



# DIASPORA ENGAGEMENT RAPID ASSESSMENT

Ministry of Foreign Affairs Department of Diaspora Affairs  
**Republic of Uganda**

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## 1. BACKGROUND, SCOPE AND GOALS

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It is now well established that, diasporas contribute significantly to homeland development both in the form of remittances, and well beyond these crucial inflows. Diasporas and their contributions are organized across a variety of scales and sectors, providing both financial and in-kind resources to communities and populations in their countries of origin – sometimes with little or no governmental support. Moreover, these citizens are indispensable in representing their homelands abroad, and in conducting bilateral relationships between the host and origin countries.

As the Government of the Republic of Uganda begins to take key organized steps to engage the Ugandan diaspora, it is important to note that it does so at a critical time. Uganda continues to demonstrate great resolve against the challenges of the global pandemic, subsequent economic downturn, and regional instabilities. Moreover, Uganda has already demonstrated political will and interest in engaging with the diaspora through the establishment of the Department of Diaspora Affairs in 2007, a complement of staff to support services in this unit, several projects initiated by various ministries, the appointment of the Senior Presidential Advisor on Diaspora Affairs - Ambassador Walusimbi Abbey, and the recent appointment of Ambassador Johnny Muhindo, who has been a member of the Ugandan diaspora for several years, as the Head of the Department of Diaspora Affairs. Eastern Africa faces overlapping socio-economic and environmental dilemmas that will require innovation and the tools by which to leverage its overwhelmingly young population. As diaspora communities across the world also begin to recover from the impacts of COVID-19, the medium-term will be decisive for developing countries like Uganda to leverage their skills, resources, and shared cultural contexts for mutual exchange, reciprocal benefit, and fostering collective resilience.

The following were identified and agreed upon by the Diaspora Department in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs as priority areas of the rapid assessment to be addressed;

- Identify countries, those of Africa and the developing world in particular, that have integrated the diaspora in national planning, and that have successfully implemented diaspora engagement programs.
- Review existing Ministry efforts to engage with the diaspora, and ways by which to initiate immediate or short-term improvements to these processes.
- Identify opportunities to foster trust with the diaspora for long-term diaspora engagement programs.
- Determine ways to effectively communicate with the diaspora, and for sharing information and data with the diaspora.
- Develop a proposal for a mapping assessment of the Ugandan diaspora.

## 2. METHODOLOGY

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The methodology included a multimodal approach geared to the timeline and goals of the assessment. A desk review was conducted on the current diaspora processes, projects and materials within the Diaspora Unit - Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Uganda Investment Authority which included the following:

1. Compendium of Investments
2. Home is Best Summit
3. Regulatory Impact Assessment

The desk review also included identifying African countries that have successfully integrated the diaspora in their national planning and implemented projects which included the diaspora. Examples have been provided in Ethiopia, Ghana, Mali, Nigeria and Somalia.

Communicating with and sharing information with the diaspora is a process where you contact, connect, collaborate with and build trust with the diaspora. Through a review of past projects, this assessment provides various options for sharing information with the diaspora. It should be noted that these options are currently being used by countries of origin to successfully share information with their diaspora. Building and earning the trust of the diaspora must include connecting with diaspora members' core values, preserving and valuing the traditions of the diaspora with a common sense of identity and integrity.

## 3. BUILDING TRUST

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Building partnerships between governments and diasporas is much more likely to succeed if there is a strong foundation of good communication and mutual trust. Partnership is a two-way street. In many destination countries diasporas have felt that country-of-origin governments see them simply as endless supplies of cash, while some country-of origin governments see diasporas as entitled and demanding. All parties must feel that they are deriving value from the relationship. Building trust is therefore a necessary element of the diaspora engagement strategy. A critical element in building trust with diaspora populations must also involve creating a welcoming environment for diaspora engagement in development activities. Trust building suggestions may include;

- » Initiatives focused on recognizing diaspora members who have excelled in their professional fields or philanthropic work in host countries – “Meet Ugandans in the Diaspora Making a Difference”. This should be seen as the first step to show respect for all diaspora regardless of their ethnicity, religious, or political affiliation. This is not about contributions to national development but rather a first step to show respect and recognition of the diaspora. As an example, the Government of Nigeria did something similar in July 2020, but given the maturity of their diaspora engagement strategy, their initiative also included a ‘contribution to national development’ component which we do not recommend at this stage.<sup>1</sup> Examples of Ugandans in destination countries who have attained excellence in various fields are listed below. Please note this is not an exhaustive list:
  - **Salma Lakhani** is the 19th Lieutenant Governor of the Canadian province of Alberta. Her appointment in 2020 comes after many years of service in the public and non-profit sector. Ms. Lakhani is the nominal viceregal representative of Queen Elizabeth II, Canada’s Head of State, in the province of Alberta. Ms. Lakhani is the first South Asian and the first Muslim to hold viceregal office in Canada.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://diaspora.gov.ng/dday/>



- **Solomon Jagwe** Sowl Studios was created by Solomon and Nerissa Jagwe to provide educational content for their two children, in order to foster familiarity with their rich and diverse Ugandan cultural heritage. Solomon was born and raised in Uganda, and this solution was intended to help their kids learn Luganda. They were inspired by this gap in educational material embarked on creating a children's app Nkoza and Nankya. Nkoza & Nankya is user-friendly and geared to teaching children and parents learn Luganda across the world.
  - **Ronny Mayanja** is the founder of the Ugandan Diaspora Network, a social networking forum celebrating Uganda's success stories abroad. Now in its 8th year the forum holds an annual Diaspora Social Networking Gala and Business Breakfast at Kampala Serena Hotel. Dr. Maggie Kigozi is the organization's Patron, while the organization's founder has previously served as a member of the Uganda North American Association (UNAA) Board of Directors.
  - **Michael Samuel Kiwanuka** is a British singer-songwriter and record producer who is signed with Polydor Records. The son of Ugandan parents, his 2012 debut album, Home Again, went gold in the United Kingdom and his second album, Love & Hate, debuted in 2016 at number one. He has been nominated for numerous honours, including the Brit Awards, MTV Europe Music Awards, BBC Music Awards, and The Grammy Awards. In January 2012, Kiwanuka won the BBC's Sound of 2012, and in September 2020 the Mercury Prize.
  - **Winnie Byanyima** is the Executive Director of UNAIDS and an Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations. A passionate and longstanding champion of social justice and gender equality, Ms. Byanyima leads the United Nations' efforts to end the AIDS epidemic by 2030. Ms. Byanyima believes that health care is a human right and was an early champion of a People's Vaccine against the coronavirus that is available and free of charge to everyone, everywhere.
  - **Henry Kerali**, a Ugandan national, is the World Bank Country Director for Afghanistan. Mr. Kerali joined the World Bank Group (WBG) in 2003 as Senior Highway Engineer in the Infrastructure and Energy Department in Europe and Central Asia region and was appointed to his current post in 2019. He has also held various positions within the WBG such as Country Director for Ghana, Liberia and Sierra Leone. Before joining the Bank, Kerali was a professor at the University of Birmingham, specializing in the development of transport infrastructure, and developing research on economic cost-benefit models for assessing the feasibility of infrastructure investments.
- » Engaging with community leaders in the diaspora for collaborative discussions and inclusive projects. The challenge is to identify and engage those with 'affluence and influence' who are in a position to connect with the home country. Early identification with leaders and keeping in contact on an ongoing basis with mutual respect is essential.
  - » Establishing a diaspora committee/council as a branch of the Diaspora Unit of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for regular sessions on diaspora engagement.
  - » Once the diaspora engagement strategy is completed, stakeholder consultations should be arranged to outline and solicit feedback on the government diaspora strategy and policy.
  - » Flexibility in project implementations.
  - » Greater transparency in regulations and licensing requirements and more consistent application of property law.
  - » Engaging consulates and embassies in trust building programs.

Few governments have taken the task of gaining the trust of a diaspora as seriously as the government of Mexico. From the late 1990's, the government has invested significant resources for communication with and service to its diaspora. The creation of the Institute of Mexicans Abroad (Instituto de los Mexicanos en

el Exterior or IME) in 2002 by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs brought coherence to these efforts through a dense network of over 56 consular offices in North America. IME works with organized diaspora groups on the well-known Tres por Uno (3x1) program, through which three levels of government match the contributions of migrant organizations to infrastructure projects in their communities of origin. This initiative has yielded tangible results in the form of local improvement totaling USD 1.5 billion as of 2014.<sup>2</sup> A key trust-building element of Mexico's diaspora engagement strategy is CCIME, the consultative council. The council freely criticizes and disagrees with government positions when it feels called upon to do so, which — paradoxically perhaps — consolidates the confidence of both parties that disagreement does not mean alienation. As Mexico's example shows, the establishment of joint diaspora government decision making is extremely important to building trust.<sup>3</sup>

To give an example of Mexico's commitment to diaspora engagement, in May 2021, The Institute for Mexicans Abroad (IME) and the offices of legal affairs (DGAJ) and consular services of the Foreign Ministry held a virtual meeting with Mexico's embassies and consulates in Latin America and the Caribbean to strengthen implementation of the 2021 Constitutional reform regarding Mexican nationality. The DGAJ explained that the reform modifies Chapter II Article 30A of the Mexican Constitution. Now, unrestricted transmission of Mexican nationality by birth is allowed for generations born outside of Mexico, descendants of Mexicans, father or mother, who were also born outside of Mexico. In accordance with current legislation, the Foreign Ministry's area for legal affairs is responsible for applying and establishing the criteria regarding Mexican nationality. The Foreign Ministry has created internal measures to ensure that Mexicans abroad are registered as Mexicans in order to fully exercise and enjoy their rights as Mexican citizens. Since its publication in the Official Journal of the Federation on May 17, 2021, the Foreign Ministry has informed Mexico embassies and consulates of this Constitutional reform to ensure that all children of Mexicans born abroad have the necessary information to exercise their Constitutional right to Mexican nationality. The Foreign Ministry will conduct an intense campaign among the Mexican communities in Latin America and the Caribbean to guarantee the exercise of Mexican nationality and its transmission to daughters and sons born outside of Mexico.

## 4. DIASPORA MODELS

### 4.1 ETHIOPIA: ETHIOPIAN DIASPORA TRUST FUND

#### Overview

The Ethiopian Diaspora Trust Fund (EDTF) is a non-profit organization working in coordination with the Ethiopian government to directly involve the diaspora in development by way of fundraising and projects for Ethiopia. The Fund originated in the USA under the auspices of Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed in 2018, who guaranteed an apolitical and transparent process for the 3 million-strong diaspora to contribute to the country's development objectives. Supporting this, the EDTF is an incorporated non-profit in the United States under Delawarean corporate law and is administered by a Board of Directors who are responsible to an Advisory Council that shares fiduciary responsibility for the Fund's assets.<sup>4</sup> The Fund's mandate can also be characterized as supporting the reform agenda of the Ethiopian government by attempting to facilitate equitable and inclusive social and economic development; with an overarching objective of promoting national unity and cooperation amongst all Ethiopians.

<sup>2</sup> Malone and Durden 2018

<sup>3</sup> Developing a Road Map for Engaging Diasporas in Development, IOM and MPI

<sup>4</sup> EDTF Terms of Reference, September 15th, 2018.



EDTF Board Member hands over thousands of first aid kits to local authorities. Retrieved from: Official EDTF Twitter Account.

## Implementation

As of January 2022, the EDTF had raised approximately USD \$9 million in contributions for projects. These contributions from Ethiopia's diaspora were derived from over 26,000 donors in 48 chapters, spread across 93 countries.<sup>5</sup> Guaranteed geographic representation of the global diaspora, provisions for the inclusion of women and youth, and professional qualification requirements for members of the Board are imbedded in the governance mechanisms of the EDTF. Governance mechanisms such as these work to safeguard the institutional quality of the Fund, while ensuring that its activities are viewed as legitimate by stakeholders and the public. Moreover, EDTF's activities and fiscal overview are accessible to the public.

In practice, Ethiopian institutions, government bodies, or civil society organizations submit applications and proposals to the EDTF Board for review, shortlisting, and approval. Past projects of the EDTF have included the distribution of medical supplies, while several ongoing projects include water and energy infrastructure, child welfare, Covid-19 emergency relief and education. In line with the EDTF mandate, the geographic scope of these projects have spanned all of Ethiopia, including the Afar, Amhara, Oromo and Tigray regions. The Fund has recently announced that, it will undertake the building of four secondary schools in collaboration with Ethiopia's Ministry of Education.<sup>6</sup> The project will be aimed at students in Amhara and Afar who have been affected by the ongoing conflict and will seek to address school attendance rates for girls, and the lack of infrastructure in underdeveloped rural areas.<sup>7</sup>

Although the EDTF has been successful at generating diaspora engagement with local development initiatives and remaining active, the diaspora's contributions have not met government expectations. The original expectation of raising approximately USD \$365 million annually has not been met. Low contribution levels can be attributed in part however, to Ethiopia and its diaspora contending with the pandemic and the internal conflict. It is also likely that the fund is hindered by its incumbent structuring, that relies on part time volunteers for its management and oversight.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.ethiopiastrustfund.org/>

<sup>6</sup> Borkena, 'EDTF Launches a \$3 million dollar 'Building Forward' Project in Ethiopia', January 28th, 2022.

<sup>7</sup> EDTF Press Release, 'EDTF Launches a \$3 million dollar 'Building Forward' Project in Ethiopia',

<sup>8</sup> Taddese, H., 'Op Ed: Ethiopia Diaspora Trust Fund: A great idea in need of a reset' Addis Standard, January 14th, 2019.



## Replicability for Uganda

Uganda's is well positioned to replicate a trust fund initiative given the technical, entrepreneurial, and managerial skills of its diaspora. It would be critical for program success to ensure adequate resources are dedicated to the administration and expansion of the Fund, in contrast to the gaps in these areas that are evident in the EDTF. Additionally, Uganda would be well advised to ensure that inclusiveness, accountability and transparency are central to this initiative.

## 4.2 GHANA: YEAR OF RETURN

### Overview

*The Year of Return, Ghana 2019* is a diaspora engagement project targeting the Ghanaian and broader pan-African diaspora to commemorate four centuries since its creation by enslaved Africans and their descendants. In so doing, Ghana is expected to become the geographic focal point for millions of African descendants attempting to discover and nurture roots to the African continent.<sup>9</sup> The project has several underlying facets, including the Ghana Diaspora Celebration and the Homecoming Summit (CDHS) that were held as part of the activities marking the year-long celebration of the African diaspora. It is evident that, the Year of Return has sought to capitalize on growing awareness of marginalization by Black Americans in the United States and their growing desire to trace familial ancestry and identity. The Year of Return also offers those of Ghanaian descent and African diaspora members a path to naturalized citizenship and information pertaining to migration and settlement in Ghana.



HE Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo, President of the Republic of Ghana swearing in a new citizen from the Year of Return program. Retrieved from: Ghana's Office of the President.

### Implementation

This project was a state-led initiative, with major stakeholders including the Diaspora Affairs Unit of the Office of the President, with implementation responsibility falling within the Ministry of Tourism, Arts and Culture through the Ghana Tourism Authority (GTA). Yet, many programs did not receive government funding or project support. Activities for the project included the Pan-African Student Summit, Panafest,

<sup>9</sup> Ennos, E. (2019). Assessment of Ghana's Diaspora Engagement Initiatives for National Development [Thesis], University of Ghana.

Emancipation Day, healing concerts, investment forums, film festivals, lecture series, and art shows.<sup>10</sup> The project's facilitators also offer participants information on immigration and citizenship, community integration, continuing education, transportation, licensing, as well as support in purchasing homes, vehicles, and businesses. The effects of the program are too early to assess but it has already demonstrated its ability to bring new international attention and 'birthright' tourists to Ghana, with approximately 150,000 new arrivals in Ghana during the Year of Return.<sup>11</sup> Officials anticipate arrivals will grow exponentially over the next two decades as the program expands. Concurrently, there are concerns of adverse effects the program may contribute to later, such as the effects of foreign-led businesses withdrawing profits from the local economy.<sup>12</sup> Ghanaians have already begun to express concerns about their potential displacement, the access foreigners receive, and the long-term effect of the program on the cost of living.<sup>13</sup>

### Replicability for Uganda

Similar birthright initiatives should be developed to engage the diaspora, especially those of Ugandan descent who have little or no connection to Uganda or Africa. In lieu of engaging the pan-African diaspora, government's efforts may be better utilised if focused or piloted to those of Ugandan heritage whose families may have left Uganda during the instabilities of the post-independence era. This is especially the case for descendants of the Asian minority who were expelled in 1972. Moreover, Uganda possesses several national parks, and potential for growth in the cultural and ecological tourism sectors. The challenge of implementing such programs lie with the required investment capital, and the amount of incubation time prior to the sector achieving profitability or self-sustainability.

## 4.3 MALI: MICRO-FINANCING RURAL YOUTH FROM MALIAN DIASPORA

### Overview

In Mali, rural youth lack access to financing for income-generating activities. This program was created by IFAD's Rural Youth Vocational Training, Employment and Entrepreneurship Support Project (FIER) in collaboration with the Groupe de Recherche et de Réalisations pour le Développement Rural (GRDR) civil society organization, and the social enterprise ABC Microfinance platform Babyloan.<sup>14</sup> Using the Babyloan platform, the Malian diaspora in France can support socio-economic development activities via participatory financing, commonly known as crowdfunding. In addition to start-up capital, this program allows diaspora members to directly contribute to vocational training and professional development activities. The intent of the program is to create sustainable livelihoods that reduce pressures on youth to emigrate from rural areas and to help them contribute to local economic development. The goal of the program is to finance 11,500 youth income-generating activities and 4,000 youth microenterprises over an eight-year project life cycle.

<sup>10</sup> <https://repatriatetoghana.com/>

<sup>11</sup> Tetteh, B., 'Beyond the Year of Return: Africa and the diaspora must forge closer ties,' Africa Renewal, September 20<sup>th</sup>, 2020.

<sup>12</sup> Ghana Web, 'Ghana needs staggering system for repatriation of foreign exchange profits,' March 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2022

<sup>13</sup> Hamelo, G., 'Why Ghana's "Renaissance" Campaign is Divisive,' OkayAfrica, February 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2022.

<sup>14</sup> International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), 'Crowdfunding Malian diaspora remittances to finance rural entrepreneurship,' 2020: [https://www.ifad.org/documents/38714170/39135645/Mali\\_Casestudy\\_Web.pdf/2ed0b277-3c73-d098-83f5-a2152c04bd3a](https://www.ifad.org/documents/38714170/39135645/Mali_Casestudy_Web.pdf/2ed0b277-3c73-d098-83f5-a2152c04bd3a)



Beneficiary of micro-financing for agro-processors in Mali. Retrieved from; Le Fonds international de développement agricole (FIDA).

## Implementation

IFAD and ABC Microfinance invested approximately USD \$530,300 in their partnership to co-pilot this model and conduct the following key project objectives<sup>15</sup>:

- Map the diaspora in the Paris region of France and segment them according to remittance habits and expectations.
- Create the Mali-dedicated webpage on the Babyloan website.
- Develop partnerships with Malian micro-financing institutions to extend loans to small entrepreneurs.
- Conduct a study to develop marketing approaches to engage the diaspora.
- Set up a knowledge management system, including a monitoring and evaluation system and organize performance assessment workshops, midterm evaluation report and final evaluation.

Babyloan screens and works with local microfinance institutions (MFIs) to disburse loans guaranteed and reimbursed by the project. Recipients received loans of up to USD \$2,200 at a time, though disbursal figures to recipients were far below this. During implementation it was found that Malians in the diaspora were responsive to government attempts to create an enabling environment for diaspora investment, and were also partial to investing in their regions of origin. The project also helped to create standardized processes among micro-finance lenders in rural areas. While the project was able to build trust with a high rate (100 percent) of diaspora lending reimbursed, only 10 percent of the nearly 300 micro-financing projects were funded by the diaspora.<sup>16</sup> Additionally the project is framed as one of direct microfinancing between rural youth and diaspora, but in practice the program is partnered with local lending institutions. This model requires extensive preliminary work to ensure partners meet conditionalities for disbursal, in addition to recipient conditionality. Moreover, FIER approved far many more projects than the local lending partners have been able to issue.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

<sup>16</sup> Rabat Process. (2020). Collection of Diaspora Engagement Practices. Rabat Process - Euro-African Dialogue on Migration and Development.

## Replicability for Uganda

Crowdfunding microfinance programs offer the diaspora innovative opportunities to invest in projects in their country of origin maximizing financial inclusion throughout the country. Moreover, it facilitates the strengthening of the small and medium enterprise sector through the provision of access to credit and business development services. This model leverages the well-established microfinance sector in Uganda and provides the opportunity to engage the youth both in Uganda and in the diaspora. It should be noted that engaging the diaspora through crowdfunding microfinance was also successful in Haiti through the 'Zafen' program mobilizing more than \$1 million, supporting 575 entrepreneurs and creating more than 900 jobs. It is critical that business development services (legal registration, accounting, business planning, information and technology, marketing) accompany the access to finance.

## 4.4 NIGERIA: NIGERIANS IN DIASPORA COMMISSION – NIDCOM

### Overview

The Nigerians in Diaspora Commission (NiDCOM) was enacted by legislation in 2017 to serve as the apex body of the organized global Nigerian diaspora. NiDCOM's mandate is to engage the Nigerian diaspora on the policies, projects, and their participation via capital and human resources in the socio-economic, cultural, and political development of Nigeria.<sup>17</sup> The Commission is institutionally located within the federal Ministry of Foreign Affairs; but is run by an independent governing board, empowered to exercise authority on behalf of NiDCOM to engage and coordinate the diaspora. As a federal commission, the Chairperson of the governing board is appointed by the President of Nigeria for a four-year term, with ratification of the appointment occurring in the Senate. NiDCOM is tasked the day-to-day running of the Commission, formulating and implementing programs and policies that complement government priorities, coordinate all other state-sponsored Nigerian diasporic organizations, and serve as premier counsel to all levels of government on diaspora affairs.



Attendees of the NiDCOM 2021 Diaspora Investment Summit. Retrieved from: Nigerians in the Diaspora.

<sup>17</sup> NiDCOM, National Diaspora Policy (NDP) of 2021: <https://nidcom.gov.ng/>



## Implementation

The Commission has undertaken several programs in fulfillment of its mandate of engaging and organizing the diaspora. In this capacity, NiDCOM functions as a quasi-oversight body for the development and implementation of government diaspora programs. Developed alongside NiDCOM for example, the Federal Mortgage Bank of Nigeria sponsors a mortgage affordability program for diaspora. The program gives members of the diaspora an opportunity to access mortgage loans to own residential property in Nigeria. This housing project is situated on 675 hectares of land in the Federal Capital Territory of Abuja and anticipates 17,000 housing units will be created with multiplier effects for the local economy. Recently, NiDCOM's efforts have focused on the evacuation and support services of Nigerian nationals stranded in Ukraine. This has garnered the Commission some praise as it effectively coordinated the efforts of government, the private sector, as well as local and international civil society to respond to those Nigerians who have faced insurmountable difficulties whilst attempting to flee the current conflict.<sup>18</sup> It is important to note that, given the Commission's Chair and Board are appointed by the executive, it has come under criticism by various diaspora civil society organizations for its non-inclusion of key stakeholders and the delay in constituting this key oversight mechanism.<sup>19</sup> Despite this, NiDCOM increasingly functions as a point of first contact for those in the diaspora wishing to engage government, while streamlining outreach by officials to the diaspora in order to eliminate overlap and ensure efficiency. NiDCOM has also raised the profile of the diaspora and its members who are working towards the development of Nigeria.

## Replicability for Uganda

At present, the Ugandan government comprises over 30 Ministries, and approximately 50 cabinet ministers. Diaspora engagement is critical to every area of governance, and requires a streamlined, well-resourced actor that can coordinate other stakeholders both locally and in the diaspora. Any diaspora coordination unit must also balance diaspora expectations of transparency and a process/institution that is insulated from political interference. This program or a similar program offers the government of Uganda the opportunity to engage the diaspora who may wish to assist family members to purchase property or a home and also diaspora members looking to invest in property or a home in Uganda.

## 4.5 SOMALIA: SOMALI AGRIFOOD FUND

### Overview

Project Stakeholder	Financing Contribution (%)
Business Owner/Operator	20
Somali AgriFood Fund	20
Diaspora Investor(s)	40
Local or additional Diaspora Investor(s)	20

The Somali AgriFood Fund was a start-up capital matching investment fund that focused on driving diaspora investments into Somalia's agriculture and rural businesses. The Fund was initiated by the Government of Somalia in collaboration with the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) and its Financing Facility for Remittances (FFR). The FFR works to enhance remittance impact to eliminate rural poverty by co-financing projects alongside public, private and civil society partners. These efforts

<sup>18</sup> Babalola, O., 'MURIC commends NIDCOM on Nigerians evacuated from Ukraine,' The Guardian Nigeria News, March 13<sup>th</sup>, 2022.

<sup>19</sup> Samson Atekojo UsmaN, 'Absence of NIDCOM board responsible for agitators' support from abroad – Ex-NIDO Chairman,' Daily Post Nigeria, October 9<sup>th</sup>, 2021.



were a part of the broader *Rebuilding Somalia through the Diaspora Investment in Agriculture (DIA)* initiative done in partnership with the United States Department of State's International Diaspora Engagement Alliance (IdEA).<sup>20</sup> Given that Somalia's remittances exceed the country's official development assistance, stakeholders over the past two decades have attempted to channel these monies into productive investments for local economic development. Target projects ranged in size from USD \$20,000 to \$250,000, with the Fund contributing 20 percent of project financing. The objectives of Fund and DIA were to promote investment in poor rural areas, build diaspora capacity while focusing its efforts to agribusiness, and to connect the diaspora with stakeholders in Somalia.<sup>21</sup>

## Implementation

Somali diaspora investors were engaged by government and partners in the United States, Canada, European Union and Australia. The scope of small and medium enterprises Somalia's agribusiness value chain included fishing, livestock, agricultural production, food processing, packaging, and cold storage facilities. The project, inclusive of applicant screening, promotion, disbursing funds, as well as monitoring and evaluation functions were managed by Shuraako, an American NGO operating in Somalia from 2014-2019. The project also received ongoing support from IFAD and the Business in Development (BiD) Network. By 2016 the Fund had 199 applicants, 8 diaspora investors, and disbursed USD \$435,000 to 6 qualified owner and operators.<sup>22</sup> Diaspora investors were partial to investing in their regions of origin, while owners/operators were given technical assistance to engage local banks and micro-financing institutions.

It is important to note that, this model is structured to rely on external program management and stringent conditionality towards local farmers that meet donor expectations. Moreover, the program relied on perceived multiplier effects that would benefit thousands of small-scale producers and create hundreds of new permanent job opportunities, both of which are difficult to measure. It is unknown if impact assessments and planned follow-up upscaling phases remain undisclosed or were not conducted due to the global pandemic.

## Replicability for Uganda

The pandemic recovery has contributed to an international commodities boom and rising prices for agricultural goods have continued due to global instabilities. The US International Trade Administration reports that, Ugandan agriculture is hindered by the absence of packaging quality, storage facilities, technical assistance to minimize post-harvest losses and boost production, reliable transportation and freight and credit. Producers face difficulty in meeting sanitary and phytosanitary standards for exports to both neighbouring countries and the broader international market.<sup>23</sup> Moreover, agriculture accounts for one-quarter of Uganda's GDP, and only half of its arable land cultivated. It is against this backdrop that Uganda could prioritize agribusiness and value chain enhancement in its diaspora engagement, most especially in existing agri-food producing regions such as the Central and Western regions.<sup>24</sup>

## 4.6 SOMALIA: IOM MIDA HEALTH, EDUCATION, GOVERNANCE PROGRAM

### Overview

Migration for Development in Africa (MIDA) is a capacity building programme, which provides assistance to mobilize competencies acquired by African nationals abroad for the benefit of Africa's development. Based on its extensive experience in the Return of Qualified African Nationals (RQAN), IOM launched MIDA to strengthen its capacity building efforts. Many African nationals in the diaspora are applying their qualifications and skills in other countries. Such qualifications and skills can be brought back and channeled

20 IFAD, 'IFAD grant for Somalia in response to call for diaspora investment', February 4<sup>th</sup>, 2013.

21 Shuraako, Somali AgriFood Fund Case Studies, June 2017.

22 IFAD, Diaspora Investment in Agriculture (DIA) initiative Overview.

23 US International Trade Administration, Uganda – Agricultural Sector.

24 Ugandan Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Agriculture Sector, The Compendium of Diaspora Investment and Business Opportunities, 2012.

into the development of the African continent. Through its mobility-based approach, MIDA aims at assisting African nationals to directly contribute to the development of their countries of origin. Many parts of the African continent are currently affected by a shortage of qualified human resources. Large-scale departures of executives and university graduates have contributed to this shortage. Thousands of African professionals leave each year in search of better opportunities abroad or to seek asylum either from insecurity or unstable political and socio-economic conditions. The resulting brain drain heightens the dependency of African economies by compelling them to resort to costly foreign expertise.

### Overall impact of IOM MIDA Program

NATIONALITIES 17 countries	ASSIGNMENTS +500 assignments completed	INSTITUTIONS +100 institutions
MAIN AREAS COVERED education, health and governance	GENDER OF PARTICIPANTS Male: 74%; Female 26%	LOCAL PROFESSIONALS 104 experts trained
JUNIOR PROFESSIONALS 153 interns trained		

Since 2008, IOM/UN migration has been actively supporting the role of diaspora as a key development actor in Somalia and beyond. With its MIDA Somalia programme, IOM/UN Migration has contributed to providing capacity-building and technical skills support to the Federal Government of Somalia and Federal Member States, through the deployment of diaspora experts in key sectors (health, education, governance).

### Implementation

The MIDA Somalia programme 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 is further strengthened through the assignments of local professionals and junior professionals (interns), who benefit from diaspora experts' daily mentoring and training. Somali diaspora have been deployed from several countries as outlined below.

Examples of diaspora projects in the health sector are listed below.

- Somali diaspora assisted in the development of relevant public health policies and guidelines aligned to international health regulations.
- Diaspora in cooperation with IOM and the Somali Ministry of Health of the South-West state travelled to Merka for a 2-month short-term assignment from April to May 2020 to support Merka General Hospital and the local branch of the Ministry of Health to raise the level of awareness on Covid 19 and prevention.
- Diaspora experts assisted in Kismayo General Hospital attending to over 700 children suffering from measles
- Diaspora health experts worked intensively with the National Public Health Reference Laboratory (NPHRL) to develop testing capacity to detect COVID-19 with the assistance from the World Health Organization
- A total of 26 diaspora health professionals supported Somalia's Covid 19 prevention and response at national, regional and in hospitals including hospitals designated as treatment centers e.g., de Martino hospital.



## Replicability for Uganda

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 Uganda Ministry of Health has made progress in the health sector with projects such as the implementation of the National Technical Guidelines for Integrated Disease Surveillance and Response (IDSR) strategy across the country. This strategy provides the opportunity for rational use of resources and maximises investments in health surveillance systems. The 3rd edition of the IDSR guidelines incorporates lessons learnt from previous epidemics, new frameworks like the Global Health Security Agenda (GHS), Disaster Risk Management (DRM), the WHO regional strategy for health security and emergencies, and the rising non-communicable diseases. These guidelines have been adapted to reflect national priorities, policies and public health structures. However, the MIDA program can bring considerable diaspora resources to the table aligning these resources with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Diaspora strategy and the Ministry of Health strategies.

## 5. DIASPORA COMMUNICATIONS

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As trust building initiatives are being determined and implemented, communicating with the diaspora is a critical component to mobilization. Good communication and amicable relations are the building blocks of an effective outreach mobilisation strategy. They are crucial for building trust and establishing long-term partnerships. Delegates at the Global Forum on Migration and Development (GFMD) diaspora roundtable (Roundtable 1.2) repeatedly made the point that, countries of origin need an institutional framework at the national level to communicate with their diasporas, coordinate policies, and provide support for and follow-up on engagement. Strategies for diaspora mobilization may include the following:

### 5.1 DIASPORA DATABASE

Creation of a central Diaspora database of contacts and organizations. Currently the Ugandan diaspora is communicating with several government ministries in diaspora engagement projects. While these projects are important, this model does not leverage the full capability of the diaspora or the Government of Uganda. A central database of diaspora contacts, associations and communications in the Diaspora Unit will provide the opportunity for improved development and implementation of policy and engagement of diaspora strategies.

### 5.2 SOCIAL MEDIA

With advances in technology, virtual developments now facilitate and transform the possibilities for diaspora outreach and connections globally. Diaspora communities usually have their own social media platforms that governments can use to reach out to the Diaspora at a minimum cost. Social media platforms (such as Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp, Twitter,) also provide the ability for outreach and mobilization of the diaspora.

### 5.3 CONSULATES AND EMBASSIES

Increasingly, governments are instructing their consulates to interact with the diaspora more systematically. A review of the embassy and consular websites of 30 origin countries with active diaspora policies suggests an extensive consular presence in the top destinations of their respective diasporas. The services offered at consulates vary, ranging from language instruction to notary services, from issuing identity cards to organizing discounted tour packages to the homeland, both for business and leisure. Many

consulates provide information on developments at home, particularly in the business sphere, as well as programmes on culture, education, and economic development.<sup>25</sup>

## 5.4 NEWSLETTER UPDATES

Newsletters offer an opportunity to stay connected with a subset of the diaspora community still interested in this form of communication. An example can be seen in The Citizens and Diaspora Organizations Directorate (CIDO) which has the mandate of linking citizens and diaspora organizations to the African Union (AU).<sup>26</sup>

## 5.5 WEBSITE

The Uganda Diaspora website provides a platform to share information, gain knowledge, and to engage with the global diaspora community. This website should provide comprehensive, regularly updated data and analysis relevant to diaspora communities.

## 5.6 MEDIA IN DESTINATION COUNTRIES

The role of ethnic media in global communication flows is steadily growing in importance. The transnational ethnic-based commercial broadcasting infrastructure is integral to the increasingly global diaspora and ethnic economy. Advertising on ethnic radio and television is viewed by niche marketers as a way to reach growing diaspora populations in a time of fragmenting audiences.

## 5.7 DIASPORA ASSOCIATION PARTNERSHIPS

Governments coordinate and collaborate with the private sector, academic institutions, and civil society. Establishing such connections takes advantage of the fact that, Diaspora groups are active in many leading institutions and sectors of their host society. Already, members of the Ugandan Diaspora work with their counterparts in academic institutions, while others are entrepreneurs and have their own business ventures. Other diaspora members are working in the public sector and civil society realms with INGOs, etc. All these existing contacts can enhance mobilisation efforts with regards to the Diaspora.

# 6. REVIEW OF CURRENT ACTIVITIES

A diaspora strategy should be centralized enough to ensure that a common identity, sense of purpose, economies of scale and strategic priorities can be achieved. A review of successful diaspora engagement strategies used by countries of origin shows that the Diaspora Unit (usually within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs) serves as the focal point and hub for implementing diaspora policy and engagement to the diaspora to participate in the development of the country. Currently within the Ugandan context, there seems to be disparate activities and projects attempting to engage the diaspora rather than a clear, concise, centralized effort which would leverage the full strength and resources of the diaspora.

Feedback on current initiatives based on documentation received includes the following;

## 6.1 HOME IS BEST SUMMIT

While diaspora events and the focus on specific local communities is welcome, the following observations and recommendations were made about the current *Home is Best Summit* model:

### 6.1.1 Streamlining engagement outreach

Any diaspora event should be hosted by the Diaspora Unit of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to provide a cohesive, organized, central front to the diaspora. Of course, it would be organized in collaboration with the Uganda Investment Authority and other agencies who would be named, but you cannot present

<sup>25</sup> Developing a Road Map for Engaging Diasporas in Development

<sup>26</sup> <https://au.int/en/documents/20200722/citizens-and-diaspora-organizations-cido-newsletter>

diaspora programs from various ministries as separate, disparate events and hope to leverage the full force of the diaspora.

### 6.1.2 Broadening scope: Diaspora engagement events

While focusing on specific local communities should be lauded, it can serve to limit engagement from diaspora members who may be interested in a different geographic area or sector of Uganda. Best practice suggests organizing a Diaspora Event over 2-3 days where one day is spent engaging on various economic sectors on the country. A brief outline of such an event would be as follows:

- *Day One* would be the opening of the event, presentations and sessions on overall country issues and opportunities for the diaspora.
- *Day Two* might include site-visits or working tours, where attendees are taken by organizers to the various cities or sites where programs are organized with local civil society and leaders to showcase what has been done in the locale's economic sectors; and opportunities for the diaspora to get involved and/or invest. In essence you can give attendees and would-be investors the ability to cover more ground in one day than they could over several years. We know that diaspora members are nostalgic about their hometowns and are investing in projects and establishing hometown associations specific to their city of origin.
- *Day Three*, the final day of the event, would see attendees returned to the conference site, back together and eager to recap and organize next steps.

This model also allows for the Diaspora Unit to collect data on all diaspora attendees, associations, projects etc. and build lasting relationships between officials, technical staff, and key diaspora members in attendance.

## 6.2 REVIEW OF COMPENDIUM

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA) *Compendium of Diaspora Investment and Business Opportunities* has potential to be the premier source of business intelligence for those seeking to invest in Uganda's economy. The Compendium was developed alongside the Ugandan Investment Authority (UIA) and UNDP to provide a broad overview of opportunities in the various economic sectors and geographic regions of the country. As government seeks to increase diaspora engagement, the following recommendations to improve the Compendium may complement these objectives:

### 6.2.1 Capacity Building

Human and material resources are required to maintain, update, and expand this website to eventually serve as a major platform for state-diaspora engagement. In its current format the Compendium can serve as reference material for baseline analyses of Uganda's abundance of investment opportunities, but little on how to access or operationalize these opportunities. MoFA, UIA, and Uganda's international partners would do well to ensure the Compendium's information and mandate are updated on an ongoing basis.

### 6.2.2 Updated Information

Uganda's economy in the years since the Compendium was first created has changed. Updated information is required to reflect both the challenging realities that have occurred in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as economic highlights such as pre-pandemic agricultural yields and the expanding importance of novel industries such as Uganda's migrant worker programs.



### 6.2.3 Streamlined Points of Contact

A central, online intake form available on the Compendium platform would allow MoFA (Diaspora Unit) and UIA to streamline diaspora investor interests with the most suitable sectors/regions/stakeholders. This may also allow MoFA (Diaspora Unit) to collect the contact information of key diaspora members, especially those with productive investment capacities.

### 6.2.4 Explaining the Process

Current information on tax regime, licensing, and legal obligations may be perceived as overtly technical or arduous, and thus poses a barrier to potential investors. As a first point of contact, the Compendium should act as a resource that assures diaspora members that, Uganda is an enabling, low-risk investment destination.

### 6.2.5 Business Ideas E-Books

The E-Books are an excellent resource for investors, but any updates to the information provided in these guides should shift their focus away from operational cost-benefit analysis to opportunities and the business development process involved with participating in each respective industry (licensing, local processing capacity, exporting to intraregional markets, etc.).

### 6.2.6 Progress and Success Stories

The Compendium would do well to feature ongoing diaspora engagement projects across the private, public, and non-governmental/charitable sectors.

While improvements are needed to demonstrate government's commitment and attract diaspora members, the Compendium in its current form provides a wealth of information for policymakers and technical experts to initiate a more engaging strategy with the Ugandan diaspora.

## 6.3 REGULATORY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

While this is a great start in the process, the critical missing piece is the mapping of the diaspora and feedback from the diaspora. Additionally, this document includes both issues relating to migrants and the diaspora. We would recommend that migrant issues be outlined in a separate document as the needs of migrants and policies around migrants are quite different to diaspora engagement strategies.

## 7. DIASPORA PROPOSAL

Diaspora communities are quite diverse with initial migration motives, skills, ethnic profiles, durations of stay (old and new diasporas) migratory status, destinations.<sup>27</sup> The lack of reliable data on diasporas is frequently identified by governments as an obstacle to developing effective diaspora policies and programs. Census data do not usually capture out-migration very well, as they offer only a snapshot of people residing in a country at the time of the census. Governments must rely on destination countries to collect data such as place of birth, age, gender and occupation. The first step in developing a diaspora engagement strategy is getting to know your diaspora. Countries that know their diasporas well are better placed to engage them. A proposal is outlined below for a mapping assessment of the Ugandan diaspora.

<sup>27</sup> Wickramasekara, P. Role of Diaspora in Development: International Experiences.

## Objectives

We will design and conduct a 6-month multi-modal research project to better understand current and potential diaspora engagement activities of the Uganda Diaspora in the US and Canada. Activities will include the following;

1. Mapping of the Uganda diaspora with demographic and socio-economic information including age, gender, income, marital status, educational background, employment status, remittance patterns. This data will be collected through two sources; a) available country census statistics and b) through outreach to the diaspora.
2. Identification of Uganda diaspora organizations database (e.g., business/professional, cultural, health, humanitarian, religious, sports, youth, etc.) and their leadership.
3. Identify diaspora willingness to invest in national development initiatives as well as the perceived obstacles and gather information on the needs/demands in diaspora engagement with the country of origin. Additionally, capture the diaspora willingness to contribute towards upcoming temporary return assignment programs.
4. Measuring current levels of diaspora engagement with the country of origin via tourism, remittances, philanthropy, volunteerism and business investment.
5. Mapping of frequency of interaction with family and friends, patterns of communication with Uganda society.
6. Information on communication channels currently being used and preferred communication channels for further participation of the diaspora in developmental efforts in Uganda.
7. Data collected via this type of study can inform recommendations to enhance current diaspora-engagement activities.

## Methodology

This study will be a mixed-method research initiative, inclusive of a desk study, in-depth one-on-one interviews, group interviews and an online survey. A key aspect of this assessment will be to leverage and engage with diaspora members with influence and those with an existing network in countries of destination. These leaders will act as ambassadors to promote and perform outreach to encourage diaspora members to participate in this assessment. This work should be included in the budget. It is also highly recommended that the study design includes diaspora outreach components such as a social media campaign (which should be included in the budget) and a small news media budget (which should be included in the budget) to broaden the reach to the diaspora, increase responses to the survey, participation in interviews and general interest in the project. The type of news media (radio, TV, print) will be determined after the desk study.

## Research Phase 1

**Desk Study:** A review of existing academic and policy literature regarding the diaspora is conducted first to understand the current state of knowledge about the historic, current socio-economic and organizational structure of the diaspora community in the identified countries. An analysis of relevant Uganda government policies and the outcomes of previous relevant programs and Government action plans will be conducted. Data gathered during the Rapid Assessment phase will be leveraged during this phase of the project. This review also examines the current size and impact of diaspora remittances on the country-of-origin economy. The communication strategy, a detailed project plan, a draft survey document and draft interview questions will also be developed in this research phase.

Work will start on a) the creation of a database based on 501c3 type organization registrations associated with the diaspora communities in the US and Canada and b) outreach to determine diaspora ambassadors/leaders to be engaged during the project.

## Research Phase 2

**Survey:** A self-administered, online survey is conducted, consisting of approximately 25 questions to provide quantitative estimates of key research questions, including estimates of current diaspora engagement, psychographic, behavior profiles and size estimates.

Questions included in the survey measure current diaspora engagement, including annual remittances sent to the country of origin and annual charitable contributions made to organizations in the country of origin over the past three years. Respondents are also asked how many trips they have made to the country of origin in the past year to measure circular migration. The survey also captures the specific diaspora organizations with which the respondent is affiliated.

The survey probes respondents' level of interest in volunteerism and skills-transfer programs, direct investment (in real estate and entrepreneurship), and portfolio investment (e.g., equity, diaspora bonds, specific social-impact investment models, etc.). Questions on the survey are included to disaggregate diaspora investment interest into various motivation dimensions, including financial, emotional, social-status and political motivations.

Demographic questions include gender, foreign-born status, number of years spent in the US, occupation, education, and total annual household income, etc.

Survey links will be distributed throughout the diaspora with the help, promotion, and partnership of Uganda Consulates/Embassy, various diaspora organizations recruited to support the project by the research team as well as through an aggressive social media and news media push.

The diaspora database will be developed during this phase.

Outreach efforts will continue through this phase of the project.

## Research Phase 3

**In-Depth One-On-One Interviews.** Semi-structured interviews will take place with leaders/ambassadors within the diaspora, including diaspora organization leaders. Interviews explore leaders' perspectives on trends in diaspora engagement, diaspora investment motivations, diaspora willingness to invest in national development initiatives as well as the perceived obstacles. Additionally, these interviews capture the diaspora willingness to contribute towards upcoming temporary return assignment programs.

Opinion leaders are also queried as to their suggestions for the best methods for reaching the diaspora to enhance survey respondent reach.

Opinion leaders will be consulted to assist in completing the list of diaspora organizations so that it reflects the universe of known organizations in the diaspora community.

**Group Interviews.** Group Interviews will be conducted in the USA and Canada where possible with consideration of the Covid 19 pandemic and current restrictions in place during the project. In this setting, a selected group of informants are recruited to attend a facilitated group conversation in an informal setting (with no recording or transcription). Informal notes are taken and general conclusions and themes are identified post-conversation.

Group Interview participant groups each consist of approximately 4-6 diasporas. We seek to balance groups wherever possible by gender and aim to select groups that are reflective of the geographic origin and the educational, occupational, and income levels of the diaspora. In terms of recruiting and outreach efforts, we plan on using local diaspora organizations, community leaders and the Uganda Consulate/Embassy.

Group Interviews are conducted either during the day or evening, during the middle of the week and on Saturdays to increase participation with approximately 2 hours of discussion conducted in an informal setting with refreshments.

### Key Deliverables

1. **Diaspora Organization Database** – An Excel document, listing each identified diaspora organization, leadership, social media profile, and mission statement. Please note this data will be collected based on available data in the public domain.
2. **Draft Final Report** - A Word document that summarizes and triangulates qualitative and quantitative data. This report will provide a demographic profile of the study sample, comparisons of current diaspora engagement levels by activity and diaspora engagement interest by activity, a ranking of perceived obstacles to diaspora engagement, and recommendations for enhancing existing engagement, including specific ideas for new program/product/service development building on recommendations outlined in the Rapid Assessment Phase.
3. **Final Report** – A Word document and PowerPoint presentation that summarizes and triangulates qualitative and quantitative data which may or may not be revised based on feedback/comments. Feedback from the stakeholder workshop may or may not be included in the final report. Please also note that this report should not be altered or changed after presentation to you.
4. Facilitation of **Presentation** on the final report at a stakeholder consultation.

## 8. CONCLUSION

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There is no standardized approach to diaspora engagement, nor is the diaspora an all-encompassing solution for all developmental needs of a country/government, however there is tremendous potential if the diaspora is harnessed into targeted endeavors which address the concerns and fears of the diaspora as investors and contributors. In summary, the government must devise a road map inclusive of sectors and areas where collaboration with the diaspora can create a mutually beneficial and profitable partnership. This Rapid Assessment provides guidance in agreed areas and a proposal for next steps in developing a Ugandan diaspora engagement strategy.

