

*Prepared for the Rockefeller-Aspen Diaspora Program (RAD)*

## The Kenyan Diaspora in the United States

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### Summary

Kenyan immigrants currently represent a small fraction of the United States' overall foreign-born population, but their numbers have grown quickly over the past two decades. Kenyan immigrants and their children (the first and second generation) totaled about 100,000 as of 2013, making it the smallest diaspora population in the RAD analysis.<sup>1</sup> Two-thirds of Kenyan immigrants arrived in the U.S. during or after the year 2000. They are young, highly educated and economically successful: the median age is only 33, and 98 percent are below age 65. Kenyan diaspora members are more likely to be in the labor force than the general U.S. population, and a greater share of Kenyans hold bachelor's degrees and advanced degrees than the U.S. population overall. In general, high levels of education correspond to higher employment rates for the diaspora groups analyzed in the RAD series, as is the case among Kenyans. The median annual income for Kenyan diaspora households is \$61,000, above the median of \$50,000 for all U.S. households. Thirteen percent of Kenyan households have incomes over \$140,000, which is the income threshold for the top tenth of U.S. households.

Kenyan immigrants are widely distributed across the United States, with the largest populations in the states of Texas and California. By metropolitan area, the greatest numbers of Kenyan immigrants live in Dallas, Minneapolis-St. Paul, New York, Seattle, Atlanta, Washington, and Boston. Minneapolis-St. Paul also had a large immigrant population from other parts of East Africa, and many of the Kenyan-born immigrants there are likely of Somali origin.

Kenyan diaspora organizations in the United States tend to be newer groups without full-time professional staff or significant revenue streams, reflecting the fact that the diaspora is relatively small and recently-arrived. The organizations generally are one of two kinds: charitable institutions that provide humanitarian assistance to Kenya's most vulnerable populations or social networking groups focusing on the diaspora itself. Some of these organizations also have a Christian focus, including the one with the highest revenues: the Kenyan Christian Fellowship in America. Other notable groups are the Kwarula Society for Kenyan Education, the Association of International Kenyan Medical Professionals, and the Kenya Diaspora Advocacy Councils of New England and Georgia, which were founded in conjunction with the Embassy of Kenya in Washington, DC. In addition, the Kenyan Diaspora Alliance, a nascent San Diego-based association, is trying to bring together Kenyan diaspora groups from around the world to advocate for diaspora voting rights in Kenyan elections. Only one of the 44 groups identified for this study reported having annual revenue above \$200,000, and most had much lower levels of revenue or none at all.

<sup>1</sup> The RAD Diaspora Profile series covers U.S.-based diaspora populations originating in Colombia, Egypt, India, Kenya, and the Philippines.

The United States is the second-largest source of remittances sent to Kenya and also the second most common destination of its international migrants, after the United Kingdom in both categories. The diaspora in the United States transferred approximately \$315 million to Kenya in 2012. Historically, Kenya is not a large migrant sending country nor has it received large remittance inflows. However, with receipts valued at \$1.2 billion in 2012, remittances made up 3 percent of the country's GDP of about \$41 billion.

## Detailed Demographic and Socioeconomic Characteristics<sup>2</sup>

Analysis of data from 2009-2013 shows a Kenyan diaspora in the United States of about 100,000 individuals, counting immigrants born in Kenya and U.S.-born individuals with at least one parent born in Kenya.

### First Generation (Kenyan immigrants in the United States)

- An estimated 80,000 immigrants from Kenya resided in the United States.<sup>3</sup> Almost 10,000 Kenyan immigrants to the U.S. reported both their parents as Somali-born. Thus, about 10 percent of Kenyan-born immigrants are likely the children of refugees from Somalia. Kenya has large refugee camps in which Somali and other populations have resided for years.
- The size of the Kenyan immigrant population in the United States is small but growing. In 1980, the United States was home to fewer than 10,000 immigrants from Kenya, a time when immigrants from Africa constituted only 1.4 percent of the country's total immigrant population.<sup>4</sup> In 2012, the immigrant share from Africa was 4.2 percent. In the same timeframe, the Kenyan immigrant population grew almost eight-fold from the small 1980 baseline. The Kenyan-born population, along with those from Ethiopia and Nigeria, belong to a rapidly growing cohort of African immigrants in the United States.
- About one-third of immigrants from Kenya arrived before 2000 (33 percent) and two-thirds arrived after 2000 (67 percent).
- A relatively small share of Kenyan immigrants was U.S. citizens at the time of the survey (35 percent), the lowest naturalization rate of the five groups in the RAD analysis — reflecting the recent arrival of the majority of the Kenyan immigrant population.
- Most Kenyan immigrants were working age (77 percent). The remainder was almost entirely under age 18 (20 percent).

2 Unless otherwise noted, estimates for the diaspora population and its characteristics are based on Migration Policy Institute analysis of the U.S. Census Bureau's Current Population Surveys, using five years of pooled data (2009-2013), collected in March of each year. All Census Bureau data were accessed from Integrated Public Use Microdata Series (IPUMS) (Steven Ruggles, J. Trent Alexander, Katie Genadek, Ronald Goeken, Matthew B. Schroeder, and Matthew Sobek. Integrated Public Use Microdata Series: Version 5.0 [Machine-readable database]. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 2010), <http://usa.ipums.org/usa/>.

3 Estimates based on the 2008-2012 American Community Survey give a larger estimated Kenyan immigrant population size of 95,000.

4 Estimates based on MPI analysis of the U.S. Census Bureau's 2010-2012 American Community Surveys (ACS) and the 1980 and 2000 Censuses.

- The median age of Kenyan immigrants was 33; they were the youngest group of the five countries in the RAD analysis.

### **Second Generation (U.S.-born with at least one Kenyan immigrant parent)**

- An estimated 25,000 U.S.-born individuals had at least one parent who was born in Kenya, making it the smallest second generation group in the RAD analysis.
- The majority of second-generation individuals reported that both their parents immigrated to the United States from Kenya (60 percent). Another 28 percent of this population had one parent who was U.S.-born.
- Almost all members of the Kenyan second-generation immigrant population were under age 18 (92 percent).

### **Educational Attainment**

- Kenyan diaspora members were well-educated and more likely than the general U.S. population to have completed a university degree.
- Thirty percent over age 25 had a bachelor's degree, compared to 20 percent of the U.S. population. Sixteen percent possessed a master's degree, PhD, or an advanced professional degree—also a larger share than the general U.S. population (11 percent).

### **Household Income**

- Kenyan diaspora households reported a higher median annual income than U.S. households overall: \$61,000 versus \$50,000.
- On average, Kenyan diaspora households have 2.6 members, fewer than the other diaspora groups in the RAD analysis but similar to U.S. households overall, which, on average, have 2.5 members.
- Thirty-one percent of Kenyan diaspora households reported incomes higher than \$90,000 per year, the threshold for the top 25 percent of U.S. households.
- Thirteen percent of Kenyan diaspora households had incomes over \$140,000, the threshold for the top ten percent of U.S. households.

## Employment

- Kenyan diaspora members over age 16 were much more likely than the general U.S. population to be in the labor force (80 versus 64 percent). Both Kenyan men and women were in the labor force at rates well above U.S. averages.
- The Kenyan diaspora population in the labor force was equally likely as those in the general U.S. labor force to be employed: 91 percent.
- The Kenyan diaspora population was employed in professional and managerial occupations at a higher rate than the U.S. population overall: 31 versus 20 percent. These occupations include specialized fields (e.g. engineering, science, law, or education) as well as administrative and managerial jobs (e.g. finance or human resources).

## Geographic Distribution<sup>5</sup>

- Immigrants from Kenya were widely distributed across the United States.
- By state, the largest population of Kenyan immigrants lived in Texas and California, with about 10,000 in each.
- The largest population of Kenyan immigrants in the United States by metropolitan area lived in Dallas, where approximately 8,000 Kenyan immigrants resided. Other major population centers for this immigrant population included the Minneapolis-St. Paul, New York, Seattle, Atlanta, Washington, and Boston metropolitan areas.

## Remittance Volume<sup>6</sup>

- Historically, Kenya has been not a large migrant sending country and has not received large remittance inflows. However, with remittance receipts valued at \$1.2 billion in 2012 and a total GDP of \$40.7 billion, remittances now made up a significant share — about 3 percent — of the country's GDP.
- The United States was second largest source of remittances sent to Kenya, after the United Kingdom, and also the second most popular destination country for Kenyan migrants. In 2012, \$315 million in remittances were transferred from the diaspora in the United States to Kenya.

5 These estimates are based on MPI analysis of the 2008-2012 ACS. Note that geographic distribution is only analyzed for the immigrant population. Second-generation Kenyan diaspora members are not included in this section.

6 Remittance data are taken from World Bank Prospects Group tables for annual remittance inflows and outflows (October 2013 update) and the 2012 Bilateral Remittance Matrix (both available here: <http://go.worldbank.org/092X1CHHD0>). GDP estimates are from World Bank World Development Indicators data. Population estimates are from the United Nations Population Division mid-2013 matrix of total migrant stock by origin and destination.

## Tables, Maps, and Graphs

### Characteristics of the Kenyan Diaspora in the United States

	Kenyan Diaspora in the U.S.*	Total U.S. Population
<b>Household Income</b>		
<b>Median household income</b>	\$61,000	\$50,000
Average household size	2.6	2.5
Share of households with high incomes (\$90,000+)	31%	25%
Share of households with very high incomes (\$140,000+)	13%	10%
<b>Employment</b>		
<b>Total population age 16 and older</b>	65,000	239,386,000
Share in the labor force	80%	64%
... that was employed	93%	91%
... that was in a professional occupation	31%	20%
<b>Educational Attainment **</b>		
<b>Total population age 25 and older</b>	55,000	201,925,000
... with less than high school education	4%	13%
... with high school or some college education	50%	57%
... with a bachelor's degree	30%	20%
... with an advanced degree	16%	11%
<b>Population Characteristics by Generation</b>		
<b>First and Second Generation Immigrant Population</b>	102,000	73,140,000
<b>First generation immigrant population ***</b>	77,000	38,468,000
... that was working age (18-64)	77%	81%
... that entered the U.S. before 2000	33%	64%
... naturalized as U.S. citizens	35%	44%
<b>Second generation population ****</b>	25,000	34,672,000
... that was under age 18	92%	46%
... that was working age (18-64)	8%	43%
... with only one parent from Kenya	40%	

\* defined as all first and second generation

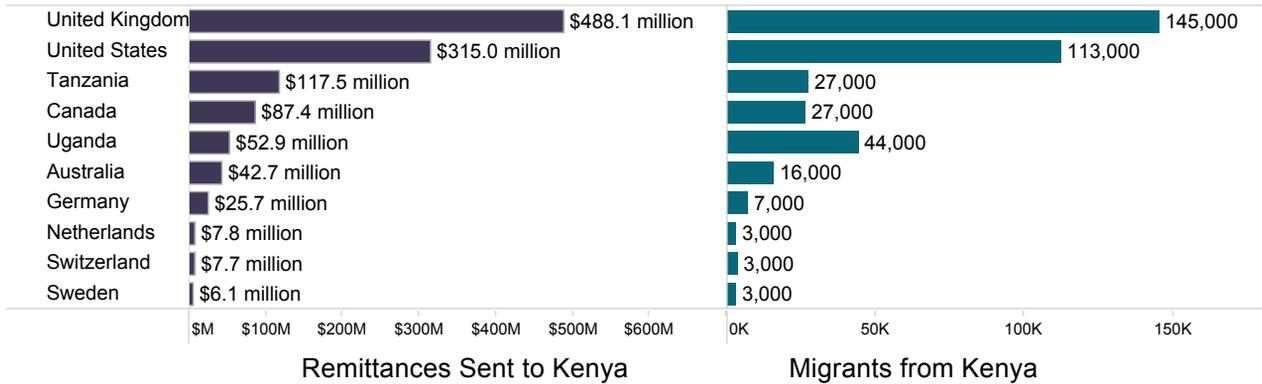
\*\* highest level reported

\*\*\* all individuals who report Kenya as their place of birth, excluding U.S. births abroad

\*\*\*\* all individuals who report having at least one parent born in Kenya

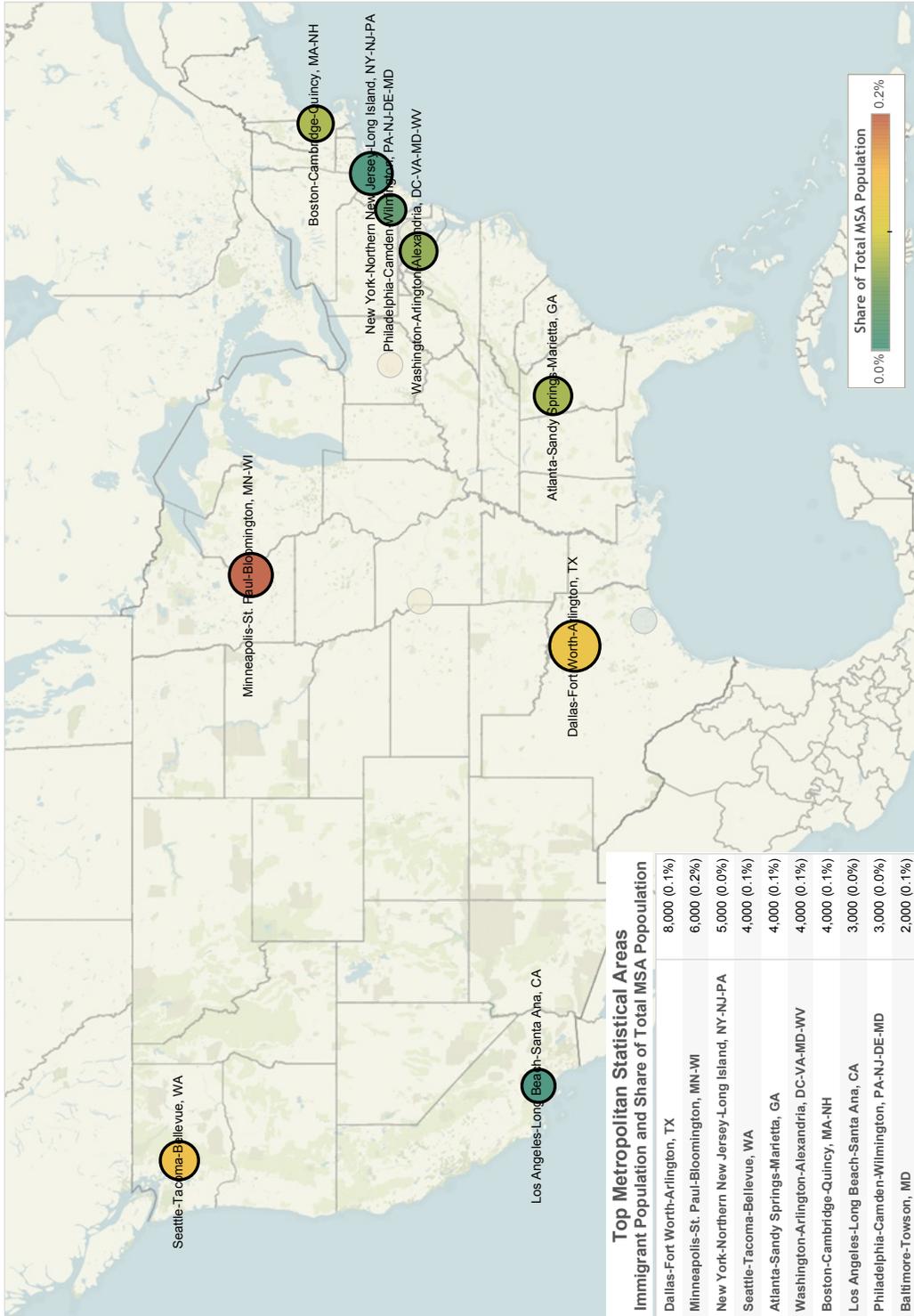
Source: All Census Bureau data were accessed from Integrated Public Use Microdata Series (IPUMS) (Steven Ruggles, J. Trent Alexander, Katie Genadek, Ronald Goeken, Matthew B. Schroeder, and Matthew Sobek. Integrated Public Use Microdata Series: Version 5.0 [Machine-readable database]. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 2010), <http://usa.ipums.org/usa/>.

### Remittance Inflows to Kenya by Sending Country and the Kenyan Emigrant Population, 2012



Source: MPI's analysis of World Bank Prospects Group tables for annual remittance inflows and outflows (October 2013 update) and the 2012 Bilateral Remittance Matrix, the World Bank's World Development Indicators, and the United Nations Population Division's Matrix of Total Migrant Stock by Origin and Destination (mid-2013).

## Immigrant Population from Kenya Displayed by Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA)



U.S. Census Bureau; American Community Survey, 2008-2012 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, Table B05006; generated by the Migration Policy Institute; using American FactFinder; <<http://factfinder2.census.gov/>>; (18 December 2013).

Source: MPI's analysis of 2010-2012 ACS, pooled.