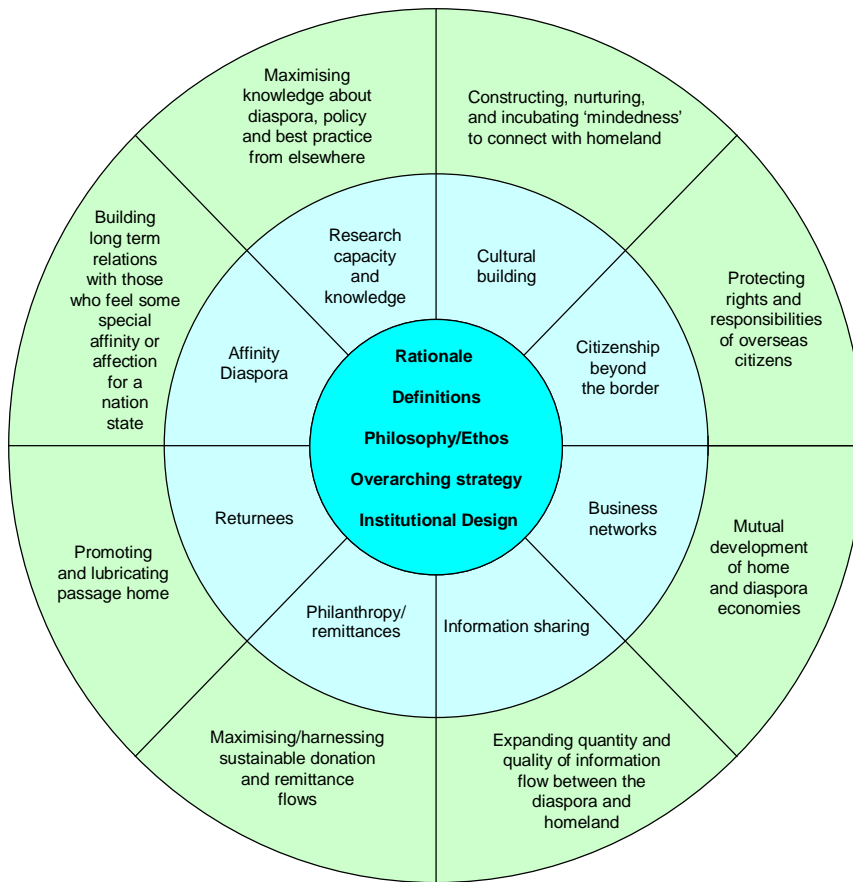


THE NIRSA DIASPORA STRATEGY WHEEL AND TEN PRINCIPLES OF GOOD PRACTICE

A **Diaspora Strategy** is an explicit and systematic policy initiative or series of policy initiatives aimed at developing and managing relationships between homelands and diasporic populations. These policy initiatives vary from highly formalised and structured programmes to projects that are quite light in conception and application. A diaspora strategy is perhaps best thought of then as an overarching framework for providing a level of coherence to the range of diaspora policies devised and implemented by a variety of agencies.

The **NIRSA Diaspora Wheel** is designed as a checklist for policy makers currently formulating and rolling out diaspora strategies. It identifies eight policy spokes around a set of five challenges at the hub. Clearly in practice some spokes overlap with others. Within each policy spoke a set of key considerations and critical measures are identified. Work is currently being undertaken to specify a range of concrete indicators and benchmarks of progress within each spoke.



WHEEL HUB

Rationale – Identify the critical social, economic, cultural, political, moral, environmental, and demographic challenges which the diaspora strategy is conditioned by and in turn might contribute to. Each country will have different challenges in engaging its diaspora due to differences in the nature of their respective diasporas, where they have migrated to, and the economic and cultural conditions in the homeland. A successful diaspora strategy has to be tailored to these challenges and have a well designed and clear specific end goal.

Definition – Clearly delimit the specific populations which constitute the nation’s diaspora. A meaningful diaspora strategy depends upon a clear understanding of who belongs to the diaspora. This is in part a pragmatic matter: any strategy needs to ration limited resources through careful planning and targeting. It is also, however, of significant political concern given that it ascribes inclusion or exclusion from a national community.

Philosophy/Ethos – Develop an overall philosophy for the nation’s diaspora strategy and propagate this vision among stakeholders. States can adopt one of five kinds of engagement with their diaspora that shapes the nature of the policies and programmes formulated ranging from a market approach to a light touch to strong managerialism. These are:

Absent	the state leaves the formation of links between the homeland and the diaspora to the market or to autonomous social, cultural and political movements, with the diaspora self-organizing itself and its engagement with its homeland
Custodian	the state nurtures, protects, regulates, and polices new and emerging diasporic connections
Midwifery	the state identifies potential engagements and champions/leaders and mobilizes and cultivates them but leaves ownership in the hands of the diaspora
Husbandry	the state works with and re-energizes existing diaspora organisations and networks
Demiurge	the state directly creates and runs diasporic initiatives and networks, perhaps with the intention of letting the market assume responsibility at a later date.

Overall Strategy – Decide upon the policy mix and specific policy programmes which are to be prioritised. Given that a strategy has a specific rationale it is important to determine and formulate a set of specific initiatives that will ensure that its goals will be delivered.

Institutional Design/Architecture – Specify the structures, programmes and technologies of delivery which will be best suited to the establishment/fortification of relations with the diaspora, and work to build

any new institutions and institutional arrangements which might be required. Failure to adequately operationalise overall strategy by using inappropriate structures, programmes and technologies will ultimately lead to a failure to maximise the engagement with the diaspora and to achieve the strategy's goals. Associated here is the appropriate resourcing and staffing of programmes to ensure that they are given the opportunity to succeed.

WHEEL SPOKES

Culture building - *Constructing, nurturing, and incubating 'mindedness' to connect with homeland*

Key considerations – How can the mindedness of diaspora to be engaged by home countries be cultivated? Which diasporas, and groupings in the diaspora are in greatest need of being built up? How can diaspora strategies be best articulated with national cultural strategies? Which kinds of honours system are most appropriate to reward diasporic champions and ambassadors? How can short term visits be promoted and best capitalised on to rekindle enthusiasm, pride, and interest in the origin country?

Critical measures – Levels of 'ethnic' social capital, tourist visits from the diaspora, diasporic organisation and participation in patriotic festivals, levels of consumption of home media and cultural outputs, self identification of ancestry in official (Census) Statistics.

Citizenship beyond the border – *Protecting rights and responsibilities of overseas citizens*

Key considerations – What kinds of citizenship rights do home countries wish to extend to their diasporic populations and why? To what extent should home countries' have a responsibility for vulnerable overseas groups? How well do they know who and where the vulnerable are? Should home countries be lobbying to ensure welfare entitlements are provided and accessed in regions of destination or should they themselves be providing direct support? What are the priorities for lobbying? In providing welfare relief what are the advantages and disadvantages of working with pre-existing diasporic and other welfare group and how far should new systems and infrastructure of welfare provision be included? What are the obligations and challenges which surround extending the voting franchise to overseas groups?

Key measures – Levels of activity of consulates and key foci of this activity; levels of access to rights in destination regions; levels of satisfaction among diaspora populations about representation and advocacy supports; scale and geographical reach of direct welfare support from home and quantitative and qualitative impacts of investments and grants; scale and nature of participation in electoral process.

Business networks – *Mutual development of home and diaspora economies*

Key considerations – How can countries engage with their diasporas so as to lubricate the globalisation of their indigenous companies and maximise the attraction of FDI, through knowledge transfer, business contacts, venture capital, mentoring, and technology transfer and licensing? How can business networks be established, be made to be sustainable, and create a user demand from indigenous sectors? How can business networks be made to be mutually beneficial to both the diaspora and to the home country? Who should set up, run, monitor, and evaluate networks and what different outcomes arise from different actor groups? What role might business networks play in promoting balanced regional development?

Critical measures – Number of networks; size of networks by membership and geographical base; sectoral coverage of networks; levels of activity in the network; quality of activity within networks; number and scale of projects stimulated by networks; perception of benefits amongst users of network utility.

Information sharing - *Expanding quantity and quality of information flow between the diaspora and homeland*

Key considerations – Through which infrastructure should home countries open channels of communication with diasporic groups? How effective are central web portals? What ought to be hosted on these portals? How can they be promoted, financed, and sustained? What opportunities might free to air satellite channels provide? What kind of newsletters/print/electronic media do diasporians want and how can they be made to reach the widest population? How might diaspora councils, round table forums, global meetings, and conferences be organised so as to solicit the views of diasporians and to explore opportunities? How much consultation needs to go into the formulation and monitoring of a diaspora strategy itself and how can this be accomplished?

Critical measures – Visits to web portals; circulation/audience statistics for key media; number, quality, and geographical reach of diasporic consultation and briefing events; and levels of satisfaction among diaspora populations concerning consultation.

Philanthropy/remittances – *Maximising/harnessing sustainable donation and remittance flows*

Key considerations – Where and among which populations is the scope for philanthropy greatest? How should donors be approached, by whom, and in respect to what projects? Should countries consider sending policy makers and would be philanthropic organisers on emerging internationally recognised courses on the art and science of philanthropy? How can diaspora strategies be more suitably tailored and what kinds of typologies or market segments are appropriate? How can we segment diasporas, and might models from market research be employed and recycled in this context? How can remittance monies be transferred at the lowest cost? How might remittance monies be best channelled by private households for the collective good?

Critical measures – Quantitative measures of number and scale of financial flows; number of fund raising events; number of donors; trends in donations; cost of wiring money home and levels of capital lost en route; quantitative and qualitative impacts of flows/projects.

Returnees – *Promoting and lubricating passage home*

Key considerations – What skill shortages exist in the domestic economy? What brings migrants home? How much repatriation is down to hard economic, family and lifecycle, and culture and lifestyle factors? Who should be responsible for prospecting for global talent and what policies and pitches should be adopted? How can country's make it as easy as possible for talented migrants to return home? What kinds of one stop shops work best? How can country's support the return of vulnerable and less resourceful migrants?

Critical measures – Levels of awareness of opportunities to return within the diaspora; number of visits and enquiries to relevant web sites; visitor levels at recruitment fairs; number of returnees; socio-economic composition of returnees; employment and salary outcomes for returnees.

Affinity diaspora – *Building long term relations with those who feel some special affinity or affection for a nation state*

Key considerations – Who should be part of a nation's affinity diaspora? How can such diaspora be grown so as to have an elevated commitment to a nation? How important are educational institutions, alumni networks and intern schemes to affinity diaspora relations and how can they be made to be more effective? Which global regions and markets are most strategically valuable and for which specific affinity groups should be recruited with greater vigour? How can affinity diasporas be more effectively drawn into a

national diaspora strategy and can two countries bring their diaspora strategies into alignment for mutual benefit?

Critical measures – Levels and types of networking whilst resident; level of satisfaction of experience of stay, level and type of contact once moving home or to a third country; sense of belonging and attachment to the transient homeland; skill set and cultural competencies.

Research capacity and knowledge – *Maximising knowledge about diaspora, policy and best practice from elsewhere*

Key considerations – What kind of research might productively underpin the development of diaspora policy within each country? From which part of the state (or private and voluntary sectors) is research being commissioned, how is it being circulated, and how is it being acted on? How much of this research is comparative in nature, evaluating and contrasting programmes developed by different countries? How can comparative research lead into policy transfer or improvement? How well do home nations know their diaspora and how is historical and current research on diasporas being compiled and amassed?

Critical measures – Existence of research centres with expertise on diaspora; volume of funding for diaspora research; volume and range of research projects commissioned; participation in international workshops; degree to which policy is evidence based; volume and effects of policy monitoring and impact analyses.

TEN PRINCIPLES OF GOOD PRACTICE

1. A diaspora strategy should be centralized enough to ensure that a common identity, sense of purpose, collective consciousness, economies of scale, and strategic priorities can be achieved, but loose enough to let a thousand flowers bloom. Coordinated anarchy is not entirely indispensable.
2. A diaspora strategy cannot privilege economic ties over social and cultural networks and still be sustainable.
3. A diaspora strategy needs to be mutually beneficial for both home countries and diasporic populations.
4. Countries that know their diasporas well will be better placed to engage them.

5. Diaspora strategies should define 'diaspora' as broadly as possible to avoid racialising national social, cultural, economic, and political policies – and should include affinity diasporas policies where appropriate..
6. Diaspora needs to be consulted before any diaspora strategy is rolled out; diaspora strategies must be coauthored if they are to work.
7. Diaspora strategies need to be transparent and need to be held accountable, but given the specificity and the many intangible benefits of policy interventions, distinctive and unique policy impact analysis tools and evaluative frameworks and metrics need to be developed.
8. There is no ideal institutional framework for coordinating diaspora strategies; each country needs to devise forms of engagement which reflect their own institutional histories, social, cultural, economic, and political needs, and the histories and apriori structures and organisation of their diaspora.
9. Diaspora strategies need to be brought into the growing international conversation about best practice and should pro-actively affiliate themselves with networks involved in policy dissemination.
10. Diaspora strategies need to be underpinned by a philosophically grounded rationale which resonates with the country's deepest social, economic, cultural, and political needs at any point in time. Shallow slogans might lead to short terms gains but will fail over the long term; a meaningful overarching identity will galvanise and energise.

For more information

<http://www.nuim.ie/nirsa/diaspora/>

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