

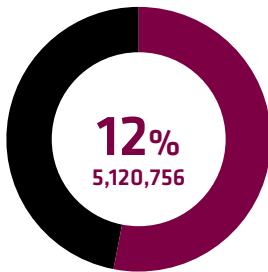


# Diaspora engagement mapping AFGHANISTAN

## Facts & figures

### Emigration

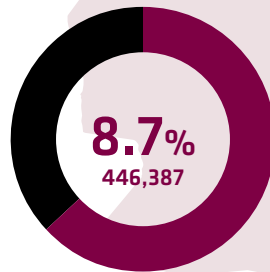
% of emigrants in total population



♂ 53.3%  
♀ 46.7%



% of which in the EU



♂ 63.1%  
♀ 36.9%



Remittances as a share of GDP: -  
Remittances inflow (USD million): 350



### Top countries of destination

Islamic Republic of Iran	2,310,292
Pakistan	1,589,146
Saudi Arabia	469,324
Germany	208,732
United States	80,026



### Political rights



Dual citizenship<sup>1</sup>



Right to vote in national elections for citizens residing abroad<sup>2,3</sup>



## 2017: Afghanistan National Diaspora Policy<sup>4</sup>



President Ashraf Ghani prioritised the National Diaspora Policy as a mean of achieving development and self-sufficiency for Afghanistan. The policy seeks to create an institution to act as a focal point for diaspora organisations wishing to be active in Afghanistan, in addition to encouraging investment from diaspora businesses. The International Organisation for Migration (IOM) is assisting the government with collating data on the Afghan diaspora, identifying critical areas of diaspora engagement and capacity building (see Spotlight section).

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.dualcitizenshipreport.org/dual-citizenship/afghanistan>

<sup>2</sup> Voting from Abroad <https://www.idea.int/sites/default/files/publications/voting-from-abroad-the-international-idea-handbook.pdf>  
However, this is not implemented due to lack of funding and operational capability

<sup>3</sup> The Taliban appointed an unelected government in September 2021. No popularly elected body functions under Taliban rule. The right to vote from abroad is theoretical, based on the former government. In 2021, the Taliban abolished the Independent Election Commission and the Electoral Complaints Commission. <https://freedomhouse.org/country/afghanistan/freedom-world/2022>

<sup>4</sup> 'Afghanistan looks to Diaspora to Promote Development', International Organisation for Migration, 2018 <https://www.iom.int/news/afghanistan-looks-diaspora-promote-development>

## Overview of the policy and legislative framework



- 2005** ● **Law on Domestic and Foreign Private Investment in Afghanistan**<sup>5</sup> promotes economic development and allows domestic or foreign entities to invest in all sectors of Afghanistan. The law has done away with sector restrictions regarding foreign investment, guarantees equal treatment with nationals for foreign investors and allows them to lease land for up to 30 years. Companies can also be wholly foreign-owned.
- 2019** ● **Comprehensive Migration Policy**<sup>6</sup> was developed by the Afghan government in partnership with the International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD). The policy focuses on four key areas: the safe reintegration of returnees, promotion of regular and labour migration, prevention of irregular migration and efforts to maximise the development potential of migration. In June 2019, the final draft of the policy was officially presented to Afghanistan's chief executive and the Displacement and Returns Executive Committee. ICMPD plans to support policy implementation, after the final endorsement by the government.

### » Trends

Previously, the government aimed to use diaspora engagement to attract foreign investment and skills transfer. During the Senior Officials Meeting in 2017, President Ghani discussed the 11 top constraints facing the private sector in Afghanistan. Since then, business licensing has been improved, punitive tax penalties abolished, and public-private partnerships legislation developed.

The government viewed diaspora engagement as productive for both the government and society due to the transfer of knowledge and skills acquired by the diaspora as well as remittances and business investments.

With the Taliban rule, what the diaspora community can deliver remains very limited. Topics such as sending remittances (not only for diasporas, but also labour migrants), engaging in cultural and socio-economic activities, providing online/remote classes in education, investing etc., remain out of reach. Therefore, the Afghan diaspora is limited in their engagement to the integration of newly arrived Afghans to the EU and lobbying and awareness raising activities.

## Obstacles



- **Political context:** The rule of the Taliban is not conducive to systematic diaspora engagement. The current regime is not transparent in its decision making and policies previously established are not adhered to. This, along with restricting freedoms (of expression, for women, in education, religion, media etc) within the country and lack of effective protection for NGOs, impedes all diaspora engagement with the country of origin.<sup>7</sup>
- **Heterogeneity of the diaspora:** Heterogeneity of the diaspora: The Afghan diaspora varies greatly in terms of ethnicity, political views, time of arrival, and generational or religious beliefs. This results in a hyper-diverse diaspora that does not have a unified concept of Afghanistan which in turn limits membership, collaboration and coordination among diaspora organisations. In addition, members of the diaspora are often looked upon with suspicion by some locals when returning home, as they are perceived to have abandoned the country.<sup>8,9</sup>

5 Law on Domestic and Foreign Private Investment in Afghanistan, Government of Afghanistan, <https://www.lexadin.nl/wlg/legis/nofr/oeur/arch/afg/PrivateInvestmentLaw.pdf>

6 Comprehensive Migration Policy for Afghanistan, November 2019, <https://www.budapestprocess.org/component/attachments/download/400>, Project News: Comprehensive Migration Policy for Afghanistan presented in Kabul, Afghanistan, 2019,

7 <https://freedomhouse.org/country/afghanistan/freedom-world/2022>

8 Ibid

9 Balkhi M., (18 September 2023) The Constructive and Destructive Role of Afghanistan's Diaspora. Wilson Center Asia Program Blog. <https://www.wilsoncenter.org/blog-post/constructive-and-destructive-role-afghanistans-diaspora>

- **Funding:** The voluntary nature of work in diaspora organisations means that they struggle to have adequate time dedicated to operational issues and are unable to attract technical staff to help with proposal writing, funding bids and project cycle management.

## Spotlight: effective practices



### IOM Support for Implementation of National Diaspora Policy

IOM funds and implements a project to support the roll out of the Afghanistan National Diaspora Policy, with the backing of the Afghan president. The project consists of:

1. A mapping of the Afghan diaspora in selected countries;
2. Diaspora engagement needs assessment;
3. Capacity building for the government.

POLICY

### Return of Qualified Afghans (RQA) programme, 2001-present<sup>10</sup>

The IOM initiated the RQA programme in December 2001 to tap into the expertise of qualified Afghans abroad and to engage them in the reconstruction process. The programme helped Afghans abroad to return home and to place them in key positions within ministries, government institutions and the private sector, thus enabling them to contribute to national development. By 2018, 1665 Afghan experts had returned home from 29 countries.

HUMAN CAPITAL

### Afghan Diaspora for Development Forum, 2018

The Centre for International Migration and Development (CIM) hosted the event to facilitate diaspora engagement, networking and support the involvement of the diaspora in policy making. The event, which seems to have been a one-off initiative, brought together more than 100 participants from several Afghan diaspora organisations to discuss their work, establish new contacts and reinforce existing networks.<sup>11</sup>

NETWORKS

### DIP - Afghan Safe Migration 2019-2022

Five Afghan Diaspora Associations (Shura) in Denmark, Germany and the Netherlands collaborated with the Danish Refugee Council and Mixed Migration Centre Asia to develop and share informational videos on safe migration, asylum procedures and family reunification conditions with migrants in the border areas in Afghanistan and Turkey.

COMMUNICATION/  
MIGRANT RIGHTS

### DiPS - Diaspora Project Support

DiPS is a Danida-funded project that aims to enhance diaspora organizations' capacity to support people in Somalia and Afghanistan that are affected by conflict and displacement. DiPS has a fund for diaspora-led projects by organisations in Denmark, as well as capacity development for diaspora organisations.

CRISIS/CAPACITY  
DEVELOPMENT

<sup>10</sup> Return of Qualified Afghans (RQA) Programme, IOM Afghanistan, [https://www.iom.int/jahia/webdav/shared/shared/mainsite/activities/countries/docs/afghanistan/rqa\\_programme\\_08.pdf](https://www.iom.int/jahia/webdav/shared/shared/mainsite/activities/countries/docs/afghanistan/rqa_programme_08.pdf) <https://www.iom.int/jahia/webdav/shared/shared/mainsite/activities/countries/docs/afghanistan/IOM-Afghanistan-RQA-Factsheet-January-2012.pdf>

<sup>11</sup> Other conferences include 'Knowledge Transfer and Support. The Role of the Afghan Diaspora in Europe', 2019. <http://www.vidc.org/en/topics/global-dialogue/2019/networking-conference-the-role-of-the-afghan-diaspora-in-europe/> and 'The Afghan Diaspora's Role in Afghanistan's Social, Economic and Political Development Process', 2019. <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/the-academic-diaspora-conference-afghanistan-by-the-farkhunda-trust-tickets-57722306974#>

## Annex:

# List of Actors

## Diaspora related institutions



- **At regional level**

### **World Bank Afghanistan** <https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/afghanistan/overview#2>

Afghanistan became a member in 1955 but operations were suspended in 1979, shortly after the Soviet invasion. The World Bank continued to provide assistance through its office in Pakistan and operations resumed in 2002. To date, the World Bank has provided over \$4.48 billion for development and emergency reconstruction projects, \$4.14 billion in grants and \$436.4 in no-interest loans. The bank has 10 active International Development Association (IDA) projects worth \$908 million and 14 projects jointly funded with the Afghanistan Reconstruction Trust Fund valued at over \$2.3 billion from IDA. The International Finance Corporation (private sector development arm of World Bank) has a current cumulative committed investment portfolio of over \$238 million and advisory services portfolio of \$11.5 million.

### **International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD)** <https://www.icmpd.org/home/>

Founded in 1993, ICMPD is an international organisation with 17 member states, 300 staff members and is active in more than 90 countries worldwide. It takes a regional approach in its work to create efficient partnerships along migration routes. It has signed an MoU with Afghanistan's Ministry of Refugees and Repatriation to develop a Comprehensive Migration Policy (CMP). They have also partnered to set up a Migrant Resource Centre in Kabul, Afghanistan, to provide clear information on possibilities for orderly migration and pre-departure information to potential migrants. This was officially presented in 2019 in Kabul. ICMPD is also the implementing partner of the project "support to the Silk Routes Partnership for Migration under the Budapest process". The Silk Routes Partnership Project aims to strengthen the migration management capacities of the Silk Routes countries – Afghanistan, Iraq and Pakistan – and is funded by the EU, Bulgaria, Hungary (lead), Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey and the UK. ICMPD also engages extensively with the Ministry of Labour on their labour migration practices and policies and supports the Ministry of Interior Affairs in regional law enforcement cooperation initiatives.

### **International Organisation for Migration Afghanistan** <https://afghanistan.iom.int>

The IOM Afghanistan works closely with national and local government institutions, NGOs, community organisations and donor communities to deal with migration management, humanitarian emergencies and improved living conditions for vulnerable communities.

### **United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Afghanistan** <https://www.af.undp.org/content/afghanistan/en/home.html>

The UNDP has been working in Afghanistan on challenges related to climate change and resilience, gender, governance, health, livelihoods and rule of law. Its work is guided by the government, its development councils and is carried out in close coordination with partner UN agencies.



## **USAID in Afghanistan** <https://www.usaid.gov/afghanistan>

USAID's goal in Afghanistan is to promote a stable, inclusive and prosperous country. The key elements of USAID's strategy going forward call for sustaining the significant achievements in health, education, and women's empowerment; stimulating agriculture-led economic growth and fiscal sustainability; and supporting legitimate and effective Afghan governance.

## **United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA)** <https://unama.unmissions.org/activities>

UNAMA was established by the UN Security Council in 2002 at the request of the Government of Afghanistan. Its mandate is reviewed annually with the latest mandate renewal in September 2019 when resolution 2489 was adopted to continue to lead and coordinate international civilian efforts in full cooperation with the Afghanistan government.

- **National institutions**

- At ministerial level

### **Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs, Martyrs and Disabled** <https://molsa.gov.af/en/about-ministry-0>

The ministry has four key programmes: labour welfare & skills development; welfare of the families of martyrs & disabled; social welfare; and administration & finance capacity development. This is currently the lead ministry responsible for diaspora engagement and it is responsible for administration and management.

### **Ministry of Refugees and Repatriation (MoRR),** <https://morr.gov.af/en>

The ministry addresses issues related to returned refugees, reintegration and internally displaced person (IDP) management.

### **Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA),** <https://www.mfa.gov.af>

The ministry focuses on bilateral and multilateral relations with migrant host countries and deals with cross-border issues that might stem from migration or returning diaspora.

### **Ministry of Interior (Moi),** <https://moi.gov.af/en>

The ministry is responsible for issuing legal documents, such as passports and visas, as well as handling the prevention of irregular migration.

- At sub-ministerial level

### **Da Afghanistan Bank,** <https://dab.gov.af/index.php/>

The Central Bank of Afghanistan has introduced a lot of legislation related to international money transfers and remittance transfers. It introduced the Law of Da Afghanistan Bank (2003/4) which contains 134 articles focusing on aspects such as currency, securities services and transfer systems, foreign exchange controls and exchange rate policy.



**High Commission for Migration** <https://morr.gov.af/en/about-high-commission-migration>

After being mooted by the Minister of Refugees and Repatriations, the formation of a High Commission for Migration was discussed and approved in an Afghanistan cabinet meeting in 2015. The High Commission is assigned to manage affairs related to refugees, provide rights and social services to refugees and those returning to the country and also garner aid from countries, especially that of host countries.

- At local level

**Agency Coordinating Body for Afghan Relief and Development (ACBAR), 1988**  
<https://www.acbar.org/>

The agency was created in Pakistan in response to the demand from NGOs working with Afghan refugees in Pakistan and across the border in Afghanistan to coordinate assistance and delivery of services more efficiently. It focuses on information sharing, coordination, advocacy with NGO members, the government, UN, donors and wider civil society.

**Afghanistan Institute for Civil Society, 2014,** <https://aicsafg.org/>

It aims to support a credible and competent civil society sector in Afghanistan by linking civil society organisations, donors, government and capacity building services through culturally appropriate certification schemes. It seeks to encourage the growth of a vibrant civil society, promoting pluralism and participatory development in Afghanistan.

**Afghan NGO Coordination Bureau, 1991,** <https://www.ancb.org/index.php>

It was founded as a network of national NGOs in Afghanistan coordinating the activities among its members, the government, international organisations, UN and donor Agencies. It strives to enhance the capacity of member organisations through workshops, seminars and building partnerships with other organisations to boost technical capacity. It has 200 members in health, agriculture, human rights, women empowerment, education, environment, civic education sector and capacity building.

**Afghan Civil Society Forum-organization (ACSFo), 2001,** <https://acsf.af/>

The organisation was established in partnership between Afghan civil society actors and 'Swisspeace' (a Swiss private foundation for the promotion of peace). It aims to coordinate, expand and foster civil society networks in Afghanistan and identify, raise and incorporate the needs, concerns and views of Afghan citizens into the social, economic and political development processes.

**American University of Afghanistan, 2006,** <https://auaf.edu.af/>

The American University of Afghanistan is Afghanistan's only nationally accredited, private, not-for-profit, non-partisan and co-educational university. It enrolls more than 1700 full and part time students and has produced 29 Fulbright scholars. It also maintains partnerships with American universities. The university was founded by Dr Sharif Fayez who was from the Heart province in Afghanistan and pursued his graduate education in the US.

## Diaspora organisations in Europe



**Abad** <http://www.abad-berlin.de/>

- ☑ Development activities
- ☑ Integration activities

Abad is a non-profit social enterprise developed by Afghan diasporas and established in 2020 in Cologne, working towards safe migration and empowering social groups in Afghanistan. To empower local communities, Abad works to activate local social groups and provides advisory programmes focusing on education.

**Afghan Academy International early 1980s** UK <https://www.afghanacademy.org.uk>

This independent, non-political and non-tribal organisation was set up to serve and support newly-arrived Afghans in the U.K. with early personal and social needs as well as to provide and promote cultural and educational activities to the new Afghan community.

**Afghan Council of Great Britain (ACGB)** UK <http://a-cgb.co.uk>

ACGB is the first national council of the British Afghan community in the UK affiliated with regional public, private and nongovernmental organizations from across England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. It promotes consultation, cooperation, and collaboration on Afghan affairs in the UK. It also founded the Federation of European Afghan Associations, which is the largest independent non-political union of Afghan diaspora organisations from across Europe.

**Afghan-German Doctors Association-Weimar (ADAV)** 2004 Germany  
<https://www.afghan-telemedicine.org/en/adav-weimar>

- ☑ Development activities

ADAV is a registered voluntary association in Germany which provides scientific and practical help with establishing medical facilities and efficient healthcare in Afghanistan. It trains Afghan doctors and medical staff by sending doctors from Germany and other European countries to Afghanistan or by finding scholarships for Afghan doctors. It also engages in the psychological support of Afghans living in Germany.

**Afghanisches Kommunikations-und Kulturzentrum (Afghan Communication and Culture Centre)** 1987 Germany <https://afghan-kultur.de>

Promotes Afghan culture in Germany to assist with the integration of recent Afghan arrivals in Berlin, including German lessons. It also offers social and psychosocial counselling, cultural activities and social events, and Dari and Pashto courses.

**Afghan Medical Staff Association** 2002 Germany <http://www.afghanmedstaff.de/>

- ☑ Development activities

Combining Afghan and German medical expertise, AMSA supports the continuous training and qualification of Afghan doctors through capacity building either in Germany or in Afghanistan. It carries out projects that are intended to contribute to the development and modernisation of the healthcare system in Afghanistan.

**Afghan Lawyers Association in Denmark (ALA)** <https://legalaids-afghanistan.com/team/>

- ☑ Development activities
- ☑ Integration activities

Afghan Lawyers Association in Denmark (ALA), is a non-profit legal organisation established in 2013 and working with volunteers in Denmark and Afghanistan. Its mission is to empower and seek justice for vulnerable people in Afghanistan, especially women and children, by establishing a safe legal office and educating women, future lawyers, and the public on their rights.

**Afghanska Föreningen i Örebro** <https://www.facebook.com/afghanskaForeningenOrebro>

- ☑ Development activities

Afghanska Föreningen i Örebro is a non-profit organisation formed by Afghan families in Örebro. Established in 2003, the organisation aims to enhance the cultural participation of the Afghan diaspora in Sweden and provide assistance in the Swedish integrative process.

**Afghanska Föreningen** <https://www.afghanha.se/>

- ☑ Development activities
- ☑ Integration activities

Afghanska Föreningen is a member-based association founded in 1994 in Stockholm. The association focuses on cultural promotion and integration activities for the Afghan community in Sweden and supports humanitarian and development initiatives in Afghanistan.

**Association of Afghan Healthcare Professionals** 2011 UK <http://aahpuk.org>

- ☑ Development activities

This organisation assists with the education and training of healthcare professionals of Afghan origin in the UK and works with other medical organisations in the UK and Afghanistan to promote clinical awareness and contribute to the reconstruction and development of Afghanistan's healthcare sector. The Wheelchair project was a joint charitable venture between AAHP, The Karen Woo Foundation and Baaz Foundation (Afghanistan). The Clean Drinking Water project was implemented in Balkh province (2013) and Provincial Hospitals set up in Ghor (2015) and Chaghcharan Ghor (2014). It has also supported the Khwaja jam clinic in providing healthcare services to its local population for nearly three decades. The association also organises fund-raising events.

**Bildung, Kultur, Begegnung (Education, Culture, Encounter) (YAAR)** 2012 Germany  
<http://yaarberlin.de/english/>

This organisation offers German, Dari/Farsi and Pashto language courses and legal advice for refugees from Afghanistan in Germany, in addition to social activities for women empowerment and political participation.



**Bureau for Rights Based Development (BRD) <https://www.brd-org.se/>**

**Development activities**

The Bureau for Rights-Based Development (BRD) is a non-profit, non-governmental organisation registered in Afghanistan and Sweden. Established in 2002, BRD implements a rights-based approach to poverty eradication and development and encourages citizens to have an active role in determining the values and governance of Afghanistan.

**Dachverband des Afghanischen Medizinischen Fachpersonals (DAMF) (Association of Afghan Medical Professionals) 2002 Germany <http://damf-ev.com/Startseite/>**

**Development activities**

This organisation functions as a coordinating NGO of all medical and other Afghanistan-focused NGOs based in Germany. They focus particularly on providing books for Afghan universities, have built and fund the running costs of the Dewanbegi clinic in Kabul and organise the annual Hamburg-Afghan week. The organisation coordinates activities with the German Ministry of Public Health, Ministry of Education and the German institutions, including GIZ in Afghanistan.

**Farkhunda Trust for Afghan Women's Education 2016 UK <http://www.farkhundatrust.org>**

Farkhunda Trust supports Afghan women with exceptional academic records by providing mentorship and scholarships to attain their education in the UK. The trust has institutional links with Kabul University and Gawharshad Institute of Higher Education in Kabul.

**Federation of Afghan Resident Organizations in Europe (FAROE) <https://www.faroe.info/organizations/>**

**Development activities**

**Integration activities**

The Federation of Afghan Refugee Organizations in Europe (FAROE) was founded in 2000 by 53 socio-cultural organisations of Afghans residing in the EU Member States. FAROE is a member-based association in the Netherlands working to protect the human rights of Afghan refugees and their integration and participation in the EU Member States, as well as promote democracy, human rights, and sustainable development in Afghanistan.

**Female Fellows <https://femalefellows.com/>**

**Integration activities**

Female Fellows is a non-profit organisation established in 2018 to empower women and girls with refugee and migration backgrounds and make it easier for them to integrate into German society. The Tandem projects in Stuttgart, Bietigheim-Bissingen and Tübingen, which are run on a voluntary basis, are characterised not only by language and everyday support but also by events and activities of all kinds.

**Freundeskreis Afghanistan (Friend's Circle Afghanistan) 1980s Germany <https://www.fk-afghanistan.de>**

**Development activities**

Freundeskreis is a result of cooperation with the Ministry of Education and Ministry of Defence in Afghanistan for transportation services, school equipment and other materials. It also partners with humanitarian NGOs from Germany and Afghanistan.

**Katib Kultur Forening (Katib Cultural Association)** 2007 Denmark <http://www.katib.dk>

KKF supports younger generations of Afghans to preserve culture and prevent cultural clashes between newcomers and the general population in Denmark.

**KEIHAN Foundation** <http://www.keihan.org/>

- ☑ Development activities
- ☑ Integration activities

KEIHAN Foundation is an Afghan-Dutch foundation established in 2005 by a group of Afghan students who wanted to support the Afghan community in the Netherlands. The foundation aims to build a bridge between the Netherlands and Afghanistan, to make the integration of the Afghan community in the Netherlands successful and provide assistance to Afghans in Afghanistan, particularly young people, in the areas of education and self-development.

**NADOE (Network of Afghan Diaspora Organisations in Europe)** Belgium <https://nadoe.eu/>

NADOE is a network organisation connecting hundreds of Afghan organisations across Europe. It serves as a hub for European and international organisations to connect with local or regional Afghan associations. NADOE organises a variety of activities including intercultural mediation, training for new arrivals, advocacy, research and coordination.

- ☑ Development activities
- ☑ Integration activities

**Salsal Förbundet I Sverige** <https://www.salsal.se/>

- ☑ Development activities

Salsal Förbundet I Sverige is a non-profit organisation providing integration and community support, cultural promotion, and other activities related to youth, education, and sports to the Afghan community in Uppsala.

**Swedish Committee for Afghanistan** <https://swedishcommittee.org/>

- ☑ Development activities

The Swedish Committee for Afghanistan (SCA) is a Swedish non-governmental foreign aid organisation active in Afghanistan. Since 1982, the SCA aims to help Afghanistan to become a peaceful and stable country where human rights are respected, rural communities are empowered and all Afghans have the right and opportunity to democratic participation in the governance of their country. The SCA's work encompasses programmes for education, health, support to persons with disabilities and rural development.

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