



DEMAC

DIASPORA
EMERGENCY ACTION
& COORDINATION

DIASPORA HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE & ENGAGEMENT GOOD PRACTICES



DRC DANISH
REFUGEE
COUNCIL

SUMMARY

This report provides an overview of key good practices of diaspora organizations that engage in humanitarian response. These fourteen good practices were selected after consultations with diaspora organizations as well as institutional humanitarian actors. Each good practice is illustrated by two concrete examples of diaspora organizations who respond to crisis and emergency situations. The examples cover the variety of diaspora engaging in humanitarian assistance, in terms of nationalities, countries of residence and humanitarian sectors.

Diaspora organizations involved in humanitarian response are the primary audience for this

tool, which aims to help build organizational capacity in the areas identified and share experiences and lessons learned between diasporas. Institutional humanitarian partners and international non-governmental organizations are the secondary audience of this report and may benefit from this tool by gaining additional understanding and knowledge of how diaspora organizations engage in humanitarian assistance, as well as the challenges and opportunities they face.

All diaspora organizations included in this Guide have been contacted whilst developing the document and have given their consent to be featured.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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ABOUT DEMAC

The mission of DEMAC is two-fold:

- 1) to enable inclusive coordination and collaboration among diaspora organizations providing humanitarian assistance, and across diaspora organizations and institutional humanitarian actors
- 2) to facilitate higher levels of engagement and visibility for diaspora organizations in the humanitarian system

The objective is to contribute to transforming the humanitarian ecosystem by laying the groundwork for a deeper understanding of diasporas as humanitarian actor groups with different modus operandi for the implementation of aid in practice, identifying and opening potential spaces for engagement and cross-fertilization, and improving coordination between diaspora and institutional relief providers.

DEMAC AIMS AT

01

Enhancing knowledge
between diasporas
and humanitarian
institutions

02

Increasing awareness
on diaspora's
humanitarian
interventions

03

Improving coordination
communication and
coherence of
humanitarian response

WHY DIASPORA?

Work with diasporas has shown that diaspora organizations are multi-sectoral, fast responding actors who work transnationally, including in countries facing humanitarian crises. Having a connection to and understanding of their country of origin or heritage plays a vital role in humanitarian assistance where diaspora organizations often are part of the first response in the aftermath of a disaster.

They are also key actors when it comes to raising the alarm in times of crisis. The ease and frequency of communication between local communities and diaspora organizations means that they can be alerted in real-time, and their capacity to collect and disperse funds rapidly ensures that they are a key factor in unlocking the first responses in crisis settings. In hard-to-reach places where access may be an issue, diaspora organizations have a unique advantage due to their local connections and ties. They use their transnational position to respond to the growing demands for remote management and cross-border response in countries where international actors have a limited presence, and to advocate on behalf of crisis affected populations in the policy arenas of their countries and regions of residence.

Supporting diaspora as part of a broader humanitarian ecosystem to play a key role in humanitarian responses and provide vital support to communities in countries of origin, contributes to the relevance, effectiveness and sustainability of humanitarian responses. In light of their transnational identity and close local ties, it is also strongly linked to the localization agenda, one of the main commitments under the Grand Bargain. Localization aims to strengthen the resilience of local communities and to support local and national responders on the front line. UNOCHA has called furthermore for an indispensable opening of the resource base of humanitarian action by integrating 'non-traditional actors' - such as diasporas - to enhance the effectiveness of the humanitarian response and render it interoperable.

Diaspora organizations are part of and playing a central role in localization. Many can be considered frontline responders themselves, making direct and concrete contributions to emergency responses in their home countries. Others work closely with local authorities, local organizations and community groups, providing technical and financial support, playing a role in advocacy and linking local actors with additional sources of support.

Diaspora organizations are heterogeneous - they have different capacities, values and approaches and as part of a broader humanitarian community can play a valuable and agile role in humanitarian responses. However, assistance provided by diaspora organizations and the formal humanitarian actors often follow parallel tracks, resulting in a lack of mutual understanding and recognition, and thus a lack of coordination and collaboration that would be of benefit to the overall response.



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Acronyms and abbreviations

AAP	Accountability to Affected Populations
AICM	Association Internationale de Coopération Médicale
APA	Austria-Pakistan Association
ARCS	American Relief Coalition for Syria
ATUGE	Association des Tunisiens des Grandes Ecoles
DARCI	Dominica Amateur Radio Club Inc.
DEMAC	Diaspora Emergency Action & Coordination
DO	Diaspora Organization
DRC	Danish Refugee Council
ECRE	European Council on Refugees and Exiles
FGM	Female Genital Mutilation
FREE	Foundation for Refugee Economic Empowerment
FSN	Finnish Somalia Network
GBV	Gender-Based Violence
GRA	Governance and Reform Advisory
HDREU	Haitian Diaspora Emergency Response Unit
HIH	Hand in Hand for Aid and Development
HIRDA	Himilo Relief and Development Association
HRA	Haiti Renewal Alliance
ICA	Institute of Chin Affairs
IDP	Internally Displaced Persons
IMI	Imamia Medics International
INGO	International Non-Governmental Organization
IOM	International Organization for Migration
MFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs

MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
NDMA	National Disaster Management Authority
NFI	Non-Food Items
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
PPE	Personal Protective Equipment
PSEA	Protection against Sexual Exploitation and Abuse
SAPA	Sudanese American Physicians Association
SCAN UK	Syrian Charities and Associations Network in the United Kingdom
SNA	Syrian NGO Alliance
SOP	Standard Operating Procedures
TOSHPA	The Organisation of Sierra Leonean Healthcare Professionals Abroad
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
UNFPA	United Nations Populations Fund
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UN OCHA	United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
UP	University of the Philippines
US	United States
WASH	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene
WFP	World Food Program
WHAF	World Humanitarian Action Forum

INTRODUCTION

Background

Diaspora organizations engage in humanitarian assistance. Even though they are usually not perceived as traditional humanitarian actors, diaspora have a number of strengths when responding to humanitarian crises. Work with diasporas has shown that diaspora organizations are multi-sectoral, fast responding actors who work transnationally, including in their countries of origin when facing humanitarian crises. Having a connection with and understanding of their country of origin or heritage plays a vital role in humanitarian assistance where diaspora organizations often are part of the first response in the aftermath of a disaster.

Diaspora are also key actors when it comes to raising the alarm in times of crisis. The ease and frequency of communication between local communities and diaspora organizations means that they can be alerted in real-time, and their capacity to collect and disperse funds rapidly ensures that they are a key factor in unlocking the first responses in crisis settings. In hard-to-reach places where access may be an issue, diaspora organizations have a unique advantage due to their local connections and ties. They can use their transnational position to respond to the growing demands for remote management and cross-border response in countries where international actors have a limited presence, and to advocate on behalf of crisis affected populations in the policy arenas of their countries and regions of residence.

Supporting diaspora as part of a broader humanitarian ecosystem to play a key role in humanitarian responses and provide vital support to communities in countries of origin contributes to the relevance, effectiveness, and sustainability of humanitarian responses. In light of their transnational identity and close local ties, it is also strongly linked to the localization agenda, one of the main commitments under the Grand Bargain. Localization aims to strengthen the resilience of local communities and to support local and national responders on the front line.

The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UN OCHA) has called furthermore, for an indispensable opening of the resource base of humanitarian action by integrating 'non-traditional actors' - such as diasporas - to enhance the effectiveness of the humanitarian response and render it interoperable.

This Guide

In May 2022, DEMAC published an overview of how diaspora engage in humanitarian response. The report, called *Diaspora Humanitarian Response & Engagement - Key Highlights*, included a mapping of their approaches, coordination efforts, challenges and future trends. However, members of diaspora organizations identified the need to more explicitly raise awareness of the strengths and

advantages of diaspora organizations, and to identify complementarities with the institutional humanitarian system. Thus, this Good Practices Resources Guide will elaborate on the many good practices and lessons learned by diaspora when responding to crises and emergencies.

This Guide responds to that request by highlighting fourteen areas of humanitarian assistance in which diaspora organizations have been successful. Each good practice is illustrated by two concrete examples of diaspora working on this topic, highlighting the results, challenges and lessons learned. As a result, the Guide includes practical examples from 28 diaspora organizations worldwide providing a practical and useful tool that directly informs future humanitarian responses.

The primary target audience of this tool is diaspora organizations involved in humanitarian response with the aim to help build organizational capacity and to share experiences and lessons learned between diaspora communities. The secondary target audience is institutional humanitarian partners and international non-governmental organizations who may benefit from this tool by gaining additional understanding and knowledge of how diaspora organizations engage in humanitarian assistance, as well as the challenges and opportunities they face. The Guide aims to identify synergies and linkages between diaspora organizations and the humanitarian system in an effort to strengthen the humanitarian system overall.

Methodology and Selection Criteria for Good Practice Examples

The Good Practices in this Guide were the result of an initial consultation and selection process, including through meetings in September 2021 with institutional humanitarian partners and diaspora representatives. Based on that selection, fourteen practices were elaborated.

Two concrete examples of each practice conducted by diaspora organizations are then described. The identification of the 28 examples in this Guide is based on desk research, outreach and the previous work of DEMAC, including data collected for the purpose of case-studies and real time reviews. The diaspora organizations were contacted and asked to share further details in a short interview. The information in this Guide is a combination of the data provided in the interviews, data from websites and social media, and from general literature on diaspora humanitarian engagement.

All contacts provided their consent to be included in the publication, including their logo, and were given the opportunity to review the sections summarizing their experiences to ensure accuracy and to enhance ownership. In general, the 28 organizations welcomed the opportunity to raise awareness of their activities and to share challenges and lessons learned with peer organizations and with other humanitarian actors.

THE FOLLOWING GOOD PRACTICES ARE INCLUDED IN THIS GUIDE:

1. Diaspora organizations engage in effective coordination and partnerships with institutional humanitarian actors and mechanisms.
2. Umbrella organizations bring an added value when coordinating individual diaspora organizations, especially when reacting to crises.
3. Because of their connections, diaspora organizations can easily coordinate with national authorities.
4. Diaspora organizations can be a source of knowledge and learning for other humanitarian actors.
5. Diaspora organizations have the ability to grow and build their capacities to become professional humanitarian organizations.
6. Diaspora organizations are well placed to transfer technical knowledge and expertise in humanitarian assistance.
7. Diaspora organizations are well placed to advocate on behalf of their communities and to amplify the voice of the affected populations.

- 
8. Diaspora organizations deliver effective and efficient humanitarian assistance through partnerships with local civil society organizations.
 9. Diaspora organizations have or may be aware of direct communication channels with the affected population thereby overcoming difficulties in access.
 10. Gender-specific assistance delivered by diaspora organizations has better chances to be accepted by local communities.
 11. Local connections and knowledge of diaspora organizations enable them to generate funding and to transfer it efficiently to the affected populations.
 12. Diaspora organizations can bridge the humanitarian-development nexus because of their long-term interest and presence in the country.
 13. Diaspora utilize opportunities offered by new digital tools to expand and strengthen their support to their countries of origin.
 14. Diaspora organizations can play a vital role in emergency preparedness both in their countries of residence and countries of origin.



Good Practice 1

COORDINATION WITH INSTITUTIONAL HUMANITARIAN ACTORS

Diaspora organizations engage in effective coordination and partnerships with institutional humanitarian actors and mechanisms.

While diaspora organizations are not perceived as traditional humanitarian actors, they often end up working in parallel systems independent from the institutional frameworks and mechanisms used by international humanitarian actors. However, the following two examples will demonstrate that it is not only possible for diaspora organizations to participate in international coordination frameworks, such as the cluster system, but also to become a trusted and recognized partner working on humanitarian assistance.

Indeed, some diaspora organizations work to coordinate with institutional humanitarian actors by participating in cluster coordination and inter-agency needs assessments. Inclusion of diaspora humanitarians as focal points

in coordination mechanisms can enable better coordination of activities, improve information flows, reduce the potential for duplication, and improve the impact of interventions on the ground. Integrating diaspora can also build sustainability by leveraging partnerships and resources.

Of course, there are a number of conditions and requirements for diaspora organizations to reach that degree of recognition and respect. A development and learning process is needed to reach a level of organizational development and to meet humanitarian standards. Whereas the first example relies primarily on the operational importance of its member organizations, the second example emphasizes the double advantage of diaspora organizations, namely meeting donor requirements in terms of transparency and accountability, while at the same time bringing the advantages of local actors in terms of access.

SYRIAN NGO ALLIANCE



SYRIAN NGO ALLIANCE
تحالف المنظمات السورية غير الحكومية

PROFILE

A coalition of 23 major Syrian non-governmental organizations established in 2014, working in North and Northwest Syria responding to humanitarian needs.

OBJECTIVE

To coordinate leadership and advocacy efforts to achieve effective participation of Syrians in the management and decision-making of Syrian humanitarian affairs and to impact on humanitarian policies.



DESCRIPTION OF GOOD PRACTICE

The Syrian NGO Alliance (SNA) has 23 Syrian members, including local organizations and diaspora organizations registered outside Syria. In support of its advocacy role, SNA has managed to establish working relations with the United Nations, the cluster system and with donors. In fact, the individual NGOs explicitly asked the SNA to assist in overcoming challenges in coordinating with the institutional humanitarian actors and the cluster system in order to attract more funding and assistance for the work they were doing.

The SNA is a collective mechanism that advocates for the needs of the individual members to institutional actors, but it is not an operational actor itself. As a result, the SNA has a seat at the core humanitarian coordination mechanisms for Syria, the Humanitarian Liaison Group and the Strategic Steering Group.

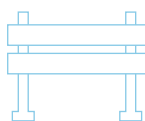
SNA has a good working relationship with other initiatives, like the Syrian Networks League, the Syria INGO Regional Forum and the Northwest Syria NGO Forum. The members of SNA deliver around 80% of the aid in the northwest of Syria. Because of its size and the dependence of international actors on local actors to implement their activities on the ground, SNA brings a certain distinction to the table and is taken seriously by international actors.

Whereas SNA members participate directly in cluster meetings, any points for discussion are



LESSONS LEARNED

shared by the members during the quarterly meetings, for the SNA to raise them in coordination meetings at a higher level. For example, the SNA argued in the name of its members against proposed budget cuts so that not the individual members but the SNA itself was held accountable for opposing the proposed changes as a kind of buffer mechanism.



CHALLENGES EXPERIENCED

The operational coordination challenges for SNA members in Syria are numerous, stressing the importance of having a joint advocacy mechanism. For example, when NGOs had trouble getting humanitarian access, the SNA took up the issue and discussed with UN OCHA how to approach the problem.

However, the main challenges remain access to funding for local NGOs, including from Humanitarian Pooled Funding, and the SNA's influence to change these systemic challenges remains limited.

The main lesson learned from this example is that a joint voice is stronger than individual organizations. Strength lies in collective advocacy, including because of the combined importance of the assistance delivered by the members. In addition, the SNA occupies one seat representing 23 organizations, which is thus simpler to integrate into coordination mechanisms.

Another lesson is the clear division of labor when participating in coordination mechanisms: while the individual members join operational meetings, the SNA represents its members at a higher policy level. As a result, there is a gradual process to raise issues of importance up the decision-making chain. Furthermore, this example proves how diaspora organizations can integrate themselves into existing mechanisms, rather than duplicating them and consolidating the parallel system. Yet coordination with institutional partners is also facilitated by the set-up of the SNA, namely the combination of diaspora organizations, who can raise public awareness about operational challenges in (donor) countries of residence, and the local actors, who bring the operational capacity.

YEMEN AID



PROFILE

Established in 2016
by Yemeni diaspora
in the United States.

OBJECTIVE

To provide clean water, healthcare,
education and economic opportunities
for the population in Yemen.



DESCRIPTION OF GOOD PRACTICE

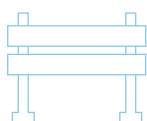
Yemen Aid initially started in an effort to move away from informal diaspora aid to the population in-country and instead build a bridge between assistance from the west and humanitarian access. Therefore, Yemen Aid was set up as an international NGO, with an office in Aden, by well-educated individual diaspora members residing in the US. From the beginning, the aim was to apply a localized approach, ensuring dignity for the affected population. The initial crisis focus evolved into a broader response to the economic crisis emphasizing sustainable assistance.

Over the years, Yemen Aid built its capacities in order to become a recognized humanitarian actor, including by learning from other diaspora based in the US and by engaging a dedicated resource person. The learning process resulted in the elaboration of policies to meet humanitarian standards and familiarization with bureaucratic requirements. As a result, Yemen Aid now cooperates with the World Food Program (WFP), UN Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the International Organization for Migration (IOM) for example. The organization is a member of the Health Cluster and coordinates with the Food Security Cluster to meet the emergency needs of Yemeni families and to distribute food baskets to over 40,000 individuals in nine provinces throughout the country in addition to providing specialized food packages to malnourished children and promoting agricultural livelihood projects for farmers. Yemen Aid benefits from the Cluster meetings, especially in terms of information sharing and logistics.



LESSONS LEARNED

The information gained at the meetings supports project management, but especially the project outcomes and impact for the affected population. Duplication with activities of other humanitarian actors is deliberately avoided. At times, larger institutional actors approach Yemen Aid to learn from its project implementation, but also to seek cooperation since the organization can access difficult-to-reach areas in the North of the country.



CHALLENGES EXPERIENCED

Yemen Aid experienced considerable challenges throughout its development. Since the founding members lacked understanding of the international humanitarian system and public management overall, coordination with the cluster system was initially perceived to be a challenge, but was overcome by demonstrating credibility.

In addition, Yemen Aid had to follow work-related policies from Yemen since it established offices there and in the US, resulting in the need to follow two different financial systems and transparency standards. Another challenge was the need to learn how to set-up operations in a qualitative manner, in terms of procurement and logistics systems for example.

The organization realized that it is not sufficient to simply help. Instead, in order to work on the ground in a sustainable manner, Yemen Aid learned to adopt a professional and organizational approach. The development process included making mistakes and learning from them in an open and collaborative manner, but also required substantial investments and efforts by the founding members.

Despite this difficult development process, Yemen Aid now brings two key advantages to providing humanitarian assistance and to coordinating and cooperating with institutional humanitarian actors: it profits from applying US-based standards in terms of financial management and transparency, enhancing its credibility and trustworthiness, but at the same time Yemen Aid can operate in the country and has advantages in terms of humanitarian access.



Good Practice 2

DIASPORA UMBRELLA ORGANIZATIONS

Umbrella organizations bring an added value when coordinating individual diaspora organizations, especially when reacting to crises.

Diaspora umbrella organizations can enhance coordination between individual diaspora crisis responses, and between the diaspora community and other humanitarian actors. This is especially important when diaspora react to ongoing crises where there is little time for organizational capacity-building, establishment of communication channels and for building partnerships. In such cases, it is better to integrate efforts and to speak with one voice to facilitate an efficient response.

In addition, diaspora umbrella organizations can enable greater information sharing between diaspora humanitarians regarding the

needs of local communities affected by crises, logistical and other barriers to delivering humanitarian assistance to affected local areas and identify and fill gaps in relief provision. This can be done through the use of online platforms, which help gather information and actors in one place, or use of social media and mobile messaging apps, which allow even informal networks to mobilize resources, and coordinate humanitarian responses quickly and effectively.

Umbrella organizations can ensure that actors at different scales and organizations of varied sizes are able to coordinate, exchange information and efficiently use resources. This also helps diaspora organizations to learn from each other by working more closely in response to crises.

HAITI RENEWAL ALLIANCE



PROFILE

Non-profit organization
based in the US.

OBJECTIVE

Promoting diaspora engagement for the
sustainable development and investment
in the Caribbean, particularly Haiti.



DESCRIPTION OF GOOD PRACTICE

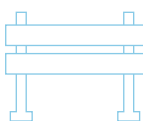
The Haiti Renewal Alliance (HRA) in partnership with IOM and funding from USAID's Bureau of Humanitarian Assistance developed the Diaspora Coordination Framework, an umbrella network of diaspora organizations for humanitarian actions and tools for increasing diaspora coordination and collaboration. This led to the development of the ONEDIASPORA coordination platform to serve as a repository to house critical information, to provide resources to registered diaspora organizations and to improve long term recovery efforts. HDERU, the Haitian Diaspora Emergency Response Unit, established in 2016, is a diaspora coordination model for tracking, monitoring, and integrating the diaspora within humanitarian affairs and development more effectively.

HDERU was activated after the earthquake in Haiti on 14th August 2021. On the day of its activation, the HDERU platform held the first online conference with more than 90 diaspora organizations. Eventually, more than 30 online meetings were held to share real-time information via WhatsApp Relief communications, to pre-negotiate vendor rates, to formalize relationships with national and local authorities and to strengthen local procurement processes. As a result, the ONEDIASPORA platform operationalized and registered over 70 organizations working both within the diaspora community and on the ground, and the platform engaged and informed over 200 organizations, government officials, health care workers, and other friends of Haiti. The Platform provided logistics support to diaspora organizations and the transportation of



LESSONS LEARNED

supplies into Haiti. The established HRA-ONE-DIASPORA FUND received pledges of over USD 1.5 million through a flash appeal—with which the HRA purchased and distributed 2,000 five-gallon water bottles, 500 tents and tarps, and sent containers of medical and hygiene supplies for relief and recovery efforts and provided funding for several registered ONEDIASPORA Coalition Organizations working in the 2021 relief effort. HDERU was de-activated on 30 September 2021.



CHALLENGES EXPERIENCED

The emergency efforts encountered a number of challenges. First, the response phase was hindered by after-shocks, but also by political and economic instability. The latter hampered effective cooperation with authorities and created security concerns for the transport and distribution of goods. Secondly, limited diaspora funding resources and expertise to navigate and to access direct funding from traditional humanitarian donors was perceived to be a challenge. Thirdly, the absence of local governance and law enforcement impeded local coordination efforts enhancing the importance of coordination from outside the country,

A major lesson learned was the need for diaspora organizations to integrate efforts and to enhance mutual support, in particular when applying for funding. A coordinated and collaborative diaspora was expected to have more impact. Also, the need was recognized for more collaboration with traditional actors in line with the necessity to build the capacities of diaspora organizations to meet standards. As part of that, building organizational infrastructure was deemed crucial regardless of limited capacity. A proper vision, formal registration, and a platform structure were essential to gain credibility and attract partnerships. A final lesson learned was the importance of diversifying funding resources, and combining funding from several groups to accomplish more work.

AMERICAN RELIEF COALITION FOR SYRIA



PROFILE

A Syrian diaspora-led humanitarian organization, based in the United States, with ten member organizations across 26 US states.

OBJECTIVE

To be a voice for US-based Syrian diaspora organizations who are providing humanitarian and development services for Syrians worldwide, through advocacy and empowering local humanitarian actors.

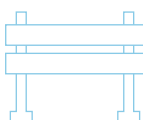


DESCRIPTION OF GOOD PRACTICE

In response to the Syria crisis, diaspora engaged in humanitarian response, initially through the sending of remittances. When the number of US-based Syrian diaspora organizations increased, the need was realized to coordinate and to have an entity representing these diaspora organizations engaging in humanitarian response.

The American Relief Coalition for Syria (ARCS) started first to operate on an unofficial basis, but quickly became organized. In 2016, ARCS was able to secure funding, from membership and from Oxfam, to hire staff. Oxfam continued to support ARCS until recently. As a result, ARCS works on capacity building by providing tools and resources to members to strengthen their abilities and impact, including proposal writing, organizational capacity building and communications. ARCS also represents their members when sharing lessons learned and exploring cooperation with other Syrian diaspora organizations.

In addition, ARCS aimed to operate as a bridge between Syria and the US, between diaspora and traditional humanitarian actors. In doing so, ARCS included advocacy activities and passed on information and updates from the field, in particular from local and grassroots voices, to politicians, including to the White House, US Departments of State and Homeland Security, UN Security Council, UN agencies, and Congress.



CHALLENGES EXPERIENCED

A major challenge was that diaspora organizations are not familiar with the humanitarian system. Until today, it remains a struggle to explain how the international system works and what its limitations are.

Secondly, securing funding for coordination is perceived as difficult, since it remains challenging to demonstrate the impact of coordination on the ground. Most coordination efforts are not visible, and by definition hard to raise money for.

Thirdly, operational coordination was felt to be the most challenging aspect, especially compared to the advocacy functions of an umbrella organization. Intense cooperation, in terms of joint fundraising and joint project implementation, requires investment and capacity-building in dedicated staff, and more learning was needed to achieve that.



LESSONS LEARNED

The experience of ARCS demonstrates some lessons learned. First, the organizational differences between diaspora organizations do not really matter from a coordination point of view as long as all members share similar objectives and the same vision. Despite differences in size, all members should be perceived as equal partners.

Second, umbrella diaspora organizations should be given the time and opportunity to grow gradually. It is advisable to start small and focused, based on mutual understanding and objectives.

Third, a transition is needed between operating as a crisis actor and as a long-term initiative dealing with a protracted crisis. Whereas in the first case, the added value of an umbrella organization is straightforward, it is more difficult to find its role for the long-term and to ensure the relevant capacities.

Finally, diaspora organizations profit from umbrella organizations in emergency situations and for protracted conflicts, in terms of building networks, exchange of knowledge and sharing of experiences. Comparatively small diaspora organizations benefit slightly more from umbrella organizations to overcome standard challenges of volunteer-led organizations, such as limited capacities.



Good Practice 3

COORDINATION WITH LOCAL AND NATIONAL AUTHORITIES

Because of their connections, diaspora organizations can in certain contexts easily coordinate with national authorities.

Coordinating diaspora humanitarian activities with local and national authorities in crisis-affected regions is important to maximize impact and reduce duplication of efforts and resources. In some countries, it is also a requirement to be allowed to operate in the affected area. Diaspora groups and networks coordinate with governments in settlement countries, their embassies abroad, and national and local governments in origin and other countries. Approval and official permissions to operate in the country can be a requirement for any humanitarian actor. In conflict and complex emergency settings, diaspora humanitarians may also have to negotiate with non-state actors, including non-governmental armed forces to facilitate humanitarian activities.

Engagement with local and national authorities in countries of residence and origin can enhance the coordination of diaspora humanitarian activities with those of other actors. It can also form the basis for partnerships that leverage diaspora and other financial and human resources for improved impact, especially at the local level. Especially when crises emerge or escalate, diasporas have the advantage and can build on already established relationships with authorities, especially the embassies in the countries of residence.

Of course, the degree of coordination with local and national authorities will depend on the type of disasters and crises, and might be easier when conflicts are absent and a functioning governing structure is in place.

ASSOCIATION DES TUNISIENS DES GRANDES ÉCOLES



PROFILE

Established by Tunisian diaspora members in France, especially engineers, students from business schools, doctors and researchers in 1990.

OBJECTIVE

To reinforce connections and cooperation between Tunisia and the world.



DESCRIPTION OF GOOD PRACTICE

Tunisia had a wave of COVID-19 infections in July 2021. In response to this emergency, Tunisian diaspora got involved. The France-based diaspora association, Association des Tunisiens des Grandes Ecoles (ATUGE), had already established contacts within the Tunisian embassy in France, also in the form of non-crisis related cooperation. When the Embassy called for assistance to respond to the ongoing health crisis in Tunisia, ATUGE responded positively.

ATUGE requested that its network, mainly students and engineers, support the response, either by making donations or by assisting in the logistical part of the operation at the Embassy. This resulted in a mutual collaboration where the Embassy needed volunteers to help out and ATUGE required support to transport the goods to Tunisia. Initial needs were identified by the hospitals and local contacts in Tunisia, and then communicated to the Tunisian diaspora. In the last two weeks of July, Tunisian diaspora brought personal protective equipment (PPE) and other material, including oxygen, to the Embassy. Other organizations also assisted in the response, including medical doctors working in France.¹

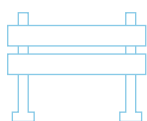
Once the goods arrived to the Embassy and were sorted with the help of volunteers, the relief items were transported by the authorities to Tunisia. Customs procedures were taken care of by the appropriate services. The distribution of the relief items went in accordance with preferences defined by the diaspora, who had verified with their

¹ In addition, ATUGE together with other diaspora raised over USD 93,000 for medical equipment for hospitals in Tunisia (Source: DEMAC. Diaspora Organizations and their Humanitarian response in Tunisia. Real-Time Review, January 2022.)



LESSONS LEARNED

local contacts where the main needs were in the country. The armed forces assisted in the transport and distribution in-country to ensure an efficient and timely delivery. Staff from ATUGE and partner organizations based in Tunisia undertook verification activities to confirm that the aid had arrived, and pictures were taken to provide evidence. When numbers of infections decreased and possibilities for vaccination increased in the country in early August, the assistance was downscaled.



CHALLENGES EXPERIENCED

ATUGE was relatively new in providing this kind of assistance. As such, it experienced a number of challenges. ATUGE had tried to send goods to Tunisia in March 2021, but experienced difficulties in doing so and therefore focused on the transfer of money to purchase materials directly in Tunisia. By summer 2021, they knew the value of the Embassy's support. In addition, ATUGE did not have much experience in how to set up a campaign asking for donations. Therefore, it undertook relatively few communication activities on the internet, radio and TV in France, which may have limited the results of the campaign. In general, ATUGE lacked support functions, in terms of communication, logistics and coordination.

The key lesson learned from this experience is that authorities and diaspora organizations can complement each other when providing assistance to non-political emergency situations. The coordination was mutually beneficial. The division of tasks was clear with the authorities ensuring the transport and customs, and the diaspora supporting needs assessment and the soliciting of donations.

In addition, local contacts of diaspora organizations contributed to the appropriateness of the relief items and enhancement of the overall efficiency and effectiveness of the emergency aid.

AUSTRIA-PAKISTAN ASSOCIATION



Oesterreichisch
Pakistanische
Gesellschaft

PROFILE

Established in 1976 by diaspora from Pakistan in Austria.

OBJECTIVE

To cultivate the cultural and scientific contacts between Austria and Pakistan, and to further the knowledge of the wider public in Austria about the politics, economy, history, culture and the social system of Pakistan.



DESCRIPTION OF GOOD PRACTICE

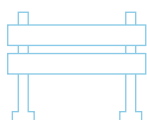
The Austria-Pakistan Association (APA) has the broad mandate to enhance and promote friendly relations between Austria and Pakistan. Hence, it has a close cooperation with the Pakistan embassy in Vienna. In addition to organizing events for its members and serving as a platform for all who deal with Pakistan and Austria-Pakistan relations, the Association also engages in cooperation projects in the educational and humanitarian sector. Humanitarian activities are relatively new for the APA and grew from the recent COVID-19 crisis. In response to the pandemic, APA started a project called “Millions of Meals” to distribute meals and medical supplies to one million Pakistanis living under the poverty line, low wage workers, the homeless and other people affected by COVID-19.

In Pakistan, the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) coordinates incoming humanitarian assistance as well as the equivalent bodies at provincial and district level. In fact, local representations of diaspora organizations have to be formally registered in the country to be allowed to operate. Coordination with authorities for humanitarian activities is thus a precondition for diaspora aiming to implement projects in the country.

Additional mechanisms were established in response to the COVID-19 crisis, including a National Coordination Committee and a Relief Fund, and the authorities granted special permissions to humanitarian actors, including

² DEMAC. Diaspora Organizations and their Humanitarian Response in Pakistan, August 2021.

diaspora, to rapidly start activities while waiting for formal approval.² Hence, APA coordinated with the relevant authorities in the country, in particular to be granted the necessary permissions and approvals, and to assist with logistics to transport the goods in the field. Now, APA has expanded to assist with clean water and educational projects.



CHALLENGES EXPERIENCED

As an organization working on a broad range of activities, APA experienced challenges in building its knowledge and capacities with regard to humanitarian assistance. As a new actor in this field, challenges exist in how to access funding and how to increase cooperation with other humanitarian actors. As a result, humanitarian activities remain a small part of the Association's portfolio, limiting its possibilities to build a track record. The lack of experience further constrains fundraising, and the diaspora organization finds itself in a vicious cycle. To exit that cycle, APA requires capacity-building and assistance. Coordination with authorities also takes time and dedication to identify the responsible service within ministries.



LESSONS LEARNED

This example indicates that diaspora organizations with a broad mandate can also be well suited to implement humanitarian projects. In particular, they may have an advantage in terms of building on pre-established contacts and networks to coordinate projects with the national and local authorities. Yet, the experience of APA also demonstrates that these contacts are not alone sufficient to guarantee effective coordination.

One reason is that the responsible persons are spread over different ministries and institutions in Pakistan depending on the type of project. Multiple contact attempts may be needed before a contact can be successfully established. Whereas previous contacts make coordination easier, patience and persistence are still required on top of quality and professionalism.



Good Practice 4

TRANSFER OF KNOWLEDGE AND LEARNING BY DIASPORA

Diaspora organizations can be a source of knowledge and learning for other humanitarian actors.

Diaspora humanitarians have vital experience and expertise in responding to crises in origin and other countries and can be a source of knowledge for other humanitarian actors, including local organizations, other diaspora members and relief organizations overall. In fact, diaspora can have better access to local humanitarian actors, especially if they share the same nationality, language, culture and/or profession. These help in overcoming barriers that institutional humanitarian actors may have when working on local capacity-building.

However, diaspora can also work in silos and lack access to structures and networks that enable the exchange of knowledge between different diasporas about what has worked in various emergency contexts. Inter- and intra-diaspora networks and platforms can support improved coordination in humanitarian responses by bridging diasporas, experience, and expertise, providing a multiplier effect for media advocacy, lobbying, and leveraging resources. Intra- and inter-diaspora coordination platforms foster collaboration and exchange to increase the sustainability of humanitarian interventions, and to collaborate with the humanitarian community overall.

WORLD HUMANITARIAN ACTION FORUM



PROFILE

The Humanitarian Forum and Zakat House, both established in 2008, joined to form the World Humanitarian Action Forum, in part as an effort to support the collaboration of international organizations working with a wide range of humanitarian partners around the world, including Muslim NGOs and communities as well as diaspora organizations. They are based in the UK.

OBJECTIVE

To address common issues affecting the humanitarian sector and to promote collaborative working at local and international levels.



DESCRIPTION OF GOOD PRACTICE

In addition to working on advocacy and coordination, the World Humanitarian Action Forum (WHAF) works on learning and knowledge transfer to a wide variety of partners, but in particular with the aim of supporting local actors and diaspora organizations.

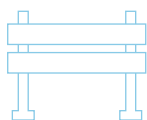
One way of transferring knowledge to diaspora is the support to young diaspora members who are interested in supporting the Global South. WHAF provides training and mentorship. Regular humanitarian visits are organized with young humanitarian experts, for example to Kenya in January 2022 when eighteen young men and women from the UK, Ireland, Italy, Spain and Nairobi met humanitarian actors and gained direct experience from the field. The experience of WHAF demonstrates that the second generation of refugees and migrants are especially keen to engage in humanitarian assistance worldwide, not necessarily in their origin country only.

However, they need exposure to and understanding of the reality of such work and require strengthening of their skills. In another effort to connect diaspora in countries of residence, diaspora in transit countries and local organizations in countries of origin, WHAF provides training to local organizations. Local partners are asked to identify their needs and priorities, upon which trainers from diasporal organizations in Europe provide in-person training and share their humanitarian know-



LESSONS LEARNED

ledge and expertise. Such capacity-building programs can for example include organizational development, good governance, project management advocacy or communication skills. The trainings are driven by the needs of the trainees and are organized in a participatory and active format. In addition, organizations are offered tools and guidance.



CHALLENGES EXPERIENCED

In order for WHAF to be able to successfully share knowledge and learning, it has to rely on a wide network of humanitarian actors, NGOs and diaspora organizations. It takes time and knowledge to build up this network and to gain capacities. WHAF also gains credibility by organizing a regular annual Forum aimed at enhancing partnership and coordination amongst humanitarian actors.

For its training programs in particular, WHAF relies on individual experts who have previous or ongoing expertise in the humanitarian field. Since the experts contribute to training programs on a voluntary basis, they need to have the necessary motivation to invest their time in sharing their knowledge.

In order to overcome the isolation of diaspora organizations in the humanitarian sector, there is a need to strive towards an inclusive approach to capacity-building and learning. The experience of WHAF demonstrates the importance of building networks and connections across diverse types of organizations, be they international or local. In addition, this example demonstrates the possible added value of diaspora in terms of overcoming language and cultural barriers when building the capacities of local organizations. Diaspora members with solid humanitarian expertise have an advantage when passing this knowledge on to local organizations.

IMAMIA MEDICS INTERNATIONAL



PROFILE

Established by immigrants and foreign medical graduates in the US in 1994.

OBJECTIVE

To provide a global platform for Shi'a Muslim health & science professionals for career development as well as the opportunity to offer health education and services to underserved populations globally.



DESCRIPTION OF GOOD PRACTICE

Imamia Medics International (IMI) has the dual mandate of delivering health assistance and providing educational and professional development. The organization has regional, national and local chapters in seventeen countries, but also has the ability to work in any country where there is a need. IMI offers training and professional development to health professionals and other professional groups needing knowledge about emergency health, such as police officers and customs officials.

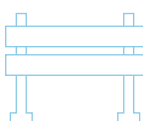
For example, in Iraq, they transfer and give instruction on modern technologies and techniques to local colleagues, such as radiology. Diaspora members return to their countries of origin to give guest lectures as visiting professors in existing educational programs. In addition, IMI organizes annual medical missions during the pilgrimage season in Iraq. On top of providing medical services to around 100,000 patients in one week, these missions can directly transfer and exchange knowledge and experience between international and local health professionals. The transfer is two way, whereby also local colleagues share knowledge with international professionals, including on how to treat patients when technical devices are unavailable, or internationals learn how to practice in different country environments in line with the applicable national protocols. Since the medical teams visiting the countries are diverse in terms of professional background, experience and nationality, they continuously learn from each other on the job.



LESSONS LEARNED

The example of IMI clearly shows that learning can take place in a holistic and interdisciplinary manner. Knowledge exchange is helped by diversity in terms of gender, nationality or background. In addition, the experience shows that learning is an integral part of any humanitarian activity and is best served by the combination of multiple learning tools and layers. Formal education is to be combined with on-the-job training and informal opportunities to exchange expertise. Most importantly, the IMI experience shows that learning is not taking place in one direction only, namely from international to local health professionals. On the contrary, diaspora members can also benefit from the knowledge of local staff. Learning should take place in both directions.

IMI adapts its trainings and capacity buildings to the status of knowledge and capacities in the country. For example, in Pakistan and India, diaspora members deliberately build on the available knowledge that exists in these countries and focus on specific niches and gaps. Finally, IMI also organizes annual global conferences in the formats of continued formal education whereby participants can gain academic credits.



CHALLENGES EXPERIENCED

When working with a diverse group of experts in multiple countries of the world, there is automatically the challenge of how to find a common denominator. IMI's experts bring their own education and professional experience, yet they need to work as a team when being deployed. Working in different countries, also requires adaptation in terms of the cultural settings and the national legal framework and context. IMI thus has to be able to manage this diversity. One solution was to offer orientation trainings for its staff and the agreement to never work against national protocols.

VOICES OF DIASPORA ORGANIZATIONS

“If we implement a large project, we are contacted by UNICEF and WFP who want to understand how we do this. We are valued for our honesty and support, and internationals value that we can implement projects on our own to meet the needs.”

“When message comes from us an umbrella organization, they will listen, and we can influence the decision. They know that we can go to the media. Our letters are published and shared by our members who have their own websites and large outreach in the US and the UK.”

“The humanitarian system is not known by diaspora organizations. It is a continued struggle to explain how the humanitarian world works. For example, it is not easy to explain the limitations of the UN system to the communities.”

“Traditional fundraising in a post-COVID-19 world is no longer tenable, and diaspora members and organizations must support one another’s organizational development for collective project funding.”

“One of most important challenges is the differences between technical standards. High-tech equipment may not correspond with actual needs.”

“We benefitted a lot from the learning process. Now we call ourselves a humanitarian actor. We were doing humanitarian assistance before, but we did not know. We started to recognize ourselves as a humanitarian actor.”

“During the crisis, it was natural (for the Embassy) to contact us to help with fundraising and logistics. They needed human resources and we needed their influence to send planes and to mobilize armed forces to distribute the assistance. It was a mutual collaboration.”

“All our work is about capacity-building and lessons learned and we have different layers complementing each other. A good practice is to have diverse people joining the conversations. When networks meet regularly, there is so much cross-over between diaspora communities.”



Good Practice 5

CAPACITY-BUILDING OF DIASPORA ORGANIZATIONS

Diaspora organizations have the ability to grow and to build their capacities to become professional humanitarian organizations.

Diaspora organizations do not always have the same capacities as institutional actors, and typically lack resources enabling them to upskill staff and organizations. Upskilling diaspora capacities and networks helps institutionalize diaspora organizations and improve the impact and sustainability of diaspora humanitarian responses. Increasing diaspora capacities in turn enhances the visibility of their activities and the likelihood of recognition by actors in the field, as well as leveraging dias-

pora networks and resources to contribute to more impactful responses to current crises, as well as future ones.

The following case-studies are two examples of diaspora organizations successfully engaging in a learning and development process. Acknowledging the needs to expand their knowledge on the humanitarian sector allowed them to grow and to expand their activities. Capacity-building is a continuous and comprehensive effort which requires a learning culture in the organization to ensure that the efforts are sustainable and effective.

THE ORGANISATION OF SIERRA LEONEAN HEALTHCARE PROFESSIONALS ABROAD



PROFILE

A professional and non-political think-tank healthcare organization representing all Sierra Leonean professionals abroad, set up in the UK in 2007.

OBJECTIVE

To provide healthcare relief services and create ideas and policy debates that will shape the future of healthcare policy, practice, and regulation for a healthier Sierra Leone.



DESCRIPTION OF GOOD PRACTICE

As a result of their experiences with the Ebola crisis in 2014-2016, the Organisation of Sierra Leonean Healthcare Professionals Abroad (TOSHPA) saw the need to develop their capacities in the response and coordination of future crises and underwent significant organizational development. In 2016, TOSHPA attended capacity-building programs, including from DEMAC. In these program, TOSHPA leadership learned how to deliver humanitarian assistance, including project management, humanitarian coordination and risk management. TOSHPA also learned how to market itself, how to raise funds and how to communicate results through social media. The organization overall benefitted from having its leadership participating in these programs, after which learnings were distributed throughout the TOSHPA hierarchy.

Whereas TOSHPA was engaged in the humanitarian sector before, the trainings strengthened their activities and provided staff with the confidence to function as a humanitarian actor. Thanks to the capacity-building process, TOSHPA became recognized as a professional organization bringing relevant expertise in responding to crises. The learnings were applied soon thereafter in response to the 2017 mudslide in Freetown and in the COVID-19 response in Sierra Leone as of 2020. In response to the mudslides, TOSHPA sent a team of nurses, composed of a qualified mental health nurse and registered general nurses, and provided psychological support to victims of that disaster, especially women and children. They also delivered training to

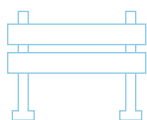


LESSONS LEARNED

upskill colleagues at the Kissi Mental Health facility and Connaught Hospital. In this occasion, TOSHPA knew how to get the necessary approvals from the Ministry of Health, how to assess the risks and how to cooperate with the other actors present. For example, it now recognized the value of having a Memorandum of Understanding with partner organizations. Other visible outcomes of the capacity-building efforts are to be found at the level of the organization itself. TOSHPA updated its website and acknowledged the importance of showing the results of its activities in order to attract more funding.

The example of TOSHPA shows the importance for diaspora organizations to have the necessary capacities and understanding of the humanitarian sector. Learning enhances the effectiveness and quality of the response, but also fosters solid and equal partnerships. Learnings need to be applied as quickly as possible of course, and it is a continuous process to identify additional learning needs.

Finally, it is important for learnings to be distributed throughout the organization and to be transferred to other staff, especially when the leadership is changing.



CHALLENGES EXPERIENCED

Diaspora networks like TOSHPA in Sierra Leone went through a steep learning curve through the experience of providing an emergency response to the Ebola crisis and saw the importance of building their organizational and staff capacities in order to strengthen their emergency responses, which is often a challenge for informal or ad hoc diaspora organizations and networks. However, further learning remains, particularly on how to draft project proposals and how to apply for institutional fundings.

DOZ E.V.



PROFILE

Established in 2011 as a student and youth intellectuals organized group, with registration as an NGO in 2012 with offices in Northeast Syria, Kurdistan in Iraq and headquarters in Leipzig, Germany.

OBJECTIVE

To support and protect children, youth, women, Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs), refugees, and local communities from long-term negative impacts of extremism, inter-conflict tensions, inequality of opportunities, injustice, poverty, and violence in conflict areas and create safe spaces for them in both humanitarian and development areas and invest in humanity.



DESCRIPTION OF GOOD PRACTICE

Throughout the years, Doz underwent a clear development process from being an informal group based in Syria compensating for the lack of education opportunities due to the outbreak of the conflict, towards becoming a registered NGO in Germany with offices and operations in Iraq and Northeast Syria. Once Doz was registered in Germany, the founding members realized the need to get professionalized and organized.

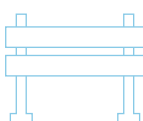
The organization started with creating a bank account and then developed tools to be able to conduct project management, grant management and auditing. As a result of building these capacities, Doz was able to expand its sectoral and its geographical scope from education and protection towards agriculture and livelihoods. Because of the difficult access to Syria for humanitarian actors, Doz functioned as an implementing partner for Save the Children, Mercy Corps and War Child but also implemented projects in Germany for the German Ministry of Interior and the Robert Bosch Stiftung.

Doz entered into partnerships with other actors, both in Syria and in Iraq, but also in Germany, to actively learn from them and share its own knowledge. In 2018, Doz became one of the consortium members to implement a research project under the EU-funded Horizon 2020 program, mapping the integration of migrant children across Europe. Since 2022, Doz is a membership-based organization



LESSONS LEARNED

with an elected board and offices in three countries, employing four staff in Germany with an additional five volunteers, two staff in Iraq with three volunteers, and 72 staff in Syria with around 30 volunteers. Staff across all locations are included in the capacity-building and strategic growing process of the organization.



CHALLENGES EXPERIENCED

One of the challenges experienced by Doz in its development process is that new organizations have little track record and as such they need time to build trust with NGOs and donors. Basic elements, such as having a bank account, are essential in demonstrating professionalism to their partners. In order to overcome this challenge, it was advised to grow slowly and start with a small number of activities in order to have impact. Another challenge was the need to constantly gain knowledge and learning. The process thus requires a high degree of patience, determination and dedication.

The experience of Doz indicates that diaspora organizations have to learn how to strengthen their complementary role combining local and international advantages.

It can be an added value to contextualize the work of diaspora within the larger picture and there are clear opportunities for diaspora. In the case of Doz, it successfully placed its work within the Grand Bargain Commitments and the outcomes of the World Humanitarian Summit, namely in terms of localization, and deliberately worked towards that goal when strengthening its capacities.

Another lesson is that diaspora should invest in developing consistent policies and guidelines when working in multiple countries. For example, the same rules and regulations should apply to staff across all three countries, including on PSEA guidelines or working hours, enhancing its credibility.



Good Practice 6

TECHNICAL AND KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE

Diaspora organizations are well placed to transfer technical knowledge and expertise in humanitarian assistance.

Diaspora organizations, networks, and individuals often deploy their skills and expertise in response to emergencies. Diaspora health professional networks have provided emergency medical services and supplies in crisis-affected regions, helping to strengthen fragile health systems both on the ground and remotely via telemedicine.

Similarly, diaspora professionals with expertise in engineering, Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH), and reconstruction deploy

their skills and knowledge to build pre-crisis resilience, as part of the emergency response operations, and assist in post-crisis recovery and reconstruction.

Diaspora organizations have clear advantages in this regard, since they have built up their qualifications and expertise in the countries of residence, but continue to have access to their countries of origin, relying on previous knowledge on the needs of the situation, the standards used in the country and personal contacts with stakeholders which can be utilized to create the necessary connections and agreements to assist the population in a meaningful and sustainable manner.

ASSOCIATION INTERNATIONALE DE COOPÉRATION MÉDICALE



PROFILE

Established in 2004, composed of more than 30 medical experts, pharmacists, specialized engineers, trainers and project managers from the Ukrainian diaspora community living in France.

OBJECTIVE

Together, for a just and modern medicine in Ukraine.



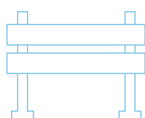
DESCRIPTION OF GOOD PRACTICE

The Association Internationale de Coopération Médicale (AICM) works on the basis that access to healthcare is a fundamental right for everyone. Therefore, half of the budget of the AICM goes to humanitarian activities in Ukraine. In 2021, AICM assisted 165 care centers and provided direct and indirect support to 2.75 million people, including 16,500 COVID-19 patients in intensive care. The Association imported 554 tons of medical equipment and drugs for the most urgent needs of hospitals.

Since the start of the conflict in eastern Ukraine in 2014, AICM has strengthened its focus on assisting the population in the Donbas region. In addition, AICM provides training to institutions in specialized medical assistance, such as pediatrics, oncology or neurosurgery in an effort to transfer knowledge from their experts. These trainings take place either in France or Ukraine, or through distance learning, and are intended to have a multiplier effect whereby those trained specialists spread their knowledge to other colleagues in the country.

Medical specialists from the diaspora community also provide on-the-job training in the country or treat patients directly with Ukrainian colleagues observing. AICM, in cooperation with French and Ukrainian doctors, also developed information booklets for patients and their families when experiencing specific

diseases, such as cancer. Another project is in terms of DNA research for the detection of specific diseases amongst children. Due to the expense of transporting the genetic material to France, the project was transferred to Ukraine.



CHALLENGES EXPERIENCED

A key challenge in transferring knowledge and expertise in the medical area is the difference in standards and equipment between the two countries, but also in terms of experience and education system for medical specialists. Most medical doctors do not speak English and have no access to international scientific literature. For example, during the COVID-19 crisis, this resulted in a delay in acquiring the latest updates on how to treat infection. Therefore, AICM translated articles into Ukrainian or Russian and included the knowledge in training opportunities. A final challenge was the huge need for hospitals to gain technical expertise, through which AICM felt overwhelmed at times.



LESSONS LEARNED

When diaspora organizations aim to transfer knowledge and expertise to their countries of origin in a sustainable and effective manner, a lesson learned from the AICM experience is to first secure the approval of the national authorities. AICM signed an agreement with the Ministry of Health in 2004, and found that this document provided the necessary access to the hospitals. A top-down approach is advisable to ensure that the assistance provided is durable and comprehensive.

After this initial agreement, close cooperation with specialized institutions is possible in identifying interlocutors and train-the-trainers. At the same time, it was deemed important to advertise activities as broadly as possible using multiple channels, including to embassies, donors and partners.

Finally, this experience clearly demonstrates the comparative advantage of diaspora whereby their members have acquired specialization and expertise in their countries of residence, but benefit from knowing the needs and the context of their countries of origin with which to access and make sustainable changes.

SUDANESE AMERICAN PHYSICIANS ASSOCIATION



PROFILE

A humanitarian membership-based organization for physicians and other medical professionals of Sudanese descent that live and work primarily within the United States, established in 2019.

OBJECTIVE

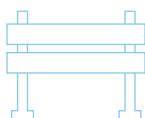
To provide a forum for physicians and other medical professionals of Sudanese descent to engage and collaborate with their colleagues within the United States, Sudan, and across the world, as well as to contribute to the development of health policy and the delivery of quality health care services in its members' communities.



DESCRIPTION OF GOOD PRACTICE

In order to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic in Sudan, the Sudanese American Physicians Association (SAPA) provided support to the medical institutions in the country, including by forming a COVID-19 Taskforce. Based on an agreement with the Federal Ministry of Health, SAPA supplied PPE for a total sum of USD 74,823 on top of other equipment. Needs for such items are identified by the Ministry of Health in close cooperation with local authorities. In addition, SAPA worked directly with hospitals to transfer knowledge and expertise. For example, members of SAPA joined the daily rounds of doctors via remote technology and advised local colleagues directly on treatment. These co-visits also took place for non-COVID-19 medical issues.

Another activity was to develop and upload videos on social media explaining medical issues, for example COVID-19 for children or COVID-19 for pregnant women. Finally, SAPA supports the Sudanese Board of Specialists through the development and delivery of training courses, including post-graduate courses or surgery training. These activities take place either remotely or in-person.



CHALLENGES EXPERIENCED

Initially, SAPA experienced challenges in identifying local partners with the appropriate technical expertise to accommodate the knowledge transfer. However, it learned that before making investments, guarantees are needed for the local partner to engage in a trustworthy manner, enhancing the sustainability of the technical support. In addition, constant developments and changes on the ground led to delays in projects and made in-country visits difficult, which is particularly important when transferring technical skills.

In addition to the need for a solid structure of the diaspora organization, SAPA needs to remain abreast of the developments to ensure its technical assistance is tailored and effective. Also, sensitivities on the ground continue to limit the possibilities for marketing, and forces SAPA to be careful in openly sharing pictures of donated technical equipment.



LESSONS LEARNED

Contact between SAPA and the technical staff in the ministries was facilitated by personal and educational networks. But also, connections with local authorities were built on relations in the resistance movement during the uprising. There is a linkage between political work and the professional medical knowledge exchange, whereby the funding of pro-democracy movements provides SAPA with the required leverage.

Second, diasporas are advised to constantly update themselves on the situation. Especially when diaspora members have left their country some time ago, they need to adapt their understanding of technical and knowledge needs of the country to the realities. Flexibility is equally advisable in how to match needs with available technical capacities. For example, SAPA has sent equipment to Sudan which no longer met the strict medical standards in the country of residence but did function perfectly well. With little training to the operating staff, this equipment has been put to good use in Sudan.



Good Practice 7

ADVOCACY AND AWARENESS- RAISING

Diaspora organizations are well placed to advocate on behalf of their communities and to amplify the voice of the affected populations.

Diaspora groups and networks carry out important advocacy to raise awareness about crises in origin and other countries, and push for increased resources for humanitarian response. However, it is important to distinguish between diaspora and media advocacy on behalf of those affected by crises and the broader political lobbying of either diaspora opponents of origin country governments or opposition inside the country, although the

line can become blurred. Diaspora humanitarians are often very aware of this distinction, as it can affect their humanitarian activities.

Critical events in origin and other countries are also important mobilizers for diaspora humanitarian response. Diaspora crisis advocacy leverages diaspora skills, resources, and networks to maximize the impact of humanitarian activities, ensure information is heard by policymakers, foster effective communication, and help hold governments, institutional partners, and other stakeholders accountable for their humanitarian interventions.

SUDAN NEXTGEN



PROFILE

Established by Sudanese experts in the diaspora in the US.

OBJECTIVE

To leapfrog Sudan forward by supporting developmental projects and empowering youth through leadership development and agile teamwork.



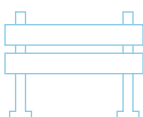
DESCRIPTION OF GOOD PRACTICE

Sudan NextGen implements humanitarian and development projects in the country, including medical support, training and leadership, supporting schools, addressing flooding needs and bringing in new agricultural technologies. In addition, Sudan NextGen has been actively advocating around the crisis facing Sudan by using multiple means. The focus of the advocacy work of Sudan NextGen is on the use of available digital tools.

The organization regularly creates videos and uploads them on social media in addition to providing information on the humanitarian situation in country. Sudan NextGen pursues annual awareness-raising campaigns for recurring natural disasters, such as floods. The Organization also raises awareness about the situation in the country, including by providing data on the number of casualties and injuries resulting from demonstrations. The Facebook page of Sudan NextGen is followed by almost 145,000 people and provides information both in Arabic and English.

These social media efforts are supported by additional information on the website of Sudan NextGen, including a digital platform with comprehensive information on the 217 projects run by Sudan NextGen. The platform includes promotional videos, information on funding sources, linkage to the Sustainable Development Goals and an expense tracking

sheet. In an effort to be transparent, Sudan NextGen wants to provide a clear message about the professionalism of the organization to potential local partners, but also to the target audience of their advocacy campaigns. A final advocacy channel is the use of semi-official media to give a voice to the people of Sudan. The diaspora organization also actively reaches out to the US State Department and members of the Senate, sends emails to local and national politicians and prepares statements on the situation in Sudan.



CHALLENGES EXPERIENCED

Sudan NextGen has encountered multiple challenges in its work. A first challenge is that advocacy work is highly regulated in the US and Sudan NextGen needs to be clear about its focus. Second, language can become a hindrance since all information needs to be translated from Arabic into English to make sure it is understood by the target audience in the US. A third challenge is that the organization relies heavily on volunteers, but also that these come from the non-profit sector and can lack expertise.



LESSONS LEARNED

The example of Sudan NextGen also indicates a number of lessons learned. First, trust is found to be a key ingredient for success for effective advocacy. There needs to be trust within the team, but it is also crucial to build up trust with local partners and with the target audience of the advocacy campaigns, including politicians. It is thus important to stay focused and as objective as possible in reporting and awareness-raising.

Second, effective advocacy requires multiple channels, including social media, a demonstration of trustworthiness through transparency and more traditional advocacy means. Building up credibility is a precondition for effective awareness-raising, and this requires the entire organization (and its partners) to follow standards. Investments in the team and the staff on the ground are needed to make sure that all understand and respect this goal.

Finally, Sudan NextGen recognizes the importance of teaming up with other diaspora organizations to have a louder voice, and takes on a contributing role when other organizations are stronger in a given aspect.

OMID INTERNATIONAL



PROFILE

Established in 2021 by
Afghan diaspora in the UK.

OBJECTIVE

To create sustainable futures
for those fleeing war and conflict.



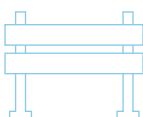
DESCRIPTION OF GOOD PRACTICE

Omid International aims to support, mentor and empower refugees, Afghans and non-Afghans, and to facilitate employment opportunities to become self-sufficient. Since its establishment in 2021, Omid has provided employment and sustainable livelihoods to over seventy Afghans and is currently delivering a training program for fifteen Afghan refugees with the aim to employ them in the UK. An agreement with a local company in the UK has been made to hire them after the training by Omid resulting in a solution benefiting both the refugee and the domestic labor market.

The activities of Omid International and of its sister companies, Governance and Reform Advisory (GRA) and Rahela Trust, are accompanied by strong advocacy campaigns that raise awareness about the humanitarian situation in Afghanistan and call for sustainable solutions for refugees with a particular focus on girls and young women in Afghanistan who are experiencing violence. A key message is that a sustainable development approach should not be sacrificed for the purpose of humanitarian assistance. Advocacy takes place through different tools and means, including through making statements and face-to-face communication with politicians or by organizing conferences for diaspora to come together and advocate collectively. In addition, social media is actively used, such

as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube and other websites.

Although the main focus of Omid International is to assist refugees from Afghanistan, the organization deliberately does not exclude other nationalities and advocates for the rights of all persons fleeing from conflict. For example, the organization also raises awareness of the suffering of Ukrainian refugees and reaches out to the Ukrainian diaspora to build their capacities and share lessons learned.



CHALLENGES EXPERIENCED

The main challenge for Omid International and its sister companies is that in order to be a credible organization, funding is needed. However, ensuring funding is difficult for most diaspora organizations and they continue to lack the support needed to build their capacities. The organization needs to combine smaller donations, making it even a challenge to fund its running costs. As a result, it is difficult for Omid International to increase its awareness-raising campaign and to ask for support for its programs.



LESSONS LEARNED

From this example, the following lessons can be learned to inform other diaspora organizations engaging in advocacy and awareness-raising. First, the structure is key, and the diaspora organization needs to clearly define the message it wants to send and the target audience of these campaigns. It is equally important to involve the people who are victims of the situation and who are traumatized. They should be asked about recommendations on how to restore their rights and dignity in advance of any advocacy work.

Refugees and diaspora should be engaged to work towards a sustainable approach and to strengthen their capacities. Advocacy is a comprehensive effort, ideally carried out by a broad group of people. The cooperation with humanitarian actors, including DRC, supports the exchange and building of networks that identify opportunities for awareness-raising and advocacy, also towards different countries and target audiences.



Good Practice 8

PARTNERSHIPS WITH LOCAL PARTNERS

Diaspora organizations deliver effective and efficient humanitarian assistance through partnerships with local civil society partners.

Partnerships with local civil society organizations and institutions grant diaspora organizations access to the affected populations and enable them to deliver aid. Local partners function as implementing partners on the ground. Especially in emergency contexts with a deep distrust of national structures, mechanisms and international organizations, the direct support of diaspora organizations to local civil society groups can create additional channels and have a more direct impact on affected communities. The allocation of greater resources to local organizations is in line with the Grand Bargain Commitments.

The establishment of these partnerships usually starts through informal and personal contacts. The examples below not only show the importance of these partnerships in

facilitating the humanitarian engagement of diaspora organizations, but also indicate good practice in how to make these partnerships effective and sustainable thereby meeting pre-set standards. Enhanced accountability and transparency help the overall outcomes and impact of humanitarian engagement of diaspora organizations.

The other direction is also possible, whereby local organizations can reach out quickly to diaspora organizations to mobilize their support and receive financial or in-kind contributions. This facilitates quick assistance in accordance with identified needs and using a more direct way to reach the affected populations. Diaspora organizations are able to support first assistance offered by civil society and the local population, and provide these first responders with the necessary impetus to deliver effective assistance.

HEALING VENEZUELA



PROFILE

UK registered charity, established in 2016 by private persons.

OBJECTIVE

To help the delivery of the best possible medical assistance to the people of Venezuela through a variety of programs.



DESCRIPTION OF GOOD PRACTICE

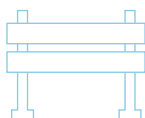
Healing Venezuela implements its programs through partnerships with local civil society groups, rural health centers and state hospitals. To date, Healing Venezuela has donated 12+ tons of medical supplies, delivered more than 1,000,000 meals to children at risk of malnutrition, sponsored 300 junior doctors, repaired and donated 12 critical medical devices and installed 3 water treatment plants in hospitals.

The establishment of partnerships was a gradual process. In 2016, Healing Venezuela started sending medical supplies to one reliable contact in one hospital. Additional contacts were identified through personal connections or through social media. A selection process was put in place that included on-the-ground verification of potential partners. In order to deal with a growing number of requests for assistance, a process was implemented whereby the Board decides which requests will be pursued. Receiving institutions are asked to supply evidence, including data and pictures, on the receipt and the use of the supplies. Healing Venezuela has applied the professional experience of diaspora members from the corporate sector to set up a management system with key performance indicators, reporting and auditing the programs. The system uses both quantitative and qualitative data to show the impact. Financial reports are published bi-annually, and updates are shared quarterly through newsletters.



LESSONS LEARNED

Over time, local actors were selected and any partnerships which did not fulfil the reporting requirements were ended. In 2022, Healing Venezuela is working with six partners instead of the original 24 to supply medical supplies to partners and has installed critical equipment in 7 hospitals as well as sponsoring junior doctors in 8 hospitals in different areas of the country. In the malnutrition prevention program, cooperation is limited to two centers working closely with the communities.



CHALLENGES EXPERIENCED

The implementation of a transparent management and reporting system is resource-intensive and requires a high degree of dedication from the volunteers working for Healing Venezuela. In addition, the crisis in Venezuela is highly politicized which complicates the support of diaspora organizations to the affected populations. For assistance to be effective, both transparency of funding sources and a low public profile that doesn't take public political positions are necessary. Blanket sanctions on Venezuela have also hindered humanitarian operations.

A number of lessons learned were identified that enable and strengthen partnerships with local civil society partners. First, quality is more important than quantity. If partnerships do not meet certain standards, diaspora organizations need to be able to terminate them.

Second, respect and trust in local partners is important for partnerships to flourish, especially in politicized environments.

Third, is not to overcomplicate the collection of evidence on the effectiveness of assistance. For example, Healing Venezuela puts a local UK newspaper in its supply boxes and asks recipients to take a picture when the material arrives.

Fourth, an appropriate management system, the right culture and skill set are key to maintain effective partnerships with local implementing partners.

BASECAMP BEIRUT

من تحت الرّدم
BASECAMP

PROFILE

A citizens' initiative that initially brought together four local non-profit organizations and countless volunteers, established as an emergency relief camp in response to the 2020 Beirut blast, based in Lebanon.

OBJECTIVE

To offer disaster relief services to households affected by the Beirut explosion, including home & shop rehabilitation, food, hygiene & other donations, medical aid, environmental, educational & psychological support.



DESCRIPTION OF GOOD PRACTICE

In the aftermath of the blast in Beirut on 4 August 2020, the local population gathered spontaneously in a parking lot to offer assistance to affected people. Eventually, Basecamp brought together four local associations and NGOs to offer medical assistance, distribute food and hygiene kits, and assist in reconstruction and clearance of the rubble. The initiative grew quickly and in a matter of days was forced to get organized. In October, Basecamp moved out of the parking lot into office premises, made possible thanks to private donations and a narrower focus on support to the neighborhood. The coalition continued to exist after the initial blast response and since then has also provided support to other emergencies in the country.

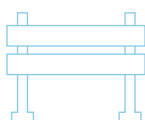
Diaspora supported the initiative in two ways, which supported the organization and growth of the initiative. First, diaspora provided donations, including cash for repair material and for the payment of contractors rebuilding the houses. Second, the blast occurred during the summer months, when many Lebanese citizens who live abroad were spending their holidays in the country. Many Lebanese expats supported the work through volunteering and in the first two months, Basecamp was supported by over 3000 volunteers, both local and diaspora members.

Over time, cash donations from diaspora decreased but were replaced by in-kind contributions. This was due to negative trends in the exchange rate and the limitations of



LESSONS LEARNED

the financial system, which complicated the transfer of money, keeping in mind that most diaspora members may have already been supporting their own family still living in Lebanon during the crisis. Nevertheless, in-kind donations of diaspora continue to make up 30-35% of the supplies from Basecamp. Some Lebanese expats set up their own initiatives to collect donations, including from private and corporate donors. Lebanese diaspora travelling back to the country also brought in extra suitcases of material to support people in need.



CHALLENGES EXPERIENCED

Whereas Basecamp was established thanks to the spontaneous reaction of the local population, the lack of organization quickly proved to be a difficulty for the coalition of organizations.

The organizations experienced challenges in terms of sustainability, including registration of the organization, operational costs, and the reliance on private donations & volunteers. As a result, Basecamp developed a structured vision, but is currently scaling down its initiative until official registration is possible again.

This example shows the potential of diaspora organizations to support and empower local initiatives, but also indicates a number of lessons learned. First, diaspora support can take the format of cash, in-kind and in-person support, but needs to adapt to local developments and limitations.

Second, incoming diaspora support cannot take place in a vacuum and can only be effective if it fits into a structured and organized framework.

Third, for assistance to have impact, spontaneous initiatives are not sustainable and are required to undergo a learning and development process to become formal humanitarian organizations that are able to grow, plan, sustain themselves, and over time respond to other emergencies.



Good Practice 9

ACCESS TO FIRST-HAND INFORMATION

Diaspora organizations have or may be aware of direct communications channels with the affected population overcoming difficulties in access.

Diaspora humanitarians can be highly effective at drawing on informal, community networks, working with local civil society, and using these networks and digital messaging applications to collect information on needs and to communicate directly with the population. At times, this may give them a comparative advantage over institutional humanitarian actors, since diaspora organizations can access personal networks or knowledge on how to enable communication with the population in a given area. This can be of particular importance when responding in areas which

are difficult to reach due to security concerns or when natural disasters have damaged the country's infrastructure.

Direct communication facilitates the accountability to the target population when conducting needs assessment and supports humanitarians' accountability to affected populations. The high degree of trust between these populations and the diaspora organizations also ensures that the data collected for needs assessments is directly sourced from said populations. Finally, working with local civil society groups in crisis affected areas enables diaspora organizations to monitor and verify activities, even in remote areas.

FOUNDATION FOR REFUGEE ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT



PROFILE

Established by Nigerian diaspora members in the UK in 2015.

OBJECTIVE

To address emergency and longer-term needs of displaced persons and host communities in Northern Nigeria affected by the Boko Haram insurgency.



DESCRIPTION OF GOOD PRACTICE

The Foundation for Refugee Economic Empowerment (FREE) delivers relief and medical supplies, education services and WASH interventions to refugees in camps and in local communities in Northern Nigeria. In order to collect data on the needs of its target population, FREE has set up an effective monitoring system enabling direct contact with the communities.

Needs assessment is conducted using several methods to ensure the information originates from varied sources: interviews, questionnaires, focus groups and physical verification. Tools such as KoBo Toolbox and Microsoft Excel are used for collation and data collection is also conducted by paid community-based volunteers who have received training in advance. Community visits allow for direct participatory assessments. Focal points are identified remotely, give context to the situation on the ground and provide a link to gate keepers (traditional/women/youth/religious leaders and government agents) who help with additional details. In addition, joint assessment with other agencies takes place (e.g., cluster partners operating in the region).

A final information source is needs assessment reports from UN agencies or government publications such as the Nigeria Demographic and Health Survey. Data is again verified through community visits. Challenges in terms of access and limited communication are overcome by the use of these multiple approaches. In addition, a community-led

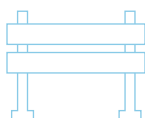


LESSONS LEARNED

This example demonstrates that diaspora organizations, even when they are small, have an advantage in terms of collecting data on needs. They can benefit from having direct contacts and networks in the region and speaking the local language, through which they receive direct information from the target population with regard to the needs, but also regarding security. In addition, it underlines the importance of engaging the community during the assessment process in collecting accurate data, creating a sense of ownership and making a positive change.

Finally, while in volatile contexts especially it may not be possible to collect perfect data, the organization should nevertheless work with the available data and use all possible sources, while at the same time striving for continuous improvements through lessons learnt.

participatory method through the use of traditional channels such as via traditional leaders and other gatekeepers is key to increased ownership for affected people. Finally, data may also be collected by paid and trained community-based volunteers to reduce challenges related to language and translation.



CHALLENGES EXPERIENCED

FREE has experienced a number of challenges in terms of needs assessments. One is the potential bias of some traditional gatekeepers. In response, a committee with varied representatives cutting across demographics has been implemented to ensure equitable representation and mitigate bias. A second challenge concerns time, especially when there are urgent or changing needs in volatile contexts. As such, it needs to be accepted that data analysis might be incomplete, or no time is available for verification or repeated testing. Third, the security risk may impede access. In these situations, remote assessment is conducted using tools of probability to estimate needs. Where possible, implementation is based on these estimates or is suspended until conditions on the ground make access possible.

DOMINICA AMATEUR RADIO CLUB INC. (DARCI)



PROFILE

Founded in 1968 as a voluntary, non-profit, non-politically registered organization with a membership of 50 operations, based in Dominica, and with frequent contact with diaspora.

OBJECTIVE

One of its objectives is to provide radio communications before, during and after disasters when all other means have failed and in peace time to assist social and other groups requiring radio communications and agile teamwork.



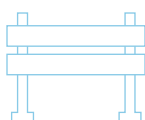
DESCRIPTION OF GOOD PRACTICE

The example of the Dominica Amateur Radio Club Inc. (DARCI) is a good illustration of how diasporas have access to an affected population, even in situations where no other means of communication are available. On several occasions, DARCI has taken on an emergency communications role, for example during hurricane David in 1979, hurricane Marilyn and Louis in 1995 and tropical storm Erica in 2016. This previous experience came in use during the response to hurricane Maria in 2017, which affected 65,000 people, around 80% of the population of the country.

DARCI has capacities which are of relevance when normal communication means fail after natural disasters, and the affected population is largely cut off from the outside. These capacities consist namely of high frequency transceivers for global contact, repeaters and radios for contacts with neighboring islands and a network installed at strategic locations around the country guaranteeing 95% island wide coverage. As a result, DARCI could pass on messages to and from the affected population, to governments, institutions, emergency responders and the diaspora on a 24/7 basis. Radio messages included requests for assistance and specifying the type and location of assistance needed. The system can also send emails through radio repeaters overcoming communication challenges when

the internet services broke down. The network thus supported, and at times replaced, official communication.

In a spontaneous reaction, DARCI also informed relatives abroad with an update on how family and friends were doing after the hurricane. This was possible because diaspora knew DARCI from a daily radio show broadcast in non-crisis times. This service continued in the aftermath of the hurricane passing on news about relatives and friends in the country.



CHALLENGES EXPERIENCED

DARCI also tried to raise funds, including through its Facebook page, however this proved to be unsuccessful. A persistent challenge for an amateur club is its dependence on volunteers, which does not make it easy to be a standard emergency response tool. In addition, financial insecurities in the club made it difficult to procure and repair the radio equipment and installations.



LESSONS LEARNED

The knowledge and experience of diaspora can be seen as unique in this regard and overcomes challenges experienced by other humanitarian actors. While the radio show was a simple tool, it proved to be highly relevant in the first days after the hurricane, enabling contact with the affected population. As such, basic tools can play an important role in bridging communities and communicating about needs. Naturally, this demands a certain level of preparation, especially for the Radio Club.

Preparatory planning, having Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) in place and previous experience have been enabling factors for DARCI to quickly take up this role. Existing communication methods, known and used by diaspora, can be a strong tool to reach affected populations.

VOICES OF DIASPORA ORGANIZATIONS

“The ability to have good awareness-raising is more than Facebook alone. We need to translate our messages in English and Arabic. We meet with the teams bi-weekly and have daily exchanges and updates through WhatsApp. Any local partner who wants to work with us must exert transparency”

“Initially, we were operating in good faith when working with local partners, but the implementation on the ground was not fulfilling our requirements. We decided not to expand our cooperation but focus on what we have and try to follow management standards.”

“Each community is unique, and while ensuring that standards are not compromised, engaging the community in the assessment process will create a sense of ownership and foster positive change.”

“We are a bridge between communities, inside and outside the country, if everything else fails.”

“We try not to shock anybody. It is all about communication. We consider the culture and do not force anybody what to use. We give them the choice.”

“Our decision on funding is made on information. Before we raise funds, we had communication with leaders in the communities and phone conversations with the affected people of the villages. We need to know in which areas the needs are more than in other regions.”

“Longer partnerships and frameworks are important in terms of building trust and effectiveness.”

“Even with little capacities, digital tools allow cheap and effective information-sharing.”

“In Ramadan, we do appeals in advance to provide cooked foods. We collect medical equipment and supplies from Europe, have these stationed and prepositioned in the country to fill in gaps.”



Good Practice 10

GENDER-SPECIFIC ASSISTANCE

Gender-specific assistance delivered by diaspora organizations has better chances to be accepted by local communities.

In humanitarian contexts, women are often amongst the most vulnerable, especially in terms of health, protection, livelihoods, and access to necessary services. Some diaspora organizations and networks have developed extensive experience and expertise in meeting the needs of women in emergencies in culturally sensitive ways.

Because of their personal networks and understanding of the local context and culture, gender-specific assistance from diaspora organizations will be easily accepted by local

communities, where at the same time diaspora can rely on added knowledge gained in the countries where they reside. Diaspora organizations are also active and effective in campaigning and lobbying on sensitive issues and women's rights, e.g., for menstrual health or against Female Genital Mutilation (FGM).

Diaspora efforts to make humanitarian interventions more gender inclusive, addressing the specific inequalities faced by women in emergencies, promotes more equitable and impactful responses, drawing on human resources and expertise in the diaspora to overcome gender barriers to engagement.

HIMILO RELIEF AND DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATION



PROFILE

Established in the Netherlands by Somalia Diaspora in 1998, HIRDA has offices in the Netherlands and in Somalia.

OBJECTIVE

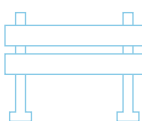
To improve the wellbeing of Somali groups in the Horn of Africa through enhancing self-reliance and increasing access to basic social services and local and diaspora communities.



DESCRIPTION OF GOOD PRACTICE

Throughout its activities over the years, especially in the field of education, the Himilo Relief and Development Association (HIRDA) recognized the important role women played in the development of the country and the importance of gender equality. Its basic thinking is reflected in the Somali proverb “Haween la’aani waa hoy la’aan” which means “Where there are no women, there is no home”.

As a result, HIRDA pursues gender mainstreaming at two levels: 1) in its program implementation and 2) within the organization itself. The main aims of its gender programs are to enable women to organize themselves, to increase their independence, to eradicate the harmful tradition of FGM and to improve health care for mothers and children. For example, HIRDA aims to provide equal opportunities to boys and girls in schools, support women empowerment centers in cooperation with UNICEF, and promote the financial empowerment of women in cooperation with IOM. Within HIRDA itself, gender mainstreaming takes place through the inclusion of women in the decision-making bodies, positive discrimination for women in HIRDA Somalia, capacity-building and the inclusion of gender in the organizational strategy. As a result, gender is now an integral part of HIRDA’s work, which is appreciated by the organization’s donors.



CHALLENGES EXPERIENCED

Whereas in the beginning of its establishment, gender was not an explicit focus for HIRDA, it required the dedicated efforts of individual Somali diaspora women in the Netherlands to put the matter on the agenda as of 2001 onwards. Yet, the absence of a long-term strategy on gender specifically and a narrow focus is said to limit the potential impact of HIRDA's gender programs.

Like other diaspora organizations, the organization experiences challenges in terms of an effective project management approach, including adequate monitoring, evaluation and learning processes, which again limits the potential of the organization when providing gender-specific assistance.



LESSONS LEARNED

The example of HIRDA demonstrates a number of lessons learned. First, female diasporas have more opportunities to push the gender agenda. While they know the local society and culture, they also profit from exposure to different mindsets and perspectives on the matter. In addition, in their country of residence they experience fewer limitations to being active and speaking out on the issues without it having negative consequences. Female diaspora can be seen as an entry point for gender-mainstreaming and gender-specific assistance.

Second, the dual focus of women empowerment both in program implementation and in the diaspora organization itself are mutually reinforcing and are appreciated by donors and partners. Yet, these efforts take time and investment.

Finally, gender mainstreaming needs to be combined with specialized gender-specific assistance programs to increase possible impact and sustainability of activities. The example of HIRDA indicated that the inclusion of gender into existing programs alone is not sufficient to make long-lasting and substantial changes.

DAWRATI



PROFILE

Established in May 2020 by diaspora returnees, based in Lebanon.

OBJECTIVE

To provide women and girls across Lebanon with menstrual products, a safe space to discuss women's health issues, and education on menstrual hygiene.



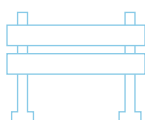
DESCRIPTION OF GOOD PRACTICE

During multiple crises in Lebanon, including the COVID-19-pandemic, the 2020 blast and the ongoing economic and social crisis, Dawrati identified the problem of period poverty, defined as the lack of access to menstrual products, a proper bathroom, menstrual-related knowledge and a safe space to discuss the matter.

In response, Dawrati provides women and girls with menstruation kits in parallel to activities to empower women and to normalize conversations around their period.

Since the financial support from inside the country declined and Dawrati could no longer rely on the local population as donors, the organization depended on the support from the diaspora during the crisis. Most donations came from European diaspora.

Especially in Europe, the topic of period poverty was perceived as an interesting field and several journalists assisted in promoting the topic through coverage in the media. Support also came from US diaspora through contacts and with the support of Period, a US-based INGO dedicated to eradicating period poverty and stigma.



CHALLENGES EXPERIENCED

The main challenge experienced by Dawrati over its two year existence has been the deteriorating social and economic situation in the country, which demanded a redefinition of vulnerability and increased the needs. In addition, the COVID-19 crisis required a different approach to awareness-raising. Since many women had no access to the internet, social media was not an appropriate tool to reach out to them and offer this safe space. Also, following the crisis, women were less open to new things because of financial or mental reasons, which limited the work of Dawrati.



LESSONS LEARNED

The main lesson learned from the experience of Dawrati in delivering gender-specific assistance is that communication matters when building trust and acceptance. In fact, the organization had expected a certain degree of criticism and challenges given the sensitive nature of the subject matter. However, Dawrati has been deliberately careful when promoting the topic. Already its name, which means “my cycle, period” in Arabic, is carefully selected because of the softness of the term. On their website and promotion campaigns, a conscious choice was made not to

show graphic images which could put people off. Dawrati does not want to force anything on anyone and adapts language to its audience. Because of this cautious and culturally sensitive approach, the organization has wide access in the country, including in poor and conservative neighborhoods, and there are more men than women providing financial support to Dawrati.

The founders of Dawrati opted to grow slowly to ensure that trust and acceptance were guaranteed and, as a result criticism and opposition to their work has remained absent. In hindsight, a more ambitious approach could have been taken.

Another lesson learned is that the kits provided should not resemble charity, and with the financial donations, quality menstruation kits should be purchased and distributed. This is important because increasingly even middle-class women are requesting assistance from the organization due to their declining financial capacity to buy them themselves. It is a matter of dignity. Gender-specific assistance may be needed for a large proportion of the female population.

Finally, any assistance should be contextualized the fact that certain products are welcomed in countries of residence does not imply that these will be accepted in countries of origin.



Good Practice 11

FUNDRAISING

Local connections and knowledge of diaspora organizations enable them to generate funding and to transfer it efficiently to the affected populations.

Diaspora organizations and individual members are highly effective in quickly mobilizing community financial and other resources in response to crises in origin and other countries, but often lack the financial resources needed to institutionalize or scale up activities.

Many (if not most) diaspora organizations struggle to access institutional humanitarian financing, as they often lack the organizational capacity and resources to meet eligibility criteria.

Diaspora fundraising and philanthropy is often small-scale when compared to the overall response, with donation campaigns conducted via community and faith networks, as well as online crowdfunding platforms. Their particular advantage is especially to be found at the onset of a crisis, when diaspora can quickly mobilize a substantial amount of funds from their community.

Nonetheless, there are opportunities for institutional humanitarian partners to support diaspora resource mobilization and philanthropy by leveraging emergency funding to enable relief activities to be scaled up quickly, and by providing advice, expertise, and training in fundraising, crowdfunding, and campaigning. Access to institutional funding encourages diaspora organizations to improve accountability and transparency mechanisms by investing in organizational development, as well as increasing visibility of their humanitarian activities for institutional and other stakeholders.

The good practice is not only in the generation of funding. In fact, diaspora organizations benefit from the direct information they receive from the affected populations to better understand the needs resulting in improved project design and effective transfer to the areas most affected. Diaspora organizations have established channels to send remittances to the populations in their countries of origin, which can be quickly activated or scaled up to transfer donations from crowdfunding or fundraising campaigns.

NEW WAYS



PROFILE

National NGO founded by Somalia intellectuals in 1993 with diaspora as board members.

OBJECTIVE

To tackle poverty and promote human rights and social justice across Somalia, and to support people to make lasting, positive changes to their lives and their communities.

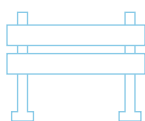


DESCRIPTION OF GOOD PRACTICE

In 2021, New Ways received institutional funding from the following donors: WFP (45.1% of total budget), UNICEF (44%), UN Population Fund (UNFPA) (7.4%) and Somalia Humanitarian Fund (3.5%). In 2021, the organization had projects in the following sectors: protection (supported by UNICEF), Livelihood (financed by WFP), Health (financed by UNICEF) including obstetrics and neonatal care (financed by UNFPA), and nutrition (financed by WFP, World Health Organization (WHO) and UNICEF). In addition, they receive some donations through crowdfunding (including through diaspora and business groups support) and in-kind support. This is the result of a gradual development process of the organization.

In 2017, New Ways was still a relatively small organization, however the organization used the humanitarian knowledge and expertise of its leadership to approach institutional funding platforms. In order to have access to funding from pooled funds and other humanitarian actors, New Ways had to build its organizational capacities to meet the eligibility criteria. These included changes in terms of human resources, strategy development, financial management, design of visibility tools and policy requirements, such as guidelines on Accountability to Affected Populations (AAP) and Protection against Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA). Local staff received regular training to improve their skills. Once these elements were in place, the organiza-

tion grew fast. The organization currently runs projects with a budget of more than one million USD and employs 120 staff, including in Somalia. New Ways is now also active in the cluster system and actively shares information, including rapid assessments, with donors.



CHALLENGES EXPERIENCED

The main challenges experienced by New Ways were the considerable efforts necessary by staff and volunteers to build up the capacities of the organization in order to meet the standards set by the donor. The development process required the dedication of an entire team; however, many diaspora organizations rely on only a few individuals. Another challenge can be found in terms of the commitment required to be successful in receiving institutional funding. Compared to other humanitarian actors, diaspora organizations do not have the same capacities as these organizations in terms of proposal writing, and are challenged during the competitive tender process. On average, one proposal will be accepted for every two or three rejected.

Finally, every donor has its own requirements, which staff have to be familiar with.



LESSONS LEARNED

Clear lessons learned from this example is the advantage of diaspora organizations getting access to institutional funding due to being registered as a local organization in the country, and not in Europe. Local organizations are familiar with the operational context, have access to difficult areas, and also continue their commitments with the hope of “Aid localization” privileges and less hitches from the local authorities. This is of particular importance due to the competitive nature of the application process, whereby diaspora/local organizations are in direct competition with professional humanitarian organizations.

A final lesson learned was the need to build and showcase a track record, in order to be able to demonstrate previous experience and convince donors of its abilities and capacities to deliver.

INSTITUTE OF CHIN AFFAIRS



PROFILE

Established in 2012, as a charitable organization based in the US.

OBJECTIVE

To work for a peaceful, just, democratic society in Chin State and strengthen unity, tranquillity, and harmony among the Chin people worldwide.



DESCRIPTION OF GOOD PRACTICE

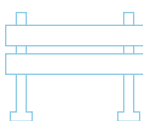
Although the Institute of Chin Affairs (ICA) was less active before, it reorganized itself following the military coup in Myanmar in February 2021 and in response to the resulting humanitarian crisis in the Chin State and Kalay township in Sagaing Region. ICA undertook several activities, including advocacy on human rights violations and data collection on the ground to conduct research and analysis on the crisis.

ICA also set up fundraising campaigns through social media and its website to directly support assistance activities. The fundraising campaign was accompanied by information, pictures and videos showing the ongoing developments and needs in the Chin State, based on the incoming data from monitors in the field. The organization worked together with other diaspora organizations from Myanmar who were better known by the public to attract more visibility and more donations. The contributions were sent to Chin State and Kalay township in Sagaing Region with each organization focusing on its own specific region. The choice for the regions was based mainly on personal connections, but the specific target areas were selected on the basis of needs. ICA had that information thanks to their network of monitors. The funds were then distributed to selected community or religious leaders, again following a needs-based approach. Discussions were held with the leaders to identify the specific needs, to whom the funds should be sent and occasionally to confirm the reliability of relief organizations with whom ICA could cooperate. Information was also useful to determine



LESSONS LEARNED

if the same areas should be further targeted. For example, changes were made throughout the process when needs changed, or continuous verification of the accuracy of data and reliability of partners was executed. Continuous conversations also provided the required confirmation that the assistance had reached the population in need, or if transfer channels had to be adapted.



CHALLENGES EXPERIENCED

Because ICA was new to fundraising on social media, it had to undergo a learning process. For example, they learned that when fundraising through particular social media channels, a certain percentage was kept by the firm. However, this was not the case if ICA could provide evidence that they are a not-for-profit organization. Another important challenge was how to maintain contact with the recipients in the highly volatile situation where fighting leads to the abandonment of villages or the cutting off of communication. ICA learned that contact could be re-established after the events calmed down.

Another challenge was keeping donors motivated to contribute, since a certain donor fatigue came in and new ways had to be found to continue attracting the funding.

The experience of ICA confirms that diaspora organizations can be quick in setting up fundraising campaigns and to collect donations from their network through social media and websites. However, the example also indicated that diaspora organizations can be effective in rapidly transferring the funds to the affected population using existing ties and networks rather than having to establish these from scratch.

Finally, the example indicates that fundraising and the transfer of funds need to be accompanied by strong and reliable information to inform about the needs and to ensure that funds arrive to the people who were targeted.



Good Practice 12

WORKING ON THE HUMANITARIAN- DEVELOPMENT NEXUS

Diaspora organizations can bridge the humanitarian-development nexus because of their long-term interest and presence in the country.

Diaspora organizations, networks, and individuals deliver interventions that span the humanitarian-development(-peace) nexus, from pre-crisis resilience building and emergency response to post-crisis recovery and reconstruction. They also support peacebuilding at the local community level, encouraging and ensuring sustainable and durable responses. This gives diaspora organizations an advantage, as they can respond to crises quickly, building on existing mechanisms, networks, trust, and expertise. This has been evident throughout the COVID-19 pandemic.

Diaspora organizations are often involved in humanitarian and development contexts for the long-term and can transition to post-crisis

recovery with ease, mobilizing diaspora networks for reconstruction. Building on existing patterns is an efficient and effective way to respond to humanitarian and development issues. The fact that diaspora organizations are likely to retain their interest in supporting their country of origin across generations makes them a reliable partner for the humanitarian-development nexus.

Finally, since diaspora organizations are often active in both humanitarian and development assistance, it is possible for them to benefit twice from assistance with regard to capacity-building and organizational development. Longer term partnerships, as is the case in development assistance, may have beneficial outcomes for organizations who are equally active in the humanitarian sector.

KEIHAN



PROFILE

Established in 2005 by a group of Afghan students in the Netherlands.

OBJECTIVE

To support the integration of Afghans in the Netherlands, and to assist Afghans in Afghanistan, in particular youth, in terms of education and self-development, and to contribute to a developed and stable Afghanistan.



DESCRIPTION OF GOOD PRACTICE

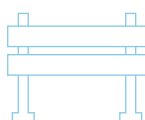
Keihan was originally founded to support the integration of Afghan refugees in the Netherlands. From its beginning, Keihan aimed to provide aid in Afghanistan in the following areas: education, integration and developmental aid. Gradually, Keihan's activities expanded and changed into durable projects while keeping a clear focus on its three core areas. Since 2017, they provided training, in person, for medical physicians and nurses.

Keihan also developed trainings on research and analytical skills for Afghan students. Since 2016, 20 assignments have taken place in Afghanistan's priority sectors: health, education, and infrastructure (urban and rural development). Since its projects have expanded and received recognition both nationally and internationally, Keihan has collaborated with ministries in the Netherlands and Afghanistan. Since the Taliban took over power in August 2021, Keihan has been active through advocacy, support of evacuations and provision of information to refugees and Afghans in country.

However, it's not certain whether its projects can continue. All trainings were transferred to remote courses since colleagues could not visit the country in person. A local colleague did manage to collect a few funds to buy me-

dical equipment in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Nevertheless, Keihan is required to re-establish connections and cooperation with universities and the Ministry of Public Health before it can restart its programs.

Recently, Keihan has started a collaboration in support of the “Safe Migration” project to launch campaigns to create a safer migration process for female Afghan refugees.



CHALLENGES EXPERIENCED

In addition to the political changes in the country and the resulting security challenges for its staff and volunteers, the activities of Keihan are hindered by a lack of capacities. The organization relies mainly on volunteers, and newcomers require training to familiarize themselves with the programs. The organization keeps a deliberate focus on long-term projects, also because the funding options for humanitarian activities appear to be limited.



LESSONS LEARNED

The example of Keihan indicates that diaspora organizations can rely on their long-term presence when emergencies occur. As a result, diaspora can scale up rather quickly when organizing protests or other activities at short notice. In general, the collaboration between diaspora organizations is rather good during emergencies. However, investments are needed to sustain this interest and attention.

Another lesson for Keihan was that diaspora should have a seat at the table when authorities and civil society in countries of residence discuss the response. In 2021, this did not happen sufficiently. However, because of their long-term development presence, diaspora have networks and connections which could be useful. Diaspora became visible in the aftermath of the August events since they were approached by individual Afghans requesting support for evacuation upon which they were referred to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Because of that, the Ministry became aware of the existence of diaspora and their possible added value to the operation at large. Diaspora organizations working on development assistance can thus become a valuable partner in emergency response. Once the crisis de-escalates, it is the intention of Keihan to continue with their previous programs, thus facilitating the transition of humanitarian to development work.

FINNISH-SOMALIA NETWORK



PROFILE

An independent umbrella organization, established in 2004, which works as a cooperative body for organizations conducting or planning to conduct development cooperation projects in Somalia and the Horn of Africa.

OBJECTIVE

To build peace and contribute into development in Somalia.



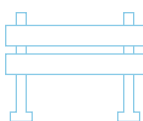
DESCRIPTION OF GOOD PRACTICE

The Somali diaspora in Finland has set up several development associations to help their country of origin. Nevertheless, these organizations experienced challenges in terms of knowledge and capacity to provide development aid. To meet that need, the Finnish-Somali Network (FSN) was established with the aim to increase the number of effective development cooperation projects and to improve the abilities and skills of diaspora organizations.

The FSN offers its member organizations peer support, training and advice as well as consulting services for stakeholders interested in the region. The Network operates along a joint project model. Member organizations in Finland have local partners in Somalia. The Network applies for the funding and is also the recipient of the approved budgets from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA). The FSN coordinates and administrates the joint projects, and does both narrative and finance reporting to the back donor.

The FSN is the key focal point of all the activities; local partners do the final implementation and the Finnish member organizations do the monitoring and follow-up at field level and report to the FSN. The projects are the results of joint discussions between the members and the FSN. Because of the joint model, meaning that the same project is implemented in different regions by various members,

compromises between project ideas are needed. The model implies that joint learning and an exchange of experiences take place between the members and their local partners. Development projects usually last eight to ten years.



CHALLENGES EXPERIENCED

Although the joint project model has clear advantages in terms of harmonization of standards and peer learning, a number of challenges are still present. The search for a common denominator between partners and regions when developing a project idea is a cumbersome activity requiring time and a dedicated staff. When organizations have to make compromises to their original idea, the degree of ownership may decrease.

Another challenge is the differences between member organizations. Some members and their local partners have substantial experience in development aid, whereas others in remote areas have less capacity. Yet, the joint project model requires them to implement the same model.



LESSONS LEARNED

Although the FSN itself does not cover any humanitarian projects, the learning and capacity-building gained through the joint project model assists members and local partners in applying for humanitarian funding in emergency situations from other donors.

Because of their longer time span, development projects are better suited at integrating organizational capacity-building objectives than humanitarian projects with a shorter project period. Longer partnerships can be built and strengthened. Therefore, members involved in development projects with an organizational development dimension can apply these outcomes also in their humanitarian work.

The FSN may also refer members to humanitarian organizations and donors in times of crises, like floodings. A recommendation from the Network increases the credibility and trustworthiness of the member and so its eligibility for funding. Another lesson learned is that having an intermediate between diaspora organizations and the donor is greatly valued: by the donor, since the Network assumes accountability and quality, and by the diaspora for its support functions in terms of project application, management and learning.



Good Practice 13

DIGITAL ENGAGEMENT

Diaspora utilize opportunities offered by new digital tools to expand and strengthen their support to their countries of origin.

Making use of digital resources amplifies and brings visibility to diaspora organizations' work. Social media, for instance, is a powerful tool to convey lived experiences and plays an important role in fundraising. Online platforms are often used to respond quickly in crises to assess needs, raise funds, and mobilize resources, as well as for remote knowledge exchange (e.g. telemedicine), volunteering, mentoring, and coaching. Utilizing commonly available digital tools can help maximize fundraising efforts, reaching out to professionals and experts who might support the response.

In addition, digital tools allow diaspora to enhance or to expand their support to affected population in countries of origin, either by inventing new ways of support or by increasing the scope and size of the assistance.

Digital tools are easily accessible to diaspora and bring a new way of information exchange and reporting, directly from receivers to donors in the communities. Especially for younger generations, digital engagement is a preferred means of providing assistance since it is more easily combined with their daily life in countries of residence.

GLOBAL UKRAINE



PROFILE

Established by young educated Ukrainian expatriates in 2015.

OBJECTIVE

To become a unique bridge between Ukraine, Europe and the world, to safeguard Ukraine's interests, using all the modern tools of professional people, cultural, scientific and business diplomacy.



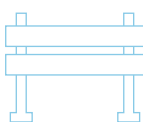
DESCRIPTION OF GOOD PRACTICE

Global Ukraine aims to combine the creative, intellectual and financial resources of Ukrainians worldwide with the aim of facilitating their efforts to create an extraterritorial Ukrainian space. The Global Ukraine Network developed out of a drive to use the Ukrainian diaspora's resources. Global Ukraine creates a transnational online space where Ukrainian organizations, independent leaders, and experts promote Ukraine's interests at the global level.

Global Ukraine offers a digital platform as a service and limits its role to connecting its network to share support, human and social capital. Through this platform, Global Ukraine also facilitates humanitarian assistance. For example, network members offer support to IDPs through little initiatives providing in-kind support and small crowd funding campaigns. The platform also encourages the mobilization of support through its network members, which it facilitates through the global reach of the network that covers more than one hundred communities in various countries.

In the 2022 conflict, Global Ukraine facilitates the connection between refugees and diaspora. Founded in 2017, the Money Touch Hub service provided by Global Ukraine's Global Business Hub arose out of a need for direct cash transfers to Ukraine to meet humanitarian needs. Created by network members with FinTech skills, the Money Touch Hub is a joint

project between Global Ukraine and Visa that uses the credit company's global payment network to facilitate money transfers from the Ukrainian diaspora in Europe. Money Touch Hub service allows the diaspora to send direct cash transfers with zero commission using the Visa and Mastercard payment systems. Users can transfer money from their credit card directly into respective beneficiary accounts in Ukraine.



CHALLENGES EXPERIENCED

Global Ukraine has made a deliberate choice to stay independent from donors. As a result, the organization is reliant on remittances to keep its flexibility and autonomy. The Global Ukraine Network receives credit from every transfer and uses these funds to finance its humanitarian projects. The more a person uses the card, the more money is generated for projects. The community can then decide which projects are to be funded through a voting mechanism. Humanitarian projects are thus the direct result of the collaborative set-up of the platform.



LESSONS LEARNED

The example of Global Ukraine clearly demonstrates the advantages of digital tools for diaspora to support their countries of origin. Namely, digital engagement allows the diaspora members the necessary flexibility to support these initiatives while working and travelling globally.

Once the tools are developed and functioning, they can be easily scaled up without many additional investments, as could be seen in the 2022 conflict in Ukraine. Digital tools overcome borders in terms of communication and bring together diaspora communities working towards the same goal. However, the development of these tools necessitates founding members with the required technical and financial expertise in terms of compliance and regulations on top of their motivation.

Finally, the Money Touch Hub was built on a previous attempt by credit unions in the 90s to use parts of their benefits to support social initiatives. As such, this example demonstrates that diaspora wanting to engage in innovative tools do not have to reinvent the wheel but should rather review past examples and adapt them to the current context and requirements.

SYRIAN CHARITIES AND ASSOCIATIONS NETWORK IN THE UNITED KINGDOM



PROFILE

Established in 2015 by a group of Syrian organizations, as a network of sixteen Syrian NGOs, charities, CSOs, associations and organized regional groups based in the UK.

OBJECTIVE

To serve as an umbrella under which Syrian registered charities and NGOs in the UK can work together towards ensuring that members of the Syrian community within the UK lead safe, productive, and well-integrated lives.



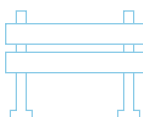
DESCRIPTION OF GOOD PRACTICE

The Syrian Charities and Associations Network (SCAN)-UK acts as a mutual communication and collaboration link between its members and the wider community. SCAN aims to provide a platform for its members and share information about the integration, advocacy and coordination of humanitarian activities. For that goal, the use of digital tools is mandatory. The main tools used by SCAN UK and its members for communication is WhatsApp. The organization establishes group chats for specific purposes where information can be shared, and questions asked. For example, when setting up a community-lead campaign or when sharing good practices on how to set up activities to assist populations in Syria to prepare for winter.

SCAN UK also has its own WhatsApp group exclusively for its members. Two representatives of each member are allowed to participate in the chat. The group allows the members to ask questions and for the staff of SCAN-UK to share the responses to inform the activities of the members. SCAN-UK also participates in WhatsApp group chats of other organizations, like from the Syria Civil Society Networks Platform, and then forwards relevant information on to its members.

Facebook and Telegram are also used to share information and connect members and

stakeholders. Telegram was deemed a more appropriate tool when making direct calls, whereas Facebook had certain advantages when conducting webinars, sharing updates and keeping contact with the communities. Facebook groups have also more flexibility in the number of members. Direct communication tools are perceived to be more efficient and effective than email exchange. A large part of the activities of the organization run through these digital tools. In addition to group chats, private instant messaging is used to share direct information.



CHALLENGES EXPERIENCED

SCAN-UK experienced challenges in reaching certain audiences and underwent a clear learning process. For example, in an attempt to reach out to young members of diaspora, SCAN-UK was initially unsuccessful because it was not using the most appropriate digital tool. On the other hand, older diaspora members are used to certain practices and are more reluctant to change tools and approaches.



LESSONS LEARNED

This example indicates a number of lessons learned for diaspora on the effective use of digital tools. First, it is important to have a clear purpose in mind for each chat group created to inform participation. In addition, digital communication tools require clear rules and agreement. For example, sometimes it is appropriate to have only one person with posting rights. Although in general, most members respect those rules and do not use the chats to overload the members with information, it is sometimes necessary to remove people from a chat.

Members must be reminded about the purpose of the chat and strict management is needed to continue to ensure the effectiveness of the tools. Finally, a combination of tools is advisable building on their advantages and disadvantages in function of the purpose and the practices of the target audience. In sum, diaspora organizations have become reliant on digital tools to implement their activities.



Good Practice 14

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

Diaspora organizations can play a vital role in emergency preparedness both in their countries of residence and countries of origin.

The previous good practices have mainly identified good practices for diaspora organizations contributing to emergency response. However, diaspora can also play a crucial role in preparing for disasters and crisis situations. This is facilitated by their long-term understanding and knowledge of both their country of residence and their country of origin which allows them to anticipate disasters and the resulting needs.

Preparedness activities can take place in the countries of origin of the diaspora. These can

be part of professional humanitarian assistance programs, where diaspora follow the good practices of other humanitarian actors in an attempt to anticipate arising needs and pre-position goods and supplies in the region.

Preparedness activities can also be organized in the countries of residence of diaspora, especially if these countries are disaster-prone and are vulnerable to natural disasters themselves. In these situations, diaspora can take on the responsibility of preparing their fellow nationals in advance of emergency situations making sure that relevant mechanisms and structures are in place to scale up assistance when needed.

HAND IN HAND FOR AID & DEVELOPMENT



HiHFAD

PROFILE

Established in 2011 by British Syrians and registered as a foundation in the UK.

OBJECTIVE

To provide on-the-ground support for the civilians displaced, in danger and in need as a result of the conflict in Syria.



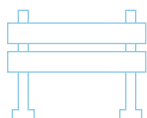
DESCRIPTION OF GOOD PRACTICE

Hand in Hand (HiH) for Aid and Development operates in Syria and neighboring countries in six humanitarian sectors, namely health, shelter and non-food items (NFI), education, protection, food security, livelihood and WASH. Throughout its years of experience, HiH has recognized the importance of emergency preparedness for effective assistance to the people of Syria.

For that purpose, HiH regularly prepositions supplies, especially donations received from private individuals from Europe. This has proved particularly needed when preparing for winter. However, these preparations need time and ideally start over summer. Yet, the interest of people to donate winter clothes and items months in advance is challenging. In addition, HiH collects medical equipment and supplies from Europe, including through focal points that act as assembly points for donations and send them together in containers. Medical items are then stationed and prepositioned to fill gaps when they arise, or to support the activities of other organizations. For example, in early 2020, one focal point of HiH managed to send in eight containers with gloves and sanitizers to prepare for the COVID-19-response.

Another way of preparedness is in anticipation of military activities and the resulting displacement thereof. For that purpose, HiH has

successfully stationed food in the past, especially tinned food. Also, in preparedness for Ramadan, HiH issues appeals to the diaspora community and the general public to provide cooked food.



CHALLENGES EXPERIENCED

Preparedness activities create a number of challenges. First, the diaspora organization needs to have sufficient capacities, in terms of organization but also in terms of logistical facilities. Warehouses in the UK, France, Turkey and Syria are crucial. At times, HiH activates its personal contacts to be able to store items in UK cities. Second, there is a requirement to learn about the context, and to constantly remain updated on the changing needs of the population. Third, funding for preparedness proved to be challenging. Institutional funding was perceived to be less appropriate since it is less flexible or earmarked, however private donations can be activated quicker and have fewer restrictions in its use. Yet, preparedness work requires reserves to be kept anticipating shortfalls, which require a combination of institutional and private funding.



LESSONS LEARNED

The experience of HiH demonstrates a number of lessons learned for preparedness activities of diaspora organizations.

First, the example reconfirms the importance of including preparedness activities in the diaspora's response. However, this requires a number of investments and efforts over a longer period of time. For example, HiH also receives items which are less useful or require work from HiH to organize them. Yet, the organization does not refuse any and prioritizes the willingness of people to donate to assist in advocacy and future campaigns.

Most importantly, preparedness work requires more dialogue with the communities than when launching donation campaigns at emergency moments. Preparedness work is a continuous and long-term process, and the diaspora community needs to remain constantly engaged.

UNIVERSITY OF THE PHILIPPINES ALUMNI ASSOCIATION INDONESIA



PROFILE

Established by Filipino Alumni from the University of the Philippines who live in Indonesia.

OBJECTIVE

To set up a network of Filipino expats in Indonesia.



DESCRIPTION OF GOOD PRACTICE

In Indonesia, there is a small, but vibrant community of nationals of the Philippines (around 8000 persons). The University of the Philippines (UP) Alumni Association in Indonesia is one of the diaspora organizations in the country and they work closely with other organizations, including the Philippine Business Club Indonesia and the Filipino Expatriate Viber Community. Even though their main focus is not humanitarian assistance, the diaspora organizations do engage in relief assistance, such as providing cash donations to disaster victims in the country of origin, for example through the Mindanao Calamity Fund Raising. They also provided non-prescription medicines/vitamins, daily meals, and cash assistance to Filipinos that contracted COVID-19 in Indonesia.

As a result of the 2018 West Java Earthquake in Indonesia, the UP Alumni Association started to realize the importance of disaster preparedness. In 2018, the Association, in cooperation with the Embassy of the Philippines in Indonesia, launched the Disaster Preparedness Forum. The Forum aimed at enabling dialogue between the expat community, authorities and regional organizations working on the topic. The event was attended by over 100 participants.

Although the Forum was a one-off event, it did give the necessary impetus to enhance preparedness to assist Philippines nationals following any further natural disasters in



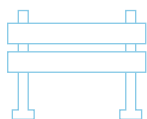
LESSONS LEARNED

Indonesia. A gap existed in assisting temporary migrant workers from the Philippines in the country, since no official provisions were in place before that, and assistance occurred through informal structures. Even though local authorities do look after foreigners, it was felt that better provisions were needed.

With the Forum, the Embassy put in place mechanisms to assist nationals in the country of residence in case of emergencies and ensured a 24/7 contact line. Coordination mechanisms were set up and consolidated to assist in case nationals residing in Indonesia required relocation and/or repatriation. There was also an improvement in information-sharing, whereby news is now verified first and sent through official channels to the Filipino population. Also contact details were gathered and updated. A follow up activity would be to launch an official platform.

This example demonstrates that preparedness should receive a broad understanding. The diasporas in countries of residence often fall outside national preparedness systems and structures, and specific efforts are needed to make sure that they themselves are looked after in case of emergencies. In addition, the example shows the importance of involving individual diaspora members who can push their community forward with their connections and knowledge. The contribution of individual experts is key.

A final lesson learned is to identify possibilities and to take these opportunities to drive the preparedness agenda forward. Sometimes, it is sufficient to bring people together to achieve positive results.



CHALLENGES EXPERIENCED

The key challenge in setting up such preparedness activities is that the main objectives of these diaspora organizations is not humanitarian assistance. As such, there was a need for a learning and familiarization process.





ANNEX

LIST OF DIASPORA ORGANIZATIONS ASSESSED

(In order of appearance)

No.	Name of diaspora organization	Website (where available)
1	Syrian NGO Alliance (SNA)	www.linkedin.com
2	Yemen Aid	www.yemenaid.org
3	Haiti Renewal Alliance	www.haitirenew.org
4	American Relief Coalition for Syria	www.arcsyria.org
5	Association des Tunisiens des Grandes Ecoles - ATUGE	www.atuge.org
6	Austria-Pakistan Association	www.austriapakistansociety.com
7	World Humanitarian Action Forum	www.whaf.org.uk
8	Imamia Medics International	www.imamiamedics.com
9	The Organisation of Sierra Leonean Healthcare Professional Abroad	www.imamiamedics.com
10	DOZ e.V.	www.doz.international
11	Sudan NextGen	www.sudannextgen.com
12	Omid International	www.omidinternational.org
13	Healing Venezuela	www.healingvenezuela.org
14	Basecamp Beirut	www.facebook.com/basecampbebanon
15	Foundation for Refugee Economic Empowerment	www.free-ng.org
16	Dominica Amateur Radio Club Inc. (DARCI)	www.darci.online
17	Himilo Relief and Development Association	www.hirda.org
18	Dawrati	www.instagram.com/dawrati.lb
19	Association Internationale de Coopération Médicale	www.aicm.eu
20	Sudanese American Physicians Association	www.sapa-usa.org
21	New Ways	www.new-ways.org
22	Institute of Chin Affairs	www.chinaffairs.org
23	Keihan	www.keihan.org
24	Finnish-Somalia Network	www.somaliaverkosto.fi
25	Global Ukraine	www.global-ukraine.org
26	Syrian Charities and Associations Network in the United Kingdom	www.scanuk.org.uk
27	Hand in Hand for Aid & Development	www.hihfad.org
28	University of the Philippines Alumni Association Indonesia	www.facebook.com/UPAAIndonesia



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