

MAPPING THE
RWANDAN
DIASPORA
IN
BELGIUM

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Publisher: International Organization for Migration
KG 632 St, Gasasa 239
Rugando Cell
Kigali, Rwanda
Tel.: +250 252 586710
Fax: +250 252 586711
Email: iomrwanda@iom.int
Website: www.iom.int

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MAPPING THE RWANDAN DIASPORA IN BELGIUM

Prepared by

Sean O' Dubhghaill, PhD



Belgium
partner in development



FOREWORD

I would like to begin this foreword by detailing a vignette from the time I was researching the Rwandan diaspora in Belgium. The story is an indicative microcosm, I feel, of the research more generally and illustrates how people, in casual conversation, express how they shape and frame their personal positions on matters with respect to their homeland. I believe that such moments can yield insights into their worldviews, and I found that beneath the casual atmosphere lies a complex set of diverging but interlocking interests.

“This is Sean. He is a friend of Rwanda”, was a common shorthand manner that I was introduced while attending Rwanda-themed events, which are detailed throughout this work. The very first such occasion occurred with the manager of a Rwanda-themed fashion show. Upon discovering that the project I was working on was co-sponsored by the Government of Rwanda, I was referred to in the manner mentioned. Each person to whom the manager had so graciously introduced me, first greeted me by the title, “friend of Rwanda.”

My first thought was that the utterance meant to convey something with the weight and effect of either, “Be careful with what you say in his presence”, or “You can speak freely to him.” Given that these sentiments were paradoxical, the next time I was referred to as a “friend,” I took advantage of the opportunity and attempted to resolve my confusion.

I was invited to attend a “Meet the Ambassador” event organized by Diaspora Rwandaise Belgique à Anvers¹ (DRB BERWA²) and I was introduced as a “friend of Rwanda” once again. A kind woman, when prompted, remarked, “Don’t worry. It is not a bad thing. You are not from Rwanda, but you take an interest in Rwanda. Not many do that, but it is the act of a friend, to care and to take interest.” She then looked around to see whether others agreed and there was a silent, nodding consensus. Sometimes, the interest I showed moved people to tell me stories of their homeland, talk about the recently inaugurated (in July 2017) direct flights from Kigali to Brussels and back with Rwandair; discuss trips I might make there one day; and talk of the country’s beautiful landscapes, volcanoes and gorillas.

¹ In English, “Rwandan Diaspora in Belgium” (DRB). Diaspora Rwandaise Belgique à Anvers is the local chapter of DRB in Antwerp, Belgium.

² The President of DRB Anvers delighted in telling the author that “BERWA” is a portmanteau of “Belgium” and “Rwanda”.



However, there is another side to friendship that demands our attention. Friends are expected to point out our errors and oversights, and to draw attention to any misconduct. This is how friends can sometimes be viewed as antagonistic or as opponents. I have met many “friends of Rwanda” who think in these terms, who point out that there are things that could be otherwise, and remain committed to offering their assistance in this regard. They also remain committed to leaving Rwanda a better place and to paying forward the great gift of life they managed to hold onto in the mid-to the late 1990s, in the aftermath of the genocide.

With these points in mind, I wish to close by stating that this report on the Rwandan diaspora in Belgium has been written by a friend of Rwanda, indeed.

Sean O’ Dubhghail, PhD

Author



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ACRONYMS

ADPC	African Diaspora Policy Centre
CPIA	Country Policy and Institutional Assessment
DGD	Diaspora General Directorate
DRB	(the former) Diaspora Rwandaise de BeNeLux; also, “Diaspora Rwandaise Belgique”
EDPRS	Economic Development and Poverty Reduction Strategy
GDP	gross domestic product
IOM	International Organization for Migration
KNOMAD	The Global Partnership on Migration and Development
MINECOFIN	Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning
MINEDUC	Ministry of Education
MINAFFET	The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation
RDB	Rwandan Development Board
StatBel	Statistics Belgium
TOKTEN	Transfer of Knowledge Through Expatriate Nationals
TVET	technical and vocational education and training



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The primary objective of this exercise is to map the Rwandan diaspora in Belgium. The project aims to ascertain and transmit a profile that outlines the number, gender composition, geographic professional skills, training and expertise of this population.

This report is one in a four-part series that aims to give an understanding of the predicament and situation of the Rwandan diaspora in Belgium, Germany, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom. It was executed between March and October 2018, with a sensitization workshop held in the Rwandan Embassy in Belgium on 27 September of the same year.

The findings, based on a survey of 223 respondents and key informant interviews, show a very skilled diaspora interested in contributing to Rwanda's development. Impediments to engaging in skills transfers and other initiatives include the following: lack of information, the requirement to make mortgage payments, lack of time off from work and lack of opportunities to engage in nation-building projects.

Another significant finding is that there are strong feelings of connection to Rwanda among the diaspora, and involvement in social networks is high. The diaspora is also very familiar with the broad swath of current policy priorities in Rwanda. However, the lack of support and encouragement, of information, and of a concrete expression of the necessity of the diaspora to contribute to ongoing initiatives is a significant impediment.

Generally, members of the Rwandan diaspora in Belgium feel that more could be done in the areas of pooling diaspora talent, putting diaspora members in touch with each other, facilitating more roundtable discussions and expanding diaspora operations internationally (to the other BeNeLux countries at first). There is a profound need to establish a showcase of diaspora talent, investors and entrepreneurs in order to foster and facilitate greater engagement.

What this report recommends, then, is a pilot programme to determine which skills possessed by diaspora members can be shared through e-learning and online mentoring, which would, ideally, negate the need to travel to Rwanda for a period of time.



The recommendation advanced is that there ought to be an online platform where active members of the diaspora can register their skills and job interests, governmental agencies can post volunteer and mentoring opportunities, and skills transfer “best practices” can be showcased and valorized. Many have proposed that the extant Rwandan Global Diaspora Network could serve this function, while others requested that it be independent and non-profit.

On a similar note, a culture of entrepreneurship and a certain level of financial acumen must be fostered. “Transnational entrepreneurship,” based on information (including contact information) provided through an envisioned platform that features different projects, could thrive in this capacity. Crowdsourcing and microfinancing investment projects are a small-scale way of encouraging transparency and better channels of communication (given that funding dries up once projects stop reporting on their welfare). In time, and with a great degree of oversight and collaboration, this is expected to lead to the development of a “Diaspora Venture Capital” programme.





1. BACKGROUND AND LITERATURE REVIEW

1.1. RATIONALE OF THE STUDY

A growing body of research suggests that skilled diasporas and country networks abroad are an important reservoir of knowledge and know-how.³ The research underlines the possibility of migrants acting as agents of development and as contributors to their countries of origin, for example, through financial and social remittances, knowledge transfers through the Transfer of Knowledge Through Expatriate Nationals (TOKTEN) programme, and investment ventures.⁴

Realizing the importance of its diaspora in economic development, the Government of Rwanda plans to identify the conditions and factors necessary in engaging them in the development of the country. The Government believes that the Rwandan community abroad lacks credible information on the realities back home and is often not acquainted with its socioeconomic and political drives. There is a real need for a well-established structural and strategic framework, both in Rwanda and abroad, to mobilize, coordinate with and involve the Rwandan diaspora in national development efforts (Rwanda, MINAFFET, 2009).

This chapter has three aims:

- (a) Give an understanding of what constitutes a diaspora, the volume of Rwandans overseas, and the Rwandan context (Sections 1.2, 1.3, 1.4 and 1.5);
- (b) Examine what is laid out in official governmental documentation concerning national development, remittances and the skill set(s) necessary to support these phenomena (Sections 1.6, 1.7 and 1.8);
- (c) Provide insight into material with which the diaspora is expected to be familiar (namely, Vision 2020 and EPDRS2) (Sections 1.6 and 1.8); familiarity with these two documents, specifically, is employed by the survey to gauge the level of access to “credible information” available to the diaspora.

This mapping exercise aims to support and guide the Government in the design of potential diaspora engagement programme interventions in Rwanda that would enable the diaspora to better participate and engage in the country’s development process.

³ See, for example, Barré et al., 2003; Khadria, 1999; Kuznetsov, 2006; Meyer and Brown, 1999; Pack and Page, 1994; Saxenian, 2002a, 2002b, 2004, 2006; Wescott, 2006; and Wickramasekara, 2009.

⁴ See, for example: Tejada, 2012; Weinar, 2010; de Haas, 2006; Katseli et al., 2006; and Lowell and Gerova, 2004.

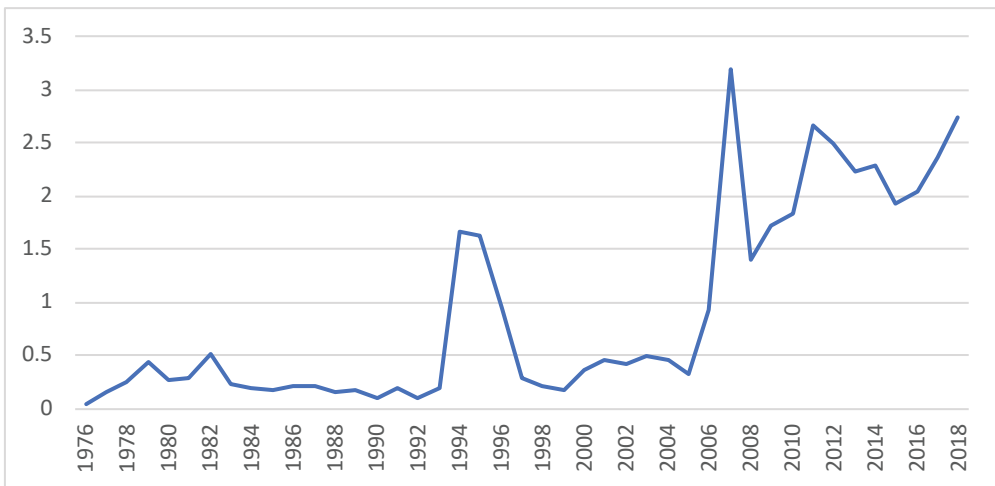


1.2. RWANDA: AN OVERVIEW

With a population of almost 12 million people, Rwanda is the most densely populated country in Africa. While its history is chequered with events that have led to massive bloodshed, its meteoric rise and the ambitious goals it has set for itself make it a country apart in East Africa.

Rwanda scores the highest of all African countries in the World Bank's Country Policy and Institutional Assessment (CPIA).⁵ Rwanda stands out in this exercise for its low debt-to-GDP ratio (World Bank, 2016, p. 17), its recent success in being among the top 100 countries in the Doing Business Index (specifically, for trading across borders) (World Bank, 2016, p. 20) and, finally, in the index that gauges how effectively revenue collection and public expenditure are used to address poverty amelioration and other economic priorities identified in strategic governmental reports.

Figure 1. Remittance inflows to Rwanda as a percentage of GDP



Source: World Bank, 2019.

Figure 1 shows remittance inflows as a percentage of GDP (not seasonally adjusted) (World Bank, 2018). The last decade has given rise to a staggering increase in remittance payments, leading to peaks, interspersed with troughs that corresponded to global crises and recessions (2008–2010). Some of the drawbacks of this rapid expansion, however, have included:

⁵ The CPIA consists of 16 criteria grouped into four equally weighted clusters: (a) Economic Management, (b) Structural Policies, (c) Policies for Social Inclusion and Equity, and (d) Public Sector Management and Institutions.



- (a) The economic and demographic dominance of Kigali, its increasingly expanding hinterlands, and its economic sluggishness in the second half of 2017 (down from 7.4% in the second quarter of 2016 to 4.3% in the second quarter of 2017);
- (b) The need to better manage the demographic dividend (as opposed to strictly controlling discrete population groups);
- (c) An insufficiently financed infrastructural network (primarily roads) (World Bank, 2017c, pp. 33–36).⁶

A report released in 2016 by the International Fund for Agricultural Development, entitled “Sending money home: Contributing to the SDGs, one family at a time”, estimates that remittances contributed by the Rwandan diaspora in 2017 was valued at USD 163 million, a figure that has grown by a little over 33 per cent from the previous decade. Interestingly, the Global Knowledge Partnership on Migration and Development (KNOMAD) has higher estimates of USD 184 million for 2017 and USD 173 million for 2016 (World Bank, 2017a). Whichever figure one accepts, the GDP contribution of remittances entering Rwanda was around 2 per cent in 2014, as Figure 1 shows. [Section 1.3](#) examines these remittance senders.

1.3. RWANDANS OVERSEAS

The stock of Rwandan migrants worldwide is often estimated to be between 250,000 and 500,000. Migrant stock is only part of the diaspora (it does not consider Rwandans born abroad). One estimate provides a figure of 315,866 (2.72% of the population) for 2015 (of which 5,053 were estimated to reside in Belgium) (Web Financial Group, 2019). KNOMAD estimates the number to be closer to 354,800 (3.1% of the population) in 2016 (World Bank, 2017b). According to UNICEF’s Migration Profile for Rwanda, the global stock of Rwandan migrants stood at 452,406 (3.84% of the population) (UNICEF, 2014).

What has been left unexamined thus far is the distinction between “migrant population overseas” and “diaspora” in its broader sense. The term “migrant” does not necessarily suggest a continuity between home country and host country, while the concept of “diaspora” connotes ties (economic, cultural, emotional, etc.) to one’s country of origin. [Section 1.4](#) is dedicated to providing a conceptual definition of “diaspora”.

⁶ A condensed analysis of the report is available at www.tralac.org/news/article/12589-rwanda-economic-update-rethinking-urbanization.html.



1.4. THE RWANDAN DIASPORA

One common definition of “diaspora” is an etymological one, that is, from the Greek stems *dia* (“through”) and *speirein* (“scatter”), which combine to form *diaspeirein* (dispersal). A more concise definition is provided by Cohen and Kennedy (2000):

[Diasporas] are formed by the forcible or voluntary dispersion of peoples to a number of countries. They constitute a diaspora if they continue to evince a common concern for their “homeland” (sometimes an imagined homeland) and come to share a common fate with their own people, wherever they happen to be. (Cohen and Kennedy, 2000, p. 32)

The definition of “Rwandan diaspora” is found in the Rwanda Diaspora Policy, established by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation (MINAFFET) (now known as the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation). The document provides a distinction between temporary and permanent diaspora members, stating thus:

[The diaspora consists of] individuals originating from one country, living outside that country, irrespective of their citizenship or nationality, who, individually or collectively, are or could be willing to contribute to the development of their country. Descendants of these individuals are also included in this definition [...] In the Rwandan context, Rwandan diaspora refers, in general, to all Rwandans who [have] left their country voluntarily or were forced to live in other countries of the world and are willing to contribute to the development of Rwanda. (Rwanda, MINAFFET, 2009, p. 6)

Occasionally, the word “diaspora” takes an initial capital in this policy document and in some other governmental documentation, while most times it does not. The Rwandan Directorate General for Immigration and Emigration used an initial capital (i.e. “Diaspora”) everywhere on its website.⁷

1.5. THE THREE DIASPORAS

The topic of differentiating between diaspora communities came up frequently in carrying out this project and is examined by Simon Turner (2013) in his work entitled, “Staging the Rwandan diaspora: The politics of performance”. The thrust of the article concerns the distinction between the post-1959 and post-1994 diasporas, and Rwanda’s successful self-marketing initiatives and how these are capitalized upon how both the diaspora and the State are “staged” in the global arena. He writes:

⁷ The DGIE microsite is currently available at <https://rwandaguide.info/place-details/directorate-general-of-immigration-and-emigration>.



Staging the diaspora as progressive and as contributing to national unity becomes part of a larger nation-building project that is about “staging” or “performing” Rwanda as a showcase of national unity. The audience here is not only the diaspora, but also Rwandans inside Rwanda, as well as the international community. (Turner, 2013, p. 266)

The diaspora comprise members who are either receptive to, sceptical of or actively hostile to the idea of contributing to the well-being of their country of origin, and efforts have been made within this diaspora mapping project to include a cross-section of all three.

Considering the diverse composition of the diaspora, what hope is there of discovering a single or common manner that they might contribute best to their homeland? [Section 1.6](#) explores the role(s) that the diaspora is expected to play, according to the ambitious targets, strategies and policies that have been put in place in relation to their potential contributions.

1.6. DEVELOPMENT

This section aims to highlight insights yielded by the study's desk research phase concerning the role that the Government expects the diaspora to play, various think tanks, and academics and practitioners alike. Our first port of call is a policy document known as “Vision 2020”,⁸ drafted by the Rwandan Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning (MINECOFIN). The policy sets out the priority areas and specific development goals to be met in the coming years. The revised Vision 2020 document contains only one mention of the word “diaspora,” but the role it is expected to play is quite clear:

The nation will be open to the world, including its own Diaspora. Rwandans will be a people, sharing the same vision for the future and ready to contribute to social cohesion, equity and equality of opportunity. (Rwanda, MINECOFIN, 2012, p. 9)

What we can infer from this passing mention of the diaspora is the primacy of their volition and readiness to contribute, a topic that was touched upon in the previous section. This shared vision can come into fruition on condition that the burden of contribution is shared between the nation and the diaspora. During the desk research phase, the original incarnation of the Vision 2020 document (from 2000) was discovered in which the evolution of the diaspora's role is traced throughout different historical periods. This tracing of the evolution is reproduced in Table 1. Attention should be paid to the rather modest role that the diaspora is expected to play in the post-Tutsi

⁸ The original Vision 2020 document (dating from 2000) is available at www.sida.se/globalassets/global/countries-and-regions/africa/rwanda/d402331a.pdf.



genocide period; such a role will adopt a participatory approach and serve as a general consultancy position.

Table 1. The role of the Rwandan State in diaspora affairs

Pre-colonial era	Colonial era	From independence until 1994	Post-1994
Limited	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exacerbation of waves of migrants running away from the colonial yoke and ruthless rule • Close monitoring of indigenous administration 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Negative role of the State in forced emigration • Destabilization of the diaspora in host countries 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Double citizenship • Efforts towards good relations and contact • Easy entry and exit • Participatory approach and generalized consultation

Source: Rwanda, MINECOFIN, 2000.

In comparison to what is stated in the revised version, which emerged a little over 10 years later, this view seems troublingly laissez-faire. A much clearer and a much more ambitious role expected to be played by the diaspora is described in the Economic Development and Poverty Reduction Strategy (EDPRS), which specifically recognizes contributions of the diaspora as having given rise to a boom in the construction sector, even during an economic downturn.

The industrial sector grew at an average rate of 9.8 per cent per year during EDPRS1, driven by a rapid expansion of construction, which grew 15.0 per cent annually. The industrial sector produced 15.4 per cent of national output between 2008 and 2012. Investment flows for construction from the Diaspora have been an important contributor. The rapid growth was achieved despite the sector being hit hard by the global downturn in 2009. Industrial growth contributed 20 per cent of total growth during EDPRS1. (Rwanda, MINECOFIN, 2013, p. 5)

At a later part in the same document, there is also mention of the skill sets and skill levels of diaspora members, who are hoped to help relieve “job market bottlenecks,” add value and relieve brain drain through skills transfers. (Rwanda, MINECOFIN, 2013, p. 69)



1.7. REMITTANCES

Remittances, their costs and the benefits they yield are a commonly featured theme in analyses of diaspora communities. The staggering volume of remittances worldwide certainly plays a role in why there is much interest in this topic:

Remittances specifically require increased attention, given that in 2017 an unparalleled \$466 billion worldwide were sent; this figure overtook the amount given in foreign direct investment in 2017, too, and dwarfs the amount given through foreign direct investments threefold. (World Bank et al., 2018, p. 3)

For an overview of the specific role that remittances play in Rwanda, Jules Rubyutsa provides an examination of the three-tiered structure of remittance payments before going on to outline where these remittances (which are portions of the diaspora members' salaries, be they big or small, irregular or regular) go specifically. He writes:

First, individual – mostly small and regular – financial transfers to support relatives back home; second, money sent to friends or relatives in the country of origin to finance economic investments; and third, individual or collective philanthropic support to development projects. (Rubyutsa, 2012, p. 122)

These are the most common types of remittances, and, as enumerated, they range from small personal payments intended to cover daily expenses, to large-scale payments for supporting cooperative ventures that contribute to development. This remittance “typology” has sensitized the researcher to the distinction between remittances for consumption and remittances for investment, and is built into the mapping exercise. On the topic of development, specifically, Rubyutsa goes on to remark that:

However, remittances' value is normally appreciated in terms of its impact on social and economic progress, or, in one word, “development”, i.e. the improvement of living conditions of an individual or society, which touches different areas of life (social, economic, technology, etc). It is usually materialized by the improvement or enhancement of the well-being of people derived from certain additional means of production acquired. (Rubyutsa, 2012, p. 122)

Paying attention to the role played by remittances will help to underscore the range of possible contributions that the diaspora can make.



1.8. SKILL SETS

The specific types of technical and vocational education and training (TVET) examined in this work coincide with those identified in MINECOFIN's EDPRS2 (2013–2018). The first priority outlined in EDPRS2 are “critical skills and attitudes for service and industrial sectors” (Rwanda, MINECOFIN, 2013, p. 130).⁹ The achievement of this objective, as priority number one, is expected to contribute to Rwanda's ambition to become a middle-income country by 2020. It is hoped that, by 2050, Rwanda will become a high-income country (World Bank, 2017c, p. 34). The report, based on stakeholder consultations, posits that:

Some key sectors in need of building critical skill[s] for economic transformation include transport, energy, mining, hospitality (including basic mastery of international languages such as English and French), IT and trade logistics, while some sectors will require the development of basic skills for massive job creation, including literacy and numeracy, skills related to trade, construction, transport, agro-processing and light manufacturing. (Rwanda, MINECOFIN, 2013, p. 66)

Two levels of skills, then, are identified: the former is more professionally inclined, while the latter is more oriented towards tradecraft and apprenticeship. Subsequently identified priority areas include technology, entrepreneurship (including securing access to finance and business development) and, finally, direct labour market interventions and amelioration of unemployment. The mapping exercise poses specific questions to members of the diaspora to determine the level of qualifications and skills training they have received and what field(s) it has allowed them to work in. Moreover, this examination will allow for segues into the discussion of whether diaspora interlocutors have any interest in putting their skills in the service of their homeland and what would facilitate such an engagement.

1.9. CONCLUSION

In summary, the literature investigation phase of the project involved:

- (a) Defining “diaspora” and “Rwandan diaspora”;
- (b) Contextualizing the Rwandan diaspora worldwide and outlining the “three diasporas”;
- (c) Tracing remittances by examining their effect(s) on development in Rwanda;
- (d) Identifying the skill sets necessary for Rwanda's continued development;

⁹ This mention of the diaspora has been excised from the abridged version of the Economic Development and Poverty Reduction Strategy II, available at www.rsb.gov.rw/fileadmin/user_upload/files/EDPRS_2_Abridged_Version.pdf.



- (e) Introducing documentation used to gauge the level of credible information available to the Rwandan diaspora.

Chapter 4 hones in on the execution of the project, as per the foundation established during the literature review phase.





2. METHODOLOGY, SCOPE, AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

This project attempts to ascertain the size, demographic composition, professional skills, training and expertise of the Rwandan diaspora in Belgium. The broad statistical data is complemented by findings from interviews and recorded informal, semi-structured conversations.

The areas of interest examined in these interviews and correspondences involve the following:

- (a) Diaspora members' relationship with their home country, Rwanda;
- (b) The kinds of contributions they make to the home country (e.g. remittances and investments);
- (c) Their desire to return, invest and share their skills;
- (d) What they expect their personal level of involvement in these activities to be and how such engagement might be better facilitated.

Table 2 presents the research framework used to capture each of the above elements. The framework is organized in terms of (a) the project objective that each element aims to address, which then determines (b) how this objective is stated in question form, (c) the method(s) employed to address such question to and get a response from diaspora members participating in the research, (d) the expected outcome(s) from posing this question, (e) outstanding concerns with any of the aforementioned elements and, finally, (f) whether the research orientation is quantitative or qualitative.



Table 2. Research framework

Project objective	Question(s) posed	Methods employed	Expected outcome(s)	Outstanding concern(s)	Research orientation
Estimate the volume and composition of the diaspora in the area studied (profession, gender, age, skills, and geographic distribution).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How many Rwandans live in the area studied? Where do they live and what are their professional backgrounds? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Desk-based literature review Statistical examination of demographic data (from census reports) Survey questionnaire Embassy consultations 	A robust overview of the demography and dispersal of the Rwandan diaspora in the area examined	The information will feed into further examination of the priority areas identified, if priority TVET areas emerge via the methods employed.	Quantitative (statistical)
Provide data on which professional fields participants are trained in; determine their level of interest in skills-sharing towards Rwanda.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What area/sector did you train in? Would you be interested in skills-sharing exchanges? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Survey of diaspora members (through a questionnaire) Key informant interviews (semi-structured) Focus group discussions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An analysis of the areas in which participants are trained An overview of the level of interest in skills-sharing 	Demonstrating willingness might prove challenging due to practical obstacles (family, personal health, etc.).	Quantitative (statistical)
Outline the different levels of the diaspora's awareness concerning opportunities and facilities available in Rwanda.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are you aware of the extant facilities and opportunities available to you? Might they enable you to engage more easily? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Survey of diaspora members (through a questionnaire) Key informant interviews (semi-structured) Focus group discussions 	An understanding of the variegated levels of understanding possessed by the Rwandan diaspora in the area examined	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are the consultants expected to mobilize the participants? What are the engagement opportunities for the diaspora? 	Qualitative (personal/subjective)



Project objective	Question(s) posed	Methods employed	Expected outcome(s)	Outstanding concern(s)	Research orientation
Identify the areas in which participants would like to contribute towards Rwanda's development and how this might be actualized.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do you currently contribute to Rwanda's development? How do you/How would you personally like to contribute? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Key informant interviews (semi-structured) Focus group discussions 	An overview of the way (and possible ways) that the diaspora is currently engaged in homeland development	"Development" is a broad concept; do the creative arts count towards development, for instance?	Qualitative (personal-subjective)
Present a clear picture of the gaps in diaspora members' levels of awareness and knowledge concerning Rwanda's social and economic situation.	From your perspective, how do you think Rwanda is faring in the current socioeconomic climate?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Desk-based literature review Key informant interviews (semi-structured) Focus group discussions 	An overview of the disparity between Rwanda's socioeconomic state and the general perception thereof by the diaspora in the area examined	Is the researcher expected to disagree, to some extent, with the personal opinions of the diaspora interlocutors?	Qualitative (personal-subjective)
Provide a list of expectations in terms of improved policies and facilities that would help diaspora members participate in the country's development.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What expectations do you have of the Government of Rwanda? What would better facilitate your participation in Rwanda's development? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Survey questionnaire Desk-based literature review Key informant interviews (semi-structured) Focus group discussions 	A list of concrete suggestions being advanced by diaspora members	How concrete do the suggestions need to be? With an interview format, for instance, people might struggle to think through an idea fully.	Qualitative (personal-subjective)



2.1. METHODOLOGY

The mapping exercise took place from March to October 2018 and involved online and offline surveys, key informant interviews¹⁰ and focus groups. Survey respondents were selected through convenience sampling coupled with stratified and multi-stage sampling procedures.

The exercise was promoted to prospective participants through traditional and social media platforms. Following the initial outreach, interested respondents were invited to participate in focus groups, take the survey (online or offline) and attend key informant interviews; the order in which these were undertaken was iterative, and each exercise fed back into the others.

Descriptive statistics are used to summarize the data and distributions are illustrated through pie charts in Chapter 3. The method chosen to determine sample sizes is dealt with in [Section 2.2: Sampling strategy and technique](#).

2.2. SAMPLING STRATEGY AND TECHNIQUE

Prior to selecting a sampling strategy, a list of strata was made that considered all relevant variables. These included gender, skill set, professional qualifications and geographic location, all of which corresponded to their own strata. Ensuring that all these strata were included allowed for the sample to be representative.¹¹

The strata, as they were envisioned, were categorized into two types based on whether they were objectively or subjectively oriented. The objective strata corresponded to more static variables (e.g. gender, home address and type of qualifications possessed), whereas the subjective strata corresponded to slightly more ambiguous variables that required deeper investigation. The stratified sampling method proposed accommodated these two types of considerations (see Table 3 for the list of strata).

Table 3. Objective and subjective strata

Objective strata	Subjective strata
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gender • Home address in area under investigation • Professional/educational level 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Current level of contribution to Rwanda's development • Level of interest in contributing to Rwanda's development • Self-ascribed skill set

¹⁰ More information on what comprises a key informant can be found in [Section 2.4: Key informant interviews](#).

¹¹ For an overview of the proportionate stratified sampling methodology, refer to, for example, <https://research-methodology.net/sampling-in-primary-data-collection/stratified-sampling>.



Randomization guaranteed that any participant selected from within a specific stratum had an equal chance of being selected as any other.

Cochran’s formula, used in this mapping exercise, underpins a wide variety of survey sampling size calculating tools. It is used by Survey System’s Sample Size Calculator, Raosoft’s Sample Size Calculator, Checkmarket’s Sample Size Calculator and, finally, Survey Monkey’s Sample Size Calculator. Cochran’s formula is expressed as follows:

$$n_0 = \frac{z^2pq}{e^2},$$

where e is the margin of error; p is the size of the population under examination; q is 1 – p; and Z (or the z-value) represents the confidence level. Contingency plans were designed to address low response rates or incomplete surveys (see [Section 2.7](#)).

The sampling methodology is a combination of purposive and continuous methods. To arrive at a representative sample size that suited the sampling method outlined, the sample sizing strategy summarized in Table 4 was adopted. Specifically, the researcher sought a representative sample size at a confidence level of 95 per cent, with a margin of error between 5 and 10 per cent. In Belgium, the population of Rwandan diaspora members was 32,137. However, given that participants under the age of 18 could not give informed consent, this number dropped to 27,627.

Table 4. Study sampling table (Cochran’s method)

	Margin of error	Sample size	Gender breakdown (male/female)	Confidence level
Population of the Rwandan diaspora in Belgium: 27,627 (Statbel) 12,227 (male) 15,400 (female)	5%	379	169/210	95%
	6%	265	123/142	95%
	7%	195	90/105	95%
	8%	150	69/81	95%
	9%	119	53/66	95%
	10%	96	44/52	95%

In total, 204 people were surveyed and interviews with 19 key informants took place, which meant a total of 223 official participants. The margin of error for the survey, thus, falls between 6 and 7 per cent, at a confidence level of 95 per cent.

[Section 4.3](#) details the different research methods and engagement techniques applied in the conduct of this exercise.



2.3. PROJECT EXECUTION

The project was executed in the following manner:

- (a) A literature review was undertaken to better understand the Rwandan context, the diaspora's skill set(s), and concepts such as "Rwandan diaspora," "remittances" and "development." (Chapter 1)
- (b) A research framework was established and the methodology best suited for executing the aims of the framework was employed alongside a robust stratified sampling strategy. Moreover, considerations regarding privacy, ethics and contingency plans to address the study's limitations were drawn up. (Chapter 2)
- (c) Reputable, up-to-date demographic and statistical data on the Rwandan diaspora, provided by the Belgian Government, was tabulated and visualized using charts and graphs. Such data included volume, gender, geographic distribution throughout Belgium, age range and marital status. (Chapter 3)
- (d) Results of the survey, taken in either English, French and Flemish,¹² were compiled, and a review was made of the supplementary information provided by participants in response to the open-ended questions in Annex 1. These data were then visualized using pie charts and bar graphs. (Chapter 4)
- (e) Survey responses from participating diaspora network members in Belgium were coupled with interview and focus group findings, as well as findings from an interview with Rwandan Embassy representatives and a previous research report, to generate an overview of the situation of the diaspora from an interpersonal perspective. (Chapter 5)
- (f) Finally, recommendations based on the mapping exercise, formulated in as practical and expressed in as concise a manner as possible, were presented to the Government of Rwanda and reinforced with feedback received from a stakeholder event hosted at the Rwandan Embassy in Brussels on 27 September 2018. (Chapter 7)

2.4. KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEWS

Key informant interviews are qualitative in-depth interviews with individuals who know "what is going on" in their community. The purpose of key informant interviews in this exercise was to collect information from a wide range of diaspora members – including community leaders, professionals and residents – who had first-hand knowledge of their community. These interviews took place at a location of the participants' choice and lasted between 35 and 90 minutes. A total of 19 interviews took place, often outside office hours, on public holidays or weekends. The questions are reproduced in Annex 1.1.

¹² Translations were undertaken by Rob de Lobel and Suzanne Martens.



Table 5. Key informant interview participants

No.	Gender	Age	Location	Expertise	Date
1	Female	33	Antwerp	Medicine	12 April 2018
2	Female	28	Brussels	Education	15 April 2018
3	Male	31	Brussels	Information technology and finance	16 April 2018
4	Female	28	Brussels	Finance	1 May 2018
5	Female	26	Brussels	Law	5 May 2018
6	Male	32	Brussels	Finance	5 May 2018
7	Female	29	Brussels	Finance/International relations	10 May 2018
8	Male	33	Brussels	Finance/Energy	31 May 2018
9	Female	60	Brussels	Non-profit/Enterprise	4 June 2018
10	Male	50	Oostende	Business owner (imports)	7 June 2018
11	Female	44	Oostende	Business owner (imports)	7 June 2018
12	Female	41	Brussels	Non-profit/Enterprise	11 June 2018
13	Male	31	Brussels	Finance	14 June 2018
14	Male	30	Brussels	Finance/Enterprise	16 June 2018
15	Male	28	Brussels	Finance	16 June 2018
16	Male	29	Brussels	Finance/Investments	18 June 2018
17	Male	33	Brussels	Law/International relations	28 June 2018
18	Female	31	Antwerp	International relations	29 June 2018
19	Male	42	Brussels	Finance/Enterprise	12 October 2018

Focus groups were also held, albeit with fewer people per session than initially planned. The Rwandan Embassy in Brussels advised the researcher to keep focus group size to a minimum due to the difficulty of arranging for so many participants to meet at the same venue and time. The Embassy also advised that being in such a situation might make some individuals unable to speak freely.

Having established this, one three-person and two two-person group discussions were conducted that closely adhered to the script in [Annex 1.2](#). This included the two-person group discussion that took place at the Rwandan Embassy among two of its personnel, the questions posed at which have been included as [Annex 1.3](#). The researcher was instructed not to record the interview that took place at the Embassy but was permitted to take down notes.



2.5. ONLINE SURVEY

The online survey that targeted the Rwandan diaspora in Belgium made use of a questionnaire that was available in four languages (i.e. English, French, Flemish and Kinyarwanda) and created using a Google form. It had splash pages (which contained introductory graphics) and it was heavily promoted through traditional, electronic, and social media platforms. The following actions were taken to publicize the survey's existence:

- (a) Published the survey on the Rwandan Embassy in Brussels' Facebook page (name: Ambassade de la République du Rwanda à Bruxelles), which was followed by 2,903 people as of 20 September 2018;
- (b) Published the survey on Rwandan Youth Belgium's Facebook page, run by a private group with 1,124 members as of 20 September 2018;
- (c) Circulated the survey among members of the DRB Rugari Federal through its president and chapter leaders (there was a total of around 60 members from 9 chapters);
- (d) Circulated the survey through IOM Belgium's official Twitter account, which had 1,496 followers as of 20 September 2018 (the link to the survey was retweeted by IOM Rwanda's Twitter account);
- (e) Reached out to opposition network, Jambo News, to ensure that the diaspora was being represented in its entirety;
- (f) Posted a QR code that linked to the survey, in all four languages, at the entrance to the Rwandan Embassy in Brussels;
- (g) Invited interviewees to send the survey participation code through WhatsApp to attract other potential interviewees.

One difficulty that emerged was related to the survey's circulation and concerned the Embassy's lack of a central repository for email addresses for individual members of the diaspora (the Embassy did not have a communications person during the first five months of the mapping project, but has since compiled one).

2.6. PRIVACY AND ETHICS

The research ensured that ethical principles, based on IOM's Data Protection Principles,¹³ were respected throughout the duration of the mapping exercise and that respondents' privacy was protected. Participation was voluntary and informed consent was obtained throughout.

¹³ Details about IOM's Data Protection Principles can be found at http://publications.iom.int/system/files/pdf/iomdataprotection_web.pdf.



Respondents were informed that the purpose of the exercise was to gauge diaspora interest in contributing to Rwanda's development. Participants in the key informant interviews and focus group discussions remained anonymous and confidentiality of personal information was maintained.

2.7. LIMITATIONS

This mapping exercise captures the views of a small sample of the Rwandan diaspora in Belgium. Although significant efforts were made to reach the widest audience possible, certain limitations have ultimately affected the overall results of the exercise. Minor limitations included survey fatigue, a lack of faith by some participants in the successful implementation of the project's recommendations, some questions becoming "lost in translation" and participants' lack of faith in their identities remaining anonymous, among others.

2.8. CONTINGENCY PLANNING

Contingency plans that were put in place to address the study's limitations included renewed efforts at activating and dialoguing with a variety of other diaspora actors; IOM's confirmation of the researcher's identity and position, and assurance of his trustworthiness; stakeholder feedback sessions and participants' scrutiny, in which they were invited to review their testimonies and allowed to add or subtract information; and, finally, frequent contact with participants, which served to demonstrate the researcher's commitment to the project. These measures proved very worthwhile and significant survey uptake was observed each time that official IOM Twitter accounts (specifically, those of the IOM Rwanda and IOM Brussels and Luxembourg Country Offices) circulated the link to the online survey.





3. STATISTICAL OVERVIEW

This chapter aims to provide an overview of the demographic composition and geographic distribution of the Rwandan diaspora in Belgium. How many members of the Rwandan diaspora currently reside in Belgium depends, firstly, on how one defines “diaspora” and, secondly, on whom one is listening to. For example, according to the report, “Diaspora organizations as strategic agents of development”, by the African Diaspora Policy Centre, Rwandans do not figure in the top ten African diasporas in Belgium (ADPC, 2014, p. 53).

Belgium’s national statistical agency, Statistics Belgium (“StatBel”) has produced the most accurate and up-to-date figures available to the project. Perhaps the most noteworthy feature of the statistical treatment is how StatBel organized the Rwandan diaspora into three groups. In terms of citizenship status, there are Rwandans who are: (a) “foreigners” in Belgium (i.e. those not possessing Belgian citizenship); (b) “immigrants” born overseas but who have acquired Belgian citizenship; and (c) “Belgians of foreign origin,” who were born in Belgium but do not possess Belgian citizenship. These three categories are described in greater detail below:¹⁴

- (a) *Foreigner*. A Rwandan living in Belgium who is not a Belgian citizen but could have been born in Belgium and have Rwandan citizenship (i.e. he or she did not necessarily move from Rwanda to Belgium). Rwandan citizenship defines this group.

This group is named “Current nationality: Rwandan” in this exercise.

- (b) *Immigrant*. A Rwandan born in Rwanda, who moved to Belgium and may currently be a Belgian citizen. The fact that they moved from Rwanda to Belgium defines this group.

This group is named “Country of birth: Rwanda” in this exercise.

- (c) *Belgian of foreign origin*. A Rwandan born in Belgium, who was a Rwandan citizen but has become Belgian in the meanwhile. Change of citizenship defines this group.

This group is named “First nationality: Rwandan” in this exercise.

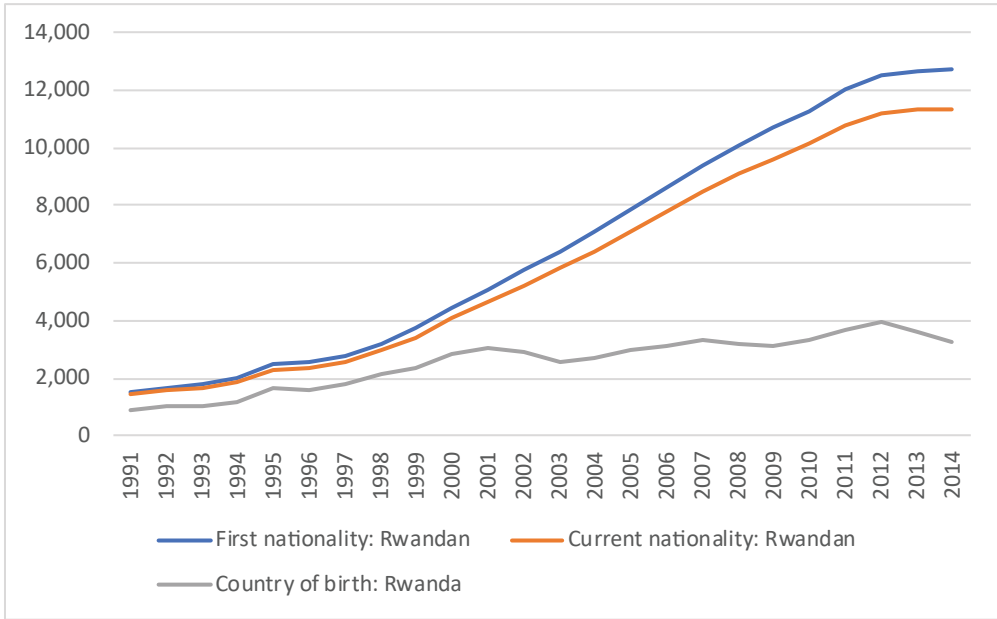
¹⁴ The necessity for this categorization stems from the nature of the statistical treatment by StatBel (see www.myria.be/nl/publicaties/myriatics-2-immigrant-vreemde-origines). In such statistical treatment, “citizenship” and “nationality” are taken to mean the same.



It is important to note that there exists a possible overlap between the second and third categories, but the degree or extent of the overlap is indeterminable. This should be borne in mind when examining specific features of these two groups.

The total number of Rwandans living in Belgium was 32,137 as of 1 January 2018. The statistics presented in this chapter are the most accurate and holistic figures available as of this report's writing.

Figure 2. Rwandan population in Belgium

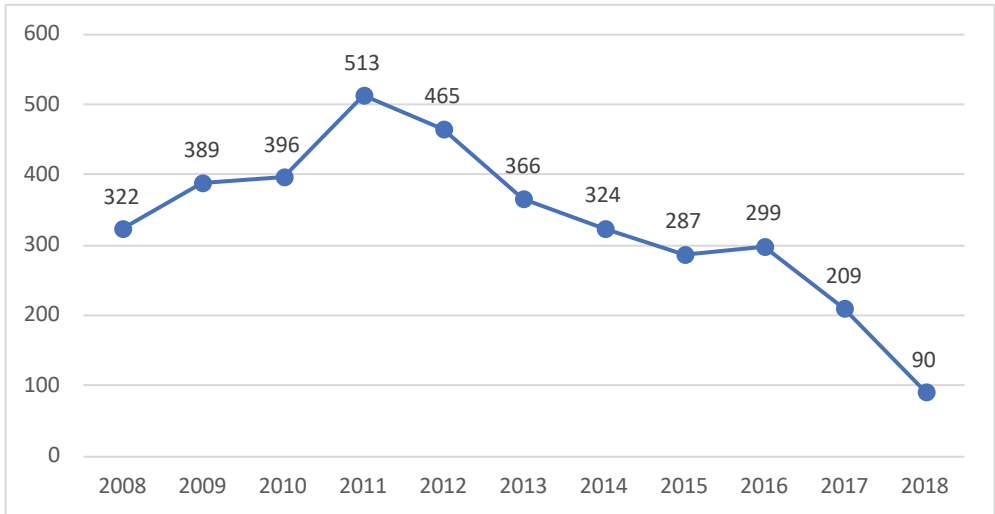


Source: StatBel, 2018.

Figure 3 shows the number of exiles, refugees and asylees who arrived from Rwanda to Belgium in the last ten years. The number of Rwandan exiles, refugees and asylees in Belgium has fallen since its recent high point of 513 in 2011 and tapered off significantly to a 10-year low of 64 in 2017. The figure registered in the first 6 months of 2018 was 49.



Figure 3. Rwandan exiles, refugees and asylees in Belgium, 2008–2018



Source: StatBel, 2018.

3.1. CURRENT RWANDAN NATIONALS

The “Current nationality: Rwandan” contingent of the Rwandan diaspora in Belgium is split between 1,629 males and 1,904 females (Figure 4). In terms of geographic distribution, this contingent is more or less equally spread across the three regions of Belgium (Flanders in the north, and Brussels Capital Region and Wallonia to the south) (Figure 5). Flanders counts 484 males and 636 females; Wallonia counts 565 males and 712 females; and Brussels Capital Region counts 580 males and 556 females (Figure 6).

Figure 4. Gender distribution of the “Current nationality: Rwandan” contingent

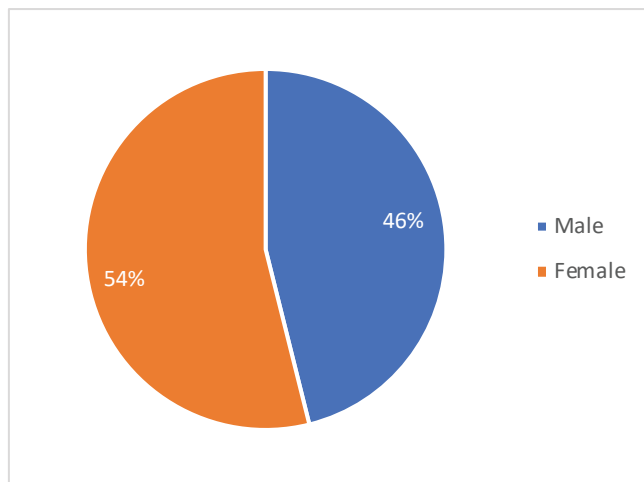




Figure 5. Geographic distribution of the “Current nationality: Rwandan” contingent

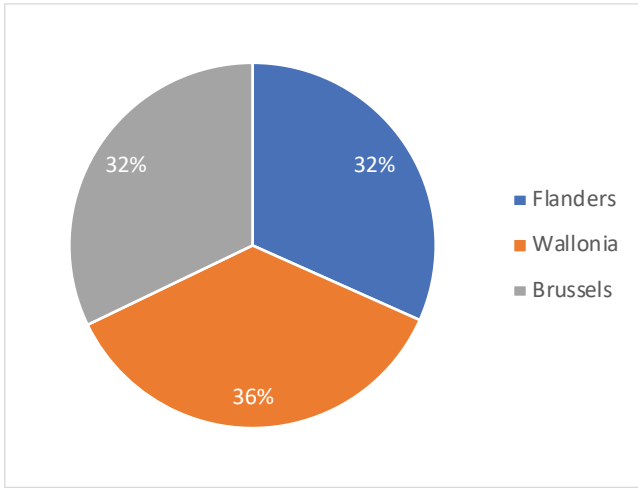
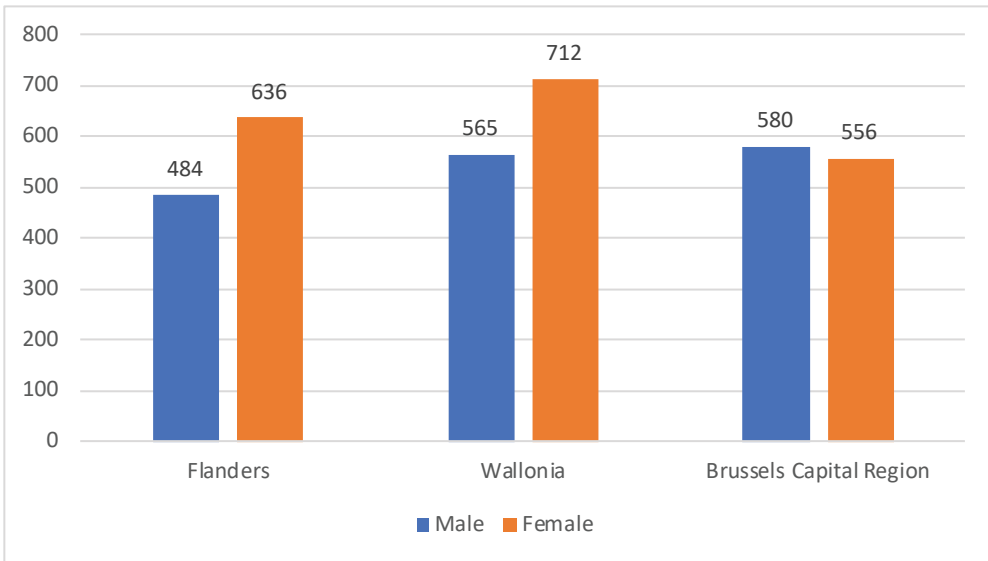


Figure 6. Geographic and gender distribution of the “Current nationality: Rwandan” contingent

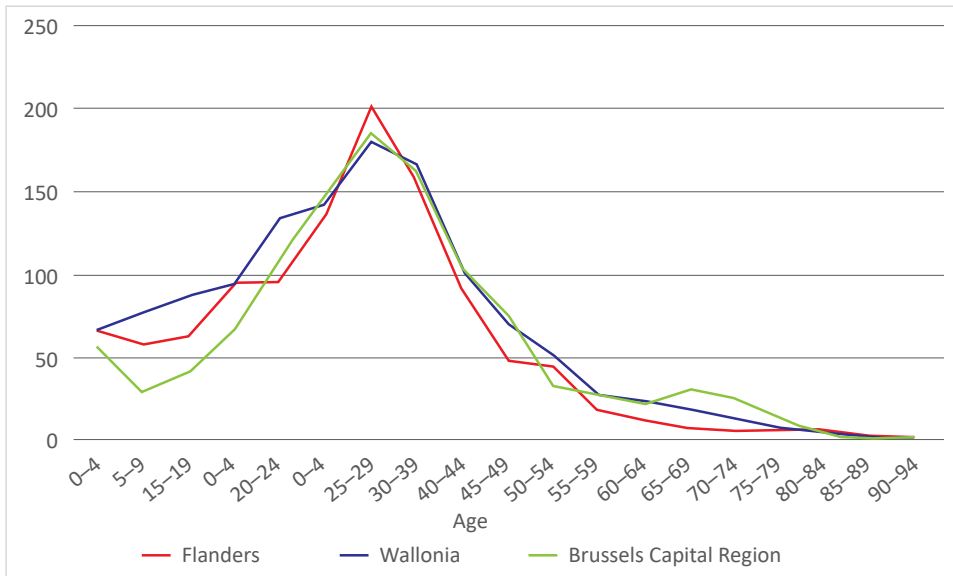


The “Current nationality: Rwandan” contingent is a young demographic with a sharp incline prior to the 20–24-year-old cohort and a sharp decline after the 30–34-year-old cohort. Less than 10 per cent (264) of this group are over 65 years of age. In this mapping exercise, the under-18 group (who cannot consent to be interviewed) comprises 801 individuals.¹⁵ (Figure 7)

¹⁵ Given the lack of disaggregated data, it is not possible to determine the exact breakdown of the 15–19-year-old cohort. Considering this limitation, the entire cohort is removed to remain on the safe side.

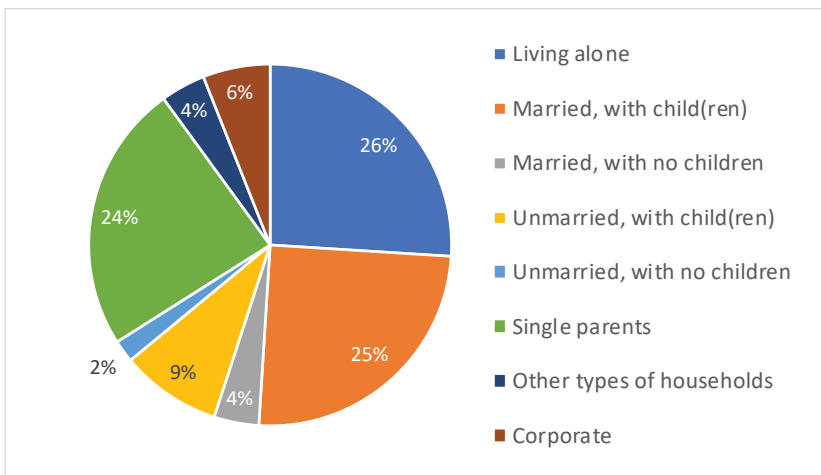


Figure 7. Age distribution of the “Current nationality: Rwandan” contingent



The three largest categories of civil status among the “Current nationality: Rwandan” contingent are: (a) those living alone (26%), (b) those who are married, with child(ren) (25%), and (c) single parents (24%). “Corporate type” households (or “collective” households) are usually institutions of some kind, including rest or care homes, prisons and similar institutions. “Other types of households” are those that do not fit neatly into any of the other categories and possibly include those that have more than one “head of household.” Classification errors in the population registry may also lead to a household being put in this category.

Figure 8. Civil status distribution of the “Current nationality: Rwandan” contingent





3.2. RWANDA-BORN RWANDANS IN BELGIUM

The Rwanda-born contingent (“Country of birth: Rwanda”) of the Rwandan diaspora in Belgium is split between 6,312 males and 7,749 females (Figure 9). In terms of geographic distribution, the Rwanda-born diaspora are, like the “Current nationality: Rwanda” group, more or less equally distributed among the three regions of Belgium (with Wallonia having a slightly higher representation) (Figure 10). Flanders counts 2,045 males and 2,594 females; Wallonia counts 2,289 males and 2,594 females; and Brussels Capital Region counts 1,978 males and 2,343 females (Figure 11).

Figure 9. Gender distribution of the “Country of birth: Rwanda” contingent

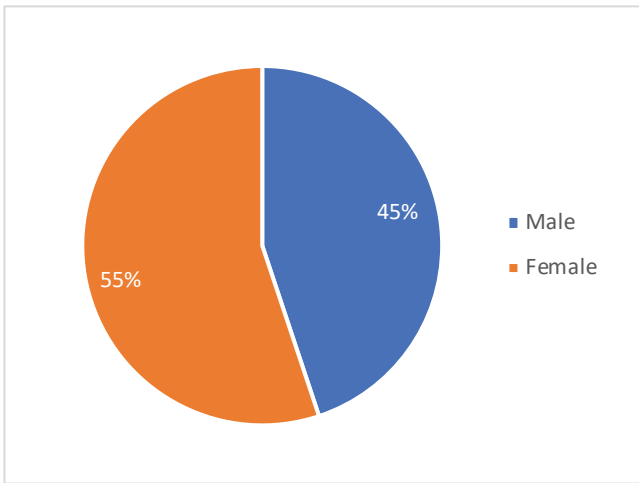


Figure 10. Geographic distribution of the “Country of birth: Rwanda” contingent

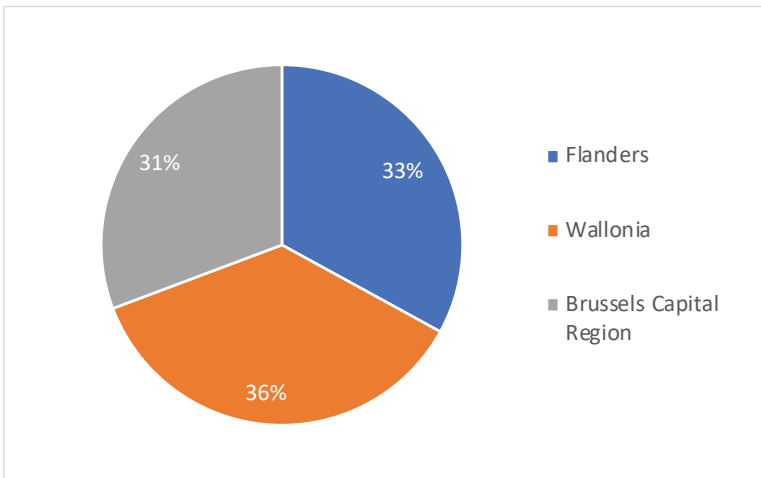
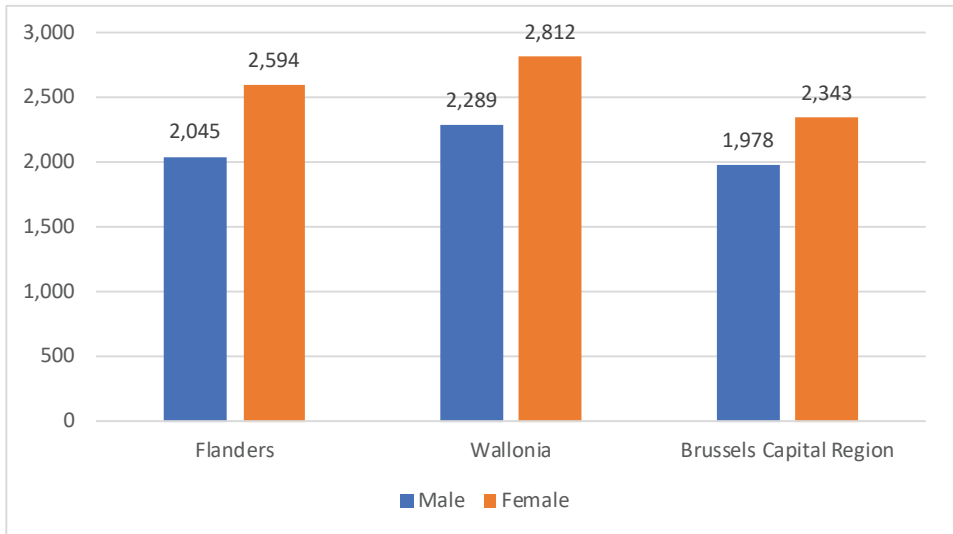


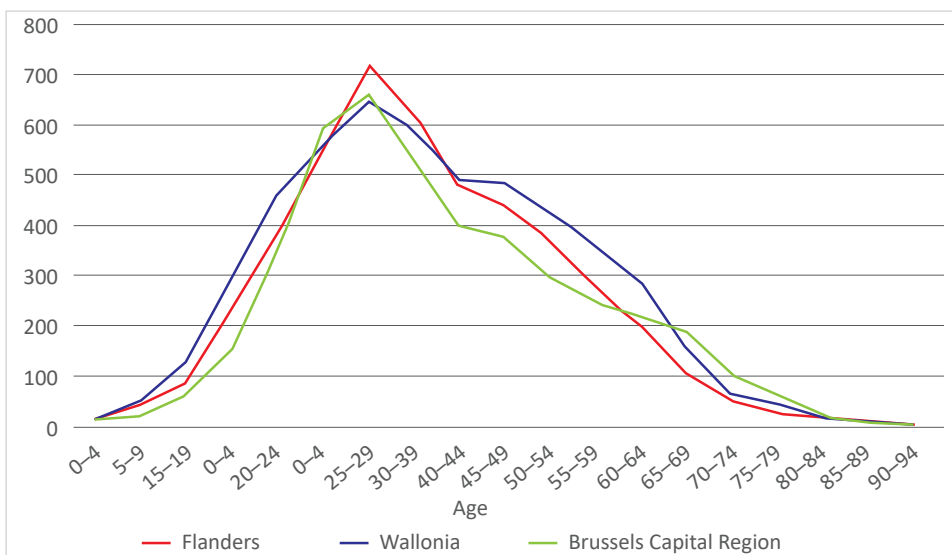


Figure 11. Geographic and gender distribution of the “Country of birth: Rwanda” contingent



Rwanda-born Rwandans are slightly older than the previous contingent, with peak frequency at 25–29 years old (compared to the latter, at 20–24 years old) and a more gradual decline in the number of individuals aged 40 and above. Less than 5 per cent (443) of this group are over 65. The group under 18 (and who, therefore, cannot consent to be interviewed) comprises 1,136 individuals.¹⁶ (Figure 12)

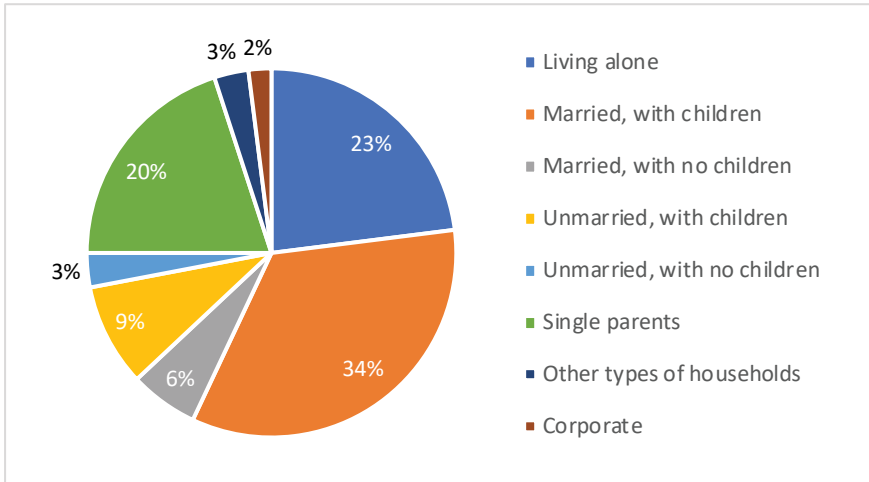
Figure 12. Age distribution of the “Country of birth: Rwanda” contingent



¹⁶ Given the lack of disaggregated data, it is not possible to determine the exact breakdown of the 15–19-year-old cohort. Considering this limitation, the entire cohort is removed to remain on the safe side.



Figure 13. Civil status distribution of the “Country of birth: Rwanda” contingent



This group has a greater degree of variation than “Current nationality: Rwandan”, with the “married, with children” group being the forerunners (34%), followed by those who live alone (23%), and then by single parents (20%). The group of married individuals with no children is also slightly bigger (6%), while the “unmarried, with children” group is identical in proportion (9%).

3.3. FIRST NATIONALITY: RWANDAN

The gender distribution of the “First nationality: Rwandan” contingent of the Rwandan diaspora in Belgium is similar to that of “Current nationality: Rwandan”: This contingent is split between 6,569 males and 7,974 females (Figure 14). In terms of geographic distribution, this category is almost identical to the “Country of birth: Rwanda” group (Figure 15). Flanders counts 2,149 males and 2,642 females; Wallonia counts 2,327 males and 2,836 females; while Brussels Capital Region counts 2,093 males and 2,496 females (Figure 16).



Figure 14. Gender distribution of the “First nationality: Rwandan” contingent

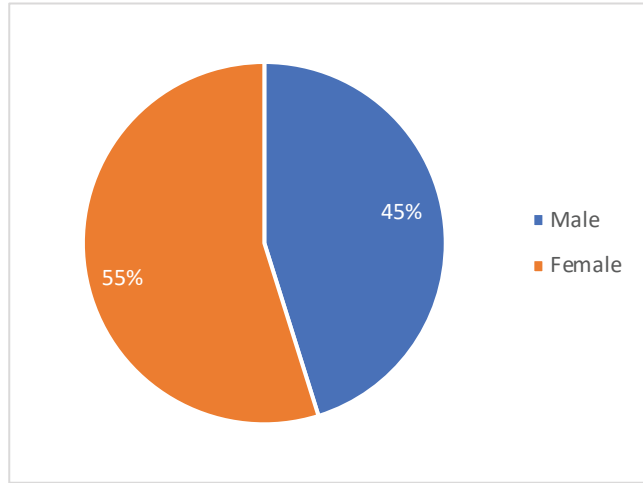


Figure 15. Geographic distribution of the “First nationality: Rwandan” contingent

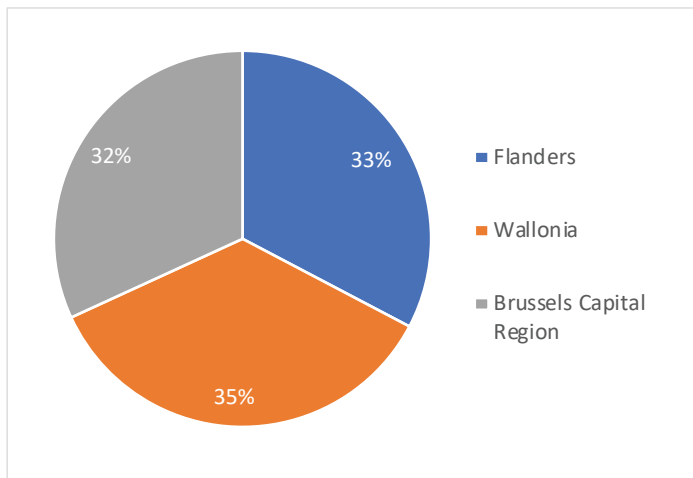
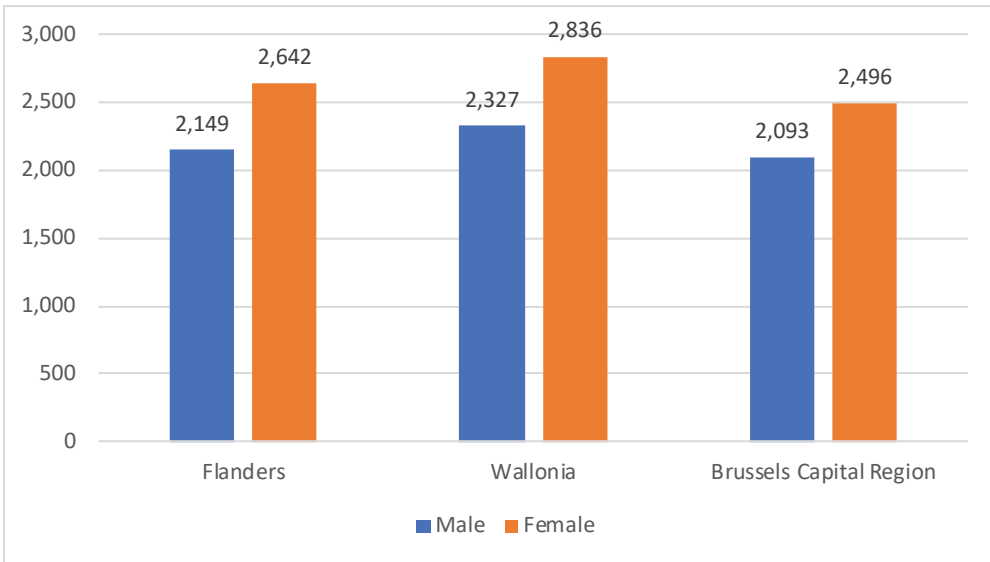




Figure 16. Geographic and gender distribution of the “First nationality: Rwandan” contingent



The “First nationality: Rwandan” contingent is a slightly older group than the previous category, with peak frequency at 30–34 (compared to the latter, at 25–29). The decline in the number of individuals aged 40 and above is likewise sharp. In addition, less than five per cent (279) of this group are over 65, but, in stark contrast to the previous two groups, this cohort’s population of individuals under 18 years old is over twice as large. They comprise 2,573 individuals, the largest portion of which is in the 15–9 age range (1,137).¹⁷ This is easily seen by comparing the segments to the left of the peaks of the respective graphs for the Rwanda-born Rwandans and the “First nationality: Rwandan” group. (Figure 17)

¹⁷ Given the lack of disaggregated data, it is not possible to determine the exact breakdown of the 15–19-year-old cohort. Considering this limitation, the entire cohort is removed to remain on the safe side.



Figure 17. Age distribution of the “First nationality: Rwandan” contingent

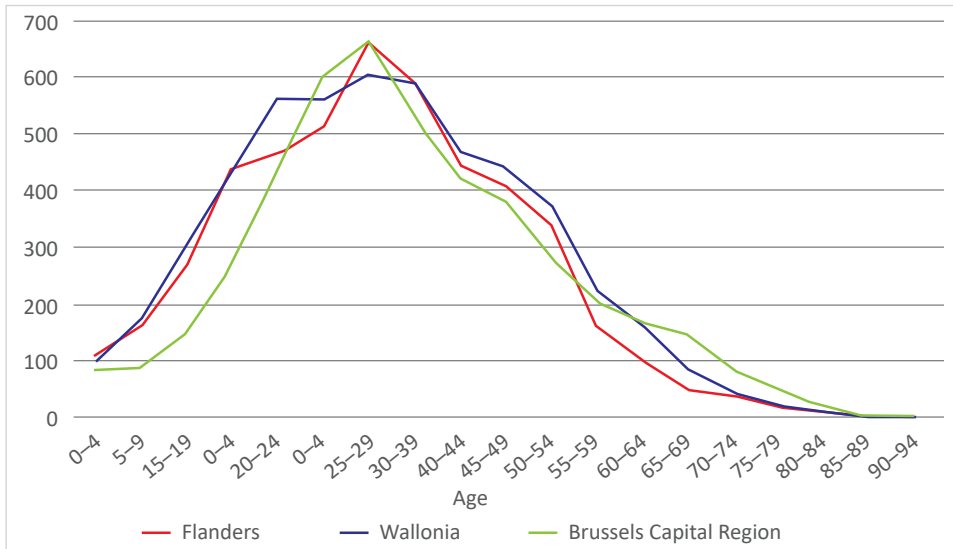
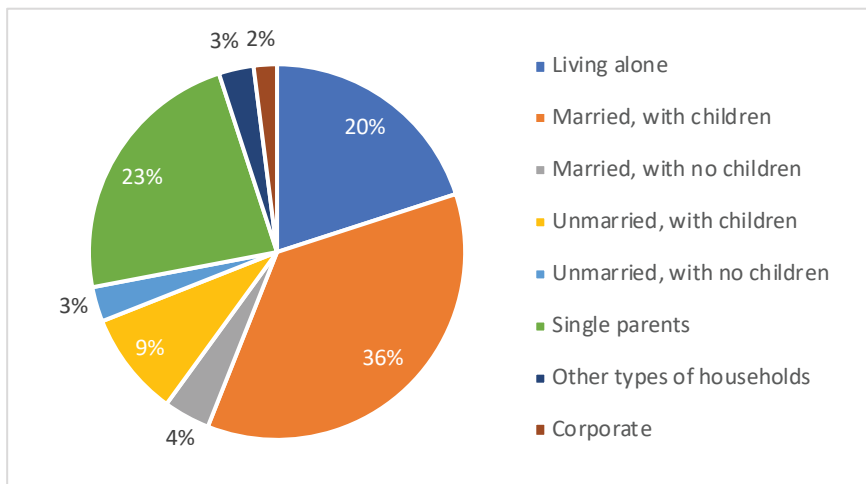


Figure 18. Civil status distribution of the “First nationality: Rwandan” contingent



Finally, the “First nationality: Rwandan” contingent has a similar composition to their Rwanda-born counterparts, with slightly more who are “married, with children” (36%), the same proportion who are “unmarried, with children” (9%) and slightly fewer reporting that they are living alone (20%).

This chapter has mapped various statistical distributions of the Rwandan diaspora in Belgium. The succeeding chapter will proceed to examine the results given by survey participants.





4. SURVEY FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

4.1. SURVEY FINDINGS

This chapter analyses the findings from a total of 204 participants who took the survey in one of three languages (French, Flemish and English). The survey results were tabulated using a Google form that was exported through an Excel document and then visualized.

A little over half (55%) of survey respondents are permanent migrants (or “expatriates”). Refugees and exiles, and temporary migrants account for 20 per cent each (Figure 19). “Others” (25%) include asylees, persons whose citizenship has lapsed and those who feel that the term “Rwandan diaspora” does not reflect their situation – findings revealed during the key informant interviews. More than half (61%) of respondents possess dual (i.e. Belgo-Rwandan) citizenship (Figure 20).

Figure 19. Respondents’ migration status distribution

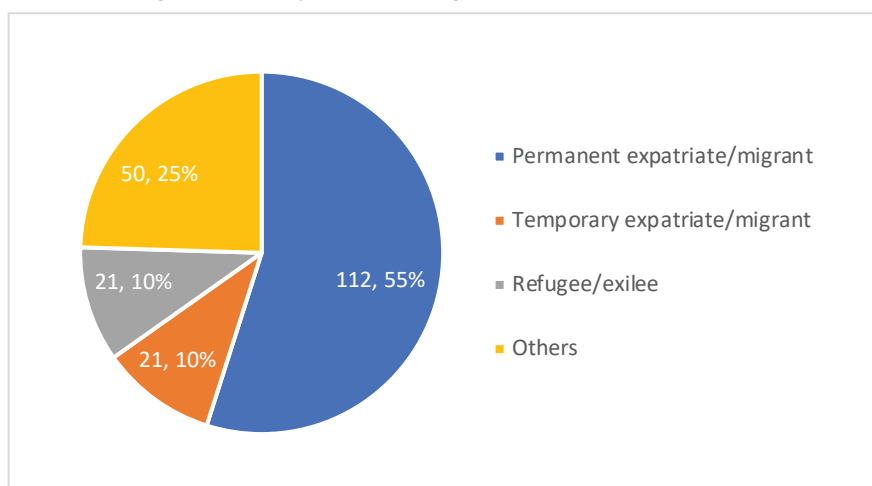
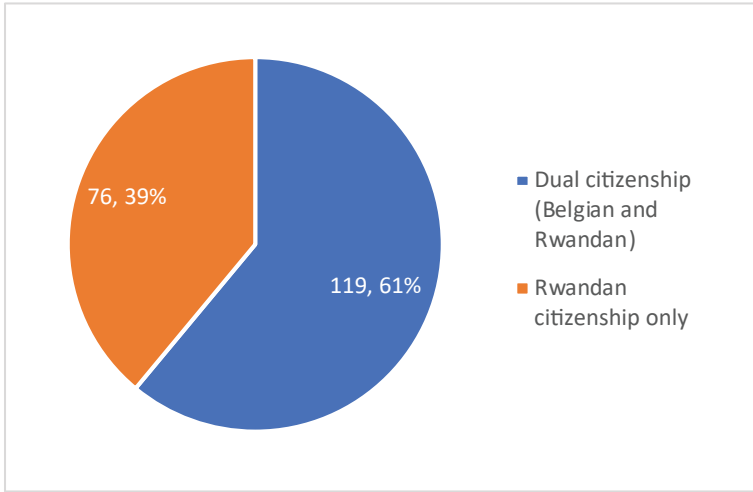


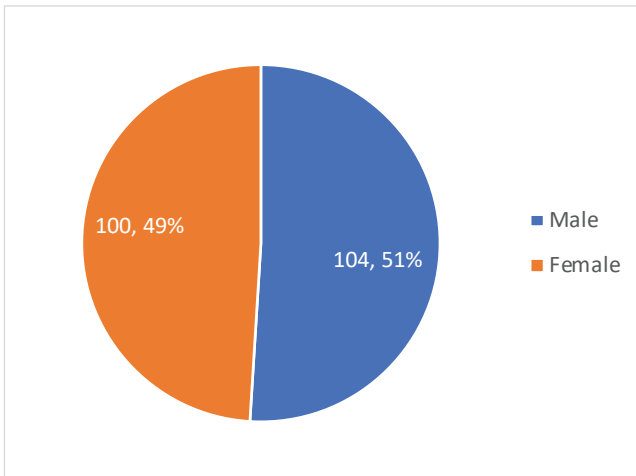


Figure 20. Respondents' citizenship status distribution



This mapping exercise, as explained in the previous chapter, attempts to strike as representative a balance between the genders as possible. As Figure 21 shows, very close to a 50/50 distribution is achieved. This coincides with the gender distribution outlined in Chapter 5.

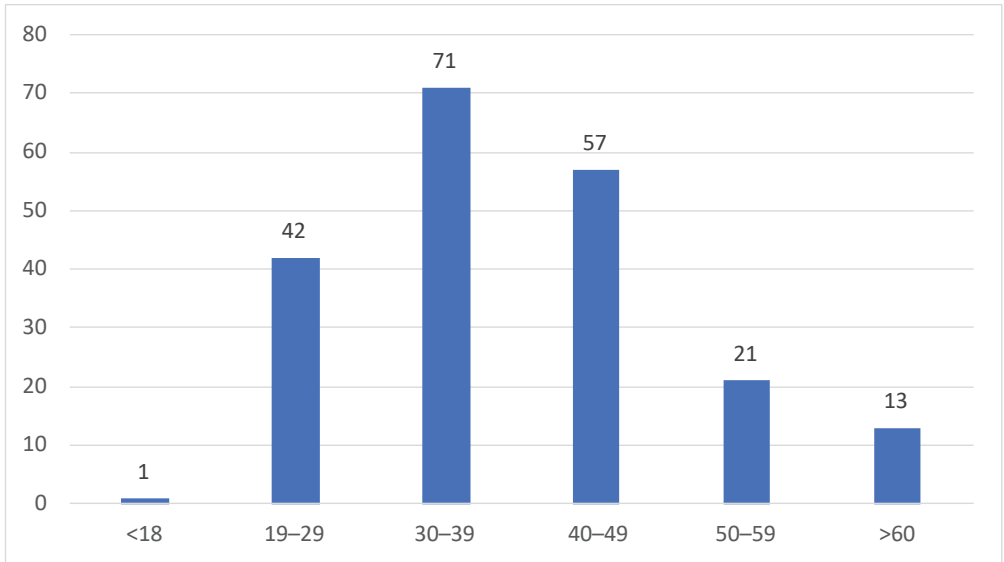
Figure 21. Respondents' gender distribution



The two most significant cohorts of Rwanda diaspora members participating in the study are the 30–39 and 40–49 age brackets; the 19–29 age bracket comes in at third place (Figure 22). This pattern closely mirrors the age distributions presented in Chapter 5.

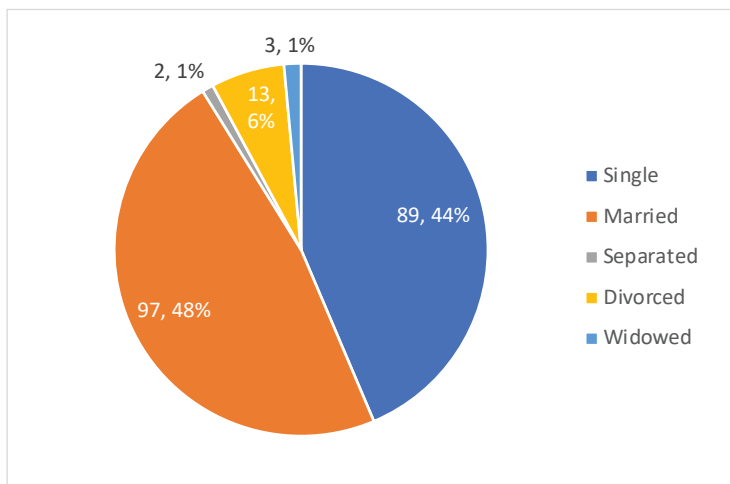


Figure 22. Respondents' age distribution



The Rwandan diaspora in Belgium seems to comprise largely of individuals who are either currently married or single (Figure 23). It must be noted, however, that the survey in this mapping exercise does not employ the same categories under marital status as those in StatBel's surveys (namely, "living alone", "married, with children", "married, without children", "unmarried, with children", "unmarried, without children", "single parents", "corporate" and "other household types"; see Chapter 5).

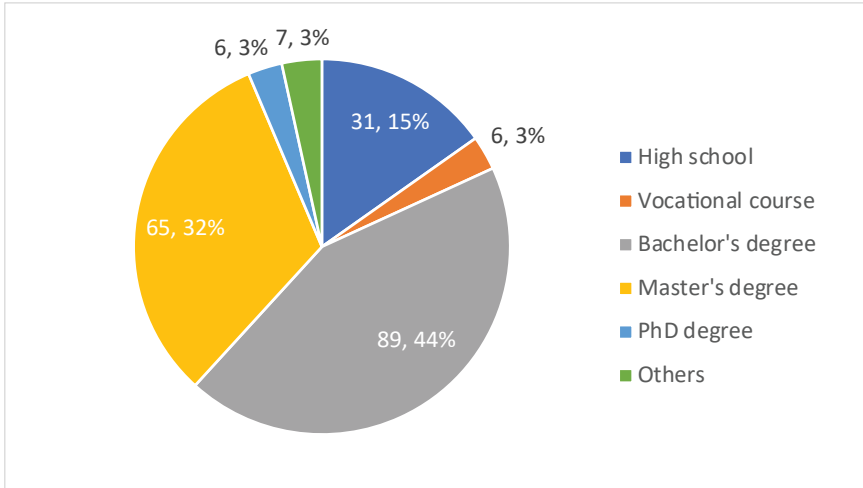
Figure 23. Respondents' marital status distribution





The Rwandan diaspora in Belgium are a very skilled group, with three quarters (76%) possessing either a bachelor’s or master’s degree. Others have had apprenticeships or a few years of college education but have not acquired their degrees. (Figure 24)

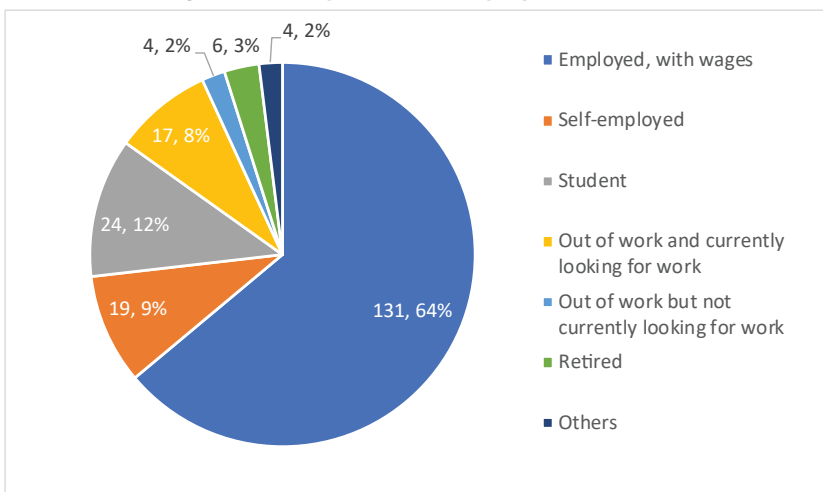
Figure 24. Respondents’ educational attainment

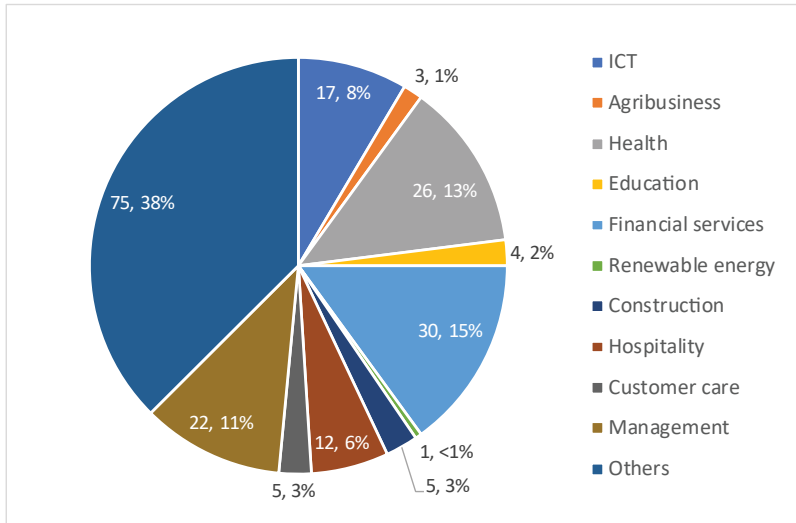


4.2. DIASPORA TRAINING BACKGROUND

Almost two thirds (64%) of the respondents are in salaried employment (“employed, with wages”); 9 per cent are self-employed, while 12 per cent are students (Figure 25). Majority of “Others” in Figure 26 include transportation, law, consultancy (non-management), the creative and performing arts, interior design, the academe, psychology, communications, political science, events management, web design, engineering and others. Another common response is a combination of two of these fields.

Figure 25. Respondents’ employment status



**Figure 26. Respondents' professional sectors**

Survey participants are also asked if they have shared their skills to projects that contribute to nation-building through “skills and knowledge transfer” initiatives. If so, they are also asked which sector they have contributed to and to detail any challenges encountered. (This question has 107 responses.)

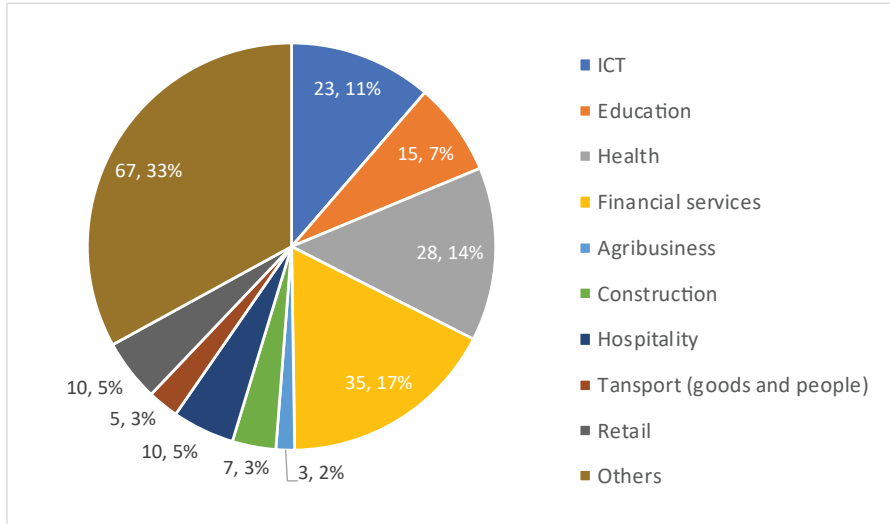
There is a broad variety of answers to the question of whether respondents have ever participated in nation-building through knowledge and skills transfers. Some have done so remotely, for example, through volunteer training, historical or educational pursuits (e.g. a PhD dissertation written on the topic of the Rwandan nation), or historical research into Rwanda’s past, or by teaching Rwandan culture and language in Belgium, maintaining a successful business in Rwanda from Belgium, engaging in real estate development, participating in government initiatives (e.g. the “\$1 Campaign”, Africa Democracy Forum and mutual funds), taking up an internship at the Rwandan Embassy in Brussels, making films and documentaries about Rwanda for a European audience, participating in the Pan-African Festival of Dance (FESPAD) or training hotel staff and personnel in the hospitality sector.

Other contributions to nation-building are of a financial nature, for example, the financing of the education of nieces and nephews, and donations to charities to enable Rwandans in Rwanda to access health care and education.



Answers to the question, “(If YES) Which sector did you contribute to?” include health, education, nursing education, creatives, construction, training of health personnel, training of mechanics, and the field of uniting adoptees in Belgium with their birthparents in Rwanda (Figure 27). A significant number of respondents with an answer to this question report being involved in sectors not on the list provided, or give more than one answer (e.g. ICT and health).

Figure 27. Professional sectors of respondents who have contributed to development



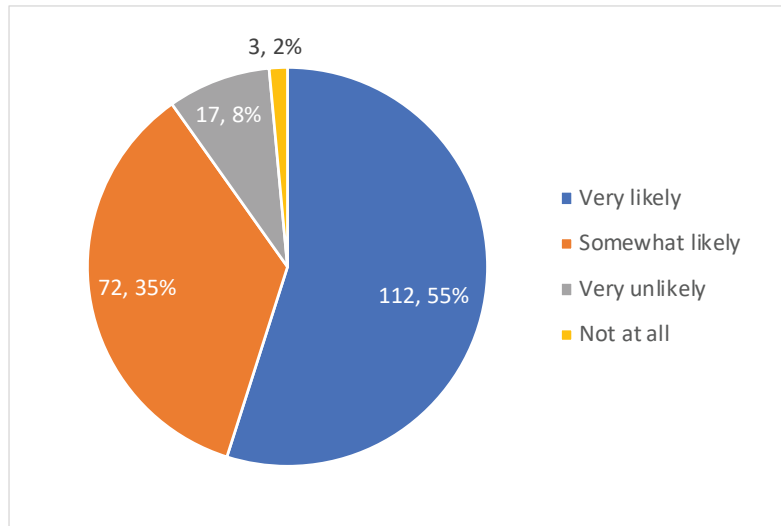
Responses to the question, “What challenges did you encounter?”, generally involve gaps, including a lack of “ready access to people with technical skills or useful, relevant information” and a lack of exposure to real-world situations among young college graduates in Rwanda. (There is a discrepancy in the levels of training received by Belgian and Rwandan college graduates with similar education profiles.)



4.3. DIASPORA INTEREST IN CONTRIBUTING TO DEVELOPMENT

Around 80 per cent of those surveyed are either “very likely” or “somewhat likely” ready to contribute to the development of Rwanda, if asked to do so (Figure 28). The level of interest and volition among the diaspora is, therefore, very high.

Figure 28. Respondents’ likelihood to contribute to development



Survey participants are then asked for how long they would be willing to contribute to such development and when they would start to be available. (This open-ended question counts 160 responses.) The common themes in the responses to this question are as follows:

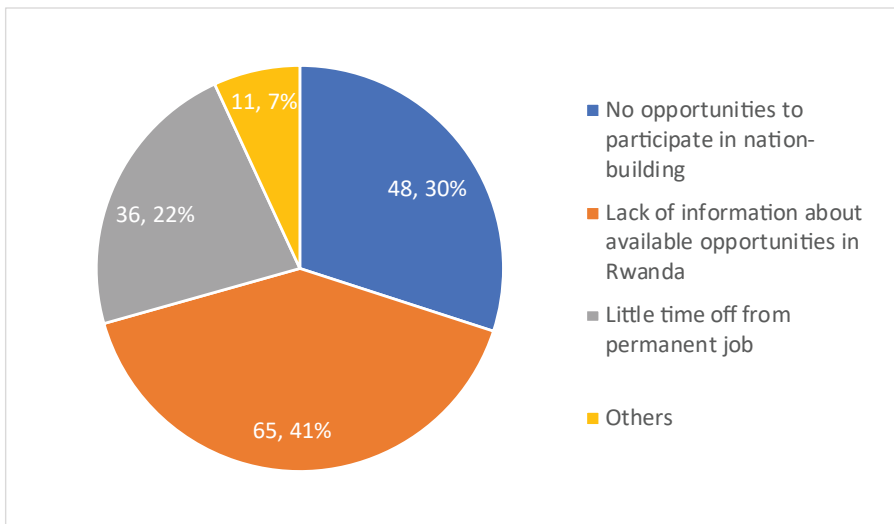
- Some variation of “Unsure”, “I don’t know” or “It would depend on the requirement I would have to fulfil or length of career break I would have to take” are common.
- Another common thread is to express an interest in contributing once the participant’s studies have ended (bachelor’s or master’s), or a few months prior.
- The most preferred time seems to be during annual leave or holiday, in July or August (or both). A virtual format (e.g. e-learning, for an afternoon a week) is also preferred. Some feel that they have already contributed enough through the Agachiro Development Fund and/or IBUKA Survivors’ Fund.



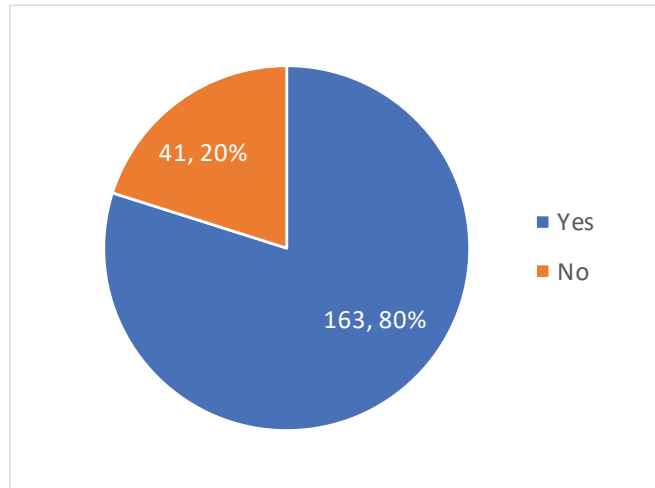
In terms of when participants would be able to leave for Rwanda to contribute to its development there, answers range from “As soon as possible/Now” (or once they had been contacted regarding the necessity of their contributions) to “2019” and “2020”, contingent on family and work situations, and “in 10 years’ time”. In terms of duration, participants’ responses range from one week or for the remainder of their professional careers and/or their entire lives. A whole gamut of responses – from 3 weeks, to 1, 1.5, 2, 3, 6, and 12 months, to 1, 2, 3, 5 and 10 years and, lastly, “indefinitely”, are all given as answers. There are a great number of responses that simply read, “Whenever you want me.”

Among those who express not planning to make contributions to the development of Rwanda, reasons include the following: insufficient funds/lack of time; family obligations (remittance payments act as a barrier to greater contributions); never having thought of doing so; lack of knowledge or information about how to do so (“I do not know how or what I should invest in”); lack of opportunities to do so (“Maybe when I am pensioned”); lack of skill or know-how; and the presence of a handicap (Figure 29). Security issues again play a role, leading to some participants’ lack of interest in contributing to development (“The current political climate does not allow me to contribute.”).

Figure 29. Respondents’ reasons for not contributing to development



A large majority (80%) of respondents report that they are already contributing to the development of Rwanda (Figure 30). The “No” respondents (= 41) are asked why they are not contributing at present and the results obtained are similar to those previously reported, which were mainly concerned with impediments to travelling to Rwanda in terms of skills transfer initiatives.

**Figure 30. Respondents currently contributing to development**

There are certain impediments to diaspora members' active contribution to Rwanda's development. To explore these, a follow-up question was posed to the 41 respondents who indicated "No": "If you are not interested in contributing, could you give your reason why not?" The question received 32 responses and reasons included: lack of information or ability to find a job with a stable income; certain family situations ("I cannot leave my family along for long"); lack of time, disability (e.g. visual impairment); a perceived devaluation of their chosen trade (e.g. the position of a nurse is remarked as being viewed more negatively in Rwanda than in Belgium); and short supply of funding for such a venture.

A common theme in non-contribution is the issue of security ("Being physically in Rwanda under the Rwandan Patriotic Front regime means risking one's life"); a "lack of respect for human rights" (including freedom of speech) in Rwanda; and lack of a passport, which is necessary for travel.

Alternatively, there are some responses that reject the premise of the question, either by claiming that in order to contribute that "You have to be there", or that it is possible to (indirectly) contribute to Rwanda's development by making "contributions towards better exchange between Rwandans."



4.4. DIASPORA AWARENESS OF OPPORTUNITIES FOR CONTRIBUTING TO DEVELOPMENT

Respondents express an interest in contributing within their own respective areas of professional expertise (Figure 30). “Others” include those fields already listed in Figures 26 and 27, with the addition of such fields as heating, ventilation and air-conditioning (HVA), advocacy and NGO work, and, significantly, management and administration.

Figure 31. Respondents’ interest in contributing through their professional expertise

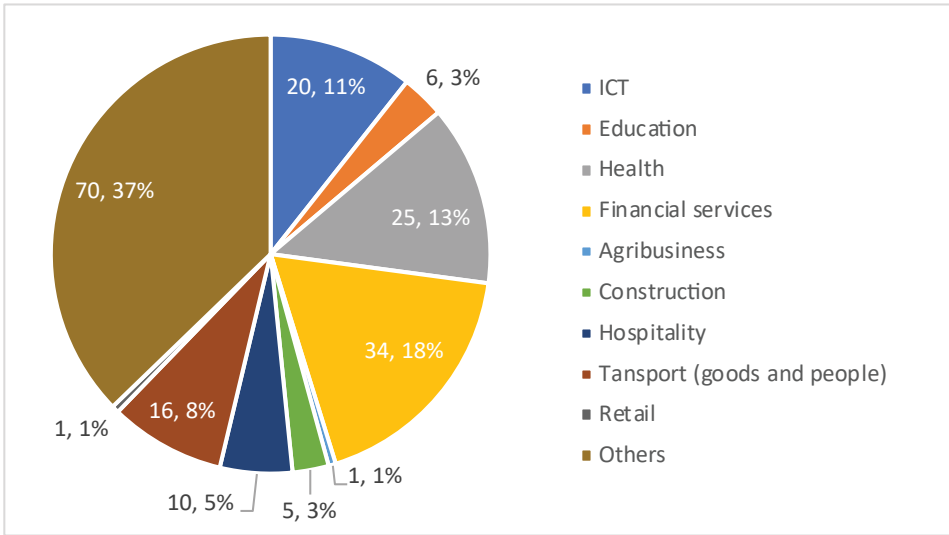


Figure 32 shows that interest in contributing to vocational education and training in Rwanda is incredibly high, with almost 90 per cent of respondents indicating such interest. Figure 33 shows the various ways in which diaspora members intend to contribute to vocational education in Rwanda.



Figure 32. Respondents' interest in engaging in vocational education

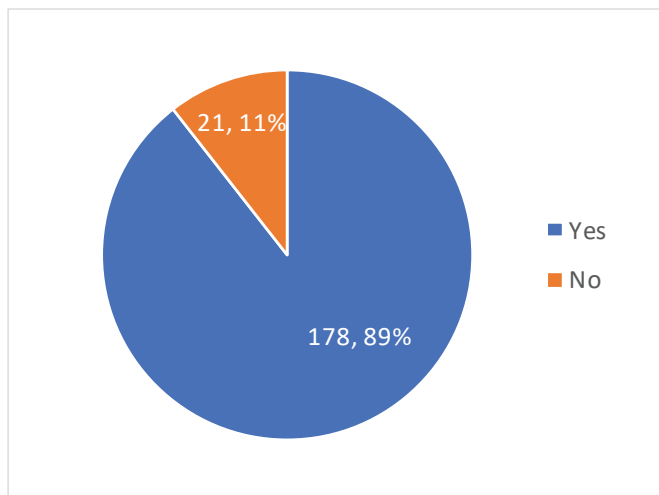
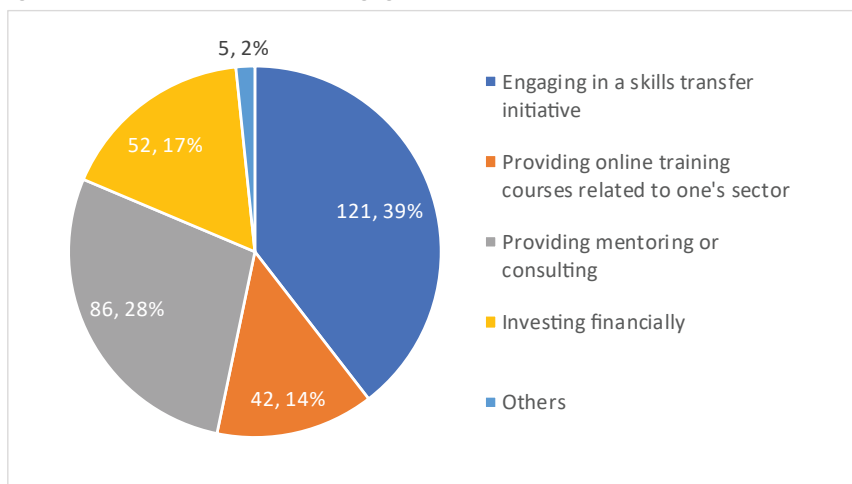


Figure 33. Potential areas of engagement in vocational education in Rwanda

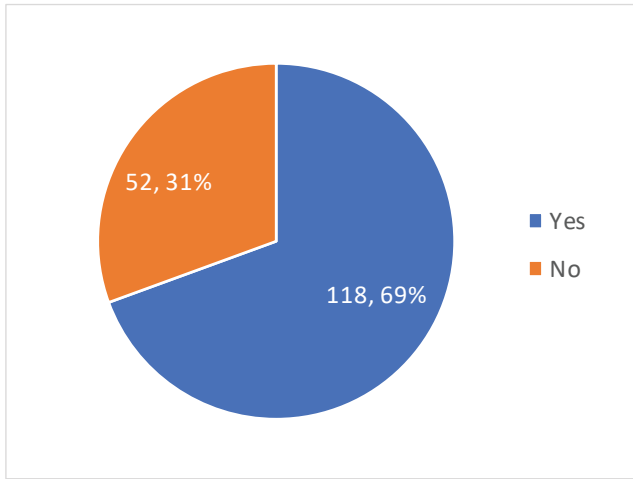


4.5. DIASPORA REMITTANCE-SENDING ACTIVITY

Almost 75 per cent of survey participants make remittances to Rwanda (Figure 34). Figures 35 to 43 show the following data: frequency of payment, remittance amounts, recipients of the remittances, reasons motivating the sending of remittances, remittance payments as a percentage of sender's annual income, methods chosen to transfer money, and sectors that benefit from remittance payments.

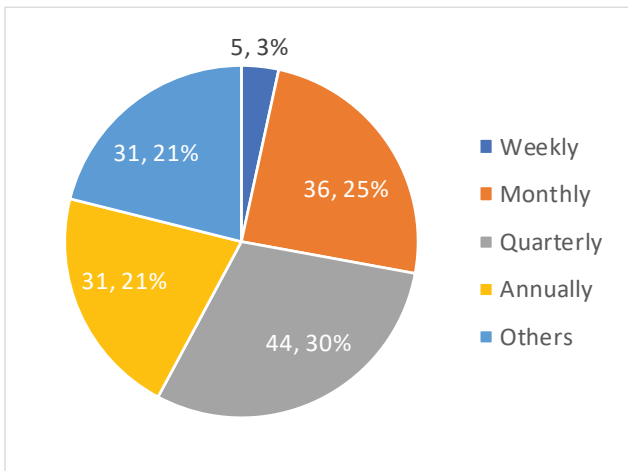


Figure 34. Respondents' remittance-sending activity



Almost a quarter of survey respondents send remittances “as the need arises”; a few send every week; and half of respondents send money either quarterly or annually (Figure 35).

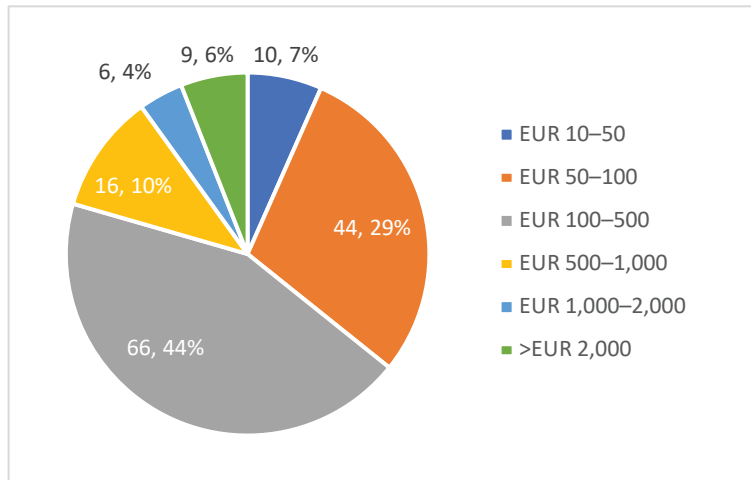
Figure 35. Frequency of respondents' remittance payments



Around 75 per cent of survey respondents send amounts in either the EUR 50–100 or EUR 100–500 range.

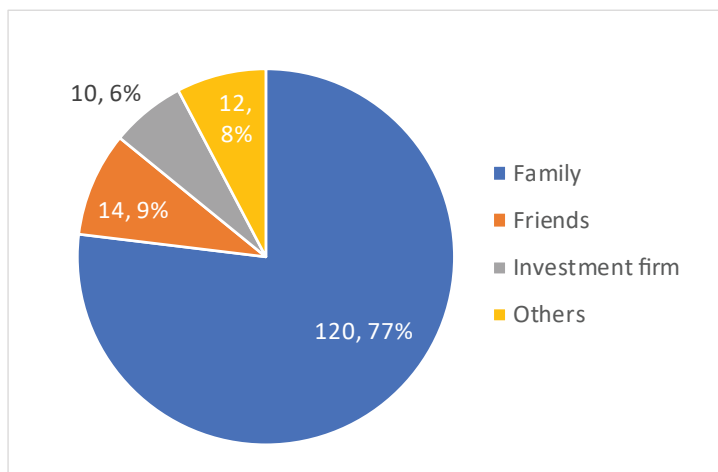


Figure 36. Remittance payment amounts



Family is the recipient of remittances for majority (77%) of survey respondents (Figure 37). “Others” include health syndicate, private charitable concern or to the schools of family members (or extended family members).

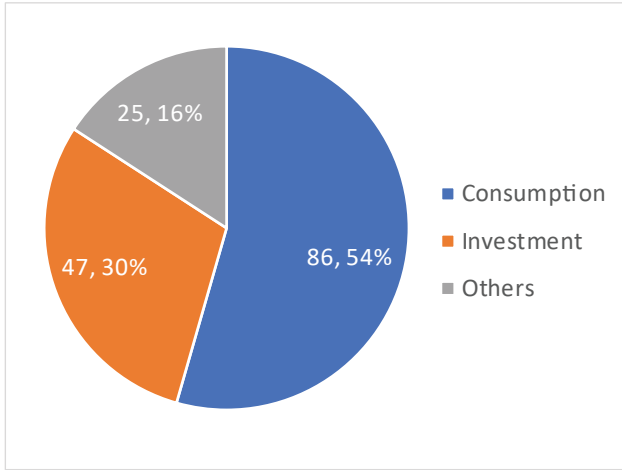
Figure 37. Recipients of remittances



Household consumption is the top use of remittances sent (reported by 86% of survey respondents) (Figure 38). Purposes categorized as “Others” include such expenses as family support (but excludes household consumption), school fees and housing-related projects (which may be philanthropic in nature), and also covers gifts.



Figure 38. Uses of remittance payments



A very large proportion (95%) of survey respondents send between 1 per cent and 25 per cent of their earnings as remittances; around 50 per cent send less than 5 per cent; and slightly less than half send less than 25 per cent.

Figure 39. Remittances as a percentage of sender’s annual income

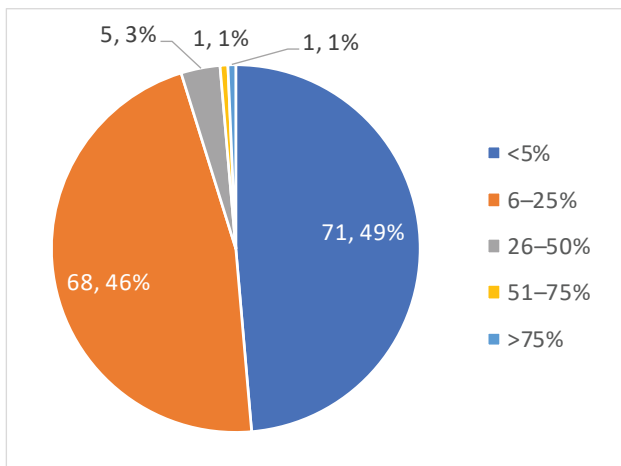




Figure 40. Chosen methods for remittance payments

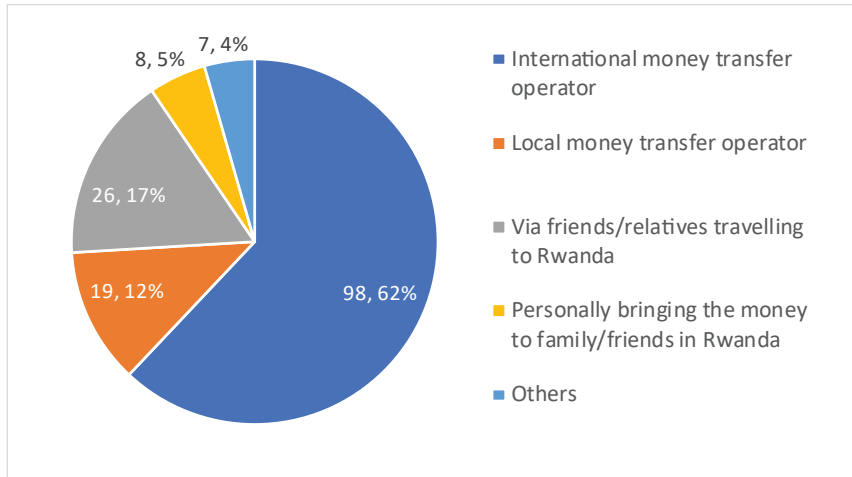
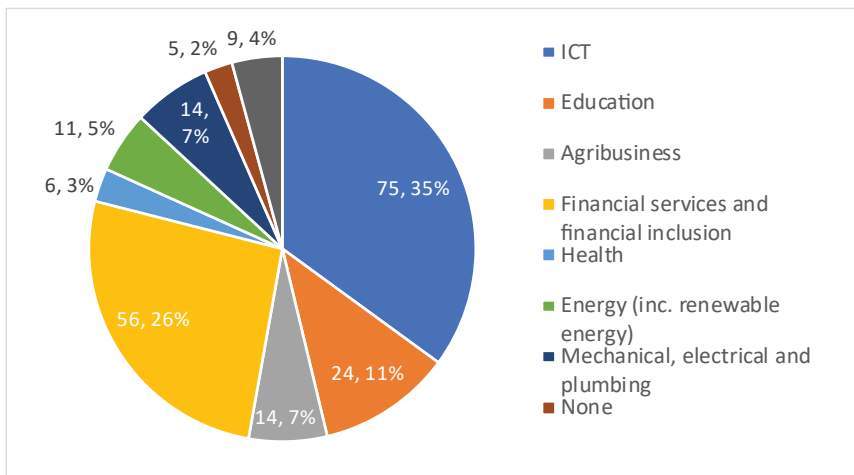


Figure 41. Sectors that benefit from remittance payments





4.6. DIASPORA MEMBERS' INVOLVEMENT WITH DIASPORA ASSOCIATIONS

The level of felt connection to Rwanda is generally very high, with most survey respondents (70%) giving one of the three highest possible scores (i.e. 8, 9 and 10) (Figure 42), and with almost three quarters (72%) being members of a diaspora association (Figure 43).

Figure 42. Level of felt connection to Rwanda (scale: 1–10)

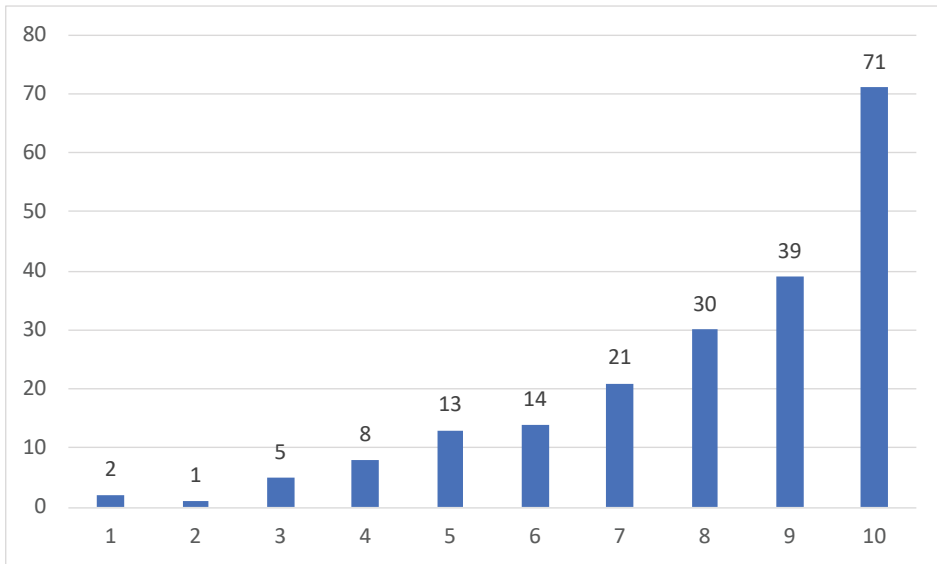
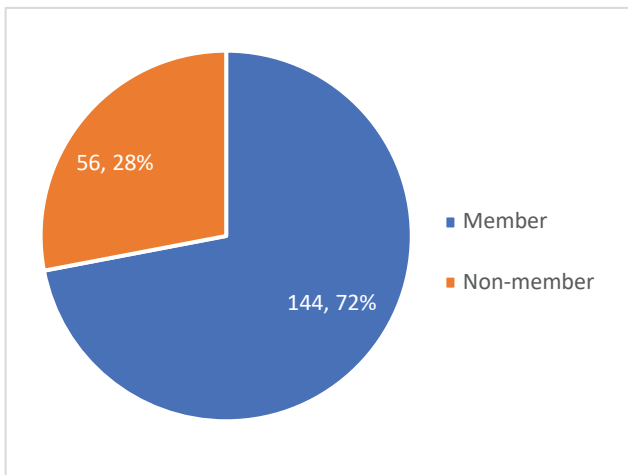


Figure 43. Membership in an official diaspora association





Reasons given for non-membership in a diaspora association included lack of time and/or opportunities to join one, and lack of awareness or information about the existence of such groups in the first place. There exist a few informal diaspora groups, and while some of them are in close association with other members of the Rwandan community, they are not perceived as “proper” diaspora networks.

Another deterring factor is physical distance from where these diaspora associations operate (“Where I live, I rarely meet Rwandans”). In addition, the feeling that some of these groups exhibit “lack of pragmatism” or poor organization drives people away. Some participants, therefore, are unsure of the value in engaging with these groups.

Other reasons why diaspora members may choose not to get involved with diaspora associations include language problems (access seems to depend significantly on knowledge of either Kinyarwanda or French) and the feeling that diaspora groups are highly politicized entities, which leads some to have little confidence in their work. One participant claims that being married to a Belgian means that there is little need for engagement in diaspora associations.

Figures 44 to 47 show how survey respondents report on the following: (a) the nature of the diaspora association or network’s activities; (b) how the diaspora association is connected to Rwanda; (c) whether and (d) how the diaspora network shares information with others. In Figure 50, Whatsapp and SMS are the two most commonly reported answers under the category “Others.”

Figure 44. Diaspora network’s activities

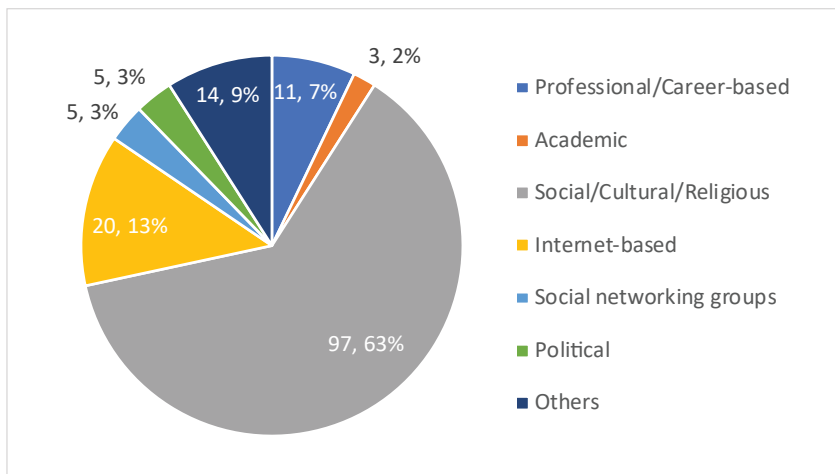




Figure 45. Manner in which diaspora network is connected to Rwanda

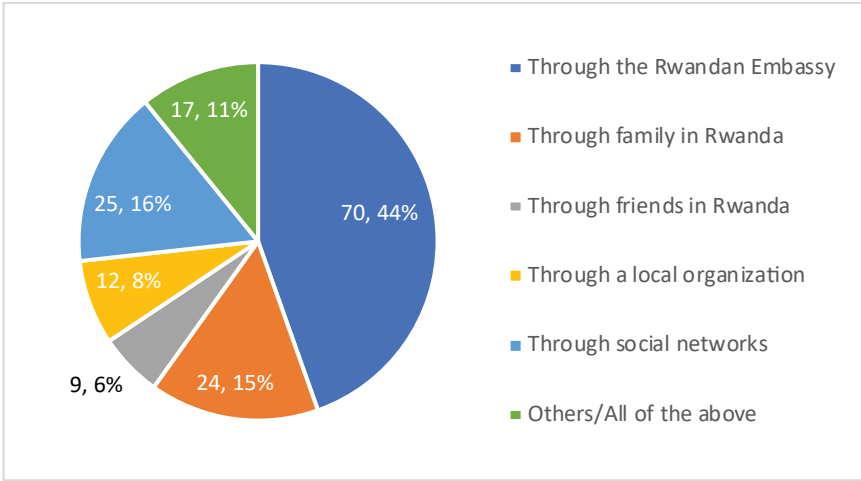


Figure 46. Information-sharing with other diaspora networks

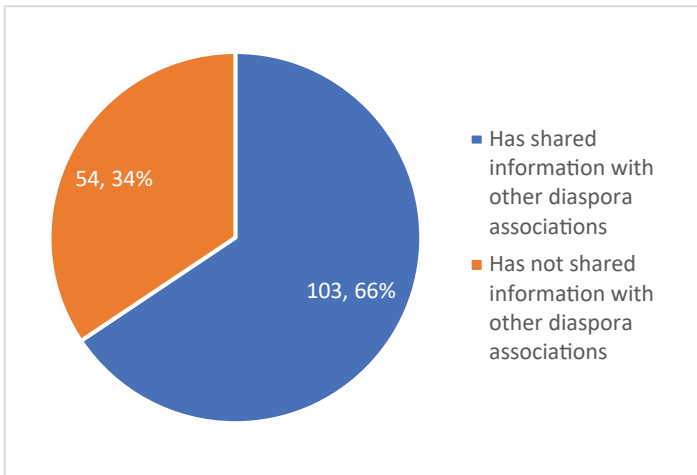
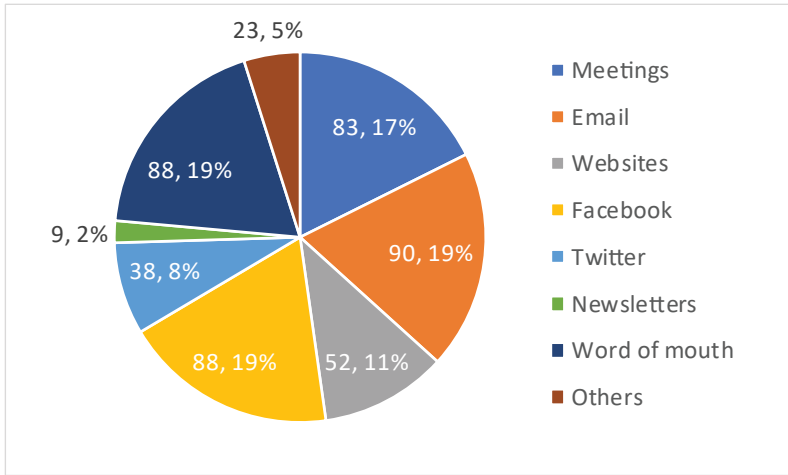




Figure 47. Means of information-sharing among diaspora networks



4.7. DIASPORA AWARENESS (GAPS)

Over 55 per cent of the diaspora members surveyed are aware of the EDPRS (Figure 48). This indicates a considerable level of engagement with the EDPRS, which was examined in [Chapter 1](#) of this report. Almost 80 per cent of the surveyed respondents are familiar with the Vision 2020 document (Figure 49), which was likewise examined in [Chapter 1](#) of this report. The “Yes” responses were in the minority with regard to awareness of existing bilateral development activities of BERWA, with less than 25 per cent of participants giving this response.

Figure 48. Respondents’ awareness of the EDPRS

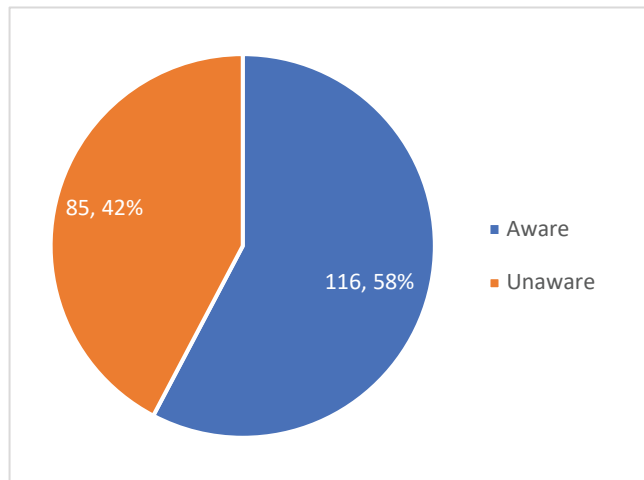
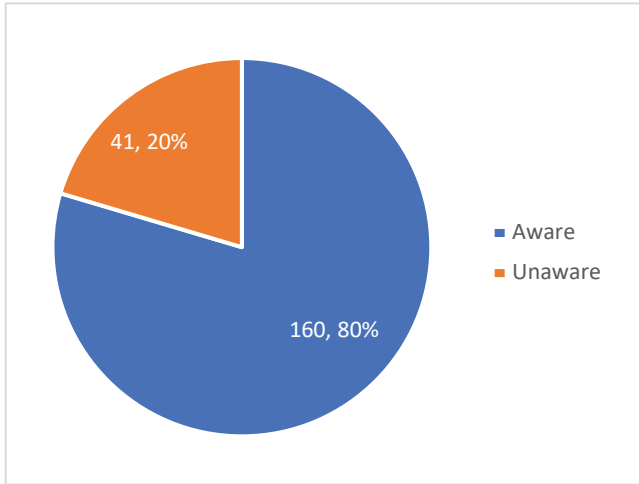


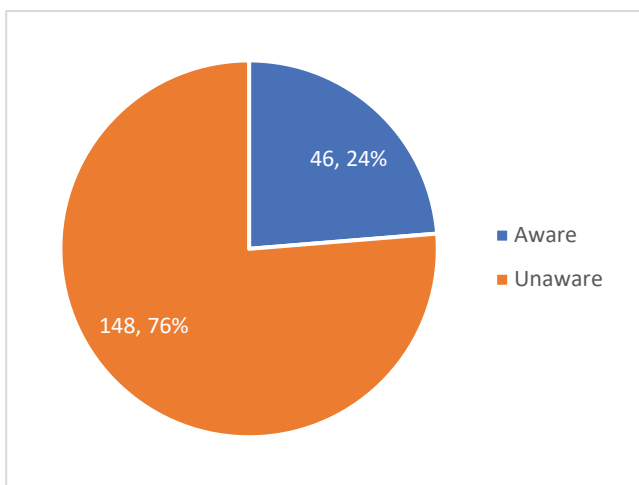


Figure 49. Respondents' awareness of Vision 2020



When prompted to elaborate, 39 survey participants provide information or websites about cooperative partnerships. The work of the Belgian development agency, Enabel, is well known and cited frequently, so is that of the National Centre for Development Cooperation (CNCD-11.11.11). Participants also highlighted the work done by the Belgian Embassy in Rwanda, on whose website it is mentioned that “Rwanda has been a partner country of Belgium since its independence in 1962. The country is the second largest beneficiary of Belgian development cooperation.”

Figure 50. Respondents' awareness of development-related partnerships involving BERWA





Other projects that are not necessarily development-related include teacher exchange programmes (the participant is unable to provide a link or web address to the programme website); the Virtual Rwanda programme, which is described as follows on its funding platform:

Virtual Rwanda will open the country visually to potential visitors. We'll portray the main tourist attractions of the country; we explain where the money tourists pay to visit the parks is going and how it is used to develop the local communities and to protect wildlife.¹⁸

Some survey respondents also mention 4 de Pijler, an organization that offers support to individuals and groups who voluntarily work in the global South. Brussels Enterprises Commerce & Industry (BECI; website: www.beci.be) and Awex, a Wallonian organization specializing in attracting investment and foreign investors into Wallonia (website: <http://awex.be>).

Finally, "A Thousand Hills of Hope" is mentioned by some respondents. A Thousand Hills of Hope, a charity founded by a Belgo-Rwandan athlete, Imana Truyers, provides assistance to street orphans and young children through the provision and building of semi-boarding schools and day-care centres.

¹⁸ The funding platform for the Virtual Rwanda programme is available at www.indiegogo.com/projects/virtual-rwanda-community-adv-enture?fbclid=IwAR1Ku6rcEn7t2Gu9IVLH4cpGfg1EAwOLVYmv5EVsg4Db0it_Td42gCTZjrw#.





5. KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEWS, EMBASSY INTERVIEWS AND OPEN-ENDED SURVEY QUESTIONS

This final chapter reviews data yielded by the key informant interviews, interviews with embassy personnel and data derived from three specific open-ended questions in the survey. These open-ended questions are examined in this chapter, rather than in the previous chapter, due to the sheer volume of responses and the level of detail provided in the corresponding answers. The questions are as follows:

- (a) What do you expect from the Government of Rwanda in terms of supporting individuals in their efforts to engage in development activities in Rwanda? (141 responses)
- (b) Do you need any support from the Government of Rwanda to enable you to contribute (in one way or another) to the development of the country? What kind of support do you have in mind? (108 responses)
- (c) What policy recommendations do you wish to give to the Government that you feel would improve diaspora initiatives for the development-related interests of Rwanda? (120 responses)

5.1. EXPECTATIONS OF THE RWANDAN GOVERNMENT

Question: “What do you expect from the Government of Rwanda in terms of supporting individuals in their efforts to engage in development activities in Rwanda?”

Diaspora members seek the sharing of accurate information (which is a recurrent theme), be it by maintaining a list of contact persons at the Embassy of Rwanda in Brussels; better communication of information to the public; providing more targeted (e.g. sector-specific) information, including about the labour market and its requirements; and holding more frequent meetings with the diaspora (information about which is also circulated). Information also concerns “what can be done” and the “means by which to do it.”

In addition to the request for more information, many participants also feel that it is incumbent on the Rwandan Government to provide updates on development-related initiatives and measures it has already taken or is taking; issue progress reports on projects and programmes; clarify priority areas and explain how diaspora members might participate; and publicize “real opportunities,” without which “in person”



contributions to Rwanda would be impossible. Best practices are also sought on the matter of tapping “successful returnees” to Rwanda who are making a difference in their communities (the so-called “lucky ones”); it would also be beneficial to investigate their level of satisfaction in the process.

Some participants answered in the negative (“(I have) No idea” and “I am very poorly informed about the subject”). There is a feeling that instead of Rwandan diaspora members receiving support from the Government, the onus was entirely on them to find ways to engage in development-related activities in Rwanda.

Another common concern is the level of language proficiency among the Rwandan population; upskilling in English and French, specifically, are identified as necessary to being able to communicate to a workforce. Another informant asks that more attention be paid to issues relating to standards of living (particularly, matters of public hygiene and better or improved infrastructure).

Support for the diaspora often takes two forms: non-monetary (e.g. administrative procedures and legislation), while the other is monetary (including governmental financial assistance). Young people are singled out as being especially in need of support.

- (a) Non-monetary types of support include encouragement, active listening and active collaboration with, for example, investors and job creators among the diaspora. Encouragement is particularly commonly mentioned and many informants speak about feeling connected to Rwanda, but also that “the feeling is not mutual.” Another suggestion proposed is to hold a “job fair” for the Rwandan diasporas of the BeNeLux countries in which priority areas are identified and new initiatives are sensitized.
- (b) Monetary or financial types of support feature commonly, and these include access to financial services and “financially oriented meetings” for the diaspora. Specifically, access to credit and provision of resources for private purchases (e.g. houses) and public ventures are a common theme. Logistical and investment-related advice and investments in education and exchanges between Rwanda and Belgium are also sought. The suggestion is also made that the Rwandan Government pay more attention to small-scale, independent investors rather than large companies.



There is obvious political tension between those that think the Government needs to maintain the status quo and those that urgently feel that it must address significant current oversights.

- (a) Better governance and protection of human rights: greater transparency, greater individual freedom, less corruption, accountability in public spending, less fraud, protection against administrative hassles, greater welcome to diaspora members, an apolitical stance in development engagement, and equal opportunities for all.
- (b) Moving in the right direction: better planning, maintaining the speed of development, ease of return and integration in the country (long-term) and step-by-step guidance on how to invest.

A well-articulated piece by one survey respondent sums up the diaspora's sentiments:

For having already spoken with many of my compatriots among Rwandan youth and even leaders of our community, I make the same observation that there is a serious lack of information about the labour market in Rwanda. We often hear that young Rwandans must come back to help develop the country, but for young people living abroad, I find that the Government does not provide the means to turn their wishes into reality. How could we return with our families without work? And yet there are still so many areas to develop and so many jobs to create. As is often the case in Rwanda for young people, we should also organize more frequent meetings between Rwandan youth abroad and companies, organizations (including NGOs), banks and local investors in Rwanda. This would help a lot of Rwandans in the diaspora. There are several ways to organize these meetings and respond to this request. I had already suggested it, but, unfortunately, I was told that the problem was the financing of this project. Investing in the youth never leads to a loss! This is a question and a problem that I would like to discuss with our President and see if he would have a solution for us.



5.2. SUPPORT FROM THE RWANDAN GOVERNMENT

Question: “Do you need any support from the Government of Rwanda to enable you to contribute (in one way or another) to the development of the country? What kind of support do you have in mind?”

There is some overlap between this question and the one posed in [Section 5.1](#). In light of this, areas touched upon in the previous section will not be re-examined. Expectations can be broadly broken down into three themes: Inward investment, taxation and contextual difficulties were key emerging themes. A lack of information was mentioned frequently, in both the survey and in interviews, but has been examined in the previous subsection.

(a) Inward investment

Support is sought in terms of guidance (specifically for investors), and many concerns are raised about the necessity of legislation to protect the rights of investors and entrepreneurs; greater awareness of investment risks and benefits; continued guidance and reassurance for investors; access to credit (e.g. to purchase equipment); and education on dedicated investment funds.

In terms of direct investment, requests were made to simplify land purchase agreements (such as a diaspora-specific platform), the purchasing of houses for social purposes (youth houses) and greater investment in the areas of entrepreneurship training, scholarships, “human resource mobilization” or foreign internship programmes, and active recruitment among the diaspora.

(b) Taxation and customs

Support is sought for the provision of information (specifically, legal and taxation-related issues). More information on how to acquire a passport, the “possibility of obtaining a visa with a longer validity period” (to ensure consistency in training) and for the Embassy of Rwanda in Brussels and the Government of Rwanda to showcase and promote individual projects for their financial support.

Special taxation rates or tax exemptions on certain imported materials are also sought. “Customs taxes” are singled out for the impediment caused to sending materials overseas for investment and development-related purposes.



(c) Contextual support

Support is sought for sensitization workshops for close collaboration on addressing local needs and targeting priority areas through bilateral initiatives, and about how the Government currently intervenes. Recognition “as experts in their fields of study” is also sought.

Another contextual issue is how “free” individuals are in their efforts to aid in development. Survey participants seek the “freedom to act,” to be critical, and be free from prosecution (i.e. there shall be no “monitoring” and “no attempts to approach me”) and suspicion (one participant lamented that he can no longer contribute to Rwanda after being labelled a “spy” because of his military background).

Support might take the form of assistance in finding work, including through information tailored to applicants’ specific profiles, and facilitation of enterprise (e.g. assistance with acquisition of land for real estate development; finding an audience in need of a specific skill set through e-learning; information about how to start and build a school for the poor).

One particularly telling quote is reproduced below:

Yes, I would like, if possible, for my government to help me find a job, please. I have been to Rwanda twice for 4 and 2 months, respectively, to look for work, but despite my many years of experience, I have not yet received any offers. The reality is quite different on the ground, as it requires more time and patience. It is still sad to find that I can find work faster in Europe than in my country, but it does not matter. I’m persevering. I have a lot of ideas on how I can contribute to the development of my country. But the most important to me are these: I dream of a job that would allow me to help poor children, those who are on the streets and those who suffer from starvation, malnutrition, to help people to develop and become independent in their professional activities, to help improve the quality of services in general, and create a recreation centre for children of all ages and thus contribute to develop[ing] their stimulus.



5.3. POLICY SUGGESTIONS FOR THE RWANDAN GOVERNMENT

Once again, some respondents express satisfaction with the initiatives taken to date. However, there is an expressed desire for a more apolitical environment in which people who return are not treated with suspicion. In terms of policy suggestions, participants categorize them in three classes: governmental, experiential and diasporic.

(a) Governmental suggestions

Greater flexibility is sought in terms of administrative paperwork, the abolition of visa requirements, and exemption from particular kinds of customs duties. Others mention that support for the Government of Rwanda is currently “dormant,” due to a lack of a mobilization campaign and reliable information delivered in a timely manner. The embassy is expected to actively seek out diaspora talent. Respondents also comment that ministers’ delegation visits are too infrequent (lowers morale) and that there is a need to boost and amplify diaspora contributions (embassy staff are thought to be “acutely nonchalant” at times). The specific role of the Rwandan Embassy in Brussels is examined in [Section 5.4](#). The suggestion is also put forward that the Government recruit experts within the diaspora through MIDA/IOM programmes.

(b) “Inspection” of the country of origin

“Missions” that would invite people to become involved in skills transfer initiatives are deemed important, as such initiatives provide the diaspora with a feeling of “being useful.” A sensitization campaign that takes a candid look at the country’s “internal affairs” is also sought. “Come and see” campaigns should be extended to target small teams of investors from specific parts of Belgium.

(c) Reinforcement of diaspora structures

Diaspora organizations should be formalized (in terms of their structure) and financed, so that they can play a more meaningful role in the achievement of policy changes. There need to be more meetings between diaspora groups and greater international collaboration between BeNeLux partners. The suggestion was made to expand the Rwanda Day Initiative to two or four times a year, to provide the diaspora more opportunities to meet and invite delegates from governmental bodies to discuss transfer initiatives and administrative updates.



Greater diaspora engagement that showcases interregional and inter-country cooperation (further expansion to Austria, Switzerland and France), greater support for diaspora-run projects with concrete timelines. Sensitization workshops and/or information sessions for an “on the ground” view of the daily workings of Rwandan people was requested. Within the social diaspora, cultural empathy was sought, as well as flexibility and understanding due to differing levels of proficiency in Kinyarwanda, French and English.

One respondent’s statement directly tackles many of the issues highlighted:

. . . (a) Organize meetings between the supply and demand sides of the labour market in the various countries where the Rwandan diaspora lives; (b) The creation of a website for job search, that is a little more interactive, efficient and updated than the sites that currently exist; (c) More involvement of the Rwandan diaspora in the different events and activities of the country, facilitated through invitations or others; (d) More communication on the various calls for tenders that come from our Government, so that we can help and respond quickly especially for tenders that concern health equipment, schools, etc. (Currently we use word of mouth); (e) Help the diaspora to attract potential foreign investors by organizing fairs, evenings or sports events. In short, talk and show more about Rwanda on the international scene through the Rwandan diaspora abroad. Use us.

5.4. EMBASSY INTERVIEW FINDINGS

One possible reason why there is a felt disconnect between the diaspora and the Rwandan Embassy in Brussels concerning the provision of information, or in assisting in finding work, revolves around what the embassy views as its role. The researcher spoke to embassy personnel at Rwanda House (the Rwandan Embassy in Brussels) on 19 April 2018.¹⁹ During the meeting, interviewees stressed the importance of ensuring the autonomy of diaspora associations, as well as the fact that it is not in the embassy’s purview to recruit or liaise with talented members of the diaspora; these are roles of the RDB and the Workforce Development Authority (WDA).

The primary role of the embassy, in its own words, is to mobilize the diaspora (by encouraging but not directly interfering in the affairs of the various DRB chapters) and to act as mediators between Rwanda-based governmental bodies that are expected to deal with the diaspora’s concerns (e.g. investment opportunities, job opportunities, emerging priority areas, etc.). On the issue of technical cooperation, the Embassy

¹⁹ The script for the interview with embassy representatives is available in Appendix C.



mentioned that Enabel deals directly with Rwandan partners and that the Embassy has no part in this exchange.

The Rwandan Embassy in Belgium is often not informed of the comings and goings of Rwandan diaspora members; the consular services offered by the embassy notwithstanding, embassy staff mentioned that when reaching out to particular diaspora members, the response can be that they have permanently relocated to Rwanda, thereby cutting the embassy out of the loop. One other important element of note is that during the majority of the fieldwork period (March to September 2018), the Rwandan Embassy did not have an active list containing up-to-date email addresses of its members; instead, it used Facebook and Twitter to announce initiatives and events, but appealed to the DRB chapter heads to circulate information. This is another indicator of both a hands-off approach and a gap in the delivery of information or updates to members of the diaspora. In October 2018, the embassy hired a communications manager who is currently working to remedy this situation.

5.5. CASE STUDY: REMITTANCE AGENCIES

Given the significance that money transfers and remittance payments play in the lives of the Rwandan diaspora, two transfer operators were identified for interview. These meetings took place in April and October of 2018.

The situation for small money transfer agencies is one in which “cash is king” and the engagement with virtual technologies is low. The “big players” (i.e. international money transfer operators such as Western Union and Moneygram) are used by a little over 60 per cent of this study’s survey respondents. The aforementioned figure also points to the fact that more people use informal channels than local operators.

From what the researcher has been told, the problem seems to lie with the Belgian regulator who, because of their scepticism about money-laundering, have put a great deal of legislative impediments in the way of small-time business owners. Informants remarked that this is done to “protect the interest of the big players” and to “wait out” smaller business as they slowly go bankrupt. Paying for software that traces each payment and performs automated “fraud checks” (on payments set above a certain threshold) and performing self-paid audits (even if the company is making no money) are also expensive.

The specific benefits afforded by a smaller player who is familiar with the Rwandan context, as the researcher was told, was that they can offer a tailored “money corridor” approach that advertises on the basis of calendar events and can offer bespoke arrangements (e.g. school fees may be paid directly to school staff; Ramadan, disaster relief).



What was sought by both individuals was a clearer assessment of how the Rwandan Government can support them (e.g. one interviewee had a licence to operate a business in Rwanda, but not in Belgium) and assistance in founding an association of Rwanda businesspeople (whose main goals will include lobbying). One informant remarked, “Money has no political colour”, so the Rwandan Government can do more to support entrepreneurs.





6. FINDINGS

This study's key findings are enumerated and summarized below:

- (a) Interest in participating in skills transfers is high, but due to a variety of factors (e.g. mortgage payments, standard of living issues, children educated in the Belgian education system), temporary relocation is either very difficult or impossible.
- (b) When asked, "If you were asked to contribute to the vocational education system in Rwanda, would you go back for a limited period of time?", 80 per cent of respondents say that they would be either "very likely" or "somewhat likely" (112 and 72 respondents, respectively; see Figure 32). Specifically, the interest in contributing was to "engage in a skills transfer initiative" (121) or through "mentoring or consulting" (86). Far less frequently picked is the option of contributing through financial investment (52).
- (c) Some 70 per cent of respondents grade their personal feelings of connection to Rwanda from between 8 and 10 (on a scale of 0 to 10).
- (d) When surveyed, over 55 per cent state that they are familiar with the Rwandan Economic Development and Poverty Reduction Strategy (EDPRS2), while a staggering 90 per cent are familiar with the Vision 2020 report. The diaspora is observed to very familiar with the Government of Rwanda's policy positions.
- (e) However, while the diaspora are familiar with the material infrastructure (policy provisions), there is still a strong feeling that either there are "no opportunities to participate in nation-building" or that "a lack of information about opportunities" currently exist in Rwanda. Participants mention the lack of support and encouragement frequently.
- (f) There is a felt disconnect between the needs outlined in government papers and their concrete desire to attract talent from overseas.
- (g) The diaspora is heavily involved in the fields of financial services and financial management, ICT, health and education. Half of the diaspora members surveyed work in one of these fields (see Figure 26). This is a phenomenally skilled group in that respect.
- (h) Many members of the diaspora also have their own side ventures or personal charitable endeavours. While many seek direct financial assistance from the Rwandan Embassy in Brussels, some seek greater engagement through other means (e.g. greater visibility through diaspora-themed events or assistance in establishing contacts and connections).





7. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are presented:

- (a) In order to capitalize on the high level of interest shown by the diaspora in terms of engagement and connection, the Rwandan Government may invest in virtual skills-sharing exercises. This would require designing curricula that can take place virtually (not a trade or apprenticeship programme, which requires in-person sharing of hands-on expertise).

A pilot project examining the feasibility of virtual skills transfers must be conducted to capitalize on high levels of interest and the difficulty of temporary relocation.

- (b) Devise a mentoring platform that shows greater interest in capitalizing upon diaspora talent, to broadcast opportunities available in Rwanda through an intermediary to the diaspora. There has been a suggestion that the network be separate from the Rwandan Development Board and the Workforce Development Authority (and should also be independent and not for profit).
- (c) This platform can include a portal having any of the following features:
 - (i) May contain tickers, widgets or Twitter links on which various government initiatives are announced;
 - (ii) Allows interested people to post their skill profiles and contact details;
 - (iii) Focuses on priority areas identified by various governmental parties (e.g. RDB, WDA, etc.);
 - (iv) Functions to pool diaspora interests and facilitate greater involvement of BeNeLux communities and beyond;
 - (v) Allows sharing of best practices or how-to's based on the experiences of individuals who have successfully undertaken investment opportunities or participated in skills transfer initiatives;
 - (vi) Contains a Rwanda-specific guide to investment that users can draw up and circulate (with the possibility of putting interested parties in touch with money managers or investment funds).



- (d) If revived, the Rwandan Global Diaspora Network (RGDN) could serve many, if not all, of the functions described in (c). (The Rwandan Global Diaspora had previously been singled out for providing information too infrequently. As well, the list of community leaders overseas is not kept up-to-date; see: www.rwandaglobaldiaspora.org/associations.)
- (e) Capitalizing on a financially-savvy diaspora, “transnational entrepreneurship” is something that might be fostered and formalized. The Rwandan Development Board might be complimented with joint ventures between enterprises based in Belgium and nascent ventures in Rwanda.
- (f) Rather than re-engaging in Diaspora Mutual Funds, we recommend investigating the feasibility of a “diaspora venture capital programme,” one that showcases competitive ventures that seek partnerships between investors and individuals with technical know-how (examples of existing partnerships include Afropreneur, OVO and BrusselsAfricaHub).



ANNEX 1. INTERVIEW QUESTIONNAIRES

1.1. KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEW QUESTIONNAIRE AND SCRIPT

What follows is an indication of the anticipated running order for an interview. This is meant to serve only as an explanatory template. The research script must retain a certain amount of flexibility, given the need to adapt to each researcher's unique set of circumstances, and due to the fact that any breakout or emergent notion that have been flagged elsewhere by previous participants need to be included in future research examinations. Interviews are expected to last between 45 and 75 minutes (depending on the context and level of interest demonstrated by the participant).

[Interview begins after confirming that the participant is comfortable to proceed, once the recorder has been switched on and the interviewee has given their name, the date and place of recording, and their informed consent for their testimony to be used for the Diaspora Mapping Project.]

Interviewer: First I would like to begin by thanking you for speaking with me today. So, for comparison purposes, I would like to ask a few technical questions.

May I ask your age?

What gender do you identify as?

What level of education have you achieved?

What technical training skills do you possess?

Are you planning/hoping to go back to Rwanda one day? Why (not)? How often do you travel back to Rwanda annually?

Now, when did you move/were you born in Belgium/the Netherlands/Germany/United Kingdom? Why have you chosen to live in _____?

(Note to interviewer: Establish context.)

What is your employment status at present? What sector do you work in?

How involved are you in what are called "diaspora activities"? Are you involved with any diaspora associations in Belgium/the Netherlands/United Kingdom/Germany? [If not, why do you think that is? Do you find them unappealing?]



How would you characterize the type of association in which you are involved? [Is it a formal or an informal type of association?] How do they communicate with one another? [Would you be able to put me in touch with someone there?].

Do these organizations have ties with Rwanda? What kind of ties? Do they invest in development? How do they communicate with their counterparts in Rwanda?

How would you characterize your relationship with Rwanda at present (Prompt: Do you think of it as “home”? Do you long to return? Are you currently involved in remittance payments? What is the purpose of these payments?). [If remittances are being sent: How frequently do you send remittance payments? To whom do you send remittances? To members of your family or further removed family members/community organizations? What do the remittances cover? Do you invest the remittances (in family businesses, community initiatives or nationwide projects)? What sector do they contribute to? Have you ever encountered any difficulties in sending them that you would like to see be fixed?

From what I understand, many people in the Rwandan diaspora are involved in projects that are going on there. Are you (pause), involved in any such projects at present? Are you currently investing in Rwanda? Could you tell me about them? Do you feel involved in Rwanda’s development? (If so, how...) If not, would you like to be? What sector do you think you might contribute best to?

Finally, I would like to ask you about the future. Do you see yourself becoming more closely involved with sharing the skills and knowledge you have acquired here in Rwanda? (If so, in what sector do you think you might be interested? If not, why do you think that is? Is there a way you can contribute to the dissemination of skills remotely? What would it take for you to change your mind?)

Thank you very much for your time. I will be in touch once a basic draft has been worked up. I can give you an indication of how your testimony will be used in the report and I welcome your feedback. Thanks again.

[At every point in the interview, there are multiple angles of pursuit; any offshoot that is related to the project, or if questions are anticipated by the participant, this should be entertained.]



1.2. FOCUS GROUP QUESTIONNAIRE

Communication that will take place ahead of time will outline the date and venue on which the focus group will take place. Interviewees will also be apprised about the conditions under which their testimony will be given (i.e. anonymous, confidential, that their testimony will be recorded and that their data will be treated with great ethical care).

These focus groups will touch on all of the project's objectives (refer to Figure 8: Research Framework), except for "Estimate the number and composition of the diaspora in the area studied (profession, gender, age, skills, volume and location)."

Introduction

Our topic is "How is the Rwandan diaspora in Belgium contributing to the development of Rwanda and how can this contribution be further supported?" The results will be used to further guide the design of potential diaspora engagement programme interventions in Rwanda to enable the diaspora to participate and engage in the country's developmental process.

Guidelines

- There are no right or wrong answers, only differing points of view;
- We are recording this interview;
- We ask that one person speak at a time;
- We are on a first name basis. You do not need to agree with others, but you must listen respectfully as others share their views. We would like to ask you to kindly switch off your cell phones and pagers, if applicable. If you cannot and if you must respond to a call, please do so as quietly as possible and re-join us as quickly as you can.

Questions

1. **Engagement questions.** Introduction of the participants to the topic and get them comfortable with the discussion.
 - a) Can you please introduce yourself and characterize your relationship to Rwanda at present?
 - b) What are the challenges you face to greater support the development of Rwanda as a Rwandan living abroad?
 - c) Can you tell me some details about the Rwandan diaspora in Belgium/Germany/United Kingdom/the Netherlands?



- d) Which opportunities do you see for greater engagement of the diaspora in the development of Rwanda?
 - e) Do you send home remittances? To whom do you send them? Do you feel any pressure to send them? How would you like the money to be spent/invested? How can this be better facilitated? Why do you think this does not happen at present?
2. **Exploration questions.** The following questions have been designed to get to the heart of the discussion and are typically open-ended:
- a) Are you involved in any development projects at present in Rwanda? Could you tell me about them?
 - b) Are you interested in participating in Rwanda's developmental activities such as business, makings investments and skills transfer? If so, how would you like to be involved? If not, would you like to be? What sector do you think you might best contribute to?
 - c) Are you aware of any initiative in your host country that supports diaspora engagement back home? If so, did you participate in such programs? If not, why?
 - d) According to you, what are the missing links/tools/instruments that would increase the participation of the diaspora in the development of Rwanda?
 - e) Could you tell me how the government might enhance how you support Rwanda?
 - f) In you had (unlimited) access to technical and/or financial resources, what would you do to support the development of your country of origin?
3. **Exit questions.** Designed to see if any aspect was overlooked during the discussion.
- Is there anything else you would like to say about how the Government could support diaspora initiatives in Rwanda?



1.3. QUESTIONNAIRE FOR THE RWANDAN EMBASSY

Our topic is: How is the Rwandan diaspora contributing to the development of Rwanda and how can this contribution be further supported? The results of this exercise will be used to further guide the design of potential diaspora engagement programme interventions in Rwanda to enable the diaspora to participate and engage in the developmental process of the country.

We would like to discuss the following issues related to the Rwanda Diaspora Policy:

1. Do you organize, harmonize different initiatives and activities related to Rwandan diaspora engagement in Rwanda?
2. What information or data do you collect from the Rwanda diaspora in Belgium/Germany/Netherlands/United Kingdom? How do you contact/engage them?
3. Do you have programs to mobilize expatriates and highly skilled diaspora members on knowledge and skills transfer to Rwanda?
4. Do you have programmes to mobilize and leverage Rwandan diaspora business communities for investment and trade in Rwanda?
5. What are you doing to create an enabling environment for financial investment and remittances for Rwandan diaspora in Rwanda?
6. Are you aware of any programmes initiated by the host country to create job opportunities overseas? (In the Netherlands, for example, there is a programme called “Promoting Dutch investments in emerging countries”.)
7. Could you tell us the strengths and weaknesses that exist when it comes to setting up diaspora engagement programmes?
8. If you could speak directly to the diaspora in one venue, what would you convey to them?



ANNEX 2. CATEGORIES OF RWANDAN CITIZENSHIP

Table A1. Calculations for “Current nationality: Rwandan”

	Margin of error	Sample size	Gender breakdown (male/female)	Confidence level
Population of Rwandan diaspora in Belgium: 2,732 (StatBel) 1,215 Males 1,517 Females	5%	343	160/183	95%
	6%	246	114/135	95%
	7%	186	85/101	95%
	8%	144	66/78	95%
	9%	115	52/63	95%
	10%	94	43/51	95%

Table A2. Calculations for “Country of birth: Rwanda”

	Margin of error	Sample size	Gender breakdown (male/female)	Confidence level
Population of Rwandan diaspora in Belgium: 12,925 (StatBel) 5,726 Males 7,199 Females	5%	343	160/183	95%
	6%	246	114/135	95%
	7%	186	85/101	95%
	8%	144	66/78	95%
	9%	115	52/63	95%
	10%	94	43/51	95%

Table A3. Calculations for “First nationality: Rwandan”

	Margin of error	Sample size	Gender breakdown (male/female)	Confidence level
Population of Rwandan diaspora in Belgium: 11,970 (StatBel) 5,286 Males 6,684 Females	5%	343	160/183	95%
	6%	246	114/135	95%
	7%	186	85/101	95%
	8%	144	66/78	95%
	9%	115	52/63	95%
	10%	94	43/51	95%



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