Creating Opportunities to work with Diasporas in Humanitarian Settings

Key findings presentation
August 2018

Introduction - Methodology - Analysis of DO contributions - DOs’ potential to contribute further - The road ahead - Recommendations
Creating opportunities to work with Diasporas in humanitarian settings

Research Question

Original
What comparative advantage and added value do different types of diaspora organisations (DOs) offer in humanitarian responses?

Revised
In what ways can diaspora organisations contribute to strengthening the humanitarian response in times of crisis?

Research Objectives

Provides recommendations for
1. Diaspora organisations
2. DEMAC
3. International organisations and NGOs
4. Donors
5. Governments

Beyond descriptives
• Build evidence-based knowledge of the comparative value and value-added of DOs
• Identify tangible contributions that DOs could and currently do make to efforts of traditional humanitarian efforts
• Understand current coordination and effectiveness

Selection of Diaspora Organisations (Dos)

- 6 DOs in Somalia and Syria
- None in Nigeria (planned for three)
- 48 structured interviews
- 13 focus group discussions,
- 6 organisational capacity assessment tools (OCATs)

Introduction - Methodology - Analysis - Potential - Road ahead - Recommendations
Locations and Sample

- 7 fieldwork locations
- Cross-regional learning (Somalia, Syria)
- Context analysis (Nigeria)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Location</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Somalia</td>
<td>Galgaduud (South Central)</td>
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<td>Faraweyne (Somaliland)</td>
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<td>Idlib (Idlib - Northwest)</td>
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<td>Kobani (Aleppo - North)</td>
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<td>Gaziantep (Turkey)</td>
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<td>Syria</td>
<td>Maiduguri (Northeast)</td>
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<td>Lagos (Capital city)</td>
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<td>Nigeria</td>
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# Criteria for assessing DOs

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<td>1. Cost-effectiveness</td>
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<td>2. Access</td>
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<td>3. Rapidity</td>
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<td>4. Local ownership and anchoring of activities post-project completion</td>
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<td>5. Results</td>
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<td>6. Sustainability</td>
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<td>7. Innovation</td>
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<td>8. Voice amplification</td>
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## Methodology

### Secondary data

The secondary data analysis was limited to a desk review of the literature on diaspora action. One of the obstacles of the assessment is the lack of formal reporting by diaspora organisations. Beneficiary lists, formal reporting and M&E are missing.

### Primary Data Collection

Three field teams – in Somalia, in Nigeria, and in Syria/Turkey – led a total of 45 key informant interviews (KIs) and 10 focus group discussions (FGDs).
## SELECTED SOMALI DIASPORA ORGANISATIONS

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Diaspora Organisation</th>
<th>HQ</th>
<th>Specificity</th>
<th>Interventions</th>
<th>Brief description</th>
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</table>
| **Caawi Walaal**      | Network of volunteers with an office in Mogadishu | Strong focus on social media campaigns | Deliver:  
- Food and clean water  
- Essential drugs for cholera  
- Basic medication | Caawi Walaal raised **101,000 USD** to deliver clean water, essential drugs for cholera response, basic medication, food to an estimated 55,884 people in 12 regions in 2017 |
| **Somali Faces**      | UK Offices in Australia & Somalia | Strong emphasis on storytelling & fundraising | - Food and water relief  
- Hospitals; ambulance services  
- Awareness raising  
- Resettlement support | Somali Faces raised **124,012 USD** to provide food & water to 54,300 Somalis in 12 regions in 2017 |
| **Rajo**              | Denmark | Partnership with local implementers to deliver programmes | - Social development projects  
- Skills trainings  
- Food delivery | Rajo secured a grant from DERF of **87,153 USD** to deliver food to 4000 families in Somaliland in 2017. |
Starting point in in Somalia: How do they operate?

Ignorance of and a resulting sense of mistrust around DOs’ work persist

- *Interactions are limited but there are efforts to interact at the central level.*

DOs are not visible actors at the local level

- *At the local level, because of their geographic fragmentation, DOs cannot participate in coordination meetings or make themselves known to other partners, except on an ad-hoc basis.*
- *Somali Faces and Caawi Walaal are highly visible on social media.*

Seasonal humanitarian action

- *Respond when a need arises and when called upon*

DOs are often presumed to promote the welfare of their clans or tribes

- *Better networks in communities where they are from, nationwide reach for Somali Faces & Caawi Walaal*

Doubts on capacity beyond crises

- *Social investment processes triggered by DOs*

“The government should give tax-exemption and create coordination in terms of information and logistics, and the Diaspora need to work with the government instead of mistrusting them” – KII, local CSO
SUSTAINABILITY

- The three DOs under review do not aim for sustainability when responding to shocks and emergencies.
- They are capable but limited in their ability to transfer skills to local NGOs in Somalia, with notable exceptions.
- Although there is still an impression that DOs only intervene in emergency settings, the support offered by DOs in this study often complements, rather than duplicates, efforts of other actors.

ACCESS

- DOs in this study are present on the ground through community outreach and in-person visits by DO representatives.
- They benefit from better access to local communities because they are from these communities and have strong ties with locals.
- Their ‘emotional humanitarianism’ is an asset in winning local trust and access, and is well perceived by local stakeholders.

RAPIDITY AND COST EFFECTIVENESS

- The three DOs are not constrained by formal procedures and administrative systems.
- They are able to quickly send private funds through web platforms, phone-based cash transfers, and remittance transfers.
**INNOVATION**

- The three DOs are perceived as being particularly innovative in the way that they adapt and put to use resources and concepts encountered abroad.
- They use new methods of funding, are resourceful in delivering aid in the aftermath of shocks, make wide use of technologies (e.g., a crisis-mapping platform, crowd-source gathering), and introduce new models for protection (e.g., recycling and waste management interventions to encourage environmental sustainability).

**LOCAL OWNERSHIP/RESULTS**

- Interventions by the DOs in the study are felt to be more relevant to local needs and to serve local interests.
- They were criticised for their alleged lack of transparency in selecting beneficiaries and partners. There were perceptions that clan affiliations informed their decisions.
- The DOs were not felt to be transparent or well integrated into the local and national humanitarian coordination systems.

**VOICE AMPLIFICATION**

- The three DOs are seen to make effective use of social media and emotional pledges to expedite fundraising processes and to disseminate information around humanitarian needs.
- They rely on community feedback and consultation to raise awareness of local situations. In turn, they have a unique potential to lobby the government.
WHERE THEY NEED MOST SUPPORT

1. Humanitarian principles
2. Knowledge and learning
   - Reporting structures
   - Dissemination
3. Legal status and financial policies
4. Strategic planning
   - Strategic fundraising
   - Human resources
5. Coordination mechanisms
   - Outreach

Evidence-based reporting is a key gap and easy trigger of greater accountability, coordination, outreach, and planning
## ZOOM: SYRIA DOs

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<td>Germany, regional offices in</td>
<td>Germany, regional offices in Iraq &amp;</td>
<td>On the ground involvement</td>
<td>- Awareness raising</td>
<td>Aims to build transnational, cross-border ‘sustainable solidarity’, and places emphasis on supporting civil society centres in northern Syria where it provides local students and children with education.</td>
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<td>Iraq &amp; Syria</td>
<td>Iraq &amp; Syria</td>
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<td>- Childhood education</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>- Development projects</td>
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<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>Direct management (eg of safehouses)</td>
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<td>- Vocational trainings</td>
<td>Supports some 700 widows and orphans displaced to Syria’s neighboring countries where they receive psychosocial support and shelter in centres.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Childhood education</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>- Turkish language classes</td>
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<td>UK</td>
<td>Partnership with local implementers</td>
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<td>- Emergency relief</td>
<td>Focuses on providing emergency relief in Raqqa, Aleppo, Idlib, and Homs.</td>
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### Introduction

- Methodology
- Analysis
- Potential
- Road ahead
- Recommendations
The term ‘grassroot organisation’ was commonly used by stakeholders to describe DOs. They are perceived as intervening from the ground-up. This vision is shared by a representative of Doz: “we are a youth and student organisation. We are a local organisation with a Diaspora component”.

**Starting point in Syria: “Add a new layer” in the humanitarian system**

Lack of knowledge about smaller, medium-scale DOs

- *No interaction and DOs’ reluctance to be defined or labelled as “diaspora organizations”*

A focus on differences

- *Rather than recognising similarities*

Scrutiny

- *For acting and thinking differently*

Limited further engagement

- *While needs far outweigh the capacity to respond by traditional humanitarian actors*
SUSTAINABILITY

- The three Syrian DOs in this study place emphasis on the need to establish financial sustainability. They want to transition from private funding to international funding sources.
- They attempt to make sustained change through transferring skills and engaging in social investments.

ACCESS

- DOs in the study have proven access to communities across a range of locations. They have intervened across Syria, including in hard-to-reach areas; in the host communities, whether they act as links for those who consider staying or returning; and in cross-border responses (e.g., in Turkey and Iraq).

RAPIDITY AND COST EFFECTIVENESS

- The three Syrian DOs are knowledgeable of the local context because they are well connected with beneficiary populations.
- The DOs have levels of skills, expertise, and flexible self-organisation.
- Their primary limitations are that they are not registered and have constrained human resources.
**INNOVATION**

- Current initiatives by the three DOs include development activities such as an agriculture programmes that incorporate psychosocial and economic support.
- These are small-scale interventions that can be scaled and supported with higher investments.
- UN agencies recognise the innovative contributions that Syrian DOs have made to developing coordinated humanitarian responses.

**LOCAL OWNERSHIP/RESULTS**

- The three DOs have established a local footprint outside of the traditional humanitarian system and expanded their interventions into early recovery and development work.
- There are concerns that DO responses are informed by kinship networks.
- The DOs have the capacity to put in place mitigation mechanisms that address concerns of beneficiaries.

**VOICE AMPLIFICATION**

- DOs in this study have limited participation in the humanitarian coordination system; international organisations express suspicion of the DOs’ intentionals, which limits their influence.
- There are concerns about whether DOs are impartial in their selection and representation of beneficiary populations.
WHERE THEY NEED MOST SUPPORT

In developing:

- **Operations and interventions**, learning from each other’s subnational access strategy
- **Gender and inclusion** of vulnerable groups
- **Partnerships** and stakeholder relations.

In enhancing:

- **Learning**, and humanitarian principles
- **Legal status** and financial policies
- **Financial autonomy**

Evidence-based reporting limits learning opportunities; M&E to be integrated in systems and practices.
Starting point in Nigeria: Newcomers to the humanitarian system

Access not yet secured

DOs have started operating using charity-based intervention, distributing relief materials or making donations.

A shift to the Northeast

This charity-based approach has three main consequences:
- DOs are not engaged in coordination mechanisms and hence invisible to other stakeholders
- Community feedback mechanisms and sustainability are lacking
- Partnerships with local organisations do not lead to skills being transferred

Search for DOs’ entry point

Stakeholders and coordination

Limited funding for DOs

“A smoke effect”? The national context is opening up to Diaspora contributions: Nigerians in Diaspora Commission Establishment Bill (2017); draft National Policy on Diaspora Matters (2016)
DOs’ potential to contribute further: Partnerships are a key to obstacles

Monitoring & evaluation

A twinning program should lead to the possibility for DOs to enter the common humanitarian funding streams, identify opportunities, enhance skills on M&E.

Procurement & Logistics

A critical juncture where procurement and logistics processes require more investment on their part. Through local CSOs?

Technical capacity

- Management
- Humanitarian & early rec.
- Communications & media

From reporting to media and outreach training, DOs need to strengthen their organisational voice. Current HR resources limit their capacity to implement campaigns that represent their work.
Conclusions: A time of change and self-reflection

A discussion to have:

1. What are the observed strengths that diaspora organisations (DOs) in this study bring to humanitarian response, and how do and can they complement the work of traditional humanitarian actors?

2. What challenges or shortcomings in DO response have been revealed by this preliminary analysis, and what does that tell us about how humanitarian actors can or should move forward (i.e. whether actions can be synchronised and complementary, or developed in parallel, etc.)?

Capacity to be developed:

Questions are premised on the assumption that DOs can assume a more prominent and strengthened position in the humanitarian landscape:

• While the DOs observed generally had better access to beneficiaries than international organisations, they are financially less well endowed with sporadic interventions.
• Their position can be consolidated / integrated in a community of practice
• Transparency to be improved
RECOMMENDATIONS FOR DOS

1. Consolidate an umbrella network of diaspora organisations for humanitarian action
   Serve as a referral network or resource in crisis settings when other actors cannot mobilise as quickly.

2. Engage with diaspora organisations involved in the development sector
   Map social investments and track improvements to infrastructure that can support humanitarian DOs.

3. Identify twinning opportunities between large and medium-scale DOs, between DOs and traditional humanitarian actors, and across settings
   Improve diaspora organisations’ technical and managerial capacities, monitoring and reporting skills.

4. Commit to systematic reporting, based on monitoring and longitudinal data
   Develop a learning agenda with events, workshops and opportunities to debate and share lessons.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR DEMAC

5. Build a learning agenda on diaspora engagement by highlighting and disseminating successful initiatives as entry points for engagement with DOs
   Share information and present entry points for engagement between DOs and a range of stakeholders.

6. Provide capacity-building support
   Focus on: (1) building partnerships, (2) knowledge management and reporting, (3) referrals and skill-transfers, (4) financial and legal procedures, (5) humanitarian principles and working in displacement-affected communities.

7. Engage the diaspora’s voice and capacity to act in displacement contexts
   Establish and ensure comprehension of guidelines for protection and durable solutions programming.
RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IOS & NGOS

8. Consider DOs as partners who can do what IO/INGOs cannot do
   Encourage DOs to use and document different methods to achieve a common objective.

9. Engage in a twinning program
   Participate in shared programs with other organisations to develop capacity in specific fields and contexts.

10. Include DOs in resilience consortia
    Capitalise on DOs’ role in strengthening community capacities to absorb, adapt and transform in the aftermath of shocks and stressors, in collaboration with resilience actors.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR DONORS

11. Initiate co-creation requests for proposals that will require diasporic and traditional actors to generate joint project ideas
    Identify common geographical and thematic areas of work to advance resource-sharing practices.

12. Generate opportunities for non-conditional funding to explore new approaches
    Develop pilot funding for DOs, available over 2-5 years to fund humanitarian action.

13. Define cross-border possibilities
    Learn from DOs’ cross-border programming to negotiate access and adapt to local contexts.

14. Scale successful DO initiatives
    Identify community-based DO initiatives that can be scaled and assess the financial costs for scale-up.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR GOVERNMENTS

15. Apply tax exemptions for members of diaspora organisations
    Fiscal benefits to be accompanied by conditionalities, such as regular reporting and coordination.

16. Include the role of DOs in humanitarian action in government’s existing or future diaspora engagement policies