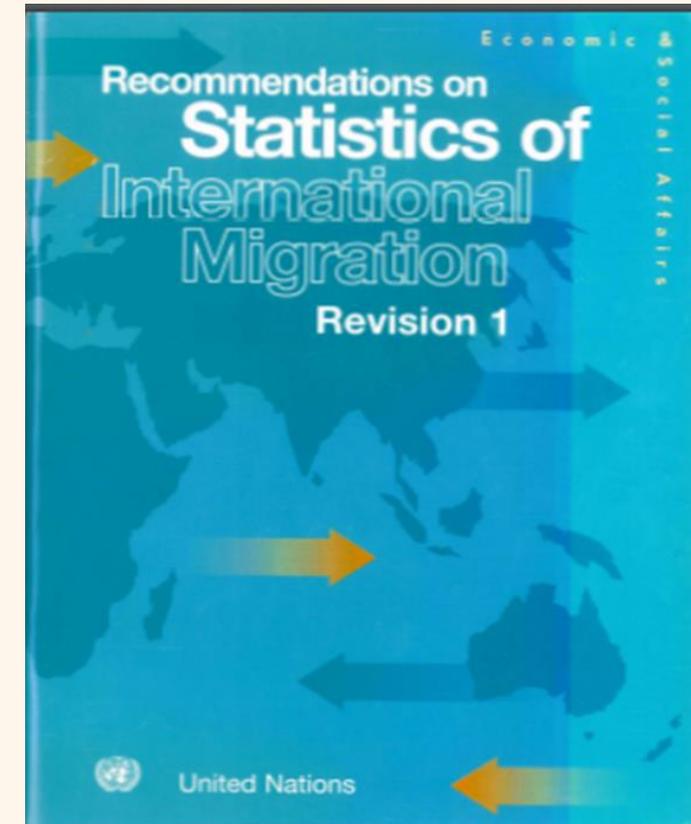
2. Data on migration and diasporas: key concepts, definitions, and overview of sources

Who is a migrant?



Defining a migrant

- **Immigrant:**
 - Entering the country by crossing the border
 - Not a usual resident of the country when entering
 - Staying in the country for at least one year
- **Emigrant:**
 - Leaving the country by crossing the border
 - Being a usual resident of the country
 - Staying in another country or abroad for at least one year
- **Long-term versus short-term** migration (> 3 months, < 12 months)



IOM definition (2019)

- “An umbrella term, not defined under international law, reflecting the common lay understanding of a **person who moves away** from his or her place of usual residence, whether **within a country or across an international border, temporarily or permanently**, and **for a variety of reasons**. The term includes a number of well-defined legal categories of people, such as migrant workers; persons whose particular types of movements are legally-defined, such as smuggled workers; as well as those whose status or means of movement are not specifically defined under international law, such as international students.”

Who is part of the diaspora?

- **No agreed-upon definition** of diasporas
- **IOM definition** (2019): “migrants or descendants of migrants, whose identity and sense of belonging have been shaped by their migration experience and background.”
- State approaches often tend to focus on **non-resident citizens**, including emigrants and their descendants (Collyer 2013)
- “...and who maintain a **connection to their homeland**” (IMF 2011)
- **AU definition of African diaspora** as “consisting of people of African origin living outside the continent, irrespective of their citizenship and nationality and who are willing to contribute to the development of the continent and the building of the AU”
- Recognition of **different feelings of belonging and willingness to engage** -> alternative definitions based on i) an “ongoing orientation towards a ‘homeland’ and maintenance of a group identity over time” (Gamlen 2019); ii) recognition that the composition of diasporas can change over time.

FEATURES OF A DIASPORA.

Diaspora can be defined as “migrants or descendants of migrants, whose identity and sense of belonging have been shaped by their migration experience and background.”

(IOM World Migration Report, 2017: 305)

Diasporas are usually characterized by most, if not all, of the following features:

MIGRATION



Migration from a country of origin in search of work, trade, or to escape conflict or persecution

COLLECTIVE MEMORY



An idealized, collective memory and/or myth about the ancestral home

CONNECTION



A continuing connection to a country of origin

GROUP CONSCIOUSNESS



A strong group consciousness sustained over time

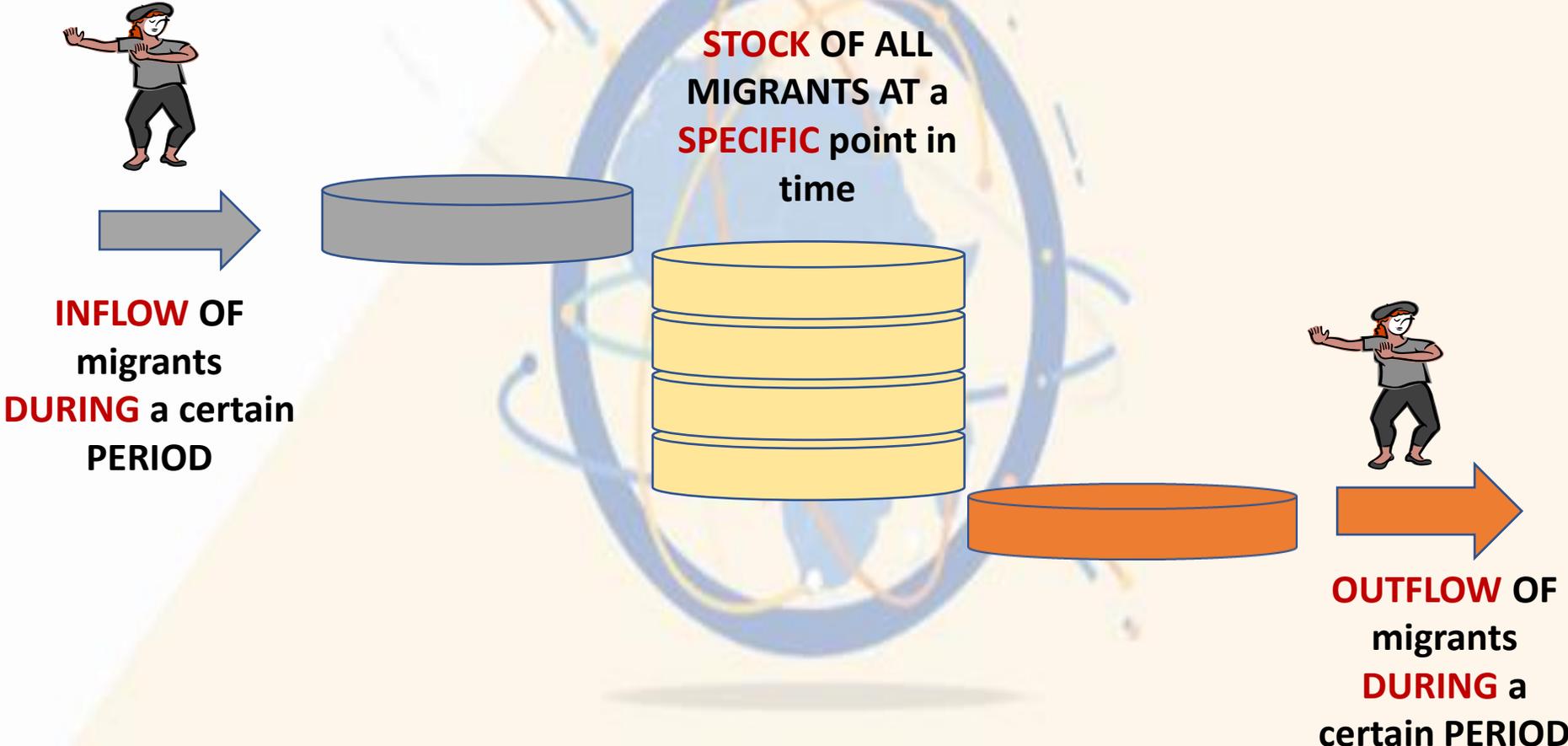
KINSHIP



A sense of kinship with diaspora members in other countries

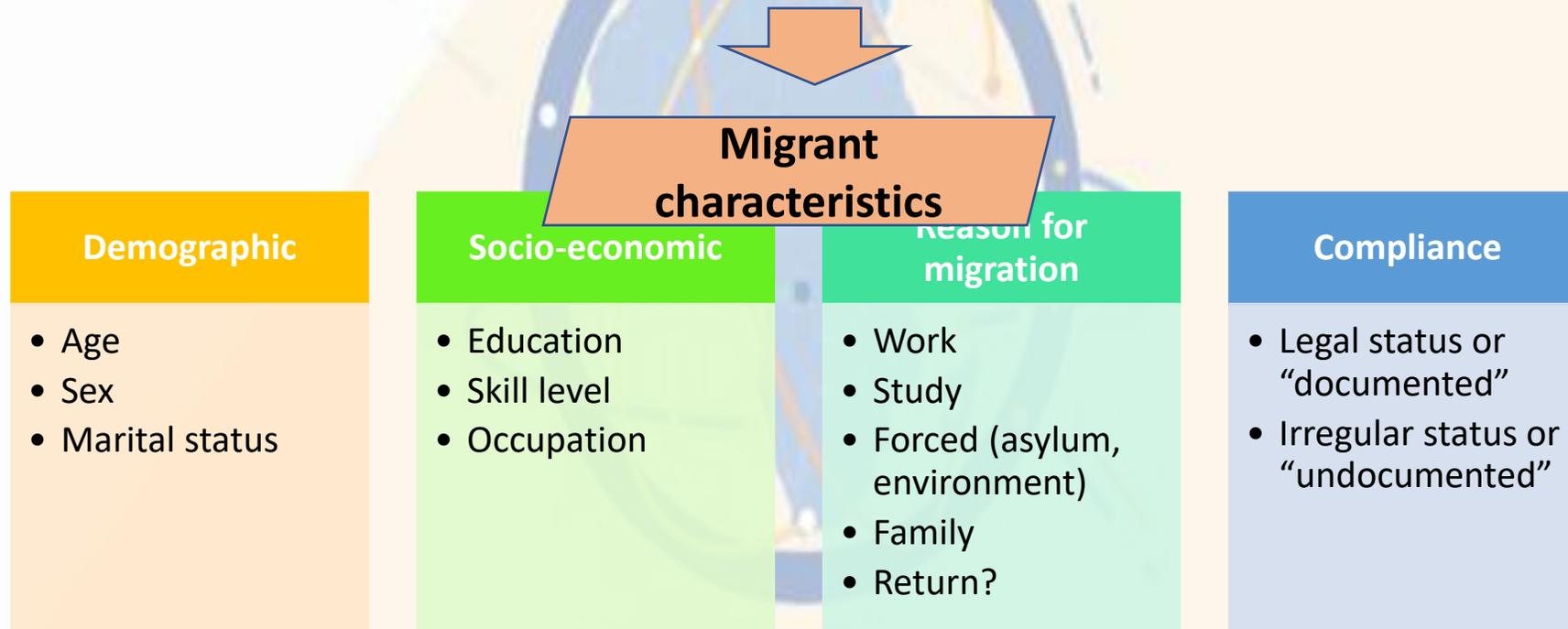
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Stocks versus Flows



Migrant characteristics

What age are they? What is their educational attainment? Do they work? What skills do they have?



KEY SOURCES OF MIGRATION DATA

TYPE OF SOURCE

EXAMPLES OF SOURCE



Statistical

Collect data for the creation of official statistics



Censuses



Household surveys



Administrative

Collect data primarily to support administrative processes rather than to produce official statistics



Visa, residence-, work-permit



Border data collection system



Innovative

Emerging sources of migration data



Big data (e.g., social media)



IOM's Displacement Tracking Matrix



Migrant stock



Drivers and impacts of migration



Migrant flows



All of the above

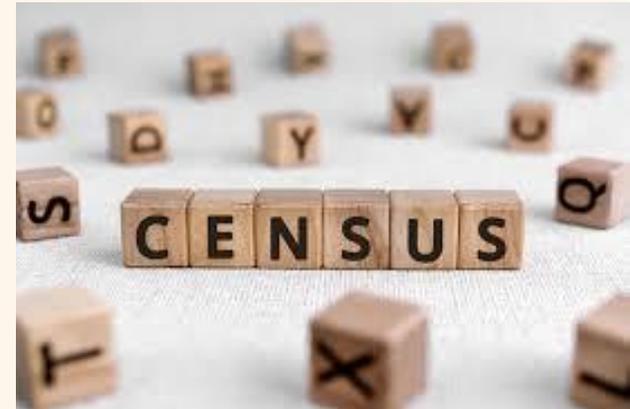
Population and housing censuses

- **Pros**

- Universal
- Only a few questions → Cross-country comparability
- Rich in socio-economic characteristics

- **Cons**

- Infrequent
- No information on causes/consequences
- Unreliable data on emigration (proxy respondents or no respondents)



Sample surveys and administrative records

Surveys

Pros

- Wealth of information, causes and consequences
- Flexibility: adding questions to identify migrant groups of interest

Cons

- Sample size!
- Costly

Administrative sources

- Records, not people
- Coverage issues (rules for registration/deregistration not strictly followed)
- Administrative rather than statistical purposes

Importance of integrating various sources
→ Harmonization of concepts and definitions!



Innovative data

Advantages:

- High spatial resolution
- High frequency of update
- Timeliness (virtually real-time)
- Wide coverage (hard-to-reach populations)
- Larger sample size compared to surveys
- Richness of information
- Relatively low cost (access!)

Challenges:

- Re-using existing private data
- Integrating 'Big' and 'small' data
- Addressing risks of data innovation for migration



- Spyratos et al. 2019: "Spyratos et al. 2019: ["Quantifying international human mobility patterns using Facebook Network data"](#)". PLOS ONE
- "Using Google Analytics & Onomastic Analysis in Diaspora Mapping", in BD4M Practitioners Guide (forthcoming)

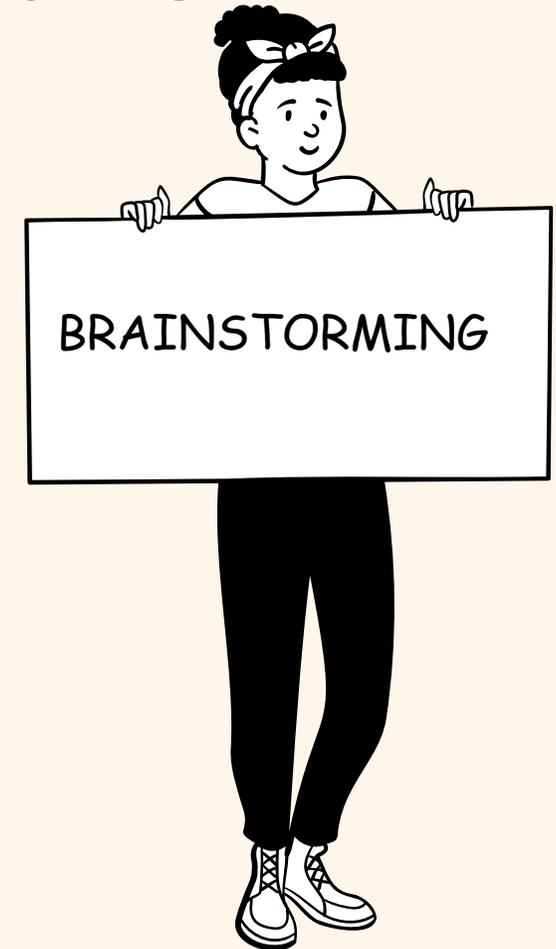


What sources of data could be useful for diasporas?

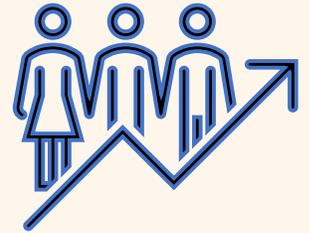
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What about data on diasporas?



- Data on diasporas are **difficult to collect**.
- There is **more information than data** on diasporas.
- Currently, there are no attempts to measure global diaspora populations per se.
- However, some data sources (such as emigrant stock data) can act as a **proxy** for diasporas maintaining links to countries of origin.
- **Data on issues relating to diasporas** are also relevant. These include:
 - data on the education level of emigrants, which can give information on diaspora human capital.
 - data on remittances, which give information on diasporas' involvement with home and host countries.
 - operational data

Challenges regarding data on diasporas

As strong and weak as proxy data sources

Data on emigration are difficult to collect

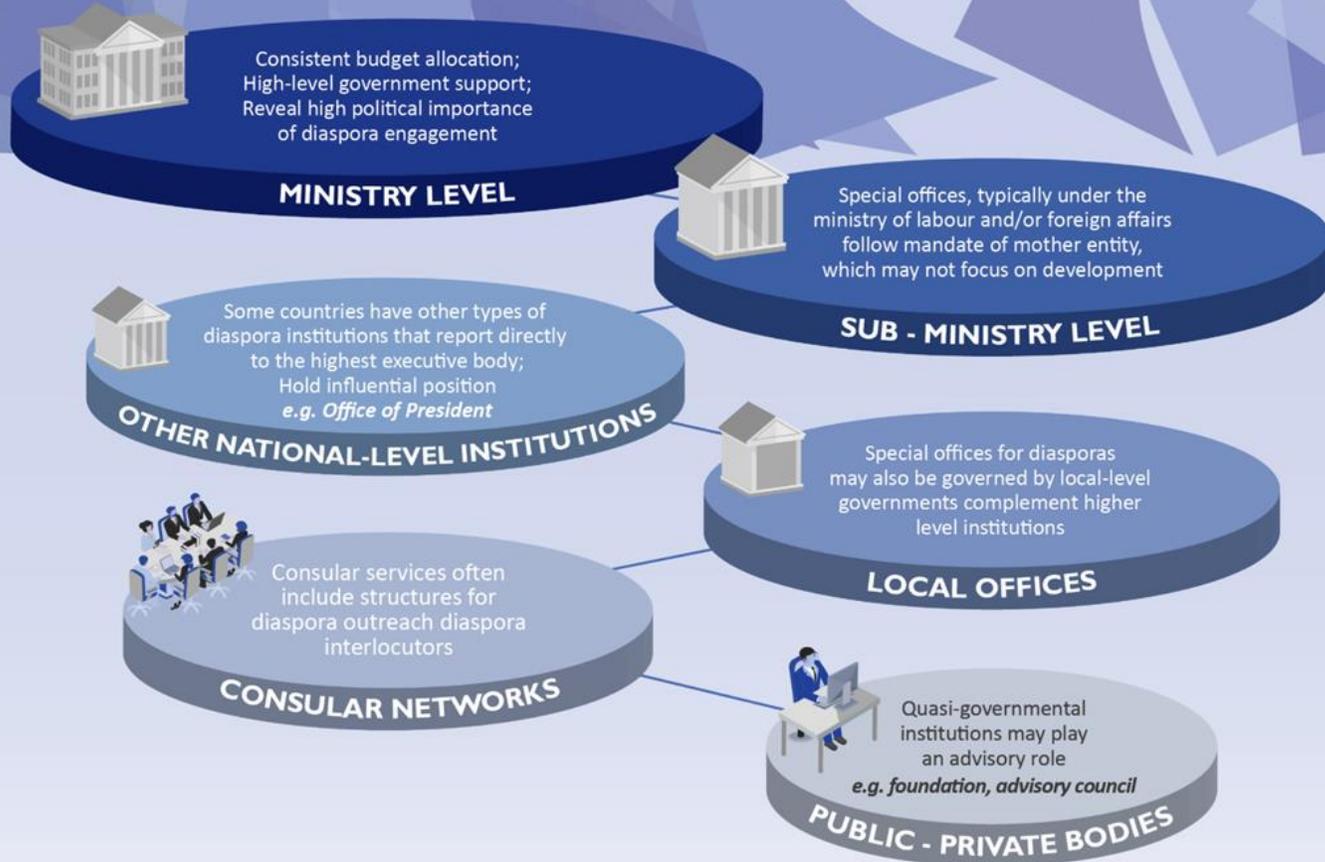
Weak databases on diaspora populations, often based on voluntary online registration or on emigration records

Data gaps in countries of destination

Challenges related to single-country case studies

An overwhelming focus on South-North migration

TYPES OF DIASPORA INSTITUTIONS



Diaspora institutions as key actors

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Data on remittances

Measuring of remittances – which are commonly understood here as the money migrants send back to family and relatives in origin countries – does often not include small money transfers. Computations are based on ‘compensation of employees’ and ‘personal transfers.’

Remittances data by the World Bank, based on the IMF's statistics and country information, sometimes do not include:



Small amounts of money sent by migrants to their families not via banks but money transfer operators, post offices, mobile phones, or informal transfers



Instead information focuses on

'Compensation of employees':

Salaries of



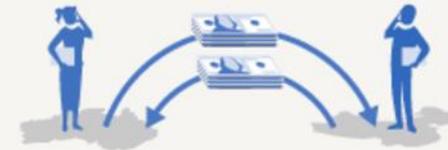
Temporary migrant workers

Residents of the country who work for embassies

Residents of the country who work for international organizations (like the UN)

Residents of the country who work for foreign companies

'Personal transfers':



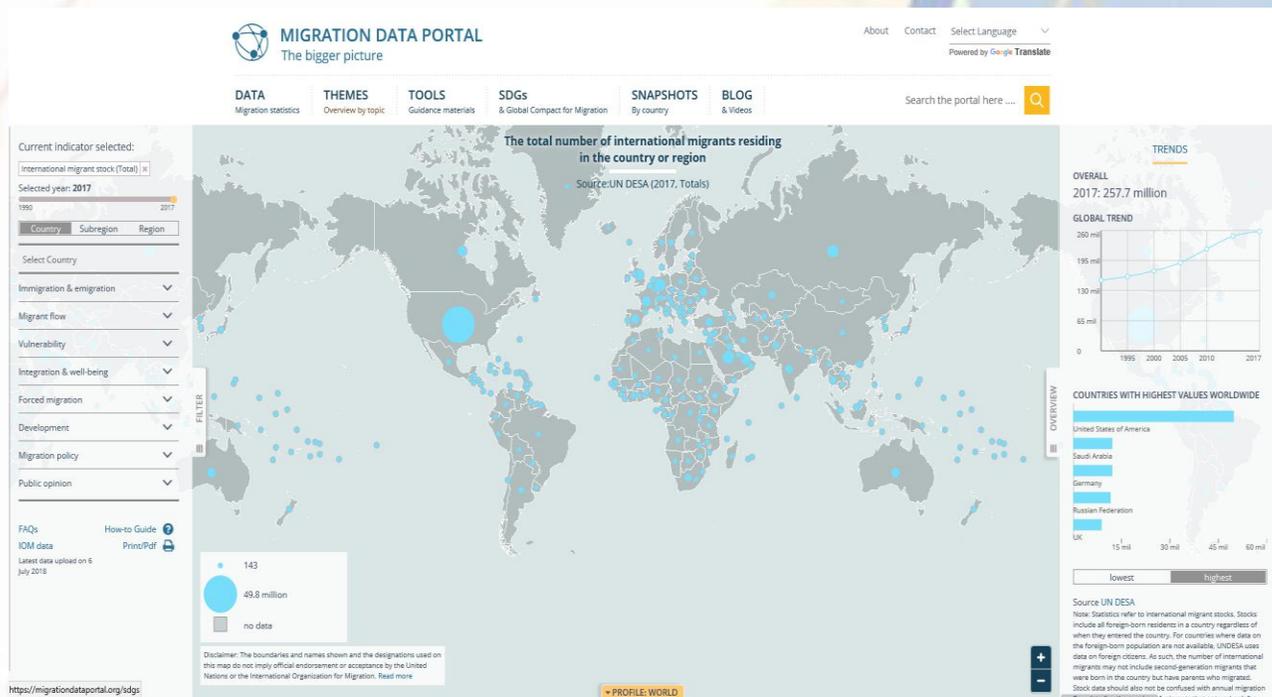
All transfers in cash or in kind made or received by residents in country A from or to individuals resident in country B, regardless of them being migrants or not. The data conflates remittances with diaspora investment, savings and other financial transactions.

Source: Own elaboration based on IMF, 2009 and Irving et al., 2010.

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Read more about migration and diaspora data

- <https://www.migrationdataportal.org/themes/diasporas>



This screenshot displays the article page for "Diasporas" on the Migration Data Portal. The article is categorized under "Migration & development" and was last updated on 9 June 2020. The text defines diasporas as expatriates or transnational communities and discusses the challenges of measuring them. It notes that migrant stocks data can serve as a proxy for diaspora populations and that remittance data is closely linked to diaspora studies. The article includes links for Definition, Recent trends, Data sources, Data strengths & limitations, and Further reading. A "Share on" section with social media icons and a "Data Innovation Directory" banner are also visible.



Time for questions
and discussion



Thank you!

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