



Diaspora engagement mapping

SAINT LUCIA

Facts & figures

Terminology: The term 'diaspora' is used in national documents.

Political rights



Dual citizenship¹



Right to vote in national elections for citizens residing abroad²



Remittances



Remittances as a share of GDP: **2.38%**
Remittances inflow (USD million): **60.64**

Data disclaimer

As diaspora definitions vary widely, we have chosen to use comparable data on emigration as a proxy. This does not include all who consider themselves diaspora and is not necessarily aligned with national definitions of diaspora. Emigration data comes from [UNDESA \(2024\)](#) and remittances from the [World Bank \(2024\)](#).

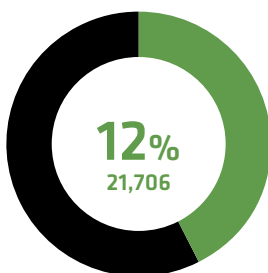
Emigration



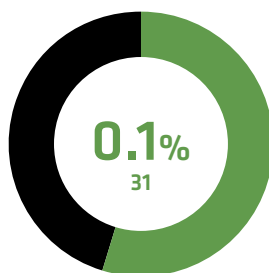
% of emigrants in total population



% of which in the EU



♂ 43%
♀ 57%



♂ 54.8%
♀ 45.2%

Top countries of destination



Canada	7,557
United States Virgin Islands	3,427
Martinique	2,242
Barbados	2,220
Trinidad and Tobago	1,406

¹ <https://www.govt.lc/media.govt.lc/www/resources/legislation/ConstitutionOfSaintLucia.pdf>

² <https://www.sluelectoral.com/saint-lucia-electoral-legislation/>

Overview of the policy and legislative framework



1996

Government of Saint Lucia Diaspora Policy. From as early as 1996 consultative discussions about the role of diaspora engagement began. This eventually resulted in the Government of Saint Lucia Diaspora Policy being ratified in 2015. The policy sets out the Government of Saint Lucia's (GoSLU) trajectory for harnessing the capabilities of citizens resident abroad for home country development. It states that "engagement with the Diaspora must be constantly re-evaluated so that the type of engagement policy can shift as the country evolves." It seeks to focus on economic growth, poverty reduction, good governance, capacity building, and policy development that will redound to the benefit of all. The policy makes provision for the targeting and inclusion of diaspora for home country development by outlining focus areas aligned with the government's socio-economic plans. Though it is focused on Saint Lucians working together for the good of the country, it is not widely circulated or used as a guiding document for or by the diaspora.

2012

Review of the External Relations Policy of Saint Lucia sets out a comprehensive review of the external relationships between Saint Lucia, its global trade partners and diaspora by determining strategies to revolutionize the policy direction. This includes recognising the diaspora as integral to home country economic growth, the need to seek partnerships outside the UK, USA and Canada and the idea to compile diaspora skills in a database to identify core skills for development. It further outlines strategic methods for these engagements including looking to the diaspora for connection to new markets and for lobbying on critical matters.

2021

Office for Diaspora Affairs Work Program details 12 strategic priorities under the main objective "to ensure effective engagement of and partnership with the Saint Lucia Diaspora in pursuit of the National Development Agenda". Priorities range from providing training for overseas associations to enhance their service, and promoting Saint Lucia as a seasonal remote-work location, to increasing the participation of the diaspora in national development activities, and enhancing collaboration with other states and international agencies.

Practices

Explore 520+ practices by country, SDG or sector of engagement in the [interactive database!](#)



Lucian Links 2022

Under Lucian Links, the Saint Lucia Tourism Authority rebranded their diaspora tourism programme to ensure citizens in the diaspora enjoy discounts and rewards for visiting home. This initiative is an example of the connected nature of the current governmental diaspora strategy as it strives to include diaspora engagement in all aspects of the country's development.

Diaspora Homeland Guide 2018

It was compiled as a central repository to support efficient process for Returning Saint Lucian nationals. It provides information to assist returnees navigating return, such as entitlements to possessions and information on pertinent organisations and bodies in Saint Lucia. There are also attractive incentives to start a business and for investments.

Saint Lucian skills mapping in the UK 2023

With support from a diaspora professional, Mandy Preville-Findlay, co-founder of Beyond Iyanola, EUDiF is equipping relevant departments of the government of Saint Lucia with the skills, knowledge and tools to map the skills of their diaspora. A full report on the skills profile of the Saint Lucian diaspora in the UK has been published.

Citizenship of Saint Lucia Act

In 2022, Saint Lucia held a second virtual diaspora engagement meeting to inform overseas nationals about plans to extend citizenship by descent. In 2024, following this outreach, the Parliament approved an amendment to the Citizenship of Saint Lucia Act, granting citizenship to second- and third-generation Saint Lucians born overseas, thereby reinforcing diaspora links and contributions to their country of origin.

National Migration Policy groundwork

In 2024, Saint Lucia and IOM laid the groundwork for its first comprehensive National Migration Policy through stakeholder consultations on migration and diaspora governance. In 2025, the government launched the policy development process, including stakeholder engagement, capacity building and a migration management workshop, marking progress towards more structured migration governance.



Observations

The “Observations” and “Obstacles” sections contain additional information on the context of diaspora engagement that does not fit directly into the other sections. They are based on a combination of literature review and comments from the authors. New information is incorporated during the annual updates. Readers are invited to verify the relevance of the information at the time of reading, as the context may have evolved.

Saint Lucia’s approach to diaspora engagement is growing strategically as it is putting in place mechanisms to build on successes implementing the diaspora engagement strategy (diaspora policy and homeland guide see below). Diaspora engagement has grown in recognition as a strategic priority for development leading to the creation of a Diaspora Affairs Ministerial Portfolio in the Office of the Prime Minister, headed by an Ambassador, to give special attention to the concerns of Saint Lucians resident in other countries. The External Relations Review Committee focused on the role of diaspora in trade whilst undertaking research on behalf of the Government of Saint Lucia, which laid out a strong argument for utilising diaspora for development.

The Ministry of External Affairs, International Trade, Civil Aviation and Diaspora Affairs, with 10 diplomatic missions and hundreds of foreign service officers located across all continents, has endeavoured to progress on diaspora engagement as a key focus for all overseas departments. In 2021, the ministry expanded to incorporate a Diaspora Affairs Unit, dedicated to ensuring diaspora priorities are kept at the forefront of policy development. The relocation of the Diaspora Affairs Unit from the Office of the Prime Minister to this ministry centred on the belief that it would achieve a better fit by more closely aligning diaspora engagement

with Saint Lucia's foreign and economic development policy. In less than a year, this has resulted in the development of the Office for Diaspora Affairs Work Programme (see above).

In 2021, the Prime Minister's party manifesto centred the need to invite highly skilled and distinguished Saint Lucians in the Diaspora back home to share their knowledge, achievements and experiences, as part of an annual event, to inspire and motivate diaspora youth. Additionally, in his 2022 New Year's Day address, the Prime Minister set out the government's intention to change the Constitution to offer citizenship to second generation Saint Lucians. This strategic move would significantly increase the access rights of the grandchildren of diaspora members seeking connections with their heritage, for example, descendants of the Windrush Generation in the UK.

To date, tourism is still the main economic driver for Saint Lucia, thus a significant portion of the country's resources are allocated to its development. In this regard, the Saint Lucia Tourism Authority rebranded their diaspora tourism programme to entice and reward citizens in the diaspora for coming home and contributing to the country's economic development. The new (2022) incentive initiative Lucian Links is another example of the connected nature of the current governmental diaspora strategy. Lucian Links, the Saint Lucia Tourism Authority diaspora tourism programme, was developed as a mean to keep the diaspora connected to their home country. It promotes local businesses and experiences to the diaspora through a discount scheme, with the aim to boost economic growth whilst increasing developing heritage tourism.

Other key areas the government focuses on for diaspora engagement are:

Diaspora philanthropy: Diaspora organisations and individuals made increased contributions to the island in light of the impact of COVID. Concessions on the receipt of barrels (parcels) from the diaspora were started earlier than previous years, and this was extended to cover the period of COVID to facilitate members of the diaspora providing assistance to family members at home.

Economic development: A key government interest is to target the diaspora as a source of Foreign Direct Investment (FDI). Invest Saint Lucia, the agency responsible for attracting and engaging potential investors, has made it a primary strategic objective to engage Saint Lucians based overseas with the view to attracting them to invest in the homeland.

Export: There has been an increased demand from diaspora communities for Saint Lucian domestic products, helping the country increase their exports to outside markets, including a reenergising of the banana market in the UK.

Skills mapping: The Saint Lucian Diaspora Affairs Office is exploring methods for data and skills capture with a view to harnessing diaspora capital for development. This is in its infancy but has the potential to provide a steady avenue for skills linked to in-country development.



Achievements

The diaspora is benefiting from increased connectivity for participation in home country activities virtually. This includes access to national parliamentary debates, festivals and commemorations including emancipation observances and reparation explorations hosted on the social media platforms of the Government of Saint Lucia and those of affiliate bodies. Furthermore, the development of communication channels between the Office for Diaspora Affairs and citizens living overseas is diversifying and strengthening.

Obstacles



- **Insufficient social protections schemes:** Saint Lucians choosing to retire to Saint Lucia after working abroad do not enjoy the same privileges as those who continue to stay in their host country after retirement.
- **Right to vote:** Though dual citizenship has been allowed by the Saint Lucian Government, there is currently no right to vote whilst living overseas. This hampers the diaspora's ability to engage in a civic activity, one which is often considered integral to identity and belonging.
- **Dearth of skills schemes:** There is no state-initiated or led avenue for competency sharing. This remains an avenue on which the Saint Lucian government has not yet formally capitalised.

Annex:

List of Actors

Explore the institutionalisation of diaspora engagement worldwide via the [typology of 520+ institutions](#)

Diaspora related institutions

- **At regional level**

Caribbean Community (CARICOM) 1973

CARICOM promotes regional integration through economic and trade union; coordination of the foreign policy and cooperation in areas such as health, education and culture, communications, and industrial relations.

Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) 1981

At regional level OECS was originated from a treaty signed by seven Eastern Caribbean countries “agreeing to cooperate and promote unity and solidarity among the Members.”

- **National institutions**

- At ministerial level

Ministry of External Affairs, International Trade and Civil Aviation 1979

After Saint Lucia gained independence in 1979, the government developed ministries to oversee the running of the country, including external affairs. The names and functions of the ministry in charge of external affairs changed over time. The current Ministry of External Affairs, International Trade, Civil Aviation and Diaspora Affairs oversees all legislation pertaining to the political and economic situations of other countries in relation to that of Saint Lucia, including diaspora engagement for development. It was constituted in 2021 after elections in July of that year. It facilitates the formal and diplomatic engagement of foreign governments with the aim of establishing co-operative and diplomatic relations with friendly countries.

Ministry of Home Affairs, Justice and National Security

The Ministry of Home Affairs, Justice and National Security oversees all legislation pertaining to the security and protection of Saint Lucians at home and via immigration services.

- At sub-ministerial level

Saint Lucia Diaspora Unit 2021

The Saint Lucia Diaspora Unit is located within the Ministry of External Affairs, International Trade and Civil Aviation. It is mandated to provide strategic and tangible oversight on the global Saint Lucian diaspora to determine how the governmental priorities for development are executed with the diaspora at the fore. It was established with the primary goal of “providing special attention to the concerns of Saint Lucians resident in other countries”.

The diaspora unit is pursuing the following objectives:

- To build partnerships between Saint Lucians living overseas and Saint Lucians at home;
- To encourage Saint Lucians living overseas to invest in their country;
- To encourage young Saint Lucians living overseas to maintain contact with their country; and
- To establish structures to facilitate Saint Lucians overseas in their efforts to reintegrate into the Saint Lucian community.



Diaspora organisations in Europe

Read more about diaspora organisations in "[Starting guide: What is a diaspora organisation](#)"



Anse-La-Rayé (St. Lucia) Association UK 1992

✔ Development activities

This charitable organisation was set up to raise funds to help in the development of Anse-La-Rayé, a small community to the west of the island of Saint Lucia. Their focus is to connect members from this community based in the UK "culturally and socially; to facilitate in the development and improvement of the local community; and to help increase the profile of Anse-La-Rayé in general." It undertakes community fund-raising and cultural activities within the UK.

BEYOND IYANOLA UK & Europe 2016

✔ Development activities

✔ Integration activities

BEYOND IYANOLA is a diaspora-focused community organisation which aims to identify, amplify and celebrate citizens of the global Saint Lucian diaspora for in-country development in collaboration with local, regional and international actors. In addition to connecting the diaspora through their publications, FOCUS 2020 and BEYOND IYANOLA Digest, the organisation continues to raise awareness of cultural heritage and works towards supporting Saint Lucia to make progress towards the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), in particular Goal 17, partnerships for the goals.

Canaries St Lucia (UK) Association UK

✔ Development activities

This London-based association aims to support home country development of the community of Canaries through collaborative fundraising and showcasing of cultural activities within the UK facilitated by members of the Canaries diaspora, resident in the UK.

Friends of St Lucia UK 2016

✔ Development activities

✔ Integration activities

Based in London, Friends of Saint Lucia undertakes a range of activities geared towards people and nation development and building with an international outlook. It has a focus on cultural heritage preservation through the hosting of a range of heritage commemorations.

Gros Islet (St. Lucia) Community Association in the UK UK 1971

✔ Development activities

Focusing on assisting the development of the Gros Islet community located to the north of the island of Saint Lucia, the association works to build links within the Gros Islet diaspora in the UK in order to inspire development locally.

Ju Cares UK 2020

✔ Development activities

In an effort to support families in need of medical support in Saint Lucia, Ju Cares developed during the COVID-19 pandemic. It continues to bring medical relief to communities across Saint Lucia, as well as collaborating with other diaspora organisations within the UK.

The Lucian Crew Association Martinique 2015 **Development**

The Lucian Crew Association was created to connect the Saint Lucian Diaspora in Martinique on cultural and social lines.

Micoud UK Committee UK 2015 **Development activities**

The Micoud UK Committee aims to contribute positively to the development of the district of Micoud and its environs through a programme of community engagement on the ground whilst collaborating with other diaspora organisations to support key development priorities, especially around education.

St Lucia Association of London UK 1963 **Development activities** **Integration activities**

This association was founded in 1963 to keep Saint Lucian citizens in the United Kingdom connected during a time of global upheaval. It continues this aim today alongside supporting home country development where possible.

St. Lucia Diabetes Project UK 2003 **Development activities**

The St. Lucia Diabetes Project UK works to continue “supporting the prevention and treatment of diabetes in St. Lucia” through in-country training of health professionals and offering community education.

UK 758 UK 2021 **Development activities**

This Saint Lucian Diaspora collective developed out of a need to support Saint Vincent and the Grenadines during the volcanic eruption on the island in 2021. The group still works to support crisis situations both at home and across the Caribbean, and actively supports the Saint Lucian Diaspora within the UK and Europe to promote and amplify their skills and businesses.

Association Culturelle des Saintes Luciens de Guyane French Guyana **Development**

The Association Culturelle des Saintes Luciens de Guyane was developed to keep the cultural identity of Saint Lucians living in French Guyana alive.

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