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Research on migrant and refugee populations in Cape Town

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A summary

Numbers

There are around 400,000 people who are 'foreign born' in the Western Cape. At least 54% have children - often more than one child. The target audience is typically in the lower-income brackets and, due to a variety of factors, they can struggle to ensure access to services for their children.

Nationality + Documentation

Typically, they are originally from Zimbabwe, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Somalia, and other Southern and Central African countries. Importantly, many of the target audience struggle to ensure their documentation remains valid in South Africa. This, in turn, impacts their ability to document their children. Audience members on asylum-seeking status spend large amounts of time, every three or six months, to renew their paperwork at the Refugee Reception Office. Undocumented audience members perhaps seek advice on documentation, accessing NGOs and other hubs of information.

Location

These adults and families are clustered across Cape Town with hubs of people around the Southern Suburbs, Bellville, Dunoon and Joe Slovo, Cape Flats and Imizamo Yethu. The majority of our target audience use public transport; targeting them at this time (as they sit in traffic) might be beneficial. According to research, the two most popular major transport routes for migrants in Cape Town are the west-east Voortrekker Road and the north-south Main Road. Religious institutions, schools, NGOs, state and non-state institutions, workplaces, are often hubs which are contacted and connected to by the target audience.

Income + Education

The majority of the target audience earn under R8,000 per month and are often in quite precarious socio-economic conditions. Many of the target audience send money back to their home countries (remittances). There is often very little surplus income for this target audience. A large majority (estimated 90%) have matriculation-equivalent education or above, and employment rates are good (migrants are more likely to be self-employed than South Africans). In general they display attitudes of adaptation, survival, resilience and entrepreneurialism - attitudes that are vital in order to migrate and set up a new life in a different country.

Communications

In terms of communications, no known studies exist on migrants and communications - but the prohibitively expensive data costs in South Africa limit exposure to online-based communications. In internal censuses, Scalabrini found that 70% of clients had smartphones, 69% have emails. The best way to contact clients was reported, by clients, to be WhatsApp (13%), SMS (33%), Calls (17%) or e-mail (13%).

Our target audience in greater detail…

Numbers

There are just under 400,000 foreign-born people in the Western Cape

Between 4-7% of the population is 'foreign-born'. According to StatsSA estimates, the Western Cape population is 7,00,5741. If we take the average of 5.5% of the population to be foreign-born, there are currently around 385,315 foreign-born people in the Western Cape. Nationally, using the same population estimates, we can estimate there to be 3,279,229 foreign-born people in South Africa.

According to a 2017 Census (on Scalabrini clients *only* over the period of a week), 54% of migrant and refugee clients had children. They had the following children in South Africa:

- No dependents at all: 46%
- One child: 12%
- Two children: 15%
- Three children: 10%
- Four children: 9%
- Five children: 3%
- Six or more children: 5%

Nationality

Our target audience is mainly from other African countries.

According to the Human Sciences Research Council, and according to the last official census (although this is now nine years ago), migrants in Cape Town fall into the following categories:

Country of birth	Number	Percentage	Percentage of foreign born
Zimbabwe	44,772	1.27%	35.97%
UK/Europe	14,820	0.42%	11.91%
DRC	8,101	0.23%	6.51%
Namibia	7,549	0.21%	6.06%
Somalia	6,663	0.19%	5.35%
Mozambique	3,209	0.09%	2.58%
Nigeria	2,568	0.07%	2.06%
India	2,010	0.06%	1.61%
China	1430	0.04%	1.15%
Lesotho	1044	0.03%	0.84%

Ghana	623	0.02%	0.50%
Botswana	526	0.01%	0.42%
Swaziland	344	0.01%	0.28%
Bangladesh	797	0.02%	0.64%
Other*	30,014	0.85%	24.11%

Table 1: Country of birth of the population of Cape Town: 2011 Census

Other = Pakistan, Malawi, Botswana, Swaziland, Angola, Burundi, Rwanda, Cameroon, Congo-Brazzaville, Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia, Eretria, Chad, Sudan, Burkina Faso, Algeria.

Neighborhoods

According to the 2011 Census, the following neighborhoods had the 'highest proportionate concentrations of non-South African born residents':

- Sea Point
- Masiphumelele
- Claremont
- Imizamo Yethu
- Green Point
- Woodstock
- Table View and
- Joe Slovo Park.

Eleven wards had more than 1,000 Zimbabwean-born residents. These included:

- Brooklyn
- Steenberg
- Masiphumelele
- Imizamo Yethu
- Asanda
- Nomzamo
- Lwandle
- Marconi Beam and
- Dunoon.

We'd also add Bellville (mainly Somali nationals reside here) and Maitland.

The HSRC also confirms using more recent data from an NGO found that their Zimbabwean and DRC clients were mainly spread across:

- The inner city (Woodstock, Sea Point, CBD),
- The north-west coast (Table View, Milnerton),
- The Voortrekker Road zone (Kraaifontein, Bellville, Parow, Maitland, Goodwood),
- The Cape Flats (Philippi, Gugulethu, Delft, Athlone, Langa, Mitchell's Plain, Khayelitsha),

- The south peninsula (Hout Bay) and,
- Wynberg.

Note: it is important to keep in mind that there is a high residential mobility (i.e. our target audience moves around a lot) as a strategy to survive, seek employment, evade xenophobia and so on.

Transport and roads

Our target audience largely uses public transport: public taxis, buses (Golden Arrow and MiCiti) and trains. According to HSRC, The two most popular major transport routes for migrants in Cape Town are the west-east Voortrekker Road and the north-south Main Road.

Employment and earnings

SAMP surveyed migrant-owned businesses in Cape Town. Of those surveyed, they had previously found work as

- unskilled manual workers (20%),
- skilled manual workers (11%),
- domestic workers, (10%),
- farmworkers (6%) and,
- security workers (5%).

Those who started their own businesses were typically small (under the value of R10,000), and typically bought stock from wholesalers (usually in Epping). Furthermore, 2010 research in the South African Journal of Economic and Management Sciences found the following business types owed by migrants across South Africa.

Sector	Activity	Main nationalities
Retail	Curio selling	Malawi, Mozambique and Zimbabwe
	Clothing	West Africa
	Food retail	West Africa
Service	Car repairs and panel beating	Mozambique and Zimbabwe
	Hairdressing	All
	Operating restaurants	West Africa
Production	Traditional clothing	West Africa
	Wedding dresses	West Africa

	General tailoring	Malawi
Other business sectors	Nightclubs	West Africa
	Cafes	West Africa
	Import/exports	West Africa
	Music shops	Central Africa and West Africa
	Traditional healing	East Africa and West Africa

Table 2: Migrants' business clusters according to their origins

According to the Employment Access Programme (EAP) at SCCT, as of 2019/2020:

- In terms of main employers of non-South Africans, EAP finds that the hospitality are the main industry for hiring foreign nationals, followed by retail and private households. It is usually small businesses that hire non-South Africans as once a company gets too big they are restricted by BBBEE.
- The following top-8 employment sectors were recorded for EAP clients: Hospitality (26%), Household assistant (7%), General worker (6%), Drivers (6%), Security (5%), Artisan (5%), Childcare (5%).

According to a 2017 Census (on Scalabrini clients *only* over the period of a week), clients reported falling into the following brackets over the previous month. Please note that one of the services at Scalabrini is an Employment Access Programme, so there may be lower employment rates than in the actual migrant population.

- 0-R800: 69%
- R801-R1500: 5%
- R1501-R3000: 11%
- R3001-R8000: 13%
- R8001+: 3%

Documentation

According to statistics gathered by SCCT, in 2019, clients held the following documentation statuses:

Documentation Type	Percentage
Asylum Seeker	36.95
Medical Visa	0.02
Other	1.29
Permanent Residence	0.93
Refugee	15.75

Relative Visa	0.13
South African Citizen	6.83
Special Dispensation Permits (ZEP, ASP, LSP)	2.03
Spouses Permit	0.02
Study Permit	2.10
Undocumented	17.23
Unknown	2.78
Visitor Visa	0.51
Work Permit	1.72
Not captured	11.72

Finmark found that 68% of SADC nationals in South Africa are undocumented migrants.

In terms of communications, those on asylum seeker status will have to visit a RRO every one to three months to remain on a valid permit, whereas a refugee must visit an RRO every one to four years. Immigration permits vary but to make an extension within South Africa, VFS offices have to be visited. Undocumented people may reach out to organizations such as immigration lawyers, advisors and NGOs for advice.

Education

The target audience is likely to have received an education.

Timberg found that a UN survey of asylum seekers in South Africa indicates that immigrants are relatively skilled and well-educated, with two-thirds holding a high school diploma or higher. According to a 2017 Census (on Scalabrini clients *only* over the period of a week), clients reported the following levels of education held:

- Clients with Advanced Degree: 3%
- Clients with University Degree: 19%
- Clients with Tech/College: 15%
- Clients with Secondary School/Matric: 53%
- Clients with Primary School: 6%
- No Education: 4%

Media consumption and sources of information

Most have cellphones, but data is expensive: WhatsApp and SMS are best.

The expense of data in South Africa makes heavy-data usage prohibitively expensive: the average price of 1GB of data in South Africa is R106. According to a 2017 Census (on Scalabrini clients *only* over the period of a week), 70% of clients had a smartphone, whereas 30% did not.

In the same survey, access to emails was recorded. Here it was found that 41% do not have access to emails, whereas 37% check their emails one-three times per week, 22% checked their e-mails between four and ten times (or more) per week.

When asked what is the best way to contact clients, the 2017 Census at Scalabrini found the following preferences among clients:

- Email: 13%
- WhatsApp: 37%
- SMS: 33%
- Call: 17%

Use of state services and barriers to access

In our experience, clients are likely to use the following services:

- Department of Home Affairs – typically the Refugee Reception Office on the Foreshore and sometimes the Civic Home Affairs (Barrack Street, Bellville, etc). Those on asylum documentation frequent the Refugee Reception Office on a regular basis (every three to six months) and spend a long time waiting there before being attended to by officials.
- Schools: The 2017 Scalabrini Census found that 54% of migrant and refugee clients had children. They were asked about their child's access to this education. At 87%, a majority of clients successfully enrolled their children in school – whereas 13% did not. Their reasons for the non-enrollment of their children in school was documentation issues (23%), a lack of funds (23%), full schools (4%) - no answer was provided in 50% of cases.
- Clinics: The 2017 Scalabrini Census found that 33% of our clients needing healthcare access had difficulty accessing it in South Africa

Use of commercial services: remittances, shops, calling home

In terms of remittances, the 2017 Scalabrini Census found that 41% of clients sent money home to their families (59% did not). Around 11,2 billion rands are remitted from South Africa to SADC regions annually. Typical companies would be Mama Money, Mukhuru, World Remit, TransferWise, and to a lesser extent older companies like Western Union.

Finmark found that SADC migrants use various means to send money home. Namely:

- By taxi or bus (42%)
- With friends or family (24%)
- Bank Transfer (12%)
- Money transfer agents (8%)
- Post office (8%)

In terms of shops and other services, this is much like South African counterparts: supermarkets, etc. One might assume that specific shops would cater to migrant demand such as food shops that import food goods from elsewhere in Africa.

Calling home apps or companies such as Flash, Mytelo, are used but likely superseded by WhatsApp and other such apps.