

HAITIAN DIASPORA ENGAGEMENT

A CASE STUDY OF THE FRAMEWORK FOR DIASPORA ENGAGEMENT IN HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE



CONTEXT

The humanitarian crisis in Haiti is one of the most complex and acute worldwide, due to sociopolitical instability and the country's susceptibility to natural disasters, such as hurricanes, floods, and earthquakes. The recent rise of gangs' violence in Port-au-Prince and nearby areas has exacerbated an already vulnerable situation, with an estimated 5.5 million Haitians (half of the population) in need of humanitarian assistance, including 1.6 million with protection needs.

The Haitian diaspora, spanning millions worldwide, is a resilient community deeply engaged in activities of humanitarian and development support in Haiti, through voluntarism, advocacy, and remittances which serve as a lifeline for many in times of crisis. The diaspora's humanitarian response, from the 2010 earthquake onwards, exemplifies the strength of transnational solidarity. The establishment of diaspora platforms, like the Haitian Diaspora Emergency Response Unit (HDERU) has enhanced the coordination and effectiveness of the humanitarian efforts.

SCOPE

In this context, the Framework for Diaspora Engagement in Humanitarian Assistance was applied to support US-based Haitian diaspora organizations' efforts towards more streamlined internal coordination, both for possible crises and for the response and recovery of a specific crisis: the earthquake that hit the country in August 2021. The Framework was also used to promote closer coordination between diaspora organizations and humanitarian actors on the ground, including government, UN agencies and private actors.

FAST FACTS

100

diaspora organizations/members involved in HDERU coordination calls at the onset of the crisis

110

members (both non-profit and businesses) registered under the OneDiaspora Haitian diaspora platform

50+

coordination calls held under the HDERU umbrella between August and September 2021 and many more bilateral and multilateral exchanges to coordinate immediate response

4

diaspora working groups created on the IASC Cluster model to better guide and coordinate sectorial responses (e.g. health, logistics, education and shelter)

THIS CASE STUDY FEATURES:

- 1. Crisis Context:** Small country with frequent environmental hazards and political instability.
- 2. Diaspora type (in the US):** Significant diaspora (relatively to country's size), concentrated in specific regions, grouped in professional associations, HTAs, and networks, with solid culture of interventions in country.
- 3. Humanitarian system in-country:** Consolidated coordination system and presence of international actors; volatility of government's bodies, existing ministry for diasporas' engagement.
- 4. Diaspora partner:** Organization (HRA) with solid humanitarian assistance experience, cooperation with other DOs, public and private local actors, and existing coordination hub (HDERU).
- 5. Scope of the engagement:** support diaspora's internal and external coordination for response and recovery, and interface with public and private humanitarian actors in-country.



IMPACT

For diaspora: The Framework application significantly impacted diaspora actors, strengthening existing internal coordination systems, offering opportunity for technical assistance, facilitation of operations on the ground, and liaison with institutional public and private humanitarian actors for information sharing and possible collaborations.

For humanitarian actors: Institutional humanitarian actors on the ground were better familiarized with diasporas' interventions and benefited for more streamlined and technical diasporas' humanitarian interventions. Opportunities for collaboration were also created thanks to the diaspora focal point.

For local actors and affected communities: The benefit was in terms of increased reach of assistance to the least served communities through direct data collection from communities and last mile strategy implementation; Prioritization of locally sourced goods and cash, thanks to relations between DOs and a network of private actors (AGERCA), direct and more targeted support and capacity and resilience building of local actors in the recovery phase.

FRAMEWORK APPLICATION

Design of the Engagement

- Diaspora as a partner in design and execution
- Consultative process
- Build on existing networks and platforms.

Functions

- Strengthening of internal systems for more streamlined coordination and communication in real-time crisis response
- Centralized and regular information sharing and communication for crisis response
- Technical assistance and capacity building
- Closer coordination with public and private humanitarian actors on the ground.

Governance

- Centralized system with a coordination hub, a command center for crisis response, defined membership, and working groups by sectors.

Liaison

- Dedicated liaison from humanitarian actor (i.e. IOM) in Haiti and the US.

Stakeholders

- Multiple local private actors
- Buy-in of institutional stakeholders
- International humanitarian actors.

RELEVANT TOOLS OF THE FRAMEWORK

- Strengthening of the Haitian Diaspora Emergency Response Unit (HDERU) as coordination hub for more effective diaspora's humanitarian assistance, with a command center, SOPs for activation and deactivation, and sector specific working groups.
- Diaspora's regular calls, and WhatsApp group messages for regular communication.
- Standard Operating Procedures for the Logistics working group.
- Centralized diaspora's fundraising campaign.
- Dedicated website for humanitarian and development communication and coordination.
- Technical assistance on sector-specific humanitarian assistance (i.e. shelters and settlements).
- Liaison with humanitarian actors and coordinators on the ground.
- Connections with local vendors and private actors in Haiti for joint initiatives.
- Simulations and trainings for recovery, resilience building and preparedness.
- Promotion of public-private partnerships – also through MOUs.
- Financial and technical support to local actors (churches, schools) in the recovery efforts.

REPLICABILITY

The nature of humanitarian interventions is very context-specific; however, the Framework's flexibility allows for adaptation to diverse situations. The different Framework's components are adaptable to different contexts and needs of both diasporas and institutional humanitarian actors, either in response to future crisis in the same context, or in other crisis settings.



For more information on the Framework for Diaspora Engagement in Humanitarian Assistance or its Case Studies, please contact the Diaspora Engagement Unit at IOM Washington at diasporaforhumanity@iom.int.

