

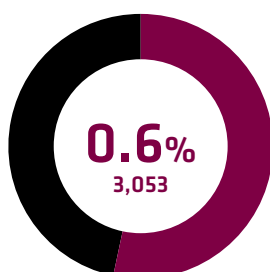


# Diaspora engagement mapping MALDIVES

## Facts & figures

### Emigration

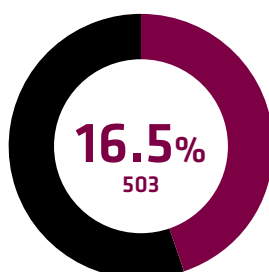
% of emigrants in  
total population



♂ 53.5%  
♀ 46.5%



% of which  
in the EU



♂ 43.5%  
♀ 53.6%



Remittances as a share of GDP: **0.1%**  
Remittances inflow (USD billion): **4**



### Top countries of destination

Sri Lanka	1,409
Australia	645
United Kingdom	402
India	194
South Africa	95



### Political rights



Dual citizenship<sup>1</sup>



Right to vote in national elections  
for citizens residing abroad<sup>2</sup>



Voting from abroad<sup>3</sup>:

At embassies/consulates



Terminology: In the 2014 census, the government referred to their diaspora as 'non-resident' Maldivians.

**The Maldives does not have a diaspora engagement policy.<sup>4</sup>**

1 Maldivian Citizenship Act Law No. 1/95, <https://www.refworld.org/pdfid/58d3c59b4.pdf>

2 [https://www.ifes.org/sites/default/files/ifes\\_maldives\\_parliamentary\\_elections\\_faqs\\_april\\_2019.pdf](https://www.ifes.org/sites/default/files/ifes_maldives_parliamentary_elections_faqs_april_2019.pdf)

3 Ibid.

4 [https://publications.iom.int/system/files/pdf/mp\\_maldives\\_2018.pdf](https://publications.iom.int/system/files/pdf/mp_maldives_2018.pdf)

2006  
  
 2010

## Overview of the policy and legislative framework



- Seventh National Development Plan<sup>5</sup> included a policy on boosting the training of the labour force through education and training for sectoral development. The first strategy under this policy was to maximise the utilisation of overseas fellowships for education and training. The Ministry of Higher Education has since listed a range of scholarships and loans on their website to encourage students to go abroad for either undergraduate or postgraduate studies, and 85 of these have been taken up. This shows the government encouraging its students to study abroad.<sup>6</sup>

### Trends

Given the relatively low number of Maldivians living abroad, engaging them is a challenge and therefore diaspora engagement has not been a priority for the Maldivian government. As a result, there have been no schemes to encourage the return of Maldivians who emigrated abroad. Maldivian migrants are mainly those seeking employment, students and asylum seekers/refugees. The shortage of degree-level programs in the country has compelled Maldivians who wish to study to degree and postgraduate degree levels to seek their university education abroad. There is no data collected on Maldivian students studying abroad and whether they have returned. According to the 2014 Census, 5589 people were identified as “non-resident” Maldivians (citizens living or intending to live abroad for at least 1 year).<sup>7</sup>

## Obstacles



- Limited contact:** The diaspora seldom self-report to an embassy and thus there is limited contact between them and their home country.
- Low priority:** There are very few Maldivians living abroad and engaging them is a challenge. Neither the Maldives, nor destination countries can prioritise contributing to an active diaspora policy for such a small part of their population. Even in Sri Lanka, which houses almost 50% of the Maldivian diaspora, Maldivians represent only 3.5% of the foreign population.<sup>8</sup>
- Lack of data:** The Ministry of Foreign Affairs does not collect data on the Maldivian diaspora. There is limited capacity and collaboration in data collection, analysis and exchange among the various organizations that manage migration in Maldives. The three databases - XPAT, PISCES, and CBN - managed by Maldives Immigration are not integrated as different developers created them. Records are also only available since 2013, when Maldives Immigration was created.

## SPOTLIGHT: effective practices



### Maldives Climate Change Policy Framework 2015<sup>9</sup>

One of the key targets of the framework is capacity building and leading advocacy at climate negotiations by inculcating climate change advocacy and awareness cross-sectorally nationwide as well as in the international arena. The framework suggests that, in order to do this, Maldives should seek to host, both in the Maldives and in their missions abroad, frequent seminars/workshops/interactive dialogues designed to promote Maldives' advocacy on climate change for climate vulnerable/frontline states.

<sup>5</sup> [https://policy.asiapacificenergy.org/sites/default/files/seventh\\_ndp.pdf](https://policy.asiapacificenergy.org/sites/default/files/seventh_ndp.pdf)

<sup>6</sup> <https://mohe.gov.mv/scholarship-loan>

<sup>7</sup> Migration in Maldives: A Country Profile 2018 [https://maldives.iom.int/sites/default/files/Maldives%20Migration%20Profile\\_2018.pdf](https://maldives.iom.int/sites/default/files/Maldives%20Migration%20Profile_2018.pdf)

<sup>8</sup> IOM, “Migration in Maldives: A Country Profile 2018”, (2018): [https://publications.iom.int/system/files/pdf/mp\\_maldives\\_2018.pdf](https://publications.iom.int/system/files/pdf/mp_maldives_2018.pdf)

<sup>9</sup> <http://extwprlegs1.fao.org/docs/pdf/mdv172920.pdf>

## Annex:

# List of Actors

### Diaspora related institutions



- **At regional level**

#### International Organisation for Migration 2013

Maldives became a member state of IOM in 2011 and IOM established its office in Malé in 2013. IOM has one staff member based in Malé and it has worked with the government to promote safe migration.

- **National institutions**

- At ministerial level

#### Ministry of Economic Development 1979

The Ministry formulates and regulates economic and trade policies. It promotes trade and investment, immigration and emigration, labour, maritime and land transport sectors. Since 2014, the Ministry has also been involved in labour management, in addition to migration management and anti-human trafficking victim support services.

- At local level

#### Maldivian Red Crescent 2009

A non-profit, volunteer-run humanitarian organisation with the governing board having a mix of Maldivian diaspora and Maldivians on the ground. The organisation has not produced reports or data on migration, but has been involved in several projects on the ground.

### Diaspora organisations in Europe



#### Maldivian Students' Association UK (MSAUK) 2015

- ✓ **Development activities**
- ✓ **Integration activities**

A non-profit student association that represents the Maldivian students in the UK. The group hosts events to bring together Maldivian students in the UK. The association also conducts workshops and sessions for students in Maldives who are sitting for their GCSE (formerly 'O' level) and A-level examinations (British academic qualifications for secondary education, usually taken at the ages of 16 and 18 respectively). The International Maldivian Students Association (IMSA) is an informal collective of Maldivian students associations/communities across the world. On behalf of IMSA, MSAUK has helped organise a fundraising appeal to help Maldives overcome the Covid-19 pandemic. The appeal calls upon Maldivian families living abroad and the international community at large to provide monetary donations.

Written by: **Ronojoy Sen,**  
University of Singapore  
Edited by: **EUDiF**  
July 2020

