

## Brief Introduction



After the successful first edition of the Diaspora Newsletter (November 2020), the International Organization for Migration ([IOM](#)) in Belgium and Luxembourg is proud to deliver the second newsletter. This edition follows the reconstruction of our [Diaspora webpage](#), which has now a comprehensive overview on past and current diaspora projects. Furthermore, the webpage and our [social media accounts](#) will be updated regularly with new events, calls and info relevant for diaspora residing in Belgium and Luxembourg. A separate section on the webpage will feature interviews with inspirational diaspora members (“The Voices of Diaspora”) in Belgium and Luxembourg.

With over 30 years of experience, IOM Belgium and Luxembourg is aware of the importance to establish links and to engage with diaspora communities as powerful actors of development. The expertise, commitment, knowledge and skills of diaspora make it essential for our office to give you a prominent place in the development and implementation of our project activities.

With the newsletter and renewed webpage, IOM Belgium and Luxembourg would like to set up a dialogue with you and create a platform that will benefit all. We hope to bring together various actors interested in diaspora engagement as well as to increase awareness on the wonderful work and huge potential of diaspora as agents of change.

### DIASPORA EVENTS & CALLS

IOM Mauritania in coordination with WHO and the Mauritanian Ministry of Health is looking for **diaspora working in the medical sector** who are willing to go on a mission to support the **COVID-19 response in Mauritania**. More info can be found in [this document!](#)

Have you started a (non-) profit **business in Africa** or are you thinking of doing so? Artevelde University (Ghent) would like to talk to you for an exciting **research**. Send [them an email!](#)

The young female entrepreneurs of **#SheDIDIT** will launch their book on youngsters, entrepreneurship and diversity. Register for their **launching event** on 14/10 [here!](#)

The Africa-Europe Diaspora Development Platform **ADEPT** is organizing a **series of webinars** under the theme «Beyond Aid: Rerouting Africa-Europe relations». For more info, access [here!](#) Also, take a look at their new **media campaign** featuring initiatives of African diaspora in their fight against COVID-19.

*Are you organizing an event in the coming months or are you seeking to engage with diaspora? Feel free to send it to [us](#) and we will feature it on our website/ newsletter!*



### GLOBAL DIASPORA INITIATIVE

To follow up on and get involved in other diaspora projects ran by IOM outside of Belgium and Luxembourg, you can visit the global [iDIASPORA platform](#). After becoming a member (for free), you can benefit from a growing network, read the latest news articles, and expand your knowledge with learning materials and best practices. Additionally, you can share your questions, opinions and recommendations online, stay informed about upcoming events and explore new partnerships and opportunities.

## Voices of Diaspora: PluriElles, Women of the African Diaspora

In May 2019, we celebrated the end of the successful [Women4Dev Academy](#) project, supported by IOM. During this project, the participating organizations were trained in project management, communication and visibility, and fundraising over the course of several weekends.



© Marie-Pierre Nyatanyi, PluriElles

One year later, we interviewed **PluriElles**, one of the participating organizations, to talk about their activities and the impact of the project.

**Thank you, Ms. Nyatanyi, for taking the time for this interview. Could you tell us a bit more about the projects of your organization?**

Since 2016, the activities of Femmes PluriElles revolve around the book "[PluriElles. Women of the African Diaspora](#)", which addresses themes such as sub-Saharan female migration to Belgium, stereotypes and prejudices against African and Afro-descendant women, and roles of women in the diaspora in host societies and in Africa. (...)

In March 2019, an "[International Symposium on the Leadership of African and Afro-Descendant Women](#)" was held at the premises of the Wallonie Bruxelles International. This led to recommendations that would serve as a basis for future actions by the platform. One of the recommendations, creating links and bridges with women living in Africa, was implemented via conferences that we organized in Guinea in May 2019 and in Senegal in November 2019 (...). At the invitation from the Center d'Action Laïque de Namur we also intervened during the opening of the exhibition of PluriElles portraits in March 2020. (...)

**One of the key modules of the Women4Dev project focused on project cycle management and preparing proposals. Have you successfully submitted a project proposal to a donor ever since?**

One of the recommendations of the International Symposium was to concretely resolve certain problems encountered especially by young women entrepreneurs. We therefore successfully submitted a project to support young African or Afro-descendant girls with an entrepreneurial project or wishing to embark on entrepreneurship.

*Read further on the next page >>*

## Meet the diaspora team of IOM Belgium and Luxembourg



**Amina Odofin**

Amina is the newest member of our Country Office and joined in August 2020, after successfully finalizing her master's degree in Conflict and Development. She will support the office in communication and visibility-related activities. Passionate about diaspora engagement, she will increase awareness on the valuable work done by diaspora in Belgium and Luxembourg. She will also assist in optimizing opportunities for diaspora engagement.



**Anke Van de Velde**

Anke was hired as a project manager for the IOM Rwanda Diaspora Engagement project in 2019. She also supports other IOM projects, such as the [Equality](#) and [Actiris Coordination Platform](#) project. As the diaspora focal point, she gives ad-hoc support to diaspora members and other IOM offices seeking to engage with diaspora in Belgium. She also makes sure to include diaspora interests in the development and implementation of new projects. Before joining IOM, she was working in New York and Mozambique on human rights and development

### Diaspora Podcasts

Podcasts are an interesting way to indulge yourself in your favorite topics. We have listed 3 diaspora podcasts that you may like!

- 1) [Dear Diaspora](#): this podcast celebrates "the African diaspora- its change-makers, innovators and entrepreneurs working to make our world better."
- 2) [On things we left behind](#): Two daughters of Somali refugees explore the stories of refugees in the afterlife of war.
- 3) [The Migration & Diaspora Podcast](#): A podcast on all things migration and diaspora!



#DiasporaTalks: Stay tuned for our office's own podcast featuring interviews with inspiring diaspora members residing in Belgium and Luxembourg!

**You have also received a visibility training. Is your association now more active on social networks and other communication channels?**

The communication coaching allowed us to develop and improve our visibility on [social networks](#) through the choice of images and accompanying texts. We have also become aware of certain communication elements that we were missing (for example the website) and we are in contact with a web developer to remedy them. These corrections increased our audience and interest in the project/platform.



© Marie-Pierre Nyatanyi, PluriElles

**COVID-19 has impacted the work of many organizations around the world. Some diaspora members decided to re-direct their activities towards COVID-19 relief efforts. How has COVID-19 influenced your activities?**

The crisis has put our activities on the back burner but also gave us the opportunity to quickly set up a #Masquespour tous project.

>> Read the full interview with Ms. Nyatanyi of PluriElles [here](#) <<

## #FamilyRemittances

### Did you know...

... that 800 million people (one in nine people) globally receive remittances from around 200 million migrant workers? These flows are used to improve access to education, food, healthcare, and a range of other purposes.

... that remittances to low- and middle-income countries increased by 51% over the past decade? These flows exceed three times the combined official development assistance.

... that remittances matter enormously in rural areas? Around half of the global remittances go to rural areas where 75% of the world's poor and food-insecure live.

... that migrant workers send on average US\$200 or US\$300 home every one or two months? This represents only 15% of their salary but can make up as much as 60% of a household's total income.

... that currency conversions and fees cost, on global average, 7% of the amount sent? [SDG 10.c](#) aims to reduce transaction costs to less than 3% by 2030.

... that the World Bank is projecting a 20% fall in remittances due to COVID-19? That equates to US\$110 billion.

**More info on remittances? Read [this document](#) for general info and to know more about the impact of crises on remittances click [here](#).**



**Let's celebrate and commemorate together!** October 2020 – March 2021

#### October

- 15/09 – 15/10: Hispanic Heritage Month
- 5/10 – 11/10: [Global Diaspora Week](#)

#### November

- 16/11: International Day for Tolerance
- 18/11: International Day of Islamic Art

#### December

- 10/12: International Human Rights Day
- 18/12: International Migrants Day
- 20/12: International Human Solidarity Day

#### January

- [Congolisation](#) – Festival Afro-Diaspo Arts in Belgium
- 21/01: Martin Luther King Day

- 24/01: World Day for African and Afro descendant Culture
- 27/01: Holocaust Remembrance Day

#### February

- 20/02: World Day of Social Justice
- 21/02: International Mother Language Day

#### March

- Black History Month in Belgium
- Women's History Month
- 1/03: Zero Discrimination Day
- 8/03: International Women's Day
- 21/03: International Day for Elimination of Racial Discrimination
- 25/03: Remembrance Day of the Victims of the Transatlantic Slave Trade

## Voices of Diaspora: Young Rwandan Diaspora in Belgium

Since 2018, IOM has been working closely with the Rwandan diaspora for the successful implementation of IOM projects. After a first mapping exercise in 2018, IOM is currently implementing a Rwandan diaspora engagement project. We were glad to meet Pierre Mugabo from the Youth department of the Rwandan Diaspora Association in Belgium (DRB) for an interview on their many activities, on COVID-19 and on their successful fundraiser for Rwanda.



© Pierre Mugabo, DRB Jeunesse

**Thank you for taking the time to meet with us, Mr. Mugabo. Could you explain the structure, work and objectives of DRB Jeunesse?**

DRB jeunesse is not an independent structure. It is a section within the DRB (the Rwandan diaspora association in Belgium), so that is why we depend on their objectives. Our organization has three principle objectives: the harmonious integration of our community within Belgium, supporting socio-economic projects that have an impact on Belgium and/or Rwanda and lastly, the fight against negationism with regards to the genocide perpetuated against the Tutsis. It is in this framework that we try to organize activities that will interest and mobilize young people. (...) For now, I am the responsible for the Rwandan diaspora youth, but I do not work alone. I work with a team of other young people. (...)

**Where did the initiative to create DRB Jeunesse come from?**

The DRB in its current format was created in 2011, but the association already exists for more than 20 years. So, we have been mobilizing in Belgium for several years already. It is interesting to know that the Rwandan community in Belgium is the largest community outside of Rwanda. Despite the fact that there are so many of us, the youth has always been categorized as the most difficult to reach. (...) So, the question arose, "Who are these young people and how do we reach them?" We wanted to try to get to know them, to bring them together and to spark their interest in the Rwandan diaspora.

**Recently, we got to know about the big campaign organized by the Rwandan diaspora to help Rwanda in tackling the COVID-19 pandemic. Why has the DRB Jeunesse decided to mobilize members of the Rwandan diaspora for COVID-19 relief efforts?**

(...) Various members of the diaspora asked us: "How can we help the most vulnerable people in Rwanda?". (...) The idea of a call for donations took form and in collaboration with the Embassy of Rwanda in Belgium we appealed to the diaspora to contribute any amount. (...) The idea came from the DRB committee, but the youth who took care of the communication. We had the idea of creating a video with a call for donations.

**What were the concrete results of this campaign and how will this help the COVID-19 relief efforts in Rwanda?**

We started the campaign around April 14th, (...). A month and a week after its launch, we stopped the campaign because we wanted to send the money as soon as possible. We were able to collect more than 40,000 euros, which we sent to the Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning in Rwanda (...)

>> Read the full interview with  
Mr. Mugabo of DRB Jeunesse [here](#) <<

### Online info session for IOM's Rwandan diaspora project



On Saturday, 26th of September 2020, Rwanda's Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation MINAFFET, in coordination with IOM Rwanda, hosted an online info session for more than 150 Rwandan diaspora residing in Belgium, France, UK, Germany and The Netherlands interested in contributing to the TVET and health sector in Rwanda. The involved departments and IOM presented the project and answered questions of diaspora.

The applications are now open for diaspora living in Belgium or Germany and skilled in the [TVET sector](#) or a Rwandan diaspora [health professional](#) living in Belgium, Germany, UK, France or The Netherlands.

Did you miss the online info session?  
The recordings will soon be available [here](#).

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