

Newsletter - Diaspora Engagement

Wil je deze nieuwsbrief in het Nederlands lezen? Klik op jouw rechtermuisknop en duidt dan de optie "Vertaal naar.. Nederlands" aan. Veel leesplezier!

Voudriez-vous lire cette newsletter en français? Veuillez cliquer sur le bouton droit de votre souris et choisir l'option "Traduire... en français". Bonne lecture!

As the days grow longer and we are still keeping up with our resolutions, we feel that the start of the New Year would not be complete without the **eighth edition of our IOM Diaspora Engagement newsletter!**

In this newsletter, you can find out how we have been working together with diaspora communities in recent months, what we have learned and which exciting activities we have in store for you. The newsletter also looks at what has been happening around the world and gives you some cultural tips for the coming months, including a new episode of our very own podcast!

1. Diaspora engagement at IOM Belgium and Luxembourg: the O-REMIT project and Belgian diaspora as climate actors
2. Get to know diasporas around the world: Global Forum on Migration and Development and Global Diaspora Week 2023
3. Diaspora Insights Podcast: Diaspora Dishes with Roger Dushime on Afro brunch and Talks
4. Q&A Time with... Marta from Pleegzorg Vlaanderen on culture-sensitive foster care!

5. Fill in your agenda: events and calls for projects.
6. Cultural Tips

Already wanting more? [Sign up here](#) for our **bimonthly newsletter** to keep up to date with our activities!

1. Diaspora Engagement at IOM Belgium and Luxembourg



O-REMIT: Sharing experiences on remittances

With the [O-REMIT](#) project, IOM Belgium and Luxembourg aims to contribute to Sustainable Development Goal Target 10.c on reducing the transaction costs of remittances (*monetary transactions*) to 3% by 2030, while increasing the development impact of sent remittances in countries of origin, including through diaspora investment trainings to learn how to invest in green businesses in selected African countries.

Recently, the O-REMIT team initiated **a series of exchanges with various diaspora communities in Belgium** in order to understand remittance habits and motivations. We explored the ins and outs of money transfers, transparency of money transfer operators, formal and informal channels, cultural expectations and much more! The first fruitful exchanges took place on Saturday 3 February 2024 with diasporas from Southern Africa, Eastern Africa and the Horn of Africa and Central-West Africa.

The results of these group discussions are key for developing an awareness raising campaign and workshops on digital and financial literacy for remittance senders and receivers.

Are you interested in participating to a group discussion on remittances? Would you like to know other peoples' opinions on the topic? **More exchanges are taking place on Saturday 2 March 2024** for

diasporas from Northern Africa, Middle-East, Latin-America and Asia! Express your interest by sending a mail to o-remit@iom.int.

Follow the [O-REMIT LinkedIn page](#) to receive regular updates on all project activities (including opportunities for training) or register for the [monthly O-REMIT newsletter](#)!



Diaspora Advisory Board: Consultative meeting on Diaspora and Migrants as climate actors

A consultative meeting with the **IOM Diaspora Advisory Board (DAB)**, diaspora climate activists, professionals, academia and civil society in Belgium took place on 24 October 2023. The challenges to access climate action activities, especially for (young) people of colour, due to issues related to stereotypes and language barriers, were explored at the meeting. Issues such as limited access to financial resources and funding, lack of inclusivity of interventions underway, and a lack of awareness on climate change among diasporas were also raised. Discussing climate change is crucial as diaspora communities often face unique climate vulnerabilities.

One of the main recommendations that is often overlooked is that diaspora communities should be more involved in policy development. They can act as a bridges, transferring knowledge and skills to local communities in climate-vulnerable regions and vice versa.

Through meetings such as this one, IOM aims to strengthen partnerships between diaspora organisations and governments in residence and origin countries to achieve a more **inclusive response to climate change**.

Read more about our findings and recommendations in our [DAB policy brief](#) on "**Harnessing the power of diaspora for climate action**".

Do you want to receive the latest news on our DAB? Sign up [here](#)!



1 - Diaspora Advisory Board on climate (24/10/23)

2. Get to know the diasporas around the world!



Diaspora talk at the 14th GFMD Summit in Geneva

2024 kicked off with the 14th Summit of the Global Forum on Migration and Development, which took place on 23 -25 January 2024. The Forum was launched in 2007 under the auspices of former UN Secretary-General, Kofi Annan. This non-binding, voluntary Forum brings together policymakers on the issues of migration and development. 1200 delegates attended this edition of the Summit which focused on the impact of climate change on human mobility.

The **role of diasporas as agents of development** was one of the thematic priorities, powerfully brought forward by the IOM delegation. Discussions focused on how governments can build trust and enhance the contribution of diasporas to sustainable development. The Forum emphasized that while diasporas are important actors, they are not expected to take responsibility for development; rather, States should facilitate the role that diasporas can play.



Global Diaspora Week



The **Global Diaspora Week** taking place in December usually marks the end of a year full of diaspora action. The yearly, virtual event is organised by IOM and the [Global Diaspora Confederation](#) (GDC), which is a global movement of diaspora organisations initiated with the support of IOM during COVID-19.

Each day focused on a different region of the world, where hearings were organised to share experiences and work towards more stable partnerships. Diaspora organisations (including from Belgium!) and others also participated in an online training session on the **IOM Diaspora Training Toolkit, which will be launched very soon on [the iDiaspora webpage](#)**. This toolkit aims to strengthen the skills and capacities of these organisations to engage in sustainable development.

You can also take a look at the presentation by [Lani Anaya Jiménez' talk](#), who explains how youth and faith-based communities interact with the SDGs!

The week was concluded with the Diaspora Assembly, during which various stakeholders reflected on what challenges and opportunities diaspora communities are facing.



In our last issue, we introduced you to the [Diaspora Platform](#), which can be used by diaspora communities to share knowledge and experiences. If you are part of a diaspora organization, you can take the following [survey](#) to see what training programs could benefit your organization!

3. Diaspora Insights Podcast





Indulge your senses on the Diaspora Dishes Podcast with Roger Dushime, where we delve into the savory world of Afro Brunch and Talk and deconstructing stereotypes of African cuisine in Belgium. Join us for mouthwatering conversations and culinary discoveries that celebrate the vibrant flavors and cultural richness of the diaspora.



Find the podcast here - -> [Diaspora Insights Podcast - Diaspora Dishes - Roger Dushime \(youtube.com\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=...)

4. With... Marta Pedro Miala from Pleegzorg Vlaanderen (Foster Care Flanders)!



Today we sit down with Marta Pedro Miala. Welcome Marta! Would you like to present yourself to our readers?

My name is Marta Pedro Miala. I am a project collaborator within the organization Pleegzorg Vlaanderen. **Pleegzorg Vlaanderen is a foster care organization** in Belgium which accompanies children and adults with disabilities or psychiatric problems who are staying in another family because their parents cannot take care of them. This also **includes unaccompanied migrant children**. At Pleegzorg, the well-being of

these children or adults is the main focus: everyone has the right to grow up in a safe place where her/his outlook on life, religion and culture have a place.

Pleegzorg operates in the entire Flemish area, but I work for the region Flemish Brabant & Brussels. We have departments in different locations (Brussels, Halle, Vilvoorde, Leuven and Tienen). We currently assist more than 1,200 foster children, foster youth and adult foster guests.

I am working for Pleegzorg for almost two years now. I started there in April of 2022, as they were looking for a collaborator for a project on culture-sensitive foster care.

What could you tell us about your project on culture-sensitive foster care?

This specific project is funded by the Flemish Community and aims at making our organisation accessible for everyone entitled to foster care support. We are specifically targeting cultural minorities in Brussels. This is a target group we have found difficult to reach with foster care. The project is aimed at making foster care in the Brussels Capital Region more known to that target group, in an easily accessible way.

My main job is to raise awareness and on the other hand to recruit people with diverse cultural backgrounds who actually have been fostering a child who is not their own like a cousin, sister, brother or have been fostering an uncle, grandparent, close friend. In a lot of communities this is part of the culture. **Our organisation can provide financial and pedagogical support to everyone who fosters a child or an adult** with disabilities or psychiatric issues.

Very interesting: you are reaching out to people who are already informally involved in foster care. And what about people who are interested in foster care?

Yes, that is the second part of our project. There are currently 1,000 children on our waiting list, which is a lot because we are not finding enough potential foster care candidates. On that waiting list there are young unaccompanied migrants from various countries; Afghanistan, Syria, Eritrea, Congo, Cameroon. **The approach for unaccompanied migrant children is different** than the approach for other children because they have different cultural codes. Some studies have shown that when a child can live with a family that has a similar background, similar values or a similar religion, this can help the child move forward. My co-workers and I see the difference when those children are placed in such families. For example, when a young Afghan unaccompanied migrant comes to Belgium and lives with someone from Afghanistan, we see that the child or minor really feels protected. **To hear the same language, smell the same food and engage in similar cultural practices can feel like a relief for the child.** Children and young unaccompanied migrants who newly arrive experience many triggers and are often emotionally and mentally unstable, having lived through traumatic experiences. They need to get to know the language, to socialize, and learn the culture. When children live in a family with similar values, they feel relaxed and protected. That is very important for their integration process. Of course, this is not the only solution, but our project focuses on this aspect of foster care.

Which recruitment methods are you using in your search for people with diverse migratory backgrounds?

Very interesting question. **I am currently looking for key figures within migrant and diaspora communities.** These are people who have a great network within the community and have generated trust. I act as a mediator who passes on information, for example flyers, which they can distribute within their community. This works very well. It is important to understand that, although we live in a country with strong written practices, I tend to communicate with the key figures in an oral, verbal way. I do not

mail, but call them. Seeing your face, sitting down with them, explaining face-to-face what is going on really makes the difference. **Building trust** is also very important, I try to meet up with key figures multiple times. They need to feel that you are someone who is transparent and that they can believe you. Some people come from countries where they have weaker trust in institutions, so this process takes time. It is very important to keep on motivating key figures to bring the project forward to their community. Another important part of our recruitment method is the digital aspect. Flyers and visual mediums are easily distributed online. I am also going to podcasts and local radio stations of communities, who often do not listen to the traditional radio stations. I am still looking for these canals and platforms. Finally, I believe that representation also plays an important role. When they see me, and the colour of my skin, I believe there is always a little gap that has already been bridged.

Very interesting to hear about your approach. A final question for you, Marta. What can our readers and diaspora members mean for your organisation Pleegzorg?

Most importantly, we are looking for key figures. If you have a migratory background, whichever country it is, you can really reach out to me (see email address and telephone number below). **If you have a network within your community, if you enjoy social activities, if you are trying to help out in any other way, just contact me.** You would be amazed what information people can give to me when they reach out: “oh but I know a church in this neighbourhood” or “oh, but my friend does activities with certain parents” ... Together we can figure out what we can do, what you can mean to me, what I can mean to you. We can work together **to find candidates who might want to become foster parents**, but also find families who already fostering but are doing this in an informal way. Everyone can help in a way. People really have no idea of the impact they can have. How little it may be, everyone can have an impact.

Thank you very much for your time and this interesting discussion, Marta! I wish you all the best of luck with your project!

marta.pedromiala@pleegzorgvbb.be - 0493 22 62 55

I already shelter a child

Are you a grandparent, aunt, uncle, teacher, older sibling, friend, ... and do you care for a non-biological child? This is obvious to many, but remains a difficult task. If you need support, you are entitled to guidance from our service.

More information?
Marta Pedro Miala - 0493 22 62 55
marta.pedromiala@pleegzorgvbb.be

I ALREADY SHELTER AN ADULT WITH A DISABILITY OR PSYCHIATRIC ISSUE

Are you a grandparent, aunt, uncle, teacher, older sibling, friend, ... and do you care for an adult with disabilities or psychiatric issues? This is obvious to many, but remains a difficult task. If you need support, you are entitled to guidance from our service.

More information?
Marta Pedro Miala - 0493 22 62 55
marta.pedromiala@pleegzorgvbb.be



5. Fill in your agenda: outreach, calls and events



International celebrations

8 March	International women's day
11 March	Estimated start of Ramadan
22 March	World Water Day
24 March	Palm Sunday
31 March	Easter
1 April	Easter Monday
10 April	Eid Al Fitr (estimated)
14 April	Tamil New Year
15 April	Bengali New Year

A simple illustration of a calendar with a red cover and a white grid of dates.

Events

29/02/2024 - 03/03/2024 Afropolitan Festival at Bozar



From 29 February to 3 March, the **Afropolitan Festival** will once again take place again at the BOZAR Fine Arts Centre. Get ready for a programme full of visual arts, performances and music by Afropolitan artists! The three-day festival reflects on the theme 'Dream and Action' and aims to help us reclaim our dreams and build new worlds together.

Check out the diverse programme [here](#). You can buy separate tickets for the activities, performances, debates or concerts you are interested in.

02/03/2024 Black History Month x AB: Opening Night



On Saturday 2 March, the **launch party** for Black History Month Belgium (BHM) will take place at [AB](#). Each year, BHM highlights the resilience of the black community. By understanding history from a people's perspective, BHM works to promote cultural diversity and a more inclusive society. This year's theme is '**New Beginnings: Celebrating Resurgence**'.

This party features a great line-up with Miss Angel and more! It kicks off what will be an enriching month of conversations, performances and other exchanges. Will we see you there? Oh, and the party is FREE!

09/03/2024 SIEMPRE - Coups de Plume



On 9 March, **Siempre** will facilitate a workshop that combines two disciplines: boxing and writing. Throughout the **workshop**, participants will be invited to engage both physically and emotionally. All women are welcome and no experience in boxing or writing is needed. Siempre is a Brussel-based organisation supporting Latin American women to become more integrated in social life. The workshop will be held in both French and Spanish.

Want to discover how writing and boxing go together? Register for **free** via coupsdeplume.siempre@hotmail.com

[Outreach and Calls](#)

CONEX - Launch Incentive Fund



IOM's Conex project has **launched** its yearly **Incentive Fund** which aims to structurally **support local organizations** based and active in Belgium, in innovative activities linked to **the protection of and assistance to migrants, diaspora and people with a migration background**.

IOM through the Conex project is committed to facilitating the referral of migrants in vulnerable situations to professional counselling in support of their basic rights in order to improve the overall protection of migrants.

Thematic priorities for this call for proposals are:

- *psychosocial support for frontline workers
- *access to basic rights
- *decreasing vulnerabilities
- *increasing of capacities of migrants, diaspora and people with a migration background.

Examples of activities are: competencies trainings, info sessions on social rights, socio-cultural activities facilitating access to information about support services, etc.

The budget allocated per selected project ranges **from 2.000 EUR to 8.000 EUR**, the full available budget is 40 000 EUR. Submissions in **French, Dutch and English** are possible.

Does your organization have an impactful project idea? Don't miss this opportunity: **check out [the website for more information](#)** and **apply before 1 March 2024!**

Call for projects Brussels International's Sud 2024

Do you want to launch a sustainable and inclusive economic development project in a developing country? Brussels International's Sud 2024, at the initiative of Ans Persoons, State Secretary for Development Cooperation and Foreign Trade, are launching a new call for projects to eradicate global poverty through sustainable and inclusive economic development. Be sure not to miss the deadline!

Deadline: 18/03/2024

How? NED: [Projectoproep Zuid 2024 – International Brussels SPRB](#)

FR: [Appel à projets Sud 2024 – International Brussels SPRB](#)

*Every 2 weeks, IOM's Diaspora Engagement team highlights 5 events, calls or opportunities for diaspora through **the Flash Updates**. Follow us on [Instagram](#), [Facebook](#), our [IOM LinkedIn](#) and our [O-REMIT LinkedIn](#) so you don't lose out on any opportunity or event! You can also visit our [IOM's website](#) - [O-REMIT's webpage](#).*

6. Cultural tips



FILM - OMEN - Baloji (2023)



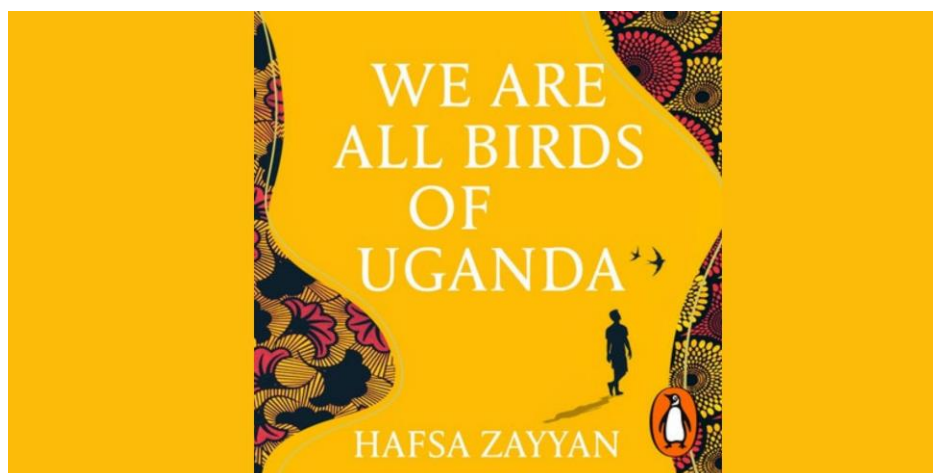
With its premiere at the Cannes Film Festival in May 2023, the movie 'Omen' is a film to put on your watch list! Belgian-Congolese director **Baloji** tells the story of Koffi, who returns from Europe to Kinshasa, to visit his birthplace and family. Koffi is confronted with old family dynamics, his alienation from the cultural traditions and the way he is received by his family's tribe.

How does Koffi relate the two worlds he lives in and can he unite them?

Baloji drew on his personal experience of being born in DRC but raised in Europe. He mixes different artforms and enhances the magic-realist atmosphere of his movie with a mysterious soundtrack.

If you want to find out more about Baloji, you can also visit his exhibition at the [MoMu Gallery](#) in Antwerp which runs until June 2024.

BOOK: We Are All Birds of Uganda – Hafsa Zayyan



During the nearly 70 years of British administration in Uganda, there was a large migration stream from British India to Uganda. As a reaction to British rule, former President of Uganda, Idi Amin, ordered the expulsion of all 'Asians' from the country in 1972.

UK-based lawyer and writer Hafsa Zayyan tells the fictional story of Sameer, who lives in contemporary London and the story of his grandfather Hassan, who lived in Kampala at the time of the expulsion and emigrated to the UK.

We Are All Birds of Uganda is beautifully written and reflects the challenges of belonging, exile and the struggle of dual citizenship. Through this intergenerational lens, the reader is drawn into the characters' search for deeper roots, but also into their layered experiences of racism. Hafsa Zayyan succeeds in telling a story that is not often told, making it very understandable and touching. Enjoy!

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