

FRAMEWORK FOR

DIASPORA ENGAGEMENT IN

HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE



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This publication was made possible through support provided by USAID's Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance, under the project Consolidating and Operationalizing a Framework for Diaspora Engagement in Humanitarian Assistance - Phase II. The opinions expressed herein are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of USAID.

Publisher: International Organization for Migration  
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This publication was issued without formal editing by IOM.

This publication was issued without IOM Research Unit (RES) endorsement.

Required citation: International Organization for Migration (IOM), 2023. *Framework for Diaspora Engagement in Humanitarian Assistance*. IOM.

Cover photo: IOM enumerators carry out door to door assessments in partnership with the Lebanese Red Cross in areas affected by the Beirut explosions to help the humanitarian community better understand the needs, plan and provide assistance. © IOM 2020/Muse MOHAMMED

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ISBN 978-92-9268-474-7 (PDF)

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PUB2022/188/R

FRAMEWORK FOR

DIASPORA ENGAGEMENT IN

HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE



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IOM volunteers use megaphones to disseminate key COVID-19, hygiene best practice and mental health and psychosocial support messages to those facing increased mobility restrictions in the Rohingya settlements. © IOM 2020/Abdullah AL MASHRIF

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Framework for Diaspora Engagement in Humanitarian Assistance is the result of years of research and cooperation between the International Organization for Migration (IOM), diaspora organizations (DOs) and institutional humanitarian actors (IHAs). The Framework was first piloted in Haiti through HDERU, the Haitian Diaspora Emergency Response Unit supported by Haiti Renewal Alliance (HRA). It has since also been piloted in the Philippines and, to some extent, Ukraine, through the mapping of active diaspora organizations with key skills urgently needed by communities facing effects of the conflict, including language skills and psychosocial support. With support, 40 of these organizations (DOs and IHAs) were registered to a Ukraine-specific repository on IOM's iDiaspora platform.

The Framework was developed, piloted and operationalized through two project phases:

- Developing and Piloting a Framework for Diaspora's Engagement in Humanitarian Assistance
- Consolidating and Operationalizing a Framework for Diaspora's Engagement in Humanitarian Assistance - Phase II

USAID's Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance (BHA) provided the generous funding for the first two phases of the Framework project, as well as for a third phase currently under development. The first two phases were also implemented in partnership with HRA, a nonprofit organization based in the United States that focuses on investment in the Caribbean.

## Project Team

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The Framework was developed through multiple consultative processes, including surveys and data collection, interviews and literature reviews. A working group consisting of the following actors was instrumental in the Framework's design and realization:

American Relief Coalition for Syria	InterAction
Camp Coordination and Camp Management Cluster	International Fund for Agricultural Development
Diaspora Emergency Action and Coordination	National Federation of Filipino American Assoc.
Ethiopian Diaspora Trust Fund	Oxfam
Filipino Young Leaders Program	Philippine Disaster Resilience Foundation
Food for the Hungry	Solidarités International
Global Diaspora Confederation	United Front of the Haitian Diaspora
Global Shelter Cluster	World Food Programme
Haiti Health Care Inc.	World Health Organization
Healing Venezuela	Zimbabwe Diaspora Nation Building Initiative
Institute of Caribbean Studies	

The editors apologize for any other non-acknowledged contributor as the list may not be exhaustive.

# FOREWORD

The Framework for Diaspora Engagement in Humanitarian Assistance<sup>1</sup> is a suggested guide to support more streamlined coordination among diasporas and institutional humanitarian actors, to promote more effective humanitarian assistance to affected people and communities worldwide.

This note explains the core elements of the Framework for Diaspora Engagement in Humanitarian Assistance. It also provides supplemental information in reference to the interactive visuals of the Framework itself. The links to these interactive visuals are referenced throughout the note and together at the end.

This Framework remains a living document and will continue to be elaborated and adapted over time.



Diasporas are uniquely equipped to intervene in cases of natural and manmade disasters in their countries of origin through their technical and language skills, community networks, remittances and philanthropic contributions, and local area knowledge.

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<sup>1</sup> See the interactive background presentation on the Framework for Diaspora Engagement in Humanitarian Assistance. Available at: <https://prezi.com/view/ImmNerjrhgNTQJqXoUh/>.

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# 1. OVERVIEW OF THE FRAMEWORK AND ACCOMPANYING VISUALS

## 1.1. WHY is the Framework relevant?

The extraordinary number of complex and protracted crises that affect more people every year around the world, compels humanitarian actors to explore innovative ways to meet the growing needs of affected populations. At the same time, the proliferation of new actors, and the need for multi-stakeholder solutions, raise the urgency to engage non-institutional actors in a more coordinated and collaborative way.

Diasporas have long been engaging in humanitarian assistance in multiple ways (i.e. in-kind donations, financial contributions and remittances, skilled volunteerism, etc.) to respond to the humanitarian and development needs of affected communities in their countries of origin and countries of residence. The question is “HOW” to more effectively engage and coordinate with diaspora groups to further leverage all actors’ experiences, skill sets, resources, and unique added values.

Building upon several decades of work around diaspora’s engagement and humanitarian assistance coordination, IOM, in cooperation with the Haiti Renewal Alliance and other partners, have developed and are piloting a framework for a more streamlined diaspora engagement in humanitarian assistance, at the global and country levels. The objective is to increase the capacity of diasporas and institutional humanitarian actors to more effectively coordinate, communicate and cooperate with each other. The ultimate goal is to increase the effectiveness and reach of humanitarian assistance to populations affected by natural and human-caused disasters and more broadly along the humanitarian-development-peace nexus.

## 1.2. To WHOM is the Framework addressed?

The Framework is directed towards diaspora actors, in particular diaspora’s organizations and coalitions, and institutional humanitarian actors, both at the global and country level.



"Loharano" is the project launched by OIM and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MAE) of Madagascar, in order to engage the Malagasy diaspora in the economic development of Madagascar. 9 young Malagasy volunteers from the diaspora were selected to implement actions relating to community development in five municipalities in the field of education, IT, livestock, languages and crafts. © IOM 2019/Natalie OREN

## 1.3. WHERE is the Framework applicable?

This Framework specifically applies to humanitarian crises affecting diasporas' countries of origin. However, the adaptability of the Framework allows for consideration of humanitarian assistance provided by diaspora in locations different from their country of origin, e.g. in countries of displacement or in neighboring countries, with a regional focus.

## 1.4. WHEN is the Framework applicable?

The Framework is applicable at any stage of humanitarian assistance – preparedness/prevention, response and recovery. Considering the important role that diasporas play along the humanitarian-development nexus, this framework is also adaptable to contexts where recovery moves towards development and/or where the same country may experience pockets of crisis within a broader development context.



## 1.5. HOW does the Framework for Diaspora Engagement in Humanitarian Assistance work?

For the purposes of this note, the "Framework" for Diaspora Engagement in Humanitarian Assistance refers to coordination between diaspora and humanitarian actors. Included in this, the Framework also addresses internal coordination among diaspora organizations through a model for internal diaspora coordination which suggests possible modalities in which diaspora actors from the same country of origin or heritage can work together in a more structured way. In this way, the Framework addresses both internal diaspora's coordination and external coordination between diasporas and institutional humanitarian actors.

Overall, the Framework identifies actors engaged in humanitarian assistance and suggests streamlined entry points and pathways for diaspora and institutional humanitarian coordination, at different levels. The Framework clarifies:

- **WHO** is involved in coordination broadly: diaspora actors and humanitarian actors at the country, regional and global levels. Within each of these macrogroups there are individual actors, who often already operate within existing coordination platforms.
- **WHERE** coordination occurs, whether at the global or country level. The regional level is not explicit, but it may be relevant as one of the locations where humanitarian diaspora facilitators may operate.
- **WHAT** are the main objectives of coordination: such as information sharing/communication, capacity exchange, resource mobilization, and joint initiatives. This list is not exhaustive.
- **HOW** coordination can be streamlined for more effective assistance, through suggested entry points; pathways for actors' coordination and; step-by-steps flows of coordination, at different levels of the humanitarian assistance. The step-by-step flows are reflected within flowcharts<sup>3</sup> that outline how different actors can intervene and interface with each other at different phases of the assistance, depending on needs and capacities.
- **WHEN** coordination occurs: whether before, during, and after disasters, crises and conflicts; and also along the humanitarian-development-peace nexus.

Figure 1: The Internal Model for Coordination



Figure 2: The External Model for Coordination



2. See the interactive Internal Model of the Framework for Diaspora Engagement in Humanitarian Assistance. Available at: <https://prezi.com/view/ssf1GfWSPckpJMpTkVtP/>.
3. See the Flowcharts for Diaspora Engagement in Preparedness & Prevention and Response & Recovery. Available at: <https://prezi.com/i/view/pkaScEYOI5xgpbB8sQfB>.

# 2. INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL DIASPORA COORDINATION

## 2.1. DIASPORA ENGAGEMENT IS MORE THAN JUST A STOPGAP

Although remittances remain an important lifeline to affected communities, diasporas bring much more to the table. Diasporas also bring intellectual, political, social and cultural capital that can be mobilized at different crisis stages and ensure sustainability of efforts. As countries affected by conflict, natural disasters or other crises face the difficult task of rebuilding physical, institutional and social infrastructures, diasporas also contribute to the transition from crisis to post crisis phases; they are sometimes in a position to either temporarily or permanently return to their countries of origin to aid in capacity-building in various sectors, such as health or education. Diasporas often support and cooperate with national and local first responders, such as civil society and local organizations, and can play an important role towards enhancing the localization of the assistance. While it may appear obvious that coordination can help engender a more informed, comprehensive humanitarian assistance, it is also important to consider diasporas' interest to maintain a certain degree of flexibility and autonomy, the possibility to cross the humanitarian-development divide, and preventing the risk of being exposed to the same hindrances as international organizations.

## 2.2. STRENGTHENING DIASPORA COORDINATION LEADS TO MORE EFFECTIVE EFFORTS

The positive effects of internal diaspora coordination have already been witnessed following the devastating August 14, 2021 earthquake in Haiti. Coordination by the Haitian diaspora, particularly by such organized bodies as HDERU, allowed for a quick and efficient response targeting specific areas affected by the disaster. The response, led by Haiti Renewal Alliance, involved regular meetings of various Haitian diaspora actors who organized focal points and working groups based on the Cluster System. Direct efforts included mobilization of medical staff, collection of vital supplies (e.g. water and shelter materials) and arrangement of their transportation, and fundraising. More streamlined internal coordination led to addressing possible gaps and overlapping and leveraging different actors' capacities and resources.

Additionally, the National Federation of Filipino American Associations (NaFFAA) has developed internal coordination tools (e.g. Facebook pages, SMS alerts) to engage the US-based Filipino diaspora. Step-by-step procedures have been outlined to activate diaspora mobilization if a disaster occurs in the Philippines including points of contact for internal and external communication, initial response, needs assessments, resource mobilization, and more, coordinated by the development of a Humanitarian Council. These tools have been tested in consultation with national actors in the Philippines and with the Filipino diaspora.

In light of the crisis in Ukraine, the Ukrainian diaspora and diasporas from neighboring countries have responded by providing essential assistance to affected and/or displaced communities. Diaspora groups from Africa and Asia have also responded to meet the needs of third country nationals (TNCs) and fill gaps in services or protections. Further highlighting the regional-to-global response, the Global Diaspora Confederation has organized Humanitarian Forums on Ukraine Response, bringing together diasporas around the world for more information sharing, capacities exchange, needs identification, and more.

By piloting aspects of the Framework in different contexts, it is possible to learn how to best adapt the Framework to other current and future disasters and help develop the capacities of communities to become more resilient.



# 3. KEY COMPONENTS OF THE FRAMEWORK

## 3.1. ACTORS

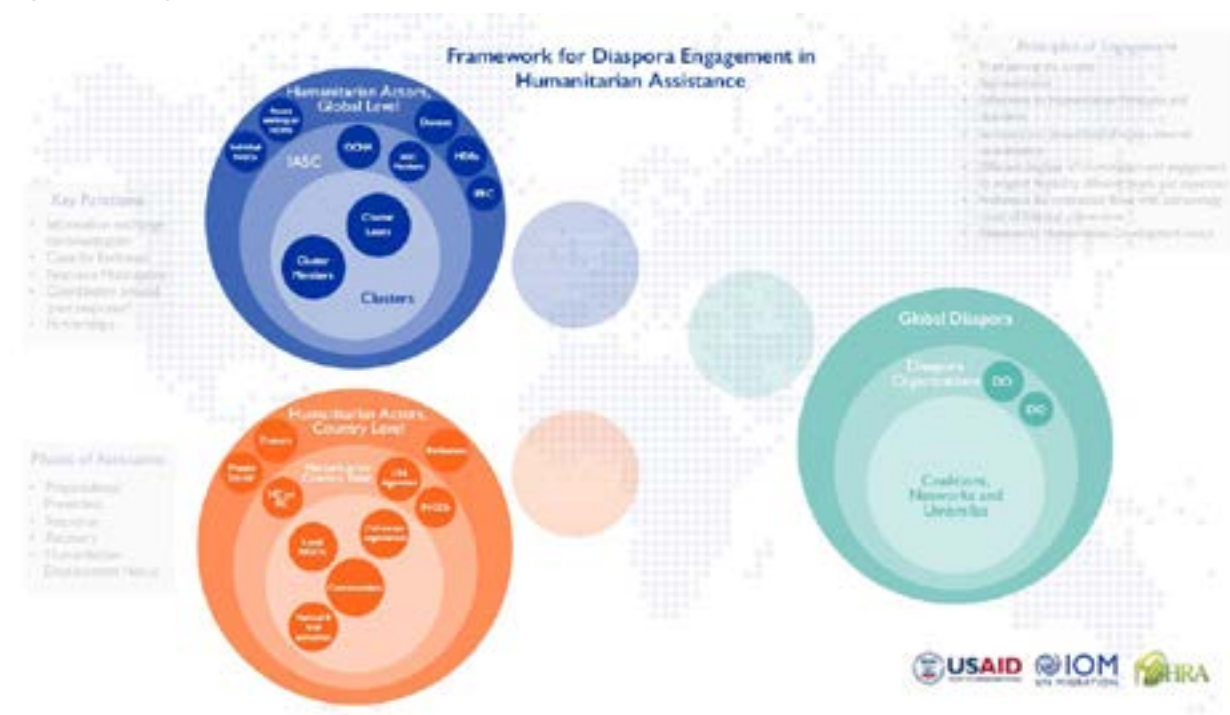
Three main categories of actors are considered within the Framework:

1. Diaspora actors;
2. Institutional humanitarian actors at the country level;
3. Institutional humanitarian actors at the global level.

A non-exhaustive list of specific actors is included within each large circle, representing these main categories, to provide a concrete idea of who can be involved in coordination, both at the global and country level (i.e. United Nations agencies, international and national NGOs, national and local authorities, affected communities, donors, etc.). Existing coordinating platforms which gather and convene some of these actors are also reflected (i.e. global and in-country humanitarian clusters).

Regional actors are not explicitly mentioned, but they may be relevant as possible facilitators depending on contexts and needs.

Figure 3: Categories of Actors



This still from the External Model highlights the above main categories of actors within the Framework, including select sub-actors who may be involved in coordination at different levels of engagement. These images are just extracted samples from the Framework models; more complete models may be found on pages 16 to 19.

Preceding page: Somali diaspora experts, supported by IOM's Migration for Development in Africa (MIDA) program, are drafting policies, training manuals, and creating the structure for more robust and responsive Somali institutions. One of the MIDA projects, set up in 2009, Qualified Expatriates Somali Technical Support – MIDA (QUESTS-MIDA), provides a platform for this. © IOM 2013/Mary-Sansu OSIRE

### 3.2. ENTRY POINTS – HUMANITARIAN DIASPORA FACILITATORS

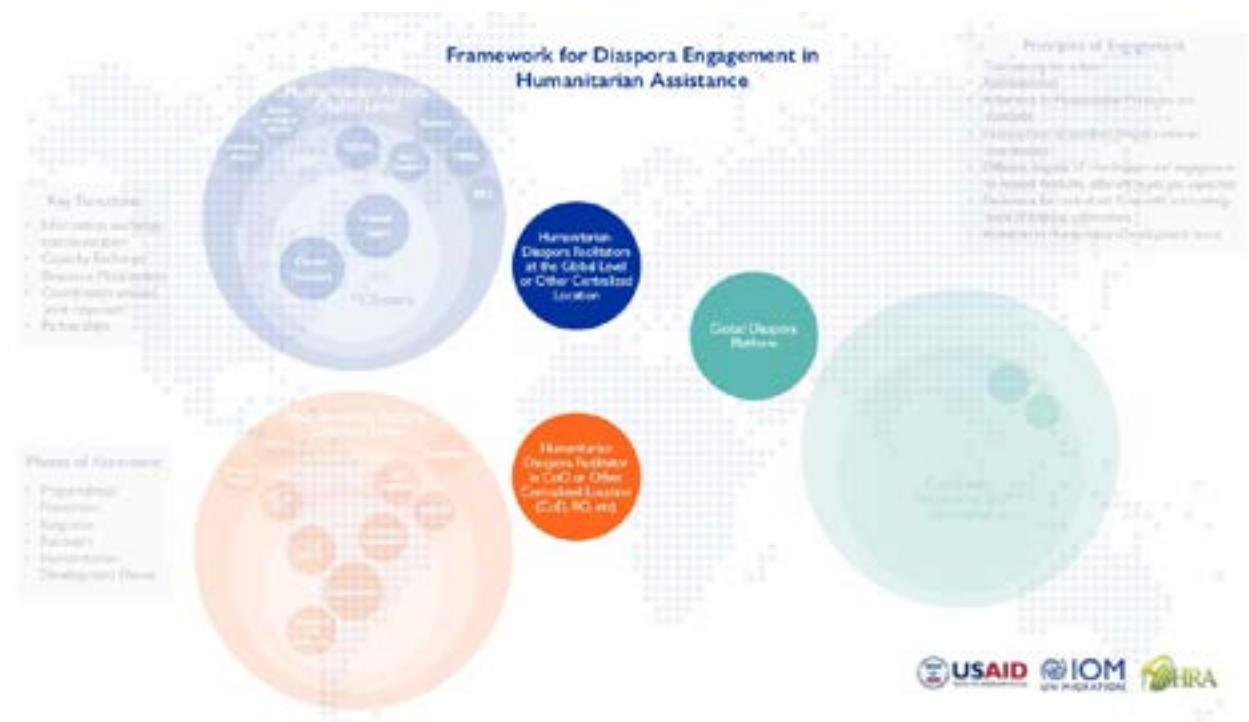
The Framework introduces, or recognizes in a more institutional manner where already existing, the roles of facilitating actors/platforms that can serve as entry points, points of contact, and, if necessary, as a triaging center for coordination requests and activities.

The Framework suggests three actors/platforms with complementary roles:

- Facilitators at the global level or other centralized location;
- Facilitators at the country-of-origin level or other centralized location (e.g. regional level);
- A Humanitarian Hub within a Global Diaspora Platform.

The establishment, roles, complementarity and interactions among these facilitating figures is regularly under elaboration and discussion with concerned stakeholders, in order to ensure that needs are met in an effective and not overlapping manner. Reference the Interactive Framework<sup>4</sup> for more information on the suggested roles of the Facilitators. In addition to these facilitators, entry points can also include humanitarian focal points within diaspora coordinating platforms, as well as diaspora focal points within humanitarian organizations.

Figure 4: Entry Points



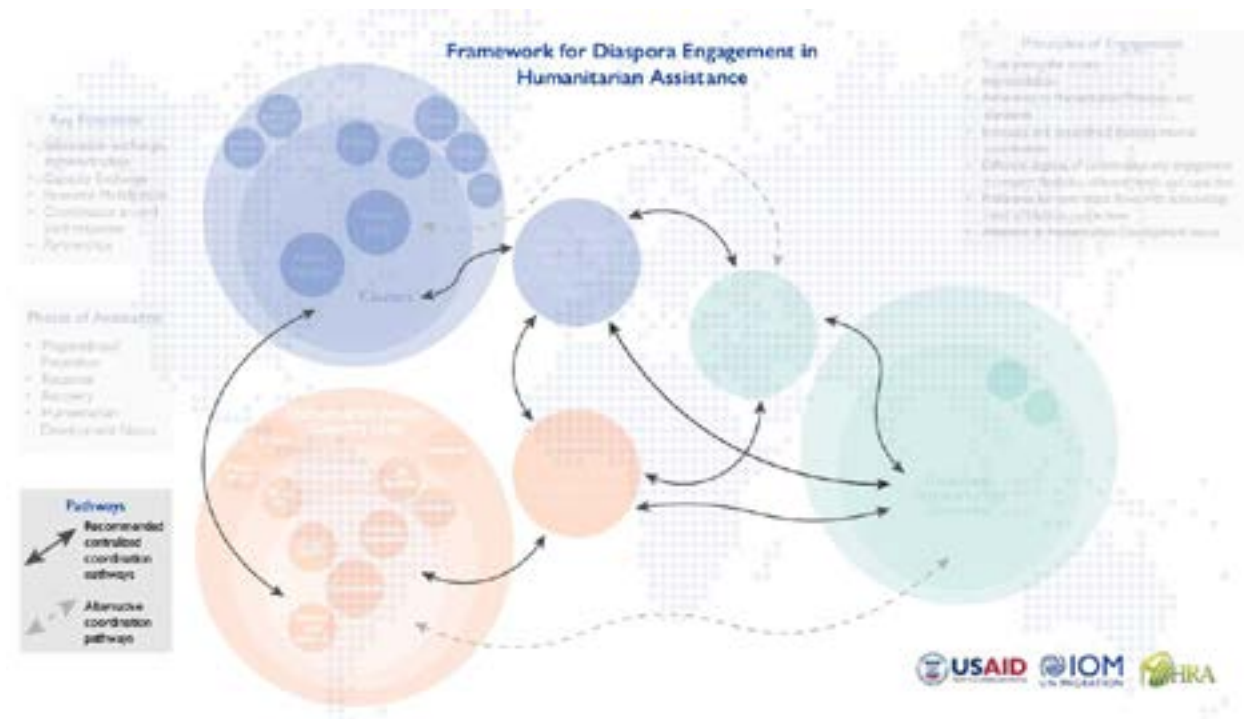
This still from the External Model highlights the suggested entry points to the Framework. These images are just extracted samples from the Framework models; more complete models may be found on pages 16 to 19.

4. See the interactive External Model of the Framework for Diaspora's Engagement in Humanitarian Assistance. Available at: <https://prezi.com/view/LqOhYzytvV8xDpPwZPz/>.

### 3.3. PATHWAYS FOR COORDINATION

The Framework indicates pathways to reflect the flows of connections between different actors. It suggests more streamlined pathways – solid lines – and recognizes the current or potential use of bilateral ad hoc coordination which can be preserved if effective – dotted lines. This is meant to promote the benefits of coordination towards a more informed and effective humanitarian assistance, while considering diaspora interest to maintain a certain degree of flexibility and autonomy and the fact that not all actors may be interested in and able to perform the same degrees and functions of coordination.

Figure 5: Pathways



This still from the External Model highlights the Framework's pathways for coordination. These images are just extracted samples from the Framework models; more complete models may be found on pages 16 to 19.

### 3.4. COORDINATION AMONG DIASPORA MEMBERS

This model for diaspora coordination is a sub-component of the overall Framework. Effective coordination between diaspora organizations and institutional humanitarian actors is also reliant on proper and more streamlined internal diaspora coordination. This would increase the benefits of coordination for diaspora actors involved in the coordination systems, and would ease the external interface with other stakeholders.

As a subcomponent, the Model for Diaspora Internal Coordination<sup>5</sup> offers guidance on possible ways diaspora from the same country of origin or heritage can come together in a more structured way. The goals of this model are to enable diaspora organizations to be better equipped to (1) provide humanitarian assistance to family, friends, and communities in their country of origin or heritage and (2) be more organized for streamlined engagement with external humanitarian actors.

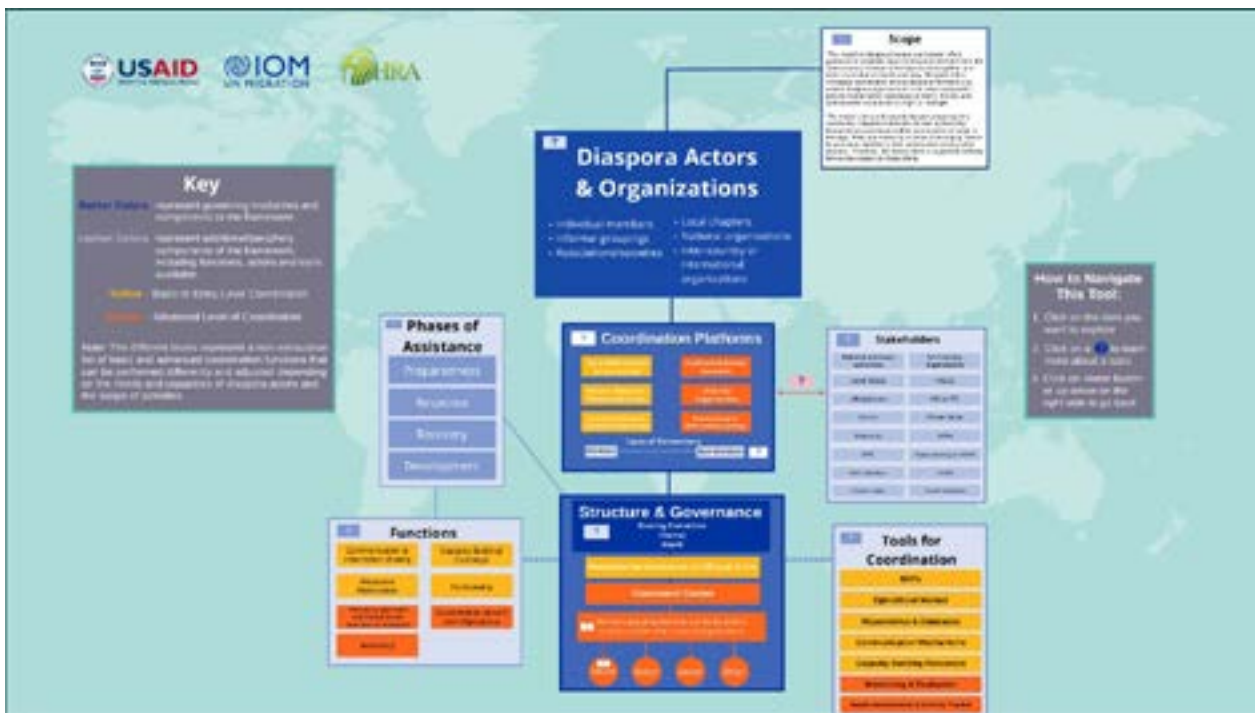
5. See the Interactive Internal Model of the Framework for Diaspora Engagement in Humanitarian Assistance. Available at: <https://prezi.com/view/sf1GfWsPCkPjMpTkVtP/>

The model focuses on the following central components:

- Diversity of diaspora actors;
- Suggested mechanisms for coordinating diaspora actors around different coordinating platforms;
- How to structure the coordinating platforms; and
- Possible main functions and tools.

The model accounts for both basic coordination and more advanced levels of coordination, allowing use of different modalities and functions depending upon existing capacities and actors' interest. There are also pathways on interfacing with external actors, illustrated by flow charts relative to phase of intervention (e.g. preparedness/prevention, and response/recovery). Partnerships between various actors are encouraged and facilitated.

Figure 6: Internal Coordination Model



A still from the interactive Internal Model of the Framework for Diaspora Engagement in Humanitarian Assistance.

External coordination, as outlined in this Framework, may be a second but necessary step after a closer and more effective internal coordination among diaspora actors is promoted, in the same way in which humanitarian actors have their own internal coordination systems both at the global and/or country level. In this optic, all actors are better organized internally to promote a more effective response and a more facilitated coordination with external actors.

### 3.5. COORDINATION AT THE GLOBAL LEVEL

This Framework accounts for global level coordination to support streamlining engagement systems via suggested entry points and pathways to facilitate engagement at a macro level at different phases of humanitarian assistance, but in particular during the preparedness and recovery phases. Emphasis is placed on interfacing with institutional actors within existing humanitarian systems as well as through the possible development of complementary systems or coordination tools.



IOM Washington's Diaspora Engagement Unit (DEU) and diaspora partners Haiti Renewal Alliance (HRA) and the National Federation of Filipino American Associations (NaFFAA) at the 2022 Humanitarian Networks and Partnerships Week (HNPW) in Geneva, Switzerland. © IOM 2022/Lawrence BOOK MCKNIGHT

### 3.6. COORDINATION AT THE COUNTRY LEVEL

In addition to global coordination, most of the granular and programmatic coordination around humanitarian assistance will need to occur at the country level. In this way, it is important that facilitators in the affected country or region work in coordination with diasporas and humanitarian actors involved on the ground in synergy with existing coordinating systems and actors leading coordination processes. Diasporas can collect, guide, and share information on diaspora-led response initiatives and share information and needs that they may gather from affected communities with country level humanitarian actors. Various connections and/or partnerships between diaspora organizations and humanitarian actors can be initiated or strengthened as appropriate in order to provide added value to the humanitarian assistance by leveraging different parties' specific capacities.

Humanitarian assistance can be relevant not only in support of activities in diasporas' countries of origin, but also to assist migrants and refugees in a third country. This level of intervention should also be considered and reflected in the Framework.



### 3.7. KEY PRINCIPLES OF COORDINATION

The Framework recognizes some key principles underlying coordination efforts within diaspora communities, as well as between diasporas and institutional humanitarian actors, including but not limited to:

- Trust among the actors, both horizontally and vertically, and trust building processes;
- Adherence to Humanitarian Principles and Standards;
- Accountability to members, partners, principles and affected communities, with a feedback loop system;
- Increased and more streamlined internal diaspora coordination (see the model on diaspora internal coordination for more information);
- Different degrees of coordination and engagement to respect different needs and capacities of actors;
- Flexibility to choose how to coordinate along the distinct aspects of the Framework, like functions and pathways, which can be applied in different ways and at different phases according to the needs, interest, and capacities of the actor.



IOM Washington's Diaspora Engagement Unit (DEU), IOM United States Chief of Mission, and diaspora partner the National Federation of Filipino American Associations (NaFFAA) at the launch of the FilAm Alerts program in Washington, DC. © IOM 2022/ Daphne HENNING



# ANNEX 1. ENDORSEMENTS

Development of the Framework for Diaspora Engagement in Humanitarian Assistance is ongoing. The project, now having completed its second phase, continues to consolidate and operationalize the Framework for broader application to relevant crisis contexts. Thus far, nine organizations have fully endorsed the Framework while other endorsements are presently under review.

IOM is optimistic for the Framework's future, from its applicability to both human-caused and natural disasters as well as its enduring potential to further streamline coordination between diasporas and institutional humanitarian actors, and strengthen capacity for assisting populations in need.

For more information about the Framework, or to find out how you can get involved, email IOM Washington's Diaspora Engagement Unit at [diasporaforhumanity@iom.int](mailto:diasporaforhumanity@iom.int).



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Preceding page: Many families had their homes and livelihoods destroyed as Super Typhoon Rolly and three other typhoons pounded the region within a span of three weeks in 2020. The Philippines, while contributing the least to climate change, is the second most affected by it globally as extreme weather events like super typhoons are expected to become more frequent and more intense in the coming years. © IOM 2021/Andrea EMPAMANO

# ANNEX 2. VISUALS AND INTERACTIVE MODELS

For more information on the elements of the Framework for Diaspora Engagement in Humanitarian Assistance, please reference the following visuals and stills from the Framework's interactive and static models. Navigate the interactive models by double-clicking on areas of interest, or using your arrow keys on a desktop for a step-by-step view of the models.

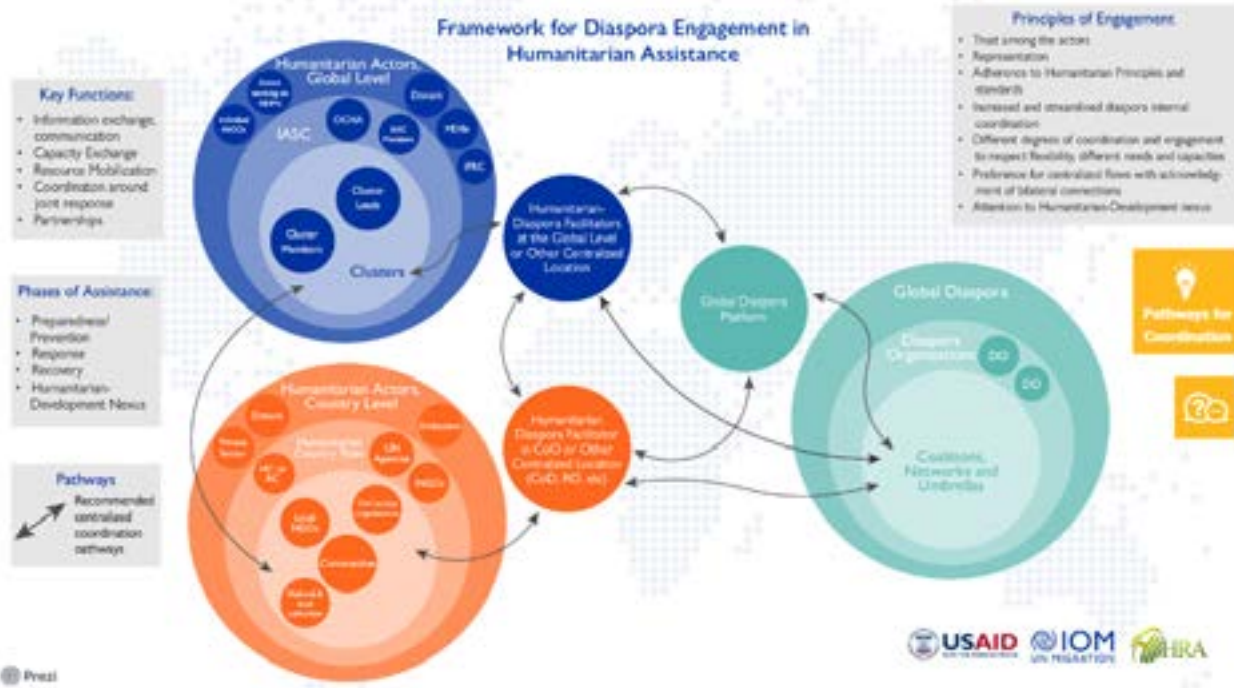
## 2.1. BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON THE PROJECT

Access this presentation for a hands-on dive into the project's key elements, purpose, and vision:  
<https://prezi.com/view/ImmNerjrwhgNTQJqXoUh/>



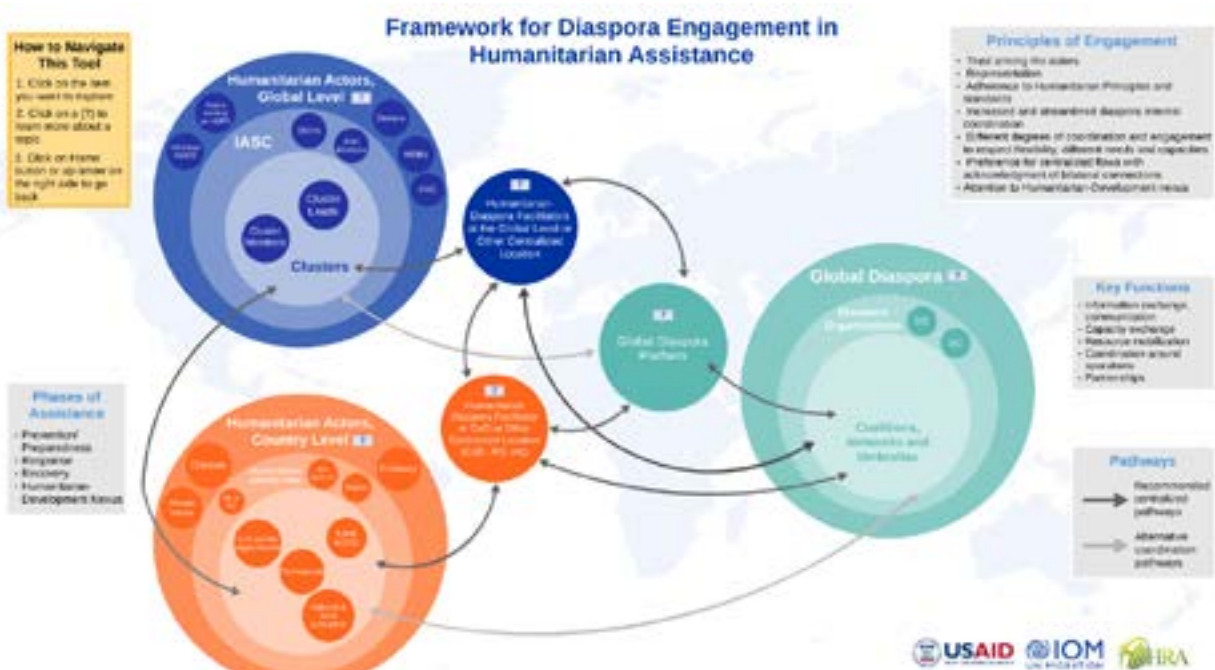
## 2.2. COMPONENTS OF THE FRAMEWORK FOR DIASPORA ENGAGEMENT IN HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE

Access this visual for a deeper look at the External Coordination Model's components, including key functions and principles: <https://prezi.com/i/view/NcwhopQvezBguhqAP3UR>



## 2.3. INTERACTIVE MODEL OF THE FRAMEWORK FOR DIASPORA ENGAGEMENT IN HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE

Access this presentation to examine the different components and layers of the External Coordination Model: <https://prezi.com/view/LqOhYzytvV8xDpPwZPz/>

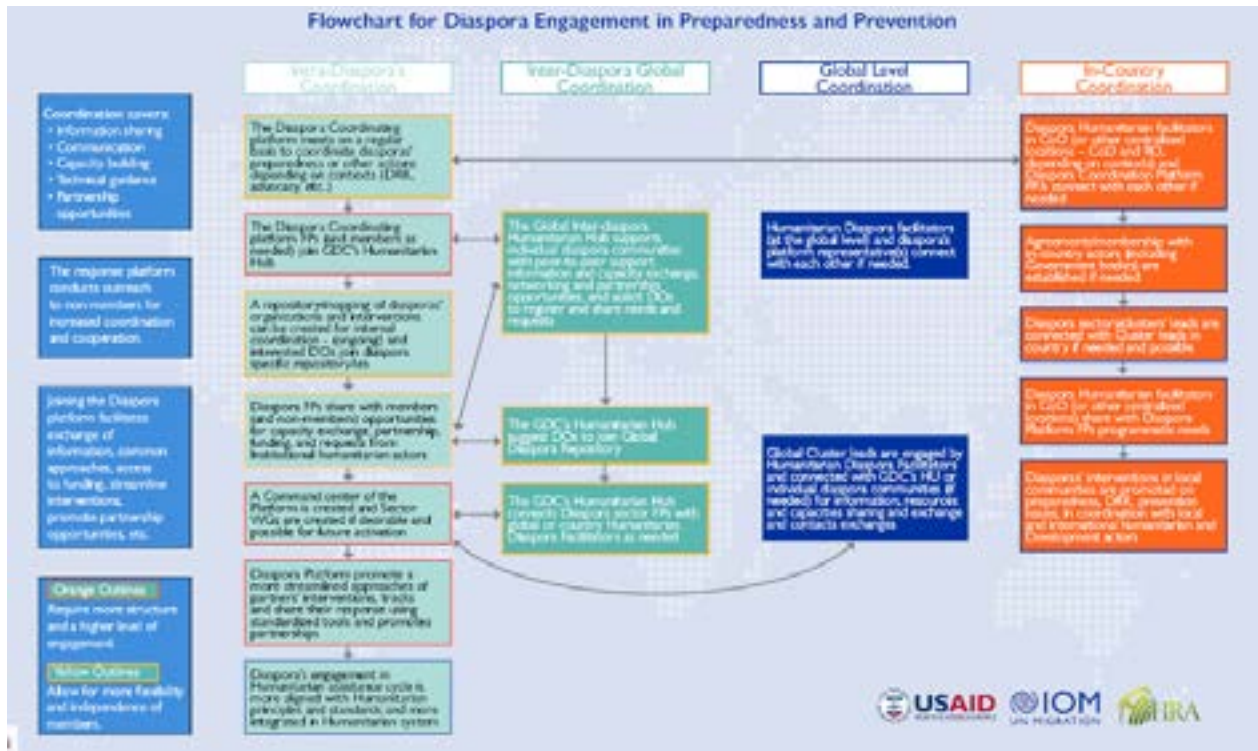




## 2.5. FLOWCHART FOR DIASPORA ENGAGEMENT IN PREPAREDNESS AND PREVENTION

Access this visual for detailed steps in suggested coordination methods for before a crisis happens.

Link to both flowcharts: <https://prezi.com/i/view/Kx2yyqiHk3S4hrAjpFX>



## 2.6. FLOWCHART FOR DIASPORA ENGAGEMENT IN RESPONSE AND RECOVERY

Access this visual for detailed steps in suggested coordination methods for after a crisis occurs.

