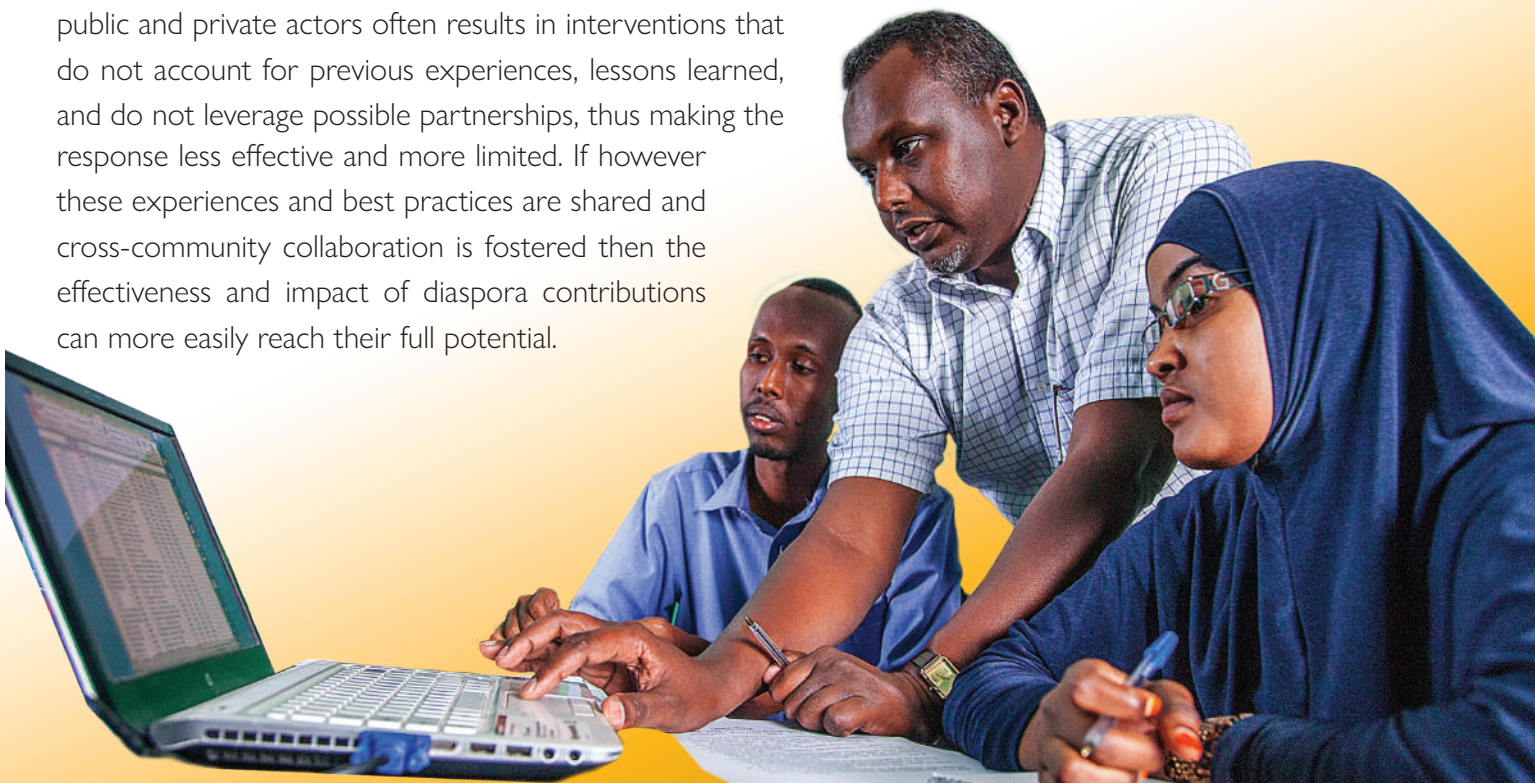


Introduction

On 31 December 2019, a cluster of pneumonia of unknown etiology was reported in Wuhan City, Hubei Province of the People's Republic of China. On 11 March, World Health Organization officially declared Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) a pandemic. Since the outbreak began, as of 3 April, more than 1 million cases and over 58,000 deaths have been reported globally. Confirmed cases have been reported in 204 countries and territories, with new cases and countries reporting new infections on a daily basis. The impact of the current global pandemic is affecting every aspect of life from health, economies, and even basic social interactions. The steady increase in new reported COVID-19 cases continues to impact global mobility by triggering new decisions for border closures or extensions of the restrictions already in place. However, in spite of these challenges, diaspora communities are already mobilizing to help their families, friends, and communities most vulnerable to the impacts of the pandemic even while they themselves maybe facing challenging times and an uncertain future in their countries of destination.

Diasporas are not only often the first to respond, their political, social, cultural and human capital coupled with their in-depth knowledge of the country, and familiarity with local languages, social, cultural, and religious norms, can lead to more targeted and tailor responses. They also provide financial and other resources that go directly in support of the affected communities. The COVID-19 pandemic however is perhaps the first acute global crisis that most living today have ever experienced and thus these responses are being developed within an entirely unprecedented context that calls for everyone's contributions and new levels of coordination and collaboration. While specific diaspora communities may have experience in responding to similar emergencies in their countries of origin, lack of communication between diaspora communities and between diasporas and other public and private actors often results in interventions that do not account for previous experiences, lessons learned, and do not leverage possible partnerships, thus making the response less effective and more limited. If however these experiences and best practices are shared and cross-community collaboration is fostered then the effectiveness and impact of diaspora contributions can more easily reach their full potential.



Objective

The objective of the Global Diaspora Virtual Exchange on COVID-19 Response is twofold. First, as the name implies, the aim will be to create a space for diaspora groups from different communities to share experiences and best practices in order to maximize their impact within their efforts to respond to the COVID-19 crisis and beyond. Eventually, this may also serve as platform for sharing existing needs and possibly create partnerships that could contribute to address gaps. Secondly, the Virtual Exchange will try to showcase and bring attention to the important work that diaspora groups are already doing on the ground in order to encourage policy makers and practitioners to strengthen their collaboration and support to such efforts. While a call to involve actors, such as diasporas, within humanitarian assistance in a more institutional manner was made during the World Humanitarian Summit in 2016 recognizing the independent and key role that these communities have historically played, diaspora's contributions to emergency response are still often misunderstood due to a gap in knowledge about their work. As such, this proposed virtual exchange intends to contribute to the effort to better interlink diaspora's interventions to other public and private responses.

Format

In order to maximize opportunities for virtual exchange, a number of different channels will be made available to participants. Firstly, participants will be invited to share examples of successful interventions, best practices, and opportunities for collaboration through the iDiaspora forum and, secondly, participants can discuss their experiences during the Virtual Exchange Event which is planned for two hours. After the event, IOM will compile and the inputs received through the iDiaspora forum and during the Virtual Exchange Event in an outcome document showcasing diaspora initiatives and best practices which can be disseminated to policy makers and practitioners to encourage further collaboration with diaspora groups during the crisis and moving forward Within the iDiaspora forum you are invited to share:

- your success stories and best practices [here](#)
- your opportunities for collaboration [here](#)

During the event there will be two opportunities for exchange, initially a panel of diaspora individuals who will present their concrete experience in supporting the response to the current COVID-19 crisis and/or similar emergencies in the past and subsequently all participants would be invited to share their experiences during a plenary discussion in order to identify best practices.

Participation

The event is open to all diaspora communities with a focus on facilitating exchange between African, Asian, and European diaspora communities. All participants are invited to register through iDiaspora and will have the opportunity to share their experiences and submit inputs and initiatives through the Platform in writing and during the plenary discussion. In addition, several panelists with concrete experiences to share from different communities will present their stories and help frame the discussion on best practices.



The COVID-19 pandemic is the first acute global crisis that most of us have experienced in our lifetime and thus calls for new levels of coordination and collaboration.

Sesión	Format	Timing
Introduction	IOM welcoming remarks	10 mins
Sharing Successes and case studies	Panel discussion	50 mins
Exploring Best Practices	Plenary discussion	40 mins
Agreeing on a Way Forward	Plenary discussion	20 mins

Welcoming Remarks



ANTÓNIO VITORINO

Director General for the International Organization for Migration since October 2018, Mr. Vitorino is a former European Commissioner for Justice and Home Affairs and former Minister of the Presidency and National Defence Of Portugal. He has enjoyed a distinguished career in Portugal as a lawyer as well as in electoral politics, including serving in Parliament and as Minister for National Defence and Deputy Prime Minister within the government of António Guterres, now the United Nations' Secretary General.

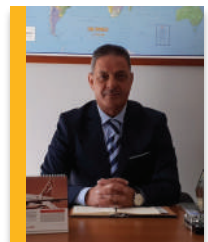
Moderator



KEMO CAMARA

Founder and CEO of Omek, a community-centric platform for the social and professional advancement of the African diaspora talents. He has also co-founded many businesses and non-profit organizations and played various leadership roles in community organizations. He has more than 15 years of professional experience in leadership and management working for multinational corporations including banks and manufacturing companies.

Panelists



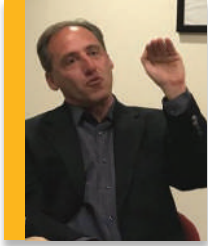
ADEL KAROUI

Businessman based in Turin with over 30 year's professional experience in the hospitality industry and as a strategy consultant for over 20 years. His background includes a variety of projects with a wide range of major customers in Italy and other countries working on all aspects of hotel management and tourism, including analysis of financial information, business targets and marketing strategies.



DR. CHARLES SENESSIE

Founder and President of the UN ECOSOC accredited Afro-European Medical and Research Network that brings together health practitioners in the Diaspora to serve people all over sub-Saharan Africa. He is also CEO of Senessie Low-Income Countries Healthcare and Consultancy Services. He currently works as a physician for the Swiss Federal Government in the regulation of clinical trials locally and internationally.



MARK KOSMO

Chair of the Global Albanians Foundation as well as chair of the Massachusetts Albanian American Society since its founding in 2006 and CFO of the Mentor Group in Boston with experience working as an independent consultant and for the World Bank in Albania and Washington D.C. Mark is a member of the Board of Directors of GERMIN (an organization in Kosovo promoting Albanian Diaspora engagement) and Action for Mothers and Children.



NILOUFAR RAHIM

Chairwoman of KEIHAN foundation and active member of International Federation of Medical Students' Association and International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War. She has supported many projects to improve health care and higher education in Afghanistan. Born in Kabul in 1987, she left Afghanistan when she was two years old and arrived in the Netherlands at age ten, where she studied medicine at Leiden University and has since worked in the following fields: emergency health, paediatrics, gynaecology and as general practitioner.



PETER KWOK

Chairman and Founder of the UK Federation of Chinese Professionals (UKFCP), a national community organization for global Chinese professionals in the country. He has previously shared advices with the Scottish Government, local councils, universities and SMEs on diaspora strategies and also at the World Overseas Professional Associations' Chairpersons Conference organized by the Chinese State Council.



SIHANA BEJTULLAHU

Co-Executive Director of GERMIN since March 2020. Ms. Bejtullahu has a strong background in civil society organizations and, among others professional experiences, has been directly involved in programs supporting education and innovation systems within youngsters in more than 24 Kosovo municipalities. She is also an active human rights activist, with a particular interest in women and other vulnerable groups.



YOHANNES ASSEFA

Board of Directors of the Ethiopian Diaspora Trust Fund and an experienced business lawyer and international development professional with over 20 years of experience in the United States and Africa. He is the founder and Executive Director of the Ethiopian Diaspora Business Forum, the oldest operating Ethiopian Diaspora business association in the United States. Mr. Assefa is also a member of the African Diaspora Network's Executive Council.

Co-conveners:



Organized by:

