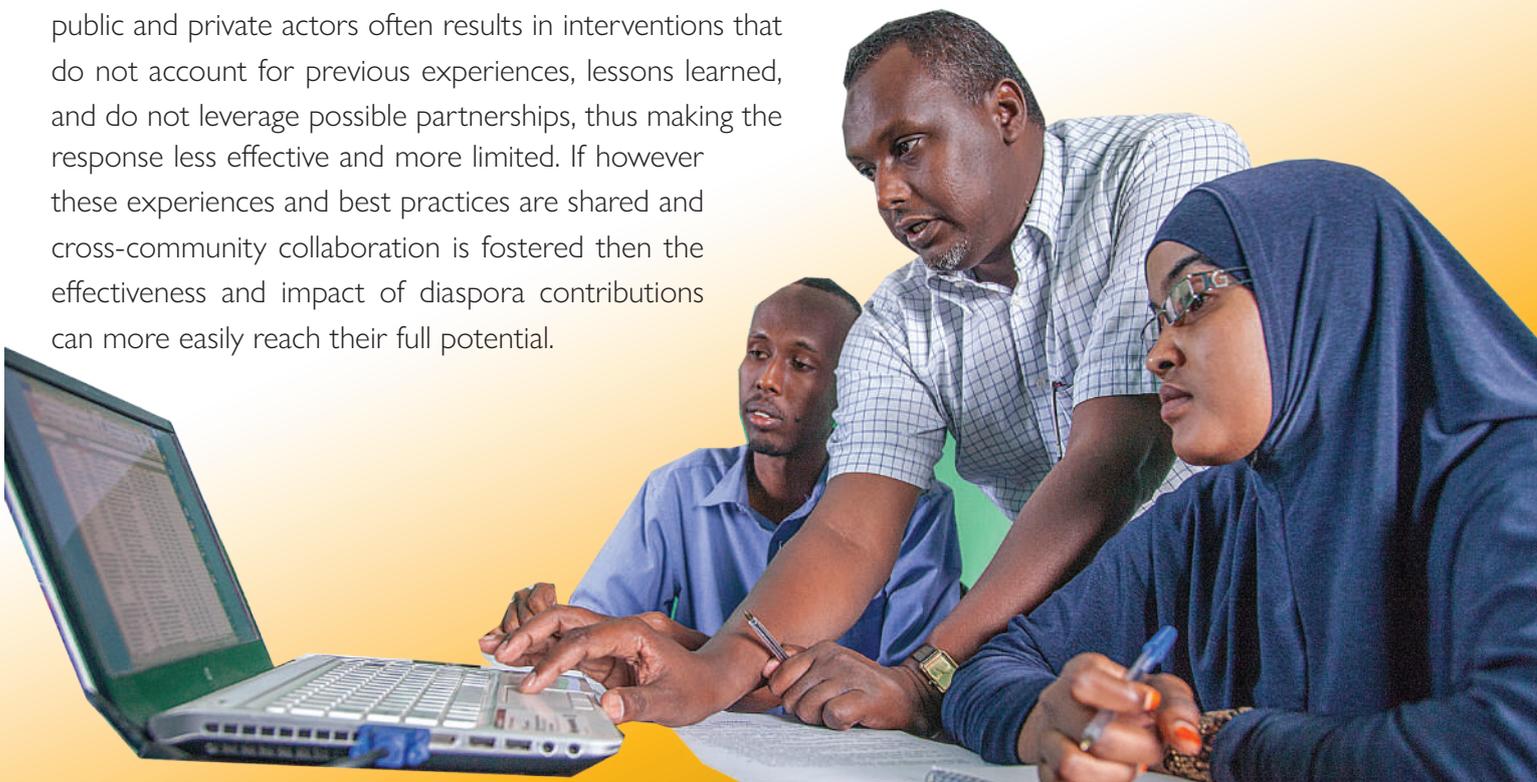


## Introduction

On 31 December 2019, a cluster of pneumonia of unknown etiology was reported in Wuhan City, Hubei Province of the People's Republic of China. On 11 March, World Health Organization officially declared Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) a pandemic. Since the outbreak began, as of 3 April, more than 1 million cases and over 58,000 deaths have been reported globally. Confirmed cases have been reported in 204 countries and territories, with new cases and countries reporting new infections on a daily basis. The impact of the current global pandemic is affecting every aspect of life from health, economies, and even basic social interactions. The steady increase in new reported COVID-19 cases continues to impact global mobility by triggering new decisions for border closures or extensions of the restrictions already in place. However, in spite of these challenges, diaspora communities are already mobilizing to help their families, friends, and communities most vulnerable to the impacts of the pandemic even while they themselves maybe facing challenging times and an uncertain future in their countries of destination.

Diasporas are not only often the first to respond, their political, social, cultural and human capital coupled with their in-depth knowledge of the country, and familiarity with local languages, social, cultural, and religious norms, can lead to more targeted and tailor responses. They also provide financial and other resources that go directly in support of the affected communities. The COVID-19 pandemic however is perhaps the first acute global crisis that most living today have ever experienced and thus these responses are being developed within an entirely unprecedented context that calls for everyone's contributions and new levels of coordination and collaboration. While specific diaspora communities may have experience in responding to similar emergencies in their countries of origin, lack of communication between diaspora communities and between diasporas and other public and private actors often results in interventions that do not account for previous experiences, lessons learned, and do not leverage possible partnerships, thus making the response less effective and more limited. If however these experiences and best practices are shared and cross-community collaboration is fostered then the effectiveness and impact of diaspora contributions can more easily reach their full potential.



## Objective

The objective of the Global Diaspora Virtual Exchange on COVID-19 Response is twofold. First, as the name implies, the aim will be to create a space for diaspora groups from different communities to share experiences and best practices in order to maximize their impact within their efforts to respond to the COVID-19 crisis and beyond. Eventually, this may also serve as platform for sharing existing needs and possibly create partnerships that could contribute to address gaps. Secondly, the Virtual Exchange will try to showcase and bring attention to the important work that diaspora groups are already doing on the ground in order to encourage policy makers and practitioners to strengthen their collaboration and support to such efforts. While a call to involve actors, such as diasporas, within humanitarian assistance in a more institutional manner was made during the World Humanitarian Summit in 2016 recognizing the independent and key role that these communities have historically played, diaspora's contributions to emergency response are still often misunderstood due to a gap in knowledge about their work. As such, this proposed virtual exchange intends to contribute to the effort to better interlink diaspora's interventions to other public and private responses.

## Format

In order to maximize opportunities for virtual exchange, a number of different channels will be made available to participants. Firstly, participants will be invited to share examples of successful interventions, best practices, and opportunities for collaboration through the iDiaspora forum and, secondly, participants can discuss their experiences during the Virtual Exchange Event which is planned for two hours. After the event, IOM will compile and the inputs received through the iDiaspora forum and during the Virtual Exchange Event in an outcome document showcasing diaspora initiatives and best practices which can be disseminated to policy makers and practitioners to encourage further collaboration with diaspora groups during the crisis and moving forward Within the iDiaspora forum you are invited to share:

- your success stories and best practices [here](#)
- your opportunities for collaboration [here](#)

During the event there will be two opportunities for exchange, initially a panel of diaspora individuals who will present their concrete experience in supporting the response to the current COVID-19 crisis and/or similar emergencies in the past and subsequently all participants would be invited to share their experiences during a plenary discussion in order to identify best practices.

## Participation

The event is open to all diaspora communities with a focus on facilitating exchange between African, Asian, and European diaspora communities. All participants are invited to register through iDiaspora and will have the opportunity to share their experiences and submit inputs and initiatives through the Platform in writing and during the plenary discussion. In addition, several panelists with concrete experiences to share from different communities will present their stories and help frame the discussion on best practices.



# Programme of Virtual Exchange Event:

The COVID-19 pandemic is the first acute global crisis that most of us have experienced in our lifetime and thus calls for new levels of coordination and collaboration.

Sesión	Format	Timing
Introduction	IOM welcoming remarks	10 mins
Sharing Successes and case studies	Panel discussion	50 mins
Exploring Best Practices	Plenary discussion	40 mins
Agreeing on a Way Forward	Plenary discussion	20 mins

Featuring the experiences of the following diaspora leaders

ADEL KAROUI Albideya Association	YOHANNES ASSEFA Ethiopia Diaspora Business Forum
NILOUFAR RAHIM KEIHAN	PETER KWOK UK Federation of Chinese Professionals
MARK KOSMO AND SIHANA BEJTULLAHU Global Albanian Foundation	DR. CHARLES SENESSIE Afro-European Medical and Research Network

Co-conveners:



Organized by:

