



Compte rendu d'entretien
Nairobi – Kenya

PORTRAIT : FELIX

Date de l'entretien : Juin 09

My name is Felix, I am a doctor at the Avenue Hospital in Nairobi, and I come from Mehru, which is an area in central Kenya near the Mount Kenya. I have no wife and no kids. I am 26, turning 27 this year. Currently I am a general practitioner, I finished Medical school only four years back so I haven't yet gone back for my specialisation but I hope to go back this year or next year. For my specialisation I want to do neurology, I am interested in the brain.

Where did you grow up?

I was born in Mehru, I was stayed with my mother initially because she is a teacher, she is teaching in Mehru, my dad is lawyer, he was working in Nairobi at that time so for the first three years I lived with my mother then she came to Nairobi. So most of my life I have actually grown up in Nairobi, I went to the primary school, to the secondary school and to University here in Nairobi. I have joined the Medical school in the year 2000, it was long course, and it took me 5 years.

Did you go abroad to study?

No, I didn't go abroad. I have done all my studies here in Nairobi. I was just here.

Why? You didn't want to go abroad or you simply didn't have the opportunity to do that?

When I have 18 I had the opportunity to go studying abroad but my parents told that I was too young at that time and they preferred that I studied here. But now, for my post graduation I think that probably I would go abroad.

Where did you have the opportunity to go?

I had the opportunity to go to Canada.

Do you have brothers or sisters?

I have two sisters, they follow me, one is 23 and the other is 24. The oldest one is working as a editor at a publishing house, the younger graduated this year and she is working as an accountant.

Did they go studying abroad?

No, they studied all here.

In which neighbourhood did you live in Nairobi?



We were living in **Karren**, at the beginning we grown up in a area called Buruburu, we lived there for sometimes then we moved to South and then we moved to Karren.

Can you tell us something about Karren? Did you live in a flat or in a house?

Karren is a place near a forest, we lived in a house in a compound. It was pretty nice, there were nice gardens.

You told that your mother is a teacher. She works in a public school or in a private one?

She works in a public school. She is teaching in a secondary school right here. She has been teaching for a long time. Recently she took a master in Psychology so she in the next stage of her life is going to be a psychologist.

You told that your dad is lawyer. In what consists his job exactly?

My father is a commercial lawyer, but he doesn't work for a company.

Why did you chose to become a doctor?

I decided to become a doctor because the human body had always interested me, from the time I was a little child and I used to read on the books about the heart, about how it works et what it does. Also when I went to the doctor I always wondered how it was to listen at heart with the stereoscope. So I got interested, I like biology in the high school. I have always known that I wanted to do medicine.

To which university did you go?

I went to the Medical school in Nairobi, it is called University of Nairobi Medical school.

Do you live in your own flat or do you still living with your parents?

When I finish school I went in a town called **Kisy**, which is about 600 km from here, so I used to live alone there but when the violence broke out I couldn't stay anymore, it was a little bit difficult and I had to come back to Nairobi and I came back living with my parents.

Can you tell us something about your monthly income?

Average I earn about 8600/9000 Ksh a month.

Do you have a second job or all yours earnings come from your activity in this hospital?

All the earnings I get come from this hospital. Sometimes, when they need it, I do extra hours, but always in this hospital.

Are you happy with the pay you get?

I think that it's about the average. Some get a little bit more; some get a little bit less.



Do you manage to live in Nairobi with this salary?

It's getting harder but it's not so bad. I mean there are much worse salaries around. The problem is that, because we don't have a very good public transport system, we are obliged to have our own car and it is expensive to maintain it. In addition to this, you have to consider also that if you want to live in a nice place the rents are pretty high.

For example, how much is the rent for a flat?

I'm looking for a flat and there are beautiful flats which cost about 20000/25000 Ksh par month, so I am obliged to find someone to live with, to share the rent with him/her.

In which neighbourhood do you like to live?

I'd like to live in an area called Parkland, it's near the city, so is not too far away and it is pretty good. It is an area with mostly flats, generally is two bedrooms apartments and there is security and that's not so bad. Actually flats are in a compound and there is a gate, and at this gate there is a man who checks people who enter, it is like a closed area.

Where do you place yourself in the Kenyan society?

Probably, I would place myself in the middle class. I have friends who are not doctors like me who earn less than me, but I also know other people, who are like businessmen, who earn two times three times what I'm earning. So I place myself somewhere in the middle.

In your opinion, apart from the salary, what distinguish a person belonging to the middle class from a person belonging to another social group?

What defines a middle class person to me is the way he/she is dressing. You can understand the class to which one person belongs from what he/she is wearing. You can immediately see if this person wears expensive clothes or not. I think that the most defining is the habits. There are people who can have a coffee after work or go somewhere during the weekend and have holidays outside the city. There are people who can afford an expensive car, like a Toyota. I think that is most the habits, which define the middle class. They may have lunch in a nice place, they do sports but their habits are different from those of rich people.

How can you distinguish a rich people?

Actually it is very simple. First of all there is the car. Then there is the neighbourhood they live and the places they go on holiday. They normally drive cars, of the more expensive types, they drive Mercedes or BMW. I don't think they drive French cars. They live in places like Rhunda, Musaika. For holidays they like exotic you know. They like going out of the country. When they stay in the country they normally go to the coast, they go in the most expensive and exclusive hotels.



In your opinion what kind of jobs do rich people? Do they have a specific type of job?

Not necessarily. They are normally businessmen. The most of them are in business, they make lots of money through the business. For the professionals, I can say that they are rich when they are at the total level of their profession like a doctor who is gone up, a doctor who has all the clients and all the experiences and he is really good and everyone wants call him.

In your opinion, what kinds of professions do middle class people?

Most of professions when you start off you just are a middle class person whether you are a lawyer, whether you are an engineer to begin with, whether you are a journalist. Most people, even the ones in marketing or in business. I think that in the first five years of working you find yourself in the middle then after that when as the opportunities come by you can go up.

In your opinion how much is the salary of a middle class people?

In a place like Nairobi, I think that the salary of a middle class person is about 15000/16000 Ksh. Because if you take the same amount and you go in other places in Kenya, you live very well because the rents are lower, the cost of life is much much lower in other areas.

Do you support economically someone?

I don't have any financial obligation from anyone.

How do you manage when you have an health problem? Do you have an health insurance?

Yes, I have an health insurance, I am covered by this hospital. When I have an health problem I go to see one of mine colleagues.

What do you do in your spare time?

Sometimes I travel but as I don't have much of free time I like spending the most part of my spare time with my girlfriend or with my friends.

Are you involved in some social clubs?

No, I am not yet involved in social clubs.

Are you involved in politics?

Not at all. I don't like it. I don't like politicians so I am not involved actively in politics but I vote and I have my own opinion.

Why you are not involved?

The politicians in my opinion are very selfish; they don't care about the good of the country



Do you think that the next generation of politicians will come from the middle class?

For our country, unfortunately not yet. The middle classes are a really small population. For the politicians it is very easy to continue to have the power because they easily control the poor and the upper class. The poor are easy to mislead, they have the numbers and they come to vote. But they really don't think through issues, they are ready to believe what is been said. It is easy to manipulate them.

Did affect you the post election events? And the actual global economical crisis is affecting you? What is changed from before to now?

The post election events yes. Like I told you I was working in an area called Kisy so when the fighting started there was no way for me to get out because the community I belong is closely related with Kikuy so it was pretty difficult to travel. About the global recession, I think that it's not yet affecting me in a tangible way. Here in Kenya the effects of the global recession are less evident than in other countries, like for example, the US. But I am sure over the time the effects of this global crisis will be strong even here.

Have you thought about emigrating?

Yes, but I love my country. Even if I go abroad it will be only temporarily, I prefer to settle down here and to make a difference here. Actually I have never thought about emigration, I thought about going study abroad and then come back here and settle down here. Kenya