

Executive Summary Dissertation: ‘Energise Cameroon’: a new avenue for green remittances? The Migration-Development nexus in practice: a Stakeholder Analysis

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This study actively engages in the debate on the migration-development nexus, in which both scholarly and political attention is focused on how migration and development processes interrelate. In light of increasing critique on traditional development aid, migrants, who maintain connections with their origin countries, are appointed as actors of change. The monetary transfers these migrants send back to their countries of origin, known as remittances, serve multiple purposes, going from daily consumption and electricity bills, to more productive investments. Findings have shown that the impact of remittances on development indicators (GDP, inequality etc.) can be both positive and negative, depending on the context. A review of the literature brings to light the need for research into how green remittances can positively impact environmental development. This topic should be examined through a bottom-up approach which prioritises the needs and initiatives of diaspora members. This dissertation centralises on case-study of ‘Energise Cameroon’ and investigates how members of the diaspora can be engaged to invest remittances into solar energy ‘back home’. This question is aimed at exploring both discourses that are used to engage diaspora members, as well as the interests, power and attitudes of the different invested stakeholders involved in the project. Remitting is a dynamic and two-way process, which has to be approached from multiple angles. Following these objectives, a stakeholder analysis (SA) is used to investigate the reasons behind the different stakeholders involvement, their power in the project is and how they relate to each other. The data for this analysis was collected through participant observation, conducted in both Belgium and Cameroon, complemented by 12 semi-structured interviews with different actors involved in the project. ‘Energise Cameroon’ was set up in 2022 as access to electricity is still one of the greatest challenges facing Cameroon today. Only 0,01% of current energy comes from solar PV, although the country has enormous potential with its high levels of exposure to solar irradiation (Agerberg & Carlson, 2017). Re-Distribute thus partners up with Solar4You, a Belgian company that operates in Cameroon since 2017 to distribute autonomous solar systems. Since January 2023, Re-Distribute is actively engaging with the diaspora to connect them with Solar4You. The SA in this study reveals how NGO Re-Distribute manages to respond to the needs of multiple actors: Solar4You's search for financial capital, the diaspora's ambitions to invest and the local population's electricity requirements. Diaspora members get the opportunity to channel their moral or economic obligations towards an environmentally friendly and much needed solar system. However, the SA also reveals three main threats to the project. Firstly, there is a mismatch in the attitudes of diaspora members and the local population, as this type of investment can negatively impact the latter's monthly allowances. The project is still in a precarious phase for Re-Distribute, the diaspora namely shows a lack of trust, but also for Solar4You, as Re-Distribute can still decide to work with different companies. The SA does not only identify threats, but also ways to strengthen the linkages between the different stakeholders. Re-Distribute and Solar4You should align the discourses they use to convince target groups, and are encouraged to explore a climate change discourse. Whilst Re-Distribute can gain trust from the diaspora by supporting investments with sponsor donations and strengthening client networks, Solar4You should also work on improving client satisfaction. Finally, the relationship between diaspora members and local population should be strengthened to equalise expectations and make both stakeholders co-decision makers of the investment. The SA is limited to the primary stakeholders in ‘Energise Cameroon’ and does not gain sufficient insight into the attitude of remittance-receivers towards the project. As this qualitative research is context-specific, it rather has to be seen as a first step towards, and an encouragement for, further analyses of green projects which utilise remittances. The SA is also valuable as it brings some tentative policy recommendations to the foreground. Both

origin and host countries should first better familiarise themselves with their diasporas, starting from existing diaspora led initiatives to understand how these relate to renewable energy projects. Not only should diaspora members be better informed, but other stakeholders should be encouraged to work together with diaspora members and remittances. Finally, this study motivates researchers to not fully discard the migration-development nexus, but rather make sure that projects have a real and lasting impact on the needs and demands of the diaspora and local populations.