Connecting Diaspora for Development (CD4D2) Final Report

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Summary

This report details the final evaluation of the International Organization for Migration's (IOM) Connecting Diaspora for Development 2 (CD4D2) project. This project has been implemented by IOM the Netherlands from 1 July 2019 to 30 June 2023 in four focus countries – Afghanistan (until January 2022) Iraq, Nigeria and Somalia – and aims to promote the active role of diaspora and create sustainable impact through capacity building at the institutional level. It aims to do so by linking diaspora participants with (primarily) Dutch residency to institutions in their country of (ancestral) origin for purpose of capacity building. Participants conducted in-person and virtual assignments in selected public and private sector organizations in specific target sectors within the project countries. Placements were made through a demand-driven approach in which selected "host institutions", those organisations that received placements, requested placements based on specific needs. The project was funded by the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs and evaluated by the United Nations University-MERIT and Maastricht University.

The evaluation covers the second phase of the CD4D project, which included 95 participants who delivered 212 assignments in Afghanistan, Iraq, Nigeria and Somalia. Those participants conducted 121 assignments physically in-country, whereas the remaining 91 assignments were delivered online. A total of 49 host institutions participated in the project. The evaluation follows the logic of a realist evaluation framework and rests primarily on qualitative data analysis, stemming from interviews with diaspora participants, host institution staff, and stakeholders of the project. A total of 245 interviews were conducted as part of this evaluation, most of which were among host institution staff (189) in four rounds of data collection, followed by equal numbers of participants (28) and stakeholders (28) interviewed at one moment in time. The evaluation also collected quantitative survey data among participants who finished their assignments. Given the limited timeframe in which CD4D2 was implemented and the challenges in collecting consistently good-quality data over time, the evaluation is limited in its ability to establish *impacts* and the sustainability of impacts associated with the intervention. It instead focuses on outputs and outcomes of CD4D2 assignments and linked institutional collaborations that are likely to be enduring over time.

The evaluation was structured around seven thematic research questions: 1) Why do diaspora members and host institutions choose to participate in CD4D2?; 2) What are the expectations of diaspora members and host institutions in the CD4D2 project?; 3) What are the experiences of host institutions, colleagues, and participants in the CD4D2 project?; 4) How is knowledge being transferred? What forms of knowledge are transferred?; 5) What factors enable and inhibit knowledge transfer? How does this compare to CD4D1?; 6) What is the impact of the CD4D2 project on host institutions, colleagues, and participants?; 7) How sustainable are the impacts? When it comes to **participation in the project**, the evaluation shows that diaspora members choose to participate in the CD4D2 project for both altruistic and non-altruistic reasons. The vast majority mentioned their desire to contribute to the development and/or post-conflict reconstruction of their country of (ancestral) origin as their primary motivation. A variety of additional "non-altruistic" motivations stimulated participants to join the programme in addition to the altruistic motivations, including a desire for further professional and personal development, emotional satisfaction, getting "in touch" with their country of (ancestral) origin, establishing networks, setting up businesses, and "trialing" more permanent return or a more transnational lifestyle. Host institutions' primary motivations for participation was to benefit from knowledge and skills that they could not receive in-house or within the country at large, either with the purpose of learning or to fill employment gaps. **Expectations of participation** for diaspora participants varied along their connectedness to their country of (ancestral) origin: whereas those with substantial prior involvement in the country emphasized becoming "bridge builders", those who were not as engaged often admitted not fully knowing what to expect or to deliberately keeping their expectations low. Across countries and in line with CD4D2's objectives, however, participants mentioned expecting their work to establish concrete improvements in the working procedures and processes at the host institution. Host institution staff univocally mentioned the expectation to learn, whereas managers' expectations were impacted by their perception of diaspora. This ranged from more optimism stemming from a perception of diaspora as culturally situated "in between" to skepticism stemming from perceptions of diaspora as "outsiders".

Experiences of most involved in the project were positive. Across the board, staff mentioned having enjoyed working with the participants and having learned from them, whereas the diaspora participants mentioned having fulfilled their goals and getting a sense of accomplishment from their work done. When it comes to assignment preparation, the evaluation revealed substantial differences between host institutions, leading to potential difficulties during actual assignments. Diaspora were overall satisfied with communication and cooperation while their assignments were ongoing, with noticeable difficulties in the initial phase for diaspora in Somalia. Some participants across countries noted additional difficulties stemming from unsupportive working cultures, for example, related to resentment from local colleagues and poor communication about tasks and expectations. Some female participants reported particularly acute challenges in the working process that (according to them) stemmed from their gender and positioning. CD4D's core activity – **knowledge transfer** – took place with different intensities and by means of a variety of methods and modalities. Five types of assignments were identified within the evaluation: 1) provision of one-to-many training; 2) one-to-many training of trainers; 3) co-working; 4) independent organizational capacity building, and 5) individual development of networks. These different assignment types each made it more-or-less likely for knowledge exchange to take place, as explicit knowledge transfer activities were included in the first two, whereas the latter two are not premised on explicit knowledge transfer per se. The evaluation also identified various activities that were central to some CD4D2 assignments but that did not require knowledge exchange at all to take place. Throughout assignments, both "hard" and "soft" **forms of knowledge** were exchanged. Hard knowledge included the introduction of "new knowledge" or complementary knowledge to assist in meeting priorities already in place at the host institution. In contrast to most Terms of References, soft knowledge exchange prevailed and was given more importance by CD4D2 participants. They highlighted the importance of "attitude change", widening staff's understanding of what their work entailed, changing competencies such as project management and communication, and helping colleagues to see the "bigger picture". The evaluation revealed four important factors that crucially shaped whether and how knowledge exchange could take place. First, knowledge transfer is not always an explicit part of assignment Terms of References, due to either an overly ambitious or broad needs assessment, or a bigger need to fill structural shortage of staff within specific host institutions. Second, knowledge transfer merits a specific skillset and capacity on the part of those who exchange knowledge, which were not always present or used to select participants or priority learners. Third, the right opportunity structure including commitment of management, resource availability and a friendly working environment should be in place. Finally, COVID-19 both enabled (heightened accessibility) and inhibited (connectivity issues) knowledge transfer.

The evaluation design cannot account for direct, causal changes between intervention and specific outcomes of interest on individual, organizational or societal level. Instead, it reveals that on the individual level CD4D2 assignments **engendered change** both in *how* staff conducts their work and in the actual *content* of their work. Important pre-conditions for individual capacity building included a good fit between the assignment content and the daily work realities of staff, the presence of an organizational environment that stimulates continuous learning, and proper pedagogical skills on the part of diaspora. The evaluation identified four types of organizational capacity building that occurred during the CD4D2 project: "laying the groundwork" for new structures or business lines within host institutions, developing curricula and teaching materials, networking, and challenging institutional norms. There are four key challenges that might hamper organizational capacity building: a lack of knowledge transfer activities that have clear continuity, reliance on key individuals to carry sustainable change, the legitimacy and stability of institutions, and finally the retention of knowledge within the institution due to staff turnover or priority changes. Similarly, it is difficult to assess the **sustainability of impacts** mentioned above given the limited timeframe of the project and evaluation and factors outside of the control of the CD4D2 project. Instead, the evaluation reflects on the likely enduringness of activities and outcomes associated with the CD4D2 assignments. Three outcomes of the project in particular seem to persist over time: training materials, transnational networks and a change in perception of diaspora in the project countries. These likely enduring changes can be better reinforced in future programming by incorporating sustainability considerations more in the theory of change underlying assignments and paying due attention to elements of country context, like institutional instability, that are likely to accelerate or inhibit sustainability of impacts.

Based on the evaluation's findings, the evaluation report puts forward 15 recommendations for future programming, distinguished roughly in the phase of assignments that it most applies to.

Pre-assignment intervention design:

- Clarify roles/responsibilities of stakeholders in different implementation countries across the project cycle
- Develop and integrate feedback cycles in project planning
- Calibrate assignment support resources, activities, objectives, and outcomes to country and sector context
- Leverage CD4D2 participants' non-altruistic motivations

Pre-departure assignment planning:

- Provide guidance on conducting structural needs assessments and transforming needs into assignment priorities
- Conduct capacity assessments within host institutions
- Conduct pre-arrival preparation and expectations management for host institution staff
- Explicitly construct theory of change linking assignment modality, knowledge transfer activities, objectives, and sustainability mechanisms

Ongoing assignment support:

- Conduct brief mid-assignment progress reviews, including on the likelihood of assignment completion within the set timeline

Post-assignment continuity:

- Plan for and leverage complementarities with other diaspora and development interventions
- Monitor the exit plan and sustainability strategy on assignment level, and identify the resources needed to maintain knowledge transfer
- Establish communities of practice to engage expertise of participants in future assignment preparedness
- Provide explicit validation of the work of diaspora experts post-assignment

Evaluation:

- Explicitly define alternative measures of impact and ensure coherence between collected data and impact at different levels and times
- Economize data collection moments and support coherent reporting, monitoring, and evaluation data approaches

List of tables and figures

Abbreviations

CD4D	Connecting Diaspora for Development
IOM	International Organization for Migration
FW	Fieldwork
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GGD	*Gemeentelijke Gezondheidsdienst*
KNCV	*Koninklijke Nederlandse Centrale Vereniging tot bestrijding der Tuberculose*
KRI	Kurdistan Region of Iraq
MOOC	Massive Online Open Course
OECD	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
REMPLOD	Reintegration of Emigrant Manpower and Promotion of Local Opportunities for Development
RIVM	*Rijksinstituut voor Volksgezondheid en Milieu*
RQA	Return of Qualified Afghans
ToC	Theory of Change
ToR	Terms of Reference
TRQN	Temporary Return of Qualified Nationals
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme

1. Introduction

Before you lies the final evaluation of the International Organization for Migration's (IOM) Connecting Diaspora for Development 2 (CD4D2) project. This project has been implemented by IOM The Netherlands from 1 July 2019 to 30 June 2023 in four focus countries: Afghanistan[1], Iraq, Nigeria and Somalia[2]. As a continuation of IOM's Return of Qualified Afghans (RQA), Temporary Return of Qualified Nationals (TRQN) and Connecting Diaspora for Development 1 (CD4D1) projects, CD4D2 links so-called "diaspora experts" with (primarily) Dutch residency to institutions in their country of (ancestral) origin for purpose of capacity building. These experts—referred to as participants in the remainder of this evaluation—conducted in-person and virtual assignments in selected public and private sector organizations in specific target sectors. Placements are made through a demand-driven approach in which selected "host institutions", those organisations that receive placements, can request placements based on identified needs. Ultimately, the project aims to "promote the active role of diaspora and create sustainable impact through capacity building at the institutional level".[3] The project is funded by the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs and evaluated by the United Nations University-MERIT and Maastricht University, an external partner that was also involved in the evaluations of the TRQN and CD4D1 projects.

This report covers the evaluation of the second phase of the CD4D project, which included 95 participants who delivered 212 assignments in Afghanistan, Iraq, Nigeria and Somalia (see Table 1). A total of 49 host institutions participated in the project. This leaves Somalia as the lead beneficiary of the program, followed by Iraq, Nigeria and finally, Afghanistan.

Table 1: Participants, host institutions and assignments, by country. Source: IOM project data

Country	CD4D2 participants		Host institutions		Assignments	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Afghanistan	4	4,2%	4	8,2%	4	1,9%
Iraq	13	13,7%	15	30,6%	61	28,8%
Nigeria	17	17,9%	10	20,4%	46	21,7%
Somalia	61	64,2%	20	40,8%	101	47,6%
Total	95	100%	49	100%	212	100%

This final evaluation report was commissioned by IOM the Netherlands and forms part of a four-year assessment of the CD4D2 project. The evaluation particularly focusses on evaluating the underlying model and implicit Theory of Change (ToC) of the project at large, as articulated in documents such as the project proposal, and the subsequent changes the project supported in the institutions, sectors, and project countries in which it was implemented. The evaluation does not assess individuals or institutions involved in the project; it evaluates the project as such, as it was envisioned and eventually implemented. It does so by explicitly taking into account multiple rationales, perspectives, and choices by a variety of stakeholders that together contributed to the eventual CD4D2' model, setup, activities, and focus. The evaluation links initial project objectives to the activities designed to meet those objectives, and in turn links the activities and objectives to the outcomes and potential impacts of project components on individuals, institutions, and to a limited extent sectors and societies. The evaluation builds upon previous baseline- and mid-term

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[1] Due to the fall of the Afghan government in August 2021, and the consequence seize to power from the Taliban, CD4D2's implementation has been suspended in Afghanistan from January 2022 onwards.

[2] The project was implemented in two regions: the Somaliland region of the Federal Republic of Somalia (referred to as the Somaliland region of Somalia) and the South-Central region of Federal Republic of Somalia (referred to as Somalia). Throughout the report, we will distinguish between project implementation and impacts between the two wherever appropriate.

[3] IOM (n.d., p.1)

reports and presents the main findings based on data collected between 2020 and 2023. It answers the following research questions:

- Why do diaspora members and host institutions choose to participate in CD4D2?
- What are the expectations of diaspora members and host institutions in the CD4D2 project?
- What are the experiences of host institutions, colleagues, and participants in the CD4D2 project?
- How is knowledge being transferred? What forms of knowledge are transferred?
- What factors enable and inhibit knowledge transfer? How does this compare to CD4D1?
  What is the impact of the CD4D2 project on host institutions, colleagues, and participants?
- How sustainable are the impacts?

In the remainder of this introduction, we will first discuss the wider landscape in which the CD4D2 project operates, namely within the so-called "migration-development nexus". We will then define key concepts used throughout this evaluation before discussing data and methodology (section 2) as well as presenting a general overview of the CD4D2 project (section 3). In section four, we will discuss the outcomes of the evaluation before putting forward recommendations for future programming in section 5.

1.1. Situating CD4D2 in the migration-development nexus

The CD4D2 project is situated within what academics call the "migration-development nexus", which is the scholarly and programming space dedicated to understanding how and under what conditions migrants – and diaspora specifically – may influence development processes and outcomes in their countries of (ancestral) origin. This nexus has been subject of discussion since the 1950's, with specific strands of investigation focusing on the role of return migration and transnational migration on development.[4] The interdisciplinary body of academic work that theorizes and details the varying impacts of migration on development[5] identifies that impacts reach well-beyond the transfer of human and social capital, yet much policy and programming focuses precisely on such capitals.[6] In line with this emphasis, both early and more recent scholarly work has focused on under what conditions diaspora members may act as agents for the transfer of such capitals. For example, Gmelch[7] and Cerase[8] emphasized the necessity for migrants to have acquired various forms of human capital - new skills, ideas and attitudes – that match the needs of their country of (ancestral) origin's labour market. Evidence at the time showed that many migrants who were set to return had often acquired too little of such skills to mobilize them for developmental purposes. Policy programming in the Netherlands specifically has recognized the link between migration and development since the 1970s, starting with a programme entitled REMPLOD (Reintegration of Emigrant Manpower and Promotion of Local Opportunities for Development) that explored how international labour migrants could contribute to development in countries like Morocco, Tunisia and Turkey. Conclusions associated with this project were not optimistic, arguing that to stimulate development processes in said countries, more structural changes were necessary than migrants alone can effectuate.[9] From the 1990s, new academic optimism emerged on migrants' role in development, particularly linked to the development of transnational lifestyles spurred by globalization[10], social remittances[11] and co-development practices.[12] Such forms of circularity and co-development were

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[4] For an overview, see Nyberg-Sorensen et al. (2002) and King (2022)
[5] See for example de Haas (2010; 2012)
[6] See e.g., Faist (2008)
[7] Gmelch (1980)
[8] Cerase (1974)
[9] De Haas (2006)
[10] Glick Schiller et al. (1995)
[11] Levitt (1998)
[12] Faist (2008)

increasingly thought of as not being tied to physical return of immigrants per se but as being enabled and supported by continuous exchanges between bodies, ideas, and capital over time. In the Netherlands as well, various migration and development policy notes were written in the 1990s, a practise that accelerated in the 2000s. From then on, according to Sinatti and Horst[13], policy agendas across Europe started to pay attention to the role of diaspora in migration and development as well, arguing for the first time that they can act as 'new agents of change'. At this time, academics questioned the migration-development nexus as being 'too optimistic'.[14] Some academics attributed growing policy emphasis on the migration-development nexus to conscientious efforts to link migration to development as a means to enable migration control as a multilateral policy issue[15] or as a means to promote a paternalistic form of development that keeps potential migrants in place and effectively immobilizes them.[16] Likewise, de Haas[17] argues that governments should recognize that diaspora are already mobilized for development on their own terms, and rather than "mobilizing" diaspora for development, established development actors should establish a genuine two-way relationship of cooperation with diaspora actors.

Debates on the migration-development nexus have been accompanied by studies on the role of diaspora as "agents of development".[18] Individual diaspora members or diaspora communities at large may be portrayed as being altruistic and inherently more effective bridge builders who can mobilise proprietary insights and knowledge of multiple countries and cultures to promote development.[19] There is substantial academic debate on whether and how diaspora returnees can be meaningful bearers of economic capital, knowledge, skills and social connections, values and attitudes, as well as debate on whether and under what conditions those capitals are beneficial to their countries of (ancestral) origin. Ammassari[20], for example, finds that returnees who gained additional educational qualifications and professional experience were in the best position to transfer knowledge upon their return. Wang[21] highlighted that embeddedness in both their country of residence and country of (ancestral) origin is pivotal for being successful "knowledge brokers". While these scholars, together with others like Newland and Patrick[22] and Brinkerhoff[23] are generally positive about diaspora's ability to act as "agents of change", others like Åkesson and Baaz[24] and Sinatti[25] are more critical, especially about the assumption of human capital acquired in Europe being beneficial to contexts in the Global South. They question its "universal applicability" as well as the presumption of unidirectional flows of such capital between the Global North to the Global South. Skeldon[26] adds that the emphasis that is put on individual migrants' agency obscures the importance of structural conditions in their countries of (ancestral) origin. The makeup of the labour market, resource constraints, and stability of government are all recognised by academics as important barriers to lasting change enabled by the diaspora. Åkesson and Baaz[27] contend that structural conditions in the country of origin challenge returnee knowledge transfer. At the same time, returnees may not be able to acquire necessary skills and knowledge in their countries of residence due to labour-market discrimination, which in turn challenges what they can transfer to the (ancestral) origin country. Others,

[13] Sinatti and Horst (2015)
[14] Siar (2014)
[15] De Haas (2006), Skeldon (2008), Faist (2008)
[16] Bakewell (2013)
[17] De Haas (2006)
[18] Sinatti and Horst (2015)
[19] See e.g., Brinkerhoff (2016) and Newland & Patrick (2004)
[20] Ammassari (2004)
[21] Wang (2014)
[22] Newland and Patrick (2004)
[23] Brinkerhoff (2016)
[24] Åkesson and Baaz (2015)
[25] Sinatti (2015; 2019)
[26] Skeldon (2008)
[27] Åkesson and Baaz (2015)

like Kleist[28] and Sinatti and Horst[29] have explored how diaspora identity connects to (capacity for) meaningful action, and have questioned the inevitability of action and duty implied in the alleged altruistic urge to help. Such authors proposed that diaspora 'cultural in-betweenness' can result in complex motivations to contribute to both organised and more informal development activities, with motivations related to financial opportunities, individual development, reorientation towards more permanent settlement in one's country of (ancestral) origin or bettering the lives of their close friends and family.

The CD4D2 project has been designed and implemented against the backdrop of a contested academic and programming field in which there is limited agreement on when and how diaspora can act as positive agents of development. This evaluation recognises the importance of context in shaping the roles of diaspora in development processes in their countries of (ancestral) origin, particularly related to knowledge exchange and capacity building processes, and it places the review of CD4D2 against evidence from both practise and academic investigation.

In recognising that how key concepts are defined and measured can affect how they are assessed and evaluated, the following section clarifies our understanding of some key concepts and definitions referred to throughout the report, drawing from such evidence in the process.

1.2. Key concepts and definitions

Diaspora: the term diaspora originates from the Greek *diaspeiro*, meaning 'scattered'. Academics and policy makers alike have contested the limits of the term and which populations "should" or should not be considered diaspora. Brubaker[30] provides one widely-used set of criteria for defining diaspora, arguing that early uses of the term centred on three core elements of diaspora identity: 1) dispersion across space, both beyond and within state borders; 2) firm rooting of a population abroad in a conceptual "homeland", which at the same time is an authoritative source of value, identity and loyalty, and; 3) boundary maintenance – the preservation of a distinctive identity vis-à-vis settling societies – over generations. Brubaker[31] suggests that more modern uses are not limited to defining diasporas as a bounded group based on an ethnocultural fact and argues that *diaspora* should instead be seen as a as a category of practice, an idiom, stance and claim. Projects like CD4D2 in a sense reflect this approach by not setting strict limits on who can "belong" to the category of targeted participants and instead encourages activation of identity. Policy definitions, including IOM's (2019) centre much more on self-identification, a shared sense of belonging and history, identity and linkages with a shared homeland.

In this report, we will use the term "diaspora participants" or "CD4D2 participants" to refer to those who took up the assignments at the host institutions. When referencing them as "diaspora participants", we refrain from making claims about their perceived identities. Based on the work carried out as part of the evaluation, we cannot assume that aforementioned characteristics such as dispersion, homeland orientation and boundary maintenance apply to the participants. During our interviews with 28 participants, we heard that many in fact identified as a member of the Afghan, Iraqi/Kurdish, Nigerian or Somali diaspora, eager to engage in diasporic projects and practices.

Diaspora engagement: diaspora engagement can be defined as transfers of financial, social and human capital towards planned development by people who identify as part of a diaspora, directed at a conceptual homeland.[32] Diaspora may mobilize individually and independently, for example through

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[28] Kleist (2008; 2015)
[29] Sinatti and Horst (2015)
[30] Brubaker (2005)
[31] Brubaker (2005)
[32] Sinatti and Horst (2015)

sending financial and social remittances[33] on the community level[34] e.g., through sending collective remittances, or by means of institutionalized efforts on the part of governments and international/intergovernmental agencies and NGOs. Participation in the CD4D2 project can be understand as a particular form of institutionalized diaspora engagement, in which the IOM facilitates the transfer of social and human capital from diaspora to Afghanistan, Iraq, Nigeria and Somalia.

Host institution staff: throughout this report, we will refer to participants in Afghanistan, Iraq, Nigeria and Somalia who took part in the CD4D2 project as host institution staff. When appropriate, we differentiate among **priority learners** or **colleagues** and **managers**. The former reference host institution staff who are directly exposed to, or participating in, the knowledge exchange activities that took place under the CD4D2 project. When we reference managers, we refer to staff who were involved in the administrative and managerial side of the project, including preparing of Terms of Reference or acting as Focal Points to the program for IOM.

Return: Embedded in the CD4D2 project, including its predecessors CD4D1, TRQN and RQA, is a component of return migration. CD4D2 participants return temporarily from the Netherlands or other places in Europe to their country of (ancestral) origin, whether physically or virtually, for purpose of capacity building. Such "return visits for knowledge transfer"[35] share key characteristics, such as a temporary nature and limited timeframe, with other short-term returns such as tourism or family visits. Duval[36] conceptualizes return visits as a "transnational exercise through which multiple social fields are linked". As CD4D2 participants often take up a CD4D2 assignment as part of a much wider engagement with their country of (ancestral) origin - which can include visiting the country for family, friends and leisure, sending remittances, following the news or starting business opportunities - we conceptualise CD4D2 assignments as part of a broader, transnational engagement of participants that include, but are by all means not limited to, short- or longer-term visits to their country of (ancestral) origin.

Knowledge: Knowledge, in short, is that what people know.[37] It is commonly understood as individual and influenced by an individual's existing stock of knowledge, background, personal experiences, beliefs and values.[38] For knowledge creation to happen, human action is required.[39] Polanyi[40] famously distinguished between explicit and tacit knowledge, with explicit knowledge codified and easily transmissible, whereas tacit knowledge perceived as more complex, personal, and context dependent. Within the development and knowledge transfer context specifically, Siar[41] further differentiates between "hard" and "soft" knowledge. Hard knowledge is comprised of "mainstream scientific, technological and economic knowledges", whereas soft knowledge refers to "cultural and social transfers, which are less tangible and less quantifiable", learned through experience and more specific to a particular cultural or locational context. Siar[42] argues that in the context of development work, soft skills should be taken as seriously as hard knowledge as the latter do not solely drive development. For return migrants specifically, Ammassari[43] divided knowledge and skills into five categories: specialized technical expertise, organizational and managerial competence, a sense of professionalism, communication skills and other skills. This evaluation recognises these different dimensions of knowledge and will indeed address

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[33] Levitt (1998)

[34] Kleist (2008)

[35] Mueller and Kuschminder (2023)

[36] Duval (2004, p.54)

[37] UNDP (2010)

[38] Davenport & Prusak (2000)

[39] Joia & Lemos (2010), see also knowledge transfer below

[40] Polanyi (1966)

[41] Siar (2012, 164)

[42] Siar (2014)

[43] Ammassari (2004)

explicit/implicit and hard/soft knowledge where possible, with examples of specific categories of knowledge in line with Ammassari's[44] categories given when illustrative.

Knowledge transfer/exchange: knowledge transfer takes place between (at least) two people – the knowledge sender and knowledge receiver – and has the purpose of an individual acquiring new knowledge.[45] Within the wider literature on knowledge transfer, there are various factors that either facilitate or inhibit knowledge transfer. At the individual level, this includes the relationship between knowledge sender and receiver(s), including the perceived the trustworthiness of the sender[46]; the perceived position of a knowledge sender in organizational hierarchies[47], and; the passionate attitude[48], open-mindedness,[49] and speaking a common language[50] of both knowledge sender and receiver. At the level of host institutions, academic research has revealed the importance of a supporting organizational culture[51], a safe psychological environment in which one can express their opinion freely[52], small power-distances in the workplace[53], and limited time restrictions on the knowledge transfer activities.[54] Organizational resources to support knowledge transfer is likewise identified as an important pre-requirement for knowledge transfer[55], as well as a certain level of "absorptive capacity"[56], a base level of knowledge and expertise that allows recipients to understand and absorb new knowledge. Finally, at the widest contextual level, scholars found that cultural differences – especially when it comes to differences in communication styles and value orientations – impact the success of knowledge transfer[57]; xenophobic attitudes[58] and general degree of trust to "outsiders"[59] also influence knowledge transfer. Throughout the evaluation, we will pay specific attention to these and other factors that either inhibit or accelerate knowledge transfer. The CD4D2 project is structured in such a way that primarily diaspora with Dutch residency take assignments in which they transfer their acquired human and social capital to their colleagues within the institutions. Based on our experience during this evaluation, and in line with Meyer[60] and Levitt and Lamba-Nieves[61], we prefer to use the term "knowledge exchange" to denote the mutual back-and-forth of learning and exchange of knowledge, values, and ideas.

Capacity development: UNDP[62] defines capacity development as "a multi-level process through which the abilities of individuals, institutions and societies to perform functions, solve problems and set and achieve objectives in a sustainable manner are strengthened, adapted and maintained over time". **Individual capacity building** is closely linked to knowledge transfer – the process through which individuals gain new knowledge and skills. Simply being the recipient of knowledge may not be expected to lead to capacity development, however. Knowledge should be first understood and interpreted by the recipient, a process supported by active meaning making[63], whereby individuals make sense of and place

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[44] Ammassari (2004)

[45] Bender & Fish (2000)

[46] Joia and Lemois (2010), Kuschminder et al. (2014)

[47] Sun and Scott (2005)

[48] Sie and Yahklef (2009)

[49] Sun and Scott (2005)

[50] Joia and Lemois (2010), Kuschminder et al. (2014)

[51] McDermott and O'Dell (2001)

[52] Joia and Lemos (2010)

[53] Riege (2005)

[54] Riege (2005)

[55] Riege (2005)

[56] Goh (2002)

[57] Kuschminder et al. (2014), Wang (2014)

[58] Wang (2014)

[59] Rivera-Vazquez et al. (2009)

[60] Meyer (2001)

[61] Levitt and Lamba-Nieves (2011)

[62] UNDP (2010, 32)

[63] See, e.g., Ignelzi (2002)

new knowledge within the scaffolding of previous knowledge and experience. The meaning-making process is not always instantaneous and purely individual, with recipients of knowledge co-creating new insights through sometimes sustained interactions with others. As Szulanski[64] further highlights, beyond the uptake of new skills and knowledge alone, it is important for individuals to also *use* the received knowledge and integrate it into one's day-to-day work for knowledge to translate into change in internal resources. **Organizational capacity building**, in turn, goes beyond the acquisition of skills and knowledge by individuals. UNDP[65] conceptualizes the organizational level of capacity building as "the internal structures, policies and procedures that determine an organization's effectiveness". As CD4D2 aims to build institutional capacity through knowledge transfer, this evaluation study will focus on both individual and organizational capacity building and will, whenever possible, address how knowledge transfer is translated into capacity building. Finally, UNDP[66] highlights the importance of what they call the **enabling environment:** the broader social system in which people and organizations function. This includes all the rules, laws, policies, power relations and social norms that govern civic engagement. CD4D2 operates in this enabling environment, or broader context, which will therefore be often referred to while discussing the evaluation findings.

Impact: In many evaluation methodologies, 'impact' is understood as the direct, causal link between an intervention and a documented outcome. Neither the design of the CD4D2 project nor of the evaluation methodology would allow for the discrete identification of causal influences between (elements of) the intervention and specific outcomes of interest on individual, organisational, or societal level. Given the nature of the objectives of CD4D2 and the diversity of inputs and activities used to reach those objectives, the evaluation follows the OECD's conceptualisation of impact as "…the ultimate significance and potentially transformative effects of the intervention... Beyond the immediate results, this criterion seeks to capture the indirect, secondary and potential consequences of the intervention. It does so by examining the holistic and enduring changes in systems or norms, and potential effects on people's well-being, human rights, gender equality, and the environment."[67] Not all elements of this definition are applicable to the CD4D2 intervention; for example, examining effects of CD4D2 on the environment is beyond the scope of this evaluation. The evaluation focuses its assessment of impact on how CD4D2 and its different components—namely exchange visits between host institutions and institutions in the Netherlands, and CD4D2 participant assignments in host institutions in the (ancestral) origin country— have created enduring changes in processes, norms, and well-being on individual and institutional level. Inherent to this vision of *impact* is the enduringness of changes or effects, which can also be understood as the *sustainability of impact or change.* The evaluation therefore considers to what extent observed changes or effects endure over time (or are likely to endure) and what factors or conditions would be needed to ensure sustainable change or effects

2. Data, case selection and methodology

2.1. Overview of data collection (interviews and surveys)

The evaluation of the CD4D2 project builds on the evaluation of the first phase of CD4D (CD4D1). The CD4D1 evaluation used data collected through qualitative interviews and limited quantitative surveys with management staff and colleagues during three rounds of fieldwork in the target countries. The three rounds of fieldwork roughly corresponded to different stages of the project: pre-placement, right after placement, and longer – usually one year – after placement. The first round focused on collecting baseline data from host institutions in the target countries. Interviews focused on the main characteristics,

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[64] Szulanski (1996)
[65] UNDP (2009, p.11)
[66] UNDP (2009, p.11)
[67] OECD (2019, p.11)

strengths and challenges of the selected institutions, their motivation to host CD4D1 participants, and expectations of the project and their learning. In the second and third rounds of fieldwork, interviews addressed the experiences of both managers and colleagues working with the diaspora, their learnings, and their perceptions of the impact of the program to their work and organization at large. In contrast to an impact evaluation, which would generally focus on constructing control and treatment groups for sake of comparing carefully-controlled outcome measures that could be discretely tied to the intervention, the CD4D1 evaluation methodology focused more on processes and the link between processes and a variety of outcomes relevant to the project.

The previous researchers leading the CD4D2 evaluation largely followed the framework of the CD4D1 evaluation, with two adjustments. Given the limited quality of previous survey data, it was decided that the CD4D2 evaluation would rely primarily on qualitative data collected through semi-structured interviews. The second shift was a sustained focus on the projects' longitudinal impacts on host institutions. A specific objective was to collect data on how knowledge transfer led to capacity building in host institutions that were involved in both phases of the CD4D project for a total of six years. Given the variety of placements made within CD4D2 and the diversity of sectors in which placements could be made, outcomes measures were not pre-defined, and the interviews allowed for exploration of different forms of knowledge transfer and capacity development.

The decisions made in earlier phases of the CD4D2 evaluation affected the nature and quality of the data available for the evaluation, and they shaped what may eventually be inferred from the collected data. While the CD4D evaluation methodology aimed to assess longer-term changes through a three-phased data collection approach[68], it was not always possible to collect information from intended participants during all three phases. The CD4D2 Initial Report[69] centred on host institution personnel's expectations about their participation in the program, their expected learning from the participants' assignments, and the impact of the program on their organization. It was not consistently possible to access the same staff during the mid-term evaluation, however, due to limited availability of staff and staff turnover within the host institutions. As a result of this discontinuity, it was difficult to measure whether managers and staff saw changes occurring in their organization and their individual learning over time. This, in turn, affects the evaluators' ability to detail the impact (viewed as changes that occur due to project activities and that are sustained over time) of individual placements on the level of priority learners and institutions. This final report therefore does not attempt to "track" changes in colleagues and managers' learning over time and instead reports about change in more aggregate terms.

Similarly, the initial objective of tracking institutional changes over time was challenged by the change in participating countries and institutions in the CD4D2 project. At the beginning of the evaluation, Afghanistan and Somalia were both included in the CD4D2 project, which should have enabled longer-term tracking of host institutions that had also participated in CD4D1. With the suspension of CD4D2's implementation in Afghanistan in January 2022 and directed changes in priority sectors/target host institutions in Somalia on request of the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, only a few targeted institutions in the latter project country (namely the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Interior, and the Ministry of Water Development in the Somaliland region of Somalia) were involved in the project for a prolonged period of time. Due to the aforementioned staff turnover and varying availability of staff – especially priority learners and colleagues - for the evaluation interviews, we want to be cautious not to overstate the weight of our findings for Somalia and those institutions specifically. We will therefore not be able to infer larger patterns of long-term impact associated with the project model as such. To

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[68] Due to the switch of evaluation team composition – from Dr. Katie Kuschminder and Dr. Charlotte Mueller to Dr. Michaella Vanore and Dr. Laura Cleton in February 2022 – and accompanying standstill in data collection, an additional mid-term fieldwork collection phase was added. We will refer to this phase as FW III, and the final round of data collection as FW IV.

[69] Mueller and Kuschminder (2020)

nevertheless account for the longer-term impacts of the CD4D project on institutions within Somalia and the other focus countries, the final round of data collection (FW IV) included several so-called "retrospective interviews". These interviews, directed at both managers and colleagues of institutions who have been longest involved in- and exposed to the CD4D program, questioned participants about the perceived longer-term impacts of the program to themselves and their organization, including the factors necessary to make such changes sustainable over time. However, and as we will detail later in this section, the evaluation suffered from research fatigue on the part of host institution staff in especially this latter phase of the evaluation. This further compounds difficulties in assessing long-term impact of the project.

To broaden understanding of how the CD4D model and linked placements fit within larger country contexts and development intervention environments over time, interviews were also conducted with CD4D ambassadors, participants who had been involved over multiple placements, and stakeholders (e.g., IOM project staff, Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs staff, focal points for CD4D in Dutch embassies/consulates in CD4D target countries). These interviews also provided more retrospective and longer-term assessments of potential impacts the CD4D model could and had generated in different contexts. Interview guides for all interview modalities are available in the separate Annex.

The remainder of this section will present an overview of the data collected as part of the CD4D2 evaluation, the cases selected, and methodology used. As described in section 2.3, the evaluation relies on both qualitative and quantitative data, in the form of interviews and a post-assignment survey for CD4D2 participants. Table 2 below presents an overview of the collected interview data as part of the evaluation.

Table 2: Interviews conducted for CD4D2 evaluation. Source: Evaluation team data

Country	FW I		FW II		FWIII		FW IV		CD4D2 participants		Stakeholders		Total
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#
Afghanistan[70]	10	20,4%	9	15%	-	-	-	-	1	3,6%	2	7,1%	22
Iraq	10	20,4%	14	23,3%	11	20,3%	11	42,3%	4	14,3%	1[71]	3,6%	51
Nigeria	5	10,2%	19	31,7%	28	51,9%	8	30,8%	9	32,1%	4	14,3%	73
Somalia[72]	24	49,0%	18	30%	15	27,8%	7	26,9%	14	50%	9	32,1%	87
N/A[73]	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	12	42,9%	12
Total	49	100%	60	100%	54	100%	26	100%	28	100%	28	100%	245

A total of 245 interviews were conducted between 2019-2023, the majority of which were held with managers and colleagues working at the host institutions (189), followed by CD4D2 participants (28) and stakeholders (28). Below, we will detail data collection for each of those groups in more detail.

Interviews with **host institution staff,** including higher management and colleagues, were collected in four fieldwork phases in Afghanistan, Iraq, Nigeria and the Somaliland region of Somalia (see Annex A and B). Baseline fieldwork conducted in 2019 was held in all countries and resulted in 47 interviews being

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[70] Due to the removal of Afghanistan from the CD4D2 project in January 2022, no interviews were conducted in FW III (Fall 2022) and FW IV (Spring 2023).

[71] The one interview listed here comprised of a group interview with three stakeholders from Iraq.

[72] Due to the safety situation in Somalia, it was decided at the start of the CD4D2 evaluation that no data would be collected at host institutions in the South-Central region of Somalia/Mogadishu. Indicated numbers therefore apply to data collected at host institutions in the Somaliland region of Somalia only.

[73] N/A refers to stakeholders who are not primarily working on one of the CD4D2 focus countries, such as staff at IOM the Netherlands/Geneva or the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. To varying degrees, interviews under this header either focused on work in one of the CD4D2 focus countries, or on the project at a more general level.

conducted at 12 host institutions. The baseline study identified the main motivations for host institution staff to participate in the CD4D2 project, their expectations from the diaspora, and their own expected learning and outcomes for the project. Three additional rounds of interviews to capture respondents' experiences with the CD4D2 placements then were held between March-August 2021 (FWII), August-October 2022 (FWIII), and April-July 2023 (FW IV). The second round of fieldwork was again held in all target countries, and Afghanistan was then phased out in FW III and FW IV. During these three rounds of data collection, the evaluators asked participants about their expectations and the drafting of the Terms of Reference for the assignments, their experiences with working with the CD4D2 participants, the knowledge exchange and learning of themselves and their colleagues, the perceived impact of the work on themselves and their organization, as well as their future plans concerning the knowledge gained from CD4D2. While interviews in the first fieldwork phase were mostly held on-site, with the Maastricht team travelling to Afghanistan, Nigeria, Iraq and Somalia, data collection turned into an online modality after the start of the COVID-19 pandemic in January 2020. As long as the network permitted, interviews were conducted using MS Teams, and other platforms like WhatsApp and Zoom were used when needed. In section 2.3, we will reflect on the impact of this data collection modality on the data quality and reporting.

Interviews with **CD4D2 participants** took place on an ongoing basis over the past four years, with the aim of understanding the knowledge transferred from a "sender" perspective. Participants were generally contacted by the Maastricht team within six weeks of finishing an assignment, within a few weeks with an initial reminder, and with a final invitation after a couple of months if the respondent did not respond. Since participating in the interview took place on a voluntary basis only, the team refrained from reaching out beyond the aforementioned three times. Interviews took place in-person, on a location in the Netherlands of the participants' choosing, or via MS Teams or WhatsApp. As with the host institution interviews, the conversations were guided by means of an interview guide (see Annex C) that asked about pre-assignment expectations and preparation, experienced work culture and cooperation during the assignment, transferred knowledge and skills, changes created through the assignment, and the participants' personal development and gains from the project.

Finally, 28 **stakeholder interviews** were conducted throughout the past four years. Stakeholder interviews are conducted to better understand the context, structural conditions in implementation countries, and governance of diaspora and return, which all have an influence on how the knowledge exchange process operates. Different from stakeholder interviews conducted in CD4D1, we decided to also interview IOM staff in the target countries and the Netherlands, embassy personnel and colleagues working at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. These interviews gave us a better understanding of how CD4D2 as a migration-development project operates within the wider development programming in both the Netherlands and target countries, the administrative operation of the project, and the cooperation among different IOM actors and partners.

Next to these qualitative interviews, a quantitative, participant survey was implemented as part of the CD4D2 evaluation. Participants who finished their CD4D2 assignments were immediately asked to complete a post-assignment online questionnaire (see Annex D), which was completely anonymous and routinely attached to the Participant Final Report that diaspora experts complete for IOM after each assignment. The survey was implemented using the survey tool Qualtrics. As per June 5, a total of 108 valid responses were recorded, which would equal a response rate of a little over 50% as 215 assignments had been completed by that time. Incomplete submissions (13) were excluded and have not been taken into consideration when calculating the response rate, nor in the figures and tables displayed in this report. Additional limited quantitative indicators were collected through three questions sent via WhatsApp/email to managers and colleagues in host institutions, who were asked to assess their overall experiences with CD4D2 on a 5-point Likert scale (see Annex E).

Data collection was challenged by research fatigue among host institution staff and participants, particularly during FW III and FW IV. Throughout the last phases of the evaluation, the research team

received increasing signals that participants felt that they already had told us everything that they wanted to tell in previous interviews (host institution staff), or in other modalities of data collection (diaspora participants). Research fatigue especially seemed to be a problem while targeting CD4D2 participants: only 29,5% out of all CD4D2 participants decided to accept our invitation for an interview (28 out of 95). During the interviews, many referred to either the post-assignment survey they had filled out for Maastricht University, Participant Final Reports for IOM, or additional reporting that the host institutions tasked them to do. Until FW IV, host institution staff seemed more receptive to engage in interviews, mostly thanks to the invaluable collaboration with IOM colleagues in Iraq, Nigeria and Somalia. During FW IV, however, we noticed similar research fatigue on the part of the host institution staff: some indicated being too busy or feeling like it was no longer relevant to talk to us because there was nothing "new" to share. As the final round of interviews occurred at the end of the CD4D2 project, the absence of follow-up financing or a next stage of the project may also have shaped respondents' perceptions of the value of engaging. Based on our experiences with data collection, we will make recommendations in section 5 on how to approach data collection throughout a project evaluation.

2.2. Case selection

The CD4D2 project was implemented in four target countries: Afghanistan, Iraq, Nigeria and Somalia. There were several requirements for these countries to be selected as project countries into the program. First, according to our stakeholder interviews, selected countries had to be in line with the Dutch governments' wider approach to both migration and development in the selected regions.[74] While predecessors of the program had a clear migration-related component to it, namely engendering circular- and return migration, various stakeholders stressed that the emphasis in CD4D when it came to choices of sectors and assignments rested solely on development rationales.[75] Secondly, the needs and wishes from the project countries were pivotal for eventual selection, especially when it came to sectors.[76] Third, the availability of relevant diaspora populations in the Netherlands particularly and Europe more generally was assessed before starting the project.[77] Below, we will briefly detail the social, political and economic context of these four countries, as they matter for the implementation of CD4D2 as a knowledge-transfer and capacity-building project.

2.2.1. Afghanistan

After the announced withdrawal of U.S. troops from Afghanistan in 2021, significant economic contraction and increased insecurity hit the country. According to the World Bank, the cessation of international aid caused a collapse in aggregate demand, job losses and economic deprivation remained widespread, resulting in a decline of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) with 20.7% in 2021. It resulted in a significant increase in prices, deteriorating economic conditions, rising food insecurity and widespread deprivation and welfare losses. Afghanistan's economic growth was already hampering before 2021, however. Decreased aid support and political instability ensured that the country's GDP declined from an average close to 10% annually between 2005-2014 and 2.3% annually between 2015-2019. The COVID-19 pandemic and following border closures, lockdown and reduced migrant remittances led to a further 2.4% contraction of the economy in 2020. The World Bank estimated that 47% of Afghan people lived under the poverty line in 2021. While aid partially resumed in 2022, Afghan families are still faced with severe constraints to their livelihoods, with an expected two-thirds of households living under the poverty line in 2022 and 2023.[78] When it comes to gender inequality, Afghanistan has consistently been among the

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[74] Interview 04-04-2023, Interview 11-04-2023a, Interview 06-04-2023

[75] An important exception here is Iraq, where the majority of assignments were focused on strengthening migration management.

[76] Interview 24-03-2023, Interview 04-04-2023, Interview 29-03-2023a

[77] Interview 11-04-2023a, Interview 24-03-2023

[78] World Bank (2022), World Bank (n.d.a)

top 10 least performing countries with a score of 0.674 in 2020 on UNDP's Gender Inequality Index. This index measures gender-based disadvantage in three dimensions: reproductive health (maternal mortality and adolescent birth rate), empowerment (secondary education and shares of parliamentary seats) and the labour market (participation rates). In Afghanistan, differences of almost 50% exist between male and female labour participation, with similar differences in parliamentary seats.[79]

Security-wise, Afghanistan knows a long history of instability and conflict. In the time that CD4D was operational in the country, Taliban-led insurgencies spread from the country's south into other regions of Afghanistan. Their presence rapidly expanded in 2014 after the partial withdrawal of international military, leading to the Taliban having control of larger parts of the country by 2017. From that year onwards, the involvement of the Islamic State (ISIS) in especially the Khorasan Province added a new dimension to the conflict, with fighting intensifying in the south and east of the country across 2018 and 2019. In February 2020, the US and Taliban signed a peace agreement and started peace talks between the Afghan government and Taliban in Doha. This led to the gradual withdrawal of US and NATO troops in 2020, and full withdrawal of all US troops by summer 2021.[80] From the Taliban takeover in August 2021 onward, there is a decline in reported security incidents and civilian casualties. The UN Secretary-General has nevertheless continued to report the security situation in the country as continuously fragile, due to an intensification of ISIS attacks, crime-related incidents following the country's deteriorating economic and humanitarian situation, and attacks claimed by the National Resistance Front.[81]

In the CD4D2 project, priority was given to assignments in the health sector, related to rural development and water management, and to technical and vocational training.

2.2.2. Iraq

Iraq is a federal, parliamentary republic that consists of 19 governorates. It is an ethnically diverse country in which Islam is the dominant religion, followed by Christianity. The autonomy of Iraqi Kurdistan had been agreed upon in 1970, but the population did not enjoy democratic freedom for more than two decades after. This changed in 1991, with the uprising against Saddam Hussein at the end of the Persian Gulf War and conflict between the Iraqi government and Kurdish region. After the Iraqi government fully withdrew from Kurdish territory in October that year, the region started to function de facto independently. This was also accompanied, however, with economic blockades by the Iraqi government over the region, reducing its oil and food supplies. Over the course of the US invasion and following years, tensions between the Kurdish and Iraqi government remained, accumulating in a 2017 Kurdish Region independence referendum. Following the majority vote in favour, the Iraqi government started a military operation in which they took control over Kurdistan territory and forced its government to annul the referendum. Tensions between central Iraq and Kurdistan remain to date. In the CD4D2 project, assignments are implemented in both central Iraq and the Kurdistan region.

Economically, Iraq is heavily dependent on oil revenue, which accounts for up to 42% of its GDP. Oil and COVID-19 shocks led to increasing unemployment, especially among women, displaced persons and returnees. While the economy is slowly recovering, the World Bank has suggested that growth will continue to be stymied by structural bottlenecks that are aggravated by fragile political conditions, a weak healthcare system, and corruption within government, which ensures that unrest across the country remains.[82] There are steep differences in economic livelihoods between men and women in Iraq, with a difference of over 15.000$ in Gross National Income Per Capita.[83] Similarly, the Gender Inequality Index

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[79] UNDP (n.d.a)
[80] EASO (2021)
[81] EASO (2021a)
[82] World Bank (n.d.b)
[83] UNDP (n.d.b)

indicates steep differences between men and women in the labour market, with a 61,5% difference of labour market participation in 2020. To help support Iraq in some of these domains, CD4D2 assignments were made in the health sector, related to migration management (to support the government in managing internal displacement and refugee movements in the region), and in the fields of community development, education, justice, and local governance.

Like Afghanistan, Iraq has been affected by longer-term conflicts. For the period in which CD4D was active in the country, the armed conflict between the Iraqi government, supported by various militia and the US-led international collation, and ISIS is noteworthy. After its territorial defeat in 2017, ISIS shifted to guerrilla warfare, and its fighters were still regularly involved in attacks across 2021 and 2022. The fight against ISIS has led to significant internal displacement within Iraq, notably to the Kurdistan Region. EASO reports that there are also numerous protests and riots across the country, mostly demanding more job opportunities, an end to corruption, and political change. This was similarly the case in the Kurdistan Region in December 2020, sparked by economic crisis and governments' failure to pay civil servants' salaries.[84]

2.2.3. Nigeria

Nigeria is a diverse, multi-ethnic federation of 36 autonomous states and the Federal Capital Territory (FCT). It is Africa's most populous country and is estimated to have over 250 ethnic groups, with Islam as the dominant religion in the north of the country and Christianity dominating in the south. Nigeria is climbing on UNDP's Gender Development Index, with a total score of 0.864 in 2020. Women still face on average two fewer years of schooling compared to men, and likewise earn on average US$2000 less on an annual basis.[85] Nigeria's 36 states and the FCT are grouped into six geopolitical zones, which were considered when selecting host institutions' eligible for participation in the CD4D2 project. It is a multiparty democracy and works on the basis of a federal quota system in which party candidates alternate for elected office based on ethnicity and their regional affiliation.[86] In terms of gender equity in political representation, women held only 4,5% of all seats in 2020.[87]

According to the World Bank, Nigeria had the highest gross domestic product in Africa in 2020. It is heavily reliant on oil, which accounts for 80% of all exports, half of government revenues, and a third of the banking sector credit. In 2020, the Nigerian economy experienced a recession due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the fall in global oil prices. Despite higher oil prices in the two years after, the macroeconomic stability of the country weakened. Inequality in terms of income and opportunities remains high, which is a result of a lack of job opportunities, regional inequalities, and social and political unrest. High inflation has also taken a toll on household welfare. This deteriorating economic environment, according to the World Bank, will lead to more Nigerians living in poverty over the next years.[88] There is a 9.1% difference between men and women being active in the labour force in Nigeria in 2020.[89] To support reducing Nigeria's dependence on oil revenues, the CD4D2 project focused on the agriculture, health and IT sectors in the country.

Long-standing security challenges also exist in Nigeria. The UN described the security situation in Nigeria in the second half of 2019 as "volatile", with ongoing conflict due to Boko Haram's presence that has resulted in a worsening humanitarian situation, human displacement, and food insecurity. Further conflict in the country ranges from violence related to armed bandits and criminal violence in the North-West and

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[84] EUAA (2022a)
[85] UNDP (n.d.b)
[86] EASO (2021b)
[87] UNDP (n.d.a)
[88] World Bank (n.d.c)
[89] UNDP (n.d.a)

North Central Regions, street gangs in the South-West Region, conflict between farmers and herders in the Middle Belt and to southern states, communal and ethnic clashes in the North-Central Region and southern states, Biafra separatists fighting for independence in the South-East and oil militants in the Niger Delta. Election-related violence occurred throughout January to March 2019.[90]

2.2.4. Somalia

Somalia is a Federal State comprised of two levels of government: the federal government and the Federal Member States (FMS), the latter of which includes both regional and local governments that have their own constitutions and armed forces. Somaliland is part of the FMS and declared its independence in 1991 during the civil war in Somalia. Ever since, it has embarked on an institution-building and democratization process. Somaliland remains largely unrecognized internationally, despite an increase in diplomatic relations with other states. Across Somalia, clans are a primary tool for identification and a way of life. They define relationships between people and belonging, and matter in terms of getting access to resources, political influence, justice and security. Clans, importantly, are also actors within political life across Somalia. Clan elders function as mediators and play a vital role in the resolution of local and intra-clan disputes.[91] As became clear over the course of data collection for this evaluation, clan-based politics are also at play within the governmental sector in which the majority of CD4D2 participants conducted their assignments.

According to the World Bank, Somalia is currently undergoing an economic transition. As political relations in the region are experiencing change, there are new opportunities for Somalia to benefit from trade and regional integration, and Somalia is slowly transitioning away from reliance on humanitarian aid to more sustainable development. Rapid urbanization, the growing use of digital technologies, investments in energy, ports, education and health all present opportunities to support economic growth. Equitable, gender-based development has also been a focus in Somalia and its regions, yet contemporary data and statistics that would inform country rankings in tools like the Gender Inequality Index are missing. Available statistics demonstrate areas for improvement, particularly in the health domain, with the country demonstrating relatively high maternal mortality ratios (829/100.000 live births), high adolescent birth rates (with 118/1.000 births to women aged 15-19), high rates of female genital cutting (99.2%), and high rates of marriage before the age of 15 (16.8%). Women's political participation does seem to be improving, however, with almost 25% of all national parliamentary seats held by women.[92] Consecutive years of severe drought, rising food prices, falling exports and slowing growth in remittances are preventing the economy from becoming robust[93], and little data is available on how such trends affect the economic position of women. To support Somalia in making its transition, the CD4D2 project focuses on local governance, private sector development, diaspora engagement, rule of law and water and infrastructure sectors.

According to the Global Peace Index, Somalia is the 5th least peaceful country in the world. This is mostly due to the long-term armed conflict between the Somali National Army (SNA), supported by the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM), and anti-government insurgents. Key among the latter is the terrorist group Al-Shabaab, which is linked to Al Qaeda. Al-Shabaab's overall goal is to establish an Islamic State in Somalia, and it commits targeted killings of governmental, AMISOM officers, businesspeople, clan elders and employees of (I)NGOs. While Al-Shabaab is active across the country, most attacks take place in the south of Somalia and its capital Mogadishu, where car bombs and attacks on restaurants, hotels, government buildings and markets are commonplace. The Council on Foreign Relations declared in 2021 that the group "remains the principal security challenge in war-torn Somalia

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[90] EASO (2021b)
[91] EUAA (2022b)
[92] UN Women (n.d.)
[93] World Bank (n.d.d)

and continues to mount lethal attacks against Western and government forces and civilians in the region".[94] In 2021-2022, the country underwent a period of high political turbulence due to long-delayed presidential and parliamentary elections. Security surrounding the election process was a concern, with Al-Shabaab threatening to attack electoral delegates and disrupt elections.[95] Other sources of insecurity Somaliland and Puntland (another FMS) which sometimes turns to violent conflict, as well as ISIS activity in Puntland.[96]

This short overview of the focus countries and their social, economic and political context underscores the variety of contexts in which the CD4D2 project operates. Following this inventory and our stakeholder interviews, it became clear that the rationales for including the focal countries and sectors are based on both migration- and development-related considerations. The main rationale for selecting project countries stems from wider migration (management) agendas, whereas sector choices were mostly driven by development rationales. While the migration governance sector was included in Iraq on request of the government to help manage internally displaced persons and refugees, the Nigerian government pressed for including both agriculture and IT sectors to reduce the country's dependence on oil and diversify its economy.[97] Between the countries, there are also stark differences in economic situation: whereas the Nigerian economy is one of the strongest in Africa, both the Somali and Iraqi economies are yet to recover from debts and conflict. This context matters for how knowledge transfer activities can translate into capacity building, particularly in contexts characterised by instability where creating and assuring long-term change must accommodate more uncertainty. From the outset of the CD4D1 project, IOM the Netherlands signalled that differences in country context would translate into differences in implementation and likely outcomes. As we will explain in more detail in section 5, the stability of organizations and the availability of resources to carry forward learning into practise were indeed regarded as key elements to produce longer-term changes in capacity. In more fragile contexts, where resource constraints and institutional tenure are central challenges, sustainable, longer-term impacts that require (institutional) stability are therefore more difficult to cultivate and assure from within the boundaries of project. In both Somalia and Iraq, CD4D2 participants reported other sources of potential disruption to the CD4D2 model, such as government staff not always receiving pay for their work, which shaped their enthusiasm and willingness to participate in the project. Finally, there are important differences in stability and safety across the countries and their regions, which matter substantially for the degree to which CD4D2 participants and colleagues could perform their work. These differences, therefore, make it challenging to assess the overall impact of the project in each individual country and compare the impacts between countries and sectors. Where possible, the reports' results will tease out country- and sector-specific features that shape impacts in short-, medium-, and long-term.

2.3. Research methods and limitations

As explained in section 2.1, the evaluation followed a three-step approach in which a baseline, mid-term, and final evaluation round were conducted to provide insight in the experiences of participants, the transfer of knowledge, and the impacts of identified transfers. In contrast to an impact evaluation, which focuses on isolating changes in specific outcome measures that can be clearly attributed to an intervention and contrasting the outcomes of members of so-called control and treatment groups, this evaluation instead focused on understanding how project processes unfolded and how the decisions and activities of different stakeholder groups involved in the project design and implementation shaped outcomes. While the evaluation does not neatly follow a theory-driven evaluation framework, it is nevertheless influenced by *realist evaluation,* a method popularized in the late 1990s. It starts from the assumption that the same policy or project intervention will not work everywhere and for everyone given context-specific

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[94] Klobucista et al. (2022)
[95] EASO (2021c)
[96] EASO (2021c)
[97] Interview 29-03-2023a, Interview 29-03-2023c

differences. The approach seeks to answer the question of *why* a particular program works, for *whom,* and under *what* particular circumstances.[98] Three key concepts from realist evaluation are context, mechanisms, and outcomes. Context, importantly, determines whether particular mechanisms work during a program. Outcomes may indeed vary, depending on economic, geographic, historical, social and political circumstances in a particular context, as well as people's beliefs and values. Mechanisms – the causal process – are defined as "underlying entities, processes, or structures which operate in particular contexts to generate outcomes of interest".[99] These are obviously closely connected to context, as changes in context might affect the causal process. Finally, outcomes of an intervention can be short-, medium- and long-term. While this current CD4D2 evaluation is obviously interested in learning about the outcomes of the work delivered, following realist evaluation methodology our attention goes out to the role of context in shaping the causal mechanisms implied in CD4D's implicit theory of change and subsequent project outcomes and impact. We will discuss this throughout section 4.

Following the work done in the CD4D1 evaluation, this evaluation rests on quantitative (survey) and qualitative (interview) data analysis. The analysis has a mixed methods design in which the qualitative part is supplemented by insights from the survey data. For the interviews, we relied on thematic analysis based on our reading of fieldnotes and listening of interview recordings. We relied on a combination of inductive and deductive analytical reasoning, embedded in the more general framework of realist evaluation as discussed in the paragraph above. Our analysis was partially guided by concepts and themes that we drew from the wider literature on diaspora engagement in development, such as the applicability of skills and the importance of in-country perceptions towards diaspora (see also section 1). We at the same time stayed attentive to identify important concepts and themes that arose more inductively out of the data. We analysed survey data by means of Qualtrics and focused on descriptive analysis to supplement the findings of the qualitative interviews. In line with conclusions drawn from the CD4D1 final evaluation[100], we believe that the qualitative data yields the most in-depth and contextualized insights for this evaluation. The interviews allowed the research team to extensively speak about host institution staff and participants' experiences and to gain a thorough understanding of how the context in which the project operates impacts assignments. It also allowed for exploration of how the wider group of stakeholders that informed the CD4D model and its implementation understood and oriented the programme within the wider migration and development space. It is indeed important to highlight that conclusions drawn from interviews (and qualitative data in general) reflect the partial perspectives of interviewees and are based on a retrospective recollection of their experiences. These perspectives and experiences are closely connected to their position within the wider ecosystem of the CD4D2 project, which will therefore influence their narratives and feedback. As much as possible, we attempted to triangulate their narratives with documentary materials, other interviews and quantitative data analysis. When findings are reported, it is generally on the basis of multiple accounts, and when an uncommon findings arose that reflected a specific context, we duly note so to support interpretation. The quantitative survey data further allowed us to identify patterns across contexts. While, as stated in section 2.2, the varying nature of both the countries and sectors participating in the project makes it difficult to strictly compare between them, we believe that the survey data did yield insight into the type of knowledge and skills transferred across countries, type of activities performed, and perceived contribution to individual and organizational capacity building. Analysis of survey data is limited to descriptive statistics, which demonstrate response patterns across questions in terms of, e.g., means and shares of categorical responses. More advanced statistical analysis methods such as regression analysis were not considered feasible given limited sample numbers, high numbers of missing data in some questions, and absence of needed covariates to create meaningful multivariate models that would be appropriate across country contexts.

[98] Pawson and Tilley (1997)
[99] Mercer and Lacey (2021)
[100] Mueller and Kuschminder (2019)

The evaluation did face limitations in its implementation that affected data quality. These can be linked to the particular moment in which data collection took place (during and in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic), the safety situation in some project countries, as well as the unique position of the researchers associated with this evaluation. Choices made and explained further below should therefore be seen in the light of these constraints. First, and as already signalled in the latest CD4D2 mid-term evaluation report[101], a reoccurring concern for the interviews was the possibility that respondents would provide socially desirable answers. Throughout the evaluation and across project countries, we noticed that answers to our questions were largely positive. Many respondents across the three project countries signalled that they wanted to have future CD4D2 placements, and respondents may have been concerned that raising potentially negative points may have been used to deny them future diaspora experts. This worry was particularly emphasised during the final round of interviews (FW IV), when it was clear that the CD4D project would not continue in some of the assignment countries. On a few occasions, interviewees at host institutions were clearly disheartened and almost pleading to the research team to ensure that the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs would reconsider continuing the project. Throughout earlier phases of the evaluation as well, interviewees would often ask the evaluation team for further financial opportunities to intensify the collaboration. Such statements might indicate that it is difficult for host institution staff to separate the evaluation team (and our interests) from IOM or the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, despite our continuous attempts to clarify that we had no role in deciding on the continuation of the project and were independent of IOM and its institutional partners. This final point relates to the larger issue of positionality and how the evaluation staff could engage with participants. Both interviewers who collected data were relatively young women from a university, neither had extensive knowledge of the contexts of the study countries, and neither could speak the languages of the study countries (e.g., Kurdish, Arabic, Somali). Given these features, it proved challenging to build rapport with some respondents, and it was at times difficult to intervene and probe for additional information from respondents when consecutive translation was used. The researchers would ideally have travelled to the project countries and have more time available to build rapport, meet interview participants face-to-face, and become 'embedded' within the host institutions, options which were not deemed feasible given COVID-19 related restrictions and given safety concerns in some countries or regions. With the help of local translators or a local research assistant who was similarly trained and similarly independent of the project implementing institutions, the data might have been more rich and nuanced.

Second, and as likewise noted in the mid-term evaluation, the quality of information collected during interviews remained a difficulty. All interviews with host institution staff occurred using telecommunications/VOIP services, as aforementioned COVID-19 restrictions and safety concerns made face-to-face interviews impossible. The quality of connections was often weak, particularly with host institution staff in the Somaliland region of Somalia, where interruptions of connections and in general poor-quality audio made it challenging to maintain conversations while respecting respondents' limited time. In Iraq and the Somaliland region of Somalia, some interviews were conducted with use of an interpreter who provided either consecutive or simultaneous translation. While in general the quality of interpretation was excellent, interpreters were generally not topic experts and translation via VOIP services resulted in unavoidable delays and misunderstandings within limited space for further follow-up questions given the time needed for clarification. In some cases, interpreters were helpfully provided by IOM in the project countries, which might have affected respondents' willingness to share information that they may have perceived as, for example, increasing the risk of not receiving future CD4D2 placements. In an ideal scenario, we would recommend for future evaluation purposes to work with research assistants who ideally both have knowledge of the topic and context, as well as the necessary language skills and independence from any bodies responsible for the design and implementation of the project.

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[101] Vanore and Cleton (2022)

Third, the specific evaluation model that has been chosen makes it difficult to measure the impact of assignments conducted and whether impact persists over time. To do so, and as alluded to in section 2.1 already, it would have been necessary to have a longitudinal, panel set-up, in which the same individuals were interviewed in baseline, mid-term and final evaluation rounds or in which narrowly-defined outcome indicators could be collected from members of a control and treatment group across different moments. While the availability of staff and staff turnover prevented such a longitudinal panel set-up from materializing, and diaspora experts were themselves often available for assignments only for a short period of time, there are several further factors shaping how "impact" is measured in this report. The first is the modality of data collection through qualitative research methods, as it allows for insight in perceived impact of the CD4D2 project on the level of the respondents as well as their organization. As mentioned before, this perception of impact closely reflects our respondents' positionality within the wider CD4D2 ecosystem and is based on a retrospective recollection of their experiences. As a consequence, there may be tensions in how different stakeholders assess or perceive the project and its outcomes and impacts, a challenge that is addressed by interpreting findings within the wider context of literature, programme documentation, and interview data collected from multiple respondents. This is obviously a different way of assessing impact, changes, and sustainability from measuring people's skill levels by means of quantitative assessments, or assessing institutional productivity over time, for example. Second, the duration of the CD4D project, including the evaluation, does not allow for measurement of sustainable impacts over time. The limited time that CD4D2 participants have to implement changes – ranging from 3 to 6 months – generally implies that diaspora participants do not see the changes they contribute to materialise. In our interviews and surveys, CD4D2 participants mentioned that they often saw their knowledge and skills being taken up by colleagues, or they would ensure that a draft for a new policy plan or legal framework was finished. However, the limited time available often implied that they could not follow-up on these changes and assess whether they had longer-term implications, whether they would be adopted in staff working routines, or whether their drafted policy plans would be adopted and implemented. While interviews with host institution staff to a certain degree provided a fuller picture of the creation and sustainability of such impacts, they too mentioned that the CD4D2 project time was too short to gain a full picture of changes happening. A clear example comes from the education sector in Iraq, where CD4D2 participants worked to change teaching staff's methodological and pedagogical skills. Host institution interviewees emphasized that it was realistically possible for them to tell the researchers something about the impact of CD4D2 after a couple of years, based on indicators like student performance and wellbeing.

3. **Overview of CD4D2 project: assignments, participants and host institutions**

This section summarises the CD4D2 assignments conducted and the socio-demographic characteristics of CD4D2 participants and host institution staff. We derive information in this section from two sources: IOM project data, as well as the post-assignment survey operated by Maastricht University.

3.1. CD4D2 assignments

As part of the CD4D2 project, 212 assignments were conducted. Table 3 below shows the breakdown of these assignments by modality, signalling stark differences between project countries in the balance between virtual and physical assignments.

*Table 3: overview of assignments per country, sorted by virtual/physical. Source: IOM project data*

	Assignment country				
	Afghanistan	**Iraq**	**Nigeria**	**Somalia**	**Total**
Virtual	2	43	35	11	91
Physical	2	18	11	90	121
Total	4	61	46	101	212

Whereas in both Iraq and Nigeria the majority of assignments between 2019-2023 were held virtually, in Somalia the overwhelming majority was conducted physically. From our conversations with participants, as well as our own experiences in using telecommunication services interviewing host institution staff, there are two main explanations for this difference. Telecommunication services seemed to be more readily available and of better quality in Nigeria and Iraq (especially in the Kurdistan region) as opposed to Somalia. The type of host institutions participating in the project also shaped the necessity of different modalities. In Nigeria, for example, host institutions included businesses in the IT sector as well as universities and research institutions, all of which need stable internet connections to function. As a result of this relatively good access to telecommunication services, we also noted that participants in Nigeria and Iraq increasingly combined both modalities into their assignments after travel became possible again in 2021. They would, for example, prepare work for an assignment virtually, and only travel physically to execute their assignment for a shorter period of time. Combining these assignment modalities seemed to be a way for CD4D2 participants who often worked full-time jobs in the Netherlands or elsewhere in Europe to participate in the project more easily. Second, the CD4D2 project in Somalia could rely on a large share of participants who were already residing in the country at the time the COVID-19 pandemic broke, which was especially the case in the Somaliland region of Somalia. Contrary to other project countries, we noted that a large share of diaspora participated in the project who live transnationally between Somalia and the Netherlands (or elsewhere in Europe) throughout the year. Dutch Somali diaspora are well-organized in Somalia, through organizations such as Holland House Hargeisa in Hargeisa and Guriga Oranje in Mogadishu.[102] We therefore expect that word of mouth also played a role in spreading knowledge on the CD4D2 project through in-country diaspora networks, leading more in-country diaspora to participate. This trend continued after travel became easier again in 2021 and 2022.

Figure 1 below shows that the majority of assignments was a "first assignment". Based on 108 responses to the post-assignment survey, we see that the share of repeated assignments is largest in Iraq, followed by Nigeria and Somalia. As participation in the post-assignment survey is anonymized, it is not possible to trace survey responses to specific participants. Yet, we know that in Iraq several longer-term projects were running in which participants did repeated assignments at the Ministry of Education and Agriculture, respectively. We will discuss these long-term, institutionalized assignments in more detail in section 4.3.

Figure 1: First or repeated assignments, by country. Source: post-assignment survey

First or repeated assignment? (n=108)
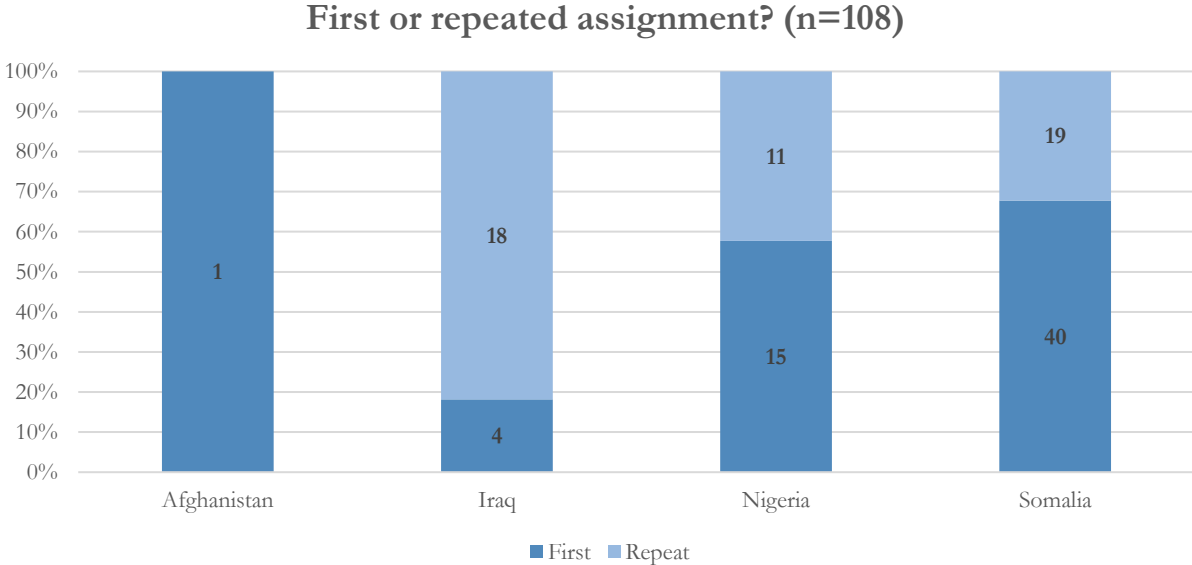
In figures 2a-d, we show the breakdown of number of CD4D2 assignments per focus sector for each project country. The few assignments conducted in Afghanistan were mostly done in the area of Technical/Vocational Education Training. The majority of assignments in Iraq was conducted in the area of migration governance. As mentioned in section 2.2 already, this was a clear priority area for the Iraqi government. In the other countries, assignments are divided more evenly across priority sectors. In Nigeria, the health sector has received considerably fewer assignments compared to agriculture and IT. While another long-term, institutionalized project running in the health sector in Nigeria is not included in these statistics (see section 4.3), another reason might also be a mismatch between demand and skills present in the Nigerian diaspora in the Netherlands.[103] This was similarly mentioned for the case of Afghanistan: when very specific specialists were requested, it was not always easy to find a match.[104] In Somalia, the divisions of assignments across sectors was more balanced, with the majority taking place in the area of rule of law and local governance.

Figures 2a-d: Division of CD4D2 participants per sector, all project countries. Source: IOM project data

Total CD4D2 assignments Afghanistan, by sector

1
3
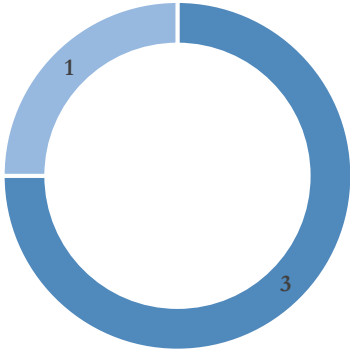
■ Technical Vocational Education Training
■ Diaspora Engagement

Total CD4D2 assignments Iraq, by sector

10
13
4
34
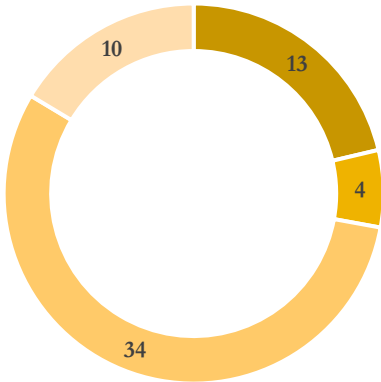
■ Education   ■ Justice
■ Migration Governance   ■ Private Sector Development

[103] Interview 29-03-2023a
[104] Interview 26-06-2023

Total CD4D2 assignments Nigeria, by sector

- Agriculture ■ Health ■ IT
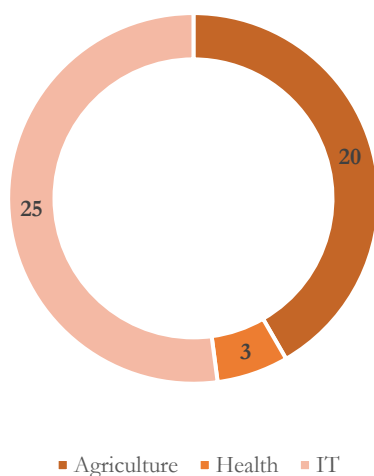
Total CD4D2 assignments Somalia, by sector

- Diaspora engagement ■ Local governance
- Private sector development ■ Rule of law
- Water management ■ Infrastructure
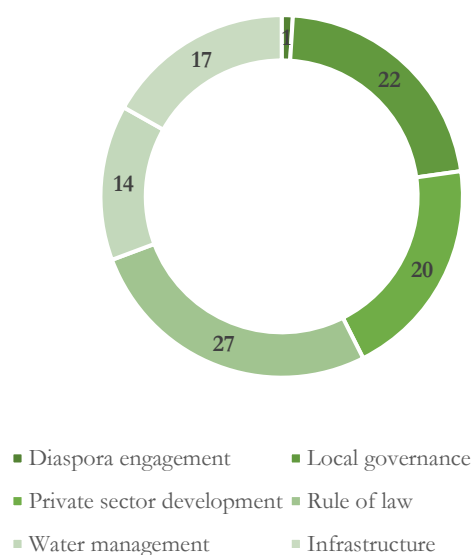
Finally, table 4 presents a schematic overview of the different natures of CD4D2 assignments that we observed over the course of our interviews with participants and host institution staff. As we will discuss at length in section 4.1, the Terms of Reference used within the project leaves considerable room for host institutions to determine what assignments will look like. While this demand-driven nature of assignments is purposefully built into the design of the project, we observed that it leads to considerable differences in how assignments are conducted, and the outcomes that it generates.

Table 4: Overview of type of placement & knowledge transfer modality. Source: CD4D2 interviews with diaspora experts & host institution staff

Type of diaspora expert placement	Modality of knowledge transfer	Example diaspora expert tasks	Example assignment topical focus
(Virtual) Provision of one-to-many training	• Teacher-to-recipient knowledge exchange • Teaching materials that can be consulted & re-used • Protocols, guidelines, etc. that may be consulted & reused	• Development of teaching materials (e.g., lecture slides, handouts, assignments, readers) • Providing two-hour online lecture with interactive components once a week • Supporting trainees to develop protocols, guidelines, or other documents that can guide future decision making	• Food safety standards along the agricultural production chain • Establishing and maintaining greenhouses
One-to-many training of trainers	• Teacher-to-recipient knowledge exchange • Training materials that can be consulted & re-used • Protocols, guidelines, etc. that	• Development of training materials to be implemented among recipients & to be refined with recipient feedback for future use among other trainees	• Training inspectors of labour affairs to conduct better workplace inspections (and teaching the workers of these organizations about

	may be consulted & reused	• Leading workshops or other interactive learning moments • Supporting trainees to develop protocols, guidelines, or other documents that can guide future training	safety measures during the inspecting visits) • Training staff on disease epidemiology and community health, which in turn may support training of community health workers or students
Side-by-side, one-to-one co-working	• Bilateral expert-to-beneficiary exchange • Activity focused co-development (i.e., "learning through doing")	• Pairing with an employee of the host institution to solve a particular problem or implement a solution together • Providing work within a larger workflow that multiple team members contribute to • Participating in team meetings • Reporting on progress to team members &/or management	• IT services • Policy planning • Legal affairs (e.g., co-drafting new amendments to Migration Law in Iraq)
Independent development of organizational capacity	• Establishment of new units or structures with procedures, guidelines, etc. that may be consulted by future staff	• Investigating the business niche or gap a new unit or structure could fill • Researching & documenting needed lists of competencies for staff of a new unit • Drafting guidelines, protocols, procedures, etc. to guide business approaches or decisions	• Establishing human resource protocols to guide HR management • Establishing an IT support department • Establishing a software development unit in a hardware-focused business
Independent development of organizational network	• Establishment of new institutional relationships that may be handed over at a later time	• Identifying potential donors, implementation partners, or other relevant stakeholders • Establishing relationships with relevant stakeholders • Engaging with new partners on preparing/delivering institutional visits or exchanges	• Establishing partnerships with development finance partners in Iraq • Working with a university in the Netherlands to plan & deliver a short exchange visit of host institution staff to the university

As you can see in table 4, we grouped assignments in five categories. These are not mutually exclusive: in fact, several were often implemented simultaneously within one assignment period. Depending on the needs and wishes of the host institution and the skills and knowledge of CD4D2 participants, placements could include one-to-many training, a one-to-many training of trainers, one-to-one co-working, independent development of organizational capacity, and/or independent development of organizational networks. In principle, all these assignment forms could take place in a virtual or physical manner, although participants noted that some worked better online than others. In the table, we detail what the modality of knowledge transfer for these 5 placement-types look like, what kinds of tasks participants could be asked to perform, and what the focus of their assignments could look like. These choices are important for the type of capacity building that is (not) taking place and the sustainability of work done under the CD4D2 project. We will refer back to these placement modalities across section 4 and refer to its implications for the impact of the overall program.

This section will present a short overview of the profiles of CD4D2 participants contributing to capacity development in their countries of (ancestral) origin. Before presenting numerical overviews of their socio-demographic characteristics below, we would first like to reflect on the implicit and explicit assumptions deriving from diaspora engagement programs like CD4D2. As referred to in the introduction of this report, there is a booming academic literature on diaspora and returnee engagement in development, which also disentangles assumptions and preconditions of their involvement in capacity building initiatives. Åkesson[105] describes how in policy, migrant return and development is univocally described in a positive manner, which she attributes to three underlying assumptions. The first is that the skills, values, knowledge and social capital that migrants obtain in the Global North are useful for their countries of origin.[106] The CD4D2 narrative proposal similarly refers to this idea, by arguing that "these four focus countries have large diasporas abroad, which on the one hand deprives them of the skilled expertise they might need for the development of their institutions, but on the other hand, offers them significant contributions in terms of social and financial remittances". In section 4, we will further reflect on the (mis)match between participants' skills and knowledge, the needs of the host institutions and the wider context in which capacity building is ought to take place.

Secondly, Åkesson[107] argues that policies frame returnees as having mastered the social, cultural, and linguistic competences needed in the country of (ancestral) origin, an assumption that may be mismatched to the experiences and perceptions of the diaspora themselves. For diaspora specifically, Sinatti & Horst[108] argue that policies build upon an understanding of diaspora as being "in-between" different communities but still firmly rooted in a "national home" that fosters a group identity with other diaspora. While the experience from both TRQN and CD4D1 was not necessarily in line with this statement, the CD4D2 narrative proposal alludes to shared "cultural affinity" rooted in ethno-territorial ties to a shared homeland. It argues that "most migrants and their descendants have a shared sense of identity and belonging. They are connected to their country of residence, but also to their country of origin. […] Their expertise, cultural affinity, and strong commitment can make them humanitarian actors in crisis situations, entrepreneurs in business, trade and innovation, international experts, as well as excellent agents for human and economic development and fundamental in the development of human capital".[109] A substantial number of CD4D2 participants, especially those whom policymakers categorize as "second" or "third generation" immigrants, mentioned experiencing challenges with mastering the "cultural competences" necessary to conduct their assignments. According to them, these were both workplace specific but also tied to their position and functioning in society more widely. While many expressed a sense of cultural affinity, this affinity may not have translated into the competences that they felt could help them navigate complex institutional and cultural contexts in the short time available for their assignments. In line with research by Horst[110] and others, we furthermore argue that such an appeal to national homeland connections inherent to diaspora engagement policies and programs might also exclude certain diaspora from participating. This can either be due to non-altruistic reasons for participation, such as in view of establishing connections for business activities, or strained political relationships with their country of (ancestral) origin and connected to (family) histories of forced movement.

Third, Åkesson[111] argues that policy assumes that returnees have a "natural" sense of moral obligation to support the development of their countries of origin. This assumption also rests on the idea of individuals

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[105] Åkesson (2011)

[106] See also Sinatti & Horst (2015), Hammond (2015), Turner and Kleist (2013)

[107] Åkesson (2011)

[108] Sinatti and Horst (2015)

[109] IOM (n.d., p.1)

[110] Horst (2013)

[111] Åkesson (2011)

being rooted in a specific country and having particular responsibilities to this homeland. Our interviews with CD4D2 participants confirmed that many diaspora indeed felt an intrinsic motivation to contribute to their country of (ancestral) origin. While this as such is not necessarily problematic, assuming altruistic motives may render other motivations for engagement "improper" or "disloyal"[112] which could dissuade individuals with diverse motivations from participating. Our research likewise shows that other motivations for participation in the project were at play. In section 4.1, we reflect extensively on motivations of CD4D2 participants to take part in the project, including their reported "gains" from doing so. In sections 4.3 and 5, we moreover show the limits of such claims underlying programming design, especially when it comes to ensuring continuity and involving institutions instead of individuals.

Following these assumptions and the underlying project logic, CD4D2 participants are conceived of as skilled individuals who occupy an "in-between" position between the Netherlands (or regular place of residence in Europe) and their country of (ancestral) origin, and who are intrinsically committed to contribute to development. Various stakeholders to the program indeed confirmed in our interviews that this general set of assumptions matched their view of the CD4D2 participants. They highlighted that participants across countries were highly motivated, well-qualified, and eager to contribute.[113] Table 3 describes the highest level of education of CD4D2 participants who submitted a response to our post-assignment survey. Out of all 108 responses, we can indeed conclude that the average level of education of CD4D2 participants was high, as the overwhelming majority had completed master-level education at the time of their assignment. From our interviews with participants, it became clear that the majority had also completed this education in the Netherlands or elsewhere in Europe.

Figure 3: Highest obtained level of education at time of assignment, by country. Source: post-assignment survey
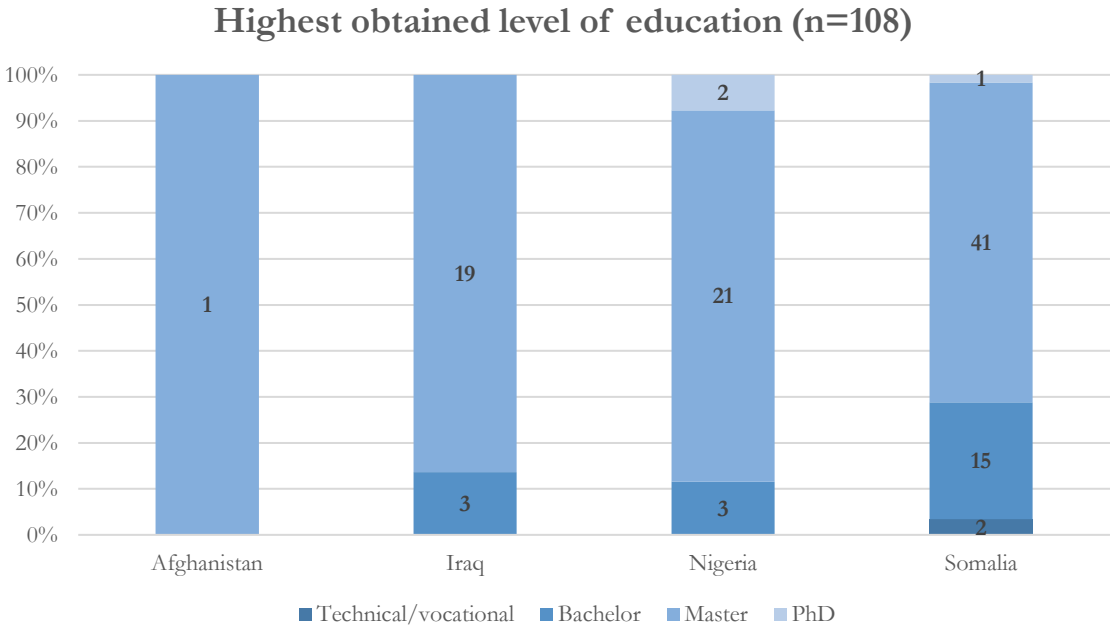
In terms of age, the CD4D2 participants who filled out the survey were young, with the majority of participants between 25 and 44 years old at the time of their assignment (see figure 4). This is different from earlier experiences with the TRQN program[114] as well as other diaspora engagement programs.[115]

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[112] See, e.g., Åkesson & Baaz (2015), Sinatti & Horst (2015)
[113] Interview 21-02-2023, Interview 04-04-2023, Interview 11-04-2023a
[114] Kuschminder (2014)
[115] E.g., Kleist (2008; 2015), Hammond (2015)

Our interviews with stakeholders indicate two possible reasons for this. First, the relatively short assignment duration in the CD4D project makes it more inclusive as opposed to longer assignment modalities, between six months and one year, which merit a bigger commitment. Such a commitment was easier for those at older age, because of retirement or few working hours building up to retirement. Second, and connected, CD4D's predecessors had a bigger focus on return and therefore attracted mostly (first generation) diaspora who could combine participating in the program with "trying out" a more permanent return to their country of origin, for purposes of retirement. In CD4D, the focus shifted from "return" to "knowledge transfer", targeting (first, second or third generation) diaspora who had the majority of their education or work experience in Europe.[116] In figure 5 below, you can also see that the workplace seniority of participants, despite their relatively young age, is high across countries. The majority of participants had either a mid- or higher-level position within their place of usual employment right before their CD4D2 assignments. Our interviews with participants indeed confirmed that the project attracted a group of established professionals, who despite their ages were often in positions of job security. This sense of stability and establishment better enabled them to "take risks" and participate in CD4D2, as for the majority of participants their assignments were "side activities" next to their day-to-day jobs. As we will touch upon in section 4.3 as well, most of them also had resources at their disposal to fill gaps in their assignments, for example to provide for food, certificates, or training materials when this was deemed necessary.

Figure 4: Age of CD4D2 participants at time of assignment, by country. Source: post assignment survey

Participants' age at time of assignment (n=108)

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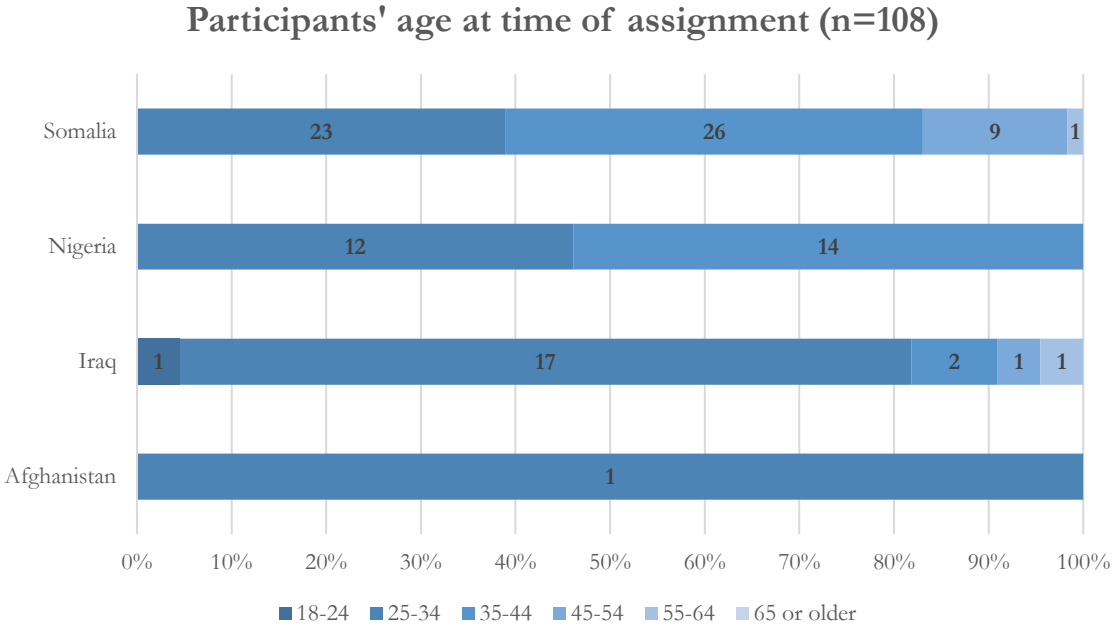
[116] Interview 21-02-2023, Interview 04-04-2023

Workplace seniority at time of assignment (n=108)
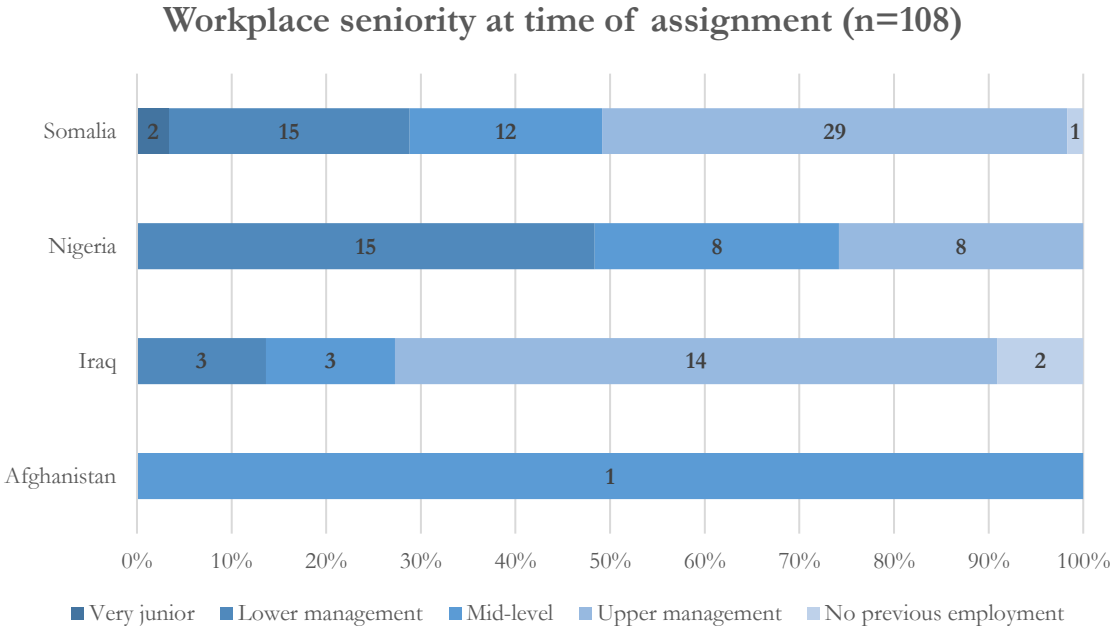
Finally, figure 6 displays the gender breakdown of assignments conducted under the project. The majority of participants were male (74,7%), with the percentage of women varying between 17,6% in Nigeria to 38,5% in Iraq. The CD4D2 project set itself as a target to attract at least 25% of female participants in the program.[117] While this target is therefore accomplished, the need to further calibrate the CD4D2 model to gender-specific needs and constraints was raised by different participants throughout the interview process. For example, women with caring responsibilities may not be as easily able to take a physical assignment requiring the person to be away from the country for weeks in a row. Gender may also affect the pathways an individual has to influence work culture and processes given gendered social norms, and organisational culture may not always lead to women feeling equally safe as men. Where possible and relevant, different gendered considerations are discussed throughout section 4.

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[117] IOM (n.d., p.6)

Figure 6: Gender of CD4D2 participants. Source: IOM project data

Gender of CD4D2 participants (95)

Legend: ■ Male ■ Female
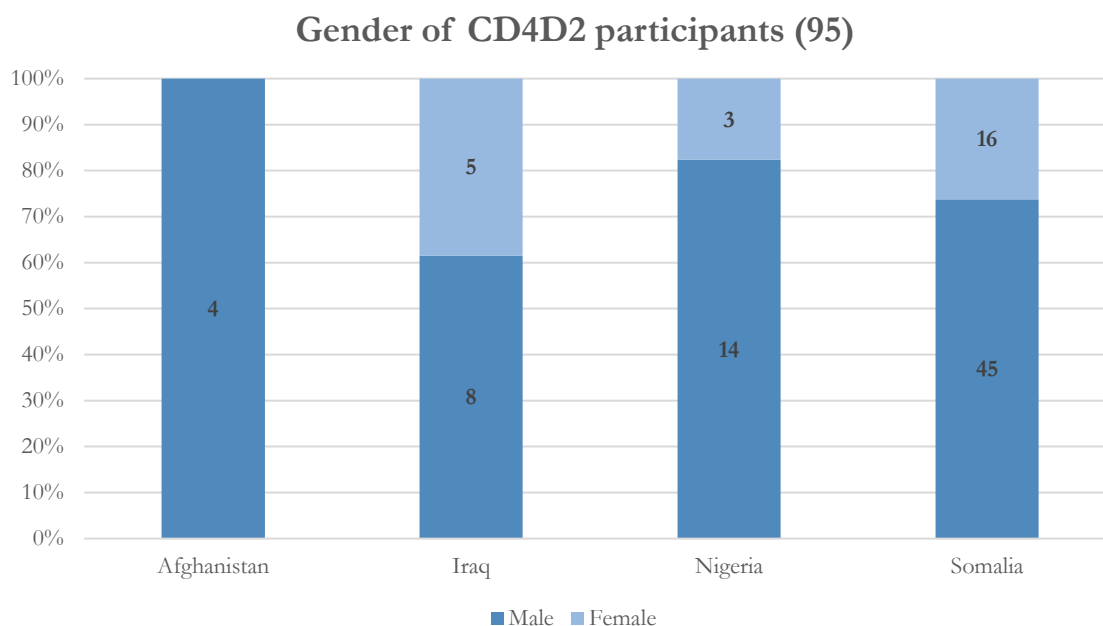
3.3. Host institutions

In this final section, we will present background information on the host institutions that participated in the CD4D2 project. In table 5 below, we have outlined all participating institutions in the project, including the number of assignments they have received.

Table 5: Overview of HI participants and received assignments, per country. Source: IOM project data

Country/region	Number	Host institution	Assignments received
Afghanistan	4	Afghanistan Civil Service Institute	1
		First Vice-President's Office of Afghanistan	1
		Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs	1
		Ministry of Refugees and Repatriation	1
Iraq	15	Central Statistics Office Baghdad	4
		Commission for Investigation and Gathering Evidence	10
		Duhok University (KRI)	2
		Kurdistan Regional Statistics Office (KRI)	1
		Kurdistan Regional Government (KRI)	2
		Governorate of Sulaymaniyah (KRI)	11
		Ministry of Education	3
		Ministry of Education (KRI)	6
		Ministry of Health	1
		Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (KRI)	2
		Ministry of Migration and Displacement	7
		Ministry of Planning (KRI)	5
		Ministry of Trade (KRI)	5
		Ministry of Youth and Sport	1

Nigeria	10	Federal College of Horticulture	4
		Food Crops Technology Transfer Station (Kano State)	1
		Food Crops Technology Transfer Station (Ubiaja)	1
		Galaxy Backbone Ltd	5
		Joseph Sarwuan Tarka University, Makurdi	2
		Ministry of Agriculture	1
		National Horticultural Research Institute	11
		National Information Technology Development Agency	8
		Nigerian Communications Satellite Ltd	9
		Obafemi Awolowo University Teaching Hospital Complex	4
Somalia	20	Benadir Regional Administration	10
		Berbera Municipal Authority (Somaliland)	6
		Guriga Oranje	2
		Holland House Hargeisa (Somaliland)	4
		Ministry of Commerce and Industry	1
		Ministry of Constitutional and Federal Affairs (Hirshabelle State)	2
		Ministry of Employment, Social Affairs and Family (Somaliland)	1
		Ministry of Energy and Water Resources (Galmudug State)	5
		Ministry of Energy and Water Resources	3
		Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation	3
		Ministry of Interior (Somaliland)	9
		Ministry of Investment Promotion (Somaliland)	5
		Ministry of Justice	2
		Ministry of Justice (Somaliland)	11
		Ministry of Parliamentary Relations and Constitutional Affairs (Somaliland)	6
		Ministry of Planning, Investment and Economic Development	6
		Ministry of Public Works, Land and Housing (Somaliland)	7
		Ministry of Public Works, Recontraction and Housing (Southwest State)	3
		Ministry of Transport and Road Development (Somaliland)	5
		Ministry of Water Resources Development (Somaliland)	10
Total	49		212

Between 10 and 20 host institutions participated in CD4D2 per country (apart from Afghanistan; see Table 5). The names of the host institutions that participated in any fieldwork phase of the evaluation are highlighted in the table. The procedures for selecting host institutions for participating in CD4D2 differed from country to country, according to interview respondents. In Nigeria, for example, a national-level meeting among IOM, the Dutch embassy, and the Nigerian Ministry of Planning determined what priority sections were chosen, after which host institutions were selected to respect an equal division within the six geopolitical zones.[118] In Iraq, an inter-ministerial technical working group with specialists from all ministries were asked to identify priority areas CD4D2 assignments should cover and the institutions that should receive placements accordingly, which resulted in some institutions that were not initially in the

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[118] Interview 29-03-2023a

working group (e.g., the Ministry of Education) participating in the project.[119] In Somalia, in contrast, a stakeholder mentioned that the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs took the lead in proposing priority sectors. The majority of these were in line with the Ministry of Planning's priorities. A fourth sector of crucial importance to the Ministry of Planning was later added but phased out halfway through the CD4D2 project. While the stakeholder had been involved in consultations on changes to focus sectors and institutions between CD4D1 and CD4D2, the stakeholder nevertheless perceived that the final selection of sectors and institutions was very narrow and did not cover the needs that exist across the country well enough.[120] Across countries, interviewees emphasized the importance of including host institutions only if they showed willingness and enthusiasm to host diaspora participants, which was seen as a key factor to successful placements. In absolute numbers the Governorate of Sulaymaniyah in Iraq (11), the National Horticultural Research Institute in Nigeria (12) and the Ministry of Justice in the Somaliland region of Somalia (11) received the most CD4D2 placements. The number of placements is not necessarily the same as the number of participants, as one individual participant may fulfil multiple assignments, as was for example the case in the Governorate of Sulaymaniyah.

As mentioned in the introduction, we conducted 189 interviews with host institution staff across the CD4D2 evaluation. We divided these interviews into "management" and "colleague" interviews (see section 1.2 on definitions). The former included all senior staff, the Focal Points managing contact between IOM and the host institutions, as well as those deciding on the Terms of Reference for the assignments. The latter targeted the participants' colleagues who were selected as "priority learners". Depending on the set-up of the assignment, this could include colleagues who the diaspora participant worked closely with, gave a formal training to, or acted as their "assistant". Finally, we also reached out to former interns in Somalia who co-worked with CD4D2 participants during their assignments with the aim of getting a permanent position within the host institution after good evaluation of their work.

While data on the socio-demographic characteristics of host institution staff was not systematically collected in FW I and FW II, FW III made clear that colleagues and managers tended to differ in key characteristics. Managers were on average slightly older, had been working at the host institution for several years, and were almost exclusively male; in contrast, colleagues were younger, generally had limited tenure in the host institution, and were more balanced in gender distribution. The characteristics of host institution staff seemed to shape the evaluation process. We felt like differences in gender and age between the evaluators and the host institution managers did not impede the quality of interviews, yet colleagues were more apprehensive in answering our questions. Organizational hierarchy and power dynamics may have shaped this response pattern, with colleagues perceiving higher risks of being frank with the evaluators.

4. Main findings

This section details the main findings of the CD4D2 evaluation, guided by its underlying research questions. Section 4.1 discusses the reasons for CD4D2 participants and host institution staff to participate in the project, as well as their expectations upon doing so. Section 4.2 then details what forms of knowledge, if any, were transferred throughout the project, as well as the factors that enabled and inhibited knowledge transfer from taking place. Section 4.3 addresses individual and organizational capacity building and identifies what kinds of capacity the CD4D2 project built across host institutions, their staff, and CD4D2 participants themselves. Finally, section 4.4 addresses the impacts and sustainability of impacts associated with CD4D2 placements, assessing what outcomes of the project may persist over time. This final section also pays attention to the impact of the project on CD4D2 participants themselves.

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[119] Interview 29-03-2023c
[120] Interview 13-06-2023

4.1.1. Motivations for participation in CD4D2

In interviews, CD4D2 participants, stakeholders, and host institution staff reported similar reasons for participating in the project. Several stakeholders in the project, as well as a few host institution managers, spoke about the CD4D2 project as a form of reparative justice, as it sought to reverse flows of (human) capital from the Global North back to the Global South. One stakeholder, for example, argued that diaspora engagement projects in general, and the CD4D project in particular, are a way to "get back" what governments in the West extracted during the colonial period from countries in Africa and Asia, as "a means to empower people and reverse brain drain".[121] Other stakeholders and managers spoke of CD4D participants as "international experts" with access to more "modern" form of knowledge and resources that would normally be unavailable to them because of the cost of hiring international staff[122]; receiving such experts through CD4D was therefore described as a kind of discounted or free resource.[123] We noted throughout the research that host institution staff indeed referred to participants either as "experts" or as "consultants". In the former, the emphasis was placed much more on knowledge transfer and learning, whereas the latter signalled the independent workforce of participants who were implementing changes within the host institutions. In section 4.2 and 4.3, we will link these different roles that participants assumed to knowledge transfer modalities and subsequent capacity building that did or did not take place.

When describing why they would want to engage with CD4D, host institution staff all mentioned that they anticipated learning and benefiting from knowledge and skills that they could not receive in-house, either because the institution did not have specific expertise on staff (regardless of diaspora affiliation) or because the diaspora were perceived as having unique knowledge to share. Some staff mentioned that they equally preferred to work with a diaspora member and a non-diaspora expert, as long as they had the proper skills and knowledge necessary to help build capacity at the host institution.[124] Those who did speak about diaspora specifically argued that they would have acquired form of social and human capital that would be beneficial to them, due to diaspora's exposure to education and working abroad. As mentioned in section 3.2, their reflections are in line with the underlying theory of change in the CD4D2 narrative proposal and efforts to involve diaspora in development in general.[125]

When it comes to the motivations of diaspora to participate in development efforts, academic literature generally makes a distinction between "altruistic" and "non-altruistic" reasons for participation. Among the former, duty towards both the (ancestral) home country and an inclination to reinforce and express homeland identity feature prominently.[126] Kapur[127] and Siar[128] for example argue that diaspora engagement programs appeal to an idea of "national solidarity" that invites diaspora to participate in larger, national goals for the country. The overwhelming majority of CD4D2 participants mentioned that their primary motivation for participation was indeed to contribute to the development and/or post-conflict reconstruction of their country of (ancestral) origin, or on some occasions the wider region or continent (such as "Africa" or "the Middle East"). This subscribes to the rationale for the overall CD4D2 project and confirms that the majority of CD4D2 participants interviewed feel an intrinsic connection to their country of (ancestral) origin. One participant from Nigeria, for example noted that "even though I left Nigeria a long time ago, I still hold Nigeria very close to my heart, and that makes me want to make an

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[121] Interview 29-03-2023a, Interview 15-06-2023, Interview 12-07-2023

[122] Interview 29-03-2023b

[123] Interview 29-03-2023a, Interview 29-03-2023b. See also [123] See also Mueller and Kuschminder (2019, p.24) on Sierra Leone

[124] Interview 17-11-2022, Interview 26-09-2022

[125] See also Åkesson and Baaz (2015) and Kleist (2015)

[126] Binkerhoff (2006; 2012)

[127] Kapur (2001)

[128] Siar (2014)

impact whenever I can".[129] Regardless of whether diaspora members migrated to Europe or were born there, many mention feeling "privileged" having grown up in Europe, and that they got the opportunity to get their education there. A participant who conducted their assignment in the Somaliland region of Somalia mentioned that this makes him feel "indebted" to his fellow countrymen who did not get this same opportunity.[130]

In line with research on diaspora engagement in development, the interviewed CD4D2 participants also mentioned a myriad of non-altruistic reasons for participation in the project. As described in the introduction, and following Sinatti and Horst[131], we argue that it is important to acknowledge the variety of non-altruistic motivations that are at play in such programs. As further elaborated upon in section 5, we argue that acknowledging and providing space for such non-altruistic motivations within the project can potentially not only draw other diaspora groups in but might also enhance the effectiveness of the program.[132] Among those non-altruistic motivations was a desire for further professional and personal development. The desire for professional development was often mentioned during our interviews across project countries, but especially in Somalia, and was often tied to exploring business and self-employment opportunities. Some participants mentioned using their time on the ground for their assignments to set up business networks and explore possibilities for initiating start-up businesses or a new career.[133] Personal development relates to opportunities to learn more about one's country of ancestral origin, culture and get in touch with family members who were still residing in the country.[134] Second, another often cited reason for participation in diaspora engagement activities is emotional satisfaction: to feeling a sense of accomplishment from engaging in development-related work.[135] A participant from Somalia, for example, explained how they did their BA and MA studies in the Netherlands and after graduating felt like being "a dime in a dozen". On the Dutch labour market, they explain, they would just be someone else with a BA and MA and hence easily replaceable by others. They therefore decided to move to Mogadishu and noted that their skills and knowledge were valued tremendously there, as it added value to what their colleagues within a ministry in Mogadishu knew.[136] Another form of emotional satisfaction came from the ability to more actively show ones ethnic and cultural identity.[137] This was especially true for participants who were born in the Netherlands or elsewhere in Europe and who were curious about experiencing living in a country where they were not considered a "minority" when it comes to religion and race.[138] Third, a few participants noted that the CD4D2 project provided them with an opportunity to conduct the work they had already been doing elsewhere in their country of (ancestral) origin, in a formal and paid manner that moreover endowed their work with a sense of legitimacy. This was the case for two participants from Iraq, who both mentioned to having benefited from working under the IOM banner, as it provided easy access to institutions in Iraq that could engender wider change in the country. Due to IOMs reputation as a well-known, international organization in the development field, associating their individual work with the organization would moreover give them a sense of legitimacy to these new connections in Iraq.[139] Finally, the CD4D2 project was considered as a "trial return" for some participants. Like the TRQN project[140] this could mean trying out more permanent return migration, which was especially the case for older participants who were about to retire from their jobs in Europe.[141] For others, such a "trial" related to a

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[129] Interview 25-11-2022

[130] Interview 19-03-2021

[131] Sinatti and Horst (2015)

[132] See also Kuschminder et al. (2014), Siar (2014)

[133] Interview 29-03-2023d, Interview 19-08-2022, Interview 25-11-2022a, Interview 27-02-2023

[134] Interview 19-08-2022, Interview 27-02-2023

[135] See Nielsen and Riddle (2009)

[136] Interview 28-10-2022

[137] Brinkerhoff (2006)

[138] Interview 28-10-2022, Interview 16-06-2023

[139] Interview 07-09-0222, Interview 06-07-2023

[140] Kuschminder (2014)

[141] Interview 19-09-2022

potential change in their careers and lifestyle. A participant in the Somaliland region of Somalia, for example, detailed that they decided to participate in the project exactly because it could function as a steppingstone to a different career. At that time, they were in-between jobs and doubting whether they wanted to continue doing the kind of work they did in the Netherlands. CD4D therefore provided a nice opportunity that, in their words, "was both paid, but also a kind of vacation", which allowed him to try out working in a different environment. For this participant and a few others, the CD4D experience completely changed his career and enabled him to live a more transnational lifestyle (see also section 4.4).[142] Finally, a few participants mentioned that the CD4D2 project provided them not simply with the opportunity to contribute to the development of their country of (ancestral) origin, but more specifically to the future of family and friends they had living in the country.[143]

Figure 7: Soza Gaffaf, CD4D2 participant and ambassador, working on capacity building in the education sector in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq, by working with school children, teachers and their parents on dealing with trauma. © IOM the Netherlands

4.1.2. Pre-assignment expectations

For host institution staff, motivations to participate in CD4D strongly reflected their expectations of what participation would yield. Across the countries, managers who had been involved in the managerial and administrative processing of CD4D2 at their institution told us that they expected the knowledge and skills of diaspora participants to be of great added value to their organization. They mainly characterized

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[142] Interview 29-03-2023d, Interview 16-06-2023, Interview 23-03-2023

[143] Interview 19-08-2022

this added value as focusing on "new perspectives" and best practices from abroad that could change the day-to-day workings, policies, and procedures at the host institution. While we will discuss the drafting of the Terms of Reference (ToR) guiding CD4D2 participants in the next section, the involvement of managers in the recruitment process seemed to ensure that managers felt that their institution could recruit someone who would fit the needs of their institution well. This confidence was reinforced, according to several respondents, by the demand-driven approach inherent to CD4D2. This approach, according to one manager in the education sector in Iraq, ensured that host institutions could include expertise from abroad while tailoring that expertise to their own institutional contexts. They explained that past projects had often imposed various Western curricula and teaching methodologies on them that followed other national plans and procedures. The demand-driven approach of CD4D allowed his institution to specify what kinds of expertise they lacked on their own terms and where their own needs are.[144] For some managers, their high expectations of CD4D placements were also reinforced by the fact that members of the diaspora were involved. Following the logic of diaspora engagement programs, host institution managers situated diaspora as culturally "in between", enabling an understanding of the country context and a better adapting of their knowledge and skills to the local context.[145] They argued that diaspora would be better able to tailor knowledge and skills to the context of the country and sector at hand, as opposed to international experts who would offer recommendations not fit for purpose.[146]

Some host institution managers were a bit more skeptical, however, and had lower expectations of the program and what could be reasonably expected of participants to achieve. Some respondents emphasised that they did not expect the diaspora to perform miracles, especially given the limited time available for their assignments. They would highlight that diaspora's alleged "in-betweenness" is not univocally an advantage and detailed the less positive connotations that existed about diaspora. While these understandings were slightly different from country to country, all had in common that diaspora could be perceived as *hareeb,* "runaways" to Europe who sought to improve their own situations while leaving their fellow countrymen behind.[147] In conflict-affected countries especially, diaspora members may be perceived as lacking understanding of local issues, as they had not lived through the difficult situation that locals had to live through and may not share relevant reference frames. Managers sometimes doubted whether the knowledge and skills that diaspora had gained abroad could be adapted well enough to meet their needs. As documented by our colleagues Mueller and Kuschminder[148], another prevalent perception about diaspora across the project countries was that they were believed to impose a threat to local jobs[149] as their knowledge would be valued more by the institutions and therefore eventually come to replace local staff. These negative perceptions, according to some managers, could stand in the way of co-working between colleagues and the effectiveness of overall assignments.[150] At the extremes of this, one manager would even go as far as telling us that in his view, the project was a bit opportunistic, designed to satisfy the emotional needs of diaspora in the Netherlands more than his country benefitted from it. They came to this conclusion by comparing the impact of the program to other development initiatives on education and health that they had previously taken part in, highlighting the limited time available for the assignments as the most troublesome aspect.[151] Some stakeholders in CD4D2 recognised this attitude, with some IOM staff underlining the importance of communicating CD4D2 to host institutions as a way to add resources to an institution and not as a potential threat to hiring or retention of local staff.[152]

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[144] Interview 15-11-2022

[145] See also Kleist (2015)

[146] Interview 24-11-2023, Interview 27-06-2023

[147] Interview 12-07-2023, see also Stefansson (2004) on the similar term *pobjeclice* in Bosnia

[148] Mueller and Kuschminder (2023)

[149] See also Hammond (2015)

[150] Interview 12-07-2023

[151] Interview 12-07-2023

[152] Interview 29-03-2023b, Interview 29-03-2023c

When it comes to priority learners at the host institutions, most mentioned either having no particular expectations of their participation in the project, or that they expected to "learn a lot" from the CD4D2 diaspora participants. Respondents indicating not having particular expectations about the diaspora participants were sometimes not informed by their managers about the program or what that could expect from it.[153] Colleagues who were more informed about the objective of the placements mentioned that they expected that the participants would share knowledge that would be relevant to their day-to-day workings. This could take different forms and shapes, such as getting "different perspectives" on patient care[154], learning how to work with particular statistical software packages[155] or receiving "general info" on social safety at work.[156] Cutting across their expectations was the impression that diaspora who they would co-work with had a good background and capacity to support the development of their institution.[157] When asking more specifically about where this idea came from, some answered that it had to do with the type of education diaspora had received in the West and the jobs they performed in Europe, which were implicitly perceived as "better" than those available in the project countries.[158] Others emphasized that they would expect mutual learning and collaboration to be core to the project, as opposed to unilateral learning from the CD4D2 participants.[159]

The twenty-eight interviewed diaspora participants reported mixed expectations of their CD4D2 assignments. Most noted that they expected that their work would help to establish concrete improvements in the working procedures and processes at the host institution. Their main goal was to contribute to institutional efficiency or effectiveness by sharing their knowledge, skills and networks, and in that way making an enduring change for the work of the host institution and its employees. One participant from Nigeria noted not only how they hoped to transfer some of his decade-long experience in the IT sector in the Netherlands to the colleagues working at the host institution while emphasising the importance of doing this in a contextualized manner that placed appropriate attention to the practicalities. During our conversation, they reflected on the necessity of not simply talking about issues like software development and IT security but on demonstrating how to make improvements practically to colleagues. Especially, so they argued, because they are well-aware of the possibilities and limits of IT organizations in Nigeria, they were hoping to provide tailor-made advice that would really fit with what the host institution needed.[160] Other participants who had not grown up in the project country nor had prior working experience there reported more doubtfully about their expectations of the assignment. They mentioned that they either did not really know what to expect, other than that they anticipated that the context that they would end up in would be diametrically opposed to the one they knew in the Netherlands.[161] Some diaspora mentioned that they purposefully kept their expectations of the program low. This was especially so when their motivation for participation went beyond altruistic reasons alone. One interviewee in Somalia, for example, mentioned that they decided to participate in the program due to their long-treasured desire to return to their country of ancestral origin and "get a foot in the door there", as they planned on starting a more transnational lifestyle. Afraid to disappoint themselves, they explained, they kept their expectations deliberately low and approached the country with an as open mind as possible.[162]

[153] Interview 02-11-2022
[154] Interview 30-05-2023
[155] Interview 30-5-2023
[156] Interview 15-05-2023
[157] Interview 23-6-2023
[158] Interview 02-11-2022, Interview 19-09-2022
[159] Interview 10-11-2022, Interview 03-11-2022, Interview 12-09-2022
[160] Interview 25-11-2022
[161] Interview 14-05-2021, Interview 16-06-2023
[162] Interview 27-02-2023

<u>4.1.3. Project preparation</u>

Before the CD4D2 assignments could take place, both the host institutions and diaspora participants would need to prepare for the assignment. In this section, we will detail what this preparatory phase looked like.

The most important part of the preparatory process for host institutions dealt with preparing the Terms of Reference (ToR) and hiring the CD4D2 participant who best met the requirements of the assignment. As mentioned before, CD4D2 is a demand-driven project, with host institutions responsible for determining what tasks and roles a CD4D2 assignment should contain to best meet their needs. In order to achieve this, IOM the Netherlands implemented a step-by-step procedure. After identification of key host institutions in the selected project countries, the most crucial needs and priorities of host institutions were identified by a needs assessment. These assessments were done through workshops in which host institutions together with IOM country office colleagues and other relevant stakeholders brainstormed about priorities to eventually create a list of crucial needs, which were shared with IOM the Netherlands for feedback. Based on these general needs assessments and the list of priorities, ToRs were developed for each assignment by the host institutions. ToRs followed a template drafted by IOM the Netherlands, which included 1) general information about the HI; 2) general information about the position the assignment should fulfil; 3) objectives of the assignment; 4) responsibilities and accountabilities of the diaspora participant; 5) competencies of participants; 6) required/desired education and experience level of the participant, and; 7) language requirements for the assignment. IOM colleagues in the focus countries were tasked to ensure that the ToRs were realistic, in line with the earlier identified priorities, and paid specific attention to the mechanism of knowledge transfer. Before publishing ToRs online, IOM the Netherlands would review the ToR one last time.

The step-by-step approach could be implemented in different ways across host institutions, contributing to differences in the depth of needs assessment and the eventual ToRs they informed. Factors such as institutional hierarchy seemed to play an important role in this regard, with a high- or mid-level manager often responsible for inventorying needs and capacity gaps across departments within an institution. After a meeting with responsible department managers, a specific department would be selected to receive the assignment. Within the selected department, a group of staff were generally then asked to fill out the ToR form, specifying their capacity needs and requirements for the diaspora placement. In some host institutions the needs assessment on department level was conducted exclusively by management and/or the institutional focal point for the CD4D2 project, whereas in other host institutions needs assessments were informed by consultations with managers and lower-level employees. Advocates of including more staff in the needs assessments mentioned that doing so best helped cultivate buy-in while supporting a more accurate view of what was needed, since "our people understand their own needs best", as a manager from Iraq mentioned.[163] Information on department needs was then fed into the ToRs, a draft of which would be submitted to IOM colleagues in the project countries for review. The IOM focal points we spoke to assumed different roles in this process across the project countries. For example, one focal point's role in the ToR development process was, according to them, more like a facilitator, which included assisting host institutions in narrowing down their ToRs and identifying priority needs. This facilitation helped host institution staff manage their expectations about what the placements could achieve and to formulate realistic goals given the time available.[164] In other project countries, IOM focal points were less involved in the ToR drafting and review process, and the role of critically reviewing and providing feedback on the ToRs, particularly related to further clarifying and narrowing down needs and goals, was taken up by IOM the Netherlands before the publication of the ToRs on their website.[165]

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[163] Interview 27-06-2023
[164] Interview 29-03-2023a
[165] Interview 04-04-2023, Interview 11-04-2023a, Interview 11-04-2023b

The types of needs that host institutions identified and that eventually guided placements varied. Needs included acute, systematic capacity gaps, such as the absence of a topic specialist who could assist the institution in developing specific work domains, such as setting up a new software division within an IT organization. Other identified needs related more to specific tools or knowledge domains, with an expert intended to train staff on new areas, methodologies or practice of work. This could, for example, be a training for a group of scientists on research methodologies and analysis tools. A related need was for specific procedures or guidelines, which may lead to establishing guidance documents and/or curricula for training of trainers. Finally, institutions may have identified needs related to missing staff or roles dedicated to building/consolidating networks or facilitation of specific activities or events.

Initial needs assessments played a significant role in shaping eventual assignments, as it often corresponded to specific tasks a CD4D2 assignment should contain, and the resources provided to host institutions to realise those tasks. The needs assessment could therefore represent a first potential impediment to realizing the full benefits of CD4D2. One focal point in a Nigerian institution noted that the initial needs assessment was not systematic or complete enough to fully inform the eventual ToRs, which contributed to a later challenge, as the selected expert was not fully able to address the host institution's needs.[166] In this manager's view, a more comprehensive needs assessment phase would have prevented such a mismatch from happening. CD4D2 participants across various project countries similarly highlighted that the ToRs guiding their assignments were drafted "too broadly", were "vague" and "incomprehensible", sometimes to the point that, as one participant stated, "the reality is so different on the ground, so you can basically forget about the ToR completely".[167] In such situations, participants mentioned that the first few weeks of their assignments were spent familiarizing themselves with the host institution and basically re-completing a needs assessment before their work could start. This in turn felt like a missed opportunity to them, as the initial time spent on such tasks lessened what many perceived as an already limited time budget.[168] In contrast, other participants also highlighted the necessity of having ToRs that were open and flexible, as it allowed them to step in if/when additional needs were identified throughout their stay at the host institution. Indeed, they argue that it is only possible to develop a fuller understanding of actual needs and priorities of host institutions once they have been 'on the ground' for a period of time. Other respondents likewise noted that it is valuable to have more flexible ToRs that allowed participants to receive unanticipated, urgent work that arose in the course of the assignment. Rather than having ToRs with fixed tasks, some respondents indicated that it would be desirable to have a global assessment of the kinds of needed skills/knowledge a diaspora expert should have in a pre-assignment interview, to draft ToRs that recognized those competencies, and then to allow the diaspora expert to pick up work that arose in the course of the assignment. From our inventory, we would argue that the nature of ToRs can be flexible, but that this should not compromise the realistic expectations of what CD4D2 assignments could fulfil – an issue described in more depth in section 4.2.

For host institutions, the next part of the preparatory stage was the hiring procedure. Once IOM the Netherlands received and approved the ToRs, the vacancy would be published on the CD4D2 website and further disseminated via social media posts and their network of amongst others diaspora organizations.[169] Upon receiving applications, IOM the Netherlands would perform an initial screening, ensuring that those who applied were eligible to participate in the project (based on nationality and overarching fit of CV to ToR) Host institutions had the final decision on whether to hire a candidate based on their motivation and competencies, however. IOM Netherlands staff emphasized the importance of announcing vacancies to ensure transparency and to ensure that potentially interested candidates could apply.[170] This procedure, while followed for the majority of assignments, was deviated

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[166] Interview 01-05-2023
[167] Interview 25-11-2022b
[168] Interview 25-11-2022b, Interview 29-03-2023d, Interview 18-08-2022
[169] Interview 21-02-2023
[170] Interview 11-04-2023a

from in some occasions, for example, when host institutions put candidates forward for positions themselves based on previous experience and known expertise. While this was standard procedure for follow-up assignments and assignment extensions to ensure continuity of work done by a single participants, some first time assignments without an open selection procedure being in place.

The final part of the preparatory phase for host institutions was to prepare their existing staff for participation in the project. Based on the final two rounds of data collection, it became clear that nomination procedures differed based on assignment modalities chosen. When diaspora participants were tasked to give a dedicated (virtual) one-to-many training or a training of trainers, staff would be selected into participation in the project. Such selection procedures often centred on dedication and enthusiasm to learn, as well as a close fit between the participants' skills, envisioned training module and the day-to-day work activities of host institution staff. For the side-by-side co-working, selection procedures differed. While in some placements selections were not made up front, this was clearly done in the internship program in the Somaliland region of Somalia. When diaspora participants would work on organizational capacity building and networking independently, most host institutions would not have a particular nomination procedure or set of criteria in place to select staff. As the diaspora was tasked to help capacity building at departmental level, more staff from said department would be involved to varying degrees. Especially in those latter cases, staff were generally not prepared for co-working with CD4D2 participants. They would be notified a few weeks or days in advance that the participant would come and that they would receive trainings, workshops, or co-work with the diaspora, but what this involved and how the employee could make the most of this opportunity did not seem to be explicitly discussed.

The CD4D2 participants had a very different set of activities in preparation for their assignments. After applying and being selected for the first time to participate in the project, prospective participants were offered a pre-departure training. While pre-departure training was part of the CD4D1 project, it was further developed in CD4D2 and became mandatory for all new participants. The training was provided by an external consultant and included a two-day, online training course in which the trainer and prospective participants could discuss a variety of topics, some of which were proposed by participants. In the March 2022 version of the training, topics included discussing expectations from the side of the host institutions, perceptions about diaspora in development, creating awareness of cultural challenges, methods of knowledge transfer, coaching skills, how to handle conflict, and how to support sustainability of knowledge transfer.[171] The training model is participatory and bottom-up, with ample room for participants to explain what they would want to learn and to exchange practices for addressing a specific dilemma or topic with each other. The pre-departure trainer argued that the curriculum for the pre-departure training should reflect two crucial factors related to expectations management. First is the idea that diaspora would be welcomed as heroes in their countries of (ancestral) origin, which the trainer highlighted could create tensions with colleagues in the host institution and challenge willingness to receive and exchange knowledge. As we discussed in sections 3 and 4.1 already, there are often varying interpretations and perceptions of diaspora, including more negative ones, which CD4D2 participants may need to be aware of and integrate into their strategies on the work floor. Second is the idea that participants would return to their "own country".[172] Whereas many diaspora we interviewed who were born in the Netherlands mentioned that they do feel that Somalia, Iraq, Kurdistan or Nigeria are "their" countries as much as their parents', many simultaneously noted that their experiences in CD4D2 also taught them that they are very Dutch.[173] The first day of the pre-departure training tried to create awareness among the participants on these two topics by having participants evaluate the expectations, perceptions, and foreseeable challenges they might encounter. The second session in the pre-departure training spoke about methods of knowledge transfer as well as pedagogical skills. The pre-departure

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[171] Online training CD4D2 – International Organization for Migration (IOM), by Currents Facilitation. March 2022 version, p.1.
[172] Interview 28-03-2023
[173] Interview 16-06-2023, Interview 19-08-2023

trainer described the involvement of diaspora in development programs as a double-edged sword. They emphasized that it is invaluable to see their inherent motivation to contribute, enthusiasm, and their technical skills, yet they also argued that most are not experts in pedagogy or coaching, nor development workers. This often implies that participants cannot easily see the different modalities to support knowledge transfer and capacity building and may make it more challenging for them to transfer their technical knowledge in a way that will last at the host institution.[174]

The diaspora we spoke to as part of this evaluation were overall satisfied with the pre-departure training they received. They argued that it was helpful to confront such expectations management before the start of their assignments, as it brought attention to sensitivities that they were not always fully aware of.[175] Yet, others argued that it would have been helpful for them to have a more in-depth topical discussion, especially on the context of their project country. One participant who conducted his assignment in the Somaliland region of Somalia, for example, mentioned that for him, the biggest adjustment was getting to know the country context, understand how politics work, and finding his way as an employee of a ministry. They would have loved to be better prepared for the way the political system works in Somalia, including how decisions on the political level impact day-to-day working at governmental institutions. The same goes for the influence of ethnicity and clan-based affiliations in life in Somalia in general and at the workplace specifically, or how to motivate colleagues who have not been paid salaries for months due to the economic situation.[176] While such country-specific information might be difficult to incorporate in a pre-departure training, this could be accommodated by establishing wider "communities of practice", as further detailed in the recommendations. By means of a shared WhatsApp group, for example, or a separately-organized Q&A session with participants who had conducted their assignments in a particular country or institution, country-specific context information could be incorporated into pre-departure activities in a more flexible manner. Moreover, through the workshop Maastricht University hosted at the CD4D2 Final Event, some participants also expressed that expectations should be better managed on the side of host institutions. They felt like host institutions were currently not prepared well enough, leading to unrealistic expectations from their side about what the participants should be able to achieve[177], which could be mitigated by having an introductory meeting between the CD4D participant, host institution management, participating staff, and IOM to calibrate expectations before the start of assignments.

Finally, throughout interviews with CD4D2 participants, colleagues and managers in host institutions, and stakeholders, the issue of *systematically* incorporating feedback and institutional learning throughout the preparatory phases was addressed, with some respondents identifying missed opportunities to further refine the CD4D2 preparation model. For example, the curriculum of the pre-departure training does not seem to be systematically evaluated, reviewed, and updated. The trainer mentioned in passing that the earlier referenced Final Event would be the first time that they could speak to participants about their experiences. While the trainer made continuous efforts to integrate outcomes of earlier project evaluations into the training and adapted the curriculum after the COVID-19 pandemic started, they mentioned receiving limited further feedback throughout the years. IOM the Netherlands noted that feedback from participants was incorporated in the pre-departure curricula, for example, by addressing gender-specific challenges and on challenges to virtual assignments. Regular meetings between IOM the Netherlands and the pre-departure trainer provided opportunities to share insights that could be incorporated into the training content, but there did not seem to be a *systematic* cycle through which feedback was shared with the ore-departure trainer, incorporated into the training curricula, and eventually monitored. Similarly, the challenge of drafting realistic ToRs also does not seem to be new: in the CD4D1 final evaluation, the evaluators recommended involving host institution staff in the process. While this is now done in CD4D2, albeit to different degrees, this has not necessarily ensured that ToRs are more realistic. IOM, for example,

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[174] Interview 28-03-2023
[175] Interview 27-02-2023, Interview 17-02-2023
[176] Interview 16-06-2023
[177] Final Event Workshop 30-03-2023, Interview 18-08-2022

is currently involved in this process on a discretionary basis, yet a more harmonized approach to reviewing and approving ToRs, and providing feedback to host institutions on reasonable expectations of the assignments and what they can achieve within the placement timeframe, may be beneficial to manage host institution expectations better. This does not need to impede the demand-driven approach of the project but can complement it and ensure that assignments can kick-off smoothly. In section 5, we will formulate concrete recommendations on how institutional learning can be improved.

4.2. Knowledge exchange

This section will discuss the knowledge exchanged as part of the CD4D2 project. As mentioned in section 1.2, we deliberately use the term *knowledge exchange* instead of *transfer* to emphasize the mutual, two-way learning between participants and host institution staff. Diaspora who took part in the project exchanged a great deal of knowledge and skills with host institution staff, leading to varying impacts on the individuals involved.

Knowledge exchange and capacity building at the individual and organizational level address distinct processes and outcomes. Knowledge exchange takes place between (at least) two people – the knowledge sender and knowledge receiver – and has the purpose of an individual acquiring new knowledge.[178] Szulanski[179] highlights that for an individual to build capacity, it is important that individuals not only take up new skills and knowledge but also *use* the received knowledge and integrate it into day-to-day work. In recognizing this distinction, this section addresses the exchange and uptake of new knowledge, with capacity building at the individual and organizational level addressed in section 4.3. This section further discerns different forms of knowledge: "hard" and "soft" knowledge.[180] Hard knowledge includes "mainstream scientific, technological and economic knowledge". Soft knowledge, conversely, includes "cultural and social transfers, which are less tangible and less quantifiable", which is learned through experience and is more context-specific than hard knowledge. We simultaneously remain attentive to Ammassari's[181] work on the knowledge transfer of return migrants specifically, with knowledge and skills divided into five categories: specialized technical expertise, organizational and managerial competences, a sense of professionalism, communication skills, and other skills.

When exploring the kinds of knowledge and skills that were exchanged, it is important to recognize different assignment modalities, which mattered tremendously for the type and intensity of knowledge exchanged. As mentioned in table 3 in section 1 already, we distinguish between five types of assignments: provision of one-to-many training, one-to-many training of trainers, co-working, independent organizational capacity building, and individual development of networks. Section 4.2.1 will first of all detail the types of knowledge that was exchanged in the CD4D2 assignments, including knowledge that participants mentioned to having received from their interactions with staff. Section 4.2.2. will then detail what methods participants used during knowledge exchange. Section 4.2.3., finally, addresses facilitators and inhibitors for knowledge exchange to take place, including those related to COVID-19 and the virtual assignment modality specifically.

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[178] Bender and Fish (2000)
[179] Szulanski (1996)
[180] Siar (2012, p.164)
[181] Ammassari (2004)

Figures 8 and 9: Staff member of a horticulture institute in Nigeria showing the work they do on plant breeding and crop growing. © IOM the Netherlands

4.2.1. Exchanged knowledges during CD4D2 assignments

This section addresses knowledge and skills exchanged between CD4D2 participants and host institution staff. Figure 7 below indicates responses of CD4D2 participants who filled out our post-assignment survey regarding what kinds of knowledge they transferred during their assignments. As you see, the most mentioned categories are examples of soft knowledges, such as the ability to solve problems, communicate effectively, gain a sense of professionalism, plan projects and tasks, show leadership, and be open-minded. Examples of hard knowledge, such as technical expertise, research design and analysis, and writing methods, were less often mentioned. All types of knowledges as discussed by Ammassari[182] in her study on returnees were noted throughout data collection.

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[182] Ammassari (2004)

Reported knowledge transferred during assignments (n=109)

Category	Value
M&E techniques	7
Coding & Programming	11
Negotiation skills	16
Teaching methods	18
Technical/academic writing	23
Intercultural communication	26
Task delegation	27
Social skills	27
Data analysis	36
Research design	38
Decision-making	38
Open-mindedness	41
Leadership	41
Task management	46
Technical expertise	47
Project management	55
Project planning	57
Professionalism	57
Communication skills	64
Problem solving	74
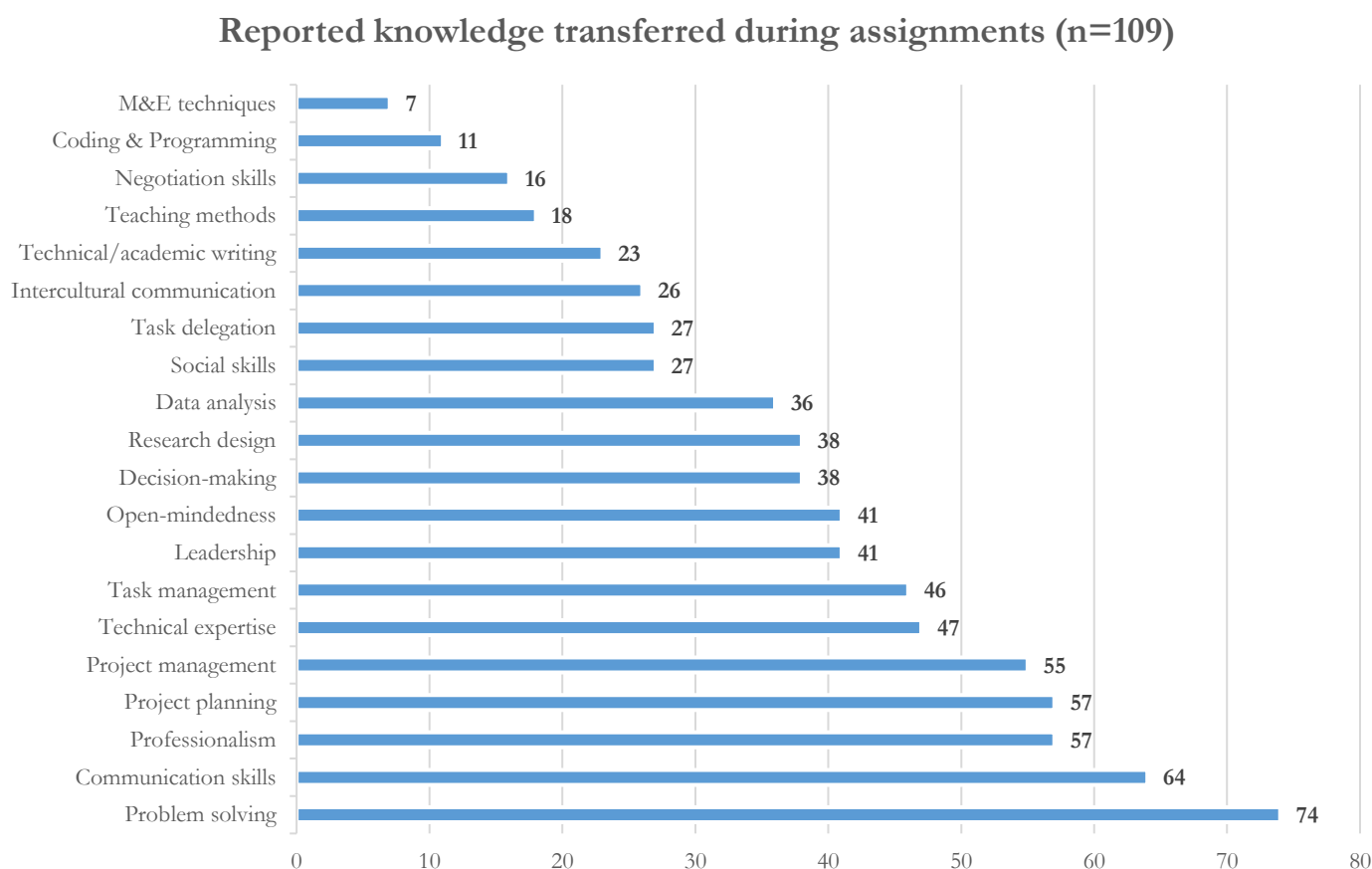
Our interviews with diaspora participants highlighted the importance that they attributed to soft knowledge. Most mentioned consciously working towards what was respondents often termed "attitude change". Such attitude changes differed from assignment to assignment but often entailed trying to change the way staff approached their work – either practically or by widening their understanding and orientation of what their work entailed. On the practical side, participants mentioned their attempts to change staff competencies like project management and communication skills, including related toward articulating needs to management.[183] More often, however, participants highlighted their attempts to change staff's 'big picture' understanding and orientation of the contours and content of their work. An IT manager who conducted his assignment in Nigeria, for example, mentioned that they tried to teach his colleagues that software development is only 10% about programming – the other 90%, so they explained, had to do with maintenance, licencing, and getting to learn about your customer's needs.[184] An expert from Iraq similarly noted a focus on changing people's mindset by promoting private sector development and investing in training youth. They noted that due to Iraq's conflict history, people are focused on "getting by day by day", which leads to people being "short-term minded" and not investing enough in longer-term processes related to innovation and entrepreneurship. They hoped that their assignment could help to change ministry staff's mindset on this, as they feel like long-term investments in this area are pivotal for success.[185] Some CD4D2 participants also tried to shape staff's orientation to their work by focusing on values of professionalism and open-mindedness. A participant who conducted his assignment within a ministry in the Somaliland region of Somalia, for example detailed how they consciously tried to

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[183] Interview 14-05-2021, Interview 31-07-2021. See also Ammassari (2004)

[184] Interview 25-11-2022

[185] Interview 19-08-2022

change staff's "work mentality" when it came to taking responsibility and showing up at work. At the moment they arrived within the ministry, they mentioned that staff's current attitude did not live up to what could reasonably be expected from ministry employees.[186] Finally, another participant was tasked with changing the mindset of employees of an Iraqi ministry on women's empowerment, in particular in trying to broaden their understanding of "empowerment" and challenging hegemonic gender norms.[187] The range of examples of "soft knowledge" focus areas highlights that CD4D2 placements often involved change of much more complex perceptions, behaviours, and processes. This stands in sharp contrast with the ToRs underlying their assignments, in which outcomes were often described in terms of improved hard knowledges. Yet, such soft knowledge exchanges often involved changing norms and values - changes that require practise and integration into daily work to translate into longer-term impacts and changes in capacity. Soft knowledge may also be needed to support the internalisation or activation of hard knowledge. For example, learning to approach software development through understanding the lifecycle of the product, including how it responds to users' needs, would be needed before someone who could effectively use new skills related to coding, as how software is coded should reflect the vision of why/for whom it is developed, who and how it will be maintained, etc.

The focus on soft knowledge did not imply that participants neglected exchange of hard knowledges of more technical nature. Indeed, our interviews and review of ToRs revealed that almost all assignments included some form of explicit "hard knowledge" exchange. Since a wide variety of host institutions and sectors participated in the CD4D2 project, a similar wide variety of technical skills and knowledges were targeted for transfer. Some examples include providing a training on the basics of software development and programming in Nigeria[188], writing a housing policy plan in the Somaliland region of Somalia[189], or developing guidance on clean and sustainable water delivery systems for agricultural use in Iraq.[190] Very often, these types of knowledges complemented work of the host institution and built upon existing priorities. In some cases, CD4D2 participants introduced "new" areas of work to the host institution, with assignments focusing on hard knowledge domains with which the host institution had limited prior experience or competence. For example, in Nigeria a participant with expertise in agricultural production and improvement in greenhouses worked with colleagues in a host institution on greenhouse growing techniques, an area in which the host institution did not specialise. The participant told us that growing crops in greenhouses is a relatively recent innovation in Nigeria more generally and that multiple organizations are currently exploring its potential to increase food safety.[191]

Regardless of whether the knowledge was "new" or complementary to what was already known, all CD4D2 participants mentioned that it was necessary to adapt their knowledge to the local context and to conscientiously demonstrate how skills would practically benefit employees in their day-to-day work.[192] Most mentioned that, because of their continuous relationship with their country of (ancestral) origin, they were well-placed to do this – something that was also confirmed in our interviews with managers and colleagues.

Another type of knowledge exchange that took place during CD4D2 related to sharing knowledge of other individuals and institutions—essentially, networks. CD4D2 participants were sometimes assigned to assist the host institution with network building by establishing long-term partnerships at the organizational level. Such partnerships were often pursued with the aim of finding more durable funds for the host institution or to ensure continuity of learning after the CD4D2 assignment ended. Sharing knowledge about networks can not only lead to organizational capacity building (see section 4.3), but also

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[186] Interview 16-06-2023

[187] Interview 17-02-2023

[188] Interview 25-11-2022; Interview 27-07-2022

[189] Interview 10-08-2021

[190] Interview 08-05-2023

[191] Interview 27-07-2022

[192] See also Ghosh (1996), Ammassari (2004), Kuschminder (2014)

teaches staff involved in how to make connections and find resources that are useful for their organization by addressing others. One manager from a host institution in Iraq, for example, noted how the selected CD4D2 participant had linkages with the UNESCO head office, which they in turn mobilized as part of their assignment to establish a UNESCO chair at the research institution.[193] Institutional networking was also an explicit part of the long-term arrangements between some CD4D2 host institutions and institutions in the Netherlands, which are elaborated further in section 4.3.

Figure 11: CD4D2 participant exchanging knowledge on the fishing sector with staff in the Somaliland region of Somalia. © IOM the Netherlands

The type of knowledge exchanged seems largely contingent on the assignment modality, with some modalities involving minimal explicit knowledge exchange and others focusing explicitly on knowledge exchange modalities that would ensure wider dissemination. One-to-many training and one-to-many training of trainers, for example, generally focused on the exchange of both soft and hard knowledge and had the explicit aim of disseminating knowledge further over time or beyond the immediate host institution. One train-the-trainer program in Iraq provided a good example of an assignment with both soft and hard knowledge exchange at its core. The participant's training spurred both a rethinking of what safety at the workplace should look like (soft knowledge) and provided tools for labour inspectors to perform inspections (hard knowledge) in line with international standards.[194] Interviews with host institution staff confirmed that both types of knowledge and skills were indeed exchanged during formal trainings, which arguably provided an explicit setting and framework to do so. Co-working similarly allows for the transfer of both soft and hard knowledges; the modality provides a more suitable setting for soft knowledge to be transferred, as it involves informal interactions between participants and their colleagues, exposure of wider groups of colleagues to new ways of working, and iterative learning and application opportunities.[195] In contrast, assignments that focused more on independent organizational capacity building did not always focus on exchanging knowledge, nor did knowledge exchange have priority given the objectives identified in the ToRs. One example of independent organizational capacity building

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[193] Interview 07-12-2023

[194] Interview 09-11-2022, Interview 17-11-2022

[195] See also Riege (2005)

included a CD4D2 participant who was assigned to establish an IT department from scratch and develop software by themselves. While the participant did share hard, technical knowledge with staff who were supposed to work within the newly established unit, knowledge exchange was not the primary focus of the assignment, and many of the activities envisioned for the assignment did not involve knowledge sharing. As the unit in which staff were assigned was newly-established, the intended recipients of knowledge had limited prior knowledge and scaffolding upon which the participant could build. This limited prior knowledge poses challenges to the translation of knowledge transfer to actual take up, and further along the road, capacity building at the individual level.[196] Other independent organizational capacity building assignments did not involve knowledge exchange at all. In the Somaliland region of Somalia and Afghanistan in particular, CD4D2 participants were sometimes (supposed to be) treated as "another staff member" who filled human resource management gaps, without necessarily exchanging much with colleagues. In such assignments, a participant was often not perceived as a complementary resource that could help deepen or consolidate organisational competence but was instead viewed as a supplement to missing capacity.[197]

While the assignment ToRs generally focused on one-way knowledge transfer, CD4D2 participants were keen to emphasize that knowledge exchange was a two-way process in which they also learned from the assignments. The knowledge participants received can likewise be categorized as either "hard" or "soft" knowledge. Most participants mentioned that they did not learn new technical or scientific knowledge or skills that were useful for them. A notable exception were experts who worked in the agriculture and horticulture sectors in Nigeria, where participants mentioned learning a lot about local seed development, crop growing, and agriculture practices, including on the history of how these methods were developed, which broadened their perspective on their profession.[198] In this example, the hard knowledge supported participants to feel closer to their country of (ancestral) origin, instead of improving their work in Europe. In sections 4.3 and 4.4 we will further detail the impact of the CD4D2 assignments on diaspora participants in more detail. Participants more often mentioned learning soft knowledge and skills that are useful to them both in their professional and private lives. Most mentioned that their time at the host institution taught them to be flexible and adapt to unknown and unexpected circumstances[199], including with diverse teams in terms of work culture[200], ethnicities[201], or religion.[202] Their assignments also made them more aware of their own style of working, which some laughingly would characterize as "very Dutch": direct and taking due account of time management and appointments made.[203] CD4D2 assignments also taught participants to adapt to starting from zero: getting back to the basics with very little resources at hand.[204]

4.2.2. Methods of knowledge exchange

In transferring or exchanging knowledge, CD4D2 participants and the learners with whom they engaged in the host institutions could use different methods or tools to support exchange and learning. These methods are embedded with different assignment modalities. For example, an assignment based on one-to-many training would generally always involve structured information transfer, for example, in form of a lecture or workshop within the setting of a formal training. In figures 8a-d below, we broke down the types of activities that participants performed during their assignments. While there are some differences across the project countries, the figures demonstrate that giving formal trainings and providing mentoring

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[196] Interview 25-11-2022

[197] Interview 29-03-2023d, Interview 16-06-2023, Interview 30-07-2021

[198] Interview 27-07-2022, Interview 09-09-2022

[199] Interview 12-08-2021

[200] Interview 18-08-2022

[201] Interview 30-07-2021

[202] Interview 22-07-2022

[203] Interview 18-08-2022, Interview 19-08-2022

[204] Interview 25-11-2022a, Interview 22-07-2022

or coaching were the most common assignment modalities across countries. These activities are followed by writing or updating documentation as well as assisting in problem solving and encouraging teamwork.

Figures 12a-d: Activities performed by CD4D2 participants, per country. Source: post-assignment survey

Activities performed in Afghanistan (n=1)
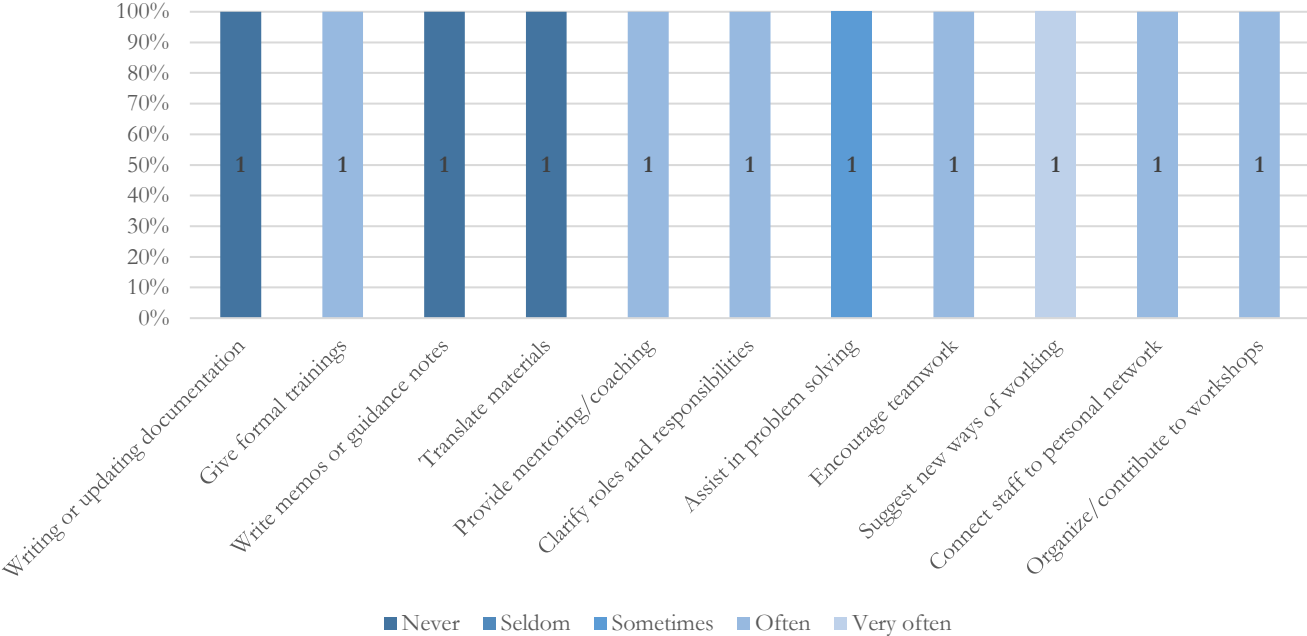
Activities performed in Iraq (n=22)
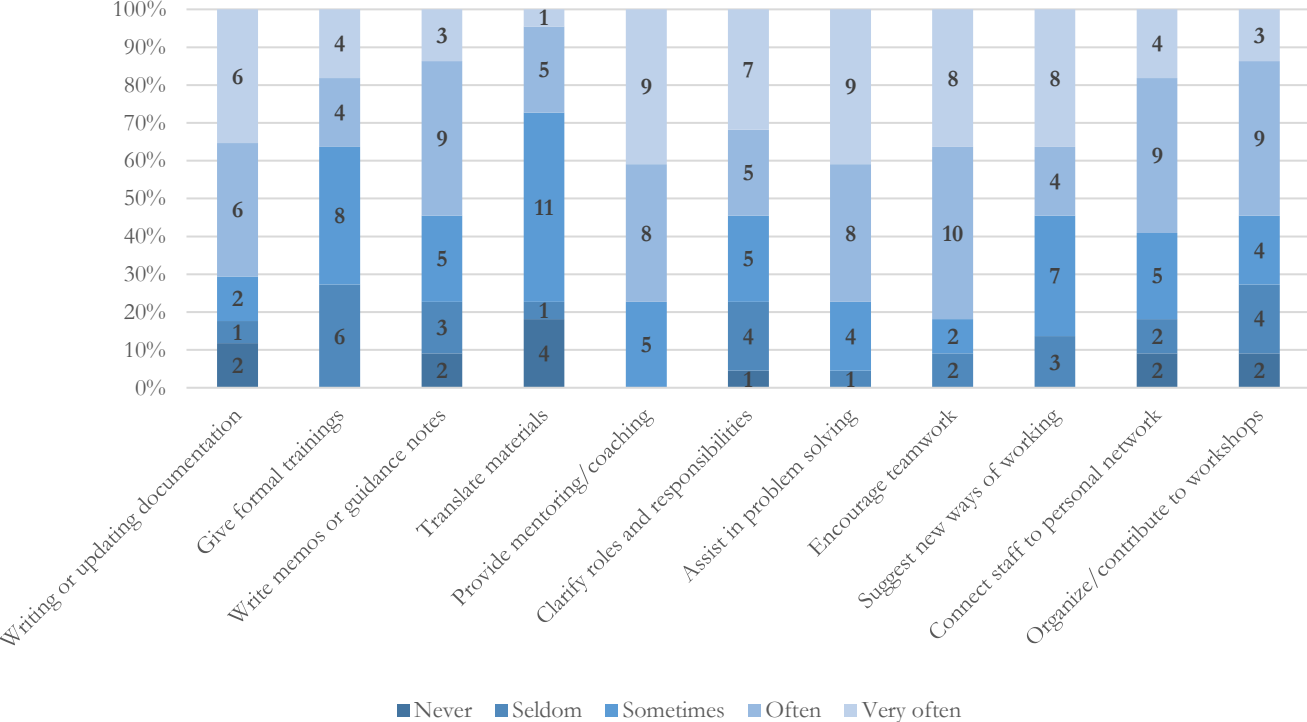
Activities performed in Somalia (n=59)

Legend: Never, Seldom, Sometimes, Often, Very often

Categories: Writing or updating documentation, Give formal trainings, Write memos or guidance notes, Translate materials, Provide mentoring/coaching, Clarify roles and responsibilities, Assist in problem solving, Encourage teamwork, Suggest new ways of working, Connect staff to personal network, Organize/contribute to workshops

Activities performed in Nigeria (n=26)

Legend: Never, Seldom, Sometimes, Often, Very often

Categories: Writing or updating documentation, Give formal trainings, Write memos or guidance notes, Translate materials, Provide mentoring/coaching, Clarify roles and responsibilities, Assist in problem solving, Encourage teamwork, Suggest new ways of working, Connect staff to personal network, Organize/contribute to workshops

The activities participants engaged in during their assignments have implications for whether and how knowledge was exchanged. The activities included in figures 8a-d differ in the explicitness of knowledge transfer: giving formal trainings, assisting in problem solving, suggesting new ways of working, and organizing workshops, for example, all include very explicit knowledge exchange. During activities like coaching, clarifying roles and responsibilities, and encouraging teamwork, however, it is more unclear to what extent and how knowledge transfer takes place. Finally, activities such as updating documentation, writing memos, and translating materials are very likely to be activities completed by the participant independently, for which knowledge exchange does not occur by default.

About half of the interviewed CD4D2 participants mentioned that they delivered some sort of formal training to host institution staff in line with the objectives described in their ToRs. It was clear to them that they were expected to prepare a formal training module, or multiple workshops, for colleagues and/or managers. One participant who conducted their virtual assignment in the horticulture sector in Nigeria, for example, explained how they prepared PowerPoint materials, discussion questions, and assignments that would train the staff on seed breeding. The materials used, including recordings of the online trainings given, were given to the host institution with the intention that the materials could be used to train other staff in the future. They compared their style of training to lecturing at a university, including handing out assignments and grading them as part of the curriculum.[205] This did not mean, according to them, that the training was "unidirectional". They would try to make the sessions as interactive as possible by asking questions and creating online "breakout groups" to allow for small assignments. In some CD4D2 placements, participants who had planned to offer formal trainings as part of their assignments could not do so given bureaucratic hurdles[206] or because of staff availability. One participant in the Somaliland region of Somalia, whose assignment happened to overlap with the holy month of Ramadan, explained that the holiday period severely limited staff availability – without him knowing up front that it would. Whereas the participant planned for formal trainings to be part of his assignment, the two-to-three hours in which staff were available each day simply left too little time to deliver the training.[207] This is a challenge that may have been avoided with more careful review of how the ToRs objectives matches with envisioned activities and conditions on the ground to support those activities. When CD4D2 participants mentored or coached colleagues, the knowledge exchange settings were usually less formal and contrived, and participants would try to enhance both hard and soft knowledges by together solving problems, discussing potential avenues forward, or explaining steps that needed to be taken to achieve particular goals. This was, for example, the case in Nigeria, when CD4D2 participants who were software developers worked side-by-side with host institution staff and program code, work on acquiring ISO certificates, or decide together on a course or action for further maintenance of their databases.[208] To ensure continuity of learning, these assignments would sometimes be complemented by providing some form of IT documentation, a guideline, or a report that colleagues could refer to after the participant had left. As this type of implicit knowledge exchange also does not allow for immediate feedback from priority learners to understand how well information had been received and understood, some participants mentioned that they proposed "evaluation meetings" after each milestone in the assignment to discuss progress and determine whether the intended learning goals were met.[209]

Interviews with host institution staff revealed that staff were overwhelmingly positive about the activities that diaspora participants performed. Whether the engagement was more in a formal training setting or in informal co-working, they all mentioned being satisfied with the approach taken to knowledge exchange, as the information shared was clearly comprehensible and matched their expectations. Some staff

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[205] Interview 09-09-2022
[206] Interview 18-08-2022
[207] Interview 16-06-2023
[208] Interview 25-11-2022a, Interview 18-08-2022
[209] Interview 14-05-2021

mentioned that they would have liked more one-on-one time with the CD4D2 participants, especially during virtual assignments. While staff recognised that diaspora participants were readily available for them if they wished, they argued that virtual assignments made it impossible for them to quickly ask something, engage in spontaneous conversation about the training topics, or "learn by doing" from participants. The inability to "learn by doing" in virtual settings was particularly mentioned staff who worked in sectors like IT and agriculture in Nigeria, where translating theoretical knowledge to practice may have required more active practise of knowledge using tools and physical resources.[210]

4.2.3. Challenges to knowledge exchange

This section discusses the main facilitators, inhibitors and challenges of knowledge exchange during CD4D2 assignments. The section particularly explores how CD4D2's implicit theory of change and its internal logics and assumptions informed assignment designs, and how this alignment subsequently affected knowledge transfer activities and capacity building. We will also discuss how virtual assignment modalities either impeded or accelerated knowledge exchange.

A first characteristic that shapes knowledge exchange relates to the construction of assignments to contain explicit knowledge exchange components (or not). Interviews with participants and staff as well as our independent review of ToRs made clear that, despite clear attempts by IOM, not all ToRs included an explicit knowledge exchange component. In the CD4D1 evaluation, the evaluators argued that it is necessary to explicate what knowledge will be transferred and how the transfer should be done, as making explicit pathways between outcomes, outputs, and activities will help to further ensure the sustainability of interventions (see also section 5). Based on the current evaluation, there seem to be two common reasons for why knowledge transfer is not always made explicit in assignment ToRs. First, the needs assessments conducted in the host institutions and used to formulate specific objectives and activities may have been too abstract or broad to lead to concrete knowledge transfer components. The reviewed ToRs often contained phrases like "the diaspora expert will help to build capacity in department X", without further specifying what knowledge sharing activities would be undertaken and how those activities would in turn lead to the building of specific capacities. As argued earlier in this section, while a certain degree of flexibility in ToRs might be unavoidable or even desirable, ToRs often contain too specific or ambitious activities and expectations for a CD4D2 participant that did not appropriately account for the time and resources available for individual assignments. A second and more fundamental challenge underlying the absence of knowledge transfer activities in some ToRs and assignments is that a few host institutions – especially in more fragile state contexts – needed participants to fill structural gaps. The report reflecting data from the baseline interviews in CD4D2 noted in Afghanistan, for example, various participants mentioned that a chronic lack of both staff and resources severely impeded the work that they sought to do. They, in turn, expected CD4D2 participants to step in and assist them in, for example, teaching an increasing number of students in medical faculties.[211] Similarly in the Somaliland region of Somalia, many host institution interviewees mentioned that their departments were relatively new and lacking capacity to build a solid legal foundation to work from.[212] CD4D2 participants, in turn, were tasked with writing policy plans and legal frameworks that should serve as the new basis for said departments. These activities are not necessarily premised on knowledge exchange and in practice mostly required CD4D2 participants to work independently with knowledge transfer mostly happening at unplanned moments. As the previously stated example of a participant in the Somaliland region of Somalia already made clear, in settings where the CD4D2 participants were supplementing absent personnel, knowledge transfer would often come second. Importantly, the core premise of CD4D's implicit theory of change (ToC) is that individual and institutional capacity building should occur through knowledge transfer activities, yet the disconnect between knowledge transfer activities, the objectives, and the outcomes of specific assignments

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[210] Interview 02-11-2022, Interview 09-22-2022
[211] Mueller and Kuschminder (2020)
[212] Interview 12-09-2022, Interview 17-09-2022, Interview 29-09-2022

suggests that this ToC was not systematically integrated into the design of all placements. It may further suggest that the CD4D2 model was not equally well-fitted to all project countries and sectors given the influence of structural constraints, such as overall insecurity and transitional governance ecosystems which are outside of the project's control yet influence how project objectives could be met. The appropriateness of the CD4D2 model for different implementation contexts also highlights potential tensions in the interests and positions of different stakeholders. Specific countries and sectors were prioritised by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs given their relevance within wider migration and development agendas, sometimes exactly because of specific challenges they were characterized by. Yet the characteristics that could make sectors and countries relevant from a foreign affairs and development perspective could make it challenging for the selected model of CD4D2 to function as intended. The implicit theory of change of the CD4D2 model and the constructive alignment across activities, outcomes, and impacts on assignment level as developed by IOM and its executing partners may not have been as feasible given contextual constraints inherent to some project countries.

A second characteristic that shapes how and to what extent knowledge exchange occurs relates to the skills both CD4D2 participants and host institution staff have to articulate, share knowledge, and integrate knowledge. While the core focus of both CD4D1 and CD4D2 is to match participants with technical expertise to institutions in their countries of (ancestral) origin, we recognize that skills that facilitate the *process* of exchanging are equally important and not per se prioritised or selected on. Indeed, not all diaspora participants are well-placed to act as knowledge exchangers, nor are all staff. On the part of host institution staff, CD4D2 participants sometimes argued that their colleagues' base level capacity – or their absorptive capacity at the micro-level[213] – was too low for the type of knowledge that they set out to share with them.[214] Poor "absorptive capacity" is a challenge in many knowledge transfer contexts, with the literature identifying this issue as a key inhibitor of knowledge transfer regardless of the type or mechanisms of knowledge being transferred. One participant in Somalia mentioned that "out of 20 employees at work in my department, likely only 2 were actually fit for the job".[215] As soon as they noticed that the colleagues did not match the anticipated level, they would take extra time to cover the basic content needed to grasp the more nuanced knowledge or more advanced techniques with the consequence that the content and level of intended learnings could not always be met within the assignment timeframe.[216] Interviews likewise made clear that not all CD4D2 participants are excellent teachers of new knowledge and skills, as the pre-departure trainer already noted (see section 4.1). The CD4D2 participants were unanimously viewed as having the relevant skills necessary to build capacity at host institutions[217] and they were also seen as successful "vernacularizers"[218] who could translate the knowledge, skills and ideas from Europe to the context of the project countries in a way that host institutions could internalise. Shared language was identified as a key enabler in this regard.[219] Yet on some occasions host institution staff felt that participants lacked the right pedagogical skills or "disseminative capacity"[220] for effective knowledge transfer. Based on well established literature in the fields of knowledge management and education research, we know that "disseminative capacity"— the ability of a knowledge sender to contextualise knowledge and adapt it to the needs of the recipient in a way that facilitates understanding and activation—requires distinct skill sets.[221] While some literature refers to these skills more broadly as 'management' skills, others note that specific skills are needed to frame knowledge in a way that is effective in supporting recipients not only to understand it in broad strokes but to more specifically understand how it translates to practise and action. These skills relate to interpersonal social

[213] Goh (2002)

[214] Interview 25-11-2022a, Interview 27-07-2022, Interview 09-09-2022. See also Kuschminder et al. (2014)

[215] Interview 27-02-2023

[216] Interview 09-09-2022

[217] See also Ghosh (1996), Ammassari (2004), Kuschminder (2014)

[218] Levitt and Merry (2009)

[219] See also Joia and Lemois (2010), Kuschminder et al. (2014)

[220] Tang et al. (2010)

[221] Tang et al. (2010), Minbaeva and Michailova (2004), Schulze, Brojerdi and von Krogh (2014)

and communicative skills necessary for anyone to navigate working and exchanging in a workplace, and for knowledge exchange to be effective in particular. The limited "disseminative capacity" of CD4D2 participants is a challenge shared in many contexts of knowledge transfer, particularly when technical rather than knowledge transfer skills are prioritised. There is limited information to suggest that CD4D2 participants had uniquely or specifically poor disseminative capacity; indeed, the specific nature of their roles and assignments were not identified as significantly shaping how they managed knowledge transfer. While generally any concerns about the knowledge-transfer capacity of CD4D2 participants were attributed to the absence of specific skills or competencies, one example was identified in interviews with staff in a Nigerian institution in which challenges with knowledge exchange were attributed to the CD4D2 participant's identity as 'diaspora'. In this example, colleagues and a manager of the participant mentioned that they were both difficult to work with but also had "the wrong attitude", as they positioned himself as knowing everything better and was rigid and uncompromising in his preferred way of work, characteristics that the respondents associated with the diaspora believing that they came from a "better" environment.[222]

Opportunity structures for knowledge exchange[223] are a third characteristic that shape how and to what extent knowledge exchange can occur. A first example comes to commitment of host institution staff, and in particular management, to knowledge transfer.[224] At the outset of CD4D2 assignments, management can promote a collaborative working environment by giving staff time to contribute to knowledge exchange and take part in the activities. Some participants mentioned that staff at the host institutions were not always aware that they were present at all to support capacity building or that they were giving a workshop at a particular and this attributed to poor communication from the managers.[225] One participant likewise mentioned that bureaucracy at the host institution impeded knowledge transfer activities from taking place at all, as it simply took too long for trainings to being approved and resources made available.[226] On other occasions, interviews with participants and staff made clear that staff were not able to dedicate time to offered trainings because their regular day-to-day work was too time-consuming. High regular workload contributed to low motivation to take part in trainings and workshops, as it was something they were tasked to do in addition to their regular work and sometimes also outside of office hours.[227] According to some participants, having trainings outside of office hours could ensure that everybody could join if they wanted to but doing so then interfered with care giving tasks of some staff. The absence of dedicated staff time to trainings often then required that colleagues needed to be "incentivized" to come to the trainings, for example by being promised various kinds of "bonuses" such as food, certificates or diplomas, and sometimes even money. A few experts also described providing for food and certificates themselves to increase participation and motivation levels, highlighting how the individual commitment and investment in the assignment by some CD4D2 participants was key to meeting the assignment objectives.[228] The opportunity structures present (or absent) for knowledge exchange may not be particular to CD4D2 as such but may simply reflect the nature of the institutions and contexts in which those institutions operate. Particularly in countries with greater uncertainty and instability, institutional opportunity structures may be harder to ensure and are not per se tied to the nature of the intervention, such as its use of diaspora experts.

Another element of opportunity structures for knowledge exchange relates to the working relationship between CD4D2 participants and the staff they should most closely work with. Overall, both participant and host institution staff noted positive experiences in their communication and co-working. When negative experiences were noted, these seemed to be connected to a mismatch between the host institution's needs and the participant's skills or a clash in character and approach. In several contexts,

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[222] Interview 08-11-2022, see also Wang (2014), Rivera-Vazquez et al. (2009)

[223] Brinkerhoff (2006)

[224] Goh (2002), Nareth (2008), McDermott and O'Dell (2001)

[225] Interview 31-07-2021

[226] Interview 18-08-2022. See also Kuschminder et al. (2014)

[227] Interview 22-07-2022, Interview 28-10-2022, see also Riege (2005)

[228] Interview 29-09-2022, Interview 19-09-2022, Interview 22-07-2022

however, participants mentioned an unsupportive working culture at the host institutions. Many of them mentioned that staff seemed to be hostile towards them at first, as they were, in their perception, seen as possible threats to their job security.[229] They mentioned that this seriously impacted their work at the host institution – ranging from staff not being willing to exchange, withholding important information, or outright sabotaging their work. On all but one occasion, problems would be resolved or become less prominent after participants managed to gain their trust. However, this process was one that required greater periods of time that were not always within the envisioned timeframe of a one-time assignment. The few female CD4D2 participants we spoke to noted that working environments were not always friendly to them, which ties to wider gender-specific norms around workplace participation in the project countries. Across project countries, instances of gender-based challenges that were reported to us ranged from unsolicited advances by priority learners through WhatsApp[230] to efforts to make work environments more inclusive for women and disabled people not being taken seriously.[231]

A third form of opportunity structures for knowledge exchange related to supplying necessary infrastructure and resources.[232] Such resources could include a dedicated workspace to meet colleagues and perform the work, or a stable internet connection so staff can participate in online trainings. For one diaspora expert, the building of a new ministerial building coincided with his assignment, so the colleagues were almost all working from home, limiting opportunities of knowledge exchange.[233] Other experts also noted the unavailability of certain resources, such as laptops or statistical software packages, without which trainings could not be conducted.[234] While IOM the Netherlands has budget available to assist participants with some of these expenses, not all participants seemed to be aware of this or experienced the process of acquiring resources as lengthy, resulting in a loss of valuable assignment time. In other cases, the resources needed to ensure the availability of infrastructure to support knowledge exchange were too extensive for IOM to provide. For example, several staff of host institutions in Nigeria who received trainings on topics such as seed manipulation, selective plant breeding, and greenhouse agricultural production mentioned that the knowledge they received remained at a largely abstract level because they lacked the equipment and tools to implement and practise the new knowledge. While the staff very much valued the new information, their concerns about being unable to practise the knowledge highlights a disruption in the logic chain between knowledge transfer and capacity building, as simply knowing more may not translate into increased capabilities.[235]

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[229] Interview 27-02-2023, Interview 23-03-2023, Interview 29-03-2023d, Interview 16-06-2023, Interview 25-11-2022b, Interview 15-02-2023. See also Hammond (2015) and Wang (2014) and Rivera-Vazquez et al. (2009) more broadly on trust to "outsiders"
[230] Interview 09-09-2022
[231] Interview 27-02-2023
[232] See also Kuschminder et al. (2014), Riege (2005)
[233] Interview 25-11-2022b
[234] Interview 09-09-2022, Interview 07-09-2022, Interview 06-01-2023
[235] Interview 28-10-2022, Interview 01-11-2022a, Interview 01-11-2022b

Figure 13: Virtual training provided on women empowerment at the Ministry of Migration and Displacement, Iraq. © IOM the Netherlands
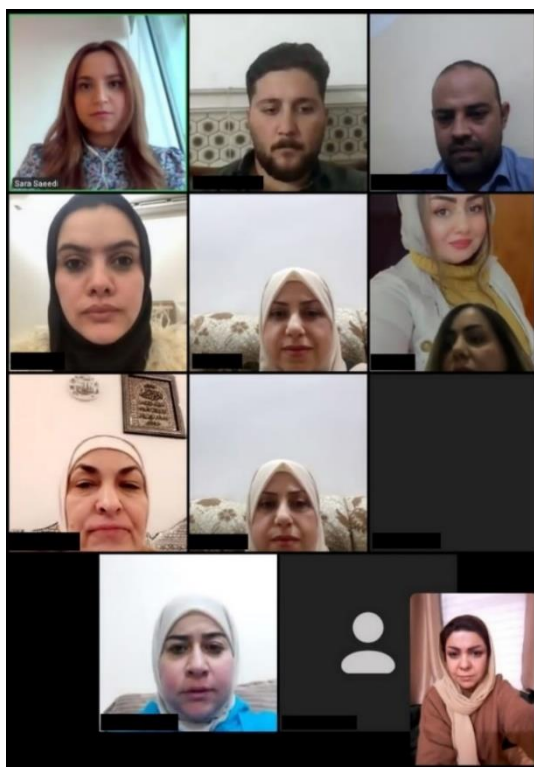
Finally, the outbreak of the global COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent switch to virtual assignments impacted the way in which knowledge could be transferred, although in ambiguous ways. Across project countries and sectors, those who participated in virtual assignments mentioned that internet reliability was a barrier to effectively engaging with virtual CD4D2 placements. For example, in Nigeria several online trainings were offered by CD4D2 participants, but because of both the pandemic and then later closures of university campuses due to labour disputes, respondents needed to connect with the trainings from home or from temporary field stations but often did not have stable internet access.[236] Beyond internet access, virtual assignments were both seen as enablers and inhibitors of effective knowledge transfer, depending on assignment modality. A diaspora participant in Nigeria, for example, highlighted the effectiveness of combining both virtual and in-person assignment modalities. They used the time and greater flexibility of the virtual component to inventory needs and prepare trainings, which they subsequently delivered in Nigeria in-person afterwards.[237] Host institution interviewees were also keen to emphasize the heightened accessibility of virtual assignments. One Nigerian institution with branches across the country argued that virtual trainings enabled staff from all over the country to benefit from the CD4D2 project, whereas this would not have been possible would the participants have visited solely one branch.[238] Yet, interviewees acknowledged that the degree to which they benefitted from virtual assignments also depended on the type of work that needed to be done. Several virtual assignments were set up to really support one-to-one or one-to-many training, with strong transmission of knowledge or information from the diaspora expert to online participants. Assignments that merit more on side-by-side coworking, especially with very clear practical components, were considered less effective virtually.[239]

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[236] Interview 27-10-2022

[237] Interview 22-07-2022

[238] Interview 14-11-2022, Interview 08-11-2023

[239] Interview 07-11-2023, Interview 01-11-2022b, Interview 08-11-2022

Despite country and sector context, all interviewees agreed that working in a virtual setting could not make up for the intensity and quality of ad hoc interactions in-person and some respondents noted the absence of more personalised and targeted engagement with the expert on an individual level.

4.3. Individual and organizational capacity building

A central aim of this study is to assess if knowledge transfer activities delivered by CD4D participants contribute to the development of individual and organizational capacity and eventually changes to the host institution. This section focuses on this aspect. We define capacity development as a general "multi-level process through which the abilities of individuals, institutions and societies to perform functions, solve problems and set and achieve objectives in a sustainable manner are strengthened, adapted and maintained over time".[240]

Following from this definition, we conceive of knowledge transfer or exchange as an input for broader capacity building; *transferring* or *receiving* knowledge by itself is not sufficient to contribute to greater individual or institutional capacity. For knowledge to eventually support development of capacity, it should be contextualised to the setting and the types of functions or problems to which it should be applied, as this allows novel information to be adapted into practice. Knowledge should also be integrated into existing systems of understanding (referred to as *meaning making* in section 1.2), as doing so readies the knowledge for use in a way that builds on previous strategies of action. Finally, the abilities that new knowledge supports—for example, the ability to work with specific equipment, to approach diagnosis of complex illnesses, or revise health and safety practices—should also be maintained over time, implying that knowledge should be maintained and potentially updated. We will pay particular attention to this last aspect in section 4.4.

Assessing CD4D2's contributions to capacity building therefore requires assessing the different dimensions of knowledge contextualisation, integration, and maintenance. Individual capacity building can be assessed through how individuals evaluate the relevance of knowledge, how they use the received knowledge and integrate it into their day-to-day work, and how knowledge can be or is maintained. In section 4.3.1. we will therefore investigate how individual learning relates to individual capacity building and what barriers affected this process. Organizational capacity building goes beyond the acquisition of skills and knowledge by individuals, as it references "the internal structures, policies and procedures that determine an organization's effectiveness".[241] Section 4.3.2. will reflect on the types of organizational capacity building that occurred through the CD4D project, including barriers for doing so. Section 4.3.3. pays specific attention to long-term capacity building activities embedded in the CD4D2 project: the internship program in the Somaliland region of Somalia and the twinning activities in Nigeria and Iraq. We will assess the types of capacity building that did (not) occur in these endeavours specifically and will reflect on how these forms of engagements relate to long-term capacity building.

4.3.1. Individual capacity building

The take-up of knowledge by host institution staff during CD4D2 assignments is core to individual capacity building. The CD4D2 participants, managers, and host institution staff all reflected on how knowledge gained during exchanges corresponded to changes in capacity. As visualized in figure 9, CD4D2 participants across project countries felt like their assignments made great contributions to staff's daily performance at work.

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[240] UNDP (2010, p.32)
[241] UNDP (2009, p.11)

Figure 14: Contribution of assignment to individual capacity building, all countries. Source: post-assignment survey

Contribution of assignment to staff's ability to... (n=114)

■ None ■ Low ■ Medium ■ High ■ Very high
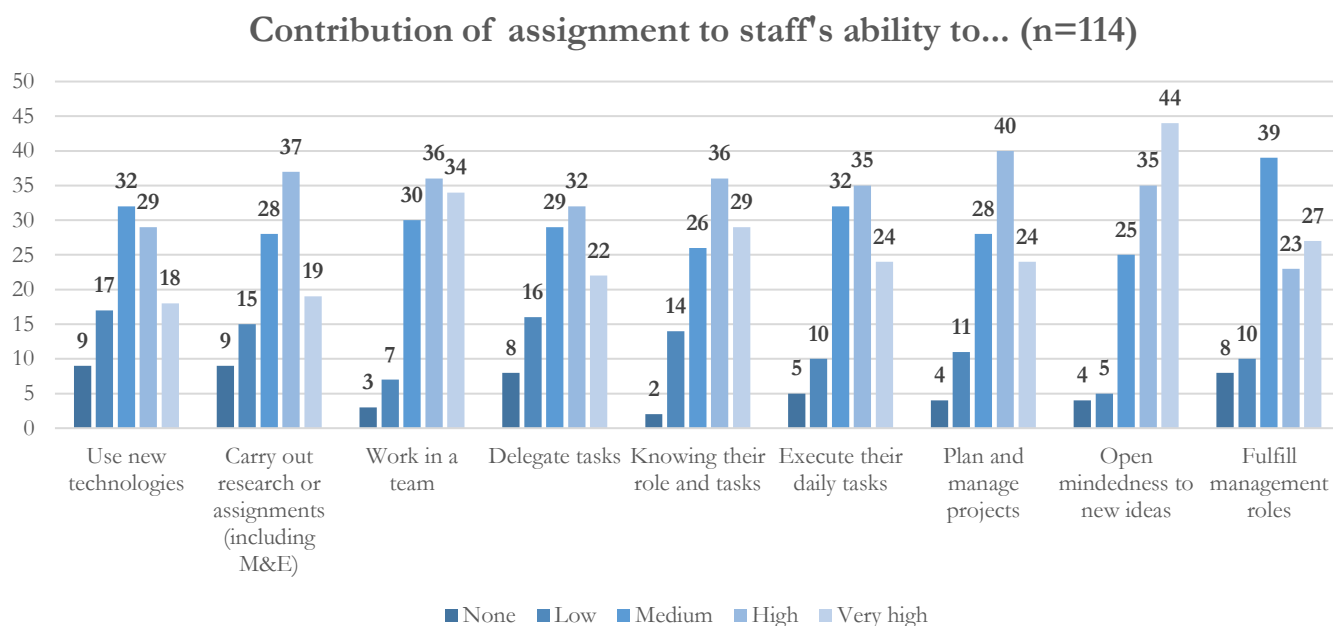
In line with participants' emphasis on the importance of soft knowledges in section 4.2., figure 9 demonstrates that CD4D2 participants felt that they made the biggest contributions to staff soft knowledges and skills, with open-mindedness and being able to work together in a team among the top-mentioned skills across countries, closely followed by staff having a better understanding of their role and tasks and planning skills. Hard knowledges, such as related to the use of modern technologies and conducting research or assignments, were among the least often mentioned by participants.

The perceptions of participants were overall in line with staff's own evaluations of the uptake of knowledge and skills. Across most interviews, host institution staff reported being able to translate the knowledge they gained from work with CD4D2 participants into their daily work, suggesting both contextualisation and integration of knowledge into individual practice. In some examples respondents gave, the new knowledge led to concrete changes in *how* their work was done. In several assignments, participants used their time at the host institution to develop protocols or procedures that established new workflows or changed existing ones. In Nigeria, one participant supported colleagues to develop a series of guidance documents related to agricultural production chains, which the host institutions plan to use to inform farmers on how to adapt their procedures.[242] In other assignments, management noted the changed attitude and approach of staff to work. This included having improved time management skills, being better able to manage complex processes, being able to navigate between different departments, or having renewed confidence to speak to management about necessary resources and other requests.[243] In other cases, knowledge led to changes in the *content* of host institutions' work. For example, the materials a diaspora expert shared during a training on food safety was adapted into the course curriculum of one training participant, who in turn used the adapted material to change the content delivered to students in her own university course.[244] In another example, staff in Iraq mentioned that they are now applying for research funding individually after having been trained by a CD4D2 participant on how to best do so.[245] These examples demonstrate how knowledge exchange within the CD4D2 assignments can support changes to both individual and institutional aspirations and processes in a way that may have (unintended)

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[242] Interview 15-11-2022

[243] Interview 26-09-2022a, Interview 08-11-2022

[244] Interview 02-11-2022

[245] Interview 07-12-2022

knock-on effects, with some changes likely amplified through sharing with other stakeholders beyond the host institution (e.g., students, farmers).

Interviews and survey suggest that while individual capacity building did seem to occur through CD4D2, some pre-established conditions can help support knowledge uptake and internalisation. Firstly, there should be a good fit between the topic of knowledge exchange activities and the daily work realities of staff. 'Fit' can refer to area of expertise. As mentioned in section 4.2.3, several respondents who had participated in online trainings on specific topics (e.g., seed breeding, food safety) reported not currently working in a domain in which the knowledge was made immediately applicable. While they recognized the value of having the additional knowledge to broaden their knowledge of the field, their immediate jobs did not allow them to practice the knowledge. In other cases, inability to practice acquired knowledge reflected the absence of institutional mandates, infrastructure, or other resources that would allow recipients to practice knowledge. For example, one training offered by a diaspora expert in Nigeria focused on establishing and maintaining greenhouses. While the participants of the training highly valued the knowledge they gained and found its quality to be exceptional, they could not practice and consolidate the knowledge because their institution could not build greenhouses, retrofit existing installations with more sustainable heating or watering systems, and/or secure and maintain greenhouse structures once they were damaged.[246]

Another pre-condition to support the contributions of new knowledge to capacity building is the presence of an environment in which individuals can continually learn and refine their understandings of a topic. Knowledge transfer is fundamentally about learning; theories of learning underscore that learning does not occur by simply receiving more knowledge but requires the learner to make the bridge between their current understanding of a topic and new knowledge. This bridging process often requires the learner to hear new information and apply it on multiple occasions in order to place it within their existing knowledge scaffolding. The knowledge internalisation process occurs at different paces among learners, but knowledge exchange is generally an iterative process that fares best when practiced on multiple occasions by using different learning modalities.[247] The design of CD4D2 assignments may not accommodate longer-term knowledge internalisation, and the nature of some host institutions may further challenge that process. . In most assignments, the time available for knowledge exchange, for staff to ask questions to CD4D2 participants, and for staff to practice newly-acquired knowledge and skills is limited. Across the CD4D2 evaluation, most interviewees mentioned that there was too little time available in the project, leading to a feeling of missing out on opportunities to learn more from participants and to sometimes highly condensed formal learning moments. To compensate for this limited timespan, many CD4D2 participants mentioned that they remained available for host institution staff to consult and continued their work outside of working hours and in many cases even after the assignment had formally ended. As we will further elaborate on in section 5, the continuity of knowledge exchange is often enabled by diaspora's goodwill and hence not formally part of the CD4D2 assignment as such. Structural reliance on a participant's discretionary goodwill to support longer-term individual capacity building may signal that the CD4D2 model may need to be better calibrated to reflect the nature of the relationship between knowledge exchange and capacity building.

Two further factors mentioned in section 4.2.3 supported iterative and continuous knowledge transfer and internalisation: a good assignment modality and pedagogical skills. Especially in sectors where learning and practicing new techniques was core to the assignments, staff mentioned missing the ability to co-work with the diaspora experts and "learn by doing" from them. The right pedagogical skills on the part of diaspora participants could also help knowledge take-up by individuals. Being available to answer questions, give appropriate examples, and being able and willing to tailor and localise the trainings to

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[246] Interview 15-11-2022, Interview 14-11-2022
[247] Ignelzi (2002)

individual recipients within specific settings were particularly important to assuring that knowledge could be effectively contextualised and internalised.

4.3.2. Organizational capacity building

Individual capacity building through learning and activating new knowledge and skills can contribute to organisational capacity building The UNDP[248] perspective on organisational capacity building focuses on internal structures, policies, and procedures that shape organisational effectiveness. This section therefore investigates to what degree, and in what forms, CD4D2 assignments contributed to changes in the internal structures, policies and procedures that determine whether an organization functions in an effective manner. We will first review the types of organizational capacity building that occurred as a result of assignments before discussing potential challenges to organizational capacity building.

Interviews suggest that four key types of organizational capacity building occurred as a result of CD4D2 assignments. A first type of capacity building relates to "laying the groundwork" of institutions, for example, by tasking CD4D2 participants with writing legal frameworks and policy plans, or by setting up new departments. This form of organisational capacity building was particularly visible in Somalia, where almost all participants worked with ministries to draft new policy plans and procedures. In Iraq, one participant was tasked with reviewing Iraq's refugee law and revising it in further alignment with international laws and agreements.[249] In Nigeria, one participant was tasked with building a new software division within a private company from scratch.[250] Interviewed host institution staff were unanimous in viewing these policy plans and newly established departments as important for their organization, as such changes affect the function and strategic direction of institutions. A second type of organizational capacity building occurred through developing curricula and teaching materials, which would subsequently be used to train other individuals. In Iraq, for example, several participants worked in the education sector to improve trainings for teachers, particularly related to updating pedagogical skills or dealing with war-affected children. In Nigeria, several participants trained staff working at knowledge institutions such as hospitals and universities on research methodology. Assignments in these institutions included training teachers and staff, who would in turn pass on their knowledge to other staff and to students, who were in turn expected to benefit due to better learning outcomes.[251] A third form of organizational capacity building occurred through networking and ensuring that (financial) resources are allocated to the host institution. In Iraq, a participant conducting their assignment at a university mobilized their connections to lobby for establishing a UNESCO chair at the university. Following the establishment of this chair, further financial resources were made available from UNESCO for the research centre in Iraq.[252] Finally, the fourth type of organizational capacity building relates to challenging and revising institutional norms, which in turn led to significant changes in the ways in which departments approached their work as a whole. Taking the example of tuberculosis treatment in Nigeria, participants mentioned that their exchange visit to the Netherlands completely changed their understandings of what tuberculosis care can include. They mentioned that their visits to treatment facilities in the Netherlands exposed them to more holistic treatment regimes that does not only centre on managing an individual's symptoms but also works to combat stigma and involve the social environment of an infected individual.[253] Similarly in Iraq, the train-the-trainer program designed for labour inspectorates changed the way in which said inspectors understood what "safety" at the workplace looked like. This curriculum currently informs all trainings given to such inspectors.[254] The four forms of organisational capacity building identified through

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[248] UNDP (2009)

[249] Interview 10-11-2022

[250] Interview 25-11-2022b

[251] As mentioned in sections 1 and 2 already, it was not possible to measure whether such improved learning actually occurred as a result of the short duration of both the project and evaluation.

[252] Interview 06-12-2022

[253] Interview 30-05-2023

[254] Interview 15-05-2023a, Interview 15-05-2023b

interviews demonstrate that individual knowledge transfer and capacity building are not per se prerequisites for organisational change to occur. Yet in all examples, the continuity of institutional changes following the end of a CD4D2 assignment are likely to require staff with sufficient capacity to continue new practices.

Figure 10 below shows the perceived contribution of diaspora experts to changes at the organizational level across the project countries. Compared to perceptions of contributing to individual capacity, CD4D2 participants expressed less confidence in their contributions to changes at the organizational level. Participants seemed most positive about their contributions to improving organizational structures and its functioning, but they were mixed in their assessments of how much they contributed to improving course curricula, internal procedures and increasing resources, with a substantial number of participants noting no or low contributions to these areas.

Figure 15: Contribution of assignment to organizational capacity building, all countries. Source: post-assignment survey

Contribution of assignment to organizational capacitybuilding
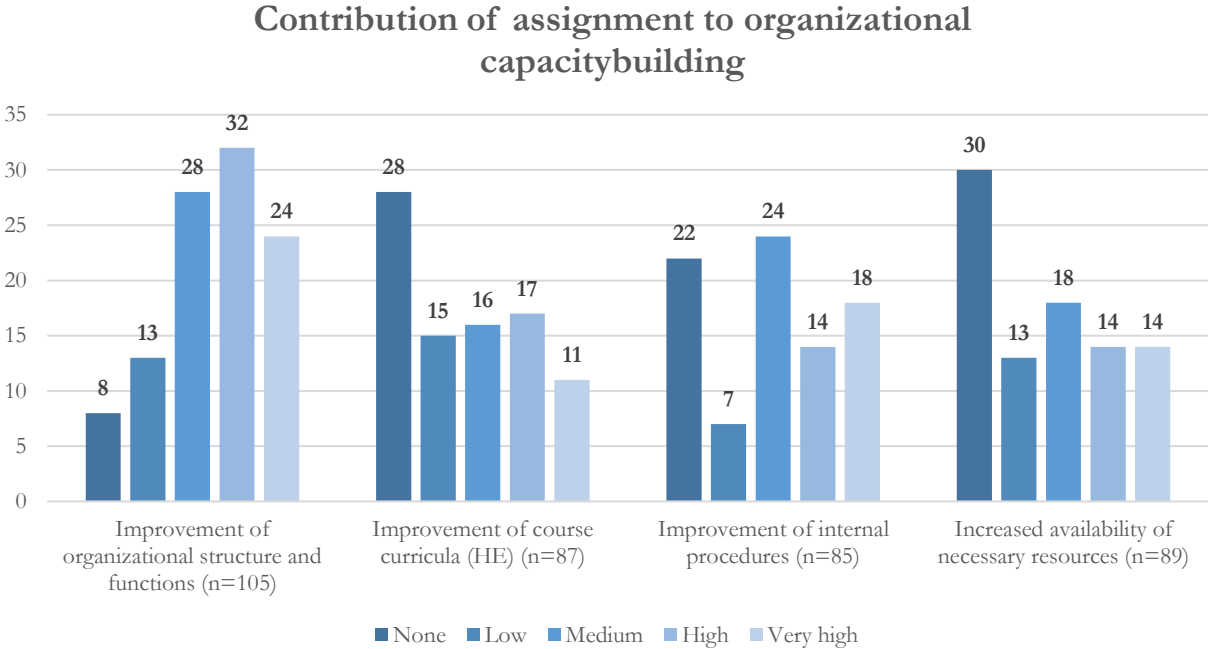
Interviews shed further light on the challenges that come with contributing to organizational capacity building. A first key challenge to organizational capacity building within the CD4D2 project relates to a disconnect between the implicit theory of change driving CD4D2 and the design of individual assignments. The underlying ToC presumes that capacity development at both the individual and organizational level occurs through knowledge transfer. Yet, as previously mentioned, several forms of organizational capacity building do not merit knowledge transfer per se, especially on the short term. Several CD4D2 participants were tasked with drafting policy plans or reviewing existing legal frameworks. While such activities could contribute to capacity building at the organizational level, they were often not accompanied by knowledge-exchange activities that would ensure continuity in the longer term. An example from Iraq is emblematic of how the absence of structured knowledge exchange activities within an assignment could undermine long-term capacity building. A CD4D2 participant reviewed the legal framework underlying their refugee policy so as to harmonize it with international laws and agreements. When we interviewed a staff member who co-worked with this expert, they mentioned that the new draft was currently under review, and as soon as the review would come back to them, they should revise the framework further yet mentioned being unable to do independently as they did not have enough knowledge of international rules and regulations. The host institution colleague mentioned that they would

need assistance from another international expert again if they were to ever implement the new legal framework.[255] This assignment therefore serves as an example where longer-term goals for capacity development cannot be achieved due to the specific assignment modality chosen and the dislocation of knowledge exchange from the assignment model.

A second challenge to organisational capacity building relates to heavy reliance on the vision and commitment of key individuals for the effectiveness of CD4D2 assignments. An emblematic example comes from the education sector in Iraq, where one CD4D2 participant who is a well-established educationalist used his own experience and vision for education to design a training programme for teachers. While the training is based on international practice and is structured around documented approaches to education, the curriculum is so specific to the competencies of the CD4D2 participant that it may be difficult for another expert to use the developed materials to train teachers if, for whatever reason, the original participant is no longer available.[256] Another example of a key individual driving organisational capacity building comes from Nigeria. The long-term partnership between KNCV and the teaching hospitals in Nigeria seems to be enabled by the individual position and motivation of KNCV's director. In an interview, the director explained that they directly involved multiple colleagues at KNCV in the ongoing partnership between these institutions. They were also a former employee of the Ministry of Health in Nigeria, with an extensive international network that they can mobilize to gain resources. His current role as KNCV director, former role in Nigeria, and his personal motivation to contribute to the development of his country of origin makes the KNCV director a clear ally to the CD4D2 project, but they are not a resource that can be easily planned for or replaced in case they are no longer able or willing to support the partnership between KNCV and host institutions.[257]

Another challenge to organisational capacity building within the CD4D2 model relates to the legitimacy and stability of institutions. The project's implicit theory of change places institutions at the core of capacity building initiatives, aiming to spur development. An underlying assumption is that capacity building within (government) institutions will lead to further developmental benefits for citizens. Various interviewees highlighted that within a specific project country, governmental bodies are very unstable and have high institutional turnover, which makes capacity building through knowledge transfer a difficult exercise as there is often very little to build on.[258] Additionally, not all government institutions may have the recognition and role to drive development. Following Rousseau's theory on the "social contract", citizens ought to surrender their freedoms and submit to a ruling government in exchange for protection of their rights and best interests, as well as maintenance of the social order. One interviewee criticized this basic assumption underlying the CD4D2 project as "Western" and not fitting with the reality of governance in fragile, non-democratic states, where government bodies may not hold such legitimacy and may not be as present in the daily lives of citizens as other social institutions like clans are. [259] The respondent argued that building capacity in government institutions in fragile contexts is both extremely challenging and does not automatically lead to heightened development and welfare for citizens, whereas investing in non-government entities like private business would truly drive change.[260]

A final challenge to institutional capacity building relates to retention of knowledge within the institution. The CD4D2 ToC presumes a certain level of stability within institutions for organizational capacity building to occur, with retention of trained individual staff and leadership necessary to support the incorporation of novel knowledge into institutional practices. Interviews suggested that the staff retention was often a challenge: good and experienced staff move to functions where they would get paid more,

[255] Interview 10-11-2022
[256] Interview 06-07-2023
[257] Interview 15-06-2023
[258] Interview 13-06-2023, Interview 20-06-2023
[259] See https://freedomhouse.org/country/somalia/freedom-world/2020
[260] Interview 22-05-2023a

sometimes in a completely different country. In the IT sector in Nigeria, for example, staff turnover was mentioned as a barrier to maintaining and continuing to run (new) IT platforms created through CD4D2.[261] One IT manager who conducted his assignment in this sector mentioned that staff turnover led him to conduct the same training on multiple occasions. After one month, two of the host institution colleagues left the company, and they hired a new colleague to take on their jobs. The CD4D2 participants was then asked to re-do the training from the start. They were happy to do this, but it did feel "like a waste of time".[262] At the managerial level, the transition of political appointees, like ministers or vice ministers, was identified as sometimes leading to changes in the focus or portfolios of ministries or specific units within those ministries. Especially in Somalia, those changes could lead to the content areas of previous diaspora expert placements no longer being as relevant or central to the work of the institution, and the knowledge gained by colleagues could therefore not as directly be applied. A related example comes from Iraq, where a CD4D2 participant was less successful in meeting the terms of the assignment and was regarded by management as unable to meet the needs of the host institution given his limited understanding of the context and how international best practice could be adapted to that context, which in turn led to assignment products that were not as useful in the institution's long-term strategy. One interviewed manager noted that host institutions like a ministry of planning demand more intensive knowledge and competences both from CD4D2 participants and from regular employees, as their core mandates requires the development of long-term governance strategies that respond not only to the current context but that anticipate future scenarios. Fostering such expertise often requires staff with keen insight into local and regional dynamics, and it may require longer staff retention periods, which is at odds with the design of CD4D2 assignments and is further complicated by turnover of staff. The respondent also highlighted that senior staff like a director general may be better recipients of knowledge through programmes like CD4D2 because they generally have greater institutional tenure and have the role and mandate to create policies, protocols, and programmes that ensure knowledge retention within the institution.[263]

4.3.3. Long-term engagements

This last section is dedicated to the three long-term engagements embedded within the CD4D2 project: the internship program in the Somaliland region of Somalia, and the so-called "twinning activities" taking place between institutions in Iraq, Nigeria and the Netherlands. In this section below, we will describe what these engagements looked like and how they addressed capacity building.

4.3.3.1. Internship program in Somaliland (Somalia)

At the start of the CD4D2 project, an internship/traineeship program was implemented in the Somaliland region of Somalia, with the explicit aim of fostering sustainability of CD4D2 and creating structural opportunities for local graduates. Within this programme, internships were created that were conducted in parallel to expert placements, with the idea that interns would be appointed as "assistants" to the CD4D2 participants and receive on-the-job training and mentoring from them. At the end of the assignment, the host institution could decide whether to employ the intern for a full time position and therefore "reap longer-term benefits of the skills transfer".[264] Interviewed stakeholders were very enthusiastic about the internship program, presenting it as a source of stability and continuity in otherwise volatile institutional environments.[265] A total of 12 interns took part in the program at 5 different host institutions across the Somaliland region of Somalia, the majority of which (10) were eventually retained as staff.[266]

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[261] Interview 27-07-2022; Interview 25-11-2022a

[262] Interview 25-11-2022a

[263] Interview 22-05-2023b

[264] IOM (n.d., p. 7)

[265] Interview 13-06-2023, Interview 20-06-2023

[266] Interview 13-06-2023

Host institutions that participated in the internship programme were generally satisfied with the diaspora participants, evaluating them as knowledgeable, up for the task, and able to make a difference to the host institution. Interns we spoke to as part of the evaluation mentioned having learned a great deal from their "mentors". Beyond hard knowledge connected to elements like IT and financial reporting, interns acknowledged a variety of soft knowledge fostered through cooperation with CD4D2 participants. One intern noted that working with the CD4D2 participant taught her about communicating across ministerial departments and coordinating financial budgeting and planning across them. Interns were encouraged to share ideas and receive feedback from the CD4D2 participant they were paired with, which provided a novel learning opportunity interns were eager to engage in.[267] Managers of interns likewise reported frequent interactions characterised by open, clear, and mutual communication between interns and the CD4D2 participants.[268] Management perceived increased capacity on the part of these individual interns as a result of the internship program, both related to technical knowledge and soft skills. In order to amplify such increased capacity across the host institution, one manager explained that when later hiring interns, they deliberately decided to relocate them to a different department to support further knowledge and skill dissemination in an almost "train-the-trainer" approach. [269]

The internship program was designed to support the training-to-work transition and longer-term amplification of knowledge transfer, with interns offered a permanent position within the host institution upon successful completion of the programme.[270] Despite the high rate of post-internship employment, the contributions of the internship programme—and how the unique design of the internship programme enabled contributions—to both individual and organisational capacity building were not entirely clear. Interviews with host institution staff, CD4D2 participants, and (former) interns made clear that interns benefited from the intensive guidance and tailored mentoring provided by CD4D2 participants, but the added value of having an internship program with "diaspora" mentors as opposed to "regular", in country mentors was not clear. Interns mentioned appreciating working with diaspora participants, as they brought "new perspectives" and "new techniques" their work[271], yet interns acknowledged intensive learning from their "regular colleagues" at the host institution as well, because they were new into the ministries and felt like they had a lot to learn in general.[272] Given the absence of a similar internship programme involving non-diaspora staff in the role of intensive mentor, it is difficult to assess the unique impact generated by the "diasporic" nature of CD4D2 participants. The value of the model of the internship programme as such was easier to distil. Interns valued having someone at their disposal to ask questions to, to practice with, and to receive regular feedback from, which increased interns' confidence and opened a clear pathway to become a full staff member of the institution.[273] In short, the internship programme provided a unique vehicle for aspiring young professionals to benefit from dedicated guidance; how the (assumed) unique competence of diaspora were leveraged to support their further professional trajectories was not readily apparent.

4.3.3.2. Twinning activities in Iraq and Nigeria

A second mode of long-term engagements within the CD4D2 project are so-called twinning activities, which attempt to establish connections between institutions in the project countries and the Netherlands. The CD4D2 narrative proposal[274] mentions that IOM sought to facilitate exchange and training opportunities for key individuals at specific host institutions to relevant institutions in the Netherlands. Similar to the aforementioned internship program, these activities fit the general objective of capacity

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[267] Interview 26-09-2022a

[268] Interview 26-09-2022b

[269] Interview 17-07-2023

[270] IOM (n.d., p.7)

[271] Interview 26-09-2022a, Interview 26-09-2022b

[272] Interview 19-09-2022

[273] Interview 19-09-2022, Interview 26-09-2022a

[274] IOM (n.d., 7)

building and ensuring sustainability, in particular by fostering enduring links between institutions in project countries and the Netherlands.

Such institutional partnerships have been established in Iraq and Nigeria and involved existing or incipient interventions in which IOM's role was to act as facilitator, giving a "boost" to the scope or scale of the interventions. In Iraq, a partnership emerged between the Governorate of Sulaymaniyah's agriculture department and Wageningen University that focused on adapting the agriculture sector to drought through combatting soil degradation and enhancing water quality for irrigation. In Nigeria a partnership was formed between the Obafemi Awolowo University Teaching Hospital Complex and KNCV Tuberculosefonds, with the collaboration centred on tuberculosis management and prevention, including through research and improving patient care. In both cases, the project was initiated and carried forward by individuals: KNCV's director championed the cooperation in Nigeria, whereas a CD4D2 participant from Kurdistan who functioned as a middleman between Wageningen University and the Governorate of Sulaymaniyah supported the cooperation in Iraq. Interviews revealed that these individuals initiated the collaborations with the host institutions and only later officially became embedded in the CD4D2 project, which in turn provided a platform and resources for training programmes to be established.[275] Participants in the project countries spoke very fondly of those two key individuals: they were seen as the driving force of the projects because of their commitment, flexibility, proactive attitudes, and willingness to mobilize their networks for the benefit of the host institutions.[276]

There were various reasons for the institutions in both target countries and the Netherlands to become involved in the CD4D2 projects. For Wageningen, a colleague told us that this activity fits well within the university's mandate to conduct outreach activities and spread knowledge on best practices from Dutch agriculture.[277] This was similar for KNCV, as providing technical assistance and conducting knowledge transfer is part of their official mandate as well. This institutional orientation coupled nicely with the director of KNCV's desire to contribute to capacity building in his country of origin. Indeed, the director's expertise and network, formed over many years in his professional roles as KNCV director, former employee the Ministry of Health in Nigeria, and member of NIDO, ensured according to him that "everything aligned".[278] To support tailor-made trainings for the partnering institutions in Nigeria and Iraq, representatives of KNCV and Wageningen University conducted a needs-assessment in which they discussed needs, desires, and wishes for the training program with representatives of partner institutions. Both mentioned that expectation management was core to designing trainings, as not all topics could be covered in a one to two-week training program. They therefore narrowed the initial, ambitious ideas down and set up a feasible training module, which was multidisciplinary in nature and involved staff of different departments within the institutions and staff of other institutions. In contrast to "regular assignments", staff were selected to learn from the exchange visit exactly because they already had the capacity to apply and further disseminate novel knowledge and skills. Before visiting the Netherlands, the selected Iraqi and Nigerian participants were expected to follow an online preparatory program to ensure that all participants had the same level of knowledge as soon as the on-site training in the Netherlands began.[279]

The trainings in the Netherlands were designed as a train-the-trainer program, with the explicit intention for participants to pass on their learned skills upon return to colleagues in the partner institutions. Next to trainings offered by KNCV and Wageningen University staff, exchange visits involved field-visits to other institutes. In the health sector field visits occurred to bodies such as the RIVM (the National Institute for Public Health and the Environment) and GGD (Municipal Health Service), and in the agriculture sector, visits took place to Wageningen University's business unit Greenhouse Horticulture in Bleiswijk and 'the

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[275] Interviews 04-04-2023, Interview 15-06-2023

[276] Interview 15-11-2022

[277] Interview 14-04-2023

[278] Interview 15-06-2023

[279] Interview 15-06-2023, Interview 14-04-2023

farm of the future' in Lelystad. Further information sharing between the institutions also took place in the form of access to Massive Online Open Courses (MOOCS) and to platforms from the World Health Organization.[280] The trainings and field visits in both examples placed emphasis on practically implementing novel knowledge, with participants encouraged to apply theoretical concepts to physical practice environments.

Figure 16: Members of the Governorate of Sulaymaniah and Ministry of Agriculture during their exchange visit with Wageningen University in the Netherlands. © IOM the Netherlands

Figure 17: A member of the Obafemi Awolowo University Teaching Hospital at KNCV Tuberculosis Foundation in the Hague. © IOM the Netherlands

When talking to priority learners in the project countries, it became clear that the trainings led to individual capacity building. Participants from the Obafemi Awolowo University Teaching Hospital Complex in Nigeria mentioned acquiring hard knowledge related to new laboratory techniques for diagnosing tuberculosis[281] and soft knowledge relating to the need for a multidisciplinary approach to treatment[282], a personalized approach to patient care[283], and the benefits of digitalized patient dossiers.[284] In Iraq, two managers from the Governorate of Sulaymaniyah who took part in the training program mentioned being exposed to soilless farming and circular horticulture as well as GIS-techniques that could help testing the quality of soil and water.[285] The combination of novel forms of hard and soft knowledge participants were exposed to in the Netherlands as well as trainings offered by CD4D2 participants in (virtual) assignments helped participants develop more holistic understandings of their fields and how to

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[280] Interview 15-06-2023, Interview 14-04-2023

[281] Interview 07-11-2022

[282] Interview 30-05-2023

[283] Interview 07-11-2022

[284] Interview 30-05-2023, Interview 07-11-2022

[285] Interview 15-11-2022, Interview 24-11-2022

adapt institutional processes. For example, one participant from the Obafemi Awolowo University Teaching Hospital Complex who participated both in the exchange visit and online trainings from a CD4D2 participant described the combined experiences as resulting an internal paradigm shift in how they viewed the existence and treatment of communicable diseases like tuberculosis. The respondent stated that the Dutch approach to communicable diseases like TB was more patient-centred and holistic, with an emphasis on supporting the individual to function within society and not just within the medical system. While the topic of trainings and field visits was focused on TB, the participant used the inputs to inform an anti-microbial stewardship programme within the home institution, demonstrating how individual knowledge acquisition can potentially transform into individual and eventually institutional capacity development.[286] A similar narrative was related by a participant from the Governorate of Sulaymaniyah department of agriculture, who explained that seeing the way Dutch agriculture approached fertilizer and pesticide use completely changed her perspective on how to find solutions to agricultural challenges that are safer and more sustainable. The mindset shift on technical content was accompanied by a change in mindset on soft skills; seeing how colleagues in the Netherlands compartmentalized and shared information in small, practicable units also changed her own approach to knowledge delivery, which the participant reflected on and practiced when they returned to Iraq and prepared a seminar and report on key learnings from the exchange visit for colleagues in her unit.[287] The combination of theoretical learning, observation of practice, and individual application provides another example of how knowledge can be transformed into capacity.

After the trainings in the Netherlands and participation in the CD4D2 project ended, the institutional linkages between these institutions remained. Participants told us that work is being carried forward in different modalities, focused on continuation and consolidation of work. In Nigeria, staff at the Teaching Hospitals are currently lobbying at management within their organization for procedures and resources that will further build organisational capacity. Staff have been trying to convince managers to hire social workers into the department to further shape multidisciplinary and holistic care for patients, and they have worked to acquire funding and technical expertise to digitalize patient records.[288] Simultaneously, KNCV and the Teaching Hospitals signed a new Memorandum of Understanding to "keep the momentum going" and further partner on research on tuberculosis. The commitment of KNCV to its partnership with the Teaching Hospital has been further strengthened through tightened collaboration with KNCV's sister organization in Nigeria, which resulted in the sister organisation offering new equipment for the Teaching Hospital to improve research and patient care following the request of KNCV's director. While IOM could not assist the director in providing equipment for the Teaching Hospital, the director described the provision of new equipment as one of the most important accomplishments of the partnership between the two organizations, as resources are sustainable and enable individuals to perform better.[289] In Iraq, participants were seeking to implement their newly acquired knowledge to a pilot farm in the Kurdistan region. This pilot would later evolve into a collaboration under the Global Network of Lighthouse Farms.[290] Similar to the Nigerian example, the diaspora participant continued to look for funding to further the collaboration between Wageningen University and the Governorate of Sulaymaniyah after the CD4D2 project ended.[291]

Through these longer-term partnerships, CD4D2's goal to "create sustainable links between the two countries"[292] is partially achieved. While the CD4D2 project did not initiate the contact between the individuals who carried out these collaborations and host institutions, IOM had an important role in facilitating and further consolidating these partnerships, boosting the scope of scale of existing

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[286] Interview 24-05-2023

[287] Interview 08-05-2023

[288] Interview 30-05-2023

[289] Interview 15-06-2023

[290] See https://www.lighthousefarmnetwork.com/

[291] Interview 24-11-2022; Interview 04-04-2023

[292] IOM (n.d., p.7)

interventions. We indeed see that one year after the exchange visits took place, there is still intensive collaboration between the institutions, with various tangible results, such as new equipment being made available in Nigeria and the successful transition of a pilot farm in Kurdistan to the Global Lighthouse Farms network. Yet, sustained outcomes associated with these partnerships have seemed to arise from individuals leveraging windows of opportunity. This reflects the underlying premise of the implicit theory of change guiding the CD4D2 project, which depends on the intrinsic motivation, the efforts, and sustained goodwill from individual participants. As many of these individual efforts and commitments are beyond the control of the project designers or implementers, especially in terms of subsequent sustained engagements that take on "a life of their own", outcomes and impacts of the project are likely to vary depending on who exactly is involved and how their individual efforts can be sustained in the absence of IOM as a long-term facilitator. When discussing the outcomes of the exchange project with staff at Wageningen University, one colleague, for example, mentioned that the embeddedness of a Kurdistan farm in the Lighthouse network was "more luck than wisdom".[293] They explained that a lot of luck and coincidence was involved in getting a second farm to embark on this trajectory, as expansion beyond the pilot farm was not part of the original CD4D2 framework project. Coincidentally, his colleagues at a different research group in Wageningen were affiliated with the Global Lighthouse Farm Network, and opted to "adopt" the project under its header. The first farm they selected during the CD4D2 project did not meet the necessary criteria, but because of the diaspora participants' persistence, a second farm in the region was eventually selected. The continued commitment and enthusiasm of a few individuals in Kurdistan and the Netherlands, who happened to know the right people and could acquire further funding, allowed the lessons taken from the exchange program to be eventually implemented in Kurdistan.

Furthermore, the continuation and consolidation of project learning is largely dependent on the discretionary efforts of individuals that reach beyond the CD4D2 framework and specific assignment ToRs. Knowledge transfer undoubtedly occurred during the exchange programs, yet in some instances, institutional capacity development may only occur now, for example, with the allocation of new resources to the Teaching Hospitals and the participation of a Kurdistan farm in the Global Lighthouse Farm network. This example reflects a challenge in CD4D2 more generally, which is that individual assignments are generally too short to support the entire pathway of knowledge transfer to localisation, practise, and eventually sustained application and updating. Yet even when institutions have longer periods of time to support capacity development, other barriers may stand in their way. For example, staff of Wageningen University mentioned the struggle of doing "charity work" way below the normal price for trainings, as the financing given by IOM the Netherlands could not cover the true cost of designing and implementing such tailor-made training. They mention that they needed to rely heavily on the personal time and money of professors and other researchers involved.[294] As already addressed in section 3, an underlying feeling of contributing charitable work and "doing good" seems to be both cultivated and utilized within the CD4D2 model as a whole, which appeals to diaspora identity and a sense of obligation to their country of (ancestral) origin. While this model seems well matched to the motivations of diaspora members, the underlying drivers of non-diaspora institutions may differ. In short, when pivotal facilitators of institutional partnerships are no longer engaged, the sustainability of partnerships may be threated if a similar sense of obligation and commitment from professional institutions in the Netherlands does not exist.

Finally, for the institutions involved, the role and mandate of IOM in these twinning activities was less clear than in regular CD4D2 assignments. In these engagements, IOM was often not the sole facilitator, as pre-existing connections were leveraged and other organizations were simultaneously committed to providing resources. This unclear division of responsibilities at times also created confusion and frustration on behalf of Dutch institutions that may have felt unprepared for the level of commitment

[293] Interview 17-05-2023
[294] Interview 17-05-2023

expected or required. In view of creating sustainability in Nigeria, KNCV wished that IOM could have contributed to resource allocation more than it did. In Iraq, Wageningen University would have appreciated more support from IOM before and during the exchange visit. An employee describes not being fully briefed about the political situation in Kurdistan before committing to this institutional partnership with a government body. They mention being "naïve" and believing that "doing good will hurt no one".[295] They eventually decided to postpone the collaboration for six months to discuss this collaboration with the Wageningen University Board of Directors, as entering into a formal agreement with the Kurdistan government could have implications for the university as a whole. IOM the Netherlands provided a fuller briefing of the situation after concerns were expressed, after which the exchange program took place. Respondent from Wageningen University moreover mentioned that, at the time the delegation from Iraq visited the Netherlands, there was confusion about who bore responsibility for immediate, practical and logistical questions, tied to things like visa applications and recovering lost luggage at Schiphol Airport. While there was a focal person at IOM, the perception seemed to be that it was unclear who to reach out to in cases of unanticipated hiccups in the project. [296]

4.4. Sustainability of impacts

In this section, we discuss the impact that the diaspora assignments, and the CD4D2 project as a whole, made on the host institutions, sectors and project countries. As discussed in section 1, there are many ways in which we can understand impact. As the setup of this evaluation does not allow for identification of causal chains and measurement of project impact on specific outcome measures, we instead explore sustainability of the CD4D2 project through the (potential) enduring activities and outcomes associated with specific CD4D2 assignments. We understand sustainability as the use of outputs and outcomes associated with specific CD4D2 assignments beyond the placement of the CD4D2 participant. Assessing sustainability implies sufficient time and observation moments to document how processes, outputs, and outcomes generated by assignments are maintained and used. Given the relatively short implementation timeframe for the CD4D2 project and the often recentness of specific assignments at the time interviews were conducted, our ability to capture sustainability is limited; we nevertheless reflect where possible on activities described or observed that would support longer-term use of assignment products. In the sections below, we will first detail how impact was discussed and conceived in our interviews with diaspora participants, host institution staff and stakeholders, and whether this impact was expected to last over time. We will then detail some challenges to ensuring impact, according to our assessment of the project. Finally, we will detail the impact that the project has had on the lives of individual diaspora participants.

4.4.1. Project impacts

When discussing the impact of the CD4D2 assignments with participants and host institution staff, many pointed to the many ways in which they built or gained individual and organizational capacity, as discussed in section 4.3. Impact, in short, was often equated with change. Both participants and staff expressed that the CD4D2 project meaningfully contributed to changes at the individual and organizational level, and even to the country as a whole. A host institution manager for example emphasized that learning new knowledge and skills is a lifelong virtue, which will help to "fulfil the potential that Nigeria has to offer".[297] Many colleagues across countries finished our interviews by reiterating that the assignments had meaningfully changed their daily practice and that they would gladly engage in the program again given the opportunity.[298] Our survey among CD4D2 participants confirms this picture. Figures 11 and 12 display the contribution that participants felt their work has made to staff learning and capacity development in

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[295] Interview 14-04-2023
[296] Interview 17-05-2023
[297] Interview 30-5-2023
[298] Interview 07-11-2022, Interview 17-11-2022, Interview 03-11-2022, Interview 19-09-2022

general. As figure 11 displays, staff's perceived learning from the CD4D2 assignments was generally assessed as 'high' or 'very high'. In Somalia, we see that almost 20% of respondents noted only "average learning". As discussed in section 4.2, perception of more limited learning among recipients in Somalia (in particularly the Somaliland region) may reflect the nature of some assignments, a greater number of which focused on an independent modality of working in which CD4D2 participants did not extensively engage in knowledge exchange activities. It may also reflect perceptions that host institution staff had lower initial starting points that anticipated, which may have made it challenging for CD4D2 participants to support exchange of the intended level or depth of knowledge.

Figure 18: Perceived staff learning from assignment, by country. Source: post-assignment survey

Perceived staff learning from assignment (n=109)
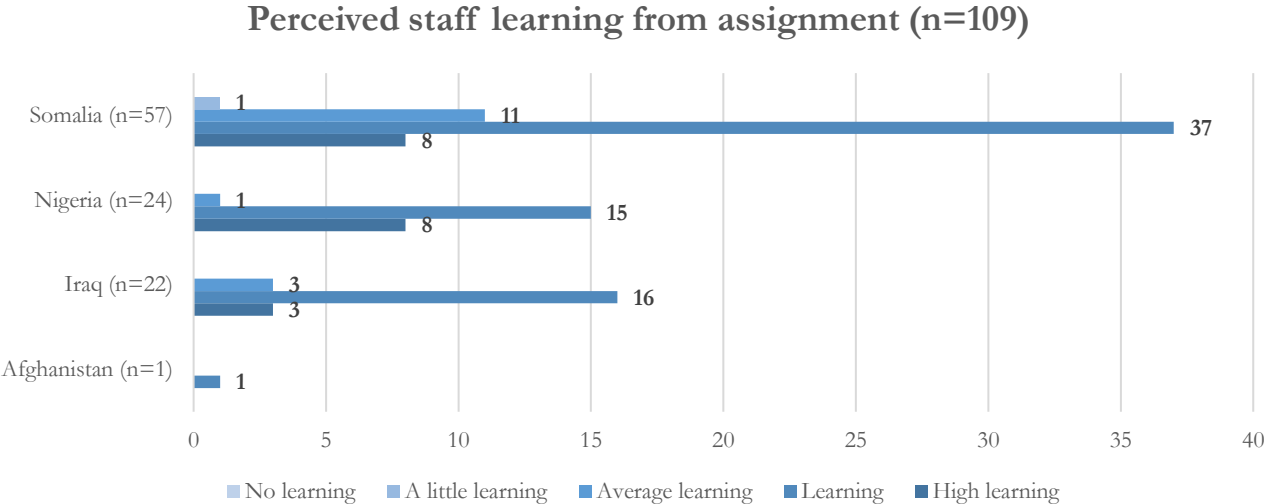
In figure 12, we similarly see that the overall perceived contribution of the CD4D2 assignments to institutional capacity development is high, with the majority of participants either indicating a "high" or "very high" contributions.

Figure 19: Perceived contribution to capacity development, by country. Source: post-assignment survey

Perceived contribution of assignment to capacity development at host institution (n=108)
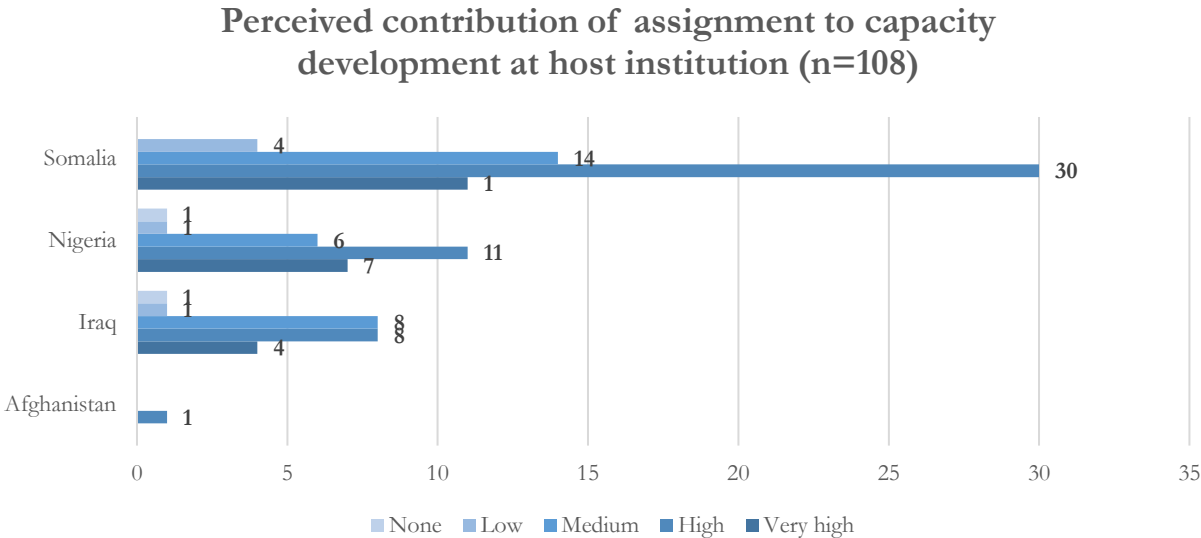
A substantial number of participants across the project countries, however, also noted a "medium" contribution to overall capacity development at the host institutions. Figure 13 below sheds further light on the challenges that diaspora participants encountered in their attempts to establish change. The challenges identified are very much in line with previously discussed challenges in sections 4.2 and 4.3., with a lack of experience of staff and the lack of a stable internet connection among the top noted challenges experienced. Yet, it is also noteworthy that next to a lack of equipment, COVID-19 and an unsupportive working culture, a substantial number of participants also noted no challenges to the effectiveness of assignments.

Figure 20: Reported challenges to effectiveness of assignments, all countries. Source: post-assignment survey

Challenges reported to effectiveness of assignments (n=114)
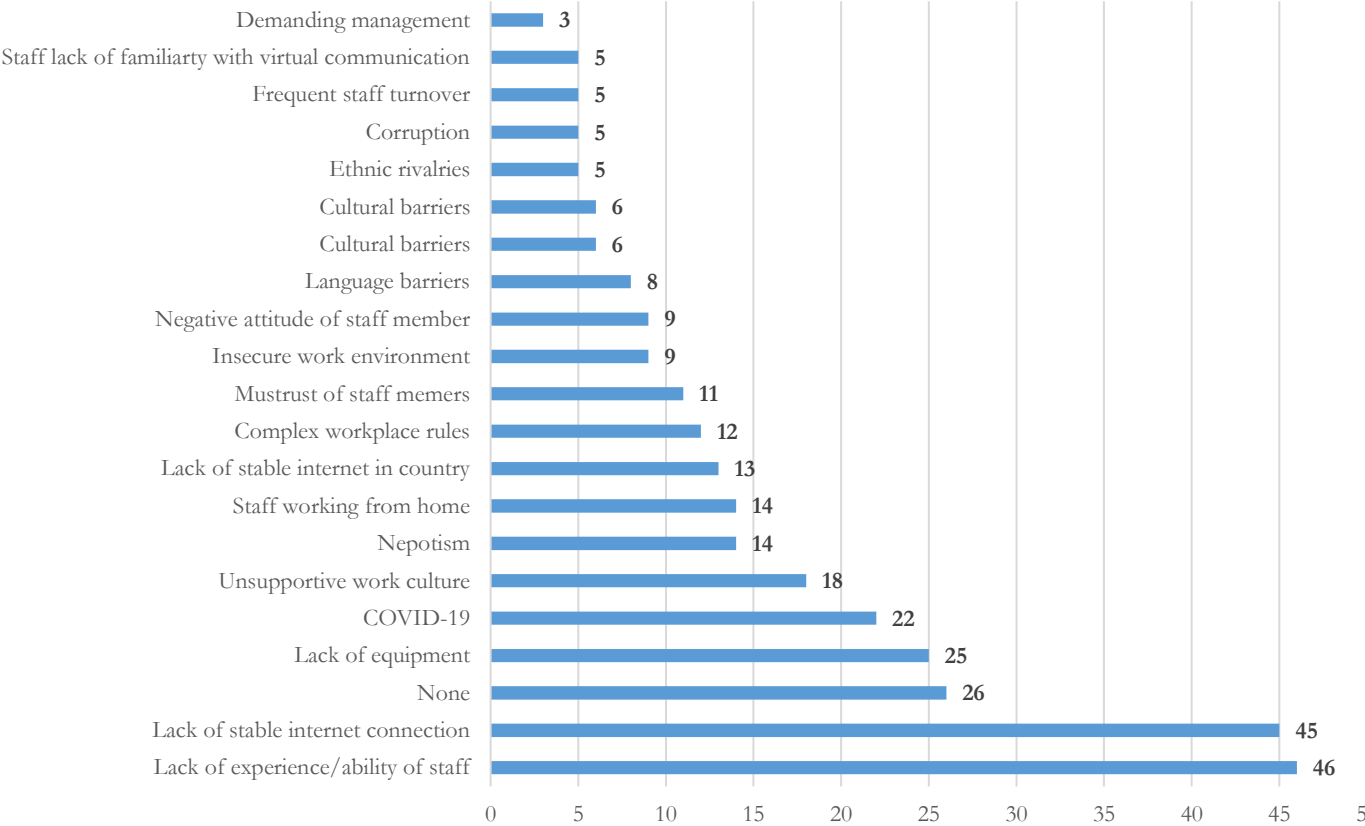
While this survey data and interview excerpts tell us something about the perceived impact of the CD4D2 assignments on capacity building and learning at the host institutions, we similarly spoke to diaspora about the impact of the CD4D2 project on them. While we already discussed individual capacity building on the part of diaspora in section 4.3, the project also engendered changes that are difficult to categorize as capacity building but that were nevertheless seen as significant. All interviewed participants mentioned that participating in the CD4D2 project was an "enriching experience" that had a profound impact on their professional and personal lives. A few participants made a change in their professional career, either spurred or accelerated by their participation in the project. This included taking up permanent positions in the project country of mobilizing newly gained networks to explore possibilities for start-up businesses.[299] Two interviewed participants likewise mentioned that their participation in CD4D2 helped them to get a

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[299] Interview 29-03-2023d, Interview 28-10-2022, Interview 19-08-2022, Interview 31-07-2022.

clearer view of what professional activities they would want to undertake in the future.[300] For most interviewed participants, however, participation in the project led to most meaningful changes on a personal level, especially getting a (renewed) engagement with their country of (ancestral) origin. This led to a heightened sense of their diasporic identity[301], to making new friends and re-connecting with old ones, and connecting to family.[302] Finally, we noted that in especially Somalia, participation in the project accelerated a pre-existing desire for participants to live a more transnational life between the Netherlands and Somalia. The CD4D2 assignments were used as a "steppingstone" to gain professional experience in Somalia and to "try out" whether such a lifestyle was possible for them. For all participants interviewed, the project eventually led to further professional as well as personal involvement in both countries year round.[303]

Figure 21: A farmer in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq working with CD4D2 participants to improve soil quality and transition towards climate resilient farming. © IOM the Netherlands

4.4.2. Sustainability

During the evaluation, we spoke with participants and host institution staff – particularly management – about the sustainability of identified changes. In these interviews, most participants understood sustainability as the lastingness of changes engendered by the outcomes of CD4D2 assignments over time.

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[300] Interview 18-08-2022, Interview 31-07-2022

[301] Interview 22-07-2022, Interview 19-08-2022, Interview 31-07-2022, Interview 12-08-2021, Interview 19-05-2022
[302] Interview 12-08-2022, Interview 18-08-2022

[303] Interview 29-03-2023d, Interview 25-11-2022b, Interview 28-10-2022, Interview 23-03-2023, Interview 16-06-2023

One stakeholder expressed that sustainability should be the core objective of any CD4D2 participant, explaining it as "an effort to ensure that you make yourself no longer necessary all the way from the start of your intervention".[304] While all respondents emphasised the importance of considering sustainability from the outset, most struggled to assess the sustainability of change spurred by CD4D2 for two reasons. Firstly, due to the limited timeframe of the CD4D2 assignments and the evaluation period, it was often not possible to assess whether longer-lasting changes did occur. On many occasions, host institution staff and diaspora participants noted clearly that changes at the individual and organizational level started but could not tell whether these changes did or could last over time. Diaspora participants often noted less intensive contact with the host institution after the assignment ended and were therefore unable to assess whether the changes they started were still having a substantial impact.[305] Host institution staff likewise mentioned that more time was needed to assess whether the intervention created tangible, lasting change. In Iraq, a manager that supervised a train-the-trainer assignment mentioned that this assignment had spurred changes in protocols and practices on how to assess safety at workplace inspections across the country, but it is not yet possible to assess if these outputs will eventually lead to increased safety and fewer incidents.[306] Another manager working in the education sector in Iraq mentioned that the various train-the-teachers programs they supervised across different schools focused on supporting teachers' time-management, communication, and pedagogical skills. Whether these changes will also result in better outcomes for pupils at schools, in terms of higher grades or better teacher-student relations, cannot be assessed until several academic cycles have passed.[307]

The sustainability of assignment outputs and outcomes are also dependent on a variety of factors that are outside of the control of the CD4D2 project and its participants. One such factor is the availability of resources necessary to consolidate project outcomes. As one host institution staff member from the Somaliland region of Somalia noted: "it is great to bring change, but you should also bring the batteries that keep change going".[308] This analogy highlighted the need to provide not only expertise but also resources necessary to continue to work with the gained expertise. As already touched upon in section 4.2 and 4.3, host institution staff often referenced financial resources that allowed them to purchase equipment or follow-up training materials. Especially the latter was deemed important for sectors where legislation or techniques are continuously changing and in need of updating, such as the IT-sector in Nigeria or work-safety standards and legislation in Iraq.[309] Another factor that was often mentioned dealt with the ability of host institutions to keep staff at the organization. Various managers mentioned that retaining staff who took part in the CD4D2-related activities is not a guarantee and losing too many of them might mean losing the knowledge gained from the institution completely.[310] Various host institution managers mentioned that a change in political leadership might also influence the sustainability of outcomes of the CD4D2 project. This is true both at the level of host institutions and the wider sector. In the Somaliland region of Somalia, higher-level managers and director generals within ministries are often replaced as soon as new political leadership is established. Likewise in Iraq, several managers in host institutions in regional or local governance areas mentioned that initiatives like CD4D2 tend to come to a standstill with the arrival of new governors and subsequent changes in priorities , which severely affects the continuity of programming and hence the sustainability of impacts.[311] Sector-wide changes in political leadership might engender new political directions and priorities, leading to diffused emphasis on areas of work that the CD4D2 project focused on. In a host institution in Nigeria, for example, a CD4D2 participant helped to formulate policy recommendations that were brought to the respective ministry at

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[304] Interview 20-06-2023

[305] Interview 28-10-2022, Interview 17-02-2023

[306] Interview 15-05-2023a

[307] Interview 27-06-2023

[308] Interview 12-07-2023

[309] Interview 15-05-2023a, Interview 08-11-2022

[310] Interview 26-06-2023, Interview 15-06-2023

[311] Interview 20-06-2023, Interview 24-11-2022

the end of their assignments.[312] Whether those policy recommendations were taken up was largely dependent on the priorities of the ministry and the stability of the administration.

Based on our discussions with host institution staff, diaspora participants and stakeholders, and taking the limitations as discussed above into account, we identify three tangible impacts of CD4D2 that seem to persist over time: *training materials, (transnational) networks* between diaspora and host institution staff and a *changed attitude towards the role of diaspora in their countries of (ancestral) origin*. Enduring training materials include PowerPoint presentations used in online trainings, research protocols drawn up, or reporting templates. During our interviews with host institution staff, we noted how these tangible documents and materials were used after the diaspora participant left the institution, either for future training of staff or to shape practices and procedures at organizational level. Transnational networks refer to the emergence of connections between participants and host institution staff as a result of the placements, which tend to last after completion of the assignment period. Almost all CD4D2 participants and host institution staff we spoke to mentioned to still being in touch after the assignments ended. These engagements varied anywhere between sending WhatsApp messages solely for social purposes[313] to diaspora participants answering questions of colleagues[314] and even running entire IT-departments at the host institution on their own initiative.[315] Third, our interviews with host institution staff and stakeholders made clear that on a wider level, CD4D and likeminded projects send a signal to the general population about the possibilities for engaging diaspora for development purposes in their country of ancestral origin. Across all three project countries, interviewees mentioned that the project and the high-quality "diaspora" that took part in it demonstrate to both the government and wider society that diaspora should be better engaged as they as provide beneficial resources for the country .[316] In Iraq in particular, one stakeholder mentioned that CD4D helped to broadcast to society that reconciliation after war is possible because various demographic groups including diaspora were willing to participate.[317]

With these identified outcomes that seem to last over time also come a set of reservations, however, as discussed in the next section.

4.4.3. Considerations on CD4D2's sustainability

Consolidating the potential benefits of CD4D2 and like projects requires that specific conditions for sustainability are in place. In this section, we address important considerations to take into account in future programming when it comes to sustainability, especially in relation to the overall implicit theory of change of the project.

Various actors involved in the CD4D2 project seem to understand impact and the sustainability of outcomes differently. Different stakeholders and some host institution staff we spoke to in retrospective interviews were critical of seeing training materials and networks as outcomes and instead argued that such products are inputs that can engender broader societal change.[318] They spoke about inputs being used to support more "measurable" outcomes related to, for example, ensuring that more children can attend school, or that better health care is provided to citizens. This thinking, which focuses more on the kinds of results that can be used to measure and monitor development within frameworks like the SDGs,

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[312] Interview 15-11-2022
[313] Interview 15-06-2023
[314] Interview 23-03-2023
[315] Interview 25-11-2022a
[316] Interview 29-03-2023a, Interview 29-03-2023d, Interview 23-03-2023, Interview 16-06-2023, Interview 27-06-2023
[317] Interview 29-03-2023c
[318] Interview 20-06-2023, Interview 06-04-2023, Interview 26-06-2023b, Interview 22-05-2023, Interview 27-06-2023, Interview 12-07-2023

perceives improved networks and training materials not as tangible, enduring outcomes but solely as inputs that can be instruments to spur further change.

Tied to this, secondly, is the little dedicated attention to issue of sustainability in CD4D2's underlying overall theory of change. This implicit theory of change stipulates that knowledge transfer should engender capacity building within institutions at large. In the narrative proposal, however, there is little explication of mechanisms through which knowledge can be converted into capacity building at the individual or organizational level. As discussed already in section 4.1, the pre-departure trainer for the project argued that there was little regard for necessary pedagogical skills on the part of diaspora to ensure that knowledge is taken up, and subsequently used, in the best way possible. Furthermore, there is almost no distinction made between transferring knowledge as such and ensuring that said knowledge will ensure long-term improvements. Various stakeholders have suggested that the CD4D2 model, and the resulting Terms of References for individual assignments following this model, should therefore contain exit strategies that specify how efforts are continued after the diaspora participants leave. At present, much emphasis is placed on the voluntary continuation of efforts on the part of diaspora participants through transnational networks. In the narrative proposal it is even specified that "virtual follow-ups will systematically be included in every expert's contract up to 6 months after finishing the assignment to monitor the impact at the institution's level and ensure the assignment's sustainability" (IOM n.d., p. 6). In our interviews, it became clear that such systematic follow-ups were not included, and that follow-up activities that did take place were arranged on a discretionary basis. Indeed, while some diaspora participants we spoke to were not in touch at all anymore with their colleagues, others mentioned to being in touch sporadically upon their request to answer questions, to co-work with them to further the efforts they have started, or to being in charge of entirely new departments, as previously discussed. This wide range of activities conducted shows that continuation of efforts is ongoing, which is likely to be helpful to establish sustainability of impacts. Yet, the wide variety in which follow up is done also shows that follow up activities happen on a discretionary basis, depending on the individual capacity and goodwill of diaspora participants and is not resulting from a pre-defined strategy embedded in the overall implicit theory of change. As touched upon already in section 3, the CD4D2 project presumes a strong commitment on the part of diaspora experts to participate in the program and such voluntary continuation of efforts afterwards might be seen as part of this. Yet, from a programming and evaluation perspective, such voluntary commitment might lead to different outcomes when it comes to impact and sustainability of impact.

Third, the evaluation made clear that sustainability of changes is likelier to take place in some country contexts over other. This has to do with earlier identified factors such as the availability of resources to consolidate and further changes spurred by the CD4D2 assignments, the stability of governance institutions, as well as the degree to which fragility and insecurity is likely to interrupt project work. Respondents from Somalia in particular spoke of how the wider context of conflict, reconciliation, and institutional/governance transitions affect the resources available to both institutions and individuals, shaping how they are receptive to, enact, and eventually sustain changes. Multiple and overlapping crises, such as governance changes and environmental hazards like droughts, were also identified a disruptor of sustainability of changes in Iraq. In contexts of (continuous) disruption and uncertainty, it can be challenging for institutions and individuals to effectively look ahead, to earmark resources to support sustainable knowledge exchange and application, and to mobilise scarce resources for outputs that may not be perceived as a priority. On individual level, it is also important to recognise the mental space that is required to process and enact change, both on the side of a knowledge receiver and on behalf of a knowledge sender. Individual concerns about issues like personal security, job stability, and inter-personal conflict on the work floor can all negatively impact an individual's resilience and can "crowd out" an individual's ability to care about sustaining change.

5. Discussion and recommendations

The evaluation of the CD4D2 project has been guided by seven research questions that have been investigated by a combination of desk review of literature and project documentation, surveys with CD4D2 participants, and semi-structured interviews with host institution staff, CD4D2 participants, and programme stakeholders. In this section of the report, we integrate the findings of the evaluation together to provide answers to the seven research questions before providing recommendations for CD4D2 and like programmes.

5.1 Reflections on research questions

The CD4D2 evaluation was guided by seven research questions, which loosely follow the "cycle" of CD4D2 placements to understand how key individuals within the project—diaspora participants, host institution colleagues, host institution managers—engage with assignments. The seven questions are:

1. Why do diaspora members and host institutions choose to participate in CD4D2?
2. What are the expectations of diaspora members and host institutions in the CD4D2 programme?
3. What are the experiences of host institutions, colleagues, and participants in the CD4D2 programme?
4. How is knowledge being transferred? What forms of knowledge are transferred?
5. What factors enable and inhibit knowledge transfer? How does this compare to CD4D1?
6. What is the impact of the CD4D2 programme on host institutions, colleagues and participants?
7. How sustainable are the impacts?

The questions provided a framework for exploring how the CD4D2 model affected the expectations and experiences of participants and, eventually, how the model stimulated knowledge transfer and (sustainable) capacity building. The research questions structured discussion of evaluation results in section 4; here the questions will be answered by integrating the findings of different themes together.

5.1.1 Motivations for participation

The evaluation finds that diaspora members choose to participate in the CD4D2 project for a variety of altruistic and non-altruistic reasons. Coinciding with the idea of "national solidarity" underlying many diaspora engagement programs[319], the vast majority of interviewed CD4D2 participants mentioned their desire to contribute to the development and/or post-conflict reconstruction of their country of (ancestral) origin as their primary motivation for participation. A variety of "non-altruistic" motivations stimulated participants to join the programme in addition to the altruistic motivations. These motivations included a desire for further professional and personal development, emotional satisfaction, getting "in touch" with their country of (ancestral) origin, establishing networks, setting up businesses, and "trialing" more permanent return or a more transnational lifestyle. Host institutions' primary motivation for participation was to benefit from knowledge and skills that they could not receive in-house or within the country at large. Some respondents framed this within a larger project of decolonization; as a just way of reversing flows of human capital from the Global North back to the Global South. The evaluation made clear that knowledge transfer as such was not always a primary motivation for host institution staff: while for some, their engagement with diaspora as experts was primarily motivated by learning, other host institutions wished to attract diaspora as international consultants to fill employment gaps.[320] In the latter situation, learning was not a primary motivation, but rather a welcome side effect.

5.1.2 Expectations of participation

The evaluation finds that diaspora participants' expectations of the CD4D2 project differ and are connected to their degree of connectedness to their county of (ancestral) origin. Across countries and in

[319] Kapur (2001), Siar (2012)
[320] See also Mueller and Kuschminder (2019, p.24) on Sierra Leone

line with CD4D2's objectives, participants mentioned expecting their work to establish concrete improvements in the working procedures and processes at the host institution. Participants who were either born in the project countries or had lived there for a substantial part of their lives emphasized becoming "bridge builders" who could support the translation of knowledge and skills gained in the Global North to the context and skill levels in their countries of origin in the Global South. Participants who had not visited their country of (ancestral) origin often, however, often admitted to not fully knowing what to expect, or of deliberately keeping their expectations low to avoid disappointment. On the part of host institutions, priority learners and managers expressed different expectations of the CD4D2 placements. Whereas the former unequivocally mentioned expecting to substantial learning by receiving "general information", very specialized and technical information, or getting "different perspectives", managers' expectations were more clearly mixed and influenced by their perception of diaspora. Those who had high and great expectations of diaspora clearly articulated this in the context of diaspora as being culturally situated "in between", enabling an understanding of the country context and being able to adapt their knowledge and skills to be relevant to the institution. A minority of managers were more skeptical, however, and mentioned not expecting diaspora to perform miracles. They doubted whether participants could indeed translate their knowledge and skills to local needs well enough and mentioned the need to carefully manage perceptions of diaspora as threatening or "outsiders" at the workplace.

5.1.3 Experiences in CD4D2

Participants and host institution staff reported overall positive experiences within the CD4D2 project. Across the board, staff mentioned having enjoyed working with the participants and having learned from them, whereas the diaspora participants mentioned having fulfilled their goals and getting a sense of accomplishment from their work done.

In terms of assignment preparation, CD4D2 participants mentioned feeling prepared for their assignments, assisted by the mandatory pre-departure training addressing expectation management, perceptions about diaspora in development, creating awareness of cultural challenges, understanding methods of knowledge transfer, consolidating coaching and conflict-resolution skills, and working on supporting sustainability of efforts. Participants mentioned appreciated this preparation but missed deeper engagement with social, political and economic structures in the project countries. Preparation on the part of the host institutions varied widely by organization, with varying degrees of attention to initial needs assessments, developing a clear and manageable Terms of Reference, and informing their staff on the arrival of CD4D2 participants. Participants and host institution staff overall reported good cooperation, clear communication, and a friendly work environment. There seemed to be different levels of involvement of host institution focal points and IOM country office focal points across countries. While most participants were satisfied with communication and cooperation, unclarity about roles and responsibilities sometimes led to confusion and perceived absence of support, which was especially problematic in emergency situations, such as a reported suicide bombing in Somalia. On some occasions, host institution staff would reported more negative experiences with some CD4D2 participants, ranging from their inability to deliver the required tasks to difficult working relationships due to character clashes. Reported difficulties seemed to be the result of an unlucky match of individuals to CD4D2 assignments rather than a reflection of the underlying model of the CD4D2 project. The evaluation made clear that the CD4D2 model as such may present some challenges in Somalia specifically, where all but one interviewed participant experienced (initial) difficulties in their relationship with host institution staff, generally stemming from hostility and negative perceptions towards diaspora on behalf of colleagues. Some female participants moreover noted additional difficulties stemming from unsupportive working cultures. After assignments finished, diaspora participants and host institution staff generally reported staying in touch, mostly for incidental trouble-shooting in more-or-lesser degree, happening largely at the discretion and goodwill of participants themselves.

5.1.4. Forms and mechanisms of knowledge transfer

Knowledge was transferred – or exchanged – with different intensities and by means of a variety of different modalities and methods in the CD4D2 project. Based on the evaluation, we distinguish between five types of assignments emerged as part of the evaluation: 1) provision of one-to-many training; 2) one-to-many training of trainers; 3) co-working; 4) independent organizational capacity building, and; 5)

individual development of networks. The different assignment types each made it more-or-less likely for knowledge exchange to take place, with the last two modalities not premised on knowledge exchange per se and the first two clearly premised on knowledge exchange. Mechanisms supporting knowledge exchange could either be more explicit or implicit. Explicit methods of knowledge transfer included giving formal trainings, assisting in problem solving, suggesting new ways of working, and organizing workshops. In about half of the assignments discussed during the evaluation, virtual or on-site formal trainings took place. More implicit methods of knowledge transfer, such as coaching, clarifying roles and responsibilities, and encouraging teamwork also took place. Mentoring and coaching in particular was an often-mentioned method of knowledge exchange, yet it was not always clear what kinds of knowledge or skills participants tried to transfer while engaging in such activities. Furthermore, we also noted that various activities that took place in the CD4D2 project – which on some occasions were the sole or predominant focus of said assignments – did not require knowledge exchange at all to take place, such as updating documentation, drafting policy plans, writing internal memos, and translating materials.

Different forms of knowledge were exchanged throughout assignments. We distinguish between "hard" and "soft" knowledges: the former includes cultural and social transfers that are less tangible and less quantifiable, whereas the latter point to mainstream scientific, technological, and economic knowledge.[321] We find that both forms of knowledge are exchanged during CD4D2 assignments, and that, in contrast to most Terms of References, soft knowledge exchange prevailing and was given more importance by CD4D2 participants. Participants particularly highlighted the importance of "attitude change", widening staff's understanding of what their work entailed, changing competencies such as project management and communication, and helping colleagues to see the "bigger picture". Hard knowledge exchange took various forms and included the introduction of "new knowledge" or complementary knowledge to priorities already in place at the host institution. Whether soft or hard knowledge, all participants highlighted the importance of translating new skills and knowledge to the local context in such a way that is understandable and usable for their colleagues.

5.1.5 Inhibitors and enablers of knowledge transfer

The evaluation found four broad factors that crucially shaped how knowledge exchanges takes place. Since these factors relate mostly to internal project logics and underlying assumptions, we see a convergence between CD4D1 and CD4D2. First, knowledge transfer is not always an explicit part of assignment Terms of References. We argue that this is the case either due to an overly ambitious or broad needs assessment, or a bigger need to fill structural shortage of staff within specific host institutions. Especially in the latter situation, it became clear that CD4D's core premise – capacity building *through* knowledge transfer – was not systematically integrated into the design of all placements. Second, knowledge transfer merits a specific skillset and capacity on the part of those who exchange knowledge, which were not always present or used to select participants or priority learners. On the part of host institution staff, a base level capacity needed to enable further knowledge consolidation was not always present, which sometimes stood in the way of effective knowledge transfer. On the part of participants, pedagogical skills and 'disseminative capacity'[322], which are of crucial importance for knowledge to be effectively exchanged and taken up, were not always present.[323] A third factor pertains to opportunity structure, which includes a wide array of organizational- and country-specific factors that enable knowledge transfer, such as management promoting learning, a good understanding and friendly working relationship between diaspora and staff, and availability of necessary resources and infrastructure to allow internalization and activation of knowledge. Finally, COVID-19 was articulated as both enabling and inhibiting knowledge transfer, depending on assignment objectives and modality. Virtual assignments were often hampered by unstable internet connections and the inability to co-work and translate theory to practice, yet both CD4D2 participants and host institution staff highlighted the heightened accessibility of trainings and the ease of combining virtual and in-country modalities enabled by use of online communication systems.

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[321] Siar (2012)
[322] Tang et al. (2010)
[323] Ignelzi (2002)

<u>5.1.6 Impacts of CD4D2</u>

The evaluation design cannot account for direct, causal changes between intervention (CD4D2 assignments) and specific outcomes of interest on individual, organizational or societal level. Instead, we understand impact as the significance and potentially transformative effects of an intervention by examining potentially enduring changes in systems or norms.[324]

On the part of host institutions and its staff, the evaluation made clear that capacity building at both the individual and organizational level has occurred. On the individual level, CD4D2 assignments engendered change both in *how* staff conducts their work (e.g., by supporting new workflows) and in the actual *content* of their work (e.g., by learning new techniques and methods). Important pre-conditions for individual capacity building included a good fit between the assignment content and the daily work realities of staff, the presence of an organizational environment that stimulates continuous learning, and – similar to knowledge exchange – proper pedagogical skills on the part of diaspora. The evaluation identified four types of organizational capacity building that occurred during the CD4D2 project: "laying the groundwork" for new structures or business lines, developing curricula and teaching materials, networking, and challenging institutional norms. Overall, it seemed that diaspora were less confident about their contributions to organizational capacity building as opposed to individual capacity building. The evaluation argues that there are four key challenges that might hamper organizational capacity building: a lack of knowledge transfer activities that have clear continuity, reliance on key individuals to carry sustainable change, the legitimacy and stability of institutions, and finally the retention of knowledge within the institution due to staff turnover or priority changes.

Individual capacity building similarly took place among CD4D2 participants. This mostly took the form of developing soft skills that were both useful for them in their professional and private lives. Examples include learning how to be flexible and adapt to unexpected circumstances and working in diverse teams in terms of capacity, ethnicity, and religion. Their participation in the project, however, had further self-reported impacts that do not fit well under either individual or organizational capacity building. These include getting more in touch with their country of (ancestral) origin, getting a clear(er) view on their professional development and pathways, finding new interests, and expanding their networks. In Somalia specifically, we noted that a substantial number of participants adopted an (even more) transnational lifestyle after participating in the project.

<u>5.1.7 Sustainability of impacts</u>

It is difficult to assess the sustainability of impacts mentioned above given the limited timeframe of the project and evaluation and factors outside of the control of the CD4D2 project, such as availability of financial and human resources within host institutions, stability of leadership, and sector-wide changes in policy agendas. Instead, we reflect on the likely enduringness of activities and outcomes associated with the CD4D2 assignments. Across interviews, it became clear that host institution staff felt that their participation in the project was meaningful and of importance for the future working of their organization. Three outcomes of the project in particular seem to persist over time. The first one is training materials established during the CD4D2 assignments, which are used by many host institutions for further training and refinement. Second are transnational networks, which refers to the ongoing connections between participants and host institution staff. The purpose of these ongoing connections vary by assignment and range from social contact to participants running newly set up departments and assisting host institutions with finding additional resources. Third and finally, the CD4D project at large engendered a change in the perception of diaspora in the project countries, enforcing their legitimacy as actors in development and post-conflict reconciliation. Such likely enduring changes can be better reinforced in future programming by incorporating sustainability considerations more in the theory of change underlying assignments and paying due attention to elements of country context, like institutional instability, that are likely to accelerate or inhibit sustainability of impacts.

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[324] OECD (2019)

5.2 Recommendations for future programming

Based on the evaluation findings and answers to the research questions, we have been able to identify practices and design principles underlying the CD4D2 model that both support and frustrate the project in meeting its (implicit) objectives. These observations are brought together in this section, which reflects on how lessons learned from CD4D2 and, to a certain extent, CD4D1, can guide the design of future interventions. We organized these according to the phase in the participant assignment that it most applies to.

5.2.1 Pre-assignment intervention design

Even before a specific host institution, diaspora expert, or assignment has been identified, a number of decisions are made in how assignments should be constructed and delivered that shape how knowledge transfer eventually transforms into individual and institutional capacity building. In the stage of pre-assignment intervention design, the overall logic of assignments and the alignment between specific assignments and the wider objectives of CD4D2 is set. There are four recommendations related to the overall intervention design that can support the project, or like future projects/programmes, to meet identified capacity-building objectives.

- *1.1 Clarify roles/responsibilities of stakeholders in different implementation countries across the project cycle:* A number of actors facilitate different aspects of the CD4D2 programme, spread across countries and institutions. The CD4D2 project is complicated and requires tight coordination across these actors to avoid duplication of efforts, delays due to single individuals acting as bottlenecks, ambiguity of responsibility or accountability, delayed action in situations requiring urgent response, and so on. Respondents were entrepreneurial in solving problems on their feet and used different main contact persons (e.g., host institution focal points, IOM county office focal points) to identify solutions, but in some (emergency) situations, it was not always clear who they should contact. To ensure tighter coordination in implementation, existing stakeholder maps may be reviewed and specific roles should be identified within specific institutions. The identification and clarification of roles entails discussion of responsibilities that each role has at different moments of the project cycle, and it should importantly include an inventory of what preconditions and resources should be in place to ensure that the role can be fulfilled. This process should not just occur on host institution level but on wider project level, with a meeting of host institution focal points, IOM country office focal points, IOM Netherlands staff, and Dutch embassy personnel included in the role clarification process. An important aspect of this role identification and clarification is a description of *roles* as such and not of the *individuals* who fill those roles. Focusing on the level of the role can help in identifying opportunities that may be otherwise overlooked if the role is conceptualized as a specific individual, whose capacities may assist in the present execution of a role but that may not be assured in the future. A number of tools can assist in conducting a stakeholder mapping of this nature; one that may be particularly useful in defining responsibilities is the RACI matrix.[1] A RACI matrix is a project management tool that helps define roles and the relationship of those roles to specific activities or decisions in a project, with roles each assigned a designation of *responsible, accountable, consulted,* or *informed* related to a specific project element. As an example, one role that may be defined is that of CD4D2 focal point in an IOM country office. A stakeholder mapping can identify how this role executes tasks related to, for example, TOR development and approval, or emergency assistance to a CD4D2 participant in the field, and it should show how this role executes these tasks in conjunction with others (e.g., CD4D2 country lead in the IOM NL office).

- *1.2 Develop and integrate explicit feedback cycles in project planning:* The CD4D2 project currently generates feedback and monitoring data throughout the project cycle, which can be used to further calibrate and improve processes and outcomes on individual, assignment, and institutional level. How feedback and monitoring data is incorporated into future planning in a more structured manner is not always clear, however. For example, the curriculum of the pre-departure training is regularly updated and adjusted to reflect the needs of participants, yet there does not seem to be a systematic approach to generating data on the appropriateness and relevance of pre-

departure trainings that are then fed back to the trainer and that inform curriculum development or delivery. Similarly, the development of terms of reference (ToRs) and the extent to which ToRs reflect the underlying theory of change of the CD4D2 project seems to have been inconsistently monitored or improved in response to feedback on the appropriateness of ToRs. Given the number of stakeholders involved in the project who receive both formal (e.g., through CD4D2 participant reports, project evaluation reports) and informal (e.g., received through unplanned consultations with CD4D2 participants) feedback, it may be beneficial to explicitly describe what type of feedback and monitoring data will be generated, when, by whom, for what purposes, who will receive it, and how the use or take up of feedback will be monitored. Finally, there should be a clear strategy in place for using evaluation data and outcome to inform (future) project design, with the model of direct follow up projects incorporation evaluation insights.

- *1.3 Calibrate assignment support resources, activities, objectives, and outcomes to country and sector context:* Assignments held in different countries and sectors are likely to face specific constraints and opportunities that shape the way the specific assignment will contribute to meeting the overall objectives of the CD4D2 project. As similarly mentioned in the CD4D1 Final Evaluation[325], in fragile state situations in which institutions in target sectors face structural resource limitations, high turnover and limited institutional memory, and potential security hazards that can disrupt daily activities, assignments may not be able to support knowledge exchange in a way that supports individual and institutional capacity building in the same way as assignments in other contexts do. It is therefore important to calibrate the resources used to support assignments, and the internal alignment of assignment activities, objectives, and outcomes, in a way that recognizes country context, and perhaps even to recognize that other country or sector choices might fit the model and its ToC better. Support resources may include elements like housing stipends for CD4D2 participants, which may need to be higher in less secure environments, or stipends for host institution focal points who may be assigned guidance of CD4D2 participants on top of existing work. Alignment of assignment activities, objectives, and outcomes for specific sectors and contexts requires a critical evaluation of the assumptions underlying the CD4D2 model and how knowledge transfer or exchange is expected to foster capacity building. One implicit assumption within the CD4D2 model is that there is enough institutional memory and stability for the initial groundwork CD4D2 participants lay to be continued by other staff upon the end of their assignments, which are generally limited in duration. This assumption may be mismatched to the nature of institutions within some contexts and may require adjustment, for example, by explicitly drafting an end-of-assignment handover strategy that includes collecting additional resources for future work. In sectors like governance planning (e.g., as in the Ministry of Planning in Kurdistan), where activities focus on responding to future challenges, assignments may need to be constructed in a way that activities and outcomes build up on scenario building exercises and other forms of anticipatory modeling, as this will allow the assignment to generate outcomes that are more likely to be of longer-term benefit to the host institution and that can be continued by future work.

- *1.4 Leverage CD4D2 participants' non-altruistic motivations:* While CD4D2 participants often decided to participate in the project due to a desire to "do good" or "support development" in their countries of (ancestral) origin, many also made strategic use of CD4D2 assignments to meet other personal goals. These could include, for example, learning more about the country to "test out" return, learning more about the context and/or establishing connections and networks to support the development of a private enterprise, or taking advantage of their time in the country to contribute to or engage in family events. These motivations can act as powerful means of amplifying the reach and potential impacts of CD4D2. For example, participants who desire to start their own business or expand/consolidate an existing business may have access to networks and resources that can be useful for sustaining the outcomes associated with CD4D2 assignments. As another example, participants who want to spend time in the country to explore possible (longer-term) return may be more willing and able to take on longer-term assignments. Assessing the motivations of potential participants and tailoring participation pathways to those

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[325] Mueller and Kuschminder (2019, p.30)

motivations may help CD4D2 and projects like it to capitalize on participants' desires and resources, including by identifying opportunities to feed participants' (post-)assignment networks into further activities. This recommendation has a flipside, however. Most participants and host institution staff stated that the terms of the assignment could not be fulfilled within the timeframe and given resources for the assignment. Many CD4D2 participants dedicated additional time and, in some cases, private financial resources, to ensure that the goals and objectives of their ToRs could be met. While it is important to recognize and act on the motivations of CD4D2 participants, assignments should not be designed in a way that they can only be feasibly achieved by assuming that CD4D2 participants will be willing and able to volunteer outside of the prescribed tasks and hours of the placement. To manage the diversity of participation motivations, CD4D2 (or similar initiative) promotional materials and documentation may also avoid the focus on altruism as an implicit opposite ty self-interest and instead may speak of the richness of engaging diaspora from different stages of the lifecycle, professional pathways, and visions on holistic development.

5.2.2 Pre-departure assignment planning

Individual assignments follow from the general CD4D2 model and specify how specific activities will lead to specific outputs, outcomes, and eventually objectives that align with those of the overall CD4D2 project. The evaluation has identified some discontinuity between individual assignments and the overall project objectives, some of which may be remedied by more systematically approaching internal assignment logics. We therefore provide four recommendations related to the formulation of assignments and to preparedness for starting assignments.

- *2.1 Provide further guidance on conducting structural needs assessments and transforming needs into realistic assignment priorities:* To formulate specific assignments, host institutions first conduct needs assessments to identify the most pressing needs that a CD4D2 participant can address. Different types of host institutions operating in different sectors will likely have different types of needs, not all of which can be addressed within the confines of the CD4D2 project and within the intervention model that fundamentally focuses on knowledge transfer. The initial needs assessment informs the design of assignment tasks and objectives, and so providing guidance to what "needs" are and what needs can be feasibly addressed within the context of the CD4D2 project parameters can help align expectations. Whereas in past assignments needs assessments seemed to vary in form and focus, more structural needs assessments that provide an even clearer description of what kinds of resources CD4D2 can provide within the project itself and what resources would need to be sought from external and complementary sources can support calibration between needs, resources, and the tasks of an eventual expert. The parameters/limitations of the CD4D2 project did not always seem to be well taken up by respondents, particularly when the project contributed to ongoing interventions or to projects that were scaled up with support of other resource pools. Similarly, providing examples of assignment activities and objectives that can be achieved within a three-month assignment duration can also be given to host institution focal points responsible for collecting and prioritizing needs, as it can help demonstrate how needs pass into the formulation of reasonable activity plans and can help assist in the prioritization of needs that an assignment then addresses. Taking the latter approach might imply shifting terminology, as conducting a needs assessment implies an inventory or recollection of *all needs* present within an organization, whereas a narrower structural assessment of needs most clearly linked to assignment contributions may support development of more manageable ToRs.

- *2.2 Conduct capacity assessments within host institutions:* Host institutions receiving CD4D2 placements generally have acute needs that the CD4D2 project can address, but there are generally some preconditions that should be in place to ensure that the envisioned CD4D2 assignment can be carried out as envisioned. Particularly in assignments with strong knowledge transfer components, knowledge prerequisites or preconditions may need to be in place for host institution staff to benefit from the intended level and depth of provided information. Some assignments may also require that specific equipment is available to support application of knowledge. Once the desired

activities, outputs, and outcomes of an assignment are known, it may therefore be useful to conduct a *capacity assessment* of the unit receiving a CD4D2 placement to understand the existing capacity of colleagues to receive, localize, internalise, and practice novel knowledge and skills and to identify the resource requirements necessary for knowledge exchange to take place. In contrast with a needs assessment, which should inventory known absences or limitations, a capacity assessment should help benchmark the level of knowledge or starting points of host institution staff prior to the start of an assignment to guide the CD4D2 participant in designing appropriate knowledge-exchange activities. The results of a capacity assessment may lead to adjustments to the ToRs or planned activities within an assignment, or it may be used to design pre-arrival orientation/training activities within a unit receiving a CD4D2 placement to close smaller knowledge gaps. The better calibration of assignment activities to existing unit-level capacity can help ensure that the objectives of an assignment can feasibly met, which can in turn help ensure that activities translate into changes that can be made sustainable over time.

- *2.3 Preparation and expectations management for host institution staff:* The evaluation made clear that host institution staff are not always well-informed about the contours of the CD4D2 programme, as well as particular activities taking place. Building on recommendations on selecting colleagues and launching introductory meetings posed in the CD4D1 final evaluation[326], and tying to recommendation 2.2 above, we argue that pre-arrival orientation session will help to inform host institution staff about what the objectives of a CD4D2 assignment are, what they can expect from the CD4D2 participant, and who they can speak to if they encounter challenges in working with the participant. Given the finding that some host institution staff were not made aware of the CD4D2 participant and assignment until the CD4D2 participant approached them, having pre-arrival orientation sessions can in any case support convergence of expectations across the host institution.

- *2.4 Explicitly construct theory of change linking assignment modality, knowledge transfer activities, objectives, and sustainability mechanisms:* As highlighted throughout this evaluation, the extent to which knowledge transfer activities were explicitly addressed within CD4D2 assignments varied, despite pressing by IOM the Netherlands.[327] Whereas assignments involving one-to-many trainings, or a training-of-trainer modality had knowledge exchange at their core, assignments involving independent development of organizational networks or capacity did not per se have knowledge exchange activities clearly embedded in the pathway between activities and objectives. While assignments of different modalities are not by definition better or worse, they do signal inconsistent internal alignment of assignment activities, outputs, outcomes, and objectives with those of the wider CD4D2 project. Tools like logical framework matrices (or logframe matrices)[328] can be used to show how specific activities contribute to desired objectives. Logframe matrices are often included within monitoring and evaluation plans, and they may be used to identify further actions or activities that should be undertaken to ensure continuity of activities. In this instance, such a tool might help to explicitly embed the project's theory of change in easy-to-use documents and materials for host institutions, such as needs assessment forms. Such forms or templates can support host institution staff in articulating their needs in ways that match the underlying theory of change, and therefore increase the likelihood of activities, outputs and outcomes of the project being both internally aligned and aligned with the overall objectives of CD4D2. Sustainability of assignment outcomes and activities has been another challenge signaled throughout the evaluation, with aspects like limited assignment duration, institutional turnover, and resource shortfalls all disrupting the continuity of potential CD4D2 assignment impacts. While these challenges often fall outside of the control of IOM directly, they do suggest that assignment ToRs should consider specific activities that can be included as part of an expert's *"exit strategy"* to ensure that the institution has measures in place to support further dissemination of knowledge. The "exit strategy", a recommendation also posed in the final CD4D1 evaluation[329], can include

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[326] Mueller and Kuschminder (2019), p. 28-29)

[327] See also Mueller and Kuschminder (2019, p.24)

[328] For more info, see: https://tools4dev.org/resources/logical-framework-logframe-template/

[329] Mueller and Kuschminder (2019, p.32)

specific knowledge dissemination activities (e.g., workshops or seminars) or outputs (e.g., a protocol or policy) that ensures retention of knowledge inside the organisation through multiple staff or individuals, with many of these activities already consistent with the planned focus activities of a given assignment. Yet by explicitly documenting how activities use knowledge transfer to build capacity, and by documenting what can be done to ensure the longer-term application of knowledge inside an organisation, it may be possible to identify inconsistencies in the assumptions and impact pathways within specific assignments, which can then be adjusted to promote greater consistency with the implicit CD4D2 theory of change and with sustainability in mind.

5.2.3. On-going assignment support

The experiences CD4D2 participants and host institution staff have during in assignment are importantly shaped by decisions and processes in the pre-departure stage, with many of the recommendations given above likely to affect ongoing assignments. The recommendation in the 'on-going assignment support' phase reflects actions that can only be undertaken when an assignment is underway.

- *3.1 Conduct brief mid-assignment progress reviews, including on the likelihood of assignment completion within the set timeline:* Regular written reporting from the diaspora expert to IOM seems to occur at the end of (most) assignments, which can help ensure that any issues or challenges that IOM may have a role in supporting or solving are identified. Early identification of challenges to likely completion of the assignment objectives is important, not only to identify solution mechanisms but also to manage realistic expectations and support harmonious relationships among all involved parties (e.g., CD4D2 participants, host institutions, IOM). We therefore suggest to have brief mid-assignment reviews in which the diaspora expert and host institution focal point jointly draft a progress report, potentially following a template that includes tools like Gantt charts to reduce the time cost for reporting. A meeting with IOM may then be held to discuss the report and decide on next steps in the assignment, which could include extending the assignment, providing more formal conflict management if needed, discussing resource needs, and so on. In addition, we suggest that this assessment is preceded by an informal feedback moment between IOM staff and the diaspora expert to (informally) inquire whether everything is going well and if they need more assistance. This face-to-face and informal character can help diaspora experts to feel like IOM monitors their progress.

5.2.4. Post-assignment continuity

As an individual CD4D2 participant approaches the end of their assignment, how the outputs and outcomes associated with their assignment will be continued or sustained becomes an important element of planning. While continuity and sustainability of knowledge transfer has been addressed in previous recommendations, the set of recommendations within this stage of the CD4D2 cycle specifically concerns how planning of an assignment "exit strategy" can support knowledge continuity.

- *4.1 Plan for and leverage complementarities with other diaspora and development interventions:* The CD4D2 project fits within a wider ecosystem of diaspora-related and diaspora and development-related policies and programmes. Each of the target countries for the CD4D2 project have unique diaspora and development related contexts, with some countries having well-elaborated diaspora policies and institutions and others, like Iraq, having more incipient policy environments. A country's overall diaspora policy and programming ecosystem may provide both potential challenges and opportunities to projects like CD4D2 and like projects. Projects like CD4D2 may explicitly "hook in" to existing diaspora and diaspora and development policies and programmes. To an extent CD4D has done so by, for example, making use of large diaspora associations and networks like NIDOE to identify potential participants. Further complementarities with existing diaspora policies and interventions may exist in target countries of implementation, which may help foster greater coherence with the overall development strategy of the country, may support longer-term engagement of diaspora, and may help ensure continuity beyond the immediate lifecycle of an assignment or project. For example, countries with diaspora heritage tourism

policies may provide opportunities to the (adult) children of diaspora members to return to the country of (ancestral) origin, including for educational exchanges. If CD4D2 participants are concerned about being away from their families for longer periods of time, policies or programmes that support family mobility may reduce barriers to longer-term commitments. As another example, other international/inter-governmental organisations may offer interventions in similar sectors as CD4D2 assignments target, which may open up access to networks and resources that could further amplify or sustain outputs/outcomes associated with CD4D2 assignments. When deciding on sectors for CD4D2 assignments, and even when preparing for the placement of a CD4D2 expert, it may therefore be helpful for the CD4D2 focal point in the IOM country office to explicitly map related policies, projects, and programmes being run by the government and development-focused organisations to identify potential complementarities. Guidance on how to do such a mapping is addressed in some depth in the Global Migration Group's *Mainstreaming Migration into Development Planning[3],* with recommendations on conducting a scoping exercise (see section 2.2.4 in the guide) and conducting a situation analysis and assessment (see section 2.3.1 and annex B3 in the guide) particularly useful to structure such explorations and feed them into further assignment planning. Where possible, stakeholders involved in key identified projects or programmes may be consulted with to design specific future cooperation activities (e.g., joint seminars or workshops, participation in funding calls or grant proposals) that are included in the "exit strategy" for specific CD4D2 assignments.

- *4.2 Monitor the exit plan and sustainability strategy on assignment level, and identify the resources needed to maintain knowledge transfer:* The challenge of creating and ensuring sustainability of the outputs and outcomes created through CD4D2 placements has been underscored throughout the evaluation. Most of the countries in which CD4D2 operates were selected for intervention exactly because of their positions within (post-)conflict and development cycles, yet many are still consolidating institutions, laws, and practices that create supportive ecosystems for sustainable development interventions. As many of these elements are beyond the direct control for CD4D2, the project and assignments within it need to account for and design components to support continuity and sustainability despite the wider context of transition and uncertainty. The "exit strategy" described in recommendation 2.4 should provide explicit mechanisms to ensure that knowledge accrued in the context of CD4D2 assignments is retained and, ideally, amplified within and beyond host institutions. Monitoring how well the "exit strategy" is followed, and whether the activities taken to realize it are meaningful, would be one way to further support continuity of activities, and it may help diffuse responsibility for creating continuity away from the CD4D2 participant and toward the host institution and, to an extent, IOM.[330] Monitoring exit activities at the end of the assignment and then at specific moments in the future—for example, six months and 12 months from the end of an assignment—can both provide data on potential outcomes and impacts and can help emphasize to host institutions that they should act to support knowledge continuity. Monitoring exit strategies and the continuity of activities they include can also support identification of the resources needed to support continuity at different times after the end of an assignment. While IOM is not responsible for collecting these resources, knowing what is required to support continuous knowledge consolidation and expansion may help in informing the design and resourcing of similar future interventions.

- *4.3 Establish communities of practice to engage expertise of participants in future assignment preparedness:* The pre-departure training provided to CD4D2 participants, while positively assessed by participants, did not necessarily include guidance on navigating country-specific contexts or challenges, and it did not provide opportunities for exchange with former participants. Participants in CD4D2 assignments reported gaining unique competencies, skills, and insights, which can undoubtedly support future participants in their assignments. Making better use of the accumulated knowledge and experiences of former CD4D2 participants to prepare new participants for their assignments was recommended by participants themselves. One way to foster peer-to-peer exchange and insight sharing can be through establishing so-called "communities of practice", essentially a network of former, current, and potential CD4D2 participants. The communities of practice can

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[330] See also Mueller and Kuschminder (2019, p.34)

support pre-departure training and expectation management by drawing on the experiences, observations, and recommendations of participants. In some cases those insights may be country-specific, related to, for example, how to manage host institution expectations or how to de-escalate conflicts with management or colleagues. In other cases, the insights participants share may be more related to the content of work or the skills needed to execute that work, independent of country context (for example, related to pedagogical approaches to informal, adult education). These communities of practice can also provide a network of individuals with resources that can support further amplification of CD4D2 outputs and outcomes. In line with the CD4D2 mid-term evaluation report, we would recommend further consolidating "alumni" networks and communities of CD4D2 participants. Creating opportunities for continued exchange between/among CD4D2 alumni and host institution staff, like exchange visits, CD4D "alumni" fora or events, dedicated LinkedIn groups, and so on may be valuable to help host institutions and diaspora experts maintain connections and expand their networks beyond the people with whom an initial placement supported exchange.

- *4.4 Provide explicit validation of the work of diaspora experts post-assignment:* While most diaspora experts seem to be intrinsically motivated to contribute to CD4D2, the assignments they complete may require the experts to further hone and demonstrate competencies and skills that would be highly valued in the workplace and that may be strategically used as leverage by an expert for, for example, promotion or hiring decisions. To support the use of the placement experience for further growth, it may be valued by experts if they could receive a certificate of completion, micro-credentials, or other outputs that testify to the role of the expert in CD4D2.

5.4.5 Evaluation

Evaluation does not belong to any specific stage of a project or intervention but should be woven into the design of different stages of intervention. The CD4D2 project as designed included many moments for feedback and reflection, generating valuable data—both informal and formal—that could inform further iterations of the programme. The set of recommendations under this header relate to how monitoring and evaluation data may be more systematically integrated into the design of further programming.

- *5.1 Explicitly define alternative measures of impact and ensure coherence between collected data and impact at different levels and times:* One of the challenges identified throughout the CD4D2 evaluation is to define and eventually measure different kinds of outcomes associated with the CD4D2 programme. As the discussion of definitions in section 1.2 demonstrates, identifying discrete lines of influence and impact between components of the CD4D2 intervention and particular outputs and outcomes is challenging to do given limited observation moments, limited data, and the diversity of activities/outputs/outcomes associated with different programme components. Being able to identify direct lines of influence between CD4D2 activities and specific outcomes can be advantageous to identify how specific programme components or decisions shape "success", which can in turn support replication or consolidation of those components. If future evaluations should indeed demonstrate "impact", a complete impact methodology should be considered and embedded in the evaluation design from the beginning and should be conscientiously tailored to the specific assignment contexts. Included in such an impact evaluation design would be an inventory of different dimensions and ways of measuring impact, e.g., on the level of individuals, institutions, sectors, and beneficiaries. The objectives or impacts of CD4D2 on those different levels should be defined by the project from the outset and included within the larger programme-level logic model, which can in turn inform different proxies of impact. For example, on institutional level, one objective may be to harmonize practices or policies toward a specific standard, which would be sector-specific and require monitoring of both the presence and use of specific instruments like policies or protocols. On sector and beneficiary level, objectives could relate to enhancing outcomes of beneficiary populations, for example, in terms of increasing matriculation rates among children in a specific age cohort, which again reflects the need to tailor outcome and impact measures to sector. The data needed to support impact evaluation would need to be systematically collected from the beginning of the project, with sufficient budget, tools, and strategies in place to support its collection.

- *5.2 Economize data collection moments and support coherent reporting, monitoring, and evaluation data approaches:* Many CD4D2 participants, host institution focal points and staff, and IOM staff generated large amounts of data throughout the intervention, yet often without the explicit knowledge of or intention for it to be used for evaluation purposes. At times the request for additional reflection or information to support the evaluation was met with reservations because respondents felt that they had already shared information via different channels, with some respondents feeling that their time was not being efficiently used. To reduce respondent burden, we recommend economizing data collection moments throughout the project and finding ways of leveraging regular reporting (e.g., end-of-assignment reports from diaspora experts to IOM) for evaluation purposes. One way to do so would be to combine a CD4D2 participant's required reporting on the assignment to IOM and the host institution, perhaps with a specific form or online tool that can be used to distinguish which sections of the report should be delivered to each specific institution. Another way to do so would be to automatically trigger a request for an exit interview between a CD4D2 participant and the evaluation team when the participant submits the report, which could come in the form of a scheduling assistant that suggests that a respondent can choose specific days/times for a conversation with someone from the evaluation team. Another way would to be draw the evaluation team into the design of report tools, such as post-assignment surveys, and to allow evaluators to include specific questions or items in default reporting tools that are more specific to the evaluation context and that IOM does not per se receive data from. A capacity assessment (recommendation 2.2) can also be used as part of a formal evaluation methodology that seeks to trace causal lines of influence between intervention activities and an end state, as it establishes the baseline situation prior to intervention. Capacity assessments can be as wide or narrow as desired, for example, by focusing on very specific knowledge domains and inventorying what an individual knows and is capable of doing related to, e.g., specific technical skills, or a capacity assessment may inventory the conditions in place in a specific unit related to an overarching business proposition or activity line. Much in line with the previous recommendation, this recommendation speaks to having a wider vision for monitoring and evaluation made explicit and communicated to all relevant stakeholders from the beginning of the project. Respondents should know what information that will be asked for, at what times, for what purposes, and to whom it will be communicated as early in the project as possible, as this expectation management can help encourage participation.

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