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Diaspora and Peace

A Comparative Assessment of Somali and Ethiopian Communities in Europe

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Contents

Preface	4		
About DIASPEACE	5		
Acknowledgements	5		
Introduction	6		
1 Somalia:			
Conflicts and migratory flows	13		
1.1 Somali organisations in Italy	16		
<i>Petra Mezzetti and Matteo Guglielmo</i>			
1.1.1 Somali migration to Italy	16		
1.1.2 Immigration and refugee legislation	17		
1.1.3 Diaspora organisations	18		
1.1.4 Diaspora perceptions of peace and conflict	23		
1.1.5 Diaspora's role: Political protagonists and development actors?	24		
1.1.6 Networking and co-operation	28		
1.1.7 Concluding remarks	30		
1.2 Somali organisations in the United Kingdom	32		
<i>Päivi Pirkkalainen</i>			
1.2.1 Somali migration to the United Kingdom	32		
1.2.2 Immigration and refugee legislation	32		
1.2.3 Support structures for migrant organisations	34		
1.2.4 Diaspora organisations	35		
1.2.5 Diaspora perceptions of peace and conflict	39		
1.2.6 Networking and co-operation	41		
1.2.7 Concluding remarks	41		
1.3 Somali organisations in Finland	43		
<i>Päivi Pirkkalainen</i>			
1.3.1 Somali migration to Finland	43		
1.3.2 Immigration and refugee legislation	43		
1.3.3 Support structures for migrant organisations	44		
1.3.4 Diaspora organisations	45		
1.3.5 Diaspora perceptions of peace and conflict	48		
1.3.6 Networking and co-operation	49		
1.3.7 Concluding remarks	50		
1.4 A comparative assessment of Somali diaspora organisations in Europe	52		
<i>Petra Mezzetti and Päivi Pirkkalainen</i>			
1.4.1 Contexts in the country of settlement	52		
1.4.2 Diaspora group characteristics and attributes	54		
		2 Ethiopia:	
		Conflicts and migratory flows	58
		2.1 Ethiopian organisations in Germany	61
		<i>Andrea Warnecke and Clara Schmitz-Pranghe</i>	
		2.1.1 Ethiopian migration to Germany	61
		2.1.2 Immigration and refugee legislation	61
		2.1.3 Ethiopian diaspora organisations	62
		2.1.4 Peacebuilding activities and projects	68
		2.1.5 Diaspora perceptions of peace and conflict	71
		2.1.6 Networking and co-operation	73
		2.1.7 Concluding remarks	75
		2.2 Ethiopian organisations in the Netherlands	78
		<i>Antony Otieno Ong'ayo</i>	
		2.2.1 Ethiopian migration to the Netherlands	78
		2.2.2 Immigration and refugee legislation	79
		2.2.3 Ethiopian diaspora organisations	80
		2.2.4 Diaspora perceptions of peace and conflict	84
		2.2.5 Networking and co-operation	87
		2.2.6 Concluding remarks	88
		2.3 A comparative assessment of Ethiopian diaspora organisations in Europe	90
		<i>Clara Schmitz-Pranghe</i>	
		2.3.1 Context in the settlement country	90
		2.3.2 Diaspora features and attributes	92
		2.3.3 Concluding remarks	95
		Summary and perspectives	96
		References and bibliography	103
		Annex I: Methods: "Interview Table"	113
		Annex II: Methods: "Interview Guidelines"	118



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Preface

The Horn of Africa is affected by numerous long-standing and protracted conflicts with serious humanitarian, socio-economic and political consequences for the entire region and beyond.

In the conflict and peace processes, not only are the states concerned, non-state actors, foreign powers and international actors involved, but increasingly diaspora communities who have emerged as actors actively engaging in the respective countries of origin and neighbouring countries. Conflict is often considered a primary cause of migration but in turn can also fuel violent conflicts. The involvement of individual diaspora members and organisations in conflict resolution is manifold and ranges from financial contributions and social remittances, lobbying activities and direct involvement in political processes to humanitarian and developmental projects.

The role of the diaspora in their countries of origin is increasingly acknowledged not only by the research community but also by policy- and decision-makers, both in the countries of origin and in the countries of residence. The African Union officially endorses the active participation of the African diaspora in its affairs. Moreover, various African states have established diaspora departments or ministries to further institutionalise state–diaspora relations. In the countries of residence, governmental institutions and non-governmental organisations are looking for ways to involve diaspora members and organisations in their developmental and integration endeavours. However, these efforts are often hampered by restrictive migration legislations due to fears of security threats and demographic imbalances.

Whilst most initiatives focus especially on diaspora engagement in the field of development, researchers and policy-/decision-makers still have to take the potential contribution of diaspora communities to peacebuilding as well as indigenous approaches of the diaspora to peaceful conflict resolution more systematically into account.

Research within the DIASPEACE project focuses on the contribution and impact of diaspora actors in peace and conflict processes by carefully studying diaspora organisations from the Horn of Africa in Europe, their interfaces with European civil society and state institutions, and their engagement in the Horn.

This *brief* comprises innovative findings of the DIASPEACE project on Ethiopian and Somali diaspora organisations in five European countries. Based on in-depth research in the United Kingdom, Finland, Italy, Germany and the Netherlands, this study provides a comparative assessment of diaspora organisations, their activities and the framework conditions determining their interventions in the Horn of Africa. It assesses both the characteristics and own resources of diaspora organisations as well as factors and conditions that shape this engagement, and therefore allows for an analysis of the diaspora organisations' potential to contribute to peace and development in their countries of origin. In consequence, it allows for a more objective policy and intervention of diaspora actors in the receiving countries of the European Union.

Based on comprehensive empirical data, the present study enriches the discourse on diaspora communities from the Horn of Africa and the role of the diaspora in conflict settings in general. It also seeks to provide first entry points to enhancing the co-operation of diaspora actors with other governmental and non-governmental institutions, thereby improving the integration of diaspora organisations into existing peacebuilding policies and initiatives in the region of origin and the receiving countries.

Peter J. Croll
May 2010

About the project



Diasporas for Peace: Patterns, Trends and Potential of Long-distance Diaspora Involvement in Conflict Settings. Case Studies from the Horn of Africa (DIASPEACE) is a three-year research project looking into how diaspora groups can foster peace and development in their countries of origin.

DIASPEACE seeks to generate evidence-based knowledge on how exiled populations from conflict regions play into the dynamics of peace and conflict in their countries of origin. In a globalised world such diasporas have become new forces shaping the interactions between countries, regions and continents. In the mainstream literature, diasporas are often seen to fuel conflict and exacerbate tensions through radical mobilisation along ethnic and religious lines. New research findings, however, show that diaspora groups are playing an increasingly prominent role in peace and reconciliation processes. In DIASPEACE, the focus is on positive initiatives, while keeping in mind also the non-intended and negative impacts.

The project has an empirical focus on diaspora networks operating in Europe, which extend their transnational activities to the Horn of Africa. This is a region where decades of conflict have resulted in state collapse and the dispersal of more than two million people. The project involves six partners from Europe and two from the Horn of Africa and conducts field research in both Europe and Africa.

DIASPEACE aims to: a) devise and test methodologies of multi-sited comparative research and to develop the conceptual framework for researching migrant political transnationalism in a conflict context; b) facilitate interaction between diaspora and other stakeholders in Europe and in the Horn of Africa; c) provide recommendations on how to better involve diaspora in conflict resolution and peace-building interventions.

DIASPEACE consists of five main research components:

- Defining joint analytical tools and research methodologies;
- Providing a comparative assessment of transnational diaspora networks from the Horn of Africa and their interfaces with European civil society and state institutions;
- Case studies of diasporas as agents of conflict and peace from the Horn of Africa;
- Interaction between European state actors and diasporas in conflict resolution and peace building;
- Synthesis and dissemination of the research findings

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We are also especially grateful to the European Community, which has funded the DIASPEACE research under its Seventh Framework Programme. We hope that this research will stimulate further European-wide collaborative research on migrant communities.

In the process of developing and revising this study, many colleagues, both within and outside our joint project, have supported the research and offered their assistance. We would like to thank the reviewers, Dr. Nauja Kleist of the Danish Institute for International Studies (DIIS) and Dr. Marja Tiilikainen of the University of Helsinki, for their valuable inputs and comments. Among the DIASPEACE colleagues, special thanks are due to Peter J. Croll, Dr. Cindy Horst, Prof. Liisa Laakso, Dr. Ferruccio Pastore, Dr. Giulia Sinatti, Dr. Pekka Virtanen, and last but not least Julia Ojanen for bringing us all together.

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This research project aims to generate new knowledge to better understand diasporas' potentials, expectations and experiences as bridge builders between countries of residence and countries of origin. The project is funded by the European Commission under the 7th Framework Research Programme.

The research team was established by the University of Jyväskylä and consists of the University of Jyväskylä (JYU), Finland, the Bonn International Center for Conversion (BICC), Germany, Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology (MPI), Germany, Centro Studi Politica Internazionale (CeSPI), Italy, International Peace Research Institute, Oslo (PRIO), Norway, African Diaspora Policy Centre (ADPC), Netherlands, Forum for Social Studies (FSS), Ethiopia, Academy for Peace and Development (APD), Somalia.

Introduction

The interest in diaspora or migrant groups as potentially influential stakeholders in peace and development processes has many well-founded reasons. In cities with huge African diaspora communities in North and South America, the Caribbean, Europe, and Asia, African diaspora communities have formed potent networks. These have begun to wield extraordinary political, cultural and economic power, which can be effectively leveraged to improve health conditions and reduce poverty in Africa. In 2004, the African Union (AU) announced its principled decision to formally include Africans living in the diaspora as the so-called Sixth Region of the AU's organisational structure.

From an economic perspective, remittances by migrants into their countries of origin have come to surpass the sum of the annual payments of official development aid (ODA) (Gammeltoft, 2002; World Bank, 2005) and, in some country cases such as in Somalia, also the sum of foreign direct investments (Gundel, 2002).²

Policymakers, researchers and practitioners have begun discussing the impact of (both individual and collective) remittances on development. The sophistication of the argument around remittances also brought forth the conceptualisation of so-called 'social remittances', e.g. knowledge, values and skills that are transferred to the country of origin. In the political realm, for instance, many diaspora groups try to raise awareness or support through lobbying campaigns and demonstrations in their residence countries (see for example Horst, 2007; Ostergaard-Nielsen, 2003; Levitt, 1998 and 2001). In addition to that, individual diaspora representatives repeatedly take over central roles in their origin countries in the transition period towards a new post-war order, as for example in the course of the government-building processes in Afghanistan. Especially the organisational field of diaspora engagements in peace-relevant activities has received very little attention so far.³

Transnational diaspora intervention in peace processes is by no means a new phenomenon. However, the opportunities for transnational political mobilisation and co-operation have come on by leaps and bounds in the past few years.

Due to the globalisation of communication and transport, diasporas have become important actors in development, peace and conflict processes in their countries of origin (see, for example, Demmers, 2002; Adamson, 2002; Al-Ali and Koser, 2002; Bercovitch, 2007). However, the likely impact of diaspora engagement on peace and conflict processes is highly contested and controversially debated among practitioners and researchers alike (Pirkkalainen and Abdile, 2009; Smith and Stares, 2007; Warnecke et al., 2007).

On the one hand, it is assumed that the influence of diaspora groups on the situation in their native countries serves to exacerbate conflicts through direct or indirect support for the conflict parties, particularly through the provision of financial or logistical resources, but also due to the (assumed) reproduction and persistence of conflict attitudes among the diaspora (Anderson, 1992; Duffield, 2002; Brinkerhoff, 2006; Collier, 2000; Collier and Hoeffler, 2001; Kaldor, 2001; Lyons, 2004 and 2006). On the other hand it is argued that diaspora groups can function as bridge-builders and have the potential for reducing conflict by fostering constructive dialogue processes or contributing to positive economic developments through remitting money and knowledge (Zunzer, 2004; Mohamoud, 2005; Spear, 2006; Rigby, 2006).

Nonetheless, while it seems almost impossible to eschew this dichotomy of positive vs. negative, or rather constructive vs. destructive impacts on the overall (political) situation in the countries of origin, the paradigm of 'peacemakers vs. peace wreckers' is by far too polemic or, at best, simplistic and does little to explain the complex social processes and interactions of stakeholders involved.

The following study seeks to contribute to understanding these complex dynamics and interactions by analysing the ways in which Somali and Ethiopian diaspora organisations in Europe get involved in peacebuilding and development processes in their countries of origin. In the course of five empirical case studies (Finland, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom), the study firstly describes the scope of diaspora engagement with the respective countries of origin. It thereby draws a comprehensive picture of the nature of relationships and involvement of conflict-generated diasporas and seeks to identify ways in which this engagement might contribute to facilitating peace and development in different societal spheres (social, political, economic,

¹ With inputs by all authors.

² For interlinkages between migration, remittances and development, see for example De Haas, 2005.

³ Research, however, has been conducted on the role of Home Town Associations (HTAs), see for example Caglar, 2006; Landholt, Autler, and Baires, 1999; Orozco, 2003; Vertovec, 2004.

etc.). While we do not assume that diaspora engagement in peace and conflict processes is necessarily always of a positive or constructive nature, this study specifically aims to identify actual cases and potentials for constructive intervention. In addition, we also seek to identify factors that influence and shape the modes and patterns of engagement by applying a comparative perspective both with a view to countries of residence and of origin. For this reason, the study addresses a sub-set of research questions:

1. What types of diaspora organisations from Somalia and Ethiopia can be found in Europe? What are their most striking features in terms of size, modes of organisation, purposes, and activities?
2. By which means do these organisations seek to contribute to peace and development in their countries of origin?
3. Which factors shape, enable and delimit their engagement, both 'here' and 'there'?

In essence, the study describes and analyses diaspora activities and modes of engagement towards peace and stability in countries of origin and develops a first typology of influencing factors on the following levels: country of origin, country of residence, the international, and the diaspora agency level.

Theoretical framework

The context of diaspora engagement: Influencing factors

It has repeatedly been stated that diasporas are neither homogeneous nor static entities but composed of rather diverse and dynamic groups and factions, and ethnic, religious, political and other identities and affiliations. Likewise, the social, political and economic framework conditions that influence and shape the perceptions and activities of diaspora communities on different levels are complex and subject to permanent change. Accordingly, the engagement of diasporas in peace processes has to be assessed by looking at the dynamic interplay between these factors—diasporas' own attributes or features, including their historical development, composition, aims and activities, and the ensuing context conditions as well as political opportunities in countries of origin, residence and at the international level.

Against this backdrop, the following exploratory study investigates both the *contexts* in which diaspora organisations act and adopt or dispose of certain strategies and objectives as well as the respective *characteristics* and *attributes* of the diaspora community and its subdivisions. In this framework, the terms *characteristics* and *attributes*⁴ depict diasporas' own resources and perspectives, e.g. cultural, networking, economic and other capacities, identifications, perceptions of conflict processes, its sources, possible solutions as well as their own position therein.

By contrast, the *context* comprises the entire social, cultural and institutional environment the given organisations operate in, both in the countries of origin and of settlement, and to a lesser extent also on the international level. With a view to the countries of residence, the *context* includes factors such as legal frameworks for immigration and integration, migration history, the overall level of (cultural and economic) integration as well as funding structures and opportunities for co-operation or networking with other NGOs.

In an effort to operationalise the impact of host country contexts on immigrant (ethnic) mobilisation and organisation, several authors have adopted and modified the concept of political opportunity structures (POS)⁵, which originally derives from social movement theory. According to a frequently cited definition by Tarrow (1994), POS denote "dimensions of the political environment that provide incentives for people to undertake collective action by affecting their expectations for success or failure" (p. 85). While POS are classically employed to analyse social movements that aim towards fundamental changes in society, and hence focus on the "political" in the narrow sense, the notion has been imported and applied to migration and ethnic studies (Ireland, 1994), arguing that the concept can also provide a vantage point for investigating the relationships between immigrant organisations and (political) institutions of the resident society (Bousetta, 2000; Bengtsson, 2008,

⁴ Similarly, in a recent study, Sheffer (2007) suggests the term "diaspora profile", which includes patterns of identification, strategies towards other actors, organisational and transnational activities.

⁵ For a more detailed discussion see the literature on political opportunity structures (POS) as developed by Tarrow (1996) within social movement theory. This concept was subsequently applied to ethnic mobilisation studies by Ireland (1994) and further discussed and revised *inter alia* by Koopmans and Statham, 2000; Bousetta, 2000; Odmalm 2004; Koopmans et al., 2005; Bengtsson, 2008.

p. 1). Within the framework of our study, we have adopted a very broad concept of the *context* or opportunity structures in countries of residence, which encompasses the whole gamut of institutional and legal conditions, relevant policies, the availability of and access to resources and partners as well as the overall social and economic environment.

With a view to the countries of origin in the Horn of Africa, several protracted conflicts pose various challenges to and often seem to hinder constructive diaspora engagement. Apart from practical issues such as security considerations and access to reliable information, the nature of the diasporas' engagement with the country of origin also depends on the perceptions and interpretations of the conflicts by the diaspora, and on the degree to which diaspora members are able to visit their countries of origin or have access to collaboration partners and additional sources of information. When discussing the *context* in countries of origin within this study, the argument is primarily based on the perceptions and experiences of diaspora members, as empirical data has been collected in European residence countries alone.⁶

The study is based on the underlying assumption that the content and manifestations of diaspora engagement are, to varying degrees, influenced by these contextual factors and by the dynamic interplays between these factors and the specific features of diaspora groups. More specifically, we try to identify factors such as legal and institutional frameworks, levels of socio-economic integration, or access to collaboration partners, which seem to shape, delimit or enable transnational diaspora engagement. Through in-depth field research within two different diaspora communities in altogether five residence countries, the study develops a preliminary set of influencing factors in comparative perspective.

Taking this assumption as a starting point for the empirical research, the case studies seek to unravel the complex set of factors framing diaspora engagement in the countries of residence and of origin, while also acknowledging Ostergaard-Nielsen's conclusion that diasporas are in fact not passive or "weak players easily modified by their surrounding political institutional environments"

⁶ Within the DIASPEACE project, field research is undertaken both in countries of residence and of origin to be able to follow up results from both ends. However, this study primarily presents field work results from Europe, while occasionally drawing on preliminary findings from the ongoing research in the Horn of Africa countries.

(2003b, p. 780; see also Boussetta, 2000), but independent actors with agency.

Given the complex and multi-faceted nature of diaspora engagement in peace processes, the two levels of analysis—*context* and *diaspora characteristics and attributes*⁷—are not mutually exclusive. It is also important to note that this dichotomic structure only partly enables us to account for the relative importance of individual factors. However, in the framework of this qualitative empirical study, it serves as a useful starting point for identifying factors that shape, encourage or delimit diaspora activities in comparative perspective, and for developing sound hypotheses on the likely impact and influence of individual factors.

Diasporas and peace

For the purpose of this study, Somali and Ethiopian diaspora communities in Europe have been selected as case studies. Both in the Ethiopian and Somali cases, large-scale migration has been predominantly conflict-induced. Furthermore, both the Ethiopian and the Somali diaspora communities are relatively large and well-established in European countries.

Despite these similarities, the social, historical and political contexts in the two countries of origin differ considerably. While Ethiopia represents a comparatively strong state, Somalia is an example of a failed state where there is no official state 'control' of diaspora activities. In the case of Somalia, however, it is important to note that significantly different contexts prevail in different parts of the country, i.e. in the self-declared north-west region, Somaliland, the autonomous Northeast Region, Puntland, and South-Central Somalia.

Migration from the Horn of Africa to European countries dates back to the colonial and early post-colonial era, when primarily students, diplomats and other professionals came to Europe on business or to pursue further education. Following the various political upheavals in Ethiopia, Somalia and what later

⁷ Following a similar approach, Smith et al. (2007, pp. 6–10) apply the controversial paradigm of agency vs. structure to their case studies on diaspora capacities (agency) and the transnational opportunities available to diasporas (structures). However, this paradigm is highly contested due to the methodological and theoretical questions it raises: first of all, it is not always possible to distinguish agency from structure, especially as several parameters can be perceived of as belonging to both the realms of agency and structure at the same time. In addition, the paradigm is hardly instrumental in explaining the nature of the relationship between the two dimensions.

became Eritrea, more migrants came to Europe as political refugees and asylum seekers. Thus, migration from the Horn countries is, to a significant extent but not exclusively, conflict-induced. As is evident from the sharp rise in total numbers of migration following these political upheavals and crises in the origin countries, conflict-generated migration is usually large, rapid and includes entire extended families or communities. It has been claimed that these migrant communities tend to be predominantly characterised by the drivers and circumstances of their migration or flight (Collier, 2000; Collier and Hoeffler, 2001; Lyons, 2004 and 2006), which subsequently continue to shape the respective communities' identities in their new residence country.

At the same time, not all migrants necessarily participate in diaspora networks or seek to get engaged in political and social processes in their origin country. The term 'diaspora' as it is conceptualised here rather implies choice and self-identification with the original homeland and the adjacent memories or visions serving as the focal point for community mobilisation (Sheffer, 1994; Mayer, 2005, pp. 14–16; see also Axel, 2004; Werbner, 2002; Kleist, 2007).

Nonetheless, while diaspora groups or networks originating from the same homeland are frequently being referred to as "the diaspora", there is of course no such thing as a single unified and homogeneous Ethiopian or Somali diaspora. Rather, like all civil society groups or social networks, the group of people referred to as "the Ethiopian diaspora" is sub-divided or even split along ethnic, religious, linguistic, political, generational and other lines. The same divisions that were relevant in the origin country are reflected in the set-up of diaspora groups in the residence country, notably in cases of political division between pro-government and opposition groups and political parties, or perpetuating divisions of social class (see for example Ostergaard-Nielsen, 2006; Kleist, 2007; Axel, 2004; Werbner, 2002; Sökefeld, 2006).

It can be presumed that for 'conflict-generated diasporas', these patterns of identification and mobilisation lead to high levels of organisation and political fragmentation at the same time, i.e. a highly fragmented and diverse scene with a broad range of objectives and positions, be it in favour of the government, opposition parties or other, regional or minority issues (Lyons, 2006). However, it is important to note that divisions and fragmentations among diaspora groups do not derive from origin country-

related issues alone; new fragmentary lines can also develop in exile (see for example Horst, 2007).

Against this backdrop, the question as to whether any given group's activities contribute to peacebuilding and have a constructive impact is thus not least a matter of perspective or priorities and also depends on a variety of factors some of which are extremely difficult to assess objectively. Among them are the position of the group *vis-à-vis* other affected stakeholders, most notably the regional or national governments, the willingness and ability to collaborate with other parties, the resources and backing for the respective group within the diaspora as well as a host of external factors, such as the current political situation in the country of origin.

What is more, in many cases, especially in countries governed by authoritarian or repressive regimes, diaspora engagement on behalf of democratisation or human rights issues can lead to further destabilisation and unrest regardless of the original intention.

Conceptualising peacebuilding

In the context of international conflict- and crises-mitigation initiatives, peacebuilding⁸ has traditionally been defined as a "policy of external international help for developing countries designed to support indigenous social, cultural and economic development and self-reliance, by aiding recovery from war and reducing or eliminating resort to future violence" (Pugh, 1995, p. 330). After the failure of several UN peacebuilding efforts in the early 1990s, the concept was substantially revised to put more emphasis on the inclusion of all relevant local stakeholders to ensure a larger degree of acceptance and ownership among affected populations. According to Lederach, the foremost task of peacebuilding is to tackle potentially conflict-generating attitudes, patterns of identification, etc. on both sides to re-define the relationships among (formerly) conflicting parties, "[peacebuilding] depicts the full array of stages and approaches needed to transform conflict towards sustainable, peaceful relations and outcomes" (1994, p. 26).

⁸ The term was originally introduced by Galtung as part of the so-called "conflict triangle", which consists of three complementary approaches to conflict mitigation: *peacekeeping*, *peacemaking*, and *peacebuilding*. While *peacekeeping* largely refers to military instruments aimed at protecting and observing ceasefire terms, *peacemaking* largely refers to the political negotiation/mediation of conflicting interests. In addition to these—ideally short- to medium-term—instruments, *peacebuilding* describes the "practical implementation of peaceful social change through socio-economic reconstruction and development" (1975, pp. 282–304).

Consequently, peacebuilding pre-supposes a long-term commitment to a process by both local and external actors, which simultaneously addresses the material and immaterial levels of a given conflict. In addition to more general initiatives and projects geared towards fostering (economic and political) development, peacebuilding measures explicitly seek to (a) prevent a return to war or violent conflict and (b) create a self-sustaining peace. To sum up, as Ramsbotham, Miall, and Woodhouse put it, peacebuilding can be distinguished from other developmental and humanitarian activities on the grounds "that it has the specific political aims of reducing the risk of resumption of conflict and contributing to the creation of conditions most conducive to reconciliation, reconstruction and recovery" (2003, p. 195).

Based on these rather broad conceptualisations, all activities that directly or indirectly seek to mitigate the causes and effects of conflict, foster reconciliation or exchange between conflicting groups or help to overcome acknowledged grievances on the material or immaterial levels can be conceptualised as 'relevant to peacebuilding and reconciliation' in the context of this study.

Nonetheless, it is important to note that only few representatives of diaspora organisations interviewed in the course of the case studies explicitly named peace(b)uilding as their organisations' core objective. Rather, 'peace' was mostly referred to as an overarching goal or desire, which might eventually be attained through fostering economic, social and political stability or through facilitating dialogue between opposing social groups.

In an attempt to adopt 'peacebuilding' as a concept for the purposes of this study and to help select organisations relevant to our research, our study focuses on civil society groups that engage in concrete project work and have partners or partner institutions in their countries of origin. For a first assessment of their actual, planned or potential contributions to peace and peacebuilding initiatives, we found the following criteria to be useful:

- Adoption of principle of non-violence;
- Inclusiveness (openness to members and co-operation partners from diverse backgrounds);
- Some degree of continuity and stability;
- Transparency and accountability regarding decision-making processes and funding;

- Communication and/or co-operation with groups in the origin country and/ or with other diaspora groups;
- An implicit or explicit focus on projects relevant to peace and reconciliation, i.e. on activities that seek to mitigate the causes and effects of conflict, foster reconciliation or exchange between conflicting groups.⁹

Methodology

Initial data collection

In an effort to establish a comprehensive overview of organised Ethiopian and Somali diaspora groups in Europe, the research process started with an extensive mapping of diaspora organisations and networks in the five countries¹⁰ originally under study. It focussed especially on the groups' organisational set-ups and objectives, their transnational linkages, both within Europe and *vis-à-vis* their countries of origin, as well as their actual or potential engagement in the peacebuilding processes in the Horn of Africa.

The mapping was conducted between June and November 2008; all in all, about 950 organisations from the Horn of Africa¹¹—both registered and non-registered—were uncovered and compiled in a comprehensive database through extensive online, literature, and empirical research.

To further verify the information collected through Internet and literature research as well as previous contacts, a joint questionnaire and information sheet on the project was prepared and disseminated via mail, e-mail and personal contacts with members of diaspora organisations. These questionnaires were bilingual (English/ German, English/ Italian, etc.) and, to simplify data collection, the questionnaire was put online in two versions (English and German).

⁹ For a detailed discussion of these criteria, see the DIASPEACE working paper *Discussion Paper on the Key Set of Key Indicators for Constructive Diaspora Engagement in Conflict Settings*. Amsterdam: African Diaspora Policy Centre (ADPC), June 2009.

¹⁰ The results of this initial mapping exercise were summarised in Warnecke, ed., 2009, "Diaspora Networks in Europe: Summary Report of Initial Data Collection on Somali, Ethiopian and Eritrean Diaspora Organisations in Finland, France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway and the United Kingdom." Unpublished DIASPEACE Report. Bonn: BICC. In addition to the countries and diaspora networks presented here, the mapping also covered diaspora networks in Norway and France, as well as research on Eritrean and Somali groups in the Netherlands and Eritrean groups in Germany.

¹¹ Including Somalia, Ethiopia and Eritrea, see Warnecke, ed., 2009.

The return rate of the questionnaires was rather modest. Results were generally much better when contacts had been established beforehand via telephone or when the questionnaires were handed out personally. For this reason, in most cases attending conferences, diaspora festivals or other events was the best and most successful way to establish new contacts. Once a contact had been established, respondents were often eager to provide information on their experiences, their organisations' work as well as their own views and activities, and frequently recommended additional contacts and interview partners.

Selection of diaspora organisations

Following the general mapping of diaspora organisations in the given countries, an initial typology for distinguishing diaspora groups relevant to our research on peacebuilding engagement was developed. Based on the categories discussed above, the following criteria were applied to select groups for more detailed in-depth research:

- Some degree of continuity;
- (Planned) activities in the area of peacebuilding/reconciliation;
- A special focus on or contacts with the society in the country of origin.

Special efforts were also made to include 'matched samples', i.e. diaspora organisations with branches or partners in the countries of origin, to follow up the research conducted in Europe through fieldwork in the Horn of Africa (Horst, 2008). Examples include the Tigray Development Association e.V. (TDA), Network of Ethiopian Muslims in Europe (NEME), Nomad International and Hargeisa hospital, IIDA-Somalia and IIDA-Italy, and the Associazione Senza Frontiere with its counterpart Geelo. In addition, convenience and accessibility, i.e. the likelihood of obtaining in-depth information, also influenced the selection of individual organisations.¹²

Qualitative interviews

Between August 2008 and May 2009, semi-structured interviews with representatives of diaspora organisations were carried out in five European countries, i.e. Finland, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, and the United Kingdom. In addition, the researchers

participated in diaspora conferences and meetings and interviewed additional key informants wherever possible (see Annex I: Interview Table).

The interviews were conducted with the help of jointly developed interview guidelines (see Annex II) and focused on the following three issue areas:

1. Diaspora organisation and community: Formation, cohesion and identity;
2. Perceptions of origin country, conflict and peacebuilding: Potentials and challenges;
3. Networking activities: Local, national and transnational levels.

The first sub-set of questions focuses on the history and development of the given group, issues of (religious, generational, ethnic, etc.) identity, community cohesion or divisions as well as more formal aspects such as lines of membership, the extent of formal structure (level of professionalism, funding sources, etc.), and the group's main purpose and focus of activities. The second sub-set of questions essentially seeks to generate some information on the respondents' perceptions of the conflict and peacebuilding processes in their countries of origin, as well as of their own (potential) role and that of other actors involved (both state and non-state). In this regard, we were especially interested both in concepts of and avenues for attaining peace, and in respondents' assumptions on chances and limitations of diaspora involvement as well as in possible enabling and restricting factors. Finally, the third set of questions is about networking activities and interfaces with other diaspora and non-diaspora organisations 'here' and 'there': What kinds of organisation does the group collaborate with, both spatially (local, national, transnational contacts) and qualitatively (diversity of contacts and partners)?

The application of the interview guidelines provided the project team with a common ground and ensured a certain degree of comparability of the data. Nevertheless, the results and information obtained still vary significantly, which is not least due to the different country contexts (both the countries of origin and residence) and the diverse backgrounds of the interview partners. In addition, often more than one meeting took place between the researchers and respondents to build up a minimum level of trust and to follow up earlier conversations.

¹² See also the respective discussions in each case study.

Challenges

Given the often repressive political climate in the origin countries, there are several challenges to the research itself and the co-operation with members of diaspora communities especially in terms of data protection and privacy issues, ethical guidelines for the research and the selection of methodological approaches that are sensitive towards the targeted communities' security needs. For this reason, throughout this study only anonymised interview data are presented.

In general, the willingness to participate in the research process largely depended on the respondents' personal and/or political background. There are, for instance, notable differences among Ethiopian diaspora groups: while the majority was usually rather open to and interested in the research, most groups repeatedly emphasised their non-political agenda. Similarly, the Somali diaspora in Italy generally expressed a lack of trust which often made obtaining information a challenging exercise. This is presumably a result of prior negative experiences (misrepresentation, un-recognised ownership of initiatives and projects, lack of direct involvement) these individuals have had with media, NGOs or civil society aid organisations. The latter have often spoken in the name of migrant organisations thereby generating a crowding out effect *vis-à-vis* migrant organisations (Caponio, 2005). In general, especially members of the non-dominant ethnicities and representatives of opposition movements seem to be hesitant to reveal personal or organisational data.

The differences in social, political and legal conditions in the European countries of residence are an additional challenge to the research conducted. Demographic and statistical data on migratory flows to and from the European Union are not available in all countries and are calculated differently. Furthermore, each country has different provisions and regulations with respect to the establishment and recognition of registered associations, or, for instance, funding structures and opportunities. Likewise, the history of migration to European countries was, and still is, also shaped by the historical relationships between sending and receiving countries during both the colonial and Cold War era. Thus some countries rather function as temporary residences (as France for Ethiopian communities) while others rank highly among the most favoured destinations among specific Sub-Saharan migrant groups (e.g. the United Kingdom, not least due to the common language). These historically

grown ties have an impact on the living conditions and the situation of migrants, their communities and organisations and thus considerably influence not only the results but also the implementation of the research process as such.

Within the wider framework of the DIASPEACE research project, the primary focus of this study lies on diaspora organisations in Europe, their activities, purposes and modes of engagement, as well as on the factors that shape this engagement. While we seek to identify influencing factors on the country of origin, country of residence and international levels, the principal body of research presented here clearly refers to (European) countries of residence. Factors and conditions in the countries of origin will be looked into more specifically by ongoing project research in Ethiopia and Somalia/Somaliland. By linking up field work results from Europe and the Horn of Africa countries, we finally hope to be able to offer new insights into the determinants, patterns and dynamics of transnational engagement in peace processes.

Bearing in mind these limitations, we hope that the exploratory findings presented here will add to our understanding of the mechanisms and dynamics of transnational engagement and will contribute to developing a conceptual framework for future empirical research.

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1

Somalia: Conflicts and migratory flows



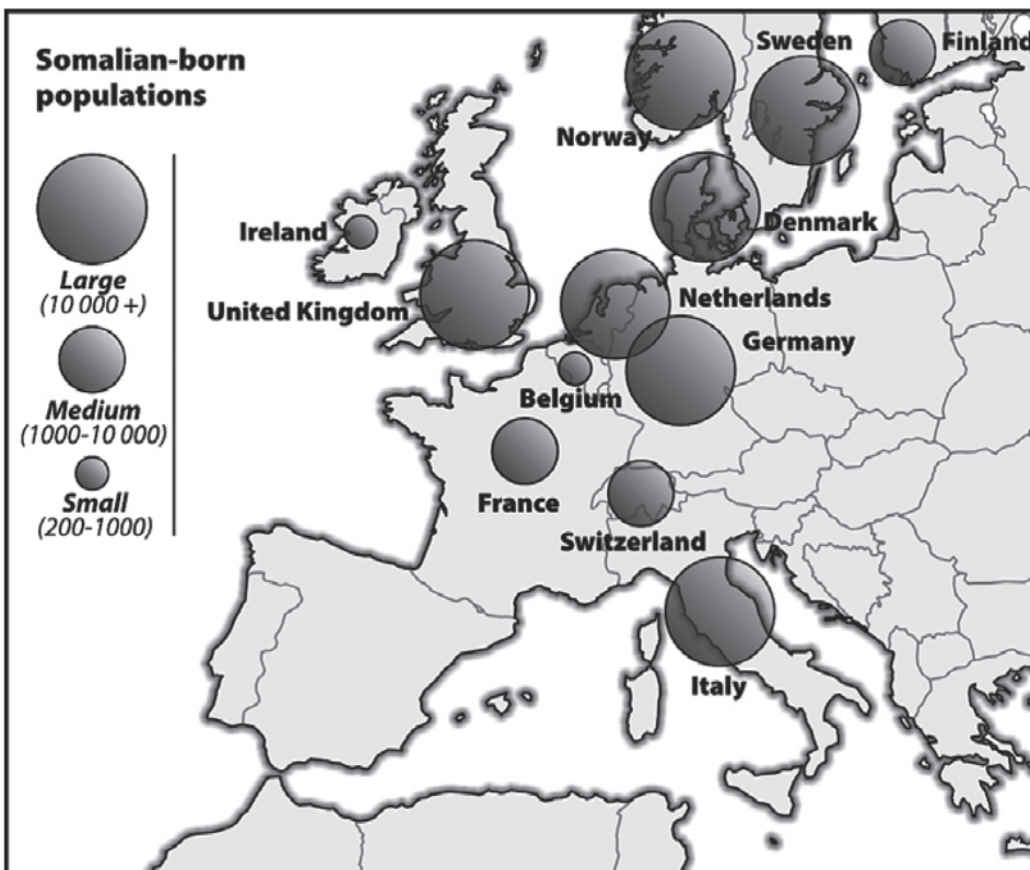
In the course of the so-called 'Scramble for Africa', the Somali population and its territories were fragmented into British Somaliland, Italian Somaliland, Côte Française des Somalis, Ogaden, and Northern Frontier District (NFD). The first two territories united following their independence in 1960 to form the Somali Republic, the third became the current Djibouti, while Ogaden and NFD were ceded to Ethiopia and Kenya respectively and became what is called today the Somali Regional State of Ethiopia and the North Eastern Province of Kenya. Consequently, despite the fact that Somalis are culturally homogeneous with one language and religion, as a people they do not live within one national and political border (Waldorn and Hasci, 1995; Lewis, 2002). Today, two-thirds live in Kenya, Ethiopia, and Djibouti (Hyndman, 2000; Drysdale, 1964).

After a few years of civilian rule in Somalia, General Siad Barre arranged a bloodless coup in 1969,

characterised by the national ideology of "scientific socialism" (DeLancey et al., 1988; Samatar, 1988; Decraene, 1977).

In 1977/78, the Somali Republic fought Ethiopia over the Ogaden—inhabited by Somalis—in its pursuit of a 'Great Somalia', which resulted in a military and economic debacle. This defeat and the subsequent agreement of 1988 between the Somali government and Ethiopia led to the emergence of a rebellious and dissatisfied clan-based armed movement, which intended to overthrow the regime (Lyons and Samatar, 1995). Things speedily deteriorated and the economic and political disintegration became evident. Two main political movements, the Somali Salvation Democratic Front (SSDF) and the Somali National Movement (SNM) were formed in 1981. The government forces and the SNM clashed in the north in 1988, and from then onwards civil war spread throughout the country. In 1989, opposition

Figure 1: Estimated Somali-born populations in Europe



Sources: OECD, map by Jorgen Carling (maps are based on figures from the OECD database on immigrants and expatriates, with supplementary statistics for Germany, Spain and Italy).

movements such as the SNM, the United Somali Congress (USC) and the Somali Patriotic Movement (SPM) joined forces with the aim of fighting Barre's regime. Siad Barre was removed from power by the USC, and the Republic of Somalia collapsed in early 1991. Later that year, the Northwest Region of Somalia proclaimed itself as the independent Somaliland (Gundel, 2002, p. 257). In South-Central Somalia, the USC split and the civil war continued between different factions.

Between 1992 and 1995, UN operations put in place with the aim of halting the civil war did not succeed in achieving peace and stability. Since the UN forces left Somalia in 1995, the country has been divided into small administrations governed by autonomous movements and militias. Somaliland was rebuilt but it still is not internationally recognised, while Puntland declared its autonomy in 1998, expressing the will to become part of Somalia. Various attempts have been made during the years to halt the violence and reconstruct Somalia, without any success.

The current Transitional Federal Government (TFG) was formed in Nairobi in 2004 during the 14th internationally sponsored peace conference; in early 2006, the TFG moved to Baidoa, Somalia. It has, however, so far not succeeded in bringing peace and stability to the country as it lacks both legitimacy and effectiveness. By June 2006, the Islamic Courts Union (ICU)—an umbrella group composed of different *sharidic* court militias and supported mostly by the Mogadishu-based business community (Barnes and Hassan, 2007)—captured Mogadishu and subsequently expanded its power base. The ICU brought relative peace, but its growing power led to increasingly open warfare between the Islamists and the secular factions in the country. Subsequently, the ICU was removed from power following Ethiopia's military intervention in late 2006.

In February 2007, the UN Security Council adopted the African Union's Peace and Security Council decision to send 8,000 African Union (AU) peacekeepers to Somalia (UN Security Council, 2007). The Ethiopian troops withdrew in early 2009 and former moderate ICU leader Sheikh Sharif was appointed president of TFG. Currently, the conflict is continuing between radical Islamist movements (Al-Shabab, Hizbul-Islam) and the TFG supported by African Union Mission to Somalia (AMISOM) troops, creating increasing refugee flows. According to the United Nations, Somalia is one of the "worst humanitarian crises in the

world": 3.2 million people are in need of humanitarian aid (AlertNet, 2008).

Somali migration has a long history, starting from the colonial period when some Somalis settled in the United Kingdom and Italy, although at that time migration was only occurring on a small scale. During the 1970s and 1980s, Somali migrant workers were mostly headed to the Gulf States. The largest movements took place from 1988 onwards, and peaked in early 1991, when more than an estimated one million Somalis left the country because of the civil war. Most Somalis went to neighbouring countries or elsewhere in Somalia as IDPs (internally displaced persons). Refugees who were better off went to Western countries (Gundel, 2002, p. 264). The ongoing conflict forces people to flee their homes and presently the figure of IDPs is estimated at 1.1 million people (AlertNet, 2008).

1.1 Somali organisations in Italy

1.1.1 Somali migration to Italy

Due to its colonial past, Italy was one of the main recipient countries of Somali refugees—a kind of 'natural' destination for emigrants—both before and after the 1991 war. The early presence of Somali migrants in Italy thus dates back to the 1960s and in the 1980s, the numbers began to increase as a result of the worsening political situation in Somalia (Aden Sheikh and Petrucci, 1991; Farah, 2003).

The history of Somali migration to Italy can roughly be divided into three different phases, each with different motivations for migrating and marked by differences in the composition of migration flows. Migrants in the 1980s and before 1991—a period that corresponded with the radicalisation of the Siad Barre regime—were mainly students and political dissidents. It is thus interesting to note that two liberation fronts were formed in Italy. In 1989, the political wing of the United Somali Congress (USC), then led by Ali Wardigley, and later the 'Manifesto' group, an unarmed party formed by 114 Somali intellectuals, business people and political figures and supported by the Italian government (through Italian diplomacy and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs) (Aden Sheikh and Petrucci, 1991; Guglielmo, 2008). After the collapse of the state in 1991, both women and men began arriving in Italy. When civil war broke out, Italy was considered to be one of the main destinations in Europe for those fleeing the conflict. Entire families, even temporarily, moved to Italy and joined the established Somali community, mostly until 1993.

Recent migrants (after 2000) are referred to as those who 'arrive in the boats' and are mainly youngsters.¹⁴ In late 2006, the number of the Somali asylum seekers in Italy increased dramatically, as the Ethiopian military intervention and the subsequent insurgency which opposed the Ethiopian contingent opened up a new period of violence and political instability in the

country. Therefore, thousands of Somalis, especially from South-Central Somalia were forced to move to Europe.

The National Institute on Statistics (ISTAT, 2009)—producing data based on foreigners officially registered in municipal registries—indicates that, as of 31 December 2008, there are 6,663 Somalis in Italy. Looking at the historical development of presences between 2002 and 2008¹⁵, an increase of almost 1,350 officially registered individuals can be noted. The highest peak of presences was reached in 2008, especially on the islands and in central Italy where, according to the interview material, most Somalis who had newly arrived were directed (I_IN2). This is also the first year in which the male presence almost equals that of females (ISTAT, 2002; 2003; 2004; 2005; 2006; 2007; 2008; 2009).¹⁶ It must be noted that data produced by ISTAT does not include *irregular* presences. This is also why these figures are considered to be underestimations.

It is important to note that Somalis in Italy are not a homogenous group. Years of migration from Somalia have produced diversity in the social and generational stratification of the incoming groups. It is, for example, possible to distinguish between different generations of migrants. There are those that are perceived as 'newcomers' (from 2000 and onwards) and others who belong to an 'old generation' (before and after 1991, and until the mid- to late 1990s), both of whom sometimes find themselves in confrontation with one another. The two groups differ enormously as to their levels of integration, which can be explained *inter alia* with the social and political environment, alliances, policies, etc. found and developed at different times in the country of residence. In other words the "political opportunity structure"¹⁷ found in different historical moments in Italy has changed and shifted from more to less 'open' over time towards Somalis and Somalia, as well as towards migrants and asylum seekers in general, as discussed in the next paragraph.

For a long time, Italy—both culturally and politically—has been an important point of reference for the Somali diaspora. In recent years, however, Italy seems to have lost its central political role with regard

¹³ We wish to thank Ferruccio Pastore for his supervision during the initial stages of the research; Mario Raffaelli and Paola Monzini for useful indications; Silvia Aprile and Mohamed Aden Sheikh for having read and commented on this draft. Equally we wish to thank all the people interviewed during the field work research for their trust in telling us their stories and allowing us to start understanding some dynamics which belong to the complex universe of Somali diaspora organisations in Italy.

¹⁴ In terms of social composition, the recent flows of migrants from Somalia are composed by middle and upper class Somalis: only people with means can face the expensive price of the travel, which can last several months. However, the reasons of Somalis' recent migration are complex, and the economic sphere is not the only dimension which can explain the profile of new Somali migrants and the reasons for fleeing the country and the conflict (cf. I_IN1).

¹⁵ Data referring to the years prior to 2002 are not available.

¹⁶ For details see the following website: ISTAT (2002–2009) *Bilancio Demografico e popolazione residente straniera al 31 dicembre per sesso e cittadinanza*, available at <<http://demo.istat.it/>>.

¹⁷ For a broad discussion on the POS concept applied to migration studies, see the Introduction as well as the following studies: Ireland, 1994 and 2000; Boussetta, 2000; Koopmans et al., 2005.

to the situation in the Horn of Africa, and is thus no longer a preferred destination for Somali migrants.¹⁸ In addition, Italy's state benefits are very low, and in some cases, such as housing, employment, etc. non-existent. Thus many Somali refugees have chosen to migrate to other countries where establishing a new life would be easier. Today, Italy retains a smaller Somali community compared to those in other EU countries such as the United Kingdom, Norway, and the Netherlands (Warnecke, 2009).

Especially in the early stages, flows toward Italy were predominantly composed of women. While this was true until late 2007, this trend has changed recently with new arrivals (ISTAT, 2008). The little state support for refugees and asylum seekers mentioned above, coupled with the market demand for carer's jobs, helps explain the gender composition of the Somali diaspora: it was harder for men initially to find satisfactory adequate work, which in the past has resulted in decisions to move elsewhere or to not even choose Italy as a primary destination. During their time abroad, Somali women have created informal networks given the precarious situation they found themselves in and in an attempt to account for potential social risks (Decimo, 2007). This may also explain the large number of women's organisations found in Italy today, which is an exception in the context of the greater European Union.

1.1.2 Immigration and refugee legislation

Italy was a country of emigration until the early 1970s. In the mid-1970s, the number of immigrants arriving balanced that of Italian people emigrating. The first immigrants were students and political dissidents escaping dictatorship and persecution in Africa, the Middle East, Latin America and Asia (Caponio, 2005). These flows of asylum seekers and refugees were not perceived negatively as 'invaders', as depicted in the media and in the general discourse today. The social and political environment—the political opportunity structure—was more open and

hospitable towards groups coming from former Italian colonies, in particular from Eritrea and Somalia.¹⁹ Only during the 1990s did migration become a stable phenomenon (Bonifazi, 1998; Ambrosini, 2001). The first act attempting to regulate immigration flows was Statute No. 943 of 30 December 1986 (Zincone and Caponio, 2006). This Statute regarded immigrants as workers and dealt with the issue from the perspective of employment.²⁰ Other legislation, which was passed during the 1990s, mainly aimed at reducing the number of immigrants in the country, while an overall understanding of the complexity of the migration phenomenon was lacking. Migration has, thus, often been framed only in security terms and migration policy has been mostly based on limiting migration into the country. Migrants were allowed in to meet labour demands and fill particular positions, rather than out of concern for their social integration.

The first comprehensive immigration law was approved in 1998 (Law No. 40/98).²¹ It was the first law to acknowledge the importance of integration and spoke of migrants' rights and obligations. Migrants were not considered merely a 'labour force', and integration policies were meant to ensure that foreign citizens had access to goods and services as well as enjoyed work and living conditions similar to those of Italian citizens (Chaloff, 2005; Zincone and Caponio, 2006).

The current Immigration Law 189 of 2002 (also known as the "Bossi-Fini" Law) is mainly a reform of Law 40 (1998) rather than a new comprehensive immigration bill. Policy has, however, become more narrow in terms of migrants' entrance and integration matters (Marta, 2008; Kasic and Triandafyllidou, 2005; Chaloff, 2005).

In sum, Italy's recent experience with immigration coupled with the need to homogenise its policies with other European countries has produced "strict and often contradictory legislation" (Pastore, 2004), governed by anti-immigrant rhetoric as well as recurrent shifts between inclusion and tough

¹⁸ In the last few years in particular, Italy has tried to regain a leading role within the international community in the Somali context. Italy, being both a member of the International Contact Group for Somalia (ICG) and having been involved in Somali politics before the fall of the Siad Barre regime was expected to play a bigger role within the ICG. Instead, Italy has been generally unable to sustain its own political agenda on the Somali situation. The reason for this must be traced in the vacuum of foreign policy tools and the revision of specific legislative instruments available, which would have made it possible to address the Somali crisis as a 'special case' and a top priority within the Italian foreign policy agenda.

¹⁹ In favour of this argument—accounting for a favourable environment towards political groups and liberation movements from the Horn of Africa—it can be noted that a political office was opened in Rome by the Eritrean People's Liberation Front (EPLF) opposing the Menghistu regime. The Western Somali Liberation Front (WSLF) attempted the same, however, without success.

²⁰ Undocumented foreign workers were regularised as all subsequent immigration reforms would also contain a regularisation.

²¹ Entitled "*Disciplina dell'immigrazione e norme sulla condizione giuridica dello straniero*" and also known as the "Turco-Napolitano" law, after the ministries proposing the draft law.

exclusion measures (Bolaffi and Damiani, 1996; Zincone and Caponio, 2006). Most importantly, Italy is the only country in Europe that does not have a comprehensive law on asylum and refugees are granted few rights in this context (UNHCR, 2008). Legislation on the matter of refugees and asylum seekers exists in terms of legislative decrees²², together with the establishment of programmes at the local and territorial level in favour of asylum seekers and aiming at sustaining the integration of recognised refugees. The major problem, however, is often rooted in the lack of available resources for implementing policies, initiatives and providing support. This affects migrants and refugees alike and has a stronger impact on the most vulnerable (*ibid.*).

Today, Italy still does not grant political asylum status to Somali migrants, while asylum for “humanitarian reasons” may be granted. This status can have two negative consequences. On the one hand, Somalis are obliged to stay in Italy²³, where public and social housing and financial subsidies are not available and on the other Somalis are forced to spend their time satisfying basic needs, making it difficult to find regular jobs (L_{IN}2). Furthermore, the Italian Citizenship Law (Statute No. 91 of 1992) is highly restrictive in both theory and practice, with 90 per cent of applications for naturalisation being rejected.²⁴ Decisions are made by the Ministry of the Interior, which enjoys a great deal of discretion and is not required to explain the reason for rejecting an applicant (Chaloff, 2005).

This is the general political context in which conditions for the Somali diaspora in Italy have been shaped over the years. It is evident that the Italian migration law is one of the most complicated in comparison to other EU countries. Somali citizens cannot receive

a permit of stay for longer than twelve months at a time, of which six months are spent waiting for a permit renewal. This puts Somali citizens in Italy in a legal limbo, where it is difficult to satisfy any of the basic survival needs, such as finding a job or renting an apartment. In addition to this, all Somali passports since 1999 have been invalidated, yet the Italian state has not granted Somalis the rights of statelessness. As an identification card, Somalis are given a “travel document” with a maximum validity of twenty-four months, which considerably affects their freedom of movement both inside and outside of the European Schengen Area.

There is no diplomatic representation for Somali citizens in Italy, which makes them even more vulnerable to lengthy bureaucratic procedures with regard to obtaining official certificates of birth, marriage, or death, which are frequently delivered by the Italian Red Cross on the base of self-certifications.²⁵ Moreover, since foreigners are not allowed to vote in Italy, Somalis have not voted since the last free elections in Somalia in 1968 (UN INSTRAW, 2008b).

1.1.3 Diaspora organisations

The ethnographic work performed in Italy took place between May of 2008 and May of 2009. It is interesting to note that in the Italian context there is some historical perspective that we have kept in mind when reconstructing the story of the associative Somali movement in Italy. We mapped 23 Somali organisations on the ground, including a remarkable number of women’s organisations—constituting more than one-third. We performed 22 in-depth interviews with diaspora organisation leaders, members and key informants in the cities of Rome, Milan, Turin and Florence (see the full list in Annex I). Based on the selection criteria discussed in the Introduction, we selected four interesting organisations or umbrella organisations/ networks (IIDA-Italy; ADEP, ASF and the Associazione Comunità Somala del Piemonte), which display these characteristics to varying degrees.

²² Regulation for the recognition of the status of refugees: Decree, 6 September, 2004 n. 303; Decree for the actuation of the communitarian normative for the reception of asylum seekers: Decree 30 May 2005 n. 140; Legislative decree implementing the communitarian directive on the norms for attributing the qualification of refugee or person in need of international protection: D. Lgs. 19 November 2007 n. 251.

²³ In accordance with the Dublin Regulation (also known as Dublin II), there are strict and objective criteria defining the member states responsible for examining asylum applications. The system is designed to prevent “asylum shopping” and, at the same time, to ensure that each applicant’s case is processed by only one member state. Therefore, in cases where a member state has already examined or begun to examine an asylum application, the applicant—even if in a different country—must return to the country where his/her application was filed in the first place. See Council Regulation (EC) No 343/2003 of 18 February 2003.

²⁴ This “restrictive” reform of the citizenship legislation was passed in the early 1990s. In fact, this act penalises non-EU immigrants, while introducing a strong principle of co-ethnic preference (Zincone, 2005).

²⁵ While revising this work, the new Somali Ambassador in Italy was finally appointed and took duty in Rome in September 2009.

1.1.3.1 Evolutions in scopes: From mutual aid to transnational political engagement

As mentioned above, the Somali diaspora in Italy is a long-standing community. Its associations, however, are still quite a recent phenomenon. They partly focus on “internal issues occurring within the community” and are composed of people who mainly arrived in Italy before 1991 (I_IN2).

Given that the first waves of Somalis in Italy belonged to an elite²⁶, the Siad Barre regime tended to keep this community under tight restrictions.²⁷ Therefore the earliest associations formed in the early to mid-1990s, generally featured a non-political profile and were mostly concerned with issues of immigration/integration and human rights within Italy. Among the groups, a few ‘first-generation’ associations—established in the early 1990s—have been playing a ‘reference’ role for the Somali people and newcomers, providing information about their rights upon arrival, where and how to find a house, how to complete the documentation procedures, etc. One example in the city of Milan is the well-known Associazione Mamme e Bimbi Somali founded in 1994.

This phenomenon, which has been termed “immigrant politics” by Ostergaard-Nielsen (2003, p. 21), refers to the political activities undertaken by the community to improve its social status in the residence country, i.e. attempts to fight discrimination and to gain more political, economic or social rights. “Immigrant politics” has been, and partly still is, the major concern for (and area of interest) of Somali diaspora organisations in Italy.

²⁶ Historical ties especially between Rome and Mogadishu concur in explaining some crucial features of the Somali diaspora in Italy, which is: 1. a long-standing community (since most Somalis in Italy already lived there at the time of the state collapse in Somalia, or had strong bonds to Italy in the form of family or work); 2. a ‘high-ranking community’ of former politicians, intellectuals, doctors, etc. can be found, as most people come from the Somali ruling class. In this regard the partnership between the Somali National University and the University of Rome La Sapienza concurs in explaining the social composition of Somalis in Italy; 3. a community with an urban background, as people generally come from the largest southern towns such as Mogadishu, Kismayu, Merka and Brava (Aden Sheikh and Petrucci, 1991).

²⁷ The main tool of the Somali regime for controlling the community in Italy was the National Security Service (NSS). The NSS was an elite organisation staffed by men from other intelligence units, such as the Somali National Army, the Somali National Police Force, the People’s Militia, and a number of other intelligence operations headed mostly by trusted members of Barre’s family. Due to the capillary of such institutions, the Somali diaspora was unable to establish political organisations in Italy in opposition to the regime prior to its collapse in January 1991 (I_IN3).

The tendency of the Somali diaspora of forming associations with the objective of influencing Somali politics ‘at home’, and as a tool of conflict resolution or for undertaking peacebuilding activities—although this term is never used or made explicit—is instead a more recent phenomenon that began no earlier than in 2000²⁸, a year which represents a fundamental turning point in the Somali conflict for two main reasons. On the one hand, in late 2000, a peace conference took place in Djibouti where the Somali diaspora’s support was explicitly requested and on the other hand, due to the relative stability on the ground, some Somalis based in Italy seized the opportunity to go back to Somalia to run development and peacebuilding organisations, further establishing local counterparts in Italy.²⁹ In the literature, this engagement has been termed “translocal politics” (Ostergaard-Nielsen, 2003). It is defined as the initiatives of migrant communities or individuals who seek to provide concrete support to specific localities in the country of origin (these may include projects as described below undertaken by the associations IIDA, ASF, Soomaaliya) and to *homeland politics* (i.e. in the case of the associations and fora ADEP, SDC) through political activities in which the migrant communities engage the government of their country of residence on issues that exclusively concern the country from which they came. Most Somalis in Italy come from South-Central Somalia and most Somali diaspora associations in fact focus on the situation in the south.

Through “transnational activism”, the migrant community shows its support for or hostility towards the political regime in its homeland. The emergence of these new organisations’ scopes has been determined by a variety of factors, the most important of which have been the intensified cycles of violence (i.e. the Ethiopian military intervention in late 2006) and the ongoing Somali national reconciliation process and corresponding events. In fact, a significant number of Somali organisations have been formalised in correspondence with the most important reconciliation conferences, such as the ones in Djibouti in 2000, Nairobi in 2004 and, more recently, in Djibouti in 2008. Most of the organisations studied here were formed during the years 2007 and 2008 (IIDA-Italy in 2007; Associazione Comunità Somala del Piemonte also in 2007; Associazione Diaspora e Pace, ADEP in early April 2008). Furthermore, the ability of the Somali

²⁸ This excludes the creation of the two liberation fronts in the late 1980s, as mentioned earlier in the text.

²⁹ As discussed in the next pages, this is the case of IIDA and Geelo, both of which have formed their counterparts in more recent years in Italy (namely IIDA-Italy and ASF).

elites to extend the debate about the state-building process helped diaspora communities (especially those based in Europe and in North America) to become more involved in Somali politics.

It has been interesting to note that within the Somali diaspora, coming from a conflict setting, many 'discourses' and nuances regarding the individuals' social and political identity strategically need to co-exist. For example, participation in associations often occurs simultaneously in different types of organisations, some of which are visible and formalised while others are less visible and informal and which may be linked for instance to a specific clan. It has been interesting to note that there is an instrumental use of this sense of belonging, one which may be more 'publicly' accepted and another which often remains latent and belongs to a 'private' sphere.

1.1.3.2 A preliminary typology of associations: Membership, structures and scopes

Migrants' associations in Italy vary in their degree of formalisation. Often formalised and registered associations (as non-profit, for instance) co-exist with un-registered but formalised groups (such as cultural associations) and informal discussion groups.

In terms of organisational and management structures, we found a number of similarities between the Somali organisations that were investigated. Most associations often do not have official headquarters. As a result, meetings are held in the work place of the president, or informally in the home of one of the members. The groups may also enjoy the hospitality of other civil society organisations, which are partners in projects or sustain the work of the different organisations, such as NGOs, etc. The organisations are never very large (20 members on average). The great majority of associations, however, has a formalised structure with a registered statute establishing the positions of the president, the steering committee, etc. Membership fees and events, such as dinners and parties, are a common way of raising money. For more 'professional' organisations, answering to calls for proposals—in partnership with NGOs, etc.—has also represented a strategy for funding (IIDA, ASF, etc.).

By assessing the scopes and membership criteria of the organisations, we identified the following typologies within the four different locations in Italy:

Community (or ethnic) associations. These can be more or less 'broad' community support organisations (or federations), where membership is based on being Somali. Examples include Federazione delle Comunità Somale in Italia located in Florence, the Associazione Comunità Somala del Piemonte in Turin, or the Association Mamme e Bimbi Somali in Milan, which used to be very active in the mid-1990s. However, these umbrella organisations cannot be found in all cities. They supply information to Somalis on various aspects of life in Italy. These organisations also have good relationships with Italian institutions and are recognised as actual or potential 'official interlocutors'. Currently, no such organisation can be found in Rome or in Milan. For other immigrant communities, these types of umbrella associations will often establish relationships with their respective governmental institutions (Ceschi and Stocchiero, 2007; Mezzetti, 2007), whereas, due to the void created by the lack of a Somali government presence, these groups are not in a position to act as mobilising interlocutors.³⁰

Women's organisations. Membership in these groups is based on gender. These associations often include either inter-ethnic or multi-cultural associations, where women of different cultures unite. Here, Somali women often either hold a leadership position or are active members (f. ex. Donne in Rete per lo sviluppo e la pace (ADIR) in Milan, Nosoltras in Florence, Alma Mater in Turin, Associazione Punto di Partenza in Livorno, etc.), or Somali women's associations (or networks) such as IIDA-Italy, which is based in Turin and was founded in 2007 to support and enhance the work of IIDA-Women Development Organisation founded in 1991 in Somalia (for details, see Tahrir, 2009), while being administratively autonomous from the 'mother' organisation.³¹ IIDA-Italy is strongly linked to the Somali Women Agenda (SWA) movement, created in 2007 in Nairobi, consisting of a network of civil society women's organisations operating throughout Somalia. SWA is well represented in Turin, Rome, Florence, and other European countries through the Somali Women's Diaspora Network (with representations in but not limited to Finland, the United Kingdom and the Netherlands).

³⁰ In the course of this section's revision, the new Somali Ambassador in Italy was finally nominated and arrived in Rome (September 2009).

³¹ Since June 2008, IIDA-Italy has published a well-documented newsletter (four issues and a Special Issue) entitled *Tahrir*. This activity was made possible through the support of the Province of Turin.

Another example is Associazione Diaspora e Pace (ADEP), a network consisting of seven member organisations from various Italian cities, which started to work in late 2006 and was formalised in April 2008. The network's objective is to promote the participation of women in the peace- and state-building processes in Somalia and in the Somali elections (originally announced for November 2009, at the time of writing postponed until November 2010) by providing training activities and being also concerned with the needs of Somali women in Italy (cf. I_IN5, I_IN4; UN INSTRAW, 2008a).

Second-generation groups. These are less formalised discussion groups or organisations, such as the *Iftiin*, which, based on its membership, is a second-generation group that was formed in Rome in late 2007. *Iftiin*, which means "shine", was the first attempt to put together a Somali second-generation discussion group and also included some Italian members. Its first task was to open up a discussion within the Somali community in Italy focussing on the group's principal needs, such as inter-generational relationships.

Inter-cultural organisations with advocacy or lobbying scopes. An example of this type of organisation is the Forum Italia-Somalia per la Pace e la Ricostruzione. They often consist of Somali and non-Somali stakeholders and are founded with political aims such as influencing the Italian foreign policy agenda towards Somalia, denouncing issues on the status of refugees, etc.

Project-oriented associations (referred to in the literature as "hometown associations" or "*Amicales*"). Membership in these groups may be based on a common ethnic background or a shared migration experience. They often re-unite people, who met during their time abroad in their city or town of residence, including people who came from the same area in the country of origin (village, neighbourhood, etc.), also extending to include Italians. In the case of Somalia, we found associations which have been established around a development project to be implemented in an area in Somalia, which is often supported by strong leadership either in the country of residence or of origin (as discussed below, in some cases these include returnees). They thus volunteer as groups of professionals on a smaller scale. Examples include the Associazione Senza Frontiera (ASF) in

Milan³², which funded projects in Beledweyne in the Hiiraan Region, and the Associazione Soomaaliya Onlus in Turin, which operates in the villages of Galkaayo, Kismaayo, Sabiid and Caanoole.

Transnational political fora. According to I_IN3, the Somali Diaspora Congress (SDC)³³ is a transnational advocacy network organisation, which was established on 28 August 2007 by Somalis representing diaspora communities from 12 Western countries.³⁴ It opposed the invasion of Somalia and was set up to draw attention to the crisis in Somalia. Participation can be on an individual or collective basis. 'Representatives' have, however, not been elected by diaspora communities. In the Italian case, for example, members are well-known people within the Somali community: intellectuals, professionals, and politicians all interested in following the political process and who have the time and means to participate.

In our investigation of Somali diaspora organisations, we did not find any self-proclaimed, explicitly clan-based organisation but less formalised (and less visible) clan-based groups do seem to exist and send help in the form of remittances for implementing projects or initiatives in specific areas or regions of Somalia (I_IN4). Insofar as Somali associationism in Italy is mostly an elitarian phenomenon, clan often seems to remain a *latent* concept. This could well be because the predominantly South-Central Somali population, linked to the colonial and historical ties between Italy and Somalia who, coming from the urban centres and belonging to an elite, considers talking about clan traditionally 'backwards'. It might also be that clan, while structuring some aspects of organisation, cannot be articulated as such (cf. Kleist, 2008b). Moreover, the clan dimension may have been underplayed and even denied as a strategy to get support from Italian stakeholders.

Despite the considerations above, clan seems to resurge as a strong dimension and an undeniable practice when working in Somalia (for a further discussion on the clan issue see Box 1 below).

³² The ASF association operates, as will be described further, through the counterpart association Geelo based in Nairobi, which has represented one matched sample case study on which the Norwegian research institute PRIO has been conducting transnational research within DIASPEACE Work Package 3.

³³ For more information, refer to <<http://free-somalia.org/?p=579>>.

³⁴ The United Kingdom, Sweden, Norway, Canada, the United States, Italy, Denmark, Finland, the Netherlands, Germany, Belgium, and France.

Box 1: Clan as seen by the diaspora and as a mobilising tool in national politics

During our investigation, we did not encounter formal clan associations. In general, we found that the use of clan identity is unpredictable, both as a discourse and highly problematic practice and as an organisational tool. Sometimes, clan doesn't seem to be a central divisive factor within the diaspora, being far from representing an insurmountable division. According to the president of a community association in Florence, other factors rather contribute to community fragmentation:

Sometimes we have disputes in our organisation, but they are related to Italian issues, where the clan's role is very marginal. For example, such disagreements could be produced by the participation or belonging to different Italian political parties. On the other hand, in other European countries, such as Sweden and the UK, we can witness many cases of 'clan clashing', due to the policies led by residence countries toward the Somali communities. In addition, what is happening in Florence, and in general Italy is aware of Somali politics, at the same time the main focus for the majority of Somali organisations is represented by Italian policies toward migrants (I_IN2).

However, the clan dimension seems to become meaningful, with both positive and negative repercussions, when individuals or groups are engaged in Somali national politics, or in material work on the ground. Clan issues insofar can directly affect diaspora groups in Italy, and clan becomes crucial when the diaspora is called to take part in the international peace process.

'Clanism' thus goes beyond the Italian national sphere and becomes strongly interconnected with political alliances and divisions developed within the Somali peace process. According to the 4.5 formula, for instance, in which each of the four major clan families (Hawiye, Darod, Dir and Digil-Mirifle) are meant to be represented in the Transitional Federal Institutions, these receive the majority of seats in the Transitional Parliament, while a residual category of "minority groups" receives half of the seats accorded to each of the major clan-families—hence the "0.5". For example, in October 2004, the selection of delegates involved in the peace talks held in Nairobi was framed by the '4.5 formula'; such a formula was also used during the last peace talks in Djibouti making the clan a key prerequisite for those, including diaspora groups, registering for the conference. The Somali diaspora in Italy willing to take part in the Djibouti peace conference had to adjust to these rules and thus decided to participate individually and not through organisations.

Sources: I_IN2; Menkhaus, 2007.

Groups, associations, etc., especially those working in Somalia (and to a lesser extent in the diaspora), are easily identified and thus 'stigmatised' as belonging to a clan or a sub-clan. Members of any association will often be associated with the clan of the associations' leader or of the most charismatic figure acting in the association (this may be the case even when the association's members are from different clans). It is important to note that between different organisations, in the diaspora as well as on the ground in Somalia, the common practice is to denigrate the work of one another on the basis of this 'stigmatisation'. It seems thus somewhat difficult (or impossible) to judge the work undertaken by organisations for its merits or reached objectives. Interestingly, while clan divisions seem to play a central role, these often reflect, as in a synecdoche, the whole range of political, social, religious competitions between the different groups.

1.1.3.3 Associations' key features: Leadership, gender, citizenship, social capital and networks

Somali diaspora associations in Italy show the following key features:

High-ranking and high-profile leaderships. Somali diaspora organisations often have 'high-ranking' members. It is thus possible to find people who are from the Somali ruling class within the organisations. Leadership positions held within diaspora associations seem to reflect this social composition. In one case, for example, the president of a community association was the former Minister of Health and High Education during the Siad Barre regime (Guglielmo, 2008, p. 69). In another case, the president of a women's association—part of the broader ADEP network—is related to a former military colonel, appointed Minister of Finance; other high-ranking bonds are widespread.

Centrality of the gender dimension. This feature is strongly noted in the composition of migration flows to Italy, which, compared to other EU countries, has a high female percentage. This is also due to the professional opportunities that some Somali women in Italy have seized, occupying high-level positions, often working within local public institutions, trade unions, political parties, etc.

Citizenship status. A large number of organisations' members and leaders are Italian citizens and, in most cases, are fully integrated into Italian society, which gives them the opportunity to actively take part in political activities, become members of political parties, etc..³⁵ Interestingly enough, many interviewees have also been elected to the *ad hoc* consultative bodies instituted in Italy especially at the local/ municipal levels since 1986 with the goal of fostering immigrant civic participation and 'political' representation.³⁶

Embeddedness in the local environment and bridging social capital³⁷ (Faist, 2000; Putnam, 1993). Somali organisations' leaders are involved in the political and social spheres in Italy, especially at the local level, not only by holding positions within local institutions (such as our interviewees in Rome, Turin and Milan), but also through their ability of establishing relationships with local civil society organisations. These ties reach out beyond ethnic boundaries, establishing preferably inter-ethnic (or multi-ethnic) networks rather than exclusive ones.

Network-building strategy. Given that Somali organisations are spatially dispersed throughout Italy, (the most important ones are based in Rome, Milan, Turin and Florence), we observed a tendency towards establishing associative networks among Somali groups (f.ex. IIDA, ADEP).

³⁵ Only Italian citizens can vote and stand for elections.

³⁶ Municipal consultative bodies are elected by foreign citizens, age 18 or older who have been officially resident in the city for at least one year. These municipal bodies are not established by law but are rather the result of local authority initiatives. Several municipalities set up this type of consultative bodies in recent years but most ceased to function after one or two years (Meli and Enwereuzor, 2003; Kosic and Triandafyllidou, 2005). For a critical overview of such bodies, see Blommaert and Martiniello, 1996; Vertovec, 1999.

³⁷ The notions of "bridging" and "bonding" social capital have been defined by Putnam (2000, pp. 22–23). "Bridging" is used here as social relations, which animate Somali people and associations and is often undertaken by leaders who can 'bridge' and connect different political actors, stakeholders, and institutions.

To the best of our knowledge, Somali organisations based in Italy have rarely received financial support from Italian institutions (the only case that we encountered is described below in Box 2). However, Somali diaspora associations seem to be involved in or make instrumental use of—both directly and indirectly—relationships with local Italian institutions. In several cases, they have even taken advantage of collaborations/ links with Italian political parties that mainly belong to the left or centre-left coalition.

In sum, the important role played by some individuals and organisations at the local level has been hard to translate into mobilisation and lobbying activities at the national level.³⁸ Looking at the genesis and scope of Somali organisations, especially during the 1990s, one notices that these have been framed by domestic patterns, while from 2000 to the time of writing the trends have shifted away from the exclusive local dimension—in some significant cases towards broader patterns of mobilisation aimed at Somalia. This shift can be read as the consequence of three simultaneous factors: first, a new or renewed need in the diaspora for supporting and actively taking part in the latest national reconciliation processes in Somalia; second, growing expectations of Somali politicians towards the diaspora; third, the little material (in terms of funds) but also political opportunities offered in the Italian context towards migrants and their organisational institutions. This has not only created a worsening competitive environment (as all groups are competing for few resources) but can also explain the diaspora's greater political engagement at the transnational level.

1.1.4 Diaspora perceptions of peace and conflict

Conflict in Somalia started roughly over 20 years ago and has involved actors and dimensions that are continuously changing (Menkhaus, 2004). Conflicts in Somalia have occurred at all levels: both interstate (i.e. Ethiopia) and intrastate (i.e. among proxies, between clans/ families) as well as at the centre and in the periphery. An additional cause for confusion has been the tendency of armed actors in Somalia (i.e. warlords)—whether it be for ideological or strategic purposes—to align themselves with the fight against terrorism (Cliffe, 1999; Healy, 2008). The

³⁸ ADEP, which has represented an attempt in this direction although specifically relating to women's issues, saw a slowdown of its process when the UN INSTRAW/ADEP Project came to an end and was not renewed due also to changes in the Italian government.

situation in South-Central Somalia especially, as well as the 'alliances' just mentioned, is thus complex and in constant flow.

As a result, it is difficult for the Somali diaspora as for any other international actor to obtain comprehensive and up-to-date information on the conflict and the underlying factors. Just like other actors, diaspora groups may also be incapable of grasping the root causes of the civil war, being directly often a party to the conflict.

1.1.4.1 Perceptions of the conflict

Many interviewees perceive the conflict in Somalia as occurring in the political spheres where different factions fight for power, which is often thought of as 'far from the average citizen's world'. Others attribute most blame for the suffering that occurs to external actors. The international community is greatly criticised, often for its inaction and non-interventionist policies and for its inability to understand the complex reality on the ground despite being involved in peace negotiations. Ethiopia's military intervention in the last two years prior to withdrawal was perceived as "the conflict".

Presently, great unease is also expressed over the growing attention that the issue of piracy has received. Most informants assumed that vested interests—other than people—such as toxic waste and the like are at stake.

Many Somalis utilise websites created by diaspora members as specialised, transnational Internet discussion groups, which monitor the conflict at home, its perception abroad and by the international community. In general, however, an explicit and overall perception of the conflict expressed by the diaspora does not seem to emerge. Furthermore, the distance (not only spatial but also temporal and cultural) makes most potential actors unable to develop a comprehensive and global idea about the situation in Somalia. This is not to say that the diaspora is not informed and updated, rather that for insiders as well as for outsiders wishing to approach the subject a lot seems to be 'unsaid'.

Interviewees, who are members of organisations that have strong links to and counterparts in Somalia, tend to refer to a *local* picture of the Somali crisis. They generally relate to the regions of origin and where they might assist with development projects, or simply

retain memories of and/or relationships with relatives. Insofar, this local understanding of the conflict could contribute to the overall comprehension of the situation in Somalia.

Few diaspora associations present themselves as capable of understanding the conflict beyond the *local* dimension and have, in some cases, also attempted to address the underlying structural factors within the Somali conflict. These are, however, exceptions and they tend to be one of the following:

1. Development organisations, which are present in different regions in Somalia (i.e. in the case of IIDA, which operates in Mogadishu, Merka, Galgaduud and Kenya).
2. Organisations whose leaders have been involved in Somali politics in the past and are thus experienced in the complexities of such political dynamics.
3. Organisations involved in combatting human rights violations and conflict through, for example, women's involvement in peacebuilding processes, which have established strategic partnerships at the institutional level or are linked to international organisations.³⁹

1.1.5 Diaspora's role: Political protagonists and development actors?

As is mentioned above, the two main areas in which Somali organisations or individuals operate in Somalia are: *development* activities, through what we have defined as "transnational or translocal politics" and *political* activities/ engagement, defined as "homeland politics". These strategies are not necessarily mutually exclusive since involvement in political processes may often represent a development dimension.

During our field work, we encountered different actors and stakeholders who have expressed a genuine interest in the future of Somalia. We had the opportunity to be present at various seminars organised in Italy on this subject and witnessed a renewed interest in Somalia.⁴⁰ We have noted three

³⁹ One example is ADEP, which wanted to push the TFG to include women in the Somali peace- and state-building processes, regardless of how the government itself may be organised.

⁴⁰ In Rome, an International Conference on the Somali Civil Society was held in February 2008; in Turin in May 2008. Another International Conference on the Future of Somalia was organised by the IIDA Network, TFG representatives, SWA and Italian local institutions; the UN INSTRAW/ADEP Project held two seminars in

different opinions regarding the role of the diaspora in the peacebuilding and state-building processes. We found groups and individuals who are very *enthusiastic* about the diaspora's participation at this stage. This political 'protagonist role' was both voiced by women's groups and also played by people who have been participating in transnational political fora such as the SDC on an *individual* level. Another example is the association ADEP, which felt that it was time to transfer the political experience (political remittances) gained abroad (party politics, activism, institutional responsibilities) to Somalia. ADEP members have also been personally interested in playing an active role in the political processes taking place in Somalia.⁴¹

Other actors in the diaspora have expressed a more *discrete interest* in taking part directly in the peacebuilding process at home. These stakeholders are often less explicitly 'political' and intend to take part in the process either by foregoing politics and focussing on development (i.e. ASF), or by operating 'off of the radar' and establishing strong relationships with Somali groups on the ground (as in the case of IIDA-Somalia) (I_IN6).⁴² This position first recognises the existence and then the dynamics and the experience gained by several local civil society organisations whose members have been living and operating on the ground despite the years of war in Somalia.

The third perspective of the role that the diaspora should play is *far more pessimistic*. In their view, the Somali crisis should be resolved by Somalis living in Somalia and the diaspora is considered an external actor who has been abroad for an extended period of time and does not understand the present situation. In some cases, this view is shared by Italian NGOs operating on the ground, a phenomenon which might reflect an existing competition between such NGOs and new potential actors represented by the diaspora. It might be the case that these are viewed as 'outsiders' who are unprepared to perform development work, and which might upset the long-standing power equilibriums.

Milan and Bari in 2008. A conference was also organised in Milan in February 2009 on the new electoral results in Somalia with international experts and diaspora organisations' representatives.

⁴¹ This is despite criticism expressed by others who claim that women from the diaspora should not run for office in Somalia, but rather support women in Somalia and their attempts at political engagement (UN INSTRAW, 2008a).

⁴² Seminar on the Future of Somalia, Turin, May 2008; Conference on Somali Women: A New Political Actor for Building Peace, organised in Turin on 3 April 2009.

1.1.5.1 Ambiguities between offensive and defensive strategies

Somali diaspora organisations in Italy working on the ground in Somalia predominantly operate at the local level by sending financial aid both as collective remittances through development projects, often directed at improving health care and school infrastructure, or through individual remittances aimed at providing shelter for specific families or communities. This is the case with various associations, such as ASF, Associazione Donne Somale Immigrate, Somaliyaa, and AISCIA. These organisations have experimented with different methods of working in Somalia: by implementing projects through local counterparts (the Geelo association for ASF; the counterpart of AISCIA operating in the *Karaan* district in Mogadishu); in partnership with (or through the support of) Italian NGOs⁴³ (as in the cases of IIDA and Geelo) or by trying to establish a direct and more explicit partnership on the ground, such as the women's network Somali Women Agenda (IIDA). In some cases, however, money is sent to the clan, and even though the project to be funded might explicitly be named, there is a lack of transparency about the management and the allocation of the money.

When dealing with resources that are destined for projects on the ground, it is important to note that not only can the remittances sent by the diaspora, but also, and to a greater extent, the implementation and support of certain development projects which are often entangled with the interests of groups in conflict have a direct impact on the conflict. During an armed dispute, such activities can very easily—and unintentionally—support militia leaders or warlords who might have some degree of power over the regions or villages where aid was supposed to have been distributed. This is an issue that some groups raise and others are either unaware of or find it too difficult to speak about (see Box 2).

Therefore, due to the serious lack of security, the line between a defensive and an offensive role for foreign aid in Somalia is very thin and difficult to control. Often it depends on relationships and trust groups and individuals establish within the different organisations. The fact that the diaspora's involvement in the conflict can be a sensitive issue illustrates that Somali organisations often realise the implications of their influence on the crisis. The

⁴³ Including some Italian NGOs, which have operated in Somalia for many years, f. ex. COSPE or COSV.

diaspora's acknowledgement of the lack of security in Somalia is a very crucial issue in Somalia and can translate into remittances and other types of material support for certain factions, as opposed to society in general. These are conscious decisions that may further fuel the conflict. For some groups, given the lack of governance in Somalia, financial remittances are seen as a legitimate practice, even when these resources must be defended and secured by militia forces (see Box 2). Other groups are more aware of the 'offensive' role which aid may have and express concern for this risk. During the interview process, some individuals raised the issue of the nature of the projects that can be implemented in Somalia today. While a physical contribution, such as a hospital, is visible and has a symbolic relevance, and thus needs to be 'defended'—thus perpetuating and exacerbating the militia system, conflict, etc. through 'offending' strategies—a training course for the empowerment of women or capacity-building, being less tangible, may be less problematic.

1.1.5.2 Factors shaping conflict, divisions and co-operation within and between the groups

The diaspora in Italy appears to be divided due to the respective group's or community's internal problems, formed while abroad. These divisions occur along the following lines: social (class), political (party politics in Italy), and generational (first-generation vs. later generations immigrants). Processes through which residence country institutions engage diaspora groups in peacebuilding in Somalia may also contribute to the deepening of divisions as will be discussed below. The Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) promoted an interesting pilot project, which saw the involvement of diaspora women's groups in the Somali peace process, recognising in turn these groups as a potential and effective peacebuilding agent.⁴⁴ The initiative was undertaken between 2007 and 2008, and was sponsored by the Italian MFA and implemented by the Associazione Diaspora e Pace (ADEP)⁴⁵ in collaboration with the United Nations International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (UN INSTRAW, 2008a and

⁴⁴ The experiment came to an end and was not re-sponsored mostly due to changes within the Italian government.

⁴⁵ ADEP started its work in late 2006 and was formalised in April 2008. It is a Somali women's umbrella association based in Italy that works towards the empowerment of women, both in Somalia and as migrants in the diaspora, in collaboration with the Italian MFA and local authorities. In order to engage more women in the Somali national political process, ADEP in collaboration with UN INSTRAW was to implement, the project "Gender and Peace in Somalia—Implementation of Resolution 1325."

Box 2: Diaspora, clan and conflict: *Offensive or defensive strategy?*

According to Ioan M. Lewis, "clan identification permeates all aspects of Somali culture and politics" (2002). However, clan ideology and the militarisation of the clan was the result of a social process, which produced a number of ruptures within the clan notion itself, both at the hierarchical and the ethical level. Mobilisation through clan identity is a process within which the diaspora played a leading role. The lack of security and the general need of Somalis to protect their communities led different individuals and organisations within the diaspora to support, financially and politically, armed groups or local politicians from their respective clans (Guglielmo, 2008).

The boundaries between 'defensive' and 'offensive' practices undertaken by the clan communities who are often supported by the diaspora, are extremely prone to change and correlate with the total lack of security in Somalia. Often, diaspora remittances, framed as a necessity to provide security to specific communities, can be used for offensive activities, especially when tensions and violence are rising. However, it is crucial to acknowledge that the role of the diaspora in offensive activities, given the lack of control over the final destination of remittances, is not always an intended one. Other organisations that have a more explicit development mandate, instead, seem to be more aware that aid activities can also be counterproductive. They realise that due to issues of security, there is a price for bringing development to the region, which they are not always willing to pay. This is the case of a smaller project-oriented Milan-based organisation, whose representative states: "We don't want to build a school and to have to pay also people with guns to defend it; this is something which goes against our will."

Sources: Lewis, 2002; Guglielmo, 2008; I_IN4 and I_IN7.

2008b). In the end, this programme did not live up to the expectations, which were to involve a large number of Somali women in the project.

It is still early to evaluate this project, which has undoubtedly had the positive effect of bringing attention to the Somali situation and to the potential

involvement of Somali women in the political processes. Thus far, our understanding is that Italian institutions (namely the Ministry of Foreign Affairs) demonstrated their inexperience and lack of understanding of the complexities of diasporas in conflict, and of the Somali diaspora more specifically. A wrong assumption made by the Italian institutions was, perhaps, that the diaspora groups would collaborate because the gender aspect would eliminate other divisive factors. The project instead led to the emergence of destructive competition between different diaspora groups.

As one key Somali actor in Italy pointed out, peacebuilding processes based on gender or other parochial differences, such as clan, family, generation, and community, are doomed to fail for at least two reasons. First, the internal divisions (social, political and generational) of the Somali diaspora affect its organisations—even those groups that are supposed to have an affinity for one another, such as women's organisations. Second, it is probably wrong to assume that by setting up peacebuilding processes, divisions will disappear. This is why women shouldn't be considered as the *exclusive* peacebuilding actor—under the oversimplified and wrong assumption that while women are for peace, men go to war—but as facilitators of a more comprehensive process (I_IN3).

Interestingly, the diaspora tends to become either *compact* and generate debates and discussions, or *fragmented* based on specific political events and positions. For example, in June 2006, after the Islamic Courts had taken Mogadishu, a lively debate started within diaspora groups on the potential to support this new political actor (Barnes and Hassan, 2007). When Ethiopia intervened in Somalia, a strong mobilisation process involving diaspora groups took place and new networks were formed with the aim of raising the diaspora's voice.

In most of the above-mentioned cases, mobilisation in the diaspora reached beyond Italy's national borders. An interesting example of this is the Somali Diaspora Congress (SDC), an advocacy organisation that opposed the invasion of Somalia and was set up to draw attention to the crisis. The creation of the SDC, and the appointment of 'Italian' delegates (i.e. Somalis living in Italy) in order to take part in this political experiment, gave the Somali diaspora the chance to set up a more co-ordinated approach in Italy. This resulted first in the creation of the Associazione Comunità Somala del Piemonte and then in the

identification at the national level of potential Somali delegates (thus creating a platform in Italy through which Italians could take part in the Somali diaspora congress project). In an interview, the president of the association explained:

At least two purposes laid on the formation of our association. The first was the need to go beyond the clan issue and particular factors within the diaspora in Piemonte (...), especially after the Ethiopian occupation of Somalia. (...) The second purpose involved the general need to build up a co-ordinated work within the diaspora community in order to make our voice stronger in a more comprehensive project named Somali Diaspora Congress (SDC). (...) The SDC was a diaspora coalition, which saw the participation of numbers of diaspora delegates, not only from Europe. Until July 2007, different delegates met officially three times, and on the occasion of the last meeting, which took place in London, we decided to join the opposition of the Alliance of the Re-liberation of Somalia (ARS), which was formalised in Asmara in September 2007 (I_IN3).

Therefore, as is illustrated by this example, in the context of certain political circumstances in Somalia, the diaspora in Italy and its organisational dimension can be shaped by two related factors:

Conflict in Somalia. This has the *potential* to spur unification within the diaspora. As an August 2008 SDC press release illustrates,⁴⁶ the will expressed by the diaspora to overcome internal fragmentations and the capacity of the organisation to influence the political process in Somalia can play a crucial role at specific moments during the conflict. This was true in the case of the Ethiopian intervention in Somalia in December 2006.

Transnational co-ordination between diaspora groups. There is no debate at the national level in Italy on the role of the Somali diaspora in conflict resolution. In order to directly and positively influence the peacebuilding process in Somalia, several actors in the diaspora went beyond Italian borders and participated in the formation of transnational spaces for engagement to promote the diaspora's political role (i.e. SDC).

⁴⁶ Available at <<http://www.goobjoog.com/index.php/maqaallada/94-english/827-somali-diaspora-congress-press-release>>.

1.1.6 Networking and co-operation

1.1.6.1 Alliances in Italy: Beyond ethnic networks

In some organisations, we observed the use of a *network-building strategy* between different diaspora groups as a tool, which allows them to go beyond the local sphere and to develop relationships in different cities. This networking strategy may help them to directly partake in peacebuilding activities in Somalia, transnationally and *trans-locally*. This is the case with IIDA through their participation in the Somali Women Agenda network (founded in Nairobi), which has both *SWA focal points* in different cities in Italy and countries in the European Union. These diaspora networks are never exclusively based on ethnicity or clan. In addition to diaspora networks, relationships with other organisations, such as several civil society organisations are established and maintained. Alliances in the development sector that we have traced include those between diaspora organisations and Italian NGOs.

Women's organisations also tend to have strong inter-ethnic relationships with civil society groups working on gender or migration issues, which include autochthonous as well as inter-ethnic groups. In the specific case of Somali women, the issue of female genital mutilation sparked exchanges and professional relationships between advocacy groups concerned with this topic at the local, national and transnational level. The topic of refugees and asylum seekers, which often focuses on the Horn of Africa and has recently made its way to the front pages of local newspapers (in Turin and Rome), has also become an area in which diaspora organisations have been involved or called for the involvement of local humanitarian organisations. Professional relationships like those established by the organisation AISCIA with medical personnel working at the Hospital Gemelli in Rome may also exist.

In addition, at the political level, meaningful alliances are led by diaspora members who are members of different Italian political parties. Such relationships often develop at the local level, where the Somali diaspora has both a strong influence and a great capacity to mobilise its community. In our field work, we found at least five Somalis who were members of leftist parties in different municipal contexts. In one case, an interviewee was elected to the Council for Foreigners' Communities in the municipality of Rome.⁴⁷

⁴⁷ Formed in June 2004, it represents one of the main links

When political engagement is not confined to foreigners' consultative bodies but also entails the possibility of participating in national politics, holding Italian citizenship is crucial for voting and being elected.⁴⁸ In other cases, we found interviewees who were elected into the neighbourhood councils, others who, being proponents of political parties, were put onto electoral lists and sometimes won elections in local institutions. These experiences have always left people with strong personal contacts within parties and institutions. It is important to emphasise that alliances between Somali associations and Italian political parties, both at the local and national levels, are mostly established through individual contacts rather than the associational dimension.

The establishment of networks has also, in some cases, been prompted by Italian local or national actors with the aim of identifying groups or individuals within the diaspora who could potentially play a peacebuilding role in Somalia. Often the product of political alliances or informal relationships established between diaspora and institutional representatives, such processes are never merely *top-down*, in which only Italian institutions play a leading role, but are rather generated through relationships, which can easily be perceived as 'exclusionist' by other actors not involved from the beginning. Other practices undertaken by diaspora groups, instead, include bottom-up practices.⁴⁹

1.1.6.2 Ties to the country of origin: Between institutional interlocutors and local counterparts

As mentioned earlier, the decision of who to work with in Somalia is of crucial and strategic importance. When operating within transnational scopes (either in development or in politics) it is interesting to note that the organisations assessed often have a counterpart on the ground. These counterparts may more often be based in Kenya, such as IIDA; ASF, etc.. For IIDA, the Somali Woman Agenda mentioned earlier is an important interlocutor—created recently in Somalia also with the support of diaspora groups. Other groups have instead entered into dialogue with high-level political figures who, for instance, operate in

between foreign communities living in Rome and the municipal administration (Cardito, 2004).

⁴⁸ In one case we also found a candidate on a list for the European elections in 2009, representing the North West Italian Region. See: <<http://romanoborrelli.wordpress.com/2009/04/28/presentazione-della-lista-unitaria-comunista-e-anticapitalista/>>.

⁴⁹ One example is the Associazione Somali del Piemonte, for which the formalisation process was instrumental for taking part in the SDC.

the diaspora in other countries, such as the United Kingdom, the United States or in the opposition movement in Somalia (with ASR in Asmara as is the case of the SDC), or with TFG authorities⁵⁰ (UN INSTRAW, 2008).

Diaspora groups, which have been in contact with high-level politicians (i.e. at the institutional level with ministries of the TFG), may not seem to be interested in finding an interlocutor on the ground. Such an attitude may contribute to widening the existing gap between Somali civil society groups and the diaspora, which seems to prefer to speak with high-level institutions' representatives. However, in the complex context of Somalia today, this may also represent a strategy to subvert a system by which all the so-called 'local' actors on the ground can easily be identified as clan or a sub-clan affiliation. For this reason, any strategic partnership with local actors can be deemed a family-clan partnership or a clan-family-driven project, while the institutional actor may instead be considered *super partes*, able to designate partners or beneficiaries. Another option would be to preferably work with individuals who have a reputation among civil society and public opinion of acting beyond clan divisions.

Interestingly, in more than one case we found that those who operate on the ground in Somalia or in Nairobi are often returnees (people who have lived and worked abroad for several years).⁵¹ These people have dense networks including diaspora organisations, international institutions as well as NGOs, and they know how to deal (or speak) with donors, international stakeholders, Somali organisations on the ground as well as their diaspora counterparts. We have observed that the decision-making process of what must be done and how measures are implemented on the ground often lies in the hands of such charismatic leaders (particular examples include the associations Geelo and IIDA-Somalia).

1.1.6.3 Individuals' vs. associations' transnational engagement and 'openings' towards the diaspora

In Italy, the year 2007 was crucial for the Somali diaspora. In late December 2006, the Ethiopian intervention in Somalia caused lively debates within

⁵⁰ ADEP met with the Prime Minister of Somalia and other members of the TFG in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, in late January 2008 in order to lobby for women's increased participation and representation. ADEP has also gained the political support of other authorities, such as members of the European Parliament.

⁵¹ On transnational returnees to Somaliland, see Hansen. 2007.

Somali diaspora communities. Results of some of these debates were the formalisation of political programmes for direct intervention in Somali politics. The huge capacity of the diaspora, appreciated also by Somali politicians, prompted the diaspora to find tools to formalise its role as a mobilised political actor in Somali transitional institutions, operating at the same level as the main Somali political groups.

One of the first steps towards the involvement of the diaspora in Somali politics was taken by the opposition in late 2006. In particular, during the foundation of the Alliance for the Re-liberation of Somalia (ARS) in September 2007, a significant number of seats of ARS' Central Committee were allocated to diaspora members. Since the ARS was a coalition, it also included representatives from Islamic Courts and former parliamentarians of transitional institutions, which opposed President Abdullahi Yusuf. Therefore, the diaspora's role within the ARS was considered to be rather marginal. In fact, the Italian delegate who was appointed member of the Central Committee thought it was not correct to actively participate in this opposition group. As he explained,

I have never been in Asmara because I was somewhat doubtful regarding the project as a whole, and also I did not appreciate all ARS' delegates (especially the Islamic Courts' delegates, but unfortunately they were more powerful than others in the coalition). Even today, after the Djibouti Agreement, I do not believe that the diaspora will be seriously considered. In addition, I do not think the TFG will succeed for two main reasons: First, because it is not possible to create a government out of Somalia, with delegates living abroad for many years and second, because of the general incompetence of the new ministers to rule; they are simply unfit (I_IN3).

For this reason, there was not much optimism on the part of the Somali diaspora in Italy with regard to the Islamist project set up in Somalia by Islamic Court leaders.

From May 2008 to January 2009, on the occasion of the Djibouti Peace Agreement between the ARS and the TFG, the diaspora's role was formalised in the context of the new enlarged parliament. The Djibouti Agreement offered the diaspora new opportunities to actively participate in the peace process:

representatives of the Italian diaspora participated rather as individuals than as members of organisations. At least two factors can be mentioned to explain this trend:

Clan discourse. Transitional Institutions were enlarged according to the "4.5" formula", which maintains the association to a clan as the most important condition of inclusion (see Box 1, p. 22). Therefore, to be able to join the peace process and to be appointed to any official position, Somali diaspora members had to cooperate and talk with clan leaders.

The specific type of Somali 'associationism' in Italy. At the surface, clan association is presented to be a minor factor contributing to the fragmentation of Somali diaspora organisations in Italy. In addition, as we tried to explain earlier, clan divisions can be overcome by the creation of networks. Notwithstanding, as clan has been chosen as a constitutional element by the new Somali institutions, Somali diaspora associations were *de facto* excluded from taking part in the peace process.

Looking at the openings offered by Somali politics to the diaspora, and their impact on diaspora organisations, it is clear that the choice to keep the "4.5" formula as a tool of legitimacy has thus produced new clan divisions within the diaspora. Therefore, even if the role the diaspora (in particular as individuals) can play in the peace process in Somalia was formally recognised, the diaspora in its organisational dimension is still far from being a recognised political actor.

1.1.7 Concluding remarks

The Somali diaspora in Italy, with its long history and social composition, can claim that some of its members are highly integrated into Italian society. This is particularly true for those at the associations' leadership level. In sum, Somali diaspora associations are led by Somalis with good connections both to the Italian civil society and governmental institutions, especially at the local level. On the other hand, the overall situation for newcomers and the new generations of Somali migrants is harsh, rendering them incapable of actively taking part in the life of diaspora associations. In other words, the Somali community suffers from a certain degree of cleavage, which occurs between a 'historical group' of Somalis living in Italy since, and before, the civil war and those

who arrived (and continue to arrive) more recently because of the conflict's escalation in South-Central Somalia.

The associational dimension, despite being a relatively new phenomenon, also shows a high potential for future involvement of diaspora groups as peacebuilding actors in the conflict 'at home'. This phenomenon emerged in correspondence with significant events such as the various Somali national reconciliation processes or crucial political changes 'at home' (such as the Ethiopian military intervention in late 2006).

Somali diaspora organisations often do not term their involvement and activities in Somalia/ Somaliland as 'peacebuilding' activities, but rather operate towards change. The two areas of engagement are *development* and/or *political processes*.

Projects and initiatives undertaken by diaspora groups are implemented through *dense networks* that have been established in Italy, Somalia/ Somaliland but also on a transnational level. Most networks in the residence country are inter-ethnic; often linked to local-level party politics, in which associations' leaders or members participate (although sometimes they also engage in national institutions). In the origin country, the associations' networks (depending on the nature of the projects) are linked to Italian NGOs, local counterparts, sometimes also family-clan communities, or high-level civil servants and national institutions (i.e. of the TFG). There are many active women's organisations' networks, not only on a national but also on a transnational level.

It was our aim to investigate the diaspora's perception of the conflict. One result is that interviewed diaspora members find it difficult to speak of the conflict beyond a *local* dimension, which is rarely directly judged by the interviewee but rather constitutes a mix of views of family, friends, and relatives. During our research, we had to learn to take into account that the situation and conflict in Somalia is subject to continuous change. Between the beginning of our investigations and the time of writing, the Ethiopian troops have withdrawn from Somalia, a new TFG and Presidency were set up with the consequence of entirely new power configurations in the country.

Due to its dynamic character, the conflict 'at home' directly affects the diaspora's perception of its role as potential development actor and its effective ability

to be considered as a peacebuilding agent on the ground. More so, in the origin country, the diaspora can also be perceived as an 'outside actor', and is thus not in the best position in the eyes of the local population to take part in political and peacebuilding processes. To build and negotiate alliances with the local population is fundamental for diaspora groups that wish to operate in Somalia.

The diaspora seems to be more confident in finding its place at the local rather than at the national level—an important difference compared to other national and international agents. However, as we have tried to argue here, the local strategy of the Somali diaspora to act 'at home' may in some cases be perceived by antagonist factions, actors or clans as "offensive". In other words, the *system of conflicts* in Somalia plays a significant role in shaping diasporas' activities as well as in excluding or including diaspora associations on the ground. Depending on the specific conflict, perceptions and common stigmatisations may be viewed to be offensive or defensive.

One must, however, not overlook the difficulties that Somali organisations in Italy are faced with and the factors that can frustrate their potential. Two particular factors spring to mind:

The Italian environment or 'political opportunity structure'. The 'immigration discourse' is framed around terms of security and public order and diaspora members are far from being considered actors of peacebuilding. Instead—despite the common language and culture shared with Italy due to its colonial past—Somali citizens find it quite hard to obtain a permit of stay; conditions for refugees and asylum seekers are worse compared to other EU countries. Therefore, many Somali refugees had to move to other European countries. It is in this context that diaspora organisations have voiced their major concern about migrants' conditions and issues rather than on development/ peacebuilding projects in the origin country.

Lack of co-ordination between associations and personal competition. Lack of co-ordination is rooted in political and individual antagonisms (and to a lesser and less visible extent to clan associations). These competitions at times undermine organisations' involvement in peacebuilding processes.

Therefore, engaging diaspora organisations in Italy—as compared to other European countries—seems to

be hampered by a 'double wall'. First, the almost total absence of institutional policies for engaging diasporas impedes any dialogue and common ground for involving diaspora organisations in development, peacebuilding, etc.. Second, the peculiar condition of Somali immigrants in Italy and the legal limbo in which they are forced to live cause most organisations to call for improvements in their living conditions in Italy rather than to devote their energies to establishing solid and transnational networks in order to serve as development actor 'at home'. For the various dimensions and factors highlighted throughout this study, the Somali associational dimension is more effective at the local level in the country of residence, or at the transnational level where strategic alliances with NGOs or other partners abroad are established, while involvement in national and political processes in their country of origin seems to be best realised by individuals.

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1.2 Somali organisations in the United Kingdom

1.2.1 Somali migration to the United Kingdom

The migration movement of Somalis to the United Kingdom has a long history, which relates both to labour migration during colonial times and refugee movements from the end of the 1980s onwards. Late nineteenth century Somali seamen migrated to work in the dockland areas of ports such as Liverpool, Cardiff and London. In the 1950s, Somalis moved to the United Kingdom to work in the industrial centres such as Manchester and Sheffield. During the 1980s, Somalis started to flee their country, in particular the Northwest region. These refugee movements culminated in 1988 with the outbreak of civil war. The collapse of dictator Siad Barre's regime in 1991 caused the refugee movements from the central and southern parts of Somalia (Harris, 2004). The United Kingdom has one of the largest communities of Somalis living abroad. Precise numbers of them are very difficult to set as estimates and statistics vary enormously (Hammond, 2007). According to the 2001 census (United Kingdom Statistics Authority, 2001), 43,373 Somali-born people live in England and Wales. This number does not include those born in the United Kingdom. According to the census, most Somalis live in London, with big concentrations in the boroughs of Brent, Newham, Tower Hamlets, Camden and Ealing. Sheffield and Manchester have the largest populations of Somali-born people outside London (ibid.). But the official number provided by the census is not accurate for two reasons: first, it was recorded several years ago; second, the way in which the census framed the questions by including the option 'Black African' but not a specific country was misleading. The Refugee Council estimates that over 150,000 Somalis live in the United Kingdom. This figure is probably closer to reality than the census figure (Hammond, 2007). An additional factor contributing to the inaccuracy of numbers is that the United Kingdom is a famous destination for so-called secondary migration from other European countries and Somalis holding passports of other European countries are not included in the official numbers of Somalis when measuring numbers based on citizenship.⁵²

Somalis have been among the largest groups of asylum seekers from the early 1990s until today. In 2008, 1,370 Somalis applied for asylum in the United Kingdom; the fifth largest group of applicants after

asylum seekers from Zimbabwe, Iran, Eritrea and Iraq (Home Office, 2008b).

In 2005, 8,305 Somali nationals were granted British citizenship (a decrease from 11,185 in 2004). This constituted five per cent of all persons who were granted citizenship in 2005 (out of a total of 161,755). Somali nationals were the largest naturalised group from Africa and in total the fourth-largest group of foreign nationals after Indian, Pakistani and Serbian Montenegrinian nationals to obtain British citizenship (Home Office, 2006). In 2006, Somalis, with 9,050 (six per cent) naturalised persons, were the third largest nationality group after Indian 15,125 (ten per cent of the total) and Pakistani 10,260 nationals (seven per cent) (ibid., 2007a). In 2007, 7,450 Somalis obtained British citizenship, most of them by virtue of residence in the United Kingdom (ibid., 2008a).

1.2.2 Immigration and refugee legislation

Due to immigration from the British colonies, the so-called New Commonwealth, there are well-established communities of ethnic minorities in the United Kingdom. Prior to the approval of the Commonwealth Immigration Act in 1962, people from Commonwealth countries could enter the United Kingdom freely. People in particular from the Indian subcontinent and the Caribbean came to fill gaps in the labour market for unskilled jobs. Due to the long history of migration and a relatively large population of ethnic minorities, the United Kingdom has a long tradition of policies dealing with immigration and multiculturalism (Wahlbeck, 1999).

In recent years, the United Kingdom together with many other European countries has moved towards the scheme of managed migration and has set up measures accordingly, such as a Highly Skilled Migration Programme which enables "the most talented migrants to come to the United Kingdom" (Home Office, 2001, p. 41). The Immigration, Asylum and Nationality Act was changed in 2006 (Office of Public Sector Information, 2006). The recent changes of the asylum policy aim at the fast handling of appeal procedures⁵³ and stopping the abuse of the system.

⁵² See Lindley and Van Hear, 2007; for Danish Somalis' secondary migration to the United Kingdom, Nielsen, 2004.

⁵³ On the website of the Home Office it is stated that at the time of writing, new asylum applications are aimed at being concluded within six months, after which integration of a successful applicant will start, and unsuccessful applicants will return home (either voluntarily or by enforced removal).

Table 1: Somali asylum applications to the United Kingdom and granted asylum cases/ permissions to stay

	Applications received for asylum in the United Kingdom.*	Cases recognised as refugees and granted asylum.*	Cases not recognised as refugees but granted exceptional leave, humanitarian protection or discretionary leave.*	Refusals of asylum, exceptional leave, humanitarian protection and discretionary leave.*
1998	4,685	2,330	375	100
1999	7,495	130	55	120
2000	5,020	5,310	3,575	2,365
2001	6,420	2,910	1,995	3,525
2002	6,540	2,515	1,405	2,815
2003	5,090	1,665	550	3,835
2004	2,585	455	460	2,355
2005	1,760	660	195	1,000
2006	1,845	655	165	905
2007 (Provisional figures)	1,615	805	105	700

Source: Home Office, 2007b. **Note:** * Excluding dependants, by country of nationality (Somalia)

When an asylum applicant is successful, the residence permit is issued for an initial period of five years ('Leave to Remain'). When an applicant is not recognised as a refugee or as in need of humanitarian protection he/she can still be given a temporary residence permit ('Discretionary Leave to Remain'). During this time, he/she cannot travel to the country of origin. Limited leaves to remain, if certain criteria are met, can eventually be translated into an Indefinite Leave to Remain (ILR),⁵⁴ which is a permission to stay and settle down permanently in the United Kingdom (Home Office website).

It is acknowledged by United Kingdom authorities that a successful integration of refugees relies on partnerships between central and local authorities, the voluntary sector, local service providers, refugees and refugee community organisations, and the private sector. The integration agenda is handled by the National Refugee Integration Forum led by the Home Office (Home Office, 2001).

⁵⁴ The ILR is a permanent residence permit, but it does not offer complete protection against deportation (which for example in case of criminal activity can be ordered by courts) (Koopmans et al., 2005, pp. 42–43).

In practice, the refugee resettlement in the United Kingdom relies rather extensively on non-governmental organisations such as the Refugee Council. Funding is available from the Home Office for resettlement and integration services and programmes (such as through the Refugee Community Development Fund and the Challenge Fund), and in addition to British NGOs, migrants' own associations are important 'service providers' to refugees (ibid.; Wahlbeck, 1999).

In the United Kingdom, the minority and immigration policy can be described as "a communitarian policy" with a strong emphasis on local communities (Wahlbeck, 1999, p. 68). According to Anthias and Yuval-Davis (1992) multiculturalist discourse in the United Kingdom perceives people belonging to specific, usually culturally defined, communities. Minorities are seen as distinct from each other and are regarded to have clear boundaries. Although the recognition of ethnic communities as part of the society is a clear sign of a multicultural society, it has also downsides as it can lead to the construction of exclusionary boundaries, and can also create new divisive lines between communities. The focus on communities also ignores the heterogeneous

nature of a given ethnic group (ibid.). In the United Kingdom, the importance of migrants' own networks is acknowledged, and this has led to the creation of "ethnic enclaves". The government's policy on asylum is, however, designed to disperse asylum seekers across the country in order to share the burden of service provision (Home Office, 2001).

The United Kingdom considers itself a truly multi-ethnic and cultural country where diversity is highly appreciated, as the Home Office White Paper states:

In important respects, the United Kingdom has responded successfully to diversity. Unlike many other countries, British nationality has never been associated with membership of a particular ethnic group. For centuries we have been a multi-ethnic nation. We do not exclude people from citizenship on the basis of their race or ethnicity. Similarly, our society is based on cultural difference, rather than assimilation to a prevailing monoculture. This diversity is a source of pride, and it helps to explain our cultural vitality, the strength of our economy and our strong international links (2001, p. 10).

The United Kingdom has, for a long time, attributed nationality at birth to a child born in the United Kingdom and there are no cultural requirements for naturalisation except the sufficient knowledge of the English language and of UK public life. Naturalisation is therefore based on "civic-territorial attributes" (Koopmans et al., 2005, p. 36 and 53). Additional requirements for obtaining citizenship by application include "sound mind and a good character", residency in the United Kingdom for at least five years and the intention to continue to live in the United Kingdom. In order to obtain a citizenship one does not need to give up one's original nationality (Home Office website).

1.2.3 Support structures for migrant organisations

The countries of settlement "contribute to the collective organisation of migrants by the provision—or non-provision—of resources for and models of organisation" (Odmalm, 2004, p. 474). Among other factors, available funding structures, so-called political opportunity structures, are part of the wider

context influencing the work of diasporas through formal associations. Community or migrant/ refugee organisations can claim several forms of support from the state organisations in the United Kingdom for activities fostering the integration of migrants into society. Many Somali organisations interviewed receive funding from local authorities (boroughs)⁵⁵ and/or different trusts for activities in the United Kingdom with the aim of integrating Somalis or other migrants into society.

Viewed from this angle, the authorities in the United Kingdom view Somali organisations mainly as 'serving' their own communities in the United Kingdom. Refugee settlement and immigrant integration activities are partly taken care of by community organisations.

Official development aid in the United Kingdom is managed by the Department for International Development (DfID). DfID does not (yet) have a specific system/ programme for engaging the Somali diaspora in supporting the country of origin. It, however, consulted with the Somali diaspora in 2008 to further develop options for engagement with the Somali diaspora in development efforts in Somalia/Somaliland.

Access to general funding schemes of DfID or similar funders for Somali organisations has been very difficult. The funding for development and humanitarian projects is much competed. In addition to UK development NGOs, several ethnic groups in the United Kingdom engage in 'homeland' support and Somalis are one of many ethnic minorities in the country and not that 'visible' (Griffiths, 2002). The difficulty to access external funding is reflected in the empirical data. Only one interviewed Somali organisation in the United Kingdom received external funding for its activities in Somalia; the source was the British relief NGO Muslim Aid.⁵⁶

⁵⁵ It is important to be aware of the differences in funding structures and priorities between various London boroughs. For example, in his study on Somali and Kurdish communities, Griffiths (2002, p. 285) stated that the invisibility of the Somali community in Tower Hamlets is compounded by the lack of attention by the local authority; one additional explanation to this neglect could be the existence of a large Bengali community, which is represented in decision-making bodies.

⁵⁶ The Somali organisation IQRA received £25,000 from Muslim Aid for building a primary and intermediate school in Balanbale, Somalia.

1.2.4 Diaspora organisations

In the United Kingdom, Somali migrants have been very active in setting up organisations. The actual number is not known, as the organisational field of Somalis in the United Kingdom is rather diverse, dynamic and continuously changing. Some organisations set up a few years ago may no longer function, new ones are set up and their names are changing. However, about 300 organisations were found through the mapping exercise and, according to estimates by the interviewees, there may be even more.

The extensive mapping of Somali organisations in the United Kingdom was conducted between May 2008 and August 2008. Fieldwork was carried out over a period of two weeks in November 2008. The data consists of 17 in-depth semi structured interviews conducted in London (13 interviews) and Sheffield (two interviews). Moreover, two interviews were conducted by phone in January and in February 2009 with representatives of Somali organisations, one based in Northampton and one in London. Out of the total 17 interviewees, two are not ethnically Somalis and the organisations they represent cannot be defined as 'purely' Somali organisations, but are included as they both deal with issues concerning Somaliland, and have Somalis as members and within the board. Among the interviewees, there is not only a regional variety among respondents, although most of them are from Somaliland (11 interviewees represented Somaliland organisations including two non-Somali organisations, from different parts of Somaliland), but also a variety of political visions on Somalia/ Somaliland. Among ethnic Somali interviewees, one was from the Ogaden region. In addition to the interviews, the data from the United Kingdom also include participant observation from one fundraising event of Somali organisations and from one meeting of Somali organisations. Among the interviewed Somali organisations, three were selected as examples to be looked at in more detail in this study.⁵⁷

1.2.4.1 Formal structures and membership

On the basis of the mapping and interviews, the following typology of organisations could be drawn

⁵⁷ Fieldwork in Somaliland by DIASPEACE Work Package 3 researchers has involved a partner of one diaspora organisation presented in this study (NOMAD International).

with regard to the aims, activities and memberships of organisations:⁵⁸

Development organisations. Organisations of this type are formed mainly to carry out development or humanitarian activities in Somalia/ Somaliland. In many cases, these types of organisations carry out development activities in the regions/ towns they or their clans originate from mainly for security reasons (see more in detail the discussion on the clan issue later in this section), but the membership is not exclusively based on clan, instead it is rather mixed in nature (including native British, other Westerners, and/ or members from other clans). Organisations included in this category have a professional approach to development work, are well established, well networked and carry out long-term projects in Somalia/ Somaliland.

Clan-/ region-based organisations. These organisations are formed around a certain clan, or around people originating from the same region (which in many although not in all cases relates to the question of the clan). It is difficult to draw a clear line between the clan-/ region-based organisations and development organisations. In contrast to development organisations, clan-/ region-based organisations include those that have not been able to set up long-term projects in Somalia/ Somaliland, but are involved in development work on a more *ad hoc* basis and send money to their communities 'back home' by pooling it among people originally from the same region or from the same clan.

Youth/ student organisations. These organisations are established by young Somalis to 'serve' youth in the United Kingdom by arranging activities, and/ or to function as a meeting point for young Somalis. In addition to youth organisations, many UK-based universities have Somali student associations.

Women's groups. These organisations include groups that are active in the United Kingdom serving Somali women and children and groups that carry out women-targeted projects in Somalia/ Somaliland.

⁵⁸ Due to the dynamic nature of Somali organisations, this typology should be considered as more of 'an ideal type' as in reality many organisations stretch their scope and activities above and across these typologies. For example, many of those formally defined as community organisations also engage in development- or peace-related activities in Somalia/ Somaliland, and in some cases there is a fine line between development organisations and clan-/ region-based organisations, as contacts through clan affiliations play a role when organisations engage in activities in Somalia/ Somaliland.

Community organisations. The primary aim of this type of organisations is to 'serve' and assist the Somali community in the United Kingdom with their integration into society and in providing support when there are problems. They also arrange activities for maintaining the Somali culture and language. These organisations often define their membership base as pan-Somali, i.e. comprising Somalis from different regional backgrounds.

Political organisations (including lobbying organisations and 'Somaliland democracy-building support' organisations). In the United Kingdom, there are political organisations that lobby for the recognition of the independence of Somaliland in the United Kingdom (and other European countries). Organisations stating to support democracy-building in Somaliland, although not involving themselves directly in party politics or running a political office, can be included in this category as they have a clear aim of supporting an independent Somaliland. In addition, according to interviews, all Somaliland political parties (Justice and Welfare Party, UCID⁵⁹, the Unity Party, Kulmiye, the United Democratic Peoples' Party, UDUB) have representatives in London. Political actors of South-Central Somalia, such as the Transitional Federal Government and Al-Shabab⁶⁰ presumably have their supporters and representatives in the United Kingdom, but the scope and nature of these is not known.

Multi-ethnic organisations. These organisations have been formed by immigrants from many different origin countries and/or are serving immigrants in the United Kingdom in general. Some specialised multi-ethnic organisations concentrate on immigrant youth and immigrant women.

Professional networks/ organisations. Organisations of this type usually represent a certain profession, i.e. Somali teachers or Somali health care professionals.

The organisations formed by Somalis in the United Kingdom vary in size, scope and formal structure. Among interviewed organisations, there are very well-established, rather long-standing (formed in the early 1990s) charities registered at the charity commission with formal decision-making bodies

⁵⁹ UCID has also got a strong connection to Finland, as the chairman is a Somali from Finland who also stands as their presidential candidate in the upcoming elections in Somaliland.

⁶⁰ Al-Shabab is an extremist Islamist organisation fighting the Transitional Government and currently 'governing' many parts of central and southern Somalia.

Box 3: Transnational nature of Somali organisations

Members of Almis Welfare Association (formed formally in 2005), for example, not only live in the United Kingdom and Somaliland but also in the United States and Saudi Arabia, totalling at about 800. Another organisation set up by Somalilanders, NOMAD International, also has a transnational dimension as it was established in the Netherlands in 1997 and moved to the United Kingdom in 2000 as the chairperson moved there. From then on this organisation has had access to wider networks as significant numbers of Somalilanders live in the United Kingdom. An organisation set up formally in 2000 by Somalis from the southern and central parts of the country, IQRA United Kingdom, has extensive transnational links to other diaspora countries in the form of sister organisations.

carrying out a variety of activities both in the United Kingdom and Somalia/ Somaliland. But there are also organisations that have been formed just recently, have not registered and therefore function as loose networks without formal structures. Many interviewed organisations also function on the transnational level having members in various other countries.

The leadership, i.e. chairpersons and the 'establishers' of organisations have lived in the West for a long time and are UK citizens or that of another EU country. Most interviewees were the chairpersons of the respective organisation and all except one interviewed ethnic Somali were either UK citizens or citizens of another European country.

1.2.4.2. Levels of activity and engagement

According to the interviews, the focus of activities of Somali organisations lies both on the integration of Somalis into society, and development and humanitarian work in Somalia/ Somaliland. Many of the organisations simultaneously engage in both fields of activity (see also Kleist, 2007, 2008a and 2009). According to their public statements, the majority of the surveyed organisations limit their area of activity to the United Kingdom (charity register documents and websites), but this does not mean that they do not take part in activities in Somalia/ Somaliland by, for example, arranging fundraising events in the United Kingdom. The scope of development and humanitarian involvement in Somalia/ Somaliland

varies significantly from established projects and programmes to *ad hoc* assistance.

Activities of Somali organisations in the United Kingdom include, for example, advice and information services on housing, legal, health and employment issues, language training (both English and Somali), homework assistance and other activities for children and youth, mental health advice and services such as counselling, the promotion of Somali culture, and social and cultural event organisation and interpreting.

There is a wide variety of sectors in which UK-based Somali organisations are establishing projects in the country of origin, including veterinary health, the protection of the environment, education, health, agriculture and fishing, disabled and orphan support, gender equality and women empowerment, youth work, and civil society development.

Activities of the interviewed Somali organisations often focus on areas where there is an expertise of the activists/establishers. Nurses and doctors have set up organisations focussing on health issues, teachers are focussing on education, and people who have experience in politics in the settlement countries have formed activities to support democracy-building in the area where they originate from. In many cases, the professionals from the diaspora organisations visited the established projects in Somalia/ Somaliland and during these visits arranged courses and training for local employees. In many cases also training materials, such as books, were transferred to project spots. This was especially the case in health-related projects.

According to the mapping, there are organisations with political agendas in the United Kingdom (see the typology above), but all interviewed organisations claimed to be non-political in nature, and perceived themselves as belonging to the civil society, grassroots level in Somalia/ Somaliland. One of the respondents originally from Somaliland described it as follows:

Politics within Somali context, if you get involved, it starts to divide, it's emotional engagement, it's not something that we would need to do what we do. I think, for development it is important, indirectly, but it's something that we should not be engaged (...) we have other channels (...) as much as possible to stay away, we don't

want to engage. It's quite difficult, 'cause sometimes what we do, things might overlap on the ground, at the same time we are engaging with and through human beings and politics are part of that, so indirectly we are always involved, but we are not politically motivated (UK_IN6).

In particular among the interviewees from South-Central Somalia, there is a clear distrust of Somali politics (see also Kleist, 2007), which explains to a certain extent the emphasis on the non-political nature of diaspora organisations among respondents. As one of the interviewees describes it:

Politics in Somalia is like a chicken without its head, lots of parties, Ethiopians, Islamic groups, warlords, and none of them is good for the citizens (...). I am not saying this because we are an NGO, but only organisation which is doing for the people are NGOs, they are the only ones that are serving people; they are one who are thinking of Somali people. There has been no progress after 1991, honest people have to ask themselves what are they doing, but people in Somalia, they do not know, they just look how they can survive, where to find food. And politicians are looking how to achieve for themselves, just for themselves, how to get more power for themselves (...) (UK_IN16).

This view of distancing oneself from politics should be understood in the context of the era of corrupt dictatorship, collapse of the state and prolonged civil war where politics in Somalia is associated with corruption and violence (see also Kleist, 2007, pp. 202–03; Kleist 2008, p. 312).

Civil society in the Somali context is, amongst others, defined by a mixture of traditional and modern characteristics. Modern civil society, often urban-based, includes NGOs, women's groups, religious leaders and other informal community and social groups. Somali NGOs emerged first in the early 1980s in response to the Ogaden refugee crisis and the numbers have since been gradually growing. Nowadays, local civil society organisations operate in a wide range of fields from relief and reconstruction to human rights protection and development, in fact largely occupying functions that would normally be attributed to the government. Many local

organisations have links to the diaspora from where the financial support is drawn. Traditional civil society refers to customary institutions comprising traditional elders (representatives of clan constituencies) who have a stake in resolving micro-conflicts (Quinn and Farah, 2008, p. 9).

Development projects carried out by Somali organisations can be seen as peace-relevant activities because, first of all, one of the important underlying factors behind the conflict is the unequal distribution of resources. Second, in particular school support activities in Somalia/ Somaliland are considered to be peacebuilding activities, as one major problem in Somalia is the fact that youths have nothing to do and/ or no future prospects. They therefore can get easily involved in conflict, for instance by being recruited by warlords. Schools provide youth with something to do, future perspectives and in so doing prevent them from taking part in conflicts. The interviewees made it quite clear that organisations involved in the development and humanitarian field do not want to (or in some cases cannot) engage in peacebuilding

by participating in Somali politics, but see their role as part of 'civil society' and building peace 'from below', i.e. the grassroots level.

1.2.4.3 Modes of engagement with the areas of origin

Only one interviewed association said it was based on a specific clan, whereas others claimed not being organised around a specific clan. Although in many cases clan is not outspoken, clan affiliation does play a role, in particular when organisations engage in development and peace related work in Somalia/ Somaliland. An important point in relation to the relevance of the clan and activities directed to areas where one's own clan resides is the security situation and accessibility of an area, in particular in central and southern Somalia. Safe access and activities carried out in an area, which is inhabited predominantly by one clan is invariably linked with trust relations.

As most of the interviewed Somalis claimed, including the IQRA representative, they wish to do more in Somalia and extend their activities even to the

Box 4: Somali organisations in action for peace and development: The cases of Almis Welfare Association, NOMAD International and IQRA UK

All interviewed organisations engage in development work, although in a variety of forms and at a variety of levels, in Somalia or Somaliland. The organisations working in Somalia/ Somaliland direct their activities towards their own clans, certain regions, or the national level.

The activities of Almis Welfare Association focus mainly on a specific clan in Hargeisa and support the education of member families in Somaliland (i.e. funding children to go to school and universities for families that could otherwise not afford it). They also try to address the needs based on a more *ad hoc* type of activities: a local branch in Hargeisa has been helping the electoral commission to register voters for the upcoming presidential elections.

NOMAD International, another Somaliland organisation, organises fundraising events and supports the emergency unit of a hospital in Hargeisa with money collected through fundraising. They run a project, which aims to help hospitals in Somaliland keep their staff, as the problems there

are low salaries and an overall lack of resources. NOMAD International's intention is to implement development- and peace-related activities in many parts of Somaliland for an equal development of the entire country and it avoids concentrating on one city/ region only. At the moment, most of their ongoing activities are mainly in Hargeisa, but they plan to extend similar activities to other main cities in Somaliland.

Activities (education sector support) of the UK-based IQRA are carried out in four cities in the Gedo and Galgadud regions of Somalia. According to the chairperson of IQRA, the members select the areas where the developmental activities are to be carried out in Somalia. At present, most members of IQRA originate from specific regions and from a specific clan.

Most of the project funding of all three organisations mentioned in this box currently comes from the members in the forms of membership fees and/ or from arranged fundraising events. IQRA UK, however, previously received external funding for its school project from the British relief NGO Muslim Aid.

national level, but this is impossible in practice as the country is divided, conflict-ridden and without a legitimate central government.

In the eyes of one interviewee, the situation of diaspora engagement in the Somali case is as follows:

The diaspora has got a dilemma, even when people don't want to be engaged in negative ways; the only way they can be engaged is very, very localised, village level way. It's good that people help whichever they can in that local way and that probably can be projected to add up together, but I don't see much being done in the national level by the diaspora, and the Somali community in the diaspora is divided, along the lines that people are divided in Somalia (...) the divisions within the diaspora are mere reflections of what is there. So we would be wise not to think that diaspora is one entity (UK_IN11).

The clearest fragmentary lines concerning Somalia, according to the interviews, are the position/ view on the Republic of Somalia vs. Somaliland and clan and regional allegiances. Somalia has got 18 regions out of which three are in self-declared independent Somaliland, two are disputed between Somaliland and Puntland; three regions are in semi-autonomous Puntland and ten in central and southern Somalia. In addition, ethnic Somalis live in Ogaden (Ethiopia), Djibouti and the North Eastern Province of Kenya. In the situation of the absence of legitimate central state authority and the existence of a variety of regions with different governance structures, diaspora engage through local networks and relations without central co-ordination resulting in localised actions on the regional and town/ village level. The lines of division mean that there is a lack of co-operation between different groups making national-level engagement virtually impossible. As the diaspora groups are diverse and fragmented, prospects of the diaspora being able to halt the conflict or develop the entire country (if we consider the borders of the Republic of Somalia) towards one goal appear unlikely.

1.2.5 Diaspora perceptions of peace and conflict

1.2.5.1 Perceptions of the situation in the country of origin, conflict and peacebuilding: Potentials and challenges

Perceptions of the most urgent problems in the area of origin and the most pressing conflict vary depending mainly on whether interviewees originate from Somaliland or from other parts of Somalia.

In Somaliland, the internal conflict is predominantly seen in the light of security problems related to the ongoing conflict in South-Central Somalia. The October 2008 suicide bombings in Somaliland (and in Puntland) are seen by Somaliland interviewees as a direct example of attempts by groups in southern Somalia to disturb the democratic development of Somaliland and these attacks have raised concerns over the security situation in Somaliland. For many Somaliland respondents, the security and fragility of Somaliland is related to the lack of recognition of Somaliland. It is claimed that if Somaliland was recognised by the international community it would be better equipped to secure its borders and provide internal security. In addition to security-related problems, the question of recognition of Somaliland is seen as a major cause for other pertinent problems such as poverty, unemployment and social problems (see also Kleist and Hansen, 2007). Interviewees also highlighted that Somaliland had gone through an internally arranged process of reconciliation, had ended civil war and that stability and peace have prevailed (at least to some extent). Poverty is mentioned by several respondents as the main problem in Somaliland.

With respect to concerns on stability, interviewees mention the situation and the border dispute in the Sool and Sanaag regions with Puntland, and Somalilanders express their worries that instability from there could spread to other parts of Somaliland.

Interviewees' perceptions as to the roots of the conflict in Somalia are all quite similar, whether they be from South-Central Somalia or from Somaliland. Initially, the conflict was clan-based and closely related to the unfair distribution of resources. While these issues still remain to some extent, conflicts have been transformed in many ways in the course of the years. Lack of leadership and warlords are mentioned as major reasons for the ongoing conflict.

Many interviewees are very critical towards the Transitional Federal Government (at the time when most interviews were carried out in November 2008) under President Abdullahi Yusuf, and described these politicians as selfish.

Several interviewees criticised that the reconciliation and peace conferences were not bottom-up but top-down processes, which enjoyed international support but excluded representatives deemed to be legitimate by the locals and they considered this fact to be one of the failures in Somalia. Several respondents compared the process with Somaliland, where reconciliation was based on a bottom-up approach and enjoyed trust and legitimacy among the people.

The international community is much criticised for its involvement in establishing and supporting peace negotiations, given its failure to understand the complex reality of Somalia and to make the processes inclusive. And yet it is also criticised for abandoning Somalia. Some interviewees, however, recognise that the fragmentation and the existence of several conflicting groups in South-Central Somalia is the problem. With each one of them trying to claim the representation of the people, it has made it very difficult for external actors to 'choose' the legitimate groups or actors to peace negotiations.

Organisations and interviewees from South-Central Somalia describe the lack of security, lawlessness and overall chaotic situation as major problems in Somalia. Many interviewees cannot travel to their areas of origin (at least not at the time when the interviews were conducted, in November 2008). In particular the rise of *Al-Shabab* and its clashes with the Ethiopian troops had made the security situation worse. At the time of the interviews all interviewees maintained the view that the intervention by the Ethiopian troops had exacerbated the situation in Somalia and their withdrawal would be essential.

The piracy problem off the Somali coast is also raised in several interviews as the interviews took place at the time when there was extensive media coverage of Somali pirates who had seized a big Saudi tanker in Autumn 2008. The piracy problem is considered a serious and illegal act, but at the same time the media coverage and the attention by the international community placed on piracy problems is criticised, as the root causes of the problem, illegal fishing and

waste dumping off the Somali coast by foreigners, are not acknowledged.

1.2.5.2 Perceptions of the role of the diaspora

The ongoing conflict in South-Central Somalia is a challenge for diaspora engagement and for some organisations, the security situation has in some cases altogether prevented any actual engagement. Most of the interviewed organisations engage in development and humanitarian activities and try to do the best they can in the given circumstances of conflict, but many interviewees claim that peace would be a precondition to a more "effective" diaspora contribution. One of the interviewees describes the situation: "Without sustainable peace you can't have functional normal life, that is a sad thing for our efforts, if we give up they will suffer even more (...) we are doing what we are doing whatever the situation. If there is peace you can achieve more and more" (UK_IN16).

According to the interviewees, the role of the diaspora in conflict settings is two-fold, fragmented and not necessarily always positive. Diaspora groups can fund the war by providing resources to conflicting parties, as has also been the case in Somalia (the scope of the support, however, is not known).

Several interviewees from Somaliland state that diaspora engagement in Somaliland is easier because of the level of stability and the absence of warlords spoiling the efforts made by the diaspora. In Somaliland, the role of the diaspora is seen as central in the political, economic and social sectors (see also Kleist and Hansen, 2007). The diaspora has a role in promoting human rights and accountability, and in facilitating the democratisation process. However, not all of the interviewees originally from Somaliland consider the role of diaspora in Somaliland solely to be positive. They criticised diaspora returnees who took positions and jobs in Somaliland in civil society organisations, politics or businesses as taking opportunities away from the locals and creating competition over positions.

1.2.6 Networking and co-operation

Networks among Somali organisations in the United Kingdom. There is no umbrella organisation for Somali organisations in the United Kingdom and the Somali community is fragmented along, for example, regional and clan lines (see also Hopkins, 2006). There are different forms of co-operation between some Somaliland organisations in the United Kingdom whereas Somali organisations from other parts of Somalia co-operate and network to a lesser extent. Co-operation among Somaliland organisations, however, includes several challenges according to the interviewees. Aims and goals differ in Somaliland organisations: there are those with political aims and those engaging in humanitarian and development work, different working methods and differences in size. Moreover, not all Somaliland organisations have the same vision of Somaliland and its (future) political status.

Transnational networks. The Somaliland Society of Europe (SSE), established in 2001 with the aim of bringing together Somaliland organisations in Europe, is one example for the Europe-wide co-operation among some Somaliland organisations. Almis Welfare Association and Nomad International are both members of SSE.

Somali organisations in general have managed to network extensively with organisations and individuals from the diaspora. SSE displays a rather unique form of a formal network among different organisations in the residence countries. IQRA, in turn, is a good example for an organisation engaging in extensive co-operation with its sister organisations in the diaspora (for example in Finland, with its sister organisation, Gannaane ry, see Section 1.3.4 and in the Netherlands, with HIRDA). In addition to the organisational-level networking, many organisations, such as Almis Welfare Association, have members in different countries around the world.

Networks in the United Kingdom. Somali organisations also network with institutions and organisations in the United Kingdom. Nomad International, for example, co-operates with universities (King's College and University of London Somali Society) in London, whereas IQRA collaborates with the council of the local borough where it is based. Organisational-level contacts to political parties in the United Kingdom are not very common. In some cases, however, there is co-operation through individual contacts between British political parties and Somali

organisations. For example, the chairperson or another active member of the organisation creates links with individual members of parliament, and keeps these MPs informed of Somali issues and in that sense tries to lobby them. According to empirical data, Somaliland organisations in particular have managed to create networks with academics and other professionals (such as health professionals) to pursue Somaliland-related matters.

Networks in the country of origin. There are different degrees of formality in the partnerships of UK-based Somali organisations with locals in Somalia/Somaliland. Some have 'institutionalised' relations and permanent partners, while some relations are more of an *ad hoc* nature and include changing partners depending on the activity. Types of partnerships among the interviewed organisations include a local branch, individual persons as contact/ focal point, a hospital/school board or a diaspora organisation as a branch of the locally established and registered organisation.

Nomad International, for example, has a direct link to the board of the hospital they support. They organise fundraising events in the United Kingdom and the money collected is sent directly to the hospital board. In addition to this ongoing hospital support project they have changing partners for more *ad hoc* activities in Somaliland. Almis Welfare Association has a branch in Hargeisa, which implements activities. A local sister organisation of IQRA, in southern Somalia takes care of the school projects.

1.2.7 Concluding remarks

The context in the United Kingdom, so-called political opportunity structures (POS), influences the mobilisation and the forms of organisation of the Somali community. This context is characterised by the communitarian immigration policy, which puts emphasis on ethnic communities and the recognition of diversity, integration measures that are taken care of in collaboration with NGOs including immigrants' community organisations and funding structures available in particular to integration activities of immigrant organisations.

There are no Somali diaspora-targeted funding structures for 'homeland' support, however, DfID has shown interest in such an initiative and has been consulting with the Somali community. In the UK context of recognising diverse ethnic groups,

negotiations with a respective group should, however, ideally take place through an umbrella, or other representative body of a given group. As Griffiths puts it, "the capacity of particular groups within refugee communities to articulate a 'communal voice' may significantly influence their access to resources in the local settlement context" (2002, p. 283). The Somali community in the United Kingdom is internally diverse and fragmented and not able to speak with a 'communal voice' for all Somalis. This has partly contributed to a situation where Somalis in the United Kingdom are rather invisible among ethnic minorities. The heterogeneity of the Somali community is also reflected by the difficulty of DfID in putting in place any Somali-targeted support structures.

Somali organisations in Britain vary in form and type, from formal community organisations to informal networks. Often organisations are engaged in several initiatives both concerning integration issues of Somalis to society in the United Kingdom and development work in the country of origin. It was, however, observed that many formal associations in their public statements limit their official scope of work to the United Kingdom. One reason for this, one can assume, is the fact that community organisations in the United Kingdom are 'recognised' partners in immigrant integration measures, and that there is also funding for that type of activities. As a proof of the strong activity and commitment level of the diaspora group, however, many such organisations initiate fundraising activities so that development work can be carried out in the regions of origin, without any external support. The focus on the integration measures can also be partly explained by the several social problems the Somali community in the United Kingdom is reported to have (unemployment, family breakdowns, *khat* abuse, school dropouts, and youth gangs).

Whether formally or more informally in nature, the Somali diaspora in the United Kingdom engages very actively in the development of the areas of origin. In many cases, development or humanitarian assistance through organisations is directed to a certain region of origin, where the establishers of the organisations are originally from, or where their clan originates. In the case of the central and southern parts of Somalia, this is perceived to relate closely to the safe access to the areas.

As concerns the diversity of the Somali community, one major division exists between the proponents of the independent Somaliland and proponents of a united Republic of Somalia, and this is also reflected in the perceptions of conflicts and the role of a diaspora. 'Somalilanders' perceive the situation in Somaliland not in terms of conflicts but prevailing peace, the most pressing problems relating to poverty and the lack of recognition of the independence of Somaliland. The lack of security and ongoing conflict in the central and southern parts of Somalia are perceived as the most pressing problems, which also limit the diaspora's access to certain areas of the country. The role of the diaspora in Somalia in general are perceived as important, even essential, in particular on the local level. The negative outcomes of diaspora engagement are also recognised as it is expressed that parts of the diaspora also support the conflicting parties. Another negative aspect mentioned is that parts of the diaspora consider themselves as protagonists which, in turn, limits for example the job opportunities of locals.

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1.3 Somali organisations in Finland

1.3.1 Somali migration to Finland

In the early 1990s, asylum seekers from different conflict zones started to enter Finland. Somalis, many of them arriving via the Soviet Union, were the largest group among them (Aallas, 1991). One factor that linked Somalia and Finland in the refugee flow was the co-operation between Somalia and the former Soviet Union, based on Cold War alliances. When war broke out, Somalis studying in the former Soviet Union functioned as links for other Somalis who were seeking asylum there. When the Soviet Union collapsed and was therefore no longer able to host Somalis, Finland was the closest Western country. It has been claimed that the majority of Somalis who entered Finland between 1990 and 1992 did not consider Finland as their primary destination. After 1992, more Somalis entered Finland through chain migration and official family reunification programmes (Alitolppa-Niitamo, 2004). Somalis who arrived from the early 1990s onwards have been the largest single ethnic group applying for asylum in Finland. Therefore, this period constitutes a milestone in the Finnish history of immigration (ibid.). Somalis have applied for asylum in Finland each year until the time of writing, but much less in numbers compared, for example, to the United Kingdom. In 2008, there was a considerable increase

in the number of Somali asylum seekers with 1,181 applications, which made them the second-largest group of asylum seekers after Iraqi citizens (1,255) (Finnish Immigration Service, 2009b).

In 2008, Finland had a community of 9,810 people who spoke Somali as their mother tongue and 4,852 of them were Somali citizens (Statistics Finland, 2008). Somalis are the fourth-largest group of immigrants in Finland and the largest group of immigrants originating from Africa (ibid., 2007). A considerable part of the Somali community in Finland consists of youth and children (Tiilikainen, 2003; Hautaniemi, 2004). Most Somalis live in the capital area of Finland (cities of Helsinki, Espoo, Vantaa), and, with a few exceptions, Somali organisations are based in these cities.

In 2008, 420 Somalis applied for Finnish citizenship, compared to 207 applications in 2007. In these last two years, Somalis were the second-largest group of foreign citizens applying for Finnish citizenship after Russian migrants (Finnish Immigration Service, 2009a).

1.3.2 Immigration and refugee legislation

Until the 1980s, Finland was a country of emigration (labour migration from Finland to Sweden and North America) and never experienced large-scale labour immigration. Ethnic relations until 1990 pertained to its old minorities: the well-established Swedish-speaking minority, indigenous Sami people, and smaller cultural minorities (Roma, Jews and Muslim Tartars). These old minorities were hardly visible as such and hardly recognised as distinct entities. The number of foreign citizens in Finland was very small until the 1980s. During the 1980s, migration patterns changed when more foreign citizens migrated to Finland and the attention towards forming policies on immigration rose (Wahlbeck, 1999; Saukkonen, 2007). The Aliens Act (400/83) came into force for the first time in 1983. It was reversed and replaced with a new Aliens Act in 1991, and again in 2004⁶¹ (Aliens Act 301/2004).

The Act of Integration (L 493/1999, §2) came into force in 1999 and was amended in 2006. One of the main aims of migrant integration was defined as adopting the main characteristics of Finnish culture while maintaining his/her own culture, language and religion. An integration plan (*kotoutumissuunnitelma*) is drafted once an immigrant has settled in a

Table 2: Number of Somali asylum applications and asylums granted

	Asylum applications by Somali nationals	Number of asylum cases granted
1997	113	77
1998	126	108
1999	111	67
2000	129	99
2001	102	89
2002	63	57
2003	93	75
2004	168	85
2005	267	158
2006	210	184
2007	244	232
2008	1181	n/a

Source: Finnish Immigration Service statistics 1997–2007.

⁶¹ The new Aliens Act defines more clearly the duties and rights of foreigners.

municipality. According to this plan, which is based on the individual's needs, training programmes and language courses are provided by the respective municipalities. These measures and activities are meant to support the positive integration into society and, ultimately, to find employment. An integration plan is completed within three years (if an immigrant does not find employment before that), and during that time an immigrant can obtain an integration allowance (*kotoutumistuki*). Refugee resettlement has been based on the policy of dispersal all over the country in different municipalities (Wahlbeck, 1999). But, in the Somali case, what has in fact happened is that once refugees obtained a secure legal position they re-migrated within Finland to places where other Somalis live (mainly the capital area), or in some cases to Europe, especially to the United Kingdom.

In Finnish society, income differences are relatively small and boundaries between 'social classes' are relatively blurred. The egalitarian ideals that have traditionally been part of the society aim to equalise and integrate its members and therefore Wahlbeck (1999) has claimed that "the notion of ethnic minorities living in their own insular communities within the larger society cannot easily be fitted into the traditional ideal of an egalitarian society." There is a multicultural ethos behind official immigration policy as integration incorporates the maintenance of the original culture. In practice, however, Finnish integration policies have been criticised of being assimilationist compared to, for example, the communitarian policy and recognition of ethnic minorities in the United Kingdom (*ibid.*).

An immigrant who has lived in Finland for at least six years, who has a satisfactory degree of knowledge of either Swedish or Finnish, "has not committed any punishable act", and can provide "proof of a reliable account of his or her livelihood" (Nationality Act 359/2003) can obtain Finnish citizenship. The same Act, however, states:

No one may be naturalised, even if he or she would meet the requirements for naturalisation, if there are well-founded reasons for suspecting that the naturalisation will jeopardise the security of the State or public order, or if the main purpose of acquiring citizenship is to take advantage of the benefit related to Finnish citizenship without aiming to settle in Finland, or if naturalisation conflicts with

the best interests of the State for some other reason on the basis of an overall consideration of the applicant's situation.

1.3.3 Support structures for migrant organisations

Finland and other Nordic countries have a very high number of voluntary associations compared to other countries in the world (see for example Siisiäinen, 2008). Immigrants, in particular refugees, have also been active in establishing voluntary associations (Saksela, 2003; Pyykkönen, 2005). Support for voluntary associations in general is available, although competed, in three forms: general allowance (*yleisavustus*), targeted allowance (*kohdeavustus*) and project allowance (*projektiivustus*). However, no allowances are available for simply establishing an association (Raittinen, 2002, p. 26).

This strong tradition of voluntary associations is part of the wider context, so-called political opportunity structures, in Finland within which immigrants can organise themselves. Migrant organisations can apply for (project) funding for activities that support the integration of migrants into society, as well as development and humanitarian activities in the country of origin. However, funding schemes are highly competitive. Integration activities of interviewed Somali organisations can be funded by the Ministry of Education and cities/ municipalities whereas development projects in Somalia/Somaliland are funded by the Ministry for Foreign Affairs (MFA) (development co-operation budget, general funding scheme of the budget line of support to NGO development co-operation). When financing NGO development projects, the Ministry requires some 'own' funding from the respective organisation; 15 per cent of the whole project budget has to be provided by the organisation. It is essential to note that the MFA does not have any specific funding scheme or quotas for diaspora organisations. In spite of this, quite uniquely, Somali associations have been able to access this general funding scheme, which is a good indication of the interplay between political opportunity structures (such as available funding) and the strong level of activity of the diaspora group (more about this in the Concluding remarks on pp. 50–51).

According to the MFA,⁶² the first development project carried out by a Somali association in Somalia obtained funding in the year 2000. From 2000 to 2007, 16 different Somali associations in total received funding for 29 development projects. MFA-funded projects were implemented in the sectors of health (12), education (9), support for women, children (mainly orphans) and youth (5), and rural development (2). One project covered several of the above-mentioned sectors. Out of 12 organisations interviewed, five had received funding from the MFA during the years, and four had applied unsuccessfully. In addition to development NGO funding, the MFA has funded the project "Strengthening the Health Sector in Somaliland and Puntland through the Engagement of Somali Diaspora Health Professionals from Finland" implemented by the IOM Helsinki office within the MIDA framework.⁶³

1.3.4 Diaspora organisations

Through the mapping exercise over 100 Somali organisations were found in Finland. This mapping, however, was not able to verify the existence and functionality of all organisations and it can be estimated that a relatively high number of these associations has ceased their activities. According to the interviewees' estimations, there are between 40 and 50 Somali organisations in Finland at the time of writing. The absolute majority of these organisations is situated in the capital area of Finland (cities of Helsinki, Espoo and Vantaa).

Fieldwork in Finland (in the cities of Helsinki, Espoo and Vantaa) took place in two phases: in August and September 2008 and in January 2009. 12 in-depth interviews with representatives of Somali organisations were conducted. Ten of the interviewees were male, two of them female. All of the interviewees were born

in Somalia/ Somaliland⁶⁴ and migrated to Finland either as adults or as youngsters and can therefore be defined as first-generation Somalis. Interviewees are originally from several different parts of Somalia: different regions of Somaliland, Puntland and various regions in South-Central Somalia (including Gedo, Galgadud, Hiiraan and Central Shebelle).⁶⁵ All interviewees are Finnish citizens, speak Finnish and are well-educated, having at least a bachelor degree, but not all of them have managed to find employment in Finland adequate to their qualifications.

Among the interviewed Somali organisations, one was selected for in-depth research in this study to elaborate the 'logics' of diaspora engagement through an organisation.⁶⁶

1.3.4.1 Types of organisations, members, formal structures and the scope of activities

Somali organisations in Finland vary from very well established registered organisations to recently set up initiatives. On the basis of the mapping exercise and 12 in-depth interviews, several different types of Somali organisations were found in Finland. Based on the typology developed in the previous section (Somali organisations in the United Kingdom, pp. 35–36), identified Somali organisations in Finland belong to the following typologies:

- Development organisations;
- Youth/ student organisations;
- Women's organisations;
- Community organisations;
- Multi-ethnic organisations;
- Professional networks/ organisations.

The 12 interviewed organisations represented a variety of forms and sizes pertaining to their members and activities. The sizes of organisations varied from those with about 30 members in Finland to those with between 200 and 300 members. The largest one interviewed had around 900 members. Many

⁶² These data were collected from the annual reports (1995–2007) on funded NGO projects published by the Finnish Ministry for Foreign Affairs (*Kansalaisjärjestöhankeluttelo*). (The 1999 issue was not available.) Even though the MFA does not differentiate organisations/ associations on the basis of the origin country of the establishers/ members the author, due to her knowledge of Somali organisations, has been able to identify the names of most Somali organisations in Finland.

⁶³ The one-year pilot project, funded by the MFA Department for Africa and the Middle East started in 2008 and includes activities such as: identification of essential gaps in the health sector in Somaliland and Puntland; identification of available skills among the Finland-based Somali health professionals and setting up of a skills database; temporary assignments for up to 22 health professionals; MIDA Conference in Helsinki/ Finland; MIDA Health Northern Somalia–Project Experiences and Lessons Learned (publication).

⁶⁴ The empirical data consist of interviews of Somalis originally from many different parts of the Republic of Somalia (no ethnic Somalis originally from Ethiopia, Kenya or Djibouti were interviewed) thus in this study, 'Somalia' refers to the borders of the Republic of Somalia. Somaliland here refers to the self-proclaimed independent region in the northwest. The author wishes to express her neutrality with respect to the issue of the status of Somaliland.

⁶⁵ See Interview Table in Annex I.

⁶⁶ Ideally, the diaspora organisations' partners in the Horn of Africa would have been included in the fieldwork to complement the DIASPEACE research but in the case of central and southern Somalia it was impossible to conduct fieldwork due to security constraints.

Box 5: From an informal transnational assistance network to a registered association: The case of Gannaane ry

The organisation Gannaane ry has been carrying out activities in Somalia since 1998 with fundraising within the wide transnational network of people originally from the Gedo and Galgaduud regions in Somalia. Until 2002, it functioned without any formal structure. In 2002, it was registered as a formal association in Finland as a result of the changes on the international level. After the terrorist attacks in the United States on 11 September 2001, activities related to remittances started to be under careful inspections in Western countries. Therefore, Gannaane ry, and its transnational networks, decided to formalise their activities and register in their respective countries in order to ensure the continuation of the support for schools in Somalia.

organisations also had members or supporters in other countries around the world. For example, Gannaane ry, an organisation involved in the education sector in Gedo region in southern Somalia has only around 70 members in Finland but approx. 1,000 members worldwide.

All interviewed organisations are registered associations. In fact, many of them were established several years before registration. The Association Database (official register of associations in Finland) names 1992 as the year in which the first Somali associations were registered. According to interviewees, organisations have been registered in order to gain access to external funding and formal "partnerships" with, for example, the Finnish Foreign Ministry, and also to make activities more professional, accountable and visible.

1.3.4.2 Activities and leadership

Activities of Somali organisations in Finland concentrate on supporting the Somali community in Finland and on humanitarian and development work in Somalia/ Somaliland. Many organisations engage on both levels simultaneously.

Interviewed organisations in Finland are involved in language training (Finnish and Somali) and computers, sports, arranging multicultural events, seminars on Somalia/ Somaliland, youth work, and homework clubs.

Activities of interviewed organisations in Somalia/ Somaliland include support for orphans, farmers, universities, schools and other educational institutions, hospitals (including, for example, maternity and tuberculosis clinics) and support for the democratisation of Somaliland. There are also two organisations that had previously supported peace talks and reconciliation between two clans. Two organisations out of 12 are not able to carry out any long-term projects in Somalia due to the poor security situation. They, however, maintain links with locals in the areas of origin and try to support them as much as they can, for example by sending some equipment to schools and hospitals. Organisational engagement in the country of origin often takes place on the local level through personal networks of active people in organisations. The organisations interviewed for this study claim to be of a non-political nature, purely involved in humanitarian and development work in Somalia/ Somaliland and they show a clear distrust of Somali politics and politicians in general.⁶⁷

In many cases, activities of Somali organisations in Somalia/ Somaliland are directed towards the area in which the 'establisher' and/or active members possess professional know-how. Doctors and nurses have set up health-related projects, teachers established education-related projects aiming to transfer the skills, know-how and build capacity in Somalia/ Somaliland through training of the locals.

Leadership of Somali associations in many cases is in the hands of resourceful and well connected individuals who in some cases are involved in several associations or have initiated many projects (see for example Box 6). Interviewed representatives of Somali organisations are all well integrated into the Finnish society in terms of language, culture and administrative/ bureaucratic procedures. They are all Finnish citizens and well-educated, possessing at least a bachelor level degree (but not all have found a job that corresponds to their level of qualification).

Funding mechanisms of the interviewed associations (for activities in Finland and in Somalia/ Somaliland) vary from 100 per cent own funding by membership fees or funds raised to external project support by Finnish authorities (such as the MFA, the Ministry for Education and municipalities).

⁶⁷ See section on Somali organisations in the United Kingdom, p. 37; also Kleist, 2008b.

Box 6: Activities, co-operation networks and funding mechanisms: The case of Gannaane ry

Gannaane ry in Somalia began its activities as an informal group. Now registered, the organisation carries out activities in El-Adde town in the Gedo region of Somalia, which is bordered by the Ogaden in Ethiopia, the North Eastern Province in Kenya, and the Somali regions of Bakool, Bay, Middle Juba, and Lower Juba further east. This region can be accessed from Kenya.

Gannaane ry has prepared a comprehensive development plan for the region, together with local NGOs and other partners. The plan involves developing basic education, a water project, the establishment of health care, a programme for women, youth, handicapped orphans and elderly people, and capacity-building for local NGOs. This plan is to be realised in co-operation with other Somali and Finnish NGOs, networks and sister organisations abroad.

Gannaane ry itself focuses on activities in the educational sector in El-Adde and has entered into a co-operation agreement with another Finland-based Somali organisation, the Somali Education and Agricultural Development Association (SOEADA), which is responsible for a water project in the Gedo region including El-Adde town. Some active individuals engage in both organisations in Finland simultaneously.

In El-Adde, Gannaane ry, as well as SOEADA, works with local partner organisations and co-operates with local authorities of the area and two aid organisations that have been present in the area for a long time (Norwegian Church Aid and Gedo Health Consortium).

Gannaane ry also has a strong transnational aspect: It has sister organisations in several countries which co-operate extensively and share responsibility among them. It co-operates closely with one of its sister organisations, IQRA UK (see section on Somali organisations in the United Kingdom, pp. 35–38). Sister organisations around the globe maintain close contacts and pool money among members and sister organisations on a transnational scale. In 2004, for example, they managed to raise US \$42,000 as donations for school projects from members who originally came from El Adde-town. The activities of Gannaane ry started with supporting the existing elementary school by raising money from members worldwide. Since then, activities have been extended to build a secondary and a high school. Presently, Gannaane ry and IQRA support the primary school in El Adde. Gannaane ry and IQRA UK have also supported an orphanage and have built a well.

In addition to its own fundraising activities, Gannaane ry has managed to receive project funding from the MFA. In 2006, the organisation was granted project funding of €28,821 from the MFA, which was used to set up a high school in El-Adde. The project included the acquisition of materials and hiring teachers. At the moment, five teachers, one guard and one cleaner work at the high school, which has 610 pupils. Pupils come to the school, which can be attended nearly for free, from other cities of the region, too, as it is the only of its kind in the Gedo region. Its number of students keeps growing. The MFA has continued supporting the project granting the funding until 2010. Gannaane ry also continues to support primary and secondary schools in El-Adde.

1.3.4.3 Patterns of organisation: Regional and clan affiliations

Looking at the activities in Somalia/ Somaliland, often the development projects/ activities are carried out in the regions or towns where the chairperson and the majority of the members are originally from. There are, however, exceptions to this among the interviewees: two organisations do not carry out projects in their 'home area' but selected the area on the basis of a needs assessment.

Regional affiliation often, but not uniquely, relates to the clan, as many interviewees have neither been brought up nor lived in the areas of origin whereas their clan, thus their roots and relatives, originates from these areas. Interplay between regional and clan affiliation is not in all cases straightforward, as there are areas that are inhabited by many different clans. There is a case among the interviewees where the association carried out assistance activities in the region they were from (or in fact where their roots are), but emphasised that they assist everyone

living there, not only their own clan. By claiming this, the interviewee wished to emphasise the fact that the organisation was *not* based on clan affiliation. The clan issue is often not outspoken and, in fact, none of the interviewed organisations expressed to be formed around a certain clan. Moreover, interviewees were extremely critical towards “using the clan” in organisations, politics, etc. and, indeed, a few claimed that clan identity did not mean much to them. Clan affiliation, however, does play a role when diaspora organisations carry out concrete activities in Somalia. In many cases, they select the area for development projects in accordance to clan and regional affiliation because of security reasons. Many of the interviewees stated that they have access, i.e. “a channel” to this certain area in Somalia where their relatives⁶⁸ live. Organising around clan lineages or regional affiliation has therefore much to do with trust relations, and may become more expressed/important in the absence of legitimate state structures (Kleist, 2007, p. 170). According to the author’s data and similarly to what Kleist (2007) and Hopkins (2006, p. 376) found out, even if people do not wittingly or purposefully organise themselves around clans, the “politics of the country of origin permeates and influences organisations in countries of resettlement,” as well as the current security situation in Somalia concretely affects the selection of areas for the development work which in many cases reflects clan and regional affiliations.

It has to be noted, however, that the Somali clan system is not a ‘static’ structure, as Virginia Luling points out:

[The clan system] is a system of great range, intricacy and flexibility. Far from being something that sets one set of people permanently against a fixed ‘other’, it is a flexible scale by means of which alliances can be constantly reshuffled. Who I am may be inescapably laid down, but to whom I turn for support, whom I will support in my turn, with whom I ally myself, is by no means so. The Somali genealogy is better described as a sophisticated construct—sophisticated both in the modern sense of being complex, and in the older one of being deceptive (2006, p. 474).

⁶⁸ In many cases, affiliation to a certain region was described as having relatives there, instead of referring to a clan.

Therefore, even if the clan plays a role, one cannot claim the Somali associational field to be solely based on clan lineage. Some organisations that have started their activities by pooling money among people from a certain region and clan have widened the networks to officials and to other NGOs, and have extended their membership scope to native Finnish members and, in some cases, to other clans. Hence, they can no longer be defined as (exclusively) clan-based organisations (see the Typology of development organisations on pp. 35–36).

1.3.5 Diaspora perceptions of peace and conflict

It is commonly agreed among the interviewees from different parts of Somalia/ Somaliland that the conflict in Somalia has deteriorated in the past two years due to the intervention by Ethiopian troops. As most of the interviews were carried out in August 2008, when Ethiopian troops were still in Somalia, their presence was highly criticised by the interviewees. The Transitional Federal Government (TFG) of President Abdullahi Yusuf was also criticised by many interviewees. The TFG was described as being composed of uneducated former warlords who only take care of their own interests. Many interviewees, however, are setting their hopes on the Djibouti peace process. Although many interviewees considered the withdrawal of the Ethiopian troops a necessity, one respondent, in an interview carried out in January 2009, did raise concerns about their withdrawal as it could lead to a power vacuum and fighting between different groups.

It is commonly acknowledged by interviewees that the Islamic Court Union managed to bring peace in 2006, but that this was entirely undone by external interventions, such as the arrival of the Ethiopian troops. Chaos in Somalia is to some extent blamed on external actors and interventions in Somalia. The international community was also criticised in its actions towards Somalia. Many stated that it was not genuinely interested in Somalia. Peace negotiations sponsored by the international community have not had legitimate leaders, but “wrong leaders” as one of the interviewee stated (FIN_IN9). The vulnerability of youth for warlords’ recruitments was considered to be an additional factor for the continuation of conflict.

Many interviewees stated that the model of Somaliland should be transferred to Somalia. Somaliland

and Puntland as examples of regions at peace are mentioned by many interviewees. However, many respondents originally from Somaliland and Puntland are critical of governance in these areas, as well as of the volatility of the Sool and Sanaag Regions (the area that is disputed between Somaliland and Puntland). Some interviewees from southern Somalia criticise Somaliland as being secessionist, while interviewees from Somaliland consider the lack of recognition of independence as one of the major root causes for problems in Somaliland.

1.3.5.1 Perceptions of the diaspora's role

The role of the diaspora in Somalia and Somaliland is seen as important by all interviewees, but not without criticisms or recognition of the negative side. Among the benefits of diaspora engagement mentioned by interviewees are the creation of jobs and services, such as schools and hospitals, and transfers of skills and know-how. They also mention that the diaspora plays an important role in conflict resolution as it has experienced functioning democratic states and can transfer these ideas to Somalia.

The peacebuilding role of the diaspora is seen in particular in terms of providing school services, as the danger of youths being easily recruited by conflict actors (whether warlords or *Al-Shabab*) due to hardly any job perspectives is recognised as one of the main problems of continuing conflict. This peacebuilding role is also perceived to be important from the settlement country perspective: the Somali communities in their countries of settlement cooperate and create trust among themselves and in so doing overcome differences. This 'model' of co-operation and trust-building can then be transferred to Somalia.

Many interviewees also recognise the negative side of Somali diaspora engagement in its fragmentation. Many interviewees mention that parts of the diaspora support the conflicting parties and parts support peace- and development-related activities. The question as to which issues are perceived to be supporting conflict and peace respectively is difficult to assess and depends on the perceptions of people. For example, one interviewee compared the situation of Ethiopian troops in Somalia to a Russian invasion of Finland and stated that it was a national right to send the money to support the fight against Ethiopian troops.

Considerable difference was seen on the perceptions by 'Somalilanders' and Somalis from South-Central Somalia on their own role. In Somaliland, because of the relative stability, the diaspora is perceived to have more 'space' to work constructively, whereas in the context of ongoing conflict in South-Central Somalia some interviewees perceive the diaspora engagement challenging mainly due to lack of security.

1.3.6 Networking and co-operation

Networks among Somali organisations in Finland.

All the interviewed organisations have extensive networks on different levels. Co-operation with other Somali organisations in Finland takes place mainly in the framework of the Finnish Somalia Network, which brings together those Finnish and Somali associations involved in, or planning, development co-operation activities in Somalia. The Network—the only of its kind in Finland—was established in 2004 and has received funding from the Finnish Foreign Ministry since 2005. It is co-ordinated by the Finnish NGO International Solidarity Foundation. The main aims of the Network are competence- and capacity-building of their members by providing courses on topics such as accounting, reporting, development project planning, etc., to share information of the development activities in Somalia, to facilitate co-operation between NGOs working in Somalia, and to share information on the situation of Somalia.⁶⁹

Within the network, a proposal for a common development project in Somalia is being discussed. Most of the respondents are very positive about this common project as it would be good to 'join forces', but many doubt whether it would really work out. Problems would already start when choosing an area/region for the project. One respondent does not believe in the success of this project and states that there is not enough collaboration between different Somali associations in Finland. In addition to the Network, a co-operative of seven associations working in different parts of Somalia was established in 2004 (three of the co-operative member associations are also members of the Network). Successful collaboration between associations that are involved in development activities in different regions in Somalia takes place mainly by exchanging information, knowledge and 'best practices' of carrying out development work.

⁶⁹ See website of the Finnish Somalia Network, available at <www.somaliverkosto.net>.

Albeit the co-operation, one cannot say that the field of Somali associations in Finland is unitary. Although the situation has changed since the early 1990s, when the traumas of war still reflected on communities in Finland and even caused clashes amongst members from different clans, one respondent stated that some still engage in politics and think according to clan lines, which make collaboration difficult. Some interviewees describe that some associations engage in political activities and state that co-operation with associations of this nature is difficult. According to interviewees, collaboration between associations that are solely involved in humanitarian and development work without a direct political agenda seems to be easier.

Transnational networks. Many of the interviewed organisations have important transnational networks with other Somali organisations in different countries worldwide, or have members in different countries. In fact, transnational networks of organisations may be even more important and wider than networks within Finland. In some cases, fundraising for development activities is arranged transnationally: members and/ or supporters worldwide contribute money, for example, to help a hospital in a certain region of Somalia. A few well-established and most long-standing organisations have managed to network with international organisations and receive support from organisations such as the World Health Organization and UNICEF for their development projects in Somalia.

Networks in Finland. There are rather widespread contacts between interviewed Somali organisations and different Finnish NGOs, both with respect to activities in Somalia/ Somaliland and to integration activities in Finland.

Interviewed organisations do not officially network or co-operate with Finnish political parties. Contacts are rather made on the individual level. For example, chairpersons of some organisations are active members of Finnish political parties, and thus socially profit from political networks.

Generally, Finnish Somali organisations have extensive contacts to Finnish officials. Some of them receive support for their integration activities in Finland or the facilitation of multiculturalism from the cities where the organisations are registered, or from the Finnish Ministry of Education. The Finnish Ministry for Foreign Affairs (MFA) grants support for the development of humanitarian activities in Somalia/ Somaliland.

Networks in the origin country. Each organisation engaging in development or humanitarian work in Somalia/ Somaliland has a local partner ranging from permanent partners to changing and *ad hoc* contacts depending on the activity. Several different forms of partnerships among the interviewed organisations can be found: a local organisation established by local people as a partner, a local organisation established by a diaspora returnee as a partner, an individual functioning as a 'focal point' or a branch of the diaspora organisation (set up by the diaspora organisation). Those Somali organisations who receive support from the MFA have a local organisation as a partner as this is the requirement from the MFA.

1.3.7 Concluding remarks

The context in Finland, so-called political opportunity structures (POS) in which Somalis organise themselves, is characterised by an active integration policy and measures reflecting the 'egalitarian ideals' of Finnish society (contrary to 'ethnic enclaves', see section on Somali organisations in the United Kingdom, pp. 34), a tradition of voluntary associations, and the existence of funding structures (also for the development co-operation of NGOs and not for diaspora groups in particular).

In Finland, the organisational field of Somalis seems to concentrate widely around the registered associations. Many organisations are involved simultaneously in activities concerning integration issues in Finland and in development and humanitarian work in the areas of origin, claiming to be non-partisan towards Somali politics. Many interviewed organisations in their public statements and agendas state that they are involved in development co-operation. In the Finnish case, several Somali organisations have managed to access the general funding structure of the MFA for development NGO co-operation without any specific quotas for Somalis. This is due to the many interlinked factors and shows the complex interlinkages between the Finnish context and the activity and commitment level of Somalis themselves. On the one hand, the active involvement and approaches towards the Ministry by Somalis is one way of accessing funding, on the other, there is the interest shown by the MFA in building the capacity of Somali organisations. This, in turn relates to the visibility of the Somali community in Finland (Somalis being the largest group from Africa) and the harsh situation in Somalia, which has made the delivery of humanitarian and development aid by international actors and NGOs challenging.

Organisations that have managed to secure funding for their development projects and function sustainably are formed and chaired by resourceful and well-networked individuals who are well-integrated into Finnish society. However, many associations struggle with securing funding for their activities and find it hard to meet the requirements of the Finnish bureaucratic system.

Clan and regional affiliations in the case of Finnish Somali organisations are not outspoken, but are importantly reflected when organisations engage in activities in Somalia. The conflict in Somalia is perceived as being far away from the ordinary people's life and associated with warlordism and criminality. In this context, it is quite understandable that organisations emphasise their distance from Somali politics and claim to be part of the grassroots level as humanitarian actors (to whom all people are equal and clan lineages do not matter).

Collaboration between different Somali organisations is claimed to become easier when they focus on humanitarian work and politics are left aside. This has been the principle of the Finnish Somalia Network, which brings together several Somali associations working in different parts of Somalia, one also from Somaliland.

Many Somali organisations have wide networks on different levels and in many cases transnational networks (following regional or clan lines) are more important and broader than collaboration with actors based in Finland. Networks increase the capacity of Somali organisations, as often the resources are secured through these contacts. The openings by settlement country actors, such as native Finnish development NGOs, and the MFA support for capacity-building measures are an important contribution to Somali associations' capacity in undertaking development work in the areas of origin.

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1.4 A comparative assessment of Somali diaspora organisations in Europe

The striking differences between the contexts in the three countries of settlement, Finland, Italy, and the United Kingdom, as well as between the respective Somali communities render a comparison between these three cases challenging. For analytical purposes, in order to identify and compare factors that frame Somali diaspora engagement and mobilisation processes, we have highlighted elements distinguishing between those referring to the context in the country of settlement and characteristics and attributes, which can be referred to the diaspora community. This distinction between context and diaspora groups' characteristics is not clear-cut and more so—as stressed in the Introduction—dynamic aspects are of major interest for the purpose of this research. Considering, however, this distinction as useful for the purpose of our assessment, it is interesting to note that despite the differences in contexts of settlement, there are several similarities in the ways work is undertaken by Somali diaspora organisations.

1.4.1 Contexts in the country of settlement

The three countries of settlement differ

- In their historical links towards Somalia;
- In the composition of immigration flows of Somalis;
- With respect to their immigration/ emigration history;
- In the political opportunity structures, namely legislative measures, policies and modes for integrating ethnic minorities in the country as well as in the funding structures for immigrants' organisations.

1.4.1.1 Migration history in the United Kingdom, Italy and Finland

The migration movement of Somalis to the United Kingdom has a long history similar to that of Italy, although the earlier migration movements consisted mainly of people from Somaliland due to its colonial past. From the late 1980s onwards, the United Kingdom has been one of the major destinations for Somali asylum seekers, both from Somaliland and other parts of Somalia. All in all, the United Kingdom has one of the largest communities of Somalis in Western countries and has also become a famous destination for a so-called 'secondary migration' from other European countries (in particular from Scandinavia and the Netherlands). The United Kingdom has become a

preferred destination, first for its 'multicultural' policies and second for the existence of sizeable Somali communities in the country. The significant number of Somalis in the United Kingdom translates into a better 'organisational capacity' as Somalis have access to wider communities through which resources can be pooled as compared to Finland and Italy.

Field research in the United Kingdom found a variety of organisations many of which were formed by 'Somalilanders', and which included explicit political activities by Somalilanders (lobbying for the recognition of Somaliland as well as the presence of political parties in the United Kingdom operating in Somaliland) and organisations involved in humanitarian and development work.

Italy's colonial past with Somalia explains the presence of a historical community of Somalis in addition to those who arrived after the state collapse in 1991. Most Somalis in Italy are originally from South-Central Somalia. In fact, the absolute majority of organisations and initiatives found in Italy engaged in development and peace-related activities operate towards southern central parts of the country (none of the Somali organisations found during our research were formed by people from Somaliland).

Italy hosts a 'high-ranking' community of Somalis who belonged or still belong to the elite in Somalia. Furthermore, many Somali women—often with high human and social capital—have migrated to Italy, which is the reason for the existence of quite a number of women's organisations. Also, a variety of organisations (and leaders) were found that are explicitly involved in transnational political practices.

The relationship between Finland and Somalia is significantly different compared to both Italy and the United Kingdom as it does not have any colonial ties and is instead limited to development co-operation in the 1980s. Therefore, the Somali community in Finland consists predominantly of people who—from the 1990s onwards—arrived as asylum seekers from different parts of Somalia.

1.4.1.2 Migration policies and institutional contexts

For a long time, Italy has been a country of emigration and only after the mid-1970s until the early 1980s did it become a country of immigration. This is similar to Finland where immigration began to increase around the same time. Italy, the United Kingdom and

Finland thus differ extensively not only with respect to their immigration/ emigration history but also to their legislative measures, policies, and modes for integrating ethnic minorities in the country. These factors partly also relate to the presence of an open or closed 'political opportunity structure' (POS).

The existence or absence of specific policies engaging and supporting diaspora groups affect the ways in which diaspora organisations are established. These may be taking advantage of formal measures, which are either available to all citizens (Finland), or to specific ethnic communities (the United Kingdom), or may use informal ties, relationships, networks, which foster the creation and development of diaspora organisations on the ground (Italy).

Italy is the only EU country which does not have comprehensive refugee legislation. Although immigration today is a stable phenomenon, for the last 20 years the immigration discourse has been framed in terms of security and emergency. In addition to legislative and discursive constraints, the lack of economic resources further affects the implementation of integration policies and the formation of professional diaspora associations, which are considered less accountable than autochthonous CSOs by public institutions.

Finland, in contrast, has effective policies and measures for integrating immigrants/ refugees and provides social benefits. While integration policies claim to rely on the concept of *multiculturalism*, in practice these have been criticised as *assimilationist*, especially when compared to policies in the United Kingdom, which recognise the importance of immigrants' networks and communities. 'Ethnic enclaves', contrary to Britain, do not fit the egalitarian ideals of the Finnish society which put a strong emphasis on the integration of its members. Partly due to the small number of immigrants in Finland, Somalis—being the largest and first significant African immigrant group in the country—are also very visible.

The United Kingdom, in turn, being a traditional country of immigration with several long-standing and well-established ethnic minorities and recognising the importance of ethnic networks, represents a *pluralist* society where Somalis are not 'spotted' as a different, visible group. The multicultural and pluralist reputation of Britain is, however, not always realised in practice and immigrants, in particular refugees, have often integrated—Britain being a class society—in the lower classes.

There are also different structures for funding immigrants' organisations that either create or limit opportunities for peace-relevant activities in Somalia/ Somaliland. In Italy, no support is offered at the national level for Somali organisations (except for one attempt of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs during the previous legislation to involve Somali women in a peacebuilding project). Funding (i.e. for events and conferences) is available only at the local level. Insofar, collective remittances gathered through fundraising events are the most common practice for Somali organisations to fund and implement projects at home.

In the United Kingdom, funding mechanisms depend much on the activity at stake. Somali community organisations can obtain national-level funding for activities furthering integration through different trusts and local-level funding (boroughs). Funding for peace-related or development activities exists in theory, but Somali organisations have to compete with native British development NGOs as well as organisations set up by other better-established and longer-standing minority groups, so funding is very hard to get. In the United Kingdom, Somalis are among many and, partly due to the fragmentation of the Somali community, they have not been very successful in negotiating a specific position for themselves among the ethnic minorities (i.e. concerning the specific/ targeted funding schemes for a certain ethnic minority group), and can easily be considered to be part of the wider network of a "black ethnic minority" (see also Government of the United Kingdom, Department for Local Communities and Government, 2009). Despite Somali organisations' inability to obtain external funding for activities in Somalia/ Somaliland, many organisations arrange fundraising events within the communities and raise substantial amounts of money to be sent to their respective community/ project in Somalia/ Somaliland. This is one of the upsides of a significant Somali population in Britain.

In Finland, due to the lesser number of Somalis compared to the United Kingdom, Somali organisations do not have the same opportunities for raising money among their communities (although in some cases money pooling takes place at the transnational level). National level project-based funding for both development and integration activities is available from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) for NGO development projects (based on the calls for proposals) and, for example, from the Ministry of Education for activities carried out in Finland. When

Somali organisations apply for project funding from the MFA for development projects, they also compete with native Finnish development NGOs. However, some of the organisations have managed to build their capacity (partly with the help of the MFA through the Finnish Somalia Network) and produce sound applications and run organisations in a professional manner. Although the MFA has no specific policies, quotas or schemes for Somali organisations, there seems to be an interest in supporting the capacity of Somali organisations. This interest relates partly to the visibility of Somalis in Finland as the largest group from Africa, and partly to the difficult access for the MFA as concerns aid delivery in Somalia due to the poor security situation.

1.4.2 Diasporas' characteristics and attributes

Based on the field work we have found:

- Similar types of diaspora organisations (as concerns their structures, membership, scopes, leaderships) in the different contexts;
- A positive relationship between integration and transnationalism;
- That the situation in Somalia may affect the emergence of diaspora groups similarly;
- A strong interest towards political engagement (either in Somalia and or in the countries of settlement), which is however mostly driven at the individual level;
- That clan and regional affiliations in diaspora organisations emerge and become meaningful in particular when undertaking activities in Somalia;
- That Somali communities in the countries of residence suffer from fragmentation;
- Extended networking capacities operating at many levels;
- Similar perceptions of the conflict;
- That diaspora organisations can play a significant role at the local level.

1.4.2.1 Organisational structures and set-ups

The formal status of organisations varies very little in the three settlement countries. In all countries, most organisations are formalised or registered associations. In the United Kingdom as well as in Italy, more loose networks without formal structure exist beyond registered associations. These networks created within one's own community (clan, etc.)

are not extremely visible and generally resourceful groups by themselves. Some may not even require external support in their activities relating to Somalia/Somaliland and thus do not need to register to obtain funding.

In Finland, previously un-registered Somali organisations saw other Somali organisations receive funding from the MFA and have registered to gain access to funding (only registered associations can obtain funding according to MFA rules). Such formalisation processes are also decisively affected by the global agenda in the framework of the so-called War on Terror and influence the measures towards accountability and transparency adopted by diaspora organisations.

In each of these settlement countries, Somali organisations tend to be diversified and rather small in size—although there are some organisations with many hundreds of members both in the United Kingdom and in Finland. In Italy, Somalis and their organisations are scattered around a few big cities. In the United Kingdom, the absolute majority of Somalis and their organisations can be found in London and other urban centres. In Finland, Somalis live in the capital area (in Helsinki, Espoo and Vantaa).

In Italy—in the absence of grand policies on migration and development as mentioned above—interaction between diaspora groups and institutions occurs mostly at the local level. In some specific cities and territories, decentralised co-operation is lively and fosters migrant organisations to undertake peace and development activities in their countries of origin. In local contexts it has been easier for migrants to deepen their social capital, to interact with institutions in everyday life, building trustworthy and personal relationships. The dispersal of Somalis, however, does not hinder organisations to act through networks established at the national level, when undertaking both integration and development projects.

1.4.2.2 Leadership

Leadership within organisations presents similar features in all three residence countries: resourceful people—well educated, well networked and well integrated into society and the intricacies of bureaucratic procedures—set up and engage in organisations. This observation indicates the positive link between integration and *transnationalism* (in development and peace). In Italy, associative leaders

are of a similar age group and can often be traced back to a similar migration flow period: they arrived after 1991 and before 2000. Leaders in Finland and the United Kingdom often are of a similar age group and arrived approximately at the same time. In Finland, most leaders arrived between 1990 and 2000 and in the United Kingdom from the late 1980s onwards. The gender dimension is especially strong in Italy, where a predominance of women's organisations and women as leaders can be found. In Finland and in the United Kingdom, the majority of associations are established and run by men, although women organisations led by women can also be found in these two countries.

Interestingly, political engagement towards the country of origin often takes place at the individual level. This is also telling considering the fact that the establishment of associations usually rests on few very capable and well connected leaders and does not necessarily actively involve great numbers of people.

1.4.2.3 Activities in the countries of residence and of origin

The types of activities, aims and scopes of Somali organisations (see Typologies in Sections 1, 2 and 3) investigated in the three settlement countries present similarities but also some specificity. In the Italian case, a major concern of diaspora organisations has been 'migrants' conditions' in the country of residence and only subsequently development/ peacebuilding projects in the home country.

Somali organisations in the United Kingdom go along similar lines as in particular the British officials perceive Somali organisations as serving their own community in the United Kingdom, rather than as partners in peacebuilding or development partners in the origin country.

Even if in Italy and in the United Kingdom, the majority of organisations focus on migrants' issues in the residence country, many engage in country of origin-related activities in parallel (which often translates into informal or *ad hoc* initiatives of mobilisation).

In Finland, the situation seems to be somewhat different as the state has put in place effective measures for integration programmes and the burden on service provision for refugees, for example, is not placed solely on immigrant organisations. Given these conditions, Somali organisations seem to have more capacity in engaging in development- and peace-

related activities geared towards the country of origin (although many organisations engage simultaneously in homeland-related and country of settlement-related matters).

Similar typologies were found in all three countries, including:

- Development/ project-oriented organisations;
- Women and youth groups;
- Community organisations.

Very rarely in the contexts observed do Somali organisations explicitly function in the 'peacebuilding field'. However, organisations engaging in development work or in politics in Somalia consider themselves to be contributing to peacebuilding processes.

In Italy, a considerable number of women organisations are actively involved in development and politics in Somalia, whereas in Finland and the United Kingdom organisations examined are predominantly established and chaired by men. In Italy, political activism by Somalis in Italian politics and recently in Somali politics (in terms of 'political remittances') has been observed. This, to some extent, can again be explained by the high-ranking status of community members (former politicians, intellectuals) who maintain and revitalise high-level as well as institutional contacts with both Somalia and the diaspora at the transnational level. Political activism takes place mostly at the individual level and not through organisations. In Italy, it has been observed that the rise in the formation of new diaspora organisations or their interest towards Somalia often depends on the situation at 'home': i.e. the intensification of cycles of violence such as the Ethiopian intervention in late 2006 or the reconciliation conferences in Djibouti in 2000, Nairobi in 2004 and again in Djibouti in 2008. This orientation in associations' scopes can also be explained with the need to gain more visibility outside a country which offers few opportunities.

In fact, interestingly in all cases investigated, political events in Somalia are reflected within Somali communities abroad (i.e. the Ethiopian intervention was much criticised, and in fact perceived as an invasion, by people from different parts of Somalia/ Somaliland in all three settlement countries).

In the United Kingdom, politically-oriented organisations of 'Somalilanders' and all three parties

of Somaliland are represented. The diaspora plays an important role in Somaliland politics as, for example, two out of the three chairmen of Somali parties in Somaliland are from the diaspora: one (Kulmiye) a British citizen and another (UCID) a returnee from Finland.

Despite the political activity of some Somalis in Finland (politics in Finland and politics in Somalia/ Somaliland) the formalised organisations of Somalis predominantly work in the humanitarian and development fields and do not relate (at least explicitly) to Somali politics. Development- and/or project-oriented organisations both in the United Kingdom and in Finland tend to emphasise their *non-political* nature, and define themselves as part of civil society.

In development-/ project-oriented organisations in all three countries there are professionals, in particular in the health and education sectors who use their skills and know-how to set up a project in the field of their expertise and in so doing transfer their know-how to Somalia/ Somaliland.

Further research in fact should be done on Somalis in the United Kingdom, especially on the issue of political transnational engagement, which has been observed in the case of Somalis in Italy, not only including organisations of Somalilanders, but also of migrants originating from different parts of Somalia. Based on this comparison, the local dimension could be further understood, verifying how different locations contribute to shaping the Somali communities and/or organisations who, in many cases, are explicitly involved in transnational political practices.

1.4.2.4 Networking capacity

Somali organisations in the three settlement countries are similar in that they are well networked and the importance of transnational networks is evident in all cases. There are, however, differences in the networking capacity with actors in the country of settlement in particular.

Somali organisations in Italy have created links with Italian political parties from which they gain legitimacy as 'political actors' and access to information, visibility, in rare cases also financial support. Women organisations in Italy in particular are very active and belong to inter-ethnic and political networks. Concerning partners in Somalia, varying strategies are implemented by the organisations, either, for

the most part, through counterparts based in Nairobi or through high-level institutional interactions with ministries, the TFG, etc. to bypass clan and regional affiliation stigmatisations.

In the United Kingdom, the Somaliland organisations in particular have managed to link up with UK actors such as individual members of parliament, academics and other professionals in their efforts to tackle problems in Somaliland (related to the non-recognition of its independence as well as to social problems such as poverty). In general, Somali organisations based in the United Kingdom have extensive direct links (mainly local organisations but also individuals) with the country of origin.

The specificity of networking in Finland is the link between the MFA and Somali organisations in the form of NGO development project support and continuous communication between the Ministry official(s) and Somalis, as well as capacity-building efforts by the MFA for Somali organisations. In general, Somali organisations in Finland have close direct links to organisations and individuals in Somalia/ Somaliland. The transnational level is also essential as several organisations pool resources for development- and peace-related work together within transnational networks.

1.4.2.5 Conflicts, divisions, and the role of the diaspora

There seem to be more similarities than differences with respect to the perceptions of the conflict in Somalia and the role the diaspora can play as expressed by Somali organisations in the three settlement countries.

As most interviews were conducted at the time when Ethiopian troops were still present in Somalia, Somali groups in all countries criticised the Ethiopian intervention. Moreover, the Transitional Federal Government led by President A. Yusuf was also criticised but there was hope in the forthcoming Djibouti peace process. The important role the diaspora could play was widely recognised but critical views on it were raised in all countries. The diaspora cannot always do that much because of the distance from the local ground, more so in the context of ongoing conflict and insecurity in South-Central Somalia, which has made it extremely challenging for some to enter the area. It was also widely acknowledged that the diaspora is fragmented in their stance towards the current conflict situation: Some groups may even contribute to conflict,

as peace-related development activities are carried out only at the local level, whereas involvement at the national level is critical. In the case of Somaliland, the situation is perceived to be different as many diaspora Somaliland groups consider Somaliland to be peaceful and stable and therefore assume to have more leeway as compared to the southern-central parts of the country.

Clan and regional affiliations can have an impact on diaspora organisations and on development-/peace-related activities in Somalia/ Somaliland, which become meaningful for Somali groups in the three settlement countries when they actually engage in activities in Somalia/ Somaliland. Very few organisations define themselves as clan-based organisations; often the issue of clan affiliation is not explicitly mentioned, however, when working in peace-related and development environments in Somalia/ Somaliland clan lineage often provides access to a certain area, to trustworthy relationships as well as security in general.

Clan and/or regional affiliation may be at the basis of the fragmentation of Somali communities in all three settlement country contexts. However, clan is by no means the only issue: In Italy, for instance, social class, Italian internal party politics, competition on visibility and economic resources and generational lines (those who came early and those who have arrived recently) contribute to fragmentation and internal conflicts. Divergences in all settlement countries may also occur in the different visions—and ideas about the role of the diaspora—towards the peacebuilding process in Somalia ranging from those who want to be actively involved to others who feel they should observe from afar, and those who believe that the situation in Somalia should be resolved by Somalis living there.

In the United Kingdom, one of the most obvious divisions exists between communities from Somaliland and from other parts of Somalia as their political visions differ quite drastically (united Somalia Republic vs. independent Somaliland). However, it must be noted that both groups are heterogeneous as, for example, not all people originally from Somaliland strive for independence. Another fragmentary line within the Somali community runs along the generation issue (first- and second-generation Somalis; those who grew up in Somalia/ Somaliland and those born and raised in the United Kingdom or somewhere else outside of Somalia/ Somaliland) as they have different views of and attachments to the 'homeland'.

In Finland, the fragmentation of the community is seen similarly along the regional lines and, to some extent, along clan lines. However, it is worth mentioning that in Finland, quite uniquely, many Somali organisations engaged in development work in different parts of Somalia/ Somaliland have joined a Finland Somalia network and collaborate with each other within that framework.

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2

Ethiopia: Conflicts and migratory flows



During the 1960s and early 1970s, most Ethiopians in the United States and Europe were students or diplomats and other members of the political and educated elite and thus predominantly temporary migrants. Between 1942 and 1970, the number of Ethiopian students in European and North American countries rose from 200 to 5,000 (Abye, 2004, p. 27). The majority of these professional or educational migrants usually returned to Ethiopia upon completion of their studies or missions.

This changed with the fall of Emperor Haile Selassie and the seizure of power by the Communist military junta, the so-called *Derg*, in 1974. Especially during the years of the Red Terror (1977–82), former supporters of the Emperor as well as members of the moderate leftist opposition fled the country and usually received unlimited residence permits in Western countries as they were officially recognised as political refugees.

In 1982, the regime under Mengistu Haile Mariam reinforced its attempts to ascertain its power in

the northern regions against Tigrayan and Eritrean opposition movements and launched campaigns to destroy all groups pursuing independence from Ethiopia. In the ensuing fighting, many opposition supporters were killed and the country underwent severe economic trouble, causing a new wave of migration from Ethiopia (Abye, 2004, p. 30). Subsequently, many Ethiopians and Eritreans (who were then still considered Ethiopian citizens) fled the country, also due to the drought and failed ethnic rebellions—notably from the Oromo Liberation Front (OLF) in the south of the country, the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF), and the Eritrean People's Liberation Front (EPLF) in the northern region.

In 1991, forces of the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF), a TPLF-led coalition movement, also comprising the Oromo Peoples' Democratic Organization, the Amhara National Democratic Movement, and the South Ethiopian Peoples' Democratic Front, finally overthrew the Mengistu regime. In 1993, a referendum supervised by

Table 3: Number of foreign-born Ethiopians by country of residence, ca. 2000

United States	73,066	Australia	3,544	Belgium	1,022
Israel	58,900	United Arab Emirates	3,363	Russia	919
Saudi Arabia	21,992	Pakistan	3,211	Zimbabwe	791
Canada	14,486	Lebanon	3,088	India	783
Sweden	11,281	Côte d'Ivoire	2,511	Iraq	735
Germany	9,542	Greece	2,507	Kenya	723
Jordan	8,781	Ghana	2,499	Uzbekistan	721
United Kingdom	8,122	Switzerland	1,972	Finland	694
The Netherlands	7,592	Zambia	1,661	New Zealand	657
Italy	6,310	Kuwait	1,483	South Africa	638
Sudan	5,112	Yemen	1,233	Egypt	636
Congo, Democratic Republic	4,196	Burkina Faso	1,201	Nigeria	617
France	3,715	Serbia and Montenegro	1,108		
Norway	3,575	Guinea	1,023		

Source: Global Migrant Origin Database, Development Research Centre on Migration, Globalization, and Poverty, University of Sussex, 2003, quoted in Terrazas, 2007.

the United Nations was held, leading to the creation of an independent Eritrean state. Ethiopia adopted a new constitution in 1994 and held its first multi-party elections the following year.

In the ensuing years, many former migrants and refugees returned to Ethiopia due to the promising political climate while others, especially opponents of the newly established system of ethnic federalism, left the country. In recent years, following the border war with Eritrea (1998–2000) and the 2005 election crisis, the repressive political climate has prompted many supporters of opposition movements to leave the country again.

In total, most Ethiopians fled to Sudan and Middle Eastern countries. Today, the largest Ethiopian community outside of the Horn of Africa exists in the United States, with an estimated total of anywhere from 250,000 to 500,000 individuals (Matsuoka and Sorenson, 2001, p. 60). In Europe, the largest Ethiopian diasporas are to be found in Sweden, Germany, the United Kingdom and the Netherlands (Terrazas, 2007).

2.1 Ethiopian organisations in Germany

2.1.1 Ethiopian migration to Germany

Migration from Ethiopia to (then West⁷⁰) Germany occurred in four major waves. Up until the 1960s and early 1970s, most Ethiopians in Germany were students or diplomats. Following the takeover of the *Derg* regime in 1974 and during the years of the Red Terror (1977–82), numerous dissidents from different backgrounds left Ethiopia in the wake of droughts, famines and armed conflict in almost all ethnic regions (see previous page). In the 1980s, many Ethiopians and Eritreans (who were then still considered to be Ethiopians) fled the country due to drought and failed ethnic rebellions (Abye, 2004).

After the fall of the *Derg*, the government was taken over by the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Party, the EPRDF, a multi-party coalition set up by the TPLF. In the following years, especially when the constitution finally came into force in 1993/94, many former migrants and refugees, especially those who had stayed in neighbouring countries, returned to Ethiopia due to the promising political climate.

Statistical data on the number of Ethiopians living in or moving to Germany as well as on long-term developments are difficult to assess. This is largely due to political and historical changes. In Germany, statistical data on migration after reunification is only available from 1991 onwards. Following Eritrea's independence from Ethiopia, German statistics were adjusted since migrants who had previously entered the country from the now independent Eritrean parts were from then on counted as Eritreans. It is estimated that until 1991, about 80 per cent of Ethiopians successfully seeking asylum in Germany were in fact Eritreans (Bauer, 2004).

The general trend of available data shows that the number of registered Ethiopians living in Germany decreased from 14,310 in 2001 to 10,115 in 2008, 4,907 of whom were male and 5,208 (51.5%) female

(German Federal Statistical Office, 2009). About 3,650 migrants held an unlimited residence permit status (*ibid.*, p. 40, 69; 82–83). In 2008, the average age of Ethiopian citizens residing in Germany was 32.6 years, the average length of stay in Germany 11.7 years. These figures do not include Ethiopians holding German citizenship, since accumulated data on naturalised citizens from Ethiopia are not available. According to recent estimates by Schlenzka (2009), in addition to the above-given number, there are about 10,000 Germans of Ethiopian background who were either naturalised or born to Ethiopian parents in Germany (*ibid.*, pp. 10–11). All in all, it can be assumed that the Ethiopian diaspora community in Germany comprises about 20,000 persons.

Germany is presently the fifth-largest destination country of Ethiopian emigration (World Bank, 2008, p.103). The largest Ethiopian diaspora communities are to be found in cities such as Cologne, Berlin, Nuremberg, Hanover and Hamburg; the main focal point of Ethiopian diaspora life in Germany appears to be Frankfurt (Main) with a significant number of diaspora organisations and meeting places such as restaurants and cafes.

2.1.2 Immigration and refugee legislation

In Germany, a new course in migration and integration policy was adopted with the new citizenship law of 2000 and the implementation of a new immigration law (*Gesetz zur Steuerung und Begrenzung der Zuwanderung und zur Regelung des Aufenthalts und der Integration von Unionsbürgern und Ausländern*) in 2005. For the first time, immigration, asylum and integration policies are all covered under one law. It replaces the former, rather complicated system of different residence permits by introducing two major status options, i.e. a limited permit of stay (*Aufenthaltserlaubnis*) and an unlimited residence permit (*Niederlassungserlaubnis*). Especially with regard to integration policies, this law has a strong focus on supporting the process by fostering language acquisition and providing general introductions on citizenship rights and duties. These so-called "integration courses" are mandatory for new immigrants but can also be attended by others. Despite several criticisms and shortcomings, many commentators⁷¹ agree that this law constitutes for the

⁷⁰ Comparable data on Ethiopian migration to the former German Democratic Republic (GDR) do not exist, as the GDR census (*Zentrales Einwohnerregister, ZER*) did not cover citizenship information (German Federal Statistical Office, 2006, pp. 14–15). In general, the federal states of the former GDR have relatively smaller numbers of migrants and foreign residents compared to Western German states, which still today host 96 per cent of Germany's migrant population. Nonetheless, especially during the 1970s, the German Democratic Republic and Ethiopia intensified their bilateral economic relations and it is assumed that approximately 4,000 Ethiopians studied in East Germany in the 1980s. See: <http://www.leipzig.de/imperia/md/content/01-4_ref_europ_int_zusammenarbeit/taedtepartner.pdf>, last accessed 21 October 2009).

⁷¹ For a comprehensive account as well as different (English language) papers on the political debates surrounding the law see the collection published by the Hamburg Institute of International Economics (HWWI) at <<http://www.hwwi.org/>>

first time a *de facto* acknowledgement of Germany's status as an immigration country. It has also led to the start of a series of national 'Integration Summits' that are meant to develop recommendations and generate public debate on new approaches to integration.

Following the first German Integration Summit in 2006, in 2007 a National Integration Plan (NIP) was set up by the federal government, representatives of the German states and municipalities, civil society actors and migrant organisations. The NIP identified ten core areas among which are improved political and civil society participation. Nevertheless, voting rights in Germany are reserved to German citizens and political participation of non-Germans is limited to voting rights of EU citizens in local elections. However, in Germany like in the Netherlands, we find advisory councils (*Ausländerbeiräte*) as a means to strengthen migrant participation in decision-making processes at the local level. These bodies are supposed to represent the interests of migrants at the local level and advise local authorities on all issues affecting migrants. At the federal level, since 1998, the Federal Council on Migration and Integration (*Bundeszuwanderungs- und Integrationsrat*) serves as a contact point and gives advice to federal institutions concerning migration and integration issues.

In general, it has become increasingly difficult for Ethiopian migrants to obtain political asylum in Germany. During the Cold War era and until the implementation of the new Ethiopian constitution in 1995, Ethiopian refugees in Germany were usually accepted as political refugees without major bureaucratic delays. However, following the regime change in Ethiopia and the positive relations between Germany and Ethiopia, the percentage of Ethiopian asylum seekers whose applications in Germany were approved fell to 3.6 per cent in 2006 (Friedrich, 2008). In absolute numbers, the number of Ethiopians applying for asylum in Germany fell from 3,096 in 1991 to only 183 in 2008 (German Federal Ministry of the Interior, 2008, p. 214).⁷² This decline can partly be explained by major changes in the German refugee and asylum law in 1993 with the implementation of the so-called "*Drittstaatenregelung*" (Safe Third Country Regulation)⁷³, which has led to an overall

decline of applications for asylum, and again in 2005 with the adoption of the first German Immigration Law (*Zuwanderungsgesetz*). However, even taking into account these legal changes and the re-definition of Eritrean migrants, the ongoing decline of applications in recent years is still worth noting, not least given the 2005 elections and violent post-election crisis in Ethiopia. Between 1998 and 2004, about 400 Ethiopians applied for asylum in Germany each year. After 2005, there were on average only 200 applications per year. Political asylum was and is predominantly granted to members or supporters of the major opposition movements, most notably *Kinijit*/Coalition for Unity and Democracy (CUD), Ethiopian National United Front (ENUF), Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Party (EPRP), and Oromo parties and associations such as the Oromo Liberation Front (OLF) and Union of Oromo Students in Europe (UOSE).⁷⁴

2.1.3 Ethiopian diaspora organisations

Within the framework of this research between June and July 2008, about 167 Ethiopian groups were identified through an extensive mapping of Ethiopian diaspora groups in Germany. Based on this initial data set, approximately 50 groups that most likely are engaged in peace-relevant activities have been selected and contacted.⁷⁵ Valuable contacts to diaspora groups have also been established and questionnaires disseminated during seminars and conferences.⁷⁶ Between October 2008 and March 2009, ten semi-structured interviews based on the DIASPEACE Interview Guidelines (see Annex II) were conducted with representatives of selected groups. These initial in-depth interviews were followed up by ongoing conversations by phone and e-mail with the respective interviewees. At the same time, three key informant interviews were conducted

third state can immediately be returned to this state and are supposed to seek asylum there. Given Germany's geopolitical situation, in effect, this law almost entirely prevents migrants that have not travelled to Germany by plane from seeking political asylum.

⁷⁴ See: German Federal Office for Migration and Refugees, MILO, available online via <<https://milo.bamf.de/lldde/livelink.exe/fetch/2000/customview.html?func=llworkspace>>. (Database on court rulings).

⁷⁵ For a detailed discussion of the selection criteria see Introduction, p. 10.

⁷⁶ Among others: ADPC Diaspora Policy Seminar, Brussels, June 2008; Tigray Development Association Annual Conference, Frankfurt, August 2008; Oromo Relief Association, Berlin, September 2008; Association of Ethiopians Educated in Germany (AEEG), Bonn, July 2008; Orbis Aethiopicus e.V. Annual Conference, Hamburg, October 2008; German-Ethiopian Association e.V. Annual Conference (DÄV), Kassel, March 2009.

Zuwanderungsdebatte.1885.0.html> (last accessed 23 January 2010).

⁷² Numbers for 2008 were provided upon request by the German Federal Office for Migration and Refugees.

⁷³ Through the amendment of Art. 16 of the German constitution, migrants who have entered the country via a "safe and secure"

with experts both within and outside the diaspora. In addition to participant observation and semi-structured interviews, additional members of diaspora organisations were contacted to further corroborate and discuss the information gathered (cf. Annex I: List of Interviews).

A major challenge to the initial mapping of the Ethiopian diaspora in Germany was the fact that contact details were difficult to obtain and available contact details were frequently no longer valid. This conveys some insight into the dynamics and flexibility with which groups are dissolved and new groups are established. The turnout of the questionnaires distributed among diaspora groups was very low; in total we received 15 filled-in questionnaires. Likewise, the online survey was hardly used by diaspora groups and only provided little information.

The repeated interviews and conversations with representatives of the selected groups have provided valuable insights into their capacities, aims and activities towards peace and development in their country of origin. The following sections provide an overview of Ethiopian diaspora organisations in Germany followed by a more detailed account of the selected groups.

2.1.3.1 Diaspora politics and divisions

The Ethiopian diaspora community in Germany is characterised by a complex and wide range of networks and groups of both political and non-political nature and maintains several websites and blogs. It is sub-divided according to ethnic and political identities or affiliations, with Tigrinya, Oromo and Amhara⁷⁷ being the predominant ethnic identities. According to information obtained during the interview process, most Oromo and Ogaden Somali migrants came to Germany during the 1990s and 2000, later moving on to other European countries, the United States and Arab countries. By contrast, most of the estimated 50 Afar living in Germany arrived before 1991 (GER_IN2). As the majority of Ethiopians living in Germany came as refugees, the most important internal clashes of interest mirror those of the society at home. This holds true particularly for migrants who left the country or had to flee due to their political activities and political and/or ethnic affiliations (Lyons, 2006; Sieveking et

⁷⁷ During our interviews, several Amharic members of the diaspora expressly referred to themselves as "Ethiopian" rather than Amharic, while members of other ethnic groups often identified themselves according to their ethnic or at least regional background.

al., 2008). With a view to the composition and major divisions of the diaspora, the power-struggle between the EPRDF/TPLF government and urban-based opposition groups (CUD/*Kinijit*; UEDF⁷⁸) is especially important since the latter have received significant material and immaterial support from diaspora networks worldwide preceding and following the so-called 2005 "stolen elections" (Lyons, 2006).

In addition, parts of the Oromo population in the south which constitutes about one-third of the Ethiopian population and has heavily suffered from famines and droughts, reject the concept of a unified Ethiopian territorial state and postulate an at least partially autonomous Oromo state (*Oromia*). Others demand the decentralisation of political power or, claiming to represent the largest population group, demand a stronger representation within the Ethiopian political system as a whole. The Oromo population builds no close-knit ethnic group, but is in turn split along religious, regional, linguistic, political and economic lines. Bulcha (2002, p. 190) emphasises the decisive contribution the Oromo diaspora has made to the development of a distinct Oromo identity.⁷⁹ The Oromo movements also strongly depend on the financial and political support from the diaspora due to the lack of political space within Ethiopia (Matsuoka and Sorenson, 2001, pp. 43–45).

Further diaspora opposition to the present government is advocated by Afar and Somali-Ethiopian (Ogaden) groups. In general, the new EPRDF government has been facing suspicion and rejection from many parts of the diaspora ever since its accession to power (cf. Section 1.2.4).

In addition to ethnic and political divisions, religious affiliations, though to a lesser extent also define diaspora identity and communities, especially Christian-Orthodox and Muslim groups (whose importance seems to have increased since the

⁷⁸ Following the CUD's gradual disintegration due to the imprisonment of most of its leaders, but also due to internal power struggles, new opposition parties and coalition movements have sprung up since 2006. The most important ones are the Coalition for Unity and Democratic Party (CUDP), and Unity for Democracy (UDJ). For a more detailed account of the recent developments see International Crisis Group, 2009.

⁷⁹ In 1974/75 first groups were founded among Oromo refugees in Europe. These were linked to the Ethiopian National Liberation Front (ENLF), founded in 1971, the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Party (EPRP) and the All Ethiopian Socialist Movement (AESM/ME'ISONNE). During the late 1980s and 1990s, Oromo community organisations—which in contrast to earlier groups were all-embracing—and in the 1990s, religious organisations were established (Bulcha, 2002, p. 203).

Ethiopian military intervention in Somalia in 2006), but also divisions between different Christian-Orthodox communities.⁸⁰

2.1.3.2 Ethiopian diaspora organisations

Our recent research has uncovered about 167 diaspora organisations, ranging from small informal groups to officially registered branches of international associations. This large number of Ethiopian organisations compared to the actual size of the registered Ethiopian population in Germany might be related to the high average educational level among diaspora members on the one hand and the fragmentation within the Ethiopian diaspora on the other (Abye, 2004; Terrazas, 2007; Schlenzka, 2009, p. 14).

In Germany, major centres of Ethiopian diaspora activity are to be found in Frankfurt (Main) and the larger Rhine-Main area, Munich, Hamburg and Berlin, whereas only a small number of groups could be located in Eastern Germany. All in all, a relatively high degree of organisation among Ethiopian diaspora groups can be perceived. Of about 167 mapped groups, 57 were officially registered associations (*eingetragener Verein*, abbrev. e.V.), and 22 were affiliated to churches or fellowships. In addition, many organisations are associated to European or worldwide diaspora networks, such as the Tigray Development Association e.V. (TDA), or they are sub-branches and support groups of parties and movements based in Ethiopia (e.g. H-ORA e.V., the aid organisation of the Oromo Relief Association in Germany). Membership within these groups varies significantly and ranges between very few members of a local community and more than one hundred members (TDA). As far as precise numbers were available, membership usually ranged from 20 to 40 active individuals.

The comparatively high degree of organisation and professionalism within the diaspora is also reflected by the longevity of some groups. The establishment of many groups dates back to the 1980s and 1990s. Out of 46 groups, for whom respective information was available, the majority were initiated in the early 1980s, between 1994 and 1996, and after 2002. In many cases, the establishment of an organisation

corresponds with specific political and social events or developments in the country of origin and—allowing for some delay—also with major migration waves. In the case of the Ethiopian diaspora, relevant events are the fall of Emperor Haile Selassie and the subsequent installation of a military regime in 1974, the devastating effects of droughts and ethnic rebellions in the early to mid-1980s, and the eventual fall of the *Derg* in 1991. In more recent years, the border war with Eritrea 1998–2000 and the riots following allegations of election fraud in 2005 simultaneously caused new waves of migration and intensified political activism within the diaspora.

Of the 167 diaspora organisations, approximately forty explicitly refer to ethnically defined identities. So far, 27 Oromo groups, two Afar groups, one Somali Ogaden group, four Tigrinian and various Amharic groups could be identified. Many Oromo groups were founded during the 1970s and in the early 1990s respectively. Of these, seven groups are registered associations, one group is affiliated to a political party and seven groups are Protestant church organisations or fellowships.

Both Afar organisations, the Afar Fürsorgeverein e.V. (Afar Charitable Association, *transl. by the authors*) and the Afar Forum e.V., are registered associations. The Afar Forum was founded in 1991 in Paris as a transnational organisation to monitor the newly established EPRDP government and its compliance with the constitution. The Afar Forum in Germany has around 20 active members, most of whom are male. Although the Afar Forum has a charter, the internal structure and work is organised on the basis of traditional law and the authority of a council of elders who resolves internal conflicts and contributes to reconciliation among group members. The only Somali Ogaden group in Germany was founded in the 1980s as a registered association and has about 50 members. The memberships of both the Afar and Ogaden groups comprise several nationalities. While the Afar Forum brings together Afar from Ethiopia, Eritrea and Djibouti, the Ogaden Direkthilfe joins Somalis from Ethiopia, Kenya, Djibouti and Somalia.

Religion and religious confessions seem to play a less important role for membership in the case of the Afar and the Ogaden groups. By contrast, among Oromos in the diaspora, the great number of church organisations (1) and fellowships (6) is noticeable. The majority of Oromos in Germany belongs to the Protestant church. Religious cleavages among Oromo

⁸⁰ The Ethiopian Orthodox church is divided. While most congregations recognise the Ethiopian-Orthodox patriarch in Ethiopia, some diaspora congregations follow another patriarch who has lived in exile in the United States ever since the fall of the *Derg* (Goldman, 1992; Schlenzka, 2009, p. 27.)

political organisations and movements (see Chanie, 1998, p. 105) and recent religious conflict patterns between Christians and Muslims in some Ethiopian regions, including Oromo Regional State, seem to be of less importance in the Oromo diaspora community in Germany (GER_IN16).

2.1.3.3 Thematic issues and activities

Most Ethiopian diaspora organisations in Germany are active in one or more of the following issue areas:

- Development co-operation and humanitarian aid;
- Community support groups;
- Women's organisations;
- Political campaigning;
- Human rights;
- Churches and fellowships.

In Germany, the majority of Ethiopian diaspora organisations focus on the first two issue areas or a combination thereof. Through mapping and personal contacts, we uncovered about 30 to 40 community organisations, which provide support to fellow Ethiopians and organise cultural events, and a slightly smaller number (30) of groups that implement or support development projects in Ethiopia.

Development co-operation and humanitarian aid. In line with the observed overall high degree of formal education among the diaspora, there are several groups whose development initiatives are based on their members' professional expertise, most notably in the fields of education, medicine and engineering. These organisations implement or finance projects supporting schools and the re-integration of street children (Addis-Hiwot Kinderhilfe e.V., Birhan e.V.; Kinderhaus Löwenherz e.V.; Cooperation e.V.; Äthiopische Kinderhilfe SELAM e.V.; Listros-Projekt e.V.) or supply medical support either by collecting money to support specific hospitals in Ethiopia or by transferring knowledge and devices through repeated trips to Ethiopia (e.g. Heart for Ethiopia). In addition to health and education, there is also a smaller number of organisations focussing on environmental and agricultural (self-help) projects, such as Enat Afer e.V.; ElJoJoFe e.V., and a small, but very well-organised group of organisations delivering services to Ethiopians wishing to return home permanently or temporarily (Association of Ethiopians Educated in Germany e.V./AEEG; Dewol-Ethiopian Intellectual Society e.V.).

Box 7: Tigray Development Association e.V.

Tigray Development Association (TDA) was originally established in 1989 in Washington, DC and has branches in different North American cities as well as in several European states (Italy, Sweden, Switzerland and the United Kingdom). While focussing most of its project work on Tigray, Ethiopia's northernmost region close to the Eritrean border, which suffered heavily from past liberation struggles and the ongoing Ethio-Eritrean conflict, TDA also claims to implement projects in other parts of Ethiopia. In the United States, TDA co-operates with USAID and the NGO "Glimmer of Hope". Other co-operation partners are the Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA) and the Barings Foundation in the United Kingdom. In Germany, a branch was set up in 1989. With about 150 active members and 90 additional supporters, it appears to be one of the largest Ethiopian diaspora organisations in Germany, maintaining close ties with other branches in the diaspora and in Tigray as well as with the Regional Authority of Tigray. TDA primarily implements projects in the health and educational sectors in Tigray and has recently also begun to develop a conflict mitigation project (see below, Section 2.1.4.3). The organisation is financed through membership fees (currently six Euro/month) and fundraising activities (both through events and online fora such as www.paltalk.com) and is currently looking for co-operation partners in Germany to support the financing of hospitals and schools in Tigray.¹ It also holds an annual TDA Europe Conference, which in 2008 and 2009 was organised by the German branch in Frankfurt (Main). In 2008, about 150 to 200 delegates attended the conference and the ensuing cultural programme. During the conference, which was also attended by Tsegay Berhe, President of the government of the National Regional State of Tigray, TDA representatives reported on the ongoing project and fundraising work. These reports were followed by questions from the audience, especially on the situation of women, the ongoing conflict with Eritrea and the general development of the region.²

¹ Interview with a member in Frankfurt (Main), 20 March 2009 and additional phone conversations with the chair of the German branch.

² The main conference language was *Tigrinya*. While the organisers kindly provided an interpreter for us, we were not always able to follow discussions, especially on contested or controversial issues. Most information on the conference was consequently gathered through personal conversations with participants during and after the conference.

Many of these organisations were set up by Ethiopians who have lived in Germany for more than a decade, hold German citizenship or at least an unlimited residence permit and are well-integrated, also in economic terms. Despite their having lived outside Ethiopia for several years, members of these organisations are usually well-informed about the situation in Ethiopia due to regular visits and contacts with partner organisations in the origin country and actively seek co-operation partners or sponsors in Ethiopia and Germany.⁸¹

While the majority of the aforementioned groups appear to have been set up on the basis of networks and contacts established in the diaspora in Germany, there are also large developmental groups such as the Tigray Development Association e.V. (TDA)⁸² and the Ogaden Relief Society e.V. that are affiliated to large international umbrella organisations and whose work focuses on a—more or less ethnically defined—region in Ethiopia.

Community groups. Community groups constitute the majority of Ethiopian diaspora organisations in Germany. They mainly provide services or support to their members on the community level, organise traditional festivals or sports events and often aim to preserve Ethiopian or regional traditions, such as festivals or the promotion of Ethiopian languages and cultures, international exchange and information on Ethiopia. In addition, many groups seek to provide support to asylum seekers and foster the integration of Ethiopian migrants. Apart from self-help and support groups, there is also an impressive number of 20 football associations spread all over Germany, many of which are associated to the Ethiopian Sports and Culture Federation in Europe and participate in annual tournaments. In absolute numbers, community groups form the most significant part of the organised diaspora. However, they are usually less formally organised and less visible since they tend to have a more limited reach largely focussing on activities for the benefit of their local members. In many cases, these organisations co-operate with charitable or local civil society and church organisations (e.g. Caritas, Diakonie), which provide rooms for meetings, access to IT equipment or contacts to other migrant and CSO networks.

⁸¹ For instance, AEEG co-operates with and receives support from German embassies, Goethe Institutes, the German Development Service (DED), the World University Service (WUS), and the *Zentrale Auslands- und Fachvermittlung* (ZAV).

⁸² See: <www.tdaint.org>, last accessed 28 April 2009.

Women's organisations. Our research uncovered two women's organisations in Germany. In general, these appear to be less formally organised as they are predominantly based on private initiatives and personal contacts. For this reason, the small number of women's groups uncovered so far is certainly also due to their lack of visibility and external presentation of their work. The Tigray Women's Association (TWA, Tigray Frauenverein in Deutschland) for example had existed for several years prior to registering as an association. It is the German branch of the Women's Association of Tigray (WAT) in Ethiopia, an organisation formally established in 1991 to implement programmes and projects in co-operation with governmental organisations and NGOs in the field of development and women empowerment. Some groups like the TWA seem to be closely linked to other Ethiopian diaspora groups in Germany. In addition to its contacts with WAT, TWA also co-operates with the TDA German branch. Likewise, the Oromo Frauenverein e.V. (Oromotiti) has well-established contacts to other Oromo groups in Germany. Besides, strong ties to other (German or migrant) women's organisations and in some cases to German municipal institutions (*Amt für Multikulturelle Angelegenheiten*) exist and play a vital role through the provision of basic facilities (meeting rooms, equipment, but also contacts to other CSO actors).

The engagement of women's organisations in Germany mainly focuses on the respective women's community, including self-help activities in the field of mothering, integration, language courses, culture and traditions. Women's groups also engage in Ethiopia, either through the report of their head organisation (Tigray Frauenverein) or by running their own projects (for instance, Oromotiti supports single mothers in the Oromo region).

Political campaigning. There are about 15 branches or support groups of Ethiopian parties in Germany, most of which are affiliated to both legal and illegal opposition groups, such as the Ethiopian People's Patriotic Front (EPPF), Ethiopian National United Front (ENUF), Germany, and the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Party (EPRP). In addition, there are several branches and support groups of the two major opposition movements claiming election fraud following the 2005 general elections in Ethiopia, i.e. the Coalition for Unity and Democracy (CUD/*Kinijit*; now partly replaced by the Unity for Democracy and Justice) and the United Ethiopian Democratic Forces

(UEDF) as well as of the United Ethiopian Democratic Party (Medhin Party).

The majority of these support groups are sub-branches of larger networks usually based in the United States. Many groups frequently organise or participate in demonstrations in Frankfurt (Main) as it hosts the Ethiopian consulate and is a focal point of Ethiopian diaspora life in Germany.

The degree of politicisation among diaspora groups appears to be especially high among the organisations of the ethnically-defined groups, especially of (political) minority groups. To a lesser extent, this also pertains to ethnically based organisations primarily working in the fields of development or human rights, as they are often in touch with more explicitly political groups. In particular, the Oromo diaspora in Germany appears to be strongly politicised. Our research uncovered one Oromo political party branch in Germany (OPC Support Group in Europe). The Oromo People's Congress constitutes part of the United Ethiopian Democratic Forces (UEDF) coalition and opposes the Oromo People's Democratic Organisation (OPDO). The Oromo Liberation Front runs its own broadcast programme in Berlin and maintains strong ties to other different (Oromo) groups. The Oromo diaspora in Germany also has a student association with transnational links and other branches in Europe. The Union of Oromo Students in Europe (UOSE/ TBOA), founded in 1974 in Berlin, reportedly supports the struggle for freedom, democracy, human rights, peace and development and considers itself a mass organisation of the OLF.⁸³

In addition to these organised party activities, there are also several small-scale campaigns countering particular acts or decisions of the Ethiopian government. In 2008, government negotiations on the demarcation of the Ethiopian–Sudanese border caused an outcry among Ethiopian diaspora and opposition movements denouncing the alleged 'sell-out' of Ethiopian territory to Sudan. This also led to the formation of new diaspora initiatives (such as the Forum for Ethiopian Sovereignty, Unity and Territorial Integrity—FESUPI; the Declaration of Ethiopians living in North Rhine-Westphalia) who then published statements on well-known diaspora websites.⁸⁴ Although the discourse among and with

representatives of most diaspora organisations was usually politically charged, most interview partners nonetheless emphasised their general weariness with 'talking politics'. Instead, many interviewees highlighted a non-political agenda and the need to get more actively involved through actual project work in Ethiopia.

Human rights. The initial mapping uncovered about nine human rights groups, such as the Support Group of the Ethiopian Human Rights Council in Germany or the Solidarity Committee for Ethiopian Political Prisoners (SOCEPP) who seek to monitor and report human rights violations. Both organisations were set up in the early 1990s shortly after the regime change in Ethiopia and co-operate with international organisations such as Amnesty International, Reporters Without Borders, UNHCR, Human Rights Watch and the Ethiopian Human Rights Council.

Several of the ethnically-defined diaspora organisations particularly focus on the human rights situation in their region of origin and seek to raise awareness, for instance the Human Rights Horn of Africa Association and the Oromo Human Rights and Relief Organisation. Furthermore, the Union of Oromo Students in Europe (UOSE) claims to contribute to conflict resolution by protesting against and publishing human rights violations.

Churches and fellowships. Churches and fellowships form another important part of diaspora community life. About half of the Ethiopians living in Germany are Christian, the remainder are assumed to be Muslim (Molina, 2005). There are about 30 religious Ethiopian congregations and fellowships in Germany, the majority of which are Christian-Orthodox, Protestant or Adventist. Some of these are especially interesting with a view to diaspora peacebuilding and reconciliation as they offer joint services for Eritrean and Ethiopian worshippers or maintain close contacts with Eritrean congregations (e.g. Wort der Gnade Evangelische Gemeinde Nürnberg e.V./ Word of Grace Protestant Church in Nuremberg, Äthiopisch-Orthodoxe Dreifaltigkeitsgemeinde Nürnberg/ Ethiopian-Orthodox Trinity Community Church in Nuremberg). Despite the sizeable percentage of Muslims in the diaspora, we only found two distinctly Ethiopian Muslim organisations in Germany, both of which are branches of larger umbrella organisations: the Network of Ethiopian Muslims in Europe (NEME), which was originally founded in the Netherlands in 2007, and Islamic Relief-Humanitäre Organisation in

⁸³ Information provided by the Union of Oromo Students in Europe, German Branch, through the DIASPEACE online survey.

⁸⁴ Among the best-known are: www.ethiogermany.de; www.aigaforum.com.

Deutschland e.V., which although not an Ethiopian diaspora organisation as such, has a strong focus on agricultural development projects in the Somali region of Ethiopia (Afder Zone).

2.1.4 Peacebuilding activities and projects

Among the diaspora groups mapped in Germany, there is hardly any organisation with an explicit or exclusive focus on peacebuilding⁸⁵ or peace consolidation activities. While some groups mention 'peace' among their overall aims and objectives, in most cases this seems to refer to a general hope or vision of Ethiopia's future, rather than to actual project activities in a specified local or topical context.

In addition, as argued in the Introduction, the question as to whether any given group's activities contribute to peacebuilding and thus impact constructively depends on a variety of factors, some of which are extremely difficult to assess objectively. Among them are the position of the group *vis-à-vis* other affected stakeholders, most notably the regional or national governments, the willingness and ability to collaborate with other parties, the resources and backing for the respective group within the diaspora as well as a host of external factors, such as the current political situation in the country of origin.

In the case of the Ethiopian diaspora, the contested 2005 national elections in particular provide mixed evidence of the impact and role of diaspora engagement on the opposition side. According to a recent study by Lyons,

the shift of tactics by key diaspora leaders from advocating electoral boycotts to supporting opposition participation was a necessary condition for the competitive elections of May 2005. Without the support of the diaspora key opposition leaders and parties within Ethiopia would not have participated. Following the contentious process of vote counting, allegations of fraud, violent demonstrations, and mass arrests of major opposition politicians and indictments of important diaspora leaders, the diaspora moved away from support

⁸⁵ See Introduction for a detailed discussion of the term peacebuilding and its application to the study of diaspora engagement.

for electoral politics and toward lobbying for international financial pressures or even strategies of armed struggle (2007, p. 545).

Hence, while diaspora mobilisation certainly had and continues to have a significant impact on social, economic and political processes, the question of constructive vs. deconstructive diaspora engagement is in many cases a matter of perspective and to a certain extent also of priorities *vis-à-vis* the numerous conflict settings in Ethiopia. In the face of these complex social processes, we have adopted a set of preliminary normative selection criteria to help identify groups relevant to our research (see the discussion on the selection criteria in the Introduction, p. 10).

Hitherto, our research has uncovered 17 Ethiopian groups engaged in peacebuilding activities. While very few explicitly refer to a peacebuilding agenda, there are many groups whose agendas or activities in the field of conflict resolution, reconciliation and human rights can be considered to indirectly contribute to reconstruction and stabilisation in Ethiopia. Activities range from campaigning and awareness-raising, conducting research to organising discussion events and implementing peace and reconciliation projects in Ethiopia. The following examples are meant to portray the diversity of their approaches before turning to a summary of our overall findings.

2.1.4.1 Campaigning for peace and demilitarisation: Ethiopian War Resisters' Initiative

In January 2007, shortly after the Ethiopian military intervention in Somalia, a group of Ethiopian refugees in Germany founded the Ethiopian War Resisters' Initiative (EWRI) to support the right to refuse forced recruitment, advocate peaceful solutions to conflicts in Ethiopia and the right to asylum for Ethiopians who "had to leave the country because they refused to engage in war and military oppression."⁸⁶ The group was originally initiated through personal contacts among its members but also with the support of the Eritrean Antimilitarist Initiative (EAI) in Germany, which in turn is affiliated to Connection e.V., an umbrella organisation of war resisters supporting peaceful resistance and creating public awareness through press releases, seminars and demonstrations. Although still in the early stages of its formation, EWRI

⁸⁶ See: Initiative der äthiopischen KriegsgegnerInnen—Ethiopian War Resisters' Initiative homepage, available at <www.Connection-eV.de/ewri>.

has adopted the following implementation strategies: a) establish networks among Ethiopian war resisters to provide advocacy and support, b) provide regular information on militarisation in Ethiopia through seminars and public events, and c) advocate the adoption of the right to conscientious objection in the Ethiopian constitution.⁸⁷

With the help of Connection e.V. and EAI, EWRI has begun to organise meetings and demonstrations and publish information particularly on incidences of systematic and reportedly forced recruitment in several Ethiopian regions and has recently published a brochure entitled "War and Dictatorship in Ethiopia."⁸⁸ The group has about 25 members, many of whom have only recently arrived in Germany and do not yet hold a permanent residence permit. Monthly meetings are organised by the chair of the group, but its scope of action is still rather limited due to the lack of IT equipment and further necessary supplies. For this reason, the group is heavily dependent on its co-operation with other diaspora and non-diaspora groups, such as Connection e.V., Bayerischer Flüchtlingsrat (Bavarian Refugee Council), Karawane e.V. and local party representatives who provide meeting venues and access to IT and online facilities. Outside Germany, EWRI also co-operates with War Resisters International (WRI), based in London.

Interestingly enough, the establishment of the group was significantly facilitated by the Eritrean Antimilitarist Initiative. Ever since then, EWRI has continued to co-operate with them and other Sub-Saharan diaspora organisations (from Angola, the DR Congo and Kenya). Together with the latter and Connection e.V., the group plans to organise a conference in Nuremberg in 2010 on the potentials and mechanisms of civil disobedience and peaceful resistance as a means of effecting non-violent social and political change. This cross-national co-operation on specific sensitive issues is especially interesting in light of an observation shared by many interview partners, according to which the inclusion of diaspora members of different origin usually facilitates a more constructive and focussed discussion atmosphere as it encourages participants to go beyond mere party-political debates and positions.

⁸⁷ Interview with the Chair of EWRI, 29 March 2009, Würzburg, and follow-up interviews with him and other co-operation partners of EWRI (GER_IN14; GER_IN15; GER_IN16).

⁸⁸ Available online via <www.Connection-eV.de>.

Similar to most of the interviewed groups, EWRI claims to be decidedly non-political and does not advocate on behalf of a particular ethnic or religious group. Based on the premise that the long history of violent conflict and authoritarian rule in Ethiopia in effect continues to hamper the peaceful reconciliation of conflicting interests, EWRI aims to facilitate discussion on sources of conflict and tension—such as ethnic federalism and regional conflicts—with all affected stakeholders.

2.1.4.2 Garnering support from the diaspora: African Rally for Peace and Development

In 2005, the African Rally for Peace and Development (ARPD) was founded in Addis Ababa as a non-profit, non-partisan and secular civil society organisation to engage in advocacy, education and research on issues of peace, security, justice and human rights. Its main rationale is to strengthen "an informed and responsible African citizenry by upholding democratic values of justice and human rights and culture of peace and tolerance."⁸⁹

As one of its first projects, ARPD has recently conducted and published a "Baseline Study for Mapping Violent Conflicts in Ethiopia", which was partly funded by the Friedrich Ebert Foundation and Norwegian Church Aid. The study provides a commented inventory of violent conflicts in seven Ethiopian regional states, i.e. Oromo Regional State, Tigray, Southern Nations/ Nationalities and Peoples (SNNP), Afar, Somali, Gambella and Benishangul-Gumuz. Based on this mapping, it develops recommendations for further research and project activities, most notably regarding conflicts connected to ethnic tensions, the unequal distribution of resources, conflicts between religious groups and between different student groups at the university level especially in Tigray and in the Ethiopian-Eritrean border region. Based on close personal contacts with the Law Department at Mekelle University (Tigray), ARPD implements reconciliation activities between conflicting groups at the local level. In so doing, the organisation seeks to "foster reconciliation between different groups in Tigray and in the border region to prepare the ground for peaceful social change."⁹⁰

In an effort to broaden its engagement and gain external support for these research and project

⁸⁹ See: <http://arpd.historia-web.de/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=3&Itemid=11>.

⁹⁰ Interview with a representative of ARPD German branch, Frankfurt (Main), 20 March 2009 (GER_IN12).

activities, ARPD has recently set up a branch in Germany based on personal contacts with diaspora representatives. Given the positive Ethiopian–German relations and the strong presence of German governmental and non-governmental organisations in Ethiopia, the German branch is supposed to garner additional support from the German-based diaspora by organising discussion events. In addition, the German branch tries to raise funds to organise reconciliation workshops with Ethiopian and Eritrean residents in Tigray. According to our interview partner (GER_IN12), support from German-based diaspora and non-diaspora institutions is especially sought after since it is generally met with less scepticism than initiatives from other Western countries.

2.1.4.3 Building peace through development: Tigray Development Association e.V.

TDA is one of the largest diaspora organisations in Germany and worldwide. The German branch has recently financed the building of a school in Mentebteb through membership fees and fundraising activities.

In addition to implementing own projects, TDA also implements projects in collaboration with other external donors (USAID; Glimmer of Hope; Baring Foundation). Its relations with the Ethiopian government are by and large positive⁹¹—the Ethiopian government actively fosters the work of regionalised development organisations.

In the area of peacebuilding, TDA has recently concluded a three-year conflict resolution project geared towards the improvement of the traditional counselling system through a series of workshops and trainings. Counselling is offered especially to victims of the Ethiopian-Eritrean conflict in Tigray, including Eritrean refugees and internally displaced Ethiopians. By improving the existing counselling and reconciliation systems, the project was meant to improve neighbourhood relations between the communities through building trust and addressing grievances.

⁹¹ For example, representatives of the regional government of Tigray frequently attend TDA diaspora conferences in Europe and North America. This close co-operation has given rise to criticism and suspicion among other diaspora organisations but also within Ethiopia, some of which consider TDA to be a mere agent of the regional government of Tigray. However, there have also been tensions between the Ethiopian government and the former TDA chairman in Ethiopia.

Prior to the conclusion of fieldwork in Ethiopia⁹² it is hardly possible to obtain more detailed information on the implementation and impact of this project. While TDA's overall contribution to the development of Tigray regional state is widely acknowledged, some criticism of the close collaboration between TDA and the TPLF-led Ethiopian government has also been voiced, both of which are accused of one-sidedly promoting the development of Tigray at the expense of other ethnic regions in Ethiopia. While TDA strongly emphasises its non-political and exclusively aid-oriented agenda, further research will have to focus on the relationship between TDA and other civil society groups both in the diaspora and in Ethiopia.

2.1.4.4 Peacebuilding: A cross-cutting issue

The above examples and the information gathered through the interviews indicate that among the Ethiopian diaspora organisations in Germany peacebuilding appears to be a cross-cutting issue. With few exceptions, most of the contacted groups have adopted their peace and reconciliation strategies as part of a broader agenda, especially development and human rights.

Another notable finding is the predominance of discussion fora as a major strategy of diaspora organisations towards conflict resolution, either within the diaspora or to be organised in Ethiopia. Several respondents also seek to organise diaspora conferences that subsequently send delegations to the Ethiopian government (ARPD, NEME). This is especially interesting in connection with recent research on discursive patterns of negotiating conflict in Ethiopia (Smidt and Abraham, 2007). According to Smidt (2007a, 2007b), constructive conflict resolution in Ethiopia is frequently hampered by exclusionist discursive structures, as illustrated during the recent 2005 post-election crisis.

In this context, it is hardly surprising that almost all respondents and organisations repeatedly highlighted their explicitly non-political agenda and put much emphasis on the need to work with grassroots movements on the local levels, while solutions on the national level were discounted by most respondents given the prevailing political climate and system in Ethiopia. For this reason, in addition to their institutional affiliations, several respondents also reported on private, i.e. individual, initiatives to support their

⁹² At the time of writing, field work was conducted under DIASPEACE Work Package 3.

societies 'back home', for instance through remitting books, money and other resources.

By contrast, organisations affiliated to political and/or ethnic minorities tend to have a more outspoken political agenda. For instance, the Ogaden Relief Association campaigns for the peaceful resolution of the Somali conflict by raising awareness among the diaspora and providing information on the Somali conflict in the Ogaden region. Similarly, the Afar Forum tries to foster reconciliation between different Ethiopian ethnic groups in Germany and in Ethiopia by facilitating meetings and exchanges between antagonistic parties.

2.1.5 Diaspora perceptions of peace and conflict

Discussing conflict in Ethiopia is extremely difficult and complex to say the least, not only given the multitude of actors and perspectives (also *within* a diaspora group), but first and foremost because of the sheer number of conflicts that were referred to during our interviews.

Due to the recent war and the subsequent deployment of the UN Mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea, the Ethiopian-Eritrean border conflict was addressed in almost all interviews and partly related to the quest for regional hegemony between Ethiopia and Eritrea, but also with Somalia. These interstate conflicts are often accompanied by ethnic tensions or ethnically-charged conflicts that span most border areas, as for example in the Afar region (Ethiopia, Somalia and Djibouti), the Somali Ogaden region or between Gambella and the bordering Sudanese territories.

Given the large number of ethnic identities within Ethiopia,⁹³ it is difficult to explain the various levels of ethnic conflict and their intermingling with other conflict factors, for instance pastoralist ones, within a single study. However, most interviewees shared the perception that these ethnic tensions had been exacerbated through the adoption of ethnic federalism by the current EPRDF/TPLF⁹⁴ government. While it is important to note that most of the interviewed

groups do not oppose the Ethiopian system of ethnic federalism as such, most interviewees criticised the incomplete implementation of federal principles and the hegemony of the TPLF. The regional authorities are mainly perceived as being controlled by the central EPRDF government.

A similar finding applies to the 2005 violent post-election crisis and the repressive political climate under the EPRDF government led by Meles Zenawi. Following years of civil war and oppression under the Mengistu regime, most diaspora interviewees acknowledged first improvements of Ethiopia's economic development, especially the co-operation with international institutions such as the International Monetary Fund, and in some cases also with regard to democratisation. But it was also pointed out that most improvements were limited to Addis Ababa and that the political climate had worsened considerably and become more repressive following the 2005 elections. Accordingly, the overall reputation of the current government among the diaspora in Germany appears to be highly ambivalent: while there is widespread acknowledgement of the achieved improvements, many respondents consider the government to be a dictatorship whose style of government strongly exacerbates existing conflict lines and divisions, especially ethnic and, to a lesser extent, religious ones.

With a view to international conflicts, most respondents agreed that the present government was neither willing nor able to resolve the border conflict with Eritrea due to entrenched conflict attitudes and its tradition as a militant liberation movement.

Most ethnically-defined groups tend to focus their perception of the conflict on their ethnic region rather than on developments and politics on the federal level.⁹⁵ According to some Oromo, Afar and Somali Ogaden diaspora groups in Germany, the lack of self-determination of the ethnic regions, the domination and oppression by the so-called Abessinian minorities, repression of the political opposition and non-dominant ethnicities figure prominently among the main causes of conflict. Especially Oromo and Ogadeni groups ascribe the persistence of violent conflict to authoritarianism and human rights violations committed by the government and parts of the security sector.

⁹³ Estimates vary from 77 to 80 distinct ethnic identities, see Turton, 2006.

⁹⁴ After the fall of the *Derg* regime under Mengistu Hailemariam, the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF), together with three additional parties, formed the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF), which has been in power since 1991.

⁹⁵ Oromo diaspora and diasporas of the other southern ethnicities assumedly played a minor role in the political conflict following the 2005 elections (Lyons, 2006).

Additionally, resource and power conflicts among different groups and socio-economic conflict causes have been stressed. Especially in the case of the Afar, the history of discrimination and underdevelopment of the Afar region are perceived as causes for ongoing conflict. Current development projects like sugar cane plantations and embankings in the Awash Valley in the Afar region are considered to contribute to the displacement of Afar pastoralists and nomads. Furthermore, the Afar-Issa Somali conflict is perceived as a major driver of conflict in the region. The Afar Forum considers the Afar people to be endangered by resettlement programmes of Issa Somalis and other Somalis in the Afar grazing areas.

Summing up, most ethnically-based groups addressed historical grievances that date back to the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century and the legacies of colonialism and authoritarian rule.

Many diaspora respondents appear to be tired and frustrated of (party-)political debates and controversies, especially looking back to the 2005 post-election crisis in Ethiopia. While many respondents shared the major opposition parties' criticism towards the repressive nature of the current government, the opposition was equally blamed for adopting an uncompromising and partly destructive attitude within the political process. According to many respondents, neither the government nor the major opposition parties are willing to compromise or negotiate their respective positions so as to achieve reconciliation. Likewise, with a view to the Ethiopian-Eritrean border conflict, many respondents expressed their belief that peace could not be attained at the government level, but only at the civil society level with the resident population on both sides of the border.

For this reason, the commitment of many diaspora organisations towards peace and stability appears to be centred on community-based approaches at the grassroots levels: through projects that seek to improve relationships between conflicting communities through small-scale reconciliation and dialogue projects. With a view to ethnically-defined and other conflicts on the regional (sub-state) level, some respondents suggested a referendum.

Strikingly enough, many respondents called for more in-depth research on the underlying conflict factors to further "objectify" or "rationalise" their efforts (see for example the baseline study undertaken by

ARPD). The role of the diaspora was mostly seen as a mediator or facilitator of constructive dialogue between the conflicting parties. Several respondents plan to organise workshops or dialogue fora with representatives of all groups and factions within the diaspora to discuss the sources of conflict. The results and recommendations of these debates are then to be handed over to the Ethiopian government.

According to most ethnic and/or political minority organisations, self-determination, the democratic participation of all ethnic groups and the end of political repression are the prerequisites to peace in Ethiopia. While most of these groups did not suggest a concrete approach to conflict resolution, the Ogaden Relief Association proposes amnesty and a guarantee of security for all participants of the Somali conflict and a federal system based on clan affiliations. It calls for the initial autonomy of the Ogaden that would be followed by a referendum like the one in Southern Sudan. It also asks for the engagement of the international community in order to help bring the Ethiopian government to the negotiation table with Ogadeni opposition and armed groups. Repeatedly, the importance of the local level (e.g. councils of elders) and civil society was stressed.

Oromo groups, such as Oromotiti, state that the impact of diaspora engagement is likely to increase due to new communication technologies (e-mail, Internet), improved access to education in Oromo regional state and the impact of remittances. On the other hand, they realise that the fragmentation of the Oromo diaspora in Germany hampers joined and efficient engagement. Most groups are aware of the fact that the diaspora is able to frame information on Ethiopia and intensively use the possibility to freely express political opinions, exchange information and provide political interpretations to their compatriots. On the other hand, some groups recognise that the diaspora has only limited access to information provided by independent sources.

Both the Ogaden and the Afar groups estimate that their influence on the situation in Ethiopia today is rather small, mainly due to the restrictions of their engagement put in place by the Ethiopian government.

2.1.6 Networking and co-operation

2.1.6.1 Networks and alliances in the country of settlement

Ethnic networks. The Ethiopian diaspora is not only divided along ethnic, but also along political lines *within* some of these ethnic groups. Especially among Oromo groups, there are political (mainly concerning the Oromo Liberation Front/OLF) and to a lesser degree religious divisions that hamper co-operation. To further complicate matters, some Oromo organisations, like OLF and ORA, are also split internally. Having said this, there are several close connections and networks between Oromo groups despite such divisions. By contrast, the (small) German Afar community seems much more united. The Afar Forum claims to represent all Afar residing in Germany and is strongly linked to the Afar Fürsorgeverein (GER_IN2). Likewise, the Ogaden Somali diaspora seems to be relatively united.

Interethnic networks. The majority of the ethnically-based groups is connected to other Ethiopian diaspora organisations in Germany and co-operates with other ethnically based groups. For example, some Oromo groups have contacts to Sidama and Somali groups (e.g. TBOE). The same holds true for Afar groups that try to facilitate dialogue between different parties and communities and maintain contacts with certain Oromo groups. Among the Oromo and Afar diaspora communities, contacts to groups of the 'politically dominant' ethnicities, such as Tigrayan groups, or non-ethnically based groups appear to be rare. The Ogaden Direkthilfe has contacts to diaspora groups from the Afar Region, Gambella, Sidama, Oromo Regional State and certain Amhara groups around the globe.

Co-operation with German civil society organisations (CSOs), non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and other partners. There are about 30 organisations with a combined membership of Ethiopians and Germans, for example the Deutsch-Äthiopischer Verein e.V. (German Ethiopian Association), established in 1995 by former development workers to maintain ties with Ethiopia, foster cultural exchange and publish information on Ethiopia and Ethiopian diaspora activities through a tri-annual newsletter (*DÄV Informationsblätter*).

Several diaspora groups have established links with other diaspora organisations focussing on the

same issue area (e.g. human rights; war resistance; refugee law; development). As mentioned above, the Ethiopian War Resisters' Initiative, for instance, co-operates with the Eritrean Antimilitarist Initiative and the Angolan Antimilitarist Initiative.

Alliances also exist with German NGOs, governmental and church-related institutions. Churches in particular play an important role as co-operation partners of the Ethiopian diaspora in Germany. Oromo fellowships receive support from Protestant churches in Germany. Likewise, H-ORA and OHAZ co-operate with the Protestant Berliner Missionswerk. H-ORA is a member of the Horn of Africa Council of the Berliner Missionswerk, the Berliner Entwicklungspolitische Ratschlag (BER e.V.), and has established links with Bengo (Beratungsstelle für private Träger in der Entwicklungszusammenarbeit), an institutional framework to support and advise civil society organisations in Germany, Bread for the World and several other organisations. Many Ethiopian human rights groups also have close links with international human rights organisations, such as Amnesty International or War Resisters' International (WRI), which among others serve as important focal points for exchanging information and experiences with other, Ethiopian and non-Ethiopian groups (see, for instance, the Ethiopian War Resisters' Initiative, Section 2.1.4.1).

Especially in recent years, initial efforts have been made by governmental and non-governmental institutions in Germany to co-operate with migrant or diaspora organisations or offer advice, especially in the wider developmental field. For instance, the *Pilotförderprogramm für Projekte von Migrantenorganisationen*⁹⁶ (pilot support programme for projects carried out by migrant organisations) of the German Technical Cooperation (GTZ) supports projects implemented by migrants' organisations in the migrants' country of origin. A complementary programme to support domestic co-operation with diaspora organisations is the Servicestelle Kommunen der einen Welt/ InWent pilot project *Interkulturelle Kompetenzbildung in deutschen Kommunen - Zusammenarbeit mit Diasporen*.⁹⁷ Bengo offers advice to private development actors. Another organisation engaged in linking migration to development

⁹⁶ For further information, see <<http://www2.gtz.de/dokumente/bib/gtz2009-3037de-diasporagemeinschaften.pdf>> (last accessed 13 January 2010).

⁹⁷ For more information, see <<http://www.service-eine-welt.de/home/index.html>> (last accessed 08 February 2010).

strategies is the Centrum für Internationale Migration und Entwicklung (CIM) which places managers and technical experts in Asia, Africa, Latin America, and Eastern and South-Eastern Europe and supports them with services and subsidies to top up their local salaries. The Ethiopian partner organisation of this programme is the Association of Ethiopians Educated in Germany (AEEG). The German Development Service (DED), the Protestant Development Service (EED), the Senior Expert Service and the World University Service also support (diaspora) experts who decide to return to Ethiopia. The German chapter of the International Organization for Migration (IOM) implements a return programme, commissioned by the German Federal Ministry of the Interior (BMI). Initiatives such as the website www.GeldtransFAIR.de of the Frankfurt School of Finance & Management and the GTZ provide information on the most reasonable and fastest possible means of transferring money. The KfW Entwicklungsbank (KfW Development Bank), too, engages in promoting the impact of migrants' organisations on the development of the respective origin countries.

Despite these promising openings, it appears that many diaspora organisations find it difficult to comply with the formal and organisational requirements necessary, especially when co-operating with governmental institutions. For instance, in the case of the pilot support programme offered by GTZ, only few Ethiopian diaspora organisations we interviewed have the necessary means or bureaucratic structures to meet the programme's demands. For this reason, several interviewees expressed the need to participate in accompanying training and information events on organisation management, legal requirements, fundraising and so on. In recent years, seminars addressing these issues have been offered by the Fachstelle Migration und Entwicklung, Solingen, by GTZ and Inwent (Internationale Weiterbildung und Entwicklung gGmbH), among others.

In some cases, diaspora organisations are—at least in their initial stages—only able to function with the support of other CSOs, such as Connection e.V., which supports EWRI with know-how and access to IT facilities, office space, etc. With a view to implementing projects in Ethiopia, many interview partners also expressed the need to closely link up with German partner organisations as they would benefit from their positive reputation in Ethiopia (ARPD; TDA).

2.1.6.2 Partners in and links with the country of origin

Due to the difficulties, many ethnic or political minority groups face in their country of origin, projects in the Horn of Africa are often run by local partners. Especially organisations that work towards the promotion of human rights, conflict resolution or other contested issues have been facing many obstacles when trying to implement projects in Ethiopia. In view of restrictive government policies, such as the recent anti-CSO legislation ("Federal Charities and Societies Proclamation", see below), many organisations rely on individual contacts in Ethiopia, i.e. friends, relatives and other non-formalised groups. Others, especially human rights groups such as EWRI, have decided to limit their activities to contacts with other groups in the diaspora altogether. In general, it has been extremely difficult to obtain information on the nature of these contacts, one notable exception being H-ORA, which supports a local NGO in a refugee camp in Kenya. In 1996, Ethiopian authorities declared the mother organisation ORA, founded in 1991 in Addis Ababa, illegal and forced it out of the country.

OHAZ, a group with strong ties with the Omoro Liberation Front (OLF), currently does not have any concrete projects and partners in the Horn. The Ogaden Relief Association has contacts to councils of elders in the Ogaden and co-operates with partners in the Ogaden.

Since the mid-1990s, the Ethiopian government has adopted a more pro-active strategy towards its diaspora communities. In January 2002, the General Directorate in charge of Ethiopian Expatriate Affairs (EEA) was established within the Ethiopian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Its main purpose is to liaise with diaspora organisations via special contact persons at the embassies, especially with respect to economic investments, assisting diaspora returnees, protecting Ethiopian citizens abroad as well as mobilising the diaspora to improve the reputation of Ethiopia abroad. For instance, in July 2004, the government created the opportunity for diaspora members to set up bank accounts in foreign currencies within Ethiopia.⁹⁸ In 2002, changes in the citizenship status of diaspora members were introduced. While dual citizenship is generally not granted, diaspora members can apply for an Ethiopian Origin Identity Card (Yellow Card),

⁹⁸ For further information on initiatives by the Ethiopian government to encourage investments and returnees from the diaspora see Schlenzka, 2009, pp. 30–33.

which endows the holder with all civil rights except the right to vote.

In general, these openings primarily target the promotion of investments, capacity-building and other economic or development contributions of the diaspora. These initiatives notwithstanding, the engagement of diaspora organisations might be considerably complicated through the recent adoption of the Charities and Societies Proclamation, which came into force in January 2009 and limits the scope of action of CSOs. This law restricts the work of CSOs that receive more than ten per cent of their funding from donors outside of Ethiopia, i.e. from external development agencies and foundations as well as from the diaspora. It effectively bans most civil society engagement in political issues such as human rights, democracy and justice by enabling the government to sanction or dissolve organisations working on potentially contested and/or political issues. While the Proclamation is officially supposed to limit the misuse of aid resources, it also delimits the degree of any external intervention within Ethiopia and affords the government an instrument to limit and control civil society. At present, the law is only partly enforced, hence the effects of its implementation on diaspora engagement, but also on the overall Ethiopian civil society still remain to be seen, especially in the light of the elections in May 2010.⁹⁹

One of the diaspora organisations that co-operates with the government is the Tigray Development Association e.V. This group holds regular fundraising events that are also attended by Ethiopian government officials and implements its projects in close co-ordination with the regional government.

The majority of our interviewees, however, does not co-operate with Ethiopian authorities; in fact, several respondents reported a general sense of distrust or 'carefulness' among the majority of the diaspora, as there are frequent claims of espionage committed by Ethiopian embassies to identify opposition movements and critics of the current government.

2.1.6.3 Transnational ties

Given the restrictions on civil society engagement within Ethiopia, it can be assumed that especially groups that follow a political agenda, like political

⁹⁹ Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia: *Federal Charities and Societies Proclamation No. 00/2008* as of January 2009. See also the assessments by Human Rights Watch (2008) and Amnesty International (2009) of earlier drafts of the law.

parties, movements or groups that engage in the field of peacebuilding and reconciliation as well as groups that refer to ethnically-defined identities, are likely to build transnational networks with branches in various European countries and the United States.

Accordingly, we were able to partly verify transnational ties to other groups within Europe or the Horn of Africa for most branches of Ethiopian (opposition) parties and for eight Oromo groups, the Ogaden group and one Afar group.

The Afar Forum has branches in the Netherlands, Sweden, the United Kingdom, Australia and Canada. It organises an annual international conference and maintains contact to Afar communities in Ethiopia, different political organisations and other Ethiopian diaspora groups. Likewise, the Ogaden Relief Association has branches in the United States and European countries, especially in Norway and the United Kingdom. The Ogaden Relief Association is also in contact with the European Association for Somali Studies.

Among the Oromo, especially those with a political agenda, seem to have strong transnational ties. For example, TBOA has branches in Belgium, the Czech Republic, Germany, Sweden, Switzerland, the United Kingdom, Greece and Norway. OPC has chapters in Belgium, Norway and Sweden.

In addition, as demonstrated above, diaspora groups working on a particular issue area such as EWRI (war resistance and de-militarisation), NEME (support for Ethiopian Muslims in Europe) or ARPD (conflict resolution) often co-operate with international initiatives or organisations dedicated to the same agenda. In the case of diaspora organisations that have been set up as branches of international Ethiopian diaspora networks, the headquarters of the respective organisations have usually been set up in the United States (TDA) and in some cases in the United Kingdom given the highly organised and sizeable Ethiopian diaspora communities in these countries.

2.1.7 Concluding remarks

When trying to assess the actual and potential scope for constructive diaspora intervention in peacebuilding and development in Ethiopia, there are several factors that either restrict or enable this

transnational engagement. The following paragraphs briefly summarise our most important findings, referring either to the contextual level or to the diasporas' own resources and characteristics.

2.1.7.1 Context of diaspora engagement

Country of origin. As discussed above, the relationship between Ethiopian government authorities and many diaspora groups is characterised by mutual scepticism and distrust. The Ethiopian government appears to be particularly worried that diaspora groups are likely to support opposition movements or parties. Accordingly, these diaspora groups do not receive any support by Ethiopian government authorities and their engagement and concrete project work in Ethiopia is at times hampered by restrictions such as the aforementioned anti-CSO legislation. What is more, most diaspora organisations fear surveillance or monitoring through the embassies. Because of this, many diaspora members refrain from openly making political statements even within their communities. These concerns notwithstanding, there are some Ethiopian groups in Germany that directly address the Ethiopian government or the Prime Minister with letters, petitions, etc. offering exchanges and open discussions with diaspora delegations. These kinds of initiatives have mostly been frustrated by the Ethiopian government.

On the other hand, there is co-operation between the Ethiopian government and a few select diaspora organisations as well as strong interaction with parts of the diaspora community; government officials even attend conferences and meetings. Some opposition groups argue that this engagement contributes to distrust and conflict between diaspora groups. In Germany, according to the consulate, co-operation especially takes place with Tigrinya groups and Ethiopian churches and fellowships.

Diaspora groups also recognise the overall weakness of Ethiopian civil society that restricts development and peacebuilding activities. Therefore, some groups stressed the need to strengthen the grassroots level in the Ethiopian society and engage in capacity-building. Co-operation between diaspora organisations and their local partners is further hampered by communication difficulties. Reportedly, several diaspora websites are censored by Ethiopian authorities and therefore not accessible from within Ethiopia (GER_IN6).

Diaspora members sometimes face distrust, envy and refusal by Ethiopians in Ethiopia due to perceptions and priorities that differ from those of the locals. In most cases, this seems to result from the choice of co-operation partners in Ethiopia, especially in those cases where diaspora groups seek to co-operate with local authorities or representatives of specific ethnic groups in a given region. There is some preliminary evidence¹⁰⁰ that this co-operation between local authorities and ethnically defined diaspora organisations might enhance existing perceptions of inequality or discrimination of other ethnicities. Finally, the unstable security situation in Ethiopia also hampers the implementation of projects.

Country of settlement. Financial constraints are a major hindrance to diaspora engagement in Germany. Most groups depend on membership fees and donations. Ethiopian associations have rarely received financial support by German institutions, although some groups maintain linkages to churches, German NGOs and local or regional government institutions, especially in the fields of asylum and integration. In particular the support by women's organisations and churches is considered vital to enabling diaspora organisations. Even though some groups have contacted the Office for Private Agencies in Development Co-operation (bengo), many have not as yet made use of it. In addition, the existing opportunities appear to be both insufficient in numbers and scope and have to be targeted towards migrant groups, as prior to our interviews most interviewees had never heard of the few opportunities that actually exist. On a more general level, obstacles to integration, e.g. precarious residence titles, insufficient language skills (only in the case of recently immigrated Ethiopians) and lacking job opportunities as well as discrimination against Africans further delimit the diasporas' scope of action.

2.1.7.2 Diaspora capacities and attributes

The Ethiopian diaspora community in Germany is characterised by an overall high level of education, integration and preparedness to actively engage in community-, development-, and reconciliation activities both in Germany and in Ethiopia. With their large number of diaspora members and established initiatives and organisations, the Ethiopian diaspora has a high potential for influencing Ethiopian politics and development.

¹⁰⁰ Unpublished DIASPEACE working paper. Results from the field work conducted in Ethiopia under Work Package 3 of the DIASPEACE project will be published on the project website, www.diaspeace.org.

On the other hand, some characteristics of the diaspora hamper constructive and sustainable engagement. The Ethiopian diaspora is very heterogeneous and highly fragmented along ideological, ethnic, religious and social lines. This fragmentation is accompanied by suspicion and distrust between various diaspora groups, including groups that share the same ethnic identity. Although most groups maintain close contacts and frequently exchange information, there only appear to be a few cases in which groups co-operate on a project basis. Many groups expressed the need for better co-operation among the diaspora itself, besides the co-operation with German NGOs and agencies.

Another constraint to diaspora engagement results from the high degree of dynamic change and fluctuation within the diaspora community. Many Ethiopians in Germany move on to other European countries or the United States after a short period of time where they maintain their transnational networks but not their former national organisations. On the practical level, especially financial constraints often delimit the organisations' scope of action, not least given the high costs for air travel to Ethiopia and the often considerable amounts of remittances that are sent to family members in Ethiopia (according to our interviews, in some cases up to 20 per cent of their monthly salaries; GER_IN12).

Given the multitude of assets, but also impediments to constructive diaspora intervention in Ethiopia, any external attempts at fostering diaspora contributions to peacebuilding have to be carefully designed bearing in mind the heterogeneity and diversity of interests within the diaspora, but also the limitations regarding the scope of action in the country of origin. Building on the assessment of most interview partners and also on the recommendations discussed during a workshop with 20 representatives from the diaspora,¹⁰¹ co-operation with and among the diaspora could best be initiated through the facilitation of a moderated dialogue and exchange process within the diaspora, which could be the starting point to building trust and identifying shared objectives that exist beyond ethnic and political cleavages.

¹⁰¹ The workshop was entitled "Diaspora Engagement in the Horn of Africa. Co-operation for Fostering Peace and Development" and was held at Bonn International Center for Conversion (BICC), Bonn, on 21 November 2009 within the framework of the DIASPEACE project. Its main purpose was to discuss the research outcomes of the project and the lessons to be learned for improving co-operation among diaspora organisations but also among the diaspora and other stakeholders with our interview partners. For a full report, see www.diaspeace.org.

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2.2 Ethiopian organisations in the Netherlands

2.2.1 Ethiopian migration to the Netherlands

Until the late 1970s, only a small number of Ethiopians came to the Netherlands mainly for educational purposes and, later, as asylum seekers and refugees. The arrival of Ethiopian asylum seekers began in 1976 and reached its peak in 1990 (van Heelsum, 2006, p. 4). Most Ethiopian migrants fled from the military dictatorship of the *Derg* regime, which came to power in 1974, while later generations of migrants (1990s to-date) came as a result of drought and economic stagnation during the late 1980s and early 1990s followed by the border conflict with Eritrea. In recent years, those who have left for the Netherlands are groups and individuals in political opposition to the authoritarian tendencies of the government as well because of conflicts with neighbouring countries.

The second most important reason for Ethiopians to migrate to the Netherlands, after asylum, is education. According to van Heelsum, (2007, p. 4) "a quarter of the Ethiopians arrive in the Netherlands to study, most noticeable at the Agricultural University of Wageningen and at the Institute for Social Studies in Den Haag." As noted by ter Wal (2005), "some came as students, and after completion of their studies decided to remain, often having married or found employment". About 50 per cent of Ethiopians legally living in the Netherlands are naturalised (de Valk et al., 2001), but this number may have increased between 2001 and 2008 since anyone with a permanent residency permit for more than five years qualified for Dutch citizenship. Marriages or family re-unification are important pull factors, and upon acquiring permanent residency, the majority of Ethiopian migrants have now become naturalised citizens in the Netherlands (ter Wal, 2005).¹⁰²

According to the Dutch Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS),¹⁰³ the total Ethiopian population in the Netherlands was estimated at 10,292 (2005), and by 2008, it stood at 10,659 (2008). In 2006, there were 210 asylum applications by Ethiopians (ibid.), however, that number went down to about 70 as of 1 January 2007 (ibid., 2009). Besides those in the asylum procedure, participation of Ethiopians in the labour market in the Netherlands is relatively high compared to other groups. A 2000 survey of 117 refugees from

Ethiopia found that 17 per cent defined themselves as highly educated, 61 per cent as average and 22 per cent as having received a low level of education (van den Tillaart et al., 2000, p. 167). The same study also found that more than 50 per cent had a high school diploma or higher and that more than half of the respondents continued their education. Since their arrival, most Ethiopians have adapted fairly well to Dutch society. A study in 2000 found that 15 per cent male and 23 per cent female Ethiopians were married to a Dutch native (van Rijn, cited in MINJUS, 2006).

Another study also observed that many Ethiopians live in neighbourhoods or streets where the majority of residents are Dutch and almost one-quarter of the Ethiopian community lives in neighbourhoods with equal numbers of Dutch and other nationalities (van den Tillaart et al., 2000). The same study also noted that more than half of the Ethiopians have continued with some kind of schooling in the Netherlands after settlement. Several respondents and groups confirm these observations and emphasise that this development has been crucial for the level of integration and other interaction processes (NL_IN1). This has also encouraged mobilisation and the establishment of organisations that cater for their diverse interests within the Netherlands. Despite the integrative efforts being made by Ethiopian migrants in the Netherlands, recent migrants are far less involved with diaspora organisations (NL_IN2). This is most common among second-generation Ethiopian migrants compared to groups that came to the Netherlands in the 1990s.

Ethiopian migrants are one of the most significant Horn of Africa groups in the Netherlands and have been more visible due to the ongoing conflicts and political instability in the region. Ethiopian diaspora communities in the Netherlands come from diverse backgrounds, many of whom have formed organisations,¹⁰⁴ largely along the lines of ethnicity, religion or political affiliations (van Heelsum, 2004). Some of these organisations also use the name of their country as a title in combination with issues they address. Although some of the Ethiopian diaspora organisations tend to portray themselves as issue-oriented, or bearing the name of the country, their founders or leadership and members are often from the same ethnic group and activities in the origin

¹⁰² For more information on this discussion, see van Kessel and Tellegen, 2000.

¹⁰³ More information can be found at <<http://statline.cbs.nl>>.

¹⁰⁴ For a detailed account on African diaspora organisations in the Netherlands, see van Kessel and Tellegen, 2000.

country largely target specific ethnic regions. There are, however, exceptions where the board of some of the organisations consists of both native Dutch and African migrants.

2.2.2 Immigration and refugee legislation

Policy response to the issue of migration has predominantly been restrictive since 1974 (ter Wal, 2005). During the 1970s, youngsters from one particular immigrant group, the Moluccans,¹⁰⁵ carried out a series of terrorist acts. This provided the impetus for introducing a new integration policy for all immigrant groups, recommended by the Scientific Council for Government Policy "Towards a general Ethnic Minorities Policy" (WRR, 1979). In the 1990s, Dutch policies changed with respect to the relationship between integration and citizenship. From then on, immigrants were expected to demonstrate their commitment to the host country as a precondition to obtaining such rights as entry, permanent residence and citizenship. Immigration and integration were traditionally separate issues in the Netherlands. With the recent establishment of a special immigration and integration department (IND), which operates within the Ministry of Justice, this has changed. The subsequent waves of immigrants were considered unwelcome anomalies requiring short-term and restrictive policy responses (Doomernik, 2001).

There are several pieces of legislation on migration and refugees in the Netherlands. Most relevant for this study are the Netherlands Nationality Act (*Rijkswet op het Nederlandschap*), the Dutch Aliens Act of 2000 (*Vreemdelingenwet*), which forms the statutory basis for forced and independent departure and the Civic Integration Act, which came into effect on 1 January 2007 (Government of the Netherlands, Ministry of Justice, 2007). In 1985, a new naturalisation law was introduced, which allowed children born on Dutch territory to acquire Dutch citizenship (Jacobs, 1998). According to this law, dual nationality was not accepted, and naturalisation meant renouncing one's previous nationality. As a result, over fifty per cent of Ethiopians born in the Netherlands held Dutch nationality by 2000 (de Valk et al., 2001). With respect to asylum, the Dutch government is undertaking in a pilot programme for the Assisted Return of Rejected

Asylum Seekers with a number of other countries. Ethiopia was one of the few countries from Sub-Saharan Africa, which signed this agreement on 22 August 1997 (Koser, 2001).

The establishment of Ethiopian diaspora organisations got an impetus towards the end of the 1980s through Dutch policies that aimed at achieving full and equal participation of migrant groups within society, granting them space for cultural expression and development facilitated by the government (Human Rights Watch, 2008). However, in the early 1990s, the attitude towards migrant organisations changed (Penninx and van Heelsum, 2004) and a general policy shift began to emphasise integration into the socio-economic field. This shift was based on the assumption that too much emphasis on cultural and religious identity might hinder socio-economic integration (also see Miles, 1993; van Heelsum, 2006, p. 4; WRR, 1990).

In the 1990s, the Dutch government introduced compulsory orientation courses on the Dutch language and society for newcomers (ter Wal, 2005; Bruquetas-Callejo et al., 2006). Between 2002 and 2006, the government further changed its policy framework by introducing mandatory integration requirements aimed at enhancing social cohesion through new restrictions on migration into the Netherlands. For instance in 2006, the Dutch government introduced a selective migration policy (Government of the Netherlands, Ministry of Justice, 2006) based on the premise that migration policy should address the needs of Dutch society and the labour market. The new policy was therefore aimed at taking full advantage of the possibilities offered by migration (ibid.). This marked the beginning of another major policy shift that saw the introduction of an integration process according to different countries of origin. For instance in 2006, the Dutch government introduced an integration test for predominantly 'non-Western' migrants that must be passed before the migrant is allowed to enter the Netherlands (under the Integration Abroad Act, *Wet inburgering in het buitenland* of 2005). On 1 January 2007, the Civic Integration Act came into effect and henceforth it was obligatory to pass the civic integration examination for all foreign nationals in the Netherlands (Dutch National Contact Point for the European Migration Network, 2007). However, the overseas integration test only applies to nationals of selected countries wishing to join family members or spouses in the Netherlands (van Heelsum, 2006).

¹⁰⁵ People from a former Dutch colony in the South Moluccan islands situated east of New Guinea in the western Pacific who were resettled in the Netherlands when Indonesia captured the island shortly after declaring its independence in April of 1950.

Since 1 January 2009, a new migration system is being implemented by the Immigration and Naturalisation Service (IND). Through this policy, a new admission scheme for highly educated persons was introduced, whereby highly educated foreign nationals who have at least attained an MA degree can obtain a residence permit with a maximum term of one year in the Netherlands in order to find a job. This policy does not, however, mention asylum seekers who have the same skills but have been in the asylum procedures for more than five years, a case which is common in the Netherlands.

2.2.3 Ethiopian diaspora organisations

Four Ethiopian organisations were selected¹⁰⁶ for an in-depth analysis of actual and potential engagement in peacebuilding in the country of origin. The study period was between August 2008 and March 2009, during which a total of 20 interviews in the form of open-ended questions and in-depth interviews with several representatives of the select Ethiopian diaspora organisations were conducted. In addition, observation of Ethiopian diaspora communities and their organisational activities within the Netherlands complemented the data gathered through interviews. Additional interviews were conducted with leaders and individual members of a few Eritrean and Somalia organisations, which allowed for corroboration of information given on cross-country and joint peacebuilding activities within the Netherlands.

The relationship between Ethiopian groups, Dutch government institutions and development agencies has largely focussed on integration and welfare within the Netherlands and development in the country of origin. To a great extent, Ethiopian diaspora organisations have been able to establish themselves and function within the Netherlands due to the legislative and institutional frameworks that facilitate such initiatives. For instance, the opportunity to register with the Dutch chamber of commerce either as a foundation or an association has enabled many groups and organisations to engage formally with the state through various ministries and local authorities as well as with major Dutch development agencies. This relationship has been critical in securing the needed funding for diaspora activities within the Netherlands and for their activities in the country of origin. The relationship has also entailed a significant level of collaboration and consultation between Ethiopian

diaspora organisations and development agencies, which often includes capacity-building initiatives and funding by various ministries.

The evolution of Ethiopian diaspora organisations is not only influenced by the existing opportunities offered by Dutch ministries and organisations but also by the concerns about the situation in the country of origin. The existing repressive political environment, especially towards the opposition and ethnic groups that are resisting historical, economic and political marginalisation, and the need to provide humanitarian assistance to regions hit by drought, continue to inform most Ethiopian diaspora activities in the Netherlands. Their activities in the Netherlands are influenced by the need to address factors related to integration into Dutch society and the welfare of their communities in the cities they live in. These needs include venues where Ethiopians can meet and interact, language lessons, skills and other activities aimed at facilitating integration. The Ethiopian diaspora in the Netherlands is remarkably well organised through the various formal and informal groups, which can be explained by its diversity and wide range of opinions, which in turn opens up many possibilities to create new organisations.

Most members of the Ethiopian diaspora have carried with them their political and ethnic differences; hence most associations are formed around ethnic and political identities. Some of these groups, especially the established ones, have organised themselves into associations (see van Heelsum, 2004). Examples include different Ethiopian sub-nationalities such as the Oromo, Amhara, Tigray, Sidama, Ogaden Somali, and Afar. For example, out of the 53 registered Ethiopian organisations, 15 are explicitly formed around ethnic identities, namely four Oromo, six Tigray and five Ogaden-Somali organisations. About eight organisations have affiliations with political parties in Ethiopia whom they represent in the diaspora in the Netherlands,¹⁰⁷ the rest of Europe and North America. These organisations often focus on human rights issues, which are sometimes combined with development and humanitarian work in the country of origin. About twelve organisations focus on development in Ethiopia while six are religion-based and another four are business-oriented (van Heelsum, 2004). About eight organisations mainly serve community interests

¹⁰⁶ The criteria used apply to all the cases as outlined in the Introduction on p. 10.

¹⁰⁷ Political organisations as used here imply political parties, non-governmental organisations, associations and groupings whose main agenda and activities are focussed on the political processes in Ethiopia. The majority are political parties in opposition of the previous and current regime in Addis Ababa.

of Ethiopians living in the Netherlands, addressing such issues as integration, culture, health and social services.

2.2.3.1 Formal structures and membership

The formation of these organisations is based on collective or individual initiatives. For instance, there are groups registered as associations (*Verenigingen*¹⁰⁸) and those that are registered as foundations (*Stichtingen*), yet they are led by a few individuals who serve as the core personnel or board members. While some of these associations have a membership that includes officials, those operating as a *Stichting* do not have members, with the exception of a board that oversees its operations. With such institutional arrangements, membership in most organisations is based on being an Ethiopian;¹⁰⁹ it has, however, been possible for non-Ethiopian individuals to be incorporated into the boards, especially Dutch individuals who are currently acting as board members of various foundations and associations. For example, DIR's (Dir biyabir Anbessa Yasir¹) board is 50 per cent Ethiopian and 50 per cent Dutch. Reasons for such choices could be strategic as well as practical. For instance, organisations working on integration such as DIR, and the Ethiopian Netherlands Network for Development Cooperation (ENNOS) emphasise the value of having Dutch people on their boards in order to facilitate the process of integration from within their organisational structures.

Most Ethiopian diaspora organisations are led by individuals who are the key person(s) of such initiatives; however, the management structures laid down in the group statutes emphasise the mechanisms of discussion and democratic deliberation. In this regard, the decision-making processes within the organisations are carried out through a formalised structure and based on procedures. Nonetheless, the activities that are undertaken within the selected activity areas often depend on the needs of the community as well as of the country of origin. Other activities are determined by policies and development agendas within the various Dutch development agencies working with these groups and government policy towards the country of origin.

¹⁰⁸ A *Vereniging* is equivalent to an association in English, the Ethiopian Netherlands Network for Development Cooperation (ENNOS), for example, falls into this category.

¹⁰⁹ Sometimes the name of the country is used to refer to a specific group/ organisation or their activity coverage, however, in practice the activities often focus on some specific region, or ethnic group from the country of origin.

2.2.3.2 Diaspora activities and peacebuilding

For the purpose of this study, four Ethiopian diaspora organisations are analysed in depth in order to understand how Ethiopians organise, mobilise and engage in different activities and what their potentials for peacebuilding are. The first organisation is the Oromo Community¹¹⁰ founded in 1980s in the Netherlands. Its main objectives include advocacy, organising conferences on human rights, organising discussions on how to change the political situation in Ethiopia, support projects and transnational linkages, and cultural events. The second organisation is DIR (Dir biyabir Anbessa Yasir), which was founded in 2000. Its main objectives are to empower Ethiopians in the Netherlands by assisting in integration, with social problems, education, and by providing judicial aid. Another objective is to bring about sustainable change in Ethiopia and to assist groups (beneficiaries) and help them to become independent. The third organisation, Ethiopian Netherlands Network for Development Cooperation (ENNOS), was founded in 2006 with the objective of offering a platform for the Ethiopian diaspora organisations in the Netherlands, facilitating co-operation between the organisations and Dutch initiatives, and the development and strengthening of the bond between Ethiopian diaspora organisations in the Netherlands and NGOs in Ethiopia. The fourth organisation is Stichting Ethiopia Millennium (SEM), also founded in 2006. Its main objectives are to promote a positive image of Ethiopia, increase public support for international co-operation, stimulate the development of Ethiopia, create awareness about issues in the field of freedom and human rights, promote friendship between Dutch and Ethiopians, and to encourage fraternisation and reconciliation among Ethiopians.

A number of opposition groups in the diaspora¹¹¹ have been engaged in the political processes in Ethiopia through formal political parties; such involvement has, however, become difficult due to the prevailing political environment in Ethiopia where activities of civil society have been restricted.¹¹² The ethnic dimension in Ethiopian diaspora organisations in this context reflects the underlying politicised ethnicity at the national level in Ethiopia, the basis upon which

¹¹⁰ For a more detailed account of Oromo diaspora, see Bulcha, 2002.

¹¹¹ Ginbot 7, as well as Sidama and Ogaden Somali groups.

¹¹² The Ethiopia government introduced a new law in 2008 that controls civil society operation in the country. It is accessible at <http://www.iccs.org/pubs/CSO_draft_received_11-07-08.pdf and <http://www.amnestyusa.org/document.php?id=ENGAFR250092008&lang=e>.

political and economic marginalisation takes place, especially when certain ethnic groups are excluded from the government and less resources allocated for development in their regions. This scenario underpins the persistence of conflicts between different groups that tend to spill over into the diaspora. Another feature of the Ethiopian diaspora organisations is their linkages to transnational networks.¹¹³ Through these networks, various diaspora groups are able to mobilise beyond the Netherlands for solidarity purposes and to raise funds for their activities.

Ethiopian diaspora activities cover a wide range of social, cultural, political and economic issues but the mode of involvement, their relationship with the regime in Ethiopia and organisational capacity varies from group to group. The majority focuses on their members' welfare in the Netherlands and community development in the country of origin. These developmental and humanitarian activities are undertaken in partnership with Dutch development agencies, which provide the financial support for diaspora organisations in the Netherlands and some of their activities in Ethiopia. Examples include organisations such as DIR, ENNOS and SEM. These claim to have partners on the ground, especially smaller community-based organisations (CBOs) and local groups. Their activities are undertaken in partnership with Dutch development agencies operating in those regions such as the Dutch Organisation for International Aid (Oxfam-NOVIB), the Inter-church Organisation for Development Co-operation (ICCO) and the Catholic Organisation for Relief and Development Aid (CORDAID).

Ethiopian diaspora engagement with the country of origin, i.e. the strategic positioning in relation to the government in Addis Ababa is critical in determining the extent to which diaspora organisations are able to implement activities on the ground, as well as the nature of and choices regarding such activities. This is true more so in terms of 'peacebuilding-related activities', which is a sensitive area in the context of Ethiopian politics and democratic dispensation. Because of this, most groups, especially the more prominent ones such as DIR, ENNOS and SEM are mainly engaged in indirect peacebuilding activities. Those in the opposition, such as the Amhara group Ginbot 7,¹¹⁴ the Ogaden Somali and the Oromo community in

the Netherlands, among others, engage directly with opposition groups in the country of origin, in the region and in the diaspora through transnational links. They are explicit in their perspectives on peacebuilding, but they cannot access their regions, or undertake any activity on the ground, even for humanitarian purposes.

The example of the Oromo Community in the Netherlands is crucial to understanding the ethnic undertones of engagement with the country of origin, political activism and fragmentation within the various diaspora groups. The Oromo Community in the Netherlands has its roots in the Ethiopian student movement, which was formed in Europe during the 1970s. According to one respondent, this movement was initiated by the Oromo students' union in Europe, whose earlier initiatives in Germany and other European countries gave birth to the Oromo Committee Netherlands (OKN). OKN's main objectives were to raise awareness for the Oromo cause through political and economic engagement and to collect materials and financial resources for Oromo refugees in Sudan, Kenya, Djibouti and Somalia (NL_IN3). The Oromo Community in the Netherlands currently has a broad transnational network in Europe, which covers Sweden, Norway, the United Kingdom, Germany and the United States. The two main foci of these transnational linkages and networks are political/military, and humanitarian issues. An example of a humanitarian effort is the Oromo Relief Association (ORA), which is headquartered in Germany but has branches in other European countries and in the Horn of Africa, while its military and political activities are based in Eritrea and other locations in the Horn of Africa (NL_IN4).

Due to the situation in Ethiopia and the inability to freely engage in direct peacebuilding activities, most Ethiopian diaspora activities are targeted at their communities residing in the Netherlands and largely focus on recreational activities such as sports and cultural events. These activities are less controversial and therefore have the potential to stimulate and reinforce contacts and co-operation and could be replicated at the national level in Ethiopia where divisions and conflicts still exist. However, implementing such nationwide activities would largely depend on the political environment in Ethiopia. The groups also act as points of convergence and shared background with, for instance, the Eritrean and Ethiopian Somali groups, even though interaction is sporadic and most of these events are only held annually. Efforts to

¹¹³ For a detailed discussion on diaspora transnationalism, see Mercer and Martin, 2009; Mercer et al., 2009; Sorensen, 2007; Portes, 2001.

¹¹⁴ Ginbot 7, means May 7 in Amharic, and is used in memory of the election day of 2005.

work with similar groups from the Horn of Africa seem to focus mainly on cultural inter-country activities, however, some Ethiopian diaspora groups claim to address peacebuilding through joint activities with Eritrean and Somali organisations (NL_IN5). These activities are only undertaken on a small scale as compared to developmental, humanitarian and welfare activities in the Netherlands, as can be observed from organisations' activities such as DIR, ENNOS, and SEM. To what extent these strategies work or contribute to peacebuilding between Ethiopia and Eritrea or between Ethiopia and Somalia at the diaspora level is also not clear and requires further investigation. One factor for such lack of clarity could be the fragmentation among Ethiopian diaspora groups, which is manifested by the deep divisions along ethnic, generational and, to some extent, ideological lines.¹¹⁵

2.2.3.3 Peacebuilding: Challenges to constructive diaspora engagement

Initial findings from the four Ethiopian organisations and individuals interviewed point to a complex mix of internal dynamics within the organisations themselves, policy and priorities of donor agencies, competition for resources and social capital both in the Netherlands and in Ethiopia. The difficulty to make choices for peacebuilding-related issues and activities is largely informed by the lack of strategies in addressing the policy positions and resource allocation priorities of the Dutch government and development agencies that operate in the Horn of Africa. As noted by Ionescu, "despite these initiatives in diaspora engagement, the existence of institutions targeting Diasporas does not necessarily guarantee that resources and capacities devoted to diaspora policies are sufficient and sustainable" (2006, p. 37). Therefore, joint strategies and collaborative initiatives by various Ethiopian diaspora organisations could facilitate access to sufficient resources devoted to peacebuilding both in the Netherlands and in Ethiopia.

Another important aspect that delimits and shapes diaspora activities is the fragmentation within diaspora communities. These divisions are due to different agendas, strategies and internal conflicts. As noted by Smith, "diasporas involve a complex of always shifting power relations" (2007, p. 5). Fragmentation of the diaspora groups (Mohamoud, 2006), therefore, has an impact on their potentials to contribute to peacebuilding in the country of origin. The divisions within the Ethiopian diaspora community, especially regarding their relationships with the government 'at home', have led to a carefully chosen set of activities that are to be implemented in the country of origin (NL_IN5). Consequently, the political situation in Ethiopia, in terms of divisions, suspicions and repression of certain groups along ethnic lines and political beliefs, also affects the diaspora. The result is a big rift and conflicts within the Ethiopian community in the Netherlands. These divisions are not only between different groups, but also within communities sharing the same ethnic identity. While groups such as DIR, ENNOS and SEM have claimed to work on peacebuilding through some of their activities in the diaspora, especially the cultural events, such undertakings are not evident in the inter-group relations, as noted during interviews with organisations such as the Oromo Community and during the review of published activity reports and documents.

The Dutch government's priorities of its foreign relations and security policy as well as development aid programmes of Dutch development agencies working in the Horn of Africa are also a significant factor influencing/ framing diaspora group activities. Most notable here are two policies: first on development aid, humanitarian relief and civil society support towards the regime in Ethiopia, second on resource allocation for diaspora activities, such as eligibility for access to funds, areas which are funded and the diaspora organisation's capability of implementation. For example, calls for grants sometimes prove to be too competitive or technical for small organisations run by volunteers to competently bid for (also see Trans and Vammen, 2008). In this context, the degree to which Ethiopian diaspora organisations in the Netherlands are able to engage in active peacebuilding is greatly impeded through the structure of the current system. The situation is further complicated by the competition that exists between residence country organisations that also undertake similar activities in the Horn of Africa. In this context, these organisations compete for the same resources with diaspora organisations,

¹¹⁵ "Due to the influence of the student movement in the 1960s and 70s against feudalism that Haile Selassie's government symbolised, most Ethiopians in the diaspora follow a left-wing ideology. Upon their return from scholarships to then East European countries and the Soviet Union and influenced by left-wing ideology in West Europe, the Ethiopian People's Revolution Party (EPRP) and All Ethiopian Socialist Movement (AMSO) were formed and the students joined the liberation struggle" (interview with first-generation member of the Ethiopian diaspora in the Netherlands, 14 March 2009). Some of these ideological positions were carried on to the diaspora, including in the Netherlands, where many had migrated to, when the Mengistu government became dictatorial.

yet they have a highly developed organisational capacity and sometimes also advantages in terms of language or other specific institutional knowledge, which allows them more access to grants. Therefore, to be able to engage proactively and contribute to peacebuilding in their countries of origin, diaspora organisations will need "passive or active support from host and home countries" (Smith, 2007, p. 14).

It is important in this context to consider the role of transnational links in the peacebuilding initiatives and processes. Discussions on effective diaspora engagement in peacebuilding need to take into account the intricate and intertwined nature of efforts on the ground, such as the support by individuals and organisations in the diaspora. While much attention has been given to organised groups/ diaspora organisations, there is hardly any knowledge of what individual actors are capable of doing.

While explicit engagement in peacebuilding mainly applies to a small number of Ethiopian diaspora organisations, there are less explicit and covert initiatives by individuals from the diaspora, working independently or in collaboration with some organisations.¹¹⁶ Efforts range from providing capacity-building to local community organisations to providing relief and essential services like schools and health care by organisations such as DIR. Their ability to undertake activities on the ground despite the difficult political environment exhibits the potential these organisations have for peacebuilding. These efforts, however, need to be observed at different levels, both in the host country and in the country of origin, involving multiple actors from diverse backgrounds to ascertain their viability and potential for peacebuilding (Bercovitch, 2007). It is therefore imperative to ask to what extent both the more common implicit initiatives (provision of essential services in conflict situations or in regions that are marginalised) and the few explicit diaspora peacebuilding initiatives (such as advocacy for human rights and democratisation processes in Ethiopia) could converge to produce constructive results in the overall national or regional peacebuilding efforts.

Women are less represented in the leadership and management structures of the majority of diaspora

¹¹⁶ For instance, a Dutch-based diaspora organisation whose membership is mainly determined by actual work on the ground shows the evolution of unique strategies of diaspora engagement in peacebuilding at the local level. Some involve individual initiatives while others entail donor support to the various initiatives through diaspora organisations.

organisations in the Netherlands. This also holds true for organisations directly involved in peacebuilding-related activities. There are, however, some Ethiopian organisations that are purely established for women's issues and run by women. These groups are organised along geographical lines (with reference to the various cities in the Netherlands) and tend to be specialised on specific gender issues and transnational networks and less on peace-related activities.

In comparative terms, the activities of a Dutch-based Somali diaspora organisation, the Himilo Relief and Development Association (HIRDA)¹¹⁷, and the Ethiopian DIR show that it is possible with good organisation to access a wide range of resources, and establish links with various actors at different levels. DIR's experiences also point to the strategic engagement with an authoritarian regime in the country of origin. For instance, they are able to remain neutral, but work on community projects, organise events, and facilitate exchange programmes as well as other community development projects for vulnerable groups such as the handicapped, ex-combatants, ex-prostitutes, and students, despite the strict conditions for civil society operations in Ethiopia.

2.2.4 Diaspora perceptions of peace and conflict

Diaspora perceptions seem to shape the kind of peacebuilding activities they are likely to engage in (either explicit or implicit). Interviews with Ethiopian diaspora organisations in the Netherlands revealed that these perceptions also play a significant role in the choice of their activities, their manner of implementation and their view of the added value of such initiatives in their origin country. The outcome of our analysis of peacebuilding and constructive engagement by the four Ethiopian diaspora¹¹⁸ groups in the Netherlands suggests that their perceptions of peacebuilding are informed by different factors. For instance, their long-distance perspective¹¹⁹ is shaped by a distant look at events and developments in their origin country, especially for individuals and

¹¹⁷ Himilo Relief and Development Association (HIRDA) is one of the most prominent Somali diaspora organisations in the Netherlands and is actively involved on the ground in southern Somalia through service delivery and other forms of peacebuilding activities in the region.

¹¹⁸ For a broader definition of diasporas, see Sheffer, 2003.

¹¹⁹ See Anderson (1998) for a detailed discussion on diaspora's long-distance perspectives.

groups that cannot safely return to or enter Ethiopia. Positions on peacebuilding would therefore be different if Ethiopian diaspora organisations received direct information from 'the ground', which is why the perspectives of partner organisations or those working with diaspora projects on the ground are so important.¹²⁰

The many years of absence from Ethiopia are therefore likely to have an impact on perceptions of peacebuilding, even if some still manage the occasional visit to Ethiopia. The perceptions of Ethiopian diaspora organisations are also influenced by the environment in which they live in the Netherlands. This environment is mostly shaped by discourses and discussions, interactions and internal dynamics within the wider diaspora community, which translates into diverse interpretations of how organisations perceive peacebuilding and activities they link to it. For instance, while the Amhara, Oromo and other marginalised groups point to the lack of peace as a result of the conflict with Eritrea, or oppression and human rights violations in their regions, Tigray groups seem to have no problem with these issues. Therefore, issues of human rights, democracy or peacebuilding in Ethiopia will vary depending on the ethnic background of the group being interviewed.

Within the Ethiopian diaspora in the Netherlands, much of the politics and practices are largely conducted by groups barred from direct participation in the current Ethiopian political system. Some of the members of organisations such as DIR, ENNOS and SEM, Oromo Community, Ogaden Somali, Sidama and Afar have often had personal or ethnic group disagreements with the regime at different times, before and after moving to the Netherlands. For this reason, many of these organisations or individuals tend to frame the homeland conflict in categorical and hard-line terms (especially the groups in opposition). This hardens the confrontation between government and some diaspora organisations or within the various Ethiopian diaspora communities (NL_IN7). These confrontations spill over into the diaspora community and undermine the possibilities for a compromise between the government and opposition groups, and between the groups themselves. For instance, various factions within the Oromo Community have differences based

on positions they have often taken within the Oromo Liberation Front (OLF) and ways in which they view their role in the political process in Ethiopia.

To a great extent, the Ethiopian diaspora perception of conflict in their country is also influenced by ethnicity. Since politics in Ethiopia is often associated with ethnicity and the ruling elite, the political problems affecting the country and its various groups are largely viewed through an ethnic prism. As the government in Ethiopia has incorporated some people from the marginalised regions in its ranks, some groups in the diaspora who have ties (ethnic and political) with the regime, such as the Tigray, seem to have no problem with the political environment in Ethiopia. However, there are also critics of the government from within the same group. In contrast, those from the marginalised regions such as the Oromo, Sidama, Afar and the Amhara, constitute the main opposition front within the diaspora in Europe and North America. Nonetheless, there are pockets of individuals within these communities who support the Tigray government for reasons that are rather of a personal than national nature. Many individuals who would like to invest in Ethiopia opt to co-operate with the government, or organisations that wish to be allowed to operate in the country use a 'neutral' position towards the regime as a means of obtaining the permission to operate (cf. NL_IN8).

Most Ethiopian diaspora organisations are also founded along ethnic and political identities. This illustrates that these differences have been transferred from the country of origin into the country of residence (van Heelsum, 2004). A review of activities in the origin country shows that in cases where diaspora organisations focus on particular issues, the geographical location of their activities in the country of origin largely reflects an ethnic and regional bias. For this reason, many Ethiopian diaspora organisations argue that peacebuilding is only possible in the context of justice, development of marginalised regions, education and dialogue between groups (NL_IN9). In response, organisations such as DIR and the Oromo Community in the Netherlands emphasise the importance of dialogue between various groups within the country and in the diaspora. Their argument is that regardless of their political affiliation and differences, most Ethiopians in the Netherlands perceive the political environment in the country of origin as hostile (NL_IN10). They view this situation as a hindrance to participation in the political process of the country of origin, but also as an obstacle to the

¹²⁰ As noted during an interview with one informant, "some people working with diaspora organisations have never returned to their homelands, due to insecurity, hence they can only work through contacts in neighbouring countries and through partnerships with local communities, but all from a distance" (NL_IN6).

direct implementation of development activities on the ground.

The prevailing political environment in Ethiopia is therefore seen as determining factor of such aspects as resource distribution, often experienced in the form of political and economic marginalisation in ethnic regions such as Oromia, Southern Nations, Nationalities, and People's Region (SNNPR), Gambella, Benishangul and Afar. Diaspora organisations and individuals from such areas feel obliged to assist through monetary and other forms of remittances. However, because the operations of civil society organisations in Ethiopia are under strict regulation, Ethiopian diaspora organisations that are not in good standing with the government tend to support their sister groups and individuals in the neighbouring countries where they live in exile (NL_IN11).

Organisations that are based on ethnicity, such as the Oromo, Amhara, and Ogaden Somali groups, often focus on the human rights situation in the region of origin. However, the extent to which their activities target peacebuilding largely depends on their perception of peace as a concept. For instance, some groups claim that peacebuilding in Ethiopia is only possible within the context of broader political reform involving various groups in Ethiopia. The exclusionary tendencies of past and recent regimes tend to obstruct peacebuilding between various groups within the country, such as between the Tigray, Oromo, Amhara, Sidama and Ogaden Somali and Afar groups. Peacebuilding between these groups in the Netherlands has not been possible either due to internal divisions and lack of trust between different groups. Despite their differences, they have taken a common stand towards the current government in terms of demands for democratisation and respect for human rights. For this reason, some groups put a lot of emphasis on reconciliation efforts in the diaspora, which they claim can be replicated in the country of origin (NL_IN12).

Engagement or expression of views that are not favourable to the regime expressed by members of diaspora organisations are a sensitive matter as it is commonly acknowledged/ perceived that Ethiopian government agents and informants are quite active in the Netherlands. As a result, suspicion and mistrust reigns between various groups regardless of ethnicity. Most of the organisations contacted pointed out that taking a hard stand against the government is likely to put any group with opposing views in a divide,

which was initially characterised by ideology, but is now increasingly shaped by ethnicity and other contested issues, such as religion and class. Religion is becoming an issue for Ethiopian diaspora Muslims who feel marginalised because of their faith. For this reason, an Ethiopian Muslim organisation was founded to champion their interests both 'at home' and abroad. Class, on the other hand, has been a major problem for the other ethnic groups previously ruled by the Amhara, which had occupied the highest social strata in Ethiopian society. For such reasons, different Ethiopian groups defend their positions using counter arguments, which exacerbate the sensitivity of terminology such as human rights, democracy and peacebuilding in Ethiopia. As a result, a number of organisations use alternative terminology in their discourse to camouflage their activities aimed at peacebuilding, or as a creative measure in order to be allowed to operate on the ground.

Examples of Ethiopian organisations that take this 'neutral' position in their discourse include DIR, ENNOS and SEM. Since the 2005 elections, in which opposition parties participated and won in major parts of the country, the Ethiopian government has become more repressive and has curtailed the operations of civil society groups and opposition parties through the new civil society law (Amnesty International, 2009). As a result, diaspora groups have been careful about what issues to discuss and which activities to implement.

Since 2005, the use of terms such as human rights, democracy and peacebuilding has become problematic and, as a result, many organisations opt for less controversial topics. Peacebuilding from these groups' perspectives is informed by their perceptions of the political situation in the country of origin. They therefore attempt to work on less controversial issues, such as cultural activities, youth programmes, seminars on regional conflict or invite speakers from the country of origin for direct interaction with the diaspora (NL_IN13). These conferences act as platforms for dialogue, although they can also create friction with the government, especially if the speakers are anti-government scholars in the diaspora.

2.2.5 Networking and co-operation

2.2.5.1 Local, national and transnational networks

Different respondents noted that the Ethiopian diaspora in the Netherlands has an influence on the political processes at home. This influence is exerted through collective diaspora political initiatives such as advocacy and lobbying of host country institutions and policies. In response, the Ethiopian government has been reaching out to the Ethiopian diaspora in the Netherlands in various ways, especially through its embassies (Lyons, 2006). These responses are underpinned by the fact that the diaspora has become a critical political actor that is spread throughout many locations and is highly connected through a complex web of transnational networks.

The Ethiopian diaspora in the Netherlands generally has transnational links. These links, however, vary from group to group, especially in terms of capacity to mobilise and gain visibility and significance in the settlement country. Their potential to connect at the transnational level is also determined by the political opportunities in the residence countries. There are those that are engaged in transnational politics and are intensely focussed on specific issues 'at home' as well as their identities in terms of their ethnic backgrounds.¹²¹ Some of these groups have links with similar outfits outside the Netherlands, both at the EU level as well as in North America and Australia. Many Ethiopian diaspora organisations also recognise that through transnational linkages they have the potential to mobilise international resources for peacebuilding and community development, especially those groups that come from the marginalised regions.

Groups that are not able to operate within Ethiopia have, therefore, resorted to transnational activities such as the use of the media (Internet, FM radio broadcasts in residence countries). A number of respondents have emphasised that some of these transnational activities have the potential for broader outreach and programmes that target peacebuilding. These strategies and tools are also used for advocacy and in an attempt to influence policy in the country of settlement and beyond. Furthermore, the transnational links within the diaspora and with like-minded groups in Ethiopia and neighbouring countries have played a significant role in the political process since 2005. These contacts have brought networks and access

through which diaspora support trickles down to the village level within various parts of Ethiopia.

2.2.5.2 Ethiopian diaspora politics, alliances and fragmentation

Ethiopian diaspora politics are inseparably linked to the early Ethiopian student movement, established by groups sent out on scholarships in the late 1960s and 70s to further their studies in North America and Europe. Examples include the Ethiopian Students' Association in North America (ESANA) and the Union of Ethiopian Students in Europe (ESUE). These movements have since fragmented along ethnic lines, hence the many factions and sub-groups in the diaspora. Within the various Ethiopian groups (organisations and associations), mobilisation takes place along political lines, in which political parties operating in the diaspora align with each other or against others based on their political affiliations and, to a greater extent, their ethnic backgrounds.

Among the groups covered in this study, their views with regard to politics and other developments in Ethiopia vary markedly and are determined by the objectives of the respective organisations. While DIR, ENNOS and SEM have opted for a more neutral or less antagonistic position towards events in the country of origin, the Oromo Community has a more critical view. However, within the organisation, there are also divergent views which lead to further fragmentation. The Oromo Community in the Netherlands, just like its counterparts in other countries, is characterised by social, economic, political and religious differences. These divisions have also been noted in the major Oromo groups such as the Oromo Liberation Front (OLF) (also see de Waal, 1994), whose public activism is rather limited in the Netherlands, compared to other European countries, despite having a strong following within the various factions.

The current regime in Ethiopia is composed of a coalition of several parties and these parties are also represented in the diaspora in the Netherlands, other European countries and the United States. These representations are mainly branches or organisations set up specifically to mobilise support for the government. 'Opposition parties' are also represented within the Ethiopian diaspora in the Netherlands.

Ethiopian diaspora politics is greatly influenced by the relationship with the government (doing business with it, opposing it or being neutral). Anyone wishing to

¹²¹ See the examples of Oromo, Tigray and the Amhara groups.

implement projects in Ethiopia is obliged to work with government bodies. In cases where some groups have opted not to be critical of the regime in Addis Ababa, different segments of the Ethiopian community in the Netherlands accuse them of selling out or collaborating with the regime for personal or sectoral interests and not for the national interest (NL_IN14). Because of the Ethiopian government's activity within the diaspora, generally aiming at neutralising the opposition, diaspora organisations perceived to have links with Ethiopian scholars and other dissenting voices are often subject to scrutiny when planning to implement projects in Ethiopia (NL_IN15). Diaspora organisations inviting such groups are suspected of associating with left-wing or socialist political ideologies even if they invited scholars purely for their intellectual capacities or as authorities in that particular field. Still, many Ethiopian people in the diaspora hold the same views, oppose the current government and encounter difficulties when engaging in matters such as peacebuilding from the distance. However, some organisations and individuals find ways of accessing their regions to implement projects—initiatives that are crucial for devising new strategies of engagement and involvement in Ethiopia and for contributions to peacebuilding.

Other implications have been the lack of consensus for collective action and clearly identified issues over which various groups, especially the pro-democracy diaspora Ethiopians, could take a unified position. The suspicions, intolerance and continued fragmentation along political lines, have therefore meant that Ethiopian diaspora groups in the Netherlands do not have a forum for dialogue and broad consultation on issues affecting their country of origin.

2.2.6 Concluding remarks

The use of the term 'peacebuilding' in the context of Ethiopian diaspora engagement in the country of origin is very controversial since many groups have divergent views on its meaning and application in the diaspora discourse. These divergent views and interpretations are also informed by the fragmentation within the Ethiopian diaspora often along different ethnic and political lines. This fragmentation is, however, largely caused by personal and group differences as well as the continued operation of the government within the diaspora community. Government infiltration is widely believed to include 'divide and rule' strategies to keep the diaspora in a disunited state. Another effect of government involvement is that people who

disagree with government politics may have problems entering or investing in Ethiopia (NL_IN15).

Under the current political situation¹²² many Ethiopians are strategically or selectively opting for non-confrontational modes of engagement. Nonetheless, there are divergent views that motivate each group to adopt the kind of strategies they are using. Initial findings from the groups that were contacted during this study point to a complex mix of internal dynamics within the organisations and of different perceptions about the situation 'at home'. This is mainly rooted in views about the legitimacy of the current regime in Addis Ababa, the dashed hopes after the revolution, which many in the diaspora had participated in and supported financially, as well as the heavy handedness with which the government deals with opposing views. Those groups that fought for the liberation from the Mengistu regime have since re-grouped and returned to their ethnic enclaves, fighting the regime from different diaspora locations through the support of opposition groups within the country. These are aspects that are worth pursuing in an in-depth analysis.

One notable aspect during this study is the success of diaspora organisations, which largely depends upon their organisational structure and systems. The type of organisations migrants set up is related not only to the institutional and political opportunity structures available in the country of residence, but also to the characteristics of the groups involved and their different stages of settlement (Penninx and Schrover, 2001). Most diaspora groups and organisations are engaged in development co-operation, which entails involvement in smaller projects in Ethiopia. These are activities aimed at bringing relief to one's region or to friends and family left behind. Others have been politically engaged, seeking to contribute to the transition and transformations taking place in Ethiopia. It can be argued that the diaspora potential for peacebuilding varies markedly and largely depends on the type of organisations involved and the kind of issues and processes they focus on. In this regard, various Ethiopian groups have been instrumental in the processes that either contribute to or hinder peacebuilding in Ethiopia. This is more so in situations where the diaspora organisations take sides with the regime in the origin country, thereby supporting the *status quo* and the continued

¹²² A regime with dictatorial tendencies and prepared to crack down on those perceived to be opponents with brute force as witnessed in 2005 when opposition groups and students were arrested and several people killed during protests in Addis Ababa.

suppression of other groups or individuals who are seen as holding divergent opinions. By taking into account the concerns of those groups whose focus lies on the political system and process but also equity through community development, it can be argued that diaspora groups have a potential to contribute towards peacebuilding, through input into the democratisation processes and positive economic development within the local communities in their origin country (Lyons, 2006). This was clearly evident by the diaspora involvement in the 2005 general election in Ethiopia.

In terms of diaspora potential for peacebuilding in Ethiopia and in the greater Horn of Africa, one observation to point out from our findings is that peacebuilding in the region requires an understanding of the contextual differences, which also shape the perceptions and activities of the various diaspora organisations. For instance, Somalia is different to Ethiopia and Eritrea as it lacks a strong state in the respective contexts. This scenario therefore determines whether the diaspora organisations can gain access to their respective countries for direct engagement. It also shapes their perceptions, strategies and forms of engagement as shown in the case of some Ethiopian and Somali diaspora organisations in the Netherlands (NL_IN16 and NL_IN17). These organisations can also operate in the neighbouring countries and hence play an important role in what has been referred to as a distinct 'third level' between interstate and domestic politics (Shain, 2002).

Comparatively, Eritrea and Ethiopia have strong states (system and institutions) whose actions have been the cause of conflict in the region and within their respective countries. For this reason, diaspora organisations from the two countries argue that peace creation is a precondition for peacebuilding both within their countries and with neighbouring countries. Through such strategies, they have become important transnational actors (Turner, 2008). However, the question is how these initiatives can be extended to further their impact. How can the operational space be widened to allow for more active and explicit engagement?

Another significant observation are the differences in internal dynamics within the various diaspora organisations (cf. Munzoul and Manger, 2006) and how these differences are reflected in the country of origin. While there are both significant cultural differences and similarities between the various organisations

under study, the differences in their members' attitudes towards external relations in the diaspora are quite remarkable. The Ethiopian organisations have a 'closed door' attitude towards members of other groups. This attitude can be both explained by the different political affiliations (opposition to or support of the regime) and the suspicions towards other diaspora organisations, which are linked to the perceived government infiltration of the Ethiopian diaspora through agents and affiliated diaspora organisations that propagate its policies. For these reasons many do not trust those from outside their ethnic grouping or political positions.

Also significant to note is the difference in the kind of partnerships developed in the Netherlands between Horn of Africa diaspora communities for various activities. While Ethiopian and Somali organisations have partnerships with Dutch development agencies, Eritrean ones only have connections to organisations within their own community and to a great extent rely on transnational linkages. Transnational linkages are a common feature among various Ethiopian diaspora groups but much stronger at the organisational level in the Oromo Community in the Netherlands.

Ethiopian organisations work closely with Dutch development agencies, which provide financial support and other resources that enable them to undertake activities both in the host country and countries of origin. The differences within and between various groups, however, have implications for cross-country engagement and for regional peacebuilding, even though they are concerned about what takes place within each other's borders.

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2.3 A comparative assessment of Ethiopian diaspora organisations in Europe

The case studies of Ethiopian diaspora groups in Germany and in the Netherlands reveal both similarities and differences as to their organisational set-ups, aims and modes of engagement. As observed above, these can partly be ascribed to context factors, i.e. the social, cultural and institutional environment the organisations operate in, and partly to diasporas' characteristics, own resources and capacities: the diasporas' *profile*.

The following assessment of Ethiopian diaspora engagement in the two residence countries is based on the assumption that context-related factors affect patterns of organisation and engagement among diaspora communities. By adopting a comparative perspective, it particularly seeks to illustrate to what extent possible differences between the activities, forms of organisation and perspectives of these two diaspora communities can be traced down to context-related factors, such as different institutional or legal framework conditions and opportunities in the two countries of residence.

At the same time, it has to be taken into account that the Ethiopian diaspora comprises highly heterogeneous groups and, for instance, ethnic or religious sub-identities. This comparison can thus only provide first entry points and should be followed up with further research on whether and in which ways sub-national identities have an impact on patterns of organisation and engagement.

2.3.1 Context in the settlement country

Germany and the Netherlands share a similar history of Ethiopian immigration. A significant proportion of Ethiopian migrants to both countries came and still comes for educational purposes. However, especially since the mid-1970s, Ethiopians have predominantly arrived in the two countries as refugees and asylum seekers.

In both countries, the level of socio-economic integration of Ethiopians is rather high, especially compared with other migrant communities. For instance, (former) Ethiopian migrants usually have good language skills and are, compared especially to other African communities, well-integrated in the labour market.

2.3.1.1 Migration and integration policies

Since the 1950s, both the Netherlands and Germany have attracted large numbers of migrants. In the Netherlands, large parts of the immigrant population originate from (former) colonies, "guest worker" recruitment countries and neighbouring countries in Europe (Ersanilli, 2007, p. 1). In Germany, migrants recruited as so-called "guest workers", i.e. temporary labour migrants, ethnic German immigrants and asylum seekers form the greatest portion of "persons with a migration background" (Özcan, 2007, p. 1).

Contrary to the Netherlands, which strive for a multi-cultural policy that recognises the right of minority groups to maintain their cultural characteristics, the former German migration policy has often been referred to as an exclusive or segregationist policy. Based on the concept of temporary labour migration, it did not actively provide for the long-term integration of migrants, lest to speak of their participation in political processes (Koopmanns et al., 2005, p. 8).

Under the Dutch Minority Policy Model and the Dutch system of pillarisation (*verzuiling*)¹²⁴, which aimed to support and empower different ethnic communities, ethnic minority groups have been able to establish state-funded platforms and advisory bodies through which they can be represented on a wide range of issues affecting them. In 1985, local voting rights were granted to foreigners and, in contrast to other countries, since 1985 non-citizens have been allowed to work in the civil service (Michalowski, 2005; Ersanilli, 2007). A major policy shift took place in the 1990s, when the policy focus moved away from cultural preservation to the socio-economic integration of migrants. For the first time, immigration policies were linked to integration policies (Ersanilli, 2007, p. 9). As discussed above, in recent years, this immigration policy has been modified and was tightened in 2001 with the introduction of a new aliens act.

In Germany, a new course in migration and integration policy was adopted with the new citizenship law of 2000 (see Section 2.1.2) and the implementation of a new immigration law (*Gesetz zur Steuerung und Begrenzung der Zuwanderung*

¹²⁴ This political system, set up in the first half of the 20th century in the Netherlands, accorded each religious faith, and later the secular socialist and liberal groups their own "pillar", which encompasses an elaborate social infrastructure, e.g. their own unions, newspapers, sport clubs, etc. As a consequence of this system, until today a lot of government funding and many consultative bodies are based on religious and ethnic backgrounds (Ersanilli, 2007, p. 5).

¹²³ With inputs by Antony Otieno Ong'ayo.

und zur Regelung des Aufenthalts und der Integration von Unionsbürgern und Ausländern) in 2005. For the first time, immigration, asylum and integration policies were covered by one law. An additional decisive innovation was the introduction of new integration measures and requirements for immigrants, such as 'integration courses', and the launch of a National Integration Plan. This plan included means to facilitate the participation of migrants in political processes and civil society initiatives. However, up to now, voting rights in Germany are reserved to German citizens and the political participation of non-Germans is limited to voting rights of EU citizens in local elections. At the same time, in Germany like in the Netherlands, we find advisory councils (*Ausländerbeiräte*) as a means of strengthening migrant participation in decision-making processes at the local level. At the federal level, since 1998, the Federal Council on Migration and Integration (*Bundeszuzwanderungs- und Integrationsrat*) serves as a contact point and gives advice to federal institutions concerning migration and integration issues.

2.3.1.2 Citizenship

Both in the Netherlands and in Germany, today, the requirements for obtaining unlimited residence permits and/or citizenship status are comparatively high.¹²⁵ In the Netherlands, the new citizenship law of 1985 facilitated access to citizenship for second-generation descendants of immigrants. Until 2003, naturalisation requirements in the Netherlands were minimal. Since 1998, several new immigration and integration laws have been implemented increasing the requirements for obtaining citizenship (Ersanilli, 2007). In 2003, a formal written naturalisation test was introduced and a mandatory citizenship course (*inburgering cursus*) has to be passed before applicants are granted citizenship.

Germany's law on nationality is based on *jus sanguinis* and aims to limit multiple citizenship. Only in 1993 was an actual right to naturalisation established in Germany. Until then, naturalisation decisions were left to the discretion of the authorities (Özcan, 2007). A major policy change took place in 2000 with the reform of the Nationality Act. With this new citizenship law, Germany for the first time introduced a legal component based on *jus soli* to its naturalisation process, which now grants German citizenship to children born to migrant parents in Germany

¹²⁵ In both countries, however, there are exceptions to the overall restrictive regulations for obtaining a residence permit designed to attract highly skilled foreign workers.

under certain conditions. It includes the so-called "Optionsmodell" (options model), according to which these children have to decide between the ages of 18 and 23 to retain either the nationality of their parents or their German nationality. Under this law, migrants have the right to be naturalised under certain circumstances. This new legislation has had a positive impact on naturalisation rates, also among Ethiopians in Germany. Both in the Netherlands and in Germany, obtaining dual citizenship has in effect been ruled out.¹²⁶

2.3.1.3 Political asylum

In the 1990s, Germany was the most important destination country for refugees and asylum seekers in Europe. Following a heated public debate, this changed with the implementation of the so-called "Drittstaatenregelung" (Safe Third Country Regulation)¹²⁷ in 1993. Ever since, the numbers of granted asylum applications have decreased. The 2005 immigration law allows for the better protection of those refugees that cannot be returned to their country of origin due to security reasons, persecution by non-state actors or gender-related persecution, but the scope of these measures is highly contested. The law also raises deportation regulations (*Abschieberegulungen*) as a means to combating terrorism. Unique across Europe is the so-called residence obligation (*Residenzpflicht*) for asylum seekers, which effectively forces asylum seekers to remain within their designated districts (*Landkreis*) until their case has been decided upon. Each time they wish to leave their district a special permit is required. Violations are fined and can affect the outcome of the asylum process. These regulations for asylum seekers obviously affect the geographical distribution of Ethiopian (and other) refugees in Germany and restrict their ability to link up with other organisations or initiatives.

¹²⁶ In Germany, however, the possibility to have dual citizenship exists under certain circumstances. For instance, children with one German and one foreign parent or parents with dual citizenship obtain the citizenships of both parents by birth according to the *jus sanguinis*. Likewise, in the Netherlands dual citizenship is still often granted.

¹²⁷ According to this law, migrants who entered the country via a "safe and secure" third state can immediately be returned to this state and are supposed to seek asylum there. In 2003, this provision was incorporated into the European Aliens and Asylum Law, the so-called Dublin II Regulation. Given Germany's geopolitical situation, in effect, this law almost entirely prevents migrants that have not travelled to Germany by plane from seeking asylum. This law was accompanied by additional regulations designed to accelerate the rejection of asylum seekers entering Germany without valid identification documents or originating from countries that are classified as safe.

In the Netherlands, refuge and asylum is governed by the Aliens Act of 2000. People granted asylum receive a resident permit for one year, which is also renewable. After three years, refugees are eligible for a permanent residence permit (Ersanilli, 2007, p. 7). The Aliens Act aimed to reduce the numbers of asylum seekers in the Netherlands by rejecting applicants within 48 hours, by limiting the grounds for refugee status and introducing temporary permits (ibid., p. 8). The Dutch asylum system seems to allow for easier access to a residence title than the German system. However, in both countries relatively rigorous extradition, return and re-admission regulations have been implemented in recent years. In general, it can be assumed that integration prospects for migrants who entered the country some time ago have been improved in both countries, while immigration barriers for new migrants have been raised.

2.3.1.4 Institutional context

In the Netherlands, Ethiopian diaspora organisations benefit from a relatively favourable legislative and institutional framework that facilitates community-oriented and developmental activities of diasporic organisations and allows for relatively easy access to funding by Dutch governmental institutions and development agencies. This provides the basis for strong linkages of Ethiopian groups to and co-operation with Dutch ministries, local authorities, such as the Dutch chamber of commerce, and development agencies, such as the Dutch organisation for international aid—Oxfam-Novib, the Interchurch Organisation for Development Cooperation (ICCO) and the Catholic Organisation for Relief and Development Aid (CORDAID). The requirements for receiving funding by governmental agencies and the close relations between diaspora groups and Dutch authorities influence the decision-making and agenda-setting of Ethiopian groups, a phenomenon which can also be observed among some Ethiopian organisations in Germany that co-operate with public institutions.

By contrast, the German institutional context has only recently begun to encourage a more systematic degree of co-operation between migrant civil society organisations and governmental authorities. Likewise, funding opportunities especially geared towards migrant organisations are still very limited. As a result, Ethiopian organisations in Germany are less linked to German governmental institutions and development actors. Instead, contact and co-operation with

German agencies and NGOs mostly exist at the local levels. In line with their overall significance within German civil society, churches, especially individual congregations as well as church-funded NGOs and charities, play an important part by supporting the organisational efforts of African groups.

At the governmental level, some noteworthy initiatives to facilitate the engagement of migrants in the field of development in their origin countries have only been launched in recent years. While in the Netherlands or in Finland, initiatives supporting migrant organisations are generally more centrally governed and operated, in federal Germany, we find a multitude of actors and institutions at federal, state and communal levels. There is no central point co-ordinating the different initiatives and providing a platform for the exchange of expertise and practical experiences. Consequently, diaspora organisations often face difficulties in orienting themselves and finding suitable partners or support programmes, a fact that does not only apply to Ethiopian groups but to most migrant groups and initiatives in Germany.

2.3.2 Diaspora features and attributes

2.3.2.1 Organisational structures and set-ups

In comparative terms, a high degree of organisation can be observed among Ethiopian diaspora groups in Germany and in the Netherlands. In Germany, about one-third of the organisations were identified as officially registered associations and 22 as affiliated to churches. In the Netherlands, recent research estimates that there are about 54 Ethiopian groups formalised either as foundation (*Stichting*) or association (*Vereniging*). In both countries, the great number of professionally organised branches of political parties is noticeable. In both settlement countries, the relatively high degree of mobilisation and organisation among Ethiopian diaspora groups can at least partly be explained with the overall high level of socio-economic integration and the prevalence of strong political and ethnic identities and affiliations within the diaspora.

Field research in the Netherlands showed that especially the first generation of Ethiopian migrants is highly organised in associations and foundations in comparison to the second generation and newly arriving migrants from Ethiopia. Likewise, in Germany, many groups for whom respective data

were available were founded during the 1980s and mid-1990s. However, we also find very active second-generation associations—for instance sports groups and student associations that promote and facilitate engagement or return to Ethiopia among its members—and very active organisations of recent migrants and asylum seekers.

In both countries, organisations often result from the initiative of individuals who usually continue to be important decision-makers in their organisations. Many of the groups have formalised structures, regulated procedures and decision-making processes based on the organisations' statutes. Field research in Germany also revealed the importance of traditional authorities (e.g. councils of elders) and traditional conflict resolution mechanisms among Ethiopian groups.

In most cases, Ethiopian groups in the Netherlands and in Germany have exclusively Ethiopian members. While most groups in Germany are community-based organisations with a relatively broad membership, in the Netherlands only few groups have a substantive number of members besides their boards. It can be assumed that these differences regarding the organisational set-ups are largely due to the different regulations and prerequisites to formalising and registering groups in the Netherlands and in Germany. More specifically, the Dutch form of organising the diaspora group as a *Stichting* appears to encourage the formalisation of small-scale initiatives, since they usually do not have members besides their boards. The majority of the Ethiopian groups formalised as a *Stichting* consist of exclusively Ethiopians, although there are some groups that also incorporated Dutch natives into their boards. Due to their organisational structure, these organisations are able to better take into account the interests of Dutch governmental and non-governmental agencies and meet their funding requirements. However, this can also have serious implications on the accountability and issues around representation of the interests of the migrant community.

While many Ethiopian organisations in the Netherlands receive support and funding from public and non-governmental institutions, Ethiopian groups in Germany only rarely receive external funding for their organisational work or concrete projects, but predominantly depend on membership fees and donations. This difference cannot solely be traced down to different institutional contexts and incentives. Despite their strongly expressed desire to co-operate

with German development agencies and donors, very few Ethiopian organisations make use of the existing opportunities. Field research revealed that this is often due to a lack of information or knowledge on these opportunities to apply for external funding and the advantages of officially registering as an association.

A considerable number of groups both in the Netherlands and in Germany are noted to organise along political or ethnic lines. Examples include the Oromo, Afar, the Ogaden-Somali, Sidame, Amhara and Tigray. The field study in Germany shows that due to these strong ethnic ties, membership, especially of groups based on ethnically defined identities is often multinational, i.e. it includes, for example, Afar from Eritrea, Somalia or Djibouti. However, in the Netherlands, ethnic ties are confined to national entity, even though their networks may transcend national borders both in the Horn of Africa and in Europe and North America where Ethiopian migrants have established communities.

2.3.2.2 Activities

The typology of organised diaspora engagement set up in Section 2.1.3 of this *brief* is applicable to both Ethiopian diaspora organisations in Germany and the Netherlands. In both countries, six major issue areas can be distinguished:

1. Development co-operation and humanitarian aid;
2. Community support groups;
3. Women's organisations;
4. Political campaigning;
5. Human rights;
6. Church organisations and fellowships.

Accordingly, the engagement of Ethiopian groups in Germany and the Netherlands is very diverse and encompasses community-related activities such as cultural events, sports and the provision of language classes, welfare, projects contributing to integration, development activities, business activities in Ethiopia and activities aimed to foster dialogue and contribute to reconciliation among Ethiopian diaspora groups, lobbying for democracy and human rights adherence in Ethiopia. Women's organisations are barely to be found in either country. The number of religious organisations in Germany, however, appears to be much higher than in the Netherlands.

Although most groups stress their non-political agendas, a high level of political awareness and

engagement among Ethiopian organisations both in Germany and in the Netherlands can be observed. For instance, there are branches of various political parties, the majority of which represents the political opposition within the respective countries of residence, but also a number of groups that support or represent the interests of the current regime.

As a consequence of restricted opportunities to engage in the origin country, especially in the field of democratisation, human rights and peacebuilding, a number of Ethiopian diaspora organisations use an alternative terminology in their discourse and choose less contested activities. Accordingly, both in Germany and in the Netherlands, only very few groups refer explicitly to peacebuilding activities and rather engage indirectly in activities that contribute to development and reconstruction. In both countries, many groups highly depend on co-operation with individuals or partner organisations in Ethiopia.

Many groups in Germany and in the Netherlands also emphasise the importance of reconciliation efforts, however, only in Germany were we able to identify groups that actually engage in reconciliation. Due to the restrictive government policy towards political diaspora engagement, these reconciliation activities are mainly implemented in collaboration with and targeting Ethiopian diaspora communities in Europe.

2.3.2.3 Networking capacity

In the Netherlands and in Germany, (transnational) networks play an important role in the day-to-day life of the Ethiopian diaspora. In both cases, a trend could be observed in which especially groups that are not able to freely operate within Ethiopia link up with Ethiopian communities and groups at the transnational level. Accordingly, groups that are based on ethnically defined identities with relatively small communities and those in the opposition movements are highly active at the transnational level and likely to build broad transnational networks that span across Europe and the United States. In contrast, community-oriented and development groups, particularly those that implement concrete projects in Ethiopia, are less likely to be linked to chapters or organisations in Europe or the United States (with the exception of TDA).

Transnational networks are in most cases headquartered in the United States and to a lesser extent in European countries. They organise common

advocacy, fundraising and lobbying events and strengthen solidarity within the Ethiopian transnational community. In this aspect, the increasing importance of transnational websites and blogs, especially in the field of expression of political opinions and political activities, is noticeable.

Co-operation partners in Ethiopia who implement development projects are especially vital to communities that belong to non-dominant ethnicities or groups that have a political agenda, since their direct engagement is generally restricted by Ethiopian authorities. Nonetheless, both in Germany and the Netherlands, we also find groups that receive comprehensive support from and are closely linked with the Ethiopian government. In Germany, among others, TDA and AEEG co-operate with Ethiopian authorities.

2.3.2.4 Perceptions of conflict and the role of the diaspora

Perceptions of conflict in Ethiopia are similar among groups in the Netherlands and Germany. Nonetheless, there are also some notable differences, especially regarding the assessment of possible approaches and solutions to the different conflicts and political tensions.

The majority of the groups in the Netherlands and in Germany emphasise the need for democratisation and political participation, especially of opposition movements and non-dominant ethnicities. Nonetheless, while in the Netherlands a change of the political system is favoured by several groups; in Germany most of the interviewed groups do not oppose the Ethiopian system of ethnic federalism as such. Moreover, with a view to the current government, some respondents in Germany provided a rather differentiated and balanced assessment of the government.

Both in Germany and in the Netherlands, the Ethio-Eritrean conflict is not perceived as one of the pre-eminent conflicts for Ethiopian society at large. Rather, it is considered to be an unnecessary war, originating from long-standing rivalries between the People's Front for Democracy and Justice (PFDJ) currently running the government in Eritrea and the Ethiopian TPLF/EPRDF government.

While some groups perceive their impact to be increasingly important due to new communication

and information technologies, others perceive their direct engagement and political participation to be increasingly affected and hindered by repressive government policies, sentiments which are observed in both the German and the Dutch contexts.

Financial support that is often directed to partner organisations or individuals in the neighbouring countries is considered indispensable, especially in terms of development and humanitarian engagement by various organisations. Ethiopian groups, both in Germany and in the Netherlands consider the fragmentation and cleavages among the Ethiopian diaspora to be a major obstacle to dialogue, broad consultations and joint action. Nonetheless, a number of groups emphasise the potential of diaspora communities to facilitate dialogue and contribute to reconciliation among conflicting parties within the country of settlement and in the origin countries.

2.3.3 Concluding remarks

The comparison of conditions of migration, asylum, integration, and participation policies shows significant differences between the German and the Dutch case studies, especially regarding integration and participation policies as well as practices shaped by these policies. While the Dutch minority policy and the system of “pillarisation” supported cultural maintenance of ethnic minorities and gave them a certain degree of political weight, public support, funding opportunities and channels for political participation for diaspora organisations in Germany have traditionally been less developed. What is more, the Dutch institutional framework allows for comprehensive co-operation between diaspora organisations and public and private institutions, while in the German case, public and private institutions that explicitly target migrant organisations have only been set up in recent years. As a consequence, in Germany, very few Ethiopian groups know and make use of support and funding opportunities. In the Netherlands, a broader public and political awareness of the importance of active integration policies did not develop before the 1980s—in Germany even later, in the late 1990s. Moreover, there are differences in the legal structures and instruments governing the establishment of associations. These factors presumably have an impact on organisational patterns like membership and funding structures that differ in the two country contexts.

In contrast, fewer differences can be found between the general characteristics of Ethiopian communities in Germany and those in the Netherlands, which might mirror the similar migration history and composition of the Ethiopian diaspora. Accordingly, Ethiopian diaspora communities in Germany and in the Netherlands are very similar with regard to their activities, transnational linkages, networks and conflict perceptions.

The observations made in this section lead us to the assumption that there are context-related factors as well as specific features and characteristics of diaspora communities that shape the landscape and engagement of diaspora organisations. These factors, however, are neither static nor clear-cut. Moreover, they intermingle with other factors relating to the country of origin or developments at the transnational and international level and might influence each other mutually. To be able to explain certain specific differences among diaspora organisations in the European countries under review, especially the context-related influencing factors in the country of residence should be further researched.¹²⁸

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¹²⁸ Ongoing research within the DIASPEACE project takes account of this and looks deeper into the interaction between European institutions and diaspora communities in conflict resolution and peacebuilding.

Summary and perspectives

The case studies on Somali and Ethiopian diaspora communities in Europe have revealed new empirical data on the types of diaspora organisations as well as on the multitude of strategies and activities adopted to help bring about peace and stability in the countries of origin. Moreover, by applying a comparative perspective between five different settlement countries in Europe, the study has provided first insights into contextual factors, i.e. (political) opportunity structures that influence the forms and manifestations of diaspora engagement especially in the settlement contexts and, finally, on the characteristics and dynamic interrelations established by diaspora groups 'here' and 'there'.

Notwithstanding the complexity and sheer range of rather diverse diaspora organisations in Europe, the following paragraphs briefly summarise the main findings on 1) the different types and capacities of diaspora organisations, 2) their activities and objectives in the fields of peace and reconciliation as well as on 3) the factors that influence diasporas' activities in Europe.

Diaspora organisations: Commitment and capacity

The high degrees of mobilisation and organisation of the Somali and Ethiopian diaspora in all five countries reveal overall strong levels of commitment and capacity among the respective diaspora organisations. In general, the interviews showed that active members and leaders of diaspora organisations often feature comparatively high educational levels and degrees of socio-economic integration in the respective societies. Furthermore, all communities observed displayed considerable networking capacities, reflected in a variety of transnational links and networks.

The Somali and Ethiopian diaspora communities in all five residence countries appear to be widely fragmented and divided, primarily along ethnic, political and, to a lesser extent, religious lines. In the case of the Somali diaspora, clan serves as an additional focal point of community mobilisation and self-identification. Especially in recent years, generational divisions seem to have become increasingly important: on the one hand, there are organisations that explicitly target second-generation members of the diaspora (see Section 1.1 on Somalis in Italy). On the other hand, "generation" can also refer

to the time and the corresponding circumstances of migration, which have a strong impact on the perceptions and objectives of many diaspora organisations. Especially with a view to attitudes and perceptions relating to the situation in the country of origin, but also to other organisations within the diaspora, the aspect of "generation" deserves more in-depth research.

In all five countries of residence, the degree of formalisation among the organisations varies significantly. On average, the organisations under study have about twenty active members. In most cases, groups appear to have been established on the basis of long-standing personal contacts or friendships and have subsequently been formalised and registered officially in order to facilitate cooperation with other institutions. In this respect, it is also noteworthy that official 'openings' by settlement country authorities towards diaspora groups in the form of available funding structures and the priorities of funding institutions contribute to defining the *official* focus of diaspora organisations, i.e. integration activities in the settlement country or development/humanitarian work in the country of origin. Formalised Somali organisations in Finland seem to have more capacity to engage in development and peace-related activities than Somali organisations in the United Kingdom and Italy, due to a more favourable funding environment. However, looking at the organisations' own characteristics and properties, in the United Kingdom in particular, several resourceful groups and networks pool money and implement projects without any external funding. Likewise, various Ethiopian diaspora groups can be found in Germany that engage in reconciliation activities without receiving any support from or co-operating with German institutions. Hence, it appears that while institutional conditions, such as funding and support structures, can significantly shape and influence the set-up and activities of many diaspora organisations, they are by no means a necessary prerequisite for diaspora organisations to function successfully, rather it appears that some organisations adapt to the framework requirements to be able to benefit from these structures.

Based on the findings from the five case studies, most authors have put forward typologies¹²⁹ of diaspora organisations, which are primarily based on the organisations' membership, activities and

¹²⁹ See pp. 20–22 (Italy), pp. 35–36 (United Kingdom), pp. 65–68 (Germany).

objectives¹³⁰. In all five countries under study, the majority of diaspora organisations appear to belong to one (or more) of the following categories:

1. Community organisation/ support group;
2. Development organisation ("project-oriented organisation");
3. Political organisation (campaigning; discussion fora, etc.);
4. Women's organisation.

With the notable exception of the so-called 'political organisations', most diaspora organisations studied seek to provide services to or support their communities either in the diaspora (community organisations) or in the countries of origin (development-/ project-oriented organisations) or both. Their activities range from publishing information and raising awareness to raising funds or implementing own projects. In addition to the four types, which were identified in all case studies, there are also more specialised categories, such as youth or second-generation groups, professional networks, transnational political fora, human rights groups and organisations according to clan identities in the Somali cases.

There are several women's organisations that focus their activities on self-help and support activities in the countries of residence, and simultaneously co-operate with or support women's organisations in the countries of origin. In the case of the Somali diaspora in Europe, a comparatively high number of women's organisations could be identified, most notably in Italy. This result can partly be explained by the particular history of female Somali migration to Italy (see Section 1.1). Interestingly, women's organisations in Italy do not display an ethnic 'identity' but rather tend to transcend ethnic boundaries to include members with different migration backgrounds as well as autochthonous individuals. By contrast, it was extremely difficult to identify specific women's organisations in the Ethiopian communities. In general, women appear to be less well-represented also when looking at the gender composition of the Ethiopian diaspora organisations studied. At the same time, it appears that women's organisations tend to be less visible in terms of their outward presentation (Internet and other publications). For this reason, it is difficult

to assess whether female members of the Ethiopian diaspora are on average less actively involved in diaspora organisations, or whether these women's organisations are simply more difficult to uncover. This is especially interesting given the fact that many governmental and non-governmental donor or support institutions in Europe have increasingly begun to incorporate gender-sensitive approaches into their project work and explicitly look for women or women's organisations to co-operate with. Our initial research on women's organisations leads to the assumption that this trend might provide incentives especially to women's organisations engaged in actual project work to further professionalise or advertise their organisations.

Peacebuilding activities and potential

Perceptions of the conflict are very similar among Somali groups in the United Kingdom, Finland and Italy on the one hand and among Ethiopian groups in Germany and the Netherlands on the other. Nonetheless, the assessment of possible solutions to the conflict differs between the respective diaspora communities. While several Ethiopian diaspora groups in the Netherlands favour a change of the political system, most of the interviewed groups in Germany do not oppose the Ethiopian system of ethnic federalism as such, but criticise the incomplete implementation of federal principles. With a view to the Somali diaspora in the United Kingdom, Italy and Finland, generalisations regarding diasporas' assessments are extremely difficult to make due to the very dynamic and continuously changing patterns of conflicts and alliances in the country of origin. This dynamic of change of the conflicts *per se* is vital to understanding the diasporas' ability to follow new developments in the homeland and the diverging interests of all stakeholders involved, when engaging in peacebuilding. It has to be pointed out, however, that there are differences, which clearly arise from the interview material, as to whether reference is made to Somaliland and Puntland or South-Central Somalia, as these two areas are often perceived of as more 'stable'.

Although conflict lines and political events in the country of origin are reflected within all five diaspora communities investigated, the levels and modes of political engagement in the respective countries of origin differ considerably. In the Ethiopian diaspora, groups representing non-dominant ethnicities and

¹³⁰ Additionally, in the Somali cases, a number of groups are also based on regional or clan affiliations. While regional and/or ethnic identities also exist in the case of the Ethiopian diaspora, the typology applied in the respective chapters has been devised according to the organisations' fields of activity. Ethnically-defined organisations are subsequently discussed within these categories.

the political opposition seem to be more likely to engage politically, especially at the transnational level, than other Ethiopian organisations. In the Somali and Ethiopian cases, several organisations and respondents repeatedly emphasised the *non-political* nature of their activities, which can partly be explained by the complex and shifting conflict settings in the origin countries and partly by the priorities set by funding institutions in the settlement countries. This is not to say that the diaspora stays clear of political fora of the countries of origin; especially in Finland and in Italy, direct political involvement mostly takes place at the individual level and through transnational networks rather than through formal registered associations set up in the settlement country.

The important role the diaspora can play was widely recognised by diaspora members of the Somali and Ethiopian communities. At the same time, critical views on it were raised in all countries. Diasporas cannot always engage effectively because of the distance (spatial, but also temporal and cultural) from the local ground, especially in the cases of ongoing conflicts and insecurity, such as in south and central Somalia. In the case of Ethiopia, the repressive political situation and especially the recently introduced CSO-legislation have made it increasingly difficult for diaspora organisations to implement their projects directly or through local partners.

Both the existing external restrictions and the fragmentation among the diaspora communities in Europe and the multitude of perspectives on the conflicts in the Horn of Africa, have in turn led to a broad variety of specific approaches or measures towards building peace in the countries of origin. Measures range from providing relief and counselling to victims of conflict and displacement, improving reconciliation among hostile (ethnic) groups through joint projects, and initiating dialogue processes among inimical groups both within the diaspora and in the country of origin. Especially in the case of the Ethiopian diaspora, many respondents repeatedly stated their wish to initiate dialogues with members of hostile or alienated groups. The role of the diaspora was often seen as that of a mediator or facilitator. While the term "peacebuilding" was only rarely used by diaspora respondents, many interviewees expressed the hope that their activities and projects within the diaspora and in the Horn of Africa countries might contribute to facilitating peace, stability, development and prosperity in general. Accordingly, it has been

shown that constructive diaspora engagement in conflict settings is not always necessarily explicitly targeted towards peace or peacebuilding *per se*, but frequently addresses specific societal issues and problems that are intermittently relevant to peace and reconstruction.

For this reason and also due to the numerous (political) limitations that are in place regarding diaspora intervention in conflict settings, it is advisable to use a rather broad conceptualisation of the terms "peace" or "peacebuilding" in this context which also includes measures in the social, economic, political and cultural fields (see, for example, the definition suggested by the 2006 Inventory: UN Capacity in Peacebuilding).

To sum up, the five case studies on Somali and Ethiopian diaspora communities in Europe have revealed a wide scope of activities of potentially constructive diaspora intervention in conflict settings. These activities can be either direct or indirect, targeting actors and processes in the country of origin directly or through an engagement with other, diaspora or third parties in the residence country and on the international level:

Advocacy

- Organising conferences, seminars and other events to raise awareness and exchange information on the conflict and alternative conflict transformation approaches;
- Lobbying governments or international organisations and NGOs in the country of residence.

Dialogue and empowerment

- Initiating dialogue processes in the diaspora and, if possible, with stakeholders in the country of origin;
- Organising joint cultural and other events to facilitate co-operation among hostile or alienated groups;
- Sending delegations to discuss conflict-related issues with the government and other institutions in the country/ region of origin;
- Creating conditions for exchanging experiences, building partnerships and facilitating empowerment by involving less-known actors (i.e. from civil society in the countries of origin).

Projects and direct support

- Providing services and support to victims of war and displacement (refugees and IDPs);
- Implementing development and re-construction projects;
- Implementing capacity-building programmes. These are often less visible and thus likely to be less controversial than infrastructural measures, which in certain areas can exacerbate (perceived) grievances and fault lines.

While the focus of our research has been on engagement in the countries of origin, it is important to note that these activities may also target the diaspora population itself, including issues of integration, cultural exchange or mutual aid. Rather than being separate or distinct from involvement in the 'homeland', these activities are instead perceived of as being closely interrelated, since conflicts in the country of origin often extend to the diaspora or continue to have a bearing on these communities.

The qualitative research on diaspora organisations that engage in 'peace-related' activities excluded political parties and organisations. Moreover, the selection of groups for further study was based on a list of normative selection criteria (see p. 10). In general, these criteria have proven useful as they directed the research towards comparatively well-organised groups that adhere to the principle of non-violence and are generally prepared to co-operate with or include members and representatives from diverse ethnic, regional, cultural or religious backgrounds. The degree of communication or co-operation with organisations and individuals in the country of residence depends on the length of stay of diaspora group members in their countries of residence. Those formed by migrants who have only recently left the country due to political reasons are often hardly able to maintain links with the country of origin, lest to speak of returning there to implement projects. Against this backdrop and also considering the high degree of fragmentation within the diaspora communities studied, future research should seek to include activities geared towards improving relations among different parts of the diaspora more systematically.

Influencing factors: The implication of the context in countries of residence and of origin

As discussed in the Introduction, the studies have sought to identify factors influencing transnational diaspora engagement by analysing the interplay between the context and diaspora's characteristics (also referred to as agency, see Introduction). The "context" comprises the societal, institutional, legal, political and cultural environment the given organisations operate in, both in the countries of origin and of settlement, but also on the international level. By contrast, the term "characteristics" depicts the diasporas' own profile and attributes, such as resources, networking capacities, perceptions of the conflict process, its sources, possible solutions, as well as their own position therein. While it is important to acknowledge that this conceptual dichotomy does not insinuate a clear-cut division between diaspora characteristics and context-related factors, the framework has been instrumental to analysing the complex processes framing diaspora engagement in the countries of residence and of origin as well as their own resources and agendas.

In all five cases, the main characteristics of diaspora organisations, particularly their setups, patterns of identification and mobilisation differ considerably not only *between* diaspora communities from Somalia/Somaliland and Ethiopia and between the respective communities in the studied European countries of settlement, but also *amongst* these communities, mostly due to regional, ethnic, religious and political affiliations.

Moreover, these affiliations and identities in turn are influenced by factors on the contextual level as, for example, the time and circumstances (history) of migration and the given social context in the settlement countries upon their arrival in Europe. For instance, the Ethiopian diaspora in Germany is not only defined by the aforementioned ethnic, regional and other affiliations but also, though to a lesser extent, by the fact that Ethiopian migrants arriving prior to the political change in 1991–1993 were usually granted resident status or citizenship without any further delay, whereas recent migrants from Ethiopia face rather high barriers and protracted legal procedures which hamper their socio-economic integration. Similarly, the existence of colonial ties also influences the modes of inclusion of a given group as well as the ways in which migrants are received and perceived by the destination society.

The case studies reveal the importance of historical interstate ties not only as pull factors of migration, but also in the subsequent process of integration. Furthermore, the nature of the recent and present relations between the country of residence and origin is relevant not only for immigration and integration patterns, but also for the organisational work of diaspora groups. This is exemplified by Ethiopian organisations that especially aim to co-operate with German organisations due to their overall good reputation in Ethiopia.

The institutional framework and funding mechanisms differ considerably between all observed settlement countries. In all cases, the institutional frameworks for available funding and partnerships with settlement country institutions seem to have a major impact on the organisational structures and agenda-setting of diaspora organisations. As discussed above, in Finland, the available state-level support for migrant organisations in terms of funding for activities in the country of origin is better compared to Italy and the United Kingdom and seems to foster the ability of Somali migrant organisations to engage in development- and peace-related activities. Despite less favourable funding opportunities for diaspora organisations in the United Kingdom, Somali organisations in the country also seem to be very capable of engaging in development- and peace-related activities. This can be traced down to their 'own agency' and the resources drawn from the comparatively large Somali community in the United Kingdom. In Italy, opportunities can be found at the local rather than the national level, i.e. through decentralised development co-operation.

Likewise, the formal organisational status varies considerably among Ethiopian diaspora groups in Germany and in the Netherlands. While in Germany, most groups are community-based organisations, in the Netherlands only few groups have a substantive membership besides their boards. It can be assumed that these differences in their organisational set-ups are largely due to the different regulations and prerequisites to formalising groups in the Netherlands and in Germany.

As concerns immigration law and integration policies, Italy sticks out as the only country which lacks a comprehensive refugee and asylum legislation. Sparse political and funding opportunities in the Italian context can account for the motivation and interests

of Somali diaspora groups to further their involvement in transnational practices.

Additionally, preliminary research on the situation in the countries of origin has revealed that existing government structures in Somalia and Ethiopia influence the modes of diaspora engagement and importantly define the access of diaspora groups to the origin country. In Ethiopia, government restrictions of externally funded civil society engagement are likely to increasingly delimit diaspora intervention, especially in the fields of peacebuilding, human rights and other contested issues. In Somalia, in turn, the absence of a functional and legitimate central government means that there are no state-level control mechanisms for diaspora engagement. This absence of central government has led to a situation in which diaspora organisations engage locally through their own clan- and region-based networks. The ongoing conflict, in particular in the central and southern parts of the country, creates security concerns for diaspora groups and, in some cases, has prevented the implementation of concrete projects. There are, however, experiences of success in these areas, which need to be further researched.

Context and agency: The positive link between transnational engagement and integration

To sum up, both the Somali communities in the United Kingdom, Finland and Italy and the Ethiopian communities in Germany and the Netherlands show a considerable number of similarities, especially pertaining to their high levels of commitment, activities and transnational networking capacity. These similarities indicate the importance of the agency of the respective diaspora groups. On the other hand, as highlighted above, there are also a number of highly relevant contextual factors. Therefore, while the agendas and overall objectives of diaspora engagement in peacebuilding appear to be primarily influenced by agency-related factors and the situation (i.e. context) in the countries of origin, the actual manifestations, i.e. the *forms and modes of organisation*, of this engagement are significantly determined by the contexts they operate in in Europe.

More specifically, the studies provide substantive evidence that diaspora organisations and engagement in peace-related activities are mostly established and run by diaspora representatives who

are either very well-integrated or have a comparatively high level of formal education or both. In fact, our results indicate a twofold positive mutually reinforcing link between transnational engagement and integration (Portes, 2001; Kleist, 2007). First, it has been shown that successful integration in the country of residence is an important prerequisite to transnational engagement, including overall socio-economic integration in terms of language, cultural knowledge, social networks and employment. Second, transnational engagement in turn often fosters and encourages integration, as diaspora organisations and members proactively look out for co-operation partners, funding mechanisms and avenues to publicise their organisations' work and objectives. Hence, while engaging in fostering peace and development in the country of origin certainly serves as a means to maintaining patterns of identification and a sense of belonging to a specific ethnic, religious or other group, it simultaneously facilitates contacts and exchange between diaspora organisations and other stakeholders in the country of residence. As a consequence, many organisations have begun to build networks not only among fellow diaspora groups, but also reaching out to diaspora networks from other countries of origin and seeking to establish links with CSOs, NGOs and, increasingly so, with governmental organisations in their countries of residence.

Nonetheless, when looking at diaspora groups, which act in conflict settings, one has to bear in mind that the scope of engagement towards 'home' can be multifaceted, from formal to less formalised ways of active interaction and participation. Hence, visible and formalised activities, involving third parties (institutions, civil society organisations) often co-exist with other discourses and activities that are only shared with trusted contacts. Consequently, it is extremely difficult to assess and verify the obtained information, lest to speak of generalising the interview data.

Based on the comparative assessment of the five case studies, the following table provides a preliminary overview of contextual and diaspora (agency)-related factors influencing the engagement in the country of residence.¹³¹ In addition to factors in the country of residence, there are also a number of determining factors related to the country of origin

and/or to the international sphere, which were mentioned by respondents during the interview process. While further empirical research in the Horn of Africa within the DIASPEACE project will have to empirically assess their likely impact, they are already included here due to their strong influence on diasporas'/ interviewees' perceptions and interpretations of conflict, peacebuilding and their own role therein.

Future research

Taking this list as a starting point, further comparative analysis of the five cases will have to reveal the complex and dynamic interplays between these dimensions, i.e. the extent to which diasporas' agency is influenced by contextual factors and vice versa, as well as their relative importance and impact on each other. Especially with regard to diasporas' specific characteristics (agency), additional qualitative data on aspects of socio-economic integration, gender, generation and migration experiences is needed to assess the impact of these factors on diasporas' potential to engage in their countries of origin. Within this framework, especially the aspect of generation appears to be important both with a view to the perceptions of and perspectives on the situation in the countries of origin and the different paths chosen and overall willingness to get involved. Notable distinctions seem to exist firstly between first- and second- (or third-) generation migrants, but also among first-generation migrants who have left their country at different points in time.

Apart from obtaining additional qualitative and quantitative demographic data on diaspora communities in general, further research should also be undertaken with regard to individual initiatives of diaspora members as well as the forms of leadership. In the cases of many organisations studied, it appears that their agendas and actual activities strongly depend on the resources and capacities of the founders or leaders of the organisation. This is especially important when it comes to (transnational) networks and co-operation, as these are often built around long-standing personal contacts. With a view to fostering partnerships between the diaspora and other governmental and non-governmental stakeholders, future research within the DIASPEACE project will specifically address in what ways this particular strength can be built upon.

¹³¹ NB: These factors have been identified through the comparative assessment of the five case studies. However, not all factors necessarily apply to all diaspora organisations studied here in equal measure.

As discussed in the Introduction, we have been able to identify a small number of so-called “matched samples”, i.e. diaspora organisations in Europe with partners or branches in the countries of origin. In addition to following up these specific organisations, a general assessment of prevalent perceptions and agendas both ‘here’ and ‘there’ through additional

multi-sited research will contribute to understanding the scope for co-operation, its potentials and challenges.

Table 4: Factors influencing diaspora engagement*

	Country of residence	Country of origin	International level
Diasporas' characteristics	Clan, ethnic, religious and regional affiliations; gender, generation and social class; internal divisions, conflicts and fragmentation	Clan, ethnic, religious and regional affiliations	Transnational networks
	Networking capacities	Networking, alliances, partnerships and relationships between institutional stakeholders and the diaspora	
	Capacity and level of professionalism Perceptions of peace and conflict		
Context	Historical links towards the country of origin	Major lines of conflict (sources, parties, etc.)	International relations; including major shifts and windows of opportunity
	Migration history and composition of migration flows	Existence of (functional) government structures and level of decentralisation	Activities, openings or programmes by international/ multinational organisations or bodies
	Legal framework (citizenship, residence permit)	Diaspora-targeted policies and practices	
	Integration policy and perception of migrants by resident society	Local views on diaspora and their role	
	Funding structures and opportunities for co-operation with local NGOs or institutions	Issues of access (entrance, security, resources)	
	Foreign policy towards country of origin; bilateral relations	Clan, ethnic, religious and regional affiliations	
	Level of socio-economic integration	Existence of a civil society and availability of local partners	

* In this table, the separation between the two dimensions—diaspora characteristics and context-related levels—is not mutually exclusive.

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Annex I:

Methods: “Interview Table”

United Kingdom

Interview Code	Background*	Role/ Type of Organisation	Place and Date
UK_IN1	Non-Somali, male	Coordinator, political organisation (support for Somaliland democracy-building)	London, November 2008
UK_IN2	Somali, male	Founder, development organisation	London, November 2008
UK_IN3	Somali, male	Founder, Somali student association	London, November 2008
UK_IN4	Somali, female	Activist in several Somali organisations/ activities	London, November 2008
UK_IN5	Non-Somali, female	Health professional involved in development organisation	London, November 2008
UK_IN6	Somali, male	Chair, development organisation	London, November 2008
UK_IN7	Somali, male	Chair, development/ youth organisation	London, November 2008
UK_IN8	Somali, male	Chair, development organisation	London, November 2008
UK_IN9	Somali, male	Director, community organisation	London, November 2008
UK_IN10	Somali, female	Volunteer, development organisation	London, November 2008
UK_IN11	Somali, male	Coordinator, community organisation	Sheffield, November 2008
UK_IN12	Somali, male	Founder, political organisation (support for democracy-building in Somaliland)	Sheffield, November 2008
UK_IN13	Somali, male	Chair, community organisation	London, November 2008
UK_IN14	Somali, male	Chair, clan-based organisation	London, November 2008
UK_IN15	Somali, male	Chair, Somaliland umbrella network	London, November 2008
UK_IN16	Somali, male	Chair, development organisation	Phone interview, January 2009
UK_IN17	Somali, male	Chair, development organisation	Phone interview, February 2009

* This column denotes the interviewees' gender and country of origin. Hence, it is primarily an etic category and neither implies ethnic identities nor necessarily corresponds to the individuals' formal citizenship status.

Finland

Interview Code	Background	Role/ Type of Organisation	Place and Date
FIN_IN1	Somali, female	Active in several associations	Vantaa, August 2008
FIN_IN2	Somali, male	Chair, development organisation	Espoo, August 2008
FIN_IN3	Somali, male	Chair, development organisation	Helsinki, August 2008
FIN_IN4	Somali, male	Chair, community and development organisation	Espoo, August 2008
FIN_IN5	Somali, male	Chair, development organisation	Helsinki, August 2008
FIN_IN6	Somali, male	Chair, community organisation	Vantaa, August 2008
FIN_IN7	Somali, male	Active in community and development organisation	Helsinki, August 2008
FIN_IN8	Somali, male	Chair, community and development organisation	Helsinki, August 2008
FIN_IN9	Somali, female	Chair, development organisation	Helsinki, August 2008
FIN_IN10	Somali, male	Chair, community organisation	Vantaa, September 2008
FIN_IN11	Somali, male	Chair, development organisation	Helsinki, January 2009
FIN_IN12	Somali, male	Chair, community and development organisation	Helsinki, January 2009

Italy

Interview Code	Background	Role/Type of Organisation	Place and Date
I_IN1	Somali, female	Member, network of Somali women's associations (comprising also individuals); member of a second-generation association	Rome, April 2009; May 2009
I_IN2	Somali, male	President, Somali community association	Florence, February 2009
I_IN3	Somali, male	President, Somali community association	Turin, March 2009
I_IN4	Somali, female	President, Somali women's association	Rome, September 2008; February 2009
I_IN5	Somali, female	President, inter-ethnic women's organisation	Milan, April 2009
I_IN6	Somali, female	Deputy Director, Somali women's organisation	Turin, November 2008
I_IN7	Somali, female	President, project-oriented association	Milan, November 2008

I_IN8	Somali, female	President, cultural association	Milan, September 2008
I_IN9	Italian, male	Spokesperson, lobbying forum	Rome, September 2008
I_IN10	Italian, female	Former Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs in charge of co-operation	Rome, November 2008
I_IN11	Somali, female	Member, Somali women's network	Rome, March 2009
I_IN12	Somali, female	President, project-oriented association	Rome, March 2009
I_IN13	Somali, female	President, women's association	Rome, September 2008
I_IN14	Somali, female	President, project-oriented association	Rome, June 2009
I_IN15	Italian-Somali, female	Writer	Rome, May 2009
I_IN16	Somali, male	Coordinator, project-oriented association	Rome, May 2009
I_IN17	Somali, female	Member, second-generation association	Rome, May 2009
I_IN18	Somali, male	Member, second-generation association	Rome, May 2008
I_IN19	Italian-Somali, female	Writer	Rome, April 2009
I_IN20	Somali, male	Employee, Universal TV	Rome, June 2009
I_IN21	Somali, male	Lecturer, University "Roma 3"	Rome, June 2009
I_IN22	Somali, male	Member, lobbying forum	Rome, December 2008

Germany

Interview Code	Background	Role/Type of Organisation	Place and Date
GER_IN1	Ethiopian, male	Member, sports and cultural organisation; member, student organisation	Bonn, July 2008; October 2009
GER_IN2	Ethiopian, male	Former Chair and member, lobbying forum	Cologne, September 2008; April 2009
GER_IN3	Ethiopian, male	Member, development organisation	Frankfurt, August 2008
GER_IN4	Ethiopian, female	Member, development organisation; member, women's organisation	Frankfurt, August 2008
GER_IN5	Ethiopian, male	Chair, German chapter of development organisation	Frankfurt, August 2008
GER_IN6	German, female	GTZ short-term expert	August 2008
GER_IN7	Ethiopian, male	Former Ethiopian Ambassador to Sweden; representative of development organisation	Frankfurt, August 2008
GER_IN8	Ethiopian, male	Chair, international development organisation	Frankfurt, August 2008
GER_IN9	Ethiopian, male	Chair, humanitarian organisation	Berlin, September 2008
GER_IN10	Ethiopian, male	Chair, development organisation; member, study association	Phone interview, October 2008

GER_IN11	Ethiopian, male	President, cultural organisation; founder of a political initiative	Kassel, March 2009
GER_IN12	Ethiopian, male	Member, development organisation; representative of Ethiopian research/ advocacy organisation in Germany; initiator of independent projects	Frankfurt, March 2009
GER_IN13	Ethiopian, male	Co-founder, lobbying organisation	Würzburg, March 2009
GER_IN14	Ethiopian, male	Member, lobbying organisation	Würzburg, March 2009
GER_IN15	German, male	Member, community and lobbying association	Phone interview, April 2009
GER_IN16	Ethiopian, female	Member, women's organisation	Phone interview, April 2009
GER_IN17	German, male	Chair, lobbying organisation	April 2009
GER_IN18	German, male	Researcher	Kassel, March 2009
GER_IN20	Ethiopian, male	Member, inter-ethnic youth association	Phone interview, October 2010
GER_IN10	Ethiopian, male	Member of Ethiopian consulate	Bonn, July 2008; Frankfurt, August 2008

Netherlands

Interview Code	Background	Role/ Type of Organisation	Place and Date
NL_IN1	Ethiopian, male	Chair and member, foundation: Platform, integration, development, Ethiopian-Dutch relations	Amsterdam, November 2008
NL_IN2	Ethiopian, male	First generation Ethiopian migrants organisation in the Netherlands	Amsterdam, November 2008
NL_IN3	Ethiopian, male	First generation Ethiopian migrants organisation in the Netherlands	Amsterdam, October 2008
NL_IN4	Ethiopian, male	Director, foundation: Platform, Dutch co-operation, development	The Hague, October 2008
NL_IN5	Ethiopian, male	Director, foundation: International co-operation, human rights, reconciliation, community development	The Hague, October 2008
NL_IN6	Somali, male	Director, foundation: Youth, service provision (education, health) peacebuilding, community development	Amsterdam, October 2008
NL_IN7	Ethiopian, male	Individual diaspora professional	Amsterdam, May 2009
NL_IN8	Ethiopian, male	Spokesperson, foundation: Political participation, human rights	Purmerend, December 2008
NL_IN9	Ethiopian, male	Director, foundation: International co-operation, human rights, reconciliation, community development	The Hague, October 2008

NL_IN10	Ethiopian, male	Spokesperson, foundation: Advocacy, political participation, human right, culture, transnational links	Amsterdam, March 2009
NL_IN11	Ethiopian, male	Spokesperson, foundation: Advocacy, political participation, human rights, culture, transnational links	Purmerend, December 2008
NL_IN12	Ethiopian, male	Project co-ordinator, foundation: Integration, community development, education, judicial aid	Amsterdam, October 2008
NL_IN13	Ethiopian, male	Spokesperson, foundation: Advocacy, political participation, human rights, culture, transnational links	Purmerend, January 2009
NL_IN14	Ethiopian, male	Individual diaspora professional	Amsterdam, January 2009
NL_IN15	Ethiopian, male	Project co-ordinator, foundation: Integration, community development, education, judicial aid	Amsterdam, October 2008
NL_IN16	Somali, male	Project co-ordinator, foundation: capacity-building, development, peacebuilding	Amsterdam, December 2008
NL_IN17	Somali, female	Co-Director, association: Women, families, capacity building, networking, health	Amsterdam, December 2008
NL_IN18	Eritrean, male	Chair, foundation: Youth, advocacy, democracy and human rights	Rotterdam, March 2009
NL_IN19	Eritrea, male	Chair, association: Advocacy, democracy and human rights	Utrecht, December 2008
NL_IN20	Somali, female	Chair, foundation: Women, capacity-building, and peacebuilding	Utrecht, December 2008

Annex II:

Methods: “Interview Guidelines”

DIASPEACE Interview topics under Work Package 2:

Table of contents

I. Group /Community

- Identity (religion, generation, ethnicity...) and self perception, lines of membership
- Community cohesion and extent of formal structuring (i.e.: level of professionalism, funding sources etc.)
- History of the group / community
- Activities (social, cultural, political, economical; national / transnational orientation)
- Channels and mechanisms of activities (institutional, personal)
- Challenges and future perspectives

II. Perception of Origin Country, Conflict and Peacebuilding: Potentials and Challenges

- Perception of other actors (state / non-state)
- Perception/ attitudes regarding sources of conflict
- Concepts of peace and peacebuilding
- General assessment of the role of diaspora in the country of origin (politically, socially, economically.)
- Perception of their own role, contribution; what are the possible obstacles or potentials
- Own needs and vulnerabilities (*vis-à-vis* the country of origin, country of residence and other actors);

III. Networking

- Spatial dimension: Local, national, transnational
- Qualitative level: inter-ethnic, inter-language, inter-religious, etc. interfaces.

Facilitating Peace and Development through Research, Advisory services, Training

As an independent, non-profit organization BICC is dedicated to promoting and facilitating peace and development.

Our task

BICC seeks to assist in preventing violent conflict and hence contribute to their constructive transformation.

While disarmament frees resources, which can be employed in the fight against poverty, conversion allows for a targeted, best possible reuse of these resources.

Our work

Peace and development: BICC offers advisory services on disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DD&R). It evaluates DD&R-related processes as well as peacebuilding tools, studies the role of the security sector, researches on the nexus between development and peace as well as early warning systems for crises.

Arms—global trends, exports and control: BICC analyzes global trends in defense expenditures, armed forces personnel and militarization. It reveals interrelationships between arms exports, development aid and human rights and lobbies for global arms control.

Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW): BICC offers advice and trainings worldwide on small arms control. It also consults on the marking and tracing of SALW as well as the safe stockpiling of SALW and ammunition. It collects data on the proliferation of small arms and light weapons and evaluates small arms control activities.

Resources and conflict: BICC studies the nexus between natural resources and conflict while lobbying and providing training on this topic.

Migration and security: BICC carries out research on the nexus between migration in Africa and security. It discusses challenges of migration and displacement in Sub-Saharan Africa and studies the African diaspora in North Rhine-Westphalia (NRW), in Germany and in the European Union.

Base conversion: BICC has carried out research on base conversion for 15 years—not only in Germany but worldwide.

Our services

Applied research (research papers, background and evaluation studies, impact analysis, indicator development, data collection and analysis as well as project assistance and implementation).

Advisory services (background analyses, policy recommendations, expert workshops).

Capacity-building through the elaboration of concepts and modules for education and training.

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- Governments
- International and national foundations
- International and national research institutions
- International and national NGOs
- German Federal States (*Länder*) and federal ministries.

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On the basis of applied research, BICC offers consultancy, policy advice and training. Its international staff carries out self- and third-party financed projects.

BICC collects and publishes information, carries out evaluations and prepares publications, making these materials available to NGOs, governments and private organizations. It is co-publisher of an international scientific book series (Sustainable Peace and Global Security Governance) and the annual State of Peace Report (*Friedensgutachten*).

The Center organizes exhibitions, conferences, expert workshops and talks on a regular basis. These events help make the public even more aware of the issues that are important to BICC.

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