



MAPPING THE

NEPALESE DIASPORA

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# MAPPING THE NEPALESE DIASPORA



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# LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

|               |  |
|---------------|--|
| <b>FGD</b>    | focus group discussion                                   |
| <b>MoLESS</b> | Ministry of Labour, Employment and Social Security       |
| <b>NRN</b>    | non-resident Nepali                                      |
| <b>NRNA</b>   | Non-Resident Nepali Association                          |
| <b>NSO</b>    | National Statistics Office of Nepal                      |
| <b>SAARC</b>  | South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation         |
| <b>DESA</b>   | United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs |

# 1

## INTRODUCTION



This diaspora mapping report is produced by IOM Nepal, with support from the Non-Resident Nepali Association (NRNA) and in close coordination with the Government of Nepal's Ministry of Foreign Affairs. This report captures the main results and insights gained from the diaspora mapping exercise conducted globally, with a specialized focus on 16 priority countries (of destination). It contains a summary of the scope and methodology of the mapping exercise and an analysis of the results thereof, providing a number of key findings to support policymaking and programme development.

For the purpose of the study, the term diaspora is treated synonymously with the Government of Nepal's official terminology, *non-resident Nepali* (NRN; see Text box below). However, the more expansive definition provided by IOM is used to supplement the Government's definition, to be inclusive of diaspora members who identify as Nepalese due to their national heritage and connection to their country of origin, even while residing abroad. This results in the inclusion of diaspora members beyond the third generation. (See [Chapter 2: Research Methodology](#) for a more detailed note on the intended target population of the mapping exercise.)

### Text box. Terminology

The Government of Nepal uses the term non-resident Nepalis (NRNs) for the Nepalese diaspora. This term often refers to a person who was previously a citizen of Nepal or has parents or grandparents who are/were citizens of Nepal, that has acquired the citizenship of a foreign country and resides in a country outside the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) (Nepal, Government of, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, n.d.).

According to the *IOM Glossary on Migration*, diasporas are “individuals and members of networks, associations and communities who have left their country of origin but maintain links with their homeland. This concept covers more settled expatriate communities, migrant workers based abroad temporarily, expatriates with the nationality of the host country, dual nationals, and second-/third-generation migrants” (IOM, 2011:28).

## 1.1. BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

Nepalese diaspora communities, with a combined population of over 2.1 million, play a significant role in the country's socioeconomic development through a variety of means (Nepal, Government of, National Statistics Office (NSO), 2022a). For example, diaspora members send remittances to relatives and friends; invest in various sectors of the economy; conduct business and trade; and leverage their social and human capital for development initiatives, often through the transfer of knowledge and skills.

The contributions of diaspora members have been recognized by the Government of Nepal. In 2008, the Government published the Non-Resident Nepali Act (2064 B.S. (Nepalese calendar year)), granting NRNs legal status and enabling them to open bank accounts; own and invest in real estate and business; and be eligible for tax exemptions similar to those applicable to cultural and charitable donations (International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD) and the European Union Global Diaspora Facility (EUDiF), 2021). In addition, through the establishment of the Brain Gain Centre under the auspices of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Government of Nepal has sought to mobilize the expertise of the diaspora community towards Nepal's ongoing socioeconomic development and to recognize their contributions to Nepal and other countries. The Government's recognition of the role of the diaspora in Nepal's development was further exemplified through the Fourteenth and Fifteenth National Plans, as well as the recently approved Approach Paper of the Sixteenth National Plan, which describes NRNs as foundational enablers of the country's economic growth (ibid.; Nepal, Government of, National Planning Commission, 2020 and 2024).

Building on these successful steps to increase diaspora engagement, IOM Nepal procured the support of Kondan & Symss Consultancy, Inc. to map Nepalese diaspora members across Africa, the Americas, the Asia-Pacific, Europe, the Middle East and Australia. Relevant stakeholders – government, private and non-government actors can leverage the data captured through this exercise to inform and design evidence-based programmes, projects and services for and alongside diaspora members. This would also enable diaspora organizations (including the NRNA) to gain insights on the composition, motivations and interests of the constituents they serve. For diaspora members, the results of this mapping will provide awareness of the diverse forms in which they currently engage and support the development of Nepal.

Lastly, this initiative represents one of many diaspora-focused projects facilitated by IOM. This mapping study is conducted within the framework of the project, "Global Programme on Making Migration Work for Sustainable Development (M4SD)", implemented by IOM and the United Nations Development Programme, and financially supported by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation. Through this initiative, IOM seeks to enhance the development outcomes of migration, through evidence-based migration policy and practice development, for the benefit of all.

The design of the mapping methodology and the implementation of the exercise was guided directly by the *Diaspora Mapping Toolkit* (IOM, 2022) which distils the experience of IOM in implementing over 150 diaspora mapping exercises across diverse contexts. Designing this exercise (including in terms of its data collection tools, considerations for data storage, analysis, publication and ethical standards, among others) based on this toolkit enables a more systematic, standardized and comprehensive approach to diaspora mapping that can improve national, regional and international data collection benchmarks and replicability and the development of time-bound comparability. Additionally, IOM published a guide for policymakers and practitioners in origin and destination countries, which was used as a reference in the design of the study methodology, analysis and recommendations, as well as informing the development of the Nepalese Diaspora Engagement Road Map based on the mapping study results.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Full title of the guide: *Developing a Road Map for Engaging Diasporas in Development for Engaging Diasporas in Development: A Handbook for Policymakers and Practitioners in Home and Host Countries* (IOM and Migration Policy Institute, 2012).

## 1.2. PURPOSE AND SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The objective of this diaspora mapping exercise is to gain insight into the diaspora's socioeconomic profile, professional skills and expertise, and to assess their capacities, interests and motivations to participate and engage in developmental activities in Nepal, such as knowledge and skills transfer activities and/or business and investments. This exercise is also launched to identify lessons learned, including best practices and opportunities that can inform future mapping exercises.

A “Roadmap for Enhancing Nepalese Diaspora Engagement” was developed as part of the mapping exercise. This road map offers a strategic framework to assist relevant State actors and relevant stakeholders in enhancing diaspora engagement and tackling the broader challenges experienced by diaspora members. It serves as a practical tool for implementing the recommendations outlined in this report. The road map delineates priority areas and proposes potential programmes that will propel diaspora engagement initiatives forward. These priority areas and programmes were thoughtfully identified through consultations with diaspora members and a thorough analysis of global and regional best practices in diaspora engagement and migration management.

The design and purpose of this mapping exercise are in alignment with the overarching objectives outlined in the *Diaspora Mapping Toolkit*. It particularly aligns with two key objectives:

- **Understanding population composition and distribution.** The mapping exercise aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the diaspora's composition and distribution, profiling key features and trends within a broader population defined by characteristics like citizenship and country of origin.
- **Informing policy and programming.** The mapping exercise also serves the objective of collecting data to inform and sensitize future policy and programming efforts. It focuses on gathering information about specific subsets of the diaspora, helping plan interventions by understanding their sociodemographic characteristics, engagement behaviours and potential resource mobilization.



↑ Poster for the Eleventh Non-resident Nepali Global Conference and the Third Non-resident Nepali Global Knowledge Convention, 17–20 October 2023, Kathmandu. The event was organized by the Non-resident Nepali Association and supported by IOM. © IOM 2023

# 2

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY



A range of diverse data collection methods was employed to carry out the mapping exercise and achieve the study's goals. These methods encompassed a thorough desk review, which involved examining existing research and data related to Nepalese diaspora communities, as well as relevant policies and legislation implemented by the Government of Nepal. Subsequently, a survey was created and distributed, with the support of the NRNA to diaspora members in the collection of quantitative data from 15 May 2023 to 21 August 2023. The NRNA publicized the survey through its Listserv mailing list, consisting of over 70,000 individuals. The NRNA also created a landing page on its website for the survey, as well as a pop-up message encouraging visitors to fill out the survey (in either Nepali or English). To complement the data obtained this way and gather more detailed qualitative insights, information was gathered through focus group discussions (FGDs) with members of the diaspora. Moreover, complementary survey data captured by the Brain Gain Centre was used – data that included its members' occupation sectors. This data is included to provide comparative insights with the data gathered through the mapping survey.

The data collection process was supported by two technical assistants. The assistants, who are well-connected members of the Nepalese diaspora community, led the translation of data collection tools, the development of a survey dissemination plan and outreach activities, as well as the facilitation of FGDs.

### 2.1. METHODS OF DATA COLLECTION

The following data collection methods were used to conduct the mapping exercise:

#### 1. Desk review/research

Data captured from previous studies and literature, identifying how the diaspora has been conceptualized, defined and measured in the past, was collated. This included information on which subgroups of diasporas have been studied based on characteristics such as age, gender, migrant cohort and occupation.

The following (non-exhaustive) open-source information on the Nepalese diaspora was examined:

- (a) Statistical data sets captured by various national census bureaux;
- (b) IOM Migration Profiles;
- (c) United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA) – Population Division, IOM and World Bank data sets;
- (d) Government of Nepal strategic plans and reports (including data provided by the Brain Gain Centre);
- (e) Academic publications on migration trends and contexts;
- (f) Recommendations and guidelines on diaspora engagement, including those outlined in regional and international frameworks or resources (including the *Diaspora Mapping Toolkit* of IOM).

## 2. Comprehensive survey

The survey acted as the primary tool to assess the diaspora communities' (demographic) composition, awareness, interests and motivations. The survey, open from 15 May 2023 to 21 August 2023, available in both English and Nepali, allowing respondents to choose their preferred language.

The survey was divided into thematic sections, developed to align with the broader categories identified in the *Diaspora Mapping Toolkit*. Considerations were given to the accessibility of the language and the duration required to complete the survey during the development of these sections (listed below, accompanied by descriptions of their objectives):

- (a) **Demographic Information**, to examine the sociodemographic composition of respondents;
- (b) **Migration Experience**, to understand their perspectives on and experiences with moving abroad;
- (c) **Financial Contributions (Remittances)**, to examine their philanthropic, business and/or investment interests and the degree to which they contribute financially to members of their community living in Nepal (i.e. friends and family);
- (g) **Philanthropy and Socioeconomic Development**, to gauge their experiences with previous diaspora engagement initiatives and their willingness to support new philanthropic and socioeconomic projects in Nepal;
- (h) **Business and Investment**, to examine their experiences with and interest in business and/or investment opportunities in Nepal;
- (i) **Diaspora Community Engagement and Diaspora Initiatives**, to determine the level of diaspora participation in their respective countries of residence and examine their level of awareness of diaspora-related legislation and policies, as well as initiatives targeted at them;
- (j) **Information Channels and Communication Preferences**, to learn about the best methods of communication to reach members of the diaspora in the future.

The survey also acted as a tool to collect information from diaspora members who were interested in joining the FGDs that were to be conducted as part of the study. The anonymous survey included a separate registration link through which individuals provided identifying information, such as their names and contact information, if they wished to be interviewed.

A registry for diaspora members interested in receiving direct communication from project partners, such as IOM or the Government of Nepal, was created as part of the mapping exercise. An additional, separate link for this registration was shared with respondents at the end of the survey. The consultants worked with project partners to identify which subgroups of diaspora members (e.g. specific professional occupations) they were interested in signing up for the registry. Information on how respondents' data would be collected, stored and used was clearly noted at the top of the registration page.

Finally, the survey data was complemented by data provided by the Brain Gain Centre on Nepalese diaspora members' occupations. This data was gathered through the Centre's online registry, which allowed diaspora members to share such information.



### 3. Focus group discussions

The FGDs were conducted with a wide range of informants, including community leaders, subject matter experts, professionals and other members of the diaspora community. These discussions were conducted to obtain in-depth insights into the experiences, perceptions, expectations, satisfaction and challenges that diaspora members faced. The semi-structured format allowed the team to collect key qualitative insights.

The consultants and/or technical assistants led FGDs through online or virtual communication methods (e.g. Zoom, Microsoft Teams and Webex). Women were particularly encouraged to participate in the FGDs, given their lower survey response rates.

## 2.2. SAMPLING

Regarding the collection of primary data, two non-random sampling techniques were employed: (a) purposeful/purposive sampling and (b) snowball sampling. The former was used to gather data from individuals listed on the stakeholder register developed in collaboration with partners, which primarily included NRNA leaders. The snowball sampling technique allowed for the dissemination of the data collection tools to a larger audience. Respondents were encouraged to share the survey and identify other diaspora members who may be interested in filling it out. The consultants worked with the technical assistants and the NRNAs to develop targeted messages to leverage the wide networks of the project partners, particularly through the NRNA national coordination councils.

The countries targeted for the mapping study were selected by IOM Nepal, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the NRNA. The consultants offered support in this selection process, primarily through the provision of Nepalese diaspora statistical data, so that countries with notable diaspora populations were selected as “priority” countries. Other factors that contributed to the selection of countries included countries of interest for the Government of Nepal or NRNA stakeholders due to reasons such as their sizeable permanent (or long-term) diaspora communities. Countries were excluded if the Ministry of Foreign Affairs already had sufficient data on the diaspora there; if they were not considered primary diaspora-populated countries of residence; and in alignment with the Government’s definition of the diaspora, which automatically excludes certain countries (e.g. SAARC countries). The selection process was also informed by the distribution of NRNA teams to facilitate enhanced outreach to the diaspora community. As currently understood at the time of the study, there are national coordination councils in more than 80 countries, including:

- (a) 16 in the Asia–Pacific;
  - (b) 18 in Africa;
  - (c) 6 in the Americas;
  - (d) 30 in Europe;
  - (e) 11 in the Middle East;
  - (f) 4 in Oceania.
- (NRNA, 2024).

Through this process, the following 16 countries were selected:

- (a) Australia;
- (b) Belgium;
- (c) Canada;
- (d) China (including Hong Kong Special Administrative Region and Macao Special Administrative Region);
- (e) Croatia;
- (f) Germany;
- (g) Japan;
- (h) New Zealand;
- (i) Portugal;
- (j) Qatar;
- (k) Republic of Korea;
- (l) Romania;
- (m) South Africa;
- (n) United Arab Emirates;
- (o) United Kingdom;
- (p) United States of America.

### 2.3. DATA ANALYSIS

For the purpose of this mapping exercise, various data collection tools were used to triangulate the findings presented in this report. Qualitative data was coded and themed across key criteria areas, and quantitative data was analysed using descriptive statistical calculations rather than inferential testing, due to the non-random sampling method used and the limited sample size. For quantitative analysis, specifically, ordinal variables were selected across the question scales.

The technical assistants transcribed recorded conversations during FGDs and analysed them to identify recurring themes, manually coding and theming the data. Triangulation with other data sources was prioritized to enhance the validity of survey responses. The collated summative data compares several data sources and methods to corroborate key insights and identify areas requiring additional attention or focus for project partners. (Note that the sample size, indicated in the charts in [Chapter 4: Analysis of Findings](#), represents the number of those who specifically responded to the given question (i.e. the number changes across questions, as responding to the questions were voluntary).)

## 2.4. CHALLENGES AND LIMITATIONS

Some notable challenges were encountered during the course of the mapping study, primarily related to survey promotion. First, there were competing priorities within the NRNA due to the ongoing International Coordination Council election process, which affected survey promotion during the data collection period. In addition, access by the diaspora was further limited due to limited correspondence with the Brain Gain Centre and diplomatic missions of Nepal in destination countries. In addition, despite close initial coordination with the Brain Gain Centre, a new representative had not been appointed during the project implementation phase. As the study methodology and outreach plans were heavily reliant on the diaspora networks of the NRNA, diplomatic missions and the Brain Gain Centre, the response rates for the survey and participation in the FGDs were lower than expected.

Regarding the data received from the survey respondents, an observation was made that men in the diaspora seemed to engage more in external communication, which resulted in a significantly lower response rate from women, in combination with other structural factors such as the diaspora women population being smaller. In addition, some of the target countries had very limited populations of diaspora members, both men and women, which expectedly resulted in low response rates.

To address the gender disparity in the data, targeted outreach and communication strategies were proactively launched early in the data collection process. While these measures yielded an increase in responses from women, it is important to acknowledge that their representation among the overall pool of survey respondents remained limited. These challenges underscore the need for a nuanced interpretation of the study's findings and a need for strengthened engagement strategies that target diaspora women directly. More qualitative research will also be required to understand if and how women in the Nepalese diaspora community can participate more in external communication. This information will be valuable in guiding future engagement efforts that target diaspora women.

To uphold the respondents' confidentiality and meaningfully analyse the data, the consultants disaggregated data exclusively from the five most common countries of residence (Australia, Canada, Japan, the United Kingdom and the United States).

## 2.5. DATA PRIVACY AND CONFIDENTIALITY

The privacy of all study participants and the confidentiality of their data were maintained throughout data collection, analysis and reporting processes. The purpose of the exercise and the privacy protection measures utilized were shared with all study participants. They were made aware that their participation was voluntary, and, as such, they were not required to answer any question they did not want to respond to, and that they were welcome to withdraw from the FGDs and/or survey at any time. Interviewees and survey respondents were actively asked to provide their consent before providing any information.

The confidentiality statements for the survey and the FGDs were made available to project partners for their inputs. Moreover, measures were communicated on access to raw data, aggregating and anonymizing interviewee and focus group notes, and deleting all unnecessary raw data at the conclusion of the study.

ज्ञान र रुपान्तरण



समृद्धिको आधार



**11<sup>TH</sup> NRN GLOBAL CONFERENCE**  
**NRNA INTERNATIONAL GENERAL ASSEMBLY**  
**3<sup>RD</sup> NRN GLOBAL KNOWLEDGE CONVENTION**  
*"Knowledge and Transformation: The Foundation of Prosperity."*

FOR NEPALI BY NEPALI

17-20 OCT, 2023

THE SOALTEE KATHMANDU

# Inauguration Ceremony



↑ Inauguration event of the Third Non-resident Nepali Global Knowledge Convention, 17–20 October 2023, Kathmandu. The event was organized by the Non-resident Nepali Association (NRNA) and supported by IOM. In attendance were the Right Honourable President of Nepal, Mr Ramchandra Paudel (third from left); Hon. Narayan Prakash Saud, Foreign Minister of Nepal (second from left); and NRNA Executive Chair Badri KC.  
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# 3

## DESK REVIEW



The desk review conducted for the diaspora mapping exercise relies primarily on centralized data collected by the Population Division of DESA. This data was cross-referenced against other sources, such as national census data and admission counts of permanent residents in Nepal, disaggregated by country of citizenship and/or residency, where available. However, for the purpose of consistency in methodological definitions and approaches used to compute for population estimates, the DESA Population Division database values are primarily used. Other international databases detailing information on global migration trends and remittances, such as United Nations and World Bank databases, are also referenced.

Unfortunately, there are limitations in reliable quantitative studies pertaining to the Nepalese diaspora community. Additional peer-reviewed studies on the Nepalese diaspora within a specific country context can provide policymakers with a more nuanced understanding of the composition, experiences and contributions of Nepalese diaspora members. With existing data sets often scattered and non-centralized, comprehensive and systematic research will be essential to inform policy, foster diaspora engagement and harness the diaspora's potential in Nepal's development.

### 3.1. THE NEPALESE DIASPORA COMMUNITY

Based on the 2021 National Population and Housing Census, it is estimated that 2,190,592 Nepalese migrants currently reside abroad, equivalent to approximately 7.5 per cent of the total Nepalese population (NSO, 2022a:58). In the census, this group is referred to as the “absent population living abroad” or “absentees living abroad”. Of the total absent population living abroad, 1,799,675 (82.2%) are male and 390,917 (17.8%) are female. Notably, 23.4 per cent of households have at least one member living abroad (ibid.). In comparison, during the 2011 census, there were 1,921,494 absentees living abroad, corresponding to 25.4 per cent of the population (ibid.:3), that is, one in four households had a family member residing abroad.

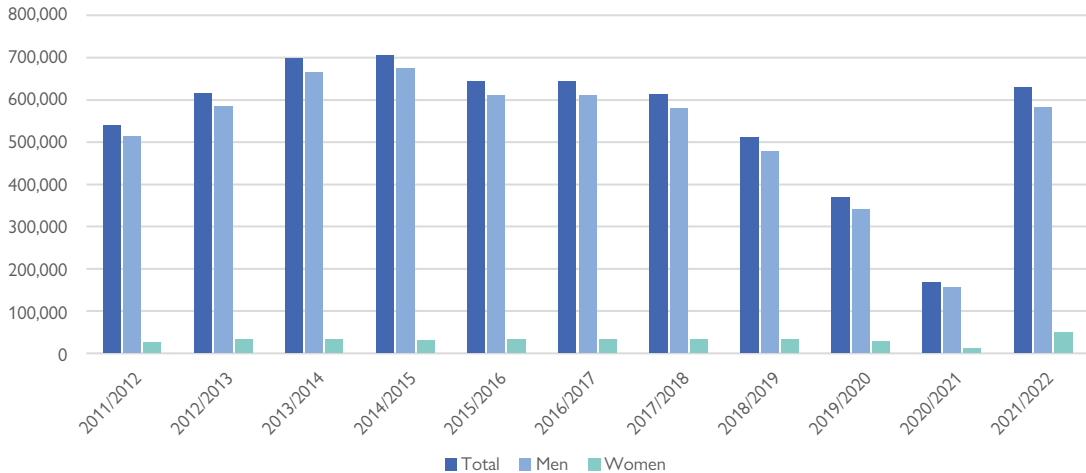
The primary driver of recent emigration from Nepal is the search for employment opportunities, which can be categorized into three key trends: (a) internal migration, (b) migration to India and (c) migration to countries other than India (IOM, 2019). While movement within Nepal, or to and from India, faces minimal restrictions, the third category of migration is subject to stringent regulations, both by domestic legislation and bilateral labour agreements (ibid.). Data from the 2011 National Population and Housing Census suggests that 71 per cent of migrants emigrated to seek employment. Among female migrants, 32.2 per cent were dependents (NSO, 2022b). Over three quarters of these migrants were from 15 and 34 years of age (ibid.).

Between the 2001 and 2011 censuses, Nepal has seen a notable increase in the number of its absentees living abroad (IOM, 2019:35–36). The 2001 census reported 762,181 absentees living abroad (ibid.). This number more than doubled, reaching 1,921,494 individuals in the 2011 census, corresponding to 7.3 per cent of the total population (ibid.). Of these absentees, 87.6 per cent were male, while 12.4 per cent were female (ibid.). Between the 2011 and 2021 censuses, the rate of increase in the number of absentees living abroad was much lower than it was between the 2001 and 2011 censuses, reducing to a 14-per-cent increase.<sup>2</sup>

The Department of Foreign Employment (DoFE), operating under the Ministry of Labour, Employment and Social Security (MoLESS), serves as a pivotal data source concerning labour migration, because it oversees “labour approvals” (i.e. approval of work/labour permits) for prospective migrant workers.

The DoFE reported that 771,327 labour approvals were granted in fiscal year 2022/2023 (MoLESS, 2023:25). Of these approvals, 699,193 were for men, constituting 91 per cent of total approvals, with the remaining 72,134 (approximately 9% of total approvals) for women (ibid.). Prior to fiscal year 2022/2023, 4.7 million new labour approvals were issued by the DoFE between fiscal years 2008/2009 and 2021/2022 (see Figure 1 for data beginning 2011/2012) (MoLESS, 2022:3). Nevertheless, it is crucial to acknowledge the limitations of this data set, which exclusively accounts for government-issued labour approvals. As such, this excludes the substantial number of Nepalese migrants who move to India for employment and are exempted from having to secure such permits. Second, these figures represent the number of approvals issued, and the data does not capture scenarios such as when a permit is not actually used (i.e. the applicant does not push through with their migration plan) or when an individual obtains multiple permits.

Figure 1. New and renewed labour approvals, 2011/2012 to 2021/2022



Source: MoLESS, 2022:54.

The top five destinations for Nepalese migrants in 2019 were (in decreasing order) Malaysia, India, Saudi Arabia, Qatar and the United States, according to data from the Population Division of DESA (2020) (Table 2). It is important to note that the actual diaspora population totals in these countries differ across sources, sometimes significantly, due to the aforementioned data limitations and the varying definitions and methodological approaches used in producing these data sets (e.g. some data sets may capture seasonal labour migrants while others do not).

<sup>2</sup> Calculated using data from National Population and Housing Census 2011 and 2021 data on the absent population living abroad.

Table 1. Top 10 destinations for Nepalese emigrants based on DESA International Migrant Stock 2019

| Destination country  | Nepalese population |
|----------------------|---------------------|
| Malaysia             | 578 082             |
| India                | 533 646             |
| Saudi Arabia         | 490 965             |
| Qatar                | 254 340             |
| United States        | 114 120             |
| Australia            | 78 016              |
| United Kingdom       | 40 003              |
| Bangladesh           | 39 573              |
| United Arab Emirates | 27 474              |
| Kuwait               | 24 012              |

Source: DESA, 2020.

### 3.2. SELECTED TARGET COUNTRIES OF RESIDENCE

As mentioned, this study relies primarily on the International Migrant Stock 2019 data set (DESA, 2020), to better ensure consistency in definitions and methodological approaches, and national census data from each of the 16 selected countries of residence, where available. A cross-comparison of the two sources is Table 2 provides an overview of the available census data from the selected countries of residence and DESA population data from the International Migrant Stock 2019 data set.

Table 2. Nepalese migrant stock in selected countries: national census statistics from countries of residence and DESA estimates for selected countries

| Country of residence | Census data from country of residence          |   | DESA International Migrant Stock 2019 |
|----------------------|--|---|---------------------------------------|
|                      | Nepalese migrant stock                         | Source  |                                       |
| Australia            | (a) 128 070<br>(aggregate estimate, 2004–2020) | (a) From data on net overseas migration by country of birth, state/territory by reference period – financial years 2004–2005 to 2019–2020 (Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), 2021a). | 78 016                                |
|                      | (b) 129 870<br>(mid-year estimate, 2021)       | (b) From data on mid-year resident population estimates by country of birth, age and sex (ABS, 2021b).  |                                       |
| Belgium              | 2 328  | From 2011 census data on the population of Belgians and foreign nationals, disaggregated by sex (Statistics Belgium, 2014).   | 3 878                                 |

| Country of residence | Census data from country of residence |   | DESA International Migrant Stock 2019 |
|----------------------|---------------------------------------|---|---------------------------------------|
|                      | Nepalese migrant stock                | Source  |                                       |
| Canada               | (a) 25 950<br>(2021 estimate)         | (a) From 2021 census data, with mother tongue used as proxy for Nepalese origin, to estimate aggregate immigration until 2021 (Statistics Canada, 2023); Nepalese population in Canada estimated at 18,275 based on the same proxy during the 2016 census (Statistics Canada, 2017a). | 15 325                                |
|                      | (b) 17 140                            | (b) From 2016 census data, with ethnic origin as criterion to estimate aggregate emigration until 2021 (Statistics Canada, 2017b).  |                                       |
|                      | (c) 7 505                             | (c) From 2016 census data on the resident population with Nepalese citizenship (Statistics Canada, 2017c).  |                                       |
|                      | (d) 21 825                            | (d) From 2021 census data on place of birth as criterion to estimate aggregate immigration until 2021, 2021 Census (Statistics Canada, 2022).   |                                       |
| China                | Hong Kong SAR only:<br>29 701         | From 2021 census data on the resident population, disaggregated by ethnicity and duration of residence in Hong Kong SAR (Hong Kong SAR, China Census and Statistics Department, 2021) (no country-disaggregated data on the foreign population in the 2020 census of the mainland).   | 12 093                                |
| Croatia              | n.d.                                  | No breakdown of immigration or ethnicity data beyond the "Asia" category (4,358 immigrants from Asia in 2021, with data specified by year since 2001 (Croatian Bureau of Statistics, 2022)).  | n.d.                                  |
| Germany              | n.d.                                  | For Asia, the German Federal Statistical Office does not publish data disaggregated by country other than certain priority countries, which do not include Nepal.   | 5 705                                 |
| Japan                | 67 325                                | From 2020 census data on the resident population, disaggregated by nationality (Japan, Government of, National Statistics Center, 2021).  | n.d.                                  |

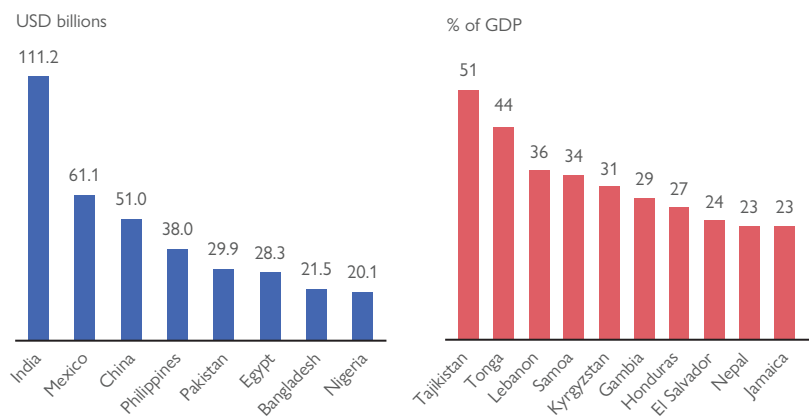


| Country of residence | Census data from country of residence |   | DESA International Migrant Stock 2019 |
|----------------------|---------------------------------------|---|---------------------------------------|
|                      | Nepalese migrant stock                | Source  |                                       |
| New Zealand          | 3 630                                 | From 2018 census data, disaggregated by ethnicity (New Zealand, Government of, Stats NZ, 2019).   | 1 505                                 |
| Portugal             | 13 224                                | From 2021 census data on the foreign resident population, disaggregated by country of nationality (Pordata, 2022).  | 5 884                                 |
| Qatar                | n.d.                                  | No country-disaggregated data on the foreign population in the 2020 census.   | 254 340                               |
| Republic of Korea    | 36 903                                | From immigration statistics on current status of foreign residents, by nationality (region) and age (Republic of Korea, Government of, Ministry of Justice, 2022).                              | 10 838                                |
| Romania              | n.d.                                  | The National Institute for Statistics publishes foreign population data only for the top five countries of origin.  | n.d.                                  |
| South Africa         | n.d.                                  | Nepal as a country of birth or nationality country is not included in the 2016 census.  | 217                                   |
| United Arab Emirates | n.d.                                  | No available migration-related census data.   | 27 474                                |
| United Kingdom       | 46 000                                | From 2021 census data on overseas-born population, by country of birth (includes first-generation diaspora members only) (United Kingdom, Government of, Office for National Statistics, 2021). | 40 003                                |
| United States        | (a) 217 150                           | (a) From American Community Survey 2021 data (United States, Government of, Bureau of the Census, 2021).  | 114 120                               |
|                      | (b) 3 337 (status admission in 2021)  | (b) From Department of Homeland Security (DHS) data on persons obtaining lawful permanent resident status, compiled in the 2021 Lawful Permanent Resident Yearbook (DHS, 2022).                 |                                       |

### 3.3. REMITTANCE INFLOWS

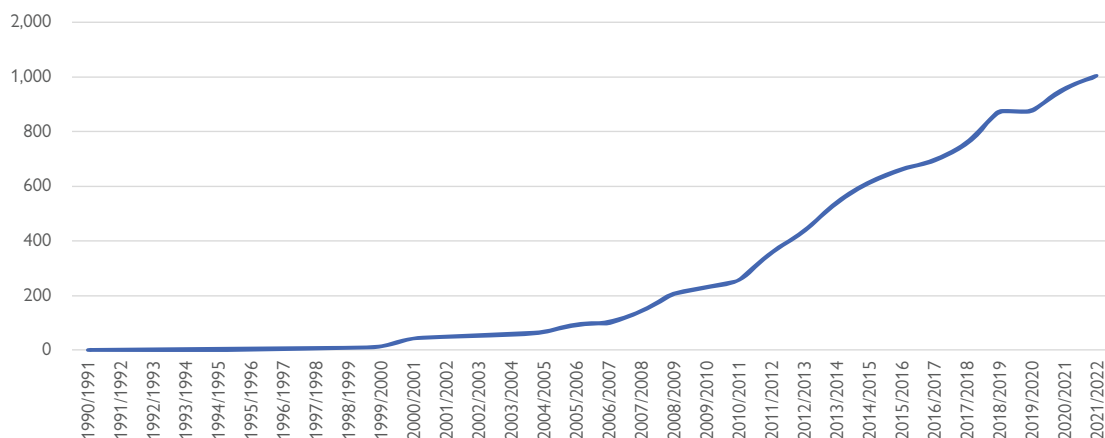
A World Bank Migration and Development brief indicated that, based on 2022 data, Nepal ranked ninth highest globally in remittance inflows, with remittances accounting for 23.1 per cent of the country's gross domestic product (GDP) (World Bank, 2023:28) (Figure 2). In the South Asian region, Nepal stands out as having the highest proportion of remittances relative to its GDP (i.e. remittances as a percentage of GDP), underscoring the significant impact of remittances on the country's economy (ibid.). The Nepal Rastra Bank (2023a:4) reports that in fiscal year 2022/2023, remittance inflows increased by 21.2 per cent in NPR and by 12.1 per cent in USD compared to the previous fiscal year (Figure 3). Remittances totalled USD 9.33 billion for the fiscal year reporting period (July 2022 to July 2023) (ibid.).

Figure 2. Top recipients of remittances among low- and middle-income countries, 2022



Source: World Bank, 2023:3.

Figure 3. Remittances received in Nepal (in NPR billions), 1990/1991 to 2021/2022



Source: Nepal Rastra Bank, 2023b, in MoLESS, 2022:119.

Note: Remittance figures exclude pensions received from abroad and payments received from abroad by business entities for goods and services provided.

In 2022, Nepal's remittances surged to USD 9.3 billion, surpassing previous forecasts and increasing by 13 per cent from the previous year (ibid.). This growth can be attributed, in part, to the employment opportunities generated by the FIFA World Cup 2022 in Qatar, which contributed to a substantial increase in remittance inflows to Nepal (World Bank, 2023:29). There was a significant decrease in remittances in April 2020 following the announcement of the COVID-19 pandemic lockdowns, but there was a steady recovery after June 2020 (MoLESS, 2022:55). There were no major fluctuations in remittance inflows during fiscal years 2020/2021 and 2021/2022 (ibid.:120). This data highlights the enduring value of remittances both as a crucial source of income and financial support for many Nepalese families and as a contributor to the nation's overall economic stability.

Remittances have significant implications not only for the national economy but also for the well-being of their recipients (Acharya and Leon-González, 2018). Remittances are primarily used to meet the day-to-day needs of households and in servicing outstanding debts (i.e. paying back loans). They are also used for land purchases and covering education-related costs (ibid.). However, as these remittance expenditures tend to be allocated for immediate family welfare, they remain insufficient for larger-scale expenditure on business investments (Nepal, Government of, Central Bureau of Statistics, 2011).

Nepal, by virtue of its geographic location, is particularly vulnerable to natural disasters and the impacts of climate change (Shikavoti, 2019). The diaspora community globally is quite responsive to disaster and climate events, demonstrated through increases in remittance inflows following their occurrence. The most notable example of this was the increase in remittances following the 2015 earthquake: Remittances increased by 20.9 per cent in 2015 versus the 3.2-per-cent growth rate from the year before (World Bank, 2016:29).

In addition, World Bank data indicates that remittances from 2000 to 2009 were substantial enough to result in increases in standards of living in Nepal; the "escape from poverty" was found to be twice as fast for households with diaspora members (Sharma, 2011). Prior to this, according to the Central Bureau of Statistics, the 11-per-cent decrease in poverty in Nepal between 1996 to 2004 was attributed to increased migration and remittance inflows (ibid.). The rate of decline in poverty then increased to 18 per cent between 2003 and 2010, when the Nepal Living Standards Survey III was concluded (IOM, 2019:94).

### 3.4. INSTITUTIONAL AND POLICY FRAMEWORKS FOR DIASPORA ENGAGEMENT

The Government of Nepal has recognized the contributions of its diaspora to the country's development efforts. This recognition has paved the way for the formulation of targeted national strategies and initiatives, such as the Non-Resident Nepali Act (2008). The Government views its diaspora members as integral stakeholders, with direct representation under the purview of various government ministries. This inclusive approach is evident in a range of policy and strategy documents and measures such as the non-resident Nepalese citizenship provision (of Non-resident Nepali Rules, 2066 B.S.), as well as the Government's supportive efforts and investments in the NRN Nepal Development Fund of the NRNA to encourage investment in Nepal among NRNs (Sharma, 2011). (The succeeding subsections outline diaspora-related institutions and frameworks.<sup>3</sup>)

<sup>3</sup> Based on the list that appears in ICMPD and EUDiF, 2021.

### 3.4.1. Ministerial structures

**Ministry of Labour, Employment and Social Security.** The Ministry holds a pivotal role in shaping labour and employment policies within Nepal. It plays a crucial part in crafting and implementing strategies that not only safeguard the rights and welfare of Nepalese workers but also facilitate their employment opportunities, both domestically and internationally.

**Ministry of Foreign Affairs.** Within the Ministry exists a specialized division dedicated solely to diaspora engagement. This division operates as the point of contact for matters concerning the Nepalese diaspora. It fosters connections, provides support and facilitates communication between the Government and Nepalese expatriates worldwide.

**Department of Consular Services.** Operating at a subministerial level, the Department of Consular Services acts as a vital link between Nepal and its diplomatic missions abroad. It plays a multifaceted role by coordinating with the embassies and consulates of Nepal worldwide. Among its responsibilities are providing essential legal assistance to citizens abroad and support for workers facing challenges overseas, as well as administering insurance policies to protect the interests of expatriates.

**Department of Foreign Employment.** Another crucial component at a subministerial, the Department of Foreign Employment is primarily responsible for managing labour agreements with other countries and overseeing migration processes for Nepalese workers seeking employment opportunities abroad. It plays a pivotal role in safeguarding the rights and interests of labour migrants, such as facilitating their lawful migration and ensuring their well-being in foreign lands.

**Brain Gain Centre.** Established in 2019, the Centre represents Nepal's proactive approach to forging partnerships with Nepalese professionals residing overseas. This initiative seeks to leverage the expertise and knowledge of the diaspora to fuel national development efforts, fostering a sense of collaboration and synergy between Nepalese professionals abroad and the homeland.

### 3.4.2. Legislation, policies and strategies relating to the diaspora

**Amendments to the Citizenship Act of 2006 (2063).** Amendments to the Citizenship Act extend economic, social and cultural rights to NRNs. These amendments do not include the right to vote, participate in politics or hold a government post. NRNs are eligible for Nepalese citizenship after they have obtained a foreign citizenship (excluding in any of the SAARC countries), or if they can prove that they have a parent or grandparent (i.e. citizenship by descent) who is or was a citizen of Nepal. This provision underscores Nepal's recognition of the contributions and significance of its global diaspora, aiming to create an environment where NRNs can actively participate in the nation's social and economic progress.

**Voting rights for citizens abroad.** In 2018, the Supreme Court of Nepal recognized the right of citizens residing abroad to participate in national elections. However, the practical implementation of this important right, whether through postal or electronic voting methods, is yet to be realized. In presenting the Government's 2023/2024 fiscal year plans, the President announced plans to provide voting rights to all Nepalese, including NRNs. This legal recognition signifies a significant step towards inclusive and representative democracy for the Nepalese diaspora.

**Non-Resident Nepali Act of 2008 (2066 B.S.).** The act serves as a cornerstone in fostering the involvement of NRNs in Nepal's development endeavours. This legislation grants a range of rights and privileges, including the ability to open bank accounts, repatriate funds, invest in the homeland and more. It stands as a testament to the country's commitment to engaging its global diaspora as valuable stakeholders in its progress.

**Foreign Employment Policy of 2012.** The policy plays a pivotal role in promoting safe and organized labour migration, maximizing the impact of remittances and supporting community development. This policy framework reflects Nepal's dedication to protecting the rights and welfare of its migrant workforce while harnessing the potential of remittances for national development.

**Development Plans (2016/2017 to 2018/2019 and the Fifteenth Development Plan).** The development plans covering fiscal years 2016/2017 to 2018/2019 and the subsequent Fifteenth Development Plan, covering fiscal years 2019/2020 to 2023/2024, have been instrumental in shaping Nepal's approach to engaging with its diaspora. These plans have placed considerable emphasis on foreign employment, recognizing the immense potential of diaspora contributions and fostering economic diplomacy as key drivers of the country's development.



↑ IOM officials and Non-resident Nepali Association Executive Committee members meet to discuss diaspora engagement.  
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# 4

## ANALYSIS OF FINDINGS



The mapping survey was conducted between 15 May 2023 and 21 August 2023, with a total of 619 respondents completing at least 30 per cent of the survey during this period. The responses were subsequently “cleaned”, collated and analysed.

### 4.1. DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

In total, 26 diaspora members (11 male and 15 female) participated in online FGDs held between June and July 2023 (Tables 3 and 4).<sup>4</sup> The questions asked in these consultations were structured to complement the survey questions and provide elaboration on the priority areas of the mapping exercise. The consultations were held in English and Nepali.<sup>5</sup>

Table 3. Breakdown of FGD participants, by country or territory of residence and sex

| Country or territory of residence | Sex    | Number of respondents |
|-----------------------------------|--------|-----------------------|
| Belgium                           | Female | 4                     |
|                                   | Male   | 0                     |
| Japan                             | Female | 2                     |
|                                   | Male   | 3                     |
| Portugal                          | Female | 3                     |
|                                   | Male   | 3                     |
| United Kingdom                    | Female | 2                     |
|                                   | Male   | 1                     |
| United States                     | Female | 2                     |
|                                   | Male   | 2                     |
| Hong Kong SAR, China              | Female | 2                     |
|                                   | Male   | 2                     |
| All places of residence           | Female | 15                    |
|                                   | Male   | 11                    |
| Total                             |        | 26                    |

<sup>4</sup> As described, the mapping exercise included a targeted approach to increase the number of women participating in the FGDs given the lower number of survey women respondents.

<sup>5</sup> Due to considerations on respondent confidentiality, the consultants and technical assistants did not require key informants participating in the FGDs to disclose if they completed the survey. However, it is assumed that most key informants completed the survey.

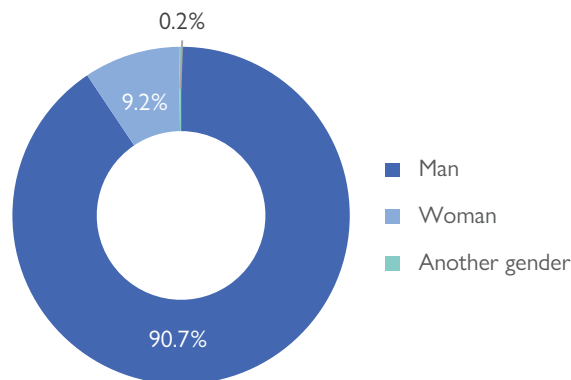
Table 4. Breakdown of FGD participants, by sex and age range

| Sex    | Age range    | Number of respondents |
|--------|--------------|-----------------------|
| Female | 20–29        | 1                     |
|        | 30–39        | 5                     |
|        | 40–49        | 7                     |
|        | 50+          | 2                     |
| Male   | 20–29        | 0                     |
|        | 30–39        | 8                     |
|        | 40–49        | 2                     |
|        | 50+          | 1                     |
| Total  | 20 and above | 26                    |

#### 4.1.1. Gender identity

In the survey sample of 612 respondents who answered the question on gender identity, the distribution is as follows: 90.7 per cent identify as men, 9.2 per cent identify as women, and one respondent identifies with a gender identity other than woman or man (Figure 4).<sup>6</sup>

Figure 4. Distribution of survey respondents by gender identity (*n* = 612)



#### 4.1.2. Age

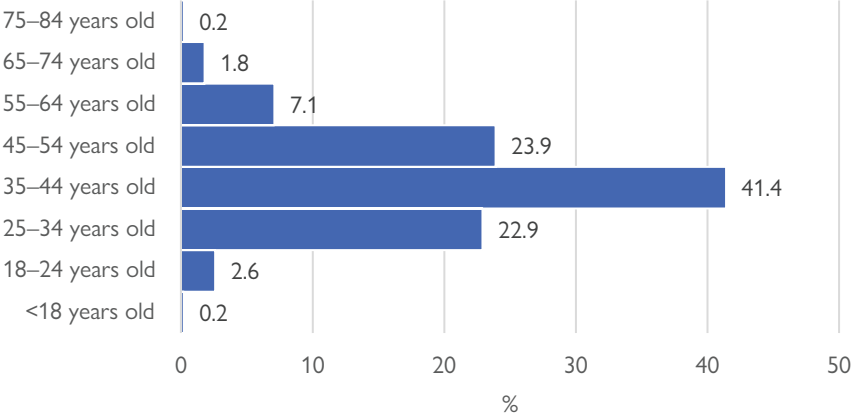
The largest portion of survey respondents belongs to the 35–44 age group, accounting for 41.4 per cent (Figure 5). This group is followed by individuals ages 45–54 (23.9%) and 25–34 (22.9%). In total, 66.9 per cent of the survey respondents fall under the age of 45.

<sup>6</sup> Given concerns related to data confidentiality, the report only refers to respondents who identified as either a man or a woman in the survey when disaggregating by gender.



When the data for the top five countries of residence is examined, a minor difference becomes evident: Respondents in the United Kingdom appear to be slightly older compared to their counterparts in the other four countries. Specifically, 46.7 per cent of United Kingdom-based respondents indicate that they are between the ages of 55 and 64.

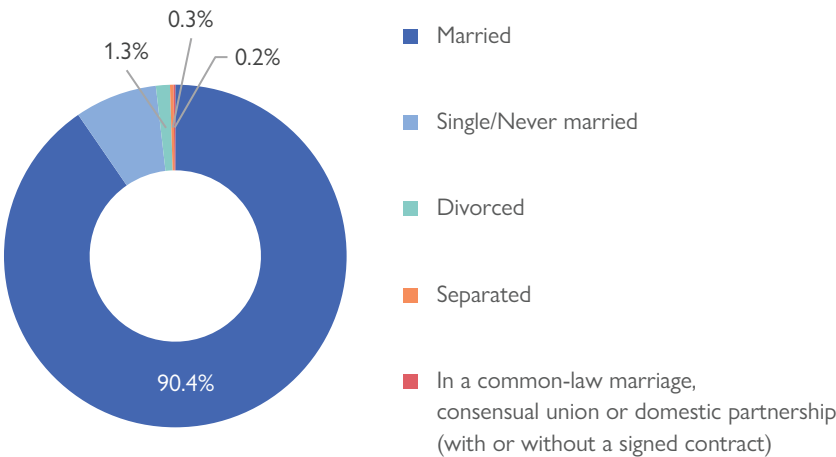
Figure 5. Distribution of survey respondents by age group (n = 616)



4.1.3. Marital status

A substantial majority of survey respondents (90.4%) indicate that they are currently married. The remaining 9.6 per cent of responses are unevenly distributed across the other marital status options (Figure 6). Marital status exhibits a consistent pattern when examined across genders and the top five countries of residence.

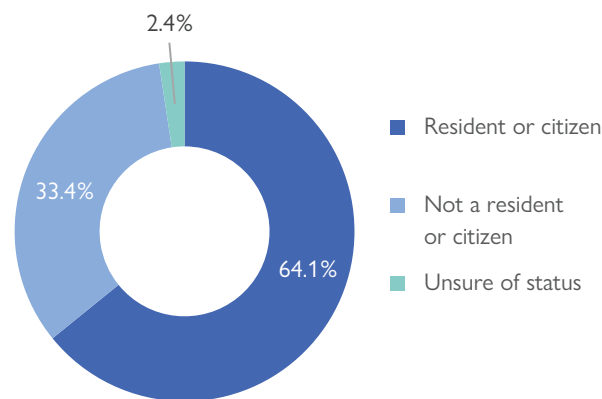
Figure 6. Distribution of survey respondents by marital status (n = 605)



#### 4.1.4. Residency and/or citizenship status and type of residency in the country of residence

The majority of survey respondents (64.1%) have permanent residency or citizenship in their respective countries of residence (Figure 7). The remaining third (33.4%) indicate that they have not acquired such status. By residency status category, nearly two thirds of respondents (66.3%) hold either permanent residency or official citizenship in their current country of residence, while 31.2 per cent report that they possess temporary residency status, with fixed-term permits (Figure 8).

Figure 7. Distribution of survey respondents by residency or citizenship status in the country of residence (n = 619)

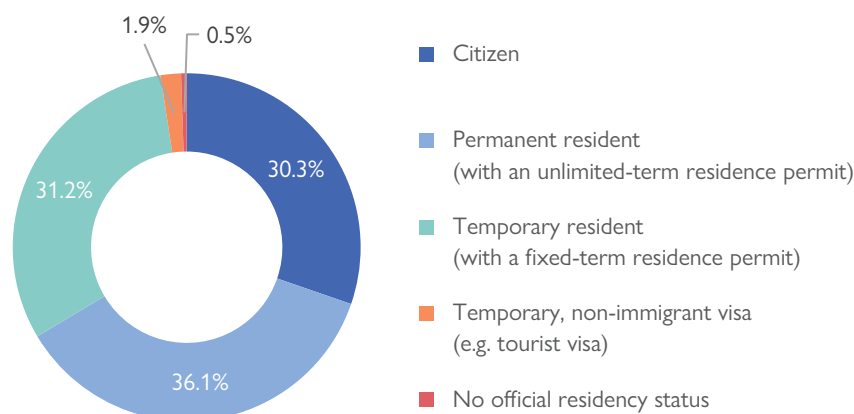


Japan differs significantly from the other top-five countries of residence in terms of respondent distribution by residency status. In Japan, less than 2 per cent of respondents hold citizenship, while the majority (57.4%) hold temporary residence permits. In contrast, respondents in the other top countries of residence are likely to hold either citizenship or permanent residency:

- (a) Australia: 47.4 per cent are citizens, and 35.5 per cent hold permanent residency;
- (b) Canada: 51.1 per cent are citizens, and 40.4 per cent hold permanent residency;
- (c) United Kingdom: 43.7 per cent are citizens, and 47.1 per cent hold permanent residency;
- (d) United States: 57.1 per cent are citizens, and 33.0 per cent hold permanent residency.

These disparities in residency status reflect the unique immigration policies and regulations in each of these countries.

Figure 8. Distribution of survey respondents by type of residency in the country of residence (n = 606)



#### 4.1.5. Geographic distribution of survey respondents

As illustrated in Table 5, approximately 62 per cent of survey respondents represent the top five countries of residence (the United States, the United Kingdom, Australia, Japan and Canada), indicating a notable concentration in these locations. The survey captures responses from a total of 47 different countries of residence, reflecting a diverse range of locations.

Table 5. Distribution of survey respondents across the top 15 countries of residence (n = 618)

| Country of residence                          | Frequency | % of total |
|---|-----------|------------|
| United States                                 | 101       | 16.3       |
| United Kingdom                                | 90        | 14.6       |
| Australia                                     | 84        | 13.6       |
| Japan   | 58        | 9.4        |
| Canada  | 50        | 8.1        |
| United Arab Emirates                          | 30        | 4.9        |
| Romania                                       | 27        | 4.4        |
| Portugal                                      | 23        | 3.7        |
| Qatar   | 22        | 3.6        |
| Germany                                       | 16        | 2.6        |
| Republic of Korea                             | 16        | 2.6        |
| New Zealand                                   | 15        | 2.4        |
| China (including Hong Kong SAR and Macao SAR) | 15        | 2.4        |
| Croatia                                       | 9         | 1.5        |
| Saudi Arabia                                  | 9         | 1.5        |
| Total (n)                                     | 618       | 100.0      |

Table 6 provides further points of comparison with the diaspora database maintained by the Brain Gain Centre. It is evident that Brain Gain Centre’s data on the top countries of residence of Nepalese expatriates generally aligns with the mapping survey results. A slight difference in the results is observed for the top five countries, which include Japan in the survey results instead of the Republic of Korea, as in the Brain Gain Centre’s data.

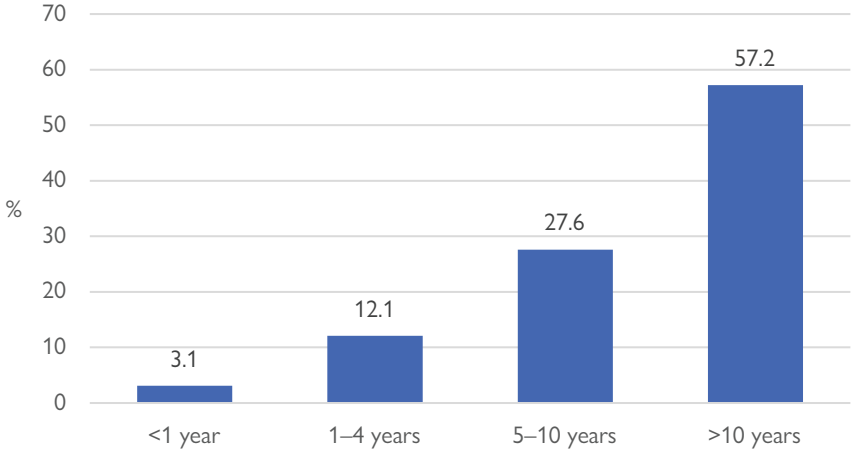
**Table 6. Distribution of Brain Gain Centre survey respondents by country of residence (n = 1,029)**

| Country of residence                          | Frequency | % of total |
|---|-----------|------------|
| United States                                 | 277       | 26.9       |
| Australia                                     | 80        | 7.8        |
| Canada  | 63        | 6.1        |
| Republic of Korea                             | 52        | 5.1        |
| United Kingdom                                | 51        | 5.0        |
| India   | 46        | 4.5        |
| Germany                                       | 42        | 4.1        |
| Japan   | 33        | 3.2        |
| Qatar   | 30        | 2.9        |
| China (including Hong Kong SAR and Macao SAR) | 28        | 2.7        |
| United Arab Emirates                          | 26        | 2.5        |
| Thailand                                      | 22        | 2.1        |
| Norway  | 15        | 1.5        |
| Finland                                       | 14        | 1.4        |
| Nepal <sup>a</sup>                            | 100       | 9.7        |

Note: <sup>a</sup> The Brain Gain Centre respondents include Nepalese who are resident in Nepal.

Furthermore, it is worth noting that most respondents (84.8%) have been living in their respective countries of residence for a duration of five years or more, with 57 per cent indicating that they have resided in these countries for more than 10 years (Figure 9). There are no discernible differences in the length of stay across countries of residence, suggesting a consistent pattern of long-term settlement.

**Figure 9. Breakdown of survey respondents by length of stay in the country of residence (n = 619)**



#### 4.1.6. Languages spoken at home

Over half (58.4%) of survey respondents report speaking Nepali at home (Table 7, detailing other language preferences as well). English ranks second but represents a much lower proportion of total respondents (15.6%).

Table 7. Breakdown of survey respondents by language spoken at home (*n* = 500)

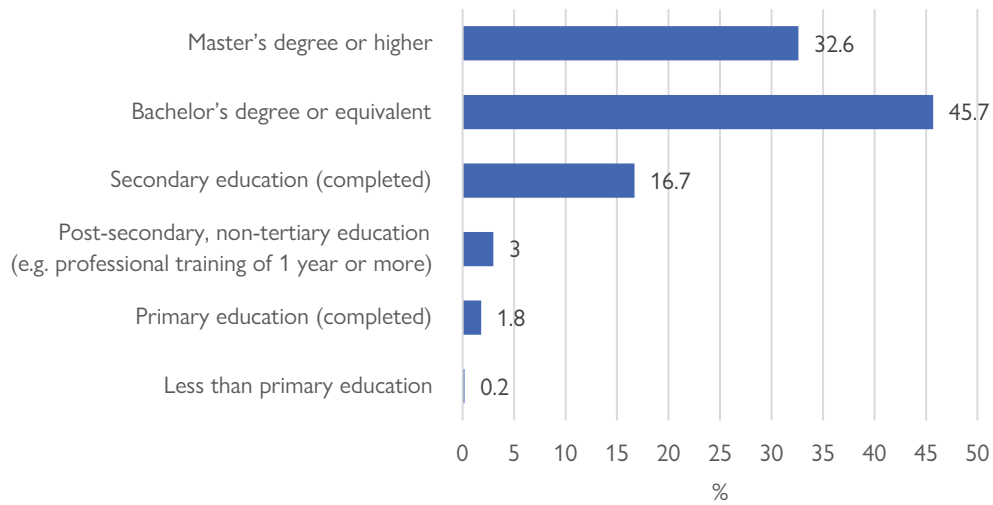
| Language        | Frequency | % of total |
|-----------------|-----------|------------|
| Nepali          | 292       | 58.4       |
| English         | 78        | 15.6       |
| Maithili        | 8         | 1.6        |
| Bhojpuri        | 3         | 0.6        |
| Hindi or Urdu   | 3         | 0.6        |
| Tharu           | 3         | 0.6        |
| Tamang          | 3         | 0.6        |
| Newari          | 3         | 0.6        |
| Gurung          | 2         | 0.4        |
| Magar           | 2         | 0.4        |
| German          | 2         | 0.4        |
| Arabic          | 2         | 0.4        |
| Polish          | 2         | 0.4        |
| Japanese        | 2         | 0.4        |
| Swedish         | 2         | 0.4        |
| Bahasa Malaysia | 2         | 0.4        |
| Thai            | 1         | 0.2        |
| Korean          | 1         | 0.2        |

#### 4.1.7. Educational attainment

The survey employed a single-response format for the question concerning the highest level of education attained (“educational attainment”), as illustrated in Figure 10. The findings indicate that roughly four out of every five respondents (78.3%) have acquired at least a bachelor’s degree as their highest level of education. In contrast, only 5 per cent of respondents report having an educational attainment below the secondary level. There are no major differences when disaggregating the data by gender.

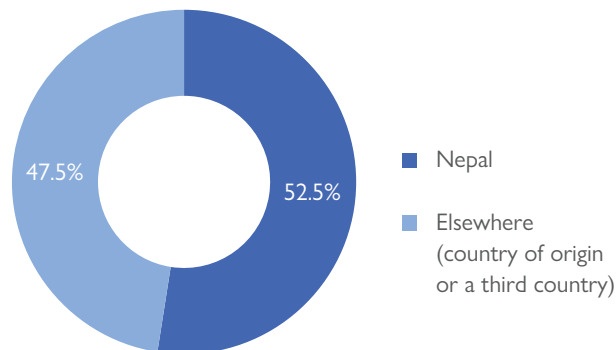
When examining the data for the top five countries of residence, Australia-based respondents stand out as being more likely to possess post-university qualifications (master’s degree or higher), compared to respondents in other countries.

Figure 10. Distribution of survey respondents by educational attainment (n = 610)



Approximately half (52%) of the respondents disclose that they completed their studies (i.e. until the highest educational attainment reported) in Nepal, while the other half (47.5%) completed their education abroad (Figure 11).

Figure 11. Distribution of survey respondents by country of study completion (n = 606)



#### 4.1.8. Fields of study and occupations

The survey results showcase considerable diversity in the respondents' fields of study, as depicted in Table 8 (survey respondents provided a total of 44 distinct responses). Notably, the category "business and administration, including accounting and auditing", emerges as the most common response, chosen by 20.5 per cent of respondents (124 individuals). This predominance holds true across all age and gender groups. Following behind are fields related to hotel and catering, travel and tourism, sports, and leisure (9.7%; 59 respondents), humanities and arts (8.6%; 52 respondents) and education (7.9%; 48 respondents).

**Table 8. Distribution of survey respondents across the top 10 fields of study (n = 606)**

| Field of study <sup>a</sup>   | Frequency | % of total |
|---|-----------|------------|
| Business and administration (except secretarial office work), including accounting and auditing | 124       | 20.5       |
| Hotel and catering, travel and tourism, sports, and leisure                                     | 59        | 9.7        |
| Humanities and arts   | 52        | 8.6        |
| Education   | 48        | 7.9        |
| Computing and information technology  | 46        | 7.6        |
| Engineering and engineering trades, and architecture  | 45        | 7.4        |
| Health  | 43        | 7.1        |
| Social and behavioural sciences (including economics and excluding social services)             | 36        | 5.9        |
| Science (excluding computing/information technology)  | 33        | 5.4        |
| Social services   | 17        | 2.8        |

Note: <sup>a</sup> A total of 44 distinct fields of study were indicated by survey respondents.

Table 9 presents data pertaining to respondents' employment across various occupation (or job) sectors. Among 23 occupation sector categories, the field of human health and social work emerges as the predominant choice, representing 10.9 per cent (63 respondents). This is followed by accommodation and food service (10.5%; 61 respondents) and professional, scientific and technical activities (9.1%; 53 respondents).

Upon closer examination of the occupation sector-related data across various demographic variables, subtle variations come to light. The top 10 sectors generally overlap for men and women, with minor differences in the topmost categories. The top two sectors for women are (a) human health and social work and (b) education, while for men, they are (a) accommodation and food services and (b) professional, scientific and technical activities. For those whose highest level of completed education are either primary or secondary education, (a) transportation and storage and (b) accommodation and food services are the most common sectors.

Furthermore, the findings exhibit a degree of similarity in the top 10 most sectors across the top five countries of residence. Nevertheless, minor variations emerge in the preferences of respondents. For example, (a) human health and social work and (b) education are the top sectors among Australia-, Canada- and United Kingdom-based respondents. Japan-based respondents are more skewed towards accommodation and food service activities, while United States-based respondents are more likely to be in wholesale and retail trade.

**Table 9. Distribution of survey respondents by occupation/job sectors (n = 580)**

| Occupation/job sector   | Frequency | % of total |
|---|-----------|------------|
| Human health and social work  | 63        | 10.9       |
| Accommodation and food service  | 61        | 10.5       |
| Professional, scientific and technical activities   | 53        | 9.1        |
| Information and communication (media, press and news, television/radio broadcasting, corporate communications, public relations and the like) | 45        | 7.8        |
| Other occupations (e.g. engineering, food preparation and non-profit management)  | 41        | 7.1        |
| Manufacturing   | 35        | 6.0        |
| Transportation and storage  | 35        | 6.0        |
| Wholesale and retail trade, and repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles  | 35        | 6.0        |
| Education   | 33        | 5.7        |
| Finance and insurance   | 24        | 4.1        |
| Construction  | 23        | 4.0        |
| Other occupations (e.g. engineering, food preparation, non-profit management)   | 41        | 7.1        |
| Unsure/Prefers not to answer  | 26        | 4.5        |

Interestingly, the Brian Gain Centre’s database of diaspora members shows a different set of top sectors among diaspora members selecting specialized careers, such as academic research, education and/or teaching, engineering and consulting (Table 10). While there is overlap between many of the occupations from both the mapping survey and the Brain Gain Centre database, the data gathered through this mapping exercise includes a more diverse array of occupations, which include non-specialized fields as well.



**Table 10. Distribution of Brain Gain Centre survey respondents across the top 15 occupation sectors  
(n = 1,029)**

| Occupation sector  | Frequency | %    |
|--|-----------|------|
| Academic research  | 271       | 26.3 |
| Education, university, school, vocational and technical                  | 211       | 20.5 |
| Teaching (including curriculum development, policy and support)          | 164       | 15.9 |
| Engineering  | 163       | 15.8 |
| Consulting (including public, private and freelance)                     | 162       | 15.7 |
| Industry work (including academic-industry collaboration)                | 122       | 11.9 |
| Academic leadership (including administration and other positions)       | 121       | 11.8 |
| Medicine, health and related fields                                      | 120       | 11.7 |
| Development, policy, planning and statistics                             | 116       | 11.3 |
| Natural sciences and their applications                                  | 108       | 10.5 |
| Non-government organization (including for- and non-profit)              | 106       | 10.3 |
| Business (including trade, finance and business ownership, among others) | 96        | 9.3  |
| Business and industry  | 87        | 8.5  |
| Innovation and entrepreneurship  | 86        | 8.4  |
| Other options  | 145       | 14.1 |

#### 4.1.9. Annual individual income range

The most common annual individual income range among the survey respondents is USD 100,000 and above, with 21.2 per cent reporting to be in this category. Table 11 illustrates a relatively balanced distribution across income brackets (with the exception of the USD 5,000–9,999 bracket). However, when examining income by gender, a difference emerges. Women exhibit more equal income distribution, with 14 per cent earning USD 100,000 and above annually (compared to 21.7% of male respondents), with USD 60,000–79,000 being the most common bracket (18% of female respondents).<sup>7</sup>

Additionally, income differences become more apparent when disaggregating the data across the top countries of residence. Australia, Canada and the United States stand out as having significant proportions of respondents earning over USD 80,000 annually, at 59.8 per cent, 37.8 per cent and 64.2 per cent, respectively. In contrast, Japan (13.0%) and the United Kingdom (18.5%) have smaller percentages of respondents in this income bracket.

<sup>7</sup> For those under the age of 25, the most common income range is USD 10,000–19,999. Due to the small sample number of these respondents, additional analysis is challenging.

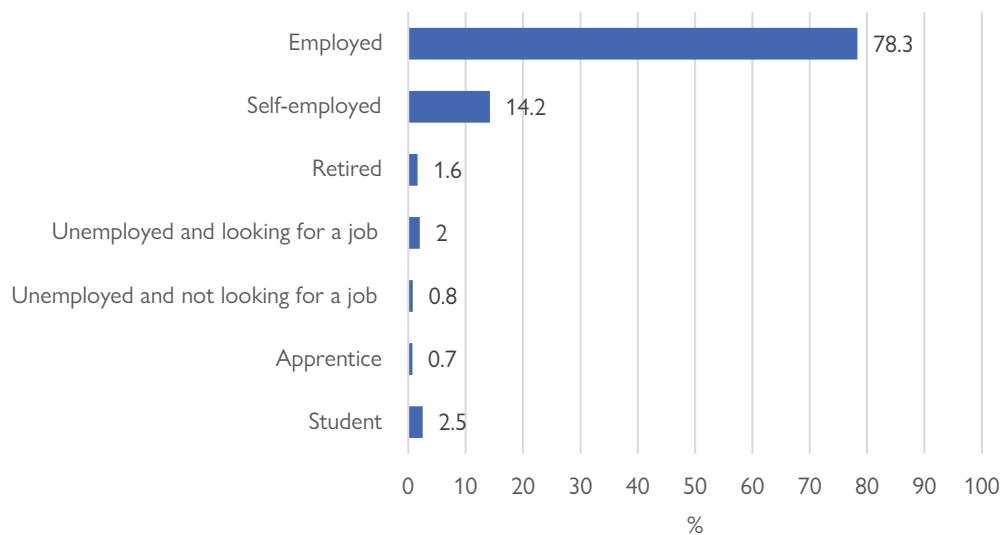
Table 11. Individual annual income range among survey respondents (n = 561)

| Individual annual income range (USD) | % of total |
|--------------------------------------|------------|
| <5,000                               | 13.4       |
| 5,000–9,999                          | 1.8        |
| 10,000–19,999                        | 13.4       |
| 20,000–29,999                        | 8.0        |
| 30,000–39,999                        | 8.2        |
| 40,000–49,999                        | 7.5        |
| 50,000–59,999                        | 8.4        |
| 60,000–79,999                        | 9.3        |
| 80,000–99,999                        | 8.9        |
| 100,000 and over                     | 21.2       |

#### 4.1.10. Current employment status and type of employment

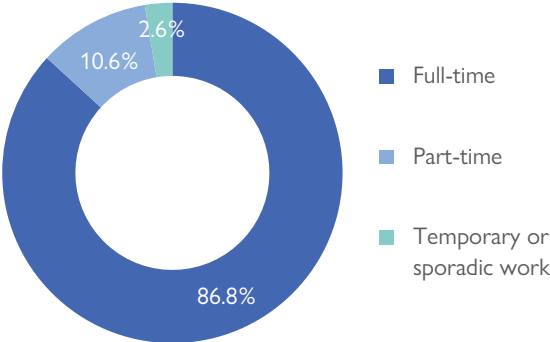
The survey results reveal that a significant proportion of respondents are employed, with 78.3 per cent reporting to be employed and 14.2 per cent indicating that they are self-employed (Figure 12). The remaining 7.6 per cent of respondents comprise students, retirees, individuals in apprenticeships and those who were unemployed at the time of the survey. These patterns remain fairly consistent across gender and country-of-residence categories.

Figure 12. Distribution of survey respondents by employment status (n = 612)



Among employed survey respondents, a substantial majority (86.8%) work on a full-time basis, while 10.6 per cent report that they work on a part-time basis and 2.6 per cent on temporary-employment arrangements (Figure 13). There is a slight gender difference in employment patterns, with a lower percentage of women (73.5%) working full-time compared to men (88.2%).

Figure 13. Distribution of survey respondents by form of employment (n = 575)

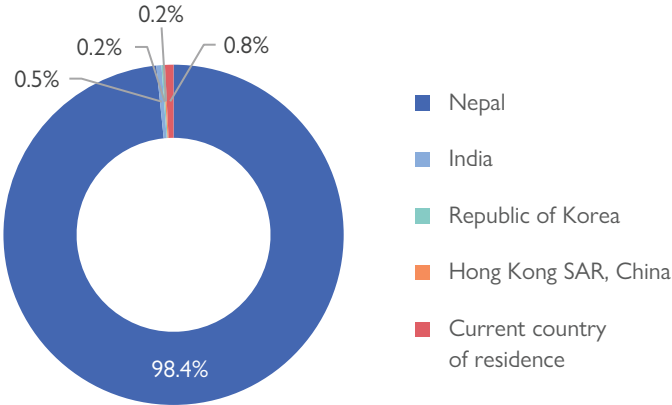


## 4.2. MIGRATION EXPERIENCE

### 4.2.1. Country of birth

The mapping survey analysis reveals that a substantial majority of respondents (98.4%) were born in Nepal, signifying that the surveyed population primarily consists of first-generation immigrants (Figure 14).

Figure 14. Distribution of survey respondents by country of birth (n = 610)



As illustrated in Table 12, the top provinces of birth of survey respondents are Province No. 3 (Bagmati Pradesh) (32.6%), Province No. 4 (Gandaki Pradesh) (25.5%), Province No. 1 (Koshi Province) (19.4%) and Province No. 5 (Lumbini Pradesh) (13.0%). They consistently feature as the top provinces of birth among respondents across the various countries of residence (i.e. there is no evidence of correlation between province of birth and country of residence).

**Table 12. Distribution of survey respondents by province of birth (n = 599)**

| Province of birth (in Nepal)            | Frequency | % of total |
|---|-----------|------------|
| Province No. 3 (Bagmati Pradesh)        | 195       | 32.6       |
| Province No. 4 (Gandaki Pradesh)        | 153       | 25.5       |
| Province No. 1 (Koshi Province)         | 116       | 19.4       |
| Province No. 5 (Lumbini Pradesh)        | 78        | 13.0       |
| Province No. 2 (Madhesh Pradesh)        | 28        | 4.7        |
| Province No. 7 (Sudur Pashchim Pradesh) | 24        | 4.0        |
| Province No. 6 (Karnali Pradesh)        | 5         | 0.8        |

The survey data highlights the predominance of specific municipalities (including cities, towns and villages) of birth of survey respondents. Notably, Kathmandu (9.3%), Pokhara (6.5%), Chitwan (5.7%) and Baglung (5.3%) emerge as the four most commonly reported municipalities of birth (Table 13). It is worth noting that the municipalities of birth are quite diverse – with 37 different municipalities reported by the survey respondents.

**Table 13. Distribution of survey respondents by municipality of birth (top 10) (n = 600)**

| Municipality of birth (town, city or village) | Frequency | % of total |
|---|-----------|------------|
| Kathmandu                                     | 62        | 9.3%       |
| Pokhara                                       | 43        | 6.5%       |
| Chitwan                                       | 38        | 5.7%       |
| Baglung                                       | 35        | 5.3%       |
| Kaski   | 25        | 3.8%       |
| Bharatpur                                     | 24        | 3.6%       |
| Lalitpur                                      | 22        | 3.3%       |
| Nuwakot                                       | 22        | 3.3%       |
| Jhapa   | 22        | 3.3%       |
| Dang  | 20        | 3.0%       |

#### 4.2.2. Factors influencing immigration

The survey findings reveal that, among the factors influencing immigration to their current country of residence, education or training opportunities emerge as the most significant, with 32.7 per cent of respondents indicating these areas as pivotal in their decision to immigrate. Economic reasons were also highly influential (24.6%), followed closely by access to essential services, including health, food, water and basic education (17.0%) (Table 14).<sup>8</sup>

In summary, this data provides valuable insights into the multifaceted factors that shape immigration decisions. These factors encompass educational and economic opportunities, as well as considerations related to lifestyle and the preservation of personal values. It highlights the complex and diverse motivations that underlie migrants' choices to relocate to a new country of residence.

**Table 14. Factors influencing immigration to the country of residence (n = 606)**

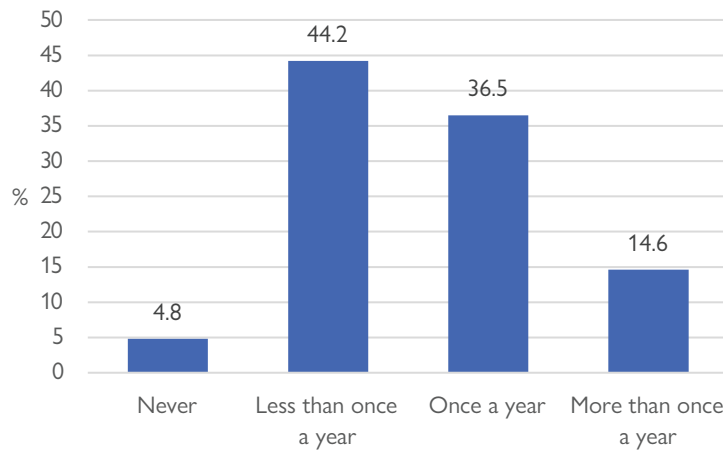
| Factor   | Frequency | % of total |
|--|-----------|------------|
| Education or training  | 198       | 32.7       |
| Economic reasons   | 149       | 24.6       |
| Access to services (e.g. health, food, water and basic education)                                | 103       | 17.0       |
| Lifestyle reasons (e.g. pleasant physical environment and weather)                               | 92        | 15.2       |
| Greater freedom or protection of personal values or identities                                   | 87        | 14.4       |
| Physical safety/security   | 63        | 10.4       |
| Marriage, family reunification or family formation   | 37        | 6.1        |
| Already know people (e.g. friends and family members) already living in the country of residence | 34        | 5.6        |
| Unsure/Prefers not to answer   | 9         | 1.5        |

#### 4.2.3. Frequency of visits to Nepal

Regarding frequency of visits to Nepal, as depicted in Figure 15, approximately 4 out of 10 respondents (44.2%) indicate that they visit Nepal less than once a year. A slightly smaller proportion (36.5%) visit once a year, while 14.6 per cent visit more than once a year. These patterns are generally consistent across different countries of residence, with some notable differences observed among Canada- and United States-based respondents. More specifically, approximately half of Canada- and United States-based respondents visit Nepal less than once a year, in contrast to roughly one third of respondents based in other countries. This variation likely arises from the geographical proximity of these other countries to Nepal compared to North America.

<sup>8</sup> The format of the suggested questionnaire made it difficult to do additional disaggregation for questions that allowed multiple responses ("Select all that apply").

Figure 15. Frequency of survey respondents' visits to Nepal (n = 584)



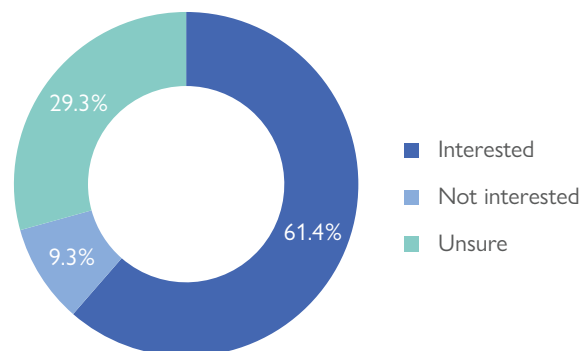
#### 4.2.4. Interest in future resettlement in Nepal

When respondents were asked about their interest in returning and resettling in Nepal in the future, a significant proportion (almost two thirds (61.4%)) express their interest in relocating. In contrast, only 9.3 per cent of respondents indicate that they would not consider such a move.

These findings, however, exhibit variations when data is analysed across different demographic variables. For instance, there is a gender divide, with men indicating a 16.9-percentage-point higher inclination to resettle in Nepal compared to women: 63.3 per cent of men indicate plans to resettle, compared to 46.4 per cent of women. Additionally, when examining responses across various age ranges, a trend emerges showing an increase in the intent to resettle for groups up to the 35–44 age bracket, followed by a gradual decline among older respondents.

Analysing the intent to resettle of respondents in the top countries of residence, it is observed that between 4 and 7 out of 10 respondents express plans to resettle. Respondents in Japan exhibit the highest indication to do so (71%), likely due to the temporary nature of their residency status. These variations suggest that factors such as gender, age and the specific country of residence can influence individuals' decisions regarding future resettlement.

Figure 16. Survey respondents' interest in resettlement in Nepal (n = 614)



#### 4.2.5. Factors influencing the decision to resettle in Nepal

The data also reveals insights into the factors that influence individuals' decisions to resettle in Nepal. Among the top five factors, improved rule of law/legal protections in the country emerges as the most influential, representing 24.4 per cent of respondents. This finding underscores the crucial role of a strengthened legal environment in motivating return. When individuals perceive enhanced legal protections and better rule of law, it promotes confidence in the country's governance systems, making them more open to the idea of returning.

The second most significant factor, reduction of corruption in the country (22.2%), highlights the detrimental impact of corruption on individuals' decision to return. It indicates that a decrease in corruption levels is also essential in encouraging diaspora members to consider resettling in Nepal. Safety and security improvement in the country (18.8%), further reflects the importance of personal safety and overall stability in shaping return decisions.

While these top three factors provide critical insights, the data also reveals a diversity of considerations that impact return decisions (Table 15). These include improved quality of services, trust in the Government, economic prospects, job opportunities, access to citizenship and more. Additionally, a small percentage of respondents (3.4%) express an unwavering unwillingness to return under any condition.

**Table 15. Factors influencing survey respondents' decision to return to Nepal (n = 553)**

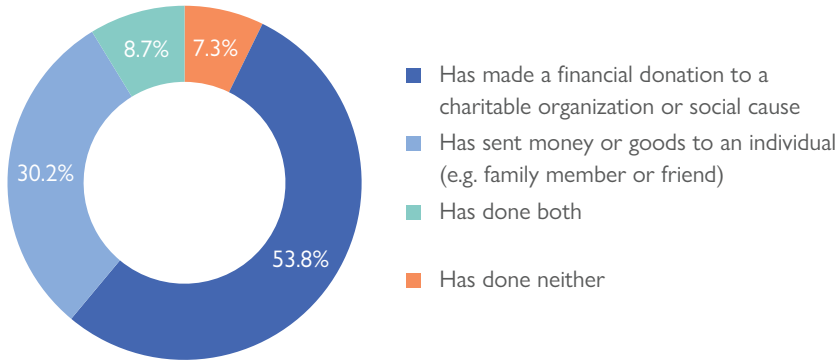
| Factor   | Frequency | % of total |
|--|-----------|------------|
| Improved rule of law/legal protection  | 135       | 24.4       |
| Reduction of corruption in the country   | 123       | 22.2       |
| Improvement in the safety/security situation of the country  | 104       | 18.8       |
| Improved quality of services, including education and health care  | 83        | 15.0       |
| Increased trustworthiness of the Government  | 80        | 14.5       |
| Improvement in the economic situation  | 52        | 9.4        |
| Guaranteed job placement   | 52        | 9.4        |
| Access to or restoration of citizenship  | 29        | 5.2        |
| No condition would matter (i.e. the respondent will never be willing to return)  | 19        | 3.4        |
| Access to housing and/or land  | 16        | 2.9        |
| Ability to move back to the current country of residence, if so desired (e.g. permanent residence permit or citizenship) | 16        | 2.9        |
| Ability to move with the family and for them to access social benefits and work  | 13        | 2.4        |
| Others (e.g. prior negative experience with return, certain family circumstances)  | 12        | 2.2        |
| Financial support for the move (e.g. plane fare, support for accommodation expenses)                                     | 5         | 0.9        |

### 4.3. FINANCIAL CONTRIBUTIONS

#### 4.3.1. Sending money or goods to Nepal in the last 12 months

The survey results highlight significant commitment to providing financial support back to Nepal, either to relatives and friends or through donations to charitable organizations or social causes, with 91.3 per cent of respondents having done so in the 12 months prior to the survey (Figure 17). Only 8.7 per cent of respondents indicate that they do not engage in such support.<sup>9</sup> This pattern of contributions remains notably high across all demographic subgroups. This consistent and robust financial support likely reflects a sense of obligation and attachment that diaspora communities often maintain towards their countries of origin. Notably, this support not only aids immediate family and friends but also serves as a significant economic driver for Nepal through remittances and contributes to its social development through charitable contributions.

Figure 17. Types of financial contributions to Nepal made by survey respondents over the past 12 months (n = 606)

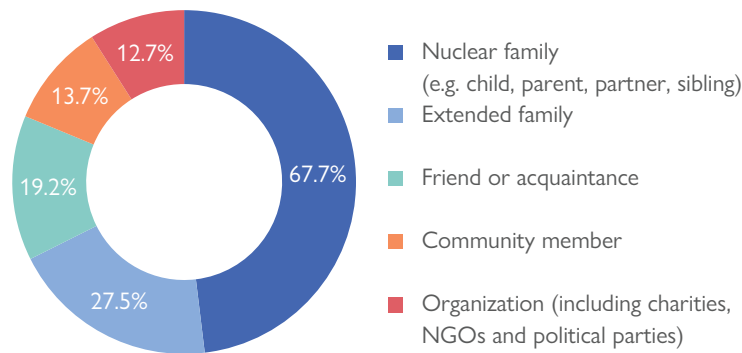


Of those who sent financial contributions, approximately 7 out of 10 respondents (67.7%) report sending funds or goods to members of their nuclear family, including children, parents, partners or siblings. This is followed by 27.5 per cent of respondents sending money or goods to members of their extended families, and 19.2 per cent sending financial support to friends or acquaintances.

<sup>9</sup> The results are relatively consistent for respondents regardless of their employment status (including retirees and students).



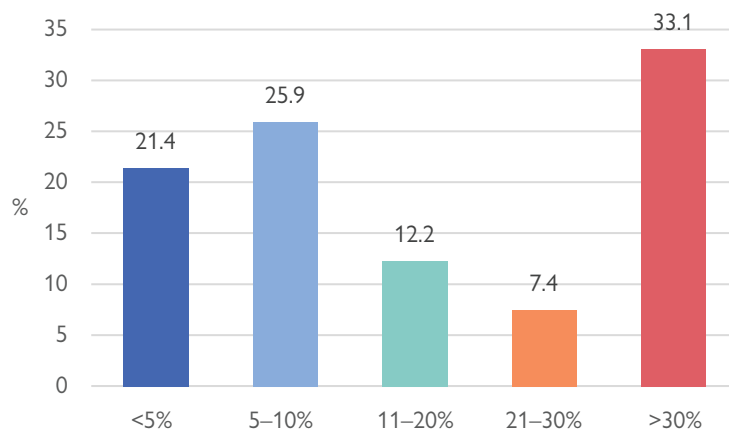
Figure 18. Recipients of money or goods sent to Nepal by survey respondents (n = 542)



Among respondents who send a portion of their income annually, approximately one third (33.1%) send more than 30 per cent of their income, while a substantial majority (83.4%) send at least 5 per cent (Figure 19). However, there are notable differences when disaggregating the data by gender and country of residence. For instance, men are more likely to send a higher proportion of their income compared to women, with 42.9 per cent of men sending at least 21 per cent of their income, compared to only 17.0 per cent of women. This observation may underscore the traditional gender roles often observed within families, where men tend to assume a more direct responsibility for financial matters and remittances. However, it is essential to recognize that women’s contributions may extend beyond financial support, encompassing various other forms of aid, such as social and emotional assistance.

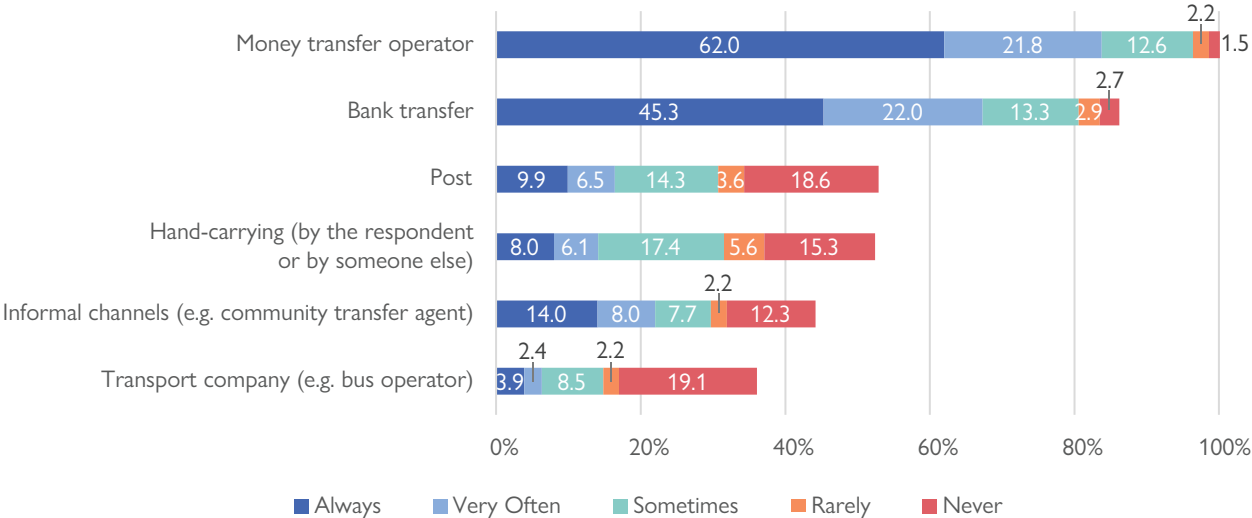
Among the top five countries of residence, Japan-based respondents stand out as being more likely to send more than 20 per cent of their income (65.4%). In contrast, the other four countries show lower percentages: Australia (20.0%), Canada (11.4%), the United Kingdom (10.3%) and the United States (17.1%). The variations in financial commitment among respondents based on their country of residence may also indicate economic disparities and differing financial capacities within the diaspora – a critical area for future research.

Figure 19. Percentage of annual income sent home by survey respondents on an annual basis (n = 541)



The most common method of sending money to Nepal, as reported by respondents, is via a money transfer operator, with 83.8 per cent ( $n = 413$  (= 100% of responses for this method)) indicating that they go for this option either “always” or “very often” (Figure 20). Formal bank transfers are also a commonly used method, with 67.3 per cent of respondents relying on it either “very often” or “always”. Transport companies’ money delivery services are the least commonly utilized among the listed options. These findings highlight the importance of reliable and secure financial channels for diaspora communities, as well as a preference among the diaspora for accessible and convenient remittance services.

Figure 20. Survey respondents’ preferred methods of sending money to Nepal ( $n = 413$ )



Note: Each respondent should indicate their frequency of use of each method. The low response rates may be due to respondents leaving no responses for methods that they do not use, instead of indicating “never”.

## 4.4. PHILANTHROPIC AND SOCIOECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

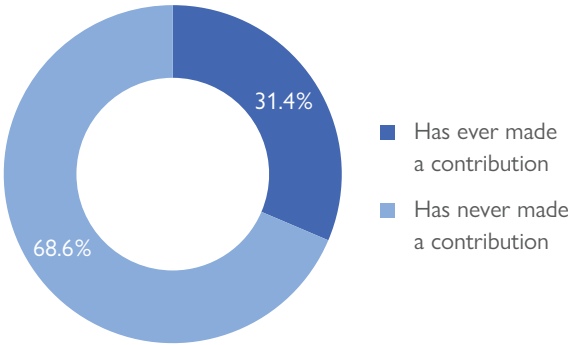
### 4.4.1. Financial contribution to humanitarian and socioeconomic development projects in Nepal

The survey results reveal that a substantial majority of respondents (68.6%, i.e. more than two thirds), have contributed financially to humanitarian or socioeconomic development projects in Nepal (Figure 21). This highlights a commendable level of engagement and commitment among the Nepalese diaspora to support the country’s development. Conversely, 31.4 per cent of respondents have not previously participated in these types of projects.

When examining these findings through the lens of gender and the top selected countries of residence, additional trends emerge. Firstly, there is a difference in this experience based on gender identity, with a higher proportion of men (70.5%) indicating their involvement in such projects compared to women (50.0%). As mentioned, gender discrepancies may be influenced by various factors, including traditional roles and responsibilities within families and communities, which may deter women from doing so.

Secondly, respondents residing in the United Kingdom and the United States demonstrate a greater inclination to financially contribute to these projects. In fact, they are at least 12 percentage points more likely to participate than respondents based in other countries. These findings suggest that the diaspora communities in these two countries may have particular interest to actively support humanitarian and socioeconomic development efforts in Nepal.

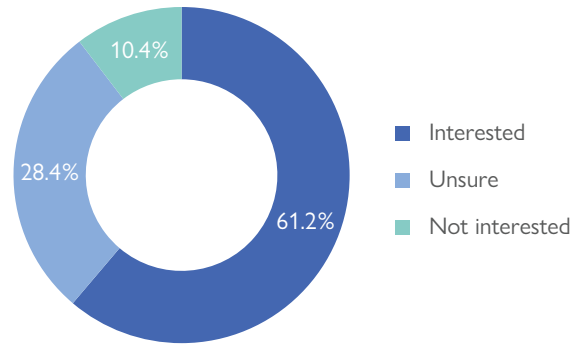
Figure 21. Survey respondents with previous financial contributions to humanitarian or socioeconomic development projects in Nepal (n = 609)



When assessing the interest of respondents in personally contributing to these projects in the future, a similar pattern is observed. While a notable majority (61.2%) express a willingness to participate, 10.4 per cent do not (“No”), and 28.4 per cent are uncertain (“Unsure”) (Figure 22). Again, there is a gender difference in these responses, with men being nearly 10 percentage points more likely to express interest compared to women (62.2% and 52.7%, respectively).

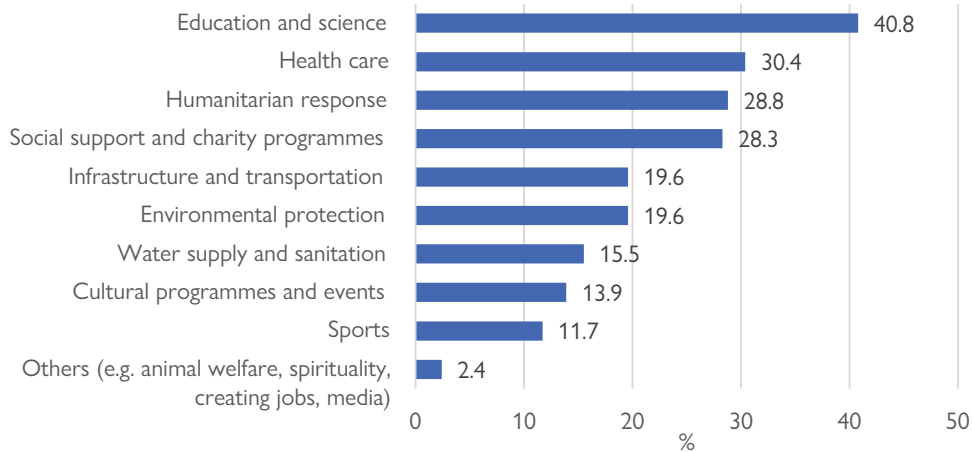
Among the top five countries of residence, respondents in the United Kingdom and the United States continue to exhibit slightly higher levels of interest, with over two thirds of respondents in each country expressing their willingness to contribute. However, it is important to note that a significant proportion of respondents in all countries (at least half) indicate an interest in participating.

Figure 22. Survey respondents' interest in financial contributions to humanitarian or socioeconomic projects in Nepal (n = 605)



The survey also includes a multiple-response question, allowing respondents to specify their areas of interest to support (Figure 23). Among the 368 respondents who do so, education and science emerge as the most popular area, with 40.8 per cent expressing interest. This is followed by health care (30.4%), humanitarian response (28.8%), and social support and charitable programmes (28.3%). Interestingly, the results exhibit a diverse distribution across other categories, highlighting a wide range of areas that diaspora members are keen to support. This diversity likely stems from the respondents' educational and employment backgrounds, reflecting huge potential to engage diasporas across the diverse and multifaceted needs of Nepal's development.

Figure 23. Survey respondents' humanitarian or socioeconomic development area of interest (n = 368)



During a series of FGDs, key informants are asked about their views on the Nepalese diaspora's potential to play a substantial role in Nepal's social and economic development. Impressively, all 26 informants unanimously agree that the diaspora not only possesses the capacity but are actively contributing significantly to Nepal's social and economic advancement. They underscore the diverse and distinctive approaches through which Nepalese diaspora members residing in various countries are making impactful contributions to their homeland. These contributions manifest in a myriad of ways, encompassing fundraising initiatives and the effective dissemination of current information on avenues to support development projects within Nepal.

All FGD participants ( $n = 26$ ) have participated in various social and economic development projects within Nepal. They share that they would also be interested in contributing to these activities again in the future, citing areas of interest such as education in rural areas, science and technology, and the health sector.

To foster stronger collaboration and partnerships between the Nepalese diaspora and local institutions in the realms of economic and social development, FGD participants offered several valuable recommendations. These include active promotion of collaboration with local institutions, easing investment return policies, simplifying remittance processes, addressing investment-related challenges, enhancing policymaking procedures, and facilitating virtual help desk support, where applicable. Additionally, the participants suggest that it would be important to have protective policies for migrant workers, as well as technical and vocational education provisions for them.

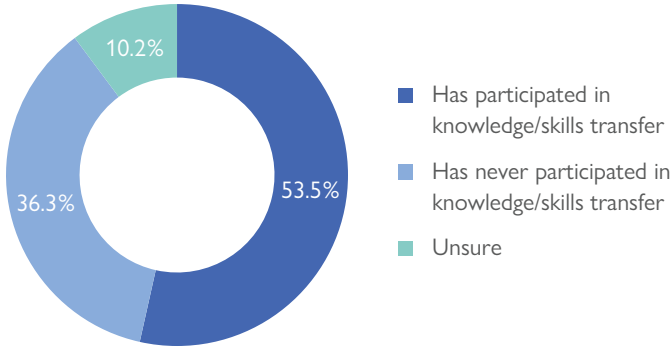
At a broader level, the participants emphasized the importance of bilateral trade agreements, network growth initiatives, financial incentives and joint research programmes to facilitate stronger collaborations across sectors. Skills development programmes and digital technology-friendly initiatives were also proposed to mitigate issues related to low wages and encourage long-term bonds between subsequent generations of the diaspora and Nepal.

#### 4.4.2. Participation in knowledge or skills transfer

Survey respondents are asked about their past participation, if any, in knowledge and/or skills transfer, such as teaching or sharing knowledge with co-nationals back home in Nepal or in leveraging their networks and connections to support them. Approximately half of the respondents (53.5%) indicate that they have engaged in such opportunities (Figure 24).

Notably, respondents in the United Kingdom are more likely to participate compared to their Australian counterparts, with a 21.4-percentage-point difference (61.2% versus 39.8%, respectively). Additionally, men are 15 percentage points more likely to participate than women, with figures of 55 per cent for men and 40 per cent for women. Overall, however, the findings indicate an active history of engagement in knowledge and skills transfer activities among the diaspora.

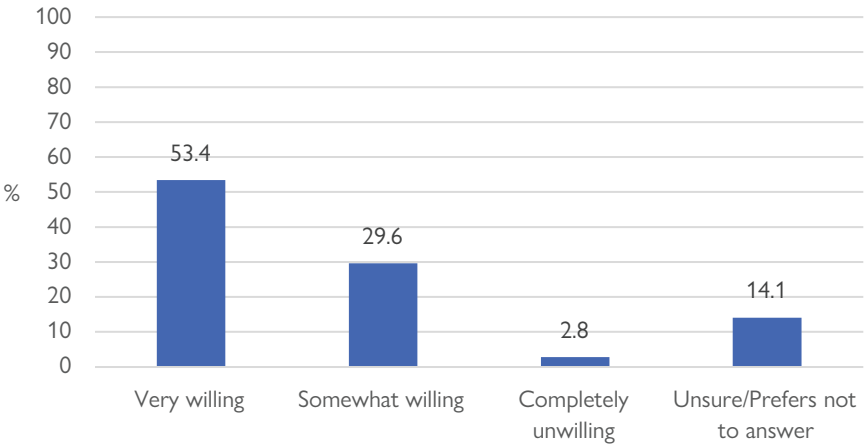
Figure 24. Survey respondents' past participation in knowledge or skills transfer initiatives ( $n = 598$ )



When assessing respondents' willingness to participate in such programmes in the future, 53.4 per cent express being "very willing", while another 29.6 per cent are "somewhat willing" (Figure 25). Notably, the "very willing" response option is consistent among respondents in the top five countries of residence.

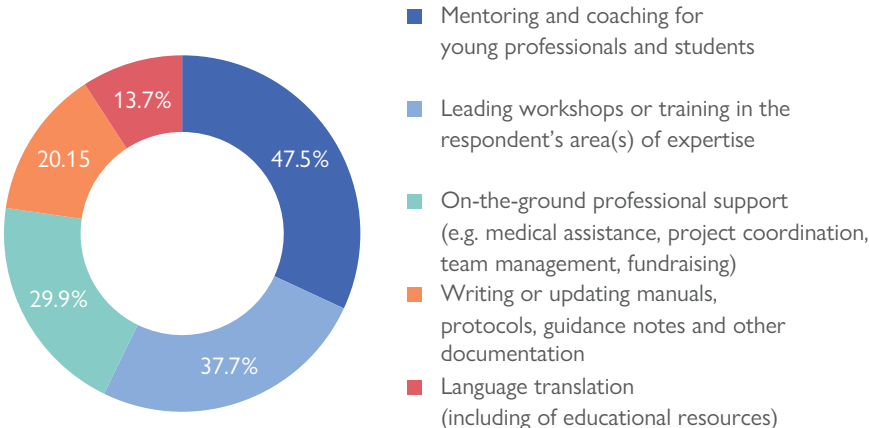
There is a noticeable gender gap, however, with a higher percentage of men (53.7%) being "very willing" compared to women (35.7%). Nevertheless, when considering both those who are "very willing" and "somewhat willing," men and women demonstrate a strong overall interest, with 81.6 per cent of men and 75 per cent of women expressing willingness to participate. This suggests that while women may initially appear less willing, they share a substantial interest in these programmes. Therefore, specific barriers or factors may need to be addressed first to ensure their equal participation.

**Figure 25. Survey respondents' willingness to participate in knowledge or skills transfer initiatives (n = 601)**



Among those interested in supporting knowledge and skills transfer programmes, the three most popular types of engagement are mentoring or coaching young professionals or students (47.5%), leading workshops or training (37.7%), and providing on-the-ground support (29.9%).

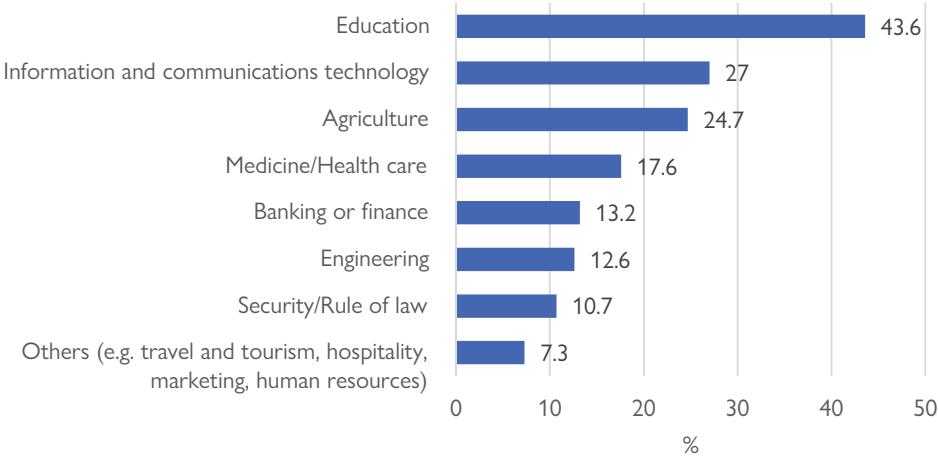
**Figure 26. Survey respondents' interests in programme or initiatives by type (n = 488)**



Regarding sectors of interest to support knowledge and skills transfer activities, education emerges as the most selected option, with 43.6 per cent of respondents expressing interest, followed by information, communication and technology (27.0%) and agriculture (24.7%). Nonetheless, respondents' diverse response options indicate a wide array of interests (Figure 27).

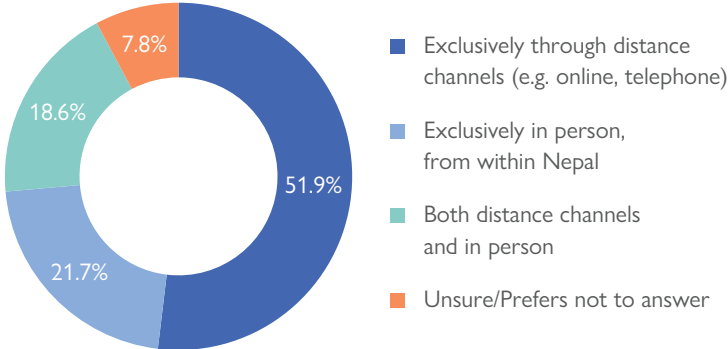
These survey results and qualitative insights both reveal a strong interest and active engagement among the diaspora in knowledge and skills transfer activities. These findings highlight the potential for leveraging the diaspora's expertise across various sectors to contribute to Nepal's development.

Figure 27. Survey respondents' interests in knowledge and skills transfer by sector (n = 477)



In terms of respondents' preferred modes or means to provide such support, just over half (51.9%) indicate online options exclusively, while 21.7 per cent exclusively prefer in-person engagement, and 18.6 per cent are flexible and are comfortable with either one (Figure 28). Notably, respondents in Canada, the United States and the United Kingdom are more inclined to favour online options, possibly due to their geographic distance from Nepal compared to respondents in Japan and Australia.

Figure 28. Survey respondents' preferred mode of support for knowledge or skills transfer initiatives (n = 489)

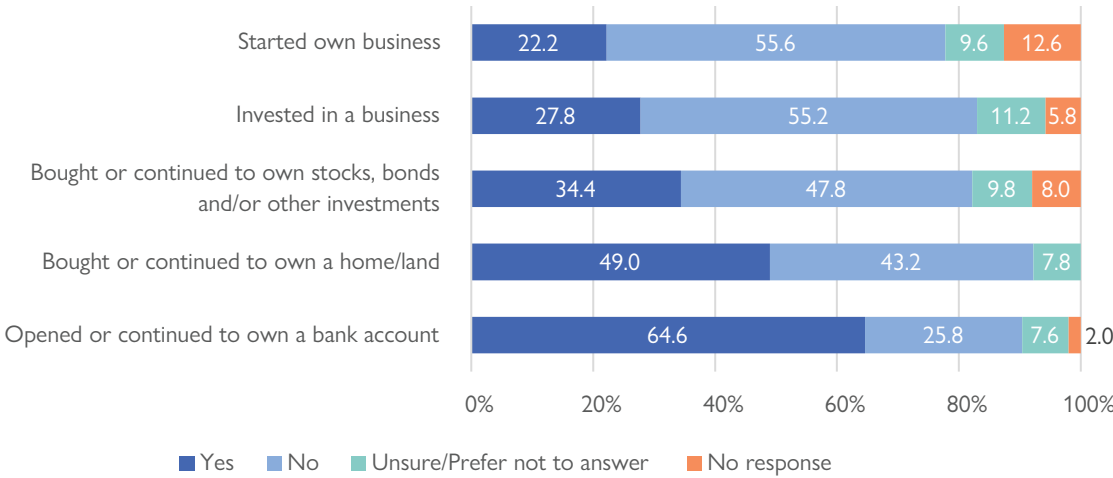


## 4.5. BUSINESS AND INVESTMENT

### 4.5.1. Prevalence of investments, financial products and assets in Nepal

The survey delved into the types of Nepal-based investments, financial products, and assets held by respondents. The findings reveal that a significant proportion, approximately 6 in 10 (64.6%) of respondents, own or have opened a bank account in Nepal. Additionally, nearly half of the respondents (49.0%) have invested in or own residential property or land in the home country, while one third (34.3%) have ventured into stocks, bonds and other financial investments. Almost three in 10 (27.8%) have made investments in Nepal-based businesses and just over 2 in 10 (22.2%) own a business in Nepal (Figure 29).

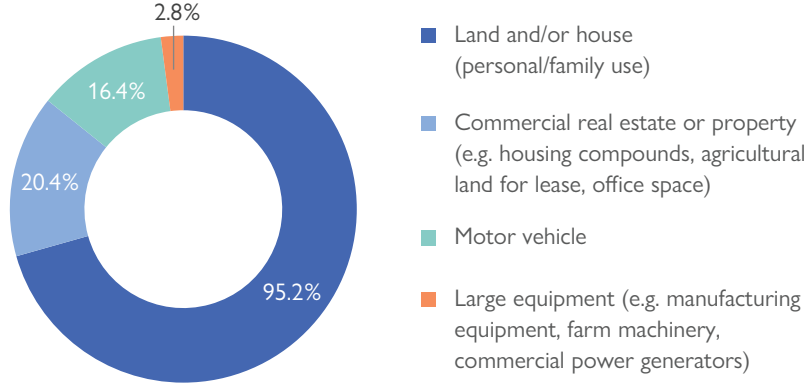
Figure 29. Survey respondents’ business investments or financial assets held in Nepal (n = 500)



Note: “Unsure/Prefer not to answer” is an actual response option to the survey question on asset ownership.

Addressing asset ownership, it is worth noting that 95.0 per cent of those who own assets possess residential property or land for personal use, specifically. A smaller percentage owned commercial real estate or property (20%), and 16.4 per cent owned a motor vehicle (Figure 30).

Figure 30. Survey respondents’ ownership of assets in Nepal (n = 353)

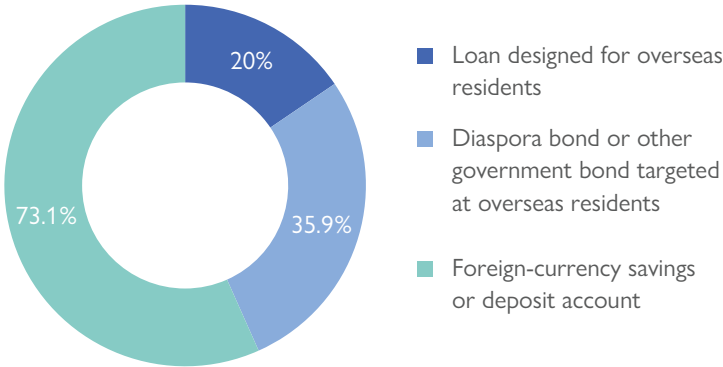




Digging deeper into financial product ownership from Nepal-based institutions, approximately three quarters (71.1%) of the 145 respondents indicate that they hold a foreign currency deposit bank account. Furthermore, 35.9 per cent report ownership of a diaspora bond or another form of government bond accessible to diaspora members, while 20 per cent take part in a loan programme (Figure 31).

These findings illustrate the diverse portfolio of investments and financial products held by the Nepalese diaspora in the home country. It reflects their active engagement in the country’s financial sector, including real estate, the stock market and business ventures. The prevalence of foreign currency deposit bank accounts suggests a strong connection to Nepal’s banking system, potentially driven by a desire to maintain financial ties with their country of origin. Additionally, ownership of government bonds and loans indicates an interest in supporting economic development and financial initiatives in Nepal. These insights are valuable for policymakers and financial institutions seeking to engage the diaspora and leverage their financial resources for the country’s growth and development.

Figure 31. Survey respondents’ ownership of financial products or services in Nepal (n = 145)



4.5.2. Business and investment across sectors

The survey data provides valuable insights into the sectors where Nepalese diaspora members are actively contributing, whether through business ownership or investment. When asked about the primary sector of their business operations or investments in Nepal, several notable trends emerge. Agriculture and forestry emerges as the most selected option, with 25.1 per cent of respondents suggesting that they are involved in this sector. This finding highlights the enduring significance of agriculture in Nepal, with diaspora members likely investing in farming and forestry-related enterprises (Figure 32).

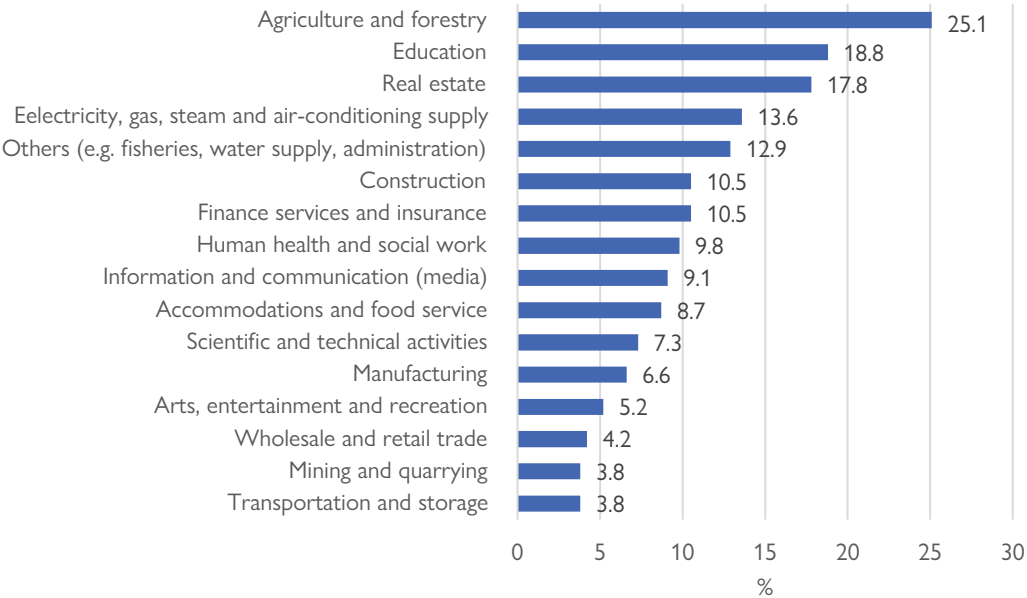
Education is selected by 18.8 per cent of respondents, indicating a substantial diaspora involvement in educational activities. This involvement may include the establishment of schools, colleges, vocational training centres and other educational initiatives. Education plays a pivotal role in human capital development and is critical for Nepal's future progress. Education is followed by real estate, which is chosen by 17.8 per cent of respondents, reflecting active engagement in the property market. Diaspora members may be investing in residential or commercial real estate ventures, which can contribute to the growth and development of the construction and real estate sectors in Nepal.

Beyond these top three sectors, the data also reveals a diverse range of contributions, including electricity and gas, mining, and transportation, among others (Figure 32). While these sectors have slightly lower representation compared to agriculture, education and real estate, they indicate a broader diaspora presence in various segments of Nepal's economy.

The data from the FGDs indicates a strong willingness among diaspora members to actively contribute to business development in Nepal through investments and vocational training programmes. All participants (n = 26) report their current involvement in such initiatives, with some investing in hardware businesses, while others support various sectors. Additionally, respondents (n = 26) show a keen interest in contributing further to these forms of business development activities in Nepal. Their areas of interest encompassed a wide range, including agriculture, the health sector, social service initiatives, biotechnology, education, real estate, hydropower, tourism, information technology and even politics. This collective enthusiasm underscores the diaspora's commitment to fostering economic growth and development in their home country.

Overall, these findings underscore the diverse nature of the Nepalese diaspora's contributions to the country's economic development. They are actively involved in sectors that are essential for Nepal's growth, including agriculture, education and real estate. Policymakers and stakeholders can leverage these insights to foster diaspora engagement, facilitate investment and promote collaboration in sectors that hold significant potential for Nepal's advancement.

Figure 32. Business or investment sector that survey respondents contribute to (n = 287)

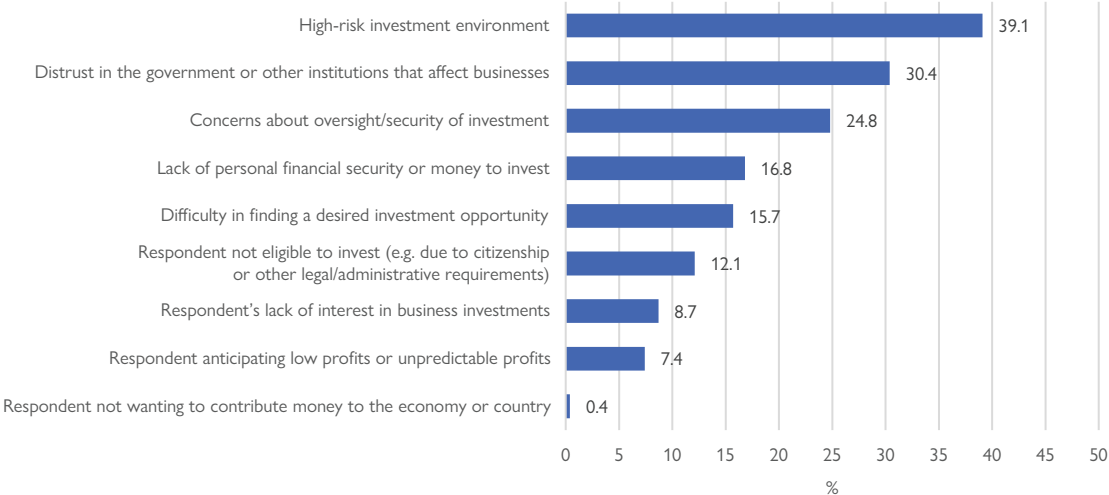


### 4.5.2. Barriers to investments

There are multiple important factors that appear to deter respondents from investing in businesses based in Nepal. The biggest concern, as expressed by 39.1 per cent of respondents, is the high-risk nature of the investment environment. This suggests apprehension about the potential challenges and uncertainties associated with business investments in the country. Approximately 3 in 10 respondents (30.4%) cite scepticism or uncertainty in the Government or institutions that impact businesses, indicating a lack of confidence in the regulatory and governance framework that governs business operations.

Furthermore, more than one quarter of respondents (24.8%) express concerns about the oversight and security of their investments, pointing to the need for robust investor protections and safeguards. Lack of personal financial security or available funds is a slightly lower deterrent (16.8% of respondents), but nevertheless highlights the importance of financial stability for potential investors. Other factors are captured in Figure 49. The following Government efforts to address these deterrents are of high importance to diaspora members, as expressed in the FGDs: improving the investment climate, enhancing regulatory frameworks, building trust in institutions and providing opportunities for investors.

**Figure 33. Factors discouraging investments in Nepal-based businesses (n = 471)**



The data on factors deterring respondents with existing businesses from expanding into Nepal (Figure 34) also reveals significant concerns that may hinder business growth and diaspora direct investment in the country. The most prominent deterrent identified by respondents is the perceived level of corruption, with 42.9 per cent expressing concerns about this matter. Market instability, cited by 28.9 per cent of respondents, presents another challenge. Lastly, 26.8 per cent of respondents select unclear or complicated registration requirements as a deterrent.

Focus group data echoes these concerns and recommendations as well, related to both investments and business in Nepal. Participants primarily emphasize the importance of transparent policies (*n* = 9) and easy access to opportunities (*n* = 7) to encourage greater diaspora engagement. Simplifying access to these programmes is also seen as beneficial, reducing barriers and bureaucracy.

Knowledge-sharing emerges as a key theme, with a focus on skilled workers and the need for improvement in international trade policies (*n* = 17). Ensuring the security of property in Nepal and providing a secure environment for investment are highlighted as critical factors for diaspora involvement. Respondents also call for improvements in investment policies in addition to policy transparency to create a conducive environment for business and investment.

Digital services are also identified as an area that could benefit from enhancement, aligning with the global trend towards digitalization. Additionally, respondents proposed the need for investment promotion campaigns, an increased number of information centres, and policies facilitating money transfers. Stability in government and property security in Nepal are identified as essential elements for building trust and confidence among diaspora investors.

**Figure 34. Factors negating expansion of diaspora-owned businesses to Nepal (*n* = 422)**

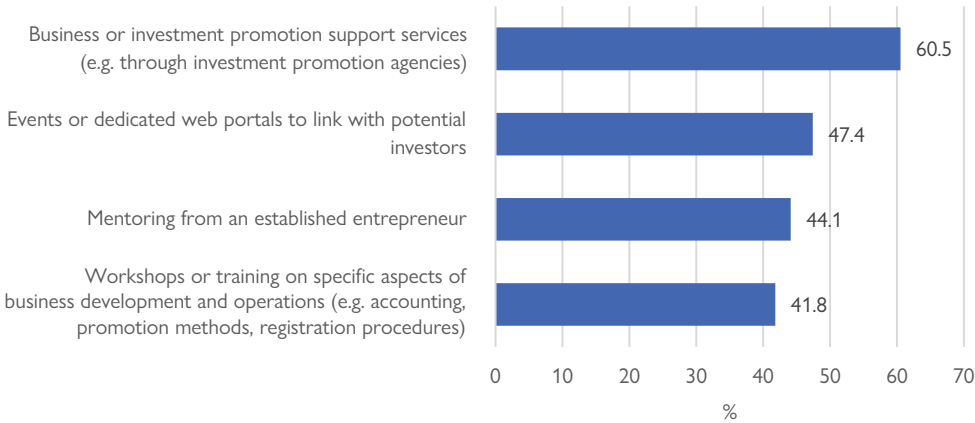


### 4.5.3. Short-term services for business owners

Respondents' strong interest in State-provided support services for diaspora entrepreneurs is evident in their interest for various forms of assistance that were suggested. Among the options presented, business or investment promotion support services are the most selected, with 60.5 per cent of respondents expressing their desire for such services (Figure 35).

Additionally, respondents express interest in other valuable forms of support, with 41.8 per cent indicating a need for “workshops or training programmes focusing on specific aspects of business development and operations”, emphasizing the role of skills enhancement in business success. Furthermore, 44.1 per cent express a desire for mentoring from established entrepreneurs, highlighting the value of experiential guidance in navigating the challenges of entrepreneurship. Lastly, 47.4 per cent indicate a need for events or dedicated web portals for networking with potential investors, emphasizing the significance of networking for business expansion.

Figure 35. Survey respondents' interest in State-provided support services for entrepreneurs (n = 304)



## 4.6. DIASPORA COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND DIASPORA INITIATIVES

### 4.6.1. Participation in diaspora groups, organizations, events, programmes and services

Most respondents suggest that they participate in various diaspora initiatives abroad. The most common of such initiatives is participating in “social events, meetings and networking opportunities with other Nepalese community members” (8.6%). Social media channels also play a substantial role in their participation among the diaspora community, with 16.0 per cent of respondents using these platforms to connect with their fellow community members (Table 16).

Just under a sixth (15.6%) of respondents actively participate in organizations, societies and/or associations that link Nepalese diaspora members more broadly, such as the NRNA. These organizations likely serve as focal points for community members to come together, share common interests, and collaborate on various initiatives. Food-related services, such as Nepalese food shops, bakeries, restaurants and cafés, also contribute to diaspora engagement, with 12.1 per cent of respondents patronizing these establishments.

**Table 16. Survey respondents' participation in diaspora groups, organizations, events, programmes and services abroad (n = 564)**

| Types of diaspora initiatives   | Frequency | % of total |
|---|-----------|------------|
| Social events, meetings and networking with other Nepalese community members  | 105       | 18.6       |
| Social media channels   | 90        | 16.0       |
| Organizations, societies and associations linking Nepalese diaspora more broadly  | 88        | 15.6       |
| Sports programmes and activities organized by Nepalese community members  | 68        | 12.1       |
| Food-related services (e.g. Nepalese food shops, bakeries, restaurants, cafés)  | 68        | 12.1       |
| Nepalese professional associations (e.g. Nepal Engineers' Association, Nepalese Nursing Association)                    | 59        | 10.5       |
| Nepalese philanthropic and fundraising initiatives to provide humanitarian and/or development assistance                | 58        | 10.3       |
| Faith-based activities and/or institutions (e.g. temple, church, mosque)  | 58        | 10.3       |
| Community lectures and activities on Nepalese history, language and culture   | 45        | 8.0        |
| Nepalese political advocacy initiatives   | 37        | 6.6        |
| Nepalese student organizations and associations   | 37        | 6.6        |
| Programmes or activities for Nepalese children and youth (e.g. summer camps, day care, Nepalese educational programmes) | 17        | 3.0        |
| Nepalese language and cultural programmes (e.g. language classes, dance groups, music groups)                           | 14        | 2.5        |
| Not a member of or participate in any such organizations, programmes, networks or associations                          | 29        | 5.1        |

#### 4.6.2. Level of awareness of selected diaspora-related legislation, policies and programmes

The majority (88.3%) of respondents are aware of the Non-Resident Nepali Act, indicating a considerable level of knowledge about this diaspora-related legislation (Table 17). This suggests that a significant proportion of the Nepalese diaspora is informed about the legal framework that concerns non-residents.

In contrast, much smaller percentages of the respondents are aware of other diaspora-related legislation, policies and/or programmes. For instance, the establishment of the Brain Gain Centre, an institution that aims to engage the diaspora, is known to only 7.8 per cent of respondents. Similarly, the Fifteenth National Development Plan is known to only 3.9 per cent of respondents, suggesting that this particular national framework is less widely recognized within the Nepalese diaspora community. The high awareness levels regarding the Non-Resident Nepali Act compared to other legislation may be due to the Act's direct relevance to non-resident diaspora members and its potential impact on their interactions with Nepal.

**Table 17. Survey respondents' level of awareness of selected diaspora-related legislation, policy or programme (n = 486)**

| Legislation, policy or programme           | Frequency | % of total |
|--|-----------|------------|
| Non-Resident Nepali Act                    | 429       | 88.3       |
| The establishment of the Brain Gain Centre | 38        | 7.8        |
| Fifteenth National Development Plan        | 19        | 3.9        |

#### 4.6.3. Strengthening collaboration and trust with the diaspora: partnerships and cooperation between the Government and the diaspora

To better address barriers and challenges faced by the Nepalese diaspora, respondents are asked to identify the most important things that the Government of Nepal can do to support them (Table 18). The top choice, selected by 24.1 per cent of respondents, is to offer counselling for prospective (re)settlement or return to Nepal. This suggests that a significant proportion of the diaspora values personalized assistance and guidance when it comes to relocation or engagement with Nepal.

The second most important form support, selected by 22.6 per cent of respondents, is providing access to voting from consulate or embassy polling stations, by post or through electronic means. This highlights the importance of political engagement for the diaspora and their desire for convenient and accessible means to participate in the democratic process.

A fifth (19.4%) of respondents emphasize the importance of expanding financial and investment programmes tailored for diaspora members, including initiatives such as diaspora bonds, mutual funds, bank accounts and remittance transfers. This is closely followed by 18.2 per cent of respondents who value the establishment of forums to foster networking opportunities for Nepalese diaspora communities worldwide.

FGD participants, when asked to identify the most significant challenges facing the Nepalese diaspora community, share a variety of issues they face individually and as a community abroad. Regarding language and culture, they note the need for greater promotion of the Nepali language and Nepalese culture, enhancing social awareness regarding gender issues, breaking down communication barriers and addressing discrimination. Respondents also express concerns about a lacking sense of unity within the diaspora, between the diaspora and Nepal. In addition, FGD participants share that they have faced much more tangible challenges while abroad. Some state that there are gaps in ensuring equal rights for them as Nepalese citizens, compared to Nepalese citizens in Nepal. Language barriers, opportunities for women, communication gaps and immigration law-related issues are cited as specific challenges as well.

**Table 18. Survey respondents' preferences for Government-led support for Nepalese diaspora (n = 532)**

| Types of Government-led support  | Frequency | % of total |
|--|-----------|------------|
| Offering counselling for (re)settling or returning to Nepal  | 128       | 24.1       |
| Absentee voting (e.g. from consulate/embassy polling stations, by post or through electronic means)                                  | 120       | 22.6       |
| Expanding financial and investment programmes for diasporas (e.g. diaspora bonds, mutual funds, bank accounts, remittance transfers) | 103       | 19.4       |

| Types of Government-led support   | Frequency | % of total |
|---|-----------|------------|
| Organizing forums to network with Nepalese diaspora communities (to facilitate professional and business networking opportunities, humanitarian and development coordination, among others) | 97        | 18.2       |
| Supporting and organizing cultural events abroad  | 85        | 16.0       |
| Facilitating internships, and training and work opportunities in the public and private sectors in Nepal  | 82        | 15.4       |
| A centralized platform for Nepalese diasporas to access information on various activities, programme or services made available to them and to enable contact with important institutions   | 80        | 15.0       |
| Organizing or supporting education in the Nepali language for diaspora members (e.g. financing and supporting language programmes and camps)  | 68        | 12.8       |

During these discussions, several key recommendations emerged, reflecting their expectations of how the Government of Nepal can enhance engagement and communication with its diaspora. These insights align with the broader desire for information access and opportunities for involvement:

- **Equal rights and social security.** Respondents emphasize the importance of diaspora members having the similar rights as Nepalese citizens, which include equal social security benefits. Ensuring that diaspora members receive equitable treatment and support is vital for fostering a sense of belonging and engagement.
- **Dual citizenship and investment opportunities.** Nepalese diaspora members express a desire for the Government to offer opportunities for dual citizenship. This policy can facilitate stronger connections between the diaspora and Nepal, enabling them to contribute more effectively to the nation's development. Additionally, creating investment opportunities and launching campaigns, similar to the Erasmus Programme, are recommended as ways to encourage engagement.
- **University exchange programmes.** Initiating university exchange programmes is suggested as a means to foster stronger engagement. These programmes can facilitate academic and cultural exchanges, creating a bridge between the diaspora and Nepal's educational institutions.
- **Proactive role of embassies.** Respondents highlighted the importance of embassies playing an active and proactive role in engaging with diaspora members. This includes organizing informative programmes, campaign initiatives and orientation programmes to keep the diaspora informed and involved.
- **Digitalization and administrative improvements.** Better administrative management and digitalization of services are identified as essential for improving engagement. These measures can streamline processes, including by making it easier for diaspora members to access information and services from abroad.
- **Fair and transparent behaviour.** Embassies of Nepal are encouraged to maintain fair and transparent behaviour towards all citizens of Nepal, ensuring that no biases exist in their interactions with the diaspora.
- **Networking and information dissemination.** Respondents expressed a desire for more networking opportunities, especially for Nepalese youth in foreign countries. Coordinating internship opportunities and hosting networking events are recommended as ways to foster stronger connections and information sharing among the diaspora.



- **Enhanced coordination with the diaspora.** The need for enhanced coordination and collaboration between the Government of Nepal and the diaspora, as well as the role of embassies in providing individual information and avoiding unskilled labour in the international market, is also highlighted.

In summary, the Nepalese diaspora members highlighted the need for equitable treatment, information access and opportunities for engagement with their home country. Their recommendations underscore the importance of proactive government involvement, digitalization and a supportive environment that encourages active participation in Nepal’s development efforts.

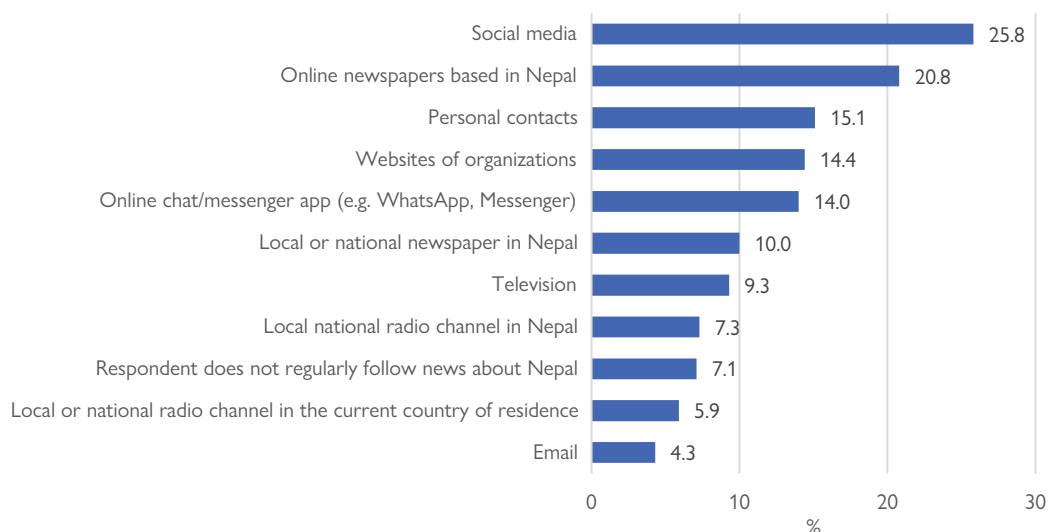
## 4.7. INFORMATION CHANNELS AND COMMUNICATION PREFERENCES

### 4.7.1. Information channels

The last section of the survey asks respondents to identify the sources and channels of information through where they receive information about developments and occurrences in Nepal. The findings reveal several key channels through which members of the Nepalese diaspora access information about Nepal while residing outside the country. Notably, social media emerges as their primary source, with approximately one quarter (25.8%) of respondents relying on platforms like Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. This reflects a global trend where social media has become a central hub for news consumption and community interaction. Following closely, online newspapers from Nepal continue to be a source of news, with 20.8 per cent of respondents turning to digital news outlets. This indicates a continued trust in traditional journalism (Figure 36).

Other notable sources include personal contacts (15%), websites of diaspora organizations (14.4%) and online chatrooms or groups (14.0%), reflecting the role of institutions and digital communication tools in information dissemination. In contrast to social media and online news outlets, traditional news sources, such as local television and newspapers (i.e. printed news) are slightly less relevant, with only 9.3 per cent and 10 per cent, respectively, indicating that they continue to prefer these traditional media for news updates.

Figure 36. Survey respondents’ sources of information pertaining to diaspora (n = 578)

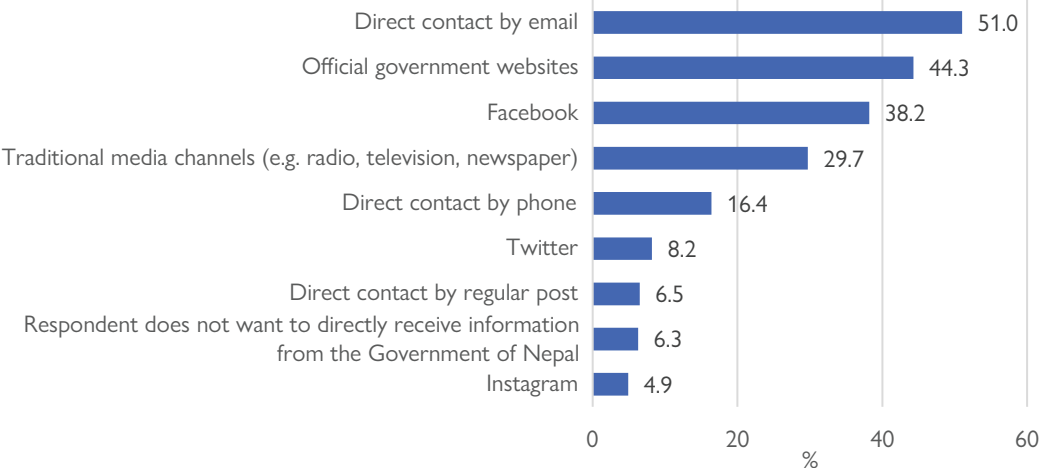


### 4.7.2. Preferred communication channels

The survey findings reveal valuable insights into the preferred communication methods of the Nepalese diaspora for receiving information related to diaspora affairs from the Government of Nepal. The most prominent choice (51.0% of respondents) is direct contact by email, indicating a strong preference for personalized and direct communication channels (Figure 37). This suggests that the diaspora values timely and targeted updates sent directly to their email addresses. Following closely are respondents with a preference for accessing information through official government websites (44.3%). This underscores the significance of credible and official online sources as trusted platforms for diaspora-related content. It reflects the diaspora's inclination to rely on authoritative channels for accurate and up-to-date information.

Other popular options include Facebook (38.2%) and traditional media channels (radio, television and newspapers) (29.7%). This highlights the importance of social media platforms, as well as traditional media outlets in reaching certain segments of the diaspora population. Among the FGD and interview participants, the three most popular preferences for communication channels are email, official government websites and WhatsApp.

Figure 37. Survey respondents' preferred method(s) of communication with government institutions (n = 573)



# 5

## KEY FINDINGS



The following key findings provide valuable insights into the composition, motivations and interests of the Nepalese diaspora. They offer a foundation for evidence-based policymaking and programme development. By understanding the demographics and preferences of the diaspora, the Government of Nepal can better tailor its engagement efforts, design targeted initiatives, and create an enabling environment that encourages active participation and contributions from the diaspora. This, in turn, can significantly benefit Nepal's development while strengthening the bond between the country and its global diaspora.

### 5.1. KEY FINDINGS FOR SECTION 1: DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

**Age distribution.** Most diaspora members who responded to the mapping survey are under the age of 45, with the 35–44 age group being the largest. The respondent age distribution indicates potential for harnessing the energy, skills and aspirations of a relatively young diaspora.

**Marital status.** The respondents of this survey are predominantly married (90.4%), reflecting the family-oriented nature of many Nepalese diaspora members.

**Residency status.** Most respondents have acquired permanent residency or citizenship in their respective host countries. Understanding the legal status of diaspora members can help the Government design tailored programmes to engage permanent residents more effectively. At the same time, addressing the unique challenges faced by temporary residents, especially in Japan, is equally important.

**Country of residence.** The primary countries of residence for the Nepalese diaspora members who responded to this survey are the United Kingdom, Australia, Canada, the United States and Japan, based on the selection criteria for countries included in the mapping study. Nonetheless, the diaspora is expanding into emerging geographic locations, such as the Republic of Korea, Romania and Portugal, among others. This diversification of residence points to the evolving and unique needs of the diaspora across various regions.

**Long-term settlement.** The survey respondents have predominantly resided in their countries of residence for five years or more. A focus on longer-term residents was intentional for this mapping assignment, shedding light on their distinct needs and interests. However, to provide a comprehensive view, further research on shorter-term diaspora members would be a valuable complement to this mapping report.

**Language used at home.** Approximately 58.4 per cent of respondents speak Nepali regularly at home. This highlights the importance of preserving the Nepali language and culture across the global diaspora.

**Educational attainment.** Approximately 80 per cent of the surveyed individuals have obtained at least a bachelor's degree. This signifies a highly educated and motivated diaspora, which can serve as a valuable resource for Nepal's development.

Occupation sector. (a) Human health and social work, (b) accommodation and food service, and (c) professional, scientific and technical activities emerge as the predominant occupation sectors for respondents. This translates to diverse workplace experiences, which can be leveraged across knowledge and human capital transfer programmes.

## 5.2. KEY FINDINGS FOR SECTION 2: MIGRATION EXPERIENCE

**First-generation diaspora.** The overwhelming majority of diaspora respondents (98.4%) were born in Nepal, signifying a primarily first-generation immigrant diaspora subgroup with direct connections to diaspora engagement initiatives such as this mapping study. This indicates that this subgroup of the diaspora has retained strong cultural ties to Nepal and can play a pivotal role in the country's development.

**Factors influencing migration.** Education and training are the most significant factors influencing migration decisions for respondents (32.7%). This is followed by economic reasons (24.6%) and access to essential services, including health, food, water and basic education (17.0%). This finding is consistent when disaggregating the data across the top five countries of residence of survey respondents.

**Frequency of visits to Nepal.** A significant portion (44.2%) of diaspora members visit Nepal less than once a year. However, 36.5 per cent visit once a year and 14.6 per cent visit more than once a year. Differences in frequency of visits are likely based on the geographic proximity of the diaspora to the country. Overall, these findings demonstrate that diaspora members, for the most part, connect regularly with the country of origin by travelling back home, possibly generating a large proportion of Nepal's tourism-related revenue in the process.

**Interest in resettlement in Nepal.** A substantial number of respondents (61.4%) express an interest in returning and resettling in Nepal in the future. This represents an opportunity for the Government to create an enabling environment for their return, including by addressing the factors that influence the diaspora's decisions. Additional research on return and resettlement (and reintegration) can better define the specific needs of these unique groups.

## 5.3. KEY FINDINGS FOR SECTION 3: FINANCIAL CONTRIBUTIONS

**High financial support.** Most respondents (91.3% of survey respondents and 100% of FGD participants) provide financial support to Nepal through remittances and/or charitable contributions. This financial support is not only significant for families but also serves as an economic driver and contributor to social development in Nepal.

**Recipient of financial support.** In terms of financial support sent to Nepal within the last 12 months, around 67.7 per cent of respondents report sending funds or goods to their nuclear family members, who include children, parents, partners and/or siblings. This is followed by 27.5 per cent of respondents who provide support to extended family members, and 19.2 per cent who send financial aid to friends or acquaintances.

**Percentage of income.** Among those who remit a portion of their income annually, approximately 33.1 per cent send more than 30 per cent of their income, with a substantial majority (83.4%) sending, at a minimum, 5 per cent. Men are more likely to send a higher proportion of their income compared to women, reflecting the persistence of traditional gender roles within families. Among the top five countries of residence, Japan-based respondents stand out as being more likely to send at least 21 per cent of their income (65.4%), suggesting variations in financial commitment among respondents based on their country of residence.

**Remittance-sending methods.** A significant percentage (83.8%) use money transfer operators like Western Union to send funds. Formal bank transfers are also a common choice, with 67.3 per cent of respondents using this method. Conversely, sending money via a transport company is the least commonly used approach. This underscores the significance of reliable and secure financial channels for diaspora communities, as well as the preference for accessible and convenient remittance services to facilitate financial transactions.

#### 5.4. KEY FINDINGS FOR SECTION 4: PHILANTHROPY AND SOCIOECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

**Philanthropic engagement.** A notable majority of respondents (68.6% of survey respondents and 100% of FGD participants) have financially contributed to humanitarian or socioeconomic development projects in Nepal. This demonstrates a strong desire among diaspora members to actively support Nepal's developmental progress (including those who provided their contact information as part of this mapping study, to be contacted for future engagement opportunities). It is worth noting that a higher percentage of men (70.5%) indicate having previous involvement in such projects compared to women (50.0%), highlighting possible structural challenges that women may face in supporting such initiatives. Lastly, respondents residing in the United Kingdom and the United States demonstrate a greater inclination to financially contribute to these projects.

**Future participation.** Over 60 per cent of respondents express their willingness to participate in philanthropic and socioeconomic development projects in the future. Encouragingly, this willingness extends across gender and the top selected countries of residence, indicating broad interest in continued engagement. Again, there appears to be a gender difference in these responses, with men being slightly more likely to express interest compared to women, as well as respondents based in the United Kingdom and the United States compared to their other countries of residence counterparts.

**Socioeconomic areas of interest.** Education and science are the most selected area of interest for future support, followed by health care, humanitarian response actions, and social support and charitable programmes. However, the results exhibit a diverse distribution across other categories, highlighting a wide range of areas that diaspora members are keen on supporting.

**Knowledge and skills transfer.** Approximately half of respondents have participated in knowledge or skills transfer opportunities, showcasing an active history of engagement. Moreover, a strong willingness to engage in future knowledge and skills transfer programmes is evident, with potential for both online and in-person engagements. Mentoring or coaching young professionals or students; leading workshops or training (based on their specific education or occupational backgrounds); and providing on-the-ground support emerged as the most popular types of engagement. Women's interest, while slightly lower, still represents a substantial opportunity for involvement.

**Method of engagement.** When considering the preferred modes of support for Nepalese diaspora members, the survey reveals that slightly over half of the respondents (51.9%) prefer providing online support exclusively, while 21.7 per cent express a preference for in-person engagement. Furthermore, 18.6 per cent are open to either online or in-person options. Respondents residing in Canada, the United States and the United Kingdom exhibit a stronger inclination towards online support, which may be influenced by their greater geographical distance from Nepal.

## 5.5. KEY FINDINGS FOR SECTION 5: BUSINESS AND INVESTMENT

**Diverse investment portfolio.** The Nepalese diaspora exhibits a diverse investment portfolio within Nepal, encompassing national bank accounts, property, stocks, bonds and business ownership. This diversity underscores their active engagement in Nepal's financial sector, indicating a desire to maintain financial ties with their home country and support its economic development. Moreover, the diaspora's primary sectoral investment includes agriculture and forestry (25.1%), education (18.8%) and real estate (17.8%). These contributions span vital areas such as food security, human capital development, and construction and real estate development.

**Deterrents to investment.** Respondents identify several key deterrents to investment in Nepal. The most common concern was the high-risk nature of the investment environment (39.1%), followed by scepticism or uncertainty in the Government and other institutions that impact businesses (30.4%). These concerns suggest the need for improvements in regulatory frameworks, governance and risk mitigation to attract diaspora investments.

**Deterrents to business expansion.** Respondents also highlight obstacles to expanding businesses in Nepal. The most significant deterrent was the perceived level of corruption (42.9%), followed by market instability (28.9%) and unclear or complicated registration requirements (26.8%).

**Support services for diaspora entrepreneurs.** Respondents expressed strong interest in State-provided support services, including business or investment promotion (60.5%), workshops or training programmes (41.8%), mentoring from established entrepreneurs (44.1%), and events or web portals for networking (47.4%). These are all relevant areas that diaspora engagement-related programming can better address.

## 5.6. KEY FINDINGS FOR SECTION 6: DIASPORA COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND DIASPORA INITIATIVES

**Awareness of diaspora initiatives.** While most respondents are aware of the Non-Resident Nepali Act (88.3%), awareness of other diaspora-related initiatives, such as the Brain Gain Centre (7.8%) and the Fifteenth National Development Plan (3.9%), is relatively low. This suggests the need for increased outreach and awareness campaigns for these initiatives as well as the explicit reference to diasporas as key development actors in national frameworks.

**Preferred forms of government support.** Respondents expressed strong interest in various forms of government support, including counselling for settling in or returning to Nepal (24.1%), access to voting from consulate/embassy polling stations or electronically (22.6%), and expanding financial and investment programmes tailored for diaspora members (19.4%). These preferences underscore the importance of personalized assistance, political engagement, and financial initiatives in supporting the diaspora community.

**Key areas to address.** Given feedback from both survey respondents and FGD participants, key considerations were raised that the Government of Nepal may wish to address:

- *Diverse and inclusive approach.* The diversity of priorities and needs within the Nepalese diaspora community highlights the necessity for a tailored and inclusive approach to engage effectively with different segments. Rather than a one-size-fits-all strategy, the Government should consider adopting a holistic approach encompassing economic, social, cultural and political engagement opportunities.
- *Effective communication channels.* The demand for a centralized platform for accessing information underscores the importance of investing in transparent and easily accessible communication channels. Providing information about government programmes, services and opportunities is crucial for engaging the diaspora.
- *Viable return options.* The interest in counselling for settling in Nepal or returning indicates an opportunity for the Government to create policies and programmes that make returning to Nepal a viable and attractive option for diaspora members.
- *Diaspora voting.* The interest in voting access highlights the importance of engaging the diaspora in Nepal's democratic processes. The Government can consider measures to facilitate diaspora voting, such as electronic or postal voting methods.
- *Financial and investment programmes.* Recognizing the interest in financial and investment programmes, the Government can explore initiatives such as diaspora bonds, investment incentives and financial services tailored to the diaspora's needs.
- *Preservation of culture.* Supporting cultural events and language education demonstrates a commitment to preserving and celebrating Nepalese culture. Collaboration with diaspora organizations can promote cultural activities.
- *Networking and community-building.* Organizing forums and networking events can help connect diaspora members with each other and with government officials, fostering a sense of community and enabling constructive dialogue.
- *Framework for dual citizenship.* Considering access to dual citizenship can facilitate stronger interests among diaspora members to participate in engagement efforts, given their close diplomatic ties to their country of origin.
- *University exchange programmes.* Initiating university exchange programmes can foster stronger engagement by facilitating academic and cultural exchanges between the diaspora and Nepal's educational institutions.
- *Proactive role of embassies.* Embassies of Nepal should play an active and proactive role in engaging with diaspora members through information programmes, diaspora engagement campaign initiatives and orientation programmes.
- *Digitalization and administrative improvements.* Improving administrative management and digitalization of services is essential for streamlining processes, making it easier for diaspora members to access information and services from abroad.

## 5.7. KEY FINDINGS FOR SECTION 7: INFORMATION CHANNELS AND COMMUNICATION PREFERENCES

Sources of information. Nepal-based social media channels (25.8%) and online news outlets (20.8%) are the diaspora's primary sources of information about Nepal. Personal contacts (15.1%), diaspora organization websites (14.4%), and online chat rooms/groups (14.0%) also play significant roles in information dissemination.

Communication preferences. The preferred communication methods for receiving information related to diaspora affairs from the Government of Nepal are direct contact by email (51.0%) and official government websites (44.3%). Social media platforms like Facebook (38.2%) and traditional media channels (radio, television and newspapers) (29.7%) are also important communication channels for specific segments of the diaspora.



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