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**LEGON CENTRE FOR INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS AND  
DIPLOMACY  
(LECIAD)**

**UNIVERSITY OF GHANA**



**PROMOTING GHANAIAN DIASPORA PARTICIPATION IN  
HOMELAND DEVELOPMENT: A CASE STUDY ON THE YEAR OF  
RETURN PROGRAM**

**BY  
TIJANI ABU-NAIM BOHIGU  
(10806243)**

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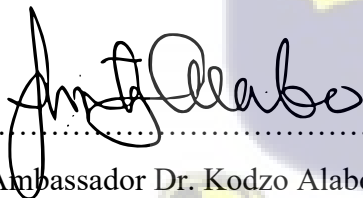
## DECLARATION

I, **TIJANI ABU-NAIM BOHIGU**, do hereby declare that this dissertation is the end product of my own research under the supervision of Ambassador Dr. Kodzo Alabo of the Legon Centre of International Affairs and Diplomacy (LECIAD), at the University of Ghana towards the award of a Master of Arts (MA) in International Affairs, and that, to the best of my knowledge, it neither contains materials previously published by another person nor materials which have been accepted for the award of any other degree by this or any other university except where due acknowledgement has been made in the text.



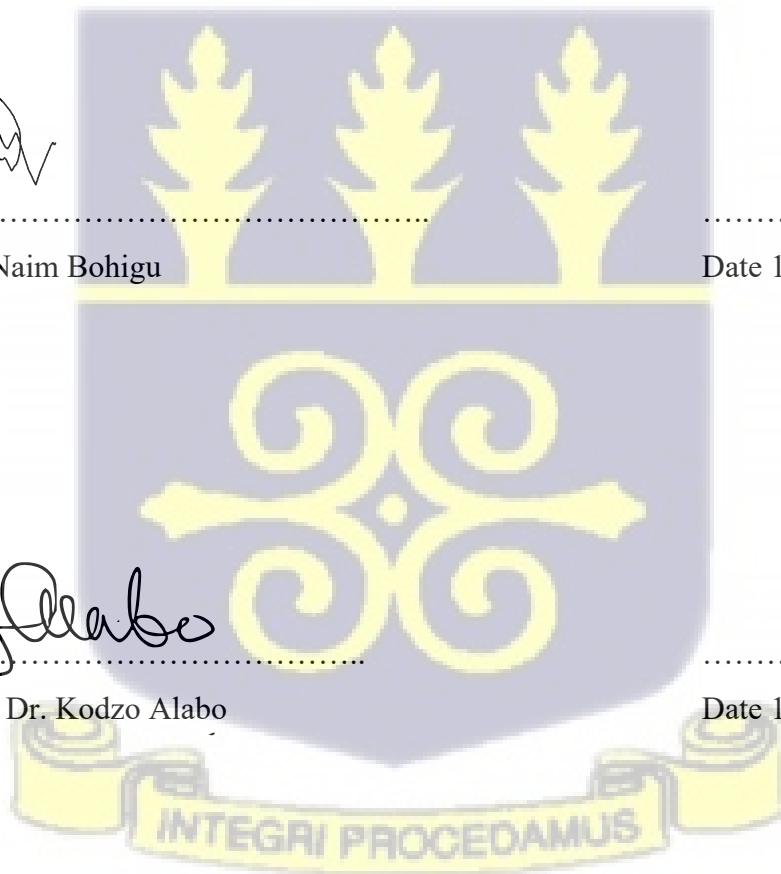
.....  
Tijani Abu-Naim Bohigu  
(Student)

.....  
Date 13/07/2022



.....  
Ambassador Dr. Kodzo Alabo  
(Supervisor)

.....  
Date 13/07/2022



**DEDICATION**

This work is dedicated to the Almighty God for His grace and mercies, and to my family.



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Special thanks to God Almighty for sustaining me throughout this project.

My next gratitude goes to my supervisor, Ambassador Dr. Kodzo Alabo for his wonderful suggestions and critical assessment without which this work would not have been successful.

I want to also extend my gratitude to a participant of this study.

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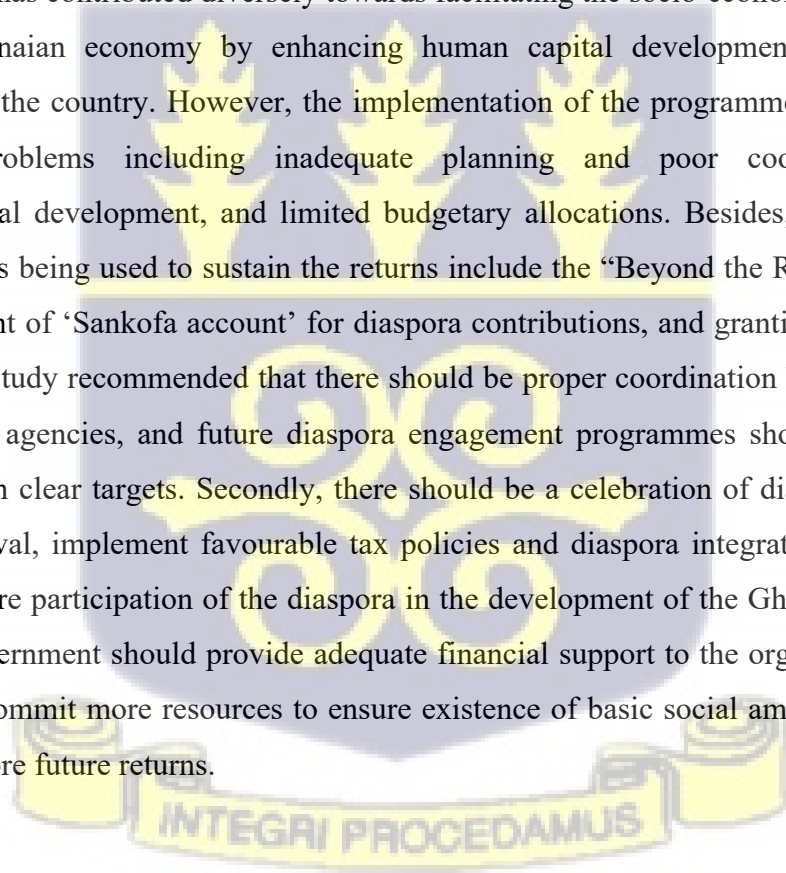
## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CMS	Centre for Migration Studies
DAB	Diaspora Affairs Bureau
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GIPC	Ghana Investment Promotion Centre
IOM	International Organisation for Migration
MDAs	Ministries, Departments and Agencies
NRG	Non-Resident Ghanaian
UNCTAD	United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural



## ABSTRACT

In 2018 the government of Ghana launched the “Year of Return” with the aim of attracting Ghanaian diaspora to come home in 2019 and to contribute to the development of the country. Since the end of its implementation, no empirical assessment has been conducted, making one wonder whether the programme has been effective in mobilizing the diaspora to improve on the level of development in Ghana. Hence, this study examined how the year of return programme has promoted the diasporas’ participation in homeland development. The study employed the qualitative research approach and gathered semi-structured interview data from government institutions with oversight over the implementation of the ‘Year of Return’ initiative. The respondents were selected using the purposive sampling method based on their in-depth knowledge of diaspora policy issues and the ‘Year of Return’ programme. The study found that the ‘Year of Return’ programme has contributed diversely towards facilitating the socio-economic development of the Ghanaian economy by enhancing human capital development and economic activities in the country. However, the implementation of the programme was faced with multiple problems including inadequate planning and poor coordination, poor infrastructural development, and limited budgetary allocations. Besides, it revealed that the strategies being used to sustain the returns include the “Beyond the Return initiative”, establishment of ‘Sankofa account’ for diaspora contributions, and granting of citizenship status. The study recommended that there should be proper coordination between relevant government agencies, and future diaspora engagement programmes should be carefully planned with clear targets. Secondly, there should be a celebration of diaspora returns as annual festival, implement favourable tax policies and diaspora integration initiatives to promote more participation of the diaspora in the development of the Ghanaian economy. Finally, government should provide adequate financial support to the organizing agencies as well as commit more resources to ensure existence of basic social amenities necessary to attract more future returns.



## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Background to the Research Problem

It has been estimated that over 258 million or 3.4% of the global population are living outside their country of origin (Montiel & Holland, 2017). Earlier, it was projected that about 30 million Africans have officially emigrated to live in other countries (Plaza & Ratha, 2011). The contributions of these individuals, who are often known as international migrants or diaspora, to the socio-economic development of their homeland have, been recognized to be enormous (Ho & Wei, 2018; Williams, 2018; Constant & Zimmermann, 2016). Diasporas are a major source of remittances (Constant & Zimmermann, 2016; Plaza, 2013; Plaza & Ratha, 2011), and they facilitate investments (Burchardi, Chaney & Hassan, 2016; Plaza, 2013); foreign exchange earnings (Sinclair & Connelly, 2018; Constant & Zimmermann, 2016), as well as facilitating peace building in their homeland (Beyene, 2015; Roth, 2015).

Consequently, issues of the diaspora have gained major attention of various home/national governments such as Ghana as they hope to leverage their diaspora resource to improve their general socio-economic development (Constant & Zimmermann, 2016; Ho & Wei, 2018; Tian & Wu, 2016; Williams, 2018; Ong'ayo, 2014). Ghana since her independence has implemented diasporas-oriented programmes with the aim of attracting Ghanaians and Africans living abroad back to Ghana to enhance her development (Tetteh, 2019). Various successive governments, dating back to Dr. Kwame Nkrumah, have aimed to pursue policies such as granting of citizenship, dual nationality, tax exemptions and land grants to Ghanaian diasporas to create conducive environments to promote more returns (Engmann, 2019).

Recently, Ghana has launched the “Year of Return”. It is a major “landmark spiritual and birth-right journey inviting the Global African family, home and abroad, to mark 400 years of the arrival of the first enslaved Africans in Jamestown, Virginia” while positioning Ghana as an attractive tourist destination for the African Americans and the African Diaspora (YOR, 2019). The programme is an initiative of the Ghana Tourism Authority with supports from the Ministry of Tourism, Arts and Culture, the Office of Diaspora Affairs at the Office of the President, the Panafest Foundation as well as the Adinkra Group of USA (visitGhana, 2020). President Nana Akufo-Addo in September 2018 has launched the initiative and consequently declared the year 2019 as the “Year of Return”. The President has urged people of African root to return to their homeland in a “major landmark spiritual and birth-right journey” (Yeboah, 2019).

Some reports have claimed that the initiative intended to attract Ghanaian, and by extension, the African diaspora to return and contribute to the development of the homeland has been successful. They argued that the programme has put Ghana on the global spotlight, making the country, an attractive destination for African in the diaspora globally (Goldstreet Business, 2019). The ‘Year of Return’ programme has triggered many Black creatives, entrepreneurs, influencers and celebrities to visit the country (Gray, 2020). Others believe it has offered people to engage heritage reclamation since Africa is considered as their homeland or motherland and the source of the resistance, pride and dignity of the Africans (Engmann, 2019). The Minister of Tourism, Arts and Culture, Mrs Barbara Oteng-Gyasi, in an interview granted to Graphic Online, said the ‘Year of Return’ programme had also resulted in about 750,000 arrivals of the diasporas with a total of US\$1.9billion being their estimated financial contributions to the country in the first nine months (Asiedu-Addo, 2019).

It is thus, beyond visitation to homeland, an initiative to encourage African diasporas to come to Africa to settle and invest in the continent. Hence, this study seeks to examine how the ‘Year of Return’ programme has promoted the diasporas’ participation in homeland development.

## **1.2 Statement of the Research Problem**

While research in the international relations field have focused mostly on state actors, less empirical research attention has been given to the engagement of non-state actors such as the diasporas despite the growing recognition of the vital roles they can play in the development of their country of origin (Dijkzeul & Fauser, 2020; Kleist, 2008; Ragazzi, 2009). Besides, Although many home governments want to develop their countries through the contributions of their diasporas (Constant & Zimmermann, 2016; Song, 2014), diaspora policies generally are not properly coordinated and ill-defined thereby, undermining the desire and motivation of diaspora to engage in investment and trade activities in their home country (Adjei, 2018; Gamlen, 2014; Williams, 2018).

Furthermore, while few studies in the Ghanaian context have tended to focus on broad mode of engaging the diaspora (see Adjei, 2018), diaspora knowledge networks on academic capacity development (see Tettey, 2016), nature of Ghana’s diaspora engagement policies and programs (see Teye, Alhassan & Setrana, 2017); these few studies in Ghana were not only conceptual in nature, but also did not focus on examining the effectiveness of a particular diaspora policy intervention. Besides, prior studies (e.g. Gamlen, 2014; Williams, 2018) have noted that there are generally limited research focusing on the impact of specific diaspora policies, and subsequently called for future

research on how a specific diaspora policy can elicit contributions from the diaspora community to improve long-term growth and knowledge transfer.

Given the fact that there is no empirical assessment of Ghana's recent major diaspora programme christened the 'Year of Return', one wonders whether the programme has been effective in mobilizing the diaspora to improve on the socio-economic conditions of the Ghanaian economy. It is for this reason that this research seeks to specifically examine Ghana's 2019 'Year of Return' programme and its influence on the participation of the Ghanaian diaspora in homeland development.

### 1.3 Research Questions

The study seeks to provide empirical answers to the following research questions:

1. What is the extent to which the 'Year of Return' programme was effective in eliciting Ghanaian diaspora's participation in homeland development?
2. What are the challenges to the implementation of the 'Year of Return' programme?
3. What strategies are being employed to sustain the programme with respect to facilitating more 'returns' and maximizing its associated benefits beyond 2019?

### 1.4 Objectives of the Study

The general objective is to examine the participation of Ghanaian diaspora in homeland development through the implementation of the 'Year of Return' programme. Specific objectives are:

1. To examine the effectiveness of the 'Year of Return' programme in eliciting Ghanaian diaspora's participation in homeland development
2. To ascertain the challenges to the implementation of the 'Year of Return' programme

3. To assess the strategies being employed to sustain the programme with respect to facilitating more ‘returns’ and maximizing its associated benefits beyond 2019.

### **1.5 Scope of the Study**

This study focuses on the ‘Year of Return’ initiative and covers the periods 2018 to 2020 since the programme was implemented in 2018 and is expected to remain a major diaspora initiative in 2020 following the subsequent launching of the “beyond the year of return”. This study will provide in-depth case study examination of the ‘Year of Return’ programme by examining its effectiveness, its implementations challenges and strategies to sustain and promote more returns of the diaspora. Specifically, the contributions of the programme toward economic development, diaspora relationship management, impacts on branding and promotion of the Ghanaian culture and tourist sites, among others are examined. The assessment of the challenges will cover pre, during, and post the ‘Year of Return’.

### **1.6 Rationale of the Study**

This research which seeks to specifically examine the contributions and challenges of the ‘Year of Return’ is relevant due to the following reasons: first, the study is useful in the sense that, it provides empirical evidence on the successes, and challenges of the ‘Year of Return’ programme. This would help the government and the agencies that championed the programme of diaspora participation in homeland initiative in effective development and implementation of future diaspora policies. It would also ensure that proper strategies or measures are put in place or implemented to sustain the gains of the ‘Year of Return’ programme to develop the homeland while ensuring more returns from the Ghanaian and African diaspora to facilitate homeland development.

Furthermore, the findings of the study on the benefits of the programme can help key stakeholders in the hospitality and hotel industry, tourism and culture, entrepreneurs, among others to position themselves well in order to tap into the potential dividend of similar initiatives in the future. This is important given the constant assurance that is given by the government and her agencies to ensure more returnees of the Ghanaian and African diasporas into the country.

Furthermore, this study has the potential to influence research on the topic. This is due to limited empirical research on promotion of diaspora in homeland development coupled with the constant calls for future research on how a specific diaspora policy elicits contributions from the diaspora community to improve long-term growth and knowledge transfer. Hence, the present study, can provide new evidence to expand the empirical diaspora literature as well as serve as a reference for future empirical studies on diaspora policies of various national governments.

### **1.7 Conceptual Framework**

The main conceptual framework for this study is the diaspora option concept, which emerged in the late 1990s. The diaspora option was originally applied to recapture the role of the diaspora to the development of their homeland (Brinkerhoff, 2009). Diaspora is attracting a growing attention in international relations (Dijkzeul & Fauser, 2020; Koinova, 2018) due to the increasing interest in the role of non-state actors. The three key schools of thought in international relations; realism, liberalism, and constructivism have some focus on transforming actors and their identities (Dijkzeul & Fauser, 2020). According to the realist school, states are strong and impermeable actors. They survive by gaining and maximizing power to achieve the interest of the state (Dijkzeul & Fauser, 2020). That said, due to the strong focus of realists on power contestation among

sovereign states in the international arena, it almost ignores the role of non-state actors like the members of the diaspora community and so tend to assign only peripheral roles to them from the standpoint of policies and preferences of the state (Dijkzeul & Fauser, 2020).

On the other hand, liberalist school of international relations is concerned the interdependence and activities of international actors in the context of institutional challenges. To them, states in the international area are not continuously in conflict with each other. They rather tend cooperate within one another within the international system, which is facilitated by international institutions (Dijkzeul & Fauser, 2020). In contrast, Constructivism assumes that actors in the international system are shaped and formed in terms of issues of preferences, goals, and identities. For instance, non-state actors like non-profit organisations including the diaspora community claim to be in existence to advance the interest of autonomous society against the state like helping the poor and downtrodden (Dijkzeul & Fauser, 2020).

Overall, it has been suggested issues of the diaspora can be better understood from the integration of constructivism and liberalism schools of thought of international relations (Shain & Barth, 2003). This is because these two perspectives acknowledge the influence both identity as well as domestic interactions on behaviours in international arena or system. In particular, “constructivism seeks to account for actors' identities, motives, and preferences, while liberalism deals largely with explaining their actions once the preferences are settled” (Shain & Barth, 2003, p.451). It also involves the construction, maintenance of values and identities as well as motivation of agents, in this case, the diasporas in international systems (Sökefeld, 2006; Adamson & Demetriou, 2007).

Due to their unique status, “diasporas-geographically outside the state, but identity-wise perceived (by themselves, the homeland, or others) as 'inside the people'-attach great importance to kinship identity” (Shain & Barth, 2003, p.451). The diasporas are appropriately positioned because of the location in the international system to manipulate international images and identities to influence decision-making in foreign policy (Shain & Barth, 2003).

This perspective argues that national governments can leverage the human, economic and social capital of their international agents, the diaspora or citizens abroad to improve the level of development in their homeland (Brinkerhoff, 2009; Pellerin & Mullings, 2013). The concept provides a pragmatic and ‘win-win’ solution to both homeland governments and diaspora where national governments “benefits from the economic, human and social capital of migrant groups in their diaspora, and where migrant groups benefit from becoming development partners in the places where they maintain ancestral ties” (Pellerin & Mullings, 2013, p.110). It is also concerned with developing programmes that will attract diaspora to their home countries to facilitate the development of the homeland (Larner, 2007; Rose & Miller, 1992).

Critics of the diaspora concept argued that “most diaspora-led development initiatives are local actions, targeting families, home towns or regions of origin. These loyalties and obligations are seen as biased and partial, thus separating diaspora-led development initiatives from professional development activities” (Sinatti & Horst, 2015, p.140). They further argued that the concept suggests the existence of an actual community but their members are usually strongly divided and so do not act in unity. As a result, it has much in common with people outside the group as inside (Turner & Kleist, 2013).

The above criticisms of the concept are inappropriate. This is because the contributions of diaspora to the socio-economic development of their homeland have been recognised to be enormous (Gamlen, 2014; Ho & Wei, 2018; Williams, 2018; Constant & Zimmermann, 2016). Diasporas are a major source of remittances (Constant & Zimmermann, 2016; Plaza, 2013; Plaza & Ratha, 2011), and they facilitate investments (Burchardi et al., 2016; Plaza, 2013), foreign exchange earnings (Sinclair & Connelly, 2018; Constant & Zimmermann, 2016), as well as facilitating peace building in their homeland (Beyene, 2015; Roth, 2015). They are therefore seen as ‘agents of change’ for development by building social capital, social values, especially trust, and social networks as well as via entrepreneurship and knowledge sharing (Pellerin & Mullings, 2013; Prest et al., 2009), and serving as investors and negotiators (Brinkerhoff, 2012). Besides, issues of division and conflict exists in every community or organization and hence not peculiar to the diaspora community.

Thus, from the perspectives of the diaspora option concept, it can be argued that the implementation of the ‘Year of Return’ programme can help the government of Ghana to tap into the socio-economic capital of her diaspora to improve on the social and economic aspects of the Ghanaian economy.

## **1.8 Literature Review**

### **1.8.1 Diaspora – conceptual clarification**

The concept is said to have been used initially to refer to the Jewish exile. It has its root in the Greek word διασπείρω (diaspeirō), meaning scattering seeds, or sowing across (Constant & Zimmermann, 2016). The term was used again to describe the Greeks who fled after the Ottoman Empire occupied Greece in 1453 to other countries, mostly European countries (King & Christou, 2008). However, the concept of diaspora has evolved and broadened over the years to reflect the changing nature of the notion of

diaspora (Constant & Zimmermann, 2016). In recent times, the term is utilized to refer to the transnational movement of different groups of migrants (Faist, 2010).

According to Brinkerhoff (2011), diasporas are immigrants who have a strong sense of association psychologically and or materially with their land of their ancestors or origin. Constant and Zimmermann (2016) described diaspora as a “well-defined group of migrants or those with migrant background with a joined cultural identity and ongoing identification (active or dormant) with the country or culture of origin as they perceive it” (p.1113). It refers to “ethnic minority groups of migrant origins residing and acting in host countries but maintaining strong sentimental and material links with their countries of origin—their homelands” (Sheffer, 1986, p. 3). Likewise, the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) (2015) defined the concept as “... individuals and members of networks, associations and communities who have left their country of origin, and maintain links with their homelands” (p. 196).

In the views of the African Union Report (2005), African diaspora are considered as individuals of African heritage living in other countries outside the continent regardless of their citizenship and nationality and who are ready to play developmental roles to help develop the continent as well as to facilitate the building of the African Union. Although there is no official definition of the Ghanaian diaspora (Quartey 2009), the concept has been used to describe all people of African descent, especially, the African-American diaspora in the broad sense. The concept of diaspora is operationally defined in this study as Ghanaians living abroad and African immigrants or people with Ghana and African heritage or root. It has been estimated that about 30 million Africans have officially emigrated to live in other countries (Plaza & Ratha, 2011).

### **1.8.2 Contributions of the diaspora participation in homeland development**

The participation of the diaspora in homeland has become the priority of many governments because of the link between homeland development and diaspora participation in their land of origin. The following explored and discussed in detail the above potential contributions of the diaspora to their homeland development under three thematic areas: economic growth and development, human capital development and knowledge transfer, and conflict resolution and peace building.

#### *Economic growth and development*

The economic growth and development impact of diaspora engagement and participation can be viewed through its contributions in terms of remittances, promotion of investment, trade and commercial opportunities and diaspora bonds, among others. Many less-developed nations tend to depend hugely on the remittances by their nationals abroad for the development of their homeland (Martinez et al., 2015; Resende-Santos, 2016; Vaaler, 2013). It has been estimated that approximately \$414 billion in 2013 was remitted by members of the diaspora community to various developing countries (World Bank, 2013).

For instance, the government of Cape Verde in 2012 received an estimated amount of US\$167 million remittances from her diaspora (World Bank, 2014). It has been further indicated that the revenues that developing countries get from remittances are three times bigger relative to what is received from the official development assistance (World Bank, 2013). Indeed, since the last three decades, inflows from remittances have been increasing significantly at a steady growth rate (World Bank, 2014). It is important to recognize that the actual amount of remittance is perceived to be much greater than the official estimates

due to the tendency of many people to remit income using informal channels (Lowell, Findlay & Stewart, 2004).

According to scholars (e.g. De Haas, Fokkema & Fihri, 2015; Williams, 2018), remittances facilitate socio-economic development of homeland in various ways. In De Haas et al.'s (2015) view, remittances encourage investment in property and estate, entrepreneurship, and infrastructural development interventions. Similarly, others (e.g. Williams, 2018; Plaza, 2013; Plaza & Ratha, 2011) have noted that remittances play a crucial role in enhancing the economic welfare of people back home in terms of supports for relatives and friends. The remittances help family members and friends left behind to be able to provide for themselves basic things such as food as well as being able to educate their children and siblings. It is also a source of employment opportunities for returning refugees (Lubkemman, 2008). For example, it has been observed that remittances from the Ghanaian diaspora community in Netherlands are used mostly for taking care of relatives through stipends, education, and funeral ceremonies, and investment in the building of houses and creation of businesses (Mazzucato, 2008).

Some diaspora remit incomes as a group or association to assist in the development of a particular community or town (Constant & Zimmermann, 2016). For example, the diaspora community of Morocco remits incomes that are used to invest in real estate and businesses (IOM, 2015). Similarly in Zimbabwe, the diaspora's remittances were used to build diaspora suburbs and environs in the capital, thereby shaping developments in the country (McGregor, 2014). Likewise in Ethiopia, the diaspora association based in Washington, DC formed the Tigray Development Association in Ethiopia, and used their remittances to promote infrastructural development in the country (Beyene, 2015).

Specifically, using the remittances, the Association built 549 primary schools and 15 secondary schools, and renovated 16 war-affected primary schools (Beyene, 2015). Relatedly, Ghanaian diaspora through their remittances contributed immensely towards investment in housing and real estate, business, and education, supporting their families' upkeep (Mazzucato, 2008). Consistent with the above, a study by Ong'ayo (2014) found that the Dutch-based Ghanaian diaspora organisations through remittances have promoted homeland development in sectors such as education, health, microfinance, agriculture, and capacity building. They have also facilitated development of water and sanitation sector through lobbying and advocacy, thereby enhancing some Ghanaians' access to water supply. These expenditures by the Ghanaian diaspora in the above areas tend to have a major spillover effects in the Ghanaian local economy (Smith, 2007).

Relatedly, beyond remittances' impacts on livelihood of those left behind and infrastructural development, the participation of the diaspora ensures the promotion of investment, trade and commercial opportunities in their home countries. Diaspora, who want to invest in their country of origin, have the benefit of having adequate or some level of knowledge and local information about the local business environment. As a result, they are well-positioned to determine whether the risk they are taking is tolerable and can generate expected returns (Burchardi et al., 2016; Plaza, 2013).

Besides, they have the capacity to influence other foreign investors through their local knowledge and understanding of opportunities to invest in their home country (Burchardi et al., 2016; Plaza, 2013). It has been estimated that investments by the Chinese diaspora constituted about 70% of China's foreign direct investment from 1985 to 2000 (Kuznetsov, 2006). The concept of foreign direct investment can be described as

investments that involve transferring assets of high values by companies or individual investors into foreign firms. These assets may be financial capital, advanced technology, expertise, and enhanced management practices, among others (UNCTAD, 2007).

Again, Samimi et al. (2013) argued that increasing number of tourists in a particular country “induces an increasing demand for goods and services such as food, accommodation and transportation. Thus, governments often prefer to attract further foreign direct investment to expand domestic products and infrastructure to cover the increasing tourist demand for goods and services” (P.60). Thus, the visiting of the diaspora to their homeland as tourists, has the potential to enhance economic growth and development through the creation of more tourism-related jobs, foreign exchange earnings, and enhancement in the performance and quality of tourism institutions and other public facilities that are necessary to boost tourism outcomes (Constant & Zimmermann, 2016).

Furthermore, governments in various African countries are leveraging their diaspora as a critical investment community and financiers for issuing diaspora bonds. Diaspora bonds are considered as a less-expensive avenue of raising external funds by home countries’ government by borrowing money from their diaspora (Constant & Zimmermann, 2016). The government of home countries issue bonds, “exclusively or not only limited to diaspora, with fixed or floating rates to raise money for economic development. Diaspora are willing to buy these bonds out of patriotism, as a means to diversify their portfolios”, or as a means of providing them with opportunities to become involved and engaged in economic activities in their homeland (Constant & Zimmermann, 2016, p.1120).

Indeed, various countries have taken advantage of this external financing mechanism. For instance, Israel has been issuing diaspora bonds annually since 1951, which allowed her to raise funds for its economic development activities. It has been estimated that the country has been able to obtain over \$26 billion from diaspora bonds to engage in relevant infrastructural projects and expand other sectors such the telecommunications, energy, transportation, and water resources (Ketkar & Ratha, 2010). India has also issued diaspora bonds on three occasions to raise emergency funds amounting to over \$35 billion. In Ireland, Tian and Wu (2016) in their study on the contributions of the Irish diaspora to development, revealed that the diaspora of Ireland have contributed diversely towards increasing foreign capital inflows, strengthening industry capacity, tourism development and industry construction.

Similar diaspora bonds were also issued by some countries in African governments to raise funds from their citizens living abroad to undertake various developmental projects. Ethiopia in early 2000s issued diaspora bonds to construct its Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam in the energy and power sector (Ketkar & Ratha, 2010). The Ethiopian diaspora contributed about 1.3% of the country's gross domestic product (GDP) while those of Kenya and Sudan contributed about 5.3% and 3.1% of their countries' GDPs, correspondingly, for the construction of dam issuance of development-oriented bonds to the diaspora community. Nigeria similarly has issued a \$1 billion Eurobond in 2013 to fund the power project (Beyene, 2015; Jonathan, 2014). As noted earlier, the Ghanaian migrants and migrant associations in 2007 in collaboration with the government of Ghana have established the Golden Jubilee Bond to promote savings and investment in the country (IOM, 2010).

*Knowledge transfer and human capital development*

The participation of the diaspora in homeland development can facilitate the development of the home country through knowledge transfer and human capital development. Engaging the diaspora can benefit the homeland by facilitating the transfer of knowledge that can improve management and business practices (Levin & Barnard, 2013; Tian & Wu, 2016; Vershinina, Barrett & Meyer, 2011). This occurs through their interactions with members of their business and social networks. Local people can learn new knowledge, new methods and procedures and novel ideas that can be used to improve current practices in the home countries (Williams, 2018). Levitt and Lamba-Nieves (2010) also noted that there is a two-way transfer of knowledge by the diaspora community. They export their home countries' socio-cultural practices to their countries as well as export new knowledge and ideas from their host countries back to their countries of origin.

Relatedly, various countries have several experienced scientists abroad which can be tapped to transfer scientific knowledge to empower and build the capacity of the locals to facilitate scientific advancement and technological progress in the home country (Constant & Zimmermann, 2016). For instance, China has a viable and active scientific diaspora that supports the local scientists back home through an effective human capital strategy and establishment of centers that promote international collaborations (Constant, Tien, Zimmermann & Meng, 2013).

In a similar study in Ireland, Tian and Wu (2016) found that the diaspora of Ireland have contributed diversely towards the development of professional and technical network to facilitate the development of the country. Moreover, the diaspora have the opportunity to be educated and trained in educational and research institutions of international repute. As a result, they are able to acquire useful knowledge and intellectual networks that can be

leveraged to improve current and future conditions in various sectors of the economy of their countries of origin (Riddle & Brinkerhoff, 2011).

Prior to this, a study by Beaverstock (2005) suggested that the transnational social networks of British highly skilled migrants in New York, contributed immensely towards enhancing global corporate-knowledge networks back home. Likewise, Menjivar (2002) indicated that the transnational social networks of Guatemalan diaspora based in the United States facilitated their acquisition of traditional medical treatment from their country of origin. The diaspora knowledge transfer usually benefits the home country by facilitating institutional changes and new policy directions in business and other aspect of life (Riddle & Brinkerhoff, 2011). Similarly, the Sankofa poultry project in Greater Accra and Northern regions of Ghana by the Ghanaian diaspora community in collaboration with the Ghana Poultry Network (GAPNET) has trained and enhanced women groups' understanding of the business of poultry farming. It further empowered them with skills to deplore modern technology and best practices, leading to improvement in outputs and profit performance (Ong'ayo, 2014).

#### *Conflict resolution and peace building*

Development of the home country cannot take place when there is civil unrest and political violence. The role of diasporas in conflict resolution and peacebuilding in homeland is a highly debated issue (Baser, 2017; Beyene, 2015; Constant & Zimmermann, 2016; Roth, 2015). Studies in some countries such as Ethiopia, Sri Lanka, Israel, Palestine, among others indicated that diaspora can worsen conflict situations (Turner, 2008; Vertovec, 2005). In Lyons's (2004, p.1) view, "diaspora groups created by conflict tend to draw motivation from their traumatic past, and as such are less willing to compromise,

thereby exacerbating and protracting conflict”. Some diasporas escalate conflict situations and threaten peace and stability by sponsoring the struggles of their country of origin against their neighboring countries or states to attain statehood, or to achieve other objectives (Antwi-Boateng, 2011; Mohamoud & Osman, 2008; Turner, 2008).

On the contrary, the diaspora play crucial roles in promoting peace building and stability in their homeland to experience development. They act as soft-power agents that facilitate truce and peace deals (Cochrane, 2007; Roth, 2015). For example, the Irish American diaspora were instrumental in ensuring that the “Good Friday peace” deal that ended the Northern Ireland conflict was made (Cochrane, 2007). Recently and relatedly, Tian and Wu (2016) found that the diaspora of Ireland have contributed diversely towards the facilitation of peacebuilding processes in Northern Ireland.

Likewise in Africa, Beyene’s (2015) analysis of the diaspora’s role in peace building in Kenya, Ethiopia and Nigeria found that they provide policy expertise, facilitate public dialogue and development of communication reform plans and ensure that they are successfully implemented. Prior to this, Antwi-Boateng (2011) assessed the role of political participation of Liberian diaspora based in the US on political development and peace building. The evidence revealed that their participation promoted peace building by deploying their “specialized skills from conflict resolution to drafting of legal instruments, specialized institutional reports, and economic reconstruction plans” (p.3).

Aside, other prior evidence suggested that the diaspora promote conflict resolution and peace building through the establishment of civil society groups and other pressure groups. These civil society groups bring pressure to bear on parties to conflicts to settle their

differences amicably (Brinkerhoff, 2006; Warnecke, 2010). They also contributed toward strengthening the capacity and vibrancy of civil society (Mohamoud, 2005) to be in a good position to facilitate peace-building through poverty alleviation, thereby, reducing potential chances of conflict occurring over limited resources (Collier & Hoeffler, 2000).

### **1.8.3 Challenges to diaspora engagement**

While various home governments are deriving substantial benefits and have been implementing various policies interventions, various challenges still remained to effective engagement of the diaspora. Many developing home countries still do not have a comprehensive and well-coordinated national policy framework for engaging their diaspora to facilitate homeland development (Awumbila, Manuh, Quartey, Antwi-Bosiakoh & Tagoe, 2011). Policy approaches intended to mobilise and manage the diaspora often times are poorly coordinated and ill-defined (Gamlen, 2014; Nedelkoska & Khaw, 2015), resulting in provision of uncoordinated supports provided to the diaspora. This makes them less willing and less motivated to contribute meaningfully towards the development of their homeland (Nedelkoska & Khaw, 2015).

Lack of such policies can also increase the phenomenon of reverse diaspora. Reverse diaspora occurs when diaspora returned to their homeland just to face a déjà vu clash of cultures, making them become traumatized and subsequently, developing a feeling of not belonging to their homeland. This makes them to engage in a new identity searching, and may end up reverting to the identity where they have just left, thereby leading to reverse diaspora phenomenon (Constant and Zimmermann, 2016). This is consistent with Ojo's (2017) research findings in the Nigerian context. In a case study analysis of Nigerian diaspora returnees who have ventured in entrepreneurial ventures or activities, Ojo (2017)

found that many diasporas who returned home often faced various challenges due to low level of development relative to what they experienced in their host countries, making it difficult for them to cope and prosper. Due to this, many returnees, especially the entrepreneurs, had to assume personal responsibility for their adjustment and fit into conditions they meet in their homeland.

Similarly, the adjustment process of the returnees is made more difficult by people in their home country by perceiving them as threats to their success and prosperity and consequently giving them hostile receptions and attitudes. This is because sometimes, investments of the diasporas can result in crowding out domestic investment and displacing local companies and entrepreneurs (Nagbe, 2009; Riddle & Nielsen, 2011). This gives credence to a research finding in the Liberian context. A study by Nagbe (2009, p.6) in Liberia found that home-based Liberians consider the “wealth and advanced educational qualifications of diaspora returnees as a threat when it comes to competition for jobs. This situation has led to a love-hate relationship from home-based Liberians toward diaspora returnees.” The emergence of this love-hate relationship between the citizens back home and their compatriots who have returned can be attributed to lack of effective policies that prepares the mind and heart of home-based citizens to embrace their fellow citizens who have returned from abroad as partners in development and not enemies.

Other challenges that hamper effectiveness of diaspora policies instituted by home governments relates to the legal status of some diaspora. According to Antwi-Boateng (2011), engagement of the diasporas for the development of their homeland is often limited because they do not have legal immigration status of their host country. These

illegal migrants find it difficult to engage their home governments despite policies that are put in place to facilitate their returns because they will fail the necessary security checks. Likewise, due to stringent financial disclosure rules in their host countries, they are unable to remit significant amount of money to facilitate development of their homelands such as sending money for undertaking peacebuilding efforts and political activities.

Turner (2008) also identified as lack of unity among the diaspora groups themselves as a major barrier to their effective engagement in homeland development. The author argued that many diasporas are divided along political party lines, religion and tribal affiliations, among others. This makes it difficult for them to present a concerted effort and united voice in participating and promoting peace-building, as well as engaging in other development-oriented interventions in their country of origin. Furthermore, lack of participation in the design and implementation of diasporas' policies and strategies is another key problem to diaspora engagement in their homeland.

In a study, Norglo, Goris, Lie and Ong'ayo (2016) examined the extent of involvement of Dutch-based African diaspora associations in formulating policies concerning Africa. The researchers used interview data from 35 members of the African diaspora and views from two seminars for the African diaspora. Findings showed that although the African diaspora have the potential to share useful insights and ideas into improving the quality of policy making process and outcomes, they are either passively engaged or have no participation. From the foregoing, it is obvious that the participation and contribution of the diaspora to homeland development can be confronted with various challenges such as lack of well-coordinated and comprehensive diaspora policy framework, hostile attitudes of home-based citizens to their compatriot-returnees, and illegal status of some diasporas, lack of

participation in the design and implementation of diasporas' policies and strategies by their homeland governments, as well as lack of unity among the diaspora groups themselves.

#### **1.8.4 Strategies for engaging diasporas effectively in homeland development**

It is important to identify interventions that can be implemented to promote the participation of the diaspora in homeland development due to the challenges that frequently hamper effective contributions to their country of origin. An important intervention that is necessary to elicit diaspora contributions for the development of their homeland is the development of an effective diaspora strategy and policy (Boyle & Kitchin, 2011; Kalm, 2013; Sinclair & Connelly, 2018).

According to Boyle and Kitchin (2011, p.4), diaspora strategy can be described as “an explicit policy initiative or series of policy initiatives enacted by a sending state, or its peoples, aimed at fortifying and developing relationships with expatriate communities, diasporic populations, and foreign constituencies who share a special affinity”. In many countries, diaspora strategy are aimed at promoting economic development due to their well-known economic contributions such as remittances, foreign direct investment, source of external financing (through diaspora bonds), foreign exchange earnings (from the as tourists), and among others (Kalm, 2013; Leblang, 2010).

This is supported by a recent research results obtained by Sinclair and Connelly (2018). Sinclair and Connelly (2018) examined the impact of diaspora strategy on tourism development and performance of Guyana using data from multiple sources including interviews and discussions with experts in the area. They found that diaspora strategy of

Guyana is aimed at boosting tourism by facilitating travel of their diaspora to their homeland. Their strategy uses advertising and promotion of special events to the diaspora including the establishment of tourism councils in the country's major diaspora host countries. In a related study in Europe, Tian and Wu (2016) the development of effective diaspora strategy by the government of Ireland has made the country to enjoy significant dividends from their diasporas in areas of economic development, knowledge transfer and human capital development, as well as peacebuilding.

For effective impact, diaspora strategies should be aimed at increasing the voice of the diaspora as this can lead to the formulation and development of more coherent, comprehensive and well-coordinated policies (De Haas, 2010). Besides, it should target development of a reliable and trustworthy social and business network, where the diaspora can tap into when they need any assistance such as financial and legal advice; marketing and human resource services (Nielsen & Riddle, 2010). Similarly, based on the diaspora option theoretical perspectives, scholars have suggested three types of interrelated strategies for engaging the diasporas, namely; remittance capture strategy, diaspora networking strategy, and diaspora integration strategy (Gamlen, 2005; Meyer & Brown, 1997).

The diaspora capture strategy is concerned with enhancing the volume and amount of remittances as well as the initiation of policies that are intended to promote foreign direct investment (Biao, 2006; Gamlen, 2005). The remittance capture strategy involved the provision of different investment options and “incentives, including remittance-backed bonds, foreign currency accounts, investment tax breaks, exemption from import tariffs on capital goods, duty-free shopping bonuses, and free passport insurance” (Gamlen, 2005,

p.20). The use of the remittance capture strategy is consistent with the diaspora option theory which argues that the diasporas should be viewed as a critical asset or resources that must be captured (Lowell & Gerova, 2004). The application of this strategy has the capacity to enhance home governments' access to economic power, and social power (among the beneficiaries of remittances, particularly, when it is targeted at a specific community) (Brinkerhoff, 2009).

The second strategy as stated earlier is diaspora networking strategy. This strategy describes networking initiatives that connect homeland to the diaspora. It may involve the establishment of websites, newsletters, among other interactive platforms by the home government to facilitate interactions with members of their diaspora community (Brinkerhoff, 2009; Biao, 2006). Other equally important avenues for operationising the diasporate networking strategy include organizing diaspora summits and diplomatic visits, award and recognition programmes, and creating specialized government agencies (that is, diaspora institutions) and initiatives to interface with the diaspora (Brinkerhoff, 2009; Dickinson, 2017).

Examples of the diaspora networking strategies or interventions implemented by the government of Ghana included the adoption and implementation of PANAFEST in 2012, which is a Pan-African historical theatre festival (Kleist, 2013), the Homecoming Summit in 2001 facilitated by GIPC (Ong'ayo, 2014; Nieswand, 2009, Mazzucato & Kabki 2009), and the 2017 Homecoming Diaspora Summit in Ghana (Adjei, 2018), and the "Planters of the Seed" awards for Ghanaian migrants who returned and established businesses in Ghana (Riddle et al., 2008; IOM 2010), and recently, the 2019 'Year of Return' programme. Other similar diaspora networking policies of Ghana noteworthy of

mentioning are the establishment of Diaspora Support Unit in 2012 and which has subsequently been upgraded to the Diaspora Affairs Bureau, with mandates to operate as a national mechanism of promoting effective management of the Ghanaian diaspora, and recently, the establishment of Business Development and Diaspora Relations at the Office of the Presidency in 2017 to coordinate diaspora engagement.

Through these networking activities, members of the diasporas can make them get access to useful information on socio-economic opportunities as well as having the opportunity to have a voice in political processes in their homeland. It will also afford them with opportunities exchange knowledge (Brinkerhoff, 2009). Moreover, the establishment of empowering agencies are necessary to effectively and efficiently coordinate diaspora policies and initiatives (Agunias & Newland, 2012) and promote timely provision of advice and support to the diaspora since these practices constitute a critical medium of communication between the diaspora community and their home country governments (Nielsen & Riddle, 2010).

Finally, the diaspora integration strategy emphasizes the need to integrate the diaspora into the activities of their homeland. This strategy is based on the notion that the diasporas are marginalized from their homeland and need to be given the opportunity to participate in their homeland. Diaspora integration policies confer “social status, political influence, and legitimacy to the diaspora and its potential efforts to contribute to the homeland” (Brinkerhoff, 2009, p.80, Renshon, 2000). Activities such as granting of voting right to the diasporas, diplomatic visits to diaspora organizations in their host countries, among others, are some of the diaspora integration interventions (Brinkerhoff, 2009; Renshon, 2000).

For example, Ghana's diaspora integration initiatives are: the immigration act that was enacted in 1999 (Immigration Act, 573 of 1999) which granted "Right of Abode" for Africans, desirous of returning back to Ghana to establish businesses, homes, among others (Hasty, 2002), the enactment of the Dual Citizenship Act (Act 591) and the Citizenship Regulations 2001, which makes it legally permissible for Ghanaians to hold dual citizenships (Quartey, 2009), as well as the Diaspora Vote Committee, granting voting rights to members of the Ghanaian community abroad following the enactment of the Representation of the Peoples (Amendment) Act of 2006 (Mohan, 2008; Nieswand, 2009).

## **1.9 Research Methodology**

### **1.9.1 Research approach**

There are three main research approaches. These are: quantitative, qualitative and the mixed research approach. This study employed the qualitative research approach. According to Patton (2002), qualitative approach provides greater richness and more detailed information about a smaller number of people. The study employed the qualitative research design to explore the opinions of people in-depth on the effectiveness of the 'Year of Return' programme, its implementations challenges and strategies for sustaining its gains.

### **1.9.2 Research design**

This study adopted the case study design strategy of qualitative research. Yin (1984, p.23) defines the case study research strategy "as an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context; when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident; and in which multiple sources of evidence are used." The case study strategy was chosen to gain context-specific insights

about the state of Ghana's "Year of Return" programme, and how it promotes the participation of the diaspora in homeland development, as well as challenges that should be addressed to make similar initiatives in the future more successful. Consistent with the research design, this study used inductive reasoning approach in order to make general conclusions on diaspora engagement in homeland development through policy initiatives using empirical data on the 'Year of Return' programme.

### **1.9.3 Target population and sample size**

The target population was defined as officials of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Regional Integration; the Ghana Tourism Authority, Ministry of Tourism, Arts, and Culture; and Diaspora Affairs at the Office of the President. Specifically, fifteen (15) officials in all (five each) from the above institutions were selected. Out of this, four were ready and available to serve as participants in the study, and were accordingly interviewed. Patton (2002) posited that qualitative research permit the use smaller number of people to obtain rich information concerning a topic. Indeed, prior studies in the field of international affair and diaspora management (e.g. Adjei, 2018; Ojo, 2017) have used a sample size of two (2) respondents in their qualitative research. It thus, follows that the sample size of four respondents is appropriate and consistent with the norms in qualitative research.

### **1.9.4 Sampling technique**

The respondents were selected using the purposive sampling technique. Bernard (2002) argues that with purposive sampling, the investigator decides what needs to be known and sets out to find people who can and are willing to provide the information by virtue of knowledge or experience. Hence, the purposive sampling provide was applied to select the respondents due to their in-depth knowledge of diaspora policy issues and or their direct oversight over the implementation and success of the 'Year of Return' programmes.

### **1.9.5 Sources of data**

This research sourced data from both primary and secondary data sources. Primary data was gathered through semi-structured interviews with government institutions with direct and indirect oversight over the implementation and success of the ‘Year of Return’ initiative. This was supplemented with secondary data from official reports and newspaper articles.

### **1.9.6 Data collection methods**

This research sourced data from both primary and secondary data sources. Primary data was gathered through semi-structured interviews with government institutions with direct and indirect oversight over the implementation and success of the ‘Year of Return’ initiative. Interview guide was used for the collection of the primary data. The interview questions were developed based on the literature, and were given to the supervisor of the dissertation to use his experience and knowledge to assess the face and content validity of the questions. Sample items included *“what is the extent to which the Year of Return programme was effective in eliciting Ghanaian diaspora’s participation in homeland development? What were the major challenges to the implementation of the Year of Return Programme? How can Ghana sustains the Programme with respect to facilitating more ‘returns’ and maximizing its associated benefits beyond 2019? What other strategies or measures should Ghana implement to engage her Diasporas to facilitate their contributions to homeland development?”* This was supplemented with secondary data from official reports and newspaper articles. The reliability of the responses was assured through triangulation since data were collected from different sources.

### **1.9.7 Tool for data analysis**

The thematic data analysis technique was utilized for the analysis by theming and describing the data in rich details. Thematic analysis becomes a “useful, flexible research tool that has the potential to provide ‘a rich and detailed, yet complex, account of data’ if undertaken properly” (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p.78). The thematic analysis procedures involve: first, getting familiar with the data; second, generating initial codes; third, searching for major and minor research themes; fourth, reviewing the research themes; fifth, defining and naming themes, and finally, producing the results (Braun & Clark, 2006).

### **1.9.8 Ethical considerations**

The ethical considerations observed include informed consent from and voluntary participation of the participants, confidentiality and protection of respondents’ privacy. Furthermore, the study obtained permission from the selected institutions. The project also complied with intellectual property rights by acknowledging and referencing all works and materials which were incorporated in the study.

### **1.9.9 Limitations**

The following are potential limitations of the study’s method. First, this study focused solely on some of the two government agencies that implemented the ‘Year of Return’ programme. Similarly, the ‘Year of Return’ is not the only programme intended to promote the participation of the Ghanaian diaspora in the development of their homeland but this study did not conduct a comparative analyses of the year of return programme and other programmes and policies intended to engage the Ghanaian diaspora in the development of the country. This is a potential methodological limitation. Likewise, although the diaspora themselves were integral part of the ‘Year of Return’ programme, their views were not

obtained or were not included in this study as research participants. This can limit the results.

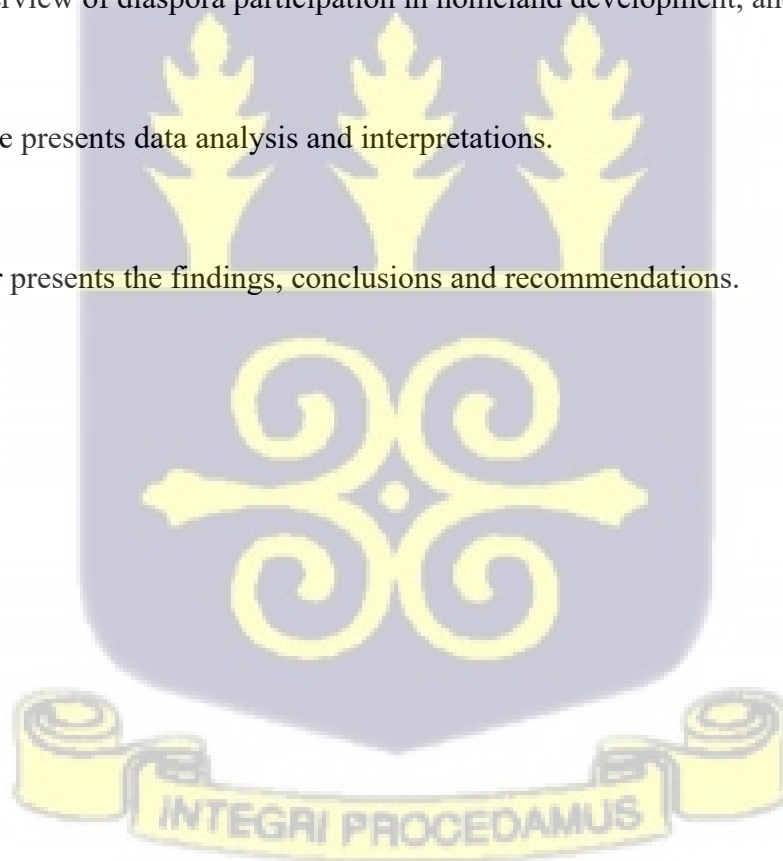
### **1.10 Arrangement of Chapters**

Chapter one presents general introduction. It examines the background to the research problem, statement of the research problem, research questions, objectives of the study, scope of the study, rationale of the study, theoretical framework, literature review, research methodology and arrangement of chapters.

Chapter two presents the overview of the diaspora landscape. It examines diaspora policies, overview of diaspora participation in homeland development, and challenges.

Chapter three presents data analysis and interpretations.

Chapter four presents the findings, conclusions and recommendations.



## CHAPTER TWO

### OVERVIEW OF THE DIASPORA LANDSCAPE

#### 2.0 Introduction

Chapter two presents the overview of the diaspora landscape. It examines the drivers of diaspora and the diaspora policy landscape in Ghana from her independence to the modern diasporas-oriented programmes.

#### 2.1 Drivers of Diaspora

It has been estimated that over 258 million or 3.4% of the global population are living outside their country of origin (Montiel & Holland, 2017). Earlier, it was projected that about 30 million Africans have officially emigrated to live in other countries (Plaza & Ratha, 2011). Various factors have facilitated migration from Africa. Frequent political instability and crises, ethnic conflicts and civil war and violence made lots of people to migrate from the continent (Adepoju 2008; Mohamoud, 2005; Mohamoud & Osman, 2008). However, several others have migrated voluntarily to pursue greener pastures due to high poverty level, and limited employment opportunities in the continent (Mohamoud & Osman 2008). Others were also motivated to migrate to pursue further education (Ong'ayo, 2014).

With respect to Ghana, the causes of migration in the pre-colonial times were influenced by fishing trade and farming (Ong'ayo, 2014). The fisher folks, traders and farmers migrated to other West African countries. This movement of people was facilitated by the trans-Saharan trade routes which connected various trading locations between West Africa and North Africa. This was later disrupted by the arrival of traders from Europe in Africa's west coast in the 14<sup>th</sup> century (Anarfi, Kwankye, Ofuso-Mensah & Temoko,

2003). This has resulted in a new form of movement of people from the country including other countries in West Africa. Migration during that era was as a result of slavery and forced labour on plantations in Europe and other part of the world (Adepoju, 2005; Sinclair & Connelly, 2018).

However, during the post-independence era, mobility of people was motivated mainly by economic considerations and poor governance, population growth, policies of the governments, political instability and violence, and military takeovers (Anarfi, Awusabo-Asare & Nsowah-Nuamah, 2000; Adepoju, 2005). For instance, following political and economic crises in the mid-1960s to mid-1980s, various Ghanaians have migrated to West African countries such as Nigeria and Cote d'Ivoire. Others have moved further away to European, North American, and Asian countries. Their movement was influenced by the need to escape political violence as well as to obtain economic security (Nieswand, 2009).

It has been estimated that migrants from Ghana are dispersed in several nations globally, constituting an international community of about 1.5 - 3 million people (7–13%) of the population of Ghana (Quartey, 2009; Twum-Baah, 2005). They have formed large and vibrant communities in countries such as the USA, the UK, Germany, Italy and the Netherlands (Mazzucato & Kabki, 2009). From the foregoing, it is obvious that the migration of Ghanaians and other nationals, leading to the formation of international community of people in a host country with a different origin or ancestral heritage, were stimulated by both push and pull factors (Dalpino, 2000).

It is essential to recognize that although migration is viewed as a necessary condition for the existence of diaspora, it is insufficient since not all people who have migrated become

diaspora (Constant & Zimmermann, 2016). According to Constant and Zimmermann (2016), for a diaspora to exist, it must satisfy three conditions: “result from migration, due to economic reasons, natural or manmade disasters, or to avoid persecution; migration has to be dispersed to more than one host country with different socio-cultural norms; and migrants preserve their norms and ethno-religious identification personally or vicariously and idealize the homeland. Diaspora includes the descendants of migrants” (p.1111). Similarly, in the views of Safran (1991), four conditions need to be met for a diaspora to exist. First, there should be an expatriate community which preserves the collective memory of their land of origin. Second, they should consider their land of origin as their real home and have a hope of returning to their homeland someday. Third, there should be existence of dedication among them to restore the homeland. Finally, they should have a strong affection with the homeland that has shaped their identity.

## **2.2 Diaspora Policy Landscape in Ghana**

The diaspora community has gained attention of various policy makers due to their potential contributions to the homeland as a result of their emotional ties to their land of origin and their desire to see their homeland develop and prosper (Martinez, Cummings & Vaaler, 2015; Sinatti & Horst, 2015). Consequently, various policies and programmes are developed to target the diaspora community by promoting their returns (Boccagni, 2011; Åkesson & Eriksson-Baaz 2015).

Ghana, since her independence, has implemented several diasporas-oriented programmes and initiatives with the aim of attracting Ghanaians and Africans living abroad back to Ghana to enhance her development (Kleist, 2013; Tetteh, 2019). Various successive governments of Ghana, dating back to Dr. Kwame Nkrumah, have aimed to pursue

policies such as granting of citizenship, dual nationality, tax exemptions and land grants to Ghanaian diasporas to create conducive environments to promote more returns (Engmann, 2019).

The interest of the Ghanaian authorities in promoting diaspora returns for socio-economic development can be traced back to the politico-cultural movement of Pan-Africanism. Pan-Africanism is described as “a political and cultural phenomenon that regards Africa, Africans, and African descent abroad as a unit” (Asante, 2007, p.12). The Pan-Africanism movement started in the late 19th and early 20th century by a group of various intellectuals and politicians of African origin. They rose against and fought racial discrimination, colonialism and imperialism. Dr. Kwame Nkrumah played a critical role in the movement as a student in United States and United Kingdom. His Pan-African activist’s role was intensified when he became a politician and President in Ghana. He was instrumental in eliciting the support of the African-Americans and Caribbean-Americans as partners to fight against racism and colonization of the black, as well as spearheading the unionization of Africa (Kleist, 2013).

However, after Nkrumah was overthrown in 1966, several African-Americans were persecuted, thereby making the movement lose its political importance in Ghana. Since then, there were no formal interventions to court the diaspora until the 1980s (Pierre, 2013) since the periods of 1960s to 1980s witnessed several major political instability and economic challenges as a result of coup d’états (Kleist, 2013).

Thus, the contemporary Ghanaian diaspora has emerged in the 1980s. However, the focused of the regime which was led by J.J. Rawlings concentrated mostly on Pan-Africanism and African-Americans like Nkrumah did. During this period, through the

efforts of the government, various public memorials and research centres aimed at honouring some of the key champions of the Pan-African movement or ideas were established. Examples include the “WEB Du Bois Memorial Centre for Pan-African Culture in Accra in 1985 and, in the 1990s, the George Padmore Research Library for African Affairs, and the Kwame Nkrumah Mausoleum” (Pierre, 2013, p.134).

Moreover, the Ghanaian officials during this period have promoted Ghana as a destination for African-Americans by leveraging on the historical relevance of Ghana in the slave trade as well as her role in the Pan-Africanism legacy (Pierre, 2013). Similarly from the 1980s to 1990s, following the reemergence of democratic rule in Ghana, the government has through its quest to address the economic challenges facing the country, implemented the structural adjustment programme. As part of the implementation process, the formation of Ghanaian diaspora was centralized and consolidated (Pierre, 2013; Kleist, 2013).

Aside the above interventions, the government in 1992 has adopted PANAFEST, which is a Pan-African historical theatre festival that was proposed by Efua Sutherland in mid-1980s aimed at bringing African-Americans and Ghanaians together. Efua Sutherland is a celebrated dramatist and playwright of Ghana. This festival has been celebrated biannually in Ghana (Kleist, 2013). Another project that promoted the return of the Ghanaian diaspora was the implementation of the Slave Route Project by the government of Ghana in 1995 and supported by the UNESCO, the International Organization of Tourism and many other countries in Africa. Similarly, with the support of the Smithsonian Institute, the government of Ghana has rehabilitated the slave castles located in Cape Coast and Elmina and established new museums (McCaskie, 2009).

Moreover, a major intervention aimed at promoting the returns of the Ghanaian and African diaspora to Ghana was the implementation of the Emancipation Day in 1998, following the inspiration that President Rawlings got after visiting Jamaica to witness their annual celebration of the abolition of the slave trade. The government consequently, created a holiday with the Ministry of Tourism given the authority and mandate to annually develop diaspora programmes and events to promote the attraction of African-Americans as well as Afro-Caribbean tourists (Hasty, 2002; Pierre, 2013). Similarly, a new immigration act was enacted in 1999 (Immigration Act, 573 of 1999) that granted “Right of Abode” for Africans, desirous of returning to Ghana to establish businesses, homes, among others (Hasty, 2002). The diaspora engagement and promotion of diaspora returns in the 1980s to 1990s was conducted in the context of neoliberalism both globally and in Ghana, following the structural adjustment programmes (Hasty, 2002; Pierre, 2013).

In 2001, the government of John Kufuor has implemented a range diaspora-oriented policy interventions to promote the return of Ghanaians abroad to facilitate the development of the country. One of these policies is the implementation of the Homecoming Summit in 2001 facilitated by Ghana Investment Promotion Centre (GIPC) which attracted about 500 Ghanaian diaspora and Afro-Americans to return and engage in investment activities at home (Ong’ayo, 2014; Nieswand, 2009, Mazzucato & Kabki 2009). As part of the GIPC initiative, the government in 2003 also instituted the Non-Resident Ghanaian (NRG) Secretariat to enhance the coordination of potential investments of the diaspora (Nieswand, 2009).

Prior to this, the government enacted the Dual Citizenship Act (Act 591) and the Citizenship Regulations 2001, which make it legally permissible for Ghanaians to hold dual citizenships. As a result of this law, it has been reported that approximately 5,903 Ghanaians have acquired dual citizenships between 2003 to August 2008. This figure has increased by about 50% in terms of applications between 2007–2008 (Quartey, 2009). This diaspora policy intervention was intended to enhance the engagement of Ghanaians abroad to invest and efficiently and effectively manage their investments in Ghana (Quartey, 2009).

Furthermore, as part of the continued efforts to attract and promote the Ghanaian diaspora in homeland development, 20 diasporas in 2006 were honoured with “Planters of the Seed” awards for Ghanaian migrants who returned and established businesses in Ghana (Riddle, Brinkerhoff & Nielsen, 2008). As a consequence of this diaspora-centered gesture, the Ghanaian migrants and migrant associations in 2007 have established the Golden Jubilee Bond to promote savings and investment in the country (IOM 2010).

Another major initiative worthy of mentioning is the establishment of the Diaspora Vote Committee. The Committee was established in response to the desire of Ghanaians living abroad to have political rights that permit them to vote in general elections in Ghana. This right was granted to members of the Ghanaian community following the enactment of the Representation of the Peoples (Amendment) Act of 2006 (Mohan, 2008; Nieswand, 2009). However, the Ghanaian diaspora are yet to vote since the act granted them voting rights. Recently, some individuals championing this cause have gone to court and got a court verdict that requires the Electoral Commission to operationalize the Act in the upcoming 2020 general election in Ghana.

The Atta Mills led government has continued the efforts of his predecessors to ensure the active participation of the Ghanaian diaspora in the development of the country. The Diaspora Support Unit was created by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Regional Integration with supports from key stakeholders such as the International Organization for Migration (Ghana), the German Technical Cooperation, and the Centre for Migration Studies (CMS) of University of Ghana. The Unit has subsequently been upgraded to the Diaspora Affairs Bureau (DAB), with mandates to operate as a national mechanism of promoting effective management of the Ghanaian diaspora (Adjei, 2018).

Similarly, in collaboration with International Organization for Migration, government of Ghana in 2012 commenced an annual diaspora engagement project, which targeted the various diaspora communities of Ghana in five countries. These countries are USA, Italy, UK, Germany, and Netherlands. They aimed to profile Ghanaian diaspora associations in the above selected countries, establish a forum that facilitates effective dialogue between the government and Ghanaians abroad, the establishment of a national Diaspora Support Unit, develop accurate and up to date database of Ghanaian diaspora and a dedicated website to enhance proper Ghanaian engagement. The ultimate aim of this project is to ensure that an institutionalized national framework to guide and enhance the participation of the Ghanaian diaspora as well as a creation of platform for the development of new initiatives and policies to improve the relationship between the government of Ghana and Ghanaian diaspora and their associations.

In 2017 through collaborations among key stakeholders, specifically, GIPC, Office of the President and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Regional Integration, a Homecoming Diaspora Summit in Ghana was organized. The Summit is seen as one of the strategies of

harnessing the resource potential of the Ghanaian diaspora to develop the country. The government has also established an office known as the Business Development and Diaspora Relations at the Office of the Presidency to coordinate diaspora engagement (Adjei, 2018).

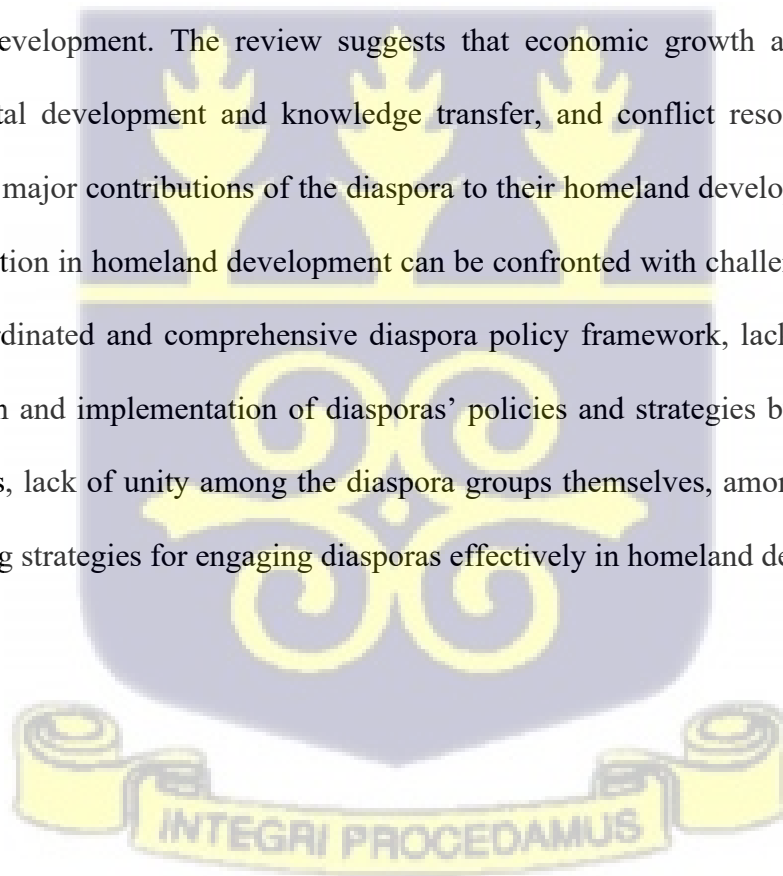
Subsequent to this, in 2018, the government as indicated earlier has launched the “Year of Return”. It is a major “landmark spiritual and birth-right journey inviting the Global African family, home and abroad, to mark 400 years of the arrival of the first enslaved Africans in Jamestown, Virginia” while positioning Ghana as an attractive tourist destination for the African Americans and the African Diaspora (YOR, 2019). The programme is an initiative of the Ghana Tourism Authority with supports from the Ministry of Tourism, Arts and Culture, the Office of Diaspora Affairs at the Office of the President, the Panafest Foundation as well as the Adinkra Group of USA (visitGhana, 2020). President Nana Akufo-Addo in September 2018 has launched the initiative and consequently declared the year 2019 as the “Year of Return”. The President has urged people of African root to return to their homeland in a “major landmark spiritual and birth-right journey” (Yeboah, 2019).

As noted, some reports have claimed that the initiative intended to attract Ghanaian, and by extension, African diaspora to return and contribute to the development of the homeland has been successful. They argued that the programme has put Ghana on the global spotlight, making the country, an attractive destination for African in the diaspora globally (Goldstreet Business, 2019). The ‘Year of Return’ programme has triggered many Black creatives, entrepreneurs, influencers and celebrities to visit the country (Gray, 2020). Others believe it has offered people to engage heritage reclamation since Africa is

considered as their homeland or motherland and the source of the resistance, pride and dignity of the Africans (Engmann, 2019). The Minister of Tourism, Arts and Culture, Mrs Barbara Oteng-Gyasi in an interview granted to Graphic Online said the ‘Year of Return’ programme had also resulted in about 750,000 arrivals of the diasporas with an total of US\$1.9 billion being their estimated financial contributions to the country in first nine months (Asiedu-Addo, 2019).

## 2.7 Chapter Conclusion

This chapter reviews the diaspora landscape. It examines the concept of diaspora, Diaspora policy landscape in Ghana, and contributions of the diaspora participation in homeland development. The review suggests that economic growth and development, human capital development and knowledge transfer, and conflict resolution and peace building are major contributions of the diaspora to their homeland development. However, the participation in homeland development can be confronted with challenges such as lack of well-coordinated and comprehensive diaspora policy framework, lack of participation in the design and implementation of diasporas’ policies and strategies by their homeland governments, lack of unity among the diaspora groups themselves, among others. It ends by discussing strategies for engaging diasporas effectively in homeland development.



## CHAPTER THREE

### THE YEAR OF RETURN POLICY OR PROGRAMME

#### 3.0 Introduction

This section presents the data analysis and interpretations. It covered demographic analysis and analysis of the key research themes. The key themes include Diaspora participation in homeland development, 'Year of Return' implementation challenges, strategies for the sustainability of the 'Year of Return' for national development. The results are interpreted or discussed in the context of the literature.

#### 3.1 Demographic Analyses

As noted earlier, the study used interview data from respondents for the analyses (see Appendix B). The sample size of four respondents, as explained in chapter one, is appropriate and consistent with prior research and the norms in qualitative research (e.g. Adjei, 2018; Ojo, 2017; Patton, 2002). The first respondent was a male and aged 30 - 39 years. He had a master's degree and held a post of Assistant Research Secretary. He had two years in working experience, all in the space of the international relations or diaspora affairs. The second participant was a female and was 30 -39 years old. She had a bachelor degree and was Assistant Director in her organisation. She had six years of working experience, of which, 2 years were specifically in the area of international relations or diaspora affairs.

Also, the third respondent was also a female and was 30-39 years old. She had a bachelor degree and worked as an Assistant Director. She had three years of working experience, with one year experience in the international relations or diaspora affairs space. The final respondent was a male and aged 30 -39 years old. He had master's degree and held the

post of a Director. He had 10 years of working experience, out of which, three years were in the area of international relations or diaspora affairs.

From the above, there was equal gender representation in the sample and the respondents generally per their job positions and their educational qualifications, had adequate knowledge and experience to shed useful light on the topic under investigation.

**Table 3.1: Demographic Profile of the Respondents**

Respondent	Gender	Age	Education	Position	Experience
1.	Male	30-39	Masters	Assistant Research Secretary	2 years
2.	Female	30 -39	Degree	Assistant Director	6 years
3.	Female	30 -39	Degree	Assistant Director	3 years
4.	Male	30 -39	Masters	Director	10 years

**Source: Interview data (2020)**

### 3.2 Thematic Analysis

Through thematic analyses (Braun & Clark, 2006) s, the analyses of the interview responses were thematically organised under the following themes: (1) ‘Year of Return’ and diaspora participation in homeland development, (2) ‘Year of Return’ implementation challenges, and (3) sustainability of the ‘Year of Return’ programme for national development. These themes are presented as follows:

#### 3.2.1 The Year of Return and diaspora’s participation in homeland development

The first major theme is on how the ‘Year of Return’ programme promotes the participation of the diaspora in the development of Ghana. The analysis of the interview responses suggested that the ‘Year of Return’ programme has elicited diaspora participation in the development of Ghana by (1) branding Ghana as a destination of

choice, (2) economic growth, (3) Knowledge transfer and human capital development, and (4) enhanced social networking/ties.

- ***Branded Ghana as a destination of choice***

The qualitative findings based on interview data revealed the programme has made the diaspora to help in developing Ghana by branding it as destination of choice for tourists internationally and a tourism hub in Africa. According to a respondent:

*The programme achieved its intended objectives by making Ghana the destination for African's history. Foreigners of African origin travelled to Ghana, a move that mimic the beginning of the Pan-African movement...It exposed the true colours of Ghana and Africa, therefore, eroding the long held misconception about the continent; it revived the spirit of patriotism for Africa by luring the diasporas to know their true origin. Within the milieu of international relations, soft power is a relevant tool for international recognition. The 'Year of Return' has become a brand for Ghana and, makes Ghana a hub of tourism in Africa which eventually, make Ghana regain its leadership role as it commanded it the late 1950s and the 1960s (Assistant Research Secretary, male, Diaspora Bureau, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Regional Integration, 2020).*

Other respondents supported this position by indicating that:

*International arrivals into the country had a significant growth from about 950, 000 in 2018 to about 1, 130, 000 in 2019...Celebrity endorsements by Harvey, Samuel L. Jackson, etc. have increased international recognition for the country (Assistant Director, female, Diaspora Bureau, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Regional Integration, 2020).*

- ***Economic growth***

The results also showed that the programme has made the Ghanaian diaspora to contribute to growth of the economy by increasing revenues, revitalisation of Ghana's hospitality sector, increased investment prospects in Ghana, and promoted trade and boosted various private sectors of the Ghanaian economy. This was expressed and retreated by almost all the respondents who stated that:

*The influx of Africans in the diaspora boosted Ghana's business sector which enabled the government to generate revenue to supplement its financial needs. Hotel management recorded increase in revenue which enables them to cover previously recorded subnormal profits..... Aside their coming serving as a source of revenue, some of the returnees have started doing business (Assistant Research Secretary, male, Diaspora Bureau, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Regional Integration, 2020).*

Another respondent opined that:

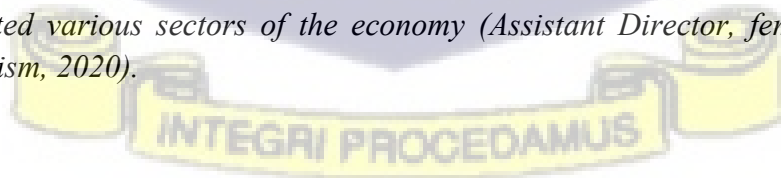
*The 'Year of Return' enabled the Diaspora Secretariat to build a database of all Ghanaians in the diaspora. It also enabled the Secretariat to easily classify all diasporas into classes. Those capable of settling in Ghana for good, those interested in investing into the Ghanaian economy. All those data classifications help in planning future investment prospects for Ghana. As well as calculated expected remittances into the Ghanaian economy, which is a component required for measuring Ghana's economic outlook ...The influx of visitors into the country aided in boosting the hospitality industry, among other industries. The 'Year of Return' also increased investment prospects in Ghana for multinationals since it is expected the 'Year of Return' may transform into a multibillion commercial activity... The happiness index of Ghana went high during the 'Year of Return'. The entertainment industry witnessed a boost (Director, male, Diaspora Affairs at the Office of the President, 2020).*

Likewise, a female Assistant Director of the Diaspora Bureau, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Regional Integration stated that:

*Increased tourism sector spending which positively impacted private sector industries such as hotels, restaurants, etc.*

This was similarly emphasised by another respondent who noted that:

*The programme sponsored events that generated revenue, promoted trade and boosted various sectors of the economy (Assistant Director, female, Ministry of Tourism, 2020).*



- ***Knowledge transfer and human capital development***

Also, the ‘Year of Return’ programme contributed to homeland development by facilitating knowledge transfer and human capital development by organizing training and skill development programmes for artisans, exchanging of expert knowledge via diaspora summit, and building of facilities to encourage teaching and learning. This is evident in the interview excerpts from respondent 1 that:

*Some of them are acquiring citizenship and resident permit. This in the long-run, will inure to the benefit of Ghana since there would be transfer of knowledge and skills to the native economy ... it equipped the diasporas with the practical know-how of the slavery and history of their descendants (Assistant Research Secretary, male, Diaspora Bureau, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Regional Integration, 2020).*

Another respondent stated that:

*Training programmes organised by the diasporas community to the youth in deprived areas helped, for example, women in the Art training programme. Two boreholes built in Akropong School of the Blind by the diaspora help in the human capital development (Assistant Director, female, Diaspora Bureau, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Regional Integration, 2020).*

Similarly, respondent 3 opined that:

*Through diaspora submit and diaspora programmes encouraging returned experts [to exchange knowledge with the locals] (Assistant Director, female, Ministry of Tourism, 2020). Likewise, respondent 4 stated that “a number of diaspora who were clueless about Ghana’s history and its historic path from slavery to now, were made easy. A number of Diasporas learned the historic path of Ghana and Africa (Director, male, Diaspora Affairs at the Office of the President, 2020).*

- ***Enhanced social networking/ties***

It is also evident from the interview data that the programme has promoted the participation of the diaspora in homeland development by enhancing social ties and

opportunities to network with the compatriots. For instance, a respondent stated that “*the Year of Return’ provided spaces where the local community could connect with the African diaspora who came into the country to experience Ghana*” (Assistant Director, female, Diaspora Bureau, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Regional Integration, 2020).

### 3.2.2 Challenges of the ‘Year of Return’ programme

Another major theme that emerged from the analysis of the interview data relates to the implementation challenges of the ‘Year of Return’ programme. It shows that the programme was impeded with challenges such as (1) inadequate planning, (2) poor coordination, (3) poor level of infrastructural development, (4) visa acquisition issues, (5) financial Challenges, and (6) language barriers.

- ***Inadequate planning and coordination***

The results from the analysis of the interview data showed that inadequate planning hampered the effectiveness of the programme. This was expressed by one of the respondents who stated that “*the programme was not specifically planned- the programme was orally/verbally made; hence, it was not planned with specific target to achieve*” (Assistant Research Secretary, male, Diaspora Bureau, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Regional Integration, 2020).

This was reiterated by Respondent 4 who noted that “*a major challenge to the success of the programme was due to lack of proper planning by the organizers*” (Director, male, Diaspora Affairs at the Office of the President, 2020). Another Respondent stated that “*there was lack of coordination between government agencies. Most government agencies were not willing to participate*” (Assistant Director, female, Diaspora Bureau, Ministry of

*Foreign Affairs and Regional Integration, 2020*). This was echoed by Respondent 3 who stated that “*lack of coordination of the Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs), lack of accessibility to information pertaining to the diaspora*” affected the programme (*Assistant Director, female, Ministry of Tourism, 2020*).

- ***Poor infrastructural development in the country***

Most of the respondents have noted that the level of infrastructural development in the country such as poor development of tourist sites, lack of good road networks, substandard hotels, among others, has negatively impacted on the success of the programme. According to Respondent 1, “*poor tourist sites - Ghana’s tourist sites have not been given attention due to low domestic patronage, and transportation challenges and poor road networks*” (*Assistant Research Secretary, male, Diaspora Bureau, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Regional Integration, 2020*). This view is similar to respondent 4 who stated that “*lack of proper organisation of accommodation for some Diasporas due to substandard hotels and other lodging options strongly emerged as a major implementation challenge to the programme*” (*Director, male, Diaspora Affairs at the Office of the President, 2020*).

- ***Visa acquisition issues and financial challenges***

The evidence also found that long process in acquiring visa by the Diasporas and limited funds and late disbursement of funding affected the effectiveness of the ‘Year of Return’ programme.

### 3.2.3 Sustainability of the ‘Year of Return’ Programme

Another major research theme from the interview data is centered on strategies being employed to sustain the programme. The results suggest that the implementation of “Beyond the Year of Return initiative”, establishment of Sankofa account for diaspora contributions, and conferment on them citizenship status are some of the things being done to sustain the programme.

- ***Beyond the return initiative***

The results showed that currently a key strategy being employed to sustain the program is the implementation of the beyond the return initiative. According a respondent, the programme will be sustained with the:

*Introduction of beyond the Return with a theme ‘a decade of African renaissance’ which would be implemented for ten years can strengthen the bonds Ghana established with its African diaspora community (Assistant Director, female, Diaspora Bureau, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Regional Integration, 2020).*

- ***Economic interventions***

The analysis of the interview data showed that government is using economic interventions such as favourable tax policies and Sankofa account to attract more returns. This is evident in the following interview excerpt that:

*Government should initiate favourable tax policies for Africans in the diaspora who want to invest in the domestic economy; government should lure the diaspora for partnership in areas of effectiveness (Assistant Research Secretary, male, Diaspora Bureau, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Regional Integration, 2020).*

Another respondent stated that other measures include:

*Setting up of the Sankofa account to encourage the diaspora to invest in the country and involvement of the diaspora community in the decision-making of the country (Assistant Director, female, Diaspora Bureau, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Regional Integration, 2020).*

- *Programme for diaspora integration (e.g. confer on them citizenship status)*

The evidence also suggested that programmes for diaspora integration such as conferring on them citizenship status can entice more returns. According a respondent, “government should confer on them citizenship status. This will make them feel obligated to invest or help develop the local economy” (Assistant Research Secretary, male, Diaspora Bureau, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Regional Integration, 2020). Others stated that “appreciate diaspora engagement structures, the integration of the diaspora in all levels of the engagement process” will help in sustaining the programme (Assistant Director, female, Ministry of Tourism, 2020).

The above qualitative results are summarised in Table 3.2 below.

**Table 3.2: Summary of Major Themes and their Empirical Findings**

Main research themes	Sub-themes	Key Empirical Findings
Year of Return and diaspora’s participation in homeland development	Branded Ghana as a destination of choice	The year of programme has elicited diaspora participation in the development of Ghana by branding Ghana as a destination of choice, economic growth, knowledge transfer and human capital development, and enhanced social networking/ties.
	Economic growth	
	Transfer of knowledge and skills and human capital development	
	Enhanced social networking/ties	
Challenges of the Year of Return programme	Inadequate planning	Analysis of the interview data relates to the implementation challenges of the year of return programme. It shows that the programme was impeded by challenges such as inadequate planning, poor coordination, poor level of infrastructural development, visa acquisition issues, financial challenges, and language barriers.
	Poor coordination among government agencies	
	Poor infrastructural development in the country	
	Financial challenges faced by organisers	
	Visa acquisition process issues	
Sustainability of the Year of Return Programme	Economic interventions (favourable tax policies and Sankofa account)	The results suggest that the implementation of “Beyond the Return initiative”, establishment of Sankofa account for diaspora contributions, and Programme for diaspora integration such as conferring on them citizenship status what are being done to sustain the programme.
	Beyond the Return initiative	
	Programme for diaspora integration	

Source: Interview data (2020)

### 3.3 Discussions of Research Findings

This section interpreted the results by discussing the findings in the context of the literature as follows:

#### 3.3.1 Year of Return and diaspora's participation in homeland development

The first objective sought to examine the effectiveness of the 'Year of Return' programme in eliciting Ghanaian diaspora's participation in homeland development. The empirical results found that the 'Year of Return' programme has facilitated diaspora participation in the development of Ghana by branding Ghana as a destination of choice, contributing its economic growth, facilitating knowledge transfer and human capital development, and improved social networking/ties with the local people.

The empirical result that the programme has facilitated homeland development by branding Ghana as a destination of choice is similar to Goldstreet Business's (2019) report that the programme has put Ghana on the global spotlight, making the country, an attractive destination for African in the diaspora globally. This means that the 'Year of Return' programme has triggered many Black creatives, entrepreneurs, influencers and celebrities to visit the country (Gray, 2020), thereby raising international recognition for Ghana as an important hub for tourists in Africa.

Similarly, the results supported prior researchers (e.g. Gamlen, 2014; Ho & Wei, 2018; Constant & Zimmermann, 2016) who found that diaspora can contribute to the socio-economic development of their homeland (Burchardi et al., 2016; Plaza, 2013). Through the programme, the Ghanaian diaspora have contributed toward building the economy of their homeland by promoting investment, trade and commercial opportunities in Ghana

such as creation of more tourism-related jobs, foreign exchange earnings, and enhancement in the performance and quality of tourism institutions and other public facilities that are necessary to boost tourism outcomes (Constant & Zimmermann, 2016).

Relatedly, the contribution of the Ghanaian diaspora in homeland development in the area of knowledge transfer and human capital development gave credence to the claim that engaging the diaspora can benefit the homeland by facilitating the transfer of knowledge that can improve management and business practices (Levin & Barnard, 2013; Tian & Wu, 2016). As noted, the 'Year of Return' programme, has afforded opportunities to the diaspora community to organised training and skill development programmes for artisans, shared expert knowledge with local business managers through diaspora summit, as well as constructed facilities in selected educational institutions for the disable to enhance teaching and learning experience for the beneficiaries. Through these initiatives, local people are empowered with new knowledge, new business techniques which are expected to be utilized to advance the development goals of Ghana as a whole.

Also, the empirical evidence showed, that not only did the local economy benefit from knowledge exchanges, but also, the diaspora through this programme, have had the opportunity to learn indigenous things, particularly, about their heritage and slavery in Ghana. This gave credence to Levitt and Lamba-Nieves's (2010) assertion there may be a two-way transfer of knowledge by the diaspora community, whereby, they export their home countries' socio-cultural practices to their countries as well as export new knowledge and ideas from their host countries back to their countries of origin.

Moreover, these contributions by the diaspora which was aided by the ‘Year of Return’ programme provided empirical evidence in support of the diaspora option theory, posits that national governments can leverage the human, economic and social capital of the diaspora or citizens abroad to improve the level of development in their homeland (Brinkerhoff, 2009; Pellerin & Mullings, 2013). Thus, from the diaspora option theoretical perspectives, it can be argued that the implementation of the ‘Year of Return’ programme has helped the Ghanaian government to tap into the socio-economic capital of her diaspora to improve on the social and economic aspects of the Ghanaian economy.

### **3.3.2 Implementation Challenges of the Year of Return programme**

The second research objective sought to ascertain the challenges to the implementation of the ‘Year of Return’ programme. The empirical results based on the analysis of the interview data found that the implementation of programme was impeded by inadequate planning, poor coordination, poor level of infrastructural development, visa acquisition issues, limited budgetary allocations for the organizing agencies, and language barriers. This implies there was multiplicity of challenges that confronted the execution of the programme. This finding supported claims that policy approaches intended to mobilise and manage the diaspora often times are poorly coordinated and ill-defined (Gamlen, 2014; Nedelkoska & Khaw, 2015), resulting in provision of uncoordinated supports provided to the diaspora. This makes them less willing and less motivated to contribute meaningfully towards the development of their homeland (Nedelkoska & Khaw, 2015; Gillespie et al., 1999).

Besides, this means that due to the level of poor infrastructural development such as poor road networks in the country, many tourists could not access many tourist attraction sites,

thereby, denying the country the needed opportunity to adequately maximise economic gains from the arrival of the Ghanaian diasporas. Likewise, the lack of adequate standard hotel facilities could have reduced the periods some diasporas stayed in Ghana with associated negative implications for the economy.

More so, it could imply that many diaspora who planned to visit the country were discouraged due to the tedious and long processes they had to go through to be able to procure visa to embark on the journey to their homeland, Ghana. Furthermore, due to financial constraints faced by the organizing agencies, they were unable to implement exciting programmes to enhance the overall experience of the diasporas that patronised the ‘Year of Return’ programme.

### **3.3.3 Sustainability of the ‘Year of Return’ Programme**

The third and final objective of the study sought to assess the strategies being employed to sustain the programme with respect to facilitating more ‘returns’ and maximizing its associated benefits beyond 2019. The results suggested that strategies being employed to ensure the sustainability of the programme include the implementation of “Beyond the Return initiative”, establishment of Sankofa account for diaspora contributions, and programme for diaspora integration such as conferring on them citizenship status.

This implies that through these diaspora policy interventions, the government of Ghana intends to enhance the engagement of Ghanaians abroad to invest and efficiently and effectively participate in the development of the country (see Quartey, 2009). However, some of these strategies are not entirely new as various successive governments of Ghana, dating back to Dr. Kwame Nkrumah, have aimed to pursue policies such as granting of

citizenship and dual nationality to Ghanaian diasporas to create conducive environments to promote more returns (Engmann, 2019). That said, if the country is able to successfully implement the “Beyond the Return initiative”, and Sankofa account programme, it can boost the country’s engagement with her diaspora to accelerate development through more returns, and facilitation of trade and investment into the country.

### **3.4 Chapter Conclusion**

This chapter presented the data analysis and the results are interpreted or discussed in the context of the literature. It examined how the ‘Year of Return’ programme impacted on the diaspora’s participation in the development of the country, the implementation challenges of the programme, as well as strategies for the sustainability of the programme for national development.



## CHAPTER FOUR

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 4.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the findings on how the ‘Year of Return’ programme promoted diaspora’s participation in homeland development, challenges of implementation and strategies being used to sustain the programme. It draws conclusions from the findings and offers recommendations based on the results.

#### 4.1 Summary

The government of Ghana in 2018 has launched the ‘Year of Return’ with the aim of attracting Ghanaian diaspora to come home in 2019 to mark 400 years of when slavery began in Africa and to contribute to the development of the country. Since the end of its implementation of Ghana’s recent major diaspora programme, no empirical assessment has been conducted, making one wonder whether the programme has been effective in mobilizing the diaspora to improve on the level of development in Ghana. It is for this reason that this research sought to specifically examine Ghana’s 2019 ‘Year of Return’ programme and its influence of the participation of the Ghanaian diaspora in homeland development.

To achieve this, the study employed the qualitative research approach and gathered primary data through semi-structured interviews from government institutions with direct and indirect oversight over the implementation and success of the ‘Year of Return’ initiative. The purposive sampling was applied to select respondents with in-depth knowledge of diaspora policy issues and or their direct oversight over the implementation and success of the ‘Year of Return’ programmes. The thematic data analysis technique

was utilized for the analysis by theming and describing the data in rich details. The following are the key findings:

The first objective sought to examine the effectiveness of the ‘Year of Return’ programme in eliciting Ghanaian diaspora’s participation in homeland development. The empirical results found that the ‘Year of Return’ programme has facilitated diaspora participation in the development of Ghana by branding Ghana as a destination of choice, contributing its economic growth, facilitating knowledge transfer and human capital development, and improved social networking/ties with the local people.

The second research objective sought to ascertain the challenges to the implementation of the ‘Year of Return’ programme. The empirical results based on the analysis of the interview data found that the implementation of programme was impeded by inadequate planning, poor coordination, poor level of infrastructural development, visa acquisition issues, limited budgetary allocations for the organizing agencies, and language barriers.

The third and final objective of the study sought to assess the strategies being employed to sustain the programme with respect to facilitating more ‘returns’ and maximizing its associated benefits beyond 2019. The results suggested that strategies being employed to ensure the sustainability of the programme include the implementation of “Beyond the Return initiative”, establishment of Sankofa account for diaspora contributions, and programme for diaspora integration such as conferring on them citizenship status.

## **4.2 Conclusion**

The issues of the diaspora have gained major attention of various home/national governments such as Ghana as they hope to leverage their diaspora resource to improve

their general socio-economic development. Hence, this study examined how the ‘Year of Return’ programme has promoted the diasporas’ participation in homeland development. The study concluded that the ‘Year of Return’ has contributed diversely towards harnessing the diaspora as a tool to facilitate the socio-economic conditions of the Ghanaian economy by contributing towards enhancing human capital base and economic activities in the country.

However, the implementation of the programme was faced with multiple problems including inadequate planning, poor coordination among the implementing agencies, poor infrastructural development such as poor road networks and fewer standard hotel facilities, and limited budgetary allocations for the organizers. Moreover, strategies being implemented to sustain the returns including the “Beyond the Return initiative”, establishment of Sankofa account for diaspora contributions, diaspora integration initiatives such as conferring of citizenship status on them to make them feel obliged to advance the good course of the country.

Finally, due to limited empirical research on promotion of diaspora in homeland development coupled with the constant calls for future research on how a specific diaspora policy can elicit contributions from the diaspora community to improve long-term growth and knowledge transfer, this study has contributed to knowledge on the subject by examining Ghana’s ‘Year of Return’ and its role in promoting the diaspora in the development of the country. It further brought to the fore key implementations challenges and how they should be tackled as well as strategies that should be implemented to sustain the returns for the benefit of the country.

### 4.3 Recommendations

#### 4.3.1 Practical Recommendations

Based on the findings the study made the following recommendations: First, the ‘Year of Return’ is to facilitate the reintegration of the diasporas back to homeland socially and economically. In order to achieve its expected outcome, the management of the Diaspora Secretariat should ensure that the existence of proper coordination between the diasporas and the Diaspora Secretariat, particularly in the development of the “Beyond the return” initiative. Strong coordination can ensure that the needs of the diaspora are factored into initiatives to ensure the effectiveness of diaspora engagement in the development of the country.

Moreover, to sustain the gains of the programme, it is recommended the Diaspora Secretariat and Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Regional Integration should collaborate to establish a programme for the celebration of diaspora returns as annual festival as it can help in attracting more returns beyond 2019. Besides, Diaspora Secretariat should organise regular diaspora summits and diplomatic visits, award and recognition programmes, including other networking activities, can help members of the diasporas to get access to useful information on socio-economic opportunities as well as having the opportunity to participate in economic development and knowledge exchange.

Similarly, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Regional Integration should liaise with the Ministry of Finance to implement economic interventions as favourable tax policies and diaspora integration initiatives should be sustained to promote more participation of the diaspora in the development of the Ghanaian economy. Relatedly, Ghana government through her agencies such as the Ghana Tourism Authority should commit investment towards developing the countries’ tourist sites and hospitality facilities to meet

international standards. Likewise, improvement in other social amenities such as roads, among others, need to be improved in order to avert reverse diaspora situation and encourage diasporas or visitors more willing to stay and contribute to the development of the country.

Furthermore, to improve on the success of diaspora participation in the local economy, government through the Ministry of Finance should provide adequate financial support to the organizing agencies. This will put them in a good stead to develop cultivating programmes as well as to advertise and promote the programme on international media platforms to entice more returns. Likewise, increasing budgetary allocations to the Secretariat will enhance the capacity of the Diaspora Secretariat to better plan, organize, execute and coordinate activities of diaspora

#### **4.3.2 Research Recommendations**

This study's findings may be limited in application since it used only the qualitative approach. Hence, future studies may employ the mixed method to provide a better understanding of the research topic using enhanced and large sample size. Again, this study focused solely on some of the two government agencies that implemented the 'Year of Return' programme. Future studies may be extended to cover all the relevant government agencies.

In addition, although the diaspora themselves were integral part of the 'Year of Return' programme, their views were not obtained or were not included in this study as research participants. This can limit the results. Hence, it is recommended that future studies on the topic should strive to seek views from diasporas as part of the data collection process in order to triangulate the views and position of government officials.

Moreover, the ‘Year of Return’ is not the only programme intended to promote the participation of the Ghanaian diaspora in the development of their homeland. Hence, it would be useful for future studies to assess how other diaspora-related policies and programmes encourage the diaspora community of Ghana to contribute to its development. These future studies can also conduct a comparative analysis across different diaspora programmes. Those with significant policy evaluation orientation may develop baseline data to help in isolating the role of the ‘Year of Return’ or future diaspora policies.



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**APPENDICES**

**Appendix A: Interview Guide**

Dear Sir/Madam,

You are kindly invited to serve as a participant in this study which seeks to examine how Ghana's Year of Return Programme has promoted the diasporas' participation in homeland development.. The researcher is a final year student pursuing a Master of Art in International Relations at the Legon Center for International Affairs (LECIAD) of University of Ghana, Legon. The project is purely academic. It is in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of MA in International Relations. Participation is completely voluntary, and all information provided shall be treated with the strictest of confidentiality.

**Section A: Demographic Information**

Please kindly tick/complete the following:

- Q1. Your gender is:**                      A. Male                       B. Female
- Q2. Your Age range is:** .....
- A. Less than 20yrs  B. 20 -39yrs  C. 40 - 59yrs  D. 60yrs and above
- Q3. Your highest educational qualification is:** .....
- Q4. Position in the organisation:** .....
- Q5. Years of work experience is:** .....
- Q6. Years of working in international relations/diaspora-related affairs is:** .....

**Section B: Assessment of the Year of Return Programme**

**Q7. What is the extent to which the Year of Return programme was effective in eliciting Ghanaian diaspora's participation in homeland development?**

.....  
.....

**Q8. How has the Year of Return Programme specifically benefited Ghana's economic growth and development?**

.....  
.....

**Q9. In what ways did the Year of Return Programme specifically facilitate knowledge transfer and human capital development?**

.....  
.....

**Q10.** In your views, what other benefits did Ghana get from organizing the Year of Return Programme?

.....  
.....

**Q11.** What were the major challenges to the implementation of the Year of Return Programme?

.....  
.....

**Q12.** In your views, what are the main causes of the challenges you identified

.....  
.....

**Q13.** How can Ghana sustain the Programme with respect to facilitating more 'returns' and maximizing its associated benefits beyond 2019?

.....  
.....

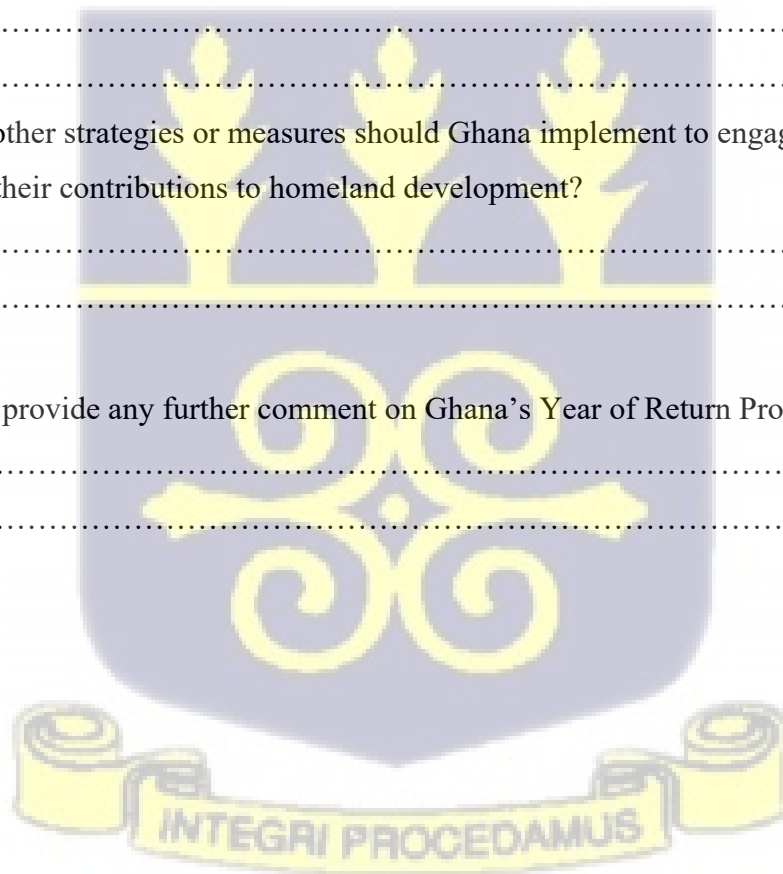
**Q14.** What other strategies or measures should Ghana implement to engage her Diasporas to facilitate their contributions to homeland development?

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**Q15.** Please provide any further comment on Ghana's Year of Return Programme

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Thank you!



**Appendix B: Organisation of the Respondents**

<b>Organisation</b>	<b>Number of Respondents</b>
Diaspora Bureau, Ministry of Foreign Affairs And Regional Integration	Assistant Director, and Assistant Research Secretary
Diaspora Affairs at the Office of the President	Director
Ministry of Tourism	Assistant Director

