

NOTHING ABOUT WITHOUT

**Celebrating the diaspora youth at the heart
of the EU Global Diaspora Facility**



European Union
Global Diaspora Facility

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Foreword

Youth today are empowered with modern skills, enabling them to excel in our multicultural and digital world. Diaspora youth in particular bridge cultures, nations, and generations – a gift we at EUDiF have been fortunate to embrace since our project's inception.

From 2020 to 2023, our internship program placed youth at the heart of our mission to champion inclusive, fair, and sustainable global development initiatives. Their fresh perspectives and openness sparked new ideas, including the creation of our alumni network, a close-knit community now integral to the EUDiF family.

I extend my deepest gratitude to the 12 diaspora interns who have journeyed with us so far. Their energy, curiosity, and eagerness to learn have profoundly enriched our work. I believe that genuine youth engagement should be woven into every stage of policy and project development, fostering trust, innovation, and authenticity.

This publication is a celebration of the alumni of the programme so far, young professionals who have embarked on exciting careers in the development field and beyond. It is also a resource with our lessons learned as hosts, and special tips from teammate Liza on how to juggle being an active young person in the diaspora with other commitments. I hope you will find it useful and inspiring.



Diana Hincu | *Project Manager*

Diaspora Youth Internship 2020-23

The Diaspora Youth Internship within the EU Global Diaspora Facility stems from a firm belief in the added value of integrating youth in migration and development at all levels.

Between March 2020 and November 2023, 12 young diasporans joined the project team. The internship was designed to offer an early-career experience to young people seeking to start their professional journey in an international organisation working on migration and development, whilst simultaneously embedding youth diaspora perspectives in the project's implementation.

100% of participants would recommend the programme to a friend

The internship has proven immensely valuable for the project, thanks to the commitment, creativity and curiosity of the interns. Participants in the programme found it a rewarding professional experience, and the majority have remained in close contact with the team and eager to join relevant EUDiF activities; this has led to the creation of an informal alumni network, the "Diaspora Youth Community."

100% of interns moved straight on to an exciting new professional or academic challenge upon completion

Apart from the five-month duration, there is no typical internship experience as the tasks are adapted according to the project's workplan and the interests of the individual. What is

consistent is a comprehensive onboarding programme on project management and the EUDiF and ICMPD portfolios, one-to-one mentoring for each participant throughout their internship, and a self-driven personal project such as developing a think-piece, designing a dialogue activity or delivering a workshop. Interns are also introduced to the alumni.

For more on youth & diaspora engagement...

Integrating Youth Perspectives in Migration Policy Processes: Diaspora Youth Recommendations

Diaspora youth & sustainable development

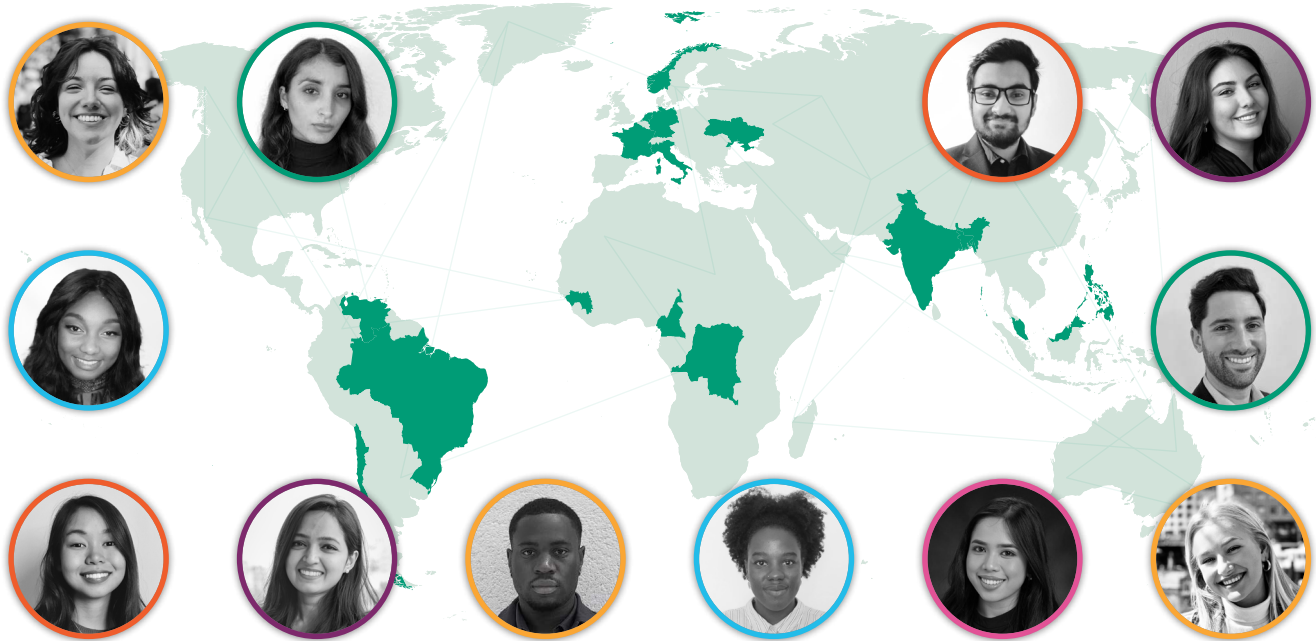
Youth entrepreneurship & heritage tourism: Long-term thinking for diaspora engagement



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Alumni 2020-23

DIASPORA YOUTH COMMUNITY



Agustín Searle Vial

Diaspora Youth Intern:

March 2020 – September 2020

What came next:

Associate Project Officer at the EU Global Diaspora Facility, ICMPD



During my first week of work, the project team invited me to lunch for my birthday. It was a beautiful surprise, especially since I had just arrived. I felt very welcomed and genuinely part of the team from the beginning!



On the internship:

I have always admired EUDiF's multi-stakeholder and participatory approach, which genuinely promotes inclusion and collaboration within the diaspora-development ecosystem. I love how the project recognises the human, social, and cultural richness of diasporas and involves them directly in project activities, putting them in the driving seat. The greatest takeaway from my time with EUDiF is the importance of adaptability and resilience in the face of unforeseen challenges. My internship began at the start of the pandemic, teaching me that, even in adverse circumstances, the show must go on. This lesson has profoundly impacted my approach to both personal and professional projects, instilling a sense of professionalism and the ability to adjust swiftly to changing situations.



Read Agustín's experience as a diaspora polling officer in Chile's historic referendum.

Mohammed Ameen Arimbura

Diaspora Youth Intern:

September 2020 – January 2021

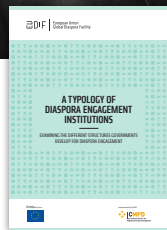
What came next:

Associate Project Officer at Budapest Process, ICMPPD

I started my internship with EUDiF during the COVID-19 pandemic, so worked entirely remotely. Despite this, the team made extensive efforts to integrate me and provide opportunities to apply my skills and knowledge. The sense of community and support, even virtually, made my experience memorable and fulfilling. One of my favourite memories is the weekly team calls, which provided a platform for collaboration and allowed me to connect with my colleagues on a personal level. The team's commitment to inclusivity and engagement helped bridge the physical distance.

On the internship:

My key takeaway from EUDiF is the importance of taking initiative and embracing a proactive approach to learning. Contributing to the global diaspora engagement mapping exercise allowed me to apply my experience with migration policies and stakeholders in southern and western Asia, boosting my confidence in navigating complex policy landscapes.



Ameen supported data collection for Typology of Institutions.

Maria Regina Tongson



**Gia co-authored “Learning by doing:
Climate action and environmental
sustainability”**

Diaspora Youth Intern:

March 2021 – August 2021

What came next:

Policy Researcher, OECD

“Definitely the first Future Forum held in person in October 2023! I was involved in the first two virtual conferences, but it’s truly a different experience seeing everyone we’ve worked with gathered together in one place. The energy in the room was so captivating, lively and empowering – it’s hard to put into words. People would come up to us to thank us for the work with do, and seeing the impact of EUDiF on diaspora members’ lives was very moving.”

On the internship:

What I love about the EUDiF is its thirst for innovation. The team constantly seeks new ways for diaspora to engage with their heritage, solve age-old problems, introduce new actors to pilot initiatives, and develop new knowledge products. This approach keeps everyone on their toes and provides refreshing insights into how diaspora communities can contribute to development. I’ve learned the importance of valuing human connections, a unique feature of diaspora engagement tied to people’s personal identities, lives and histories. While It’s easy to lose sight of this when working on very macro-level policies, EUDiF has helped me maintain a human-centred development perspective. No matter what professional project I end up doing, I strive to see how my work impacts people’s daily lives.

Naomi Wumba Bisengo

Diaspora Youth Intern:

March 2021 – August 2021

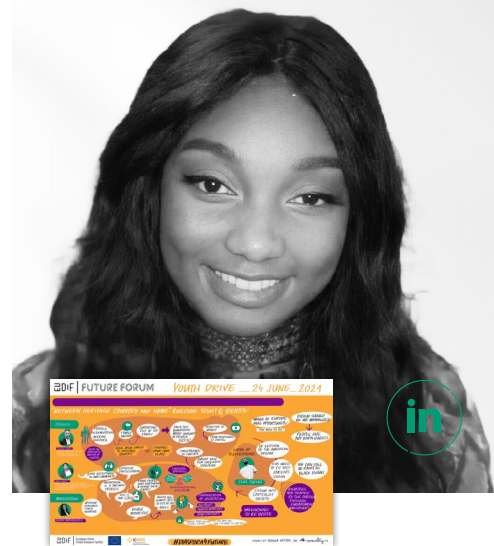
What came next:

Venture Development Working Student at Project A Ventures

My greatest memories are organizing a roundtable at the Future Forum with everyone from community representatives to development banks, as well as participating in the 7th European Migration Forum at the European Commission when I finally met my fellow EUDIF alumni after having done the internship virtually. Not only was the event very interesting, but we made a real impact by being at the heart of the decision-making process and spontaneously sharing the stage with European Commissioner for Migration, Home Affairs, and Citizenship Ylva Johansson, and President of the European Economic and Social Committee Christa Schweng. We discussed education, labour and mobility for young migrants, providing concrete action points and asking crucial questions. I also met amazing people that day.

On the internship:

The unique quality of EUDIF, in my eyes, is the curated research behind it. It's not just about talks or organising panels; it also generates high-quality, accessible research and data on the state of diaspora engagement integration in each country. This makes diaspora engagement accessible to people who are not necessarily familiar with the development environment. The greatest takeaway I've learned during my time at EUDIF is how to navigate different stakeholders, to ask the right questions, and – most importantly – to listen. Although I'm not working in international development anymore, these skills are still valuable in my current job, enabling me to anticipate my clients' needs adequately.



Naomi and Gia organised a session **“Building trust and identity”** on the youth-focused day of the first Future Forum in 2021



Oumou co-authored the Diaspora Youth Recommendations on integrating youth perspectives in migration policy processes.

Oumou Diallo

Diaspora Youth Intern:

September 2021 – January 2022

What came next:

Associate Policy and Communications Officer at the international Catholic Migration Commission (ICMC)



I have so many memories to choose from, but one of my favourites is being invited back to the youth-focused session in March 2024. I was so proud to see the project thriving and coming up with new engagement ideas. I also had the opportunity to meet some inspiring young diaspora members. Learning from all of them was a truly bonding experience.



On the internship:

During my time at EUDiF, I learned that communication is not just about sharing information; it's about experimenting with words, designs, and creativity to amplify the message. In my current role, I always leverage creativity through different mediums, from simple designs to articles, to inform and bring people closer to the core of the project. Working on the various aspects of diaspora engagement, from policy-related aspects to diaspora projects in different fields, I realised how much potential is there to be untapped in the areas of technology, climate resilience, business and investments. My time at EUDiF brought me closer to home and gave me ideas and tools to contribute to Guinea's development, whether at home or from afar.

Anne Beatrice Cinco

Diaspora Youth Intern:

March 2022 - August 2022

What came next:

Labour Migration Intern at the International Labour Organisation

Sharing the stage with the EU Commissioner for Migration and Home Affairs during the 7th European Migration Forum. Thanks EUDiF for facilitating young people's participation in policy spaces like this!



On the internship:

Having a team that believes in the contributions of young diasporans and invests time, effort, and funding to empower them is crucial. My greatest takeaway from the internship was that the developmental contributions of diasporas go beyond remittances! The lens on human capital in EUDiF actions has stuck with me. A year after my internship, this served as a solid base when I was drafting ILO's contribution to the roundtable discussion on diasporas during the 14th GFMD.

Naomi, Bea, Savannah, Oumou and Gia at the 7th European Migration Forum in October 2022.

Savannah Schuurbiers

Diaspora Youth Intern:

March 2022 – August 2022

What came next:

Research Executive Trainee at Kantar Public

Meeting everyone in person for the first time during the 7th European Migration Forum, where I had the opportunity to finally connect face-to-face with most of the alumni and Charlotte. Bea and I shared a cosy dinner at a Thai restaurant, bringing our virtual chats to life. This initial meeting set the tone for our strong bond; whenever interns reunite, it feels like no time has passed. Honourable mention for the team: whenever there's food involved at EUDiF, it's always delicious. I attribute this not only to our shared love for good food but also to the team's diverse cultural backgrounds, which undoubtedly enrich our culinary experiences.

On the internship:

EUDiF's greatest strength lies in its team of predominantly diaspora members, bringing a unique perspective and deep understanding to diaspora engagement. Their work is marked by empathy, cultural sensitivity, and firsthand insight, ensuring diaspora members are central to decision-making from project development to implementation. One crucial lesson I've learned is the importance of asking questions. This simple yet powerful practice has not only accelerated my learning curve but also fostered a proactive approach to problem-solving and collaboration in every organisation I have worked in.



Read Savannah's update on diaspora engagement in crisis, one year after our case study on the topic.

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Laila Tasmia

Diaspora Youth Intern:

November 2022 – March 2023

What came next:

Gender and Communication Trainee at GIZ

“It’s hard to pick one memory, but I would say the Future Forum. Witnessing the gathering of diaspora for development made me happy and hopeful! It was also a reunion of all diaspora youth interns.”

On the internship:

Having a firsthand experience on the diaspora agenda definitely increased my horizons of knowledge and expertise on migration and development. EUDiF’s engagement with the diaspora community is a great quality, especially their inclusive approach to gender, class, ethnicity, and culture. It’s like a world within a world, and EUDiF maintains it quite well.

Read Laila’s blog on [connecting the dots of gender and diaspora engagement](#).



Carolina de Aguiar Lopes

Diaspora Youth Intern:

January 2023 – April 2023

What came next:

Junior Evaluation and Knowledge Management Consultant at WFP project



Attending the Future Forum 2023 and getting to know in person all the team and former interns. It was an empowering and enriching opportunity to have my voice heard and also to get knowledge on diverse diaspora movements.



On the internship:

EUDI's greatest quality is being the largest global platform for amplifying young diasporic voices in Europe, through its internship program, pitch competitions, awards and spotlight on youth movements. The best lesson I learned was developing my networking skills. EUDI gave me access to spaces like the Future Forum and the Rabat Process thematic meeting as a young advocate, allowing me to connect with different ideas and institutions. Today, I have an active network in migration and diaspora, in my work at the ILO and in the city, I live in today, Geneva.

Read the takeaways Carolina co-drafted on the diaspora skills profiling methodology.



Jessica Henrich

Diaspora Youth Intern:

March 2023 – July 2023

What came next:

CIVICS Innovation Hub



My visit to Brussels was a great opportunity to meet everyone in person and facilitate a workshop on digital inclusion and accessibility. Another highlight was attending the EUDiF Future Forum 2023 conference, which brought together diaspora organisations from different sectors and enabled youth diaspora to network and connect.

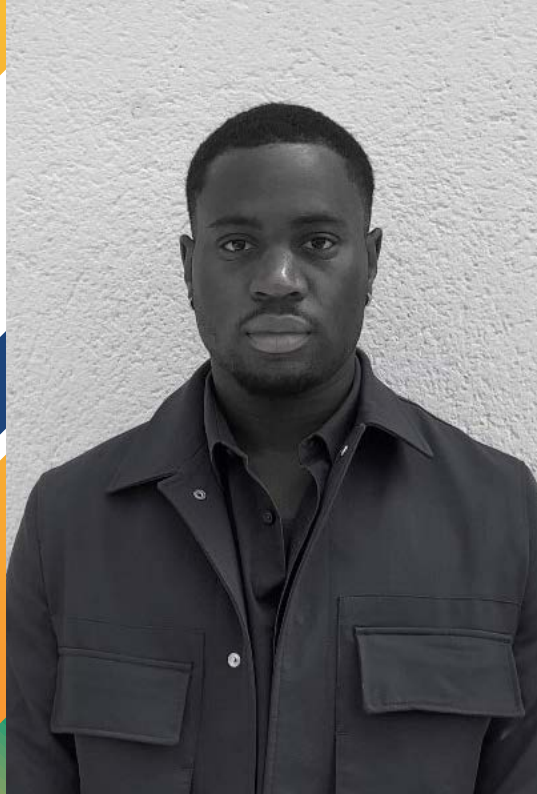


On the internship:

EUDiF's platform for youth offering internship opportunities to advance their professional skills is quite unique. Having a mentor really helped my personal professional growth, providing individual guidance and a safe space to express concerns or raise questions. The greatest lesson from my time at EUDiF was the importance of sharing diasporic expertise and collaborating with other diasporas on diverse development topics. I learned how our diasporic identity shapes our career choices, which helped me better understand my professional interests, especially in migration policy.



Read Jessica's blog on [reconnecting with Malaysia through its cuisine](#).



Rodrice Kingue

Diaspora Youth Intern:

June 2023 – November 2023



Definitely going for drinks after the 2023 Future Forum.



On the internship:

EUDiF's greatest strength is its humility and ability to connect with different diaspora initiatives for development. Human touch, empathy, and communication skills go a long way in project management, especially with such a diverse target audience. The project grows by helping others grow, finding its abundance in abundance. What I've learned most from EUDiF is the versatility of learning while doing. It has given me a new professional outlook and made me less anxious about making mistakes. It's best to do the best you can until you know better. And when you know better, you do better.

Rodrice co-hosted the Diaspora Youth Pitch Competition at the Future Forum in 2023.

Lessons learned

Reflecting on over three years of the Diaspora Youth Internship, we have identified ten lessons we have learned and implemented along the way which have made the internship the mutually beneficial experience it is today. We are incredibly proud of the programme which has grown beyond what anyone could have expected, this is thanks to the commitment of each participant, intern and team member.



1. Inductions are invaluable.

At the start of each internship, the EUDiF team prepares a comprehensive induction programme, so that all interns understand the different workstreams within the project, even those they will be less involved in. In addition, interns meet different ICMPD projects to gain a better understanding of migration management and different project types. Interns then join weekly team meetings at which they are active participants.

Practice: Following the recommendation from former interns, where possible new interns will also meet DG International Partnerships as part of their induction.

2. A diverse and personalised work portfolio brings out the best.

Before an intern starts, the EUDiF team review the work-plan and identify tasks the intern could contribute to, in line with their personal profile and interests expressed during interview. The task-list is always varied and is updated as the intern settles in, according to the skills they wish to develop and how they get on with each task.

Practice: Interns are assigned a mentor in the team who helps organise their task list and coordinate the intern's availability.

3. Empowerment through task ownership.

In many internships, tasks are led by a more senior colleague with the intern in a supporting role or taking on elements of a larger task. However, EUDiF finds that the learning experience of running a task from A-Z is extremely beneficial and includes such tasks within each internship. This ensures the development of strong time management, coordination and review skills. Task ownership is beneficial to include in CVs and discuss at interview.



Practice: At the start of each internship, interns are encouraged to choose a topic and pitch original content based on their interests and to develop it during the 5-month internship. The task requires research and drafting, incorporating feedback and planning publication and promotion.

4. Tandem internships drive creativity.

From the third cycle onwards, two interns were recruited at a time. These interns greatly enjoyed having a fellow intern with whom to share the experience. In fact, they would all have liked more joint tasks.

Practice: Naomi and Gia worked together to design, coordinate and moderate a session at the first Future Forum “Between heritage and home: Building trust and identity.”

5. Intern feedback improves the programme.

Feedback from present and former interns helps continuously improve the programme. It is collected and discussed formally and informally, during one-to-one meetings, team meetings and Project Steering Committees.

Practice: At the end of their tenure, each intern completes an internship assessment, including questions on their favourite and least favourite elements, and ideas to improve the programme.



6. Remote work option widens potential participation.

For all the negatives of the Covid-19 pandemic, the introduction of teleworking has allowed for a wider recruitment to the programme by reducing the logistical and financial barriers to participation. It requires constant innovation to ensure all interns feel fully part of the team, whilst simultaneously avoiding online meeting-overload.

Practice: Where possible, interns have come to Brussels for in-person activities such as the Future Forum and to spend time with the team.

7. Regular one-on-one career development coaching.

In addition to the daily support and monitoring of progress offered by the team member assigned as mentor, interns meet with the project manager on a regular basis – at least every two months – to engage into a wider reflection on their experience and professional development. This is an opportunity to exchange on exposure to new tasks, opportunities and career growth.

Practice: Towards the end, tailored support has been provided to interns, ranging from providing reference to supervising thesis writing.



8. Passing the baton creates community.

The EUDiF team helps new interns connect with former interns. Having a former intern, Agustín, on the permanent team also means there is always a peer available for new interns.

Practice: When new interns join, there is an introduction meeting organised with former interns. Savannah wrote a letter to her successor, which Laila found really reassuring to read when she started. Later, Laila developed a list of resources for subsequent interns to refer to when getting to grips with the project processes and subjects.

9. Community means longevity.

A strong sense of community is created through the internship, thanks to the connections between tandem interns, the project team, and alumni. This community spirit stretches beyond the end of the five-month internship and has evolved into a de-facto alumni network, now known as the Diaspora Youth Community (DYC). This provides opportunities for alumni to connect over and take advantage of professional and networking opportunities, whilst EUDiF benefits from a youth view and the sectoral expertise on an ad-hoc basis.

Practice: The EUDiF team identifies opportunities for the DYC to participate in project activities, such as being rapporteurs at the Future Forum, as well as opportunities outside the project, such as participating in the European Migration Forum in October 2022.

10. Interns, experts of the future.

The EUDiF internship programme, along with previous and subsequent professional, volunteer and academic experience, make interns future experts with contributions to make to the EUDiF project – and other projects in the field – in the immediate future and later.

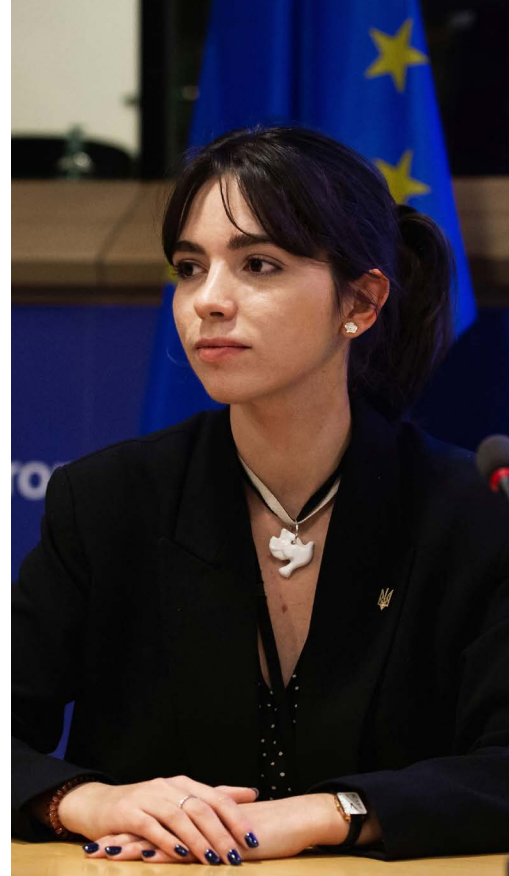
Practice: After the EUDiF internship, Gia went to OECD to work on education and skills development. She used this experience and her knowledge of the Filipino context to give inputs into the Capacity Development Lab action with the Palawan Council.

Liza's tips on wearing the "diaspora youth" hat

Liza Bezvershenko, full-time team member at EUDiF, active volunteer of the Ukrainian Brussels-based diaspora organization "Promote Ukraine," and bona fide youth diaspora – though she hasn't always used the words! – shares her top five tips on navigating multiple roles and leveraging her diaspora expertise at work:

1) Keep it real. Talk with your supervisor about your volunteering activities in an honest and transparent way, especially if it might impact your work schedule. Be clear about your role(s) at external events, but also celebrate the synergy between the two (or more!) hats you are wearing. You can even start this conversation when interviewing for a position, your volunteer roles are often partly what got you through the door, so be frank about how you want to continue and balance that with the job.

2) Balance and boundaries. Juggling many roles is rewarding but challenging. Prioritize your work commitments during working days and be clear on your availability for the volunteer organisation. If your employer allows volunteer days, use them! If not, discuss options like volunteering on Friday afternoons. Personally, I take days off for full-day events and use my lunch break to catch up on volunteering activities.



Liza Bezvershenko | *Project Assistant*

3) **Share your notes.** Show your workplace the benefits your extracurricular activities bring by sharing knowledge, event reports, best practices, and insights. Highlight that your diaspora background adds value through contacts and soft skills such as cross-cultural communication, flexibility, crisis management, you name it!

4) **Be a bridge.** Explore the opportunities to promote your day job during your volunteering. Schedule a meeting to discuss possible cooperations, propose speakers for events, or organize knowledge-exchange workshops. Don't be afraid to take the initiative!

5) **Lead by example!** Promote the positive impact of the diaspora by raising awareness and highlighting the unique value it brings to the workplace. Celebrate your many hats and invite your colleagues to join you!



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