

# Welcome to our world

## The Kamaus from Kenya

### PROFILE

**Father:** Boniface Kigotho Kamau, 35

**Mother:** Pauline Wanjiku, approximately 29 (exact age unknown)

**Daughter:** Joyce Muthoni, 8

**Daughter:** Sharon Wanjiru, 16 months



**Boniface and his wife, Pauline**, live in Ongata Rongai, a small town near the capital, Nairobi. They have two daughters: Joyce, who is in her third year of school, and 16-month-old Sharon.

Their home is a two-bedroom apartment, one of 20 in a **single-storey** block. Boniface works as a taxi driver at the international airport in Nairobi. Each morning he leaves home at 4.30am in his white Toyota – **cracked** windscreen, 200,000 miles on the clock – and is back by 10pm. On a good day he finds two clients. In a typical month he takes home about £140.



‘It’s a hard job but I like it,’ he says. ‘I meet new people, so I get some experience of the world – even though I have never been outside Kenya.’

Pauline is a **dressmaker** but isn’t working at the moment. She stays at home to look after the kids. The weekend is often the only time Boniface sees Joyce and Sharon. Boniface and Pauline met in 1994: ‘We liked each other immediately,’ says Boniface. ‘I didn’t want a woman from the city so when I learned that Pauline was from the country, I was pleased.’

They married in 1995 and at first they lived in a **slum**, and often didn’t have a lot to eat, just sukuma wiki (a green vegetable). Then, in 1996, Boniface won £60 in a cycle race. The money helped them move house to a better area and paid for driving lessons so that Boniface could become a taxi driver.

His salary doesn’t go far. Rent is £30 a month, and he gives the same amount to his parents, who don’t work. Also, as the most successful of six brothers and sisters, Boniface is expected to help their families too. He says, ‘I am always so **stressed** about money.’ Joyce’s school fees cost another £25 a month.

‘We are trying to give our children the best education,’ says Pauline, who, like her husband, never finished school. ‘Joyce wants to be a doctor.’

Next year, Sharon is going to preschool, so Pauline will have more time to start her own dressmaking business. By then, the family might have a new home. ‘This apartment is not a good place to raise a family,’ says Boniface. ‘The toilets are **communal** – one for every four families.’ Boniface plans to build a three-bedroom house in the suburbs of Nairobi.



**The family are happiest when** they have a bit of spare money: Boniface takes them to see the wild animals at Nairobi National Park.

**Family motto** Try to do your best at all times.

## The Qus from Beijing, China

### PROFILE

**Father:** Qu Wansheng, 44

**Mother:** Liu Guifang, 43

**Daughter:** Chen, 17

**Grandfather:** (Qu's father) Huanjun, 84



**Qu and Liu** have known each other since childhood. The most noticeable change in China since then is the size of families. Qu was the youngest of six. Liu grew up as one of five children. But they have only one daughter.



Unlike many Chinese parents, Qu and Liu are happy to have a girl. However, like most parents in China, they put the needs of their only child, Chen, first. She is trying for a place at the prestigious Beijing University. Qu, a propaganda officer at the municipal services bureau, and Liu, who works at the No. 3 computer factory, are saving every last yuan for their daughter's education.

The family have lived in their house in central Beijing for 70 years. It is in one of the capital's ancient Hutong **alleyways**. These are known for their **close-knit** families and warm hospitality. The elderly sit outside and chat. People wander to the shops in their pyjamas. It is a way of life **cherished** by Qu, but he can see that this relaxed routine is increasingly out of step with a nation experiencing one of the most amazingly quick changes in human history.

'We are not in a hurry to get rich,' says Qu. 'I don't want to rush around trying to make money – I am not a machine. I put my family first.'

Tens of thousands of alleyways have been knocked down in the past few years, and their house is said to be next for **demolition**. And when the old communities go, the traditional family structure, in which children look after their elderly parents at home, goes too.

But for now, the Qus keep the old ways. The grandfather, Qu Huanjun, 84 and **frail**, is the centre of the family. 'My father lives here so this is the headquarters of the family,' says his son. 'My brothers and their families come to visit most weekends. We are very close.'

They are sad that their daughter has grown up alone because the one-child policy forbids them from having any more. 'Our daughter is lonely,' says Liu. 'I always wanted to have two children.'



Qu and Liu are proud of their daughter. Chen is bright and well-balanced. She wants to study archaeology. 'University will cost a great deal of money,' says her father. 'So we try to live **frugally** and save for our daughter.'

**The family are happiest when** they are all together in the evening.

**Family motto** Save money, live simply, care for your friends, tell the truth.