

ifa ECP Monitor Country Report

Kenya

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1. External cultural policy objectives in geopolitical context

Situated on Africa's east coast, Kenya was the sixth-largest economy on the African continent in 2021. Kenya gained independence from Great Britain in 1963 after 68 years of colonial rule. After periods of political instability and several political reforms, Kenya developed its foreign policy as well as external cultural policy (ECP) based on a set of principles, including territorial integrity, peaceful coexistence, and its traditional spirit of Harambee ('all pull together' in Kiswahili, meaning self-reliance) (MOFA, 2014). Today, Kenya's capital, Nairobi, is one of the headquarters of the United Nations, and it has more than 18 UN agencies, which employ more than 5,000 local and international staff.

Table 1: Kenya's geopolitical and geo-economic position

	2019	2015	
Population (millions) / ranking	52.6 / 27 th	47.9 / 28 th	
GDP ranking	65 th	71 st	
GDP per capita	\$1,817	\$1,337	
Cultural economy (%GDP)	0.0057	0.058	
Education economy (%GDP)	5.10	4.99	
R&D economy (%GDP)	0.22	-	
Media economy (%GDP)	0.27	0.14	
Sources: National Treasury of Kenya, World Bank			
	2019	2015	
Geopolitical position	Hard power rank	83 rd	n/a
	World trade rank (\$ million)	17,215 ^(imports)	16,093 ^(imports)
		5,824 ^(exports)	5,906 ^(exports)
	Soft power rank	n/a	n/a
	Diplomacy rank	n/a	n/a

Kenya has about 44 tribes and over 70 distinct ethnic groups. While English and Kiswahili are its two official languages, more than 68 languages and dialects are spoken in Kenya. In the face of such high diversity and high potential for ethnic conflicts, presenting a unified national identity is one of the primary goals of Kenya's ECP.

In addition, Kenya's ECP is very much driven by its economic interest. Tourism and fashion exports are crucial venues for the international public to know Kenyan culture. After all, Kenya's tourism sector accounted for 8.1 percent of the country's GDP in 2019 (WTTC, 2019). And in recent years, Kenya's Ministry of Foreign Affairs started a global marketing

campaign, Brand Kenya Broad, to restore confidence in Kenya as a tourist destination and promote the “Made in Kenya” label in international markets (“Brand Kenya,” 2017).

As a rising regional leader in East Africa and an active player in the international arena, Kenya relies on peacebuilding and multilateralism to push for a pan-African identity and communicate its dedication to peace. Compared to peace and economic diplomacy, the five fields concerned in this report seem to take a lesser priority in Kenya’s ECP.

In 2019, Kenya received external funding of KES 133 billion (about 1 billion euros) from 18 states. 94% of the funds were offered in the form of debt and the rest as grants (National Treasury & Planning, 2019).¹ China, Italy, and Japan are Kenya’s top three bilateral creditors in 2019, while France will exceed Italy and rank the second taking into consideration accumulative debts and funding (Statista, 2021). In addition, Kenya received KES 162 billion (about 1.25 billion euros) from multilateral organizations, with 63% from World Bank and International Monetary Fund.

An overwhelming majority of these external fundings have supported Kenya’s ministries of infrastructure, health, and water. Very little was invested in the five ECP fields concerned in this report. Kenyan government’s underinvestment into cultural exchange, language promotion, and technological cooperation has left vacuums in its domestic as well as external cultural policies.

Most of the data presented in this report come from the Kenya National Bureau of Statistics, National Treasury & Planning, and other pan-African organizations like the African Development Bank (AFDB). However, Kenya-initiated international exchange in the five ECP fields concerned in this report is almost non-existent. Kenya’s state departments responsible for the five fields also lack clear-defined budgets for international items. While some of the major projects, including the International Arts and Education Center, Kenya School of Films, demonstrate Kenya’s international involvement, these institutions still have a primary focus on domestic activities. It is hard to differentiate their international contribution and level of participation. For these reasons, most of the data remain missing.

Table 2: Government spending on ECP fields as a % of total outlays

	2019	2015
Culture	0.57	0.32
Education	15.3	15.3
Research & Development	n/a	n/a
Media	n/a	n/a

Source: Kenya National Bureau of Statistics

¹ Refer to 2019/2020 Estimates of Development Expenditure of the Government of Kenya Volume I.

2. External cultural policy: an overview

Kenya divides diplomacy into five areas: peace, diaspora, cultural, economic, and environmental diplomacy.² In particular, through cultural diplomacy, Kenya wishes to promote its cultural diversity and heritage, foster cultural exchange, and encourage dialogue. It is also evident that Kenya's priorities in cultural diplomacy are arts and sports.

However, as mentioned above, Kenya's peace and economic diplomacy carry more weight than the rest. Economic diplomacy plays the most crucial role for Kenya to meet its socio-economical goals set by Kenya Vision 2030, which seeks to transform Kenya into "a newly industrializing, middle-income country providing a high quality of life to all its citizens" by 2030.

In 2019, the Kenyan government's objectives concerning soft power were to "support sports development, tourism promotion activities, film industry development, nurturing of talents and arts, and preservation of national heritage and cultural identity" (NGO Board, 2019). While there are guiding frameworks and well-developed strategies for Kenya's cultural diplomacy, how effectively they are implemented remains unclear, especially at an international level (National Treasury & Planning, 2020). Because the budget for any form of international exchange in the five ECP areas is almost non-existent, it can be safely concluded that Kenya's external cultural relations are still domestically orientated; identity-building and development gains are among its primary goals.

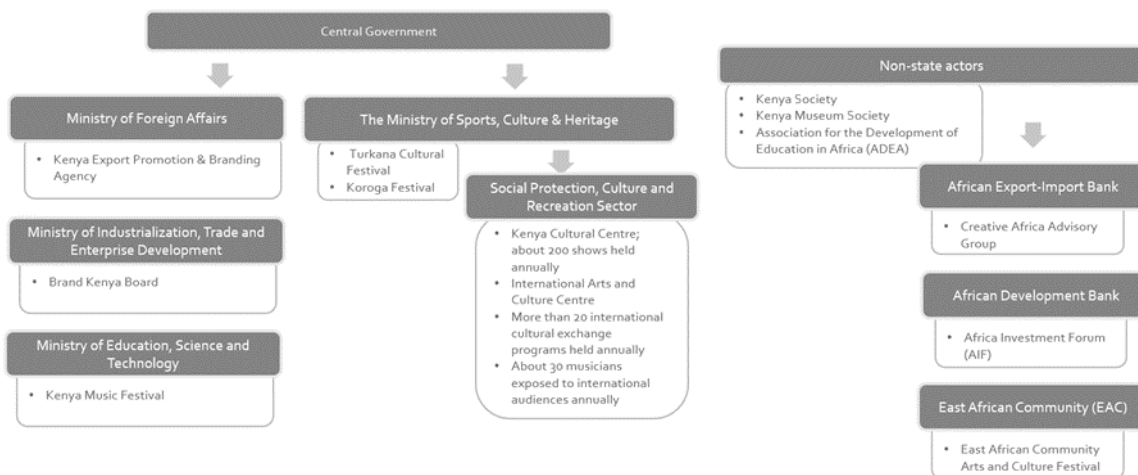
At the federal level, Kenya is far from pursuing a full-fledged and institution-led public or cultural diplomacy. Currently, the Kenyan government welcomes foreign investments and engagement with its local cultural industry. At a regional level, Kenya has been promoting cultural exchange through organizations like the East Africa Art Biennale Association (EASTAFAB) and events like the East African Community Arts and Culture Festival (JAMAFEST). NGOs also have taken the initiative to work in related ECP fields, such as the Center for Humanitarian Outreach and Intercultural Exchange and World Vision Kenya (NGO Board, 2019). However, almost all these NGOs are non-Kenya-based and depend on foreign funding.

Table 3: Key ECP statistics for country

	2019
Number of countries with ECP activities	over 20
Total number of institutions abroad ³	over 20

² Ministry of Foreign Affairs. <https://mfa.go.ke/fpolicy/>.

³ Because Kenya does not have notable brick-and-mortar institutions abroad, this number is a rough indication of the Kenyan embassies that actively engage in cultural, tourist, educational exchange with local actors.

Figure 1: Institutional map of Kenyan ECP

The major institutions responsible for Kenyan ECP are the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Sports, Culture and Heritage. Because Kenya's ECP is much influenced by its domestic socio-economic agenda, activities often require cooperation between multiple ministries and other stakeholders, including NGOs and private companies. For example, the "Made in Kenya" initiative alone expands through fashion, tourism, culture, and telecommunication and represents a joint effort between the government and local private companies.⁴

In addition, Kenya's ECP is guided by Kenya Vision 2030 as well as derivative initiatives like the Big Four Agenda, which focuses on food and nutrition security, healthcare, manufacturing, and affordable housing. Therefore, all aspects of Kenya's cultural diplomacy, from cultural exchange to university education, have to align their development goals with these domestically orientated objectives (2019, Wanderi & Makandi).⁵ For that reason, it is difficult for Kenya's ECP to have a clearly defined element that is solely devoted to promoting international exchange.

3. ECP fields

3.1. Culture and the arts

While Kenya's cultural diplomacy operates at a limited scale, it still expands through multiple areas, including sports, culture, arts, and film. According to the annual report of the Social Protection, Culture and Recreation Sector, Kenya's cultural diplomacy involves government agencies, including the MOFA, the Ministry of ICT, Youth and Innovations, the Ministry of Education, as well as private and non-state actors.

In particular, the Kenyan Culture Centre and the newly established International Arts and Culture Centre are two major locations where cultural events are held at local, regional, and

⁴ Made in Kenya Brand Mark: <http://madeinkenya.brandkenya.go.ke/mkbrand>.

⁵ Kenya Cultural Centre. Also refer to <https://www.kenyaculturalcentre.go.ke/kcc-milestones/>.

international levels. However, because one of the primary goals for these cultural activities is to showcase Kenyan cultural products and attract investments, their overall organization is fragmented, with responsibilities divided between multiple ministries and stakeholders.

Table 4: Key statistics on culture and the arts

	2019	2015
Number of countries present	n/a	n/a
Number of international exchange programs	12	25 ⁽²⁰¹⁷⁾
Number of cultural agreements	2	8 ⁽²⁰¹⁷⁾

In 2019, the Kenya Government allocated KES 54.8 billion (430 million euros) to the Social Protection, Culture and Recreation Sector to improve domestic employment and promote arts and sports regionally and internationally. This also included empowering 7,500 cultural artists and practitioners, nurturing 3,300 youth in music and dance, as elaborated in the 2019 Budget Policy Statement. The total expenditure of the programs in arts and culture under the sector is KES 2.30 billion (17.9 million euros) in 2019 (National Treasury & Planning, 2020, p.65).

According to Kenya Vision 2030 and official statements published by the National Treasury & Planning in 2019, the Kenyan government planned to establish an international arts and culture center that develops youth potential and nurtures their talents in music, arts and theatres, as well as County Heritage and Community Cultural Centres to empower artists and cultural practitioners.⁶ The government aims to expand the Kenya Film School and modernize filming equipment.

From 2008 to 2018, the Social Protection, Culture and Recreation Sector, through Film and Television Market (Kalasha), supported industry participants in attending 18 international and local film festivals (6 in 2018, and 8 in 2017) and markets as part of screen culture development in communities where 220 films were screened. It also empowered 12,847 cultural practitioners through organized capacity-building workshops, festivals, exhibitions, and competitions (Kenya Vision 2030).

In addition, the Kenya Cultural Centre is another institution for holding cultural events and conducting cultural exchange mostly within local communities, but sometimes international events are also held there, such as the “Chinese Night” in 2021 (“Chinese-Kenyan,” 2021). Every year, about 200 public shows and concerts will take place at Kenya Cultural Centre. The number dropped to 86 in 2019 due to the COVID-19 pandemic; the annual expenditure in 2019 of the Cultural Centre is KES 73.3 million (570,000 euros).

Notably, at the pan-African level, the African Export-Import Bank (Afreximbank) has channelled a fund of \$500 million to support the trade of African cultural and creative products for the next two years in 2021. The fund will be directed to the production of music, movies, fashion,

⁶ National Treasury & Planning. <https://www.treasury.go.ke/budget-policy-statement/>; see also Kenya Vision 2030, <https://vision2030.go.ke/project/promotion-preservation-and-development-of-all-aspects-of-culture-for-sustainable-development/>.

industrial parks, manufacturers, etc. In particular, the Afreximbank intends to produce compelling films through networks of African diaspora overseas and work with Netflix to reach a wider audience. In addition, Afreximbank is also working on capacity building to find a feasible and replicable model for music and movie production in Africa (Africa Soft Power Project, 2021).

3.2. Language

Kenya's two official languages are English and Kiswahili. English is the language of law, diplomacy, and education and remains prominent in official communication in Kenya. Kiswahili holds its special position as a liberation language and a language for pan-African unity (Wekesa, 2018), and it is thus one of the official languages adopted by the East African Community (EAC) and African Union.

Kenya and the EAC are keen to encourage wider use of Kiswahili in governments and public institutions, but no practical policy has been laid out so far (KBC, 2021; EAC, 2017). Kenyan government's attitude toward promoting Kiswahili domestically and internationally is ambivalent for a number of reasons, including the lack of infrastructures such as language experts and teachers, the issue around standard Kiswahili and its varieties, as well as the post-colonial power dynamics associated with English and Kiswahili (Timammy & Oduor, 2016). English is the elite language, whereas Kiswahili is promoted as a tool of horizontal integration and political expediency (Njubi, 2009).

For these reasons, Kenya does not have language institutes that promote Kiswahili or its other native languages abroad yet, even though Kiswahili has more than 200 million speakers globally. However, outside Kenya, the Kenyan diaspora in New York launched the Swahili Cultural Institute as a non-profit organization to promote the language in 2021.

Within Kenya, there are developments to disentangle Kenya from its colonial language influence. In urban areas, especially among the youth, Sheng (deriving from abbreviations of Swahili and English) patois is used, which can be seen as a contestation of the standard co-official languages in Kenya (Nabea, 2009). In 2018, the Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development (KICD) approved mother-tongue learning materials for four communities: Gikuyu, Kikamba, Dholuo, and Ekegusii. Under the new curriculum, the mother tongue will be taught at the pre-primary level, from nursery to grade 3 (Nyariki, 2020). It is the first time in the curriculum's history that over 18 local languages are being developed fully so that learners can choose to study their dialects up to the university level.⁷

3.3. Primary and secondary education

African traditional education that focuses on the training and skill development is practical and participatory in nature, and Kenya is no exception (Omolewa, 2007). Kenya's primary goal of education is to equip its population with practical knowledge and skills to contribute meaningfully to the economy and society at large (Akala, 2021). In 2018, Kenya replaced the 8-4-4 with the competency-based 2-6-6-3 curriculum (2 years of pre-primary education, 6

⁷ The 18 languages include Abasuba, Turkana, Somali, Pokomo, Maragoli, Kitubheta, Kidigo, Kiitharaka, Giriama, Bukusu, Borana, Kamba, Dholuo, Gikuyu, Kalenjin, Ekegusi, Chiduruma and Maa.

years of primary education, 6 years of secondary education, and 3 years of university education) to meet better Kenya's demand for skilled labor and its push for economic development.

Even though the new Competency-based Curriculum (CBC) has an international appeal, it does not alter the technical instrumentalist character of Kenyan education (Akala, 2021). This aspect of Kenyan education differs vastly from education offered at international schools (about 60 in total) in Kenya as a majority of them follow the British and North American curricula. These schools also mostly serve expatriates and local elites.

Currently, Kenya is still far from extending its educational practices to other countries. Like many other African countries, Kenya still struggles to find an alternative path to the educational system inherited from the colonial past. Ongoing education reforms face challenges like lack of teacher preparedness and training, and there is still a shortage of 28,000 teachers to fill by 2030, as indicated in Kenya Vision 2030.

3.4. Tertiary education and science

Kenya does not have any tertiary educational institutes abroad. But there are several international universities located in Kenya, and the most prominent ones include the United States International University (USIU).

Today Kenya has 6,828 international students, with most of the students coming from its neighboring countries such as Tanzania and Uganda. The Kenya National Qualifications Authority (KNQA) is developing a policy to help the country attract international students from across Africa and turn it into a regional higher education hub – a position currently held by South Africa, which admits thousands of international students each year (Agnes, 2019). Eusebius Mukhwana, the KNQA director-general, revealed that the strategy aims to increase Kenya's international student base to 30,000 in five years.

Although no concrete policy plan has been laid out yet, the KNQA is working particularly on building existing educational structures and institutions to gain mutual recognition of Kenyan and international qualifications. In this way, more foreign qualifications can be easily assessed, and the influx of teachers and students will increase (KNQA, 2019).

Overall, Kenya's Gross domestic Expenditure in Research and Development (GERD) accounts for less than one percent of its GDP. Kenya's research system is deficient, but it is not underdeveloped. In 2019, at least 14 international public research funders and four private research funders are active in the country. Kenya also hosts a number of international research organizations and influential research intermediaries like the African Academy of Sciences (AAS), the Inter-University Council for East Africa, and the African Capacity Building Foundation (ACBF). For these reasons, Kenya is positioned as a major research hub in East Africa.

Domestically, Kenya's institutional framework for research relies on the role of the National Commission for Science Technology and Innovation (NACOSTI), the National Research Fund (NRF), and the Kenya Innovation Agency (KENIA). These national institutions are guided by well-developed national frameworks and strategies on science, technology, and innovation (STI). The National Science, Technology and Innovation Act assigns clear competencies to national actors and provides guides on every stage of the research process, yet the

national institutions often lack the financial capacity to implement the mandates effectively (Fosci et al., 2019).

Table 5: Key figures on tertiary education and science

	2019	2015
Number of universities / colleges	0	0
Number of domestic universities/ colleges	63	53
Number of students		
Number of foreign students	Inbound: 6,828 Outbound: 16,170	-

3.5. Foreign Media

Kenya has a lively media scene, which is dominated by several big players. Kenya Broadcasting Corporation (KBC) and Kenya News Agency are state-owned. Citizen Television, National Television (NTV), and Kenya Television Networks (KTN) are all privately owned. These three leading private television broadcasters have a combined viewership of more than 70 percent of TV viewers in Kenya. And their international channels have boosters across the East African region, mainly in Uganda and Tanzania. The languages for broadcasting are English and Kiswahili, the language mostly used by East Africans to communicate with their neighbors. Domestically, radio is the main source of information for political affairs. The most popular radio station, Radio Citizen, broadcasts only in Kiswahili.

On the other hand, Kenya's media landscape is dominated by foreign content. In sight of this trend, the Kenyan government requires broadcasting stations to ensure 40 percent of local content in TV and radio broadcasts since 2014 (UNESCO, 2014).⁸ However, the quality of Kenya's music and film production has improved marginally over the years. Compared to Nigeria's success in Nollywood and Afrobeats, Kenya's media and entertainment industries still have a long way to catch up (Tubei, 2019).

Kenya has a large presence of international media support organizations, including BBC Media Action, Bloomberg Media Initiative for Africa, IREX,⁹ to support its local industry. In addition, there are several independent international TV channels broadcasting from Kenya with fully-fledged studios, staff, and daily news delivery. These include the BBC, China's CCTV, and Al Jazeera (Mwita, 2021).

⁸ <https://en.unesco.org/creativity/policy-monitoring-platform/regulation-airing-40-local>.

⁹ International Research & Exchanges Board, an international, non-profit organization that works with partners in more than 100 countries to make progress in education and development. For more programs in Kenya, please refer to IREX Kenya page: <https://www.irex.org/region/africa/kenya>.

Table 9: Key figures on foreign broadcasting

		2019	2015
TV (Kenya Citizen TV)	Number of countries broadcasted to	4 (worldwide through media)	-
	Number of languages	2	-
New Media	Social networks following	MOFA Facebook: 36,000 (2021) MOFA Twitter: 350,000 (2021) Kenya citizen TV: 3.16 million (2021) Radio Citizen: 468,700 (2021)	-

4. Challenges and future outlook

In the five fields of ECP, Kenya has suffered from major drawbacks due to lack of funding and insufficient infrastructure. Kenya's domestic situation is hampering its capacity for developing its external cultural policy. Corruption is a major issue underlying institutional weaknesses. The country ranks 144 out of 180 countries in Transparency International's Corruption Perception Index 2018, and state institutions tasked with combating corruption have not yet managed to curb it effectively.

However, Kenya has opportunities to push its ECP to the next level. The country is being internationally celebrated for digital innovation and a burgeoning information and communication technology (ICT) sector. In 2020, Kenya had the third-largest number of internet users in Africa. Kenya also had the highest internet usage rate in the entire African continent, with 85.2 percent (Statista, 2020).

Innovative hybrid media (a combination of traditional and digital media production and distribution tools) continue to enhance Kenya's digital diplomacy, which relies on the internet to achieve diplomatic goals. Prevalent use of social media to communicate socio-political messages is observed not only in main actors responsible for Kenya's ECP, such as the MOFA, but also in media agencies like the Kenya Broadcasting Corporation. In July of 2020 Google launched Project Loon, a balloon-powered internet service to provide 4G LTE internet connectivity in remote and rural areas in Kenya. The initiative is a big boost for people-to-people diplomacy and will go a long way in influencing digital diplomacy within Kenya and the rest of Africa (Maluki & Njagi, 2020).

Especially digital media can provide Kenya with a diaspora population of over four million people, with a huge potential to boost its economy via remittances. According to the Central Bank of Kenya, diaspora remittances as of June 2019 were about KES 276.8 billion (2.14 billion euros). It is evident that Kenya was an early adopter within the African context of digital diplomacy and possesses great potential to leverage social media tools to enhance its public diplomacy (Mboya, 2021).

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Charlottenplatz 17,

70173 Stuttgart,

Postfach 10 24 63,

D-70020 Stuttgart

www.ifa.de

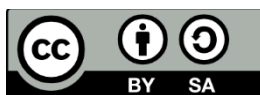
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