

Most who leave SA are economically lost to the country

Jonathan Crush

REMITTANCES to the developing world exceeded \$400 billion last year, far greater than official development assistance flows. While these soaring remittance flows are being celebrated by the developing world as a possible means of recovery from the departure of donors, South Africa should not be too hasty in popping open the champagne.

In a two-year study of remittance patterns and attitudes towards countries of origin among those who have left Southern Africa for the developed world, the Southern African Migration Programme (SAMP) found a vast difference between South Africans and those from the rest of the region.

While people from countries outside South Africa showed strong ties to home, with most remitting cash and goods frequently and regularly, South Africans had

mostly used their education and skills to leave the country and had no desire to look back.

Researchers analysed survey responses of nearly 2 500 recent immigrants to Canada from countries including South Africa, Zimbabwe, Tanzania and the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

While the majority of the South Africans had entered Canada as economic-class migrants, less than 10 percent of them said that their primary reason for coming was economic. Conversely, 40 percent said that their main reasons for emigrating related to personal safety and security as well as political reasons.

Among immigrants from other Southern African countries, only 20 percent entered Canada as economic-class migrants. While one third entered as asylum seekers or refugees, only 23 percent of them cited politics or personal safety and security as primary reasons for entry.

In comparison to immigrants from other Southern African countries, those from South Africa are high earners. As many as 44 percent of the respondents said they earned more than 100 000 Canadian dollars (about R300 000) a year and a quarter earned more than double that. Yet, almost half never send money to South Africa and only 12 percent could be considered regular remitters, sending money back at least once a month.

Most also have no intention of returning to South Africa to work.

They are nostalgic about "home", but while they keep in touch with their families in the country and return fairly often, most are not interested in being involved in development initiatives or helping in skills transfer. In fact, their responses show that they strongly feel that they are victims of post-apartheid policies, rather than acknowledging that the education and skills they benefit from are in part a

result of racist apartheid practices.

In contrast, nearly 70 percent of the immigrants from Southern African countries outside South Africa have much lower earnings than South Africans yet remit far more regularly. The average amount sent back is R9 000 a year. Just over half also remit goods with an average annual value of R4 500.

While immigrants from the region excluding South Africa focus their remitting on meeting the living expenses of their family back home, the money they send clearly has positive development implications at the household and community level, including contributing to improved food security and nutrition, medical expenses and education. Remittances have been shown to reduce the level, depth and severity of poverty.

SAMP made use of social media to track involvement in diaspora associations and found considerable evidence in

Canada of diaspora-led contributions to Southern African countries in sectors including education, health, humanitarian assistance, gender and development, poverty reduction, food security, and basic amenities development.

A more thorough evaluation of these initiatives would help to identify the best practices that could be scaled up, with appropriate financial backing, for broader impact.

In light of SAMP's findings, South Africa has to face the reality that most of those who head north cut their ties and are economically lost to the country.

● *Crush is a director of the SAMP and is the Centre for International Governance Innovation chair in global migration and development at the Babesille School of International Affairs in Ontario, Canada. The survey findings are published in a report, "Divided Diasporas: Southern Africans in Canada".*

SA should step in to stop Renamo stoking the fires of war



Peter Fabricius

AFONSO DHLAKAMA seems determined to imitate Jonas Savimbi, his late lusophone counterpart in Angola, in life and perhaps one day in death. Dhlakama is the aging leader of Renamo, the former rebel group which fought an ugly civil war against Mozambique's Frelimo government until peace talks culminating in 1992 ushered in multiparty democracy.

Yet Dhlakama, like Savimbi, has never seemed content with democracy. Or much good at it. After narrowly losing the 1992 elections Savimbi went back to the bush and was eventually killed a decade later.

Dhlakama and Renamo have done better participating, albeit grudgingly, in parliamentary politics, though losing support at every election.

But now Dhlakama has pulled out of the political process altogether in the run up to local government elections, retiring to his old military "Casa Banana" military base in Sofala province and reverting to his old guerrilla tactics.

On April 5, Renamo fighters killed four police officers in an attack. The next day they shot dead three civilians in a truck. They also injured two passengers in a South African Intercape bus.

Renamo threatened to attack any road traffic between Muxungue and Save and to sabotage the Sena rail line carrying coal from Moatize to the port of Beira.

Then last Monday Renamo attacked a military patrol at Savane in Sofala, killing seven soldiers. And on Friday Renamo fighters again fired on traffic, killing a truck driver and his passenger.

The relapse into such guerrilla tactics by Renamo essentially emanates from its demand that all decisions of the National Elections Commission should be made by consensus because it claims that Frelimo consistently rigs elections.

Frelimo says Renamo is in effect demanding veto power in the commission and so completely rejects the demand.

Just before the April attacks, Renamo officials vowed not only to boycott the coming local elections but to sabotage them. It said Frelimo's rejection of its demands was an "invitation to war".

In response to this warlike, riot police concern about Frelimo's refusal to negotiate with Renamo. This led to Frelimo changing its tune and initiating talks with Renamo.

Even after last week's attacks Prime Minister Alberto Vaquina declared on Saturday that his government remained committed to peace talks.

Yet to what effect, apart from retaining the high moral ground, is unclear since Renamo has evidently broken off peace talks with Frelimo.

Verdoubt Frelimo bears some of the blame for this dangerous relapse which is now significantly threatening tourism and the economy more broadly.

Like many former liberation movements, it has not adapted completely to civilian democratic politics.

But Dhlakama and Renamo are undoubtedly betraying an even greater nostalgia for the civil war era in their eagerness to resort to violence.

And surely at some point, sooner rather than later, Frelimo is going to lose patience and do the same. Last Friday there were already unconfirmed reports that scores of military trucks laden with soldiers had been spotted heading north towards Casa Banana.

It's time for the Southern African Development Community - and South Africa, with its considerable investments in its neighbour's economy in particular - to intervene before this spins out of control.

FLOODING IN CAPE TOWN

The trickle-down effect



TEAMWORK: There needs to be much greater collaboration between different tiers of governance in varying sectors in order to manage more effectively the risks faced by these flood-prone communities, say the writers.

Joy Waddell, Warren Smit, Gina Ziervogel and Laura Drivdal

THE SHIPPED container standing on an unshaped corner in Kosovo, Phillipi, is as large as the shacks it's there to service. Its heavy metal doors are padlocked shut because, as a community leader explains, if it was left open, "you might come here in the morning and find a body in it".

The city unlocks the container three times a week so residents can dump their rubbish in it for collection on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays.

For three years now, UCT's African Centre for Cities and collaborating departments have been concerned about how communities and the city govern effectively in the context of flood risk management. And the work done in flood-prone informal settlements in Phillipi shows that when service delivery systems fail, the consequences for the community can be devastating.

For instance, sometimes residents find a rubbish container locked and will leave their bin bags like offerings at its barred entrance. Bag after bag, the rubbish piles up.

First, the dogs come, wandering through in packs or as straggling loners, and rip through the plastic in search of food. Then the rains follow, washing the rubbish into the stormwater drains, which become a catch-all for the detritus of everyday life: grey water from laundry, the contents of bucket toilets, kitchen waste.

The drains clog, backing up after a downpour, and flood the streets with foul water which pushes in under nearby doors, across floors, seeps into mattresses and bedding, into lounge suites and kitchen cupboards and school clothes.

This is typical of partly developed

settlements like Kosovo, where hard surfaces shape the way floodwaters flow in the settlement. Others, like the nearby Graveyard Pond, are natural wetlands, so in wintertime the high water table seeps up, pooling in and around houses.

The lesson from the garbage situation, and other service delivery issues such as effective sewage and stormwater drain management, is this: if we are to deal with flood risk management more effectively, there needs to be better communication and collaboration between formal and informal leadership in the city, and in communities.

And there needs to be a better understanding of shared responsibility.

Flooding is a complex problem to manage, and cannot be treated in isolation.

The city is acutely aware that refuse management is closely linked to flood management and calls for shared responsibility from residents: be disciplined about dumping rubbish when the containers are unlocked, just before collection times.

But residents say the city needs to communicate better about collection times, or asks for contractors to stick to collection timetables.

We have a good idea about why people settle in flood-prone areas on the Cape Flats: they generally have no other choice. With large numbers of people moving into cities, and competition for limited land, people settle wherever they can find space.

This might include high-risk flooding areas like detention ponds, areas designed as part of a stormwater management system to act as temporary catchments during heavy rain. But they are deceptively dry during the Cape's summers.

If people don't know better, or are

desperate enough, they will build right where the winter's excess water is bound to well up. The implications for people living here are also well documented: disruptions to work and school, water-borne disease, the anxiety, the cold, damage to property.

We also understand how people respond: raising their homes on stilts or concrete plinths, digging trenches, dumping building rubble in communal paths, reinforcing shacks using sails and plastic sheets.

What is not well understood, though, is how governance aids or hinders management of and responses to flooding in these communities.

Our work has shown that there needs to be much greater collaboration between different tiers of governance in varying sectors in order to manage more effectively the risks faced by these flood-prone communities: city officials, elected politicians (subcouncillors and ward councillors), civil society organisations which often help with food and blanket distribution during a flood event, and volunteer leaders from within the communities themselves.

One problem, though, is the often contested and informal nature of community-level governance. Communities are usually represented by committees, drawn from voluntary leaders or activists.

Their role is to work on issues such as safety and development for the neighbour-

hood, and to negotiate with external structures, such as local government, ward councillors and civil society.

The expectations on community leaders can be unrealistically high: their community expects them to "work upwards" to sway local authorities' decision-making processes; local government expects them to "work downwards" to rally the community together at workshops and meetings. In many cases, these committees do not wield nearly as much influence as they are expected to.

These voluntary leaders carry a huge burden of responsibility if they are not organised, committed, and plugged into civil society organisations, a community might struggle to access the kind of support offered by charitable organisations, or from city structures such as the flood and storms planning task team, chaired by the Disaster Risk Management Centre.

And similarly, there is often a high turnover of politicians because of the election cycle, meaning efforts to build relationships between these two tiers of governance are often stifled.

There are many other areas where we see the need for deeper conversations to happen. For instance, there is a misperception that residents build deliberately in flood zones like the detention ponds so that they can jump the queue on the housing waiting list, or be relocated. And yes, there

might well be a small element of this. But on the whole, we have found that people settle in these areas because they have no choice in the matter: because of fires, settlement upgrades, densification, people moving out of backyard dwellings because they cannot afford the rent any more. There is high competition for limited land, which pushes people into vulnerable, flood-prone areas.

The city is up against its own plethora of challenges: in-migration, the backlog of housing and service delivery, vandalism of existing services, fires and flooding which exacerbate already precarious living conditions for these poor communities, budget constraints, lack of land, the enormity of the need within informal settlements.

Despite this, the city has plans and is willing to collaborate with other departments and external actors such as communities and civil society organisations.

They are looking for solutions to flood risk. They are doing education campaigns. They are trying to buy privately-owned land so they can develop new housing areas. They are prioritising at-risk areas for the appropriate floor risk reduction interventions.

Right now, it will take everyone pulling together as we face another winter of north-westerly fronts, heavy rain and what happens when those deluges hit the natural wetlands upon which so many poor communities are forced to settle on the edge of the city.

● *Waddell and Dr Ziervogel (UCT's Department of Environmental and Geographical Science) and Drivdal (UCT's Centre for Cities), and Drivdal (UCT's Centre for Criminology) are investigating the governance of flood risk in Cape Town in the context of a changing climate.*

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Agang offers hope to our democracy, but must provide us with solutions

POLITICAL arrogance remains popular in our country. Reactions on Saturday to the launch of Dr Mamphele Ramphele's new political party, Agang, suggested irritation with its mere existence. Some ANC politicians and supporters seem to think their party has an inherent right to govern. Some DA politicians and supporters seem to think their party has an inherent right



Eusebius McKaiser

at losing the elections, or dramatically falling in electoral numbers, that it will be

refuses, for example, to critically self-examine its relationship with the black voter, both in how it communicates with us and in relation to the social justice question.

Enter the Dr Ramphele. She accused the DA the other day of not understanding the scars of apartheid and suggested a few weeks back that social justice will be her focus rather than a left-right positioning,

commitment to social justice. Agang, if it is smart, should go where the DA fears to go.

But all of this rests on a number of assumptions about Agang that might not be true. The party has got a lot of sympathy for not yet being clear about its policy direction. This sympathy, in my view, is misplaced. It is great to go on a tour of the country and listen.

good schools, and live in a corruption-free society.

Agreed. But how do we achieve that society Ramphele? Agang will not be the competitor to the DA and the ANC that we need it to be for the sake of our democracy if the party does not quickly develop sound policies. The party's policy head, Professor Mills Soko, reportedly said that the policies

of volunteers across the country that can be unleashed on voters instantly.

Agang is but a new political party based on hope rather than on deep organisational structures and machinery doing work in the trenches. So far it has relied on the media for exposure. The ANC, for example, does not need the media as much as a party like Agang does.

to be the official opposition. Such sentiment stems from a disdain for political competition. What should we as voters, however, make of the official launch of Agang as a political party? First, political competition enhances democracy. The chances of a more responsive and accountable government increases when there are credible alternatives to the incumbent government. It is only when the ANC feels it has a real shot

the best possible party in government that it has not yet been. Political competition is therefore good for the ANC, frankly, and more importantly for you and me as voters. The DA, though a capable opposition party, also suffers complacency in its role as an opposition. It is complacent because it faces no competition from smaller, disorganised opposition parties. It, too, can benefit from political competition in the opposition benches. The DA still

neurologically. That is music to black ears tired of the ANC but sceptical of the DA. How the DA will respond, I do not know. But it can only help the DA, and therefore benefit us as voters, to be kept on its toes. I have always thought that an opposition party can only be a serious threat to the ANC if it is unashamedly race conscious, deeply historic in its analysis of the status quo and demonstrates a firm com-

mission. Heaven knows we can do with politicians who do not think that they have a monopoly on how to solve our problems. The bottom line, however, is that a good leader needs to be a strong-thought leader. Ramphele's speech on Saturday gave an excellent analysis of what is wrong with government. But it contained nothing by way of a solitary solution. Nothing. We just heard a list of aspirations about how cool it would be if we all have jobs, can go to

will be based on pragmatism. What does that mean, though? So if Agang wants the good will of some voters to be sustained and converted into actual votes, it must offer us policies immediately. Last, the biggest challenge for Agang is far less intellectual. It still lacks the reach of both the ANC and the DA in the country. The two biggest parties are well-established electoral machines with thousands

But as the election gets closer, and many more parties get media airplay, Agang will need to rely on its own resources to get into communities and canvass for votes. It's difficult to see how such an operation can effectively be put in place to make Agang a serious political player by next year. In the end, Ramphele might have to pretend to have huge hopes for next year. Secretly, however, the party must be sensible and look beyond 2014.

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