

THE CONGOLESE DIASPORA HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE

SEPTEMBER 2025

In January 2025, the M23 militia seized control of Goma, escalating a long-standing conflict in Eastern DRC. By June 2025, more than 3.8 million people were displaced in North and South Kivu, deepening one of the world's most acute humanitarian crises. The collapse of health services, repeated disruptions to aid delivery, and sharp cuts in international funding — including major reductions from the US — have left critical gaps, even as a US/Qatar-brokered ceasefire in July 2025 offered temporary respite.

To better understand diaspora engagement in the Kivus, DEMAC conducted a mapping exercise between January and July 2025, covering 53 Congolese diaspora organizations (DOs). The study combined open-source research, a short quantitative survey with 13 DOs, and 47 interviews with diaspora, local, and international actors. Its aim was to capture the range of activities undertaken by Congolese diaspora organizations and their contributions to humanitarian response.

DIASPORA ORGANIZATIONS MAPPED



CASE STUDIES

Diaspora Médicale Plus (Europe & North America)

Founded by Congolese medical professionals during COVID-19, DMP registered in 2021 with an office in Bukavu. It collaborates with health authorities to run mobile clinics, deliver medical supplies, and provide training, integrating its work into public health plans in South Kivu.

SOLIPARA (Europe)

Emerging from diaspora-backed mutual aid during the pandemic, SOLIPARA was organized through nyumba kumi — neighborhood groups of ten households led by local leaders. It funded community micro-loans and health access with support from Congolese abroad and is now evolving into a formal organization to sustain local livelihoods.

Congolese Diaspora Collective in Brussels (Belgium)

Founded in 2024, the Collective in Brussels has mobilized over 40 tons of aid. It partners with Belgian and Congolese institutions to secure military transport and with local actors to deliver relief to displaced families in North and South Kivu.

MAIN SECTORS OF INTERVENTION



HEALTH



EDUCATION



ADVOCACY



EMERGENCY

CONGOLESE DIASPORA RESPONSE IN NORTH AND SOUTH KIVU

JANUARY 2025 - JULY 2025

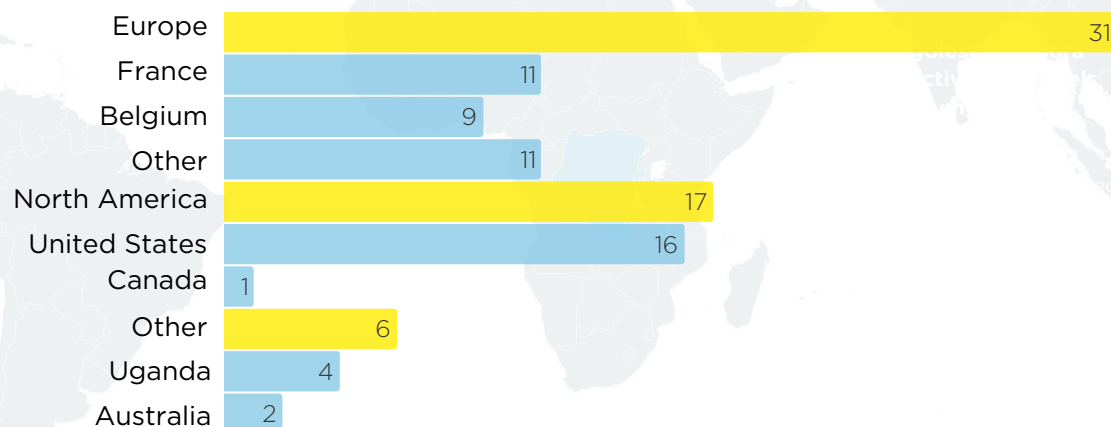
MAIN FINDINGS

- Main focus on health, education, relief, and advocacy, mostly through informal networks. Few diaspora organizations form broader partnerships, rarely join coordination platforms, and only a handful collaborate formally with government projects.
- Congolese diaspora organizations register in different ways, creating legal ambiguity locally. Abroad, their informal status limits access to funding and formal partnerships.
- Diaspora groups are mostly crowdsourced through community events, religious groups, and online campaigns, with mobile money transfers enabling speed and flexibility but raising concerns over transparency, security, and sustainability.
- These organizations are trusted, community-driven, and quick to respond, but their work is informal, hard to scale, and reliant on social media. Limited monitoring, weak project pipelines, and cautious engagement with authorities constrain long-term impact.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. For diaspora organizations: shift from reactive aid to long-term investment, strengthen monitoring and needs assessments, collaborate through umbrella platforms, build collective networks for advocacy and funding, and showcase successful partnerships to boost credibility and impact.
2. For local civil society organizations: build long-term partnerships with diaspora actors, channel support into capacity development, engage through networks for a unified voice, and showcase successful collaborations to strengthen trust and replication.
3. For local authorities: foster dialogue with diaspora groups, align services through formal agreements, ease regulations for humanitarian shipments, recognize diaspora-led CSOs with supportive policies, and scale local lessons to national reforms.
4. For institutional humanitarian actors: safely map diaspora activity, provide clear engagement guidance, design flexible funding models, support policy implementation, build reporting capacity, and promote joint programming with local civil society actors.

LOCATION OF DIASPORA ORGANIZATIONS MAPPED



“Most of our projects are based on urgent needs. When we receive a request for help, we act. It could be a family needing shelter or a woman needing emergency surgery...Our model is human-first.” - Diaspora organization member