
DEMAC TOOLKIT
POCKET GUIDE
DEFINITION AND TYPOLOGIES
OF DIASPORAS

DEMAC TOOLKIT POCKET GUIDE

The DEMAC Toolkit is a compilation of ten short, hands-on pocket guides on diaspora humanitarianism. Out of the ten, five guides are tailored to humanitarian practitioners, covering the following topics:

- 1. Definition and typologies of diasporas**
2. Awareness raising materials on diasporas' role in emergency response
3. Guidance on integration of diaspora in stakeholder analysis
4. Methodology to map & assess the engagement of diaspora in humanitarian crises
5. Guidance for collaborative advocacy with diaspora

This pocket guide is focusing on definition and typologies of diasporas. Interested in the other four booklets? Find the complete DEMAC Toolkit with all ten pocket guides on our website www.demac.org

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Why this DEMAC toolkit?

The DEMAC toolkit intends to offer practical guidance to humanitarian practitioners to enhance engagement and coordination with diaspora organizations involved in humanitarian response.

The toolkit is inspired by DEMAC lessons learned and good practices on diaspora humanitarianism. It provides guidance and definitions for humanitarian actors and sets the framework for increasing understanding, knowledge and engagement with diaspora organizations in humanitarian settings.

The toolkit does not intend to provide a binding, predetermined list of interventions or types of activities that may or may not be implemented, as this is dependent on the specific context and would appear overly prescriptive. Therefore, DEMAC encourages adaptation of this resource to the respective local situation.

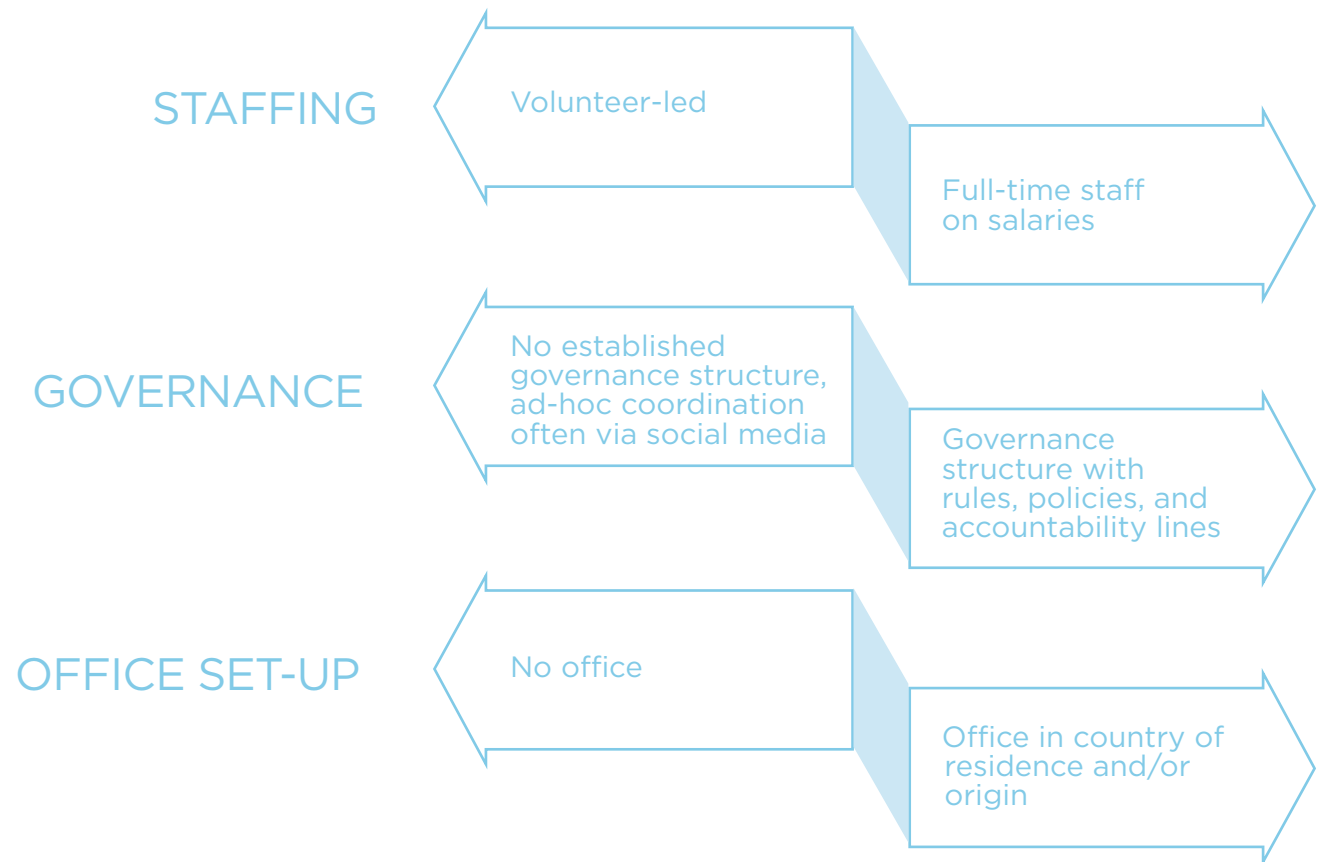
DEFINITION AND TYPOLOGIES OF DIASPORAS

Definition of diaspora:

Diaspora are migrants, refugees and their descendants who live outside their country of birth or ancestry, yet still maintain emotional and material ties to that country. Support efforts towards that country often happen transnationally, with diasporas settled across the globe collaborating to achieve joint outcomes.

Source: Danish Refugee Council, [Diaspora Engagement Strategy](#)

DEFINITION AND TYPOLOGIES OF DIASPORAS



Diaspora organizations do not share a homogenous structure, yet they can broadly be looked at based on their structure and the following criteria:

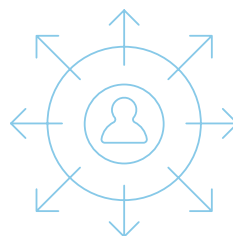
Source: DEMARC Key Highlights report

DEFINITION AND TYPOLOGIES OF DIASPORAS

Implementation

Diaspora organizations implement humanitarian response through different ways of working, directly or indirectly through partners and with different activities, with three main operational models seen. Diaspora organizations are flexible and can adopt multiple and parallel forms of implementation.

PARTNER MODEL



Diaspora organizations implement responses with local partners, mainly L/NNGOs and community-based organizations

DIRECT MODEL



Diaspora organizations implement responses directly with their own staff and/or volunteers

SUB-GRANTEE MODEL



Diaspora organizations carry out responses as implementing partners for UN agencies and/or INGOs

DEFINITION AND TYPOLOGIES OF DIASPORAS

Based on these criteria, several categories can be defined. It has to be noted, that these categories are not static, but rather evolve over the course of a crisis or response: While most organizations start off as loose networks, some might develop quickly and set up more formal structures and governance bodies, yet a few years later also might scale-down and remain registered but return to a less structured set-up, or vice versa.

Diaspora organizations have activities that are aligned with humanitarian clusters but are often working cross-sectorally and without necessarily focusing on a specific sector.



CATEGORY 1

Organizations with a formal structure, officially registered in the country of residence, with volunteers, staff and governance structure



CATEGORY 2

Organizations and associations with a less formal structure and governance, sometimes registered in the country of residence, staffed mainly by volunteers



CATEGORY 3

Organizations officially registered in the countries of origin with affiliate offices or representatives in countries of residence with volunteers, staff and governance structure



CATEGORY 4

Loose networks of volunteers coming together to respond to sudden-onset crises in their countries of origin with no formal structure and governance

DIASPORA ORGANIZATIONS' COORDINATION WITH THE HUMANITARIAN ECO-SYSTEM

Diaspora organizations coordinate with other diaspora organizations, governments, humanitarian organizations and local partners. The level of coordination of diaspora organizations for their humanitarian response varies both within their countries of residence and within their countries of origin.

01

NO
COORDINATION

Direct links with partners on the ground; coordinate if needed (often with local authorities)

02

THROUGH
PARTNERS

L/NGO partners integrated in humanitarian system; coordinate on behalf of diaspora response

03

DIRECT
COORDINATION

Diaspora organizations with a presence in-country; directly participate in coordination fora

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 eco-system 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.

Produced by DEMAC – Diaspora Emergency Action & Coordination,
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