



DEMAC

DIASPORA
EMERGENCY ACTION
& COORDINATION

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

30 MAY 2022
GENEVA, SWITZERLAND



DRC DANISH
REFUGEE
COUNCIL

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

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ENHANCING COORDINATION IN HUMANITARIAN SETTINGS



ABOUT DEMAC

Diaspora Emergency Action & Coordination (DEMAC) is a global initiative working for a deeper understanding of diasporas as humanitarian actors and striving for better coordination between diaspora organizations and the institutional humanitarian ecosystem.

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.

Acronyms and abbreviations

CSO	Civil Society Organization
DEMAC	Diaspora Emergency Action & Coordination
DRC	Danish Refugee Council
IOM	International Organization for Migration
INGO	International Non-governmental Organization
NGO	Non-governmental Organization
UDO	Ukrainian Diaspora Organization
UN	United Nations
USAID	United States Agency for International Development

The conference was made possible by the generous support of the American people through the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). The opinions expressed in this report should not be attributed to and do not represent the views of DRC, DEMAC, USAID or the United States Government. The contents of this report are solely a summary of conference proceedings and discussion.

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PREFACE

This report reflects the proceedings of the DEMAC international conference 'Enhancing Coordination in Humanitarian Settings'. The purpose of this report is to support the dissemination of the valuable discussions held at the forum, focusing on trust building, improved diaspora engagement in the institutional humanitarian system, and the status of diaspora humanitarian response. This conference brought together 43 participants from diaspora organizations, in addition to 24 representatives of INGO, UN, and research partners. Diaspora representatives came from, amongst others, Somalia, Afghanistan, Ukraine, Venezuela, Haiti, and Timor-Leste.

The conference consisted of three components: a morning plenary, afternoon parallel discussion groups, and an afternoon plenary. The first plenary component focused on reviewing the role of trust in diaspora action and how trust links to accountability. This session acknowledged the unique role of diaspora organizations as true 'nexus' actors who through their local links are often present in crises first and often remain well after institutional humanitarian and development actors have left, acting as critical intermediaries for community voices. The afternoon parallel discussions tied together a practical case study on the Ukraine response as well as discussions aimed at exploring two further topics critical to improved diaspora recognition and engagement in the institutional humanitarian system: application of humanitarian principles to diaspora responses, and access to funding streams for diaspora organizations.

Finally, the afternoon plenary session focused on the application of research findings from the last two years of DEMAC programming and how research can help elevate the voices and successes of the diaspora.

In between and throughout the sessions, the conference provided a platform for productive discussion and networking that will be used to advance future DEMAC programming most relevant to diaspora organizations. Overall, discussions focused on three overarching themes. First, access to institutional funding remains a significant issue for many diaspora organizations. While diaspora organizations should improve their administrative compliance and accountability (both to resources and affected populations), there is also a need to address structural barriers to funding.

This includes the focus on financial risk and the limited time many agencies must invest in understanding diaspora organizations and their unique positioning. Without a bigger push to engage, the system is unlikely to change. Second, diaspora organizations are interested in better engaging with global humanitarian standards, particularly the humanitarian principles and accountability to affected populations (or now, the Core Humanitarian Standard). However, there is limited awareness or capacity building initiatives focused on practical applications of these standards to diaspora organizations. Finally, there is a continued need for advocacy and research on diaspora responses, particularly on long-term engagement or nexus-focused research. This should be paired with a strong advocacy campaign and practical steps to link diaspora organizations with institutional actors for collaboration, based on a recognition that there is strength in both approaches that should be maintained.

OPENING REMARKS

Smruti Patel, Founder, Global Mentoring Initiative

Smruti Patel opened the DEMAC conference by reflecting on the impact of the 2004 Tsunami response on local capacities - noting that the response really gave rise to a movement pushing for humanitarian action that is more accountable to beneficiaries and local response actors. Emphasizing the role of diaspora in providing a key link between communities and the institutional humanitarian response, Smruti introduced the day by noting the importance of providing space for exchange between diaspora actors, donors, and humanitarian organizations. She introduced Christian Gad for further introductions.

Christian Gad, Head of Emergency, Danish Refugee Council and DEMAC Advisory Board Member

Christian Gad highlighted how he, as a member of DEMAC's Strategic Advisory Board, has seen first-hand the effort DEMAC has put into creating a space for dialogue for diaspora actors. He emphasized the increasing push to re-think the global humanitarian architecture, specifically the role of local actors - including the diaspora, who have long been working across some of the most challenging humanitarian contexts including Ukraine, Afghanistan, Timor-Leste, Tunisia, Somalia, Pakistan, and Myanmar. He emphasized the importance of the conference in determining where commonalities between diaspora actors and the institutional humanitarian system create opportunities for better responses, while differences can be leveraged. Christian sees the value in DEMAC in providing this representation and advocacy globally.

KEYNOTE PRESENTATIONS

Paddy Siyanga Knudsen, Migration and Governance Expert;
Vice President, Global Research Forum on Diaspora, and Transnationalism

Paddy Siyanga Knudsen reflected how she, as a member of the Zambian diaspora, often found herself directly involved in transnational diaspora space without consciously realizing it as diaspora members typically engage with 'home' as a way of life - rather than something that must be structured or externally encouraged. In this sense, diaspora naturally "humanize humanitarian response". She emphasized that diaspora engagement in the 'homeland' pulls on three themes: exchanging, engaging, and connecting.

On exchanging, exchanges are naturally occurring through generations, differentiated migration experiences, different skills, and capacities to affect outcomes are a major strength of the diaspora. While the lack of coordination and the freedom for diaspora to engage using their relative strengths,

there is still room for diaspora to reflect about whether they are adequately working with local civil society and engaging how the community wishes to be engaged - rather than how the diaspora wishes the exchange to occur. On connecting, Paddy highlighted how diaspora members are uniquely positioned both because of their relative freedom to advocate as well as their connection to both the issues, cultural and - often importantly - the language of the 'homeland'. She emphasized that diaspora engagement is not dictated by the trends or distracted by larger crises - but is marked by a "long-term-ism". The engagement is driven by a deep lived understanding of the transition from humanitarian to development thinking. How to bring value to the exchange, connection and engagement of the diaspora is why the conference is going ahead and should help fill some of these gaps.

Daniela Villacres PhD, Diaspora and Public Engagement Team Lead,
Office of Global Policy, Partnerships, Programs, and Communication,
USAID Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance

Daniela Villacres thanked DEMAC for its work on diaspora engagement in humanitarian engagement, particularly on improving linkages between traditional humanitarian actors and diaspora organizations. She acknowledges the value of conferences, roundtable discussions, as well as publications on diaspora responses. Specifically, case studies and real-time reviews of humanitarian response have been valuable. USAID continues to prioritize the engagement of diaspora as first responders who tend to remain long after traditional actors have left.

In this sense, they are natural nexus actors who can support the better implementation of humanitarian aid. As USAID grows their Diaspora and Public Engagement Unit, they focus on diaspora innovation, disaster risk management, and improving relationships between diaspora across generations and geographies. Ultimately, the Diaspora and Public Engagement Unit is focused on elevating the profile of diaspora action, expanding partnership and programs, and opening opportunities to engage with diaspora in humanitarian response in the next strategic period.

PLENARY

TRUST, TRANSPARENCY, AND LOCAL TIES - DIASPORA IN THE HUMANITARIAN ECOSYSTEM

Cinzia De Santis, CEO and Founder, Healing Venezuela

Lars Peter Nissen, Director, ACAPS; Host of Trumanitarian Conversations

Nick van Praag, Director and Founder, Ground Truth Solutions

Paddy Siyanga Knudsen, Migration and Governance Expert; Vice President,
Global Research Forum on Diaspora and Transnationalism

The morning panel set off the conference with an engaging and thought-provoking conversation on topics such as accountability, trust, localization, and power relations. The panel session began with practical examples of trust building with both communities and local authorities while providing support to health care facilities in Venezuela. Specifically, the need to remain neutral to politics and instead focus on providing technical assistance that directly responds to health center needs – which can be challenging in instances where diaspora members are viewed as political opposition. Diaspora are often challenged of being trusted and distrusted for the same reasons; trusted for providing external neutral support, but also mistrusted due to their ‘outsider’ status. This was linked to the humanitarian principles and the extent to which principled response can build trust. Ultimately, the panel concluded that – while some organizations can balance principles and their work – all organizations exist in a grey area depending on the context.

In terms of building trust between INGOs and diaspora organizations, some panelists felt that INGOs are reluctant to engage due to fears over politicization, while also acknowledging there is a role for actors who can both capture the opinions of the community and engage with the government effectively. Indeed, this could be a greater strength for diaspora organizations, who may not fear taking stances in the way INGOs can be due to fear of funding loss. One panelist highlighted that INGOs are unable to change because there is not a lot of diversity in the sector and a few big actors tend to shape how engagement with smaller organizations unfolds. For diaspora organizations, engagement is more heartfelt and local – but not formalized and not rigorous to meet risk tolerances of many INGOs. In this case, there is an opportunity for collaboration to create a better ‘ecosystem’ for shared purpose but with different approaches. This can be considered preferable to coordination, which is simply focused on avoiding duplication.

Beyond this, some panelists believed that, sometimes, trust is less of an issue than structural issues; INGOs are often huge bureaucracies that are interested in maximizing turnover and minimizing risk. Due to this underlying incentive, diaspora organizations are unlikely to effect change with trust alone. Similarly, questions from the audience on decolonizing aid and becoming more open to alternative funding mechanisms drew attention to the similar interest of major donors: to minimize risk. This often results in a lack of diversity.

The panel discussed the extent to which trust and accountability are linked. Most panelists felt that trust from an INGO perspective is usually tied to accountability - particularly surrounding use of resources - and how accountability can be interpreted differently by diaspora organizations. Specifically, diaspora may feel that they are accountable because they are 'connected' to the local community whereas INGOs must meet donor requirements and international accountability frameworks to be considered accountable. Furthermore, there was a need to recognize and balance the power dynamics that often emerge within diaspora response: diaspora members providing aid tend to be in a much better position than those they are providing

aid to, sometimes replicating challenges in the institutional aid sector. As a result, there is a benefit to diaspora organizations working towards more rigorous accountability standards.

The audience engaged with the panel on the issue of how trust can be built more effectively and why INGOs are reluctant to work with diaspora organizations - which is another issue of trust building. The panelists largely agreed that trust is a major deterrent for large organizations, but perhaps system change was unrealistic and diaspora organizations should instead find 'champions of change'. The panel had a lively discussion on accountability as a basic principle of aid and what principles should be applied to all actors - regardless of their positioning in the humanitarian sector. Some panelists argued that diaspora members are often simply responding to needs as they arise and have rules applied to them inconsistently from external actors without the same capacity to 'shift the rules' that larger organizations may benefit from. Other panelists felt that proximity to an issue is not necessarily aligned with accountability to a population; that accountability in aid is not who you are, but rather how you are doing things.

SHARING & LEARNING: PARALLEL SESSIONS

GROUP 1: DIASPORAS' ACCESS TO FUNDING

Facilitator: Alexandra Singpiel, DEMAC Coordinator

Andreas Møller Andersen, Director of Finance and Administration, CISU – Civil Society in Development

Marie Gerlach, Technical Advisor, Qualification Initiative for Syrian Civil Society, Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ)

Naana Otoo-Oyortey, Executive Director, Foundation for Women's Health, Research and Development

Omar Haidari, Media and Growth Analyst, ASEELapp

There was a lot of interest in the funding session from diaspora organization members, with the panel discussion linking well to previous discussions on inclusive and decolonized funding. The discussion started by acknowledging that funding civil society organizations has been complicated due to differences in capacity and registration status made worse by organizations competing against each other for small pools of funding. Administrative compliance standards were also discussed as a barrier for larger grants – particularly financial accountability standards. While localization in the funding space has been positive, it has focused on local organizations rather than diaspora organizations and often requires advocacy through evidence and relationship building on the part of the organization. While the panel acknowledged diaspora organizations are often able to implement without formal funding streams, it is a challenge that needs to be overcome.

Audience engagement brought the panel to discuss the specific challenges of diaspora who often implement in sanctioned countries, or countries that have restricted operating space for CSOs.

Funders can be wary of entering into situations with these practical barriers to transferring funds to local organizations. Audience members cited examples of money transfers to Somalia being blocked and/or bank accounts being frozen because of donation transfers. In general, there was a sense that diaspora organizations struggle to navigate anti-money laundering and anti-terrorism legislation in some contexts. While many have turned to hawala or money transfer agents, there is the sense that this also undermines local development and banking. Furthermore, informal mechanisms do not have a strong paper trail, which can reinforce donor concerns about transparency and accountability.

Indeed, panelists and audience members alike recognized the need for diaspora organizations to be able to demonstrate the compliance systems they have in place as well as a clear governance structure as a first step to being able to secure funding and advocate for transfers. Your ability to accomplish what you need though not guaranteed. Audience members and panelists also agreed that, while compliance is important, there is a need to also identify where documentation and bureaucracy is an unnecessary impediment to achieving good results on the ground.

GROUP 2: DIASPORA EMERGENCY RESPONSE IN THE UKRAINE CRISIS

Facilitator: Raphaël Capony, DEMAC Coordinator

Emily Savage, Co-Founder, Meraki Labs

Dina Volynets, Liaison Officer Ukraine, DEMAC

Andrii Kuzmyn, Board Member, Bevar Ukraine & Chairman, Association of Ukrainians in Denmark

The session was focused on the practicalities of diaspora response through the case study of the Ukraine response. The panel began by highlighting that diaspora organizations were already well positioned in Ukraine due to the prior conflict, with established relationships with local partners, hospitals, and government offices with a strong advocacy position globally. The specific issue of Ukraine also received a high degree of attention from Europe and North America in particular, so diaspora was able to leverage the outpouring of support to fund their activities and provide legitimacy to advocacy messages. Ukrainian diaspora organizations (UDOs) were able to fundraise private funds, giving them a unique ability to be flexible on how and where money was spent as compared to restrictions that would have been placed on institutional funding – which was an interesting counterpoint to the funding discussion group. This was seen in the support for the civilian defenders, as well as traditional humanitarian causes.

UDOs have placed a high degree of importance on local partnerships to deliver services and access hard-to-reach areas, particularly in eastern Ukraine; however, UDOs have been less involved in coordination with the formal humanitarian sector. DEMAC has served an important role in connecting UDOs with clusters, particularly the Health Cluster - though there is still a reluctance on both sides for formal cooperation. This is likely due to several factors.

First, UDOs tend not to have direct operational presence and instead work through partners, many of which are connected to the Clusters and working with other INGO partners. Second, both Clusters and UDOs have limited knowledge about how each other functions. The DEMAC weekly coordination meetings with UDOs have been an interesting opportunity to look at alternative means to engage diaspora organizations in coordination mechanisms.

While the response is ongoing, there are several lessons learned that came out from the panel discussion. First, cooperation among diaspora organizations is important in the early stages of a response to ensure better logistical support, coordination, and to build communication channels. DEMAC leading coordination with the humanitarian system was extremely positive. Second, diaspora funding is unique in that it is not tied to grant agreements - this flexibility is available nowhere else in the humanitarian system and should be leveraged. Finally, there is a need to strengthening local NGOs in Ukraine as well, as they are long-term UDO partners and have a vested interest in ensuring a strong response in Ukraine. As with earlier discussions, diaspora was important nexus actors, so thinking about how operations can be made sustainable through increased aid targeting and accountability is the next priority to make them attractive to other funding streams.

GROUP 3: HUMANITARIAN PRINCIPLES IN PRACTICE

Facilitator: Smruti Patel, Founder of Global Mentoring Initiative

Anders Helge Knudsen, Senior Diaspora Programme Advisor, Danish Refugee Council

Ahmed A. Omar 'Dharbaxo', Founder, New Ways Organization

Fadi Al Dairi, Regional Director, Hand in Hand for Aid and Development (HIHFAD)
and DEMAC Advisory Board Member

Mohannad Othman, Chief Executive Officer, Genel Müdür Yardimicisi

The session commenced the discussion by reflecting on how humanitarian principles work when applied to the context in Syria. The discussion began with a reflection on how the humanitarian principles might not always be relevant - particularly in highly politicized crises - where neutrality and impartiality are particularly a struggle. For example, organizations may be placed in a difficult situation while trying to follow principles but also not feel complicit, especially when following the principles is not granting them protection or improved access to affected populations. This may be heightened in cases where beneficiaries may be reluctant to cooperate with organizations who are seen to coordinate too much or too little with authorities, depending on the context; strict adherence to principles can compromise access even from the community perspective. Capacity building both staff and community members on the principles and expectations surrounding adherence to them was seen as a key mitigation.

The panelists discussed how the humanitarian principles are not something that are necessarily actively discussed in INGOs, but instead are guiding principles that support access and principled responses - often there is a negotiation between what is acceptable within these standards and what is a 'red line' for an organization. However, it is the case that most organizations must operate in the 'grey zone'.

One panelist highlighted that funding agreements lock organizations into activities - so they are never acting completely independently. On the ground, local authorities and staff compliance with humanitarian principles is an ongoing struggle. Ultimately, adherence to the humanitarian principles was seen as a nuanced endeavor - one that diaspora organizations should challenge themselves to think about. Panelists and the audience converged on the need to assess each context differently and determine a consistent and considered approach that can be justified. Ultimately, organizations may choose to address these commitments differently - including large actors like INGOs and UN agencies. Specifically, the UN is often challenged as both a political actor and as a series of agencies that implement programming and oversee partner implementation. Diaspora organizations may look to apply humanitarian principles depending on their overall objectives and positioning - for those that wish to access institutional funding, for example, it is a minimum requirement. On the other hand, those that would like to provide more informal support may not have to operate at this standard. The session concluded with reflections on the minimum standard of 'do no harm' when thinking through the application of the humanitarian principles to humanitarian work.

PLENARY

DEMAC RESEARCH AND FINDINGS: A CONVERSATION

Dr. Glenn O'Neil, Founder, Owl RE Research

Ahmed A. Omar 'Dharbaxo', Founder, New Ways Organization

Andrii Kuzmyn, Board Member, Bevar Ukraine & Chairman,
Association of Ukrainians in Denmark

Roberta Romano, Expert in international migration policies
and diaspora's engagement, consultant

The afternoon plenary discussion was an opportunity to reflect on research conducted by DEMAC over the past two-year period and what it says about the state of diaspora engagement in humanitarian response. In general, across the countries of focus, there was a huge diversity amongst diaspora organizations ranging from informal groups to well established NGOs - though nearly all are run by volunteers with no intention of being humanitarian actors when they were formed but transitioned into this as it became relevant. In this sense, diaspora organizations are true 'nexus' actors. Diaspora organizations tend to rely on funding from their own communities - which means that sometimes capacity to scale up is sometimes limited based on existing linkages. Coordination varies between organizations and responses, but there is a general sense that diaspora organizations should be obligated to work with the humanitarian system. Because organizations are typically overstretched, conducting research is still a challenge; it is extractive and time consuming - sometimes without a clear value proposition. For research going forward, 'action' or 'participatory' research should be explored. The panel discussed how research is limited by the application of 'traditional' response criteria to diaspora organizations instead of just looking at local empowerment and advancing the localization agenda. Furthermore, there was a gap in understanding later-phase diaspora engagement - despite how often it was discussed in the previous sessions as a significant asset to diaspora response.

Finally, research on failures - for both INGOs and diaspora organizations in a response - could help support identification of needs.

Funding was once again raised as an issue from the audience. The panel discussed how diaspora organizations should take advocacy with donors into their own hands and become advocates for themselves instead of expecting change overnight - though this received pushback from the audience, who indicated that there are limited 'short cuts' available for them without contacts and without the capacity to navigate donor relationships on the same level as humanitarian organizations, despite the efforts of DEMAC. Other audience members linked this to the need for the decolonization of aid; that inclusion must go beyond representation but to include diverse actors in funding development and design. As the discussion unfolded, it was acknowledged that this is a key role of research conducted by DEMAC - to raise the profile of diaspora organizations over time. Some panelists indicated that - similar to funding barriers and trust building with INGOs - decolonization will be a struggle because inclusion of some means giving something up on the part of 'traditional' actors - which is difficult, particularly with well-established ways of working. Furthermore, there is a need to ensure diaspora organizations are not simply expected to replicate the existing system but bring something unique to the table.

CLOSING REMARKS

Fadi Al Dairi, Regional Director, Hand in Hand for Aid and Development (HIHFAD)
and DEMAC Advisory Board Member

Fadi Al Dairi closed the conference, thanking all attendees and presenters on behalf of the DEMAC Advisory Board. Fadi reflected that, while the diaspora present have come from different backgrounds, they share complementary perspectives and experiences. He highlighted that the importance of trust came out clearly across the day. Diaspora often occupy a common in-between space that is not international or local - but rather a bridge built on mutual trust between international mobilization and local action.

He acknowledged that diaspora have a need to institutionalize as they exhaust themselves responding to crises in their spare time. He hopes diaspora organizations can push for more capacity building, investment, and to engage with the humanitarian principles - even when they feel difficult to adhere to in practice. He challenged international organizations to invest in diaspora capacity and support institutionalization without absorbing organizations and their qualified personnel in the process.

ANNEX SPEAKERS BIOS

OPENING REMARKS



Smruti Patel

Smruti is the Founder and Co-Director of Global Mentoring Initiative.

She has been working in the humanitarian and development sector for the last 25 years. She was a member of the Tsunami

Evaluation team for Multi-Agency Thematic Evaluation: Impact of the international response on local and national capacities, and since then has been an active advocate for locally led response and accountability to affected population. She was the Head of Membership Services and Certification at HAP International (now CHS Alliance) and currently accompanies organization on accountability and PSEA.

She is a member of the International Convening Committee of Alliance for Empowering Partnership(A4EP), a network of local and national organizations, advocating for locally led action and on the Board of Trustees of INTRAC.



Christian Gad

Chris Gad is the Global Head of Emergencies at the Danish Refugee Council (DRC).

In this function he covers emergency policies, procedures and support related to preparedness and

response frameworks, as well as being the lead on the assessment, formulation and start-up of new emergency and country operations.

Chris has been engaged in various aspects of humanitarian and emergency work for more than 30 years, covering roles in NGOs as well as in UN organizations, from point-of-delivery to overall operational planning, strategy and leadership. For the last 15 years Chris has been with DRC, focused on building the organization's emergency preparedness and response capacity. Prior to this, he has worked for UNHCR, WFP, UNICEF and several INGO/NGOs.

KEYNOTE SPEECHES



Paddy Siyanga Knudsen

Migration Governance expert & Vice-President, Global Research Forum on Diaspora and Transnationalism

Paddy Siyanga Knudsen is a Zambian national with over 17 years of professional

experience as a Development Economist and Migration governance expert. Her work covers migration governance, diaspora engagement, development cooperation and regional integration. She has taken on roles with the European Commission, UN agencies (UNICEF, IOM, UNESCO) as well as consultancy firms as program manager, coordinator and consultant.

Paddy holds a Master's in Financial Economics from SOAS and BSC Development & Economics from the London School of Economics (University of London). She is also one of the Vice Presidents of the GRFDT, an Advisory board member of the Global Diaspora Summit 2022 and the International Advisory Group of the Public Finance by Women.



Daniela Villacres

Diaspora & Public Sector Engagement Team Lead (Acting) in the Office of Global Policy, Partnerships, Programs and Communication, USAID's Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance.

Daniela specializes on diaspora engagement, remittances, and civic engagement. At USAID's Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance, Daniela leads a team focused on expanding opportunities to engage diaspora communities for humanitarian assistance and disaster risk management. Prior to joining USAID, Daniela worked on these topics as a consultant with a myriad of clients in different geographic contexts. For Daniela has collaborated extensively with diverse diaspora groups, designing capacity training workshops to maximize diaspora's impact for community development. She published on varied migration topics, including the dynamics between remittances and good governance and human trafficking threats in post-disaster contexts. Daniela holds a BA from Emory University, an MPhil from the University of Oxford, and a PhD from Brown University.

PANEL DISCUSSION

TRUST, TRANSPARENCY & LOCAL TIES - DIASPORA IN THE HUMANITARIAN ECOSYSTEM



Cinzia De Santis

**CEO & Founder of
Healing Venezuela**

Cinzia is a Venezuelan biologist with a Master in Public Policies. She had a career as an environmentalist working for NGOs and international oil

companies. In her last post, she was Head of Health, Safety, Environment for a FTSE100 company. Cinzia has been involved in non-profit organizations in the UK and Venezuela and founded Healing Venezuela in 2016.



Lars Peter Nissen

**Director, ACAPS | Host of
Trumanitarian**

Lars Peter Nissen has worked in the humanitarian sector since the late 1980s. He has worked with NGOs, the UN and within the Red Cross/Red Crescent

Movement. He has lived and worked for extended periods of time in a number of crisis affected countries from Afghanistan to Zimbabwe. For the past 12 years he has been the Director of ACAPS and in his spare time he hosts the podcast Trumanitarian.



Nick van Praag

Director and Founder, Ground Truth Solutions

Nick van Praag set up Ground Truth Solutions in 2012 with the goal of bringing the perspective of people affected by humanitarian crisis into the way aid programmes are designed and managed. He oversaw the development of the organisation and its methodology. His career spans humanitarian and development work at the EU Commission, the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, the Aga Khan Development Network, and The World Bank. His interest in accountability to affected people stems from the challenge of bringing change to the humanitarian system.

Paddy Siyanga Knudsen
(See Keynote Speeches)

SHARING & LEARNING PARALLEL SESSIONS

I - DIASPORAS' ACCESS TO FUNDING



Andreas Møller Andersen

Director of Finance & Administration, CISU - Civil Society in Development

Andreas is part of the steering committee for the Danish Emergency Relief Fund. DERF is an emergency pool of funds, funded by the Danish MFA and administered by a consortium of CISU and Save the Children DK. CISU also administers the Danish Civil Society Fund. Both funds are open to Danish organizations working within development cooperation and have for years had a significant diaspora user base. Especially the DERF has been widely sought by diaspora organizations. Andreas holds a degree in Public Administration and has lived and worked in Afghanistan, Morocco, Namibia, Sudan, Tajikistan, Tanzania, Tunisia and Greece.



Naana Otoo-Oyortey

Executive Director, Foundation for Women's Health, Research and Development

Naana Otoo-Oyortey MBE is the Executive Director of FORWARD, the leading African diaspora women's rights organization in the UK working to end multiple forms of violence against women and girls including female genital mutilation (FGM). For over 30 years Naana has championed gender equality and sexual and reproductive health and rights of African women and girls at multiple levels.

Naana was born in Ghana and has an MPhil in Development Studies from Sussex University and received her MBE in 2009. She is a board member of the Gender and Development Network and co-founder of the End FGM European Network.



Marie Gerlach

Technical Advisor, Qualification Initiative for Syrian Civil Society, Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ)

Marie is a technical advisor for the Qualification Initiative for Syrian Civil Society (QICS) implemented by GIZ on behalf of the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ). The project aims to strengthen the capacities of Syrian civil society actors to work towards a peaceful and inclusive society in Syria. Before Marie started working for QICS, she previously worked as an advisor on social cohesion and youth empowerment in Lebanon. She is highly passionate about establishing alternative spaces for dialogue and supporting the potential of diaspora as an actor for change and conflict transformation. She holds a degree in Peace and Conflict Studies and a BA in African Studies.



Omar Haidari

Media and Growth Analyst, AseelApp

Omar is a human rights advocate and a media and growth analyst for AseelApp. He works with Aseel to raise and deliver emergency aid to Afghanistan. His academic background is in Law and Politics from Kabul University in Afghanistan, and Ethics and Politics with a focus on migration studies from Bard College Berlin. In Afghanistan, he advocated for the rights of street children who were deprived of education and forced into child labor. In Germany, he advocates for the rights of Afghan refugees and assist them with the asylum process.

II - FROM THEORY TO PRACTICE: WHAT CAN WE LEARN FROM THE DIASPORA EMERGENCY RESPONSE IN THE UKRAINE CRISIS?



Emily Savage

**Co-founder,
Meraki Labs.**

Emily Savage is the Co-Founder of Meraki Labs, a displacement and migration-focused humanitarian consulting firm. She has worked in humanitarian contexts

and conducted research on displacement and migration across the Middle East, the Horn of Africa, East and Southern Africa. She has held senior country humanitarian positions and has consulted for humanitarian and UN agencies. She recently completed a Real-Time Review of Diaspora Organisation response in Ukraine.



Andrii Kuzmyn

Board member of Bevar Ukraine, & Chairman of Association of Ukrainians in Denmark.

Andrii was Born in the west part of Ukraine. He studied at Aarhus University in Denmark and graduated with a Master

Degree in Finance and International Business in 2008. He started his career as Business Controller with large corporation such as IKEA and Siemens. Andrii joined Bevar Ukraine in 2014 as volunteer and became the chairman in 2018. Today, Andrii is also the chairman of Association of Ukrainians in Denmark.



Dina Volynets

DEMAC Liaison Officer in Ukraine, former National Coordinator of the NGO forum in Ukraine

Social Change Analyst & Strategist with 14 years' experience in governance, civil society, community development and humanitarian response projects in Belarus and Ukraine. Former National Coordinator of the Ukraine NGO Forum. In 2021, as national consultant, she co-led a Case Study on Diaspora Organization response in Ukraine.

III – HUMANITARIAN PRINCIPLES IN PRACTICE



**Ahmed A. Omar
“Dharbaxo”**

**Founder of New Ways
Organization, Somali
Diaspora Organization in
Denmark & Kenya**

Ahmed A. Omar ‘Dharbaxo’ is a Humanitarian Activist and Capacity Building Consultant for non-state

actors; currently working with The Danish Refugee Council as a Project Cycle Management Consultant/Trainer under the ‘Diaspora Program’. He holds a Bachelor’s Degree in History as a major, Community Development Diploma, Micro Master’s degree of Leadership in Global Development, and a verified Certificate of ‘The Science & Practice of Sustainable Development’ from The University of Queensland. He has conducted several studies, focusing on topics such as freelance militia, child soldiers, GBV and early marriage issues. He has been actively working in East Africa on humanitarian and community development sectors since 1996.



Mohannad Othman

**Chief Executive Officer
of Al Sham Humanitarian
Foundation.**

Mohannad holds a Masters in International Relations and World Order from the University of Leicester in the UK.

Mohannad supported the creation and launch of a number of humanitarian organizations, like Ihsan for Relief and Development and the Syrian NGO Alliance (SNA). Mohannad represents Syrian NGOs in multiple strategic bodies such as Syria Cross Border Humanitarian Fund (SCHF) advisory board, Humanitarian Liaison Group (HLG), member of the International Council of Voluntary Agencies (ICVA) and Strategic Steering Group (SSG). Mohannad is a member in the Humanitarian Program Cycle Steering Group and IASC Task Force 4 on Humanitarian Development Collaboration and its Linkages to Peace.



Anders Helge Knudsen

Senior Advisor, DRC Diaspora Programme

Over the past 20 years Anders has held numerous programmatic positions and functions in DRC including: Supporting the strategic and programmatic development of DRCs diaspora engagement, Head of Programme with DRC Turkey, Head of Programme and Emergency Coordinator for DRC in South Sudan and Afghanistan. Anders has also been spearheading DRCs global initiative on Community Driven Recovery and Development from HQ and worked as Desk for Yemen, Ethiopia, Somalia, Kenya, Uganda, Sudan, Liberia.

Fadi Al Dairi
(see Closing Remarks)

DEMAC RESEARCH & FINDINGS – A CONVERSATION



Dr. Glenn O'Neil

Founder of Owl RE Research

Glenn O'Neil has over 25 years of experience, as a consultant, researcher, and humanitarian field worker. Glenn is the founder of Owl RE, based in Switzerland and has led

some 100 research projects, evaluations and reviews for over 40 non-profit organizations, mainly at the global level. Thematic areas treated include food justice, climate change, environment, humanitarian response, migration and refugees, civil society, youth and health. In 2020-21, Glenn was part of a research team that carried out case studies and real-time reviews on diaspora humanitarian response for DEMAC on Ukraine, Somalia, Pakistan, Timor-Leste and Tunisia. Glenn holds a PhD in social research and methodology and an Executive Master's in communications management.

Ahmed A. Omar 'Dharbaxo'

(see Sharing & Learning, Parallel Session III)

Andrii Kuzmyn

(see Sharing & Learning, Parallel Session II)



Roberta Romano

Expert in international migration policies and diaspora's engagement, consultant

Roberta Romano is an expert in international migration policies and programs, IDPs' issues, peace building and

diaspora's engagement. She currently works as consultant, after having served with the International Organization for Migration in Washington DC, working on global policies and frameworks for migrants in crises, supporting field programs, and engaging Diasporas for humanitarian and development purposes. Previously, she was Program Manager in Northern Uganda, working with former child soldiers and victims of conflict. She worked as Protection Coordinator in Darfur, Sudan. She holds a Master in Human Rights and Conflict Management from Sant' Anna School of Pisa, Italy, and a Professional Certificate in International Migration Studies from Georgetown University.

CLOSING REMARKS



Fadi Al Dairi

Regional Director, Hand in Hand for Aid & Development (HIHFAD) & DEMAC Advisory Board member

In response to the Syrian conflict in 2011, Fadi Al-Dairi co-founded HIHFAD before leaving a career in finance in the UK to join the organization's task force and lead and establish the organogram. From its origins as a two-man team, HIHFAD has grown into a highly impactful organization with over 1,100 employees and offices in the UK, Turkey, Syria and more recently in Yemen.

Fadi is a founding member of the Syrian NGO Alliance (SNA), an umbrella for diaspora and local NGOs whose members delivers about 70% of aid to Syria. Fadi is a Steering Committee member in both SNA & the NGO Forum for North West Syria. Originally from the UK, with Syrian heritage, Fadi is now based in Gaziantep, Turkey.



DEMAC is a global initiative aiming at enhancing mutual knowledge and coordination, communication and coherence between diaspora humanitarian actors and the institutional humanitarian system.

Further, DEMAC seeks to increase engagement and visibility for diaspora organizations in the humanitarian system. DEMAC contributes to a deeper understanding of diasporas as humanitarian actors and thus adds to transforming the humanitarian ecosystem.

