

# Engaging, Enabling and Empowering the Somali diaspora in Italy:

The MIDA Youth experience



International Organization for Migration (IOM)  
The UN Migration Agency

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International Organization for Migration (IOM)  
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Cooperazione Italiana  
allo Sviluppo  
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e della Cooperazione Internazionale



AGENZIA ITALIANA  
PER LA COOPERAZIONE  
ALLO SVILUPPO



# Engaging, Enabling and Empowering the Somali diaspora in Italy:

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## Foreword

People who maintain family ties, social networks, personal and professional lives across several localities, and who may even hold citizenship of several countries, are increasingly common. This is the case of many of IOM's partners of Somali origin, with whom IOM Italy has had the privilege to work. Over the years, with them, IOM has contributed to support development processes by enabling, engaging and empowering the members of transnational communities who wish to act as agents for development (the "three Es" approach).

*The United Nations New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants*, adopted on 19 September 2016, recognizes the contributions that migrants and diasporas can make to sustainable development. The Agenda 2030 also refers to the need to foster multi-stakeholder partnerships to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, and diasporas are certainly key stakeholders in this regard.

This publication constitutes an important milestone for IOM Italy. It gathers the lessons learned from our longstanding collaboration with the Somali diaspora. In particular, it distils a few elements for a model to empower diaspora associations, which reveal themselves extremely dynamic and increasingly mixed. Part of the findings of this report also reveal the value of ensuring diasporas' full participation in the social, civic, economic, political and cultural life of the countries of residence. Thanks to such participation, Somali diaspora organizations that initially focused on facilitating the integration of conationals, evolved in scope and vision and became more active, transnationally, in development and peacebuilding processes, mobilizing resources in Italy and Somalia. As such, this publication further reveals virtuous processes whereby, on the one hand, integration can leverage access to empowerment opportunities and, on the other, engagement in development processes can further enhance the social, cultural, civic, political

and economic participation of diasporas in the societies they bridge. The lessons gathered in this publication will guide our continued commitment to enhance the links between migrants' welfare and development, and support future programmatic activities to contribute to empowering diasporas. It is our hope that these lessons will further help policymakers and other governmental and non-governmental actors to develop informed policies and initiatives aimed at empowering diaspora groups.

# Introduction

The MIDA Youth project is embedded in a broader institutional strategy that IOM has built over the past four decades to know and engage diasporas in development processes, support the creation of enabling environments for them to fully participate in the societies they bridge, and empower those who wish to become development agents to mobilize and transfer resources and practices within transnational spaces.

This publication summarizes the approaches and principles guiding the MIDA Youth experience, as well as the lessons learned from the longstanding collaboration between IOM and transnational communities in Italy and, in particular, the Somali diasporas. It takes stock of the lessons learned and the results of this collaboration, and distills a few elements of a model that IOM Italy has piloted in the past few years to support and empower the members of transnational communities willing to drive co-development processes. As such, this document could help diasporas, policymakers, the civil society, international organizations and other relevant stakeholders to understand the joint pathway that IOM and its diaspora partners have taken together to empower organized transnational communities, and potentially replicate and contextualize this model in other transnational spaces.

This report is divided into three main sections. This first introductory section describes the co-development approach that underlies MIDA programmes, and MIDA Youth in particular. This approach recognizes both individual agency and the importance of social networks to the transnational nature of co-development initiatives.

The second section provides an overview of the Somali diaspora in Italy and its contributions to the development of Somalia, along with the political changes occurring in the origin country in the last few decades.



The third section describes the MIDA Youth experience, its major achievements, and the processes jointly driven by diasporas, IOM Italy and IOM Somalia, which underlie such results.

## **The co-development approach**

MIDA Youth project is part of the broader IOM diaspora engagement strategy aimed at strengthening diasporas' positive contribution to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. IOM's strategy is based on three principles: engaging transnational communities in development processes by understanding their characteristics, needs, motivations and capabilities and reaching out to them; supporting the creation of enabling conditions for transnational communities to develop their full potential in the societies that they bridge; and contributing to empowering transnational communities so that they can become agents of development, if they so wish.

With a focus on Somalia, the MIDA Youth project seeks to enhance the Somali diasporas' transnational action and networks between Italy and Somalia, by supporting diaspora associations' initiatives that are likely to have a positive social, economic and cultural impact. As such, MIDA Youth is enshrined in the overall IOM policies and activities aimed at maximizing the positive synergies between migration and development.

MIDA Youth is also based on a co-development approach, which recognizes most migrants' willingness to maintain close links to their country of origin,<sup>1</sup> and to contribute various forms of 'capital' (human, social, cultural and financial) to sustainable development

processes. Indeed, migrants possess and mobilize through transnational circuits different resources: migrants' skills and knowledge constitute human capital; their social networks carry with them social capital; their identities, and exposure to different cultures constitute cultural capital, and the financial transfers they make to people with whom they maintain close links constitute financial capital, and a complementary source of income for the recipients. Social transfers, of ideas, for example, are also considered as part of the "capitals" migrants possess and mobilize across societies.<sup>2</sup>

Embracing a co-development perspective means facilitating migrants' full participation (i.e. social, economic, cultural, civic and political) and contribution to development, both in the countries of origin and of residence, and implies a political consciousness about the positive contribution that migrants bring to the economies, societies and cultures of any given context.

In this sense, adopting a co-development perspective is a political choice that facilitates and supports diaspora's activism in development.

## Characteristics of co-development initiatives

Despite the variety of policies and practices, as well as levels of action in which the co-development approach takes form, existing literature generally agrees on the following specific characteristics of co-development projects:

**Migrants at the core.** Migrants, especially those who identify themselves as members of a diaspora, and their organizations, are conceptualized by the international community as potential development actors. In this sense, these actors are individuals who, well integrated into the host communities, are willing and capable to contribute to the development of the country of origin. Because migrants' full participation in the societies they bridge is a prerequisite for them to access and mobilize resources for development purposes, migrants' integration is a condition *sine qua non* of co-development programmes.

**Transnationalism.** Migrant-led actions usually link different territories, involve, actors living in different contexts and have the potential to produce effects in multiple places. Co-development actions, in fact, take place both in the contexts that migrants' bridge across countries, that is, in a transnational space. The actions are not disconnected, but mutually integrated into a process that embeds the possibility to extend its benefits to two or more locations. Transnationalism is therefore inherent to co-development projects, driven by networks of actors located in various contexts bound by a common interest that affects all locations/communities involved. Differently from traditional development projects that are designed to positively affect the beneficiary community only, co-development actions are intended to benefit the multiplicity of actors involved. In a sense, co-development projects are less biased by the donor—

beneficiary relationship, and are likely to be more balanced in terms of power relationships and intrinsically able to overcome the top-down approach, so common in traditional development cooperation practices.

**Social, over financial capital.** The resources at stake in co-development projects are not primarily economic, but social. Unlike traditional cooperation projects where generally the financial contribution from a donor agency to a beneficiary community allows the implementation of activities and the achievement of results, co-development initiatives rely also on the transfer of migrants' social capital. Indeed, usually migrants' skills and competencies, habits, ideas and visions, relationships with other actors (networks), developed both in the "home" and "host" countries are resources shared and mobilized in co-development activities.

## Linking integration and development

The more migrants are integrated into the host society, in terms of residence permit, housing, access to social services, a stable income, the more they are able and prone to contribute to the country of origin, thus enabling transnational development processes.

## Co-development in Italy

In Italy, co-development initiatives support migrants' transnational activism for peace and development since the beginning of the new millennium, as demonstrated by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation's commitment to support the MIDA programme, and similar migrant empowerment and diaspora engagement initiatives implemented by IOM Italy.<sup>3</sup>

In addition, a considerable number of co-development practices have emerged from the local level, mostly at municipal and regional level, thanks to the various decentralized cooperation channels. Many of such co-development efforts led by Italian municipalities' are in fact complementary to the efforts of the civil society.

It is worth noting that the civil society has independently gathered for the past ten years to discuss the theoretical implications of the co-development approach and to analyse and discuss practices, and the roles of various actors to promote it. These practices involve migrants, local authorities, civil society actors, and others, in what has been called by scholars a bottom-up approach to co-development, as opposed to a top down approach, guided by a national strategy eventually designed for enhancing the role of migration for development.

At the central level, the new Italian Law on International Development Cooperation approved in 2014<sup>4</sup> marks a turning point in the way Italy officially endorses the co-development approach, in accordance with the European Union's (EU) recognition of migrants as agents of development.<sup>5</sup> In fact, for the first time ever, the Italian Law on International Development Cooperation n. 125/2014 explicitly includes migrants as agents of local development, with a view

to promote the positive impact of migration for countries of origin and destination.

Moreover, Law n.125/2014 provides an institutional framework for decentralized cooperation actions promoted by local authorities in the pursuit of their international development<sup>6</sup> cooperation relations. This allows the national level of governance to capitalize on a decade of work of Italian Provinces and Municipalities on co-development.<sup>7</sup>

Lastly, the inclusion of migrants' organizations in the Law 125/2014<sup>8</sup> possibly represents an important step towards the elaboration of an Italian national policy dedicated to promote co-development at the national level.

**The new Law n.125/2014 marks a promising shift in policy whereby the Government of Italy recognizes migrants as potential development actors.**

## How do migrants contribute to development?

Migrants' engagement in development can take many forms. For example, they can individually send remittances to their relatives, or they can engage collectively, through their associations, in advocacy campaigns or in the improvement of local services and infrastructures.

Migrants can initiate their own projects or support other practitioners to implement projects on their behalf. Migrants can return permanently or temporarily to their regions of origin or engage in development processes at a distance (...). Migrants can act out of altruism or private interest and their engagement may be voluntary-based or professional, cost free or subject to compensation.

*From Alvarez and Sinatti (2011)*

*Migration for Development: A Bottom up Approach.*

1





# The Somali diasporas in Italy

This chapter describes the Somali diaspora in Italy, its history, characteristics, organization and the recent trends. It is based on a mixed research methodology encompassing literature review and primary data collected by IOM through its *Displacement Tracking Matrix*<sup>9</sup> and by diasporas' accounts and narratives.

Qualitative data, accounts, stories and experiences add insight into the work done by the IOM Italy to support diasporas' action towards peace, stability and the development of Somalia.

## Somali migration to Italy: an overview

For colonial legacy, Italy hosts Somalis since the 1960s. At that time, the Government of Italy contributed to educating the political *élite* in Somalia, by offering scholarships to Somali nationals to pursue tertiary education in Italy. Most of these students returned to Somalia, while a few of them got married to Italians and eventually settled in Italy.

In addition to this minority of students, many Somali women entered Italy as housekeepers in the 1960s and 1970s, following the return of Italian families from the former colony. In Italy, women constituted the bulk of the Somali community until the 1990s, unlike in other European countries where the Somali presence was male-dominated.

Starting in the 1980s, we can distinguish between three waves of Somali migration to Italy. The first wave, in the 1980s, was composed of students and political dissidents, escaping Somalia because of the radicalization of the Siad Barre regime.<sup>10</sup>

A second wave of migration, from 1991 to 1993, was composed of families seeking refuge and hoping to reunite with their relatives in Italy, Europe and North America, as the regime was overthrown and the civil war broke out.

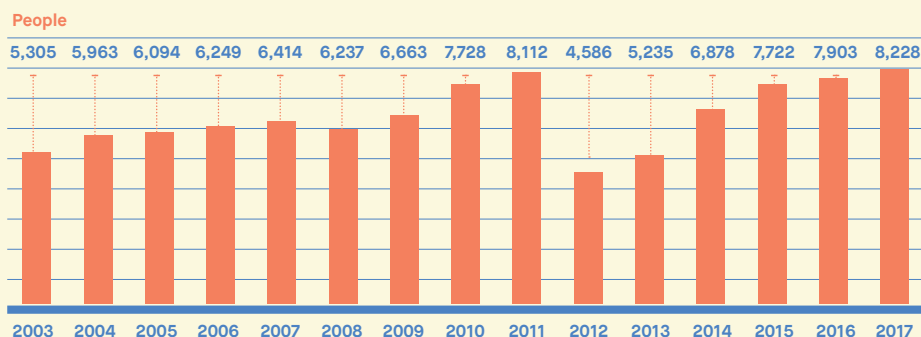
This group integrated easily into the Somali community already established in Italy. The third wave of migration, from 2000s to date, consists of transit flows to northern Europe and the United Kingdom (or heading to Canada), composed mostly of young people, with loose family connections to the established Somali diaspora in Italy.

The forced journey of these migrants is much more dangerous and difficult than the journeys followed by their predecessors, usually involving crossing the African desert on foot and making use of dilapidated boats to sail across the Mediterranean sea. Induced by the political instability in Somalia and by religious extremism, the third wave of Somali migration to Italy increased steadily until 2011.<sup>11</sup> In 2012, however, the number of Somalis in Italy sharply declined, passing from more than 8,000 in 2011 to roughly 4,500 people in 2012, according to statistics.<sup>12</sup>

**Encouraged by colonial legacies in the 1960s, Somalis first migration flows to Italy were driven by political oppression during the Siad Barre dictatorial regime in the 1980s, then by insecurity during the 1990s' conflict in Central Southern regions, and by poverty and lack of opportunities in the 2000s.**

Research has not yet explained the reasons for this remarkable migration outflow that started reversing already the following year. In fact, since 2013, a gradual but constant increase in the number of Somalis in Italy is bringing numbers back to 2010 figures with a current 8,228 Somalis residing in Italy, representing roughly 0.17 per cent of the total number of foreign regular residents.

### Migration flow of Somalis to Italy 2003 – 2017<sup>13</sup>



## Distribution of the Somali population on the Italian territory

The most recent wave of migration from Somalia to Italy, starting in 2012, marks a shift in the patterns of distribution of the Somali population on the Italian territory.<sup>14</sup>

Until 2010, Somalis headed to Rome and the industrialized northern Italian regions, where it was likely to find more job opportunities. In the last six years, national statistics show a remarkable decrease in the number of Somalis living in Rome, Florence and Milan and a net increase of the Somali population living in Southern Italy, particularly in Puglia, Sicily and Calabria.<sup>15</sup>

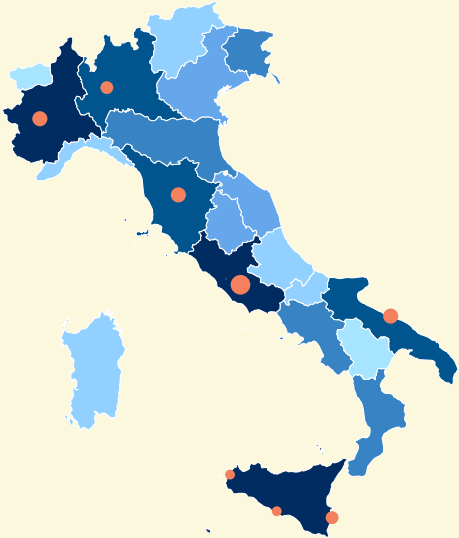
### Distribution of the somali population in Italy per region and per city, 2016

Source: elaboration of ISTAT data (until January 2016)

Available at  
[www.tuttitalia.it/statistiche/cittadini-stranieri/somalia](http://www.tuttitalia.it/statistiche/cittadini-stranieri/somalia)

<b>Lazio</b>	<b>1,450</b>
<b>Sicily</b>	<b>1,320</b>
<b>Piedmont</b>	<b>1,068</b>
<b>Tuscany</b>	<b>945</b>
<b>Apulia</b>	<b>731</b>
<b>Lombardy</b>	<b>518</b>
<b>Emilia Romagna</b>	<b>403</b>
<b>Calabria</b>	<b>284</b>

Campania	257
Molise	254
Veneto	125
Friuli Venezia Giulia	117
Sardinia	117
Marche	86
Umbria	64
Liguria	62
Trentino Alto-Adige	44
Abruzzo	38
Basilicata	18



Rome	1,233
Turin	767
Florence	602
Bari	500
Syracuse	360
Milan	281
Agrigento	243
Trapani	211



### The socioeconomic profile of Somali nationals in Italy

According to the existing literature, the socioeconomic composition of the Somali community in Italy is heterogeneous. Nuruddin Farah<sup>16</sup> identifies several groups with different characteristics. As mentioned earlier, a first wave of migration from Somalia to Italy was composed mainly by a small privileged group of students, prevalently male, assisted by the Italian government soon after 1991 with grants and scholarships. Many of these people moved later on to other Western countries, while some of them found employment in international organizations and NGOs.

According to Farah, however, until the end of the 1990s, the vast majority of Somalis in Italy were women, employed as housekeepers and caretakers.<sup>17</sup> Farah distinguishes between two social categories of Somali women in Italy.<sup>18</sup> The first category was composed by those women who arrived during the 1960s and 1970s following the return of Italian families from Somalia. These women were mainly domestic workers and caregivers who, thanks to their expertise, found a stable working environment that gave them the opportunity to integrate into the Italian social fabric and to become relatively "well off" within the Somali community in Italy. Advantaged by their stable economic situation, this first group of Somali migrant women gained a good social status within the Somali community and managed to organize an efficient mutual aid system that attracted a considerable number of relatives from Somalia during the first years after the civil war.<sup>19</sup> The second category comprises women arriving after the eruption of the civil war, according to Farah. Unlike the first category, these women were younger and often more educated than their relatives who established in Italy between the 1960s and the late 1980s. This large presence of Somali women with different education backgrounds explains the prevalence of Somali women organizations

in Italy, which is a peculiarity of the Somali diaspora in the Italian context, compared to other European countries.<sup>20</sup>

Today, the gender composition of the Somali community in Italy has changed completely, with a large prevalence of males who arrived in the country in the last fifteen years.<sup>21</sup> According to primary data collected by IOM Italy in 2016–2017<sup>22</sup> among the Somali nationals in Italy, newly established Somalis<sup>23</sup> are prevalently youngsters (57%) in their twenties,<sup>24</sup> accompanied by a large number of children under the age of 18 (28%). This is in line with the average population age in Somalia, where about three-quarters of the population are under 30.<sup>25</sup> Half of the Somali nationals recently arriving in Italy are men, 25 per cent are women and the remaining 25 per cent are children. The large majority of young Somalis heading to Italy, both men and women, have completed secondary education, an exceptionally good achievement for the Somali context, where more than half of children are out of school, and only 25 per cent of women aged 15 to 24 are literate.<sup>26</sup>

It is worth noting that most Somalis arrived in Italy in the last years are students looking for a safe environment where to continue studies and find job opportunities. Even more significant is the fact that the majority of women who leave Somalia have completed secondary school and aspire to pursue tertiary education in Italy, Germany or Switzerland.<sup>27</sup>

## **Somali diaspora organizations in Italy**

During the 1990s, Somalis in Italy organized in aid associations motivated by the need to host relatives escaping the conflict that erupted in Southern Somalia after 1991.<sup>28</sup> These were often women organizations, established by those women who migrated to Italy until the 1980s employed in the care economy.

In one or two decades, these women strengthened their socioeconomic position within the Italian context to the extent of being able to support their extended family's flight from Somalia.<sup>29</sup> Far from being political, the scope of these organizations was oriented towards integrating the Somali community into the Italian society, providing assistance related to housing, employment and keeping regular status or residence in the country.<sup>30</sup>

In correspondence to the launch of the Millennium Development Goals, a group of Somali women in Italy gathered around a political project supporting an enhanced role of women in the Somali society, both at social and political level.<sup>31</sup>

In the same years, as major peace talks were taking place for Somalia,<sup>32</sup> Somali organizations mushroomed in Italy and in many other countries in Europe, with the objective to participate in the political process that was taking place "at home" and influence peacebuilding processes in the country of origin.

Many Somalis based in Italy saw the opportunity to engage in political life in Somalia, driven by the desire to contribute to peace and to the development of their nation.<sup>33</sup> In this framework, some members of the Somali community in Italy became interlocutors of the Government of Italy to interpret local dynamics and help shaping the Italian contribution to State-building efforts in Somalia. Others returned to Somalia and actively participated in local politics and in development activities. Such "transnational activism" was mainly driven by an *élite* with a high level of education and a solid professional status.

The organization of the Somali diaspora associations in Italy is uneven. According to data collected by the Italian Ministry of Labour, in 2014 there were 23 Somali diaspora organizations in Italy, mostly in Milan, Turin and Naples.<sup>34</sup> Observations and narratives from secondary sources suggest that only a few organizations remain active for decades. Although more research is needed to confirm

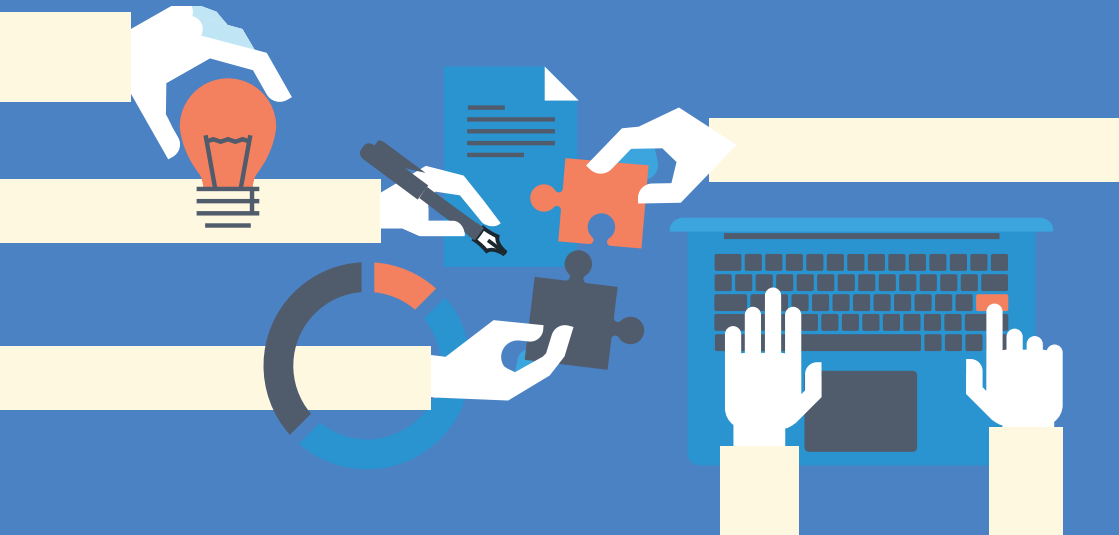


such trends, organizations seem to revolve around the charisma of a leader who typically creates anew or instrumentalizes existing associations when there is the need to gather human and financial resources to achieve a specific objective.

The membership of many Somali diaspora organizations vary in numbers according to the capacity of the leader to attract resources for a specific project. In this sense, the membership of these organizations is not necessarily composed by Somali nationals only, but has become increasingly mixed and heterogeneous, depending on the opportunity of the context and on the needs. For instance, some organizations, whose leader mobilizes a diasporic identity, strategically gather members working in institutions, such as Italian NGOs or local authorities, who can contribute with financial, material or other resources to the organizations. Such peculiar use of the membership of Somali diaspora associations suggests that development cooperation not always relies on diaspora associations, but also leverages the social capital of charismatic Somali leaders able to mobilize diaspora and other stakeholders for development and aid.

In terms of future policy and programming, the former suggests that development cooperation shall recognize the increasingly diversified nature of diaspora associations in terms of membership (i.e. the mixed composition of what are often perceived as "diaspora associations", which may involve diaspora members and other stakeholders),<sup>35</sup> and also the potential and leadership of individuals who mobilize diaspora and non-diaspora resources and networks within and beyond Italy and Somalia.<sup>36</sup>

2



# MIDA Youth: Experience and Lessons Learned

This chapter aims at describing the methodology piloted through the MIDA Youth initiative to empower diasporas as development actors. In what follows, a few lessons learned from the experience of the MIDA Youth project are also distilled.

## **IOM's diaspora engagement strategy**

IOM conceives diaspora as migrants or descendants of migrants, whose identity and sense of belonging, either real or symbolic, have been shaped by their migration experience and background. IOM also refers to them as transnational communities, because they comprise people who are connected to more than one country.

MIDA Youth is in line with IOM's "3Es" diaspora engagement strategy aimed at facilitating diasporas' key contributions to development through three key actions: engage, enable and empower.

By "engaging" IOM refers to the need to know and understand transnational communities as a prerequisite to support their development efforts, and devise appropriate outreach strategies. IOM maps and surveys diaspora communities to assess their socioeconomic profile, their willingness and capabilities to contribute to development, as well as to improve communication pathways with diaspora communities.

By "enabling" IOM refers to the creation of appropriate conditions to allow transnational communities to become agents for development; including the structural conditions that allow the members of transnational communities to develop their full potential and

acquire the necessary skills and resources to serve as architects of economic and social progress (i.e. ensuring access to essential services, and the respect for their social and civic rights). IOM works with governments to strengthen the political and institutional frameworks that reduce the social and financial costs of migration (e.g. promoting ethical recruitment; reducing the costs of remittances; and mainstreaming migration into policy development). By "empowering" IOM refers to the fact that, when the appropriate conditions are in place, the members of transnational communities will spontaneously transfer resources and strengthen links in transnational spaces regardless, and often in spite of, administrative, regulatory and other constraints. However, governments, and other stakeholders can facilitate and enhance such transfers, through adequate policy and institutional frameworks, financial and other resources and opportunities for capacity development.

The "3Es" approach is the result of a stock taking exercise of IOM's longstanding collaboration and successful experiences working with diaspora partners for over four decades. The "3Es" approach capitalizes on the lessons learned from two major programmes implemented by IOM: the Return of Qualified Nationals (RQN) programme, and the Migration for Development in Africa (MIDA) programme.

The Return of Qualified Nationals (RQN) programme started in the mid-1970s, in Latin America, but expanded later on to Africa and Asia, aimed at matching emigrants' skills and qualifications with the human resource needs of home countries, first through permanent return, comprising reintegration assistance and financial incentives, and later through temporary returns (Temporary Return of Qualified Nationals, TRQN). From the 1990s onwards, in addition to and based on these programmes, IOM was also involved in post-crisis reconstruction processes.

MIDA designates both a programme and its underlying strategy.

Launched in 2001, and initially focused on Africa, MIDA facilitated the engagement of expatriate professionals through long-term, temporary and even "virtual" return, to contribute to key development sectors, in both public and private institutions in the countries of origin, initially in response to developing countries' concerns related to skills gaps resulting from the emigration of qualified professionals. As such, MIDA aimed at mobilizing diaspora professionals through short-term assignments in their countries of origin and facilitating the transfer of knowledge and skills as well as financial resources.<sup>37</sup> MIDA comprised five strategic areas of work:

- Matching country-specific needs with diaspora resources.
- Building capacity of diaspora communities and supporting their engagement in the countries of origin.
- Enhancing dialogue between diasporas and national authorities in countries of origin and residence ("Diaspora Dialogues").
- Forging partnerships between the private sector and diasporas to promote investments and optimize the development impact of remittances.
- Promoting policy coherence for migration and development and integration of migration into the development goals of developing countries.

As such, the MIDA Youth project is aligned with IOM's broader diaspora engagement strategy, and capitalizes on the lessons learned from the longstanding and fruitful collaboration between IOM and its diaspora partners worldwide. In addition, the MIDA Youth project translates into practice the renewed emphasis on migrants' agency and contributions to development promoted by the Italian international cooperation in Italy and beyond.

## IOM's diaspora engagement approach in Italy

From 2002 to date, thanks to the support of the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, IOM Italy has actively promoted diasporas' contribution to and engagement in development in the countries of affiliation, putting into practice the "3Es" approach, long before it was consolidated as such.

At the time and until 2007, IOM Italy implemented MIDA projects and supported migrant communities from Senegal, Ethiopia and Ghana to carry out both collective and individual initiatives, such as transnational businesses and social projects in the countries of origin. From 2008 onwards, IOM Italy promoted MIDA interventions in Somalia, and expanded to other regions including Latin America and the Middle East. As such, MIDA and its various sub-programmes contributed to the achievement of MIDA goals and later on to IOM "3Es" strategy within Italy and beyond. IOM Italy has adapted these approaches to respond to the specific needs of the Italian migration context, valuing the specific competencies of diaspora groups present in the Italian territory and building on the specific strengths of the communities, civil society, and national authorities in the countries of origin.

According to independent research,<sup>38</sup> co-development initiatives funded and supported through the MIDA approach in Italy **contributed to increase significantly migrants' networks**, strengthening existing ties between migrants and the countries of origin, and created institutional links in a way that demonstrated to be beneficial for the effectiveness of co-development projects and for the diaspora community involved. Indeed, it is exactly the multitude of –sometimes– weak ties fostered by migrants in their

interaction with local contexts, both in Italy and in the countries of origin, which enable diaspora to mobilize know-how, networks and other forms of capital for local development. By increasing transnational activism of diaspora members, the MIDA approach in Italy has contributed to empower migrants and solicit their active role in development.

In addition, in some cases the MIDA approach in Italy favored a new activism of diaspora individuals, recognizing them as informal "ambassadors" of development, who are able to liaise with institutions in the origin and host countries, and act as transnational political actors in what literature describes as the "paradiplomacy of migrants".<sup>39</sup>

## MIDA Youth

MIDA Youth builds on the longstanding experience of IOM Italy and of the Italian Cooperation in working with Somali diaspora organizations for political stability and development in Somalia. In particular, following the experience gained by implementing the "MIDA Women Somalia II" project,<sup>40</sup> MIDA Youth further engages Somali diaspora associations and relevant technical partners residing in Italy in addressing youth unemployment in Somalia.

### The structure of MIDA Youth

The overall objective of the MIDA Youth project is **to contribute to the stabilization and development of Somalia by enhancing the role of the Somali diaspora and their associations in Italy**, engaging them in mobilizing and transferring their professional, social and economic resources.

To achieve, MIDA Youth piloted a co-management approach, where the management of the project was shared by IOM Italy and IOM Somalia to maximize the transnational nature of the project, including in terms of management. This flexibility allowed IOM to assist diaspora organizations throughout the implementation of MIDA Youth, adapting the global diaspora engagement strategy to respond to the peculiarity of the Somali contexts and to the characteristics of its diaspora in Italy, contextualizing this response in a particular geographical area. In addition, the co-management approach ensured the coherence between the activities of MIDA Youth, and the priorities (youth unemployment) and sectoral needs identified in Somalia through an inception study.



In the framework of this approach, the project activities have been designed along three main phases:

**1. Assessment phase** - A field research commissioned to an accredited Somali consulting company identified the gaps and opportunities for potential investment in the Southern Somali market economy. As a result of the market assessment, business opportunities and demand gaps were highlighted in Kisimayo and Baidoa in three viable economic sectors, namely:

- information and communication technology (in Kisimayo and Baidoa);
- transformation of agricultural products (Kisimayo), and
- water services in Kisimayo.

**2. Empowerment phase** - In Italy, MIDA Youth implemented an awareness raising activity to sensitize Somali diaspora associations on the opportunity to contribute to local development in Somalia through the MIDA Youth project. The awareness raising component comprised meetings, direct contacts and the mobilization of the networks of the Somali diaspora, through which associations were solicited to participate in the project.

Somali diaspora associations' empowerment process entailed a public call for project ideas, aimed at selecting the beneficiaries of a technical assistance workshop and of individual coaching services. The latter was designed on the basis of the involvement of a multidisciplinary group of experts, who provided the selected associations with tools and competencies on project management, budget development and management, human resources, communication and fundraising.

**3. Engagement phase** - In order to engage the Somali diaspora and to stimulate them to play an active role in the development of

Somalia, a restricted call for project proposals was opened to the associations that successfully completed the empowerment phase. The call aimed at selecting quality projects to be co-funded by IOM. As such, this phase entailed the formalization of the partnership between the selected diaspora associations and IOM. The project proposals presented by the diaspora associations were evaluated against their feasibility, potential for success, positive impact on the local context and level of improvement after the technical assistance workshop organized by IOM Italy during the empowerment phase.

### MIDA Youth structure

#### Assessment

- Market assessment in Kismaio and Baidoa

#### Empowerment

- Pre-call for project ideas
- Technical Assistance Workshop

#### Engagement

- Call for projects
- Co-funding

## Profile of participating diaspora organizations

Many of the diaspora organizations that took part in the MIDA Youth project were newly established. Five organizations out of seven were set up after 2012, in the aftermath of the 2012 election process leading to a promising political stabilization of the country. This coincidence suggests that political stabilization processes influence the propensity of the Somali diaspora to engage in the development of their country of origin.

MIDA Youth probably benefited from a renewed activism of the Somali diaspora in Italy, also corresponding to a diminished role of the organizations previously involved in similar projects, many of which had split up or lost their membership, according to information gathered through interviews and territorial meetings with the Somali diaspora.<sup>41</sup>

Concerning the internal organization of participating diaspora associations, in many cases the organizations have only a few active members that participate in and contribute to the associations' activities. Nevertheless, most associations are characterized by the presence of a charismatic leader that inspires and drives migrants' engagement in local development processes, both in Italy and in the country of origin. This leader is often a woman (five cases out of seven), which is consistent with the nature of the Somali community in Italy until the 1990s and activism prevalently led by women.

With regard to the nature of participation and involvement, all the organizations that participated in MIDA Youth are oriented towards solidarity and support to vulnerable groups, either in Italy, in Somalia or both. According to their associations' statutes, the prevalent focus is on creating the conditions to welcome Somali migrants in Italy and facilitate their integration. Another important common sector of intervention is the promotion of transnational

activities linking various diaspora host countries (Italy, Denmark, Sweden and United Kingdom) with Somalia and other African countries (Kenya, Mozambique). One of the participating diaspora organizations acts as an umbrella organization, creating a network of the Somali diaspora in Italy, and three out of seven associations aim at facilitating the linkages between Somalis in Italy and the motherland.

Their annual budget shows that none, except one, operates through public funds. Most of the activities of the diaspora organizations involved in MIDA Youth are self-funded through the association members' annual subscriptions, external supporters, bequests and *ad hoc* fundraising campaigns, all of which contribute to the budget for the implementation of activities in Italy and in Somalia.

### The MIDA Youth methodology

MIDA Youth achieved its results through a methodological framework that envisaged a structured technical assistance process dedicated to strengthen diaspora organizations' skills to lead sustainable development initiatives.

Particularly, technical assistance was designed to address the identified gaps in diaspora organizations' projects and to satisfy the need to endow diaspora organizations with the necessary competencies to translate their project ideas into viable development projects, and to manage such projects effectively.

In this sense, the technical assistance component built on existing diaspora resources, and aimed at maximizing their potential impact. As such, MIDA Youth allowed to pilot some methodological steps, as follows:

**“This training is enlightening!**

**I came with a certain degree of knowledge and go back with a completely changed understanding on how to establish development projects in Somalia”.**

Testimony collected among participants during the MIDA Youth technical assistance workshop.



### **a) Empowering diaspora organizations: from training to coaching**

Unlike generic trainings on project cycle management, the capacity-building phase of MIDA Youth focused on addressing the weaknesses and optimizing the potentialities of the individual diaspora associations' projects, framing the delivery of the training around the projects' design. The residential training courses, organized by IOM Italy, was divided into two two-day intensive session each session gathering a small group of participants, so as to offer a one-to-one coaching to diaspora organizations.

This approach allowed participants to focus on their own proposals and develop or enhance the necessary skills to improve them.

In addition, the training was divided into modules that allowed each diaspora organization to benefit from individualized support to enhance their proposals.

The training modules focused on the following areas:

- Project identification phase: from problems to solutions in the Somali context and in light of the Sustainable Development Goals.
- Striving for change: from an approach oriented towards activities to an approach oriented towards results.
- The use and significance of the Logical framework: intervention logic, indicators, assumptions.
- Drafting a budget: forecast expenditures

and budget management.

- The importance of communication and marketing in project implementation.
- Managing staff in a business project.
- Project implementation: ensuring collaboration among partners and stakeholders.
- Complying with IOM procedures and regulations.

The training offered tailored suggestions on how to improve the project proposals submitted by the participating diaspora organizations.

The shift from a traditional training session to a coaching method, where associations could benefit from individual technical support focused on their project ideas, demonstrated to be effective. This was reflected in the improvement rate recorded after the evaluation of the second call for projects, which showed a remarkable increase in the quality of proposals, compared to the pre-coaching phase.

### **b) Responsibility sharing: from grants to co-funding**

One of the elements characterizing the MIDA Youth methodology was co-funding, which replaced the traditional approach of providing diaspora associations' projects with grants. Along these lines, indeed, the co-funding element was conceived of a tool to consolidate the role of diaspora organizations as development agents in Somalia. Thus, co-funding represents an

**MIDA Youth mobilized EUR 53.893,8 in cash and in-kind contributions from migrant associations.**



integral part of the empowerment process addressing migrants' associations with the aim of strengthening and encouraging diasporas' transnational activism for peace and sustainable development.

Being responsible to mobilize economic resources strengthens the engagement and ownership of diaspora organization for the effective implementation of projects. In particular, economic resources contributing to co-funding are collected by diaspora associations among their transnational networks of diversified actors. As a consequence, the whole co-development process results in an higher level of responsibility and accountability of diaspora associations' towards their networks, local communities and donors.

In addition, IOM's funding to diaspora associations' projects contributes both to empowering migrants' direct engagement for development (in a transnational dimension) and to the institutional acknowledgement of migrants' role as co-development agents. In particular, the active participation of migrants to the achievement of the goals set within Agenda 2030 contributes to changing the narrative of migration, building a positive image of diasporas in the counties they bridge.

### **c) Focus on quality: the technical committee**

MIDA Youth established an external technical committee to assess and evaluate project proposals submitted by the diaspora.

The technical committee was aimed at ensuring transparency in the evaluation process and at identifying technical gaps to be filled through the capacity-building component of MIDA Youth.

A multidisciplinary team of external evaluators was identified and collectively contributed the following know-how:

- solid experience in evaluating development project proposals by the non-governmental sector;
- deep knowledge of the Somali context, bolstered by direct field-work in implementing development projects in Somalia;
- research informed competence on the main features and characteristics of the Somali diaspora organizations in Italy;
- demonstrated technical knowledge in development project planning, budgeting and related areas.

The evaluation committee looked at diaspora project proposals from a pure technical perspective, identifying their strengths and weaknesses, which served as a basis to design a tailored capacity-building programme to fill competencies' gaps and to strengthen the existing expertise at organizational level.

The selection of projects to be awarded with co-funding for implementation, through a second call for proposals, concluded the MIDA Youth implementation phase in Italy. The technical committee was called to submit a technical evaluation comprising a qualitative assessment of the project proposals, including considerations regarding the presence of elements that characterize diasporas' contribution to development, and the potential impact of the associations' projects both in Somalia and in Italy, in a co-development perspective. The qualitative judgement provided with the necessary elements to back the final co-funding decisions, including both technical scores and qualitative considerations, which responded to MIDA Youth's twofold objective of empowering diaspora organizations and capitalizing on the value added of diaspora interventions in the country of origin.

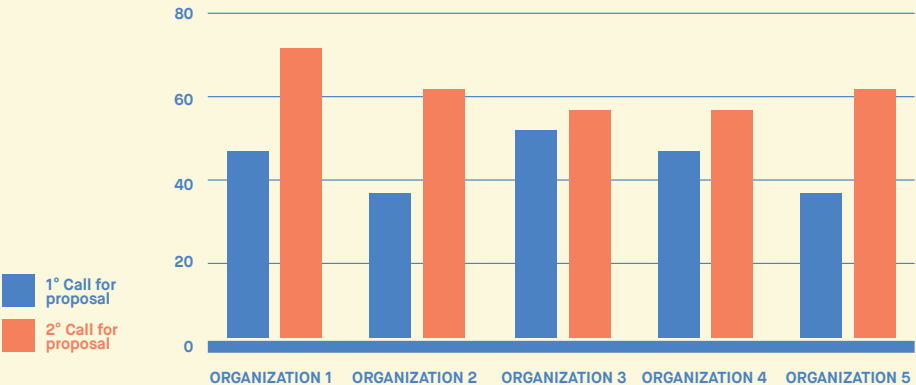


# MIDA Youth Lessons Learned

## Capacity-building: enhancing project proposals

MIDA Youth achieved the specific objective related to strengthening the Somali diaspora organizations in Italy to become effective development actors. This is demonstrated by the remarkable improvement of the quality of the project proposals submitted by the associations before and after the completion of the technical assistance workshop; as shown by the difference in the proposals' scores between the first and the second call for proposals.

### Diaspora organizations' project scores - Empowerment phase



The graph reports the scores of the project proposals submitted by diaspora organizations participating in the two rounds of the selection process of MIDA Youth. The scores achieved in the first

call for proposals, in blue, range from a minimum of 34/100 to a maximum of 50/100. All participating organizations underwent an empowerment phase before submitting a revised version of their project to the second call for proposals. The scores of the second call (in orange) show a net improvement in the quality of proposals whose scores range from a minimum of 54/100 to a maximum of 70/100.

The difference in the performance of diaspora associations (proposals improvement rate) is the qualitative indicator to measure the success of the empowerment phase through the coaching methodology piloted by MIDA Youth.

All diaspora organizations engaged in MIDA Youth improved their proposals with rates ranging from a minimum 8 per cent to maximum 73 per cent. On average, the improvement rate stands around 50 per cent, indicating that diaspora organizations doubled their capacity to translate ideas into articulated interventions thanks to MIDA Youth.

### **Funding and co-funding share**

Three proposals out of five demonstrated high quality standards (a minimum score of 70/100 and/or an improvement rate above 50%) and were funded by MIDA Youth. All proposals were able to mobilize a co-funding share of minimum 15 per cent of the total budget. This indicates the strong commitment of diaspora organizations and their partners in dedicating funds and resources to the implementation of development projects.

The co-funding share is mostly a cash contribution, with a clear involvement of local partners in availing both funds and assets to the execution of the project. The presence of a significant "cash" share, which reached an average of 5 per cent of the total budget, indicates a good level of local participation of civil society and local communities in development projects led by diaspora organizations.

"The positive aspect in diaspora involvement in development is that we, Somali nationals, are the ones who propose development initiatives, for saving our country, in our own interest."

Association taking part to MIDA Youth capacity-building workshop.

### **Mobilizing transnational networks**

All proposals demonstrate the ability to activate a solid network of partners to achieve the objectives of the development projects. Projects submitted under the first call for proposals reflect the capacity of diaspora organizations to mobilize a variety of actors involved in the identification and execution of the project ideas.

The MIDA Youth capacity-building phase stressed the importance of building a structured network of organizations that strategically bring into the partnership the necessary skills and resources for accomplishing the project's objectives. Consequently, proposals submitted under the second call for proposals further elaborated the network of partners so as to compose a team of institutions able to display all competencies and resources needed to carry out the activities foreseen by the project proposals.

The network diaspora organizations activated through MIDA Youth is solid as it encompasses a wide variety of actors, including: local Somali civil society organizations, Italian associations of migrants, individuals voluntarily engaged as professional consultants, Somali enterprises, Italian firms, Italian local authorities, as well as Somali authorities. In one significant case, the network involves a Somali organization in the United Kingdom.

This rich composition of public, private, for profit and non-profit entities involved in diaspora-led development initiatives reflect the ability of



diaspora organizations to mobilize social capital in a transnational way that MIDA Youth further supported and strengthened.

### **Addressing local needs**

The comparison between projects submitted under the first and the second call for proposals shows a clear shift in the focus of diaspora-led projects, consistent with a more rigorous attention to avoiding duplication of previous interventions and to building on existing capacities to achieve innovative results. In particular, most of the initial concepts focused on training activities only that could not guarantee an impact in terms of employment creation, in compliance with MIDA Youth requirements. Instead, all proposals under the second call included a significant focus on job creation, through the establishment of small local businesses, with proper indicators to measure their impact on the socioeconomic local fabric. Consistently with a development-oriented attitude, all these enterprises have a social value, targeting disadvantaged groups such as youth, women and unemployed persons.

In one case, innovative co-working methods are promoted by the Somali diaspora organization, with a view to minimize the running costs of the business and to stress flexibility in a highly unstable environment. Innovation clearly highlights the importance of cultural capital that diasporas are able to contribute as members of the communities they bridge in Somalia and in Italy.

### **Snapshot of projects co-funded by MIDA Youth**

MIDA Youth supported the empowerment of seven Somali diaspora associations throughout the following phases in Italy: i) seven project proposals were submitted under the first open call for project ideas; ii) six diaspora organizations were admitted to enrol

in the two-day technical assistance workshop that was part of the empowerment phase; iii) five project proposals were subsequently submitted under the second restricted call for proposals; iv) three projects were awarded co-funding and will be implemented in Somalia.

The following section provides an overview of the project proposals elaborated by the diaspora organizations and of the expected outcomes of those projects that were selected to benefit from co-funding for their implementation.

#### Project Title

### **Creation of an employment opportunity for youth through provision of market-oriented skills helping to start-up co-working business**

#### Objective

Reduce youth unemployment in Somalia through the establishment of a co-working and market-oriented business named "KISMAYO IT SOLUTIONS – KITES". Kites will employ 20 young and skilled women and men and will provide qualified IT services to private and public companies.

#### Name of Diaspora Organization

### **ADMISER**

Associazione Donne Migranti Italia-Somalia in Emilia Romagna

**Project Title****CeSPoK Multiservices  
Centre in Kisimayo****Objectives and Expected Results**

The project aims at fighting unemployment by establishing a Multiservice Centre in Kisimayo providing ICT and plumbing services. Men and women will be recruited by the centre and will gradually take control of its management.

**Name of Diaspora Organization****Faynus**

Project Title

## **Promoting Income Generating Activities for Youth in Kisimayo**

Objectives and Expected Results

The project aims at fighting unemployment in Kisimayo through the establishment of a grinding mill to produce flour out of locally produced cereals.

Name of Diaspora Organization

**Shukran**







# Conclusions and way forward

The MIDA Youth project piloted a model to empower migrants' and diaspora associations' as development actors. This model builds on positive experiences and lessons learned from past MIDA projects launched since 2002, and introduces elements that strengthen a more individualized approach to support migrants' engagement in development.

The analysis of these experiences have allowed IOM Italy to distil some lessons learned to guide our future collaboration with diasporas. Firstly, involving diaspora partners at all stages, since the inception of the initiatives is crucial. Geographical areas, as well as technical sectors of intervention in Somalia were pre-identified through a market assessment. The former allowed understanding the most pressing and relevant local needs. Similarly, the project design would have benefited from including an assessment of diaspora associations' competencies and local networks in order to identify the resources that could have been truly mobilized and how best they responded to the local needs. The experiences gathered through the MIDA Youth initiative, therefore, suggest to foresee diasporas' involvement at all phases, including in the project design by activating participatory processes.

Secondly, through MIDA Youth the multifaceted nature of diasporic actors was further revealed. The composition of the Somali diaspora in Italy is extremely dynamic. Single-nationality "diaspora" associations are rare. Indeed, Somali diasporic actors often mobilize their social capital including ties with individuals of different

nationalities and locals, or through the initiative of highly skilled charismatic leaders, not organized in formal associations, who are able to maintain strong networks. Furthermore, new generations of youth of Somali origin are increasingly showing interest in bridging the countries in which they maintain ties. Along these lines, the lessons learned from MIDA Youth suggest that it is important to include this wide range of transnational actors in the design and implementation of sustainable development initiatives.

Furthermore, through this pilot initiative, IOM Italy has identified three elements that may contribute to future project design in the framework of development initiatives involving diaspora organizations:

**Targeted capacity-building process.** MIDA Youth allowed IOM Italy to strengthen diasporas' specific skills and competencies through a one-to-one coaching to contribute to sustainable development. In particular, this approach helped mobilizing diasporic networks to provide a contextualized response, in specific geographic and sectoral areas of intervention meaningful for local development, thus matching diasporas' skills with relevant local needs. As a result, diaspora projects are more likely to be sustainable and successful.

**Co-funding as an engagement tool.** MIDA Youth was designed to provide diaspora associations with an effective opportunity to implement development projects, thanks to dedicated co-funding. The co-funding element proved valuable to ensure ownership, responsibility and accountability of diasporas towards their projects, and was useful to mobilize other resources, both in-kind and in-cash.

**Private sector engagement.** Italian private sector entities were involved by IOM Italy, both as members of the jury that selected the best project ideas, and as facilitators or tutors in the framework of the technical assistance workshop. The participation of private sector brought an added value in terms of the exchange of skills between diasporas and technical experts. It further contributed to consolidating networks between migrants and representatives of the private sector with the potential to enhance the economic participation of migrants in the societies that they bridge.

- <sup>1</sup> Weil P. (2002). Towards a coherent Policy of Co-development. *International Migration*, Vol. 40, Issue 3, Special Issue 1 2002. Pages 41—55.
- <sup>2</sup> See for reference Levitt P. (1998), Social Remittances: Migration Driven Local Level Forms of Cultural Diffusion, in *International Migration Review*, 32 (4), pp. 926—48; Sinatti, G. and S.P. Alvarez Tinajero. (2011). *Migration and Development: a Bottom-Up Approach. A Handbook for Practitioners and Policymakers*. Brussels: EC-UN Joint Migration and Development Initiative (JMIDI).
- <sup>3</sup> For a complete list of IOM MIDA projects, see IOM (2009) the MIDA Experience and beyond. Operationalizing Migration for Development Across Regions. Annex II pp.149—169.
- <sup>4</sup> Law n. 125, 11 August 2015, "Disciplina Generale sulla cooperazione internazionale per lo sviluppo".
- <sup>5</sup> European Commission (2011) Migration and Development. Commission staff working paper accompanying the document Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions "The Global Approach to Migration and Mobility" (COM 2011 743 final)
- <sup>6</sup> Law 125/2014, article 2, paragraph 6 "Italian cooperation policies, by promoting local development also through the role played by communities of immigrants and their relations with their Countries of origin, contributes to developing shared migration policies with Partner Countries, inspired by the safeguard of human rights and compliance with European and international legislation".
- <sup>7</sup> See article 9 Territorial Partnerships of law 125/2014.
- <sup>8</sup> Law 125/2014 Article 26 paragraph 2.d
- <sup>9</sup> IOM's Displacement Tracking Matrix Flow Monitoring Survey (DTM FMS) has been implemented in Italy since June 2016, within the framework of IOM's research on populations on the move through the Central and Eastern Mediterranean routes to Europe. The survey gathers information about migrants' age, sex, areas of origin, level of education, employment status before migration, key transit points, cost of the journey, reasons for moving and intentions. DTM FMS have been implemented so far in six Italian regions (Apulia, Calabria, Friuli Venezia Giulia, Liguria, Lombardy, and Sicily), between June and November 2016, and between February and May 2017. IOM Italy DTM webpage: [www.italy.iom.int/it/aree-di-attivita/C3/A0/DTM](http://www.italy.iom.int/it/aree-di-attivita/C3/A0/DTM)
- <sup>10</sup> P. Mezzetti and M. Guglielmo (2009) Somali Diaspora Associations in Italy: between integration and transnational engagement. CeSPI Working Papers 62/2009.
- <sup>11</sup> Mezzetti, P., and M. Guglielmo 2009.

- <sup>12</sup> Source ISTAT 2017. ISTAT is the warehouse of statistics produced by the Italian National Institute of Statistics. Statistics are generated by a database accessible at the following address: [www.istat.it/it/strumenti/web-service](http://www.istat.it/it/strumenti/web-service). The database allows specific query data, whose results can be retrieved in excel and other file formats. Data on the Somali population has been obtained through the query by "popolazione straniera al 1mo Gennaio"; Paese di cittadinanza "Somali"; Anno "2003-2017", generating the table available at [http://dati.istat.it/Index.aspx?DataSetCode=DCIS\\_POPSTRCIT1#](http://dati.istat.it/Index.aspx?DataSetCode=DCIS_POPSTRCIT1#) retrieved on 24 July 2017.
- <sup>13</sup> Source: see above.
- <sup>14</sup> The distribution of the Somali population on the Italian territory is an elaboration of ISTAT data (until January 2016) [www.istat.it/it/immigrati](http://www.istat.it/it/immigrati) (accessed on 30/06/2017)
- <sup>15</sup> Between 2010—2016 the Somali population in Puglia increased from 148 to 731 people, in Sicily from 576 to 1320, in Calabria from 119 to 284 people. Source: ISTAT data (until January 2016).
- <sup>16</sup> Nurrudin Farah (2003) *Rifugiati. Voci della Diaspora Somala*. Meltemi ed.
- <sup>17</sup> For an interesting focus on the women component of the Somali migrant community in Italy see also Francesca Decimo (2007) *Globalizing Diasporic Networks: Somali Female Workers in Italy*.
- <sup>18</sup> Nuruddin Farah (2003) *Rifugiati. Voci della Diaspora Somala*. P. 101.
- <sup>19</sup> Ibid p. 100
- <sup>20</sup> Mezzetti, P., and M. Guglielmo 2009.
- <sup>21</sup> ISTAT 2017. See note 11.
- <sup>22</sup> Data source: IOM DTM Flow Monitoring Surveys in Italy, June—November 2016 and February—May 2017. DTM Flow Monitoring Survey (FMS) started in Italy in June 2016 and is being conducted within the framework of IOM's research on populations on the move through the Mediterranean and Western Balkan Routes to Europe since then. For more on DTM activities in the Mediterranean region, DTM portal <http://migration.iom.int/europe/>.
- <sup>23</sup> Newly established Somalis means migrants of Somali origin (nationality) who arrived in Italy in 2016—2017 (IOM data from the Italian Ministry of Interior). Percentages come from a sample of 305 Somali nationals interviewed by the IOM within the DTM operations in Italy in 2016—2017.
- <sup>24</sup> The 57 per cent is obtained by grouping the clusters 18—21 and 22—25.
- <sup>25</sup> UNICEF (2016) *Situation Analysis of Children in Somalia*.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid p.7.

<sup>27</sup> Source: IOM DTM Flow Monitoring Surveys in Italy, June—November 2016 and February—April 2017

<sup>28</sup> This report does not account for the political and intelligence Somali organizations that were present in Italy during the late 1980s.

<sup>29</sup> This is what Ostergaard-Nielsen term "immigrant politics", with reference to the main scope or interest of the organization. See for reference Eva Ostergaard-Nielsen *The Politics of Migrants' Transnational Political Practices* (2003) *International Migration Review*, Vol 37, issue 3, pp.760—786.

<sup>30</sup> Mezzetti P. and Guglielmo M. (2009).

<sup>31</sup> In 2007, a Somali diaspora organization based in Italy founded the Somali Women Agenda, a platform of women representing a constituency of approximately 400,000 individuals from all over Somalia and the global diaspora to address issues affecting women and girls in the origin country and the lack of involvement of women in decision-making political processes in Somalia.

<sup>32</sup> Particularly the Arta peace Process in 2000, the Mbagathi Peace process in 2002—2004, and the Djibouti Peace Process in 2008—2009.

<sup>33</sup> This is what Ostergaard Nielsen term "translocal politics". Ostergaard-Nielsen (2003).

<sup>34</sup> In 2014 the research center IDOS was mandated by the Italian Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs to map all formally registered migrants' organizations that are active on the Italian territory. The resulting database is available at <http://www.integrazionemigranti.gov.it/Aree tematiche/Paesi Comunitari-e-associazioni Migranti/Pagine/mappatura-associazioni.aspx> (accessed on 30/06/2017).

<sup>35</sup> Mixed composition of diaspora associations means that the members may be of different nationalities. To quote an example, one of the Somali diaspora organizations who participated in MIDA Youth is formed by a Somali woman who is the leader of activities promoted in Somalia, a Mozambican member who has expertise in development programming, and an Italian President who is a prominent representative of local authorities in the region where the association is registered. Such a variety in the composition of the membership of diaspora may arise the debate over reformulating the notion of Somali diaspora association and it highlights a complex networking structure and strategy of diaspora organizations in pursuing their objectives.

<sup>36</sup> The current trend of engaging and empowering diaspora associations should also recognize the contribution of charismatic individuals who are well connected with the Somali community in the world, from Europe to the US, the Arab countries, Australia. Although these networks may not be formalized as an association, potentialities in terms of contribution to development and social change deserve to be noted.

- <sup>37</sup> See IOM (2009). *The MIDA Experience and Beyond*. Geneva: IOM, available at: <http://publications.iom.int/books/mida-experience-and-beyond>. The MIDA approach was implemented jointly with diaspora and other partners in Benin, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cape Verde, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia, Ghana, Guinea, Mali, Mauritania, Morocco, Nigeria, Rwanda, Senegal, Sierra Leone and Somalia.
- <sup>38</sup> Most of studies on the MIDA Programme have been conducted by the Italian research Centre CeSPI. In particular, see Stocchiero A. (2008), *Learning by doing: Migrant transnationalism for local development in MIDA Italy-Ghana/Senegal programme*. CeSPI Working Papers 48/2008 EN.
- <sup>39</sup> Keating, M. (1999), "Regions and International Affairs: Motives, Opportunities and Strategies", in Adelcoa F. and M. Keating (eds), *Paradiplomacy in Action. The Foreign Relations of Subnational Governments*, Frank Cass, London-Portland.
- <sup>40</sup> Through combined IOM and Italian Cooperation funds, MIDA Women Somalia II (2015) supported economic and social development projects promoted by the Somali diaspora in Italy, particularly women organizations. Projects focused on agriculture, food security and health, and targeted vulnerable groups such as Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) in Somaliland.
- <sup>41</sup> Meetings took place in various cities in Italy to disseminate MIDA Youth opportunities and the call for project ideas. Among the diaspora organizations met during the territorial meetings, only one had already participated in previous MIDA programmes.

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