



# ICYE Kenya National Profile

2024 - 2025



**The ICYE Kenya office is excited to welcome you to an experience of a lifetime, right here in Kenya.**

This National Profile has been prepared to give you a brief introduction about life in Kenya and what you can expect. It shall answer basic questions about living in Kenya, and what you can expect to experience during your stay here.

The first step in understanding the Kenyan way of life is by reading this National Profile. Additionally, we encourage you to come with an open mind and positive attitude.

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

Yours faithfully,  
Kerubo Nyaribo  
Programme Director, ICYE KENYA

**KARIBU  
KENYA!**



# The ICYE Kenya Team



**Kerubo Nyaribo**

Program Director



**Mercy Kubasu**

Program Coordinator



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# Kenya's Topograpghy

At 582,646 km<sup>2</sup> Kenya is the world's 47th largest country.

While much of north eastern 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 a savannah grassland giving way to the 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 the west.

The Kenyan Highlands comprise one of the most successful agricultural production regions in Africa. The highlands are also the site of the highest point in Kenya and the second highest in Africa: Mount Kenya, which reaches 5,199 meters (17,057 ft.).



# Kenya's Weather

Although Kenya's varied environments experience wide variety of climate conditions, the temperature remains comfortably warm all year-round. With climate change though, this past year has been on the cold side.

Temperatures range from 15 to 25 degrees (C) in the highlands and 27 to 38 degrees (C) in the coastal plain and the north. Much of Kenya experiences heavy rainfall from March through May and, to a less extent, from October through December.

The highlands have moderate temperatures most part of the year, and are noticeably cooler in June/July. The coast and the drier northern part of the country are hot throughout the year with the former being quite humid.



# Kenya's History

Kenya's earliest inhabitants date back to about 2.5 million years ago and there has been evidence of early mankind in the northern part of Kenya around Lake Turkana. Since then, Kenya's story has unfolded as a fascinating tale of ancient connections across the seas. Moreover, the region has long been a migratory path, passed through by wave upon wave of people 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.

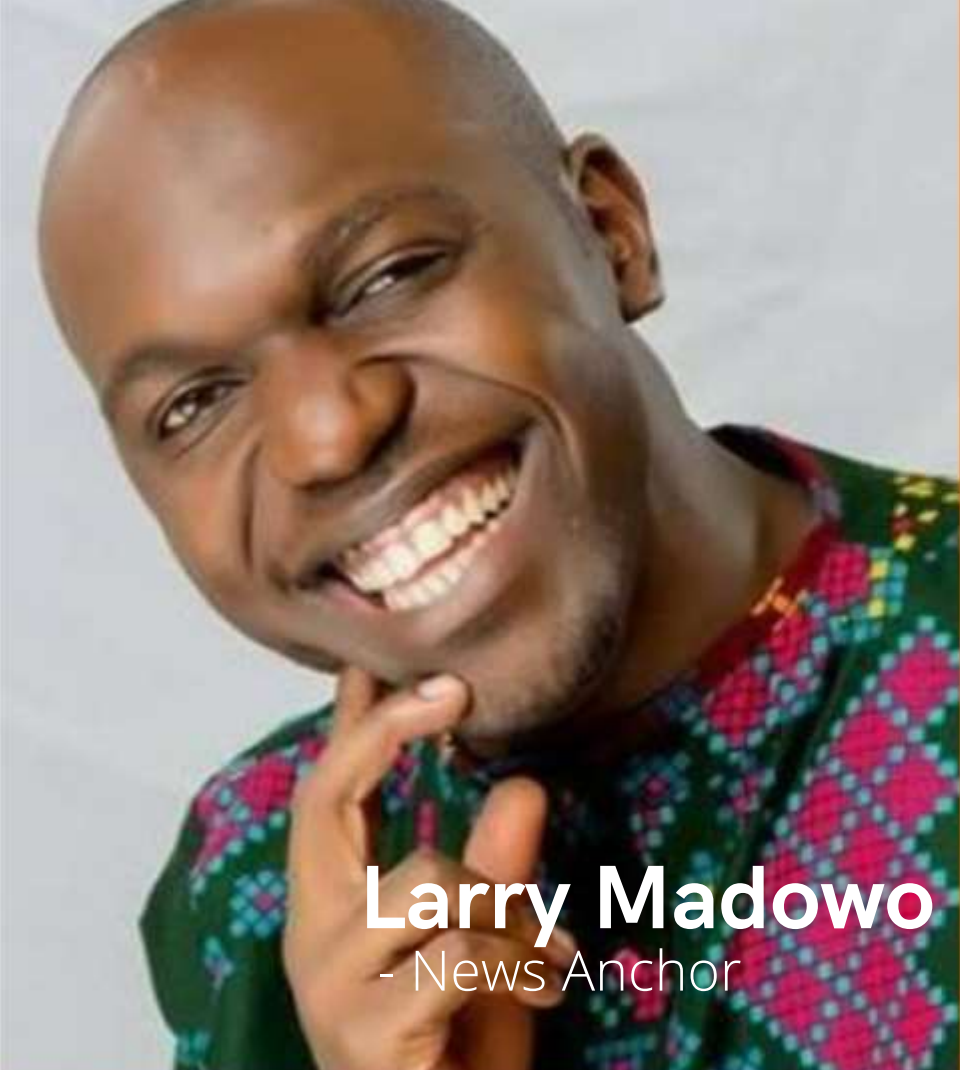
With the arrival of the Portuguese at the end of the 15th century, the East African coastal region was for a time dominated by the Europeans. However in 1729 the Portuguese were expelled, to be replaced by two Arab dynasties. Arab rule lasted till the end of the 18th Century, when Kenya was passed to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

**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.**

.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 institutions, our life style - drinking tea -English being the official language, etc.

Since the re-emergence of multiparty democracy, Kenyans have enjoyed an increased degree of freedom and because of this we have previously had a great influx of refugees from Sudan, Somalia, Ethiopia, Uganda and Rwanda.



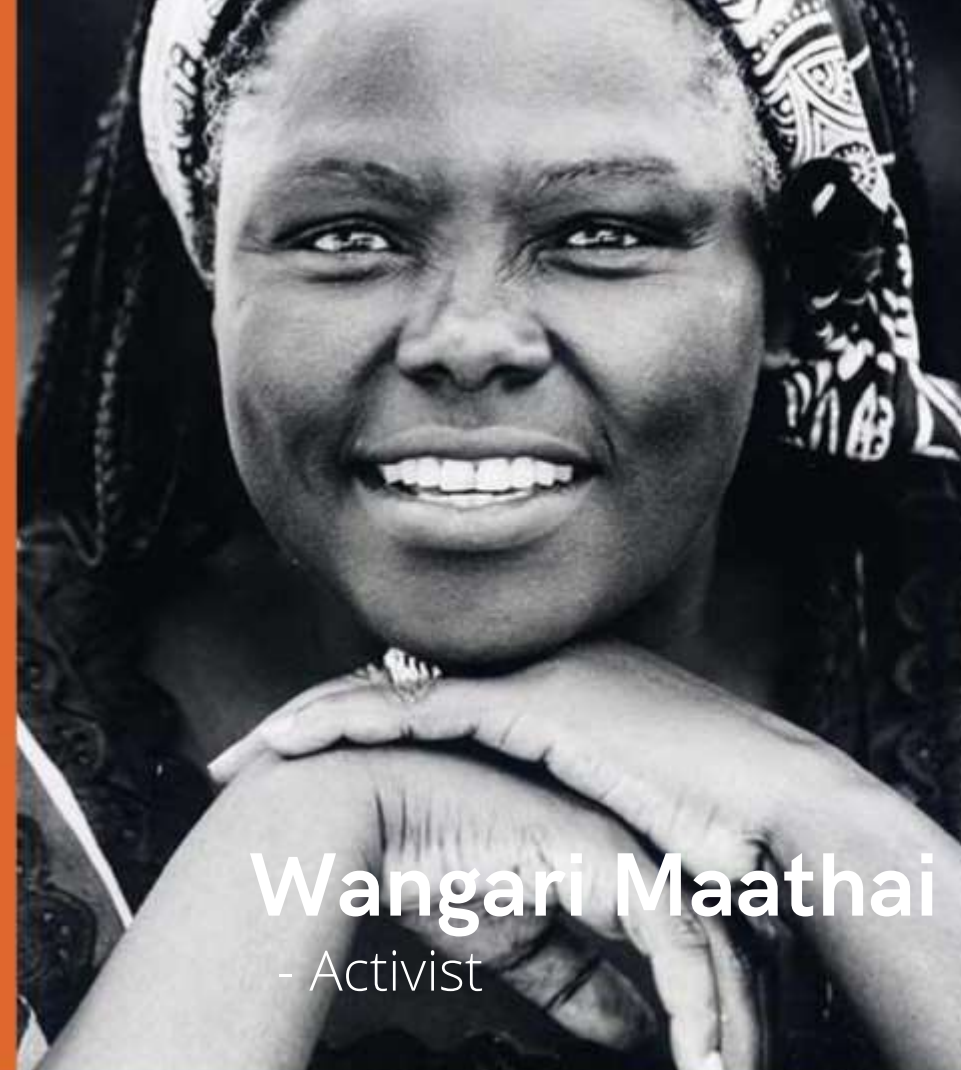


**Larry Madowo**  
- News Anchor

We have 43 tribes in Kenya and the tribes are grouped according to their linguistic origin. These are Bantus, Nilotes and Cushites.

Some of the tribes in Kenya are Luhya, Luo, Kikuyu, Kisii, Kamba, Maasai, Giriama, Taita, Kalenjin, Samburu etc.

The population spectrum also includes some minorities, such as Hindus, Arabs, and Europeans.



**Wangari Maathai**  
- Activist

# The Kenyan People

Kenya's population is approximately 54 million.

Most Kenyans dwell in urban centers whereas the North & North East part of Kenya has low population due to its arid and semi-arid climate that is less conducive for human settlement.

The rural population is confined to the fertile areas and lives on agriculture.



**Lupita Nyong'o**  
- Actress

In rural Kenya, tradition is still prevalent and the culture, rich.

People in these areas primarily speak their vernacular language. In urban areas traditional influence is minimal and there is a lot of western influence.



**Eliud Kipchoge**  
- Athlete

# Religion

Majority of Kenyans subscribe to a particular religion with 60% of the population being Christians. The Christians are further divided into different denominations i.e. Catholics, Protestants, Seventh Day Adventists etc.

Muslims make up about 20%, and larger communities will be found mainly in the counties along the Kenyan coast, the North-eastern part of the country and in particular urban areas.

The rest of the population comprises of African Traditional religions, Sikhs, Hindus, Jews, Orthodox, and Buddhists etc.

Places of worship are widely spread throughout the country.

There is also a small atheist community.

# Lifestyle

There are many attractions all over Kenya.

The lifestyle in urban areas is cosmopolitan substantial western influence- that is both in entertainment which includes theaters, cinema live concerts and places to eat all.

According to individual preferences, you will lite everything from authentic Thai food to t Kenyan food at various prices.

- Kenyans are usually hospitable especially areas and will invite you to their homes eas
- Punctuality is one of our weak points -"th hurry in Africa" seems to prevail.
- Our society is still highly patriarchal and ou reflect this a lot for example sex is not a topic of conversation or how a woman wit male friends is viewed as promiscuous.
- Homosexuality is not common and is view taboo. It is still illegal in Kenya and could le arrest. It is also a very touchy subject that w you to be very cautious when you decided this conversation with other Kenyans.





# KENYAN CUISINE

The food in Kenya, is as diverse as the nation's history and unique to each tribe.

Ugali na samaki



Pilau



Chapati

These are some of the dishes you will sample during your service in Kenya.





# KENYANAN CUISINE

The street food in Kenya is unique to each region.

Smokie Pasua

Mayai Pasua

Mahindi Choma

These are some of the most common meals you will find

Mutura



# Money

Bank accounts are easy to open both in local or foreign currency. Most business establishments in urban areas also accept credit cards.

We also have mobile money platforms, airtel money, world remit and the most famous being M-Pesa which is a mobile banking service that allows users to store and transfer money through their mobile phones on the Safaricom Mobile network. M-Pesa is widely used and accepted countrywide - it is the most commonly used mobile money platform in rural areas.

Western Union, the global money-transfer company, provides an easy way to receiving money in Kenya from abroad. Senders should contact Western Union to find the location of their nearest agency . Handily, the sender pays all the charges and there's a Postbank in most towns, often in the post office or close by and Western Union services can also be found in most banks and Forex bureaus .



# Getting Around

Road transport is the predominant mode of transport and carries about 93% of all cargo and passenger traffic in the country. Kenya has basic regional and national connectivity, linking the capital to the coast, to international border crossings, and to the rural areas.

The most common means of transport in the urban areas is the matatu or boda-boda whereas in the rural area the boda boda or tuk-tuk are more common. We also have the SGR -railway- which connects the capital city Nairobi and the large Indian Ocean city Mombasa. There is also the option of taxis. We have taxi app services such as uber, littleCab, bolt. You will find the apps in your phone's app store.

Linked to the ascendancy of the national airline, Jomo Kenyatta International Airport in Nairobi has become one of the three main international gateways in Sub-Saharan Africa. Beyond its role as an international hub, Kenya has a domestic air transport market that is the fourth-largest in Sub-Saharan Africa (following South Africa, Nigeria, and Mozambique).



# About ICYE Kenya

ICYE Kenya is registered in Kenya as an association and at present is being run on voluntary basis by a board of seven people. The office has two full time staff and several co-workers who also act as contact persons for the volunteers.



# About

## ICYE Kenya

### Countries

- ICYE member countries

### Age

- **18-30** years of age;
- Volunteers outside this age bracket can also be accepted;

### Duration of the programme

- **6 months** to **1 year** for long term volunteers
- Up to **16 weeks** for short term volunteers (STEPS)

### Cost

- Participation fee

### What to expect from ICYE Kenya

- Friendship, co-operation and a sense of family.
- Placement with a host family or project. If the project has suitable accommodation then the volunteer can stay there for some time and may visit the host family during holidays or off days.
- Support **24/7** and especially during the adjustment period.



# About

## Pocket Money

## Volunteer Projects

## Duration of the programme

## Working Hours

## Contact Person

# ICYE Kenya

- The volunteer receives a monthly stipend of Kshs.3,000 and it is paid by ICYE Kenya or the project. It is advised that the volunteer has extra money for any extra expenditure that may arise.
- **ICYE Kenya vets suitable projects for volunteer to work**
- **6 months to 1 year** for long term volunteers
- Up to **16 weeks** for short term volunteers (STEPS)
- 20-40 hours a week
- ICYE Kenya will assign a contact person for the volunteer



# About

## ICYE Kenya Activities

# ICYE Kenya

### Orientation Camp (August or January)

- The orientation camp usually runs for two weeks in which comprehensive Kiswahili classes are taught.
- The ICYE staff facilitates the other sessions with the help of our co-workers, exchangees, returnees, host families and other facilitators who volunteer time to be part of the orientation.
- The other sessions will touch on Kenya's history, geography and culture, life with a host family, conflict resolution, expectations and how to manage them among other topics.

### Mid-Year Evaluation Camp

- During this camp, Volunteers and ICYE staff evaluate their different projects and host families. There are also discussions touching on family and social relationships and the individual volunteer experience.



# About

## ICYE Kenya Activities

# ICYE Kenya

## End-year Camp

- During this camp, the volunteers, ICYE staff and co-workers review the whole year taking stock of the year and give an overall overview of their stay in Kenya.
- At the end of the camp there is usually a farewell party to bid the volunteers goodbye.

## Travel Month

- The travel month is usually in July - **at the of the volunteer service** - of every year for those who are not teaching and have not previously taken any time off
- Volunteers are expected to inform ICYE Kenya when they expect visitors, especially if it is not during the travel month time because this interrupts our program.
- The travel month is a culmination of two days for each month in the year i.e. 2 days. However, when the host project breaks for holiday, the volunteer will also break for holiday and the days will be deducted from the vacation days.



# Our Expectations For Incoming Volunteers



- Make all the necessary arrangements to meet all travel requirements before coming to Kenya i. visa, inoculations where necessary, valid passport etc.
- The volunteer should have a basic understanding of English, both written and oral.
- To assist us in your placement, a bonus for prospective volunteers would be having some basic skills i.e. carpentry, typing, nursing, agriculture, music, art, language etc.
- Be willing to learn about our culture, adapt to our systems, eradicate preconceived notions and experience our life as we live it with no prejudice.
- **You will have to adapt to the hosting society and not expect the society to change for you**
- Co-operate with the National Committee at all times.
- Do not encourage visitors from home in the middle of the volunteer year. Visitors in between can be distracting to both you and the program as you have to get away to spend time with them. Unless you are attached to a school then you can have them visit during school holiday (following the school calendar).
- **No traveling when you are supposed to be working!**
- Attend all activities organized by ICYE Kenya i.e. end year and mid year camp and any other e. medical camps etc.
- **Enjoy yourself and let it be known when you are not.**

# Co-vid 19 Requirements



- You are required to register on the Ministry of Health website before you travel, kindly follow this link.
  - Once you are registered you will receive a QR code which you will be asked to show either as you depart your country or at the airport when you land in Nairobi.
  - Please get in touch with your airline if they will require you to submit any additional documents e.g. proof of yellow fever vaccine.
- **The volunteer should have a negative PCR test taken no more than 72 hours prior to travel and not be exhibiting COVID-19 symptoms. The test must be in English and digitally verified through the Trusted Travel Initiative or Global Haven partnership : <https://africacdc.org/trusted-travel/>.**
- **It is mandatory to wear a face mask in Kenya when in a public space.**

*We are here to **support** you and ensure your time in Kenya is as **comfortable** and **enjoyable** as it can be, within our capacity.*



# Living with a Host Family



- Most of our host families are middle income earners with young school aged children and volunteers may be expected more often than not to share a room with child/children in the house.
- In most families, both parents work and may be professionals in various fields. The average standard of living for the majority is not comparable to developed countries. Volunteers should therefore come prepared to forgo some luxuries for their service period i.e. washing machines, vacuum cleaners, micro-waves etc.
- We try to place the volunteers near the host project to reduce on commuting. The volunteers will be expected to use public transport to and from work.
- Most homes have house helps to assist with the housework, but the family members also do some of the chores, e.g. making their own beds, tidying their rooms, laundry, cooking etc. The volunteers are expected to assist in house work depending on the host family set up.

**Please Note!**



- Please treat your host families with respect as they are hard to come by.
- Host families are **NOT PAID** to host, they are given a small allowance to assist them and so that the concept is not commercialized.
- DO NOT treat the house like a hotel or lodging, be part of it. Make an effort to blend with the family. Let them know about your goings and comings, and if you have to miss a meal.
- Female volunteers will be expected to do more than the male volunteers 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. This is heavily frowned upon in Kenyan societies especially in the rural areas.
- 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.



# What to bring to Kenya

## Gifts

- If you are considering getting a consider getting something pr e.g. tea cups, tea/coffee native t region, some cool socks et
- The best gifts are however given end of your service as you have a bond with your host and are give them gifts that will hav sentimental value.

# CLOTHES & TOILETRIES

- Refrain from carrying an excess of clothes, you will most probably buy some clothes here during your stay.
- -Please be sure to carry 1 or 2 pairs of shoes suitable for the heavy rain with enough grip to walk on muddy roads.
- The weather in Kenya is currently warm but we are soon going to be entering our rainy season.
- We are still a conservative society so please make sure to carry semi-formal clothes that you will wear during your official volunteering time at the project . e.g. avoid t-shirts with provocative graphics / sexual innuendos .
- **You will probably find most types of toiletries in Kenya however, if you do use a specific brand we would advise you to carry it as it may be cheaper in your country.**

# The Kenyan People

# MEDICINE

- **Please let us know before hand if you have any medication you are on so we can inform you if the prescription is readily available here.**
- If you will be placed in a malaria zone please get in touch with your doctor to advise you accordingly on the best anti malaria drugs to take .If you prefer, you can also get anti malaria drugs here in Kenya.
- It is also advisable for you to carry a mosquito net and mosquito repellent.

# INSURANCE

- Some of the clinics do travel insurance for our services, so please refer to carry money to hospital you later can claim it from insurance company.(Keep receipts)
- They have an app that both apple and android find it here <https://www.safety-app.com/en/>.

# Prices of Common Items

Item	Price in KSH
1/2 litre milk	60
1 loaf of bread	55
1 kilo meat	500
Fast food	From 100 upwards
1/2 litre coke	60
1 pack of cigarettes	250
Soap	80
Toothpaste (medium)	100
Sanitary towels	150
Newspaper (local)	60
Cinema	100
Beer	2500
Disco entrance	500
Bus fare - within the city	500





# Common Kiswahili Words / Phrases

Welcome - **Karibu**

Hello - **Habari or Jambo**

How are you? - **Habari yako**

I am fine - **Mzuri**

Yes - **Ndio**

No - **Hapana**

Thank you - **Asante**

Thank you very much - **Asante  
sana**

What is your name? - **Unaitwa  
nani?**

Where do you come from? -  
**Unatoka wapi?**

No worries - **Hakuna Matata**

How much - **Ngapi**

Where - **Wapi**

Where - **Wapi**

Money - **Pesa**

Today - **Leo**

Tomorrow - **Kesho**

Toilet - **Msalani**

Eat - **Kula**

Sleep - **Lala**

Want - **Taka**

Come from - **Toka**

White person - **Mzun**

Food - **Chakula**

Water - **Maji**

One - **Moja**

Good night - **Lala sala**

Goodbye - **Kwahe**

# Kenya Visa Application Process



# HOW TO APPLY

1. Click register on [www.ecitizen.go.ke](http://www.ecitizen.go.ke)
2. Select Register as a Visitor.
3. Once Logged in, Select Department of Immigration services.
4. Select submit Application.
5. Select Kenyan Visa.
6. **Select the type of Visa and read the Instructions Carefully.**
7. Fill in the application form.
8. Pay Using visa card, Mastercard and other debit cards.
9. Await approval via email, then download and print the eVisa from your eCitizen account.
10. **Present your printed eVisa to the immigration officer at the port of entry.**

# DISCLAIMER

1. **Visa processing fee is non-refundable.**
2. **Any documents supplied should be translated and certified - can be done by anyone as long as the translation is certified.**
3. **Incomplete applications will be rejected.**
4. **The possession of an e-Visa is not the final Authority to enter The Republic of Kenya.**
5. **Engaging in any form of business or employment without a requisite permit or pass is an offense.**
6. **A visa is required prior to entry into The Republic of Kenya.**
7. **The e-Visa printout must be presented at the port of entry.**
8. **It should take at least 2 working days to get your eVisa.**
9. **Each adult visitor to the Republic of Kenya is required to submit e-visa applications in their personal e-citizen account. Parents can apply for their children in the parents account.**

# RESIDENCE PERMIT

- ICYE Kenya applies for residence permits on behalf of our volunteers.
- Due to the Co-vid 19 pandemic, the application process now takes a little longer.
- The volunteers should provide the following documents to be submitted to the immigration office.
  - Copy of a valid national passport (the bio-data page)
  - Current immigration status of the pupil/student(if in the country)
  - Two (2) recent passport size photos in color
  - Duly certified copies of academic certificates and CV
  - Duly Certified Police Check
  - Documents in foreign languages should be translated into English by either the Embassy, Public Notary, or authorized /recognized institution.

# RESIDENCE PERMIT

- **There is an issuance fee of 15,500 Kenya Shillings. This cost is to be covered by the volunteer. Once the residence permit is issued, the volunteers are required to apply for an alien card through the online portal via the following link:**  
<https://fns.immigration.go.ke/dash/fns/newapplication.php>



You can also be directed to the immigration website by scanning this QR Code.

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

**For more information please  
visit the following link:  
<http://evisa.go.ke/evisa.html>  
Or  
scan this QR Code**



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