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Cities Without Slums

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KAKUMA- KALOBYEI

*Sustainable Economic Development Along the
Turkana West Development Corridor Through
Enhanced Connectivity*

Implementing

Partner: UN-Habitat

Location: Kakuma and Kalobeyei, Kenya

Duration: November 2019 – September 2021

SUMMARY

The Sustainable Economic Development Along the Turkana West Development Corridor Through Enhanced Connectivity project is improving connectivity and networks that enable businesses, local governments, and individuals to gain access to a wider choice of goods, finance, employment, and investment opportunities, leading to a sustainable local economy in the region.

It organised development forums for cities along a major Kenyan transport corridor, expanded a network of cities for knowledge exchange and cooperation, supported the planning of an Economic Enterprise Zone (EEZ) to promote the local economy in Kakuma-Kalobeyei, built soft infrastructure to support a city network, and strengthened capacity at the local level to integrate migration into city development.



THE CITIES ALLIANCE GLOBAL PROGRAMME ON CITIES AND MIGRATION

The Sustainable Economic Development Along the Turkana West Development Corridor Through Enhanced Connectivity project is part of the Cities Alliance Global Programme on Cities and Migration, which focuses on migration management in secondary cities in low-income countries. The programme is supported by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC).

The project in Kakuma-Kalobeyi is one of a global portfolio of nine cities that includes Amatlán and San Marcos, Guatemala; Jendouba and Kairouan, Tunisia; Arua and Jinja, Uganda; and Adama and Jijjiga, Ethiopia.

CONTEXT

Turkana County has historically been a marginalised area with some of the lowest development indicators in Kenya. Located in northwestern Kenya along the borders with Ethiopia, South Sudan, and Uganda, the county has long been a destination for refugees, especially from South Sudan. It has two main refugee centres – the Kakuma refugee camp and the Kalobeyi refugee integrated settlement – which together have a population of approximately 187,000 refugees. The host community consists of 46,000 persons.

With the support of aid and development programmes, there has been some economic activity in Turkana County; there are about 2,500 businesses and a local market valued at \$56 million per year. However, the current economic system of Kakuma-Kalobeyi is highly dependent on humanitarian aid, making it vulnerable and volatile. At the same time, this refugee-based economy presents opportunities for sustainable growth. For example, the governor of Turkana County capitalised on the large number of residents to request city status for Kakuma-Kalobeyi, which will provide increased fiscal transfers and a greater mandate for the local authorities.

More local development efforts are needed to help Kakuma-Kalobeyi make the most of these opportunities and use them as the basis for building a sustainable local economy that can flourish as aid gradually decreases and refugees return to their home countries.

An approach that emphasises systems of cities

The Cities Alliance project in Kakuma-Kalobeyi sought to strengthen the local economy by taking an approach that emphasises a thriving system of cities. This is a core focus area for Cities Alliance, which has worked for over eight years to conceptualise secondary cities, explore how these systems of cities can be connected, and how they can promote increased prosperity. Cities Alliance has produced two seminal works on the topic: *Managing Systems of Secondary Cities* and *Connecting Systems of Secondary Cities*.

The system of cities approach is built around the central idea that improving connectivity and networking within cities can significantly lower disparities in levels of regional development, increase productivity and prosperity, and support cities to manage migration.

In Kakuma-Kalobeyi, the approach leveraged the current opportunities presented by the refugee population, their skills and networks, relationships with the host communities, and the political will of the local authorities to trigger sustainable economic development.

RESULTS

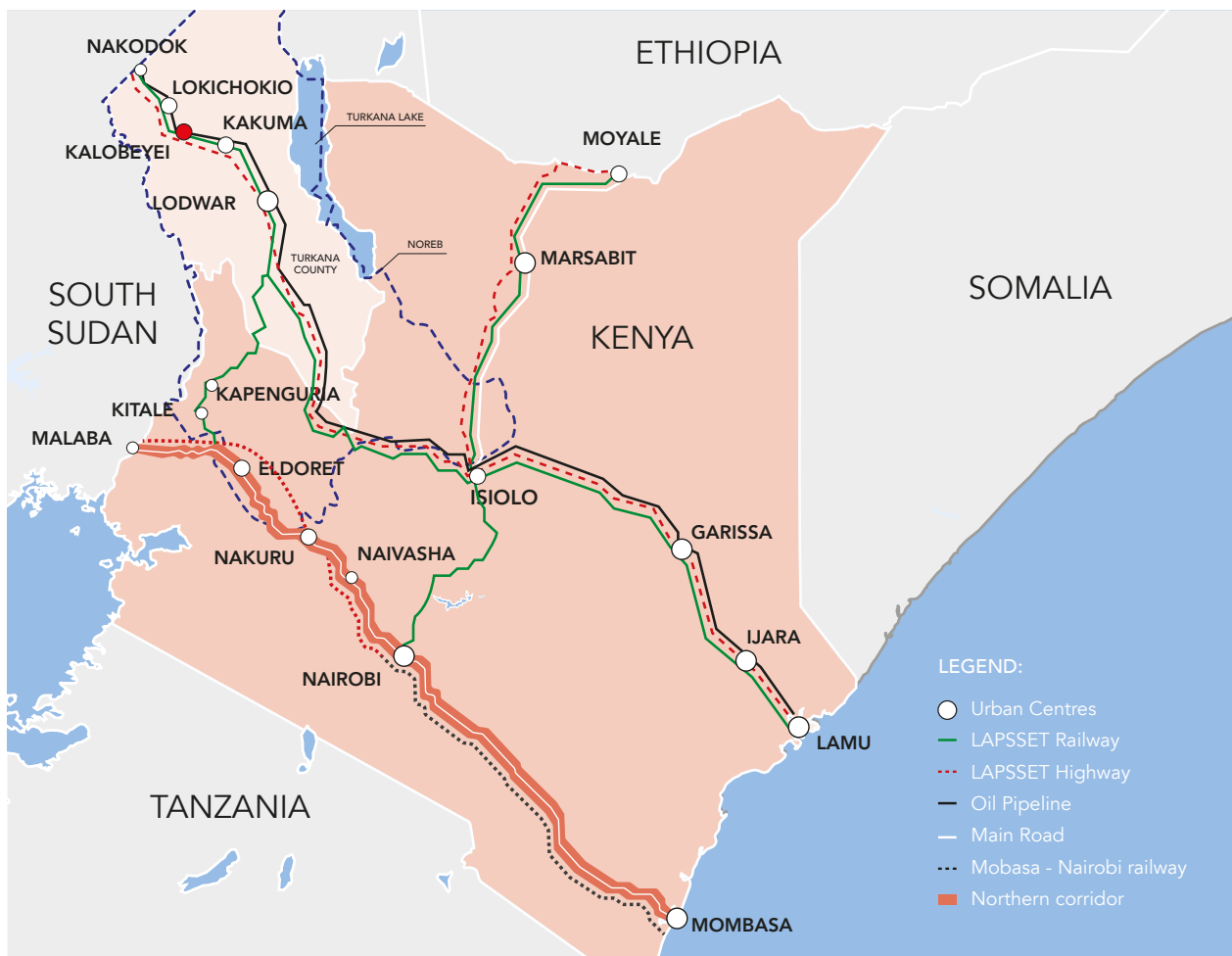
The project's activities were designed to work together to enhance connectivity and networking in Turkana County. They involved developing a process for engaging all stakeholders along the Turkana West corridor (where Kakuma-Kalobeyei lie) and investing in soft infrastructure along the LAPPSET corridor, which runs from the port city of Lamu in southern Kenya to Southern Sudan and Ethiopia.

Together, these components are helping Kakuma-Kalobeyei extend the opportunities provided by the refugee-based economy to build sustainable economic development with increased entrepreneurship and job creation for both refugees and host communities.

Refugees are an opportunity for Turkana.

— Mr. Joshua Lemuya,
former County Chief Officer
at the Ministry of Lands,
Energy, Housing and Urban
Areas for Turkana County

Map 1: Infrastructure along the LAPPSET Corridor



The area of consideration covers all of Turkana County, including Kalobeyei integrated settlement, Kakuma camps, and the host communities. The project area (highlighted in light pink on the map) includes major surrounding towns and smaller market centres located along the LAPPSET corridor running from Nakodok in South Sudan to Lamu. The corridor will form a spatial spine across Turkana County from Nakodok through Lokichoggio, Kalobeyei integrated settlement, Kakuma camps, Kakuma town, and Lodwar near the border with Baringo County in the south.



Result 1: Enhanced connectivity and networking among stakeholders along the LAPPSET corridor

The project organised development forums in cities along the corridor to expand a network of cities for knowledge exchange and cooperation.

The forums brought the cities that lie along this major Kenyan transport corridor and their development partners together to exchange knowledge, identify common economic opportunities, and tackle ongoing issues such as access to land and labour markets. Stronger connectivity among the cities and towns offers opportunities for cooperation and sharing of resources to build a resilient economic environment.

Participants – including Turkana County government and its local partners, the national government, UN agencies, local governments from Uganda and South Sudan, and North Rift Economic Bloc (NOREB) counties – committed to building stronger alliances and a network of cities and towns along the corridor.

The project also established two self-organised and funded community-based groups who meet with the county government and organise meetings with key stakeholders. This process includes identifying existing communities in Turkana West and connecting and expanding the network that the new community-based groups are creating along the Turkana West corridor.

Result 2: Mechanisms to support the development of an enterprise hub

Kakuma-Kalobeyei is establishing an Economic Enterprise Zone to promote the local economy.

With Kakuma-Kalobeyei formally declared a municipality in December 2019, Turkana County began planning for the area neighbouring the Kalobeyei settlement and revising the Town Draft Plan for Kakuma. The project focused on integrating planning for an Economic Enterprise Zone into the official planning process so that it would gain statutory recognition.

The planning for the EEZ included stakeholder consultations to formulate a clear business strategy to guide investors and consider methods to promote local economy in the EEZ, such as tax reduction. The project also conducted two surveys of 346 households and 283 businesses from six wards of Turkana West, including refugees and the host community, to ensure that their needs would be met as well.

The zone's spatial plans will help direct city planning efforts to invest in supporting physical infrastructure that is essential to expand businesses and facilities, such as warehouses for manufacturing and other services.



The project also identified key development activities for infrastructure and business investments that can support the establishment of an economic and trade development corridor in Turkana County in consultation with the government as well as potential financing.

Result 3: Strengthened capacities at the local level to integrate migration into city development approaches

The project benefited at least 200 community members and county officials through training and workshop sessions.

Capacity-building activities were embedded throughout the process. The project organised capacity development sessions with a special focus on county officials and raised awareness through workshops, training, and global platforms. Migration mainstreaming was done through local exchanges from Kalobeyei, regional exchanges along the Turkana West corridor, and peer learning exercises in collaboration with the Ministry's Housing and Urban Development department.

With Cities Alliance last year, we started a discussion with the team from UN Habitat on how to create associations and how best these associations can help business either access markets or access to products. This kind of interventions and initiatives have helped create a central place for businesses where anyone, even the refugees, are allowed to come in, own a stall and do their business as usual.

– Melisa Maimuna, Registration Officer
at Turkana Chamber of Commerce



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