

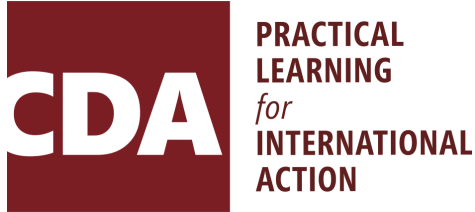
Humanitarian Effectiveness & the Role of the Diaspora

A CDA Literature Review

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CDA Collaborative Learning Projects
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Introduction

CDA's mission is to facilitate collaborative learning promoting effective and accountable international engagements. By listening to nearly 6,000 people in over 20 countries who have received, participated in or observed international assistance, CDA's Listening Project gathered evidence on the cumulative effects of aid efforts and ideas to make international aid more effective. [*Time to Listen: Hearing People on the Receiving End of International Aid*](#) summarizes this evidence and shares the experiences and feedback from local people on how to more meaningfully engage them in aid efforts with a wide range of policy-makers and practitioners.

This literature review was completed as part of an action-research project funded by the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, Policy Development and Studies Branch (UNOCHA) and the UK Department for International Development (DFID). In addition, field visits were conducted in Myanmar, Philippines, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Haiti and Ethiopia and supplemented by this desk-based research on diaspora and their perspective on effectiveness of humanitarian action. The goal of the overall project, was to better understand local perspectives on the effectiveness of humanitarian action. This report and others in the series aims to feed into the larger conversation and recommendations for the World Humanitarian Summit in 2016.

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Section I – Purpose of Literature Review

Efforts to redefine the concepts, standards, and measures of humanitarian effectiveness have led researchers, policymakers, and practitioners to look beyond the traditional international humanitarian system to the growing number of diverse actors engaged in humanitarian responses around the world. With this in mind, more attention is now being paid to the roles of the diaspora communities from countries affected by humanitarian crises. Diasporas are by no means new actors in the field of humanitarian response. The international humanitarian system, which is dominated by UN agencies, the ICRC, and a handful of primarily Western NGOs, however, has begun to develop a unique relationship with diaspora members and their networks, due to their high degree of access, local knowledge, and ability to respond and mobilize quickly to situations of disaster and conflict in their homelands.

Traditionally diaspora involvement in humanitarian action occurs in the form of remittances or in-kind support to friends, relatives, or civil society organizations in their country of origin, or through volunteerism, either individually or as part of an organization or network, both in their homeland as well as in host countries. New technologies and innovation, particularly in communications and financial transactions, have further enabled people in the diaspora community to get involved in—and coordinate their contributions to—responses to disasters, conflicts, and other humanitarian emergencies in an ever-greater number of ways.

This literature review seeks to:

- Describe the current roles played by diaspora communities in humanitarian response;
- Develop a greater understanding of the drivers motivating diaspora engagement in times of crisis with their countries of origin; and
- Examine the relationship between diasporas and other actors involved in humanitarian responses, including crisis-affected populations, governments of crisis-affected states, regional organizations, UN agencies and international NGOs, local civil society organizations and local NGOs, entities within the private sector, and donor governments.

Section II – Descriptive Background on Diaspora

2.1. Concept of Diaspora in Humanitarian Studies

Before examining the roles, motivations, and relationships shaping diaspora involvement in humanitarian action, it is important to consider the dimensions and diversity of experience

encompassed by a concept as complex and historically nuanced as that of 'diaspora.' In fact, it should be noted that the term 'diaspora,' as used by humanitarians, differs from its usage by sociologists, anthropologists, or political scientists. Academics in the field of diaspora studies would likely say that 'transnational community' is a more appropriate and general term to capture the breadth of communities that humanitarians refer to as 'diasporas.'¹ Although this is an overly simplistic heuristic, it is important to remember that not all members of a diaspora are themselves migrants, and not all migrants are part of a diaspora. It should also be noted that, whereas humanitarians use the term 'host government' to refer to a crisis-affected state which hosts humanitarian actors during an emergency response, those in the field of diaspora studies may use the same term to refer to the government of a country in which a diaspora community has settled, even if that community has lived in that country for more than a generation.

Whereas a transnational community may include any migrant community that maintains some sort of connection with its land of origin (or other territory), a diaspora connotes a very strong orientation vis-à-vis the homeland, often based on an experience or shared memory of displacement, subsequent settlement in two or more locations outside of the country of origin, and the collective idea or myth of the homeland. Efforts by academics from various disciplines to define the diaspora phenomenon have resulted in numerous typologies that provide different criteria for the classification of transnational communities, including diasporas.²

By contrast, literature in the field of humanitarian studies does not seem to adopt any particular definition of the term "diaspora." A 2002 article by Östen Wahlbeck mentions that despite the development of theories related to diasporas and transnational networks and communities, the use of 'diaspora' in the area of forced migration and refugee studies—which would seemingly benefit from engaging more with these theories—has remained "tactical, *ad hoc*, diffuse and reactive."³ In an increasingly globalized world, Wahlbeck found this disregard for contemporary debate on the issue surprising, describing much of the work on refugee studies to be "somewhat confused" as a result of its failure to be theoretically grounded.⁴

For the most part, humanitarian literature exhibits this same lack of theoretical clarity in its use of the term "diaspora." Whereas some articles in development literature acknowledge the theoretical complexities of the term

Box 1: General Definition of Diaspora

"Diaspora are defined as populations of migrant origin who are scattered among two or more destinations, between which there develop multifarious links involving flows and exchanges of people and resources: between the homeland and destination countries, and among destination countries."

Source: Van Hear, Pieke, and Vertovec 2004:3

¹ See for example Van Hear 1998; Wahlbeck 2002; Anteby-Yemini and Berthomière 2005; Bakewell 2008; and Cohen 2008.

² See Anteby-Yemini and Berthomière (2005) for a succinct summary of diaspora scholars various definitions and typologies including those by Armstrong (1976), Sheffer (1986), Safran (1991), Medam (1993), Bruneau (1995), and Cohen (1997). See also, Cohen 2008 and Bruneau 2010.

³ Wahlbeck 2002, p. 221.

⁴ Wahlbeck 2002, p. 222.

“diaspora” and may even adopt a particular definition of the term (as seen with the Box 1),⁵ humanitarian literature, by contrast, tends to use the term largely without definition.⁶ When academics or practitioners from the development field include a discussion of humanitarian relief alongside development issues, the authors often make some effort to define the term “diaspora.”⁷ Hammond et al., for example, define diaspora in terms of three characteristics, which include:

1. Dispersal of a population from an original homeland;
2. Continued or reinvigorated orientation towards a real or imagined homeland; and
3. Identities based on boundary-maintenance vis-à-vis a host society.⁸

For the purposes of this paper, and reflective of the humanitarian literature itself, the terms ‘diaspora’ and ‘transnational community’ are considered to be synonymous, unless otherwise specified.

2.2. Diaspora Engagement

In general, the discussions of diaspora engagement included in the humanitarian literature are relatively uniform, often brief, and largely focused on the functional role that diaspora communities play in the context of a particular disaster or conflict—either a specific kind of support that a diaspora can provide, or as a facilitator for the work of the international agency or NGO.⁹

Over the last 15 years, increasing attention has been paid, first by development actors and subsequently by humanitarians, to the issue of diaspora engagement.¹⁰ The term ‘engagement’ can refer, in one sense, to the involvement of a diaspora in issues related to its country of origin, placing the obligation for mobilization primarily on the diaspora itself. In a second sense, diaspora engagement can also be used in reference to the policies and programs through which development and humanitarian actors seek to access, mobilize or support the human, financial, or other resources (such as networks) available within a diaspora for a particular purpose. Furthermore, diaspora engagement is not only being pursued by international aid agencies,

⁵ See, for example, de Haas (2006, p. 7), in which the author acknowledges the theoretical difficulties in defining the term ‘diaspora’, before selecting one definition for use in the report, in that case, a relatively broad definition by Van Hear, Pieke, and Vertovec (2004, p. 3), included in the text box above.

⁶ See, for example, King and Grullon (2013) or USAID (2014), which use the term diaspora without any attempt to define its dimensions or essential characteristics.

⁷ See, for example, Hammond, *et al* (2011).

⁸ Hammond, *et al* 2011: 20-21.

⁹ See, for example, King and Grullon 2013 and USAID 2014.

¹⁰ de Haas 2006.

whether development or humanitarian, but also by governments—the governments of both countries of origin and countries of resettlement.¹¹

Given that people in diasporas are often already engaged in development and relief activities in their countries of origin, this second type of engagement places the onus for engaging with diasporas on the international agencies and governments themselves.¹² In both cases, government-based policies of diaspora engagement and the resulting relationships should not be assumed to be impartial or neutral. Just as governments can be expected to have particular agendas, the same is true for diaspora communities. Historical grievances, ethnic, religious or national identities, business interests, political affiliations, or family connections may define diaspora agendas.¹³ One should also not assume that the diaspora agenda is homogeneous as different groups within diasporas may have very different allegiances and agendas.

The potential challenges facing humanitarian actors as they navigate diaspora engagement may be further complicated by the lack of clarity, discussed above, surrounding the term ‘diaspora’ itself. Promoting engagement with diaspora populations, groups, or networks in the context of humanitarian responses, while failing to critically define what or who is meant by the term ‘diaspora,’ can have consequences, which need to be considered, particularly in terms of maintaining humanitarian principles. Bakewell, for instance, cautions that the uncritical adoption of the term ‘diaspora’ by policymakers, development organizations, and academics may have unintended consequences, on the basis that in some contexts it may increase the risk of labeling groups, and excluding ‘the other.’¹⁴ The formation of diaspora groups is often related to particular experiences of exclusion or expulsion along ethnic, political, national, or religious lines.¹⁵ Given that diaspora groups usually come into being through a process of self-identification—the extrinsic mobilization of “diasporic consciousness”—the act of seeking out a diaspora group to perform a particular function, runs the risk of perpetuating labeling practices that resemble the divide and rule strategies of colonial powers or of increasing the tensions within diaspora groups from the same countries or regions.¹⁶ These factors may pose challenges for humanitarian agencies committed to adhering to the core humanitarian principles of neutrality and impartiality, or to “do no harm.”

This is not to say that humanitarian actors should not pursue engagement with diasporas, but rather that greater efforts need to be made to understand the complexity of diaspora networks and organizations, and the contexts in which they have emerged. As Smith observes in the

¹¹ Gamlen 2006; Nonini 2005; and USAID 2014.

¹² de Hass 2006, p. 91.

¹³ See, for example, Wahlbeck 2002, pp. 224, 228; Davey 2012, p. 3; and Qayyum 2011.

¹⁴ Bakewell 2008.

¹⁵ Cohen 2008.

¹⁶ Bakewell 2008, p. 15.

introduction of the 2007 book *Diasporas in Conflict: Peace-makers or Peace-wreckers*:

...diasporas play varied roles in conflict; and different groups and individuals within the same diaspora may have different approaches, organizations, interests and objectives within the same conflict. Even where a diaspora is more united on objectives, it may play a positive role in peace-making but also may play a negative role in terms of a contribution to continued conflict. Whether a diaspora will play either or none of those roles can best be understood, according to our contributors, by tracing not just the capacities of the diaspora (agency) but also the transnational opportunities available to it (structure).¹⁷

The transnational opportunities that Smith refers to are particularly those provided by policies of the governments both in the diasporas' countries of origin as well as the countries of settlement,¹⁸ which will be discussed in more detail in Section IV of this literature review under the "Host Government" and "Donor" sections respectively. While not all crises requiring humanitarian assistance occur as a result of conflict, the possibility that certain types of diaspora involvement could exacerbate tensions in situations not classified as armed-conflict underlines the importance of understanding the context in which emergency response occurs. For instance, although humanitarian emergencies such as Typhoon Yolanda (Haiyan) in the Philippines, Cyclone Nargis in Myanmar,¹⁹ the Horn of Africa famine in Ethiopia and Somalia,²⁰ and the Asian Tsunami in Sri Lanka²¹ were precipitated by natural disaster, underlying political, ethnic, or other tensions may affect the way in which diaspora populations relate both to host governments and to different communities within the crisis-affected population. This review found no information in the humanitarian literature related specifically to the comparative effectiveness of diasporas in different types of humanitarian crises. Rather, the ability of a diaspora to respond to a particular type of humanitarian emergency in their home country, as has been found in development literature, may be more closely related to the characteristics—such as the socioeconomic, migration, employment or educational status—of a particular diaspora itself.²²

2.3. The Formation of Diaspora Networks

Diaspora networks²³ may be informal, as with the set of relationships that connects diaspora members to their family members, friends, and colleagues in their countries of origin, or formal,

¹⁷ Smith 2007, p. 9

¹⁸ Smith 2007, pp. 13-14.

¹⁹ Roos 2013; South 2012.

²⁰ Hammond et al 2011.

²¹ Deshingkar and Aheeyar 2006.

²² Fagen 2006; de Haas 2006; Hammond et al 2011.

²³ In discussing the formation or mobilization of diaspora networks, it is useful to distinguish the concept of a network from that of an organization. While an organization usually implies a specific entity with a formal structure, organizational history, and more or less clearly defined goals, a network can be thought of as any system of relationships, formal or informal, among individuals or groups, in which

manifesting in explicit agreements between individuals or organizations to work together for a common purpose. The formation of diaspora networks that play an active role in response to humanitarian crises can be related to, but is often distinct from, the creation of formal diaspora organizations. In some cases, crises result in the retooling of existing organizations and the repurposing of networks to function in new ways. The Syrian American Medical Society (SAMS) and Syrian British Medical Society (SBMS), for instance, were founded in 1998 and 2007 respectively.²⁴ Prior to the beginning of the Syria crisis in March 2011, SAMS was a professional organization composed of medical doctors of Syrian descent with the primary goal of providing continuing medical education and professional development for its members in the United States and their peers in Syria. Such professional development opportunities were provided through events such as a medical conference convened annually in Syria through 2010 (SAMS 2014).²⁵ Since March 2011, however, SAMS has joined nine other Syrian diaspora organizations from France, the United Kingdom, Canada, and Switzerland to form the Union of Syrian Medical Relief Organizations (known by the acronym UOSSM, from the union's French name, *Union des Organisations Syriennes de Secours Médicaux*).²⁶ SAMS has mobilized both individually²⁷ and as part of UOSSM to provide emergency medical relief to Syrians affected by the crisis in their home country, raising awareness, financial support, and donations of medical supplies and medicines, and organizing trips by Syrian diaspora, medical personnel, and others wishing to travel back to Syria and neighboring countries to volunteer in field hospitals and health clinics in a variety of settings.²⁸

Similarly, Somali diaspora organizations have taken on new roles in response to the 2011 famine in Somalia. For example, *Ifteen*, the Somali Forum for Leadership and Development, was an existing diaspora organization based primarily in the United States. During the 2011 famine, Ifteen mobilized its transnational networks in new ways to raise awareness and relief funds in response to the famine and to assist in the coordination of one of the first aid convoys to reach affected populations in *Al-Shabaab* controlled territory within Somalia.²⁹

Faith-based institutions such as mosques, churches, temples, or religious organizations can also be of great importance to the diaspora, a focal point around which many in a diaspora community already congregate, and are often where the mobilization of the diaspora resources in response to humanitarian crisis occurs.³⁰ In the United Kingdom (UK), for example, the Muslim

information or resources are shared to support some common interest (Random House Dictionary 2014). Whereas an organization is more defined by its structure and function, a network emerges and is perpetuated, almost tautologically, by the activity of networking itself.

²⁴ Syrian American Medical Society 2014; Syrian British Medical Society 2014.

²⁵ Syrian American Medical Society 2014.

²⁶ UOSSM 2014.

²⁷ Syrian American Medical Foundation 2014.

²⁸ Union of Syria Medical Relief Organizations 2014; SAMS Foundation 2014; Cheung 2013; World Disaster Report 2013, p. 45.

²⁹ Hassan 2012.

³⁰ DFID 2011; Hammond et al 2011.

Charities Forum (MCF) made concerted efforts beginning in January 2011 to bring together 20 UK-based Somali diaspora organizations to form the Somali Relief and Development Forum (SRDF). By September 2011, SRDF led to the creation of the Somali Humanitarian Operational Consortium (SHOC), involving 52 local organizations in Somalia.³¹ The formation of both SRDF and SHOC, in the context of the Horn of Africa famine, was intended to support the individual organizations involved overcome some of the traditional limitations of smaller aid and development organizations—including isolation from other groups doing similar work; limited capacity in terms of human resources, technical abilities, and knowledge; and even issues of mistrust based on long histories of traditional clan rivalries.³²

Similarly, the church—primarily the Catholic Church, but other denominations as well—is one of the most important institutions, not only within Haiti, but also for the Haitian diaspora and local pastors in both settings are often seen as the most reliable source of information.³³ Caitlin Bell reported that Haitian diaspora members she interviewed, “all agreed that the best way to get a message out to the Haitian community, is to have a pastor to speak on your behalf about the concern...Notre Dame d’Haiti in Miami is the largest church in the diaspora. They have over 4,000 weekly attendants and over 8,000 for prayer revivals.”³⁴ In addition the church’s ability to organize planes and medical supplies in response to the 2010 earthquake, church leadership (specifically the Notre Dame d’Haiti’s head pastor, Reverend Reginald Jean-Mary) was a focal point for international leaders wishing to provide support for Haiti.³⁵

In many diasporas, including Haiti’s, Home Town Associations (HTAs) emerge through the self-organization of people originating from the same town, village, or neighborhood with a shared interest of providing collective support for their communities back home.³⁶ Similar to faith-based networks, HTAs are often already in existence prior to the onset of a disaster, and are commonly able to mobilize quickly in response to emergent needs in their communities of origin. Although HTAs are able to respond quickly, however, their efforts are sometimes restricted by a lack of capacity and information sharing beyond the context of their home communities. In some cases, limitations in information sharing can make it difficult for HTAs when coordinating with other groups and aid agencies to avoid duplication of efforts.³⁷

Section III – Diaspora Roles in Humanitarian Relief

By far the most attention in the literature has been given to remittances sent by members of a

³¹ Ullah 2012.

³² Ibid.

³³ Bell 2010, pp. 2-3.

³⁴ Bell 2010, p. 8.

³⁵ Bell 2013, p. 8.

³⁶ Bell 2010.

³⁷ Hammond et al 2011.

diaspora community back to relatives in their countries of origin. While remittances occur even in times of non-crisis, there are numerous examples of members of diasporas mobilizing in times of crisis, to raise additional money and in-kind support for their families, friends, and communities, as well as to advocate on behalf of the affected people of their countries of origin on a global or transnational stage.³⁸ Yet, while a common role of the diaspora in humanitarian responses is providing remittances, this transnational community is also fundamental in a number of other response efforts including, volunteering and utilizing social media and other technologies, which are outlined below. Additionally, this community can also be essential for negotiating access for traditional humanitarian actors, as outlined in Section IV.

3.1. Remittances

Much of the literature on diaspora engagement by humanitarian and development actors has focused on the role of remittances. In 2006, global remittances were estimated to be worth 268 billion USD, 199 billion USD of which was going to developing countries.³⁹ By 2010, official remittances to developing countries had reached 325 billion USD annually, and some estimate that the actual amount could be an additional 50%, representing twice the global amount of overseas development assistance (ODA) by foreign donor countries.⁴⁰ Additionally, remittances were considered one of least volatile sources of foreign exchange earnings for developing countries during the 1990s.⁴¹

The role of remittance-based investment in humanitarian crises is significant. In the case of the Somali diaspora, for example, annually sends private remittances estimated to be between 1.3 and 2 billion USD to Somalia,⁴² and 130-200 million USD is estimated to be related specifically to humanitarian or development-related activities.⁴³ Additionally, in the case of the Philippines, an ODI study found that after Typhoon Yolanda (Haiyan), families receiving remittances were 4.72 times more likely to have food security compared to those families who did not receive remittances.⁴⁴ While remittances are often sent from individual diaspora members to their relatives, HTAs also organize to send funds to support development or relief efforts at a community level.⁴⁵

In a 2006 article, Deshingkar and Aheeyar explore the role of remittances to Sri Lanka from the diaspora community following the 2004 Asian tsunami. Their findings conclude that while a lot of

³⁸ Bell 2010; SAMS 2013.

³⁹ Savage and Harvey 2007: 3.

⁴⁰ Kleist and Vammen 2012, p. 28.

⁴¹ Kleist and Vammen 2012, p. 27.

⁴² Hammond et al 2011, p. 4.

⁴³ Ullah 2012; Hammond et al 2011, p. 4.

⁴⁴ Kolbe and Muggah 2013.

⁴⁵ Fagen 2006; Bell 2010; Hammond et al 2011.

money was being sent, either by returning members of the diaspora or via banks and other official routes, infrastructure damage and document loss prevented many people from accessing funds that were not delivered to them by hand.⁴⁶ Relief funds established by both the government and NGOs were very slow to respond, and support for people in affected areas arrived a month (in some cases up to three months) after it was most needed. By contrast, money sent directly from members of Canadian Tamil diaspora networks using informal cash transfer mechanisms arrived almost immediately for use by people in affected areas and communities. This relative quickness allowed remittances to provide immediate relief before government aid was available to affected populations.⁴⁷

The response by diasporas to a crisis, whether by individual members, HTAs, or other organizations, can occur almost immediately, requiring only the time it takes for an individual, family, or group to make the decision and go to a bank or Money Transfer Organizations (MTO). Although support from abroad may arrive more quickly than aid from governments or humanitarian actors, it does not necessarily get distributed to those most in need. Remittances mostly reach poor and middle class families, but not the very poor, as these families commonly do not often have family overseas.⁴⁸

Remittance flows are “counter-cyclical”— meaning that they increase in response to communities economic and emergency needs. Savage and Harvey note, however, that in some cases remittance flows are disrupted by humanitarian crises, leaving those dependent on this form of financial support suddenly vulnerable.⁴⁹ In the case of Sri Lanka and the 2004 tsunami, remittances were still making their way to some affected populations even in the absence of a formal banking network, but others were unable to receive remittances, either because of damaged infrastructure or lost personal documentation.⁵⁰

Remittances from the diaspora are not the sole source of support for affected populations. In many cases, neighbors (at a local, regional, or national level) also provide cash and other support to affected populations. Additionally, diaspora-sourced remittances can be seen as just one link in a multi-constituent chain of solidarity. In the context of Gonaives, Haiti, following tropical storm Jeanne in 2004, a study by Fagen found that the flow of remittances had not increased dramatically following the storm, and that this was, in part, due to the lack of communication technology available to affected populations in Gonaives.⁵¹ While remittances were valuable to those who received them, many people did not. Fagen also identified the need to improve the

⁴⁶ Deshingkar and Aheeyar 2006, p. 20.

⁴⁷ Orozco and Yansura 2013.

⁴⁸ Deshingkar and Aheeyar 2006, p. 20.

⁴⁹ Savage and Harvey 2007, p. 2.

⁵⁰ Deshingkar and Aheeyar 2006.

⁵¹ Fagen 2006.

coordination of diaspora support—mobilized diasporas in Canada, France, and the US, for instance, had the interest and resources to provide support but were not able to target their aid. The report suggests that in addition to providing affected populations with the ability to access information and communicate with family members, relief agencies and donors should collaborate more closely with diaspora networks by reaching out to organizations such as HTAs, professional associations, and churches.⁵² Fagen does not elaborate on how this collaboration might occur, but places the responsibility for such coordination with donor governments and “charitable organizations” in countries with large Haitian diaspora communities.⁵³ After the 2010 earthquake, access to information and communication technologies seemed to have increased dramatically, as evidenced by the massive amount of information flowing between the Haitian diaspora and affected populations.⁵⁴

The cost of sending remittances is not uniform across the world. Orozco and Yansura, in a 2013 study for ODI, found that sending remittances to African countries via Western Union or Moneygram cost twice as much when compared, for example, to transfers to Latin American countries. In another ODI study from 2014, Watkins and Quattri found that African diasporas must pay a 12% fee to send a remittance of \$200 USD, compared to the global average of 5% (the G8 target) which results in an estimated loss of remittances of between 1.4 and 2.3 billion USD each year.⁵⁵ Watkins and Quattri attribute this disparity in costs to weak competition, poorly designed financial regulation, restrictive business practices, lack of information among consumers, and a concentration of market power that sees two-thirds of all remittances to Africa transmitted through Western Union and MoneyGram.

Sending money from one place within Africa to another is even more expensive, largely due to the lack of a regional currency exchange market, and the strict regulations that many countries’ have prohibiting the sending money abroad from within the country.⁵⁶ Somalia however, uniquely has the *hawala* system, which is a Somali-created and run network composed of multiple companies with offices or agents all over the world and is capable of transferring money to almost anywhere within Somalia (including Somaliland, Puntland, and South and Central Somalia) almost instantaneously. Although many of the companies and agents in this system are thoroughly compliant with regulations, Hammond and colleagues note that “the term hawala has been used by some in the popular media to suggest that the Somali money transfer system is unregulated or illicit; for this reason many operators prefer to use the more generic term ‘money transfer company’ to stress the professionalism and regulation-compliant aspects of the transfer industry.” That being said, some suggest that sending money from outside of Africa to Somalia,

⁵² Fagen 2006, p. 15.

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ Bell 2010; Meier 2013.

⁵⁵ Watkins and Quattri 2014, p. 7.

⁵⁶ IRIN 2014.

with its myriad MTOs and payout agents in the *hawala* system,⁵⁷ is far less expensive than to other African countries,⁵⁸ perhaps because of the absence of corporate systems such as Western Union and Moneygram. The World Bank, for instance, in its January 2014 “*Send Money Africa*” report, notes that whereas commercial banks, with account-to-account transactions are the most expensive providers of money transfer services, account-to-cash transactions, processed online by MTOs are generally the cheapest.⁵⁹

The Somali diaspora is believed to number between 600,000 and one million people,⁶⁰ depending on how migrant or diaspora status is defined. Some reports estimate that remittances to Somalia from its diaspora amount to as much as \$1.3 billion USD annually, more than one-and-a-half times the \$861 million USD provided to Somalia by international donors in 2012 at the peak of humanitarian response to the drought that had gripped the Horn of Africa since the previous year.⁶¹ Other reports suggest that the value of remittances to Somalia could be as high as \$2 billion USD, estimating that up to 10% of these remittances are sent to support humanitarian and development activities conducted by local Somali NGOs.⁶²

Remittances are also sometimes sent to support political factions, militias, and other parties to conflicts.⁶³ Due to the Somali government’s inability to regulate the *hawala* system and the increasingly stringent legislation designed to curtail financial support for terrorist organizations, such as *Al-Shabaab*,⁶⁴ banks in the US and UK, fearing prosecution under counter-terrorism legislation, are closing the accounts of MTOs. Such closures have led to many Somali MTOs losing their ability to transfer remittances back to Somalia. Orozco and Yansura recommend that banks, donor agencies, and other government actors in the US, UK, and Somalia along with Somali MTOs take steps to ensure that remittance flows are not interrupted either in the short- or long-term.⁶⁵

Even in the absence of direct support for political actors or non-state armed groups (NSAGs), it is also speculated that remittances can undermine political accountability by allowing certain actors or groups to survive despite their failure to provide for the needs of the people in the areas in which they exercise power.⁶⁶ Furthermore, remittances are not distributed universally within countries and can also reinforce existing socioeconomic disparities within the home country. For example, the Somali diaspora can be divided along geographic lines into three groups: those in

⁵⁷ Hammond *et al* 2011, p.7.

⁵⁸ Orozco and Yansura 2013, p. 14.

⁵⁹ World Bank 2014.

⁶⁰ Orozco and Yansura 2013 and UNDP 2009.

⁶¹ Orozco and Yansura 2013, p. 10.

⁶² Hammond *et al*, 2011.

⁶³ Lindley 2006, p. 6.

⁶⁴ Sipus 2011.

⁶⁵ Orozco and Yansura 2013.

⁶⁶ Lindley 2006, p. 6.

neighboring countries such as Kenya, Ethiopia, and Djibouti, those in Arab gulf states such as Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, and Yemen, and those in Europe and North America.⁶⁷ Immigration status and occupational profiles within each of these groups, often related to distinct migration experiences and pre-migration identities, play a role in shaping remittance-sending behaviors. Individuals who migrate to countries in the Arab Gulf or the West, for example, tend to come from wealthier, better-educated families than do their counterparts who migrate to Somalia's neighbors, and who often remain in need of remittances themselves. This differentiation in migration along socioeconomic and kinship lines results in differential access to remittances along these same distinctions.⁶⁸

3.2. Volunteerism

Remittances are only part of the story of diaspora engagement. Diasporas also contribute knowledge, skills, information, and connection to social networks. Reports acknowledge the contributions of volunteers from diaspora communities who return to their country of origin in times of crisis, often bringing with them expertise or skills developed in the context of their diasporic lives.⁶⁹ A 2011 report by UN Volunteers of the UN Development Program notes that, "volunteering is also growing among people living away from their countries of origin, expressing the desire of the diaspora to help communities in their homeland. Recruitment of diaspora volunteers by corporations is also increasingly common."⁷⁰ In many instances, members of the diaspora serve as first responders to crises, independently mobilizing support networks in the very earliest days of a disaster before the traditional humanitarian system can respond.⁷¹ Additionally, diaspora members and organizations can function as intermediaries between traditional humanitarian actors and the crisis-affected populations.⁷² For example there is a notable trend among international NGOs to de-Westernize their staff through recruitment of personnel from both diaspora communities and the affected population, largely in order to gain greater humanitarian access in difficult environments such as Afghanistan, Iraq, Pakistan, and Syria.⁷³ In other cases, diaspora organizations' connections to local NGOs provide the agency with an added value of being able to assist in the coordination of aid and development of best practices.⁷⁴

⁶⁷ Lindley 2006.

⁶⁸ Adams et al. 2003 and Lindley 2006, p. 5.

⁶⁹ King and Grullon 2013; SAMS 2014; USAID 2014.

⁷⁰ UNDP 2011, p. 30.

⁷¹ Bell 2010.

⁷² DFID 2011; Meier 2013; Sahloul 2014; Sida 2014.

⁷³ Steets, Reichhold, and Sagmeister 2012.

⁷⁴ Sahloul 2014.

While diaspora-based volunteerism is often viewed positively by those promoting greater diaspora involvement in emergency responses,⁷⁵ several complicating factors exist and include for example:

- Differences between diaspora communities and the crisis-affected populations in their countries of origin;⁷⁶
- A combination of exclusivist political, ethnic, and religious loyalties;⁷⁷ and
- The possibility that some members of a diaspora may be providing material support for non-state armed groups⁷⁸ (often designated as terrorist organizations by crisis-affected or donor governments),⁷⁹ which may detract from a diaspora's ability to effectively partner with traditional actors in the humanitarian system.

3.3. Communication and Technology

New technologies can also facilitate greater engagement by diasporas in two overlapping, multifaceted domains: communications and financial support. The proliferation of mobile telephones, internet, and social media platforms, particularly over the last decade, allows virtual communities to form, grow, and organize transnational networks quickly. Additionally, such technology allows for the mobilization of human and financial resources across international borders.⁸⁰ Members of diaspora communities are not only active in their personal use of these new technologies, but also play an intermediary role between affected populations and the traditional humanitarian system. For example, diaspora serve commonly as volunteer translators, analyzers and mappers of text messages so that those within the humanitarian system hear the voices of crisis-affected people⁸¹.

Diaspora involvement in "crisis mapping" can be traced back to the advent of this use of information and communication technologies (ICTs). Crisis mapping describes the crowd-sourced gathering, curating, categorization, and geo-tagging of data from a variety of social media platforms (such as Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube, etc.) and ICTs (such as text (SMS) messages, e-mails, GPS-enabled devices, and mobile phones). The first instance of crisis mapping was in Kenya during the election violence in 2008. Kenyans, both at home and in the diaspora,

⁷⁵ King and Grullon 2013.

⁷⁶ Jean, 2014 p. 17.

⁷⁷ Organization 28.Jun 2014.

⁷⁸ Smith 2007, p. 13.

⁷⁹ Sipus 2011.

⁸⁰ Meier 2011; Meier 2013; King and Grullon, 2013; World Disaster Report 2013.

⁸¹ UN OCHA 2013; Meier 2011.

developed the web-based mapping platform *Ushahidi* (meaning testimony in Swahili), mapping information from SMS messages to document human rights abuses.⁸²

The Ushahidi Haiti Project (UHP) is a well-documented example of crisis mapping being used for humanitarian purposes. To date, the UHP has been used in other contexts including Haiti. An independent evaluation of UHP found that the project was effective in engaging both the affected population and Haitian diaspora to fill the gap in information needs prior to the UN and humanitarian system's response.⁸³ Volunteers and members of the Haitian diaspora were in direct contact with the affected population and during and after the earthquake. This constant contact between the Haitian diaspora and the affected population helped provide information that could be immediately incorporated into the online maps, alongside information about the location of food and aid stations, and shared both with responders and those in need of aid.⁸⁴ The independent evaluation concluded that direct engagement was highly effective in "the articulation of need and the organization of local capacity for response."⁸⁵ Rob Munro, one of the organizers of the Ushahidi Haiti Project, described how diaspora volunteers "were undertaking services like directing people within Haiti to the nearest aid points, and passing on instructions about, for example, obtaining food vouchers, fuel, places to recharge phones, etc."⁸⁶

Beyond crisis mapping, the role of information and communication technology in the mobilization of diasporas in response to a humanitarian emergency cannot be underemphasized. Aside from mobile phones, e-mail, and text-messages, social networking sites such as Facebook and Twitter allow individuals and organizations to receive and share information almost immediately, and to establish a presence online for the purpose of fundraising and volunteer recruitment for specific purposes. SAMS, for example, along with numerous other diaspora organizations, has its own Facebook page,⁸⁷ and regularly post updates with crisis-related information, urgent needs, and organizational events in the United States.

Section IV – Perspectives on Diaspora Effectiveness in Humanitarian Response

This section considers the other actors involved in a humanitarian response (such as affected communities, host governments, civil society organizations, UN and INGOs, donors, the private sector and military) and their views and perspectives of the role and effectiveness of the diaspora community during a humanitarian response. Based on desk research and key informant

⁸² Meier 2012, p. 95.

⁸³ Independent Evaluation of the Ushahidi Haiti Project 2011.

⁸⁴ Heinzelman and Waters 2010.

⁸⁵ Independent Evaluation of the Ushahidi Haiti Project 2011, p. 1.

⁸⁶ Heinzelman and Waters 2010, p. 7.

⁸⁷ See SAMS on Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/SyrianAmericanMedicalSociety>

interviews, these viewpoints should not be considered representative of the entire constituency, but rather, what the literature suggests are the trending opinions for each group.

4.1. Affected Communities

There appears to be almost no literature, at present, explicitly addressing the perspectives or attitudes of affected populations towards the diaspora or its effectiveness in humanitarian response. Several studies, however, do compare the effectiveness of formal and informal aid as reported by particular affected populations, which may provide some insight. Versluis, for instance, found that camp dwelling recipients of relief efforts following the January 2010 earthquake in Haiti viewed informal aid, and cash transfers in particular, as more timely and effective than formal aid.⁸⁸ While there is little literature, one may also be able to infer general perceptions between the two groups, to some extent, based on the factors of the relationship between the two groups, which include:

- The volume or pathways of remittances received from the diaspora;
- An assessment of a diaspora organization's and network's ability to operate effectively within a particular context; or
- By treating the diaspora as an extension of—or a proxy for—the affected population.

While this list of strategies for evaluating the perspectives of an affected population may, admittedly, be somewhat artificially contrived, as there are no examples of any systematic attempt to study the affected populations' attitudes towards diaspora humanitarian efforts. Nonetheless, given the near absence of humanitarian literature dealing directly with the issue, these proposals highlight the need for research that engages directly with the affected population to learn their perspectives on the diaspora organizations that are increasingly playing a role in emergency response.

That being said, further research in this area would need to critically consider the following:

- Measuring the penetration and impact of remittances with respect to affected populations (which is already difficult in largely unregulated systems such as in Somalia) is attractive because of the potential to quantify and even, theoretically, map the data in a way that helps humanitarian actors conduct needs assessments and plan for the procurement and distribution of emergency goods. This, however, is an imperfect method that risks privileging the priorities of traditional humanitarian actors and their definitions

⁸⁸ Versluis 2014, pp. S10-S11.

of effectiveness over the experiences, values, and perspectives of the affected populations themselves.

- Assessing the effectiveness of diaspora organizations in humanitarian response (without asking affected populations directly) is similarly problematic because the organizations' effectiveness would likely be measured in terms of that organizations' value as an implementing partner vis-à-vis a traditional humanitarian actor.
- Although members of the diaspora are frequently seen as having a comparatively higher degree of access to affected populations due to linguistic and cultural familiarity with their communities of origin than do traditional humanitarian actors, it should not be assumed that diaspora members are identical to the affected populations. As noted in the CDA Haiti Field Visit Report (2014), local Haitian medical personnel described how professional and cultural differences between local Haitian medical professionals and their Haitian-diaspora colleagues resulted in misunderstandings and tensions in the context of medical relief work. The report explains, "some even recalled tensions when diaspora nurses demonstrated 'controlling, disrespectful attitudes and overlooked existing local medical capacity.' One clinic staffer felt that diaspora nurses dismissed the trauma of the local nurses, many of whom had lost family members but nonetheless continued to work for days in the aftermath."⁸⁹ Such cases demonstrate the importance of differentiating between affected populations and diaspora communities.

4.2. Host Government

Host governments, in this case referring to governments of countries in which a humanitarian response is occurring, may pursue various diaspora engagement strategies. Although primarily focused on the relationship between governments and diaspora from a development perspective, Gamlen presents a typology that includes three broad categories of diaspora engagement policies: capacity building, extending rights, and extracting obligations.⁹⁰

Policies focused on engaging the diaspora for the purpose of capacity building are further subdivided into policies for symbolic nation-building and policies for institution-building. Nation-building policies focus on the use of inclusive rhetoric and symbols, cultural promotion and induction, media and public relations campaigns, and conferences or conventions that reaffirm the diaspora community's connection with their country of origin. Institution-building policies attempt to engage the diaspora in and through the development of consular and consultative bodies, sometimes at a ministerial level, and often with a dedicated bureaucracy for diaspora

⁸⁹ Jean, 2014 p. 17.

⁹⁰ Gamlen 2006.

affairs that include the diaspora in monitoring efforts and the building of transnational networks.⁹¹

Haiti Case

The case of Haiti illustrates several of these government strategies. The importance of the Haitian diaspora for the Haitian government is such that some would use it as evidence in the argument “against the classification of Haiti as a ‘fragile’ or ‘failed’ state, highlighting favorable factors such as its geographic location in an untroubled region, an absence of ethnic divisions and a huge and proximate diaspora.”¹ The Haitian diaspora demonstrated its willingness and ability to contribute to reconstruction and to the political process in Haiti through advocacy abroad on Haiti’s behalf. The Haitian government further allows dual-citizenship for diaspora, and encourages the return of highly skilled individual professionals as well as the participation of diaspora members in parliament.²

¹ Rencoret et al 2010, p. 9.

² Rencoret et al 2010, p. 13.

The extension of rights by a government may include the incorporation of the diaspora into the political life of their nation, through allowing dual nationality, voting rights (either remotely or in the country of origin), parliamentary representation, or even the ability to run for political office. Alternately, the government can extend civil and social rights, such as dedicated touristic services or even welfare protection. Some countries have policies that extract obligations from their diaspora with the aim of securing financial investments, political loyalty, or knowledge transfer from their citizens abroad. These policies could include the promotion of an expat lobby in their country of settlement, special economic zones, service-travel opportunities for individuals with particular areas of expertise, mandatory payments (such as income tax), or the capture of a percentage of remittances and foreign development investments sent from abroad.⁹²

The Government of Mexico’s Program for the Attention of Mexican Communities Abroad (PAMCA) provides one example of a successful policy for extracting financial support from diaspora communities. Through PAMCA, the Mexican government offers Mexican HTAs the opportunity to invest via government programs in certain pre-approved infrastructure projects in their home communities. Such investment is accompanied by the government’s promise that every diaspora dollar received will be matched with two or three government dollars.⁹³ In this way, the government gains access to diaspora resources without deliberately siphoning money from private remittances by offering diaspora communities the ability to contribute directly to

⁹¹ Gamlen 2006.

⁹² Ibid.

⁹³ de Haas, 2006, p. 3.

projects that will benefit their home communities. Although this example comes from the development field, it is likely that similar programs could be employed in response to humanitarian emergencies, provided that the government had programs in place to reach out to their diaspora.

Host governments, however, may also be wary of diaspora activities—and similarly, diasporas may distrust host governments—based on the particular context for the diaspora’s formation and histories of political, ethnic, or religious conflict.⁹⁴ The relationship of many Syrian diaspora organizations and the Syrian Government is one such example. While the leaders of relief networks such as UOSSM argue that they are increasingly recognizing the importance of humanitarian principles such as neutrality and impartiality,⁹⁵ many social media posts designed to raise awareness and mobilize support for their response to the humanitarian crises are framed in explicitly anti-government terms.⁹⁶ The Syrian Government, despite claims by diaspora organizations that they are neutral and their activities are purely humanitarian in nature, views many of these groups as being allied with the armed opposition.⁹⁷

African Diaspora Marketplace (ADM) USAID and Western Union

The African Diaspora Marketplace (ADM), a PPP between USAID and Western Union, is an interesting example of USAID trying to leverage private funds for economic growth. This partnership model builds on both Western Union’s interest in increasing financial flows to Africa, thereby increasing the market for the company’s money transfer services, and the knowledge and drive of Africans living in the United States.

The ADM is a business plan competition through which Africans living in the United States compete for matching grants of up to \$100,000 to establish or expand a business in their home countries, with local partners. More than 700 applications were submitted in the first year, from which 58 finalists were chosen to attend a January 2010 event in Washington, DC. Finalists presented their ideas before judges and the public; participated in learning sessions on business planning, access to credit, and USAID technical assistance opportunities; and took part in networking events.

Among the 14 proposals chosen as matching grant recipients were a cell-phone application that allows remote farmers to get real-time information on commodity prices and an entrepreneurial nursing franchise. USAID contributed \$600,000 to the first ADM, using the Academy for Educational Development (AED) as an implementing partner. Western Union contributed \$800,000, along with publicity and program design support. The partnership was widely viewed as a successful pilot, and USAID launched a second ADM round in 2012, selecting 17 new grantees. State/GPI has incorporated ADM, together with new diaspora business plan competitions in several other regions of the world, into its International Diaspora Engagement Alliance (IDEA) platform.

Source: Lawson 2013

⁹⁴ See, for example, Deshingkar and Asheeyar 2006; Smith 2007; Qayyum 2011; and Orozco and Yansura 2013.

⁹⁵ Cheung 2013.

⁹⁶ See SAMS Facebook page, linked above.

⁹⁷ Humanitarian Policy Group 2012; Sahloul 2014.

4.3. Civil Society Organizations

The links between diaspora groups and civil society organizations are critical in terms of the diasporas' ability to conduct effective humanitarian work and access affected populations. In Haiti, for example, HTAs maintain connections between members of the diaspora and their towns of origin back in Haiti.⁹⁸ The lines between the diasporas and local civil society organizations are not always clear. In Somalia, Hammond and colleagues note that Somalis from the diaspora are often in leadership roles or are members of local NGO boards.⁹⁹

Although many of the efforts of Syrian diaspora organizations are largely independent of local Syrian actors,¹⁰⁰ it is the relationship of the Syrian diaspora organizations to CSOs and Local Coordination Committees (LCCs) that allows them to reach otherwise inaccessible populations.¹⁰¹ It is on the basis of this close relationship with local NGOs, and the consequent ability to conduct more effective cross-border operations to besieged areas, that are off limits even to the UN, that allows CSOs to be more effective than traditional humanitarian INGOs. Such effectiveness has led leaders such as Zaher Sahloul, the President of SAMS, to petition the US Government both to rebalance its humanitarian funding in favor of more direct support for non-violent local and Syrian diaspora organizations, and to pressure UN OCHA to adopt a similar stance.¹⁰²

4.4. UN and INGOs

INGOs use diaspora members in order to access difficult-to-reach places and establish communications networks in these contexts.¹⁰³ The impact of diaspora recruitment on INGO access to affected populations is not identical in every context. Steets, Reichhold, and Sagmeister observed that while recruitment of diaspora members (especially those with dual-citizenship that obviates the often difficult process of acquiring visas for personnel) was a successful approach to increasing humanitarian access in contexts such as Somalia and Sudan. The opposite, however, was the case in Afghanistan, where the Taliban viewed local and diaspora INGO staff with greater suspicion than their foreign colleagues.¹⁰⁴ Along these lines, the effectiveness of using personnel recruited from diaspora communities may be compromised by the awareness among national governments and non-state armed groups (NSAGs), such as the Taliban, that western intelligence agencies and militaries are also recruiting diaspora members.¹⁰⁵

⁹⁸ Bell 2010, p. 8.

⁹⁹ Hammond et al 2011.

¹⁰⁰ American Relief Coalition for Syria 2014.

¹⁰¹ Sahloul 2014.

¹⁰² Sahloul 2014, p. 10.

¹⁰³ Steets, Reichhold, Sagmeister 2012.

¹⁰⁴ Steets, Reichhold, Sagmeister 2012, pp.30-31.

¹⁰⁵ Karoub 2009; Dilanian and Abdulrahim 2011; Indeed.com's L3 Communications Arabic Linguist Job Queries 2010; Defense Industry Daily 2013.

On the one hand, diaspora communities and organizations may offer traditional humanitarian actors greater access both to certain key stakeholders and affected populations, especially during the earliest stages of an emergency response before humanitarian organizations have been able to develop their own networks.¹⁰⁶ For instance, the Haitian diaspora assisted in early relief efforts by providing information with a reasonable degree of geographical precision for use by small organizations, INGOs, and the military and supported the needs assessments and response planning of other organizations that had not yet become involved in the response on the ground.¹⁰⁷

On the other hand, however, an organization that views the diaspora as a proxy for the affected population, failing to appreciate the significant differences between these two constituents, runs the risk not only of silencing the voices of the people most in need, but also exacerbating conflict by aligning with diaspora organizations with particular political, ethnic, or religious loyalties.¹⁰⁸ Davey acknowledges this concern, stating that “the relief role of diaspora networks has been recognized, with the crisis in Syria providing another example of their importance, but the emphasis they place on solidarity may pose a challenge for Northern agencies that prefer the language of impartiality.”¹⁰⁹ The fact that some members of a diaspora, or even entire diaspora organizations, are likely to support or be affiliated with certain political parties, religious sects, ethnic groups, or even NSAGs,¹¹⁰ means unexamined partnerships with certain individuals or groups could easily result in the unintentional alienation of large portions of the crisis-affected population.

4.5. Donors

Many donors have recognized the potential benefits of engaging with existing diaspora networks for the purposes of improving the effectiveness of humanitarian response. While there is evident enthusiasm for such engagement, there appears to be little literature on best practices for coordination and partnership between donors and diaspora networks. In some cases, donors are active in pursuing engagement for development purposes, but appear to leave humanitarian work largely in the hands of traditional agencies and organizations. Sweden’s International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida), for example, has developed several forums for coordination of development and reconstruction efforts in Somalia, but states that the Common Humanitarian Fund, the Red Cross, IOM, UNHCR, and UNICEF are the primary organizations through which it supports humanitarian work.¹¹¹ Unlike development work, in which the

¹⁰⁶ Savage and Harvey 2007, p. 4.

¹⁰⁷ Independent Evaluation of the Ushahidi Project 2011.

¹⁰⁸ Davey 2012.

¹⁰⁹ Davey 2012, p. 2

¹¹⁰ Sipus 2011.

¹¹¹ Sida 2014.

extended timeframe allows agencies to partner with diaspora organizations to help them with ongoing projects,¹¹² the need to respond immediately to emergencies means that decisions about which diaspora initiatives to support, if any, must be taken quickly.

In the context of negotiations for humanitarian access to affected populations, the value of having non-Western staff has been identified by ECHO, accompanied with a call to engage more directly with “relevant non-Western actors in a more strategic manner,”¹¹³ but no specific recommendations are made on how this engagement should occur, apart from the recruitment of non-Western staff by implementing organizations. Similarly, in its Humanitarian Emergency Response Review (HERR) for 2011, United Kingdom’s Department for International Development (DFID) notes the increasingly important role that diaspora and faith-based groups are playing in humanitarian response, particularly in the mobilization of financial aid in the form of remittances and the existence of independent communications networks.¹¹⁴ HERR concludes that DFID needs to “make better use of faith based and diaspora partners,”¹¹⁵ but does not elaborate on how this might be accomplished.

4.6. Private Sector

In general, there is very little literature on private sector perspectives towards diaspora involvement in humanitarian response. Remittances and international cash transfers represent one of the major intersections between the private sector (commercial banks and MTOs) and the diaspora community.¹¹⁶ Counter-terrorism legislation and accompanying government and industry regulations result in a private sector that is increasingly reluctant to provide these services to diaspora members and organizations. Diaspora run companies and their contribution during and post a humanitarian emergency is another area for further research and exploration.

4.7. Military

This review found no specific references that captured military perspectives on the effectiveness of diaspora involvement in humanitarian action. Nonetheless, the US Marine Corps credits the Ushahidi-based crisis map for the Haiti earthquake response with providing them with the information their responders needed to reach affected people, including those buried under rubble, resulting in hundreds of lives saved.¹¹⁷ Use of the Ushahidi platform in the Haiti emergency by the US Marine Corps indirectly acknowledges the role of the diaspora in the military’s own relief efforts. Western militaries, for instance the US Military, have made their own

¹¹² de Haas 2006.

¹¹³ Steets, Reichhold, Sagmeister 2013, p. 6.

¹¹⁴ DFID 2011.

¹¹⁵ DFID 2011, p. 57.

¹¹⁶ Orozco and Yansura 2013.

¹¹⁷ Meier 2013.

concerted efforts to recruit members of strategically significant diaspora communities. This is particularly apparent in the recruitment of translators and interpreters from within the diaspora to support US Military operations in Iraq and Afghanistan.

A 2013 article in *Defense Industry Daily* notes that translators and interpreters represented 8% (or 9,128 people) of all contractors hired by the US Military for work in Iraq as of mid-2009. Although local interpreters are much less expensive than those hired from within US-diaspora communities (\$15,000 USD per person/year vs. \$200,000 USD per person/year, respectively), local interpreters cannot be used for intelligence gathering work, whereas American citizens from the diaspora are able to acquire the security clearances necessary for more sensitive assignments.¹¹⁸ A host of contract companies exists to train and supply the military with interpreters.¹¹⁹ The Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) is also openly involved in recruiting from within US-based diasporas, purchasing space in diaspora newspapers,¹²⁰ running television advertisements designed to appeal to particular communities, and even attending diaspora cultural festivals.¹²¹ These efforts on the part of militaries and intelligence agencies to recruit from within diaspora communities may contribute to beliefs and suspicions among certain crisis-affected populations, crisis-affected governments, and NSAGs that diaspora personnel, working either within diaspora organizations or for international humanitarian organizations are actually the covert agents of foreign governments with patently non-humanitarian agendas.¹²²

Section V – Conclusions

One of the principal motivations for fostering greater engagement and cooperation between diaspora communities and the traditional humanitarian system is certainly to develop more effective ways of meeting the needs of affected populations in times of crisis. That being said, another motivation seems to be born out of traditional humanitarian actors' concern that the future will see their agencies or organizations excluded from one or more of the other systems that has emerged (or will emerge) to respond to humanitarian crises.¹²³ This perceived anxiety-driven push for greater engagement, however, should not preclude substantial reflection on the principles and guidelines upon which future cooperation or partnerships should be based.

Potential Roles for humanitarians in supporting diaspora efforts:

¹¹⁸ Defense Industry Daily 2013.

¹¹⁹ See, for example, Defense Industry Daily (2013), describing the case of Global Linguist Solutions (GLS), a contracting company that won a 4.65 Billion USD contract from the US Army's Intelligence and Security Command at the end of 2006, which subcontracts to other vendors such as L-3 Communications, Northrop Grumman, TigerSwan, KMS Solutions, among others.

¹²⁰ See Kim (2009) for one such example in of a CIA recruiting advertisement from the Dearborn, Michigan-based newspaper, *The Arab American News*.

¹²¹ See, for example, Karoub 2009; Dilanian and Abdulrahim 2011.

¹²² Steets, Reichhold, and Sagmeister 2012.

¹²³ Davey 2012, p. 3.

- Help affected populations with problems of lost documentation after disasters in order to ensure that remittances can be sent more expeditiously and effectively from the diaspora community to affected populations.
- Make the reestablishment of the banking system a priority in the wake of a disaster or crisis. This could be of particular importance to ensure that diaspora communities can again financially support their family members and communities in the affected country.
- Advocate for affected populations' access to remittances with respect to counter-terrorism legislation.
- Support communication networks and technologies to enable communication between affected people and diaspora.
- Engage the diaspora in family reunification programs.
- Ensure that context analyses account for existing diaspora networks and modes of engagement prior to interventions.
- Identify characteristics of "effective" diaspora groups.
- Develop a set of "good practices," as has been done in the development field, for humanitarian actors to follow in their engagement with diasporas or diaspora groups.¹²⁴
- Analyze and advocate for "a more disaggregated and nuanced understanding of informal financial flows, and how and where they should be regulated."¹²⁵
- Evaluate the impact of humanitarian INGO's cash transfer programs on diaspora remittance behaviors. For instance, would increases in NGO cash transfer programs discourage diaspora members from sending money back home?

¹²⁴ See, for example, de Haas 2006.

¹²⁵ Deshingkar and Aheeyar 2006, p. 20.

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