



DIASPORA ENGAGEMENT INITIATIVES IN RECONSTRUCTION AND RECOVERY

Context

In an increasingly volatile world, where global wars, political crises and natural disasters devastate cities and societies, the topic of reconstruction and recovery has become increasingly prominent on the international agenda. Diasporas – whether long-established or newly arrived – have repeatedly been recognised as important actors in planning reconstruction and recovery efforts by national and international stakeholders. From Ukraine to Rwanda, from Venezuela to Myanmar, diasporas have contributed to the recovery of their countries and societies despite the physical distance of thousands of kilometres and, in some cases, ongoing unsafety. As mapped in this practice collection, such engagement is truly a global observation spread through all continents.

Reconstruction, in this context, refers to a “medium- and long-term rebuilding and sustainable restoration of resilient critical infrastructures, services, housing, facilities and livelihoods required for the full functioning of a community or a society affected by a disaster, aligning with the principles of sustainable development and “build back better”, to avoid or reduce future disaster risk”¹. *Recovery* refers to more immediate and medium-term restoration of basic functions and services, often overlapping with early reconstruction efforts. Diasporas play a key role in these processes through financial contributions, skills and knowledge transfer, transnational networks and advocacy, and by facilitating connections between local and international actors.

Key concepts

Relief: immediate humanitarian assistance

Recovery: short- to medium-term restoration of basic functions and establishment of baseline security

Reconstruction: medium- to long-term rebuilding and restoration of infrastructure, institutions, economy, social systems and collective well-being

Disclaimer: the practices included are gathered through EUDiF’s annual global mapping, network knowledge and engagement, and desk research. If you would like to propose an initiative to be featured, please contact us at eu-diaspora@icmpd.org.

¹ United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR). 2017. The Sendai Framework Terminology on Disaster Risk Reduction. "Reconstruction". Accessed 23 June 2026. <https://www.undrr.org/terminology/reconstruction>.



Region	Supported country	Practice	Focus	Implementation period	Description
Africa-North	Sudan	Forum of Sudanese expatriate experts and scientists	Education, Science	Upcoming	The upcoming forum, to be held in the capital, Khartoum, is organized by the SSWA's Knowledge Transfer Program in coordination with the Council of Sudanese Experts and Scientists Abroad and the Ministry of Digital Transformation and Telecommunications. The event will take place under the patronage of the Prime Minister and the supervision of the SSWA Secretary-General.
Middle East	Syria	Syria - Short stays for teaching programs and advisory assignments	Education, Science	2026-Ongoing	The German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD), funded by the Federal Foreign Office, offers "Short-Term Stays for Teaching and Consulting Projects in Syria" for the reconstruction of Syria, with a focus on the higher education sector. The program aims to enable Syrian universities and research institutions to invite highly qualified academics from German universities, specialists and managers from the private sector to Germany. The program is designed for members of the Syrian diaspora in Germany who wish to contribute to the academic reconstruction of Syria. The goal is to establish networks and mentorships to be managed from Germany in the medium term.
Eastern Europe	Ukraine	Ukreate Hub	Skills transfer, Inclusion	2026-Ongoing	Together with the Open Lithuania Foundation and the Laboratory of Military-Political Studies and Reconstruction, the Hub has launched a programme focused on capacity building in EU integration, organisational resilience of organisations working with veterans and communities impacted by the war in Ukraine.
Eastern Europe	Ukraine	Diaspora Alliance for Recovery of Ukraine	Multiple	2025-Present	A global platform supported by the Government of Ukraine, Ukrainian World Congress, and IOM was introduced at the Ukraine Recovery Conference in Rome in July 2025. It aims to harness the potential of more than 20 million Ukrainians abroad as a force for humanitarian response, economic growth, innovation, and cultural diplomacy.
Middle East	Palestinian Authority	Heal Palestine	Children, Health, Education	2024-Ongoing	HEAL Palestine is a nonpolitical, nonreligious U.S.-registered nonprofit founded in 2024 to deliver urgent relief and long-term support to Palestinian children and families. Through Health, Education, Aid, and Leadership, they provide critical care and resources while centring grassroots leadership and community-led recovery.
Asia	Myanmar	Trauma-Informed Mentoring Programme	Mental health	2024-Ongoing	Organised by Open Briefing and Exile Hub, it provided a year-long trauma-informed mentoring programme for Myanmar human rights defenders in exile in Europe.

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Eastern Europe	Ukraine	Ukraine - Netherlands Urban Network (UNUN)	Urban planning, Skills transfer	2024-Ongoing	UNUN, based in the Netherlands, is the platform of Ukrainian and Dutch spatial professionals working on the sustainable reconstruction of Ukraine. It organises networking events, capacity building and research.
Middle East	Afghanistan	Femstech	Education, Gender	2023-Present	Founded by Afghan computer scientist Mursal Dawodi, Femstech promotes digital education for marginalised groups, particularly women in Afghanistan, through online courses in IT, programming, AI and web development as well as through mentoring and coaching.
Eastern Europe	Georgia	Promote Georgia	Advocacy	2023-Ongoing	Non-governmental organisation based in Brussels, Belgium aimed at advocating for democratic reforms, fair elections and European integration of Georgia.
Eastern Europe	Ukraine	Ukrainian Science Diaspora	Education, Science	2023-Ongoing	Launched by the Office of Scientist Support under the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine (MES), the initiative aims to unite Ukrainian scientists abroad for collaboration and post-war recovery. Hosted on MES technical infrastructure, the platform facilitates connections between domestic and diaspora researchers. The Ministry actively supports this network by developing recommendations and promoting cooperation between Ukrainian institutions and global experts, reinforcing Ukraine's scientific capacity and international engagement.
Africa-East	Somalia	Restore Somalia Foundation (RSF)	Peacebuilding, Gender, Governance	2023-Ongoing	RSF is an independent, non-profit and non-partisan foundation dedicated to supporting Somalia's peacebuilding, promoting good governance and sustainable development at the grassroots level. RSF was founded for and driven by Somalis; it exists to advance their flourishing and prosperity.
Eastern Europe	Ukraine	Mykolaiv Water Hub	Infrastructure, Innovation	2022-Ongoing	The Mykolaiv Water Hub is an innovation and cooperation platform focused on rebuilding and modernising water and critical infrastructure systems in Mykolaiv and the wider region of southern Ukraine. It was founded by a Ukrainian diaspora member in Germany and brings together municipalities, utilities, companies, universities, and international partners to develop sustainable, climate-resilient solutions for water supply, urban development, energy, and digital infrastructure, while also supporting education and capacity building.
Eastern Europe	Ukraine	CREATE UKRAINE	Youth, Governance	2022-Ongoing	CREATE UKRAINE was launched to bring Ukrainian professionals aged 22 back home to apply their international experience and the best global practices. Its goal is to support the Government in advancing European integration, implementing reforms, and addressing the challenges of war. It is funded by Lithuania through the Lithuanian Fund for the Development Cooperation and Humanitarian Aid and is aimed at



					supporting the return and successful integration of Ukrainian youth currently living abroad into Ukraine's public sector.
Middle East	Syria	Rebuilding Syria Platform	Investment, Infrastructure	2020-Present	Rebuilding Syria Platform is a purpose-driven digital platform designed to connect investors, contractors, engineers, real estate and construction firms, as well as Investors and fund seekers, in order to accelerate impactful rebuilding projects across Syria. It was founded by Maher Daboul, an architect from Syria based in Germany.
Middle East	Syria, Turkey	Peace Therapist	Mental health	2018-Ongoing	Peace Therapist is a multilingual, digital psychological support platform founded in 2018 by Jin Dawod, a Syrian refugee who faced war and forced migration. This social enterprise, which set out to reach thousands of people without access to mental health services, has contributed to the healing of tens of thousands of lives with more than 70,000 sessions across Turkey, Syria, and Europe today.
Middle East	Syria	German - Syrian Research Foundation e.V.	Education, Science	2016-Present	The German-Syrian Research Foundation (DSFG) is a non-profit organisation founded in Germany in 2016 by Syrians and Germans of Syrian origin. It was established to support Syrian and Arab students and researchers in their higher studies and careers, and to facilitate their access to scholarships and academic opportunities to continue their educational paths in Germany.
Eastern Europe	Ukraine	Promote Ukraine	Advocacy	2014-Ongoing	Promote Ukraine is a Brussels-based non-profit organisation, civil society hub, and media platform established in 2014 during the Revolution of Dignity. It acts as the primary public voice for Ukrainian interests in the EU, dedicated to advocating for Ukraine, coordinating experts, and aiding refugees.
Africa-North	Sudan	Al-Sudaniya Mentoring	Mentoring, Gender	2013-Ongoing	Al Sudaniya Mentoring provides tailored, holistic, one-on-one mentoring to young Sudanese women by Sudanese women across the globe with the goals of providing them with the tools and resources to become engaging leaders and make a difference in their communities in Sudan, as well as to build a global network of Sudanese women for knowledge and skills sharing.
Africa-East	Somalia	Somali Diaspora Engagement Programmes	Multiple	2012–Present	The Danish Refugee Council has run a diaspora programme since 2012 engaging Somali and Afghan diasporas in Denmark to support humanitarian and development efforts in countries of origin. The Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency finances programmes enabling Swedish Somalis to contribute to Somalia's reconstruction, including return placements in ministries (in partnership with the International Organisation for Migration) and small grants for diaspora-led development projects.



Eastern Europe	Armenia	TUMO Center for Creative Technologies	Education, Youth	2011-Ongoing	Founded by diaspora entrepreneur Sam Simonian, TUMO provides free after-school technology education to Armenian youth. Now expanding to diaspora cities (Berlin, Paris) and integrating Karabakh refugee youth into the network.
Latin America and the Caribbean	Haiti	Rebati Santé Mentale (RSM)	Mental health, Culture, Advocacy	2010-Ongoing	RSM is a nonprofit organisation with roots in both the United States and Ayiti, dedicated to advancing mental health awareness, access, and culturally grounded care for Haitian communities worldwide, addressing mental health needs while honouring the shared cultural identity. Following the earthquake in 2010, RSM provides culturally attuned resources, strengthens community networks, and empowers individuals through education, training, and advocacy.
Asia	Myanmar	Burmese Rohingya Organisation UK (BROUK)	Advocacy, Justice	2005-Ongoing	BROUK is a human rights and advocacy group representing the interests of the Rohingya diaspora, based in the United Kingdom. It works internationally to raise awareness of persecution faced by Rohingya people in Myanmar and to promote justice, accountability, and equal rights.
Middle East	Lebanon	IDRAAC — National Mental Health Research	Mental health	1997-Ongoing	Led by diaspora-connected psychiatrists, IDRAAC is one of the first mental health organisations in Lebanon dedicated to promoting mental well-being through scientific research, clinical care, and community-based programs. With over 40 years of experience, IDRAAC provides evidence-based interventions across the region to individuals of all ages, focusing on making mental health a fundamental human right.
Middle East	Afghanistan	AWEP - Afghan Women Empowerment Program	Education, Gender, Advocacy	1995-Ongoing	AWEP is a non-profit organisation established by Afghan women in exile to support women, children, and youth affected by war and displacement. It focuses on education, health, vocational training, human rights, and women's economic empowerment, working across Afghanistan and in diaspora-linked offices in Europe. It combines grassroots service delivery (schools, clinics, training programs) with advocacy in Europe, aiming to strengthen Afghan women's rights and opportunities both in-country and in exile.
Middle East	Palestinian Authority	Transfer of Capital through Expatriate Knowledge (TOKTEN UNDP) / Global Volunteers for Supporting Palestine, Implemented by the UNDP	Skills transfer, Governance	1994–Present (Expanded 2023)	TOKTEN deploys highly qualified diaspora professionals as short-term volunteers in Palestinian institutions in the West Bank and Gaza, primarily in education, health, and IT. Following the October 2023 war, a Global Volunteers platform was launched with the Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation to mobilise diaspora expertise for humanitarian recovery and reconstruction.



Middle East	Lebanon	Transfer of Knowledge Through Expatriate Nationals (TOKTEN Lebanon)	Skills transfer	2010–2012	Implemented by the United Nations Development Programme in partnership with Lebanon’s Council for Development and Reconstruction, TOKTEN mobilised skilled Lebanese diaspora professionals for short-term consultancies in national institutions. By deploying 19 experts, strengthening 16 institutions, and training 600 nationals, the initiative contributed directly to post-crisis institutional recovery and long-term reconstruction capacity.
Latin America and the Caribbean	Venezuela	Veneuropa	Democracy, Peacebuilding	2007–2023	“VenEuropa” is a not-for-profit organisation profoundly pro-democracy and respect for all human beings, free from any kind of political affiliations, that promotes analysis and debate about the reality of Venezuela, from the perspective of the socio-cultural ties that unite it with Europe, providing for that purpose platforms and spaces, on an international level, which facilitate the search for viable solutions to the conflicts which afflict Venezuela.
Africa-West	Liberia	Truth and Reconciliation Commission Diaspora Project	Advocacy, Justice	2005–2009	Liberia’s Truth and Reconciliation Commission systematically engaged diaspora members through documented statements and interviews with victims, witnesses, and perpetrators. Over 1,600 Liberians in the diaspora contributed statements, and more than 20 diaspora witnesses participated in public hearings.
Middle East	Iraq	Iraqis rebuilding Iraq (IRI)	Skills transfer, Governance	2005–2007	IRI was implemented jointly by IOM, UNDP and the Ministry of Planning and development Cooperation (MoPDC). The objective was to help and encourage Iraqi expatriates wanting to contribute to the reconstruction of their country by selecting 60 people to work in various Iraqi government ministries for assignments ranging from between three months to a year.
Eastern Europe	Ukraine	aHOUSEforHOME	Urban planning, Youth, Education	2024	A HOUSE FOR HOME is an architecture and urbanism lab for Ukrainian youth aged between 12 and 17 based in Rotterdam, the Netherlands. The teenagers interested in architecture, urbanism, and art were invited to create their own projects, learn from local designers and participate in the cultural life of the cities. The program is developed and implemented in cooperation between Dutch and Ukrainian professionals.
Africa-Middle	Democratic Republic of the Congo (Kinshasa)	Diaspora Forum 2021	Multiple	2021	The Government of Republic of the Congo organised a diaspora forum attended by President Félix-Antoine Tshisekedi to explore diaspora contributions to sustainable development and national reconstruction. The forum emphasised inclusion of the diaspora and promotion of foreign investment to boost economic development.



Latin America and the Caribbean	Venezuela	Voice of the Diaspora (La Voz de la Diáspora) – Research Project	Research	2017	Developed by a team at Universidad Central de Venezuela, this research project characterises and quantifies the global Venezuelan diaspora and promotes participation in reconstruction efforts. Drawing on surveys, focus groups, and interviews with nearly 4,000 participants, it analyses sociodemographic profiles, integration levels, return intentions, and willingness to engage in national recovery.
Africa-North	Libya	Empowering Libyan women in diaspora	Advocacy, Gender	2017	The overall objective of this project was to strengthen the role of Libyan women and to enhance their participation in the Libyan development process. Libyan female ‘change makers’ living in Libya and in other countries of the MENA region were brought together to share experiences and to work on common challenges and issues for the benefit of their home country by developing collective action plans.
Oceania	Samoa	Temporary Return Agreement for Crisis-Response	Infrastructure, Mental health, Investment	2009	Following the 2009 earthquake and tsunami, the Governments of Samoa and New Zealand established a temporary return scheme enabling Samoan migrants in New Zealand to return home for one month to directly support relief and early recovery efforts without losing their employment abroad. The initiative strengthened diaspora-led recovery by facilitating emotional support, informal remittances, and in-kind contributions critical to community reconstruction.

