



Diaspora volunteering in a cross-border and local context

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This study contributes to the literature on cross-border diasporic philanthropy in cross-national context of countries with no colonial past, but with a diaspora present in both societies.

Through empirical research, between 2016 and 2021, the perspectives are presented in three groups: the Amazigh diaspora living in the Netherlands, the Amazigh diaspora living in Morocco and the recipient social groups of the prior two communities.

The author concludes that the cultural nostalgia and language that the diaspora Muslim communities of the Netherlands still hold enables them to better understand and advocate to both other Muslim philanthropists (particularly in MENA countries) and Moroccan NGO's the needs of the more rural, hard to reach Moroccan communities most in need of philanthropic support, in this case primarily Amazigh speaking in the North of Morocco.

[#CrossBorderGiving](#) [#Diaspora](#) [#Philanthropists](#) [#Religion](#) [#Volunteering](#)

Background

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Context



- This study describes **cross border giving in two countries with no colonial past**: Morocco and the Netherlands. Studies over the last 20 years have demonstrated the impact of diaspora groups in Europe supporting their family and community members in their home country through the act of remittances. However, these have primarily been based in post-colonial countries. **No research can generalise around cross border trends as no two cultures will ever share the same dynamic and history.**
- A key question is: **does diasporic cross-border philanthropy** (coming from a country with no colonial past with Morocco) affect Morocco's civil society, **compared to the philanthropy that is done locally?**
- The migrant populations that have left Morocco total around 5m people, representing **c.15% of the population**. There is an annual remittance flow of around **\$7 billion** (through official channels only). Remittances are the second source of hard currency after tourism receipts.
- More than three quarters of Moroccan migrants in the Netherlands originate from the Rif mountains, in the North of Morocco. **The separation in regions** to which Moroccans immigrated, has had an **'immense impact'** on the way diaspora refer **to their philanthropic behaviour towards the country of origin**, partly due to the colonial and non-colonial links of those immigrants. **Islam** – both religious and secular influence also plays a significant part in diaspora communities' behaviours.

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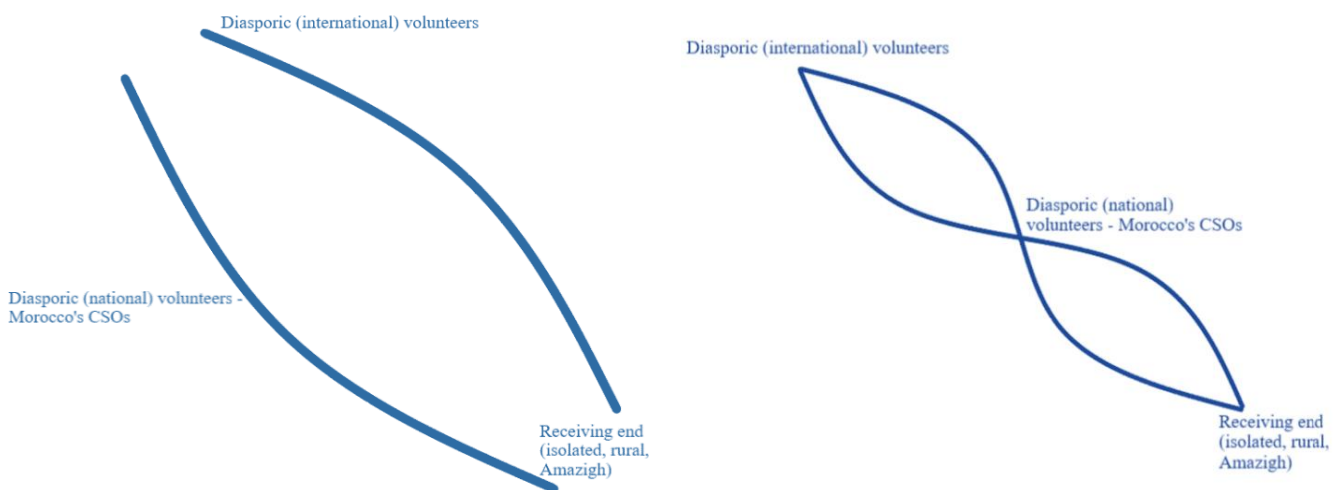
Academic articles on philanthropy through a practitioner lens

Take aways & Learnings



- This study reveals both religious (Islamic in this case) and secular motifs within the national and international Moroccan diaspora, stating that **religious motifs as more effective** than the first.
- **The Netherlands diaspora's Islamic identity as Muslim is important to themselves privately, but not in their philanthropy**, although 'cultural identity' did affect positively the sense of belonging of volunteers coming together.
- There is a nostalgia and emotion in giving back to their 'Homeland' in a stronger way than **internal Moroccan philanthropy which is serving more an objective and analytical political and social policy agenda.**
- **In the more rural areas** (often Amazigh speaking), where language barriers, marginalisation, isolation and women's emancipation is less there is less knowledge within country of what the best purpose of philanthropy and volunteering is needed for, with a post-colonial, top down approach rather than through **consultation with these rural communities.**
- **Volunteering could be more effective** if international Muslim communities (like the Netherlands diaspora) and other Muslim communities **work together with the in-country Moroccan civil society and NGOs philanthropy.**

The author illustrates that combining the two flows of diaspora giving could lead to a more inclusive and effective perspective on diasporic volunteering and philanthropy, where both religion and secularism are combined in one mission to serve.



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