2025

Landscape of Diaspora organizations in Germany

SURVEY RESULTS

DR. NORA JASMIN RAGAB

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Executive Summary

Objectives and Methodology

Diaspora Women in Action (DWiA) commissioned this survey to better understand the landscape of diaspora organizations in Germany, including their basic characteristics (year of establishment and location), membership, financial capacity, governance, impact, challenges, and needs.

The survey was implemented online in English and German and primarily employed convenience sampling and snowball sampling methods, by leveraging existing networks, digital platforms, and strategic partnerships to maximize participation and ensure the collection of diverse perspective. In total, 45 respondents completed the survey. A descriptive analysis was used to provide an overview of the characteristics of the landscape of diaspora organizations surveyed. In addition, we used a gender sensitive approach, by examining both the shared and distinct characteristics of women-led and mixed leadership diaspora organizations.

Key findings

Governance:

Women-led and mixed-leadership organizations are nearly equally represented. While women-led groups show higher inclusion of non-binary and gender-diverse leaders, mixed-leadership organizations also display internal gender diversity. Leadership teams are generally small, though women-led groups show greater variation in size. Youth and ethnic/religious minority inclusion is present but limited. Consensus-based decision-making is more common among women-led organizations while mixed-leadership more often decide on majority voting, indicating different approaches to participation and organizational culture.

Organizational characteristics:

Organizations represent a wide range of origin countries but are mostly concentrated in major German cities like Berlin and Frankfurt, with limited presence in rural or eastern regions. Nearly two-thirds of women-led organizations were founded in the last five years, indicating a surge in recent grassroots engagement by women in diaspora communities. Most organizations work on integration and cultural activities, with women-led groups focusing more on gender rights, and mixed-leadership ones on development, humanitarian work and youth.

Membership:

Most diaspora organizations are small (1–25 members). While all rely heavily on volunteer labor, women-led organizations report slightly higher rates of paid staff, both part-time and full-time, with might be linked to a slightly higher financial capacity. Membership in diaspora organizations is

predominantly composed of people with migration backgrounds. However, youth under 30 remain underrepresented, with very few organizations reporting significant youth-majority participation. While some organizations are rooted in specific ethnic or religious minority communities, most operate in more diverse or mixed contexts.

Financial capacity:

Most diaspora organizations operate on modest budgets—often under 10,000€—with financial instability reported across both women-led and mixed-leadership groups, highlighting structural funding challenges. Women-led organizations show more diversified funding—engaging public, foundational, and self-generated sources—while mixed-leadership groups rely more heavily on community-driven support like donations and membership fees. Despite greater access to formal funding streams, women-led organizations do not report higher financial stability, reflecting the limitations of project-based funding for long-term planning and organizational resilience.

Activities and impact:

Most diaspora organizations focus their activities within Germany, especially women-led groups, which prioritize local engagement through advocacy and community engagement. Both women-led and mixed-leadership organizations operate across multiple sectors and geographies, reflecting the diasporic need to maintain connections both locally and transnationally. While women-led groups are more Germany-focused, many still engage in origin-country activities; mixed-leadership organizations show a broader sectoral reach, particularly in humanitarian aid, democracy-building, and civil society. Diaspora organizations contribute to community resilience, political agency, and cultural preservation. Women-led groups report slightly stronger perceived influence in Germany, driven by targeted, identity-based advocacy and support work. Mixed-leadership organizations highlight broader service provision and transnational reach, with slightly higher perceived impact on the country of origin.

Challenges and needs

Across leadership types, diaspora organizations face systemic under-resourcing, with lack of funding cited as the most pressing challenge. This is compounded by bureaucratic hurdles, limited access to political networks, and competition with larger NGOs—creating a structurally constrained operating environment, especially for grassroots and volunteer-driven groups. Women-led organizations report heightened exposure to discrimination, economic precarity, care burdens, and identity-based exclusion—both within German society and in their countries of origin. Meanwhile, mixed-leadership groups face more challenges with visibility, community mobilization, and external institutional access. Diaspora organizations widely express the need for core funding, capacity development, and legal/administrative guidance.

Introduction

Background

Diaspora Women In Action (DWiA) is a working group that caters to the gender lens of the diverse diaspora communities in Germany. This working group consists of a small group of women who were nominated by other women to develop a possible mandate and network. As part of the exploratory phase, one of the first activities of DWiA is the initiation of a survey to better understand the landscape of the diaspora organizations and the similarities and differences in their operations and overall impact.

Objectives

The main aim of this survey was to better understand the landscape of diaspora organizations in Germany. Diaspora organizations have been defined as those, 'whose members and/or whose board of management consists of at least 50% of persons with a history of migration. This includes both registered and unregistered organizations. This survey seeks to consolidate the needs of diaspora communities in a concrete format to be able to transfer them to decision-makers aiming to support diaspora organisations. Giving a clear and sustained voice, the aim is to strengthen diaspora communities and increase their visibility and recognition in Germany.

This report summarizes the main findings of the survey and offers recommendations for different stakeholders engaging with diaspora organizations. The findings of the survey have been presented at the Diaspora Women in Action conference in May 2025. The discussions during the event further helped to inform the policy recommendations.

Methodological note

This section describes the methodological approached used in the survey, including its objective, sampling and outreach approach, the method of data analysis and limitations. Objectives

The survey aimed to gather comprehensive information on diaspora organisations in Germany, including their basic characteristics (year of establishment and location), membership, financial capacity, governance, impact, challenges, and needs, through a series of sections. The survey was implemented online in English and German, which allowed the respondents to complete the survey individually on their own time. It primarily featured closed questions with predefined answer options, alongside an open text box for additional responses as needed. To capture richer insights, particularly regarding perceived impact and success stories, a few open-ended questions have also been included. In the design of the survey, it was ensured to keep a good balance between length of the survey and depth of information collected, with the completion of the survey taking on average not exceeding 15min.

Sampling and outreach

Due to the survey's limited timeframe and the absence of a comprehensive directory of diaspora organisations in Germany[1], the research design primarily employed convenience sampling and snowball sampling methods. This approach relies on accessible contacts and participant referrals to gather responses. It is important to

[1] In Germany, the registry of "Ausländer Vereine (Foreigners' association)" that lists association whose members or leaders are predominantly foreigners; which is often used as a reference point for diaspora organization is not publicly available.

note that such methods may limit the representativeness and generalizability of the findings. The outreach aimed at leveraging existing networks, digital platforms, and strategic partnerships to maximize participation and ensure the collection of diverse perspective:

- **Outreach via email:** The survey has been sent to 411 diaspora organisations, which have been identified in previous mapping studies of diasporas from different origin countries in Germany. Next to one initial email, 2 reminder emails have been sent.
- **Outreach via Stakeholders:** The email has been sent to stakeholders working with diaspora, including GIZ, Danish Refugee Council (DRC) and the Expert Council on Integration and Migration (SVR Migration), with the request to share it with their networks.
- **Outreach via Social media sites:** An engaging post explaining the survey's objectives and importance has been shared on LinkedIn to encourage participation.
- **Distribution of flyers** featuring QR codes linked directly to the online survey have been distribute in different locations (e.g. community centres, diaspora events) in Berlin, Cologne, Frankfurt and Essen.

Overall, the survey was started by 141 individuals and finished by 45. The initial screening questions aimed to ensure that respondents were representatives of a diaspora organization in Germany. 25 respondents who started the survey did not fit this target group and, therefore, could not continue the survey. This means there was a drop-out rate of 50 per cent.

Data analysis

We used a descriptive analysis to provide an overview of the characteristics of the landscape of diaspora organizations surveyed. In addition, we used a gender sensitive approach, by examining both the shared and distinct characteristics of women-led and mixed leadership diaspora organizations. We defined women led, as organizations having 80 percent or more of women in the leadership. By leadership we mean the people that are involved in decision-making. In some cases, this can be the board, in others the management team, or the core team of active members. This threshold was chosen to capture as close as possible the potential distinctiveness of women-led organizations in terms of values, decision-making power, or organizational culture.

Limitations

While the survey offers valuable insights into the landscape of diaspora organizations in Germany, several limitations should be acknowledged. First, the use of convenience and snowball sampling **limits the generalizability of the findings.** As such, the results may overrepresent organizations that are already well-connected or more visible in existing networks. Second, despite outreach efforts via email, social media, and flyers, the final number of complete responses was relatively low (45 out of 141 survey starters), indicating a high dropout rate and possible survey fatigue or accessibility issues. This may particularly affect the representation of smaller, less resourced, or non-German/English-speaking organizations. Third, the descriptive analysis does not allow for testing relationsships or causality between variables, hence when analyzing differences between women-led and mixed leadership organizations, we cannot determine whether observed patterns hold when controlling for other factors. Third, the survey's online format and language choices may have unintentionally excluded individuals with limited digital access or language proficiency. Lastly, while the analysis applied a gender-sensitive lens, further qualitative exploration is needed to fully understand the complex and intersectional experiences of diaspora actors—especially those at the margins of visibility and recognition. Hence, the **findings offer valuable exploratory insights into trends, challenges, and**

strengths among diaspora organizations in Germany, but they do not statistically represent the full diversity or distribution of diaspora organizations across the country.

Diaspora organisations in Germany – state of literature

Migrant and diaspora organizations in Germany are diverse, dynamic and play a crucial, yet often underrecognized, role within the country's civil society. Bush (2008) defines diaspora organizations as "complex, formal, informal or semi-formal organizations that articulate and pursue goals that are asserted to be representative of the interests and aspirations of 'the diaspora' as a whole" (p.195). Diaspora organizations range from hometown associations, religious and cultural clubs and development, humanitarian or human rights organisations to political parties and activists, academic networks, and media outlets (Kleist, 2015; Sinatti & Horst, 2015). There is often a distinction made between migrant and diaspora organization, where the former focus primarily on improving the conditions of migrants in the country of residence (e.g., social services, language training, anti-discrimination work, local political participation). In contrast diaspora organisations tend to be more oriented toward the country of origin or transnational networks, focusing on development, humanitarian aid, advocacy for origin country issues, and diaspora diplomacy.

In this study we decided to include both migrant and diaspora organization without a sharp distinction, for the following two reasons. First, the transnational perspective of diaspora engagement highlights that diasporas' practices are embedded in and contribute to social, economic, and political processes and networks across geographic spaces (Glick Schiller, 2013). As actors of diaspora tend to be embedded in multiple societies at once, they may engage in both the origin and residence contexts simultaneously. In line with this, research shows that both **diaspora and migrant organizations are multi-sectoral and multi-sited actors.** They often operate at the intersections of culture, social services, education, politics, and transnational engagement, and their actions span **both local and transnational spheres**. Transnational practices of diaspora actors, hence, can be considered not just as a form of civic participation in the country of origin, but as a crucial part and voice of the civil society in the country of residence(Horst, 2018; Koopmans, 2004). Equally, many migrant organizations contribute to social, economic, cultural and political transformations in the country of origin, even if their engagement is less frequent and structured. Second, studies also highlight a **temporal dimension** of diaspora engagement as involvement might be sparked by developments and transformative events in the country of origin and result in actions that seek to influence the social, cultural, economic and political processes in the homeland. Over time diaspora actors may become more embedded in the local civil society structures and networks which enable or motivate them to pursue social, cultural and political actions oriented towards the country of settlement (Quinsaat, 2019, Ragab, 2020).

Finally, diaspora and migrant organizations should be considered as **heterogeneous actors**. This diversity is not only reflected in organizational aims and activities, but also in the lived experiences and positionalities of their members. Members of diasporas may face different social, economic and political circumstances and conditions in the residence country that, along with different trajectories of displacement and contextual aspects in the country of origin, shape identities, political orientations and their capacity of engagement. Hence, diaspora community mobilisation is often accompanied **by different power and exclusion dynamics that engender distinct spaces of representation, participation, and leadership**. Ang (2003) argues, diasporic identity "can be the site of both support and oppression, emancipation and confinement, solidarity and division" (p. 3). For instance, research shows that **women-led diaspora initiatives encounter numerous obstacles that stem from both external and internal power structures**. These challenges are shaped by intersecting factors,

including power dynamics within diaspora communities, structural inequalities in host societies, and the transnational complexities of engaging in activism across multiple contexts (Busbridge & Winarnita, 2015).

Looking at the landscape of diaspora organizations, estimated suggest that there are between 10.000 to 20.000 organizations, representing about 3% of all registered associations in Germany. Diaspora and migrant organizations are **primarily located in urban centers** with high proportions of foreign residents, such as Berlin and northern regions. However, their presence is also growing in rural and eastern areas, reflecting a broader geographical dispersion than previously assumed (Pries, 2013; Priemer & Schmidt, 2018).

Structurally, migrant and diaspora organizations in Germany are **highly heterogeneous**. However, most can be characterized as **small, volunteer-driven associations** with limited financial and infrastructural resources. Findings from the ZiviZ survey (Priemer & Schmidt, 2018) show that 77 percent of the migrant organizations in Germany have no paid staff and nearly half have annual budgets under €10,000. Despite these constraints, the study shows that migrant and diaspora organizations are well-networked, often collaborating with municipalities and other civil society actors, although such partnerships are not always experienced as equitable.

Further the findings show that diaspora and migrant organizations in Germany not only engage in sustainable development of their country of origin, but also transform social, cultural, political and economic spaces of the country of residence, by promoting the inclusion of co-nationals, advocating for rights and against discrimination or promoting intercultural dialogue and social cohesion. While many engage actively in intercultural dialogue—84 percent do so locally and nearly half participate in transnational cultural exchange. Often, **migrant and diaspora organizations often support groups at risk of marginalization**, including refugees, with more than half reported offering targeted services—demonstrating their critical yet undervalued role in fostering inclusion and social cohesion in Germany. The study argues that while their multidimensional engagement can be considered a crucial strength, it also represents a source of complexity when it comes to recognition and funding.

Finally, the studies on migrant organization captured here as well as most of the available diaspora studies in Germany **do not account for the gendered experience of diaspora engagement**, nor invest in an in-depth analysis of the diverse configurations of power that produce gendered hierarchies and positions (Ragab et. al, 2022). Hence, as Clifford (1997) rightly emphasizes:

> *"Diasporic experiences are always gendered. But there is a tendency for theoretical accounts of diasporas and diaspora cultures to hide this fact, to talk of travel and displacement in unmarked ways, thus normalising male experiences" (p. 258).*

This study seeks to contribute to closing this gap by offering a gender-sensitive analysis of diaspora engagement in Germany. Drawing on a survey conducted on the landscape of diaspora organizations, we examine both the shared and distinct characteristics of women-led and mixed leadership organizations, while also analyzing the gendered experiences and challenges faced by women in diaspora spaces.

Key Takeaways

- **Multidimensional and Transnational Engagement:** Migrant and diaspora organizations in Germany are diverse, operating across sectors like education, social services, advocacy, and

development. Many work simultaneously in the country of residence and country of origin, contributing to both local integration and transnational solidarity.

- **Structural Inequalities and Limited Recognition**: Despite being well-networked and essential to social cohesion—especially through support for marginalized groups—most organizations are small, volunteer-based, and underfunded. Their complex roles are often undervalued in policy and funding frameworks.
- **Gendered Dynamics Matter:** The gendered experiences of diaspora engagement remain largely overlooked in research. This study addresses this gap by offering a gender-sensitive analysis, with specific attention to women-led organizations.

Survey findings

Governance

This section aims to explore leadership structures, decision-making processes, and the representation of different demographic groups within leadership. By leadership we mean the number of people that are involved in decision-making. In some cases, this can be the board, in others the management team, or the core team of active members.

With 22 of women-led organizations compared to 23 mixed leadership organization the representation of each type is quite equal. However, it is important to mention that there are also varying degrees of diversity within each type. 10 out of the mixed leadership organizations have women as minority represented in the leadership, while in 7 cases there is equal representation between men and women. In addition, this type also includes organizations where women with 60 percent (4) and 70 percent (1) represent the majority. With regard to the women-led organizations, 15 organizations are fully women led, while 2 have 90 percent women and 5 organizations have 80 percent representation of women in the leadership.

With regard to the size of leadership (see Table 1) women-led diaspora organizations show a wide **range of leadership team sizes,** with a notable outlier of 120 members in one organization. The average (mean) size of leadership teams is 10 people, but the median—a better indicator in this case due to the outlier—is 3.5, suggesting that most organizations have smaller leadership groups, and the mean is skewed by one exceptionally large team. In contrast, mixed-leadership organizations tend to have more consistent and moderate-sized leadership teams. The average (mean) is approximately 4.7, and the median is 4, with a range between 2 and 11 members.

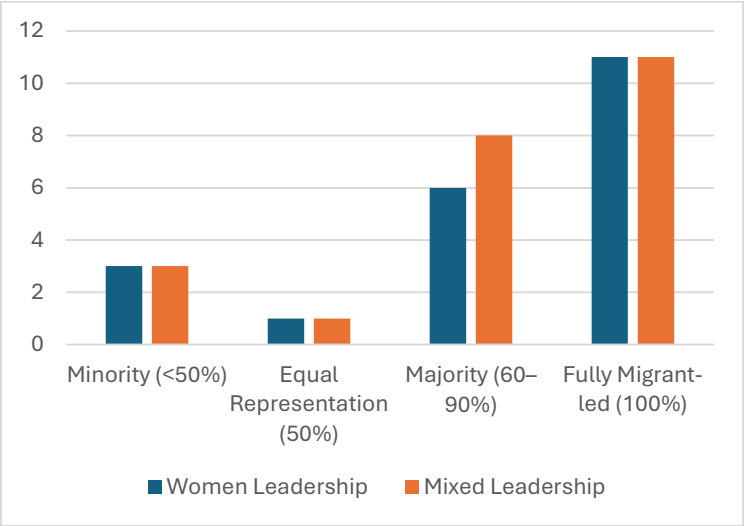
Table 1: Size of Leadership

LEADERSHIP TYPE	MEAN SIZE	MEDIAN SIZE	MIN SIZE	MAX SIZE
WOMEN-LEADERSHIP	10	3.5	1	120
MIXED-LEADERSHIP	4.7	4	2	11

One third of the women-led organisations indicated that they have non-binary/gender diverse people represented in their leadership, though with varying degrees ranging from 100 percent (3) to 50 percent (2) and 10 (2) percent. Only one of the organizations with mixed leadership indicated that they have non-binary and gender diverse people represented, who make up 100 percent of the leadership in that

organization. This contrast suggests that **gender-diverse leadership is more likely to be present in women-led diaspora organizations** than in those with mixed leadership.

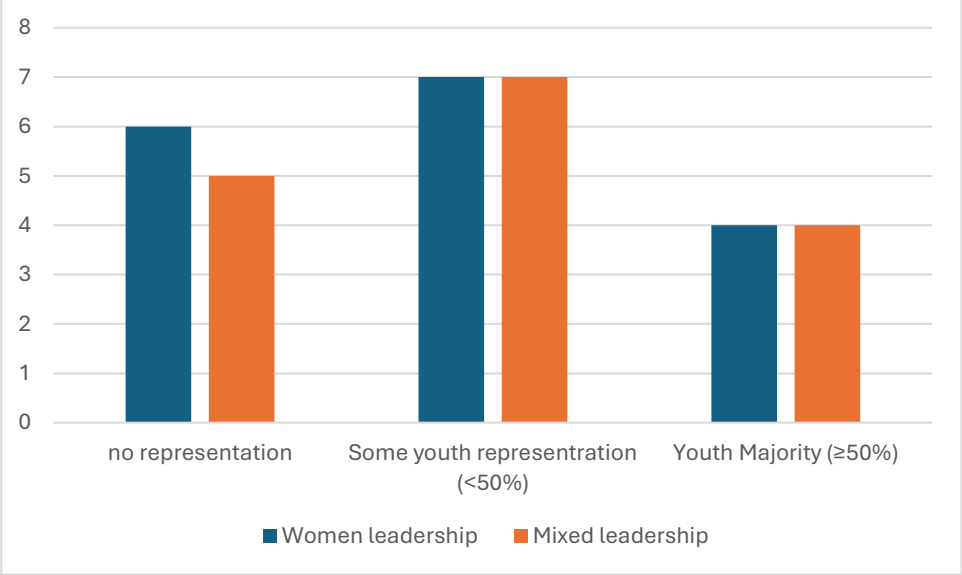
Figure 1: Representation of people with migration history in leadership



Most diaspora organizations are **led by people with a migration history**, either as a majority or entirely, with very similar patterns between women and mixed leadership. Roughly half of the organizations are fully led by people with migration background, with equal numbers both for women led and mixed leadership. A significant number also fall under the Majority (60–90%) category, with 6 women-led and 8 mixed leadership organizations. In six cases people with migration history represented a minority in the leadership, equally distributed between women and mixed leadership organizations. Notable, two organizations did not have people with migration history represented in their leadership, but people with migration background represented more than 50 percent of their membership.

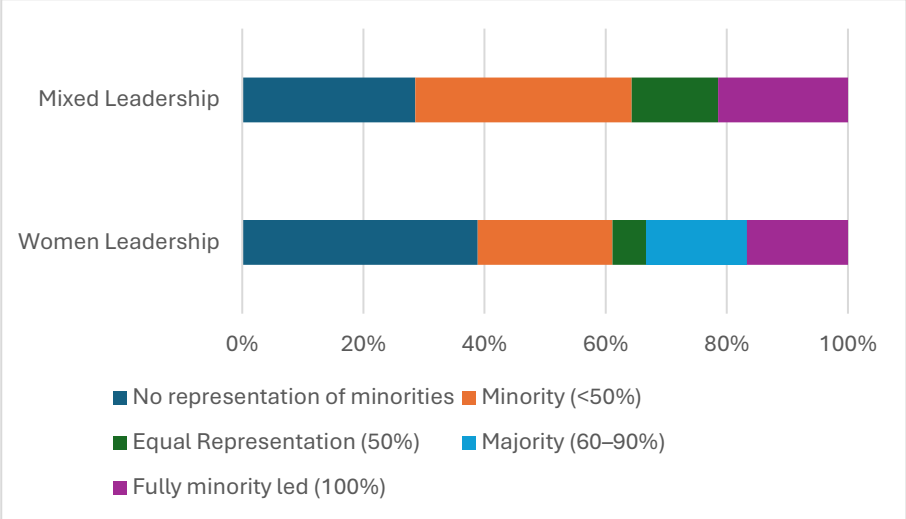
Looking at the representation of younger people (under 30years) (see Figure 2) one can observe quite similar patterns between women and mixed leadership organizations**. Across both women-led and mixed-leadership diaspora organizations, there is limited but notable representation of people under 30 in leadership roles.** In both types of organizations, 5–6 organizations reported having no young leaders at all. The most common case is where less than 50 percent of the leadership team are under 30, indicating some youth inclusion but not widespread youth leadership. Only 4 organizations in each category reported youth-majority leadership (i.e., 50% or more of leaders under 30), yet none of them was purely led by young people. These figures highlight both the potential and the challenges **of creating space for younger generations in leadership, suggesting that while intergenerational leadership exists, it remains relatively rare**.

Figure 2: Representation of young people in leadership



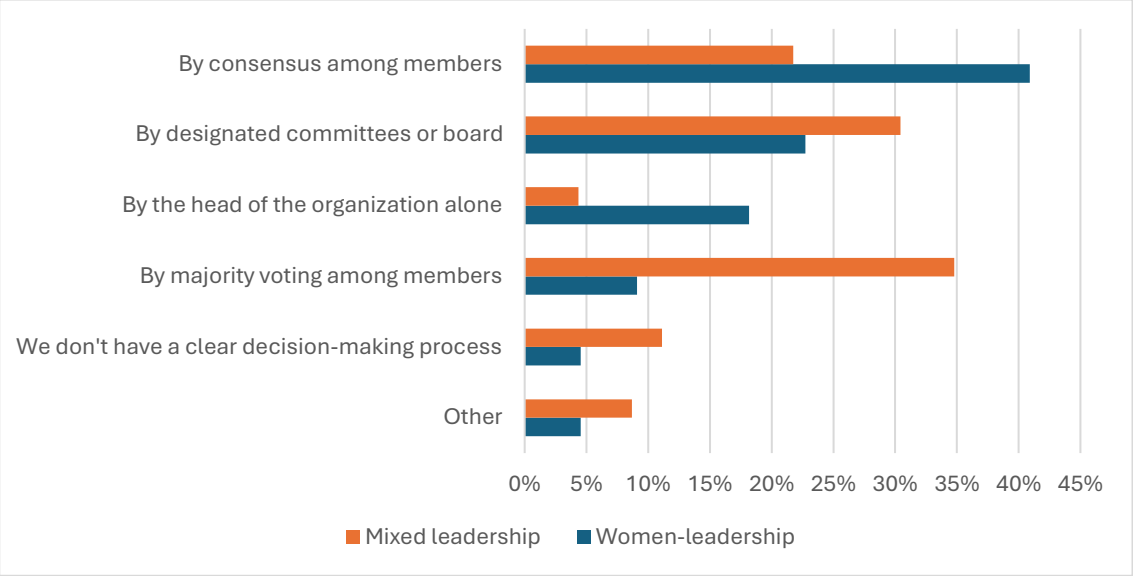
As Figure 3 shows, the data reveals a complex picture of (religious or ethnic) minority inclusion in diaspora organization leadership. Women-led organizations are more likely to have no representation of minorities at all but also show a stronger presence in leadership where minorities are in the majority. This suggests a polarized structure, where organizations may be either non-minority-led or predominantly minority-led, with fewer cases of shared leadership. Mixed-leadership organizations, on the other hand, tend to have more partial inclusion, with a majority (36%) having minorities represented in less than half of leadership. Yet they also show higher rate of fully minority led organizations.

Figure 3: Representation of ethnic or religious minorities



As Figure 4 shows, decision-making dynamics within diaspora organizations reflect distinct leadership cultures between women-led and mixed-leadership structures captured in the survey. **Women-led organizations** show a stronger preference for **consensus-based decision-making**, which suggests an emphasis on **horizontal leadership and collective decision-making processes**. In contrast, **mixed-leadership organizations** lean more toward **majority voting**, indicating a tendency toward **structured, possibly hierarchical or majoritarian decision-making frameworks**. Notably, both types use designated committees or boards significantly, but only a small number of organizations rely on leadership by a single head—highlighting that collective leadership remains central across the different organizations.

Figure 4: Decision-making processes

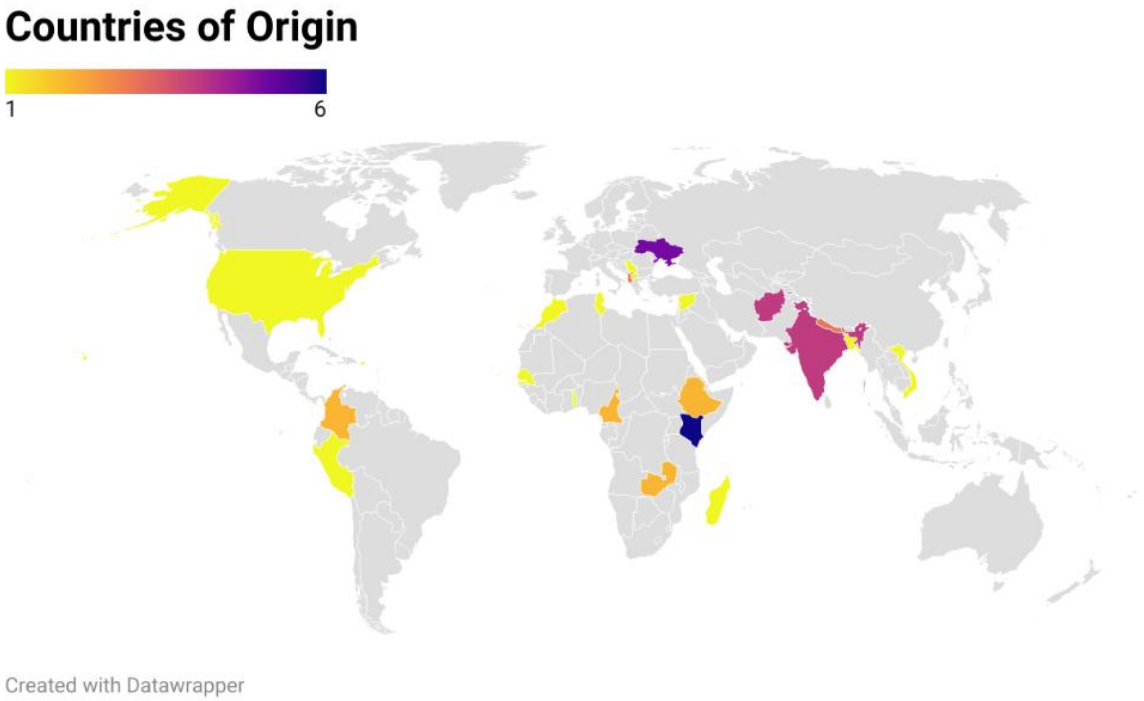


Key Takeaways

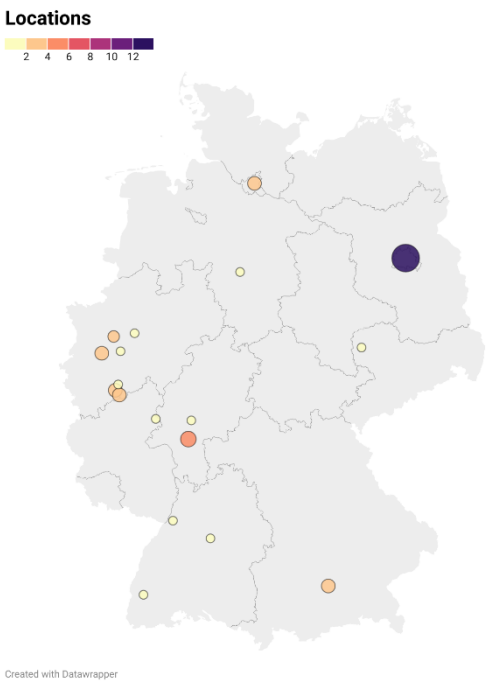
- **Gender Composition and Leadership Diversity**: Women-led and mixed-leadership organizations are nearly equally represented. While women-led groups show higher inclusion of non-binary and gender-diverse leaders, mixed-leadership organizations also display internal gender diversity—ranging from more male-dominated to majority-women leadership structures.
- **Leadership Structures:** Leadership teams are generally small, though women-led groups show greater variation in size. Youth and ethnic/religious minority inclusion is present but limited.
- **Decision-Making Cultures:** Consensus-based decision-making is more common among women-led organizations while mixed-leadership more often decide on majority voting, indicating different approaches to participation and organizational culture.

Basic Organisational Characteristics

This section captures the basic details about the organization, such as its country of origin, geographic location in Germany, year of establishment, main purpose, and legal status.



The map highlights a diverse range of origin countries across multiple continents, suggesting a broad and representation among surveyed diaspora organizations. As such, the survey captured diaspora organizations from a wide range of origin countries, including Afghanistan, Albania, Bangladesh, Cameroon, Colombia, Ethiopia, India, Kenya, Kosovo, Madagascar, Morocco, Mauritius, Nepal, North Macedonia, Palestine, Peru, Senegal, Serbia, Syria, Togo, Tunisia, Ukraine, United States and Vietnam. While most organizations connect to a specific country of origin, 4 organizations engage with several countries often at a regional level (e.g. Latin America) ore connecting different neighbouring countries. Another 3 organizations did not specify a specific country of origin, but rather people with migration background from diverse countries.

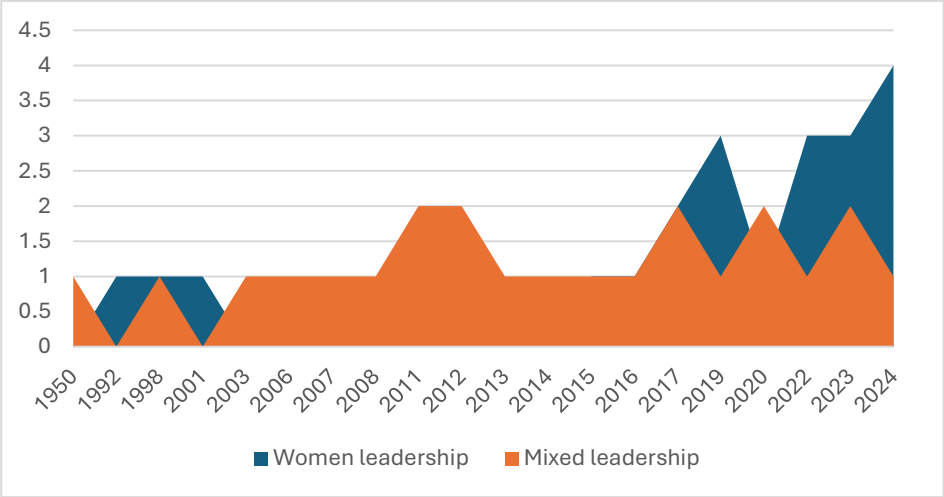


The map illustrates the **geographic distribution of diaspora organizations surveyed**. The highest concentration is in the city of Berlin, representing 14 organizations. Other notable clusters are in the western regions, particularly around Frankfurt am Main, Dusseldorf, and the Ruhr area, as well as in the northern city of Hamburg and the southern city of Munich. **While the majority of responses are concentrated in major urban centres, there is also some presence of organizations in smaller towns**. The map also reveals a limited coverage in eastern Germany outside of Berlin, highlighting a geographic imbalance in the representation of diaspora organizations in the survey. While this uneven distribution may reflect actual disparities in organizational presence, it is also likely influenced by the research design, which relied on convenience and snowball sampling methods. Hence, the findings may not fully represent the broader landscape of diaspora engagement in Germany, particularly in less networked or more rural areas.

Out of the 45 organizations surveyed, 37 **(82%) were officially registered**, while seven were unregistered initiatives. One organization didn't know/preferred not to answer. Notably, five of the seven unregistered organizations are women-led, highlighting how women in diaspora contexts often play a key role in community-based, informal organizing.

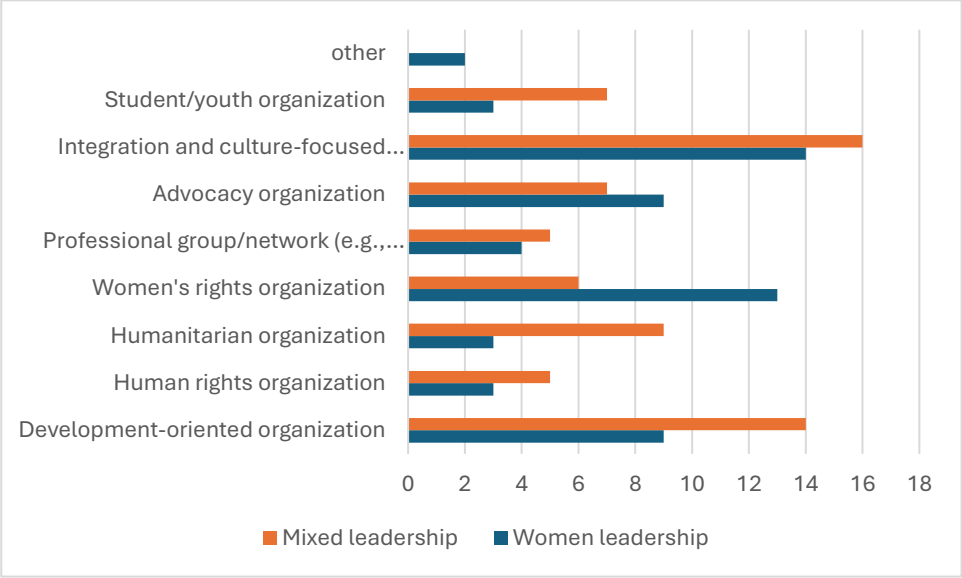
With regard to the year of establishment (see Figure 5), the survey captured a wider range of organizations, with the oldest dating back to 1950. Notably, a considerable number of organizations were founded in the last ten years. **Women leadership organisations surveyed tend to by much younger,** with almost two third (64%) being established in the last 5 years, in contrast to less than one third (30%) of organisations with mixed leadership. Generally, the distribution highlights a mix of long-term commitment and fresh engagement of diaspora organizations surveyed.

Figure 5: Year of establishment



When asked about what best describes the purpose of organizations (see Figure 6), the majority of organizations selected several types, which is in line with previous studies and suggests a multi-sector engagement of diaspora organizations. The data reveals that both women-led and mixed-leadership diaspora organizations are strongly engaged in integration and culture-focused work, suggesting that fostering belonging, participation, and community cohesion is a shared priority. Nonetheless, distinct emphases emerge between the different leadership types. **Women-led organizations show a stronger presence in women's rights and advocacy work**, reflecting their role in advancing gender-based equity, visibility, and empowerment. Meanwhile, **mixed-leadership organizations show more engagement in development, humanitarian, and youth-focused work**.

Figure 6: Organizational purpose



Key Takeaways

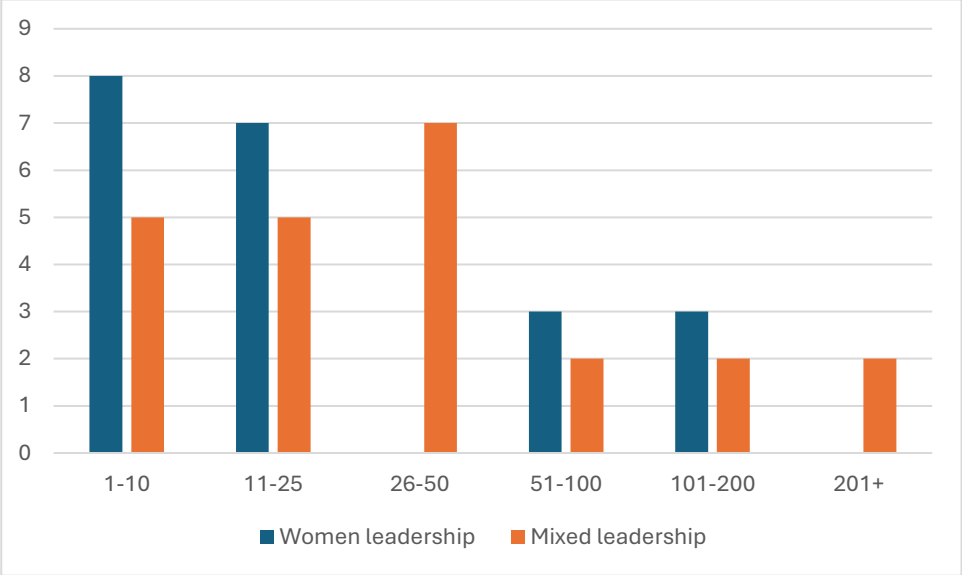
- **Diverse origins and urban-centered:** Organizations represent a wide range of origin countries but are mostly concentrated in major German cities like Berlin and Frankfurt, with limited presence in rural or eastern regions.
- **Recent growth of women-led initiatives**: Nearly two-thirds of women-led organizations were founded in the last five years, indicating a surge in recent grassroots engagement by women in diaspora communities.
- **Formal and informal structures**: 82% are registered, but more women-led groups operate informally, highlighting women's key role in community-based organizing despite structural barriers.
- **Distinct priorities by leadership type:** Most organizations work on integration and cultural activities, with women-led groups focusing more on gender rights, and mixed-leadership ones on development, humanitarian work and youth.

Membership

In this section, we assess the size, composition, and diversity of your organization's members, including gender and age distribution.

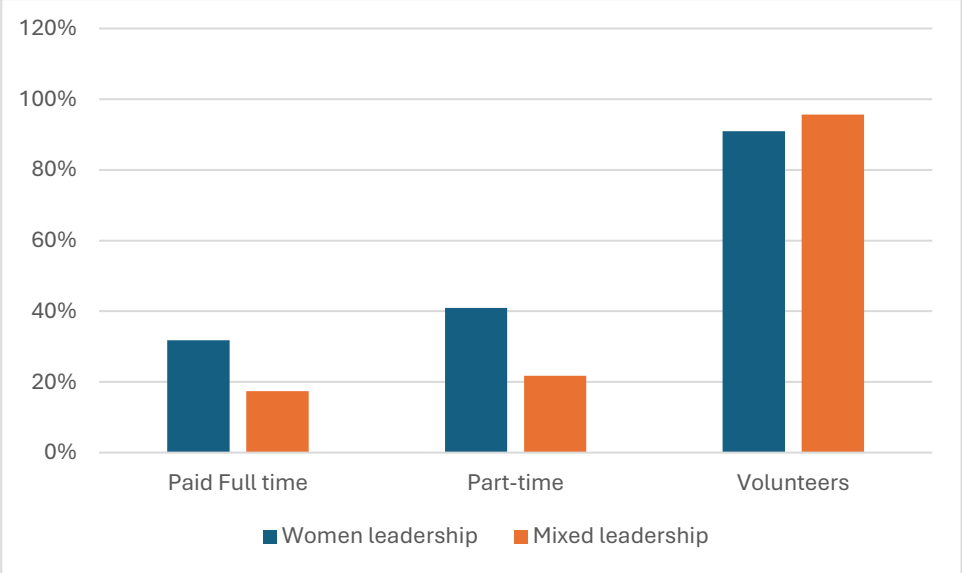
Most diaspora organizations surveyed are **relatively small in size**, with a strong concentration in the **1–25-member range**. This reflects the **community-based, resource-constrained, and often voluntary nature** of diaspora organizing in Germany. At the same time, there is **notable variation in scale**, ranging from small collectives to large organizations with over 100 members. This range illustrates the **diverse models of engagement and capacity** within the diaspora landscape. Women-led organizations are predominantly small, with 73 percent having 25 or fewer members, while mixed-leadership organizations show a broader distribution across size categories, with a stronger presence in the 26–50-member range and even up to 101–200 and 201+ membership size.

Figure 7: Size of membership



The data highlights the **overwhelming reliance on volunteer labor** among diaspora organizations surveyed, regardless of leadership structure—underscoring their **community-driven and resource-constrained nature**. As shown in Figure 8, around 40% of women-led organizations report having part-time staff, compared to just over 20% in mixed-leadership. Similarly, more women-led organizations have full-time staff (around 30%) compared to mixed leadership organizations (around 15%).

Figure 8: Representation of paid employees and volunteers



Looking at the representation of people with migration history, **the majority of diaspora organizations surveyed have a strong base of members with a migration background**, affirming their central role in serving and representing migrant communities in Germany. However, some differences emerge between leadership structures. In women-led organizations, people with a migration background make up at least 75 percent of the membership in all cases, underscoring a deep-rooted connection to migrant constituencies. More than half of these organizations (13 out of 22) are composed entirely of members with a migration history, reflecting a high degree of community embeddedness and alignment between leadership and membership. In contrast, only about 70 percent of mixed-leadership organizations reach the 75% threshold, and just five out of 23 report fully migrant-based membership.

With regard to young people under 30 years, only six organizations (3 women leadership and 3 mixed leadership) reported a representation above 50 percent in the membership. Out of these, only two have a representation above 90 percent, one each in the leadership types. These findings suggest that while **young people are present across organizations, few spaces are specifically designed for or sustained by youth participation at scale**.

The representation of ethnic and religious minorities within diaspora organizations varies, with relatively few groups composed primarily or entirely of minority members. In total, 39 organizations reported numbers on minority representation. Only four organizations—two women-led and two mixed-leadership—reported that 100 percent of their membership identifies as belonging to an ethnic or religious minority. An additional 10 organizations (3 women-led and 7 mixed) reported a minority representation of 50 percent or more. These figures suggest that while some diaspora organizations are deeply rooted in specific minority communities, many operate in more mixed or diverse contexts. Overall, the **findings highlight the heterogeneity of membership composition, potentially shaped by intersecting identities, organizational focus, and community needs.**

Key Takeaways

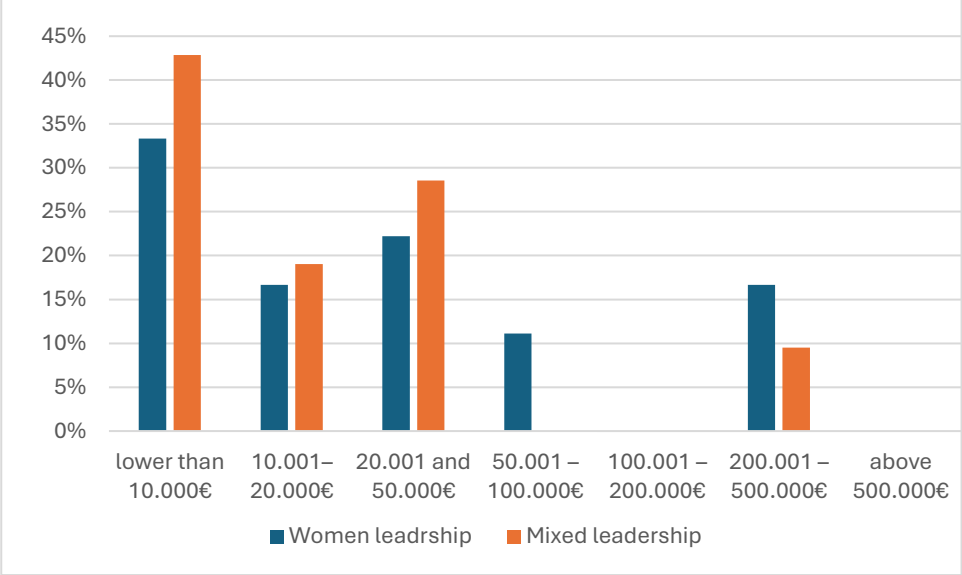
- **Small, Volunteer-Driven Organizations with Varied Scale:** Most diaspora organizations are small (1–25 members), particularly among women-led groups, reflecting their grassroots, community-based, and largely volunteer-driven nature. While all rely heavily on volunteer labor, women-led organizations report slightly higher rates of paid staff, both part-time and full-time, with might be linked to a slightly higher financial capacity.
- **Strong Migrant Representation, Limited Youth Engagement:** Membership in diaspora organizations is predominantly composed of people with migration backgrounds—especially in women-led groups, where 100% migrant membership is common. However, youth under 30 remain underrepresented, with very few organizations reporting significant youth-majority participation.
- **Diverse but Uneven Minority Representation:** While some organizations are rooted in specific ethnic or religious minority communities, most operate in more diverse or mixed contexts. The data highlights the heterogeneity of diaspora memberships shaped by overlapping identities and organizational missions.

Financial Capacity

This section explores the organization's financial resources, including annual budgets, funding sources, and financial stability.

The financial landscape of diaspora organizations is **marked by limited financial resources, with the majority operating on very modest budgets.** A significant portion of both women-led and mixed-leadership organizations report annual budgets below 10,000€, though the percentage is even higher among mixed-leadership groups (over 40%) compared to around 33 percent of women-led ones. Funding levels between 10,000€ and 50,000€ are fairly evenly distributed across both types of leadership, but women-led organizations show a slightly higher representation in the 200,000–500,000€ category. This suggests that while many women-led organizations operate with very limited resources, a small number may have achieved greater funding access, possibly through targeted programs. **Overall, the data underscores the persistent financial precarity facing diaspora organizations in Germany.**

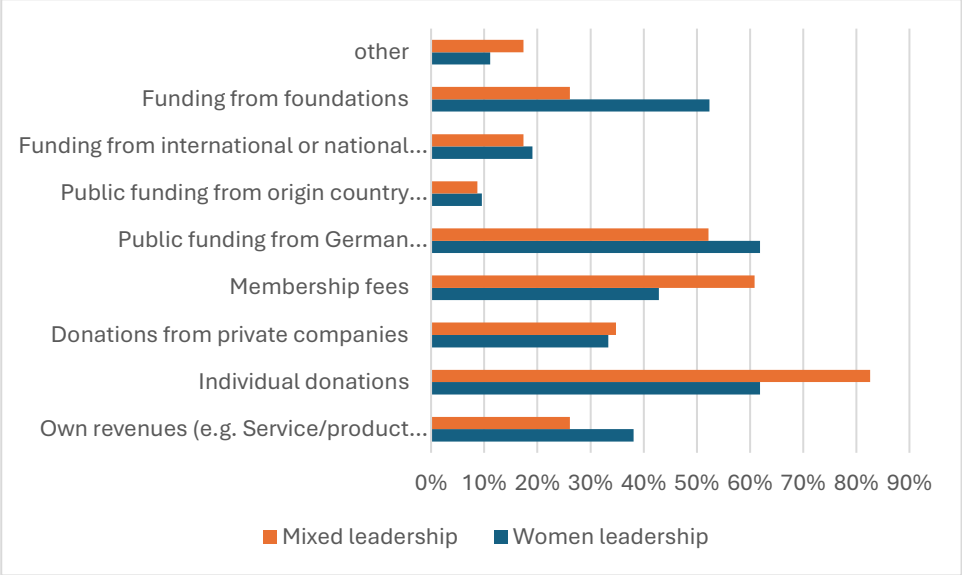
Figure 9: Organization's Annual Budget



The findings suggest that diaspora organisations surveyed tend to have a diversity of funding sources with most organizations relying on more than one for funding their activities (see Figure 10). Across all diaspora organizations, ***individual donations are the most common and relied-upon funding source****, with particularly high dependence among* ***mixed-leadership organizations****. While other sources—such as funding from international organizations, origin-country governments, and private companies—are accessed by some, they remain less significant and relatively evenly distributed across both leadership types.* ***Women-led organizations surveyed are more likely to generate their own revenues*** *through services or products and to receive* ***foundation funding*** *and* ***public funding from the German government****, suggesting greater diversification and engagement with formal funding structures. In contrast,* ***mixed-leadership organizations rely heavily on membership fees and individual donations****, indicating a stronger dependence on community contributions and grassroots support. The prioritizing of diversity and gender mainstream of some funding institutions and donors in Germany in the last*

years, may have led to an enabling environment for some diaspora women-led groups to access institutional fundings streams[2].

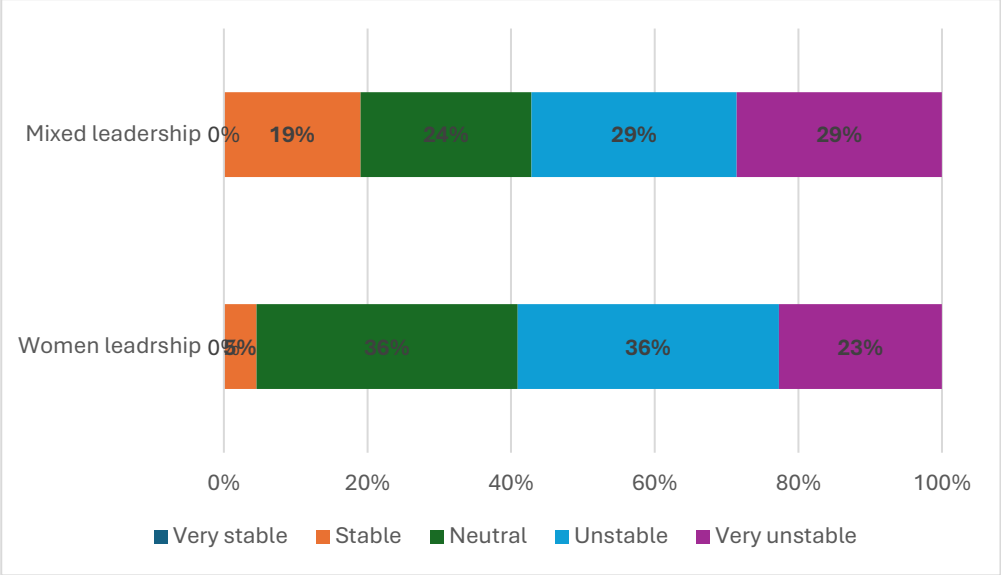
Figure 10: Funding sources



As shown in Figure 11, the majority of diaspora organizations surveyed perceive their financial situation as **precarious**, with instability being the dominant experience across both leadership types. More than half of both **women-led (59%) and mixed-leadership organizations (58%)** rate themselves as **"unstable" or "very unstable"**, highlighting widespread uncertainty and financial fragility in the landscape of diaspora organizations surveyed. Notably, mixed-leadership organizations report slightly higher levels of "very unstable" financial situation, while women-led organizations show more responses for "neutral" or "unstable". No organization in either category consider itself as "very stable", while stable assessments are more common among mixed-leadership groups. These findings underscore the **structural challenges diaspora organizations face in securing sustainable, long-term financial support**. Interestingly, while women-led organizations show higher access to public and foundational funding, this did not **translate into stronger perceived financial stability**. As funding for diaspora organizations is often project-based, this limits their ability to plan strategically, invest in core infrastructure, and build long-term resilience.

Figure 11: Financial stability

[2] See for example: Ragab et al. (2023): *Women in the Diaspora in Germany and their Engagement for Sustainable Development*, GIZ, Bundesministerium für Familie, Senioren, Frauen und Jugend (2021). Umsetzungsstand der Maßnahmen der Gleichstellungsstrategie der Bundesregierung nach Zielen. Retrieved from: https://www.bmfsfj.de/resource/blob/186044/e73f3b976eb878159250fa2471bd5436/umsetzungsstand-der-massnahmen-der-gleichstellungsstrategie-der-bundesregierung-nach-zielen-data.pdf



Key Takeaways

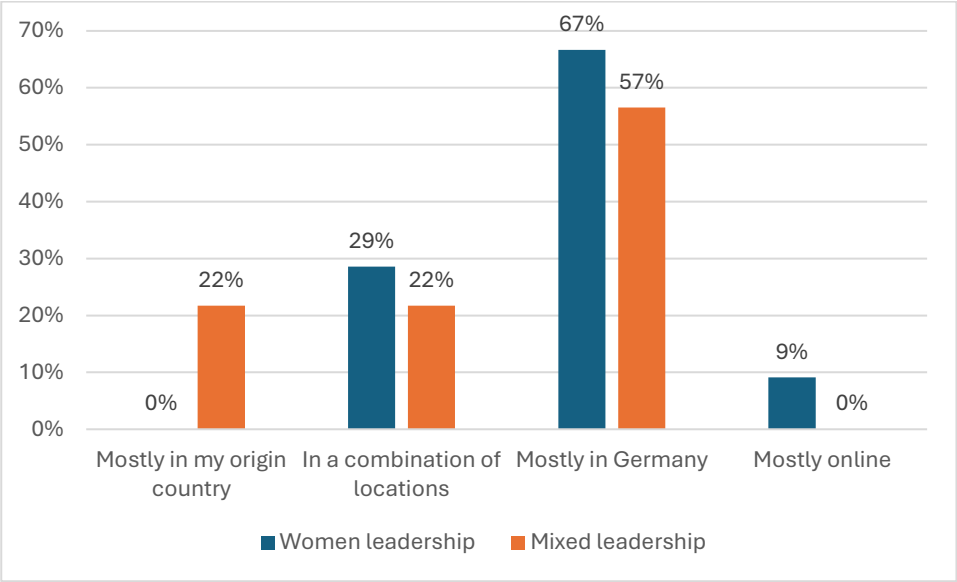
- **Widespread Financial Precarity:** Most diaspora organizations operate on modest budgets—often under 10,000€—with financial instability reported across both women-led and mixed-leadership groups, highlighting structural funding challenges.
- **Different Funding Models:** Women-led organizations show more diversified funding—engaging public, foundational, and self-generated sources—while mixed-leadership groups rely more heavily on community-driven support like donations and membership fees.
- **Access Doesn't Equal Stability:** Despite greater access to formal funding streams, women-led organizations do not report higher financial stability, reflecting the limitations of project-based funding for long-term planning and organizational resilience.

Activities and Impact

In this section, we assess the scope of the organization's activities, both in Germany and in the countries of origin, as well as the perceived influence on societal and political transformation in both contexts.

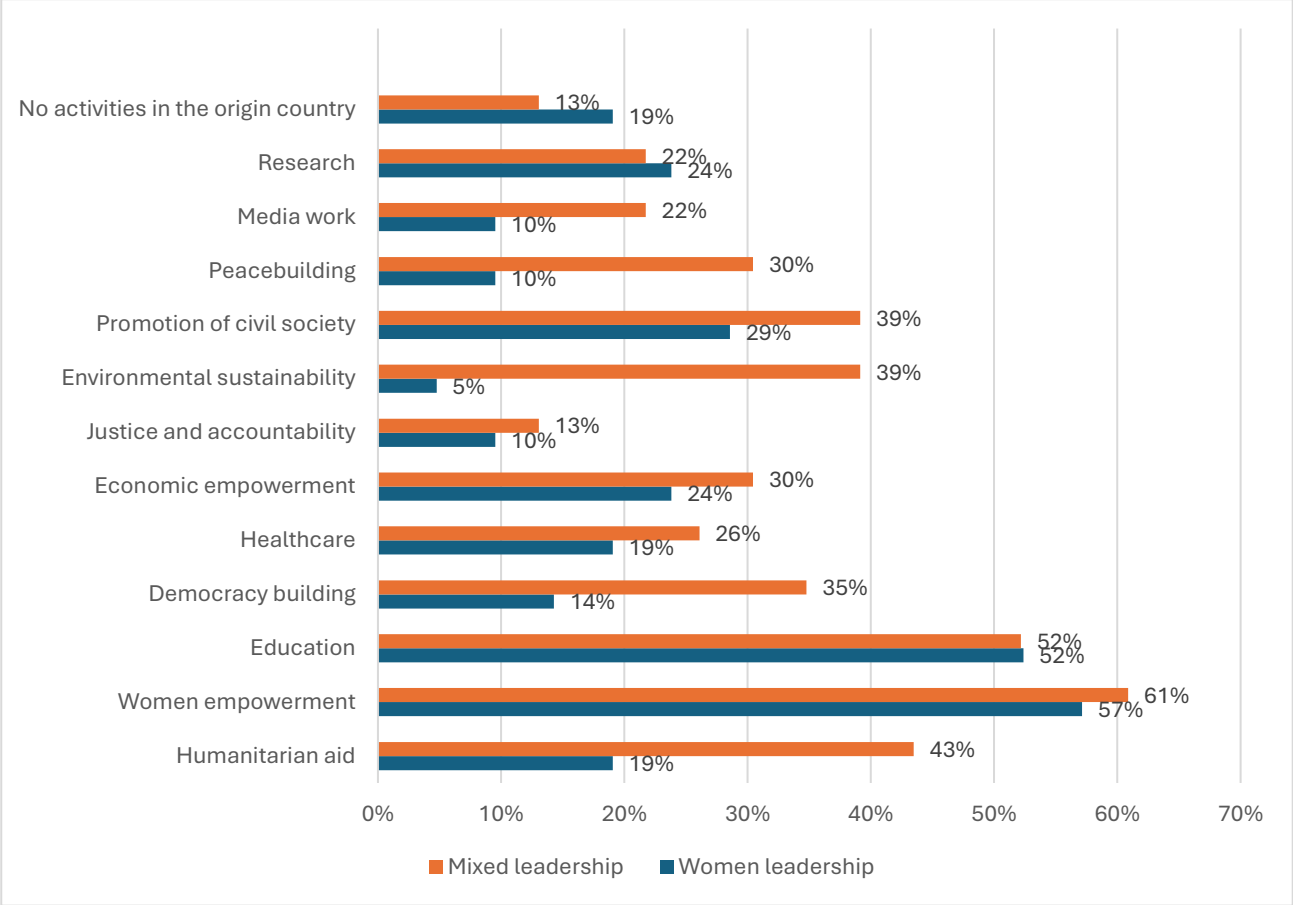
Looking at the geographical scope, diaspora organizations primarily carry out their activities **within Germany**, with this being the dominant setting for both women-led and mixed-leadership groups. The tendency is particularly strong among **women-led organizations**, with around two third operating mostly in Germany, compared to 57 percent of mixed-leadership groups. A notable share of both types also engages in **a combination of locations**, around **29 percent of women-led and 22 percent of mixed leadership organizations,** reflecting the diasporic nature of their missions and the need to maintain connections with communities both here and abroad. **Activities based primarily in countries of origin** is only reported by **mixed-leadership organizations**, while **only women-led organizations report working mostly online**. Overall, while most diaspora organizations are firmly grounded in Germany, the variation across leadership types reveals **different spatial strategies and capacities for transnational practices.**

Figure 12: Geographical scope



When examining **activities in the country of origin,** both women-led and mixed-leadership diaspora organizations **engage across a wide range of sectors.** Interestingly, **a strong focus of diaspora organizations regardless of the leadership type lies in women empowerment,** with even mixed leadership organizations reporting a slightly higher rate (61%) compared to women-led organizations (57%). Education is also a major area of focus, where more than half report engagement in each leadership type. Among others, mixed-leadership organizations report also higher engagement in humanitarian aid, democracy-building, environmental sustainability, peacebuilding and the promotion of civil society. Notably, almost one fifth (19%) of **women-led groups** report **no activities in the country of origin**. The findings indicate that **mixed-leadership groups tend to be more strongly and broadly engaged across sectors**, pointing to potential gender-specific challenges of transnational engagement.

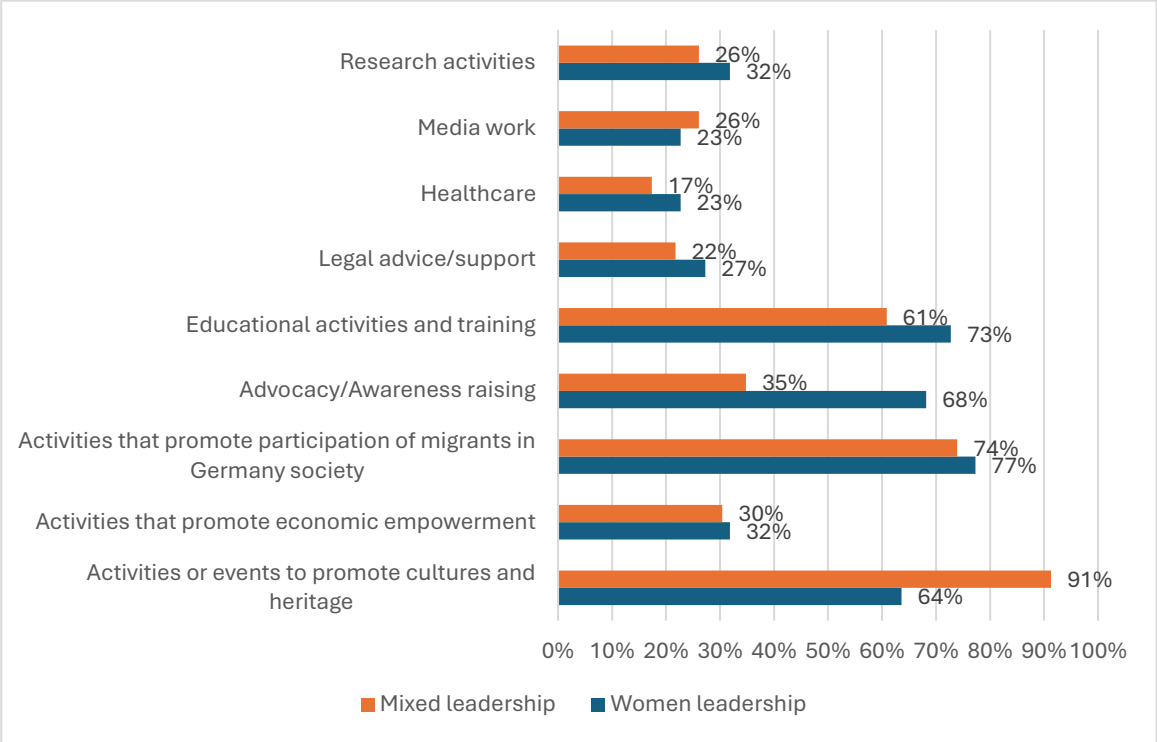
Figure 13: Activities in Origin Country



In the German context, **diaspora organizations are active across a wide spectrum of community-focused, cultural, and empowerment-related activities**. A strong focus lies on organizing events to promote cultures and heritage, with 91% of mixed-leadership organizations and 64% of women-led organizations involved. This underscores the **central role of cultural identity in diaspora work, particularly among mixed-leadership groups.** Both leadership types are also highly engaged in promoting the participation of migrants in German society, with 77 percent of women-led and 74 percent of mixed-leadership organizations involved—indicating a shared emphasis on civic inclusion and social integration. Women-led organizations show higher engagement in educational activities (73%) and especially advocacy and advocacy/awareness-raising (68%), revealing a strong orientation toward rights-based work, empowerment, and structural support. They are also more involved in healthcare and media work, albeit to a lesser degree. Overall, the data suggests that **women-led organizations tend to prioritize care, advocacy, and systemic inclusion, while mixed-leadership**

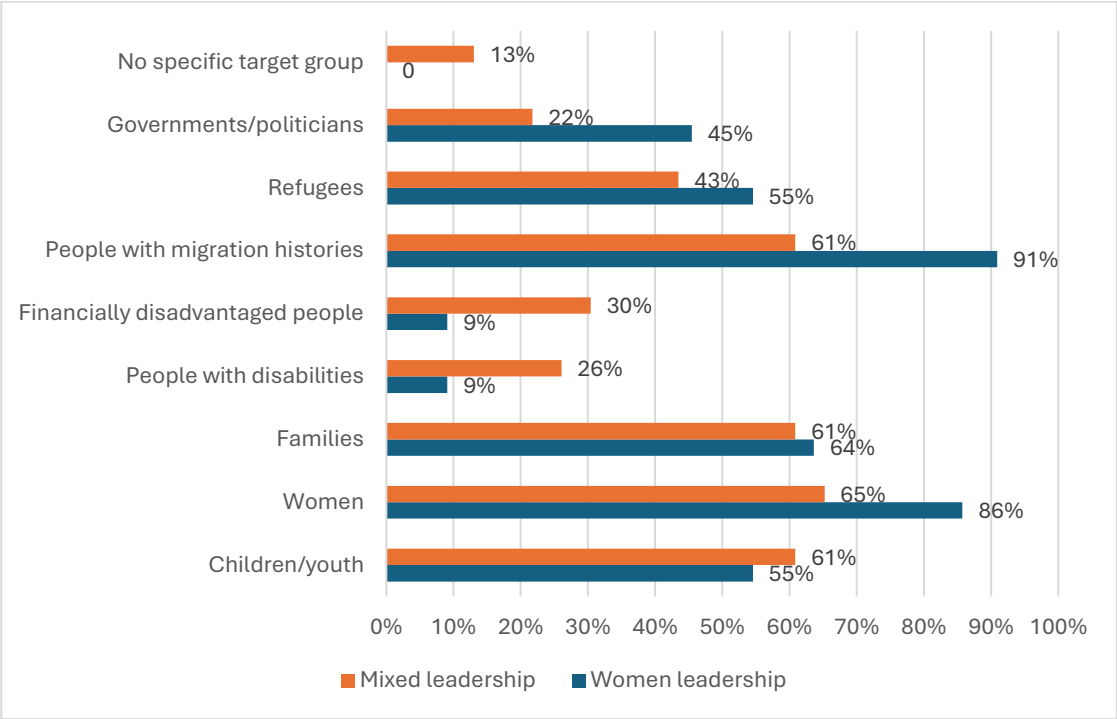
organizations are especially focused on cultural expression and supporting participation in society.

Figure 14: Activities in Germany



Diaspora organizations in **Germany serve a diverse range of target groups, but their priorities differ slightly depending on leadership structure**. A strong commonality is the focus on people with migration histories, targeted by 91 percent of women-led organizations and 61 percent of mixed-leadership organizations. This potentially reflects the stronger orientation toward the German context among women-led groups. Interestingly, women-led organizations are more likely than mixed-leadership groups to engage directly with governments and politicians (45% vs. 22%), reflecting their stronger orientation toward policy advocacy. They are also far more likely to target women (86%) and refugees (43%), and show a slightly stronger focus on families. This underscores their role in addressing intersectional forms of exclusion and empowerment. Conversely, mixed-leadership organizations are more engaged with children and youth (61% vs. 55%) and show higher involvement with financially disadvantaged people (30%), people with disabilities (26%), and those without a clearly defined target group (13%). This suggests a broader and perhaps more service-oriented model.

Figure 15: Main target groups



The collected data reveals several key areas of impact generated by diaspora and migrant-led initiatives. One of the impacts identified is the **establishment of new, self-organized structures** to address systemic gaps. For example, the creation of the first Ethiopian Diaspora Women Association in Germany is notable not only for its national reach but also for fostering cross-European networks:

> *" We were able to establish the first Ethiopian Diaspora Women Association in Germany and what makes us special is, that we are not only active in Frankfurt am Main, but all over Germany. When we organise online (Zoom) Meetings, people from other European Countries attend, too. We recognise, that our impact is increasing fast and the demand of the people around us is enormous." (SR6, women-led organization).*

Similarly, the establishment of establishment of a community-led Palestinian archive in Berlin represents a critical intervention into the politics of memory and self-representation:

> *"This archive, created in collaboration with ten trained young Palestinian Community Researchers, documents and preserves personal and collective histories that have long been silenced or ignored." (SR22, women-led organization).*

Other organizations mentioned the establishment of a network for refugee inclusion and representation in Germany or a network of Afghan diaspora organizations as major success.

Another impact concerns the **enhanced political agency and visibility.** Several initiatives aim to influence policymaking directly, such as the effort to establish a Board of Diaspora as an Advisory Body to Federal Ministries. Others focus on grassroots political mobilization, exemplified by Latin American women's coalition-building efforts:

> *"Bringing women together from many different countries from LATAM developing a political agenda on migration, racism and female activism" (SR12, women-led organizations)*

Efforts to represent Ukrainian voices in German regional politics and media — explicitly framed as a counter to disinformation — further demonstrate the strategic use of advocacy to contest dominant narratives.

Other organizations stated the **preservation of culture and community building** as a major impact, where projects such as community spaces and cultural activities serve as infrastructures for community resilience and cohesion. Respondents describe these spaces as crucial in preserving heritage while fostering belonging across age groups and genders. One organization highlight:

> *"A place for families with young children to spend meaningful time together while preserving their cultural roots and language. Women have the opportunity to showcase their strength beyond motherhood, while children learn through play. Men and fathers are also welcome to connect and exchange ideas. We promote a love for reading, encourage playful learning in the heritage language, and pass on important cultural values through traditional music and festivals." (SR13, women-led organization).*

Cultural events, such as regular festivals, or film initiatives are also described as having long-term impact and requiring dedicated investment:

> *"We have made an impact through our projects, such as the film festival that has been taking place for 13 years. In the future we would like to do bigger projects in Germany and Serbia. We are looking for sponsors for a bigger budget - 50,000 EUR or more per year." (SR41, mixed leadership organization).*

A core area of impact across multiple initiatives is the **empowerment of women** through direct support, collective organising, and rights-based advocacy. Organisations have brought women together across different backgrounds to create spaces of mentoring, mutual support, and integration. Another organization has focused on addressing gender-based violence and structural exclusion, by providing legal guidance, psychological support, and rights education:

> *"We have been at the forefront of advocating for women's rights, providing support to numerous women/children/girls facing domestic violence and abuse. Through our efforts, we have empowered them with knowledge about their rights in their country of residence, ensuring they can navigate their circumstances with confidence and dignity. We envision a world where women and children can live free from violence, and where true equality is upheld. Our commitment remains strong in fighting for legal pathways that offer protection and opportunities for migrants, ensuring a more just and inclusive society for all." (SR14, women-led organization).*

Next to the impact in Germany and within the diaspora, several organisations demonstrate a strong **commitment to development work**, highlighting the role of diaspora actors as bridges between countries of origin and residence. One initiative has successfully fostered **public–private partnerships in Vietnam**, aimed at advancing sustainable development and particularly the **circular economy**:

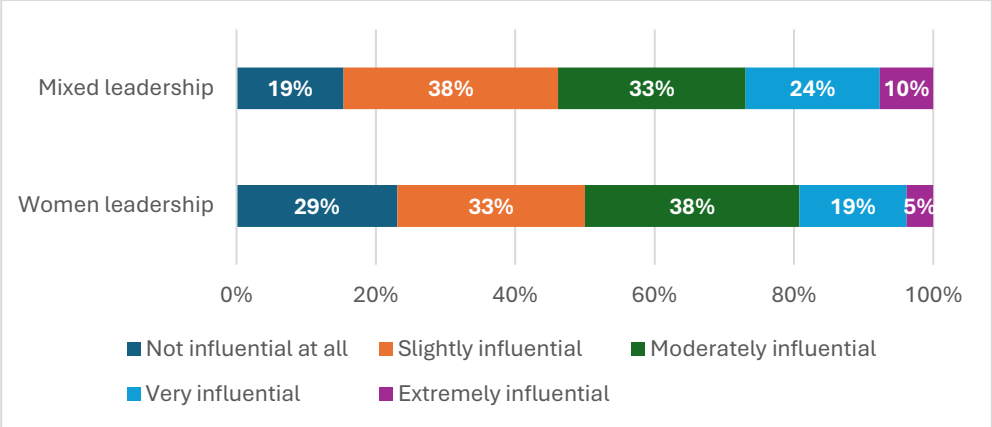
> *"We successfully fostered partnerships for sustainability between companies and civil society organisations in Vietnam. In the future, we would like to contribute Vietnam's sustainable development, especially in circular economy." (SR16, mixed leadership organization).*

Other forms of contribution include the collection and **dissemination of indigenous knowledge,** such as ancestral water management practices from Djerba in Tunisia:

> *"Collecting and disseminating an ancestral practice about water management from Djerba." (SR16, women-led organization).*

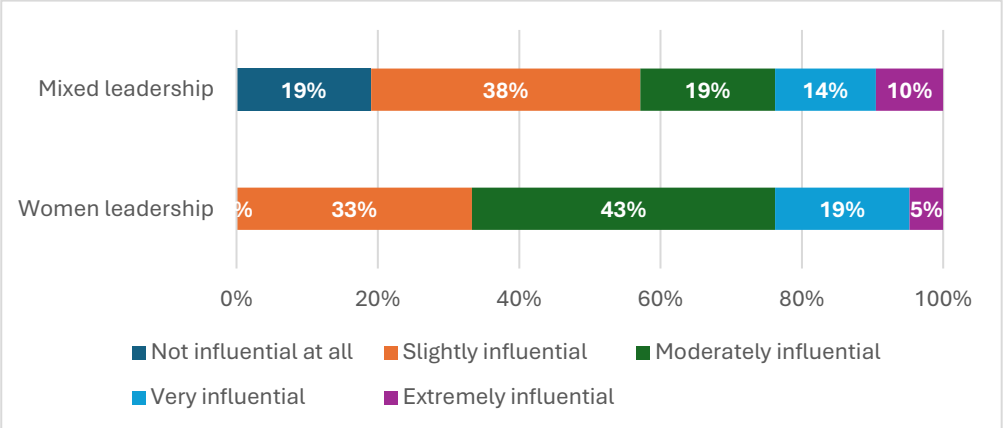
Diaspora organizations hold varied **perceptions of their influence in their countries of origin**, with most rating their impact as moderate or limited, regardless of leadership type. A majority of both women-led and mixed-leadership organizations perceive themselves as moderately influential, with the proportion slightly higher among women-led organizations. This suggests that despite resource constraints, many organizations believe they play a meaningful role in shaping discourse, providing aid, or mobilizing communities back home. However, women-led organizations more frequently report feeling "not influential at all", which may reflect limited recognition, structural exclusion, or a lack of formal partnerships in the country of origin. In contrast, **mixed-leadership organizations show a slightly broader spread across the influence scale, including higher proportions rating themselves as "very" or even "extremely" influential. This could indicate greater institutional access, longer histories, or stronger formal networks in the country of origin.**

Figure 16: Perceived Influence on the Country of Origin



Women-led organizations express greater confidence in their influence within German society, albeit they mostly perceive their influence as moderate. Few also rate themselves as "very influential" or even "extremely influential" suggesting that women-led groups perceive themselves as playing a visible and impactful role in civic life, advocacy, and community engagement. In contrast, mixed-leadership organizations are more likely to perceive their influence as "slight," and are also more likely to see themselves as not influential at all. Overall, these findings suggest that women-led diaspora organizations feel more grounded and effective in their local engagement, possibly due to their emphasis on advocacy, integration work, and targeted community support. Mixed-leadership organizations, may perceive their efforts as less directly influential, especially in spaces where migrant visibility and inclusion are still contested.

Figure 17: Perceived influence in Germany



Key Takeaways

- **Stronger Local Anchoring of Women-Led Organizations:** Most diaspora organizations focus their activities within Germany, especially women-led groups, which prioritize local engagement through advocacy, education, healthcare, and rights-based initiatives.

- **Multisectoral and Multi-geographical Engagement:** Both women-led and mixed-leadership organizations operate across multiple sectors and geographies, reflecting the diasporic need to maintain connections both locally and transnationally. While women-led groups are more Germany-focused, many still engage in origin-country activities; mixed-leadership organizations show a broader sectoral reach, particularly in humanitarian aid, democracy-building, and civil society.

- **Meaningful and Diverse Impact:** Diaspora organizations contribute to community resilience, political agency, and cultural preservation. Women-led groups report stronger perceived influence in Germany, driven by targeted, identity-based advocacy and support work. Mixed-leadership organizations highlight broader service provision and transnational reach, with higher perceived impact on the country of origin.

Challenges and needs

This section highlights the challenges of diaspora organizations in Germany, in their country of origin and with regard to the broader diaspora community, as well as their support needs.

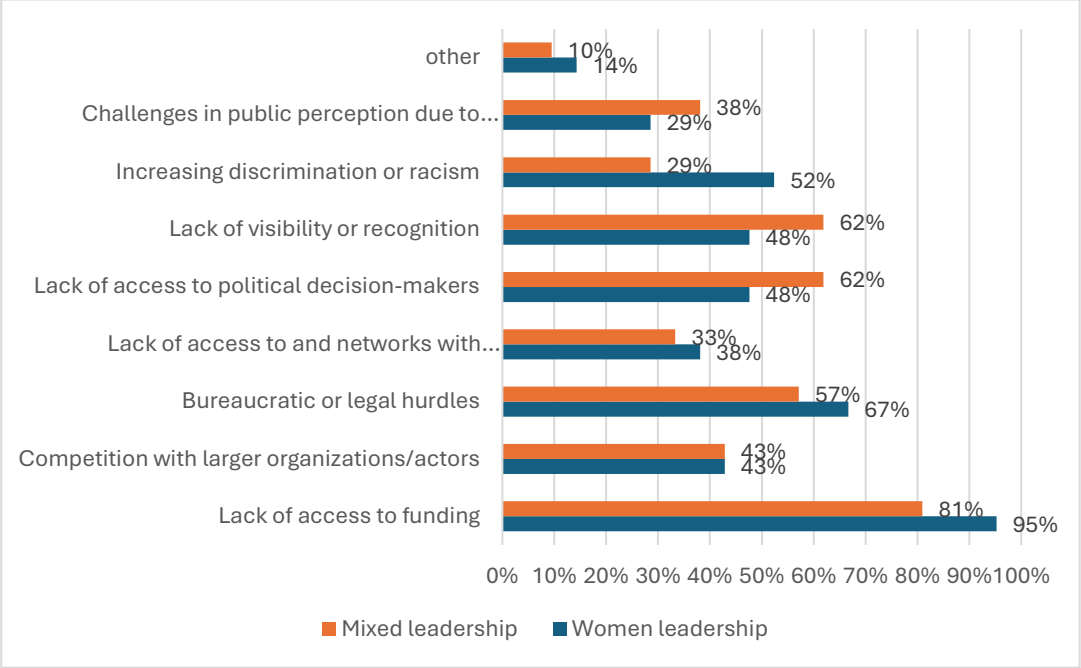
Across the board, diaspora organizations surveyed face a complex mix of structural, political, and resource-related challenges in their work in Germany (see Figure 18: Challenges in GermanyFigure 18). The most **widely shared barrier is a lack of access to funding**, which was reported by 95 percent of women-led organizations and 81 percent of mixed leadership ones.

> *"We face the same challenges every year. That costs us a lot of strength and energy. Our aim would be to achieve a greater reach in the future with the field in which we are active and thus achieve a more stable economic situation." (SR 41, women-led organizations).*

This overwhelming reliance on limited or competitive funding streams underlines the systemic under-resourcing of migrant-led initiatives, regardless of leadership structure. Beyond funding, women-led organizations report higher rates of increased discrimination and racism (52%) compared to mixed-leadership (29%) as well as more frequent struggles with bureaucratic or legal hurdles (67%).

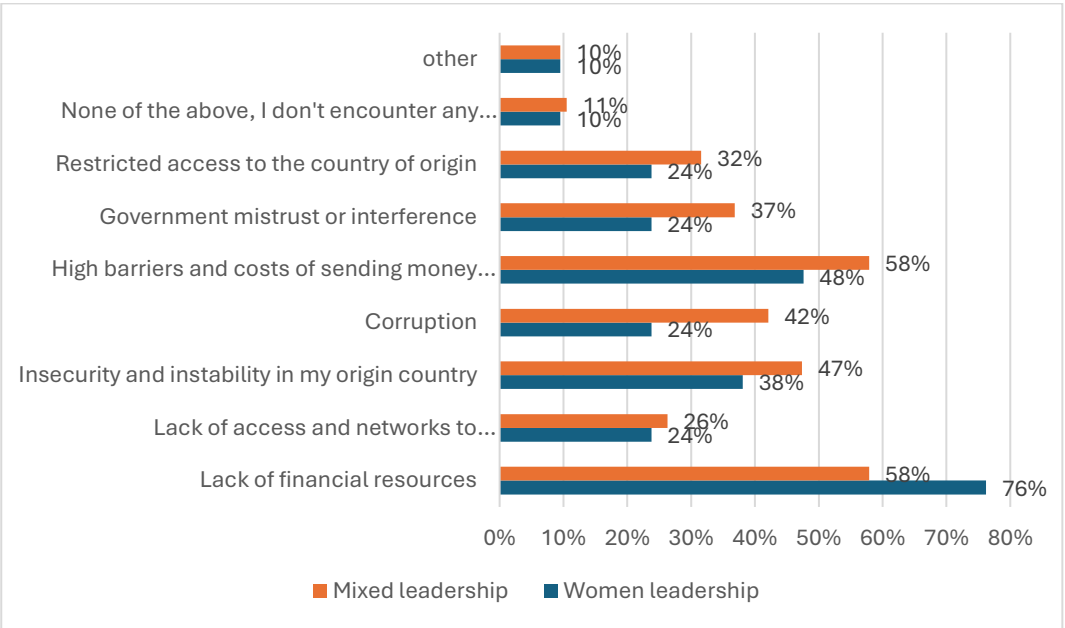
Mixed-leadership organizations, on the other side, report more frequent challenges around accessing political decision makers to networks and institutions (62%), compared to 48 percent for women-led groups. In addition, a lack of visibility and recognition (62%) as well we public perception and media framing (38%) are more frequently cited by mixed-leadership organizations than by women-led groups (48% and 29%). Competition with larger organizations is perceived equally (43%) across both types, pointing to a shared sense of marginalization in a highly competitive civil society ecosystem.

Figure 18: Challenges in Germany



With regard to the origin country, the **most common barrier across both types** is **lack of financial resources**, cited by **76% of women-led** and **58% of mixed-leadership organizations**. Mixed-leadership organizations report greater difficulty with logistical and practical barriers, particularly the high costs of sending money and goods (58%), instability and insecurity in the origin country (47%), corruption (42%), government mistrust or interference (37%) and restricted access to the country of origin (32%). The more complex challenge of mixed leadership organizations might be linked to their **broader and more intensive transnational engagement**, as reflected in their higher involvement across nearly all types of origin-country activities. These findings suggest that **challenges and risks scale with the depth of engagement** and point to the need for differentiated support that addresses not just financial need, but also the political, operational, and infrastructural hurdles that transnationally active diaspora organizations face.

Figure 19: Challenges in Origin Country

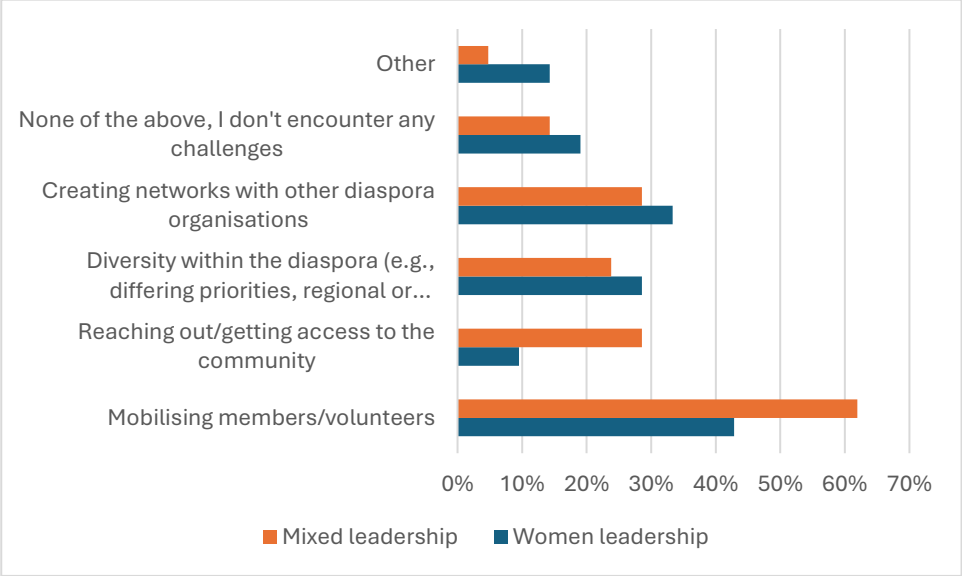


Diaspora organizations surveyed face several **internal challenges when engaging with diaspora communities**, with some differences between women-led and mixed-leadership groups. The most commonly reported challenge overall is mobilizing members and volunteers, cited by 64 percent of mixed-leadership organizations, compared to 45 percent of women-led organizations. In addition, reaching out and gaining access to the community is another key issue for mixed-leadership organizations (39%), while only 10 percent of women-led organizations report this as a challenge. This may reflect the stronger embeddedness and relational networks that women-led initiatives often maintain within their communities.

In contrast, diversity within the diaspora—such as regional, political, or generational differences—is reported as a challenge by slightly more women-led organizations (29%) than mixed leadership organizations (24%), indicating that internal fragmentation or differing priorities can complicate collective action, especially for women-led initiatives. When it comes to creating networks with other diaspora organizations, women-led organizations tend to report slightly more often difficulties (33%) than mixed-leadership groups (29%), possibly due to exclusion from established networks or fewer institutional connections. Interestingly, a higher proportion of **women-led organizations (19%)** also report that **they do not face any of the listed challenges**, compared to 14 percent of mixed-leadership groups. Some of the open remarks also highlight how a lack of funding, as well as the volunteer driven nature of many diaspora organizations limit their reach and impact to the communities they serve:

> *"Most Diaspora Organizations are fully or almost fully built on voluntary basis. This makes it difficult to create larger networks with sustainable engagements, due to lack of resources, limited time and overwhelming of the few active individuals" (SR7, women-led organization).*

Figure 20: Challenges diaspora



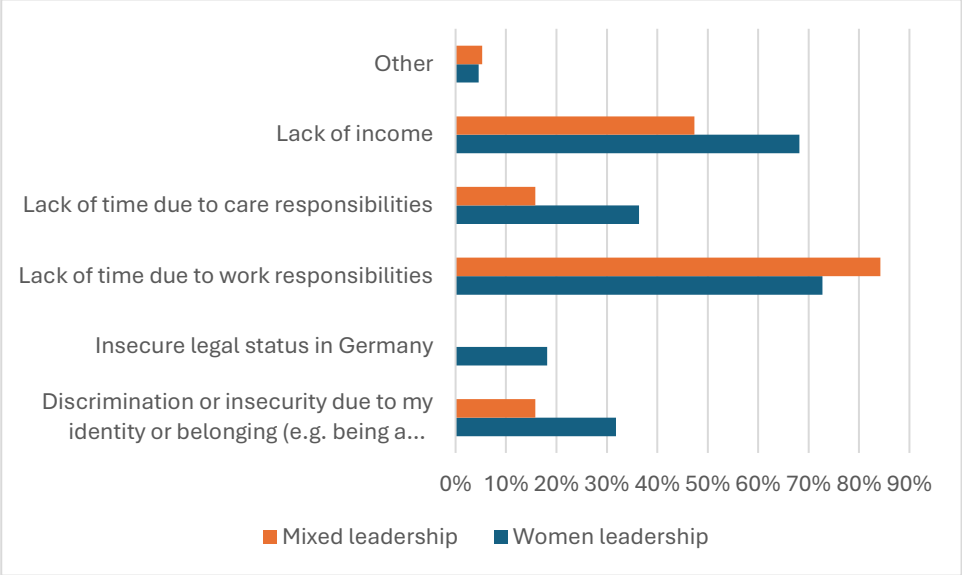
Survey respondents report a range of **personal-level barriers that hinder their engagement**, with notable gendered differences between mixed-leadership and women-led structures. The most significant challenge overall is lack of time due to work responsibilities, cited by 84 percent of mixed-leadership organizations and 73 percent of women-led organizations.

Lack of income is another major barrier, reported by 68 percent of women-led and 47 percent of mixed-leadership organizations. This suggests that economic precarity is more acute among women, potentially due to intersecting disadvantages related to gender, migration, and socioeconomic status.

Care responsibilities are also more commonly cited by women-led organizations (36%) than by mixed groups (16%), pointing to the gendered burden of caregiving that disproportionately limits women's ability to participate in civic and voluntary activities.

Discrimination or insecurity due to identity or belonging is reported by 32 percent of women-led organizations, compared to 16 percent of mixed-leadership groups. Finally, legal insecurity is reported by 18% of women-led organizations, and none of the mixed-leadership groups.

Figure 21: Individual challenges



The findings reveal persistent and structural gender-specific challenges that shape the experiences of women in migrant and diaspora organizing. While some respondents point to emerging opportunities, especially within established institutions, most highlight the entrenched nature of these inequalities.

Often women face what one respondent described as the **"double burden**"—balancing responsibilities across work, care, and community roles. While many initiatives are led or sustained by women, their capacity is constrained by structural expectations around unpaid labour.

> *"There are a lot of programs aimed at empowering women, but the core challenge of multi-tasking and limited resources is still a big challenge." (SR4, women-led organization).*

For some organizations working on gender and migration, resistance is not only external but also internal, as respondents reported a **lack of recognition or support for gender issues within their communities or countries of origin**:

> *"We work on migration and gender but people in my origin countries don't consider these issues important. Or are not in support of it in general." (SR5, women-led organization).*

> *"Cultural barriers sometimes make it difficult to discuss women rights." (SR5, women-led organization).*

Some respondents highlight that woman from racialized, Muslim, and migrant background experience **specific forms of gendered racism and exclusion,** which either rendered women hyper-visible as victims or threats, but invisible as political actors.

> *"The public perception of Indian immigration is restricted to tech and STEM fields and very masculine, where all other professional groups, especially from non-male genders, are not*

considered serious or relevant. The perception of Indian women in Germany as oppressed and without a voice - although unfortunate - also presents an opportunity and space to address the issues of migration and integration through a feminist standpoint." (SR34, women-led organization).

"The greatest challenges for Palestinian women working in associations in Germany come less from their own community than from the German majority society. These women are often confronted with deep-seated prejudices, structural racism and Islamophobia ... Many Palestinian women in Germany are automatically associated with negative stereotypes: The 'oppressed headscarf woman' the 'uneducated migrant woman', the 'wife of a patriarchal man', the 'radical Muslim woman' or even "potential terrorist'. These images make it difficult for women to engage in public spaces or to be taken seriously." (SR11, women-led organization).

Despite these constraints, the respondent highlights the political agency and resistance against racist and colonial structures, by creating independent platforms, forming alliances, and reclaiming narrative and space.

Finally, some organizations also highlight **emerging opportunities as gender is more and more mainstreamed** across institutions. Some respondents described positive experiences, including representation on boards, successful partnerships with church institution and engagement with German political actors.

"I think me and my team are well informed about funding possibilities in Germany and we haven't encountered any racial issues in carrying out our work in Germany. Instead, we have a huge support from our German church community and even beyond." (SR17, mixed leadership organization).

"No, I don't feel any gender-related challenges. Women empowerment is on the mainstream, this is the great opportunity!" (SR18, mixed leadership organization).

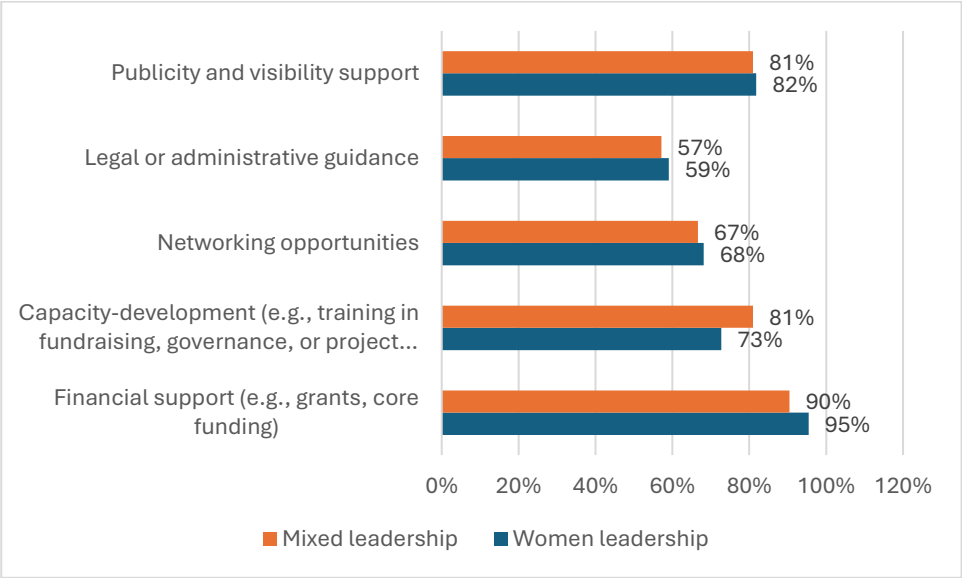
Yet, some raise a critique regarding the superficial treatment of gender by funders and institutions, where gender is widely acknowledged in discourse but rarely supported with sustained or accessible funding. One respondent notes:

"Gender is a happy check box but the seriousness with which it needs is not given. Funds on gender are given to bigger organisations or spent on making a show and tell (reports, webinars and panel discussions). The same bubble but very few are willing to put their money at smaller initiatives, at the grassroots and for actual local change." (SR1, women-led organization).

Diaspora organizations express a strong and consistent need for external support across several key areas, with little differences among leadership types. Diaspora organizations—regardless of leadership structure—express a strong and consistent need for external support across several key areas. However, some differences in emphasis emerge between women-led and mixed-leadership groups.

The most universally cited need is financial support (e.g. grants, core funding), with around 95 percent of women-led and just slightly fewer mixed-leadership groups (90%) identifying it as critical. This aligns with earlier findings on funding as the most severe barrier to both local and transnational engagement. Other widely needed forms of support include capacity development (such as training in governance, fundraising, or project management), needed by over 81 percent of mixed leadership organizations and 73 of women-led organizations as well as publicity, reported by around 80 percent of both leadership structures. A slightly lower but still substantial proportion of both types, almost 60 percent, highlights the need for legal or administrative guidance, reflecting the continued difficulty in navigating bureaucratic systems and maintaining compliance within the nonprofit and civil society sector.

Figure 22: Support needs



Key Takeaways

- **Chronic Underfunding and Structural Barriers:** Across leadership types, diaspora organizations face systemic under-resourcing, with lack of funding cited as the most pressing challenge. This is compounded by bureaucratic hurdles, limited access to political networks, and competition with larger NGOs—creating a structurally constrained operating environment, especially for grassroots and volunteer-driven groups.
- **Gendered and Intersectional Challenges:** Women-led organizations report heightened exposure to discrimination, economic precarity, care burdens, and identity-based exclusion—both within German society and in their countries of origin. These intersecting barriers limit women's participation and leadership, despite their central role in sustaining diaspora work. Meanwhile, mixed-leadership groups face more challenges with visibility, community mobilization, and external institutional access.
- **High Support Needs**: Diaspora organizations widely express the need for core funding, capacity development, and legal/administrative guidance.

Conclusion – lessons learned and Recommendations

Summary of main findings

This study underscores the vital role that diaspora organizations—both women-led and mixed-leadership—play in shaping inclusive communities and transnational solidarity across Germany and countries of origin. Despite significant structural constraints, these organizations serve as key actors in promoting cultural identity, civic participation, and social cohesion. While they share many common challenges—most notably chronic underfunding, over-reliance on volunteer labor, and limited institutional recognition—their approaches and experiences sometimes diverge in meaningful ways.

Women-led organizations tend to be more locally grounded, with a strong focus on the German context. They are particularly active in advocacy, education, care, and rights-based initiatives, and show higher levels of community embeddedness, with more consistent representation of people with migration

backgrounds in both leadership and membership. Notably, they also report higher rates of access to public and foundational funding, and more frequently employ paid staff. However, these gains coexist with persistent gendered barriers: women-led organizations report higher exposure to discrimination, greater economic precarity, and a heavier burden of unpaid care work. These intersecting challenges limit the sustainability of their engagement, despite their central role in community organizing.

In contrast, mixed-leadership organizations in this survey tend to have a broader transnational orientation and engage in a wider range of sectors, especially in relation to countries of origin. They report greater involvement in areas such as humanitarian aid, democracy promotion, and civil society strengthening. These organizations also face particular challenges in accessing political networks and improving their visibility and legitimacy within both the diaspora and institutional landscapes. Although often larger in scale, they remain heavily reliant on membership fees and individual donations, with fewer paid staff and limited financial stability.

While each leadership type brings distinct strengths and faces different constraints, both reflect a shared demand for greater institutional recognition, access to sustainable funding, and support mechanisms that reflect the diversity and complexity of diaspora organizing.

Policy Recommendations

Based on the findings of this survey and the discussions during the Diaspora Women in Action conference, the following recommendations can be given to stakeholders who seek to support diaspora engagement in Germany.

1) **Provide core and long-term funding:**
   - Shift funding models from short-term, project-based grants toward multi-year, flexible core funding, to address the financial precarity that most diaspora organizations face.
   - Establish targeted funding programs for women-led diaspora organizations, including core funding and infrastructure support.
   - Strengthen access for smaller and grassroot-led organizations through multilingual and culturally aware funding platforms.

2) **Support capacity-development:**
   - Offer training opportunities to diaspora organizations to gain knowledge and practical skills for organizational development, with particular attention to governance, leadership, fundraising, financial management and cross-sectoral networking in accessible language.
   - Gender equity should move beyond tokenistic representation to targeted, grassroots-oriented support mechanisms.

3) **Promote Inclusive and Intercultural Competence in Institutions**
   - Engage the diaspora community in expanding intercultural training in schools, public institutions, and workplaces, focusing on bias awareness and structural racism.
   - Recognize and integrate cultural knowledge and values from diaspora communities as assets.
   - Encourage co-creation of integration strategies that emphasize integration over assimilation.

4) **Address structural discrimination and gendered barriers:**
   - Recognize and act upon the intersectional barriers—including racism, Islamophobia, and gender-based discrimination—that limit civic participation.
   - Public institutions and funders should integrate an anti-discrimination lens into all diaspora-related programs.

5) **Foster policy dialogue and political representation:**

- Create institutional mechanisms (e.g. advisory boards, consultative councils) that formally engage diaspora organizations in policymaking—especially those working on gender, anti-racism, and community empowerment.
- Include diaspora women in the design and review of integration curricula (e.g., language and orientation courses).
- Foster two-way communication between policymakers and diaspora communities.

6) **Foster Networking and Visibility of Diaspora Women**
   - Support the development of a nationwide digital platform to connect diaspora women, share opportunities, and coordinate initiatives.
   - Invest in mentorship programs and strategic alliances across sectors (politics, media, education).
   - Create public spaces and forums to showcase diaspora women's contributions to society.

7) **Support future research:**
   - Offer resources to build on the explorative insights from this study, through conducting a mixed-method study based on a more systematic sampling and on multilingual, offline, and community-based outreach strategies.
   - Increase the scope of funding towards research on women-led and women-concerned diaspora organizations to inform policy and practice.
   - Work with diaspora women in validating official statistics and studies to ensure evidence-based policymaking.

Next to stakeholders, the insights from the survey can offer also some valuable recommendations for diaspora organizations themselves.

1) **Strengthen youth and minority inclusion:** Diaspora organizations could develop specific programs to increase the participation of youth, ethnic, and religious minorities within diaspora leadership and membership, recognizing the diversity and generational shifts within migrant communities.

2) **Promote inclusive involvement** by taking into account the multiple responsibilities of women and promoting structures that enable participation in decision-making and spaces of engagement (organizing childcare, flexible meeting schedules).

3) **Make use of survey questions** (see appendix) to conduct similar assessments within their own diaspora communities and networks to better understand internal dynamics**,** map needs and capacities, and strengthen strategic planning and advocacy efforts. In case you do reproduce the full survey or even parts of it, then do include a kind acknowledgement to Diaspora Women in Action.

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Appendix: Survey questions

Screening question:

Are you representing a diaspora or migrant organization in Germany? (Note: we define migrant or diaspora organizations as organizations with a membership and/or board of management consisting of at least 50% of persons with a history of migration)

1. No
2. Yes, please specify the country(s) of origin _____

Basic Organizational Characteristics

This section gathers basic details about your organization, such as its main purpose, legal status, and geographic location.

Please select the option that best describes the purpose or type of your organization:

1. Development-oriented organization
2. Human rights organization
3. Humanitarian organization
4. Women's rights organization
5. Professional group/network (e.g., association of doctors or engineers)
6. Advocacy organization
7. Integration and culture-focused organization
8. Religious/faith-based organization
9. Student/youth organization
10. Don't know/Prefer not to answer
11. Other, please specify _____

When was the organization established?

Is your organization a registered non-profit organisation (e.g. e.V., gGmbH)?

1. No
2. Yes
3. Don't know/prefer not to answer

In which city in Germany is your organization located?

Membership

In this section, we assess the size, composition, and diversity of your organization's members, including gender and age distribution.

How many members (both paid and volunteers) does your organisation have? Please specify the number of each group in the table below:

	Women	Men	Gender diverse
Paid full-time employees	❑	❑	❑
Paid part-time employees	❑	❑	❑
Volunteers	❑	❑	❑

Now, thinking about the composition of the membership of your organization, please estimate the percentage of each group.

Individuals with a migration history	❑
Individuals below the age of 30	❑
Individuals belonging to an ethnic or religious minority	❑

Financial Capacity

This section explores your organization's financial resources, including annual budgets, funding sources, and financial stability.

What is the average annual budget of your organisation considering the last 3 years (2022-2024)?

1. lower than 10.000€
2. 10.001– 20.000€
3. 20.001 and 50.000€
4. 50.001 – 100.000€
5. 100.001 – 200.000€
6. 200.001 – 500.000€
7. above 500.000€
8. Don't know/Prefer not to answer

What are the organization's most important sources of funding? Please rank all the sources that apply by importance, with the most important on top.

- Own revenues (e.g. Service/product revenues) _____
- Individual donations _____
- Donations from private companies _____
- Membership fees _____
- Public funding from German government (e.g. local, regional and national grants, funding from GIZ) _____
- Public funding from origin country government (including local and national) _____
- Funding from international or national donors (e.g. international NGOs) _____
- Funding from foundations _____
- Don't know/Prefer not to answer _____
- Other _____

Please specify other funding sources that have not been listed above, if applicable:

How stable do you rate the financial situation of your organization?

	Very unstable	Unstable	Neutral	Stable	Very stable	N/A
Financial stability	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑

Governance

In this section, we examine leadership structures, decision-making processes, and the representation of different demographic groups within leadership.

What is the size of the leadership of your organization? By leadership we mean the number of persons that are involved in decision-making. In some cases this can be the board, in others the management team, or the core

team of active members. Please specify the number below.

Now, thinking about the composition of the leadership of your organization, please estimate the percentage of each group. It's fine, if it is a rough estimate.

	0	10	20	30	40	50	60	70	80	90	100	N/A
Women	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
Men	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
Non-binary/gender diverse individuals	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
Individuals with a migration history	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
Individuals below the age of 30	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
Individuals belonging to an ethnic or religious minority	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑

How are major decisions typically made in your organization?

1. By the head of the organization alone
2. By consensus among members
3. By majority voting among members
4. By designated committees or board
5. We don't have a clear decision-making process
6. Other, please specify _____

Activities and Impact

Here, we assess the scope of your organization's activities, both in Germany and in countries of origin, as well as your influence on societal and political transformation.

In which areas is your organization active in your origin country or in another country other than Germany?

1. Humanitarian aid
2. Women empowerment
3. Education
4. Democracy building
5. Healthcare
6. Economic empowerment
7. Justice and accountability
8. Environmental sustainability
9. Promotion of civil society
10. Peacebuilding
11. Media work
12. Research
13. No activities in the origin country
14. Don't know/prefer not to answer
15. Other, please specify _____

What activities does your organization carry out in Germany?

1. Activities or events to promote cultures and heritage
2. Activities that promote economic empowerment
3. Activities that promote participation of migrants in Germany society

4. Advocacy/Awareness raising
5. Educational activities and training
6. Legal advice/support
7. Healthcare
8. Media work
9. Research activities
10. No activities in Germany
11. Don't know/prefer not to answer
12. Other, please specify _____

In general, where do the activities of your organization mostly take place?

1. Mostly in Germany
2. Mostly in my origin country
3. Mostly online
4. In a combination of locations
5. Don't know/prefer not to answer
6. Mostly in another (non-origin/residence) country, please specify _____

Who are the main target groups of your organization? (Multiple answers possible)

1. Children/youth
2. Women
3. Families
4. People with disabilities
5. Financially disadvantaged people
6. People with migration histories
7. Refugees
8. Governments/politicians
9. No specific target group
10. Don't know/prefer not to answer
11. Other, please specify _____

How would you rate your organization's influence in driving societal and political transformation in your origin country and in Germany?

	Not influential at all	Slightly influential	Moderately influential	Very influential	Extremely influential	N/A
Country of origin	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
Germany	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑

What do you consider the biggest achievement/impact of your organization in the last year and what would you like to achieve in the future?

On a scale from 0 to 5, where 0 is never and 5 is always, to what extent do you work or collaborate with each of the following actors?

Government actors in my origin country	❑

Government actors in Germany	❑
Civil society organizations in my country of origin	❑
Civil society organizations in Germany	❑
International organizations and non-governmental organizations (e.g., UN agencies, Save the Children, Human Rights Watch)	❑

Challenges and needs

In this section we want to identify the key barriers your organization faces—whether in Germany, in your country of origin, or within the diaspora community—and learn about potential areas of support.

What challenges does your organization face in engaging in Germany?

1. Lack of access to funding
2. Competition with larger organizations/actors
3. Bureaucratic or legal hurdles
4. Lack of access to and networks with organizations or institutions
5. Lack of access to political decision-makers
6. Lack of visibility or recognition
7. Increasing discrimination or racism
8. Challenges in public perception due to political or media framing
9. I have no challenges
10. Don't know/prefer not to answer
11. Other, please specify _____

What challenges does your organization face in engaging in your origin country?

1. Lack of financial resources
2. Lack of access and networks to organisations or institutions
3. Insecurity and instability in my origin country
4. Corruption
5. High barriers and costs of sending money and goods
6. Government mistrust or interference
7. Restricted access to the country of origin
8. None of the above, I don't encounter any challenges
9. Don't know/prefer not to answer
10. Other, please specify _____

What challenges does your organization face in engaging with the diaspora community?

1. Mobilising members/volunteers
2. Reaching out/getting access to the community
3. Diversity within the diaspora (e.g., differing priorities, regional or generational divides)
4. Creating networks with other diaspora organisations
5. None of the above, I don't encounter any challenges
6. Don't know/prefer not to answer
7. Other, please specify _____

What individual challenges do you face in your engagement?

1. Discrimination or insecurity due to my identity or belonging (e.g. being a woman, or member of a minority)
2. Insecure legal status in Germany
3. Lack of time due to work responsibilities
4. Lack of time due to care responsibilities
5. Lack of income
6. None of the above, I don't encounter any challenges
7. Don't know/prefer not to answer

8. Other, please specify _____

Do you feel there are specific gender-related challenges? Do you think there are specific opportunities as well?

What types of support would be most beneficial for your organization? Please rank all that apply by importance, with the most important on top.

- Financial support (e.g., grants, core funding) _____
- Capacity-development (e.g., training in fundraising, governance, or project management) _____
- Networking opportunities _____
- Legal or administrative guidance _____
- Publicity and visibility support _____
- Don't know/prefer not to answer _____

Please specify other support that was not mentioned before, if applicable:

Additional Information

You almost reached the end of the survey—thank you for your time and valuable insights!Your responses will contribute to a better understanding of the needs, challenges, and strengths of diaspora organizations in Germany. This information will help strengthen our collective voice, inform decision-makers, and hopefully improve support structures for our community.If you would like to stay informed about the outcomes of this survey, you can opt to receive updates via email. Additionally, we welcome any final thoughts, challenges, or success stories you would like to share.

Do you want to be informed about the outcomes of this survey via email?

1. No
2. Yes, please provide your email

Is there anything else close to your heart? For example, is there a particular need for support from the government or a challenge or success story that you would like to highlight?