



DEMAC

DIASPORA
EMERGENCY ACTION
& COORDINATION

DIASPORA
ORGANIZATIONS
AND THEIR
HUMANITARIAN
RESPONSE IN
SOMALIA



USAID
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COUNCIL



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ABOUT DEMAC

The mission of DEMAC is two-fold:

- 1) to enable inclusive coordination and collaboration among diaspora organizations providing humanitarian assistance, and across diaspora organizations and institutional humanitarian actors, and
- 2) to facilitate higher levels of engagement and visibility for diaspora organizations in the humanitarian system.

The objective is to contribute to transforming the humanitarian ecosystem by laying the groundwork for a deeper understanding of diasporas as humanitarian actor groups with different modus operandi for the implementation of aid in practice, identifying and opening potential spaces for engagement and cross-fertilization, and improving coordination between diaspora and institutional relief providers.

DEMAC AIMS AT

01

Enhancing knowledge
between diasporas
and humanitarian
institutions

02

Increasing awareness
on diasporas
humanitarian
interventions

03

Improving coordination
communication and
coherence of
humanitarian response

WHY DIASPORA?

Work with diasporas has shown that diaspora organizations are multi-sectoral, fast responding actors who work transnationally, including in countries facing humanitarian crises. Having a connection with and understanding of their country of origin or heritage plays a vital role in humanitarian assistance where diaspora organizations often are part of the first response in the aftermath of a disaster.

They are also key actors when it comes to raising the alarm in times of crisis. The ease and frequency of communication between local communities and diaspora organizations means that they can be alerted in real-time, and their capacity to collect and disperse funds rapidly ensures that they are a key factor in unlocking the first responses in crisis settings. In hard-to-reach places where access may be an issue, diaspora organizations have a unique advantage due to their local connections and ties. They use their transnational position to respond to the growing demands for remote management and cross-border response in countries where international actors have a limited presence, and to advocate on behalf of crisis affected populations in the policy arenas of their countries and regions of residence.

Supporting diaspora as part of a broader humanitarian ecosystem to play a key role in humanitarian responses and provide vital support to communities in countries of origin contributes to the relevance, effectiveness and sustainability of humanitarian responses. In light of their transnational identity and close local ties, it is also strongly linked to the localization agenda, one of the main commitments under the Grand Bargain. Localization aims to strengthen the resilience of local communities and to support local and national responders on the front line. UNOCHA has called furthermore for an indispensable opening of the resource base of humanitarian action by integrating 'non-traditional actors' - such as diasporas - to enhance the effectiveness of the humanitarian response and render it interoperable.

Diaspora organizations are part of and 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. Others work closely with local authorities, local organizations and community groups, providing technical and financial support, playing a role in advocacy and linking local actors with additional sources of support.

Diaspora organizations are heterogeneous - they have different capacities, values and approaches and as part of a broader humanitarian community can play a valuable and agile role in humanitarian responses. However, assistance provided by diaspora organizations and the formal humanitarian actors often follow parallel tracks, resulting in a lack of mutual understanding and recognition, and thus a lack of coordination and collaboration that would be of benefit to the overall response.

WHAT NOW?

Building on expertise gained since its inception in 2015, DEMAC is further consolidating itself as a permanent platform – a one-stop-shop – for enhancing mutual knowledge and coordination between diaspora humanitarian actors and the international humanitarian system.

DEMAC's work has been a key factor behind stronger representation and visibility of diaspora organizations in the humanitarian eco-system – a first and core example hereof being the coordination of joint messaging and participation of diasporas as a stakeholder group to the World Humanitarian Summit in Istanbul in 2016, which was a key factor to putting diaspora humanitarianism on the map.

DEMAC has also piloted concrete liaison structures between diaspora and institutional humanitarian actors towards improving operational coordination in specific crisis settings. Another core contribution to the role of diaspora humanitarianism has been continuous knowledge development: DEMAC has conducted a number of studies aiming to increase understanding of motivations and modus operandi of diaspora humanitarian engagement, replacing assumptions with evidence on diaspora contributions.¹

¹DEMAC conducted research to increase knowledge on diaspora humanitarian engagement. These studies can be found on the DEMAC homepage under resources.
[Creating Opportunities to work with diasporas in humanitarian settings, May 2018](#)
[Diaspora Drought Response - Somaliland and Puntland, March 2017](#)
[Diaspora Humanitarianism: Transnational Ways of Working, March 2016](#)

Building on these experiences and the past and present research, DEMAC will develop an operational framework for diaspora and humanitarian actors, to improve future responses to humanitarian emergencies. Through the development of a standardized approach for the international humanitarian system to assess and document the role and impact of diaspora in selected emergency responses, DEMAC will enhance the knowledge and awareness of the nature and significance of the diaspora followed by the facilitation of internal discussions on how the system could and should relate to and coordinate with diaspora emergency actors.

Furthermore, DEMAC will use the documentation from selected diaspora emergency responses to engage with diaspora humanitarian actors to enhance the generation of lessons learned and self-reflections from diaspora-led emergency responses with a view to adjust their approach and discuss how to engage with the international humanitarian system.

DEMAC will develop guidelines, tools and resources in support of diaspora emergency engagement, with a view to remain prepared to support diaspora organizations' engagement in new emergency responses and facilitate coordination among responding diaspora organizations and between diaspora organizations and the humanitarian system.

Finally, DEMAC will enhance the knowledge among diaspora organizations about the humanitarian system to enhance probabilities of coordination between the two.

DEMAC is currently working with five selected emergency-prone focus countries, while at the same time remaining prepared to engage with and support diaspora from additional countries should a humanitarian crisis unfold in their country of origin.

Acronyms and abbreviations

CBO	Community based organization
DAN	Development Action Network
DEMAC	Diaspora Emergency Action and Coordination
DERF	Danish Emergency Relief Fund
DRC	Danish Refugee Council
FTS	Financial Tracking System
HCT	Humanitarian Country Team
HRP	Humanitarian Response Plan
IDP	Internally displaced persons
INGO	International non-governmental organization
IOM	International Organization for Migration
L/NGGO	Local/National non-governmental organization
OIC	Organization of Islamic Cooperation
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
UAE	United Arab Emirates
UN	United Nations
UN OCHA	UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
WASH	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This case study is part of the Diaspora Emergency Action and Coordination Platform's (DEMAC) "Research study on diaspora humanitarian response and engagement".

Somalia has been plagued by violent conflict for more than 30 years. The devastation caused by the ongoing violence has been compounded by the impact of recurrent climatic shocks which have seen parts of the country ravaged by drought and famine and shattered by periodic floods. With nearly six million people in need of humanitarian assistance in 2021, the institutional humanitarian system carries out multi-sectorial programming in parallel to support provided by emerging actors and Somali social networks including diaspora organizations and groups.

The Somali diaspora, which numbers well over two million globally, has a deep-rooted tradition of providing both continuous and ad-hoc support, often in the form of remittances, to their families, clans and communities. In times of severe crisis, diaspora contributions scale-up significantly. While largely remaining informal, the diaspora has formed organizations and groups to respond.

These organizations have become increasingly active in times of larger-scale crises, sometimes blurring their support between ongoing development actions and humanitarian response.

This case study identified 22 Somali diaspora organizations that were regularly active in humanitarian response with the majority based in Europe, followed by North America. Over half have formal structures and set-ups. They have varied operating models. Some were project-based interventions dependent on sporadic diaspora contributions implemented by contacts on the ground with no interaction with institutional humanitarian actors. Others focused on humanitarian and development interventions supported by institutional donors and implemented with local partners who participate in humanitarian coordination mechanisms.

A sense of belonging and a charitable obligation are strong motivators which drive diaspora engagement in humanitarian response. Diaspora are alerted to crises through friends and relatives, their own humanitarian networks in Somalia, and social and mainstream media.

Diaspora organizations were involved in multiple areas of intervention and focused mainly on livelihoods, women's empowerment and education; they were less involved in protection, nutrition, provision of direct health services, livestock treatment and economic development. The majority of their responses were for sudden-onset crises such as floods and cyclones. Displacement due to armed conflict and spikes in drought were other leading reasons for diaspora organizations' humanitarian response.

The majority of interviewees, mainly diaspora organizations, partners, government officials and community representatives perceived the diaspora response as being rapid and small-scale in nature, appropriate for the immediate short-term before the more institutional humanitarian organizations were ready to respond.

Diaspora organizations implement their humanitarian response with partners based in Somalia, with most partnering with communities, international non-governmental organizations (INGOs), United Nations (UN) agencies, local/national NGOs (L/NNGO) and their own networks. A more recent trend has been implementation conducted directly by diaspora organizations through offices, staff and volunteers in Somalia. These organizations carry out both direct implementation and also operate as implementing partners for INGOs and the UN, somewhat blurring the lines between being a diaspora organization and a L/NNGO.

Different levels of coordination between diaspora organizations and the humanitarian system were identified. The less structured diaspora organizations tend not to engage directly as their humanitarian interventions are primarily carried out in collaboration with local communities and authorities. Diaspora organizations with L/NNGO and INGO partners in Somalia tend to coordinate their activities directly through these institutional partners. Some diaspora organizations, such as those directly implementing activities, coordinate with the humanitarian system and actors, for example by participating in cluster coordination and inter-agency needs assessments. Finland and the UK provide examples where diaspora organizations have established coordination between themselves in their countries of residence.

Funding of diaspora organization humanitarian responses was mainly through fundraising directly with Somali diaspora individuals and religious and community groups. However, half of the 22 diaspora organizations assessed were known to have received funding or support from donor governments. Regions of Somalia with stronger and wealthier diaspora receive greater support in general. The planning and program cycle of diaspora organization responses can differ considerably from the institutional humanitarian approach. For many diaspora organizations, selection criteria are based on clan affiliation with partners in Somalia identifying those in need.

Diaspora organizations that are supported by diaspora donations tend not to have rigid or standard reporting procedures to provide feedback to those who have provided contributions. However, they often share updates of the responses in the form of photos/videos or stories with their supporters through social media. Those organizations accessing government funding and partnering with institutional humanitarian actors have a stronger obligation to follow established financial reporting norms and to ensure accountability to donors and affected communities.

Gaps and challenges identified in the humanitarian response of diaspora organizations included a probable bias due to clan affiliation, the unpredictability of available resources, limitations in relation to the type of response implemented, their evolving humanitarian professionalism, and a lack of trust in the institutional humanitarian system.



Future diaspora response and engagement

Although the humanitarian response of diaspora organizations lacks coordination with the country's institutional humanitarian actors, their response has become increasingly professionalized. A number of diaspora organizations are already working in a way which bridges the humanitarian-development nexus through their combined short-term provision of relief and longer-term community-based support. The increasing number of diaspora organizations, either with a physical presence in Somalia or with long-lasting formal partnerships with Somali L/NGOs, illustrates their increased visibility as humanitarian actors. There is scope for increased interaction between these diaspora organizations and their counterparts in the institutional humanitarian system.

Recommendations

It is proposed that DEMAC strengthen its role in leading and supporting greater engagement between the institutional humanitarian system in Somalia and the Somali diaspora globally. These recommendations require further inputs and validation from the diaspora organizations, their partners and other humanitarian actors. Recommendations are organized around the humanitarian program cycle and contain specific action points listed at the end of the case study.

Strategic planning:

The approach to planning humanitarian response adopted by diaspora organizations varies, often running in parallel to the planning processes implemented by institutional humanitarian actors. Opportunities exist to further integrate diaspora organizations into institutional humanitarian planning processes and support their capacity in humanitarian principles, standards and ways of working.

Resource mobilization:

Diaspora organizations secure funds from two distinct sources: diaspora supporters and institutional funding. However, these donors do not currently provide a steady and continuous financial backing. There are several areas where institutional humanitarian actors could further engage with diaspora organizations in order to strengthen their access to more predictable forms of financing.

Implementation:

The operating model of diaspora organizations is both distinct and similar to institutional humanitarian actors depending upon the nature of the response and the funding source. A number of areas were identified where synergies could be increased during implementation.

Peer review and evaluation:

Diaspora organizations and their partners are involved in reviews and evaluations of their own responses, but no links were seen with the institutional humanitarian sector. Increased involvement and exchanges between the diaspora and humanitarian actors on their respective accountability mechanisms could be beneficial.

Coordination:

Both diaspora organizations and institutional humanitarian actors thought that the humanitarian response could benefit from further coordination efforts including greater outreach, exchanges and support.

Information management:

The sharing of information within diaspora organizations and their partners was taking place, but information sharing between diaspora organizations themselves and by them with institutional humanitarian actors was limited. Two-way information sharing could be further strengthened by reinforcing mechanisms to share information both between diaspora organizations and with institutional humanitarian actors, donor governments and institutional donors.



1. INTRODUCTION

The Diaspora Emergency Action and Coordination platform (DEMAC) was launched by the Danish Refugee Council (DRC) in 2015 and is currently supported with funding from USAID's Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance.

In line with the objective to facilitate increased common ground between diaspora and formal humanitarian action and enhance mutual knowledge and coordination between diaspora and humanitarian actors and the international humanitarian system, DEMAC has conducted three case studies.² These aim at contributing to strengthening the DEMAC platform by providing insights into the current modalities of diaspora humanitarian interventions and develop recommendations, resources and tools to support enhanced operational and strategic communication, and cooperation between diaspora and institutional humanitarian actors.

The findings of this study will be shared with Somali humanitarian actors including diaspora organizations and groups, as well as more broadly within the humanitarian sector.

The case study focuses on the period 2015-2020, providing an analysis of emergency humanitarian responses of Somali diaspora organizations and groups during that time. The research looked at the methods used to mobilize diaspora resources and the means used to implement humanitarian response as well as implementation arrangements and forms of interaction with the institutional humanitarian system.

² This case study focuses on Somalia with research carried out by Guhad Adan with the support of Lois Austin and Glenn O'Neil of Owl RE, research and evaluation consultancy. The other two case studies focus on Pakistan and Ukraine.

2. METHODOLOGY

The research approach was based on an initial desk review, which mapped the structure and activities of 22 Somali diaspora organizations that could be identified as active in humanitarian response.³

The mapping was followed by the collection of primarily qualitative data through further desk review and semi-structured interviews with diaspora organizations and groups, United Nations (UN) agencies, international non-government organizations (INGOs), local and national Somali NGOs (L/NNGOs), Somali community-based organizations (CBOs), religious and business leaders in Somalia, humanitarian experts, and Somali government officials. In total 36 people were interviewed.⁴ Due to COVID-19 movement restrictions, data collection was primarily remote. In addition, data on the activities of diaspora organizations was gathered, such as their type of structure, activities and partners.

Both the qualitative and quantitative data and information were collated and analyzed to identify major trends and findings that form the basis of this case study.

³ Please see Annex B for those diaspora organizations covered in the initial mapping.

⁴ Please see Annex A for the list of interviewees.

Limitations:

A small number of limitations to the research should be highlighted as follows:

- Within the research timeframe, it has not been possible to identify, describe and analyze all diaspora organizations engaged in humanitarian responses between 2015-2020. In recognition of this, the research focused on information provided from the 14 diaspora organizations spoken to, with the aim of highlighting the different approaches adopted.
- The case study is not fully representative of diaspora humanitarian response and has focused on the most visible diaspora organization interventions. This has still allowed for the drawing of conclusions and recommendations.
- A number of less formal Somali diaspora organizations preferred not to be included in the research, a voicing concerns about how data would be used. The case study therefore focuses on discussions with a select range of diaspora organizations.



3. CONTEXT

Somalia has been plagued by violent conflict for more than 30 years. The devastation caused by the ongoing violence has been compounded by the impact of recurrent climatic shocks, which have seen parts of the country ravaged by drought and famine and shattered by periodic floods.

Somalia's politics, security, and socio-economic instability create a complex environment with much of the country's recent past marked by protracted conflict and violence.⁵ Although Somalia is said to be on a positive trajectory towards peace and stability, ongoing instability undermines progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and a peaceful society.

Somalia is experiencing worsening climatic shocks and ongoing armed conflict across various regions resulting in massive displacement, both within Somalia and across its borders.⁶ There are currently more than 2.6 million internally displaced persons (IDPs) in the country, mostly located in the cities and surroundings of Mogadishu and Baidoa. Despite efforts by institutional humanitarian actors and the Somali government to achieve durable solutions, the situation continues to deteriorate, requiring ongoing humanitarian assistance.

The 2011 drought and famine, which killed over a quarter of a million Somalis, caught the world's attention, including that of the global Somali diaspora. The drought saw Somali diaspora organizations taking on an increased and more organized role in humanitarian response.⁷ One of the examples of the resultant response is that of one US-based diaspora organization which mobilized its transnational networks to raise funds and assist in the coordination of one of the first relief convoys to reach those in need in Al-Shabaab controlled territory, where levels of need were high and which many humanitarian actors and a number of diaspora organizations struggled to reach.⁸ Five years later, Somalia was again in the spotlight, as the country was once more ravaged by drought, resulting in hunger for millions of the Somali population.

In 2021, as another drought looms in parts of the country and the institutional humanitarian system is gearing up to respond, some diaspora organizations are already active. For example, the Al-Rahmah Foundation and Gannaane Ry started trucking water to areas suffering shortages in the Gedo region in early 2021.

In 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic affected the entire population of Somalia, whilst also affecting the diaspora itself. Remittances are estimated to be between USD \$1.3 - 2bn per annum, with some 40 percent of households in the country estimated to receive these transfers. However, the pandemic has led to a drastic 61 percent reduction in diaspora remittances to Somalia according to the International Organization for Migration (IOM).⁹ While the pandemic-related drop is extreme, it is thought to be temporary, with remittances estimated to return to pre-crisis levels once the pandemic is contained.¹⁰

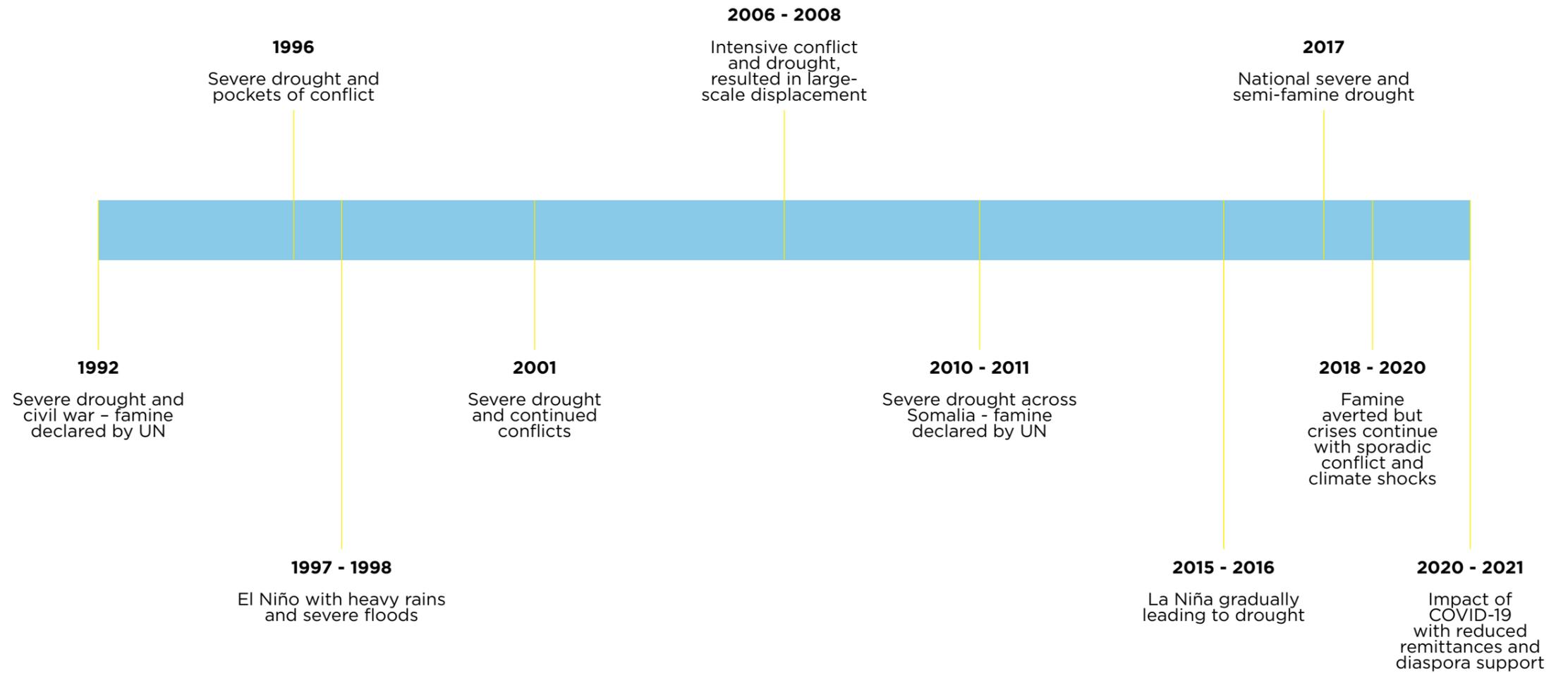
Somalia was also struck by several other crises in 2020, including the worst desert locust upsurge in 25 years in addition to floods, drought, and cyclone Gati.¹¹

The timeline on the next page provides an overview of the main crises that have affected Somalia since the early 1990s - crises which have tragically led to the deaths of hundreds of thousands of Somalis despite the ongoing efforts of the institutional humanitarian system and diaspora organizations to save lives year after year.

⁵ OCHA (2019), Somalia Humanitarian Needs Overview, <https://reliefweb.int/report/somalia/2020-somalia-humanitarian-needs-overview>
⁶ Norwegian Refugee Council (2019), 70.8 million displaced people: <https://www.nrc.no/shorthand/fr/70.8-million-displaced-people/index.html>
⁷ Haan, N., Devereux, S., & Maxwell, D. (2012). Global implications of Somalia 2011 for famine prevention, mitigation and response. *Global Food Security*, 1(1), 74-79: http://www.ipcinfo.org/fileadmin/user_upload/ipcinfo/docs/Global_Implications_Somalia2011.pdf
⁸ Majid, N., Abidrahman, K. & Hassan, S. (2017) Remittances and Vulnerability in Somalia: Assessing sources, uses and delivery mechanisms, Rift Valley Institute: <http://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/633401530870281332/pdf/Remittances-and-Vulnerability-in-Somalia-Resubmission.pdf>

⁹ IOM (August 2020), COVID-19 and the state of remittance flows to Somalia: https://www.iom.int/sites/default/files/press_release/file/covid-19_and_the_state_of_remittance_flow_to_somalia_-_iom_somalia_august_2020.pdf
¹⁰ LSE Conflict Research Programme Blog (2020), How Will Remittances Affect the Somali COVID-19 Response? <https://blogs.lse.ac.uk/crp/2020/04/07/remittances-affect-the-somali-covid-19-response/>
¹¹ OCHA Somalia (2020); Humanitarian Needs Overview: https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/sites/www.humanitarianresponse.info/files/documents/files/20200903_hno_somalia.pdf

MAIN CRISES IN SOMALIA (1990-2021)



3.1. Humanitarian actors and coordination
In parallel to programming implemented through the institutional humanitarian system, humanitarian response in Somalia is complemented by interventions from the Somali diaspora as well as emerging actors.

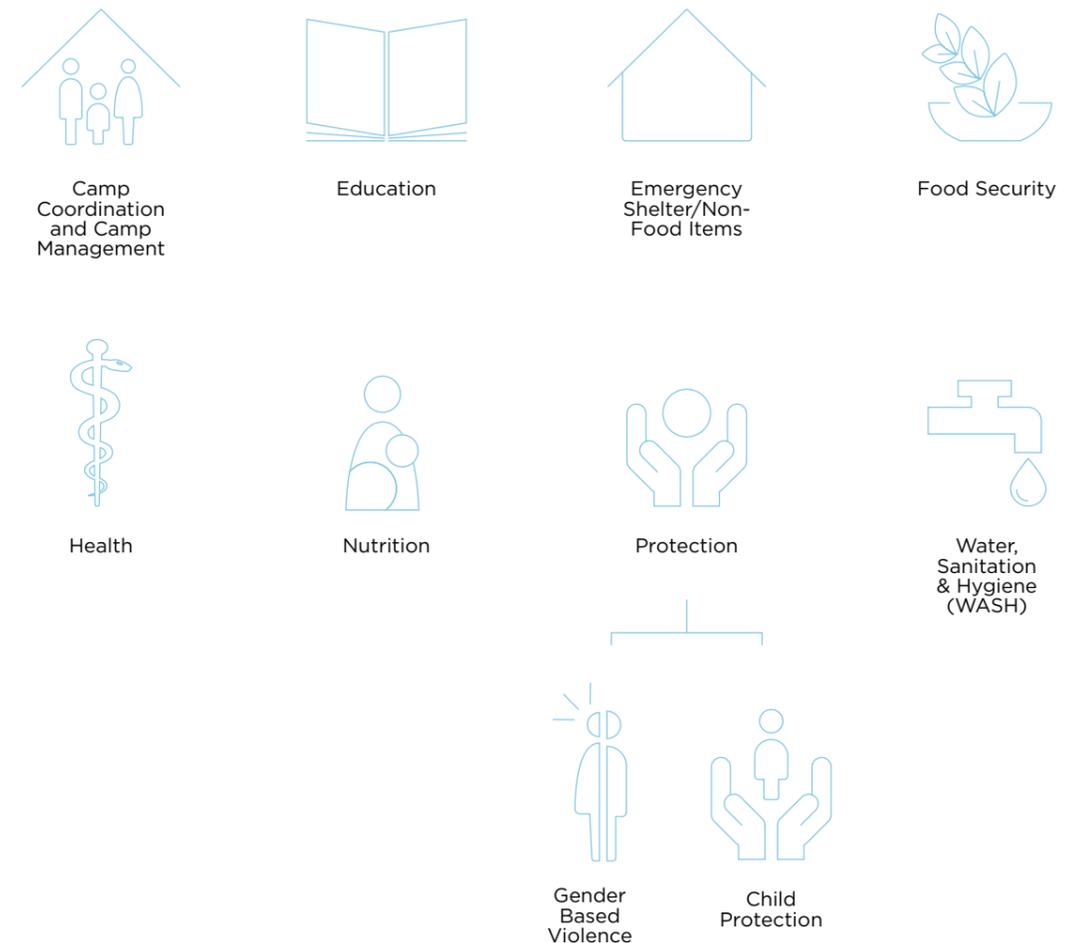
In the absence of a government capable of providing continued and stable public services, international donors remain the main source of humanitarian and lifesaving aid. They have been the main, and sometimes only, funding source for disaster-affected populations, in addition to support from Somali families, social and clan networks, and diaspora. The main humanitarian actors in Somalia are:¹²

- International institutional humanitarian actors, notably UN agencies, INGOs and the International Red Cross Red Crescent Movement,
- Western donor governments and the European Union,
- Local development and humanitarian NGOs operating within the institutional humanitarian system including the Somalia NGO Consortium,
- Emerging humanitarian organizations for example the Mohammed Bin Rashid Establishment of the United Arab Emirates (UAE), the Deniz Feneri Association and the Foundation for Human Rights and the Freedoms and Humanitarian Relief of Turkey,
- Non-western states and their alliances, such as the Arab League, the Organization of Islamic Countries (OIC) and the governments of Algeria, Egypt, Turkey, Sudan, Saudi Arabia, UAE, Qatar, Kuwait and Oman,
- Somali social networks including Somali diaspora organizations and groups.

The institutional humanitarian system in Somalia is coordinated through the multilayer UN cluster system. This is overseen by the Humanitarian Coordinator and the Humanitarian Country Team (HCT), which consists of 17-19 members, including UN agencies, international and local NGOs, an invitee from the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, and some key international donors. There are currently eight humanitarian clusters in Somalia, in addition to two protection sub-clusters and five working groups. Each holds coordination meetings for all humanitarian actors with national and regional cluster coordination meetings held on a monthly basis. A UN agency or INGO chairs each cluster both at national and federal member state level with government representatives as observers. The UN's Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UN OCHA) supports humanitarian coordination more broadly.

¹² OCHA reports that in October, 270 humanitarian actors were operational in all 18 regions, six states and 73 out of 74 districts of Somalia. The partners comprising of local and international NGOs, UN agencies and Government institutions reached 1.7 million vulnerable people with life-saving assistance.

The cluster system in Somalia is set up as follows:



Emerging humanitarian actors and non-western states have become increasingly active without necessarily interacting with the institutional humanitarian system. In the last ten years some countries, their alliances and civil society organizations have emerged as key humanitarian actors in Somalia including Turkey and the OIC. For example, Turkish humanitarian engagement is considered to be driven differently than many of the institutional humanitarian actors and is seen as an indication of the country's desire to play a greater global role, including improving its reputation and becoming an important and active humanitarian donor.¹³

3.2. Humanitarian response Nearly six million people have been identified as being in need of humanitarian assistance in 2021.¹⁴

Humanitarian response is led by international donors and institutional humanitarian actors with the support of national and regional authorities as described above. In 2020, the institutional and reported humanitarian response reached 2.3 million people. For 2021, the Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP) has identified 5.9 million people in need of humanitarian assistance and sets out three strategic objectives: reducing the loss of life of the most severely vulnerable, sustaining the lives of people in need of humanitarian assistance and upholding commitments to the centrality of protection across the humanitarian response.¹⁵ Other frameworks and funding streams to support those in need run alongside the HRP but mainly with a longer-term developmental focus.¹⁶ Other humanitarian actors noted above work outside these formal planning and response systems, making their planned and actual contributions and actions difficult to identify.

3.3. Somali diaspora

Diaspora can be defined as dispersed collectives residing outside their country of origin who "maintain regular or occasional contacts with what they regard as their homeland and with individuals and groups of the same background residing in other host countries. Most importantly, they are characterized by multifarious links involving flows and exchanges of people and resources: between the homeland and destination countries, and among destination countries."¹⁷

Somali diaspora organizations are known to contribute to humanitarian crises in a number of ways: kinship-based fundraising; remittances; in-kind support; political interventions; and knowledge, skills, understanding and information. Diaspora organizations and institutional humanitarian actors are often working towards the same goals but operating in parallel and with limited connection or interaction.

The Somali diaspora numbers well over 2 million and is distributed throughout the globe with the largest communities in neighbouring countries - Kenya, Ethiopia and Yemen.¹⁸ In Europe, the United Kingdom is home to the largest Somali community, followed by the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, and Denmark. Outside Europe, one of the largest diaspora communities is in the USA, estimated to be 170,000 members strong.¹⁹

Somali diaspora response to humanitarian crises is primarily provided through individual remittances and participation in recovery and reconstruction efforts.²⁰

This support plays a critical role in initially stabilizing crises or preventing shocks from degenerating into full-blown crises. Remittances are not distributed equally across Somalia; rather, they are concentrated within clan lineages and extended families especially in Somaliland, Puntland, and the central regions due to their migration history.²¹ Further, 80 percent of remittance recipients in Somalia receive money from one sender, illustrating the highly individualized nature of the assistance.²²

In addition to remittances, other individual responses, such as humanitarian assistance, (cash or in-kind) do not necessarily come directly from diaspora organizations, but instead pass through an array of different channels before reaching recipients.

Those who make up the transfer and distribution chain can include individuals and clan-based groups, mosques and religious centers. During smaller scale crises, diaspora responses are predominantly mobilized through clan channels.

There is no homogenous structure or approach with regards to the composition and structure of diaspora organizations.²³ In terms of diaspora support to humanitarian efforts, this can range from simply receiving information on the crisis; sharing information in the country of residence; being actively consulted in the country of residence in order to help contribute to policy and practice; identifying ways of being active in a humanitarian response; and mobilizing a response and its implementation.

¹³ Tank, P. (March 2015), Turkey as a humanitarian actor: the critical cases of Somalia and Syria: <https://www.files.ethz.ch/isn/190003/e322a62c1a18b503d37ca6dca4b2188b.pdf>

¹⁴ As identified by the institutional humanitarian sector in the 2021 Humanitarian Response Plan: hrp_2021-somalia_22_feb.pdf (humanitarianresponse.info)

¹⁵ Ibid

¹⁶ Other frameworks included: The government's Somalia National Development Plan 9 (NDP9) 2020-2024; the UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework 2021-2025; Recovery and Resilience Framework (RRF) 2019- 2021; and Collective Outcomes 2019-2022.

¹⁷ Source: DEMAC (2018), Creating Opportunities To Work With Diasporas In Humanitarian Settings <https://media.umbraco.io/demac/ny3a1ule/report-final-12052018.pdf>

¹⁸ EU DIF (2020), Diaspora Engagement Mapping, Somalia https://diasporaforddevelopment.eu/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/CF_Somalia-v.6-1.pdf

¹⁹ https://censusreporter.org/data/table/?table=B04004&geo_ids=01000US&primary_geo_id=01000US#valueType

²⁰ UNDP (2009), Somali's missing million: the Somali diaspora and its role in development; https://www.undp.org/content/dam/somalia/docs/undp_report_onsomali_diaspora.pdf

²¹ Majid, N., Abidrahman, K. & Hassan, S. (2017), Op. Cit.

²² LSE Conflict Research Programme Blog (2020), Op. Cit.

²³ According to the CDA Literature Review: Humanitarian Effectiveness & the Role of the Diaspora, diaspora networks tend to be based on a set of formal or informal relationships that connects diaspora members to their family members, friends, and colleagues in their countries of origin, manifesting in explicit agreements between individuals or organizations to work together for a common purpose. The formation of diaspora networks that play an active role in response to humanitarian crises can be related to, but is often distinct from, the creation of formal diaspora organizations.

Diaspora organizations are increasingly active in times of larger-scale crises, sometimes blurring their support between ongoing development actions and humanitarian response.

The majority of formally structured diaspora organizations with ongoing activities are focused on a range of interventions that would be considered more development than humanitarian. These include activities focused on the rehabilitation of community infrastructure e.g. schools, health clinics, water points, income-generation projects, peace and development, and the environment. Some of these structured diaspora organizations also have ongoing humanitarian activities (in line with the type of humanitarian response outlined in the HRP). However, they – and more informal diaspora groups – become active in humanitarian response at times of heightened crisis in order to provide one-off, spontaneous, or timely assistance. For example, for the droughts in Somaliland and Puntland in 2016, some 60 diaspora organizations and groups were involved in responding.²⁴

An example of moving from development to humanitarian response can be seen with the diaspora organization Garas Aid, which was founded by Somali students in Austria. They have financed school fees and materials for students in Baidoa since 2016, but due to COVID-19 are pivoting to fundraising and humanitarian response in order to support the most vulnerable. Many diaspora organizations and groups do not necessarily make a distinction between the provision of more ongoing developmental support versus humanitarian response. They are often involved with communities before, during and after a crisis²⁵ and provide a continuum of support, which

is increasingly promoted as the way forward within the institutional humanitarian system.

Of the diaspora organizations covered in this research, 22 were identified as being regularly active in humanitarian responses. The majority (15) were based in Europe, followed by North America (6) and one had offices in Europe, North America and Australia.

The diaspora organizations that were more regularly active in humanitarian response tended to have formal structures in the countries in which they were based and were often formally registered. This included registered association-type organizations (8 out of 22) often with non-profit status in their residing countries and managed mainly by volunteers, followed by diaspora organizations with official status as a non-profit organization or charity in their country of residence, often with staff, volunteers, and a governance structure (7 out of 22). Some diaspora organizations were also registered and/or based in Somalia with an affiliate office and/or representatives in residing countries (4 out of 22).²⁶ To a lesser extent, some diaspora organizations consisted of loose networks, teams or groups of volunteers that came together in a common effort to provide humanitarian assistance (3 out of 22). Although most diaspora organizations were active in certain regions, there are a handful with national coverage, such as the Irshad Islamic association and the Al-Rahmah Foundation.

Overview of structures of 22 mapped diaspora organizations



²⁴ DEMAC (2016), Diaspora Drought Response, Somaliland and Puntland: <https://media.umbraco.io/demac/ae3il2jr/demac-diaspora-drought-response-2016-somaliland-and-puntland-report.pdf>

²⁵ As discussed also in: DIIS (February 2021), Recognising diaspora humanitarianism: What we know and what we need to know more about. Policy Brief: <https://www.diis.dk/en/research/recognising-diaspora-humanitarianism>

²⁶ In addition, another four diaspora organizations that were registered in their countries of residence were also active in direct implementation in Somalia with staff and/or volunteers.

Following is an overview of six diaspora organizations engaged in humanitarian response identified through this research. All six are registered in their countries of residence but with different modus operandi.

They range from project-based interventions dependent on sporadic diaspora contributions implemented by contacts on the ground with no interaction with institutional humanitarian actors, to focused humanitarian and development interventions supported by institutional donors and implemented with or through local partners who participate in institutional humanitarian coordination mechanisms. It should also be highlighted that diaspora organizations can also have a mixed modus operandi combining both these approaches.

Rajo	Hirda
Residing country: Denmark	Residing country: The Netherlands
Active since: 2000	Active since: 1998
Structure: Rajo is a registered NGO in Denmark with operational offices, staff and volunteers in Somalia	Structure: HIRDA is a registered NGO in the Netherlands and has several operational offices in Somalia with local and diaspora full-time employees and volunteers. The Netherlands office also employs volunteers.
Description: Rajo focuses on humanitarian assistance and development projects. Rajo responds to sudden and ongoing crises to meet the immediate needs of affected populations and support the transition towards recovery. The organization has responded to emergencies by delivering food assistance and shelter materials to those displaced by natural and man-made crises	Description: HIRDA focuses on development and humanitarian activities
Main areas of intervention: Livelihoods, health, education, gender	Main areas of intervention: Livelihoods, health, education, women's empowerment, water
Main partners: Al-Rahmah charity, Barwaaqo Voluntary Organization, communities and INGOs	Main partners: HIRDA implements projects directly and is an implementing partner of UNICEF, Oxfam Novib, Islamic Relief Fund, IFAD, American Relief Agency for Horn of Africa (among others)
Funding: Diaspora donations, Danish Emergency Relief Fund (DERF)	Funding: UNICEF Somalia, Oxfam Novib, Achmea Foundation, Somali Relief Fund, IFAD, American Relief Agency for Horn of Africa, Comic Relief UK, International Development and Relief Fund, Oranje Fonds, Skanfonds, VSB fonds, OCHA Somalia, among others
Engagement with humanitarian system: Collaboration with institutional donors (such as the DERF) and through L/NNGOs and INGOs	Engagement with humanitarian system: HIRDA participates in the cluster coordination system and partners with UN and other international agencies
Geographic focus: South Central Somalia (Banadir, Lower Shabelle) and Somaliland	Geographic focus: Somaliland, Puntland and South-Central Somalia (especially in Gedo, Banadir, Galgaduud, and Bay regions)

Arladi-Aid	Gannaane Ry
Residing country: USA	Residing country: Finland
Active since: 2014	Active since: 2004
Structure: Arladi-Aid is a registered non-profit organization based in Minnesota, USA. The founders of Arladi-Aid are mostly from South West State of Somalia. The organization has staff and volunteers in Minnesota and representatives in Somalia	Structure: Gannaane Ry is a humanitarian organization based in Finland with offices in Nairobi and Kismayo
Description: Arladi-Aid focuses on humanitarian assistance, WASH in IDP camps, peacebuilding and education. Arladi-Aid responds to both slow and sudden onset crises to address the immediate needs of affected populations and the transition towards recovery	Description: Gannaane Ry has provided humanitarian assistance in the form of water supply, food, cash and basic health care services. Gannaane Ry has also been at the forefront in rehabilitating schools
Main areas of intervention: Livelihoods, WASH, education, health, food aid	Main areas of intervention: Education, health and nutrition, livelihoods, WASH, environment
Main partners: Arladi-Aid works through their representatives in Somalia, mostly business and religious leaders	Main partners: The main partners of Gannaane Ry are community leaders in El-Adde, community education committees, local NGOs such as the Somali Relief and Development Action (SRDA). Gannaane Ry is also a member of the Finnish Somalia Network
Funding: Diaspora contributions especially those from South West State of Somalia	Funding: Diaspora contributions and funding from the Finnish Ministry of Foreign affairs through the Finnish Somalia Network
Engagement with humanitarian system: Arladi-Aid does not engage with any other humanitarian actors	Engagement with humanitarian system: Gannaane Ry has now opened operational offices in Kismayo and Mogadishu; its partners such as SRDA participate in the cluster coordination system
Geographic focus: South West State of Somalia (Lower Shabelle, Bay and Bakool regions)	Geographic focus: South-Central regions of Somalia with most operations concentrated in Gedo and Lower Juba regions

Himilo Foundation	Irshad Islamic Association
Residing country: The Netherlands	Residing country: UK
Active since: 2006	Active since: 2015
Structure: Himilo is a non-profit foundation registered in the Netherlands with operational offices, staff and volunteers in the Netherlands and Somalia	Structure: Irshad Islamic association is a registered faith-based charity in the UK running mosques and resource centers. It has operational offices, staff and volunteers in the UK and volunteer religious leaders in Somalia
Description: Himilo initially formed to support the Somali communities in the Netherlands but eventually became active in responding to crises in Somalia, especially droughts and displacement	Description: Initially Irshad was formed to support Muslim communities, especially Somalis, in the UK. The mosques and resource centers supported are used to raise funds from the diaspora to respond to crises in Somalia. The registered income for 2019 was approx. USD \$50,000
Main areas of intervention: Livelihoods, WASH, education, gender equality and empowerment	Main areas of intervention: Livelihoods
Main partners: The main partners are community leaders including business and religious leaders, local authorities, NGOs and CBOs	Main partners: Religious and business leaders in Somalia
Funding: Diaspora contributions	Funding: Diaspora contributions
Engagement with humanitarian system: Himilo attends some of the cluster coordination meetings in Mogadishu and has participated in inter-agency needs assessments but does not have direct partnerships with any institutional humanitarian actors	Engagement with humanitarian system: No engagement with any institutional humanitarian actors
Geographic focus: South-Central Somalia	Geographic focus: All regions of Somalia

4. DIASPORA HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE

4.1. Motivations for humanitarian response

A sense of belonging and a charitable obligation are strong motivators which drive diaspora engagement in humanitarian response.

Sense of belonging:

The Somali diaspora's humanitarian response is motivated by a shared identity based on clan ties, blood relations, nationality and faith-based networks. This social connectedness creates a strong motivation. While the diaspora maintains constant connections and relationships with relatives, friends and contacts in Somalia, they observe how crises are unfolding and affecting people, and feel a natural motivation to respond. Providing support to those in need is central to Somali culture as expressed in the Somali proverb regarding sharing and assisting each other:

“Biro tolna wax umadhinto, qofna waxbay tartaa”
“no matter what the cost; one helps”.

Charitable obligation: Most Somali diaspora are grouped into clans and regions, but they all contribute to emergency responses because it is reciprocal, spiritual, and many collections are undertaken in the mosques where they worship. These contributions are *Sadaqa* or voluntary charity under Islam.

Diaspora organizations are alerted to crises through personal contacts, networks and staff in Somalia, social and mainstream media. In terms of where and how diaspora and diaspora organizations obtain information on emerging and current crises, this tends to be through multiple channels – primarily from personal contacts; through volunteer networks and staff on the ground; social media; and mainstream media coverage.

Media: The Somali diaspora keenly follow the media, witnessing how crises unfold. For example, the Irshad Islamic Association, a UK-based diaspora organization reported following the media closely and in reaction to crises raises money from individuals and groups through mosques and religious centers. Once funds are collected, they send the money to trusted religious and business leaders in the affected communities to implement the humanitarian response.

Social media: Social media plays a critical role in diaspora mobilization, fundraising, and responding to humanitarian crises. Equally, it is used for live streaming the delivery of aid to supporters in countries of residence. For example, many diaspora organizations use online crowdfunding platforms to raise funds, such as Haro, a US-based diaspora organization that initiates crowdfunding campaigns for each of its different humanitarian and development projects. Diaspora organizations also hold online discussion groups through WhatsApp, Facebook, Twitter or other platforms to share ongoing progress with their supporters.

Existing networks: Diaspora organizations also rely on their partner organizations in Somalia and their existing volunteer networks to provide early warning of emerging crises. For example, Somali Faces, a UK-based diaspora organization, was preparing to respond to the water shortages in Gedo in early 2021 based on alerts from its volunteer network. The Denmark-based Southern Somalia Peace and Development Organization (SSPDO) often relies on information coming from L/NNGOS with which it has historically worked, such as the Development Action Network (DAN).

4.2. Diaspora response activities

Diaspora organizations were involved in multiple areas and focused mainly on livelihoods, and women’s empowerment and education; they were less involved in protection, nutrition, provision of direct health services, livestock treatment and economic development.

Diaspora organizations and their interests are diverse in nature, often stretching along the humanitarian-development nexus and with different diaspora organizations adopting different response approaches. This includes the provision of specific one-off support in response to an identified need(s) to ongoing longer-term support; and support of a very concise nature such as provision of medical equipment for a health facility to broader support which can contribute to a number of outcomes.

In sudden onset humanitarian crises, initial responses are increasingly being implemented by those on the ground, swiftly followed by different forms of rapid support from diaspora organizations, such as funding water trucking or providing cash assistance through partners on the ground before the more institutional humanitarian response architecture has kicked-in. As this diaspora organization commented:

“For the drought it’s such a huge project that all we can do is provide quick relief until the INGOs step in.”

The Somali diaspora humanitarian response was mainly supported through remittances from individual diaspora to families and communities as described above. Support that was more regular, larger-scale and ongoing tended to be provided by diaspora organizations with established structures, staff, volunteers and financial support from diaspora, and to a lesser extent, institutional donors. These diaspora organizations were also active in development projects in Somalia with some also supporting diaspora in their countries of residence. For example, the Himilo Foundation in the Netherlands was initially founded to support the social integration of Somalis in the Netherlands and then expanded its activities with development and humanitarian projects in Somalia.

The 22 diaspora organizations assessed were mostly active in the following areas of intervention:

- Food security and livelihoods including providing cash, food, non-food items and water
- Gender, diversity and inclusion is mainly concerned with women’s empowerment, and diaspora organizations also spoke of interventions that focused on women’s health and education linking to their other activities including more development-type projects
- Education including providing schools materials for displaced children and in some cases funding temporary schooling facilities and teachers

Health assistance provided by diaspora organizations is mainly limited to supplying donated medical equipment, providing financial contributions to rehabilitate hospitals and health centres, giving training to health staff, and fundraising to pay the medical bills of vulnerable people that require extensive treatment. Very few diaspora organizations manage the direct provision of health services although an example was seen of HIRDA running mother and child healthcare clinics in partnership with UNICEF. The COVID-19 pandemic saw another example of support to healthcare in which institutional humanitarian organizations and diaspora organizations aimed to achieve the same objective. For example, HARO was fundraising for the De Martino Hospital, the main referral hospital in Mogadishu for treating COVID-19 patients, as was a crowdfunding campaign of IOM²⁷ as part of a wider response.

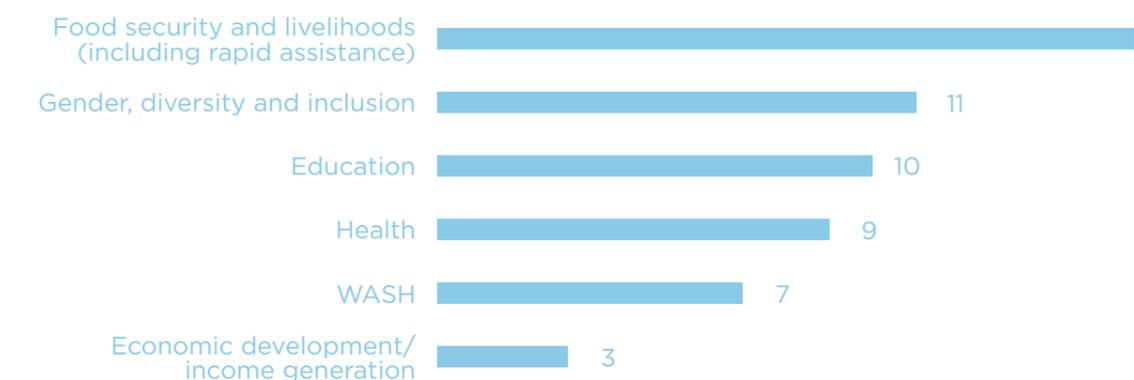


Figure 1: Main areas of intervention (22 diaspora organizations - multiple responses)

²⁷ See: <https://www.iom.int/donate/campaigns/somalia-responds> & <https://harousa.org/2021/03/01/urgent-need-for-hospital-equipment/>

Activities not undertaken: Those diaspora organizations spoken to during this research were less involved in responses such as protection, nutrition, provision of direct health services, livestock treatment and economic development. Instead, they focused on providing in-kind and cash-based support in the areas highlighted in Figure 3. Interviewees indicated that this was because they were focused on immediate needs and lack the funding, skills and capacity to mobilize more technical expertise both from within Somalia and in countries of residence. Although gender, diversity and inclusion is an important focus (and potentially more complex), most actions of diaspora organizations in this field tended to be short-term and “one-off” such as training and awareness-raising or building on links to larger development efforts. For example, HIRDA has ongoing women’s empowerment and education projects that are linked to their humanitarian responses, such as income-generation training for women and providing school facilities and materials for displaced children with a focus on girls’ education.²⁸

Types of crises: As seen in the examples of diaspora humanitarian response below, the large majority were in relation to sudden-onset crises such as floods and cyclones, displacement due to armed conflict or responding to spikes in drought. Although diaspora organizations are also involved in longer term development projects (focused on infrastructure rehabilitation for example) and supporting communities over time, this tends to not be sequenced with their humanitarian response and little distinction is made between the two approaches. Although usually based on clan affiliations, diaspora support could become regular sustenance for a given community. For example, Himilo has focused its support for some four years in Galmudug state in Central Somalia, with ongoing projects focused on the rehabilitation of community facilities and health education in addition to humanitarian assistance such as food aid for 500 households displaced by armed conflict. Longer-term support can also be provided by individual diaspora, for example directly paying salaries for teachers and health workers.²⁹

²⁸ See: <https://www.hirda.org/en/program/gender/>

²⁹ UNDP, (2009), Op. Cit.



4.3. Coordination and implementation
Diaspora organizations implement their humanitarian response with partners based in Somalia, with most partnering with communities, INGOs, UN agencies and L/NNGOs and their own networks. A more recent trend has been implementation directly by diaspora organizations through offices, staff and volunteers in Somalia.

All of the 22 formal diaspora organizations identified by this case study implemented their humanitarian activities with partners based in Somalia, including those with offices, volunteers and/or staff there. The main partners tended to be communities, followed by INGOs, UN agencies and L/NNGOs as seen in the graph below.

Most diaspora organizations worked with 2-3 partners; for example, in the town of El Adde (Gedo region), Gannaane Ry partners with community education committees and SRDA, an L/NNGO, while maintaining a working relationship with the local authorities. SSPDO selects its partners depending on the crisis location and the experience and knowledge of L/NNGOs in the area. Diaspora organizations indicated it was important to maintain relations with authorities for securing access and liaising with communities. However, authorities were much less involved in partnerships for actual implementation.

Communities and their religious and business leaders were also key partners for diaspora organizations. For example, Arladi-Aid, active in the southwest regions of Somalia has established partnerships with religious and business leaders. In these partnerships, diaspora organizations trust community leaders and elders to use the funds raised or goods provided to meet the most acute needs of the community. In this respect, they also largely rely on the community leaders to identify those most in need.

A more recent trend has seen diaspora organizations establishing offices, staff and volunteers in Somalia, such as the Al-Rahmah Foundation, Iftiin Foundation, Gannaane Ry, HIRDA, HARO, Himilo, Kisiwani Foundation and Rajo. These organizations carry out direct implementation but can also operate as an implementing partner for INGOs and the UN, somewhat blurring the lines between being a diaspora organization and an L/NNGO. For example, while operating independently, HIRDA is also an implementing partner for INGOs and UN agencies including Oxfam, Islamic Relief, UNICEF and IFAD. Implementation approaches were explained further by this diaspora organization:

“As we collect contributions, we consult the religious, business and community leaders in Somalia especially those in the affected areas and agree the best approach to respond (food, cash, water etc), mobile transfer or on-site collection.

We, therefore, keep on sending the money we receive from diaspora groups and individuals to Somalia because we are not allowed to send large amounts of money at one time.”

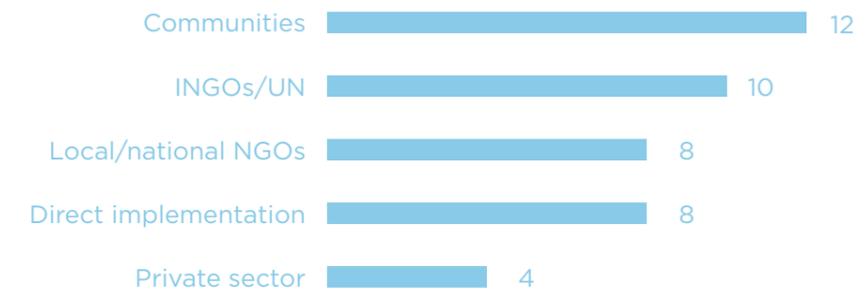


Figure 2: Implementation approaches (22 organizations - multiple responses)

Different levels of coordination between diaspora organizations and the institutional humanitarian system were identified with most tending to coordinate through local partners. The research identified three levels of coordination between diaspora organizations and the institutional humanitarian system and actors in Somalia:

• **Level 1:**

The less structured diaspora organizations tend not to interact with the institutional humanitarian system. Their humanitarian interventions are primarily carried out through engaging with local communities and contacts. Seven out of the 22 researched diaspora organizations are within this definition. However, it would also be the case for many informal groups that carry out ad hoc and occasional humanitarian response. Coordination remains internal, that is, between the diaspora organizations and their community or authority-level counterparts in Somalia. Community leaders and contacts then coordinate with other responders to distribute the assistance. For example, the Irshad Islamic Association works with religious and business leaders in Somalia, mainly through providing funds to them for humanitarian response. These leaders coordinate with their respective communities, such as in the response to cyclone Gati in 2020. This absence of coordination was explained by a diaspora organization:

“We do not coordinate at all with the institutional humanitarian system. We use our own networks and teams to implement on our own – this is our strength.

We have a huge network, we are part of the fabric of Somali society, so we can know and plan without any external help.”

• **Level 2:**

Diaspora organizations with L/NNGO, UN and INGO partners in Somalia tend to coordinate through these partners. In effect, the diaspora organizations rely on their in-country partners for implementation and they will then coordinate as necessary. Eleven out of 22 diaspora organizations identified functioned in this manner. For example, the L/NNGO partner of Gannaane Ry will participate in coordination fora of local authorities and the cluster system to coordinate the response, as seen with the early 2021 drought response in the Gedo region. Further, those diaspora organizations who accept institutional donor funding are likely to have more coordination and reporting requirements. For example, both SSPDO and Rajo have received funds from the Danish Emergency Relief Fund (DERF) and as part of the funding application and consequent reporting they have to detail their planned and realized coordination actions. Receiving institutional funding necessitates greater levels of coordination and engagement by diaspora organizations, at least from their implementing partners on the ground. According to diaspora organizations, the added value in partnering with L/NNGOs and INGOs was that it extended the reach of their activities beyond their original communities and complemented their skills-set, for example in assessment and coordination.

• **Level 3:**

Diaspora organizations which directly coordinate with the humanitarian system and actors, for example by participating in cluster coordination and inter-agency needs assessments. These tended to be in the minority (four out of 22 diaspora organizations) and were among the diaspora organizations undertaking direct implementation. For example, both Kisiwani Foundation and HIRDA directly participate in cluster coordination meetings and work both independently and as an implementing partners for UN agencies and INGOs. Himilo has also participated in inter-agency needs assessments to support data collection.³⁰

Diaspora organizations highlighted that, in general, there is some skepticism linked to engaging with the institutional humanitarian system due to concerns relating to bureaucracy and delays in responding to needs. One diaspora organization commented:

“I don’t think we can directly engage with the institutional humanitarian actors because our approaches are different.

We trust the information we get from our local connections, and don’t necessarily trust the information from the humanitarian actors. Our mode of response and motives are different, so we can’t “match” to the humanitarian system.”

³⁰ OCHA (2019), Joint Multi-Cluster Needs Assessment (JMCNA) Round III: https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/REACH_SOM_Report_JMCNA_November-2019-1.pdf

Although not always the case, diaspora organizations and institutional humanitarian actors are often working towards the same goals in humanitarian environments but operating in parallel and with limited connection or interaction. Some diaspora organizations felt their skills and capacities are not recognised by institutional humanitarian actors:

“Our efforts are not that clear to INGOs or international actors. The problem is that our resources are not that visible to them.

Our engagement with them is limited because if we are asking for funds from INGOs or the government we can be seen as competing with INGOs.

We feel we have the capacity of having the knowledge of the context; we have local contacts; we have easy access; we have familiarity with structures – this know-how that we have is not that clear to INGOs and sometimes they overlook our efforts.”

Institutional humanitarian actors and coordination mechanisms were engaging with diaspora organizations mostly when they worked together as partners or participated in coordination fora. As coordination was often through L/NNGO partners, institutional humanitarian actors may also not be aware of the involvement of diaspora organizations. These actors and mechanisms did seek increased coordination with diaspora organizations but were unsure as to what form it should take.



4.4. Coordination in countries of residence Finland and the UK provide examples where diaspora organizations have established coordination between themselves, financially supported by the government in the case of Finland.

In countries of residence, Somali diaspora have organized themselves into structured organizations and resource centers. This allows them to receive financial support from institutional donors such as governments and fundraise from diaspora to respond to humanitarian emergencies in Somalia. It has also been seen to facilitate coordination and avoid duplication as well as enable more cohesive humanitarian response by diaspora organizations which share a common goal.

This was the case in many countries of residence such as the UK, USA and in Europe, as this diaspora organization described:

“The religious (Mosques) and resource centers play the largest role in fundraising for emergency response because the Somali diaspora communities trust the religious leaders both in the host countries and Somalia.”

One trend seen was that diaspora groups are coming together and slowly regrouping and forming humanitarian-focused and more formal diaspora organizations, as one researcher said:

“Diaspora responses are large, effective, and timely, but it is always emotionally motivated and ends if the situation cools down without necessarily supporting the affected to recover. We now need transformation as many diaspora humanitarian organizations and L/NNGOs work together as humanitarian and development actors.”

An example can be seen in Finland where the Finnish government has provided support to Somali diaspora organizations to collaborate together. Over 30 diaspora organizations have united under the Finnish Somalia Network supported directly by the Finnish Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

They have a secretariat that supports the different associated organizations in terms of capacity-building and meeting requirements for funding. Each year three small consortia of three diaspora organizations each are funded to implement various development and humanitarian programs in different parts of Somalia. This seems a vital development in terms of organizing and formalizing the diaspora response from Finland as this diaspora organization commented:

“We are 32 diaspora organizations united under Finnish Somali Network. Capacity-wise we have a strong secretariat paid by the government that supports the organizations. Three organizations can join to work together and present their joint venture agreement and proposal to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for funding.”

Another example was in the UK where the Somali Relief and Development Forum re-groups Somali diaspora organizations. Members of the Forum are known to engage individually as well as in collaboration with each other.

4.5. Diaspora financing for humanitarian response
Diaspora organizations finance their activities mainly through fundraising within the diaspora community although they are increasingly receiving institutional financing, mostly from the governments of their countries of residence.

Funding of diaspora humanitarian responses was mainly through fundraising directly with Somali diaspora individuals and religious and community groups. However, of the 22 diaspora organizations assessed, 11 were known to have received funding or support from donor governments such as Denmark, Finland, Switzerland, the UK and US, private foundations, UN agencies and INGOs for either humanitarian or development projects. Diaspora organizations indicated that this was increasing as the organizations established more formal structures in addition to adopting an official legal status as a registered charity and/or NGO with the ability to accept institutional donor grants.

Where funds are coming from individuals or the community, these tend to be transferred on a rolling basis as contributions are received, as transferring large sums of money to Somalia is not possible due to anti-terror and other international financing regulations. This inhibits the ability of diaspora organizations to systematically plan their responses which is also a hindering factor in terms of engaging with the institutional humanitarian system from the outset.

Diaspora organizations did not see partnering with institutional actors as an option to overcome this challenge as it would imply considerably adapting their current ways of working. Most diaspora responses are not quantified and captured in the UN financial tracking systems (FTS), primarily because of the lack of predictability of financing and therefore limited coordination between institutional humanitarian actors and diaspora organizations as described above.

Regions with stronger and wealthier diaspora receive greater support for response to humanitarian crises. Humanitarian response from diaspora organizations is seen across the five federal member states of Somalia, Juba-land, Southwest, Hir-Shabelle, Galmudug, Puntland and Mogadishu, in addition to the self-declared state of Somaliland.

However, the strength and size of diaspora communities vary. Regions with less wealthy and/or urban business communities and fewer diaspora are often less able to respond to crises as their social connections are weaker and they therefore receive less support from diaspora. Northern regions such as Somaliland, Puntland and Galmudug have many wealthy business communities and a substantial number of diaspora and they therefore have a better capacity to address the impact of crises. Southern regions, such as Bay, Bakool, and Shabelle remain more exposed to the impact of crisis because they have less wealthy diaspora and business communities able to provide support.

As an indication of this disparity, a 2017 study found that remittances received in the north (Puntland and Somaliland) were one third higher than those received in the south (excluding Mogadishu and Kismayo).³⁰

A 2016 study on the diaspora drought response in Somaliland and Puntland highlighted the importance of diaspora leadership of a given clan as influencing diaspora fundraising and consequent response.³¹ As noted above, when a crisis becomes widespread and critical, such as with the 2016 and 2017 droughts, the diaspora response will aim to reach all of the affected areas, regardless of clan affiliations.

³⁰ Majid, N., et al. (2017), Op. Cit.

³¹ DEMAC (2016), Op. Cit.

4.6. Planning, targeting and selection criteria
The planning and program cycle of diaspora response can differ considerably to the approach of the institutional humanitarian system.

An area of focus for this research was to understand how diaspora organizations select and target who will receive their humanitarian support. It should be noted however, that for those diaspora organizations which are not receiving institutional funding, it is not necessarily just the targeting process that differs to approaches adopted by institutional humanitarian actors, but the entire approach to planning and response. For example, whilst within the institutional humanitarian system it is common practice to be guided by the humanitarian program cycle – assess needs; plan a response based on identified objectives; fundraise; implement and monitor; evaluate – diaspora organizations are less likely to implement all these actions, or at least not in a particularly formal or even cyclical way.

For example, a diaspora organization may quickly identify a humanitarian need and start to fundraise; then they will determine the appropriate response and provide real-time feedback through photos and videos of the response to their diaspora supporters. For some diaspora organizations, they perceived their approach to have clear advantages in responding proactively and quickly as this diaspora organization commented:

“We can identify the issue on the ground, raise the funds and respond – with donor funding it works the other way around – they identify the issues and then we apply for funding from them.”

For many diaspora organizations, selection criteria are based on clan affiliation, with partners in Somalia identifying those in need. As most Somali diaspora organizations are initially formed and managed by individuals from the same clan or region, their first selection criteria is assistance to the home location of their sub-clan or clan. Connections and relationships are so close that sometimes diaspora organizations know the affected households because they are originally from the same areas. This strong link between diaspora organizations with local communities was also highlighted in previous research.³³

When a crisis occurs, diaspora organizations mostly rely on their partners in Somalia to assess the situation and identify those in need as seen in the examples below. This has the advantage that the identification of needs comes very much from the community on the ground, as this diaspora organization commented:

“We have direct connections with people back home, and we also know who is affected more than others.”

³³ DEMAC (2018), Creating Opportunities To Work With Diasporas In Humanitarian Settings: <https://media.umbraco.io/demac/ny3alu1e/report-final-12052018.pdf>



However, interviewees highlighted that a disadvantage of the clan-based approach is that those on the ground may assume what is good for the affected populations without consulting them. Further, not all vulnerable groups will necessarily be identified due to both the clan dynamics and the challenges seen for partners in carrying out comprehensive integrated needs assessments, as this community member in Mogadishu commented:

“The Somali diaspora send their assistance to people they trust - business and religious leaders - but these people don’t have the time and skills to look for the voiceless communities within the affected people.”

Diaspora organizations reported that when the intensity or scale of the crisis is severe and captured by the mainstream media, the funding raised often allows for a broadening of selection criteria beyond clan and kinship ties both in the country where the diaspora organization is based and in relation to the response in Somalia itself. As one diaspora organization explained:

“When we were responding to the flood in Beletweyne, we mobilized all the Somali diaspora in the UK including the Somaliland diaspora, and they all contributed.”

Diaspora organizations which accept funding from institutional donors are required to be transparent about the targeting criteria adopted. For example, diaspora organizations which have received DERF funding such as Rajo and SSPDO have to evidence their approach to targeting, based on needs assessments undertaken by local partners in their funding applications.³⁴ A diaspora organization explained its work with a local partner in assessment and coordination:

“Our local partner [a L/NNGO] has a huge experience of implementing humanitarian projects. They do the needs assessment and then we develop a partnership agreement with them before developing a concept note and project proposal for the specific intervention. We use the information provided by our local partner to develop these products. Our local partner participates in the cluster meetings to help orient them to the geographic locations to be covered.”

³⁴ See for example: <https://derf.mynewsdesk.com/documents/intervention-application-rajo-organisation-18-004-ro-81869>

5. OVERVIEW OF DIASPORA HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE

Crisis and emergency-related humanitarian response by diaspora organizations was perceived as being rapid in nature for the immediate short-term, often being delivered before the more institutional humanitarian organizations were ready to respond.

Those spoken to during this research, mainly diaspora organizations, partners, government officials and community representatives, believe that the diaspora humanitarian response is more timely, efficient in saving lives, and effective than the institutional humanitarian response for the immediate short-term, as this business leader explained:

“When there are humanitarian emergencies, the Somali diaspora responds, and they are normally the first to provide water, food/cash, and other basic needs. They work with the most trusted people in their target areas. Their responses are small, quick, less bureaucratic, less corrupt, and straight to the beneficiaries. Equally, their contribution is “Sadaqa” Islamic charity given to a trusted person to distribute. In the previous humanitarian emergencies including 2011 and 2017 we received millions of dollars from the Somalia diaspora and distributed to IDPs and rural villages in food/cash and water. It is the diaspora response that saves the people and not the institutional humanitarian response, because, they come very late.”

However, diaspora organizations, particularly the less structured ones, reported that they struggle to maintain consistent and longer-term humanitarian response as described below in Chapter 6. Despite the challenges faced, the role played by the Somali diaspora is considered to be a significant success story, characterizing how effective the diaspora has been in supporting humanitarian response in Somalia over a number of decades.³⁵ A snapshot of recent diaspora organization humanitarian response illustrates their activities and initial results.

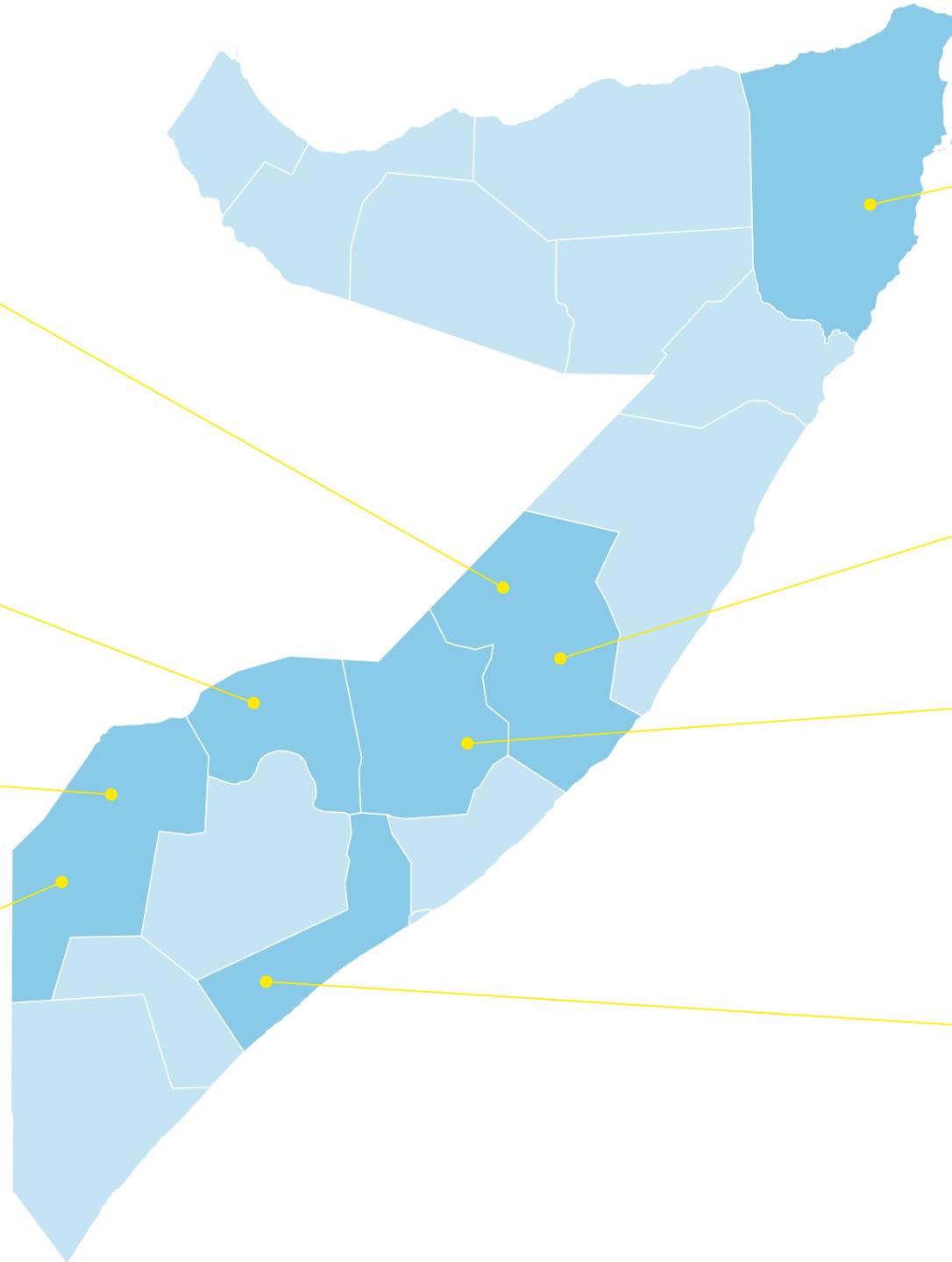
³⁵Hammond, L. et al., (2011), Op. Cit.

In 2019 **Himilo** distributed food aid to 500 displaced households by conflict in Dhusamareb in central Somalia.

WASH activities of **Southwest Research and Development Center** in Bay and Bakool regions have reached over 3,000 drought affected households in 2019-20.

In partnership with UNICEF, **HIRDA** is running more than 20 mother and child health care clinics in IDP camps and host communities in Gedo region.

In early 2021, **Gannaane Ry** is carrying out humanitarian water trucking in parts of Gedo region to assist drought affected communities.



Irshad assisted 500 households affected by 2020 Cyclone Gati in northern Somalia with food and cash.

In February 2019, **Rajo** reached over 1,000 drought affected households in central Somalia with one-month of food aid.

SSPDO supported for 600 households with food, cash and hygiene promotion in Beletweyne to respond to the 2019/20 floods.

In 2019 **Arladi-Aid** provided food aid and mosquito nets for 750 flood-affected households in Afgoye district of Lower-Shabelle.

The following are a brief description of selected diaspora response to further illustrate these results:

Southwest Research and Development Center – Drought relief in Bay and Bakol region:

After the massive displacements in 2017, Southwest Research and Development Center, a US-based diaspora organization, supported the drilling of three boreholes and rehabilitated an additional one in Bay and Bakol regions in 2019 and 2020 with the aim of reducing displacement. The locations were identified by local authorities and communities. Although the support was driven by clan-based motivations, the water is available and easily accessible for all the local population. These boreholes were expected to serve over 3,000 agro-pastoral households in areas affected by recurrent droughts.

Gannaane Re - Water and education support in Gedo:

In 2021, Gannaane Ry is carrying out humanitarian water trucking in parts of Gedo region to assist drought affected communities. It has also constructed primary and secondary schools and supports the community education committees managing the school. Over 500-600 school-aged children access free education every year with their support. Gannaane Ry works with a range of partners, such as the L/NNGO SRDA and has relied on its partners for implementation. They have recently established a presence in Somalia and are therefore now more involved in direct implementation.

Rajo – Food assistance:

In February 2019, Rajo reached over 1,000 drought-affected households in Central Region with one-month of food assistance. Rajo has staff and volunteers in Somalia to support implementation of activities, although it often collaborates with L/NNGOs for needs assessments and implementation.

Arladi-Aid – distributing food aid to flood affected households in Afgoye 2019:

Arladi-Aid responded with in-kind food and mosquito nets to flood-affected riverine communities in the Afgoye district of Lower Shabelle in 2019. Arladi-Aid reported reaching 750 households with a one-month food ration, mosquito nets and hygiene items (soap and basins). Arladi-Aid implements its interventions through business and religious leaders as described above.

The 2017 drought response:

Long before major institutional donors and humanitarian actors intervened to address the impact of the long 2017 drought, the Somali diaspora was alerted to the impending crisis through their local connections. Although international donors and humanitarian actors were ultimately proactive in responding to the drought, the Somali diaspora played an essential early role in saving the lives of millions of Somalis. The federal government of Somalia asked the business communities in Somalia for support (money and goods-in-kind) and funds were collected through a government-appointed committee. It is believed that the Somali diaspora contributed over USD \$5 million to save the lives of the drought-affected population. Although mostly clan-based and informal, over 70 diaspora organizations³⁶ and groups responded either directly or indirectly. This support tended to be in the form of direct funds for communities, channeled through religious and business leaders. According to interviewees the funds raised by diaspora organizations were used to provide food, non-food items, cash and water.

It is challenging to provide an in-depth assessment of the impact of the humanitarian interventions of diaspora organizations, in part because their reporting on this is often “light-touch” in nature. In addition, as has been noted, the humanitarian responses of diaspora organizations are often limited in duration (one-off rounds of food or cash for example) and it is understood that, in line with expectations, the impact is short term in nature.

5.1. Diaspora transparency and accountability
The reporting and accountability requirements for Somalia diaspora organizations differ based on the funding source.

Considering that the initial motivation for diaspora organizations to respond to humanitarian emergencies is often clan-based, it would not always be considered as impartial or strictly respecting humanitarian principles. According to interviewees, some partners on the ground, such as business and religious leaders, may also not be aware of how to deliver humanitarian assistance on the basis of humanitarian principles, as they are more motivated by their own charitable or religious drive.

Diaspora organizations that are only supported by diaspora donations tend not to have rigid or standard reporting procedures to provide feedback to those who have provided contributions. There is largely no expectation of this from the diaspora according to interviewees, again because of the trust they have in the diaspora organizations and their partners, largely based on clan affiliation. Himilo holds annual meetings with its supporters in the Netherlands and presents its projects, results and financial reports. If required, partners provide proof of delivery for diaspora organizations either with photos/videos or signed lists of recipients.

For some responses, the Al-Rahmah Foundation asks supporters to sponsor a number of affected households and then directly connects them to talk with the affected households. Diaspora organizations will also ask trusted friends and family in Somalia to check on implementation.³⁷ Diaspora

organizations with staff and volunteers on the ground can also accompany partners during implementation or check during their visits to Somalia.

Diaspora organizations which access government funding and partner with other institutional humanitarian actors have a stronger obligation to follow established humanitarian principles and ensure accountability to donors and affected communities. Accountability to donors mainly takes the form of complying with their narrative and budgetary reporting requirements, in addition to following the regulations of the country where they are registered as a charity.

Sometimes diaspora organizations undertake their own monitoring visits (before COVID-19) in order to inform their reporting. For example, SSPDO has adopted this approach with its previous flood responses, implemented through a local partner in Beletweyne.

³⁶ Majid, N., Abidrahman, K. & Hassan, S. (2017), Op. Cit.

³⁷ Also reported in past research: Hammond, L. et al., (2011), Op. Cit.

In terms of ensuring accountability to affected communities, the institutionally-funded diaspora organizations have also adopted practices which are common within the institutional humanitarian sector, such as the creation of feedback and complaints mechanisms, as seen in Rajo's and SSPDO's projects funded by DERF.

The diaspora organizations interviewed did not see this as particularly burdensome but recognized it was more complicated than using direct diaspora funding and also saw some of the benefits, such as stronger accountability to affected communities. Diaspora organizations working with local authorities and community leaders saw their close relations with the communities as being part of their accountability. A diaspora organization explained further how their accountability to their diaspora supporters and donor government functions:

“We work through local NGOs in Somalia, they do needs assessments of the affected area and share the report with us, we agree on the most pressing needs i.e. water or food and we transfer the money to them. They must report back both on programmatic and financial aspects. For donor funded projects we make sure all reporting is done according to the donor requirement, but diaspora contribution mostly don't ask for reports because it is Sadaqa donated through trusted persons, they don't ask us to follow it up.”

There are some concerns among some diaspora organizations in relation to corruption and mismanagement of resources as reported in Somaliland recently³⁸ and emphasized in some discussions during this research as this diaspora organization commented:

“The administration was insistent we give the aid to them, but we did not trust them, so we worked with religious leaders instead.”

³⁸ Rift Valley Institute (2020), Tech and trust challenges: emerging trends in Somaliland diaspora response to COVID-19: <https://riftvalley.net/index.php/news/tech-and-trust-challenges-emerging-trends-somaliland-diaspora-response-covid-19>



6. GAPS AND CHALLENGES IN DIASPORA HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE

Gaps and challenges identified in the humanitarian response of diaspora organizations included a bias in humanitarian response, the unpredictability of available resources, the limitations on the type of response provided, evolving professionalism and the lack of trust in the institutional humanitarian system.

Although the strengths of the diaspora humanitarian response include strong links to communities and the ability to respond quickly, a number of gaps and challenges can be identified, some of which have been previously seen in past DEMAC studies on the Somali diaspora.³⁹ The main gaps and challenges identified by the interviewees are as follows:

³⁹ DEMAC (2016), Op. Cit.; DEMAC (2018), Op. Cit.

- **Bias in humanitarian response:** As described above, many Somali diaspora organizations have been created by individuals from the same clans or regions. This implies that there is a probable bias in their humanitarian response, particularly for relatively small-scale interventions, where assistance is directed to their sub-clan, clan and/or home region. This has implications for selection criteria where bias can result in vulnerable groups being excluded as they are outside the clan system (for example, marginalized groups such as the Somali Bantu). This situation is not unique to diaspora organizations; Somali L/NNGOs have been found to have the same issues with clan-territorial divisions.⁴⁰ As noted above, a number of diaspora organizations have been able to work at a national level or in multiple geographic locations and overcome this challenge. Clan affiliation can also have positive implications for humanitarian response. Interviewees highlighted that there is an established trust between members of the same clan, from the diaspora who donate funds to those in Somalia who implement the response, allowing for a quicker and more efficient response than traditional humanitarian interventions, and ultimately better accountability to the concerned community, as confirmed by previous research.⁴¹
- **Unpredictable availability of resources:** As diaspora organizations mainly rely on financial support from diaspora in their respective countries of residence, they are impacted by the ability of the diaspora to contribute. As mentioned above, a direct result of COVID-19 was that diaspora had less available funds to support their communities and relatives in Somalia due to the global economic downturn. Further, the global financial regulations impede the transfer of funds as described above. It is also difficult for diaspora organizations to estimate how much money a crisis will generate from their fundraising efforts and contributions are transferred as and when they are received.
- **Limitations in the type of humanitarian response in which diaspora organizations engage:** The top focus of diaspora organization responses have been food, non-food items, water and cash assistance, often meeting immediate needs on a small-scale until a longer-term response is in place (if required). Diaspora organizations and other interviewees indicated that there were challenges in providing longer-term humanitarian response solutions, for example, to support multi-year programming, sequencing or cross-sector approaches. At the same time, many diaspora organizations do focus support to the same communities over a period of years, but it is not always continuous or planned and is based on availability of funds.

⁴⁰ ODI HPG (2017) Funding to local humanitarian actors: Somalia case study: <https://www.odi.org/sites/odi.org.uk/files/resource-documents/12468.pdf>

⁴¹ Hammond, L. et al., (2011), Op. Cit.

- **Evolving professional experience and skills both in countries of residence and with partners in Somalia.** Diaspora organizations have developed their experience and skills in humanitarian response mostly through “trial and error” according to interviewees. Diaspora are motivated by their family, clan or media coverage and put together a response to the best of their abilities often using their clan connections. Over time, some have become more professional in their approach and are now registered charities; one example is HIRDA that now works both independently and as an implementing partner for INGOs and UN agencies as described above. Whilst for some diaspora organizations the evolving professional or formal humanitarian skills is actually not a gap, for others spoken to, it linked to the above challenges and required attention as this diaspora organization commented:

“There is not much we can learn from humanitarian organizations. They do good work on the ground and their interventions are large-scale and longer-term. Perhaps we could learn from them more formalized implementation techniques as we get larger but we don’t want to create more bureaucracy.”

- **Lack of trust in the institutional humanitarian system:** There is an operational divide between a number of diaspora organizations and institutional humanitarian actors according to interviewees. While institutional humanitarian actors perceive diaspora organizations as “newcomers”, partial or “politicized and seasonal”⁴², diaspora organizations in turn are often suspicious of the institutional humanitarian actors as this interviewee commented:

“Our responses are not attached to any condition other than seeking reward from Allah, and we worry that the institutional humanitarian system will affect our traditional charity and assistance methods. We only ask the host governments to allow us to send large amounts of money to the affected people.”

⁴² DEMAC (2018), Op. Cit., p.16.





7. FUTURE DIASPORA RESPONSE AND ENGAGEMENT IN SOMALIA

In Somalia, diaspora humanitarian response remains selective and primarily based on the provision of lifesaving assistance, complementing the longer-term support they provide to communities over time.

Although the diaspora response lacks coordination with the country's institutional humanitarian actors, there has been a growing professionalization of the diaspora response, notably as they cement partnerships with L/NNGOs, INGOs and UN agencies and receive institutional financing. A number of diaspora organizations are already working in a way which bridges the humanitarian-development nexus through their combined short-term provision of relief and longer-term community-based support.

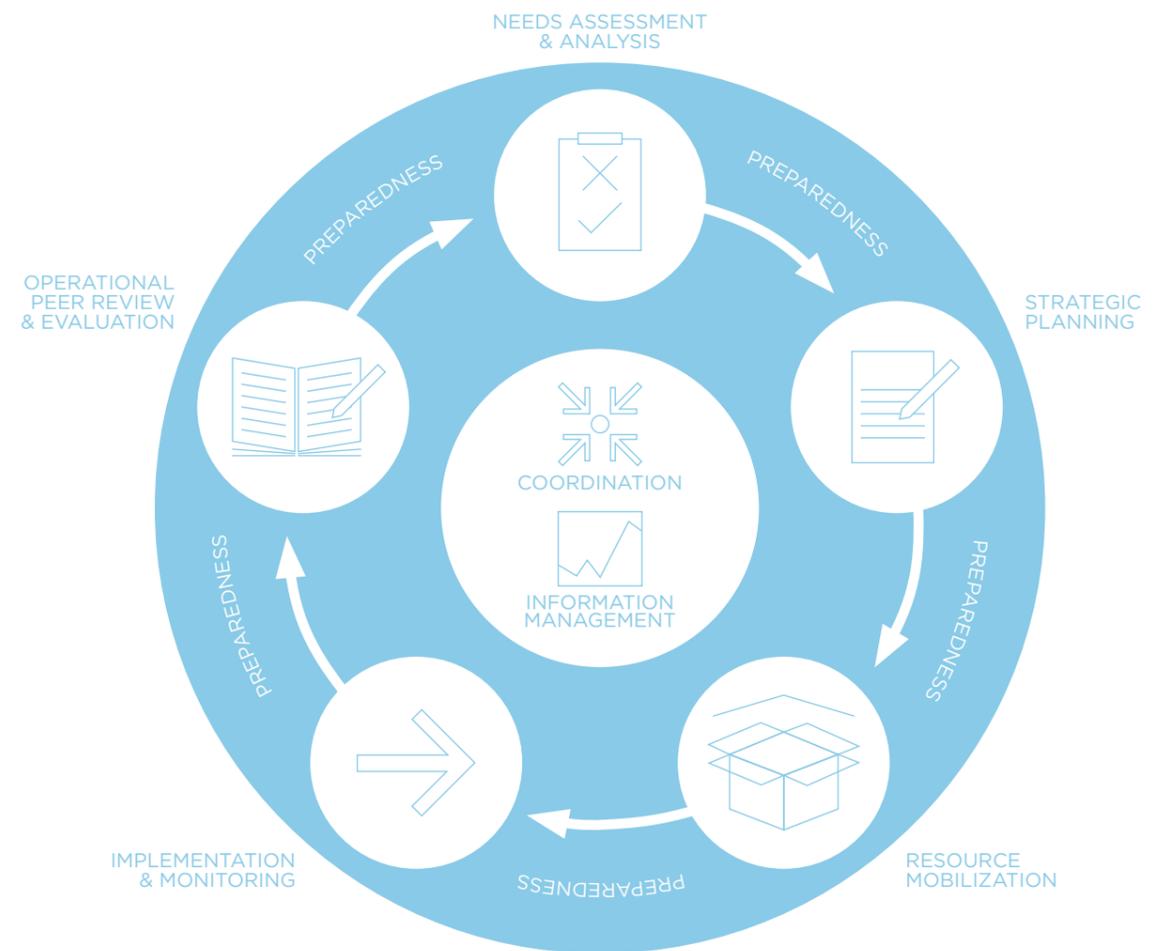
The increasing number of diaspora organizations, either with a physical presence in Somalia or with long-lasting partnerships, contributes to the evidence that they are becoming more visible humanitarian actors, blurring their role with L/NNGOs and with some organizations increasingly coordinating and engaging with the humanitarian system. There is scope for increased interaction between these diaspora organizations and counterparts in the institutional humanitarian system. At the same time it should be recognized that the bulk of diaspora humanitarian response in Somalia will remain informal, that is, between families, clans, mosques and communities.

RECOMMEN- DATIONS

The case study aimed to contribute to strengthening the DEMAC platform by providing insights into the current modalities of diaspora humanitarian response and to support potential operational and strategic communication and cooperation between diaspora and institutional humanitarian actors. On this basis, building on the feedback and insights gathered, it is proposed that DEMAC strengthen its role in leading and supporting greater engagement between institutional humanitarian actors in Somalia and the Somali diaspora globally. Recommendations to support this are organized here around the humanitarian program cycle. These recommendations require further inputs and validation from diaspora organizations, their partners and other humanitarian actors.

It is important to bear in mind that these recommendations feed into an overarching operational framework which is being developed on the basis of this case study and other country studies undertaken as part of the research. The operational framework sees DEMAC taking on a leading role as a convener in the relation to humanitarian diaspora engagement at global level – a role which should then be mirrored in select countries, with Somalia being one.

The recommendations below require leadership and spearheading from DEMAC to steer the entire process. The recommendations also require collaboration with key entities from within the institutional humanitarian system, such as UN OCHA, the HCT, donor governments, INGOs, UN agencies and L/NNGOs, in addition to buy-in and endorsement from diaspora organizations and their partners.



Alerts and needs assessment: The diaspora organizations spoken to in this research highlighted that a key advantage they have in relation to institutional humanitarian actors is their direct access to communities and early crisis warnings that they receive as a result. They also emphasized that this access facilitates their ability to have a rapid understanding of needs. Increasing engagement during the alert and needs assessment phase would include defining systematic approaches to:

- Integrating diaspora feedback and inputs into early warning systems and mechanisms, both based in Somalia and globally (such as ACAPS and REACH).
- Including diaspora organizations and their partners in inter-agency needs assessments and ongoing monitoring of crises in Somalia.
- Building capacity of diaspora organizations and their partners through peer-to-peer participation in inter-agency needs assessments and any training opportunities.
- Proactive invitations to diaspora organizations and their partners to participate in any needs assessment fora and joint analysis processes in Somalia both nationally and regionally.

Strategic planning: The approach to planning humanitarian response adopted by diaspora organizations varies, often running in parallel to the planning processes implemented by institutional humanitarian actors. Opportunities to support the involvement of diaspora organizations into institutional humanitarian planning processes should be identified. This is likely to include:

- Consulting diaspora organizations and their partners when developing the HRP and cluster strategies, recognizing the complementary nature of the diaspora response, specifying their action and their role.
- Integrating diaspora knowledge and insights into planning and strategy development in relation to interventions designed with the humanitarian-development nexus in mind.
- Proactive invitations to diaspora organizations and partners to participate in capacity strengthening activities, particularly in relation to humanitarian principle, standards and ways of working.

Resource mobilization: As described in the case study, diaspora organizations have the advantage of securing funds from two distinct sources; their diaspora supporters and institutional funding. At the same time, these two sources do not currently provide diaspora organizations with a secure and continuous financial base. There are several areas where institutional humanitarian actors could further engage with diaspora organizations in order to strengthen their access to more predictable forms of financing:

- Governments of countries of residence of diaspora organizations could provide further support, including through advocacy efforts, to adapt financial transaction regulations to facilitate the transfer of funds for humanitarian response between diaspora organizations and their counterparts in Somalia.
- Governments and donors in countries where diaspora organizations are based could provide humanitarian response funding targeting diaspora organizations and/or provide a funding stream within existing mechanisms (such as national emergency funding pools). This could also take the form of matching funds, where institutional donors match funds raised directly by diaspora organizations from their supporters. Depending upon funding and strategic priorities, funds could be for short-term crises or to support longer-term programming.
- Facilitate and prioritize joint proposals or applications for diaspora organizations with INGO and L/NNGO partners. This is likely to require an increased flexibility in relation to due diligence requirements (as seen for example with the tiered due diligence approach adopted by the Start Network where L/NNGO access to levels of funding is based on different levels of compliance).⁴³
- Support to diaspora organizations and their partners in understanding the humanitarian funding landscape and of the funding opportunities available.
- Prioritize access of diaspora organizations and their partners to emergency funds available in Somalia such as the Somali Humanitarian Fund.
- Support diaspora organizations to integrate data on their responses in FTS tracking.

⁴³ See: <https://startnetwork.org/due-diligence-and-vetting>

Implementation: The operating model of diaspora organizations is both distinct and similar to institutional humanitarian actors depending upon the nature of the response and their funding source. Interviewees identified a number of areas where synergies could be increased during implementation:

- Institutional humanitarian actors should consider diaspora organizations and their partners as potential partners in implementation, favoring joint-partnerships rather than sub-granting. Empower diaspora organizations as part of the decision-making process instead of as service providers in partnership arrangements.
- Institutional humanitarian actors should liaise with diaspora organizations and their partners during the implementation of their humanitarian response to determine how their smaller-scale responses can be integrated and support longer-term responses for affected communities.
- Proactive and systematic invitations to diaspora organizations and their partners to cluster coordination meetings and other fora to facilitate two-way information sharing and potential coordination on responses during acute crises such as floods, displacement and spikes in droughts.
- Create opportunities for diaspora organizations experienced in direct implementation and as implementing partners with INGOs and UN agencies to exchange experiences and know-how with other diaspora organizations that aspire to scale-up their activities.
- Given the important role of business and religious leaders as intermediaries for diaspora organizations, consider how awareness of humanitarian principles can be increased, possibly through the diaspora organizations and their partners.

Peer review and evaluation: Diaspora organizations and their partners are involved in reviews and evaluations of their own responses, but no links were seen with the institutional humanitarian sector. As described above, the feedback provided to supporters was often in “real-time” while a more formal approach was adopted for institutional funding. Hopefully a more cohesive approach will be able better to estimate the impact of the humanitarian response of diaspora organizations.

- Initiate involvement of the diaspora organizations and their partners in any inter-agency accountability mechanism such as joint evaluations and reviews.
- Encourage an exchange between diaspora organizations and their partners with the institutional humanitarian organizations to explain how their “real-time” reporting and monitoring works and discuss areas for improvement and collaboration.

Coordination: The case study found that coordination with the institutional humanitarian sector was mainly carried out through partners in-country or where diaspora organizations were present. Interviewees thought that both diaspora organizations and institutional humanitarian actors could benefit from further coordination efforts:

- The Humanitarian Country Team and the cluster coordinators proactively invite diaspora organizations and their partners to contribute to coordination fora; for major discussions consider inviting diaspora organizations remotely from their countries of residence.
- Outreach to diaspora organizations and their partners to be involved in inter-agency coordination such as cluster coordination within the regions where they are active.
- Institutional donors and governments in countries of residence of diaspora organizations should consider supporting the formation of umbrella associations by providing small ongoing funding both for a secretariat role and joint project implementation in Somalia, as seen in the positive example of Finland.

Information management: The sharing of information within diaspora organizations and their partners was taking place but was limited between them and with the humanitarian sector. This could be further strengthened by:

- Establishing mechanisms to ensure that information is systematically shared and then integrate data on the diaspora response more systematically into humanitarian updates, bulletins and dashboards.
- Encourage diaspora organizations and their partners active in Somalia to exchange information and updates between themselves.
- Further outreach to diaspora organizations on humanitarian response, standards and principles.
- Either through diaspora organization umbrella platforms or with individual diaspora organizations, donor governments and institutional donors should establish a mechanism through which information and know-how from diaspora organizations can be fed into their own humanitarian analysis and priorities; further efforts could be made to integrate Somali diaspora organizations into such reflections of the Ministries of Foreign Affairs, think tanks, academia and equivalent.

ANNEX A

TABLE OF PEOPLE INTERVIEWED

No.	Type of organization	Organization	Location
1	Diaspora organization	ALADI Air	USA
2	Diaspora organization	Southwest Research and Development	USA
3	Diaspora organization	Rajo organization	Somalia
4	Diaspora organization	Ganana -Ry	Helsinki
5	Diaspora organization	HIRDA	Mogadishu
6	Diaspora organization	Somali Resource Center - Bristol	UK
7	Diaspora organization	Irshad Islamic Association	UK
8	Diaspora organization	Somali Faces	UK
9	Diaspora organization	SSPDO	Denmark
10	Diaspora organization	Kisiwani Foundation	Mogadishu
11	Diaspora organization	Garas Aid	Austria
12	Diaspora organization	Al - Rahmah Foundation	Mogadishu
13	Diaspora organization	Himilo	Mogadishu
14	Diaspora organization	Iftiin Foundation	Mogadishu
15	Individual Diaspora	N/A	UK
16	Somali L/NNGO	HOD	Nairobi
17	Somali L/NNGO - partner with diaspora organizations	ARD	Mogadishu
18	Somali L/NNGO	SADO	Kismayo
19	Somali NGO consortium	Somali NGO consortium	Hargeisa
20	Baidoa based CBO linked with DOs	Southwest Youth Union	Baidoa
21	Humanitarian coordination body	UN OCHA	Nairobi
22	INGO working in Somalia	CARE international	Nairobi
23	INGO and member of Somali HCT	ACTED	Nairobi
24	Somali government	Office of Bay region governor	Baidoa
25	Somali government	Local Government - Puntland	Garowe
26	Religious leaders	Nairobi based religious group	Nairobi
27	Business leader - working with DOs	Baidoa based	Baidoa
28	Religious leaders working with DOs	Baidoa based	Baidoa
29	Business leader	Garowe based	Garowe
30	Somali politician - Former diaspora	Mogadishu - Based	Mogadishu
31	Beneficiary Community leader	Community member	Mogadishu
32	Beneficiary Community leader	Community member	Kismayo
33	Beneficiary Community leader	Community member	Baidoa
34	Beneficiary Community leader	Community member	Bardera - Gedo
35	Humanitarian consultant	Independent	Nairobi
36	UK based researcher	Independent	UK

ANNEX B

LIST OF DIASPORA ORGANIZATIONS ASSESSED

No.	Name of diaspora organization	Website (where available)	Residing country(s)
1	HIRDA	www.hirda.org	Netherlands
2	Rajo organization	https://rajo-org.com	Denmark
3	SWLI (Somali women leadership initiative)		Canada
4	Ganane-ry Organization		Finland
5	Arladi Aid	http://arlaadiaid.org	USA
6	Southwest Research and Development Center		USA
7	Gurmadka Bardera		USA
8	AI - Rahmah Foundation	http://alrahmahfoundation.org/en	Global: Europe, North America and Australia
9	Kisiwani Foundation	https://www.facebook.com/kisiwani-foundation	Netherlands
10	Iftiin Foundation	www.iftiinfoundation.com	USA
11	Himilo (Hoop in de toekomst)	www.himilo.org	Netherlands
12	Somali Democratic Institute	https://somalidemocraticinstitute.wordpress.com/	Sweden
13	Finn Som Society	https://www.finnsomsociety.org	Finland
14	Somali Relief and Development Forum - SRDF	https://www.facebook.com/somali-relief/	UK
15	Democracy for Somalia D4S	www.democracyforsomalia.org	Finland
16	Swisso Kalmo	http://www.swisso-kalmo.org/	Switzerland
17	Danish Human appeal	www.danishhumanappeal.org	Denmark
18	African Relief Services	https://web.facebook.com/African-Relief/?_rdc=1&_rdr	Sweden
19	SSPDO- Southern Somalia peace and Development organization	https://www.sspdo.org/en/home/	Denmark
20	Irshad Islamic association	www.irshadfoundation.org	UK
21	Somali Faces	https://www.somalifaces.org/	UK
22	HARO	https://harousa.org	USA



DEMAC

DIASPORA
EMERGENCY ACTION
& COORDINATION

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Responsible for content:

DEMAC – Diaspora Emergency Action & Coordination
At Danish Refugee Council
Borgergade 10
1300 Copenhagen
Denmark

Email: info@demac.org
Phone: +45 33 73 50 00

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