

**Pan-African - Mediterranean Migrations: Implications for Education and Society\***

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### **Abstract**

The purpose of this study was to examine features of the contemporary migrant and refugee flows across Africa northward to the Mediterranean and then to European countries (sometimes called the “new mass migration”), and also migrant flows southward to South Africa. In addition, the purpose was to examine dimensions of response and adaptation in receiving countries, also the interconnections between sending- and receiving countries. In the post-colonial era, a variety of political, economic, and other societal forces combined to generate increased and more frequent flows of people seeking a better life, worldwide. Migrations of Africans are part of this global phenomenon, with manifold implications for source countries in Africa and for receiving countries in Africa and Europe. This consideration of issues is framed in the context of contemporary globalization theory and migration theories including social capital theory and push-pull theory. Implications and challenges for education and society in receiving countries such as France and South Africa, and in African sending countries, are summarized, drawing on contemporary research and debate on the issues in education and other sectors of society and on policy-practice research. Prominent themes in the research literature are highlighted, including language issues, policy responses, demographic shifts and trends, transnational family relationships, labor market issues, and educational ramifications. The impacts of refugee influxes on intermediate destinations such as the Canary Islands, Ceuta and Melilla, and Istanbul are also considered. The study results indicate that Pan-African – Mediterranean migrations have generated a significant new landscape of interconnectedness across the macro-region and that the challenges and responses in European countries--the target destinations of the northward migrations--have counterparts in South Africa--the south-end target destination for many desperate migrants and refugees. Current recommendations are for multiple levels of response to tackle crucial issues in education and wider society, including in-country improvement of conditions but also joint responsibility between sending- and receiving countries in Africa and across the Mediterranean to Europe. There is a need for more research on the specific experiences of desperate migrants in the macro-region to expand understanding of the full extent of this contemporary migration phenomenon and its ramifications. (Contains 2 maps).

### **Introduction**

Population movements in the form of migrations and refugee flows have generated an enhanced degree of connectedness between European and African countries in recent decades. The contemporary degree of interconnection within and across countries, shown in Figures 1 and 2, represents a macro-region with many shared challenges. The purpose of this paper is first to consider the general features of these population movements as a significant contemporary phenomenon with two principal directions of population flows: northward across Africa to the Mediterranean and beyond to European receiving countries; and southward to the destination country of South Africa. Brief considerations of theoretical perspectives and the historical context set the stage for this overview that focuses on the desperate (and largely illegal, undocumented) migrants and refugees in addition to legal migrants and refugees. Secondly,

some issues and implications for host- or receiving countries and also for source countries of migrants and refugees are considered. Thirdly, some of the strategies to meet the challenges related to influxes of migrants and refugees are seen in selected illustrations from research and policy debate. These provide insight into the dilemmas and challenges are both personal, societal, and official and that impact education and other human resources development sectors.

From a theoretical standpoint, first, one can argue for a macro-regional perspective since patterns and trends related to migrants and refugees link European, Mediterranean, and African countries today, beyond the Pan-African perspective owing to the shared colonial legacy and post-colonial development challenges, as Brook Napier (2008) and Maathai (2009) described. Others also invoked the idea of a broader regional conception. Kuitunen (1999) called for Mediterranean-European cooperation in research, technology, and higher education development, and Sultana (1999, p. 7) pointed out the common state of peripheralization to the global economy that Mediterranean countries share. Pampanini (2010) described the linkages both in Africa and across the Mediterranean, and their contemporary implications for interculturalism, education and development.

Secondly, the globalization context is relevant. In recent decades a variety of political, economic, and other societal forces combined to generate increased and more frequent flows of people seeking a better life, worldwide, making migration and refugee movements global issues presenting challenges at the global, national, and sub-national levels. Zajda (2005) and Zajda & Rust (2009) and Baker and Wiseman (2005) summarized the general features of globalization and educational policy and research; Zajda, Daun, & Saha (2009) presented cases of nation building, identity and citizenship education within globalization contexts; and Brook Napier (2005) summarized the challenges in developing countries including those in Africa and the Mediterranean. King & McGrath (2002) described the challenges facing South Africa and other African states in education and training under pressures of globalization, the knowledge-society, and English dominance--just as Cardoso (2006) described Portugal's struggles with modernization issues whilst reeling under the impact of growing numbers of immigrants. Sultana (1999) noted that the Mediterranean countries share common challenges with regard to globalization. The dialectic of the global and the local (Arnové & Torres, 2007) can be seen in the challenges countries face as they respond to needs of migrants and refugees, and Forbes Martin (2003) argued that refugees are a global issue demanding responses on all levels.

Thirdly, migration theory (such as push-pull theory and social capital theory), inform explanations of the origins and determinants of population movements and societal policy-practice implications, historically and in contemporary times and at macro, meso- and micro-levels. Kok, Gelderblom, Oucho & van Zyl (2006) articulated these for migrations in southern Africa; Bryceson & Vuerola (2002) compiled research on migration and transnationalism issues illustrating linkages between Europe and Africa; and Falola & Afolabi (2009) documented the societal impacts of African migrations. Fourth, contemporary migrations form part of the post-colonial development story, particularly with regard to issues such as hybrid identity, mother country and post-colonial state relationships and linkages through migration. Memmi (2006, 73) noted the difficulties of

migrant and refugee integration into host societies and the ramifications for the decolonized homelands.

### **The contemporary phenomenon of Migration and Refugee Movements Across- and out of Africa**

In the post-colonial era, African countries face a web of shared challenges including poverty, political instability, war, conflict, violence, unemployment, drought and famine, disease, population pressures, environmental degradation and climate change. Of the “least developed countries” listed by the United Nations, 25 are in Africa (UN/UNCTAD 2007). Differential development, sustained dependence on foreign aid, and neocolonialism are realities on the continent that feed a widespread network of migrant and refugee flows. The European Mediterranean countries and islands have their own versions of these challenges: post-colonial development issues also link them with other parts of the macro-region to the north in Europe and to the south in Africa. In the last 50-60 years, flows of migrants to European countries from African decolonized states became a regular occurrence. Several generations of African immigrant families live in Europe, and South Africa became home to immigrants from a wide range of *African* countries particularly since the early 1990s. Hence, while there are long-established patterns, recent decades have seen increased frequency and numbers of migrants both across the northern half of Africa (Cimadomo & Ponce 2006) and in eastern-southern Africa (Crush 2008).

Population movements occur in multiple forms including internal displacement and refugee flows, rural-urban migration, and emigration-immigration in response to conditions within and across countries, and a variety of push- and pull factors (Kok, Gelderblom & Oucho 2006; Maharaj 2004). Desperation and the search for a better life fuel much of this widespread movement. Source-country push factors include among others population pressures, poverty, political instability and violence, unemployment, disease, and lack of hope. Wars and political violence in West Africa, Central and East Africa, the Horn, and parts of southern Africa have prompted escape to destinations within Africa and in Europe. In turn, pull factors including family reunification, jobs, education, opportunity, stability, safety, hope, and chances for a better life draw migrants and refugees to relatively beneficial destinations elsewhere in Africa (such as South Africa) and across the Mediterranean in Europe (Bryceson & Vuerola, 2002; Guidaaron, 2008; Kok, Gelderblom, Oucho and van Zyl 2006; Maharaj 2004).

West Africa is a sub-region exhibiting many push factors driving outmigration or producing internally displaced persons (IDPs). Nigeria is one of the poorest, most heavily populated countries (149.2 million) in Africa. It has 70% of its population in poverty, high unemployment rates, a legacy of political instability and corruption, and ongoing conflicts among more than 250 ethnic groups. Agricultural sector decline--such as in cocoa production—has pushed many to the Niger Delta area in search of oil industry jobs (Walker 2000). Foreign power oil operations left severely damaged environments and lost revenues (CIA World Factbook, 2009). In Ghana and Ivory Coast, farmer-herder conflicts push migrants off farms and into urban areas (Tonah 2003). The regional realities of IDPs and refugees (UNHCR, 2009; [www.unhcr.org](http://www.unhcr.org)) compound these countries' internal challenges. Ghana hosts 100,000 refugees, mostly Liberian women and children. Nigeria has over 5000 Liberian refugees and undetermined numbers of IDPs from religious/political violence. Resettlement and repatriation

seldom occur, leaving refugees warehoused in camps for 5 -15 years. Similar push factor conditions exist elsewhere, including in Congo, Rwanda, Kenya, and Somalia. Across Africa IDPs number are estimated to be 12 million ([www.economist.com/refugees](http://www.economist.com/refugees)), including 4 million in Sudan, 2 million in Congo, 1.3 million in Somalia, and others in Uganda, Zimbabwe, and Kenya. These conditions fuel movements in the two principal directions, as follows.

### **Migration Routes Across North Africa to Europe:**

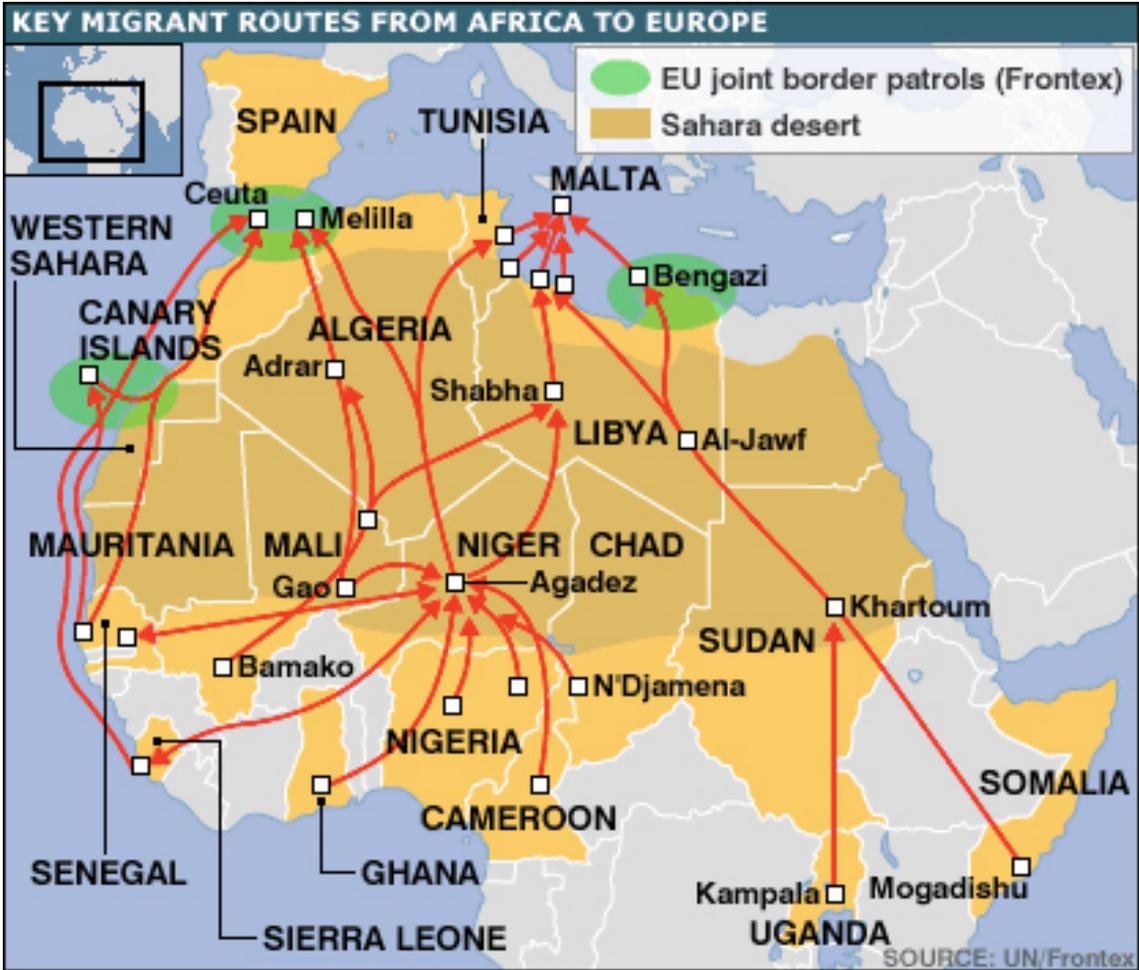
The contemporary desperate migration from Africa to Europe has become sufficiently voluminous to be called the “*New Mass Migration*,” referencing the millions of Europeans who migrated to the United States in the previous century (Min 2002), but also the “*Back door to Europe*” (Gebauer 2006) in that so many migrants seek to enter Europe via Morocco or other jumping off points. Large numbers of these are illegal or undocumented migrants as opposed to legal migrants to European countries. In the northern half of Africa three patterns of desperate migration exist today: to Morocco and Mauritania, then to Spain and other destinations via the Canary Islands; to Libya, thence to Malta and Italy; and to Greece or Turkey and beyond in Europe (Cimadomo & Ponce 2006). Intermediate destinations include Agadez, Bengazi, Gao, the Canaries, Malta, Istanbul, and the Spanish fortified enclaves of Ceuta and Melilla (Figure 1).

Intermediate destinations have attracted attention in recent years owing to the number of migrants arriving en route to Europe, and the casualty rates. For example, Mauritania and Morocco are significantly impacted by these northward flows of migrants or refugees aiming for Europe. In the year January 2006 – 2007 some 11,000 people reached Canary Islands via the Mauritanian port of Nouadhibou, in “Cayucos” (wooden boats) across 1,200 Km of seas, in a perilous 3-4 day journey. On calm days, some 700 Africans per 24-hour period can arrive (Brinkbaumer, 2007). The organization Croissant Rouge Mauritanien (Red Crescent 2006) reported that in the year 2006 alone, 600 corpses were found, but estimates were that some 1700 refugees died trying to reach Europe via this route. Musharbash (2005) chronicled migrants’ stories of desperate bids to overcome the obstacles along the route to Europe, but most realities go undocumented. The fortified Spanish enclaves of Ceuta and Melilla have been dubbed the “Gateway to Europe” and “Fortress Europe” owing to their fortified nature, perched on the northern edge of Africa. In the period 1998 – 2000 some 15,000 refugees were warehoused here, and the numbers were reported to be “thousands” in recent years, even after heightened restrictions. Accurate data on migrant/refugee numbers difficult to compile. Causes of death among migrants include drowning at sea, death in the desert, violence and murder, abandonment, “repatriation” or forced return to the homeland (Cimadomo & Ponce 2006).

### **Migrant and Refugee Flows southward to South Africa:**

South Africa is an African destination country at the other end of the macro-region with a long history of legal immigration. European settlers flocked to South Africa as an alternative destination over Australia, New Zealand, Canada, and the United States. Migrant labor patterns were established in the late nineteenth century, attracting African workers from as far away as Malawi to work in South African gold mines (Kok, Gelderblom, Oucho & van Zyl 2006). From the 1990s onwards, African in-migration surged as war, political instability, and extreme poverty in neighboring countries pushed migrants and refugees into South Africa directly from Zimbabwe and Mozambique, but also indirectly from Nigeria, Somalia, Congo, Zambia, Malawi and elsewhere (Figure 2). The commitment voiced by then President Mandela in 1994

that people would not be turned away--in contrast to apartheid era exclusion policies--made South Africa an attractive target. After 1994 legal visitors from other African countries surged, to 5.5 million in 2005 alongside sizeable internal migration from remote rural areas to the large cities (Crush 2008; Kane-Berman 2009). In the period 1998-2008 there were 200,000 asylum seekers, and in 2007 alone there were over 45,000 refugee applications made to South Africa, mostly from Somalia, the DRC and Angola but also from Nigeria, Kenya, Zimbabwe, Tanzania, Senegal, Burundi, Congo-Brazzaville, Malawi, Rwanda, Ghana, Ivory Coast, and Cameroon. This latter point reveals the bi-directional migration flows out of some Central and West African countries. As is the case with European countries, pull factors for migrants and refugees included wealth and job opportunities; schools, clinics and healthcare; housing; Constitutional rights, a justice system providing recourse; and democracy and hope for a better life. The lure of South Africa was relative to conditions in other African countries (Peberdy & Crush 2002; Crush, 2008; Maharaj 2004).



**Figure 1:** Migration Paths to Europe from source areas in Africa.

Source: African Migration to Europe. Annansi Chronicles, July 20 2007. <http://annansi.com/blog/2007/07/african-migration-to-europe>. Accessed October 24, 2009

In a scenario similar to the northward migration routes across Africa and the Mediterranean to Europe, a South African “back door” developed as illegal migrants flocked across the borders of Zimbabwe and Mozambique. According to Crush (2008) by the early 2000s, there were between 4 and 8 million “illegal residents” in South Africa at any one time. Instead of drowning at sea or perishing in the desert, here the mortality among illegal migrants comes from attacks by local people as well as attacks by wild animals—refugees crossing from Mozambique have been known to succumb to lions and elephants as they unwittingly cross through the Kruger National Park along the national border.

### **Some Issues and Implications:**

Research on migrations within and between Africa and Europe illustrates the many dimensions of response and adaptation in receiving countries, the interconnections between sending- and receiving countries, and also in the communities left behind. This discussion includes a sampling of research on educational and other implications of migration, to illustrate only some of the full spectrum of issues in the past record: the next generation of research will need to document the full reality of the most current desperate migrations. Issues can include inclusion/exclusion in host communities; policy and legal status issues; inadequate social services and aid; educational ramifications regarding language medium, curriculum, student-teacher relations, school administration policy; labor force issues; financial considerations and obligations; healthcare needs and emotional adjustment issues; frontiering and networking as coping mechanisms; identity/hybridity issues; housing, religious life, and recreational outlets; gender roles; and intergenerational conflicts and changes within families (Bryceson & Vuerola, 2002; Falola & Afolabi 2009). In general, the issues fall within two principal categories: degree of integration into the host society, and links (if any) with homeland.

Issues in intermediate destination countries in Africa and Europe are distinctive in that these countries deal with large numbers of refugees and migrants in transit to final destination countries, so there might not be the same degree of imperative to cater to the longer term needs of migrants in schools or other social institutions, yet the immediate impact of each influx is huge. For instance, Lahlou (2009) commented on the educational implications of migrant influxes to Morocco. Yukseker & Brewer (2006) noted some prevalent issues in Turkey, now an intermediate destination for African migrants: differences exist in features of migrants coming from West Africa versus East Africa regarding the predicaments they faced at home; and while in Turkey, waiting to move on, migrants face a host of disadvantages including poor access to education and social services, ostracism, poverty, and cultural and religious alienation.

### **Africans in Europe:**

France, Belgium and the Netherlands are among the European countries with large African immigrant communities. In the case of France, in 2006 the number of immigrants to France was estimated at 4.9 million or 8% of the population, with 10% of the population being Muslim, largely from the former colonies of the Maghreb (Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia) and West Africa (CIA World Factbook, 2009). Large African immigrant populations of this nature make for a variety of issues and when tensions reach breaking point, rioting and protests against negative responses in the adopted country can occur, such as the riots in France in the early 2000s when African youths protested against cultural alienation. A sampling of research on Africans in Europe follows.

Bryceson & Vuerola (2002) compiled research on dimensions of the “transnational family” wherein African immigrant families maintain linkages between their home countries including Senegal, Morocco, Algeria, and Tanzania, and their adopted countries including France, Germany, and the Netherlands. The MAFE project (Migrations Between Africa and Europe) ([www.mafeproject.com](http://www.mafeproject.com)) compiles data, analyses, policy dialogue on Afro-European migration in France, Spain, Italy & Senegal; Belgium, the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, and the Democratic Republic of Congo and Ghana. In almost all cases, studies of adjustment issues, intergenerational conflicts, and links with the home country contain either implicit or explicit educational ramifications for the immigrant families and also for the host societies. In other research, Timera (2002) reported on North African Muslim families in France where Sahelian youth (particularly girls) faced entrenched discrimination and exclusion, but where girls in these families tended to do better in school. Salzbrunn (2002) offered insights into the importance of transnational social communities among West Africans in Paris, and the hybridization of identity among Senegalese migrants living in France in which new relationships between home and host country emerge, particularly in the youngest generation. Regnault (1996) offered a portrait of intercultural collaboration between immigrant and French parents in community building, regardless of ethnic background. In another example in Spain, Cowan & Perez-Dominguez (1996, p. 35) reported on “cultural myopia” in intercultural attitudes and practices that ignore immigrant needs and abilities, resulting in missed opportunities for promoting intercultural understanding in schooling.

Kane (2002) described the close connections that Senegalese immigrants in France retained with their homeland. He noted the importance of immigrant associations abroad that send resources home, to benefit community development, schools, and infrastructure. According to the World Bank (2005), contributions to the home economy in the form of remittances from emigres living abroad are significant portions of home country GDP, for instance Senegal 7.6% (\$0.6bn), Nigeria 3.4% (\$3.3bn), Ivory Coast 1.2% (\$0.2bn), and Sudan 3.7% (\$1.0bn).

Family and intergenerational issues are another theme of research. Merolla (2002) described intergenerational identity shifts among Moroccan migrants, portrayed in Dutch literature. Guidauron (2008) described the pull factors among Moroccan immigrants to France--undeterred by the anti-immigrant racism they encountered--as kinship interventions and family reunification, and economic motivations. Similarly Bousetta (2008) reported on differences between undocumented recent Moroccan immigrants to Belgium who suffered adjustment and integration challenges compared to earlier legal immigrants. Fuentes-Dominguez & Mendieta (2008) identified universal factors related to “happiness” among immigrant women in Malaga, Spain that have relevance in most immigrant communities. These factors included education, health, relationships, employment, and legal status.

**Transplanted Africans Within Africa.** Similar suites of issues are documented in research focusing on African migrants and refugees living elsewhere in Africa. Most of the issues have direct or indirect relevance to education. Emotional adjustment and educational needs issues are major dimensions in research in African countries with significant populations of victimized children. For instance, Kanya (2009) described the impact of war on displaced

Sudanese children living in Uganda; Freedman et al (2008) discussed the efforts in Rwanda to implement culturally sensitive education programs in the aftermath of identity based conflicts and genocide; and Betancourt et al (2008) reported on the initiatives in Sierra Leone to address the emotional and educational needs of child soldiers. Boateng (2009) conducted research in Buduburam Refugee Camp, Ghana where 40,000 Liberian women refugees were warehoused. Here, hope for a better life lay not in repatriation or resettlement in another country but in improving conditions *within* the camp--in providing healthcare, education for children, and training for adults to promote self-sufficiency, build social capital, and generate income.

Language issues are a continent-wide educational challenge as English continues to grow in strength, alongside calls for indigenous language instruction, and in response to influxes of migrant/refugee speakers of other languages (Brock-Utne and Skattum, 2009). In Johannesburg area schools, Brook (1996) noted that some teachers struggled with as many as eighteen different languages in their classrooms, of pupils who included internal migrants, and also refugee pupils from as far afield as Zaire/Congo. Language and instructional medium issues remain major challenges in many African countries today.

Labor issues are prevalent in the story here. The historical legacy of migrant labor in South African gold mines entrenched patterns of regional interconnection in which mineworkers from as far away as Malawi sent home sizeable sums of money to support their families (Ratha & Xu, 2008; Dodson, 2008). Contributions from Lesotho's GDP are 22.5% (\$0.3bn), the highest on the continent, most of them coming from mineworkers in South Africa (World Bank, 2005). In South Africa, because most of the influx represented migrants/refugees intending to stay, there were significant impacts on social services including schools, and on labor force issues. Meanwhile, between 1989 and 2003 South Africa lost more than 92,000 skilled workers, mostly whites. The current "skills crisis" reflects these realities of brain drain juxtaposed with the influx of predominantly unskilled, uneducated migrants (Brook Napier, 2009; Kane-Berman, 2009). The year 2008 saw eruptions of xenophobia. In Johannesburg, 20,000 refugees from Zimbabwe, Mozambique, Somalia, Malawi were attacked, many burned alive, accused of being "foreigners" who steal jobs. The backlash against "foreigners" signaled a new nasty mood in the country, as elsewhere, with manifold ramifications for schools, clinics, police, jobs, and housing that demanded effective official responses (Crush 2008; Hassim, Kupe, & Worby 2009).

### **Meeting the Challenges related to Migrants and Refugees in the Macro-Region:**

Receiving countries such as France, Spain and South Africa show some similarities in contemporary official responses to migrant influxes. Tightened regulations against illegal migrants, as well as earnest struggles to manage increased influxes combine in "Fortress Europe" restrictions, selective admissions by country of origin, and warehousing practices for illegal migrants awaiting processing or repatriation. "Razor wire" and electrified fences feature in the fortified enclaves of Ceuta and Melilla and along the South Africa -Zimbabwe border. Although South Africa and many other countries ratified the AU Common Position on Migration and Development, events such as the xenophobia attacks in 2008 prompted criticisms of government failure to manage migration effectively. Poor service delivery, poverty, a legacy of blame and victimization, and racism and xenophobia made "foreigners" easy targets. McFarlane (2009) summarized the needs: to foster intercultural forgiveness and understanding

through education; and to promote assimilation in the new democratic society. These are common challenges in all countries receiving migrants and refugees.

The debated strategy options in policy, education, and collaborations among states include the following. With South Africa as the economic engine of Africa, migration and influxes of refugees are likely to continue unabated, and as a global condition, migration needs to be addressed as a key policy issue (CDE 2009). As Forbes Martin (2004) noted for refugee women in Africa and elsewhere, durable solutions include responses by global agencies such as the UNHCR, national governments, NGOs, local community co-operatives, and other groups. Education is key: for successful integration into host societies migrants and refugees need to develop skills for employment, and learn ways of participation and integration; public education about tolerance is needed. In schools, teachers and administrators need training and support in managing the demands of increasingly diverse pupil populations that often include migrant and refugee children. The Uganda African Union convention on needs and issues related to African internally displaced persons (IDPs), emphasized individual country responsibility for improving internal conditions, for managing in-migration, and for protecting IDPs (UNHCR 2009). Bohning & Schlueter-Parayes (1994) stressed the importance of providing aid for improvement of internal conditions, similar to the conclusion of Boateng (2009) in the Ghanaian refugee camp case since for refugees and for many undocumented migrants, repatriation and resettlement are often not feasible options. Other strategies can improve conditions in sending countries to reduce push factors: South-South collaborations between former colonies—as illustrated by Cuban capacity building projects in many African countries might mitigate outmigration (Brook Napier, 2006; Hickling Hudson, 2004); and immigrant groups in Europe are encouraged to maintain stakeholdings in their home countries in Africa (Blion, 2002). Two common threads in the debates over official responses are that there have been no specific measures to solve the problems at their roots in the home countries (Cimadomo & Ponce 2008) and that public hostility to immigrants and intolerance remain major challenges for most countries (Crush, 2008). Maharaj (2004) suggested that the South African government faces two alternatives—relevant to receiving countries elsewhere in Africa and Europe too-- to continue with the harsh “law and order” approach or to adopt a more sensitive human rights approach observing ways in which migrants can contribute to the local economy. Clearly, education programs have a role to play here. Macarov (2007) offered similar ideas in a framework of strategies to inform policies for absorption of immigrants, given that much of the literature documents the lack of official responsiveness and sensitivity to immigrant needs and issues in receiving countries.

### **Conclusion:**

African sending and receiving countries face challenges similar to those in European receiving countries, in dealing with the needs of refugees and migrants juxtaposed with pressures and responses within host societies. Flows of people will continue to link countries regardless of their internal contextual differences and varied levels of development. The challenges of migration and refugees demand multiple levels of response including in-country improvement of conditions but also joint responsibility between sending- and receiving countries in Africa and across the Mediterranean to Europe for tackling crucial issues in education and wider society. There is a need for more research on the experiences of desperate

migrants in the macro-region to expand our understanding of the full extent of this contemporary migration phenomenon and its ramifications.

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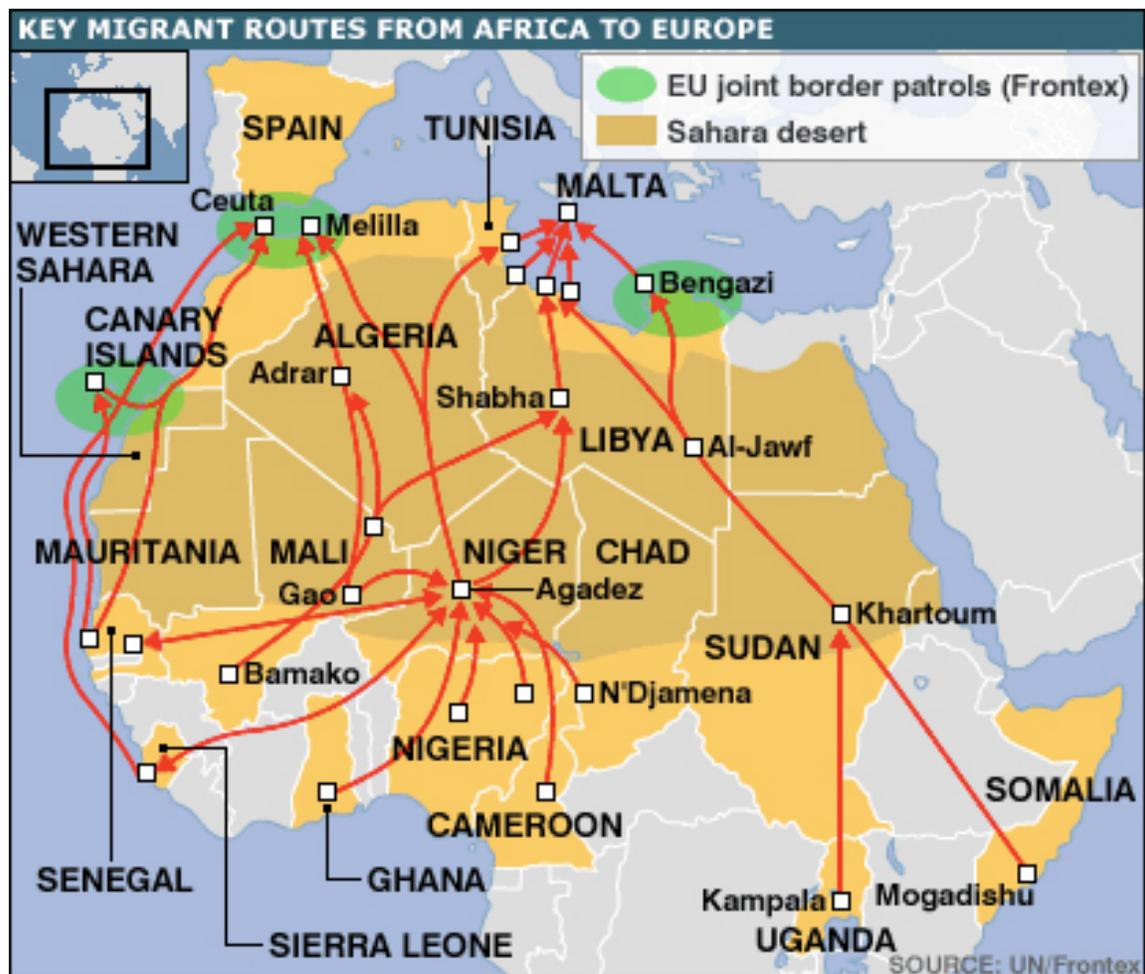
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**Figure 1:** Migration Paths to Europe from source areas in Africa.

*Source:* African Migration to Europe. Annansi Chronicles, July 20 2007.

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**Figure 2:** Migration paths in southern Africa. Source: Brook Napier (2009).

