

DIASPORAS' ROLE IN CLIMATE DISASTER RESPONSE & COMMUNITY RESILIENCE

MARCH 2024

In 2023, DEMAC and IOM conducted five Case Studies on diaspora response and adaptation to climate-related hazards in South Sudan, Egypt, Peru, Sri Lanka and Tuvalu.

Diaspora communities are increasingly recognized for their contributions to humanitarian assistance. They play an active role in climate change action and intervention, offering immediate disaster response and recovery assistance, as well as supporting investments in green technologies and knowledge transfer.

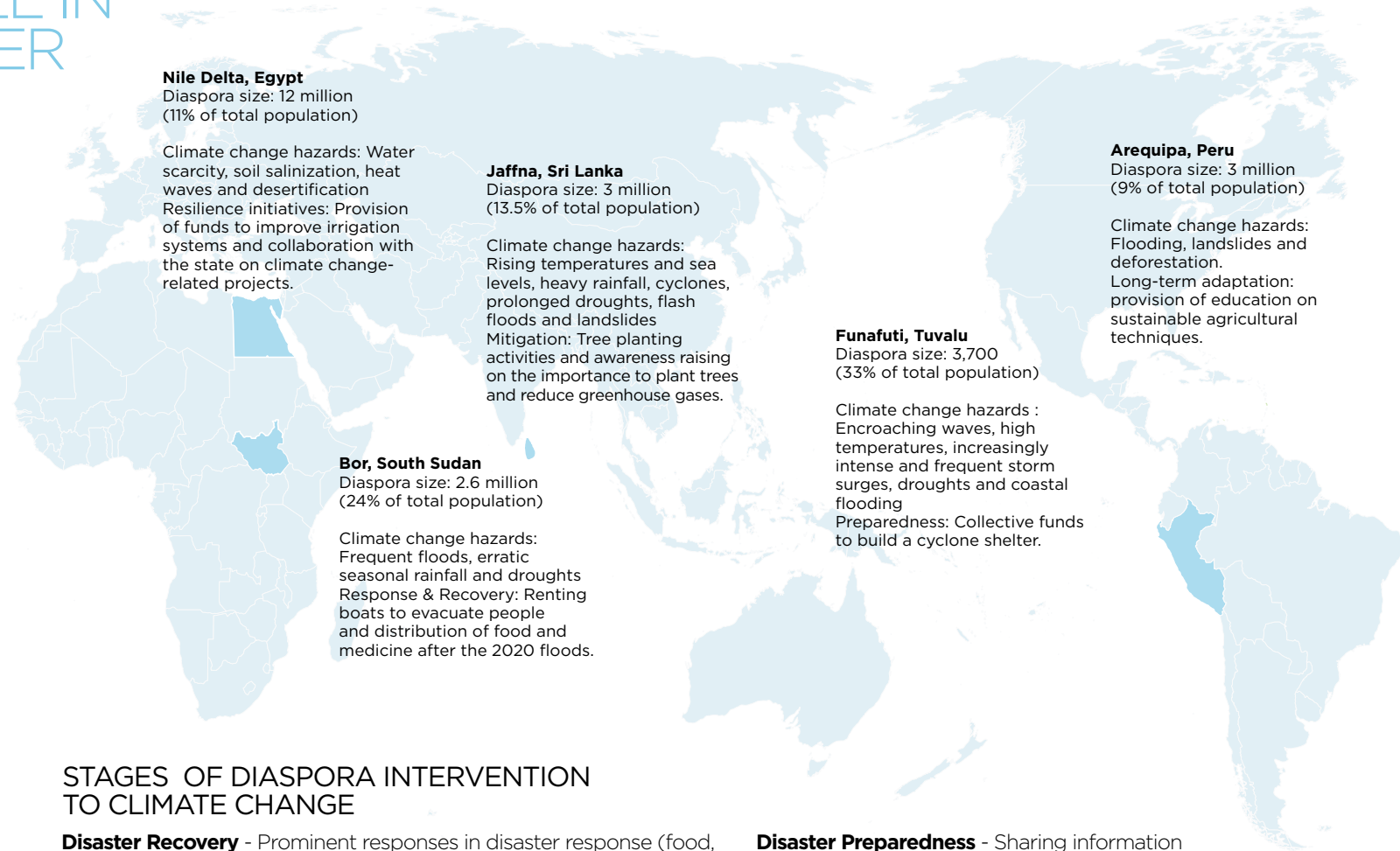
STRENGTHS OF DIASPORAS

Reach - Presence in hard-to-reach locations that institutional humanitarian actors cannot access

Sensitivity - Close ties and community trust for authentic participation

Needs & Flexibility - Flexible responses to specific requests from affected populations

Sustainability - Long-standing relationships and assistance post-emergency



Nile Delta, Egypt
Diaspora size: 12 million
(11% of total population)

Climate change hazards: Water scarcity, soil salinization, heat waves and desertification
Resilience initiatives: Provision of funds to improve irrigation systems and collaboration with the state on climate change-related projects.

Jaffna, Sri Lanka
Diaspora size: 3 million
(13.5% of total population)

Climate change hazards: Rising temperatures and sea levels, heavy rainfall, cyclones, prolonged droughts, flash floods and landslides
Mitigation: Tree planting activities and awareness raising on the importance to plant trees and reduce greenhouse gases.

Arequipa, Peru
Diaspora size: 3 million
(9% of total population)

Climate change hazards: Flooding, landslides and deforestation.
Long-term adaptation: provision of education on sustainable agricultural techniques.

Funafuti, Tuvalu
Diaspora size: 3,700
(33% of total population)

Climate change hazards : Encroaching waves, high temperatures, increasingly intense and frequent storm surges, droughts and coastal flooding
Preparedness: Collective funds to build a cyclone shelter.

Bor, South Sudan
Diaspora size: 2.6 million
(24% of total population)

Climate change hazards: Frequent floods, erratic seasonal rainfall and droughts
Response & Recovery: Renting boats to evacuate people and distribution of food and medicine after the 2020 floods.

STAGES OF DIASPORA INTERVENTION TO CLIMATE CHANGE

Disaster Recovery - Prominent responses in disaster response (food, medicine and shelter) Recovery efforts as "build back better" concept

Resilience - Support to long-term adaptation and advice on climate-smart practices and income diversification

Disaster Preparedness - Sharing information and building regular contact with remote areas

Mitigation - Awareness raising, advocacy, and involvement in carbon removal projects

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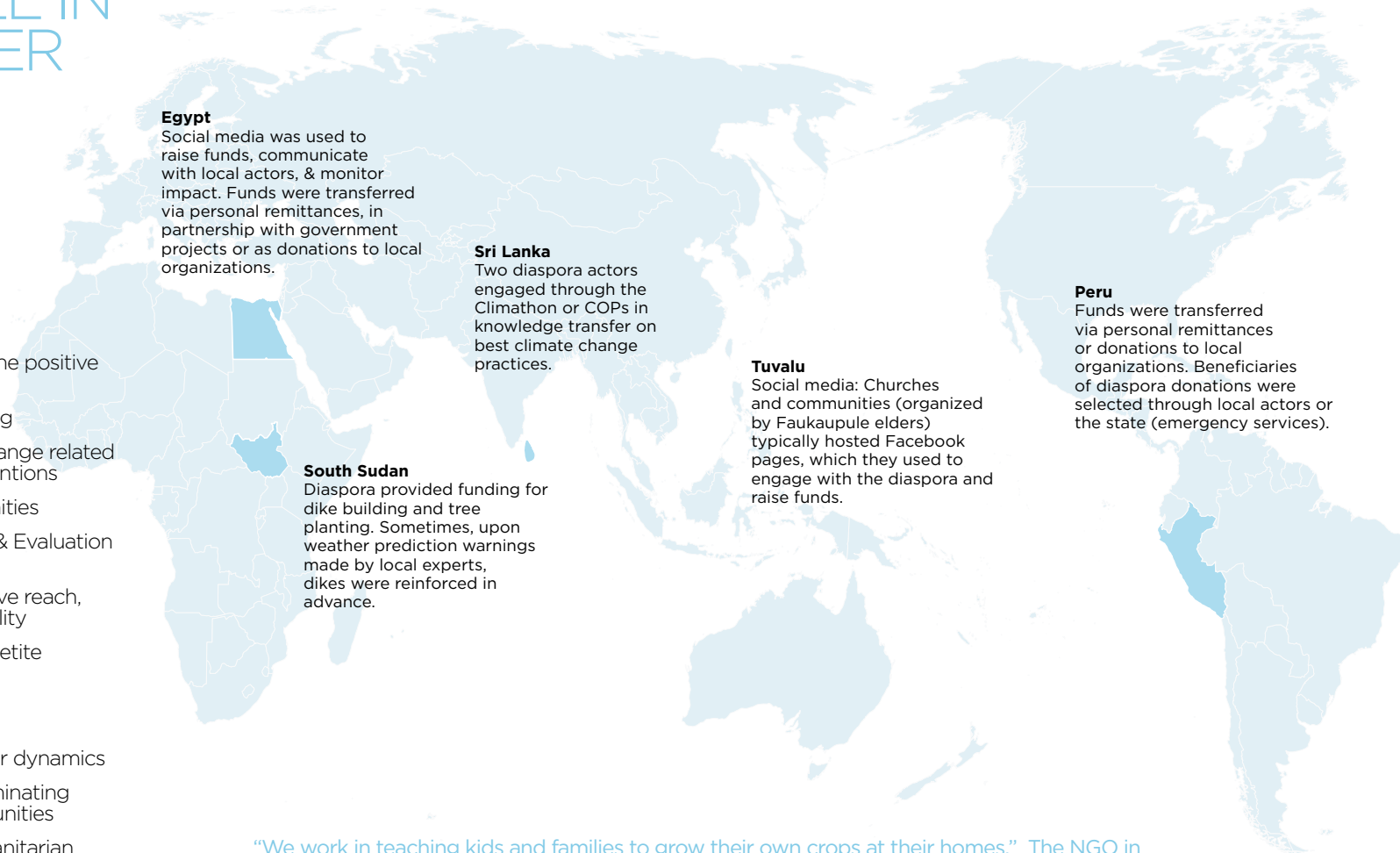
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Institutional humanitarian actors can enhance the positive aspects of diaspora interventions by:

- Soliciting diaspora input to response planning
- Providing technical assistance on climate change related hazards and boost quality of existing interventions
- Supporting access to new funding opportunities
- Sharing tools for actors without Monitoring & Evaluation expertise
- Working alongside diaspora actors to improve reach, understanding of needs, and/or local credibility
- Increasing operational and fiduciary risk appetite

Diaspora actors should consider:

- How their interventions influence local power dynamics
- Expanding their role in collecting and disseminating disaster preparedness information in communities
- Building relationships with institutional humanitarian actors
- Engaging diaspora-led businesses for funding and technical support



Egypt

Social media was used to raise funds, communicate with local actors, & monitor impact. Funds were transferred via personal remittances, in partnership with government projects or as donations to local organizations.

Sri Lanka

Two diaspora actors engaged through the Climathon or COPs in knowledge transfer on best climate change practices.

Tuvalu

Social media: Churches and communities (organized by Faukaupule elders) typically hosted Facebook pages, which they used to engage with the diaspora and raise funds.

Peru

Funds were transferred via personal remittances or donations to local organizations. Beneficiaries of diaspora donations were selected through local actors or the state (emergency services).

South Sudan

Diaspora provided funding for dike building and tree planting. Sometimes, upon weather prediction warnings made by local experts, dikes were reinforced in advance.

“We work in teaching kids and families to grow their own crops at their homes.” The NGO in Túcume, supported by volunteers from the diaspora has bio-orchards that use recycled materials and they teach the communities how to develop their own crops. This way they are prepared to confront climate change and are more resilient. - Peruvian diaspora representative in USA

MAIN FINDINGS OF FIVE CASE STUDIES

SEPTEMBER - DECEMBER 2023

HIGHLIGHTS OF INTERVENTION

WAYS OF WORKING

| | Egypt | Peru | South Sudan | Sri Lanka | Tuvalu |
|----------------------------|---|--|---|--|--|
| HIGHLIGHTS OF INTERVENTION | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mitigation: DOs provided support for tree planting activities. • Response & Recovery: DO provided food and temporary shelter after flash floods. • Long-term adaptation: DO provided funds to improve irrigation systems. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mitigation: DOs participated in education and awareness-raising activities (e.g., on the importance of reducing GHG emissions). • Preparedness: Individual diaspora members supported the reinforcement of their relatives' houses ahead of heavy rains, upon their requests. • Response & Recovery: DOs provided food and temporary shelter through local actors. • Long-term adaptation: DOs provided education on sustainable agricultural techniques. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mitigation: DOs encouraged tree planting activities. • Preparedness: DOs provided funding for dike building and tree planting. Sometimes, upon weather prediction warnings made by local experts, dikes were reinforced in advance. • Response & Recovery: DOs rented boats to evacuate people and provided food and medicine in the aftermath of the 2020 floods. • Long-term adaptation: DOs provided flood-resistant seeds & individual diaspora members facilitated new livelihoods. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mitigation: Individual members of the diaspora encouraged tree planting activities and helped raise awareness (e.g., on the importance of planting trees and reducing GHG emissions). • Response & Recovery: DO collected funds to provide emergency supplies, to cash for food, or funds for home rebuilding. • Long-term adaptation: DO supported the installation of irrigation tanks. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preparedness: Collective funds paid for a chapel, which became a cyclone shelter. • Long-term adaptation: Individuals in the diaspora provided direct support to families to help them adapt to the effects of rising sea levels, including funds to relocate inland and to start alternative, non-agricultural livelihoods. |
| WAYS OF WORKING | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social media was used to raise funds, communicate with local actors, & monitor impact. • DOs and diaspora entrepreneurs engaged in some knowledge transfer on best climate change practices. • Funds were transferred via: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Personal remittances - DOs in partnership with government projects - Donations to local organizations • Beneficiaries of DO donations were selected through local actors or the state. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social media was used to raise funds, communicate with local actors, monitor impact, and demonstrate the impact of donations (via Instagram posts). • DOs engaged in some knowledge transfer on best climate change practices. • Funds were transferred via: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Personal remittances - Donations to local organizations • Beneficiaries of DO donations were selected through local actors or the state (emergency services). | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social media was used to raise funds, communicate with local actors, monitor impact through WhatsApp pictures. • Knowledge transfer on best climate change practices and input from highly qualified returnees. • Funds were transferred via: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Personal remittances - Donations to sister local organizations • Beneficiaries of DO donations were selected through local actors (mostly, sister NGOs). | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social media was used to raise funds, communicate with local actors, monitor impact through WhatsApp pictures. • Two diaspora actors engaged through the Climathon or COPs in knowledge transfer on best climate change practices. • Funds were transferred via: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Personal remittances - Donations to local NGOs • Beneficiaries of DO donations were selected through local actors. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social media: Churches and communities (organized by Faukaupule elders) typically hosted Facebook pages, which they used to engage with the diaspora and raise funds. • Funds were transferred via: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Personal remittances - Donations through Falekaupule elders or church groups • Beneficiaries of DO donations were selected by leaders from the church, traditional elders (Falekaupule), and government. |