Diaspora philanthropy, conflict, and development

Shawn Flanigan, Ph.D.
Associate Professor
School of Public Affairs
How do low income and other marginalized groups meet their basic human needs? How do nonstate actors mediate this process?
- Policy advocacy by immigrant nonprofits, LBGT nonprofits

- Health and human service provision in contexts of conflict
  - Faith-based NGOs
  - Armed groups

- Diaspora philanthropy (esp. by individuals/organizations from contexts of conflict)
Can the small gifts of thousands have a durable impact on development and peacebuilding? How?

http://www.moreintelligentlife.com/story/layne-mosler-taxi-gourmet
Diaspora Remittances versus Diaspora Philanthropy

Dilip Ratha, World Bank, 2014
Diaspora Remittances versus Diaspora Philanthropy

$413 Billion
Remittances

$135 Billion
Aid

Dilip Ratha, World Bank, 2014
Globally, remittances = $200/month per migrant on average
The average annual income in Somalia is $250/year

Dilip Ratha, World Bank, 2014
Diaspora Remittances versus Diaspora Philanthropy

- Have large impacts on local economies
- Increase with instability/conflict
- Directly reach poor
- Lower school drop-out rates
- Higher birth weights

- Impacts are unequal across individuals and communities
- Communities with most migrants are not necessarily those with most need (India)
- Investments are largely personal (not addressing broader social concerns)
Research partners

- African Diaspora Policy Centre
- Cuso International
- Federación Zacatecana
- International Diaspora Engagement Alliance
- USAID
Assumptions in communities of practice

- Diaspora members have:
  - greater long-term commitment to causes
  - Better knowledge of conditions “on the ground”
  - Better access and networks
  - Pre-existing cultural and language skills

- But is this true? And if so, WHY?
Other questions in communities of practice

- How diasporas vary in:
  - How they affiliate
  - Connections to countries of origin
  - Relationships to home governments
  - The appeal of different types of opportunities to connect

- How do country of residence norms influence engagement and to what benefit?
Other questions in communities of practice

Benefits of low-cost technologies

- Crowdfunding:
  - What are the benefits/ challenges?
  - What is appealing about this tool? And to whom?
  - How can public policy incentivize the use of this or other tools?
Research initiatives

- Diaspora organizations project (database building and analysis)

- Community-based research with Iraqi and Somali communities in San Diego

- Evaluation research study with Federación Zacatecana (Mexican home town associations)
- Perspectives?
- Collaborations?
- Methodologies? (SNA)
- Funders?
- Any other thoughts?