



DIASPORA ENGAGEMENT NEWSLETTER

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Diaspora engagement at IOM Belgium and Luxembourg



Displaced Talent for Europe (DT4E)

DT4E aims to develop and strengthen labour mobility schemes to match displaced talents in Jordan and Lebanon with employers in Belgium, Ireland, Portugal and the UK. The project is managed by IOM Belgium and Luxembourg.

Our overall objective is to match 250 talents with employers in sectors in high demand, and to support them and their families through tailored pre-departure and post-arrival assistance. IOM will mobilize both the public and private sector, and civil society, to increase national support for displaced talent mobility.

IOM recognizes the important work of diaspora in the field of community support. The DT4E team therefore warmly invites diaspora members and organizations in the DT4E countries to reach out if interested in supporting IOM's post-arrival assistance efforts.



Other Talk: Teaching Migration

The Other Talk - Teaching Migration project aims to provide tools to current and prospective teachers in Dutch-speaking schools in Belgium on (better) approaching and discussing topics concerning diversity and migration in their classes.

Thanks to the cooperation of various diaspora members, educational instances can now also easily find guest speakers and experts to give presentations or personal testimonials on abovementioned topics.

In conclusion of the Other Talk project, an inspiration day with workshops and presentations on how to communicate about migration, diversity and inclusion will take place on 24 November 2022. You can register [here](#). Do you want to stay informed about the launch of the toolbox? Keep an eye out on the project's [page](#) and IOM's social media channels!



Rwandan Diaspora Engagement projects

The Rwandan Diaspora Engagement projects aim to address the needs of different sectors in Rwanda through the engagement of highly skilled diaspora professionals residing in Europe.

In collaboration with the Rwandan Ministry of Health, the Rwandan Diaspora Engagement in Health Sector Project attracted several high skilled diaspora members to travel to Rwanda and contribute through capacity building and skills transfer activities with local medical practitioners.

Learn more about the experience and journey of the diaspora professionals from different sectors, by checking out these [vlogs](#). Or watch our Diaspora Insights Podcast [episode](#) with Désiré Nzengou who shared his experience and explains the importance of skills mobility through diaspora engagement. Interested in joining one of our Rwandan diaspora engagement projects? IOM Rwanda is still recruiting diaspora professionals from the [TVET](#) and [Health](#) sector!



U-CARE:

As we are finishing our Unaccompanied Children in Alternative Residence (U-CARE) project, we invite you to watch Norullah's [testimony](#) and learn more about the importance and the impact of family-based care for unaccompanied children.

iDiaspora and diaspora humanitarian response and engagement

The International Organization for Migration recently organized an online event “Diaspora as Key Partner Across the Humanitarian-Development-Peace-Nexus” featuring government officials and leaders of diaspora organizations to highlight contributions of diaspora and recognize their value as allied partners during critical times.

The relationship between diaspora and their countries of origin is oftentimes understood in terms of remittances, the transfer of money to the countries of origin. It is also this remittances flow that forms the first and immediate diaspora response in times of crisis, oftentimes even moving beyond families to vulnerable community members. Keeping in mind that for the past decade the flows of remittances have been larger than official development assistance, it becomes clear that the diaspora is a crucial actor and partner in development and humanitarian aid.

We are thrilled to share that we have 1,500 members registered in [iDiaspora](#). Our community of global diaspora to connect to one another, learn and contribute to show the best of the global diaspora. Join us today: <https://www.idiaspora.org>

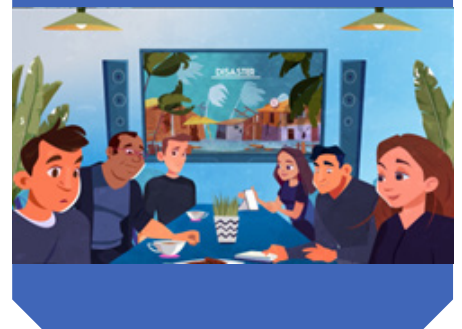
iDiaspora has also launched its own newsletter. Have a look at the first edition [here](#)

There are countless diaspora organizations that work transnationally and have illustrated the importance of operating in a flexible and swift manner when humanitarian crises strike. As part of the first response, they play a crucial role in foreseeing resources in the countries confronted with a crisis. Diaspora members have valuable knowledge of the local practices and needs, and a direct link of communication through their diaspora networks with the people who are confronted by the crisis. This allows them to operate in a very concrete way, and to support those affected in a direct manner that meets their needs. Apart from providing this internal humanitarian aid, the diasporas also play a crucial role in raising awareness on the crisis on a global scale and mobilizing governments to take action.

To learn more about diaspora as a key partner across the humanitarian-development peace-nexus, check out the full [webinar](#) in honor of the 77th session of the United Nations General Assembly. Or check out this [report](#) on the good practices of inspiring diaspora engagement.

DID YOU KNOW...

IOM has worked on a tool for diasporas who are interested in learning how to effectively contribute to humanitarian assistance before, during, and after crises, help communities access safe shelters, and make their community more resilient? Learn more about Disaster Risk Reduction in this short [video](#), and check out the online trainings, [here](#).



“A top priority for the humanitarian-development-peace-nexus is localization in which diaspora organizations play a role in bridging the gaps between the professional humanitarian and development communities.”



Hazem Rihani
Senior Programs Manager
American Relief Coalition for Syria (ARCS)

Diaspora Insights talk with Kriticos Mwansa



Welcome Kriticos Mwansa and thank you for your time to enter in dialogue with Ariana, from our COP-team. Let us dive right into the reason why we are having this Q&A: IOM's Community Policing without Borders Project (COP). The project aims to contribute to the eradication of all forms of racism, xenophobia and other forms of intolerance and discrimination by the Belgian police towards diaspora communities. We work on multiple levels and also focus on organizing small-scale bonding activities for the police and youngsters. We introduced a no-hate badge for police officers who are certified to help victims file a complaint in a safe manner and much more.

K: That sounds really cool and I like the idea of the no-hate badge, people they can approach for advice is really needed. My first ever experience with the police in Belgium, I got racially profiled.

HOW CAN RACIAL PROFILING MANIFEST ITSELF?

K: Many ways, from being the only one whose train ticket is checked, to having to face “random checks” in Starbucks or being pulled over when driving in a nice neighborhood. As a kid, I was accused of breaking into my own house. I just got home from school, in our lobby and they said “you broke into the house” while my pictures were hanging right there on the wall but they didn’t believe me. It went on to the point that she pulled out her gun. That was really scary for me, because it was just me and my little brother and sister. Back then I had no idea I could ask for their name or badge number, so it is really important to educate people on what they can do and their rights. But ever since, I am always uncomfortable around the police. When I see police when I walk, I try to smile and look friendly because I anticipate that they see me as the wrongdoer-er because that is the experience that I have with them.

A: I am so sorry to hear, I feel like this is why our project is so important to enter into these dialogues. You need just one of those horrible experiences and that can change your view on the police for years in a negative way. And as you mention it is so important for people to know their rights, and that is something that our civil society partners work on. We also try to do it in informal ways and playfully, through a quiz because knowledge can be empowering.

HOW CAN WE FOSTER A BETTER RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE POLICE AND DIASPORA?

A: I personally believe that a constructive conversation can sometimes be the best remedy and foster the feeling of safety with the police.

K: Any conversation is valuable, that’s why I organize The Bookclub. Conversation can be healing, but then again it could also be considered as emotional labor for the victims, who are burdened again by putting more energy into that horrible experience.

A: That’s spot on and something I struggle with myself. I am Afghan myself and also have these conversations and I feel like these are valuable despite being difficult.

K: What the intentions are, is important. I read about the history of Argentina, they had a big influx of the Jewish community. The way they connected with the Jewish people was by playing football, because that was a ground where didn’t have to speak, they only speak the language of “score the goal”. I think that is a really nice way to start interaction and maybe later a conversation. That could be a great entry point to enter a conversation that can be hard for both parties and to see each other as humans.

A: That is exactly what we try to achieve with our bonding activities. Thank you for sharing, Kriticos. Your experiences are very raw and they are real but they represent also the moral of the story here, that there is still work to be done, room for improvement and the necessity for all sorts of projects to be set on this issues because that is something that we still have to work on collectively.



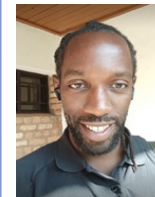
IOM has published three new episodes of the Diaspora Insights podcast series. Find out more about the participants below!



HANAN CHALLOUKI

As an inclusive communication expert, she helps organizations and companies to reach a more diverse audience. She talks about MVSLIM and What She Wants as she highlights the importance of networking and representation for young entrepreneurs.

[Listen now](#) →



DÉSIRÉ NZENGOU

As part of IOM's Rwandan Diaspora Engagement Projects, Désiré travelled to Rwanda. In this episode, Désiré talks about this experience and the importance of skills development through the diaspora.

[Listen now](#) →



MARIAM HARUTYUNYAN

As part of the Armenian diaspora, Mariam loves to include parts of her culture in her work. She talks about her brand KinArmat and as executive director of A Seat At The Table, she highlights the importance of claiming your spot in society.

[Listen now](#) →

The role of diaspora in skills mobility



For the last three years, the MATCH project has been piloting skills mobility schemes between two African countries (Senegal and Nigeria) and four European countries (Belgium, the Netherlands, Luxembourg and Italy). Beyond recruitment activities, the project has also implemented capacity building activities involving diaspora experts from Nigeria and Senegal. Our MATCH project team recently conducted visits to Nigeria and Senegal, we invited them for a Q&A to find out more about their experience.

CAN YOU TELL US WHY THE MATCH-TEAM RECENTLY VISITED NIGERIA AND SENEGAL?

We supported the pre-selection of more than 100 Senegalese and Nigerian talents for job placements in European countries, which led to the recruitment of six of those talents in Belgium and the Netherlands. Unfortunately, the COVID-19 pandemic impacted our project and we never managed to visit Nigeria and Senegal at the beginning of the project as originally planned. As international travel is now allowed again, we decided to carry out evaluation visits to Nigeria and Senegal in the last months of the project. During these visits, we met with local counterparts and relevant stakeholders and jointly assessed the success and possible points of improvements of the MATCH project. Some of our partners will be joining us here in Belgium at our closing conference.

To learn more about the impact of the MATCH-project, check out these [testimonials](#)

WHOM DID YOU MEET IN NIGERIA AND SENEGAL AND WHAT WAS THEIR FEEDBACK ON THE PROJECT AS WELL AS ON LABOUR MOBILITY MORE GENERALLY?

During our evaluation visits we met counterparts and stakeholders from both the private and the public sector. In Senegal this included the Secretary of State for the Senegalese Abroad and representatives from the Ministry of Employment and the National Agency for the Promotion of Youth Employment, and in Nigeria we met representatives from the Federal Ministry of Labour and Employment (FMLE) as well as the Nigerians in Diaspora Commission (NiDCOM). They were very positive about the capacity building activities organized for them in the framework of the MATCH project and stressed the importance of focusing on circular mobility for their citizens as well as on junior profiles instead of senior/highly skilled talents only.

HOW WAS THE DIASPORA INVOLVED IN THE MATCH PROJECT?

In Nigeria, an important counterpart in the MATCH project was the Nigerians in Diaspora Commission (NiDCOM), they benefited from a training on diaspora engagement facilitated by [AFFORD](#). After the training, they started refining their diaspora engagement techniques including the intensification of communication activities and the development of the “Diaspora mapping portal” where Nigerian diasporans can create their profile. In Senegal, a tech entrepreneur from the diaspora trained representatives of the private sector on project management and entrepreneurship.

Find out more about ADEPT and skills mobility by reading [this](#) policy paper on Talent Partnerships.

During the evaluation visits, the authorities and the private sector of both Nigeria and Senegal expressed their interest in projects linked to the diaspora, including mentorship/coaching programmes for African entrepreneurs by EU and diaspora experts, or the mobilization of diaspora members in certain countries to provide linguistic support to prospective migrant workers for those specific countries.



Are you interested in labour mobility and the mutual benefits that labour mobility schemes can bring to both countries of origin and countries of destination? Then come join us at the final conference of the [MATCH project](#), which will take place on 17th of November 2022 in a hybrid format (in Brussels and online)! Register through [this link](#) and secure a physical or virtual spot.

Q&A with our AVRR-team

The AVRR programs are a core activity of IOM and provide vital assistance worldwide to thousands of migrants who seek to return home but lack the means to do so. We promote international dialogue and cooperation between host countries and countries of origin and focus on offering a more humane return option in full respect of the human rights and dignity of migrants. In full respect of the agency of diaspora members on their migration trajectory, the AVRR team only facilitates the process of a safe return and reintegration when it has been requested by the migrant we serve. We asked our AVRR-team for an introductory Q&A about their work.

WHAT DOES AVRR MEAN?

AVRR stands for Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration. Since 1984, IOM has supported migrants who voluntarily wish to return to their country of origin or migrate to a third country where permanent residence is guaranteed, but who do not have the means to organize the return on their own. The project is managed by Fedasil, but IOM oversees the organization of the return.

The project also has a reintegration component, whereby additional in-kind support can be offered to, for example, start a micro-business, follow vocational training, but can also be used for psychosocial follow up.

WHY DO DIASPORA MEMBERS COME TO IOM TO APPLY FOR VOLUNTARY RETURN?

While deciding to return home is not an easy decision, there are many reasons why migrants may decide at some point to return to their country of origin. Some of them have applied for asylum but have received a negative answer, some may even decide already during the asylum process to return home. Others find themselves in an irregular situation, sometimes for a long time, and are facing more and more challenges to cope with life in Belgium. The reasons for someone to decide to return are very different and individual. They may also no longer see a stable future any longer for themselves in Belgium.

WHAT DOES A DAY AT WORK LOOK LIKE FOR A VOLUNTARY RETURN COUNSELOR?

Working for IOM is working closely with and for our beneficiaries. A day in IOM is never boring, it ranges from direct counselling with people thinking about return or deciding to return, to being in contact with our colleagues around the world in order to prepare the return and reintegration assistance. It is not always easy as the situations that people have lived are sometimes hard. But if people that IOM has assisted are returning and are able to pick up their life again in the country of origin, this can be very rewarding.

HOW DOES AVRR CONTRIBUTE TO THE SAFEKEEPING AND WELLBEING OF MIGRANTS?

Every request is treated individually and is tailor-made. There is no standard approach. For each person, we try to look at the best options, together with the migrant. By offering private counselling pre- and post-departure (either by us or IOM colleagues abroad), we are able to monitor the wellbeing of the migrants. As migration is oftentimes a disorienting experience, we make sure to give special attention to their psychosocial state throughout the process.



DID YOU KNOW...

SOUTH-SOUTH migration is the biggest stream of migration!

Did you know that more people migrate within the Global Souths than from the Souths to the Norths? More so, South-South migration growth continues to outpace South-North migration. Proximity and networks are major drivers of the migration choices, as the disorienting experience of migration is not to be underestimated.

DIASPORA OUTREACH, CALLS AND EVENTS

OVO (Entrepreneurs for entrepreneurs) organizes its 7th conference on 22 November 2022. This year's theme is "Africa and Europe: hand in hand". It promises to be an interesting evening with expert speakers. For more information you can visit the [website](#), don't forget that you can get a [ticket](#) for just 20EUR by using our discount code: DIASPORAOVO.

Premier of « Rhode Makoumbou, une artiste au pays des grandes femmes » on the 4 November 2022. This film takes us to the heart of Rhode's creative process and her fight for a public art of proximity. You can already admire her art on the 2 and 3 November. Find out more about the film and expo [here](#).

The Book Club is coming to Brussels! Kriticos Mwansa aims to connect people of different cultures through their love for stories and books. It is a book club where young philosophers and curious minds are encouraged to exchange thoughts and opinions about perceptions around minority groups. PS: You don't need to read the book to join The Bookclub! Next session will cover My Sister, the Serial Killer by Oyinkan Braithwaite. Find out more and register [here](#).

The Other Talk project, is organizing an inspiration day with workshops and presentations on how to communicate on migration. The event will take place on 24 November 2022, in Brussels. You can find out more about it [here](#).



IOM Ukraine invites Ukrainian diaspora members and organizations to cooperate for the country's recovery and assist people fleeing the war. They invite all interested diaspora members and diaspora organizations to register on the IOM-launched IDiaspora platform, indicating your skills, area of expertise and available resources. More information can be found [here](#).

The Awa Prize is a competition organized by Enabel which highlights women entrepreneurs from Belgian development cooperation countries and their projects. Put yourself in the spotlight and get a chance to win a cash prize, register [here](#).

Call to Flemish labs to host women scholars from African research institutions under 'The Open Doors Fellowship Program'. More information can be found [here](#).

Mark 18 December 2022 in your calendars, because we will be celebrating INTERNATIONAL MIGRANTS DAY. Stay tuned, we will be revealing this year's theme soon...

Call for Individual curators, critics, writers and others who are active in organizing projects in contemporary arts and culture, from any nationality! The Foundation for Arts Initiatives provides financial support to individuals to cover their research and travel costs. You can submit an inquiry for a Fund for Arts Research grant of \$7,500, [here](#).

The iDiaspora Photo Contest has been designed to highlight the socio-cultural contributions of diasporas and migrant communities around the world and to recognize their talent. Share your passion for photography and participate before 4 November 2022 and get a chance to win some great prizes. More information can be found [here](#).

Cultural celebrations and commemorations

NOVEMBER

08/11 Gurburab

16/11 International Day for Tolerance

20/11 World's Children Day

25/11 International Day For The Elimination of Violence against Women

29/11 International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People

DECEMBER

02/12 International Day for the Abolition of Slavery

09/12 International Day of Commemoration and Dignity of the Victims of the Crime of Genocide and of the Prevention of this Crime

10/12 Human Rights Day

18/12 International Migrants Day

20/12 International Human Solidarity Day

26/12 Christmas day

JANUARY

07/01 Orthodox Christmas

16/01 Martin Luther King Day

FEBRUARY

01/02-07/02 World Interfaith Harmony Week

21/02 International Mother Language Day

MARCH

Black History Month

Woman's History Month

01/03 Zero Discrimination Day

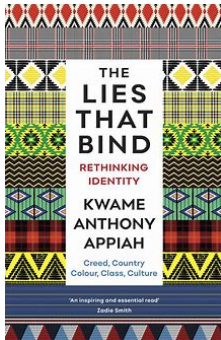
08/03 International Woman's Day

21/03 International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination

21/03 International Day of Nowruz

Cultural tips

Book recommendations



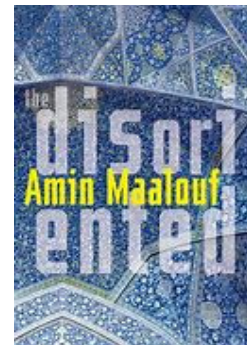
The Lies that bind: Rethinking identity
Kwame Anthony Appiah, 2018

“An incandescent exploration of the nature and history of the identities that define us.” This book challenges our assumptions about how identities work. We all know there are conflicts between identities, but Appiah shows how identities are created by conflict.



Places In The Sun: post-colonial dialogues in Europe and beyond
Luntumbue, V., et al (eds.), 2021

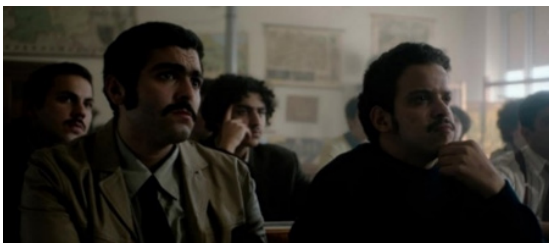
Diverse as they are, this collection of essays highlights how common the experiences of colonised peoples across the world can sometimes be, and how remembering that the same sun shines upon places like Congo or the Caucasus can open new avenues for solidarity. Free available [online](#).



The Disoriented
Amin Maalouf, 2020

A friendship between 7 college students is revived after life took them on different paths over 4 continents. Their journey back to the “homeland”, the milk-white mountains of Lebanon, they once fled from, throws the reader in the complexity of identity and belonging.

Film recommendations: short-film edition



Gastarbeider Issam Bougrine, 2021

A fictive story to highlight the story behind the Moroccan diaspora in Belgium. Brothers Mimoun and Hamidou are two Moroccan guest workers who migrated to the “promised land” of Belgium in 1964, seduced by the promising brochures. They came there to work in the mines, with the goal of saving money and returning. But not everything turns out as they imagined.



The color of time Hatip Karabudak, 2020

Twelve-year-old Ali Raşid has lost his father during the war in Syria. He needs to work and make a living for his mother and two siblings. He comes to Istanbul with a group of six immigrants. However, things do not go as Ali Raşid had planned and he gets left out as the youngest of the group. Not even knowing the language, Ali Raşid’s struggle for survival in chaotic Istanbul begins.



Nha Mila Denise Fernandes, 2020

After 14 years away from her homeland, Salome is forced to return to Cape Verde to see her dying brother. During her stopover at Lisbon airport, Agueda, a cleaning lady recognizes Salome as Mila, her childhood friend. Agueda invites Salome to her home. The neighborhood transports her on a spiritual journey, whose destination unfurls a painful bond with her homeland.