# A MODEL FOR
## DIASPORA ENGAGEMENT
### IN HUMANITARIAN CONTEXTS
# AT COUNTRY LEVEL

ENGAGEMENT OF THE UKRAINIAN
DIASPORA ORGANIZATIONS

**ITALIAN CASE STUDY**

IOM
UN MIGRATION

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# Foreword

Conflicts, natural and health-related disasters shape migration flows: people are forced to leave their homes, becoming internally and internationally displaced; their safety, well-being and human rights are threatened and need to be safeguarded. At the same time, migrants worldwide have a crucial role in responding to emergencies, particularly through their diaspora organizations. Transnational communities have been of fundamental importance in pre-crisis preparedness, emergency response and post-crisis contexts, proving their ability to quickly mobilize and release resources laying the ground for sustainable development. Thanks to their links with countries of origin and crisis-affected populations, diaspora organizations are able to access difficult areas and have a closer view of the needs.

Since the first days of the war outbreak in February 2022 we have witnessed the Ukrainian diaspora organizations across the world, including in Italy, being at the forefront of the humanitarian response to assist people affected by the conflict in Ukraine and to support those who fled abroad. The Ukrainian community in Italy has been organizing aid collection from private donations and its shipment to Ukraine, evacuation of people from war-affected territories and first reception of the displaced population arrived to Italy, carrying out fundraising and advocacy. Local actors in Italy have also actively involved the Ukrainian diaspora, in particular to guarantee cultural and linguistic mediation while providing health and psychological assistance, registration and other fundamental services.

Against this background, since March 2022 IOM Italy, in collaboration with the Italian Ministry of Labour and Social Policies, has been supporting the efforts of the Ukrainian diaspora in Italy by providing coordination opportunities, between the diaspora organizations and with institutional stakeholders, and grants to scale up their humanitarian projects in Ukraine.

Moving from the analysis of this experience, this white paper aims to present a model for diaspora engagement in humanitarian contexts that can be adapted to other countries and different diaspora communities. The model focuses

on diaspora engagement at the level of country of residence, in particular on the coordination mechanisms between diaspora organizations and with institutional stakeholders, as well as on the regranting system allowing to fund diasporas' interventions in crises-affected countries. The paper also analyses how this model fits within a broader effort to bridge humanitarian response interventions towards recovery and development, in line with the priorities outlined by the humanitarian–development–peace nexus agenda.

This white paper also intends to contribute to the ongoing debate on how to meet growing humanitarian needs more effectively by involving non-institutional actors, such as diasporas, within the humanitarian system in a more systematic manner. We hope this document can be a practical tool for the humanitarian actors who want to leverage diasporas' contributions to emergency responses at national level and in the countries of origin affected by crises.

Laurence Hart
*Director Coordination Office*
*for the Mediterranean*
*Head of Mission in Italy and Malta*
*Representative to the Holy See*

Tatiana Esposito
*Director General of Immigration*
*and Integration Policies,*
*Ministry of Labor and Social Policies*

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# Acronyms

**BHA**    Bureau of Humanitarian Assstance

**CoO**    Country of origin

**CoR**    Country of residence

**DEMAC**    Diaspora Emergency Action and Coordination

**GDC**    Global Diaspora Confederation

**HDPN**    Humanitarian–development–peace nexus

**HRA**    Haiti Renewal Alliance

**IOM**    International Organization for Migration

**ToR**    Terms of reference

# ▸ 1

## Context and scope

Ukraine has seen intense fighting since 24 February 2022, when the Russian Federation launched a major, multi-pronged invasion of the country. A grave humanitarian crisis has engulfed Ukraine, with about 18 million people in need of humanitarian support;[1] more than 7.8 million individual refugees from Ukraine have been recorded across Europe, while more than 6.9 million people are estimated to be internally displaced.[2] While the formal humanitarian system was overwhelmed by the escalating crisis, several Ukrainian diaspora organizations worldwide had positioned their response long before the conflict started. Many diaspora organizations were well-placed in terms of ability to leverage pre-existing contacts and partners on the ground and deliver aid to remote areas, due to experience gained after 2014 in response to the annexation of Crimea and the armed conflict in eastern Ukraine. Since the onset of the crisis in Ukraine, diaspora organizations have quickly raised and released funds and humanitarian aid to those in need, especially in the health, food security, emergency shelter and education sectors. The World Bank projects that remittances to Ukraine, which is the largest recipient in Europe and Central Asia, are expected to rise by over 20 per cent in 2022.[3]

Among the refugees that fled Ukraine, over 173.589 Ukrainians arrived to Italy, as of December 2022.[4] The Italian Government declared the state

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[1]  UNHCR, Ukraine emergency. Available at www.unhcr.org/en-us/ukraine-emergency.html (accessed 3 January 2023).

[2]  Ibid.

[3]  World Bank, Press Release, 11 May 2022. Available at www.worldbank.org/en/news/press-release/2022/05/11/remittances-to-reach-630-billion-in-2022-with-record-flows-into-ukraine.

[4]  Italian Presidency of the Council of Ministers, Civil Protection Department, Ukraine emergency, Cross-border Entry Dashboard. Available at https://mappe.protezionecivile.gov.it/en/emergencies-dashboards/ukraine-maps-and-dashboards/cross-border-entry (accessed 3 January 2022).

of emergency for foreign action, until the end of 2022, to ensure Italy's contribution to the humanitarian aid to affected population.[5] The Ukrainian diaspora in Italy, that mobilized ahead of the conflict, scaled up its activities in parallel with institutional actors to provide logistical support to refugees, carry out advocacy, collect funds and aid, and deliver them to Ukraine.

In this context, since March 2022 IOM in Italy[6] has been promoting the inclusion of diaspora voices within the national and local emergency coordination mechanisms that were activated by Italian institutions, such as the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, the Ministry of the Interior, the Ministry of Labour and Social Policies, the Civil Protection and others.

**THE MODEL IS CONCEIVED TO BE ADAPTABLE AND REPLICABLE ACROSS OTHER HUMANITARIAN CONTEXTS AND DIASPORA COMMUNITIES**

The need to foster a conducive environment for the Ukrainian diaspora's active role in response to the crisis became the engine behind the design and implementation of a system of conferences and a subgranting mechanism aiming at strengthen Ukrainian diaspora organizations humanitarian actions. These initiatives were promoted under the framework of the project Leveraging the humanitarian–development nexus for Ukraine response through diaspora engagement in Italy. In this white paper, IOM documents and analyses this initiative to identify best practices and lessons learned. Based on this analysis, the document also suggests a model to engage diasporas in humanitarian response, focusing on coordination mechanisms between diaspora organizations and institutional stakeholders in country of residence (CoR) as well as on subgranting mechanisms to fund diasporas' interventions in country of origin (CoO).

The model is conceived to be adaptable and replicable across other humanitarian contexts and diaspora communities. The main features of this model are presented in this paper. The model elements are extracted

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[5]    Italian Presidency of the Council of Ministers, Civil Protection Department, Ukraine emergency. Available at https://emergenze.protezionecivile.gov.it/en/humanitarian (accessed 26 December 2022).

[6]    IOM Coordination Office for the Mediterranean Mission to Italy, Malta and the Holy See.

from this specific experience and elaborated in complementarity with global systems of diaspora engagement in humanitarian assistance and across the humanitarian–development–peace nexus (HDPN).

In terms of methodology, the proposed model is the result of an assessment of the conferences and the subgranting mechanism conducted through revision of key project documents, interviews with the project team, and with a sample of diaspora organizations' representatives and institutional actors. It is also informed by a desk review of the landscape of diaspora engagement in humanitarian assistance and across the nexus, and relevant case studies. This study and analysis process were conducted between November and December 2022.

# ▶ 2

## The broader landscape

In 2021, the number of people in need of humanitarian assistance continued to rise, with 306 million recorded, 90.4 million more than in 2019 before the COVID-19 pandemic.[7] The pandemic aggravated an already complex picture of intersecting climate, conflict and socioeconomic factors which drive humanitarian needs, communities' vulnerability, and internal and cross-border displacements. Despite the international community's efforts to meet the demand for assistance and services, the humanitarian responses consistently fall short and the necessity to better engage non-institutional actors, including diasporas, is more visible and urgent than ever. At the same time, the long-standing discussion around better connectivity between humanitarian and development efforts has gained momentum.

Diasporas play a significant role in pre-crisis, crisis and post-crisis contexts, fueled by feelings of solidarity and commitment to their countries and communities of origin and heritage. Every new crisis, including the current conflict in Ukraine, is a testing ground for diasporas' continued and creative engagement to address humanitarian and recovery needs of affected communities. Also, diasporas' engagement is often sustained over time, even when the immediate response moves into recovery and the international humanitarian assistance scales down. Diasporas' contributions across crises, from the Syrian Arab Republic to Somalia and currently in the Ukrainian context, tend to implement interventions that naturally bridge the gap between humanitarian and development approaches; as such, working

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7   Development Initiatives, Global Humanitarian Assistance Report 2022: 10. Available at https://devinit.org/documents/1221/GHA2022_Digital_v8_IdHI18g.pdf.

with diasporas may help institutional humanitarian and development actors to integrate the right mix of humanitarian and development approaches.

A call to involve non-institutional actors such as diasporas within humanitarian assistance in a more systematic manner was launched at the World Humanitarian Summit in 2016, where the community recognized the role that these actors have historically played. However, concrete progresses towards coordination and partnership have been uneven and the need for the humanitarian system to promote ways to foster non-traditional humanitarian actors' engagement remains relevant. Over the last years a growing body of literature, case studies, and dedicated initiatives have contributed towards advancing this agenda, through capacity-building efforts, promotion of coordination frameworks and new partnerships. These initiatives include the Framework for Diaspora's engagement in Humanitarian assistance,[8] developed by IOM (Washington D.C. office) in cooperation with the Haiti Renewal Alliance (HRA), with funds from USAID.[9] The Framework, which represents a groundbreaking initiative in this field, provides a suggested guide to encourage more streamlined coordination, both within diasporas and among diasporas and institutional humanitarian actors, with the goal to promote more effective humanitarian assistance worldwide. The Framework has been tested in different crisis contexts such as Haiti and the Philippines.[10]

Another programme worth mentioning is the one promoted by the Diaspora Emergency Action and Coordination (DEMAC), a global initiative working for a deeper understanding of diasporas as humanitarian actors and striving for better coordination between diaspora organizations and the humanitarian system. DEMAC has contributed with research, real time reviews, and operational support to diasporas on the ground in countries such as Pakistan, Somalia, Ukraine. Other relevant initiatives are the researches and tools created by

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[8]    For more details on the Framework, see The model in connection with global systems of diaspora organizations engagement in humanitarian assistance (chapter 5).

[9]    Bureau of Humanitarian Assistance (BHA) under USAID.

[10]    For more details on the Framework, see chapter 5.

Shabaka,[11] the knowledge sharing encouraged globally within the platform iDiaspora,[12] and the work launched by the Global Diaspora Confederation (GDC)[13] aiming to establish a diaspora-led humanitarian hub to promote transnational peer-to-peer support, learning, partnerships and advocacy.

As the humanitarian system endeavours to meet growing and complex needs more effectively, and to bridge the humanitarian – development divide, while diasporas demonstrate their capacity to implement needed interventions, models (and their application) to strengthen diasporas' engagement and to foster better connection of their interventions with the work of institutional actors remain relevant and needed.

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[11]  For more information, refer to https://shabaka.org/about-shabaka/.
[12]  For more information, refer to www.idiaspora.org/en.
[13]  For more information, refer to www.theglobaldiaspora.org.

# ► 3

## The Case Study: The system of conferences of the Ukrainian diaspora in Italy and the subgrants for operational support in Ukraine

### ► 3.1. IOM Italy's diaspora engagement work

IOM has implemented diaspora engagement initiatives worldwide since the 1970s and has substantial expertise and capacity in this field. In Italy IOM has been working with diaspora organizations since the early 2000s, empowering them through dedicated training and funding diaspora organizations' transnational projects.[14] In 2020, following the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, IOM Italy launched its first humanitarian initiative to leverage Italy-based diaspora organizations' activities in response to the COVID-19 crisis. The initiative A.MI.CO. Emergency COVID-19[15] was built upon the needs and priorities expressed by diaspora organizations and funded six emergency transnational projects implemented in Italy and affiliated countries (i.e. in Africa, Asia, South America). In addition, following the latest Afghan crisis in August 2021, IOM conducted a mapping of the Afghan diaspora in Italy to identify ways to leverage Afghan diaspora organizations efforts in responding to the emergency both in Italy and in Afghanistan. The project Leveraging the humanitarian–development nexus for Ukraine response through diaspora engagement in Italy illustrated below builds on these experiences.

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[14] IOM Italy has so far trained more than 300 diaspora organizations with connections to 55 countries around the world and supported 32 development projects in the framework of the A.MI.CO Programme.

[15] For more information, refer to https://italy.iom.int/it/amico-emergenza-covid-19.

## ▶ 3.2. The Ukrainian diaspora in Italy

As of January 2021, the Ukrainians regularly residing in Italy numbered 223.489, making the Ukrainian community the 4th largest migrant community in Italy.[16] The history of migration of Ukrainians to Italy is quite recent, starting in the early 1990s, few years after the fall of the Soviet Union, when the country started experiencing a dire socioeconomic crisis. The migration trajectory of Ukrainians in Italy developed in two major phases, one phase preceding the regularization process triggered by Law 189/2002 and characterized by a high degree of irregularity and social instability, and a subsequent period which led to a more stable presence of the community in the country.[17] In terms of geographical distribution, 54.5 per cent of Ukrainian citizens live in the north, while 20.4 per cent reside in the centre, and 25.2 per cent in the south.[18] The Ukrainian community presents a high degree of gender imbalance, with women representing 78.9 per cent of the whole Ukrainian population in Italy,[19] and a significant concentration in the working age bracket: 54.2 per cent are between 30 and 59 years old.[20] The pattern of regularized and long-term residence is quite stable, with 78 per cent of the Ukrainian community members being long-term residents.[21]

According to a database of the Italian Ministry of Labour and Social Policies, there are 36 registered Ukrainian diaspora organizations in Italy. However, from a needs assessment carried out by IOM at the outbreak of the conflict in February 2022, it emerged that the number of diaspora organizations might be significantly higher.[22] The main objectives of these associations included

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[16]  The Italian Ministry of Labour and Social Policies, La comunità Ucraina in Italia, 2021 [The Ukrainian Community in Italy], 2021 : 8. Available at www.lavoro.gov.it/temi-e-priorita/immigrazione/focus-on/politiche-di-integrazione-sociale/Documents/Ucraina-Rapporto-2021.pdf.

[17]  Ibid.: 8.

[18]  Ibid.: 9.

[19]  Ibid.

[20]  Ibid.: 11.

[21]  Ibid.

[22]  IOM mapped 59 diaspora organizations while the Ukrainian Embassy in Italy reported having counted about 200 Ukrainian diaspora organizations.

the preservation of cultural heritage, intercultural mediation, trainings and contribution towards the integration process. These objectives reflect the main needs of the different communities residing across the country prior to the war.

Since the beginning of the war in February 2022, the work of the diaspora organizations has temporarily shifted its focus to meet the needs of the Ukrainian refugees who reached Italy and provide humanitarian support to the war-affected population in Ukraine. After the Italian Government declared the state of emergency to ensure Italy's provision of humanitarian aid to affected population,[23] including the reception of Ukrainian refugees coming to Italy, the need emerged for a multi-stakeholder approach, able to leverage different actors' contributions, including the Ukrainian diaspora. Diasporas' efforts in Italy were already under mobilization, with diaspora organizations involved in a variety of initiatives, including refugees' accommodation, translation, provision of medical supplies, orientation around legal requirements, cultural mediation, among others. Diaspora organizations' aid to Ukraine mostly included the collection and shipping of basic humanitarian aid. These initiatives were funded through financial and in-kind support or partnerships provided by Italian institutional actors, private citizens and business partners. The type and target area chosen for the assistance in Ukraine were mostly motivated by pre-existing family and community links of the different diaspora organizations as well as needs-driven.

SINCE THE BEGINNING OF THE WAR IN FEBRUARY 2022, THE WORK OF THE DIASPORA ORGANIZATIONS HAS TEMPORARILY SHIFTED ITS FOCUS TO MEET THE NEEDS OF THE UKRAINIAN REFUGEES WHO REACHED ITALY AND PROVIDE HUMANITARIAN SUPPORT TO THE WAR-AFFECTED POPULATION IN UKRAINE

▶ **3.3. The Ukrainian diaspora organizations engagement experience in Italy in response to the Ukrainian crisis**

Against this background, on 12 March, IOM facilitated the first virtual National Conference of the Ukrainian Diaspora in Italy, gathering 17 Ukrainian diaspora organizations and providing them with a venue to identify the most pressing

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[23]   Italian Presidency of the Council of Ministers, Civil Protection Department Ukraine Emergency. Available at https://emergenze.protezionecivile.gov.it/en/humanitarian (accessed 26 December 2022).

needs and priorities, enable internal coordination and facilitate dialogue between institutions and diaspora organizations. Given the positive outcomes and stakeholders' interest, six national conferences and four rounds of local conferences took place from March to November 2022, involving 52 diaspora organizations.

To further support the diaspora organizations humanitarian assistance to affected populations in Ukraine, IOM lunched a call for proposals, open to the diaspora organizations that had participated to the conferences and were eager to scale-up their humanitarian projects in Ukraine.

The engagement experience through the conferences and the subgranting mechanism is described in this chapter.

### 3.3.1. The system of conferences

The conferences were conceived to meet the **needs** related to internal coordination and cooperation in humanitarian contexts among interested Ukrainian diaspora organizations, as well as to facilitate liaison and dialogue between the Ukrainian diaspora and institutional actors involved in the crisis response in Italy, at the national and local level. The conferences contributed to fill the gaps experienced by the diaspora organizations, which could not rely on pre-existing regular systems of internal coordination and often were not able to directly access institutional interlocutors. Even when informal networks existed and were utilized sporadically by diaspora organizations (i.e. through personal contacts and ad hoc partnerships), a systematic structure of convenings, sharing, peer-to-peer support, common advocacy, and representation was missing and needed.

The **scope** of the conferences was elaborated through dedicated terms of references (ToR), outlining objectives, time frame, roles and modalities. The conferences were designed to take place simultaneously at the national and local level,[24] to pursue complementary needs: at the local level, participating diaspora organizations were able to explore common issues and possible solutions,

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[24]  The Local Conferences were organized with the diaspora organizations active in four Italian regions that received the highest number of the displaced Ukrainian, namely Campania, Emilia-Romagna, Lazio and Lombardy.

given the commonality of context and challenges; at the national level, the conferences allowed for wider participation and representation, cross-regional support, and identification of common priorities to be elevated within institutional forums. Also, the possibility for diaspora organizations in the regions with a lower degree of active engagement or fewer actors (e.g. Calabria) to join one of the four local conferences (as per consular affiliation) allowed a more inclusive diaspora organizations engagement. Law 125/2014 which recognizes diasporas as agents of development and promotes their consultations within institutional platforms, provided the conducive institutional environment for the engagement.

A **mapping** of Ukrainian diaspora organizations was conducted as preliminary step, through a variety of sources such as the official site of the Ministry of Labour and Social Policies, searches on social networks (i.e. Facebook) and personal contacts, which allowed a snowball effect towards the identification of diaspora organizations to engage in the process. A list of 59 diaspora organizations was compiled and a needs assessment questionnaire was submitted to 50 diaspora organizations to collect relevant data.

IOM'S ROLE INCLUDED MAPPING, OUTREACH AND CONVENING OF DIASPORA ORGANIZATIONS, BEFORE THE CONFERENCES, AND THE PERFORMING OF SECRETARIAL TASKS DURING THE CONFERENCES

**IOM's role** included mapping, outreach and convening of diaspora organizations, before the conferences, and the performing of secretarial tasks during the conferences (e.g. contacting and inviting participants, proposing agendas, taking notes, facilitating the discussions, drafting and disseminating reports). IOM also facilitated liaison and dialogue between diaspora organizations and concerned Italian institutional humanitarian actors, such as the Civil Protection. IOM could play this role, given its independent mandate, international profile, convening power and prior experience in diaspora engagement.

The presence of a **spokesperson**, elected during the first national conference with a majority of votes, was meant to collect common issues and needs and voice them in a joint and coordinated manner within high level institutional forums; this function facilitated the work of diaspora organizations that could elevate their demands in a coordinated and more impactful way, and institutional actors which could streamline their interface with diaspora organizations through a single channel. The local conferences adopted similar

ToR and named each their own representative which would consult regularly with the spokesperson of the national conferences.

Both national and local conferences were conducted in two languages, Italian and Ukrainian. **Communication** before and after the conferences occurred via email and messaging apps, as communication channel often preferred by the diaspora organizations' representatives. The conferences' **agendas** generally included a situation update from each diaspora organization about needs on the ground (also at the level of different municipalities and regions), specific challenges, and an exchange about possible common actions and solutions.

Overall, the conferences proved very effective and beneficial as opportunities for diaspora organizations to access coordination platforms; the networks created through the conferences have been utilized by diaspora organizations also beyond the conferences (e.g. through WhatsApp groups and regular or ad hoc calls). Increased **internal coordination** proved beneficial as it performs multiple functions, including peer-to-peer support, joint advocacy, sharing of best practices, creation of collaborative actions, etc. The conferences provided a platform to address concrete **operational aspects** of the assistance to Ukrainian refugees entering Italy. This operational focus allowed diaspora organizations to share common needs and identify possible solutions through information exchange and peer-to-peer support. Thanks to IOM's facilitation functions, diaspora organizations were **liaised with national and local institutional actors** based on specific needs. Several institutional actors were indeed engaged in the process, including the Civil Protection, the Ministry of Labour and Social Policies, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs/Italian Agency of Development Cooperation, the Ukrainian Embassy and consulates.

The conferences also provided venues to discuss diaspora organizations engagement in **humanitarian assistance directed to Ukraine**, although this was not the primary focus. The coordination was helpful in terms of identifying and implementing common logistical issues, for instance around available shipment solutions and area accessibility, especially during the first period of the crisis. The conferences were conceived as a **temporary mechanism**, which would have needed to be carried forward by the diaspora organizations themselves, if they

wished so, after the foreseen deadline.[25] IOM is planning a final conference with the diaspora organizations in January 2023 to jointly evaluate the experience and provide the diaspora organizations with the opportunity to share their interests and views about the future of this engagement.

### 3.3.2. The subgrant mechanism

In August 2022, IOM launched a **call for proposals** to provide financial support to diaspora organizations humanitarian initiatives in Ukraine. Through a competitive process, seven diaspora organizations were selected to receive grants of 8.000 euros each. Eligibility was limited to diaspora organizations that had previously attended the conferences. The subgrants mechanism was adapted from previous experiences, in particular subgrant distributions to diaspora organizations based in Italy for the provision of COVID-related relief in Italy and diasporas' countries of origin/heritage.[26] The mechanism was tailored and simplified in light of time constraints and other specificities of the case, such as the limited organizational and operational capacities of the diaspora organizations involved which had not participated in similar granting mechanisms before. The call also included **partnerships with local actors** in Ukraine as a requirement of the eligibility of the project proposals. Moreover, proposals had to be continuations or extensions of pre-existing diaspora organizations' humanitarian activities in Ukraine to be eligible for funding. The aim was in fact to **support and favour bottom-up ongoing responses** without imposing external interventions.

THE CALL ALSO INCLUDED PARTNERSHIPS WITH LOCAL ACTORS IN UKRAINE AS A REQUIREMENT OF THE ELIGIBILITY OF THE PROJECT PROPOSALS

The selection of proposals was conducted in consultation with the IOM mission in Ukraine, to ensure a more accurate matching between the needs on the ground and the proposed responses, as well as to identify possible risks. The selected proposals were mostly **humanitarian in scope**, varying from distribution of clothes, hygiene kits, food, supplies and the provision of mental health care. **Coaching and technical support** were offered to the selected diaspora organizations, to refine the quality of their proposals as well as to

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[25]   The project ends on 14 February 2023.

[26]   See 3.1. IOM Italy's diaspora engagement work for more info on A.MI.CO. Emergency COVID-19.

better prepare them for implementation; adherence to humanitarian principles and standards were mentioned in the contractual modality and explained during the projects' kickoff meeting. The role of IOM during the projects' implementation phase is of remote monitoring, through regular exchanges with implementing diaspora organizations, data analysis and M&E support.

## ▶ 3.4. Lessons learned and recommendations

The analysis of this initiative allowed to draw relevant lessons learned and recommendations that could inform the replication of future similar initiatives. Moreover, these learning elements were taken into account in the elaboration of the engagement model presented in the next chapter. The main lessons learned and recommendations are summarized below:

- To inform the design and implementation of engagement activities, it is key to conduct a **preliminary analysis of similar experiences** carried out by other actors in different contexts and to take into account existing models of diaspora organizations internal and external coordination in humanitarian assistance. This would be beneficial to properly address sensitive elements (i.e. representativeness, governance, sustainability, humanitarian principles, etc.).

- The presence of a **conducive legal/institutional landscape is beneficial**, but it also needs to take into account diaspora organizations inclusion, when possible, in the design phase of the response, and not only in the implementation, and be accompanied by consistent follow-ups from institutional actors, vis-a-vis diasporas' requests and needs.

- A detailed analysis of the diaspora organizations involved in the response would prove helpful to understand the different profiles, agendas, historic patterns, pre-existing divisions, gender dynamics, and others, before the engagement takes place, in order to **foresee and navigate possible sensitivities**.

- Objectives and expectations of the overall engagement and specific coordination platforms, like the conferences, should be reassessed regularly to ensure compliance with the proposed scope, and **possible revision of engagement objectives** due to changing priorities.

- Inclusion of elements such as **financial support and technical assistance** could be considered to keep motivating diaspora organizations over time and mitigate their engagement fatigue.

- The **use of different communication platforms**, like WhatsApp groups, better suited to the preferences and capacities of the diaspora organizations involved, should be accommodated.

- **Dedicated human resources** to conduct engagement activities should be foreseen; these resources need to display cultural and linguistical competences, as well as soft skills such as reliability, responsiveness, flexibility, open and clear communication, etc.

- Various modalities to **promote representativeness and broader inclusivity** of all the participating diaspora organizations, should be explored, such as rotation and limited duration of the role, as well as the possible appointment of focal points per sector of intervention.

- Referral systems and/or internal measures of diaspora members' wellbeing promotion throughout the implementation could be included in the engagement, to **address possible diaspora organizations' trauma or stress** due to the dire circumstances and the conditions of the work on the ground.

- Possible **exit strategies/sustainability plans** for the internal and external coordination and the overall engagement should be anticipated; this may include diaspora-led exchanges where IOM can retain a supporting role, such as technical advisory and guidance on the coordination model, liaison with institutional actors or role of convener in specific occasions, or merging into other existing diaspora-related initiatives, like the Diaspora Forum in Italy.[27]

- **Contractual modalities** more conducive to partnering with non-traditional actors, such as diasporas, should be explored when disbursing subgrants for humanitarian response.

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[27] More information on this initiative can be found here: https://summitdiaspore.org/.

- The needs assessed by diaspora organizations on the ground as well as their ongoing responses could be recorded to be shared with institutional actors and for promotion within the humanitarian system to **showcase the added value and complementarity** of diaspora organizations humanitarian interventions.

- Diaspora organizations understanding of humanitarian principles and standards should be promoted, to encourage independency of the humanitarian assistance from any political and military agenda and action; these aspects should be included in the **training package** offered prior subgrants disbursement.

- Diaspora organizations interventions that have both a humanitarian impact and a development lens, both in CoR and CoO, could be identified for dedicated support/funding.

- Orientation and support around **coordination with humanitarian actors on the ground** should be integrated, when providing subgrants for local humanitarian operations in CoO; although most diaspora organizations can rely on informal networks and partners on the ground, none of the interviewed diaspora organizations seem to interface with key humanitarian actors in a systematic manner or be included in any of the formal humanitarian coordination forums.

# ▸4

## A model for diaspora organizations engagement at the level of country of residence

The previous chapter described the experience piloted by IOM in Italy to engage the Ukrainian diaspora in response to the crisis. The present chapter aims to illustrate how this experience can become a replicable and adaptable model for diaspora engagement in humanitarian actions based on the lessons learned derived from the analysis of this pilot. The suggested model is composed of three macro-components:

- **Preparatory phase**: engagement scope definition, context analysis and needs assessment.

- **Coordination mechanisms**: conferences for internal and external coordination.

- **Funding**: support to diaspora organizations projects in response to the crisis through subgrants.

Each of these macrocomponents is operationalized through a series of subcomponents, which can also serve as suggested steps to follow in the replication of the model. These subcomponents are listed below, as conceived and implemented by a neutral and expert actor, like IOM, playing the role of catalyst and facilitator of the engagement.

### ▸ 4.1. Preparatory phase: Definition of engagement scope, context and stakeholders' analysis and needs assessment

The preparatory phase aims at setting the stage for the engagement, by defining the overall scope, analysing the contexts and the stakeholders, identifying diaspora organizations and gathering information to assess the main needs that the engagement is meant to address.

### 4.1.1. Scope of the engagement

The definition of the overall scope is a foundational step. The scope varies depending on the context and the needs. In this model, the engagement focuses on facilitation of diaspora organizations internal and external coordination in humanitarian assistance mostly in CoR and to a limited extent in CoOs (through the funding component). Defining the scope (and the limits) of the engagement and communicating it clearly to the engaged diaspora organizations is key to guide the process and clarify expectations. When elaborating the overall scope and the related operational modalities, reviewing other similar relevant case studies may be helpful to identify and adapt existing best practices.

### 4.1.2. Conducive institutional and legal environment

The prior existence of a legal framework that recognizes diasporas as relevant actors in humanitarian/development processes and promotes their participation/consultations within institutional platforms provides fertile ground to enhance the engagement process. Diasporas' participation needs to be regular and open, promoting, when relevant, the involvement of diaspora actors within decision-making processes and ensuring, when possible, consideration of and follow-up to diasporas' demands.

### 4.1.3. Definition of the target group/stakeholders

Diaspora communities are usually very diverse internally. The ideal interlocutors for a more streamlined and effective engagement are diaspora organizations with a certain degree of formalization and prior humanitarian experiences. Supporting diaspora organizations in their process of registration prior a crisis might be helpful in view of promoting a closer and more formal engagement in times of crisis. Working with diasporas' coalitions, networks, umbrella organizations,

when they exist, would ease further the process of strengthening coordination and increasing representativeness and inclusivity of the process. Individual diaspora members may be involved, as needed, in specific instances, such as awareness-raising, fundraising, and information-sharing. This sub-component includes also a stakeholders' analysis, with a particular focus on institutional actors and their role within the emergency, and other humanitarian actors the diaspora organizations might interface with.

### 4.1.4. Diaspora organizations mapping and assessment

Mapping is essential to identify and understand key diaspora actors and their specific features; it usually comprises a diaspora organizations database, compiled through various sources, including official registries and social media which is increasingly more important, and a direct assessment which could be conducted through a survey. This exercise serves to collect data on diaspora organizations profiles, areas of intervention, needs, capacities, interests and other aspects relevant to the scope of the engagement. If possible, a diaspora mapping should be available to the facilitator of the engagement before a crisis and updated on a regular basis.[28] An existing mapping also facilitates the outreach effort, considering the time constraints in a situation of emergency. Prior contacts with diaspora organizations contribute also to knowledge and trust building, which are instrumental towards an effective engagement. Tailoring pre-existing mapping tools is helpful, to maximize limited time available and ensure learning across initiatives. Although a targeted mapping is helpful, the same mapping may be utilized for different purposes, related to both humanitarian and development programmatic engagement.

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[28] The regular update of existing mappings is crucial to ensure quality of information and data. The inherent limit of diaspora mappings is that they represent a static portrait of a diaspora community in a specific time and context. As these variables change, so do diaspora communities.

## ▶ 4.2. Coordination mechanisms: Conferences for internal and external coordination

Based on the results of the analysis and the needs assessment phase, the next steps of the engagement may include the establishment and facilitation of coordination mechanisms among diaspora organizations and between diaspora organizations and external actors (such as institutions), should coordination fall within the scope, like in this case. Overall, coordination among actors involved in humanitarian response is crucial towards more effective assistance, especially for non-institutional actors traditionally overlooked in coordination efforts, like diasporas. The following subcomponents may be useful to consider while establishing a coordination mechanism.

COORDINATION PLATFORMS, LIKE THE CONFERENCES PROMOTED BY IOM, REQUIRE A CLEAR MANDATE WHICH DEFINES OBJECTIVES, TIME FRAME, ROLES, MODALITIES AND OTHER ELEMENTS THAT MIGHT BE IMPORTANT FOR A SPECIFIC CONTEXT

### 4.2.1. Coordination platforms' mandate

Coordination platforms, like the conferences promoted by IOM, require a clear mandate which defines objectives, time frame, roles, modalities and other elements that might be important for a specific context. This mandate needs to be shared with the engaged diaspora organizations to clarify expectations and allow for a more focused engagement, and it may evolve over time as new needs and priorities emerge. Conferences may serve as avenue for internal coordination among diaspora organizations, with multiple functions including information-sharing, peer-to-peer support, joint advocacy, promotion of collaborative actions, stronger representation vis-à-vis other institutional actors. They may also provide a platform to address concrete operational aspects of diaspora organizations assistance in CoRs, identify needs and common solutions, and draw inspiration and guidance from other diaspora organizations approaches. The same coordination platforms can be the opportunity to discuss diaspora organizations operations in CoOs (e.g. shipments of aid to affected areas, and facilitation of transport of refugees) and identify and address common logistical issues, for instance around shipment solutions and areas accessibility.

### 4.2.2. National and local coordination

The conferences at the national and local level (selected regions in the case of Italy) can pursue complementary, and equally important, needs: at the local level, participating diaspora organizations are able to explore common issues and possible solutions, given the commonality of context and challenges. The national level promotes wider participation and representation, cross-regional exchange and support, and identification of common priorities to be elevated for advocacy within institutional forums. Consultations between the spokesperson of the national conferences and representatives of local conferences are helpful to promote broader representativeness of different local priorities and challenges.

### 4.2.3. Facilitator's role

The role of the actor which establishes and/or supports the mechanism of diasporas' coordination (here referred to as facilitator) can be interpreted and implemented in many ways depending on the short and longer term intended scopes, the context, diasporas' specific needs and capacities. This role needs to balance diaspora organizations ownership and control of the process with the need for guidance and support performed by an independent party. The role of the facilitator is key and needs to be well conceived and implemented. This role may include providing diaspora organizations with a coordination platform, performing a secretarial role within the platform and liaising diaspora organizations with institutional humanitarian actors. The facilitator's neutrality, credibility, mandate and expertise are key features in the effective implementation of this role. The role of the focal point representing the facilitator and interfacing with diaspora organizations is also strategic towards a successful engagement. This role requires skills such as trust building, reliability, flexibility, effective communication, responsiveness, cultural sensitivities and language skills among others.

Other experiences of diaspora organizations coordination for humanitarian purposes within the same CoR show that the facilitator's role may include:

technical guidance around the design of the coordination platform (which also may be diaspora self-led), financial support for the creation of tools helpful to the coordination (e.g. website, temporary coverage of staff costs), and ad hoc liaison with institutional actors. Sustainability of this role requires consideration, given the time and resource allocations needed to perform this role.

### 4.2.4. Diaspora organizations spokesperson

The presence of a coordination platform's spokesperson to collect common issues and needs and voice them in a joint and coordinated manner within high-level institutional forums may be helpful. This figure may be beneficial both for diaspora organizations that can elevate their demands in a more coordinated way, and for institutional actors which can streamline their interface with diaspora organizations through a single-entry point. There may be complexities around the spokesperson figure (e.g. limited time availability, personal views and agendas, possible tensions with other diaspora organizations, lack of gender and/or geographical representation, etc.). To address them, alternative modalities to choose a spokesperson can be considered, such as appointment or election of this role on a rotational basis with time limits, and the appointment of contact persons by sector of response (e.g. health, logistics, shelters, etc.) which could increase the level of technical knowledge, reduce the spokesperson's workload and increase other diaspora organizations inclusion. Issues related to the financial sustainability of this role may need to be considered.

DIASPORA ORGANIZATIONS ROLE IN THE OWNERSHIP OF DEFINITION OF PRIORITY AREAS AND MODALITIES OF THE COORDINATION PLATFORM IS IMPORTANT

### 4.2.5. Modalities

Diaspora organizations role in the ownership of definition of priority areas and modalities of the coordination platform is important. In this model, agenda items include mostly presentation of humanitarian needs, diaspora organizations operational challenges in the response, and exchange on possible solutions and common actions. The use of multiple languages of diaspora organizations choice is a way to promote more inclusive and open communication; translation

can be considered. Before and after the conferences, communication means used by the facilitator need to be flexible, and open to the channels mostly preferred by the diaspora organizations (i.e. WhatsApp).

Other case studies show that diaspora organizations coordination meetings can be used also to provide technical guidance on the response (with experts' ad hoc participation) and/or invite institutional actors to address specific issues of common concerns – the facilitator's convening role can be leveraged in this sense. The same platforms can be used to collect lists of priority needs of affected populations and mapping ongoing diaspora organizations initiatives to share with institutional actors coordinating the response for more accurate and centralized data collection and use.

### 4.2.6. Liaison with institutional actors

Alongside increased internal coordination, diaspora organizations involved in humanitarian assistance may require closer coordination with institutional actors, that can be initially facilitated by an independent and recognized actor, like IOM, and eventually mainstreamed within institutional coordination forums. Diaspora organizations can be liaised with institutional actors based on specific needs, at the local level (e.g. municipalities, consulates, etc.) and at the national level (e.g. embassy, line ministries, civil protection, etc.). This liaison promotes inclusion of diasporas' views on needs and solutions within the response and leverages diasporas' unique humanitarian contributions.

### 4.2.7. Exit strategies and sustainability

The expected duration of the engagement initiative, and how this reflects the expected outcomes, needs to be defined and communicated. Given the benefits of the internal and external coordination initiatives, diaspora organizations are usually interested in the continuity of the efforts beyond the emergency phase. This continuity may also prove beneficial for institutional actors which may need to engage and consult diasporas in the post-crisis phases. As such, it may be helpful to anticipate possible exit strategies since

the inception phase and discuss diaspora organizations' interest and viability around different scenarios. Similar case studies show that possible options for sustainability include for example: coordination platforms which are diaspora-led and sustained with membership fees, private donations and donors' grants, and coordination platforms which meet regularly but that foresee a more intense involvement in time of crisis, with a humanitarian command centre with ad hoc activation/deactivation.[29]

## ▶ 4.3. Funding: support to diaspora organizations projects in response to the crisis

In addition to the support provided to diaspora organizations initiatives in the country of residence, the provision of subgrants may be incorporated in the engagement model to boost and enhance the impact of diaspora organizations ongoing interventions in countries of origin.

### 4.3.1. Scope and criteria

Subgrants provided to diaspora organizations are financial contributions meant to boost existing initiatives. The availability of subgrants is a concrete offer that often reinvigorates diaspora organizations engagement. Usually, the subgrant disbursement comes with a few requirements meant to prioritize certain aspects of the operations, such as adherence to humanitarian principles, partnership with local actors, coordination efforts, among others. The selection of subgrants scope and criteria may be conducted in consultation with diaspora organizations themselves and/or humanitarian actors on the ground, like IOM missions in CoOs. The subgrant system should be adapted taking into account the specificities of each context, in particular the nature of the crisis as well as the organizational and operational capacities of the diaspora organizations involved.

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[29]   See an example in The model in connection with global systems of diaspora organizations engagement in humanitarian assistance (chapter 5).

## 4.3.2. Modalities

Subgrants selection criteria may include partnerships with local actors in Ukraine, or require that proposals build on pre-existing diaspora organizations' humanitarian activities, in order to promote localization and sustainability of the response. Furthermore, a closer coordination with humanitarian actors in CoRs, like IOM Missions, in the development and selection of proposals may ensure better matching between suitable proposals and needs on the ground. Through subgrants disbursement, diaspora organizations humanitarian interventions are strengthened both financially and in terms of capacity-building, thanks to the provision of coaching and technical assistance before and during program implementation, reporting, financial accountability, etc. Moreover, given the sensitivities of humanitarian assistance in conflict contexts, it is critical to provide selected diaspora organizations with technical training on the humanitarian architecture, allowing them to familiarize with humanitarian principles, standards and frameworks, and become conscious of the main challenges facing the humanitarian community.

## 4.3.3. Coordination and partnership for humanitarian response in countries of origin

Although most diaspora organizations can rely on informal networks and partners on the ground many diaspora organizations are often not able and/or used to interface with key humanitarian actors in a systematic manner or be included in any formal humanitarian coordination forums (such as clusters). Promoting understanding of coordination systems and actors and possible liaison with them may be helpful to leverage different actors' added value, avoid overlapping and gaps, and overall, design a more impactful response.

## ▶ 4.4. Positive externalities

In addition to the above components, other interesting unintended elements emerged from the analysis of this case study and are worth considering in the elaboration of the model:

- **Transnational coordination with other diaspora organizations:** In addition to internal coordination in CoR, diaspora organizations can also be connected to transnational coordination platforms, gathering both diaspora organizations from same CoO, as well as other diasporas interested in the response, in order to promote further diaspora organizations exchanges and cooperation.

- **Mainstreamed institutional coordination:** Coordination with institutional actors promoted within the immediate response can also persist after the response phase, into recovery and development programmes; ideally this coordination, where possible, would be mainstreamed within official institutional channels and forums.

- **Engagement in conflict-settings:** The analysis of this case study highlights some specific features of diaspora organizations engagement in conflict settings, which is quite different from the engagement in case of natural disasters, carrying specific sensitives and risks to be considered and mitigated.

- **Diaspora organizations intervention added value:** Collection of examples of diaspora organizations interventions in the humanitarian response and across the HDPN can be relevant to showcase how diasporas are able to complement the assistance of traditional actors, and use this evidence to advocate for further engagement.

- **Localization agenda:** This model encompasses components that, if properly implemented, may contribute towards advancing the localization agenda thanks to diasporas' distinct local knowledge, networks and partnerships with local actors. In fact, supporting diaspora organizations actions closely implemented with local partners may contribute indirectly to enhance local ownership of humanitarian processes and outcomes.

- **Humanitarian system and operationalization of the HDPN:** This model presents implications for the broader effort to include non-institutional humanitarian actors within humanitarian systems and to further operationalize the HDPN, as developed in Chapters 5 and 6.

# ► 5

## The model in connection with global systems of diaspora organizations engagement in humanitarian assistance

The engagement model described above ought to be considered within the global effort to strengthen diasporas' engagement in humanitarian assistance for its increased effectiveness and reach, and to advance operationalization of the humanitarin–development–peace nexus. This model, built on the experience of the Ukrainian diaspora organizations in Italy, showcases an opportunity for engagement which has not been adequately explored and developed within broader systems for diasporas' engagement in humanitarian assistance. The reference here is to the engagement of diasporas in CoRs, facilitated by a humanitarian independent body, like IOM, in coordination with institutional actors.

There have been other attempts to engage diaspora communities to support crisis response in their CoRs, like in the case of diasporas responding to natural disasters to assist recent or vulnerable migrants of the same country of origin, in cooperation with embassies and local authorities in charge of the response.[30] Other examples include diasporas mobilized both in their country of residence and origin/heritage around COVID-19 relief and recovery interventions[31] and recently the Afghan diaspora which mobilized, in a rather spontaneous way, to support large flows of Afghan refugees arriving to the United States of

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[30] An example in this sense is the Haitian diaspora in Florida (United States of America) engaged by the American Red Cross to better reach Haitian migrant communities to promote disaster preparedness and response.

[31] A collection of diasporas' response interventions to COVID 19 is available in the IOM publication Global Diasporas reacting to the COVID-19 crisis: Best Practices from the Field, 2020 . Available at https://publications.iom.int/books/global-diasporas-reacting-covid-19-crisis-best-practices-field.

America in September 2021.[32] Although it is common to see diasporas working through coalitions, networks, and other types of coordination platforms in the same countries of residence, around cultural, socioeconomic and political functions, and in support of new migrants, what is new and relevant about these examples is a more structured coordination specifically for humanitarian purposes. However, the review of the available literature and case studies shows that other experiences did not reach the clarity of scope and level of structure of the diaspora organizations engagement in Italy in response to the Ukrainian crisis.

This engagement model **adds new breadth** and depth to existing case studies, and it complements global systems of engagement through new components. One of these systems is the **Framework for Diaspora Engagement in Humanitarian Assistance**, developed by IOM. This includes both a model for internal diaspora organizations coordination and a guide on external coordination,[33] which were informed by different best practices, developed in consultative manner, and, and in coherence with the broader landscape of non-traditional actors' engagement within the humanitarian architecture.

THIS ENGAGEMENT MODEL ADDS NEW BREADTH AND DEPTH TO EXISTING CASE STUDIES, AND IT COMPLEMENTS GLOBAL SYSTEMS OF ENGAGEMENT THROUGH NEW COMPONENTS

With regard to **diasporas' internal coordination**, the Framework recognizes that internal coordination is both a means in itself and a step towards a more streamlined interface between institutional humanitarian actors and diasporas. The model for internal coordination offers guidance on possible ways diaspora from the same country of origin/heritage can come together in a more structured way, either within the same CoR and/or transnationally. The model takes into account the diversity of diaspora actors, with a focus on diaspora organizations coalition or networks; it provides suggestions on the use of different coordination platforms, more or less structured, governance, functions, possible operational tools, and a list of external stakeholders with which diaspora organizations can/should coordinate.

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[32]  For more information, refer to www.cnn.com/2021/09/18/us/afghan-americans-advice-refugees/index.html.

[33]  For more details about the Framework and its components, refer to www.idiaspora.org/sites/g/files/tmzbdl181/files/resources/document/033122_framework-draft-note.pdf.

The Framework has been **piloted in a few cases**, with support from the IOM Washington, Washington D.C. office. These include the work of the Haitian Diaspora in the United States of America and the creation of the Haitian Diaspora Emergency Response Unit (HDERU), as coordinating platform for US-based Haitian diaspora organizations. The functions of the platform are to streamline communication, provide information-sharing and capacity-building, support coordination of the response in CoOs and common advocacy, and guarantee centralized representation vis-à-vis government bodies and humanitarian actors. The platform works through a command centre and working groups covering different sectors of intervention (i.e. health, protection, logistics, education, shelters, etc.), each with a focal point. This platform is activated when a crisis strikes[34] and deactivated when the emergency subsides,[35] but the coordination efforts are sustained in the recovery phase, through a different and permanent platform.[36]Another interesting model is piloted by the National Federation of Filipino American Associations (NaFFAA) with the aim to coordinate Filipino diaspora groups' resources and relief programmes from the United States to the Philippines in case of crisis. The programme includes the development of a Humanitarian Council (with a large diaspora base and rotational leadership), and a national SMS engagement system (FilAm Alerts).[37]

The Framework for diaspora engagement in humanitarian assistance provides also a suggested guide for **external coordination** between diasporas and institutional humanitarian actors at the global level and in countries hit by crises. It is applicable at any stage of humanitarian assistance, preparedness/prevention, response and recovery, and also adaptable to contexts where recovery

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[34] This happened in the case of the earthquake that hit Haiti on 14 August 2021.

[35] For more information, refer to https://haitirenew.org/hderu-deactivation/.

[36] For more information, refer to https://onediaspora.org.

[37] For more information on the Filipino model, refer to www.asianjournal.com/usa/dateline-usa/naffaa-leaders-receive-international-recognition-in-geneva-for-piloting-filamalerts-program/. Other diasporas' national and transnational coordination systems include the ones implemented by the Syrian diaspora organizations which gather in the United States of America around the American Relief Coalition for Syria (ARCS), the Venezuelan diaspora the Somali diaspora, and the Ethiopian one, among others.

moves towards development or where the same country may experience pockets of crisis within a broader development context; it is applicable also in both natural and man-made disasters. The guide on external coordination is directed towards diaspora actors, in particular diaspora organizations and diaspora's coalitions, and institutional humanitarian actors, at the global and country level. It is built around entry points, facilitators, coordination pathways (recommended and alternative). The Framework focus so far has been on diaspora organizations intervention in CoO, while adaptability of the framework to humanitarian assistance provided by diaspora in CoR had not yet been fully explored. This is where the complementarity of the experiences of the conferences in Italy comes in.

Finally, a model used to boost the operational response already undertaken by diaspora organizations, both in CoRs and CoOs, is the provision of subgrants. Besides the above-mentioned subgranting mechanism implemented by IOM Italy in the case of COVID-19 response, the funding was used also by IOM Washington D.C., under the project Supporting COVID-19 response and relief at the country level through disbursement and facilitation of sub- grants for selected diaspora organizations. Other examples include the Diaspora Partnership Accelerator, funded by BHA and implemented in partnership with HRA, that provided funds and mentorship for diaspora projects under Humanitarian Assistance, Disaster Risk Reduction, Disaster Risk Management.[38]

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[38]    For more information on this initiative, refer to https://investortank.org.

## ▸ 6

## The model for diasporas' engagement in connection with the HDPN

The model outlined in this paper, in connection with the broader frameworks for diasporas' engagement in humanitarian assistance, can contribute to operationalize the HDPN nexus. In the model of diaspora organizations engagement in CoR and CoO resulting from the experience in Italy described above, the HDPN lens can be integrated across different components, such as:

- In the **mapping and needs assessment**, understanding of diaspora organizations interest and interventions in non-crisis contexts can offer helpful information, should the engagement extend beyond the immediate response.

- In the **definition of the engagement scope**, considerations on whether and how coordination systems and opportunities can extend in the recovery phase may be included; an option in this sense may be to fold the engagement into longer-term diaspora organizations cooperation systems to sustain the momentum and promote engagement across different phases of the assistance, towards development.[39]

- Diaspora organizations are interested in accompanying the entire process rather than focusing on specific phases and tend to implement strategies and investment which have developmental lens even during emergency response. In this sense, diaspora organizations interventions tend to progress quite organically from immediate humanitarian needs (accommodation, food, clothes, etc.) to longer-term interventions, as needs on the ground evolve. The model could consider how to sustain the support for **development-related interventions** in CoR, compatibly with legal and administrative

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[39]  In the case of Italy this system can be the Italian Diaspora Forum, which could incorporate conversations around humanitarian assistance and the HDPN nexus.

conditions applicable to affected populations, including sustaining the liaison functions with institutional actors, when needed.

- With regards to the support of **diaspora organizations interventions in CoO**, through funding and capacity-building, nexus considerations may be integrated into project eligibility criteria, and diaspora organizations can be guided to incorporate longer term development approaches within the immediate response.

- The encouragement of **partnership with local actors**, and possible integration within existing coordination mechanisms in CoO, can contribute both to advance the localization efforts and to reinforce the longevity of the interventions beyond the humanitarian response.

# ► 7

## Conclusions

The severe humanitarian crisis in Ukraine has raised once again the need for a multi-stakeholder approach, able to further leverage different actors' contributions towards more effective assistance while also promoting better connectivity between humanitarian and development efforts. Globally, the complex picture of intersecting climate, conflict and socioeconomic factors continue to drive humanitarian needs, communities' vulnerability, and displacements; this scenario calls for a closer engagement of non-institutional humanitarian actors, like affected communities and the diasporas that seek to support them. Diasporas have historically demonstrated their resilience, commitment, and capacity to meet communities' needs across contexts, in support of affected populations in diasporas' CoO and CoR or third host countries. The interventions conducted by Ukrainian diaspora organizations based in Italy to support refugees arriving to Italy and affected community in Ukraine are another relevant example in this sense. The promotion of increased and more streamlined coordination between diasporas and institutional humanitarian actors has also shown the potential to enhance diasporas' interventions, strengthen the overall humanitarian response and advance the operationalization of the humanitarian–development–peace nexus.

The initiative with the Ukrainian diaspora organizations in Italy illustrated in this paper represents a remarkable case study of successful diaspora's engagement for humanitarian assistance, through a well-conceived and implemented set of activities of coordination, liaison with institutional actors, and financial and technical support to diaspora organizations local actions. The components of this experience have been documented and analysed to identify best practices and lessons learned, and to extract a model of diasporas engagement in humanitarian response in CoRs, and support to diaspora organizations local humanitarian actions in CoOs.

The model, conceived to be adaptable and replicable across other humanitarian contexts and diaspora communities, elaborates engagement perspectives and processes which complement, in a relevant manner, existing global frameworks of diaspora's engagement in humanitarian assistance and across the nexus. It contributes towards advancing the overall agenda of increased reach and effectiveness of the assistance, through more streamlined inclusion of and cooperation with transnational actors such as diasporas.

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