

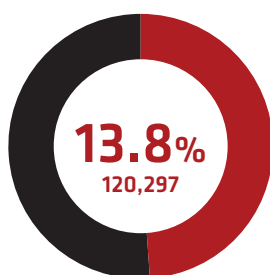


# Diaspora engagement mapping COMOROS

## Facts & figures

### Emigration<sup>1</sup>

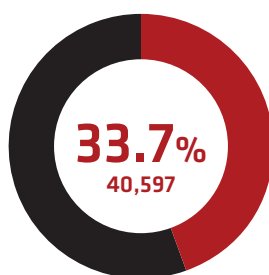
% of emigrants in total population



♂ 48.9%  
♀ 51.1%



% of which in the EU



♂ 44.6%  
♀ 55.4%



Remittances as a share of GDP: **19.3%**  
Remittances inflow (USD million): **140**



### Top countries of destination



|                            |                         |
|----------------------------|-------------------------|
| France + Mayotte + Réunion | 40,337 + 57,991 + 2,248 |
| Madagascar                 | 11,932                  |
| Libya                      | 4,557                   |
| Egypt                      | 902                     |
| Guinea                     | 726                     |

### Political rights



Dual citizenship<sup>2</sup>



Right to vote in national elections for citizens residing abroad<sup>3</sup>



Terminology: Comoros refers to its diaspora as 'Comorians Abroad' (in French: *Comoriens à l'Étranger*), although the term diaspora is also used in some documents.

**Comoros does not have a diaspora engagement policy.**

1 Source: From UNDESA Migration Stock Statistics. This probably represents a significant underestimate, given the number of Comorian diaspora with other nationalities. French diaspora organisation FORIM estimated the Comorian diaspora in France to be between 150,000 and 300,000 in 2014, see: <https://www.forim.net/sites/default/files/Etude%20sur%20la%20diaspora%20des%20Comores%20en%20France%20par%20CAGF-FORIM.pdf>

2 Code de la Nationalité Comorienne, 1979 ; for a discussion of the complexities of Comoros nationality legislation see: <http://www.comores-infos.net/le-droit-de-la-nationalite-aux-comores/> . Unusually, Comoros has permitted dual nationality for applications for so-called 'economic nationality' from foreign nationals since 2008. This is a point of tension with the diaspora, as they are not permitted dual nationality.

3 Electoral Law 2005 last modified on 19 September 2009 (Ordinance No. 09-006/PR).

## Overview of the policy and legislative framework



**2011** ● **Decentralization to strengthen participatory democracy and contribute to local development:** The Union of Comoros passed a series of laws in 2011 to enable greater decentralisation with the aim of strengthening participatory democracy and contributions to local development, including by the diaspora.<sup>4</sup> These enabled greater autonomy for local authorities in the Comoros Islands to establish co-development projects with local authorities in other countries. Most of these partnerships have been forged with local authorities in France.<sup>5</sup> While these laws do not reference diaspora explicitly, they have enabled greater diaspora participation in co-development activities in the Comoros Islands.

**2018**  
▼  
**2021** ● **Accelerated Growth and Sustainable Development Strategy (SCA2D)<sup>6</sup>** contains Strategic Objective 6 that aims to promote trade and high value-added services (such as law or finances) and create decent jobs, such as in ICT. One expected result of this strategic objective is to optimise diaspora transfers. It also sets out decentralised cooperation with the diaspora as a means to stimulate local economies, building on the legal changes mentioned above.<sup>7</sup> This document also acknowledges the lack of a diaspora policy and accurate data on the location and composition of its diaspora as barriers to achieving greater diaspora remittance flows and investments.<sup>8</sup>

The SCA2D also envisages the creation of an investment fund for the Comorian diaspora, in order to increase the productivity of their financial contributions and ‘channel them towards productive projects’, although it provides no detail on how this will be achieved.<sup>9</sup>



### Trends:

Comoros has a large diaspora relative to its total population, and yet diaspora engagement has not been a priority for the government until relatively recently. This is attributable in part to political differences in Comoros and in the diaspora.

Currently, the government is investing in infrastructure such as roads and hospitals with help from the French government and from its diaspora there (principally human resources and expertise). The Comoros is also interested in encouraging investment and heritage tourism from its diaspora, although there are currently no official schemes or programmes to achieve this.<sup>10</sup>

In June 2015, the Minister of the Interior announced the decision declaring that the diaspora’s contribution had a big impact on the national economy and national development and thus they should have a vote in the Comorian elections.<sup>11</sup> However, this decision was ultimately reversed by the Electoral Commission, which cited “technical reasons.”<sup>12</sup> Calls for diaspora voting are set to continue, and enabling this promises to give the diaspora greater opportunities to contribute to the country’s development.

4 Loi sur l’organisation territoriale: 11-006/AU du 2 mai 2011 ; Loi sur la décentralisation : 11-005/AU du 7 avril 2011 ; Loi sur l’organisation des communes: 11-007/AU du 9 avril 2011. Available at: <http://ageriuscabinet.com/web/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/lois-sur-la-d%C3%A9centralisation-du-21-juillet-2011.pdf>. See also: Abdérémane AHMED KOUURA (2013), Processus de Décentralisation au Comores, available at : [https://www.pseau.org/outils/ouvrages/cifal\\_processus\\_de\\_decentralisation\\_au\\_comores\\_principes\\_bilan\\_et\\_perspectives\\_2013.pdf](https://www.pseau.org/outils/ouvrages/cifal_processus_de_decentralisation_au_comores_principes_bilan_et_perspectives_2013.pdf)  
5 <https://km.ambafrance.org/La-cooperation-decentralisee-en>

6 Stratégie de Croissance Accélérée et de Développement Durable 2018-2021, available at : [https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=1&cad=rja&uact=8&ved=2ahUKewid1MCX9-roAhVTe8AKHakaAU8QFJAegQIBRAB&url=https%3A%2F%2Ferc.undp.org%2Fevaluation%2Fmanagementresponses%2Fkeyaction%2Fdocuments%2Fdownload%2F1156&usq=AOvVaw3lQpkUh1\\_SJ-FLOa7isns-G](https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=1&cad=rja&uact=8&ved=2ahUKewid1MCX9-roAhVTe8AKHakaAU8QFJAegQIBRAB&url=https%3A%2F%2Ferc.undp.org%2Fevaluation%2Fmanagementresponses%2Fkeyaction%2Fdocuments%2Fdownload%2F1156&usq=AOvVaw3lQpkUh1_SJ-FLOa7isns-G)

7 Ibid.

8 Ibid.

9 Ibid.

10 Stratégie de Croissance Accélérée et de Développement Durable 2018-2021, available at : [erc.undp.org > evaluation > keyaction > documents > download](https://erc.undp.org/evaluation/keyaction/documents/download)

11 <https://country.eiu.com/article.aspx?articleid=1503240734&Country=Comoros&topic=Politics&subtopic=Forecast&subsubtopic=Election+watch>

12 <https://africanarguments.org/2016/02/18/presidential-elections-in-the-comoros-whose-turn-is-it-anyway/>

## Obstacles



- **Lack of political interest and resources:** Historically there has been a lack of interest from the government of Comoros in its diaspora, as well as a lack of resources allocated to diaspora engagement, despite the large size of the diaspora relative to the country's population and its reliance on remittances. The lack of a diaspora policy and accurate data on the location and composition of its diaspora is as barriers to achieving greater diaspora remittance flows and investments.
- **Lack of diaspora engagement frameworks and structures:** There has been little policy focus on engaging the Comorian diaspora, and it is only in the last two years (2017-2019) that the government has started to turn its attention to developing such a framework.
- **Local focus of the Comorian diaspora:** The vast majority of Comorian diaspora are resident in France, and maintain strong links with specific local communities of origin. Comorian diaspora contributions – of money, skills, time and advocacy / awareness raising – tend to be oriented towards these local communities of origin, and it can be challenging to re-orient these to national schemes in the absence of frameworks and incentives for engagement and because of a lack of trust in the government.

## SPOTLIGHT: Effective practices



### Developing Diaspora Engagement in Comoros<sup>13</sup>

The government of Comoros is starting to take a greater interest in diaspora engagement, and is currently working with IOM to support the implementation of the government's SCA2D national development strategy and the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF). IOM is also assisting in the implementation of a diaspora engagement project which seeks to mobilise the human and other diaspora resources of the diaspora (investments, social capital, political capital), in order to build capacities of national stakeholders, to foster dialogue, and develop multi-sectoral strategies for leveraging the diaspora's contributions to national development.

CAPACITY BUILDING

### The Franco Comorian Co-development Programme (FCCP)<sup>14</sup>

Funded by French government, the FCCP aimed to support Comorian migrants in their commitment to the country's development. The FCCP made the first selection of grant applications from the call for projects during its selection committee meeting in Moroni in 2013, with a subsequent round in 2014. Projects funded included education, health, and enterprise initiatives. Priority was given to joint projects of local authorities and diaspora groups in order to enable the involvement of beneficiaries and greater capacity-building. This approach sought to capitalise on the decentralisation process initiated by the Union of Comoros. Results of this programme are however unclear.

PROJECT FUNDING

13 <https://www.iom.int/news/un-migration-agency-opens-office-moroni-union-comoros>

14 <https://www.codevcomores.org/le-codeveloppement.php>

## Annex:

# List of Actors

### Diaspora related institutions



- At regional level

#### **African Union Citizens and Diaspora Directorate (AU CIDO) [www.au-cido.int](http://www.au-cido.int)**

Comoros nominates a diaspora focal point to AU Citizens and Diaspora Directorate (AU CIDO) Continental Meetings.

#### **Southern African Development Community (SADC) [www.sadc.int](http://www.sadc.int)**

The Union of the Comoros was admitted to the Southern African Development Community (SADC) at its 37th Summit of Heads of State and Government in August 2017. It then became a full member at the 38th Summit of Heads of State and Government on August 2018 in Windhoek Namibia.

#### **Arab League <http://www.lasportal.org/Pages/Welcome.aspx>**

- National institutions
  - At ministerial level

#### **Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Co-operation <http://www.diplomatie.gouv.km/>**

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation promotes the interests of Comoros abroad and has responsibility for the Comorian diaspora.

#### **Presidency of the Union of the Comoros Islands <https://beit-salam.km/>**

- At local level

N/A, although Comorian diaspora communities maintain links with their communities of origin at the local level and are more likely to mobilise resources for local rather than national schemes.

## Diaspora organisations in Europe<sup>15</sup>



**Association Franco-Comorienne pour le Développement et l'Amitié de Mohéli (AFCDAM) humanitaire**  
France <http://www.afcdam.org>

Development activities

AFCDAM works to support the integration of Comorians in France, promote Comorian culture, and also undertakes capacity-building projects and donations of medical equipment to clinics in the Comoros Islands.

### Fédération Des Associations Comoriennes De France (FACOF)

Development activities

FACOF works to support the Comorian diaspora in France in relation to integration. It also provides training and education in France and in Comoros.

### Plateforme des Associations Comoriennes de la Seine-Saint-Denis (PFAC) France

<http://www.pfac-93.org/>

Development activities

PFAC is an umbrella group of Comorian diaspora organisations in Seine-Saint-Denis, France. It works to support the Comorian diaspora in France, as well as providing training, and medical and educational supplies to Comoros.

### L'Union des Femmes Comoriennes France

Development activities

The organisation works to promote women, and fight for the rights of children. It also provides training and humanitarian support to Comoros.

### Coordination des Associations de la Diaspora Comorienne (DIASCOM) France 2000

<https://www.comores-online.com/mwezinet/associations/diascom.htm>

DIASCOM represents around 50 Comorian diaspora organisations in France. It works to support Comorians in France to integrate and to promote Comorian culture.

<sup>15</sup> There are several hundred small Comorian diaspora organisations based in France, according to the official French register <https://www.journal-officiel.gouv.fr/>

Written by: **AFFORD**  
Edited by: **EUDiF**  
April 2020



Funded by  
the European Union

