

Natasha Kay Mortley: More than Dollars and Cents: Leveraging the Multiple Roles of Caribbean Migrant Women within the Diaspora for Sustainable Development



More than Dollars and Cents: Leveraging the Multiple Roles of Caribbean Migrant Women within the Diaspora for Sustainable Development

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Abstract: Women from the English-speaking Caribbean have rarely fit into traditional theories of migration and Westernized ideal of the trailing and passive wife accompanying the male breadwinner and migrant. Caribbean migration from the 1960s onwards, has shown that women, motivated by a complex range of factors, migrate independent of men, and play a critical role in facilitating the movement of other family and kin, as well as in the circular flows of goods, services, knowledge and technology. Drawing on the theory of love power migration by Baldwin and Mortley (2016) this paper demonstrates how Caribbean female migrants from the English Caribbean exercise love and care within the family, and use migration as a strategy for survival, rebuilding and empowerment. The paper argues that because Caribbean women's migration is based on a complex decision-making process incubated and determined by love power migration, there are even more reasons to maintain strong ties with multiple households and communities in the country of origin. These ties, nurtured by women's caring role, foster the creation of a transnational space linking multiple households, networks and diaspora communities.

The paper thus explores an under researched area in Caribbean migration scholarship, situating female migrants within the global policy agenda of the Sustainable Development Goals, as well as the national policy agenda of Caribbean governments that seek to engage and harness remittances and skills of persons within diaspora communities. It provides examples of women's achievements and challenges as they navigate their host countries, as well as the creative ways through which they reconstruct, maintain and connect networks and communities.

Based on the analysis of secondary data and primary case data with Caribbean nurse migrants, the paper argues that if Caribbean development planners want to better leverage their diaspora they need to first look beyond remittances. Further, employing a gender lens, they need to develop a comprehensive understanding of who makes up the diaspora. Migrant women by virtue of their triple roles, represent a valuable resource in the migration process and within diaspora communities, and their voices and experiences must be central to advocacy and policy processes for development.

Key words: migrant women, love power migration, Caribbean diaspora, sustainable development, transnationalism

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Introduction

Migration is an integral element in the history, culture and socio-economic life of Caribbean people (Byron 1999). In today's globalized and increasingly interconnected world, Caribbean migration has only intensified. The International Migration Report estimated that in 2017, migrants from Latin America and the Caribbean made up the third largest share of international migrants (United Nations 2017). The Caribbean region, relative to its population size, has the highest emigration rates in the world (Mishra 2006) and thus presents an excellent case for studying the effects of migration, as well as the role and impact of the diaspora on regional development.

Furthermore, the Caribbean, according to Stuart Hall is "the first, the original and the purest diaspora" (Hall 2001, 28). Despite being deeply entrenched in Caribbean history and culture, comprehensive data on migratory flows and composition has always been problematic due to a paucity of official and reliable data at both country and regional levels. Anecdotal evidence however suggests a 1:1 ratio between Caribbean nationals living in the Caribbean and people of Caribbean descent residing abroad. The Caribbean diaspora is far from being a homogenous group and represents a sizeable, well-educated and affluent demographic whose large majority maintains strong ties with home communities and country.

The Caribbean diaspora is a diverse and vibrant collection of individuals, many of whom have strong emotional ties back to the homeland that reflect in the types of economic connectivity with the region that they maintain or aspire to create (World Bank 2016, 32).

Caribbean migrants, even after decades abroad, continue to identify strongly with their homelands, retaining what observers such as George Gmelch call an ideology of return; (Gmelch 1992; Philpott 1973). In his work on Caribbean culture and identity, Hall (2001) reinforces this point. He argues that culture,

...provides a kind of ground for our identities: something to which we can return, something solid, something fixed, around which we

can organize our identities and our sense of belongingness. And there is a sense that modern nations and people cannot survive for long and succeed without the capacity to touch ground, as it were, in the name of their cultural identities (Hall 2001, 25).

This desire to return to the country of origin or home country is one of the defining characteristics of the Caribbean diaspora and this is closely associated with the existence and nature of transnational linkages established between migrants and their home communities and country (Thomas-Hope 1999). Return is not always manifested in actual permanent return to the country of origin, but manifests in potential for return, return flows of remittances, knowledge, technology, circulation and short-term visits. This culture of return and circulation, viewed within the transnational framework, forms the basis of the argument being put forward in this paper. The paper argues that in order to better manage and direct migration flows towards development, Caribbean development planners and policy makers need to gain both a comprehensive and more nuanced understanding of this multi-faceted phenomenon.

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of 2015 have explicitly focused on the importance of migration to the global development agenda and highlight several migration-related targets, calling for disaggregated data to better track and monitor progress made towards these targets. In the Agenda, governments pledged to “facilitate orderly, safe, regular and responsible migration and mobility of people, including through the implementation of planned and well-managed migration policies” (SDG target 10.7)

In the Agenda for development, migration is also a cross-cutting issue related to female migrants, calling for recognizing and valuing of care and domestic workers (SDG target 5.4), strong focus on female migrants (SDG target 8.8), empowerment and promotion of rights of all regardless of sex and age (SDG target 10.2) and equal opportunity and reducing inequalities within migration processes (SDG target 10.3). For the past decade, while Caribbean

governments have been moving towards engaging their diasporas for national development, the discourse and policy directives remain predominantly centred around remittances and economic investments. Remittances do in fact contribute significantly to Caribbean economies, registering an eight per cent increase for Latin America and the Caribbean between 2016 and 2017 (Orozco 2017). Remittances constitute a significant source of household income that improves the livelihood of families and communities through investments in education, health, sanitation, housing and infrastructure. However, much remains to be done as it relates to reducing transfer costs and creating an enabling environment to better leverage remittances for national sustainable growth. Further, the limited understanding of remittances as being financial does not take into account social remittances (Levitt 1998) such as skills and knowledge, and thus obscures the gendered realities of migration. There is thus the need for improved strategies and mechanisms that harness the range of resources that the diaspora possesses. In order to achieve this, there is a need to better understand the differential experiences of male and female migrants, their roles and contributions at all stages of the migration process.

Traditional scholarship on Caribbean migration has generally adopted a neo-classical framework which characterized migration as predominantly a male-dominated phenomenon, where those individuals with the ability to project themselves into the role of “Western man” headed off to the cities where the benefits of modern life could be attained (Lewis, cited in Mahler 1999). This view of the male migrant was buttressed by the dominant and influential ideology in Western industrialized societies of the nuclear family with the male breadwinner and the dependent female. It was assumed therefore that women mostly migrated as a “trailing wife” rather than migrating in their own rights. While it might have been the case that men dominated migration flows in the initial stages of emigration from the English-speaking Caribbean, by the 1960s women, motivated by a complex range of factors, began migrating independently, and even surpassed their male counterparts in some cases.

In 2017, women accounted for 48 per cent of international migrants, while female migrants from Latin America and the Caribbean for that same period outnumbered their male counterparts (United Nations 2017). Caribbean women, who rarely fit into the “trailing wife” mould, migrate independently, and often go first to set up a benchmark for the rest of the family to follow, a process known as family reunification (Chaney 1985). This paper focuses on female migrants from the English-speaking Caribbean because not only are they dominating migratory flows, but they experience migration differently and their motivations and impact due to migration are under-researched in the Caribbean migration scholarship.

Female migrants facilitate the movement of other family members especially their dependents, while at the same time maintaining strong ties and links to households and communities in the countries of origin. This paper draws on the theory of love power migration by Baldwin and Mortley (2016) and argues that because Caribbean women’s migration is based on a complex decision-making process incubated and determined by love power migration, there are even more reasons to maintain strong ties with multiple households and communities in the country of origin. These ties, nurtured by women’s caring role, foster the creation of a transnational space linking multiple households, networks and diaspora communities. Female migrants are thus critical in the creation and reconstruction of networks and communities that benefit economic and social development. Baldwin and Mortley (2016) argue that when we view migration of Caribbean women within a love power framework, we get a more complete understanding of the motivations for migration, as well as the multiple roles and the range of opportunities that result from the agency and empowerment of these female migrants.

At a theoretical level, gender is a core organizing principle that underlies migration and its related processes, such as the adaptation to the new country, continued contact with the country of origin and possible return. Policy makers and development planners, as they continue to find ways to better engage

their diasporas for inclusive development, need to better understand who makes up the diaspora and to give special focus to female migrants who play a critical role in constructing and maintaining diasporic communities, as well as linking communities across time and space. This paper draws on secondary migration data, as well as on primary data from Mortley's 2008 study of Caribbean nurse migration (updated 2017) and 2011 study of diaspora tourism. With special focus on female migrants from the English-speaking Caribbean, the paper aims to theorize contemporary migration towards a more comprehensive understanding of its impact, while examining the central role that female migrants play within today's context of globalization and transnationalism.

Caribbean women paving the way through love power migration

Caribbean women migrate as much as men and in some countries have surpassed their male counterparts. For the US, which is the top destination for Caribbean migrants, women accounted for 55 per cent in 2013 (Platanova and Geny 2017). The high emigration rates among Caribbean women are mainly driven by a growing demand for migrant women's labour in destination countries, especially in the care, health, service, and manufacturing sectors. Cynthia Enloe (2014) explains the process by which some manufacturing industries including garments, food processing, cigarettes, and textiles have been feminized. Factory managers in these industries prefer to hire women, because of gender stereotypes (they are compliant, hardworking and docile), that make women "ideal candidates" for manufacturing jobs.

The Caribbean also has one of the highest emigration rates of skilled and tertiary-educated individuals in the world (Platanova and Geny 2017), and women also account for a large percentage of those flows. A main factor accounting for this is the aggressive recruitment by private agencies (UN INSTRAW 2007), and the exodus of nurses from the English-speaking Caribbean (Mortley 2008). Other factors driving the increasing rates of female migration include more pronounced and visible inequalities in wealth and opportunities

within and between countries and the globalization of labour markets. Mortley in her study of nurse migration found that one of the attractions of Caribbean registered nurses for recruitment agencies in North America and the UK is the compatibilities in standards of training and language (Mortley 2017; 2008). Caribbean women are thus moving independently of men and paving the way for other family members.

Baldwin and Mortley (2016) argue that for many Caribbean women, migration is an extension and expression of their love and care, as well as an exercise of their power. Caribbean women have been socialized to care for their families, including children and other dependents in a variety of ways. Under the plantation system, the “Westernized nuclear family” was aspired to, but was hardly ever realized for slaves (Patterson 1967). Men lived separately and were stripped of their “provider role” and women bore the responsibility of caring for children, the sick, elderly and disabled. Smith (1962) argues that slavery involved the fragmentation of elementary families and encouraged alternative forms of union, which were neither obligatory nor stable. Further, because of the precariousness of family life, women were forced to find creative ways of protecting those in their care and ensuring the survival of loved ones. These strategies for care and family survival continued in the post-slavery period since in many ways, the culture of the plantation system persisted, despite new legal and economic arrangements. Hall (2001) argues that it is the culture, ideologies and pressures of the Caribbean that have prepared women to utilize methods to survive and transcend the creolized space. He goes on to say that the process of migration must thus be understood within that context which makes it a wholly Caribbean act. Bénitez-Rojo (1996) argues too, that the Caribbean flows outward past the limits of its own sea with a vengeance. His statement is important here, signifying that the very decision and act of migrating is an act of Caribbeanness, because to be Caribbean is to be globally resourceful and unbound. In this way, migrating women's sense of themselves could be theorized as fundamentally tied to the Caribbean region in a way that also transcends the region and connects it to the diaspora.

Love power migration developed by Baldwin and Mortley draws on Anna Jonasdottir's theory of political sexuality (2009 and 1994) and Eudine Barriteau's theorizing of Caribbean gender systems (2004). Understanding love power as crucial to the way women interact in their relationships with men and how love power results in women taking on more of the care work in these relationships, has several implications for understanding their migration. A woman's migration decision should not be reduced solely to economic necessity. The decision-making process and actual movement are more complex for women. A woman who is in a relationship and/or has a family and who decides to migrate may do so not only because of the politics of labour and the push/ pull of gaining a measure of economic power/reward but also due to the politics of love and the push/pull of creating or sustaining love, and the power this has to drive a person to act in creative, even though alienating ways.

Love power migration presents a different view of migration, moving away from a focus on men or women only, to a more nuanced approach to gender identities that recognize intersectionalities between and among male and female migrants. This new theorizing thus demonstrates how the love incubated in the social and cultural context of Caribbean gender relations can be the underlying motivation for the migration of women, and how this decision can be simultaneously empowering and oppressive/alienating not only for them but for their families as well. This more robust view of migration also frames the discourse in such a way that it no longer solely focuses on the economic or political nature of migration as the motive and the reward. Rather, it shifts our lens of understanding to women's migration as a manifestation of love and as a method used to care for themselves and those that they love. According to Barriteau (2004) women, in assuming responsibility for those that they love and care for, are motivated to explore economic survival strategies in times of economic crisis when existing state welfare allocations are cut. Furthermore, to do so, they are more likely than men to use money designated for their personal spending to boost collective expenditure on food and family items.

Caribbean women thus exercise agency and power through migration for the betterment of themselves and their families even when the move is a difficult and alienating one. Mortley (2008), in researching Caribbean nurses in the UK and later in the US, found that these professional women, in spite of overwork and feelings of alienation, remained optimistic about the positive contributions they were able to make to their families and countries of origin. Feelings of “missing home” and alienation were tempered by a sense of accomplishment and self-actualization. While the improvement in financial status was often mentioned, these nurses also celebrated the professional development and empowerment that they experienced due to migration and working in healthcare systems that valued their work and provided greater opportunities for them. Many spoke excitedly about returning home to visit and the various contributions that they were able to make to health institutions back home.

Migration, gender and sustainable development

The traditional scholarship on Caribbean migration has generally viewed the phenomenon as having a destabilizing effect on Caribbean families, communities and economies through discussions on brain drain (Mishra 2006; IMF 2006), escapism, broken families and the “barrel children” phenomenon (Crawford-Brown 1994). Such theorizing often presented a bleak picture of migration and ignored the attachment that Caribbean migrants maintain with their home communities, as well as their agency and creativity in managing the migration process. The global economy and labour markets have changed tremendously and migrants today operate within a transnational space facilitated by technological advancements, ease of travel and greater connectivity among geographical locations (Mortley 2008; Thomas-Hope 1999). The discourse has also changed from viewing migration as a loss to countries of origin to focusing also on benefits in the form of remittances, social capital, investment opportunities, knowledge and technology transfers. Minto-Coy’s 2009 study of the role of diasporas in the internationalization of business presents a dynamic view of the diaspora as active and purposive transnational agents.

As stated earlier, the new global agenda for development speaks to migration and the rights of female migrants as cross cutting issues. Goal 8 on growth and decent work, Goal 10 on reducing inequalities, Goal 16 on peaceful and inclusive societies and access to justice for all, and Goal 17 on global partnership on sustainable development are all relevant to this discussion. Migration is a human right and has become a critical feature of modern day society. The goals therefore show the importance of movement to achieving decent work, better opportunities and greater parity among various communities of people. They also for the first time point to opportunities for governments and other stakeholders to demonstrate their commitment to achieving gender equality in all of its dimensions. This can be achieved by addressing the challenges faced by women, including female migrants, to effectively exercise and enjoy their human rights and realize their full potential.

Caribbean migration is no longer a unilateral, one-time movement. The circular flows of people, goods, knowledge and skills are well documented (Mortley 2011; Thomas-Hope 1999, 1985) and Caribbean women are at the vanguard of these flows (Ho 1993). In rethinking Caribbean migration with a gendered and transnational lens not only do we begin to appreciate the benefits that can result, but we begin to better appreciate women's roles in giving form and content to these circular flows. Through migration, women's increased economic participation and empowerment enable them to have control over their lives, provide for their families, lessen their vulnerability, and exert influence in society. The benefits from women's economic participation and empowerment thus extend beyond the personal and impact the overall national development process and outcomes.

Although Caribbean women have outperformed men at all levels of the education system (Reddock 2004; Chevannes 1999), they still have a long way to go in achieving equality in employment rates, pay and formal leadership. The World Economic Forum (2017) Global Gender Gap Report highlights that even though qualified women are coming out of the education system, many

industries are failing to hire, retain and promote them, losing out on a wealth of capacity. These gender inequalities in economic participation, coupled with the fact that women have historically played a leading role in providing and caring for their families, lead them to find creative ways to self-improvement and enhanced economic stability and security (Reddock 2004). For example, many women participating in the Canadian Seasonal Agricultural Work Program (SAWP), including from Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago, are single mothers who have few economic opportunities in their home country, and are the main breadwinners for their households and extended families. The wages they earn in Canada are significantly higher than what they could make in the few income-generating activities available to women in their country, such as petty commerce, domestic labour or work in export processing zones (Grez 2011). Migration has been one of the main ways in which Caribbean women exercise their agency and power (Hall 2001) for greater security and equality. Not only are women migrating to improve themselves, but also to set a benchmark for their children and families (Mortley 2008).

On the negative side, there is a tendency to overlook the costs of migration for women and their families. Caribbean female migrant workers also face gender-specific risks and vulnerabilities while abroad. Their work can be characterized by gender stereotypes and gendered expectations, and thus undervalued in comparison to migrant men. Migrant workers, particularly women working in informal sectors or jobs or other precarious employment (e.g. low-skilled jobs, temporary or agency contracts) face high risks of unemployment, and typically have limited access to social protection, unemployment insurance in particular (Hennebry 2014). This too is important for development in the country of origin, as during periods of unemployment, remittances decrease or are less regular causing financial strain and other stresses for families and households who depend of them.

The plantation system has indeed created a culture of resilience and creativity among Caribbean women in overcoming economic and social hardships.

Through migration and the reconstruction of networks and diasporic communities, women exercise deliberateness, agency and power within a transnational space. While maintaining multiple households and forging new links and networks, these female migrants are reconstituting gender relations, gender dynamics and institutional arrangements. They do so within alienating, discriminatory and oppressive spaces. An expression of this is Paule Marshall's fictional representation of the Barbadian immigrant women of her mother's generation. Her novelistic representation of the Barbadian immigrant community reflects the central role that women played in the production of Caribbean identity in the US. For these immigrants from Barbados, language was therapy for the tribulations they endured as invisible citizens of a new land— invisible because black, female, and foreign.

Women thus represent a valuable resource, fostering strong ties between and among communities. Mortley's 2011 study of diaspora tourism found that the knowledge of, and attachment that second and third generation Jamaicans in the UK had with Jamaica stemmed from stories and experiences passed down from their mothers and grandmothers. Their love and heritage ties with the Caribbean also translated into a deep passion to contribute to social and cultural development in Jamaica, both individually and collectively, through their churches, schools, community groups and associations. While these attachments stem from personal and kinship relations, they have the potential to translate into mobilization, activism and concrete investments for the Caribbean.

If governments' new agenda for sustainable development is to truly be inclusive and foster more access, opportunities and global partnerships, then diasporic communities must be included in a meaningful way in development plans for social transformation and growth. The new gender dynamics which empower migrant women and give them increased access and opportunities must be factored in. Similarly, gendered realities that might disempower and discriminate against women, thus creating challenges for them, must also be given attention.

This can be achieved through a more comprehensive and nuanced understanding of the link between migration, gender and inclusive growth. The voices and experiences of female migrants, who are at the vanguard of diaspora communities, must be central to advocacy and new policies towards engaging diasporas.

The diaspora: More than dollars and cents

According to Minto-Coy (2016), while increasing light is being shed on the role of diasporas and migrants as purposive transnational agents who help to create businesses in their adopted countries, the discourse largely ignores the role that the diaspora plays in growing and internationalizing businesses in their countries of origin. Caribbean migrants are far from unwitting pawns or passive sojourners in the migration process. Rather, they are hardworking, skilled, professional, politically aware and resourceful persons who not only send back remittances to multiple households, but who contribute to cross border partnerships, heritage and diaspora tourism, trade and investment opportunities. Among Jamaican female migrants living in the US (who emigrated after the age of 22), 50 per cent have at least a college education. This is double the attainment rate in Jamaica, where only one-quarter of women have a college education (Beaton et al. 2017). Further, data reveals that nearly one-third of all women with at least a college education in Jamaica have emigrated, compared to about 13 per cent of those with high school education or less. These patterns reflect the significant numbers of Jamaican nurses and healthcare practitioners who migrate (Beaton et al. 2017). As a skilled and professional group, the diaspora even in the face of alienating and discriminatory circumstances, has built new relationships, vibrant networks and in some cases their own businesses. The contributions of Caribbean nurses' associations to health care (Mortley 2011 and 2008) and Caribbean Alumni Associations (Roberts 2010) to education systems in the Caribbean are well documented.

The professional successes of Caribbean women in the diaspora and the various ways that their achievements have built bridges for other Caribbean people

over time must be recognized and harnessed. Some notable cases include nurses such as Mary Seivwright and Hermi Hewitt, who as return nurse migrants contributed to health and health education through knowledge building and skills transfers. As an International Food Ambassador, Chef Nina Compton, who owns one of the top restaurants in New Orleans today, has put her home country St. Lucia on the map of culinary excellence. Rihanna, Barbadian musical/fashion icon and International Cultural Ambassador to her country, has contributed to Barbados' tourism product through her music, activism and now Fenty Beauty Makeup business. These Caribbean women represent success stories that are well known. They also represent cultural and social capital that contributes to various aspects of Caribbean economies either through trading partnerships, direct foreign investments or the tourism product.

Through their own businesses, their associations and networks it is possible for the Caribbean diaspora to remain connected, engaged and to participate in various aspects of development. Rapid changes in the global economy and the diffusion of space-time compressing technologies have intensified exchanges between migrants and their home of origin, so that persons can participate and contribute while living and working abroad. Research on remittances has focused overwhelmingly on economic development and investment, while the transfer of norms, ideas, skills and other assets occupy a subsidiary role. According to Hennebry et al. (2017), emerging literature has indicated that financial remittances, though undeniably important for stakeholders, should be understood as subordinate to social and cultural remittances, rather than vice-versa.

Women represent 58 per cent of remittances sent from the US to the Caribbean (Beaton et al. 2017). While remittances sent home by female migrants play a substantial role in ensuring sustainable livelihoods in recipient countries, their potential for broader development remains largely untapped. Much of these remittances in cash and kind go through informal channels due to high transfer costs and high duties in recipient countries. While the Caribbean diaspora has

the desire to contribute through targeted investments and other business opportunities, they confront a number of challenges including perceptions of security and stability, established systems necessary for attracting investment and a lack of confidence in government institutions in the Caribbean (Minto-Coy 2009). Diaspora financing also has the potential to play an increased role for development organizations. Some of the avenues for this include development finance institutions, impact investors, aid agencies looking for co-financing opportunities or nongovernmental organizations involved in international development projects. However proper management, well monitored institutional systems and an enabling environment need to be put in place if these contributions are to reduce poverty and influence growth and sustainable development for the Caribbean region.

Besides sending back money and barrels to family and friends, the diaspora maintains social, cultural and political ties with the home country either through return visits, donations of goods, knowledge or information exchange. The collective ideology of return of Caribbean migrants and potential for return foster these continued ties not just with immediate family, but also manifest in a deep interest in seeing home communities flourish. Women, by nature of their love, power and caring roles for family, kin and community, have more reason to maintain and invest in home country ties. Alumni and nursing associations predominantly led by women in the diaspora, contribute consistently to schools, hospitals and health care in their home communities (Mortley 2011). The business and personal networks that migrant women establish abroad have the potential to translate into tangible benefits through small business development, trading links and direct investments in Caribbean countries. Caribbean migrant women are leaders within civil society and advocacy groups that are resourceful and have political links and clout. This socio-political capital at the local level in host countries can translate into influencing policy actions that impact Caribbean immigrants and their families as well as institutions in countries of origin. Women in the diaspora are also ambassadors who market their home countries and the region, thus contributing to increased tourism. This in turn leads to direct job

creation, spin-offs into the construction, hotel industry, transport, entertainment, insurance, banking sectors and others.

Leveraging female migrants and diaspora for development

Migration can have both positive and negative impacts on women. In terms of positive impacts, women gain higher income, assets and resources, self-esteem and decision-making power through migration. On the negative side, they also stand to experience further disempowerment and increased vulnerability and multiple forms of discrimination including exploitation, deskilling, and stigmatization. IOM's 2015 study found that government policies, which aim to support women in the attainment of economic goals, are crucial to women's empowerment and to national development. These policies can be extended to migrant women and women in the diaspora, who are already achieving so much through their own volition and without government assistance. At the same time, policies should also include social protection policies that cover informal and undocumented female migrants, so that these women are not further marginalized with increased vulnerabilities.

The first step in leveraging the resources of the diaspora is identification through a comprehensive profile of persons. This mapping of Caribbean diaspora should include disaggregation of data not only by sex but also by other factors such as age, educational level and occupational grouping. The IOM's Caribbean Migration Consultations (CMC) launched in 2016 represent a platform for Caribbean governments and stakeholders to share information and best practice on common migration issues. One of the CMCs top three areas of cooperation includes data collection, management and sharing towards the analysis of migration issues. CMC has held a series of workshops in the region towards this end. This forum is important for a targeted migration dialogue policy process promoting migration partnerships among sending and host countries. The data mapping is critical for raising awareness about the diaspora,

identification, resource allocation and also to provide evidence for policy design and better governance around migration and development.

Governments also need vital information on the locations and length of stay of their diasporas for more targeted engagement and for forging trade and investment links with these communities. The experiences and specific challenges that women face within diaspora communities should be an important aspect of this analysis. For instance, it is not sufficient to merely track the amount of remittances they send back, but the differential sending patterns between males and females, channels used and challenges that women encounter help to shape better policies for national development. The gender dynamics of remittance processes reveal a number of gender differentiating factors between women migrants and men migrants, such as: ease of access to financial institutions, sector of work, working hours, financial inclusion and literacy, among other factors (Hennebry et al. 2017). The promotion of sound migration data management is thus important not only for those who wish to contribute while living abroad, but also in social and economic reintegration policies for migrants returning home.

While several lessons can be learned from countries that have successfully leveraged the resources and capital of their diasporas, no one model fits all. The government of the Philippines, for example, pursues a strategy of large-scale contract labour deployment overseas to reduce unemployment and maintain a constant stream of remittances. India and China, by contrast, have in recent years given priority to encouraging diaspora entrepreneurs and highly skilled professionals to develop activities in their countries of origin. Caribbean policy makers thus need to engage their diaspora through ongoing discussions and consultations. These can be facilitated through diaspora conferences and forums organized through Caribbean embassies and consulates. Ongoing discussions result in streamlining diaspora needs to development goals of the country of origin. Development plans and policy within the framework of the SDGs for access to justice for all, inclusive societies and global partnerships

cannot be designed within a vacuum. They must be based on engaging the financial, intellectual and social capital of the diaspora from the outset. They must be designed based on real experiences, circumstances and positionality of Caribbean migrants. Female migrants play a triple role – reproductive/care, productive and community roles – which represent a critical conduit to linking community needs and priorities with broader development plans and actions.

Governments deal with their diasporas through a combination of both direct measures including projects, and direct financing, as well as indirect measures such as voting rights, property rights, improved infrastructure and the creation of a favourable investment climate. The Caribbean diaspora has indicated that they want more than just voting rights, they want to have a voice in governance and policy. The granting of dual citizenship can be one of the most significant measures, as it symbolizes Governments' commitment and the diasporas' double belonging, which facilitates investments in home countries. Caribbean migrants return home for various reasons including short visits (diaspora tourism), business meetings (business tourism), for health and wellness (medical tourism). These sectors can be developed into lucrative industries through niche marketing and employing a global value chain framework for development (Mortley, Jarvis and George 2014).

Whether they return for short visits or maintain a desire to return, the Caribbean diaspora maintains its collective identity and heritage, and also remains connected with their country of origin. This connection and Caribbeanness is passed down to second and third generation diaspora and buttressed by women through language, culture, love and power. While migration can be alienating and oppressive for Caribbean women, it also provides a range of opportunities for self-advancement and empowerment. The resourcefulness, agency and empowerment of women who play a vital role in the diaspora need to be factored into discourse as well as development planning and policy for more inclusive growth and transformation. Caribbean policy makers thus need to focus on removing barriers to women's economic participation not only

locally but also within the global labour market, as well as creating an enabling environment that will facilitate the circular flows of migrants, economic and social capital that come from migratory flows and cross border networks.

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