

*These COVID-19 Analytical Snapshots are designed to capture the latest information and analysis in a fast-moving environment. Topics will be repeated from time to time as analysis develops. If you have an item to include, please email us at [research@iom.int](mailto:research@iom.int).*



The diaspora has long harnessed the benefits of migration to help address the socio-economic and political challenges in their countries of origin. Their contributions toward development, such as through international remittances, are well-established. The important role diasporas play toward development is also reflected in the Global Compact for Migration (GCM) which, [under objective 19](#), aims to “create conditions for migrants. and diasporas to fully contribute to sustainable development in all countries.”



### How the diaspora is contributing to COVID-19 responses

As governments and societies all over the world continue to grapple with COVID-19, diaspora communities globally are stepping in and playing key roles in supporting their countries’ efforts to fight the pandemic.

- ⇒ A [recent information sharing session](#) between doctors in New York and Yerevan, which also involved representatives of the Armenian diaspora, provided a chance for doctors in the United States to share with their Armenian counterparts trends, treatment methods and experiences in tackling COVID-19 in New York hospitals.
- ⇒ The Bangladeshi diaspora in the United States has [come together](#) to mobilize resources and support people affected by COVID-19 in their country of origin. This has also involved raising funds to provide Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) to healthcare workers and doctors in Bangladesh, a country whose healthcare system is not as robust.
- ⇒ In South Sudan, the Rwandan diaspora has [raised thousands of dollars](#) to support fellow citizens in Rwanda as the country continues efforts to contain the spread of the disease.
- ⇒ Lebanon’s diaspora in Australia has been instrumental in providing [testing kits](#) while in Eritrea, its diaspora had contributed [nearly USD 4 million](#) by mid-April in support of government efforts.





## Renewed interest in diaspora bonds?

The COVID-19 pandemic, and its devastating effect on many developing economies, could renew interest in diaspora bonds, according to the World Bank. The Bank anticipates diaspora bonds could generate about [USD 50 billion](#) a year for developing countries and could potentially make up for the current sharp decline in Foreign Direct Investment (FDI). FDI to developing economies is expected to drop by [37 per cent](#). [Diaspora bonds](#), which allow migrants to support their countries of origin, “have been [a key alternative](#) to borrowing funds from more expensive lenders such as other governments” including in times of crisis. Countries such as [India and Israel](#) have been very successful in raising funds through this mechanism.



## Global Diaspora Virtual Exchange

To engage the diaspora in responses to COVID-19, IOM recently organized the Global Diaspora Virtual Exchange on COVID-19 Response. The exchange has two objectives:

- ⇒ creating a space for collaboration that allows diaspora groups to share COVID-19-related best practices and experiences
- ⇒ showcasing and bringing attention to already on-going work by diaspora groups.

The first Exchange, opened by IOM Director General António Vitorino, was held on 22 April 2020. Read more [here](#).



## Supporting the diaspora

COVID-19 has taken a toll on many countries’ diaspora, inflicting job losses, closure of businesses and even loss of life. Several governments have initiated support services for their citizens living abroad to help them cope during the pandemic. In Turkey, for example, the Indonesian Mission is holding [virtual meetings](#) with its citizens to discuss and address issues such as those related to immigration and employment. The government of Ireland has established a [dedicated COVID-19 Response Fund](#) to support organizations that deliver services to the Irish diaspora.



## Impact on remittances



While the diaspora continues to play an outsized role in supporting their countries to tackle COVID-19, many have also been hard hit by the pandemic, limiting the ability of some to contribute to their countries of origin. One of the most affected contributions is remittances. According the [World Bank](#), remittances to low and middle income are projected to fall by nearly 20 per cent in 2020. Read more about COVID-19’s impact on remittances in [analytical snapshot 16](#). The reduction in remittances has significant implications for the people, communities and countries that heavily rely on them.

This COVID-19 Analytical Snapshot has been produced by [IOM Research](#) ([research@iom.int](mailto:research@iom.int)).

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