



IOM International Organization for Migration



ZIMBABWE

MAPPING EXERCISE
LONDON, DECEMBER 2006

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The aim of this Mapping Report is to guide IOM's outreach activities and communications strategies. The report does not purport to be exhaustive. The mapping consultant who conducted the exercise and wrote the report on behalf of IOM has taken every effort to ensure accuracy in his/her reporting and the views expressed in this report are his/hers. IOM cannot be held responsible for any omissions or inaccuracies.



1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 AIM OF THE MAPPING EXERCISE, TARGET GROUP AND METHODOLOGY

The mapping exercise aimed to identify the main communication channels used by the Zimbabwean diaspora in order to “make IOM and its voluntary return programmes known and understood”¹ by the Zimbabwean community in the UK. In the process, the exercise obtained a demographic profile of respondents that relates to their gender, age, and length of residence in the UK.

The qualitative and quantitative data used in this paper grew out of 50 informal interviews and a survey of 43 Zimbabwean respondents, from different racial, ethnic, and political backgrounds. The fieldwork was carried out during a three-month period from September 2006 to November 2006. The research adopted a variety of approaches, including structured questionnaires, informal interviews, and statistical information. Informal interviews allowed for more spontaneous and flexible responses from the participants whereas the 43 respondents completed a standardised questionnaire.

The report is based on the following data sources.

- I. Community Organisations.** Informal interviews were conducted with Zimbabwean community leaders who included representatives of asylum seekers, political leaders, pressure groups, migrant community leaders, and shop owners.
- II. Church leaders.** It was necessary to interview church leaders to get a complete picture of the complexity of the Zimbabwean diaspora.. Churches were used as points of access but interviews were carried out in people’s own homes and in restaurants.
- III. Individual Zimbabweans.** The primary data sources were the 43 questionnaires and 50 informal interviews. These were carried out with Zimbabweans from across racial, ethnic, and religious boundaries.
- IV Existing literature.** The research took account of emerging literature and resources about the Zimbabwean diaspora, such as newspaper articles, Home Office documents, and scholarly material.

The immediate research outcome, gleaned from the completed questionnaires, informal interviews, participant observations and Internet searches is a comprehensive contact list, which IOM can use to disseminate information about its voluntary return programmes but which will be used solely as an internal document ².

¹ From the mission statement of the IOM Communication Department .

² This document is confidential and does not form part of this report.

1.1.1 Research Challenges

The vast majority of Zimbabweans in the UK are undocumented migrants, that is they do not have the legal status to stay in this country and they may be subject to compulsory removal if arrested. In these circumstances, it is difficult to access people who spend much of their time trying to avoid detection, trying to be invisible. An immediate concern among diasporic Zimbabweans was whether IOM's consultant worked for the Home Office or was a member of the Zimbabwean Intelligence Organisation. Their suspicion is not just of researchers but of anyone who appears to be present in an "official" capacity. In this sense, conducting the mapping exercise among the Zimbabwean diaspora was research in a sensitive area.

1.1.2 Migration Timeline

For the purpose of this report, Zimbabwean migration history can be conceptualised in three phases. The first wave of emigration was of White Zimbabweans: this occurred soon after independence. It has been estimated that between 1980 and 1984, 50,000 to 60,000 Whites left the country because they could not adjust to the changed political circumstances (Zinyama 2002). The second wave of migration relates to the period from 1990 to 1997. In 1990, Zimbabwe introduced the Economic Structural Adjustment Programme, which the IMF/World Bank had prescribed and which was designed to restore the economy to rapid growth. The programme brought severe hardship to the people, and many professionals, such as teachers, nurses and doctors, adopted migration as a response. The third wave of migration began in 1998 and has continued until today, rising and falling in line with political events in Zimbabwe, as well as immigration policies abroad.

An examination of the official United Kingdom data on Zimbabweans who came to the UK between 1993 and 2005, allows a projection of the total size of the Zimbabwean diaspora in the UK. If none of the Zimbabweans who visited the UK during the period 1990 – 2005 returned to their home country, there would now be 395,800 Zimbabweans in the UK³.

³ Home Office 2002; Chetsanga and Muchenje 2003; Home Office 2003; Home Office 2004; Home Office 2005; Home Office 2006

1.2 NATURE OF THE ZIMBABWEAN DIASPORA

The Zimbabwean community in the UK is heterogeneous and fractured along racial, ethnic, class, and political lines. There are asylum seekers, refugees, labour migrants, students, undocumented migrants, and others who have acquired British nationality.

The UK government introduced visas for Zimbabweans intending to travel to the UK. As Ranger (2005, 411) explains: “At the beginning of November 2002 a visa requirement was imposed on all Zimbabweans travelling to Britain. It was no longer good enough to turn up at the airport, as nearly all the asylum-seekers had done, with a passport and a plane ticket.” Because of these changes, a new and sophisticated wave of immigration emerged and this has continued to the present. This shift from a permissive immigration policy to a control-oriented policy led Zimbabweans to acquire South African, Malawian, and Zambian passports in order to travel to the UK.

1.2.1 Zimbabweans and IOM

Before this mapping exercise began, the Asylum and Immigration Tribunal (AIT) ruled in August 2006 that “refused” asylum seekers from Zimbabwe no longer face persecution automatically if they are returned to their country. The ruling meant that failed asylum seekers in the UK were faced with the possibility of imminent compulsory deportation. This shaped the research field in some ways because Zimbabweans were cautiously waiting to see what the government would do. In this period of waiting, rumours and misinformation spread amongst Zimbabweans about IOM’s role in the voluntary return projects *vis-à-vis* the AIT ruling. Most of the people interviewed felt the government was using IOM as a tool to control or manage immigration to Britain.

There is a deep-rooted fear and anger directed against the Home Office and the Central Intelligence Organisation (CIO), Robert Mugabe’s secretive police. The Zimbabwean diaspora recognises the contribution made by IOM through the research recently carried out by Alice Bloch⁴ but some Zimbabweans allege that IOM is doing the Home Office’s “dirty work”.⁵ Zimbabwean organisations and refugee groups are still fighting a long legal battle with the Home Office. Some regard IOM’s offer of voluntary return packages as undermining their efforts because it gives the government an alternative. Some are not prepared to take it until the court case has been finalised.

However, this report acknowledges the efforts made by IOM to engage with Zimbabwean community organisations as a positive step in gaining the confidence and trust of Zimbabweans in the UK.

⁴ Bloch, A. (2005). “The Development Potential of Zimbabweans in the Diaspora: A Survey of Zimbabweans in the UK and South Africa.”

⁵ Zimbabwean meeting at IOM’s London office, 26 September 2006.

2 MAPPING EXERCISE OUTCOMES

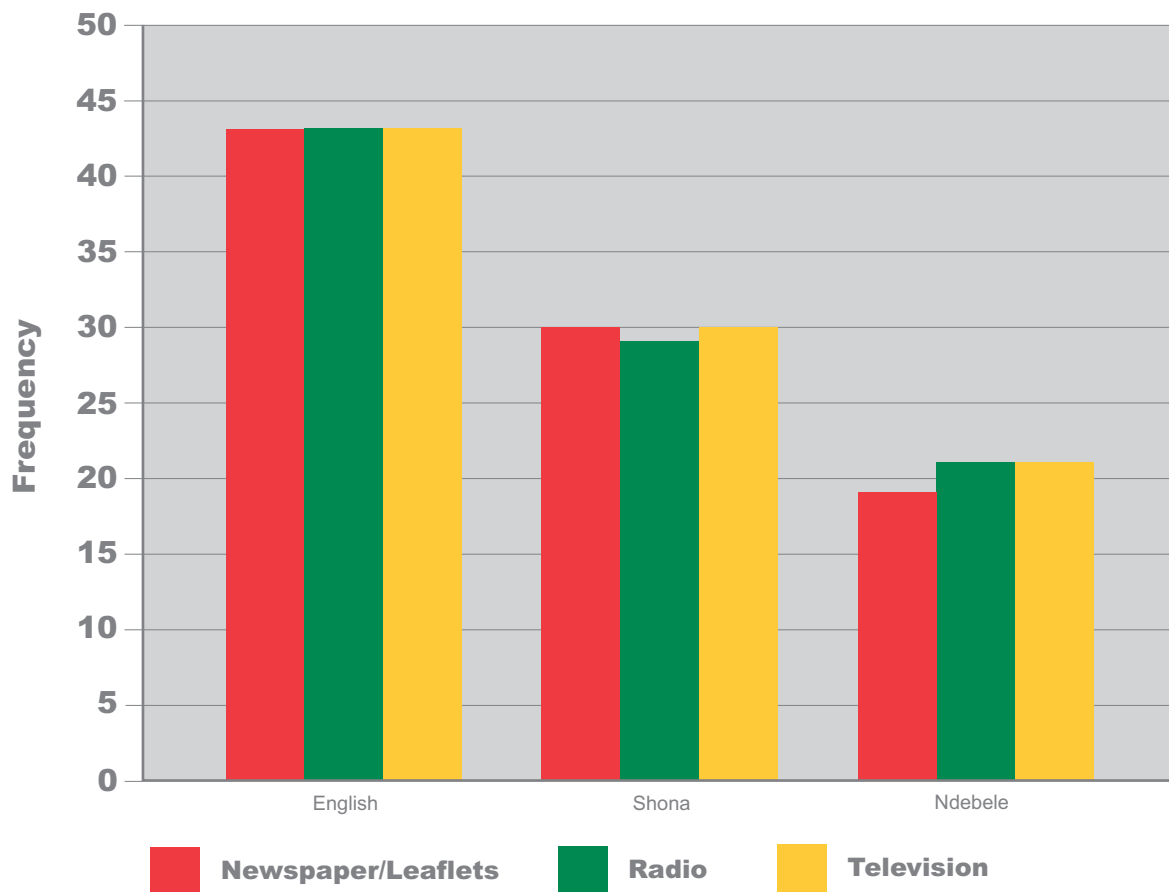
INFORMATION CHANNELS

The main modes of communication used by the Zimbabwean community are word of mouth, online websites, and Internet radio, with English as their preferred language.

2.1 ENGLISH AS A PREFERRED LANGUAGE

Zimbabweans prefer English for communication. This preference for English should be taken to mean that the indigenous languages of Zimbabwe are slowly dying out in the UK. But, it also reflects the mix of respondents: some were from the Ndebele, and some were from the Shona.

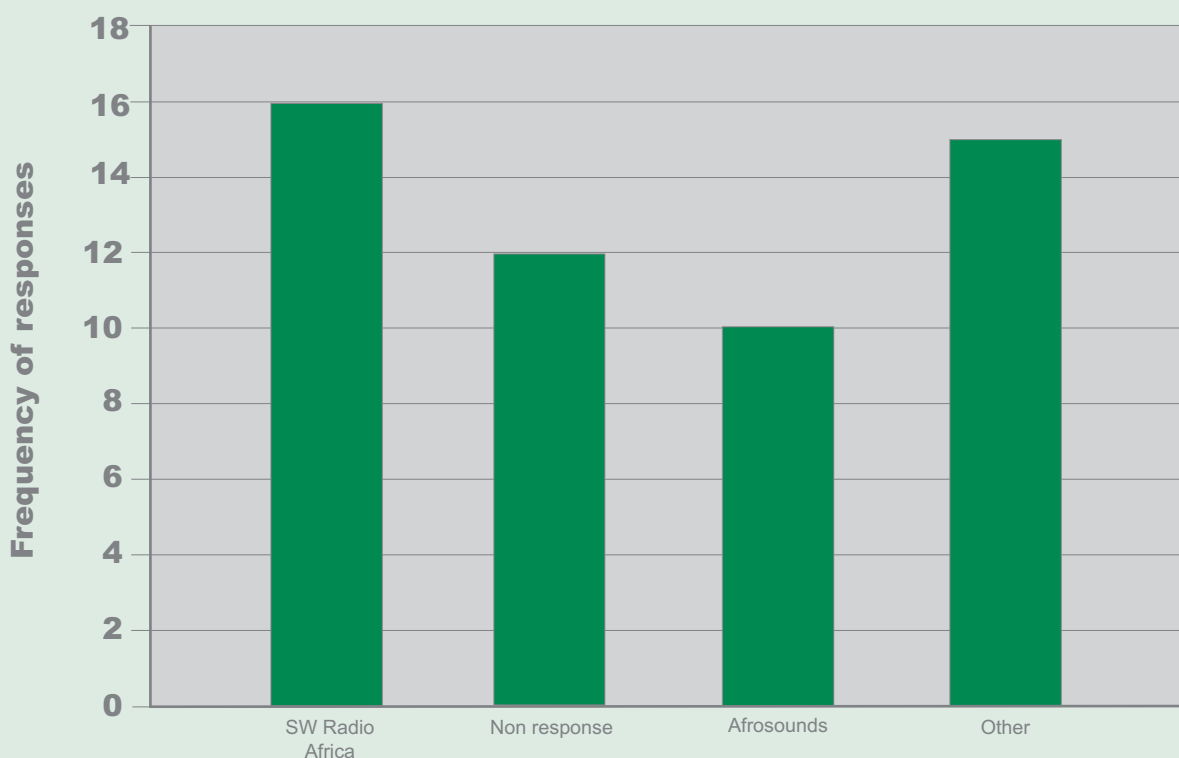
Figure 1: Preferred Language



2.2 INTERNET RADIO

All Zimbabwean radio stations in the diaspora, with the exception of *SW Radio Africa*, broadcast over the Internet. *SW Radio Africa* is both a traditional (“terrestrial”) radio station and an Internet radio station. Internet radio stations, operated with few costs or legislative hurdles are a fast-growing phenomenon amongst the Zimbabwean diaspora. Currently, there are more than six Zimbabwean Internet radios station. Although they all appeal to the Zimbabwean audience in different ways, the major attraction remains that they play Zimbabwean music and have become avenues for sharing the diasporic experience. The results of the mapping exercise suggest that IOM should advertise in *SW Radio Africa*, *Afrosounds*, *Zonet*, *Zimnet*, and *Shayafm*, taking account of the fact each Internet radio station appeals to a different audience.

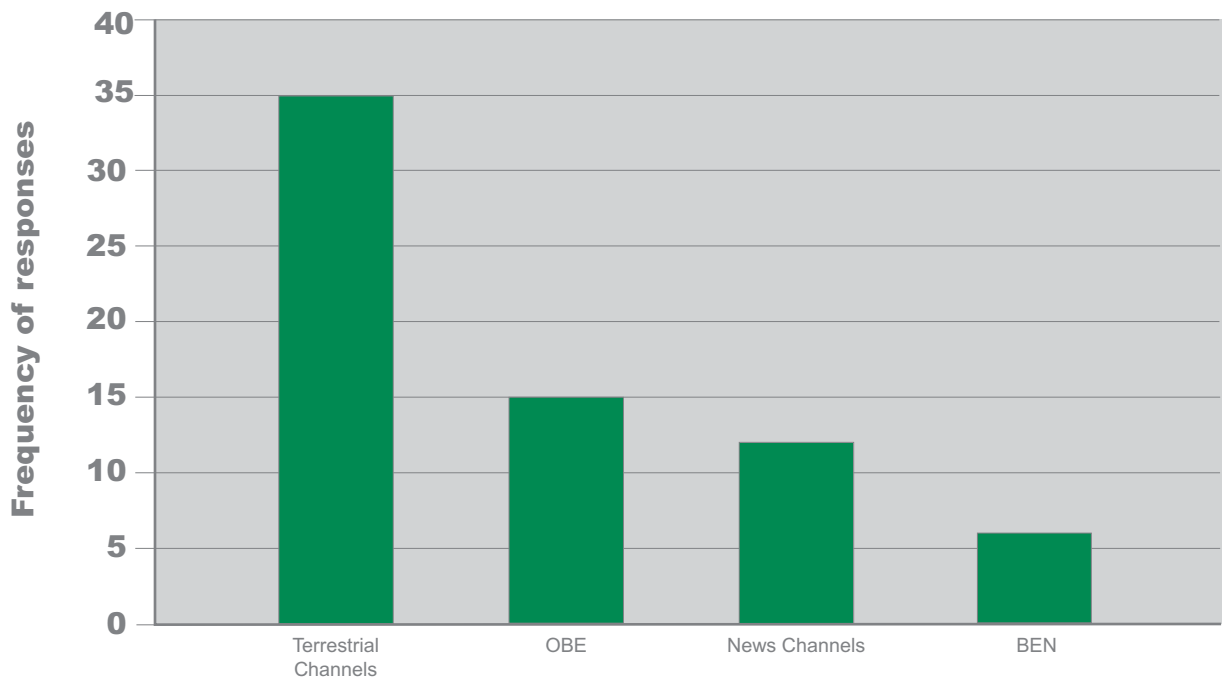
Figure 2: Radio



2.3 TELEVISION

Some Zimbabweans would like to watch African TV channels like *OBE* and *BEN* but these are only available on Sky and the majority of them may not be able to afford the subscription. It should be recognised that, whilst advertising on African channels is a good idea as a general means of spreading information about IOM's programmes, it is less likely that the audience will be failed asylum seekers or irregular migrants.

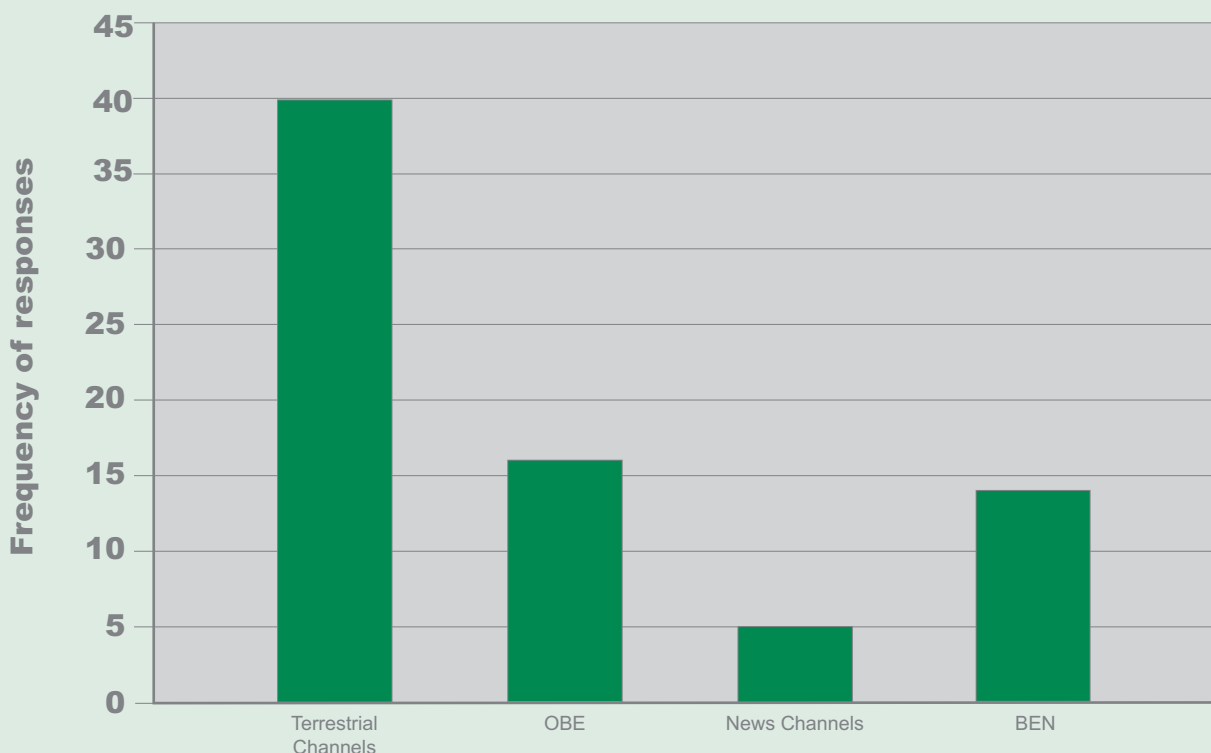
Figure 3: Television



2.4 NEWSPAPER AND MAGAZINE READERSHIP

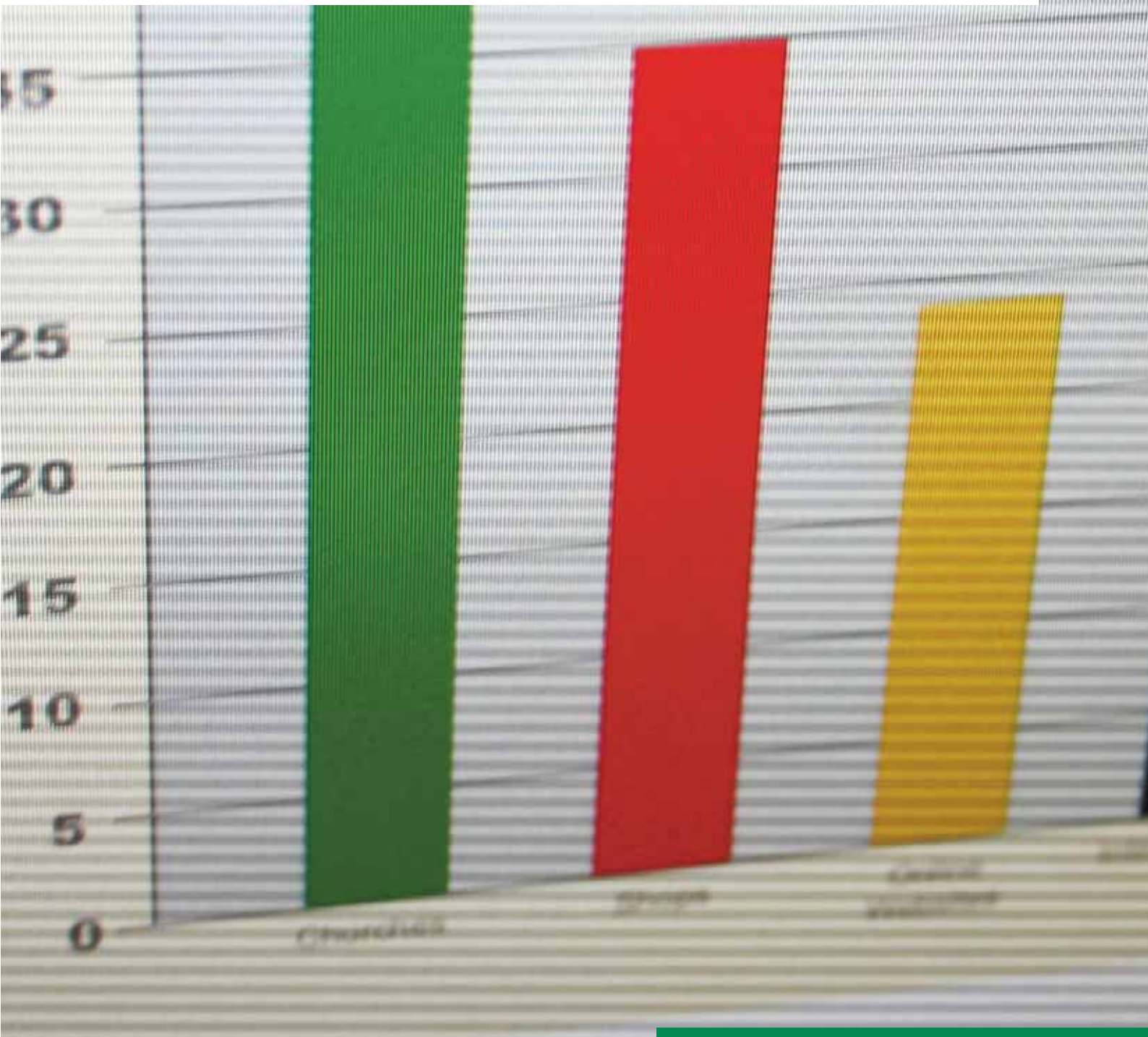
The majority of Zimbabweans read online newspapers both from their country of origin and those published within the diaspora. *The Zimbabwean* is the only newspaper published in the UK. However, relatively few Zimbabweans in the diaspora read the hard copy because of poor distribution. The paper has hired a consultancy company to improve this. The *Fusion Voice*, which used to be published in Leeds, and was designed to serve displaced Zimbabweans who have made a home in the United Kingdom, is now defunct. The results of the mapping exercise suggest that IOM should advertise in *New Zimbabwe*, the most frequently visited site in the diaspora, *Zimdaily*, *TalkZimbabwe*, *Change Zimbabwe*, *Inkundla* and many of the other sites recommended in the contact list. No Zimbabwean magazines were identified.

Figure 4: Newspaper/Magazine Readership



2.5 ONLINE WEBSITES

The Zimbabwean diaspora has exploited its cultural capital by investing in numerous online websites. Some have been operating for a fairly long time but most have had a short life for various reasons. The absence of Zimbabwean print media in the UK, save for *The Zimbabwean*, has resulted in the sprouting of these online publications. IOM should advertise on some of these websites, paying attention to the way that ethnicity, race and class inform these online papers. There are websites that predominantly cater for the Ndebele audience, like *Mthwakazi online*, whereas *Goffal* is for the Zimbabwean coloured community. Although *NewZimbabwe.com* is now attempting to offer a balanced view, it is generally biased towards Matebeleland and the Ndebele people. On the other hand, *Zimdaily* is biased towards Mashonaland and the Shona people. The fact that these online sites take a particular political standpoint obviously also shapes the audience that clicks on the websites.



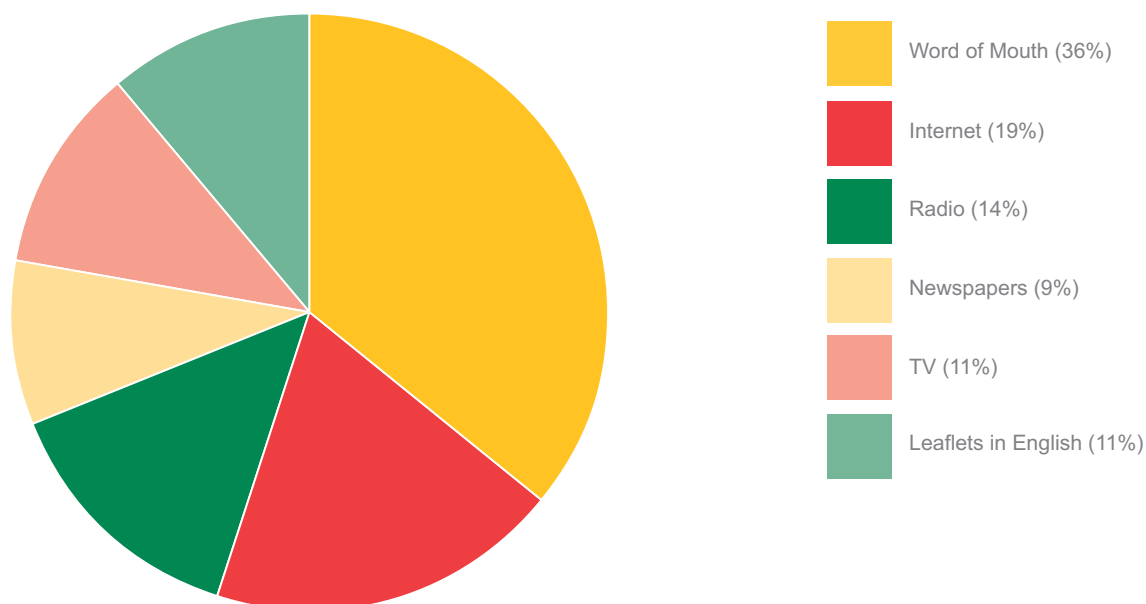
3 COMMON SOURCES OF INFORMATION

The majority of Zimbabwean migrants in Britain are first generation and they maintain active connections to their homeland through telephone calls, e-mails, text messages, letters, and remittances.

3.1 TEXT MESSAGING

The role of modern day technology like Internet facilities, telephones, faxes and e-mails in maintaining social relations between migrants and their homeland and between migrants themselves has already been stressed. However, the use of text messaging within the Zimbabwean diaspora as a means of communication is very widespread. It is through text messages that Zimbabweans in Britain know the current parallel exchange rate, how to send money to their loved ones. It is the medium through which they make political and social jokes about the homeland's fast-collapsing economy. Text messages are used to convey messages about meetings, appointments, and social events in the diaspora. However, quite apart from the difficult of IOM obtaining personal mobile phone numbers, any attempt to promulgate voluntary return information by text message would be regarded as intrusive, and would therefore be counter-productive.

Figure 5: Common Sources of Information



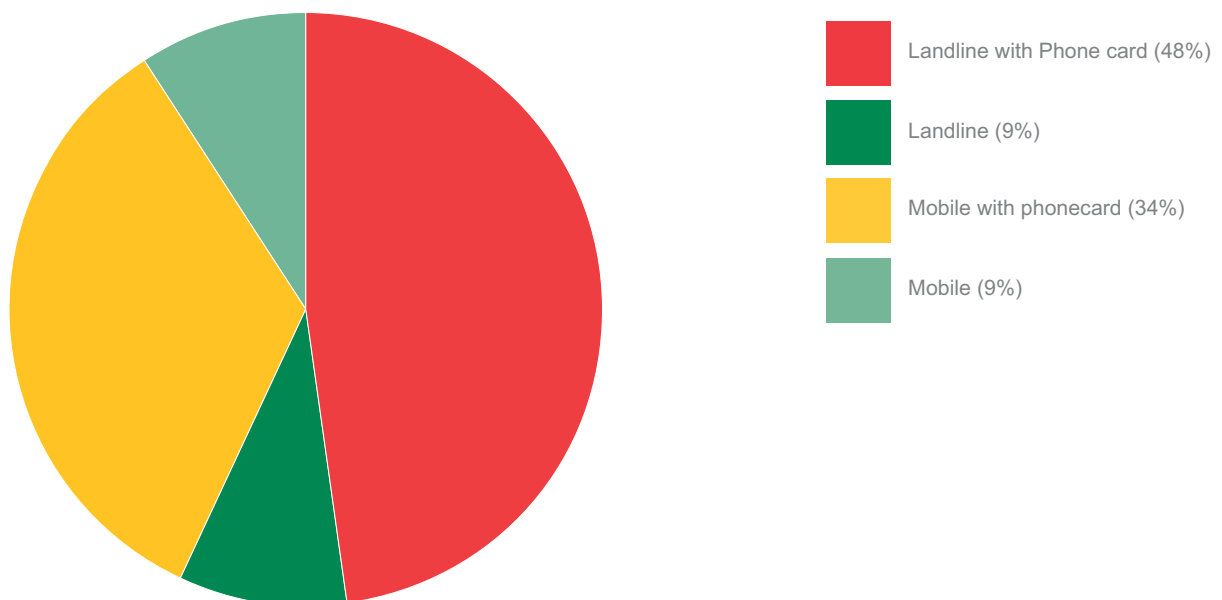
3.2 THE INTERNET

According to community leaders and interviews with individuals, the majority of Zimbabweans are highly skilled in accessing the Internet, having become so in their homeland. A significant finding of this research is the extent to which the Zimbabwean diaspora uses the Internet. They use it not only to listen to Internet radio and read the news, but also to keep in touch with relatives in Zimbabwe. IOM should consider advertising on websites frequented by both the Ndebele and the Shona.

3.3 PHONE CALLS

The table below shows that Zimbabweans still maintain contact with their families and friends in the homeland through telephone calls. However, it would be difficult for IOM to advertise on selected phone cards because Zimbabweans constantly change from one phone card to another, depending which currently offers more time for the price.

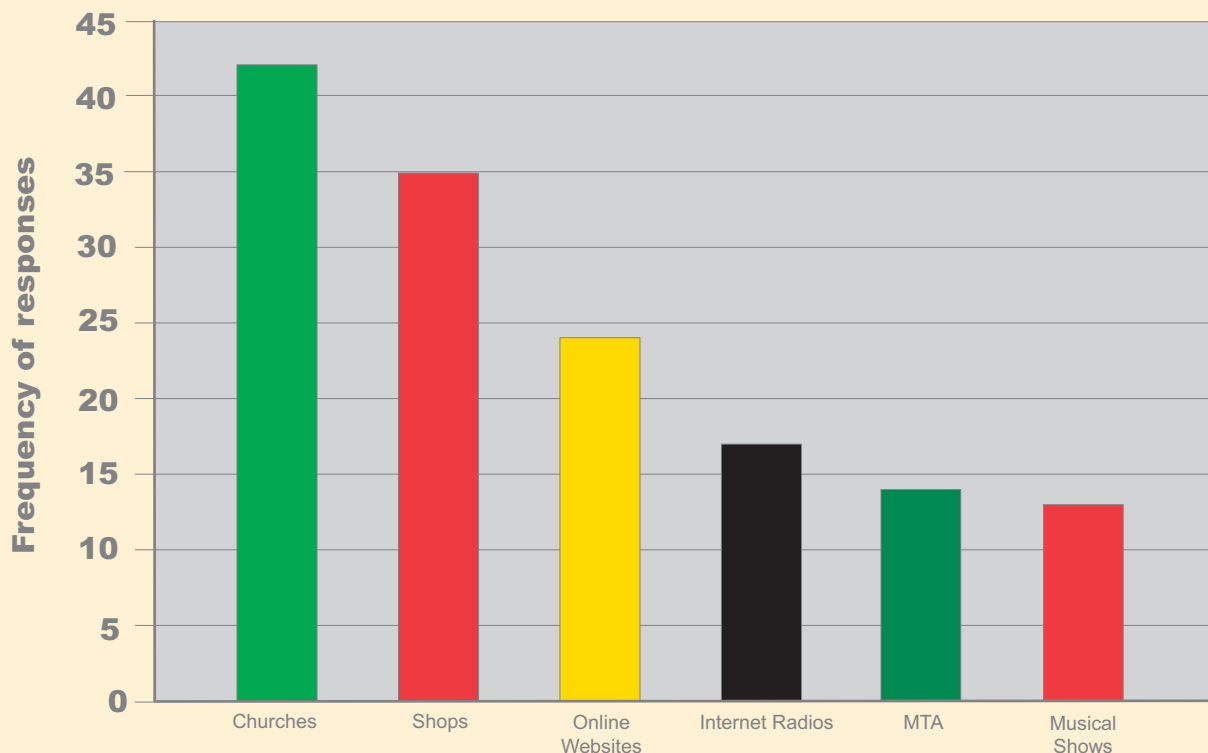
Figure 6: Phone Calls



3.4 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR LOCATIONS FOR IOM PUBLICITY MATERIAL

The figure below identifies where IOM should place its information material in order to reach Zimbabweans in the UK.

Figure 7: Recommended locations for publicity material



In the above table, MTA is used as an acronym for money transfer agencies.

3.4.1 Community Organisations

The interviews held with community organisations, church leaders and individual Zimbabweans all suggest that IOM should distance itself, wherever possible, from the Home Office. For example, cases where Zimbabweans received letters from the Home Office with only IOM contact details on them contributed immensely to strengthening their suspicion that IOM is working secretly for the Home Office. The suspicion, whether real or imagined, is detrimental to IOM’s image. It is for this reason that IOM should try to dissociate itself from the Home Office in its dealings with migrants. It should be noted that the membership of most Zimbabwean organisations includes significant numbers of exiled Zimbabwean journalists. Some of them are quick to run articles demonising the work of IOM on their websites.

IOM has been engaging with the Zimbabwean community in the UK in various forums. IOM should continue with this engagement in order to dispel the myths and misinformation that easily spread through diaspora information channels. These organisations need to know facts, but it is often the case that they rely on rumours. “Stories of Return” should be available to them, including statistical evidence on the number of Zimbabweans who have been assisted by IOM, and why they decided to return to a country which many organisations regard as an unsafe destination.

3.4.2 Diaspora Churches and IOM

The consultant observed a significant phenomenon that has emerged among Zimbabweans in Britain: the manner in which religion has become the most potent influence in bringing the fragmented community together. Diaspora churches are an extension of homeland churches, with most of their services conducted in Shona and Ndebele. There are few cities in Britain where you would fail to find Zimbabwean diaspora congregations. This pattern could potentially lead to the establishment of a strong Zimbabwean community in Britain. Churches create a space in exile for Zimbabweans to feel at home. These are not only sites for religious activities but spaces where Zimbabweans have a sense of belonging.

In order for IOM to reach out to Zimbabweans in the UK, the Information team should work closely with these churches. Identifying individual churches, negotiating entry, gaining the confidence of their pastors, and distributing leaflets: all these are steps in a process which is not easy. There is still the underlying fear of IOM being a pseudonym for the Home Office. IOM should therefore try to build a lasting and open relationship with diaspora churches and organisations, through individuals trusted by the community. .

A new mechanism should be established to keep in contact with the churches of the diaspora if they are to be used to distribute leaflets and other IOM material. Most of the Zimbabwean congregations are mobile, with relatively few fixed places of worship.

3.4.3 Concerts

Hardly a month passes by without Zimbabwean musicians performing live music shows in the UK. The frequency of the shows, and the huge number of Zimbabweans attending them, mean this is another potential link through which IOM can advertise its programmes. Places frequently associated with the concerts include London, Birmingham, Leicester, Wolverhampton, Milton Keynes, Slough, Luton, Oxford, Manchester, and Bradford. Concerts draw upon a different kind of audience than the one that attends church. IOM should work with music promoters to have their message printed on the tickets and on the flyers that are handed out to people attending the shows.

During the mapping exercise fieldwork, contacts were established with a music promoter who, at the time, agreed in principle to have IOM’s message printed on his tickets. The challenge which comes with this recommendation is that almost every Zimbabwean in the diaspora wants to become a music promoter, making it difficult to keep track of forthcoming musical events.

3.4.4 Money Transfer Agencies

Zimbabweans consistently define their diaspora as temporary. This reflects their attachment to their homeland. As one respondent said, “A Zimbabwean is looking for a house back home, that’s why the governor of the Reserve Bank came up with the Diaspora Housing Scheme and it is being snapped up quickly. Every Zimbabwean is asking himself: ‘When I go back home what will they say I was doing?’ With the Zimbabwean government in dire need of foreign currency, anecdotal evidence suggests that the country is surviving because of the remittances being sent by those in the diaspora. IOM should put posters and leaflets in the money transfer agencies used by Zimbabweans, as listed in the contact list.

Geographical Spread of the Jamaican Community in the UK, 2007



3.4.5 Zimbabwean Shops and Restaurants

It is recommended that IOM place posters and leaflets in shops and restaurants in each of the cities where Zimbabweans live across the UK, as suggested in the contact list.

3.5 THE SIZE AND GEOGRAPHICAL LOCATION OF ZIMBABWEANS IN THE UK

3.5.1 Community profile

There are varying estimates of the number of the Zimbabweans in the diaspora in Britain and extreme caution should be exercised about the accuracy of these statistics. According to UK census statistics, there were 7,905 Zimbabweans in the UK in 1971, 16,330 in 1981, 21,252 in 1991 and 47,158 in 2001. The estimates of Zimbabweans in 2001 are of particular significance to this research. Their importance is not so much in what they reveal but in what they fail to reveal. The census is held once in every ten years, hence it cannot capture or reflect the rapid changes in international migration (Bilsborrow, Graeme et al. 1997). Most of the recent wave of migration from Zimbabwe occurred before and after the parliamentary and presidential elections in 2000 and 2002 respectively. Given that most Zimbabweans are undocumented migrants, the probability of them being counted is low. They would always want to remain invisible and they might anyway have arrived during or after the census.

3.5.2 Size and Locations

Newspaper accounts have speculated that there may be between half a million and a million Zimbabweans in the UK. "Doctors, teachers, nurses, engineers, cricketers... 600,000 Zimbabweans are now living in the UK, forced into exile while their country disintegrates" (*Observer* 2003). Community leaders and organisations believe that there are from 200,000 to 500,000 Zimbabweans in the UK. Community leaders estimate that there are more than 40,000 Zimbabweans in London, 20,000 in Luton, 10,000 in Slough, 20,000 in Leeds, 10,000 in Manchester, 10,000 in Birmingham, 5,000 in Glasgow, 1,000 in Edinburgh, 3,000 in Coventry, 5,000 in Leicester, 10,000 in Sheffield, 10,000 in Milton Keynes, and 5,000 in Wolverhampton. The community leaders' estimates are based on what is available in the public domain. These are crude figures, but they serve as a starting point for investigation. It is difficult to draw any conclusion from these estimates except that Zimbabweans comprise a large, diverse, and fast-growing community.

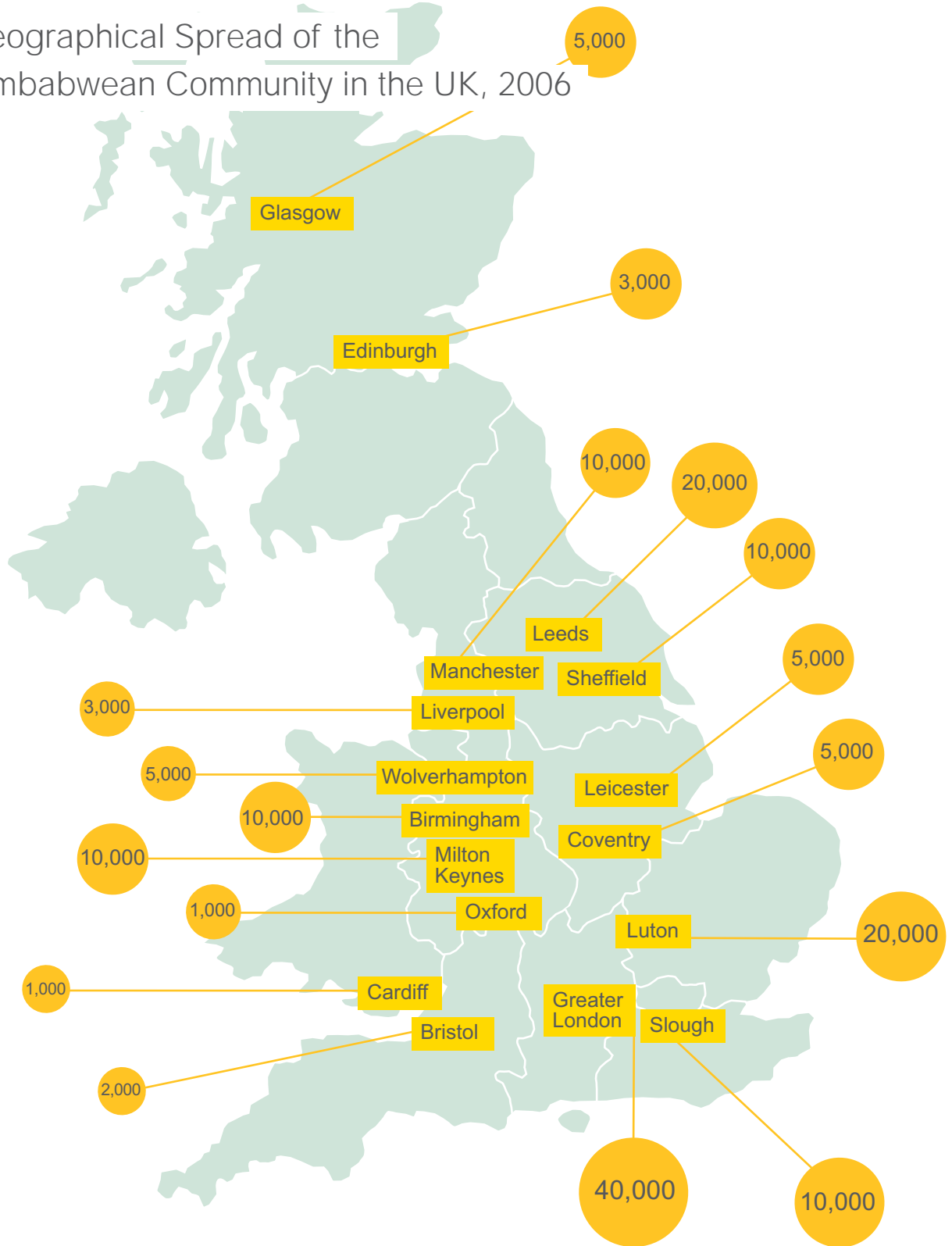
The Home Office's dispersal policy is part of the explanation given for the geographical spread of Zimbabweans across the UK. Significantly, by the year 2002, a total of 4,185 Zimbabwean asylum-seekers and refugees were distributed across the entire UK. The figures reveal that there were 390 in the North East, 575 in the North West, 695 in Yorkshire & the Humber, 580 in the East Midlands, 510 in the West Midlands, 280 in East England, 480 in Greater London, 370 in the South East, 45 in the South West, 90 in Wales and 165 in Scotland (Heath, Jeffries et al. 2003).

The Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) has branches with clearly identifiable structures in the following cities of the UK: Banbury, Becontree, Birmingham, Central London, Coventry, Derby, Grays, Hertfordshire, Leeds, Leicester, Manchester, Middlesbrough, Milton Keynes, Northampton, North London, Luton, Oxford, Portsmouth, Reading, Scotland, Southampton, South Yorkshire, Stoke-on-Trent, Walsall, Working, and Wolverhampton. Equally, Zimbabwean diaspora churches, which are undoubtedly the most visible sign of a Zimbabwean community in the UK, have assemblies in most of these cities. This suggests that all the places mentioned above are "home" to Zimbabweans.

3.5.3 Zimbabwean Gatherings

Gatherings in the diaspora almost define the simultaneous belonging and fragmentation of Zimbabweans in Britain. While the annual '*Zimfest*' usually draws a White Zimbabwean audience, diaspora churches and concerts rely on Black Zimbabweans. The multiple and fragmented character of the Zimbabwean diaspora hinders its ability to engage in collective action and create a political platform to negotiate community interests and needs in the country of destination. The Britain-Zimbabwe Society organises an annual Research Day, which is attended by Zimbabwean researchers, activists, and other friends of Zimbabwe. They also organise the Open Forum, which is attended by Zimbabweans across racial and ethnic lines. A number of pageant events are also organised in the UK and some of the popular ones are the following: Miss Zimbabwe UK, Miss Southern Africa UK and Miss Afro UK. IOM should keep in contact with organisers in order put up stands at these events and distribute leaflets.

Geographical Spread of the Zimbabwean Community in the UK, 2006



The above figures (all approximates) are based on estimates supplied by community leaders.

4 MAPPING EXERCISE OUTCOMES

DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

4.1 GENDER

More than two thirds of the respondents were male. Out of 43 respondents, 62% were men, and 36% were women. Anecdotal evidence suggests there are more Zimbabwean women than men in the UK so the large numbers of male respondents in the survey over represents them. Women were in the majority in most of the diaspora churches and social activities that IOM visited.

4.2 AGE

The majority of respondents are between 25 and 44 years of age. This echoes scholarly research, which asserts that it is mostly young Zimbabweans who emigrated from the country (Chetsanga and Muchenje 2003).

Figure 7: Age of Respondents

| AGE | NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS | PERCENTAGE |
|-------------|-----------------------|------------|
| Under 18 | 2 | 5% |
| 18-24 | 6 | 14% |
| 25-34 | 13 | 30% |
| 35-44 | 18 | 42% |
| 45-54 | 3 | 7% |
| 55-64 | 1 | 2% |
| 65 and over | 0 | 0% |
| No Response | 0 | 0% |

4.3 LENGTH OF RESIDENCE

Although statistical evidence identifies the presence of Zimbabweans in the UK for the past three decades, the majority of them were White Zimbabweans. In 2000, a major wave of migration began and it has continued until today. Zimbabwean land policy, political instability, industrial decline, growing unemployment, and repeated years of drought came together to spark an exodus of both Black and White Zimbabweans, skilled and unskilled, men and women, to the UK. This survey supports this description of the migration: most of the respondents have been in the country for between five and ten years.

Figure 8: Length of Residence

| LENGTH | NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS | PERCENTAGE |
|--------------------------|-----------------------|------------|
| Less than 12 months | 2 | 5% |
| 1 year but less than 3 | 6 | 14% |
| 3 years but less than 5 | 13 | 30% |
| 5 years but less than 10 | 18 | 42% |
| 10 years or more | 3 | 7% |
| No Response | 1 | 2% |

5 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The Zimbabwean community in the UK is hugely diverse. It includes people who are separated by race, gender, class, ethnicity, and political affiliation, and it is fragmented into multiple divisions. Community leaders and Zimbabwean organisations estimate that there are between two hundred thousand to half a million Zimbabweans in the UK. The majority of them are living underground, having overstayed their legal immigration status or as failed asylum seekers. Whilst IOM is able to provide reintegration assistance only to individuals who at some point have been in the asylum system, it is likely that there would also be great benefit if it were possible for similar assistance to be made available to over-stayers under IOM's Assisted Voluntary Return of Irregular Migrants Programme (AVRIM).

These are some of the main points made in the report.

- Interviews held with community organisations, church leaders and individuals from Zimbabwe suggest that IOM should distance itself, wherever possible, from the Home Office.
- IOM should continue engaging with the Zimbabwean community in the UK in a variety of forums in order to dispel the myths and misinformation that easily spread through the information channels of the diaspora. These organisations need to know facts rather than rely on rumours. “Stories of Return”, including statistical evidence on the number of Zimbabweans who have been assisted by IOM, and why they decided to return to a country which many organisations regard as an unsafe destination should be made available within the diaspora.
- IOM should work closely with diaspora churches in order to reach out to Zimbabweans in the UK. Most of the church services are conducted in Shona or Ndebele and care should be exercised to engage someone trusted by the community. IOM should try to negotiate entry and gain the confidence of the pastors, and distribute leaflets through individuals trusted by the community.
- IOM should work with music promoters so that IOM's message can be printed on tickets and flyers.
- A number of social, academic and pageant events are organised in the UK for Zimbabweans. Some of the popular ones are the following: The Open Forum; Research Day; Miss Zimbabwe UK; Miss Southern Africa UK; and Miss Afro UK. IOM should keep in touch with organisers, as listed in the contact list, in order to put up a stand at these events and distribute leaflets.
- The majority of Zimbabweans send regular remittances to their home country. IOM should put posters and leaflets in money transfer agencies used by Zimbabweans.
- IOM should place posters and leaflets in shops and restaurants in each of the cities where Zimbabweans live.
- IOM should advertise on the Zimbabwean websites and Internet radio stations that are frequented by the Ndebele and Shona ethnic groups.



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IOM International Organization for Migration



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