

# Engaging diasporas in development

By Camilla Burkot  
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Migrant- and refugee-led organisations implement innovative, small-scale, low-cost projects that are potentially replicable and scalable. Because of their close connections, these multicultural communities have high levels of contextual knowledge and access to vulnerable populations. However, policymakers have only just begun to appreciate the powerful role that migrant- and refugee-led organisations might play in Australian development efforts.

The role of diaspora communities in international development and humanitarian cooperation is the focus of the **Diasporas in Action Conference, which is being convened in Melbourne on 26-27 September by the Diaspora Learning Network**. The conference will bring together representatives of migrant- and refugee-led organisations, NGOs, government, the diplomatic corps, and academia from across Africa, Asia, Europe and the Pacific to share insights, good practice, and lessons learned from engaging diasporas in development. Check out the full conference program [here](#), and register for the conference [here](#).

For those who are not able to make it to Melbourne, **a public seminar featuring two of the international speakers from the Diasporas in Action Conference will be held in Canberra on Thursday 29 September at 1pm**. Chukwu-Emeka Chikezie MBE, Director of Up!-Africa Ltd, will draw on his 30 years of experience in advancing diaspora engagement with government, NGOs and the private sector in the UK to identify possible ways forward for collaboration with diasporas in Australia. He will be joined by Finau Limuloa, Humanitarian Diplomacy and Disaster Law Delegate for the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies in Suva, who will reflect on how Australia's contributions to development and humanitarian response in the Pacific might be enhanced by leveraging the unique strengths, knowledge and people-to-people connections of diasporas.

**For more details about the seminar and to register, please click [here](#).**

## About the author/s

### Camilla Burkot

Camilla Burkot was a Research Officer at the Development Policy Centre, and Editor of the Devpolicy Blog, from 2015 to 2017. She has a background in social anthropology and holds a Master of Public Health from Columbia University, and has field experience in Eastern and

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