

SOMALI DIASPORA ENGAGEMENT

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



CONTEXT

Somalia has faced a multifaceted crisis for decades, driven by a combination of political instability, violent conflict, and severe climatic conditions. The security situation has been precarious, with frequent attacks and generalized insecurity. Droughts and floods have led to severe food shortages and water scarcity, affecting millions of people. These factors have led to large-scale displacement, with millions of Somalis internally displaced or fleeing across borders. Humanitarian aid efforts are ongoing, but they face significant challenges, leaving many in need of assistance.

The Somali diaspora, with an estimated 2 million people worldwide, spread across North America, Europe, the Middle East, and other regions, has played a crucial role in the humanitarian and development efforts in Somalia. Leveraging their resources and networks, diaspora members contribute significantly through remittances, which provide a vital lifeline for many families, often accounting for a substantial portion of Somalia's GDP. They are also involved in funding educational and healthcare projects, supporting local businesses, engaging in advocacy and contributing their expertise to the state-building efforts.

SCOPE

In this context, the Framework was applied to support interested Somali Diaspora Organizations globally towards stronger and more streamlined internal coordination, with a focus on preparedness and response to real time crises, (such as floods produced by El Niño in October 2023), and promotion of closer coordination with humanitarian actors, including government counterparts, UN agencies and private actors, in Somalia. Also, financial support was provided for diaspora's interventions, thanks to sub-grants issued and managed by IOM. IOM and DEMAC jointly conducted this intervention, which is still undergoing iterative design and operationalization processes.

FAST FACTS

50+

Somali diaspora organizations worldwide meeting regularly to discuss internal coordination and collaboration.

40000

USD in sub-granting funds allocated to diaspora organizations to support interventions on the ground through local partners.

THIS CASE STUDY FEATURES:

- 1. Crisis Context:** Persistent, multi-layered political instability and violence, compounded by frequent environmental hazards, such as drought and floods, leading to vast humanitarian needs.
- 2. Diaspora type:** Large, decentralized spread across continents, with solid remittances' culture, involved in both humanitarian, development and advocacy efforts.
- 3. Humanitarian system in-country:** Extensive international and local aid presence, coordinated by the UN, focused on emergency response, food security, health and resilience building, and conducted in collaboration with federal and regional governments.
- 4. Diaspora partner:** Multiple Diaspora Organizations involved in consultations and building of coordination systems; no single diaspora partner.
- 5. Scope of the engagement:** Support diaspora's internal and external coordination; response to a real-time crisis (El Niño floods of October 2023); financial support to diasporas' projects on the ground.



IMPACT

For diaspora: More effective preparedness and response and access to opportunities for collaboration, through a systematic platform to exchange information, build capacity, receive support, and coordinate, both internally, and with humanitarian clusters in country.

For humanitarian actors: Increased understanding of diasporas' interventions, opportunities for closer coordination and collaboration with diasporas' work.

For local actors and affected communities: Increased reach of assistance to the under-served communities; increased support to local implementing actors through funding and capacity building.

FRAMEWORK APPLICATION

Design of the Engagement

- Several diasporas as involved in the ongoing design of the coordination models through consultations.
- Mapping and consultative processes.

Functions

- Internal coordination governance systems suitable to diaspora's needs and preferences.
- Priority on Information sharing and communication for crisis preparedness and real-time response
- Liaison with humanitarian clusters in countries.
- Financial support to diasporas' interventions on the ground through sub-grants.

Governance

- Under elaboration.

Liaison

- Dedicated country-level liaison role played by IOM in Somalia.
- Dedicated diaspora-level liaison role played by DEMAC.

Stakeholders

- Joint IOM-DEMAC intervention.
- Global Somalia Diaspora co-facilitating flood response coordination calls.
- Engagement with government actors and institutional humanitarian actors.

RELEVANT TOOLS OF THE FRAMEWORK

- **The Somalia Real Time Review** to document operational modalities employed by diaspora organizations (DOs) and their strengths and challenges as humanitarian actors and to contribute to improved collaboration and coordination between and among diaspora and other actors, and to an overall strengthened humanitarian response in Somalia.
- **The survey** to collect information from diaspora organizations on current responses and overall humanitarian assistance modus operandi.
- **The mapping** of Somali diasporas in the countries of major concentration.
- **The subgrant mechanism**, with call for grants and capacity building opportunities.
- **The WhatsApp group** for more effective and timely communication.
- **Regular bi-weekly coordination calls** in response and recovery to 2023 floods.
- **Two sets of consultation meetings**, one per time zone (Australia/Asia and Europe/North America).
- Other tools are currently under elaboration.

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.

