



RAPID ASSESSMENT OF EAST AND HORN OF AFRICA REGIONAL DIASPORA ENGAGEMENT

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1. OVERVIEW

The principal predominant trend for Eastern Horn of Africa (EHOA) states in relation to diaspora engagement has been the formalization of diaspora engagement policies and strategies, and capacity building and implementation of diaspora engagement frameworks. However, this work has been challenged by recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic, the impact of rising global food prices in a region that is already confronted by food insecurity, and climate change including the worst drought in the last four decades. Since 2000, diaspora remittances have grown tenfold, with remittances to Sub-Saharan Africa amounting to approximately US\$ 45 billion in 2021¹. Even though some of the EHOA countries are not receiving large values of remittances, remittances are still important for their economies, as some receiving 10% or more of their gross domestic product (GDP) in remittances. In 2021, the EHOA countries received remittances as a share of their GDP as follows: Burundi (1.5%), Djibouti (2.4%), Ethiopia (0.6%), Kenya (3.1%), Rwanda (2.3%), Somalia (25.1%), South Sudan (29.8%), Tanzania (0.6%), and Uganda (2.8%).² Most funds that are sent to EHOA originate from migrants in Europe (particularly France, Germany, Italy, Spain and the United Kingdom) and North America. The Gulf Cooperation Council region is also among sending countries to the EHOA region

On December 13, 2022, The White House described the African Diaspora in the United States as a source of **strength**. It encompasses African Americans, including descendants of enslaved Africans, and nearly two million African immigrants who have close familial, social, and economic connections to the continent. The African immigrant community makes significant contributions to America's growth and prosperity. The African Diaspora—i.e., people of native African origin living outside the continent—has been described as the sixth region of the African Union.³ The challenge remains to harness this **strength** toward significant contributions to the homeland. As EHOA member states ponder diaspora policies, strategies, and engagement, there are opportunities to collaborate, share lessons learned, and review best practices at a regional level to maximize the impact of positive engagement of the diaspora.

2. KEY TRENDS

Accounting for over 35 percent of immigrants to the United States from Africa, EHOA continues to be the second largest region of origin for Sub-Saharan African migrants to the United States. Migration drivers in the region persist via a combination of socioeconomic and livelihood factors.

The resources of diaspora communities that flow across borders are immensely varied and range from skills, knowledge and ideas to cultural capital, finance and trade links. This “wealth” is benefiting not only the government but also private, technical and academic fields and contributing to greater social equity, peacebuilding efforts and sustainable development. IOM has outlined, by way of analysis of member state planning documents, the developmental priorities in the EHOA.⁴ These include inclusive economic growth, employment, urbanization, women and youth empowerment, regional integration, crisis preparedness, urbanization, human development, and improved governance. In this section observed trends related to migration and the diaspora that pertain to these priorities in the region are outlined.

2.1 Civic and political rights

One of the key trends in the region has been greater recognition of the diaspora both as important contributors to national development and as citizens, and as such dual citizenship and the right to vote in national elections have become priority issues for the diaspora.

1. World Bank. 2021. *Migration and Development Brief. No. 35, November, Washington, DC*: https://www.knomad.org/sites/default/files/2021-11/Migration_Brief%2035_1.pdf

2. https://www.knomad.org/sites/default/files/2021-11/Migration_Brief%2035_1.pdf

3. <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2022/12/13/fact-sheet-u-s-africa-partnership-in-elevating-diaspora-engagement/>

4. IOM EHOA Regional Strategy

EHOA member states have risen to the challenge with more than half the region granting voting rights to their diasporas in their country of residence. Eligibility criteria were reviewed in the process of granting these rights, precursors include but are not limited to the presence of a diplomatic mission in diaspora host countries, the number of registered voters with the diplomatic mission in host countries, and the financial ability to support the logistics of polling centers. Diaspora members describe the recognition of dual citizenship and voting rights as a feeling of identity and connectedness with their country of origin. Political inclusion via voting rights is also regarded as a step towards building trust between a diaspora and their country of origin. Of note, August 9, 2022, was a historical day for Kenyans in the global diaspora as they were permitted to vote in Kenya’s national elections for the first time. Stakeholders estimate that the diaspora in approximately 19 countries participated in the electoral process.

2.2 Knowledge and Skills Transfer

With the advances in technology, transport, communications, and geography, diasporas can be fully committed both to the host country where they live and be committed to their country of origin, heritage, or interests abroad. This shared existence can be mutually beneficial. It has been noted that more governments globally are introducing diaspora strategies and policies and recognizing the key role that members of the diaspora can play in developing their home country’s economies without having to return home permanently. Health and Education are significant sectors with the greatest need for skills and knowledge transfer. Moreover, rural access to health care remains a challenge in Africa due to urban bias, social determinants of health, and transportation-related barriers. Health systems often lack equity, leaving disproportionately less health center access for the poorest residents with the highest health care needs.



The IOM MIDA Somalia program is perhaps one of the best examples of a program that ensures that skills and knowledge are transferred to the host institutions and retained by national staff once the diaspora experts complete their assignments. Long-term impact and sustainability are further strengthened through the assignments of local professionals and junior professionals (interns), who benefit from diaspora experts’ daily mentoring and training. Somali diaspora has been deployed from several countries as outlined above.

Since 2008, IOM has been actively supporting the role of diaspora as key development actor in Somalia and beyond.

With its MIDA Somalia programme, IOM has contributed to providing capacity-building, transfer of knowledge and know-how and technical skills support to the Federal Government of Somalia (FGoS) and Federal Member States, through the deployment of diaspora experts in key economic sectors. IOM has implemented the Migration for Development in Africa (MIDA) programme in Somalia through the engagement of Somali diaspora on short term assignments to transfer their skills and strengthen the capacity of Federal Member State institutions. To enhance the sustainability of knowledge transfer, IOM implements a capacity building model that pairs the diaspora experts with local professionals. Through this mentorship, young and recently graduated Somalis gain valuable work experience, explore a career path and have a competitive edge in the job market. A similar programme has been requested by the Government of Eritrea.

Since 2008, IOM brought 737 Diaspora Experts from all over the world in Somalia to work in key host institutions in Health, Education and Governance and to transfer skills to local staff; In addition, 127 local experts and 60 interns were trained in the relevant fields by the diaspora experts.

IOM, has also a project to support the development of Rwanda's TVET sector, by engaging Rwandan diaspora in Europe to transfer their knowledge and skills. Initiated in June 2019, the projects aim to **address the needs of the** Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) sector and Health sector in Rwanda through the engagement of highly skilled diaspora members residing in Europe. Through Trainings of Trainers (ToT), the Rwandan diaspora men and women will build the capacity of TVET professors and students in priority courses of the Rwanda Polytechnic's host institutions (IPRCs) across the country. The Rwandan diaspora professionals will also provide support to (the development of) start-ups, initiated together with and/or by the trained professors and students. With the support of the IOM Development Fund, the scope of the project was extended in September 2019 to also include the Rwandan health sector, by engaging highly skilled diaspora members residing in Europe for capacity building and skills transfer activities to i.e. local medical practitioners IOM also conducted Mapping and Mobilizing the Rwandan Diaspora in Europe for Development in Rwanda. The report aimed to provide evidence-based information to the Government of Rwanda for policy formulation and enable the diaspora to contribute to the development of their home country.

2.3 Youth Empowerment

Africa has the youngest population in the world, with 70% of sub-Saharan Africa under the age of 30. Such a high number of young people is an opportunity for the continent's growth – but only if these new generations are fully empowered to realize their best potential. It is especially important that young people are included in decision-making and given appropriate opportunities for work and to innovate.⁵ With this in mind IOM launched the Youth Strategy for East and Horn of Africa 2021-2024.⁶ Through this Strategy, IOM seeks to share good practices on mainstreaming migration into the youth developmental agenda among the key stakeholders across the countries of the region. The strategy complements IOM's efforts in the East and Horn of Africa in working closely with governments to address the many socio-economic challenges young people face through the Regional Ministerial Forum on Migration (RMFM) on Harmonizing Labour Migration Policies in East and Horn of Africa. The youth also took part in "Voices from the Field" on Youth and Women Empowerment in East and Horn of Africa forum which provided an opportunity to share updates, information, and good practices that promote the overall well-being of women and youth in the region, with a specific focus on labour migration.⁷

5. <https://www.un.org/ohrlls/news/young-people%E2%80%99s-potential-key-africa%E2%80%99s-sustainable-development>

6. https://eastandhornofafrica.iom.int/sites/g/files/tmzbdl701/files/documents/youth-strategy-for-east-and-horn-of-africa-2021-2024_v3.pdf

7. <https://eastandhornofafrica.iom.int/news/youth-and-women-meet-nairobi-validate-ioms-youth-and-migration-strategy-east-and-horn-africa>

Youth and Women Meet in Nairobi to Validate IOM's Youth and Migration Strategy for East and Horn of Africa



Nairobi, 31 May 2022– The International Organization for Migration (IOM) brought together (18-20/5) young people from six countries (Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda, Somalia, South Sudan and Uganda) in East and Horn Africa to validate the organization's Youth and Migration Strategy (2021-2024) for the region.

WithIn many member states in the EHOA region, youth lack access to financing for income-generating activities which in turn leads to outward migration to seemingly greener pastures. Programs to support youth inclusion in socio-economic development activities include microfinancing programs such as crowdfunding. In addition to start-up capital, these programs allow diaspora members to directly contribute to vocational training and professional development activities. The intent of such programs is to create sustainable livelihoods that reduce pressures on youth to emigrate from rural areas and to help them contribute to local economic development. A great example of youth empowerment is the Burundi Diaspora Youth pilot project by the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and the African Development Bank (AfDB) designed to contribute to reducing youth unemployment by tapping into the skills of the Burundian diaspora located mainly in the East African Community region, followed by the United States, Canada and Europe.⁸

2.4 Diaspora Recognition Activities

Many countries globally celebrate 'Diaspora Day' or similar celebrations annually in the country of origin as the one way to show respect for all diaspora regardless of their ethnicity, religion, or political affiliation, and acknowledge diaspora contributions to development activities. These celebrations also recognize diaspora members who have excelled in their professional fields or philanthropic work in host countries and also encourage diaspora members to visit and invest in the homeland. Several EHOA countries celebrate annual diaspora events such as Kenya Diaspora Homecoming, the Uganda Diaspora Business Breakfast and Homecoming event, The Ethiopian Diaspora Month which is recognized as July and is celebrated as close as possible to July, and the Burundi Diaspora Week. Additional efforts are required to recognize the contributions of the diaspora in order to encourage further diaspora engagement and contributions to development.

8. <https://www.iom.int/news/african-development-bank-engage-burundian-diaspora-tackling-youth-unemployment>

3. CHALLENGES

Issues of trust between African governments and their diasporas rank among the most cited challenges to diaspora engagement in Africa.⁹ A critical element in building trust with diaspora populations must also involve creating a welcoming environment for diaspora engagement. There are various reasons for this lack of trust including ethnic and political differences which had led to adversarial relationships between the diaspora and country of origin governments. However, there is acknowledgement by member states that work is needed in this area. The Principal Secretary of the State Department for Diaspora Affairs, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Diaspora Affairs in Kenya recently emphasized (at a Diaspora Outreach event in Washington DC) that building trust with the diaspora community through dialogue is crucial.

Additional challenges include limited access to resources, lack of policy coordination and implementation by member states, legal and investment frameworks for diaspora looking to invest and contribute to national development and the inability to adapt programs to diaspora needs. Furthermore, insufficient knowledge of the diaspora and their potential is a major obstacle to building adequate diaspora engagement policies and programs, making it difficult to effectively reach and communicate with the diaspora. Basically, member states need to dedicate time and resources to identify and nurture relationships with the diaspora.

3.1 COVID-19 Impacts to Diaspora Engagement in EHOA

The COVID-19 pandemic caused significant challenges to diaspora engagement across the world. This was not only due to the significant reduction of international air transportation but also impacts on employment caused by public health shutdowns, disruptions to the global supply chain, and the cost-of-living crisis that has put a strain on developmental and humanitarian efforts. Throughout this unprecedented period, however, diasporas have demonstrated resiliency in their ability to recover and in their commitment to their respective home countries. According to the World Bank, the projected remittance declines to Low and Middle-Income Countries (LMICs) expected in 2020 were far less small than anticipated, declining by only 1.6 percent, and then growing in 2021 and 2022 by 10.2 and 5 percent respectively.^{10 11}

Diaspora organizations consulted during the Rapid Assessment Diaspora Mapping of 2023 indicated that, while the issues owing to the pandemic did impact their operations, it also served as a catalyst for rallying their diaspora communities around support. As an example, in the areas of repatriation flights for stranded diaspora members and residents from their countries of origin. Additionally, diaspora organizations increased their humanitarian support to schools and the elderly in their respective home countries. Aside from the financial lifeline of remittances, efforts by the diaspora during the pandemic also included sourcing and donating equipment and Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) for medical professionals, coordinating relief efforts with home country governments, and lobbying policymakers in their host societies to curtail vaccine nationalism. This resiliency and commitment were also notable in the responses by EHOA diasporas to COVID-19. IOM conducted a survey between June and July 2020 to analyze the socio-economic impact of COVID-19 on the Somali diaspora living in Finland, the Netherlands, Sweden and the US. The IOM survey sheds light on the situation for Somali migrants in the US and Finland, who faced a decline in their ability to send remittances (63 per cent and 70 per cent respectively) due to movement restrictions, the unavailability of MTOs, high charges, and limits on the amount of money that can be sent. **This differs from Somali migrants in Sweden and the Netherlands who reported maintaining their level of remittances at 90 per cent and 70 per cent respectively.**¹²

9. <https://diasporaforddevelopment.eu/library/regional-series-africa/>

10. World Bank Group. (2021, May 12). *Defying Predictions, Remittance Flows Remain Strong During COVID-19 Crisis*. URL: <https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/press-release/2021/05/12/defying-predictions-remittance-flows-remain-strong-during-covid-19-crisis>

11. World Bank Group. (2022, December 5). *Remittances Grow 5% in 2022, Despite Global Headwinds*. URL: <https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/press-release/2022/11/30/remittances-grow-5-percent-2022>

12. <https://medium.com/@UNmigration/unflattered-by-covid-19-somali-diaspora-maintain-remittance-flows-c2b9d315c5a7>

The Ethiopian Diaspora Trust Fund (EDTF) is another example of EHOA diasporas responding to the pandemic, with USD \$1.2 million being crowdfunded from 25000 persons in the diaspora for COVID-19 responses in Ethiopia.¹³ Additionally, the Rwandan Diaspora Association in Belgium raised monies and coordinated distribution with the Government of Rwanda for economic relief amongst those whose livelihoods were affected by the pandemic.

IOM's panel on pandemic response best practices identified the following best practices for diasporas and institutional actors in future emergency and crisis responses¹⁴:

- Connection: ensuring the adequate flow of information and ideas as well as access to goods, services, and opportunities. This includes the creation of long-term networks with local actors to rapidly assess needs, utilize new technologies for the dissemination of information and communication, and include vulnerable or marginalized populations such as women to mitigate the digital gap.
- Partnership: enhancing cooperation and coordination among traditional and non-traditional actors to ensure responses are complimentary and follow humanitarian principles. IOM holds that trust building is fundamental as most diaspora communities left their home country due to adverse circumstances. While strategies will differ accordingly with individual countries, transparency throughout the implementation of interventions is crucial for interventions. The panel asserts that in addition to this, diaspora organizations should be included in coordinating bodies and cooperation frameworks that recognize their roles as key actors.
- Self-empowerment: empowering transnational communities by recognizing that they have their own voice and capacity to fight for their own rights. This can be achieved by encouraging ownership of work, encouraging participation by the intelligentsia in the diaspora, ensuring reciprocity and support of the diaspora in the host society, highlighting the positive role and contributions of the diaspora, and continuing communication to maintain linkages.

4. GLOBAL DIASPORA ENGAGEMENT

As the EHOA region looks to the future, regional themes emerge as opportunities for member states to collaborate and enhance diaspora engagement in the region as a whole and leverage IOM's rich experience with diaspora engagement, strategies and policies. With over 150 diaspora mappings, IOM is well positioned to partner with Member States. It should be noted that while Partner States remain at different levels of progress in terms of institutional capacities and policies, there is incredible evidence of attempts to improve diaspora engagement with administrative structures such as a fully dedicated diaspora departments in ministries of foreign affairs or sub-ministerial bodies. In terms of policy, most of the EHOA Member States have either drafted or adopted diaspora engagement policies.

While several IOM partnerships with Member States are noted above, outlined below are additional examples of IOM's partnerships and projects with Member States and IOM Diaspora Engagement Tools available to Member states;

- iDiaspora is a global engagement and knowledge exchange hub for diaspora communities and those looking to engage with them. It provides comprehensive, regularly updated data and analysis relevant to diaspora communities, policy makers, NGO actors, and showcases successful diaspora actions and partnerships. Migrants and diaspora communities are recognized for their invaluable role in society due to their rich cultural contributions, diverse voices, and their economic contributions to the countries they live in and come from, including philanthropy, entrepreneurship, and innovations. iDiaspora provides a platform to share your voice, to gain knowledge, and to engage with the global community committed to the importance of diaspora.

<https://www.idiaspora.org/en>

13. ENA. English. (2020) *Diaspora Trust Fund Procures over 1 Mn USD Worth COVID-19 Equipment, Supplies*. URL: https://www.ena.et/web/eng/w/en_14252

14. IOM. (2021). *Global Diasporas reacting to the COVID-19 crisis: Best Practices from the Field*.

- ii. IOM has developed a comprehensive strategic approach that focuses on the 3E's for action: to enable, engage and empower transnational communities as agents for development. This approach ensures that the framework conditions are in place to enable these communities to reach their development potential, that appropriate steps are taken to fully understand and engage with them, and that special measures and programs are in place to empower diaspora to facilitate the transfer of resources.



- iii. In 2022, IOM Somalia with IDF funding supported the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation to develop, finalize and validate the Somali National Diaspora Policy, which will lay the foundation and framework to further strengthening diaspora engagement. The first ever Somalia National Diaspora Policy and its implementation strategy have been successfully completed and validated by stakeholders, including a communication plan and toolkit to be utilized by the Department of Diaspora Affairs and Somalia embassies abroad for stronger and consistent engagement with the Somali diaspora

5. ETHIOPIA, KENYA, UGANDA, SOMALIA DIASPORA OUTREACH VISIT TO USA

The International Organization for Migration (IOM), UN Migration Regional Office for East and Horn of Africa (EHOA), and IOM office in Washington DC hosted a Diaspora outreach event on March 21 – 22, 2023, in Washington DC, USA bringing together Ethiopian, Kenyan, Ugandan and Somali diaspora in the USA. The event created an opportunity for the countries' MFAs/diaspora departments/desks, and diaspora associations based in the USA to discuss and validate the findings of the three diaspora-related assessments targeting Ethiopia, Kenya, and Uganda; furthermore, the event was an opportunity to exchange knowledge and ideas, discuss challenges and propose solutions as well as foster collaboration in diaspora engagement between countries of origin and countries of destination promoting development through partnerships with the diaspora and the private sector.

During the Diaspora Outreach Event in Washington DC, diaspora associations leaders and representatives from member states of Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia and Uganda pledged to work jointly on development action. Several models on diaspora engagement were presented by diaspora organization leaders where there was general agreement that these models can be replicated and implemented across the region. There was also a call for a collaborative approach to combatting human trafficking as its transnational nature affects all states.

Recommendations at the regional level included the following;

1. A request for Diaspora Affairs Units in member states to enhance their websites to provide more information to their diaspora members. Enhance the Ministry for Foreign and Diaspora Affairs website to provide more data and guidance to the diaspora showcasing opportunities for engagement including the following:
 - An area where the diaspora could register the details of their diaspora organization in host countries.
 - An area where the Ministry for Foreign and Diaspora Affairs could register needs in specific sectors.
 - An area where investment opportunities can be listed
 - An area such as a 'one-stop shop' where diaspora members can go to one source for all information they may require to invest, engage, and have all questions answered.
2. A recommendation was made to enhance the Technical Industrial Vocational and Entrepreneurship Training programs (TIVET) across the region to make these more appealing and create pathways for more youth to participate thereby creating more opportunities for youth at home.
3. Develop more investment opportunities across the region for diaspora members such as SACCOs, MMFs, and diaspora bonds (infrastructure bonds).
4. Develop 'Homebound' heritage trips to the region (similar to the Habesha Networks 2020 Homebound Trip and Israel Birthright Tours) where second and third generation diaspora members can visit EHOA and experience various aspects of the homeland including organized tours of historic areas, networking events and volunteer opportunities.
5. The Ethiopian Diaspora Trust Fund (one dollar a day foundation) was lauded by all diaspora leaders as an initiative worth replicating. The EDTF continues to do great work with the launch of a USD \$3 million-dollar EDTF 'Building Forward' project to build four secondary schools in the most war-affected regions of Ethiopia consistent with the goal to promote longer term socio-economic development in Ethiopia. Prior to COVID-19 the EDTF funded various projects impacting livelihoods and SDGs in the health, sanitation, and education sectors. The EDTF currently has 26,344 donors across 93 countries with 48 chapters.
6. Diaspora Leaders and Heads of Diaspora Departments should take advantage of the IOM resources available on Diaspora Engagement which builds on IOM's rich experience of over 150 diaspora mappings implemented across diverse contexts. The platform, iDiaspora (<https://www.idiaspora.org/en>) provides comprehensive, regularly updated data and analysis relevant to diaspora communities, policymakers, experts, and NGO actors, showcasing successful diaspora initiatives and partnerships. Idiaspora is a resource hub that allows participants to access diaspora success stories, best practices, and relevant policies from around the globe.

As noted by the Principal Secretary from the Ministry of Foreign & Diaspora Affairs, Republic of Kenya, 'Continuous dialogue and engagement with our Diaspora is a strategy that we have adopted to put traction to the participation of our nationals abroad in our economy. It helps to build trust, identify challenges the Diaspora face abroad and is key in formulating policies that will address those challenges stifling delivery of services to the Diaspora and handicaps to their engagement to national development.'

EHOA Member States Diaspora Engagement Snapshot

Country	Diaspora Dept. in MOFA	Diaspora Website	Budget for Diaspora Dept.	National Diaspora Policy	Diaspora Advisory Council	Diaspora Mapping	Dual Citizenship	Diaspora Ability to Vote
Burundi	Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Directorate of Diaspora	No	No	Drafted in 2015	No	No Diaspora Mapping done. Instead, a mapping of Burundian diaspora competences everywhere will be launched in 2023.	Yes	Yes
Djibouti	No	Global Djibouti Diaspora website not part of MOFA	No	National Diaspora Strategy launched in Feb 2021	No	Diaspora Mapping conducted in 2020	Yes	Yes
Eritrea	Department of Eritreans Abroad	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes
Ethiopia	Yes – Ethiopian Diaspora Agency	Yes	Yes	Ratified in 2013	No	Diaspora Mapping in 2018 and Rapid Assessment in 2023	No	Yes
Kenya	Yes -Now a State Dept. Ministry of Foreign and Diaspora Affairs		Yes	Developed in 2014 but needs revision	National Diaspora Council of Kenya (NADICOK)	Rapid Assessment Diaspora Mapping Feb 2023 - IOM	Yes	Yes – August 2022
Rwanda	Yes 2008	Yes	No	Yes 2009	No	Diaspora Mapping in 2020	Yes	Yes
Somalia	Yes	No	No	Yes - Drafted in 2022	No	No	No	No
South Sudan	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No
Tanzania	Yes	Yes	No	Drafted in 2014 but not finalized	No	No	No	Yes
Uganda	Yes	Yes	No	Developed in 2013	No	Rapid Assessment in 2022	Yes	Yes

