

Diaspora 4 Climate Action - Newsletter #1

January-March 2023

'I think I am mostly proud to have understood over the years that the potential, the skills and the knowledge exist in the countries that we work in'
(Indira Kartallozi, Sustainability Leadership Kosovo)

About the Diaspora 4 Climate Action Project

Diaspora 4 Climate Action: Leveraging the Potential of Human Mobility in the Context of Climate Change through Diaspora Engagement in Albania, Bangladesh, Ghana and Jamaica, is an initiative funded by the [IOM Development Fund \(IDF\)](#) which aims to strengthen global action on climate change through diaspora engagement with their countries of origin.

Over 24 months (1 January 2023 – 31 December 2024), IOM will work with diaspora groups in the UK and with governments and other key stakeholders in Albania, Bangladesh, Ghana and Jamaica to build sustainable links that can help them to achieve more effective and coordinated climate action. The Diaspora for Climate Action project (D4C) will support government efforts to address climate change impacts in priority sectors which have been identified in Nationally Determined Contributions and National Adaptation Plans and provide a potential model for other countries to engage with and empower their diasporas in shaping national climate change policies and programming together with governments and other actors.

[Learn more](#)

Lead-up to the Launch of the Diaspora 4 Climate Action Project

The D4C project gained attention well ahead of its launch, at COP 27, in the media and at IOM's Council meeting in November 2022, as well as in discussions with government actors.

On 12 November 2022, IOM, in collaboration with the Global Centre for Climate Mobility, hosted the COP27 affiliated event *In Conversation with the Diaspora – Exploring Good Practices in Climate Action*, which took place within the Climate Mobility Pavilion in Sharm el-Sheikh.



The side-event highlighted the important role of the diaspora as global climate actors and stakeholders. It provided a

snapshot of the many ways in which the diaspora can contribute to climate action by showcasing existing good practices of diaspora involvement in their countries of origin, from raising awareness and empowering youth in Ghana, to providing expert advice to the Jamaican Government and supporting the private sector.

The discussion highlighted the need to move beyond the perception of diaspora as ‘cash cows’ to the sustainable engagement of their intellectual capital. Panellists also pointed to the lack of planned initiatives that leverage diaspora climate action and enabling mechanisms to support their efforts.

The event offered a more informal opportunity for representatives of the diaspora, international and non-governmental organisations, academics, and other government officials to connect and exchange perspectives on the role of migrants and diasporas in taking forward the global climate agenda.

Speakers included:

- **Kanta Kumari Rigaud**, Lead Environment Specialist, the World Bank Group
- **Jebi Rahman**, Co-founder, the Bangladeshi Diaspora Climate Action (BDCA), and Head of Transparency & Pathways at the Climate Group
- **Elizabeth Mullings-Smith**, Chair of the Planet Group, Global Jamaica Diaspora Council, and Managing Director at Maya Blue
- **Gideon Commey**, Environmental Activist, Doctoral Researcher in Food Systems and Founder of the Ghana Youth Environmental Movement (GYEM)

UK FCDO's Head of Adaptation and Resilience, Peter Bentley, also attended the event and shared some reflections at the end of the panel.

In the lead up to the event at COP27, IOM UK interviewed one of the speakers, Gideon Commey, on his experience of climate advocacy and grassroots mobilisation in Ghana,

his involvement as a member of the Ghanaian diaspora in the UK and his views on how historical and trade links between the two countries can be leveraged to support climate action.



” We can build bridges between people and institutions here in the UK and back home in Ghana—for the exchange of ideas, expertise and experiences to confront challenges that are unique to all of us, such as a broken food system and global climate change. ”

Gideon Commey, an environmental activist from Ghana and a doctoral researcher in the UK, is one of the young diaspora leaders at COP27.

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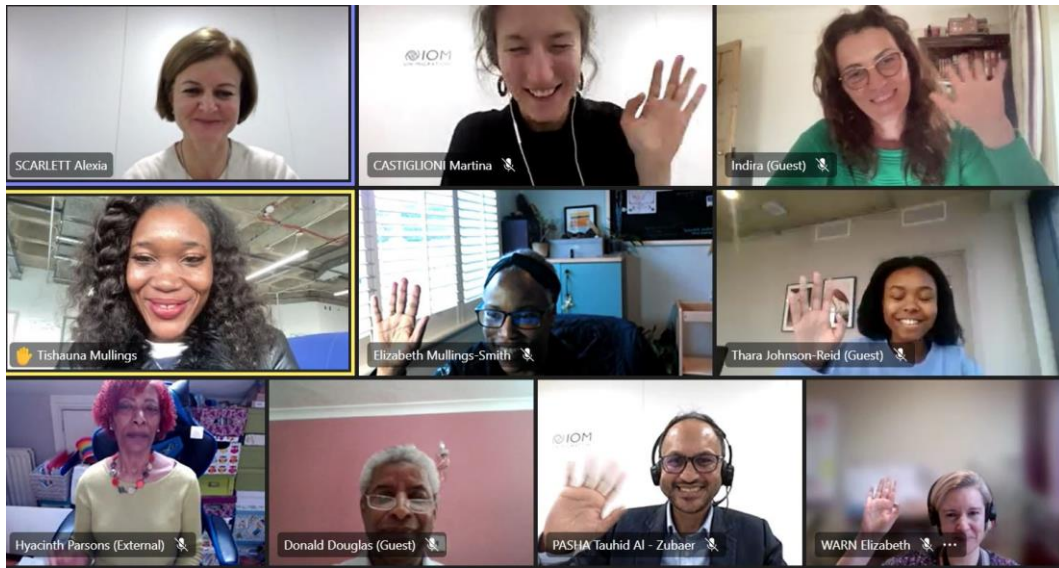
COP27
SHARM EL-SHEIKH
EGYPT 2022

#ClimateActionNow

Gideon also shared how diaspora youth can play a role in addressing climate change, first by becoming aware of climate change impacts in their country of origin and secondly by taking part and supporting concrete initiatives in Ghana.

Launch of the Diaspora 4 Climate Action Project

In January 2023, IOM UK officially launched Diaspora 4 Climate Action. IOM UK hosted two launch events to present the project to its key stakeholders; the [first event](#) brought together **government ministries** with mandates on climate change, disaster risk reduction, migration and diaspora engagement and provided an opportunity for them to share their ambitions for the implementation of the D4C project. The government delegates expressed enthusiasm for the project and acknowledged the importance of establishing meaningful connections with diasporas and identifying opportunities for collaboration to advance the national climate agendas.



At the [second launch event](#), participating **diaspora representatives** of the four target countries shared their interest in the project and existing initiatives in climate action. This event highlighted that diasporas are already implementing numerous initiatives in the climate action/sustainable development space in countries of origin and the UK, and that they are driving innovation in key sectors of the green economy, investment and influencing policy in national and international fora. Participants highlighted a few sectors of interest including **green tech, construction, renewable energy, green finance, tourism and entrepreneurship**. The majority of participants also expressed enthusiasm about the opportunity for peer-learning provided by this project.

How can diasporas support global climate action?



Celebrating International Women's Day 2023

On 8 March, IOM released a [short video](#) to raise awareness of the key role that women, and especially diaspora women, play in advancing climate action. The video features two diaspora members based in the UK that are key stakeholders of the D4C project; Indira Kartallozi, from Kosovo and Thara Johnson-Reed, from Jamaica.



Launch of the Multi-country Case Study on the Opportunities and Challenges to Engage Diaspora in Climate Action in their Countries of Origin

On 29 March, IOM UK convened the first event with diaspora stakeholders following the project's launch. This hybrid event offered an opportunity to introduce to the group the lead researchers who will be carrying out the case study and their workplan, as well as to gather inputs from the diaspora about the research approach and questions.

Some key takeaways emerged from the discussion. Firstly, diaspora participants emphasised that **diasporas are not homogenous communities** and valuable expertise (**'hidden gems'**) may be found outside of easy-to-reach members/associations. They also emphasised the importance of making the research as inclusive as possible by engaging

with **second and third generation diaspora**, as well as with **local vulnerable communities** in the countries of origin, whose voices may remain unheard. Finally, participants highlighted potential issues in the **language** used to communicate **on climate change**, which is often perceived as 'too high level' and can alienate those at grassroots level, whose participation is crucial to the success of climate action initiatives.

The hybrid event was attended by 11 diaspora representatives from the four D4C target countries and provided an opportunity for members to connect and share experiences from their various contexts, which will be crucial to guide the research.

Upcoming Events & Opportunities (April – June 2023)

- Diaspora consultation towards the formulation of the National Diaspora Policy of Bangladesh (3 April 2023)
- Stakeholder engagement in the D4C case study through interviews and focus group discussions
- D4C consultations with Government and Diaspora partners
- [London Climate Action Week](#) (25 June – 3 July 2023)

D4C in the Media

- In April 2023, **Arab News** covered IOM's Director General comments emphasising diasporas' contribution to sustainable development at the **International Dialogue on Migration** which took place in New York in March. Read the article [here](#).
- In November 2022, Tauhid Pasha, Head of Programmes at IOM UK, was interviewed on **Sky News** about the importance of diaspora engagement for climate action. Watch the recording [here](#).

Contacts

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