

# Diasporas in Humanitarian Settings: *Creating Opportunities for Complementary Action*

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## SEMINAR OUTCOMES

UNICEF, Geneva 20 August 2018



*Food Security Project Syria © DOZ e. V.*

## BACKGROUND INFORMATION

While the contribution of diasporas to development has been widely researched, their input into the humanitarian sphere remains underexplored. The Diaspora Emergency Action & Coordination (DEMAC) project aims to document the strength and complementarity of diaspora humanitarianism and highlight opportunities for greater collaboration at local and international level.

At the occasion of the World Humanitarian Day the DEMAC consortium in partnership with the Global Child Protection Area of Responsibility teams held a seminar called “**Diasporas in Humanitarian Settings – Creating Opportunities for Complementary Action**” on Monday 20<sup>th</sup> August 2018 at the UNICEF offices in Geneva.

This seminar created the space to bring Diaspora humanitarians and those within the humanitarian sector together to learn about and discuss the findings from the latest DEMAC research report “[Creating Opportunities to Work with Diasporas in Humanitarian Settings](#)”.

The seminar also provided the opportunity for humanitarian practitioners and diaspora humanitarians to hear directly from each other and explore areas of interest. Over the course of the DEMAC project we have seen the value in creating spaces for one to one conversations to explore areas of synergy and share experiences, this proved to be equally valuable on this occasion.



The seminar attracted a diverse range of participants, including those representing:

- Diaspora humanitarians
- Academics undertaking research on diaspora
- Donors
- UN agencies
- International non-government organisations (INGOs) seeking to engage and work collaboratively with diaspora communities in advancing shared goals.

This unique range of actors was involved in dynamic discussions. They also helped progress an agenda for partnership and collaboration between the different groups represented.

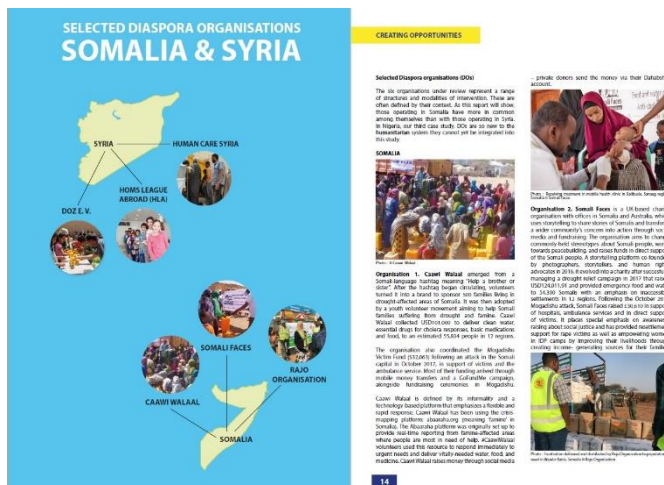
This report has been prepared by DEMAC to draw out key learnings from the Seminar and document calls to action for the different actors represented at the seminar.

## SETTING THE SCENE

Pauline Vidal from the Samuel Hall research team that conducted the evaluation study presented the report “[Creating Opportunities to Work with Diasporas in Humanitarian Settings](#)” covering three countries currently experiencing conflict - Nigeria, Somalia and Syria where diaspora humanitarians play an important role in emergencies and provide vital support to communities.

The presentation (see the full presentation in annexes) covered:

- The work the organisations are currently doing and their impact
- Areas of strength and weakness based on beneficiary and stakeholder feedback
- Recommendations going forward for:
  - o Diaspora organisations
  - o DEMAC
  - o NGOs
  - o Donors



This presentation reviewed the work of six Diaspora organisations (DOs) in Syria and Somalia, when emergency and early recovery responses are needed as a result of droughts, terror attacks or active conflict.

This research started by asking how small- and medium-scale DOs add value in remote and restricted settings where mainstream humanitarian actors face challenges of access, local ownership and sustainability. It concludes on areas of complementarity between DOs and the traditional humanitarian sector, outlining their strengths and weaknesses, achievements and areas where they should be supported.

The complexities of operating in emergency humanitarian settings in countries such as Nigeria, Somalia and Syria apply to all organisations – whether international or diaspora. DOs have to negotiate their access to funding and their implementation capacity just like traditional actors. They operate in a common humanitarian aid ecosystem, are confronted with similar challenges, and use alternative modes of intervention that can also act as sources for best practices. Yet this study reveals that traditional humanitarian actors and diasporic actors rarely interact to improve the results of humanitarian aid across emergency settings. The lack of knowledge of each other's work, capacity and potential contributions weaken the aid ecosystem and the response.

The presentation garnered a great deal of interest from the audience as there were a number of questions from all actors in the room to explore the themes further, request clarification and to probe deeper into the findings. One of the questions was focused on the motivation and impact of the diaspora organisations featured in the study. This was a good question as it led to the next section.



## DIASPORA PRESENTATIONS

The organisations in attendance included:

Organisation	Representative	Country of operation
<a href="#"><u>Somali Faces</u></a>	Mohammed Ibrahim Shire	Somalia
<a href="#"><u>Rajo Organisation</u></a>	Hafsa Jama	Somalia
<a href="#"><u>Homs League Abroad</u></a>	Dr. Mazen Charbak	Syria
<a href="#"><u>DOZ e.V</u></a>	Julia Quaas	Syria
<a href="#"><u>SCAN-UK</u></a>	Anass Tooma	Syria
<a href="#"><u>ARISE!</u></a>	Abimbola Junaid	Nigeria
<a href="#"><u>F.R.E.E</u></a>	Marwanatu Nadama	Nigeria



Each organisation provided insight into why their organisation came into creation, the work they have been doing and the challenges they have faced in responding to crises in their home countries.

This session was extremely useful in providing insight to those who had little knowledge of the work and workings of diaspora organisations. The responses from the panel helped the audience to recognise the impact and amount of work that is being done in parallel to formal response activities.

## GROUP DISCUSSIONS SUMMARIES

To enable the attendees to have in-depth conversations and explore themes further with each other the final session was divided into country specific discussion groups.

Though the groups were separated the conversations generally followed a similar form. Discussion began with the current country context in relation to the crisis being experienced progressed into exploring all participants’ humanitarian interventions and finished by looking at how participants could enhance their response through partnerships or greater interaction.

### NIGERIA

Main challenges/barriers identified for enhanced Diaspora Organisation (DO) collaboration and coordination with traditional humanitarian actors:

### Time and resources:

- Finding the time and human resource to do ‘non-essential’ activities is a challenge as diaspora often are working on a voluntary basis
- There are challenges in having skilled people to do reporting, admin and other areas so important in project and relationship management
- When funds/donations are collected there are activities specific and not for administrative work
- No time to look for projects and to work on proposal development

### Potential solutions discussed:

- Stronger coordination within DOs networks
- Put resources together in order to have staff secured for drafting proposals and fundraising available for all DOs, work as a collective



### Need for stronger coordination between DOs:

- Avoid duplication
- Assess better the needs and the interests from the local partners

### Potential solutions discussed:

- Assess the strengths of each DO (need for internal audits)
- Create real areas for mutual opportunities and synergies
- Create more formal and institutional partnerships
- Discuss the possibility to create some kind of federation at regional/national level
- Use the DEMAC platform for supporting this enhanced collaboration

### Need for a more holistic approach

The group recognised that DOs should be aware of the humanitarian principles and factor them in to their work. However, there is no need to replicate exactly how traditional humanitarian actors work as there is value in the flexibility and adaptability, among other characteristics, of how DOs work. In line with this it was suggested that the specificities of DOs and of their engagement possibilities and mechanisms should be more acknowledged in the broader humanitarian sector.

A strong feeling from those in the group was that the importance of localisation needs to be taken into consideration more by the traditional humanitarian sector. Ways of working should be adapted or created to accommodate this area of focus. One of the ways that would help diaspora strengthen their ways of working and position in the sector was for space to be created for diaspora to speak to each other and look at areas such as:

- Working solely in the humanitarian space or expand projects into development work/ support
- Reflecting on how diaspora generally work and looking at what structures would enable them to partner in the formal sector thinking about funding, reporting and so on.

## SOMALIA

The Somalia group were very clear and concise on what the needs were for improving humanitarian response to Somalia.



### Capacity

It was recognised that diaspora have skills, abilities and access that are not available to traditional responders. At the same time the DOs recognised their limitations and capacity building requirements. With this in mind it was suggested that all (diaspora and traditional humanitarian actors) be clear on the available capacity of diaspora responders and manage expectations for all involved.

An important point raised regarding capacity was in terms of who defines what capacity needs to be built and for what purpose. One DO mentioned that how much of their freedom/ independence of working must be curtailed or adapted to be able to participate actively and fully in the formal humanitarian sector. He suggested a middle ground was needed that recognised DOs means of operation while ensuring that ways of working together effectively could be found.

### Coordination

Discussion regarding effective coordination suggested that for this to happen real transparency and brutal honesty were needed to foster meaningful discussion between all stakeholders.

In line with the earlier point it was recommended that rather than have diaspora organisations be assimilated into the current structure there could be an alternative way forward. It was said that what would be more beneficial and useful is to create a space for learning where both sides can benefit from the pros and cons of their operations and how they can complement each other.

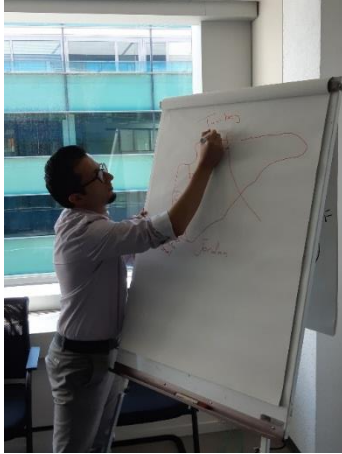
A final point was that it would be useful for coordination if a platform for people to be able to find organisations was in place. The DEMAC database of organisations was pointed to as an example.

## SYRIA

The Syria discussion group structured their discussion on action focused questions while also reflecting on the realities of the current situation and what steps could be taken to respond meaningfully.

The group reflected on the complexity of the Syria conflict as it is happening in 4 regions and each is experiencing a very different situation. In some regions it is easier as they are very connected in others there are limited coordination opportunities which make it challenging to respond.

As the group shared their experience in the current situation important considerations came out of the discussion:



- Limited access in Syria for DOs in the 4 regions (restrictions and limited funding). All the DOs are now in Idlib area. Few small DOs are also working in the Kurdish area (from Irak, not from Turkey), No DOs are working in the governmental area.
- Humanitarian DOs are questioning their own role and presence in Syria
- DOs are not allowed to work from Lebanon and Jordan. Some have Lebanese and Jordan humanitarian partners to continue working (Homs League Abroad).

DOZ (one of the diaspora organisations) has difficulties to fund activities in Kurdish areas in Europe. It is easier to fund for staff and office in Germany. They work mainly with volunteers because they cannot pay their staff in the Kurdish area. They also have presence in 3 other areas in Syria.

DOZ found it impossible to register in Gazientep. They pointed out that all the trainings are always offered outside of Syria (Gazientep, Lebanon), which limit the participation of small organisations operating inside Syria.

The group looked at the experiences in the North West part of Syria



- There were a limited number of INGOs, so it gave the space for local NGOs to take the lead in coordination
- Major actors are from national, local and diaspora in the cluster system and NGO consortium
- Coordination meetings are held in Gazientep
- They all acknowledge the importance of improving the capacity of local NGOs because they are implementing
- Funding from donors can limit their freedom to operate

The findings within the North West of Syria would make an interesting case study as it would be useful to look at the impact of humanitarian response when predominantly administered by local and diaspora actors.

***What's next? What can be the role of DOs in Syria and in Europe?***

- Syrian DOs should start merging together to cut operational costs, the operational area is shrinking e.g. why are there 18 orgs from UK for orphans in a similar specific area?

- Diaspora and other actors should empower the local organisations as they are there and the focus should be on strengthening not replacing or duplicating.
- Important issue remains: how to transfer money? DOs need to advocate for this issue together with INGOs
- There are major technical gaps in Syria in response to the number of skilled people that have left Syria. How do we take this into consideration when planning for the future with the scale of the current enforced brain drain?
- DOs need to transfer knowledge and technical skills to the local NGOs
- DOs role should be to raise funds to support local actors
- Role of DOs = Localization of aid

**Challenges** identified by the DOs which have a direct impact on their ability to develop and progress their work include:



- Lack of funding
- DOs have difficulties to fund their own HQ long term.
- How to fund advocacy and operational activities?
- Funding is for delivering aid but not for capacity-building.



## KEY SEMINAR LEARNINGS

There were many similar points that came out of the groups in terms of how diaspora were experiencing challenges as well as having a positive impact. Some areas that came out across all the conversations included:

- Funding structures to enable Diaspora Organisations to be able to access funds to enhance projects, carry out advocacy activities and pay for core costs (Staff, office space, M&E activities and admin costs)
- Traditional humanitarian organisations and donors creating mechanisms which enable diaspora and local organisations to have access and be able to engage with the organisations taking into consideration their resource limitations.
- A platform to enable all humanitarian actors/ organisations to find and connect with each other

The seminar provided a much needed space to facilitate knowledge sharing and connections between traditional actors and diaspora actors to have discussions regarding how they could find ways of working with each other that could be effective.

There were calls for similar events to be convened more often to enable the work in building connections to continue.

Following the Seminar the Global Child Protection Cluster Area of Responsibility team prepared a document to share with their country coordinators in order to identify potential ways to collaborate with diaspora organisations (see the document in the annexes).

## ANNEXES

### SEMINAR PROGRAMME

Time	Content	Speakers
13.30-13.40	<b>Welcome and introduction</b>	<b>Béatrice Mauconduit</b> , DRC/DEMAC Project Coordinator <b>Anthony Nolan</b> , Local, Engagement Specialist, Global Child Protection Area of Responsibility (facilitator)
13.40-14.00	<b>Presentation of the research findings</b> “ <i>Creating opportunities to work with diasporas in humanitarian settings</i> ”	<b>Nassim Majid</b> , Founder and co-director, Samuel Hall, (remote presentation)
14.00-14.45	<b>Reflections about the research findings with Syrian, Somali and Nigerian diaspora humanitarians</b>	<b>Mohammed Ibrahim Shire</b> , Somali Faces <b>Hafsa Jama</b> , Rajo Organisation <b>Dr. Mazen Charbak</b> , Homs League Abroad <b>Julia Quaas</b> , DOZ e.V.
14.45-15.15	<b>Q&amp;A and discussion</b>	<b>Anass Tooma</b> , SCAN-UK <b>Abimbola Junaid</b> , ARISE! <b>Marwanatu Nadama</b> , F.R.E.E
15.15-15.35	Coffee/tea break	
15.35-16.05	<b>Group discussions between diaspora representatives and humanitarian workers</b>	<i>Facilitated by the DEMAC and Global Child Protection AoR Teams</i>
16.05-16.20	<b>Feedbacks from group discussions</b>	<i>Group Rapporteurs</i>
16.20- 16.30	<b>Conclusion</b>	<b>Anthony Nolan</b> , Facilitator <b>Elvina Quaison</b> , AFFORD/DEMAC Project Manager

## SAMUEL HALL PRESENTATION



Creating opportunities to work with Diasporas in humanitarian settings



### Research Question

#### Original

*What comparative advantage and added value do different types of diaspora organisations (DOs) offer in humanitarian responses?*

#### Revised

**In what ways can diaspora organisations contribute to strengthening the humanitarian response in times of crisis?**

### Selection of Diaspora Organisations (Dos)

- 6 DOs in Somalia and Syria
- None in Nigeria (planned for three)
- 48 structured interviews
- 13 focus group discussions,
- 6 organisational capacity assessment tools (OCATs)

### Research Objectives

#### Provides recommendations for

1. Diaspora organisations
2. DEMAC
3. International organisations and NGOs
4. Donors
5. Governments

#### Beyond descriptives

- Build evidence-based knowledge of the **comparative value and value-added** of DOs
- **Identify tangible contributions** that DOs could and currently do make to efforts of traditional humanitarian efforts
- Understand current **coordination and effectiveness**

Introduction - Methodology - Analysis - Potential - Road ahead - Recommendations

### Locations and Sample

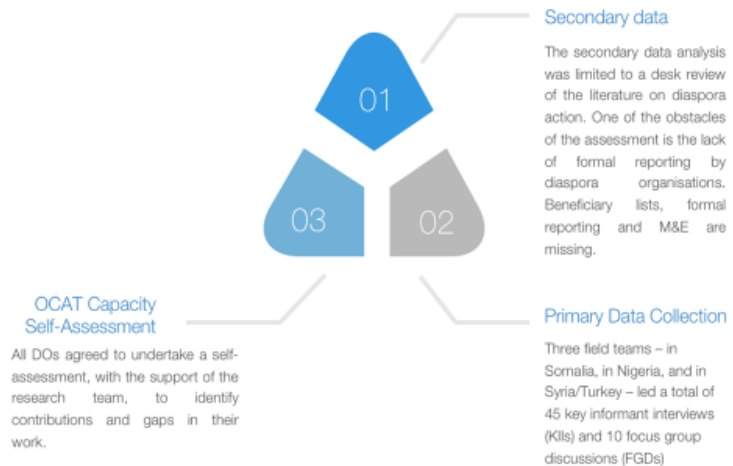
- 7 fieldwork locations
- Cross-regional learning (Somalia, Syria)
- Context analysis (Nigeria)

Country	Location
Somalia	Galgaduud (South Central)
	Farawayne (Somaliland)
Syria	Idlib (Idlib - Northwest)
	Kobani (Aleppo - North)
	Gaziantep (Turkey)
Nigeria	Maiduguri (Northeast)
	Lagos (Capital city)

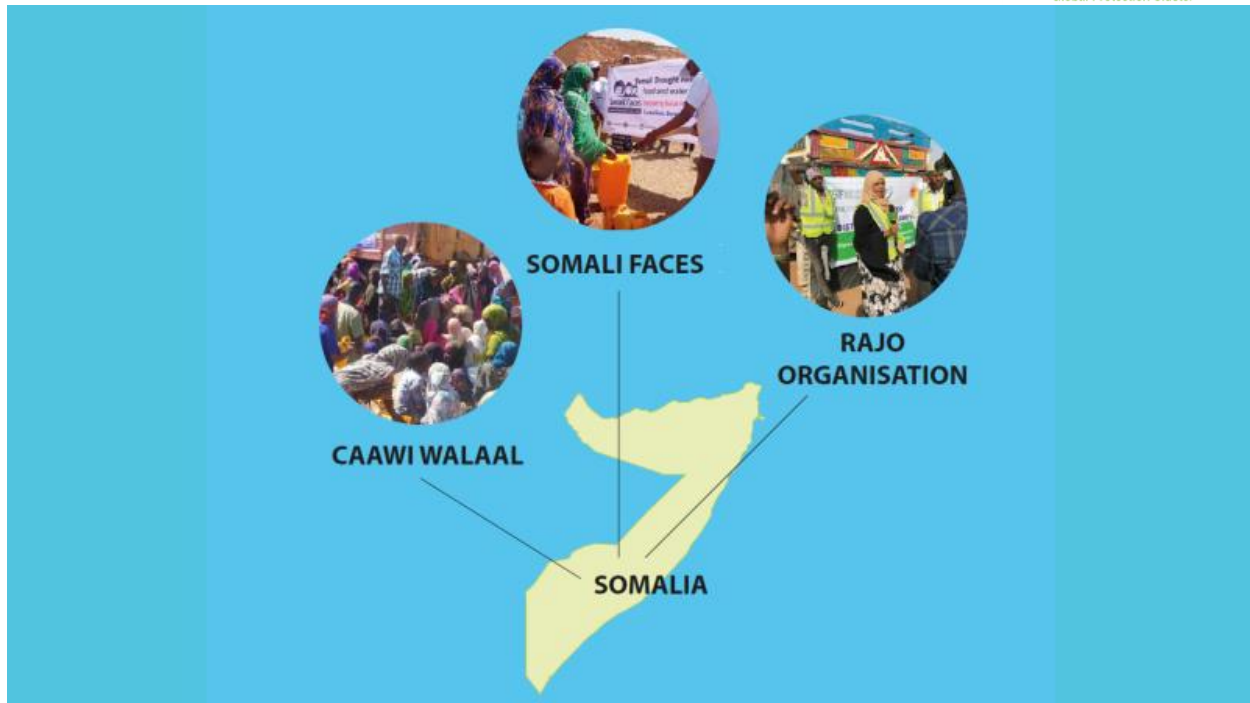


### Criteria for assessing DOs




Criteria
1. Cost-effectiveness
2. Access
3. Rapidity
4. Local ownership and anchoring of activities post-project completion
5. Results
6. Sustainability
7. Innovation
8. Voice amplification







### SELECTED SOMALI DIASPORA ORGANISATIONS

Diaspora Organisation	HQ	Specificity	Interventions	Brief description
	Network of volunteers with an office in Mogadishu	Strong focus on <b>social media campaigns</b>	Deliver: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Food and clean water</li> <li>- Essential drugs for cholera</li> <li>- Basic medication</li> </ul>	Caawi Walaal raised <b>101,000 USD to deliver clean water, essential drugs for cholera response, basic medication, food</b> to an estimated 55,884 people in 12 regions in 2017
	UK Offices in Australia & Somalia	Strong emphasis on <b>storytelling &amp; fundraising</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Food and water relief</li> <li>- Hospitals; ambulance services</li> <li>- Awareness raising</li> <li>- Resettlement support</li> </ul>	Somali Faces raised <b>124,012 USD to provide food &amp; water</b> to 54,300 Somalis in 12 regions in 2017
	Denmark	Partnership with local implementers to deliver <b>programmes</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Social development projects</li> <li>- Skills trainings</li> <li>- Food delivery</li> </ul>	Rajo secured a grant from DERF of <b>87,153 USD to deliver food</b> to 4000 families in Somaliland in 2017.

## Starting point in in Somalia: How do they operate?

Ignorance of and a resulting sense of mistrust around DOs' work persist

- *Interactions are limited but there are efforts to interact at the central level.*

DOs are not visible actors at the local level

- *At the local level, because of their geographic fragmentation, DOs cannot participate in coordination meetings or make themselves known to other partners, except on an ad-hoc basis.*
- *Somali Faces and Caawi Walaal are highly visible on social media.*

Seasonal humanitarian action

- *Respond when a need arises and when called upon*

DOs are often presumed to promote the welfare of their clans or tribes

- *Better networks in communities where they are from, nationwide reach for Somali Faces & Caawi Walaal*

Doubts on capacity beyond crises

- *Social investment processes triggered by DOs*

“The government should give tax-exemption and create coordination in terms of information and logistics, and the Diaspora need to work with the government instead of mistrusting them” – KII, local CSO

### SUSTAINABILITY

- The three DOs under review do not aim for sustainability when responding to shocks and emergencies.
- They are capable but limited in their ability to transfer skills to local NGOs in Somalia, with notable exceptions.
- Although there is still an impression that DOs only intervene in emergency settings, the support offered by DOs in this study often complements, rather than duplicates, efforts of other actors.



### ACCESS

- DOs in this study are present on the ground through community outreach and in-person visits by DO representatives.
- They benefit from better access to local communities because they are from these communities and have strong ties with locals.
- Their 'emotional humanitarianism' is an asset in winning local trust and access, and is well perceived by local stakeholders.



### RAPIDITY AND COST EFFECTIVENESS

- The three DOs are not constrained by formal procedures and administrative systems.
- They are able to quickly send private funds through web platforms, phone-based cash transfers, and remittance transfers.



### INNOVATION

- The three DOs are perceived as being particularly innovative in the way that they adapt and put to use resources and concepts encountered abroad.
- They use new methods of funding, are resourceful in delivering aid in the aftermath of shocks, make wide use of technologies (e.g., a crisis-mapping platform, crowd-source gathering), and introduce new models for protection (e.g., recycling and waste management interventions to encourage environmental sustainability).



### LOCAL OWNERSHIP/RESULTS

- Interventions by the DOs in the study are felt to be more relevant to local needs and to serve local interests.
- They were criticised for their alleged lack of transparency in selecting beneficiaries and partners. There were perceptions that clan affiliations informed their decisions.
- The DOs were not felt to be transparent or well integrated into the local and national humanitarian coordination systems.



### VOICE AMPLIFICATION

- The three DOs are seen to make effective use of social media and emotional pledges to expedite fundraising processes and to disseminate information around humanitarian needs.
- They rely on community feedback and consultation to raise awareness of local situations. In turn, they have a unique potential to lobby the government.



Spontaneous returns to Syria – Key findings

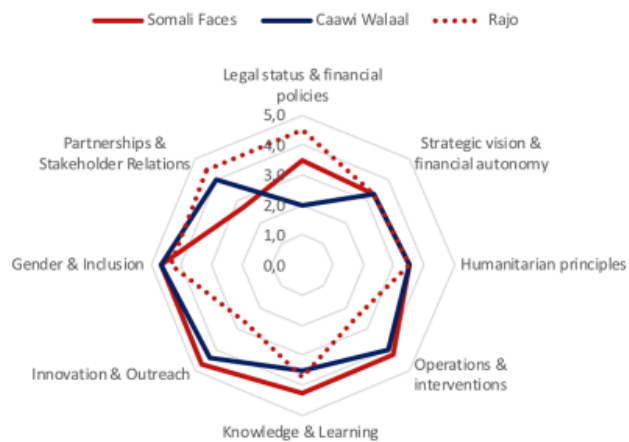


#### WHERE THEY NEED MOST SUPPORT

Somali DOs' self-assessed need for support

- 1. Humanitarian principles**
- 2. Knowledge and learning**
  - Reporting structures
  - Dissemination
- 3. Legal status and financial policies**
- 4. Strategic planning**
  - Strategic fundraising
  - Human resources
- 5. Coordination mechanisms**
  - Outreach

**Evidence-based reporting is a key gap and easy trigger of greater accountability, coordination, outreach, and planning**








Creating opportunities to work with Diasporas in humanitarian settings



**ZOOM: SYRIA DOs**

Diaspora Organisation	HQ	Specificity	Interventions	Brief description
	Germany, regional offices in Iraq & Syria	On the ground involvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Awareness raising</li> <li>- Childhood education</li> <li>- Development projects</li> </ul>	Aims to build transnational, cross-border 'sustainable solidarity', and places emphasis on supporting civil society centres in northern Syria where it provides local students and children with education.
	Germany	Direct management (eg of safehouses)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Vocational trainings</li> <li>- Childhood education</li> <li>- Turkish language classes</li> </ul>	Supports some 700 widows and orphans displaced to Syria's neighboring countries where they receive psychosocial support and shelter in centres.
	UK	Partnership with local implementers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Emergency relief</li> </ul>	Focuses on providing emergency relief in Raqqa, Aleppo, Idlib, and Homs

Introduction - Methodology - **Analysis** - Potential - Road ahead - Recommendations



## Starting point in Syria: “Add a new layer” in the humanitarian system

Lack of knowledge about smaller, medium- scale DOs

- *No interaction and DOs’ reluctance to be defined or labelled as “diaspora organizations”*

A focus on differences

- *Rather than recognising similarities*

Scrutiny

- *For acting and thinking differently*


Limited further engagement

- *While needs far outweigh the capacity to respond by traditional humanitarian actors*

The term ‘**grassroot organisation**’ was commonly used by stakeholders to describe DOs. They are perceived as intervening from the ground-up. This vision is shared by a representative of Doz: “we are a youth and student organisation. We are a local organisation with a Diaspora component”.


### SUSTAINABILITY

- The three Syrian DOs in this study place emphasis on the need to establish financial sustainability. They want to transition from private funding to international funding sources.
- They attempt to make sustained change through transferring skills and engaging in social investments.




### ACCESS

- DOs in the study have proven access to communities across a range of locations. They have intervened across Syria, including in hard-to-reach areas; in the host communities, whether they act as links for those who consider staying or returning; and in cross-border responses (e.g., in Turkey and Iraq).



### RAPIDITY AND COST EFFECTIVENESS

- The three Syrian DOs are knowledgeable of the local context because they are well connected with beneficiary populations.
- The DOs have levels of skills, expertise, and flexible self-organisation.
- Their primary limitations are that they are not registered and have constrained human resources.



### INNOVATION

- Current initiatives by the three DOs include development activities such as an agriculture programmes that incorporate psychosocial and economic support.
- These are small-scale interventions that can be scaled and supported with higher investments.
- UN agencies recognise the innovative contributions that Syrian DOs have made to developing coordinated humanitarian responses.



### LOCAL OWNERSHIP/RESULTS

- The three DOs have established a local footprint outside of the traditional humanitarian system and expanded their interventions into early recovery and development work.
- There are concerns that DO responses are informed by kinship networks.
- The DOs have the capacity to put in place mitigation mechanisms that address concerns of beneficiaries.



### VOICE AMPLIFICATION

- DOs in this study have limited participation in the humanitarian coordination system; international organisations express suspicion of the DOs' intentions, which limits their influence.
- There are concerns about whether DOs are impartial in their selection and representation of beneficiary populations.



Spontaneous returns to Syria – Key findings



#### WHERE THEY NEED MOST SUPPORT

Syrian DOs' self-assessed need for support

In developing:

- **Operations and interventions, learning from each other's subnational access strategy**
- **Gender and inclusion of vulnerable groups**
- **Partnerships and stakeholder relations.**

In enhancing:

- **Learning, and humanitarian principles**
- **Legal status and financial policies**
- **Financial autonomy**

**Evidence-based reporting limits learning opportunities; M&E to be integrated in systems and practices.**



## Starting point in Nigeria: Newcomers to the humanitarian system

### Access not yet secured

DOs have started operating using charity-based intervention, distributing relief materials or making donations.

### A shift to the Northeast

This charity-based approach has three main consequences:

- DOs are not engaged in coordination mechanisms and hence invisible to other stakeholders
- Community feedback mechanisms and sustainability are lacking
- Partnerships with local organisations do not lead to skills being transferred

### Search for DOs' entry point

### Stakeholders and coordination

### Limited funding for DOs

“A smoke effect”? **The national context is opening up to Diaspora contributions:** Nigerians in Diaspora Commission Establishment Bill (2017); draft National Policy on Diaspora Matters (2016)

Introduction - Methodology - Analysis - **Potential** - Road ahead - Recommendations



## DOs' potential to contribute further: Partnerships are a key to obstacles

### Monitoring & evaluation

A twinning program should lead to the possibility for DOs to enter the common humanitarian funding streams, identify opportunities, enhance skills on M&E.

### Procurement & Logistics

A critical juncture where procurement and logistics processes require more investment on their part. Through local CSOs?

### Technical capacity

- Management
- Humanitarian & early rec .
- Communications & media

From reporting to media and outreach training, DOs need to strengthen their organisational voice. Current HR resources limit their capacity to implement campaigns that represent their work.

Introduction - Methodology - Analysis - **Potential** - Road ahead - Recommendations

## Conclusions: A time of change and self-reflection

### A discussion to have:

1. What are the **observed strengths** that diaspora organisations (DOs) in this study bring to humanitarian response, and how do and can they complement the work of traditional humanitarian actors?
2. What **challenges or shortcomings** in DO response have been revealed by this preliminary analysis, and what does that tell us about how humanitarian actors can or should move forward (i.e. whether actions can be synchronised and complementary, or developed in parallel, etc.)?

### Capacity to be developed:

Questions are premised on the assumption that DOs *can* assume a more prominent and strengthened position in the humanitarian landscape:

- While the DOs observed generally had better access to beneficiaries than international organisations, they are financially less well endowed with sporadic interventions.
- Their position can be consolidated / integrated in a community of practice
- Transparency to be improved

### RECOMMENDATIONS FOR DOS

1. **Consolidate an umbrella network of diaspora organisations for humanitarian action**  
Serve as a referral network or resource in crisis settings when other actors cannot mobilise as quickly.
2. **Engage with diaspora organisations involved in the development sector**  
Map social investments and track improvements to infrastructure that can support humanitarian DOs.
3. **Identify twinning opportunities between large and medium-scale DOs, between DOs and traditional humanitarian actors, and across settings**  
Improve diaspora organisations' technical and managerial capacities, monitoring and reporting skills.
4. **Commit to systematic reporting, based on monitoring and longitudinal data**  
Develop a learning agenda with events, workshops and opportunities to debate and share lessons.

### RECOMMENDATIONS FOR DEMAC

5. **Build a learning agenda on diaspora engagement by highlighting and disseminating successful initiatives as entry points for engagement with DOs**  
Share information and present entry points for engagement between DOs and a range of stakeholders.
6. **Provide capacity-building support**  
Focus on: (1) building partnerships, (2) knowledge management and reporting, (3) referrals and skill-transfers, (4) financial and legal procedures, (5) humanitarian principles and working in displacement-affected communities.
7. **Engage the diaspora's voice and capacity to act in displacement contexts**  
Establish and ensure comprehension of guidelines for protection and durable solutions programming.



**RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IOS & NGOS**

- 8. Consider DOs as partners who can do what IO/INGOs cannot do**  
Encourage DOs to use and document different methods to achieve a common objective.
- 9. Engage in a twinning program**  
Participate in shared programs with other organisations to develop capacity in specific fields and contexts.
- 10. Include DOs in resilience consortia**  
Capitalise on DOs' role in strengthening community capacities to absorb, adapt and transform in the aftermath of shocks and stressors, in collaboration with resilience actors.

**RECOMMENDATIONS FOR DONORS**

- 11. Initiate co-creation requests for proposals that will require diasporic and traditional actors to generate joint project ideas**  
Identify common geographical and thematic areas of work to advance resource-sharing practices.
- 12. Generate opportunities for non-conditional funding to explore new approaches**  
Develop pilot funding for DOs, available over 2-5 years to fund humanitarian action.
- 13. Define cross-border possibilities**  
Learn from DOs' cross-border programming to negotiate access and adapt to local contexts.
- 14. Scale successful DO initiatives**  
Identify community-based DO initiatives that can be scaled and assess the financial costs for scale-up.

**RECOMMENDATIONS FOR GOVERNMENTS**

- 15. Apply tax exemptions for members of diaspora organisations**  
Fiscal benefits to be accompanied by conditionalities, such as regular reporting and coordination.
- 16. Include the role of DOs in humanitarian action in government's existing or future diaspora engagement policies**

## GLOBAL CHILD PROTECTION AOR WORKING WITH DIASPORA

### *Opportunities for Collaboration - Coordination Groups and Diaspora*

Against the background of numerous protracted humanitarian crises, diaspora communities in the northern hemisphere are increasingly recognized for their access, cultural and language skills, local knowledge, trust and networks with affected communities. This opens up potential spaces for engagement, cross-fertilization and better coordination between diaspora and ‘conventional’ relief and aid providers in an extended humanitarian system.

Diaspora organisations can play a central role in localization. Many can be considered frontline responders themselves, making direct and concrete contributions to emergency responses in their home countries. Many others work closely with local authorities, local organisations and community groups, providing technical and financial support, playing a role in advocacy and linking local actors with additional sources of support. They are heterogeneous – they have different capacities, values and approaches – and as part of a broader humanitarian community, can play a valuable role in the humanitarian responses.

Because of this diversity, coordination groups will engage with each diaspora organization differently. This note provides a [list of options](#), intended to support coordinators and diaspora groups to identify potential ways in which they can collaborate. Additional resources are available at: <http://www.demac.org/>

<b>Advocacy</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Including diaspora organisations on the coordination group mailing list</li> <li>• Sharing advocacy notes and having bilateral discussions on how this information can be used for advocacy to donors and national authorities</li> <li>• Drawing diaspora organisation’s local networks and influence in local advocacy (e.g. prevention of child recruitment, promoting girls education etc)</li> </ul>
<b>Technical Support</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Connecting diaspora organisations with local partners who are seeking capacity strengthening support (including secondments for technical advice and developing institutional systems, coaching and mentoring etc)</li> <li>• Encouraging local actors to join the DEMAC coaching and mentoring community</li> </ul>
<b>Financial Support</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sharing approved project sheets, particularly for local partners, and encouraging direct financial support from the diaspora</li> <li>• Encouraging diaspora to report funding to OPS</li> </ul>
<b>Coordination – Strategic Direction</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inclusion of diaspora organisations in meetings (e.g. dialing in option) and governance structures</li> <li>• Including diaspora organisations in efforts to validate needs assessments, HNOs and response strategies</li> <li>• Supporting diaspora to include service delivery results in cluster IM systems</li> </ul>

*For more information:*

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