



ICYE KENYA
NATIONAL PROFILE
2009-2010

Dear future exchangeees,

Hello! KARIBU KENYA. We would like to welcome you to spend one year in Kenya.

This national profile has been prepared to give you a brief introduction about your stay in Kenya and what you can expect. This National profile may not be able to cover all issues but I hope this profile will be able to answer some basic questions about living in Kenya.

We greatly advice that you read this Profile because it has some IMPORTANT information which will be of use to you.

We look forward to meeting you and we hope you are set to experience a culturally enriching Kenya.

Yours faithfully,

Kerubo Nyaribo
Programme Director
ICYE KENYA

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PART ONE

GENERAL INFORMATION ON KENYA

Kenya is still the primary focus of all adventure in Africa. It is one of the finest and undoubtedly the most famous safari destination in the world. However, the safari is by no means the only reason to visit and live in Kenya, for the attractions of its rich culture and diverse environments are considerable.

The Republic of Kenya is a country in Eastern Africa. It is bordered by Ethiopia to the north, Somalia to the northeast, Tanzania to the south, Uganda to the west, and Sudan to the northwest, with the Indian Ocean running along the southeast border.

TOPOGRAPHY

At 582,646 km² Kenya is the world's forty-seventh largest country (after Madagascar). It is comparable in size to France, and is somewhat smaller than the US state of Texas.

Kenya's geography is marvelously varied. While much of northeastern Kenya is a semi-desert with extreme temperatures, the central and western parts are volcanic highlands with mountains, hills and valleys. The eastern part is Savannah grassland giving way to Indian Ocean.

From the coast on the Indian Ocean the Low plains rise to central highlands. The highlands are bisected by Great Rift Valley; fertile plateau in west. The Kenyan Highlands comprise one of the most successful agricultural production regions in Africa. The highlands are the site of the highest point in Kenya and the second highest in Africa: Mount Kenya, which reaches 5,199 meters (17,057 ft) and is also the site of glaciers.

THE WEATHER



Although Kenya's varied environments experience a wide variety of climate conditions, the temperature remains comfortably warm year-round. Much of Kenya experiences heavy rainfall from March through May and, to a lesser extent, from October through December.

The highlands have moderate temperatures most parts of the year, and are noticeably cooler in June/July. The coast and the drier northern part of the country are hot throughout with the former being quite humid. The rest of the country has cool weather (moderately hot) and can get cold in the rainy months. Temperatures range from 15 to 25 degrees (C) in the highlands and 27 to 38 degrees (C) in the coastal plains and the north.

HISTORY

OUR ROOTS

Kenya has known the presence of human kind since the very earliest development of our species. Moreover, the region has long been a migratory path, passed through by wave upon wave of peoples from all over Africa and, later, from the Middle East as well. By the 10th century or so, the region had developed its own lingua Franca, Swahili, which is a Bantu language heavily overlaid with Arabic.

With the arrival of the Portuguese at the end of the 15th century, the East African coastal region was for a time dominated by the Europeans. However in 1729 the Portuguese were expelled, to be replaced by two Arab dynasties. Arab rule lasted till the end of the 18th Century, when Kenya passed into the British sphere of influence.

There was little penetration of the interior by outsiders and this saved the country from the worst of slave trade.

"THE COLONIALISTS"

The British took 'control' in 1895 mainly to secure raw material from Kenya for export. Indians were brought in from India (a British colony then) to build a railway line from the coast to Uganda to facilitate transport of the produce from both countries. The productive highlands were settled by the Europeans and the indigenous Africans settled elsewhere in "reserves" that were not very productive. This period saw the development of three classes of people: the Europeans who were the rulers, the Indians who had now settled as merchants and the Africans who were the labourers and oppressed.

The 1920's saw the beginning of the struggle for independence by indigenous Kenyans from the British rule. This was a long and bloody fight, which finally brought independence in 1963.

AND NOW

Since independence, Kenya has maintained remarkable stability despite changes in its political system and crises in neighboring countries. Due to this we have previously had great influx of refugees from Sudan, Ethiopia, Somalia and Rwanda. Particularly since the re-emergence of multiparty democracy, Kenyans have enjoyed an increased degree of freedom.

There have been three presidents in modern Kenya: President Jomo Kenyatta from 1963 to 1978, Daniel arap Moi 1978 to 2002 and was succeeded by Mwai Kibaki in 2003, who has continued a second term in office

A cross-party parliamentary reform initiative in the fall of 1997 revised some oppressive laws inherited from the colonial era that had been used to limit freedom of speech and assembly. This improved public freedoms and contributed to generally credible national elections in December 1997.

In December 2002, Kenyans held democratic and open elections, some of which were judged free and fair by international observers. The 2002 elections marked an important turning point in Kenya's democratic evolution in that power was transferred peacefully from the single party that had ruled the country since independence to a new coalition of parties.

It is history in the making as we are having a government run on a grand coalition. This is due to the disputed elections in December, 2007 where President Kibaki was sworn in despite the fact that there were a number of irregularities in the elections. This led to almost two months of unrest in the country and many people being displaced from their homes. It took great intervention from the international communities in order for a consensus to be reached. Now things are back to normal with several structures put in place to monitor this. Now we have a Prime minister who comes from the opposition with most members of his party running some of the key ministries in the government. The government is bloated with 42 ministers. This made new ministries to be formed such as; Nairobi Metropolitan development, Development of arid and semi-arid areas..among others.

The British influence still lingers in most of the institutions in the country in spite of the occasional changes. This is seen in the legal system, education syllabus, government, life style - drinking tea - English being the official language, etc.

THE PEOPLE



The population is over 30 million in an area of about 500,000 sq. km though this is very unevenly distributed in a very uneven way throughout the country, given that the north and Northeast regions are arid and semi-arid and little hospitable for human settling. Most Kenyans dwell in the highlands, where the climate is mild. Urban population is nearly 25% of the total and is concentrated in a few cities, mainly in Nairobi, Mombasa, Nakuru and Kisumu. The rural population is confined to the fertile areas and lives on agriculture. Only 4 million people work, including small farmers and nomad shepherds. Women account for 30% of the total active population.

Kenya's population is mostly black. The different tribes are grouped according to their linguistic origin. Around 65% of the total belong to the Bantu tribes, dwelling in Central Highlands, the Southeast and the coastal regions. The Nilotic 30% settle in Southwest and the central Rift Valley region, whereas 3% Cushites inhabit the northern areas. The population spectrum also comprises some minorities, such as Hindus, Arabs, and Europeans.

In the rural areas tradition is still very strong and the culture rich. People here speak their vernacular language (depending on the area). In urban areas tradition is less strong and there is a lot of western influence. English and Kiswahili are widely used. Some of the tribes are Luhya, Luo, Kikuyu, Kisii, Kamba, Maasai, etc. Kiswahili is the national language which most people speak, while English is the official language used in schools and offices. A few phrases of Kiswahili come in handy to the discerning visitor. Many Kenyans speak at least three languages: Kiswahili, English and their vernacular language. A new language (Sheng) has evolved among the younger generation. This is a combination of Kiswahili, English and a combination of other ethnic languages.

FAMILY STRUCTURE

"The man is the head of the house" is the common scenario in all the communities in Kenya. He makes the important decisions. But the women are the backbone of the family who look after the family while they farm in the rural areas or engage in small businesses and in the urban areas they have full time employment. The girls are protected, given domestic responsibilities (cooking, cleaning, looking after the younger ones etc.) and expected to conform to certain behaviour especially if they are single. Boys have more freedom and fewer or no domestic responsibilities. This is carried on even after marriage.

Divorce cases were not common before, but we have more and more broken families today. When this happens the children automatically go to one parent or the other depending on the community (it is not always determined in court). Marriages can be traditional or both traditional and church. Most people live with extended family (parents, sisters, brothers, nephews, cousins etc.) due to our social set up. We also have a lot of polygamous families although with time they are becoming fewer.

RELIGION



Almost everybody belongs to a religion with 60% of the population being Christians which is further broken down to different denominations i.e. Catholics, Protestants, Anglicans, Presbyterian, Baptist etc. Islam has a wide following along the coast and the north-eastern part of the country. The rest of the population includes African Traditional religion, Sikhs, Hindus, Jews, Orthodox, Buddhists etc. Very few atheists are found in the country. Churches and mosques are widely spread throughout the country even in the smallest village.

FOOD



The staple food varies from one region to another. Rice along the coast and the northern part of Kenya, in the central parts of the country, maize and beans, in the western part of the country maize meal with vegetables, among some communities' meat and milk etc. A large variety of foodstuff and fruits are available.

Mealtime in most homes is informal and the food will include a main dish and maybe a fruit. The family may eat together or separately.

FOR YOUR INFORMATION

- ◆ Kenyans are normally hospitable especially in rural areas and will invite you to their homes easily
- ◆ Punctuality is one of our weak points - "there is no hurry in Africa" seems to prevail
- ◆ Homosexuality is not common and is viewed as a taboo.
- ◆ Sex is not freely spoken about and not encouraged for young single people.
- ◆ Girls who seem to have too many men friends are viewed as promiscuous.

AGRICULTURE

While Kenya has the largest industrial base in the East Africa region, agriculture remains the backbone of the economy. The sector contributes close to 30% of total GDP, employs over 70% of the labour force in primary and secondary activities and contributes more than half of the country's foreign exchange earnings while providing a substantial part of the food requirements. Tea and coffee are the major export crops though in recent years tourism has become the leading foreign exchange earner.

In recent years horticulture has been encouraged mainly for export

HEALTH

The government provides 60% of the health care through out the country. Previously the services were free but with the Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) cost sharing has been introduced. The services offered can be inadequate due to lack of essential drugs or facilities. 40% of the services come from Non Governmental organisations, Church bodies and private clinics. Hospitals in urban areas are well equipped in facilities, personnel and drugs and have high international standards. People come from surrounding countries to be treated in Nairobi.

WATER

Some regions may have piped water where as others may not. But whether water is piped or not, it is advisable to always boil it before drinking to avoid the rampant water borne diseases.

INDUSTRIES

Most of the consumer goods are locally produced and with the recent liberalisation of the economy imported goods are finding their ways into the market. An Export Processing Zone (EPZ) has been established and the country has opened its doors to foreign investors.

MONEY AND BANKING

Monetary system consists of bills and coins termed as Kenya Shillings (Kshs). The exchange rate to the dollar is 1 dollar to 72Kshs while Sterling Pound is 120 Kshs and the Euro is 102 Kshs.

Bank accounts are easy to open both in local or foreign currency. International credit cards can be cashed in certain banks and the later is widely accepted in most establishments in major towns. Forex bureaux and hotels also change foreign currency.

PART II

PRACTICAL INFORMATION FOR EXCHANGEES

COMMUNICATION

Communication is well developed with two international airports in the 3 major cities; Nairobi, Eldoret and Mombasa. Other smaller airports and airstrips are spread throughout the country where there is a good-sized town. Train service is slow but mostly reliable. Tarmac roads serve the major towns and all weather dirt roads serve the smaller towns and villages. Roads connecting to neighbouring countries are tarmacked.

For personal travel commuter or inter-cities buses are widely used, as are "Matatus" which are small mini buses. The fares vary depending on the distances and time of the year i.e. more expensive during public holidays and the beginning and end of school holidays.

TELEPHONES

Telephone services especially mobile phones are available throughout the country though more costly than most countries. In major towns facsimiles, Internet and e-mail are available.

The postal system is reliable most times and incidences of letters/parcels getting lost, delayed or stolen are decreasing. Letters to Europe take about a week and to America and other parts of Africa less than two weeks, to Latin America about three weeks.

LIFESTYLE/LEISURE

In the city and major towns the life style is cosmopolitan with a lot of western influence both in dressing, places to eat (literally everything is available from authentic Thai food to the traditional Kenyan food at various prices) and entertainment which includes theatres, cinemas, discos and live concerts all depending on individual preference.

The game reserves and National parks are all within reach and the coast has proved to be very popular among visitors to Kenya due to the historic sites and the un-ending beach.

PART III

ICYE KENYA

It is registered in Kenya as an Association and at present being run on voluntary basis by a Committee of eight people. The office has one full time staff, one part time staff and several active co-workers.

GOALS OF ICYE KENYA

- ◆ To give the youth an opportunity to live abroad for one year
- ◆ To foster better understanding in the world by eradication of prejudices and stereotype
- ◆ To invite others to share our life with us and us with them
- ◆ Contribute to the society through voluntary work.

WHAT TO EXPECT FROM ICYE - KENYA

- 1) Friendship, co-operation and a sense of brotherhood
- 2) Placement with a host family and project. If the project has suitable accommodation then the exchangee can stay away from the host family for some time and may visit them during holidays or off days.
- 3) Support all the time and even more during the difficult times especially during the adjustment period
- 4) Monthly stipend of Kshs 2,000 which is adequate but basic. Either ICYE Kenya or the project pays this amount. The exchangees are advised to come with their own money for extra personal expenditure.

POSSIBLE PROJECTS

1. TEACHING

This ranges from kindergarten, primary schools, secondary schools or handicapped schools. In kindergarten and primary schools the skills required are less specific. In secondary school exchangees can teach science subjects, languages, technical subjects, music and art all depending on their ability and knowledge. Most projects are teaching projects.

2. HANDICAPPED CHILDREN

Mainly assisting with them in schools and with the different activities i.e. painting, swimming, learning etc. Patience and good will is necessary for the person willing to undertake this project.

3. SLUMS AND STREET CHILDREN

Various projects are run in the slums i.e. informal education, vocational training, health etc. The poorest of the poor live here and the work is not always easy. Street children projects are mainly on rehabilitating them from the streets through education, drama, feeding centres etc.

4. HEALTH

Involves working in a hospital or health centre. Some basic skills can be useful otherwise exchangees do work that does not require specialised training. Most hospitals appreciate all the assistance they can get.

5. ORPHANAGE

Working with orphaned children either in the home or at the schools that they go to.

6. OTHERS

Other placements may be sought on individual request and the availability of such opportunities i.e. working with women's group, lobby groups, research etc.

ACTIVITIES

1. Orientation on arrival

This is for two weeks in which comprehensive Kiswahili classes are given and various topics covered i.e. gender, culture, health, history and geography of Kenya etc.

2. Mid year camp

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Evaluation of the different projects and sharing of experiences is done in terms of support, family relationships, personal high moments and low etc.

3. End year camp

Taking stock of the year and a farewell party

4. Travel month

This is in July for those who are not teaching and had not taken any time off from work previously. You are expected to inform us when you expect visitors, especially if its not holiday time because, this interrupts our programme.

5. Any other on request

PART IV

INCOMING EXCHANGEES

YOU are most welcome and we say KARIBU KENYA.

FOR YOU EXCHANGEES

OUR EXPECTATIONS

- ◆ That you will have made the necessary arrangements before coming to Kenya i.e. visa, inoculations where necessary, valid passports etc.
- ◆ Between the age of 18 to 30 and preferably with some basic skills i.e. carpentry, typing, nursing, agriculture, music, art, language etc. This will assist us in your placements.
- ◆ That you will be willing to learn, adapt, eradicate preconceived notions and live our life as we live it with no prejudice. You will have to change for the society and not expect the society to change for you.
- ◆ To abide by and respect the customs and rules of the people of Kenya.
- ◆ To co-operate with the National Committee at all times
- ◆ That you will not encourage visitors from home in the middle of the year. Visitors in between are destructive both to you and the program as you have get away to be with the visitors. Visitors are allowed during the travel month only or unless you are attached to a school then you can have them during school holidays (in December and April). **No travelling when you are supposed to be working.**
- ◆ That you will attend all activities organised by ICYE Kenya i.e. end year and mid year camp and any other

- ◆ That you enjoy yourself and let it be known when you are not.

ON HOST FAMILIES

Mainly middle income earners with young school age children. Houses in Kenya are not big and therefore the exchangees may be expected/required more often than not to share a room with the children/child in the house. In most families both parents work and maybe professionals in various fields. The standard of living for the majority of Kenyans is not comparable to the developed countries. Exchangees should thus come prepared to forgo some luxuries for one year i.e. washing machines, vacuum cleaners, micro-waves etc.

The host family will generally provide a family set-up: room, food, etc. Exchangees will be expected to use public transport to and from work, unless it is convenient for the host parents to take them by car (if they have one). We however endeavour to place the exchangees near the project venue to reduce on commuting.

Most homes have house help to assist with the housework, but the family members also do some of the chores, e.g. making their own beds, tidying their rooms, some laundry, cooking etc. The exchangees are also expected to assist in housework depending on the host family set up.

PLEASE NOTE!

- Host families like in most countries are hard to come by therefore treat them with RESPECT.
- Host families are not PAID to host. We just give a small allowance to assist so that the concept is not commercialised.
- DO NOT treat the house like a hotel or lodging, be part of it.
- Female exchangees will be expected to do more than the male exchangees do as this is culturally the norm but this may vary from household to household.
- Observe personal hygiene and general cleanliness.
- Dressing should be descent and not provocative.
- Bringing friends of the opposite sex to spend the night in your room at your host family or project will be viewed very negatively.
- The concept of going dutch is not common here you have to be quite clear to whomever you are taking out that they are going to pay for themselves.

RULES ON PROJECTS

- ◆ Exchangees work in projects as volunteers
- ◆ If a project is able to pay some money to the exchangee he or she foregoes the monthly stipend from the office and any excess goes back to office
- ◆ Exchangees are to take their placements seriously, work diligently and with commitment even if they are “just volunteers”
- ◆ Time off the project will be deducted from the travel month.
- ◆ Exchangees should be willing and ready to stay for one year in one project so as to contribute effectively and give continuity to the project.

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- ◆ Exchangees MUST NEVER look for their own projects. This is due to the fact that there are many factors considered before ICYE Kenya accepts a project and moreover the residence permit that is issued for an exchangees stay is attached to a particular project.
- ◆ Exchangees involved in teaching will have to forego their travel month as they get a three months school holiday.
- ◆ If for any reason the exchangee wants to be changed from his/her project this will be after at least six months. Exchangees are representatives of ICYE Kenya in their projects and homes too therefore a positive image should be portrayed.
- ◆ The exchangee filling in our application form to participate in our program must fill it honestly and must indicate whether he or she is smoker or non-smoker.
- ◆ The exchangees should give their tickets to ICYE- Kenya on the last day of their orientation camp. This is MANDATORY.

WHAT TO BRING TO KENYA

- 1) Practical clothes to work in depending on the option the person have. Suitable clothes and shoes due to the climatic changes from hot to cold are recommended. Something dressy for special occasions like weddings etc. For women a dress and skirts may come in handy.
- 2) Extra pocket money for buying personal items and gifts.
- 3) Stationary so as to cut down costs.
- 4) Literature, photos, magazines from your country to share with the new acquaintances that you will meet.
- 5) A camera for those memorable moments.
- 6) Sleeping bag, towels and bed sheets.

A1

PRICES

	<u>KSHS</u>
1/2 litre milk	35
1 loaf	35
1 kilo meat	320
1/2litre coke	50
1 pack of cigarettes	100
1 roll of colour film (36)	400
Developing film (36 exp)	600
Soap	40
Toothpaste (medium)	70
Sanitary towels	120
Newspaper (local)	40
Stamp to Europe	120
Stamp to America	120
Fax	300
Movie	400
Beer	180
Disco entrance	300
Bus fare - within the city	30

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Pocket money 2000

Common Kiswahili phrases/words

Pronunciation	Adverbs	tense
a as the "a" in "father"	I ni	present na
e as the "e" in "better"	you u	past li
i as the "ee" sound in "bee"	he/she a	future ta
o as the "a" in "law"	they wa	infinitive ku
u as the "oo" in "too"	we tu	

A2

Kiswahili phrases/words

Hello	jambo or salama	Welcome	karibu
How are you	habari	I am fine	mzuri
Yes	ndiyo	No	hapana
Thank you	asante	Thanks very much	asante sana
What is your name?	unaitwa nani?	It is	ninaitwa
How much	ngapi	Where	wapi
Money	pesa	Today	leo
Tomorrow	kesho	Toilet	Choo
Eat	kula	Sleep	lala
Want	taka	Come from	toka
White person	mzungu	Food	chakula
Water	maji	One	moja
Good night	lala salama	Goodbye	kwaheri

Where do you come from? Unatoka wapi?

A3

VISA REQUIREMENTS

It is advisable for exchangees coming to Kenya to check with the Kenyan High Commission in their country on visa requirements. Otherwise, they need not get a visa prior to their coming. On arrival at the airport, an entry permit is issued for about \$ 50 and later ICYE Kenya secures resident permit for the exchangees, they are also required to have an alien card at a fee of Kshs.2,000. These permits are connected to the work placements.

In case one has to leave Kenya, they need to secure a re-entry permit at their own cost.

AGE LIMIT

ICYE Kenya accepts exchangees within the age bracket of 18 -30 years.

A4

Please sign this and send it back together with the priority list.

I Have read and understood the ICYE Kenya profile and agree to abide by all its regulations and those of Kenya, and that failure to do so may result to being expelled from the program.

NAME:

DATE:

SIGNATURE: