Urban Pathways

Nairobi
KENYA
Country Profile

Nairobi

Nairobi the capital of Kenya and located on the edge of the country's agricultural region of the central highlands, 1800 meters above sea level - this contributes to lower average temperatures and creates an area where rainfall is relatively higher than in the surrounding areas. Nairobi as a city was established by the colonial powers in the late 1890s, initially as a railway camp, and now is the second largest city by population size in the Great Lakes region – after Dar es Salaam in Tanzania – and is Africa's Green City in the Sun and East Africa's economic powerhouse (World Bank, 2016).

The metropolitan City of Nairobi is regarded as Kenya engine for economic growth and more than a third of the urban population lives in the City of Nairobi (and Mombasa). It is also home to the UN-Habitat and UN-Environment organisation's headquarters, IBM, Intel and Google also use Nairobi as their base for its African operations. An estimated 3.9 million people live in the City of Nairobi (The Conversation, 2018) – this is a double since the 1986 census (Metcalf, J. 2016). Population density in Nairobi varies greatly, peaking in the city's slums, which house roughly 2.5 million people in about 200 settlements. Roughly 60 percent of Nairobi's population occupies just 6 percent of the land.

Energy

Nairobi is projected to home to 10-million people in the next decade as the city increases in urbanization and population density. With this increase of people on the one hand and the country's Vision 2030 to become a middle-income country the surge of energy usage will increase rapidly. In January 2018, Nairobi accounted for more than half of Kenya Power's electricity sales over the past four years – revealing the economic dominance of the capital city and its continue energy consumption trends. In June 2018, data reveal that Nairobi accounted for 50.2% of unit sales of electricity – just above the half level mark it held since 2013 (Business Daily, 2018).

Transport

Residents of Nairobi have been burdened with an unsafe urban transportation system that have seen 447 pedestrians killed in 2015 from traffic-related incidents on the streets of Nairobi (Klopp, J. M. 2017). Nairobi historically has invested heavily in a car-centric development – with large investments in highways and expanding road networks. With rising urbanisation the City of Nairobi has seen a rise in pollution, congestion and obesity. Interestingly, just 12% of Nairobi's population use private vehicles and most other people rely on the public transport system. In 2017, Nairobi took the first steps to redress its problems by passing the Non-Motorized Transport Policy – the new policy aims to develop the city toward a more inclusive transport modal design.

Waste management

Nairobi solid waste management is currently causing the city to face a serious environmental problem as many areas are not serviced and private agencies charging high rates for services residents of the city generates between 3000 and 3200 tons of solid waste daily but only about 1,500 tonnes is collected and deposited. Earlier in April 2018 the city administration of Nairobi released a report that indicated plans are in place to create additional landfills and enhance capacity for timely collection and disposal of waste (Mueni, J. 2018). One policy option is to ban plastic bags to help mitigate this growing problem, more awareness and education campaigns are also needed to be developed so that an adaptation mindset is created to reuse and recycle. Poor waste management is linked to health problems and environmental damage that will hinder broader economic growth for Nairobi.