



African diaspora with a business (idea) in Africa

mapping of the start-up ecosystem
for African diaspora entrepreneurs in Belgium

METHODOLOGY

2 groups of respondents

African diaspora entrepreneurs:
in-depth interviews - **29** (12♀17♂)

Supporting organisations:
in-depth interviews - **6**
supplemented with online survey - **11**

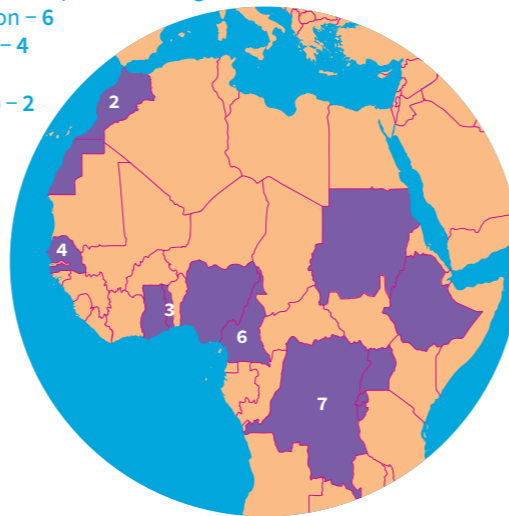
Profile of interviewed entrepreneurs:

To gain a better understanding of the motivations, challenges, and available resources of African diaspora entrepreneurs in Belgium, a total of 29 African diaspora entrepreneurs, were interviewed.

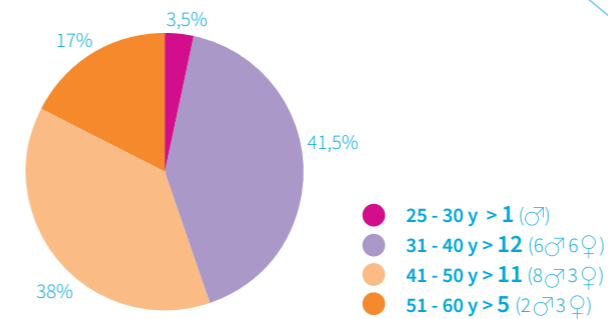
Most entrepreneurs were currently living in Belgium on a partial or permanent basis.

COUNTRY OF ORIGIN:

- Democratic Republic of Congo – 7
- Cameroon – 6
- Senegal – 4
- Togo – 3
- Morocco – 2
- Ghana
- Nigeria
- Uganda
- Ethiopia
- Rwanda
- Burundi
- Sudan



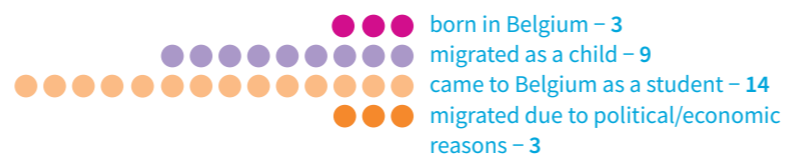
AGE GROUP:



BUSINESS PHASE:



MIGRATION BACKGROUND:



BUSINESS SECTOR:



RESULTS

Motivations ↓

Most entrepreneurs are motivated by a combination of different factors to set up a business in Africa. The most important factors are:

- Seeing a Business opportunity sometimes combined with innovation
- Being passionate about the product or service and/or having a strong entrepreneurial ambition
- Giving back by contributing to local sustainable livelihoods through employment creation, setting up sustainable agricultural practices, and investing in human resources
- Looking for alternatives to remittances and current development practices
- Being undervalued and discriminated in the Belgian job market

Challenges ↓

- Limited option of adequate financial resources
- Prejudices and discrimination in accessing financial and networking opportunities
- Legal and administrative issues when registering and managing the business
- Social network pressure and expectations in Country of Origin
- Lack of centralized information and tailored support
- Managing business from a distance

Resources ↓

- Diversified initial financial basis
- Creativity in administrative set-up to take advantage of different contexts and financial options
- Social network
 - Key to bridge time and distance
 - Access to other resources: information, human resources, practical support in Country of Origin
- Experienced in managing a business from a distance (useful in Covid times)

ENTREPRENEURIAL ECOSYSTEM

Finance

Provide loans

- MicroStart
- 🌍 OVO
- Startit@KBC
- 🇧🇪 finance&invest.brussels

Provide grants

- King Baudouin Foundation
- FIT
- AWEX
- North-South subsidies @ municipal or provincial level
- Embassies of Country of Origin in Belgium

Connect to investors

- 🌍 Brussels Africa Hub
- Microstart
- 🌿 Lady Agri Investment Hub
- 🌍 OVO
- Startit@KBC
- 🇧🇪 Finance&invest.brussels

Investors and platforms:

- 🌍 Remitfund
- Bio-invest
- 🌿 Kampani
- Startup Factory
- 🇧🇪 Finance&invest.brussels
- Koalect
- Platform Social Entrepreneurs
- Ulule

Outside Belgium

- 🌍 Ovamba
- 🌍 VCA4
- 🌍 OFA

🌍 Explicit focus on Africa

🌿 Exclusive focus on agricultural sector

🇧🇪 Exclusively for businesses established in the Brussels region

This overview is a snapshot of the situation on August 31, 2021. It does not represent all organisations that offer support to African diaspora entrepreneurs; only the most important ones that were mentioned during the research. A more complete list can be found in the research report.

Policy

- Enabel & Belgian Development Cooperation
- IOM Belgium
- 🌍 ADEPT
- Embassies of Country of Origin in Belgium

Outside Belgium

- Diaspora Engagement Unit or Ministry in Country of Origin

Support

General support to Belgium-based entrepreneurs:

- Unizo
- VOKA
- Union Wallonne des Entreprises
- Securex
- Liantis
- Xerius
- Acerta
- 🇧🇪 1819
- 🇧🇪 Euclides
- 🇧🇪 BRUSOC / finance&invest.brussels
- VLAIO

Training, coaching & networking:

- 🌍 Sustech4africa (OVO + partners)
- 🌍 Afropreneur Network
- 🌿 Lady Agri Investment Hub (agribusiness)
- MicroStart
- Startit@KBC
- Starterslabo
- #SheDIDIT
- 🇧🇪 JobYourself
- 🇧🇪 Village Partenaire
- CBL-ACP
- Group One

Diaspora (Business) networks:

- 🌍 African Professionals
- 🌍 Afropreneur Network
- 🌍 The Foodbridge
- 🌍 YABS Network
- 🌍 ADEPT
- 🌍 Entrepreneurs
- 🌍 Afro'péros

Incubators & Accelerators:

- Startup Factory
- 🌍 Bond'Innov (based in France)
- 🌍 Zidi Circle (based in NL)

Markets

- FIT (Flanders)
- AWEX (Wallonia)
- 🌍 CBL-ACP
- 🌍 The Foodbridge
- 🌍 Vitrine Africaine
- 🌿 Lady Agri Investment Hub
- Federal Agency for the Safety of the Food Chain
- IDH - The Sustainable Trade Initiative

Human Capital

Universities supporting diaspora entrepreneurs:

- Thomas More in collaboration with 🌍 OVO
- Hasselt University
- ULB
- 🌍 Africa Platform Ugent
- University of Antwerp

Offer technical support:

- 🌿 COLEACP
- 🌿 Mycelia
- VITO

Media

Create visibility & share stories:

- 🌍 The Foodbridge
- #SheDIDIT

International Podcasts & platforms:

- 🌍 Dear Diaspora Podcast series
- 🌍 She Inspires Her

CALL FOR ACTION

● Support

- Be aware of and open to the fact that African diaspora businesses might have different needs than non-diaspora businesses due to their transnational character and often socially driven motivations
- Set up a central platform or website that regroups the necessary information and links for (African) diaspora entrepreneurs on a variety of topics
- Tailor current support and financial services to this specific reality, and where needed develop new types of services
- Provide a single point of contact throughout the support trajectory within existing supporting organisations of African diaspora entrepreneurs to enhance mutual trust and continuity

● Finance

- Create an investment fund for diaspora entrepreneurs that is open to starters and growers that have a (part of their) business activity in Africa
- Set up a crowdfunding or -lending platform that facilitates investment from African diaspora

● Policy

- Revise the legal framework in Belgium to match the specificities of African diaspora entrepreneurship in terms of status of the activity, social security, investment policy etc.
- For development agencies in Belgium and/or in countries in Africa, actively involve African diaspora in the creation of development policies and programmes
- Work closer across countries to align policies and programmes that facilitate the creation of diaspora-led businesses