

# GUIDE TO PROJECTS IN THE COUNTRY OF ORIGIN FOR DIASPORA ORGANIZATIONS



## Practices and Experiences from Five Danish Diaspora Organizations

With contributions from:  
Afghan Cultural Association, Dansomala, IFTIN,  
Hela Afghan Youth Association & SSPDO.

**DRU** DANISH  
REFUGEE  
COUNCIL



**CISU** CIVILSAMFUND  
I UDVIKLING



# Contents

<b>FOREWORD</b>	<b>05</b>
<b>PROJECTS IN COUNTRIES OF ORIGIN</b>	<b>06</b>
1. Fundraising	07
2. Local partner	09
3. A strong local network	10
4. Highly complex projects	10
<b>RELEVANT RESOURCES</b>	<b>13</b>



# Foreword

This guide is one of three developed by DRC and CISU in close collaboration with five experienced diaspora organizations: SSPDO, DanSomala, Afghan Cultural Association, IFTIN, and Hela Afghan Youth Association. They were created as part of the Peer-to-Peer Organizational Development project.

Together, these experienced diaspora organizations identified the three most important themes they believe have been critical to their long-term existence and sustainability. For each theme, they outlined the major challenges and, for each challenge, formulated key lessons and recommendations.

Although many topics were discussed and analyzed, the three most important are:



The content of the three guides is further illustrated in three matching videos – see: [LINK](#).

In addition to the organizations’ own experiences and recommendations, each guide presents links to existing tools and guidelines developed by other, more formal Danish actors.

The primary target audience for these guides and videos is other diaspora organizations in Denmark—with a clear focus on leaders and board members.

We (DRC, CISU, SSPDO, DanSomala, Afghan Cultural Association , IFTIN, and Hela Afghan Youth Association) hope you find the content useful and inspiring.

Enjoy.



# Projects in countries of origin

Implementing projects in countries of origin was a top priority for the five organizations that contributed to the development of this guide. This includes both projects supported by donors (DiPS, CISU, DERF, etc.) and projects financed with their own funds, such as through fundraising.

The key elements in implementing projects in countries of origin include: developing strong projects with reliable local partners, securing funding from donors or through networks, and building strong local relationships beyond the primary partner.

## Main challenges in developing and implementing projects in countries of origin:



### Fundraising

Fundraising from institutional donors is often one of the greatest challenges for diaspora organizations. Competition is fierce, and funding opportunities for diaspora organizations are limited. Most institutional donors prefer to channel funds directly to local partners.



### Strong local partner

Although having a good and trustworthy local partner is essential, it is not necessarily a guarantee of success. If the local partner fails to meet expectations for collaboration, project implementation can become more complicated and require significant attention from Denmark.



### Solid local knowledge and network

Beyond having a reliable local partner, it is important to have strong local knowledge and a broad local network. This provides an opportunity to obtain a “second opinion” on the relevance of the organization’s project. If such a network does not already exist, building it will take time. It is therefore recommended to implement projects only in areas where a solid network and strong local knowledge have been established.



## High Ambitions and Project Complexity

Complex projects resulting from high ambitions—whether from local partners or diaspora organizations—can make implementation unnecessarily difficult.



**It must be felt and seen that the project matters – this should be evident in both actions and words.**

- DanSomala

## 1. Fundraising

Fundraising from institutional donors is considered the most important form of fundraising, as the amounts are generally larger than the organizations' own resources. While donor funding is attractive, it can also make organizations vulnerable if project proposals are rejected. Repeated rejections can be highly demotivating.

Although it is important to apply for institutional donor funding, the organization should also be able to exist and function without this type of financing.

### Recommendations for applying for donor funding:

#### EXPERIENCES AND RECOMMENDATIONS



### Work closely with the local partner

Collaborate closely with the local partner in developing your project proposal, ideally through personal visits to the target area.



### **Dedicated team in the organization**

Establish a dedicated team within the organization responsible for developing the project and writing the application. If the team is strong, success is more likely.



### **Courses and consultations**

Participate in courses and consultations offered by DiPS and CISU.

## **Recommendations for reducing vulnerability to donor rejections:**

### **EXPERIENCES AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

**Consider smaller projects with lower financial requirements and mobilize resources through a combination of:**



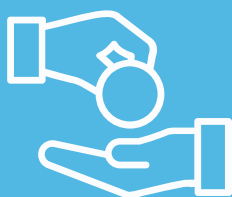
#### **Membership fees**

If supported by the organization's members, the organization may decide to use income from membership fees in Denmark to fund small projects in the country of origin.



#### **International diaspora networks**

An important strategy can be to mobilize international diaspora networks from the same region or with similar interests to support the organization's project.



#### **Fundraising**

Another option is to organize fundraising events to generate resources for the project.



## Crowdfunding

Consider raising funds through crowdfunding platforms. Identify relevant platforms that reach individuals likely to support the project.

Also, consider alternatives to direct involvement in project development and implementation. For example, the organization could focus on raising funds to support local initiatives—through events or online crowdfunding—possibly in coordination with broader diaspora networks from the same region or with similar interests.

## 2. Local partner

Having a strong and trusted local partner is essential to ensure successful project development and implementation.

### EXPERIENCES AND RECOMMENDATIONS



### A strong and trusted partnership

If you are fortunate to have a strong and trusted partner, it is important to maintain and strengthen that relationship. If possible, collaborating with the same partner on multiple projects can be valuable. Remember to maintain good communication between projects. The best partnerships are typically built over many years.



### Capacity and reliability

You should only apply for institutional donor funding if you are completely confident in your partner's reliability and capacity to manage funds responsibly.

### 3. A strong local network

In addition to having a reliable local partner, it is important to possess both strong local knowledge and a broad local network. This provides an opportunity to obtain a “second opinion” on the relevance of the organization’s project. If the organization does not already have such a network, experience shows that building one takes time. Therefore, it is recommended to implement projects only in areas where a solid network and strong local knowledge already exist.

#### EXPERIENCES AND RECOMMENDATIONS



##### Good connections and networks

Focus projects in areas where the organization has strong connections and networks.



##### Local stakeholders

Involve other local stakeholders in project development. This ensures the broadest possible information base for developing and implementing projects together with the organization’s local partner.

### 4. Highly complex projects

Complex projects resulting from high ambitions—whether from local partners or diaspora organizations—have sometimes made implementation unnecessarily difficult.

#### EXPERIENCES AND RECOMMENDATIONS



##### Simple and straightforward projects

Avoid being overly ambitious and plan only simple, straightforward projects that make sense in the local context.





# Relevant references

## Fundraising:

### DEMAC - Diaspora Emergency Action & Coordination Initiative

DEMAC is a global initiative aimed at improving mutual knowledge, coordination, communication, and coherence between humanitarian diaspora actors and the institutional humanitarian system.

**Link:** [DEMAC Resource Library](#) & [DEMAC Good Practice Guide for Diaspora Organizations](#)

### DRC Diaspora Toolkits

The purpose of this toolkit is to familiarize diaspora organizations with a wide range of funding sources and provide guidance on how to establish successful fundraising mechanisms and access opportunities to diversify funding streams.

**Link:** [Fundraising Toolkit for Diaspora Organizations](#) & [Networking & Alliance Building Toolkit for Diaspora Organizations](#)

### Fundraising for civilsamfundsorganisationer

On this page, CISU has compiled experiences, insights, and materials related to fundraising for civil society organizations.

**Link:** [Fundraising for Civil Society Organizations \(Danish\)](#)

### Toolpaper: Fundraising fra private fonde

For Danish civil society organizations, foundations represent an opportunity to supplement their own fundraising efforts and public funding. This CISU tool paper is intended for all civil society organizations seeking to increase their understanding of Danish foundations.

**Link:** [Fundraising the Danish Foundations \(Danish\)](#)

### The Fundraising Committee

To conduct a legal fundraising campaign, a permit is required. On this page, you will find the application forms needed when applying for permission to hold a fundraising event.

**Link:** [Apply for Collection Permit](#)

For more information, please contact:

**Danish Refugee Council - Diaspora Programme**

Adrien Bory | Head of Diaspora Programme | [adrien.bory@drc.ngo](mailto:adrien.bory@drc.ngo) | [diaspora@drc.ngo](mailto:diaspora@drc.ngo)

**CISU - Civilsamfund i Udvikling**

Christoph Lodemann | Advisor and Fund Manager | [chl@cisu.dk](mailto:chl@cisu.dk)

Photo Credits: DRC



**MINISTRY OF  
FOREIGN AFFAIRS  
OF DENMARK**  
*Danida*

This project was funded by Globalt Fokus and DANIDA.

**DRC** DANISH  
REFUGEE  
COUNCIL



**CISU** CIVILSAMFUND  
I UDVIKLING



This guide is one of three developed under the project  
“Peer to Peer Organizational Development”.