

# THE KENYAN DIASPORA OUTLOOK REPORT By **iGrand BP**

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An Analytical Report on the Population  
Distribution and Trends of Kenyans Living  
in the diaspora.

**Feb 2025.**

# PREFACE

In an era where the diaspora population continues to be of impactful significance on the Kenyan socio – cultural, economic and political systems; understanding the population distribution and trends of Kenyans Living abroad is key to facilitate planning and effective service delivery.

This analytical report sheds light on Kenyan populations and their trends in selected countries representing the main regions of the world. It is our hope that this report acts as a catalyst for meaningful dialogue, innovative product development and strategic partnerships to serve the Kenyan diaspora population.

# INTRODUCTION

There are approximately three million Kenyan nationals living abroad who collectively in the period between January 2024 and December 2024 remitted \$4,961 million (Kes. 641.1 billion) being a 17% increase from a similar period in 2023. (source, Central Bank of Kenya).

Remittances are the leading foreign exchange earner in Kenya accounting for 3.6% of the Gross Domestic Product.

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## Background

iGrand BP is a business consultancy firm that is focused on research – backed business development and strategic planning. We are dedicated to supporting quality decision making in organizations through support in strategic planning, developing and executing marketing plans, tax advisory and business research.

Recognizing the role that diaspora remittances play in shaping Kenya's economy, this report aims at highlighting remittance drivers into the country and key sectors that benefit from diaspora remittances.

## Key Findings

- ▶ **Population of Kenyans Abroad:** There are about three million Kenyan nationals living outside Kenya. This number remains an estimate as there was difficulty in distinguishing between Kenyans on temporary visas, permanent residents abroad, dual citizens in other countries and the undocumented (whose residence status abroad is unlawful). There are as well second and third generation Kenyans born abroad, some of whom have non – Kenyan citizenship but retain strong social ties with Kenyans.
- ▶ **Countries with the greatest number of Kenyans:** United States, United Kingdom, Canada, Australia, Germany, Uganda, South Africa, South Sudan, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, Qatar, Botswana, Zambia and Malaysia. Kenyans living in North America, Europe and Australia have vibrant associations that unite them and keep them together. Associations of Kenyans living in the rest of the world are generally weak, or young, or less structured, or less effective, or small in comparison to those in North America, Europe and Australia.
- ▶ **Challenges and Opportunities:** Rising anti – immigrant sentiments in North America and Europe is a threat to immigration trends of Kenyans to the United States, Canada, United Kingdom and the European Union. This is also an opportunity to foster stronger ties between Kenya and her diaspora through diplomacy, encouraging diasporans to invest back in Kenya and creating new study and work opportunities locally.
- ▶ **Attitude towards investment:** Kenyans in the diaspora are cautiously optimistic of Kenya as an investment destination. This is largely because of conmen, political instability, unpredictable macroeconomic environment and lack of proper communication in marketing Kenyan – made world class products to the diaspora. While many diaspora Kenyans send their remittances to their country, there is opportunity to double remittances if their attitude can be shifted from “cautious” to “incautious”.
- ▶ **Future Prospects:** Out of ten Kenyans in the diaspora, nine have aspirations of establishing themselves back in Kenya through building or buying homes, educating their kinsmen and taking care of their health. A small fraction has political aspirations on various elective and appointive positions in the 2027 General elections.



## Recommendations

- ▶ Utilize the State Department of Diaspora Affairs (SDDA) to secure the welfare and interests of Kenyans abroad. There is need for SDDA to maintain an updated record of the number of Kenyans living abroad with details of their countries of residence and status of their visa / stay abroad.
- ▶ The private sector needs to provide solutions to diaspora populations that are of world class standards, competitive and customized to the unique tastes and preferences of Kenyans in different time zones, financial systems, cultural settings, political atmospheres, languages and telco service subscriptions.
- ▶ Involvement of the Kenyan diaspora in product design and development. This is key to satisfying their taste for world class products in industries like aviation, tourism, real estate, healthcare, insurance, banking, telecommunication, pensions, capital markets, entertainment and government services.
- ▶ Regulate the marketing and promotion of Kenyan products to Kenyans in the diaspora to ensure accuracy in marketing information, fair pricing (without exploitation), elimination of conmen and insurance of risks involved. These regulations should aim at addressing the cautiousness and reservedness of Kenyans in the diaspora towards Kenya as an investment haven.
- ▶ Systemize the process of returning back to settle in Kenya after years of study, work or life abroad such that the skills and experiences gained are transferred as non – monetary remittances into the country. Both government and the private sector should invent solutions to challenges of settling back and build a vibrant community of diaspora returnees.

# OBJECTIVES OF THE REPORT

The primary objective of this report was to highlight the countries with most Kenyans abroad and trends among the Kenyan diaspora in terms of immigration, economic engagements and volume of remittances in a way that it serves as a decision-making tool for government and non – government organizations that exist to serve the diaspora population. Specific areas of focus included:

1. Understanding the current population distribution of Kenyans in the diaspora.
2. Assessing attitudes and perception towards investing in Kenya.
3. Identifying reasons for remittances and sectors that most benefit from it.
4. Exploring the dynamics of returning to settle back in Kenya after years of work or study abroad.
5. Highlighting potential improvements and future considerations for uptake of diaspora looking products that are made in Kenya.

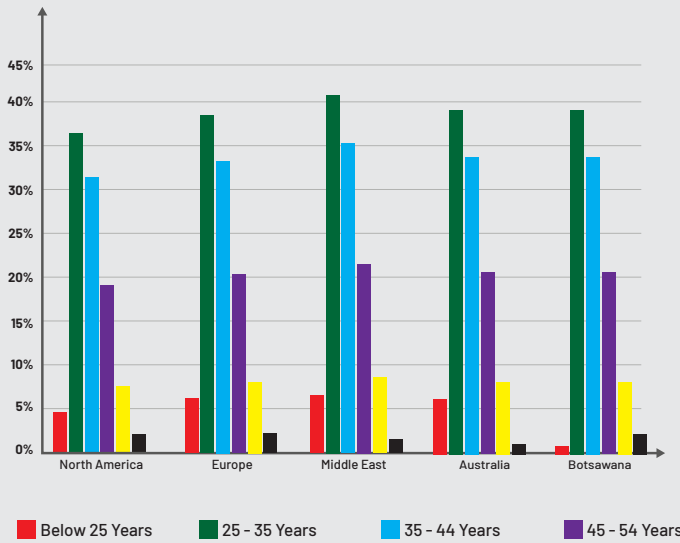
## Scope and Methodology

The report targeted Kenyans living in the diaspora and employed a mixed – methods approach to gather qualitative and quantitative data. Key components included:

- ▶ **Data Collection:** conducted through structured interviews to capture relevant information directly from Kenyans living abroad.
- ▶ **Research Method:** A quantitative approach was used, supported by Computer assisted personal interviews (CAPI) for accuracy and efficiency.
- ▶ **Instrument:** A semi – structured questionnaire designed to elicit detailed responses on key thematic areas, including uptake of Kenyan made diaspora looking products in insurance, banking, real estate, adventure tourism, pension, capital markets and telecommunication services.
- ▶ **Sample Size:** The survey included a total of n=1,850 respondents representing a diverse mix of the diaspora population including diaspora community leaders, students, diplomats, employees, business people, undocumented and second-generation Kenyans.
- ▶ **Language:** The interview and questionnaires were conducted in English to ensure clarity and uniformity of responses.
- ▶ **Survey Dates:** The survey was conducted between March 2024 and February 2025 ensuring timely data collection and reflective of geopolitical dynamics.
- ▶ **Survey Locations:** The survey visited the following countries during the period for in – person interviews, observations and studies: Australia (Perth, Adelaide and Melbourne), United States (Georgia, DMV area, New Jersey – New York area, New England area, Texas, Oklahoma, Washington State, Kansas) and Canada (Alberta, British Columbia and Ontario). The survey was also able to collect data from the following location through electronic media: United Kingdom, Germany, Botswana, Zambia, Uganda, New Zealand, Malaysia, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, UAE, Bermuda, Argentina and Malta. The survey employed use of previous visits, desktop research and out-of-location interactions to qualitatively report about the rest of the world.

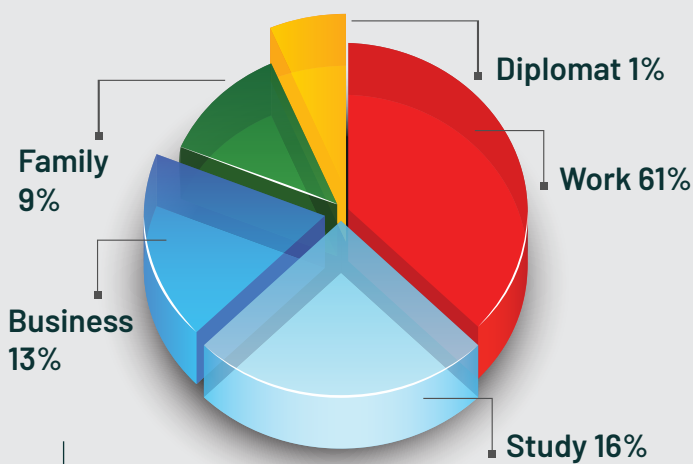
# DEMOGRAPHICS

## Age of Diasporans



**Millenials and Gen Zs** account for **63%** of the Kenyan diaspora population across all the regions.

## Reasons for Living in The Diaspora

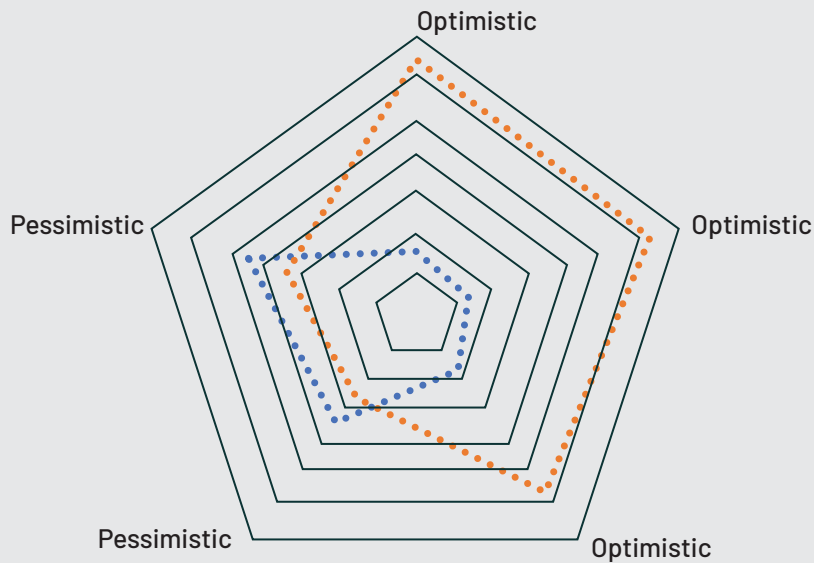


Some respondents had overlapping reasons but we only picked the primary reason for living abroad.

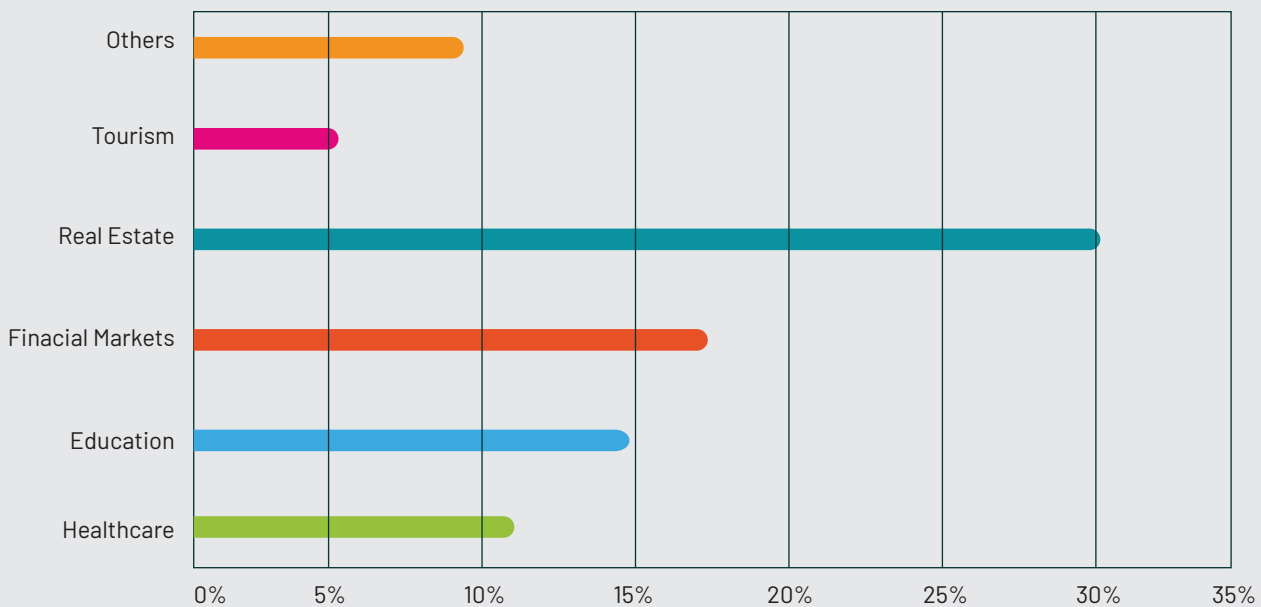


## Attitude Towards Investing in Kenya

Kenyans in the diaspora are cautiously optimistic about investing in Kenya.



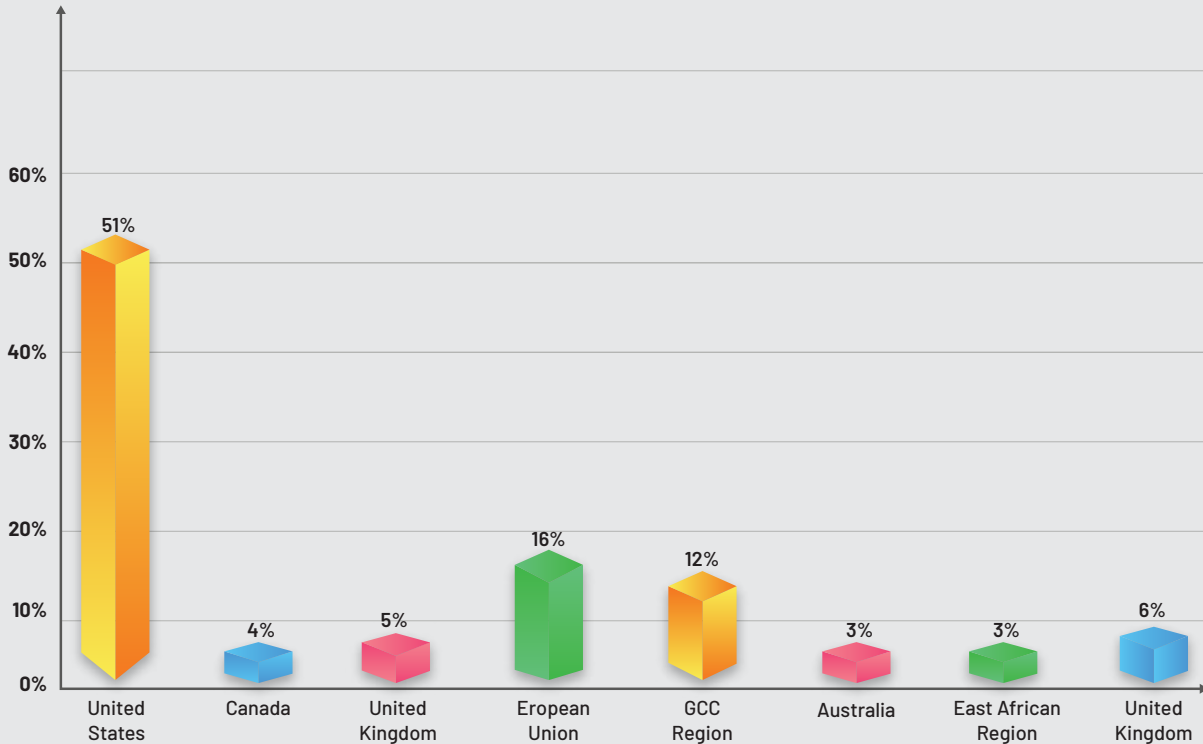
## Kenyan Sectors That Attract the Most Remittances



Most Kenyans in the diaspora maintain their ties with Kenya through sending money to take care of their loved ones in health, education, food production, family events and tourism. Diasporans also put significant volumes of money in stabilizing themselves back in Kenya through the purchase of real estate in terms of land and houses for both settlement and investment purposes. The Kenyan financial sector through banks, SACCOs and capital markets play a complementing role in serving the primary goals for remittances.

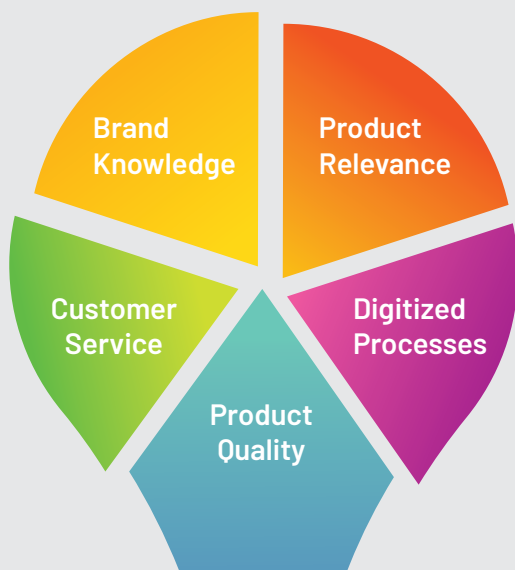
## Leading Inward Remittance Sources to Kenya, 2024.

### Leading Inward Remittances Sources to Kenya



North America accounted for 56% of total diaspora remittances in 2024, followed by Europe which accounted for 21% of total remittances. Saudi Arabia, UAE and Qatar are the most significant sources of remittances from the GCC Region. The GCC Region and Australia recorded the fastest growth rate in remittances compared to any other region due to growing population of Kenyans in those countries. The East African Community is also a major source of remittances with Tanzania and Uganda accounting for 2.5% of total remittances in 2025. Other countries that were key sources of remittances in 2025 include Botswana, Zambia, Bermuda and the Cayman Islands.

## Consumption of Kenyan Made Products



The use of Kenyan platforms to remit money, the choice of financial partners, pension, opportunities in real estate and adventure destinations to sample among other Kenyan - made products is dependent on five key factors. These factors are: how well the brand is known, the relevance of that product to the diaspora market, digitization of processes to reduce inefficiencies and quality standards of the product.

## CONCLUSION

1. More sensitization needed on diaspora looking products as well as consultative engagements to develop products for the diaspora market.
2. Providers of services to the diaspora market have an opportunity to grow their market share by understanding the unique needs, tastes and preferences of the diaspora market.
3. Incorporate the diaspora community into mainstream programs of government and private sector engagements such as political leadership, association in professional and industrial bodies, lending to government through a diaspora bond and social development.
4. Government and private sector should build mutual relationship with the diaspora community and not a transactional approach targeting remittances. This will help to effectively serve their needs.
5. Celebrate the diaspora in various government and private sector awards to cultivate identity and brand acceptance.

## ABOUT US

iGrand BP, founded in 2020, is a business consultancy firm that is focused on supporting business development through research - backed business and strategic plans. We also help in executing our plans and further support businesses in tax advisory. We coach and train teams on thematic subjects within business development, investment and financial management.



Our Mission is to provide business leaders with insights to plan ahead by creating together with them plans that solve their strategic and operational challenges.

Our Vision is to a market leader in providing business support services in Africa.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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### **University of Nairobi.**

For providing library support, discussions and a conducive environment to study, compile and analyze data before publishing in this report.

## DISCLAIMER

This report has been prepared for informational purposes only and is based on data collected during the survey period.

While every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy and completeness of the information presented, iGrand BP assumes no responsibility for errors, omissions, or decisions based on the contents of this report.

Readers are encouraged to seek professional advice when making decisions related to the topics discussed.



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