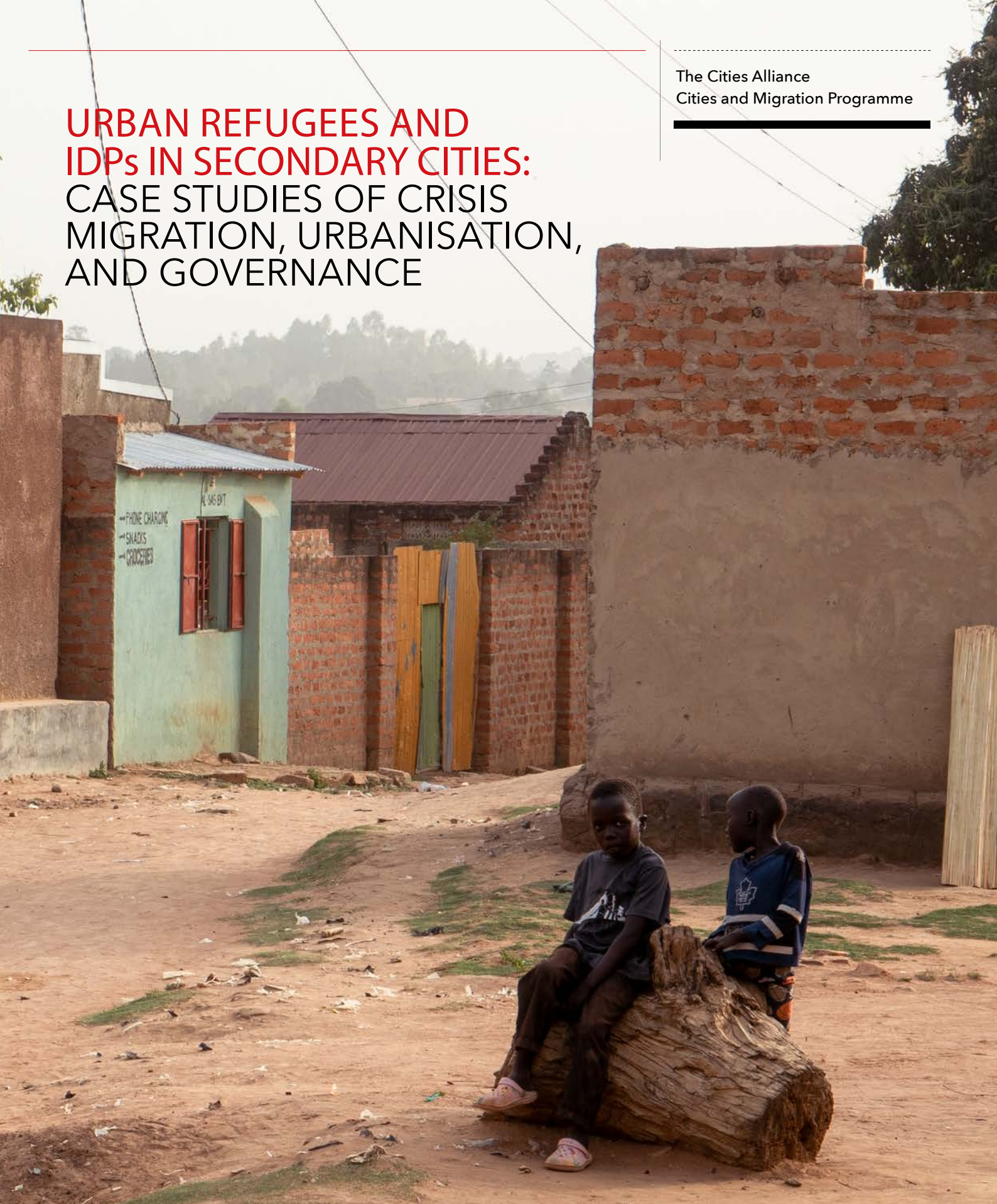


# URBAN REFUGEES AND IDPs IN SECONDARY CITIES: CASE STUDIES OF CRISIS MIGRATION, URBANISATION, AND GOVERNANCE



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URBAN REFUGEES AND IDPs  
IN SECONDARY CITIES:  
CASE STUDIES OF CRISIS MIGRATION,  
URBANISATION, AND GOVERNANCE



# FOREWORD



**From the early 1960s until the late 1990s, the international community's approach to the refugee issue was largely based on the assumption that most refugees in the Global South came from a rural and agricultural background and did not have the skills or inclination required to survive in urban areas. Host states felt that refugees might represent a threat to security if they were allowed to take up residence in cities, and consequently preferred to confine them to camps, where their visibility facilitated the task of mobilising the international assistance needed to meet their daily needs.**

Over the past two decades, there has been a growing recognition that refugees are not all farmers, that life in the unnatural environment of a camp prevents many from realising their human potential, and that they are ready to take up residence in urban areas and to take advantage of the opportunities to be found there – even if they are officially not allowed to do so and are deprived of international assistance as a result. After a long period of debate and deliberation, UNHCR eventually revised its whole approach to the question of refugee settlement and support, introducing a new urban refugee policy in 2009 and a policy on alternatives to camps five years later, both of which affirmed the right of refugees to exercise freedom of movement and to move to cities.

Since those documents were produced, three other developments have become increasingly apparent. First, the urbanisation of the world's refugee population is part of a much broader global phenomenon, whereby people in the Global South are leaving precarious environments and livelihoods in rural areas in order to live in cities. Second, the growing number of refugees to be found in urban areas of the Global South are matched – and in many situations exceeded – by the number of internally displaced people making the same kind of city-bound journeys. Finally, while it was once thought that capital and primary cities were predominantly affected by these trends, there is now a great deal of evidence to suggest that secondary cities and provincial urban areas are now providing a home to a growing proportion of these refugees and other displaced people, including those who are being forced from the land by the climate crisis.





This Cities Alliance report, which focuses largely on the East and Horn of Africa, provides a cutting-edge analysis of these trends and their implications for governments and municipal authorities, as well as international humanitarian and development organisations. Amongst its many relevant observations and recommendations, the report calls for improved documentation and data with respect to the presence and impact of forcibly displaced people in secondary cities of the Global South and underlines the importance of providing municipal authorities with the resources and capacities they need to meet this challenge and to take advantage of the opportunities it also offers. While calling for comprehensive and citywide responses, the report emphasises the need for the particular vulnerabilities and protection risks encountered by the forcibly displaced to be given the special attention that they deserve and to which they are entitled. And it stresses the importance of participatory approaches, enabling all city dwellers, whether they be refugees, displaced people, rural-to-urban migrants or long-term members of the urban population, to be equitably engaged in the process of urban planning and development. In all of these respects, this is a most welcome and timely document, with a very clear global relevance.

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# ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

<b>AfDB</b>	African Development Bank	<b>ILO</b>	International Labour Organization
<b>ASAL</b>	Arid and Semi-Arid Land	<b>IOM</b>	International Organization for Migration
<b>AWH</b>	American Women's Hospitals	<b>KCCA</b>	Kampala Capital City Authority
<b>CATI</b>	Computer-Assisted Telephone Interviewing	<b>KISED</b>	Kalobeyei Integrated Socio-Economic Development Plan
<b>CBHI</b>	Community Based Health Insurance	<b>MMC</b>	Mayors Migration Council
<b>CDF</b>	City Development Forum	<b>NAPs</b>	National Adaptation Plans
<b>CIDP</b>	County Integrated Development Plan	<b>NGOs</b>	Non-Governmental Organisations
<b>CRRF</b>	Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework	<b>NOREB</b>	North Rift Economic Bloc
<b>DAR</b>	Development Assistance for Refugees	<b>NRC</b>	Norwegian Refugee Council
<b>DRC</b>	Danish Refugee Council	<b>OBN</b>	Oromia Broadcasting Network
<b>DSI</b>	Durable Solutions Initiative	<b>RAS</b>	Refugee Affairs Secretariat
<b>FbA</b>	Forecast-based Action	<b>ReHoPE</b>	Refugee and Host Population Empowerment Strategic Framework
<b>FbF</b>	Forecast-based Financing	<b>SDC</b>	Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation
<b>GCR</b>	Global Compact on Refugees	<b>SRS</b>	Self-Reliance Strategy
<b>GRN</b>	Global Refugee-led Network	<b>SSF</b>	Somalia Stability Fund
<b>GRSC</b>	Greek Refugee Settlement Commission	<b>UCLG</b>	United Cities and Local Governments
<b>IDMC</b>	Internally Displaced Monitoring Centre	<b>UN</b>	United Nations
<b>IDPs</b>	Internally Displaced Persons	<b>UNHCR</b>	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
<b>IIED</b>	International Institute for Environment and Development	<b>WMO</b>	World Meteorological Organization



# CHAPTER 1: EXPLORING THE URBAN DISPLACED IN SECONDARY CITIES AND TOWNS



## INTRODUCTION

Maybe it was a Congolese refugee who walked to Kampala. Or a Syrian refugee who drove to Beirut. We will of course never know, but sometime in the new millennium over half of the world's refugees began to reside in urban areas. Today an estimated 61 per cent of refugees and two out of three internally displaced people (IDPs) live in cities and towns.<sup>1</sup> When taken together with UNHCR's other

people of concern, this figure is only larger. It also echoes broader trends of urbanisation (it was only in 2007 that over half of the world's population became urbanites) and foretells those that are likely to continue: by 2050 an estimated two-thirds of the global population will live in urban or peri-urban areas.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> UNHCR. 2019. *Global Trends: Forced Displacement in 2019*. UNHCR: Geneva. p. 33. Available at: <https://www.unhcr.org/5ee200e37.pdf> (Accessed 1 October 2020).

<sup>2</sup> UNDESA. 2019. *World Urbanisation Prospects: The 2018 Revision*. UNDESA: Geneva. Available at: <https://shop.un.org/books/world-urbanisation-prospects-2018-87894#:~:text=World%20Urbanisation%20Prospects%3A%20The%202018%20Revision&text=The%20world%20urban%20population%20is,and%20challenges%20for%20sustainable%20development>.



These figures on urban displacement challenge traditional narratives and stereotypes – even today the term ‘refugee’ often connotes images of long rows of tents in makeshift camps – and necessitates a reimagining of the types of assistance and actors involved. While forced displacement has always occurred to urban areas, humanitarian responses to refugees in particular have long been predominantly rural and camp based. Urban areas present challenges for humanitarian assistance, including identifying displaced people in the first place (any aid worker familiar with UNHCR’s advocacy poster of Lego figurines above the phrase ‘Spot the Refugee’ understands how this also relates to finding refugees in cities). It was only in the 1980s and 1990s that UNHCR, governments, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), and academics more comprehensively focused on urban forced displacement<sup>3</sup> despite historical precedents of international assistance to urban refugees throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>4</sup>

**THIS REPORT EXAMINES THE CURRENT REALITY OF FORCIBLY DISPLACED PEOPLE IN CITIES AND TOWNS IN EAST AFRICA, NAMELY ARUA, UGANDA; ADAMA, ETHIOPIA; AND KAKUMA AND LODWAR TOWN, KENYA.**

It argues that the growing urbanisation of forcibly displaced people has fostered increasing engagement and partnerships for assistance with local urban actors, such as municipal governments and local civil society organisations, while at the same time highlighting, and in cases exacerbating, the challenges that many municipalities face in terms of funding and a lack of recognition of urban needs. This report also discusses a crucial gap in research on forcibly displaced people: their often-unacknowledged presence in so-called secondary (non-capital) cities and towns, which themselves often lack the resources to adequately receive them. Through examples from primary research in Uganda and Ethiopia, this paper highlights the need for more comprehensive data and evidence on and assistance to forcibly displaced people residing outside of national capitals, which in many cases is also relevant to the poor and vulnerable nationals that urban forcibly displaced people live alongside. The report concludes with a discussion of the future of urban forced displacement and several recommendations for the further engagement of humanitarian, government, and other urban actors in urban assistance to displaced people.

**Research project overview**

This report emerges out of a two-year project aiming to provide data and evidence on how secondary cities respond to and manage crisis migration, including IDPs and refugees, with the goal of providing information that can inform and improve future municipal responses. The project was undertaken by the University of Oxford’s Refugee Studies Centre as part of the Cities and Migration programme implemented by Cities Alliance and financed by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC). Cities Alliance is an international partnership of 29 member organisations seeking to

address urban poverty with a focus on secondary cities. In particular, it seeks to promote the role of cities in addressing poverty and displacement. SDC focuses on sustainable development and is setting a strategic focus on migration and development. It funds Cities Alliance’s Global Programme on Cities and Migration, of which this research project is part.<sup>5</sup>

**OUR RESEARCH FOCUSES ON LOCAL AUTHORITIES RESPONSIBLE FOR MANAGING CITIES AND THOSE WHO LIVE WITHIN THEM, BUT IT ALSO INCLUDES CIVIL SOCIETY ACTORS SUCH AS IDP AND REFUGEE ORGANISATIONS.**

Qualitative field research was conducted in Adama, Ethiopia, and Arua, Uganda. The research aimed to generate evidence on the assistance provided to refugees and forcibly displaced people by so-called local actors, as well as examine areas and sectors where secondary cities need more support and investment due to urban forced migrants, such as on urban planning, infrastructure, and coexistence between migrants, citizens and other members of society. The project aim is twofold: 1) to provide evidence that can be used to inform local actors, namely authorities and civil society members, to improve the management structures as well as service delivery to involuntary migrants in secondary cities; and 2) to provide evidence to support local city stakeholders to manage crisis migration through collaboration between humanitarian and development actors. The project theory of change is presented in the following section.

3 Crisp, J. 2017. “Finding Space for Protection: An Inside Account of the Evolution of UNHCR’s Urban Refugee Policy.” *Refuge: Canada’s Journal on Refugees* 33(1), 87–96, p. 88.

4 Skran, C. M. 2011. *Refugees in Inter-war Europe*. Clarendon Press, Easton-Calabria, E. 2015. “From Bottom-up to Top-down: The ‘Pre-history’ of Refugee Livelihoods Assistance from 1919 to 1979.” *Journal of Refugee Studies* 28(3), 412–436.

5 To learn more, see: <https://www.citiesalliance.org/how-we-work/global-programmes/global-programme-cities-and-migration/overview>.

# METHODOLOGY

This report is based on qualitative research conducted over two years in East Africa, with a seven-month research period (2019–2020) in Adama, Ethiopia, and a 12-month research period in Arua, Uganda, through a combination of in-person and remote semi-structured qualitative interviews and focus group discussions (2020–2021). In total, 160 interviews were conducted for this research – 70 in

Ethiopia and 90 in Uganda. Extensive desk-based research was conducted for all case studies, with only secondary data gathered for the case study on Turkana County, Kenya (Chapter 4). Chapter 3 on Arua contains a detailed discussion of fieldwork methods. A global literature review on urban responses to forced migration was conducted to better situate the specific responses in East Africa.

While case study research can be useful for comparing contexts, this research was not designed as a directly comparative study. Instead, the research was undertaken in phases, with the research for Ethiopia conducted first, followed by research in Uganda, and finally secondary data analysis for Kenya. The aim of the study was to learn about the specific conditions of forced migration and municipal and local responses to it in Adama and Arua, and then the broader situation of Turkana County with information on cities such as Lodwar and the Kakuma-Kalobeyei settlement. Each chapter was developed as a stand-alone case study with separate, although similar, interview guides and research questions. The conclusion chapter of this report draws on all three cases to provide key findings and recommendations that are applicable to all cases.





Kenya was included as a case study due to its relevance as a major refugee-hosting country in East Africa and the existence of primary data from a UN-Habitat study that was provided to the project at the request of the funders. The challenges facing Turkana County due to both refugee flows and other types of forced as well as voluntary migration were deemed to be an important example of mixed migration flows in the region, as well as that of the relationship of refugee camps with local and regional governments. The Turkana County case study was formed through qualitative content analysis of the UN-Habitat study and through desk-based research on Kenya's government structure, urbanisation, refugee policy, and other key topics. However, as this was added as an additional case study after the initial project design and after the UN-Habitat research had been conducted, the information presented is drawn from relevant sections of the survey responses.

In Adama (Chapter 2), a qualitative case study approach was taken to understand the municipal response to IDPs. Semi-structured qualitative interviews were conducted with the main actors who played significant roles in assisting IDPs in Adama. These include

the Adama city government (mayor's office, relevant government bureaus, and kebele leaders), private sector actors, international and local NGOs, local communities, equb and iddir associations, and IDPs. Several interviews were also conducted with academics and experts in the field. Our research followed a snowball sampling methodology, with 70 interviews conducted. Annex 1 contains a full overview of the methodology.

The methodology adopted means that the research is not representative of all different stakeholders or selected populations. Our snowball sampling drew from existing social networks of contacts and informants and is thus not a random sample. As we are not able to determine sampling errors, it is difficult to make an inference about the overall population of several sectors, such as the private sector, based on our method.





THE THEORY OF CHANGE UNDERPINNING  
THIS RESEARCH PROJECT IS AS FOLLOWS:



1. Generating and disseminating data and evidence on actors in secondary cities responsible for managing crisis migration can lead to more informed decision-making, coordination and collaboration, knowledge of gaps in service provision and management, as well as ideas for next steps in strengthening local municipalities and civil society in secondary cities to respond to influxes of migrants and refugees.



2. In turn, the lives of migrants and refugees can be improved through heightened awareness of their presence and needs.



3. As a result, urban poverty can be reduced, including through enhanced service provision to forced migrants.



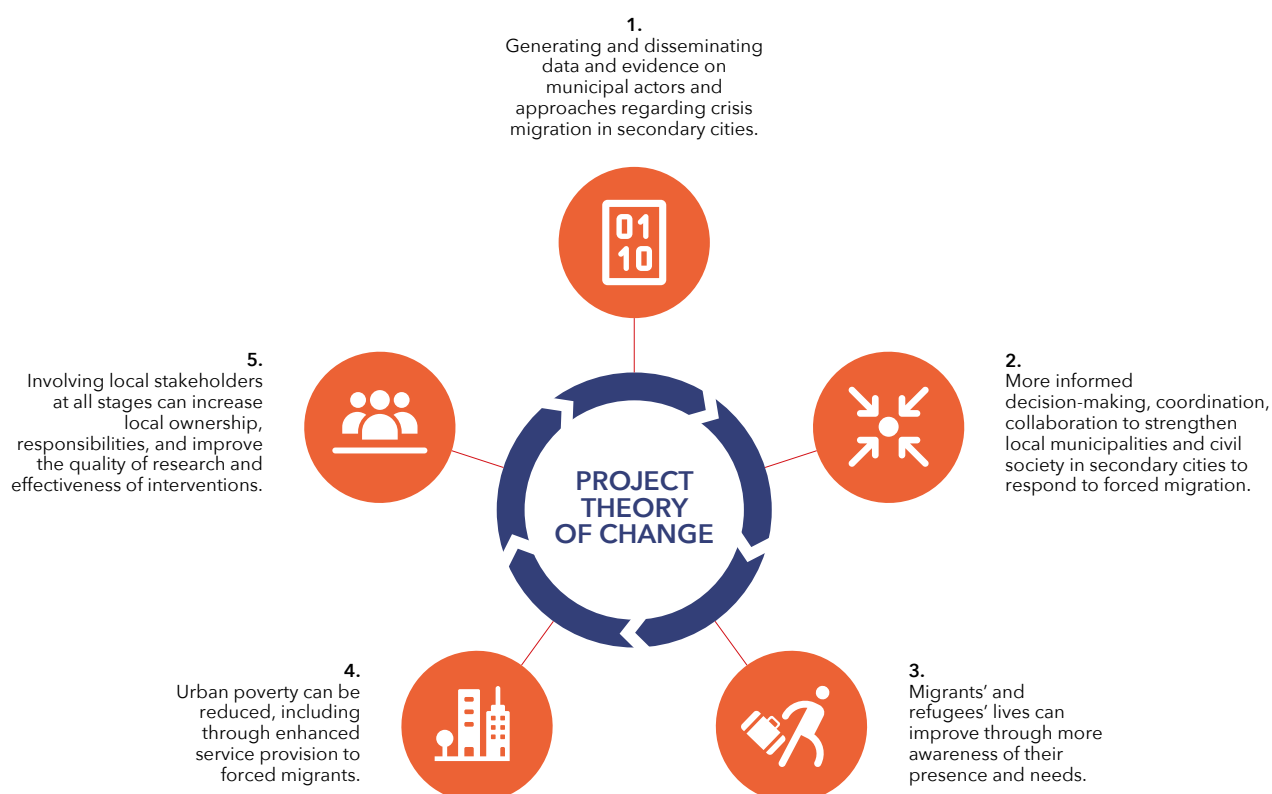
4. Focusing on gender equality as one main area to be examined in all areas of research means that more awareness of the gender-specific needs of migrants as well as the need for gendered approaches will become evident.



5. Involving local stakeholders at all stages can increase local ownership, responsibility, and improve the quality of research and effectiveness of interventions.



**FIGURE 1**  
Project Theory of Change.



# OVERVIEW OF REFUGEES AND URBAN AREAS

UNHCR's 2009 Urban Refugee Policy acknowledges urban areas as legitimate places for refugees to reside (backtracking on its 1997 policy) and paved the way for increased urban programming by international organisations. This was further reinforced in the 2014 UNHCR Policy on Alternatives to Camps. Still, the support refugees receive is generally limited to livelihood training with limited in-kind support for basic necessities. A variety of challenges including shrinking budgets,<sup>6</sup> official national policies of encampment, and limited international assistance in urban areas in many countries mean that support for urban refugees is not commensurate with those in need of it. While refugees in some countries may have the right to access social benefits like healthcare or education, in practice this may be unavailable due to demand or price, thereby effectively leaving many refugees to cater for themselves.<sup>7</sup>

While some research has found that urban refugees tend to be more educated than their rural, camp- and settlement-based counterparts,<sup>8</sup> much of the literature on forcibly displaced people in cities points to challenges such as informal housing and work and limited access to national systems such as education and healthcare. In contrast to refugees in camps and settlements, urban refugees are generally expected to be self-reliant and make a living through entrepreneurship, generally in the informal sector.

Cities can also be areas of exploitation and abuse for displaced people. In many cases, refugees continue to lack the right to reside in urban areas, and therefore lack legal protection when they do. In addition to struggling to access basic necessities, refugees can face intimidation, harassment, fines and even arrest by local authorities. These challenges, particularly in light of rising urbanisation, point to the need for increased awareness of from whom and in which ways forcibly displaced people can receive assistance and rights in urban areas. The following sections examine perceptions and gaps in knowledge on refugees in urban areas as well as particular challenges urban actors face in addressing forced displacement.

<sup>6</sup> UNHCR. 2019. *Global Trends: Forced Displacement in 2019*.

<sup>7</sup> Asylum Access. 2011. *No Place Called Home: A Report on Urban Refugees Living in Dar Es Salaam*; O'Loughlin, A. and C. McWilliams. 2017. "The Nexus of Displacement, Asset Vulnerability and the Right to the City: The Case of the Refugees and Urban Poor of Dar Es Salaam, Tanzania." *International Journal of Urban Sustainable Development* 9(1), 21-45, 21s.; S. Pavanello et al. 2010. *Hidden and Exposed: Urban Refugees in Nairobi, Kenya*. Humanitarian Policy Group Working Paper, March. Overseas Development Institute: London. Available at: [www.odl.org/sites/odi.org.uk/files/odi-assets/publications-opinion-files/5858.pdf](http://www.odl.org/sites/odi.org.uk/files/odi-assets/publications-opinion-files/5858.pdf) (last visited 15 November 2020).

<sup>8</sup> Pincock, K., A. Betts, and E. Easton-Calabria. 2020. *The Global Governed? Refugees as Providers of Protection and Assistance*. Cambridge University Press: Cambridge.





# WHERE DO REFUGEES GO?

**There is an ongoing perception that urban displaced people mainly reside in capital cities in the Global South. This perception is mainly driven by policies which do not legally recognise refugees outside of the capital or in urban areas at all, which has negative ramifications for the provision of assistance as well as for host urban areas. Yet as Muggah and Abdenur note, most urban refugees are moving to “poor and underdeveloped cities and slums in Africa, Asia and the Middle East...[and] end up living in lower-income informal settlements.”<sup>9</sup>**

Literature on urban displacement has disproportionately focused on capital cities,<sup>10</sup> contributing to a perception that they are the main urban destination for migrants and displaced people. Other cities and towns experiencing displacement have received much less attention as sites of settlement and integration by NGOs and INGOs in the Global South. Yet urbanisation increasingly occurs in secondary cities, which have a population of between 10 to 50 per cent of the country's largest city and themselves are not the capital.<sup>11</sup> These cities have been expected to grow by 460 million inhabitants between 2010 and 2025 – strikingly higher than the comparative growth of 270 million for megacities.<sup>12</sup> And, as Jacobsen notes, “Towns – especially border towns in countries of first asylum – are at the frontline of refugee displacement and are often where refugees settle or spend long periods of time.”<sup>13</sup>

At the same time, secondary cities may not have the same levels of industry or access to government resources as capitals or larger cities. They have also largely remained out of view of international donors and humanitarian agencies working with refugees and other displaced people, in part due to a lack of robust data on their number of forcibly displaced residents. Discussions with mayors and other municipal authorities of these cities and towns demonstrate that refugees and displaced people often enter these smaller cities,<sup>14</sup> yet as mentioned above less research has been conducted on their experiences and those of their hosts compared to those entering capitals. Emerging international actors in refugee assistance such as Cities Alliance and Slum Dwellers International (SDI) are seeking to raise the profile of migrants and refugees in secondary cities and informal settlements, particularly because, like other cities, secondary cities often find themselves unequipped to deal with large numbers of displaced people. This can result in overpopulated informal settlements, a lack of resources for both locals and the displaced, and other negative ramifications for both cities themselves and those who enter them seeking refuge.

<sup>9</sup> Muggah, R. and A. Abdenur. 2018. *Refugees and the City: The Twenty-first-century Front Line*. World Refugee Council Research Paper no. 2, July. Available at: <https://www.cigionline.org/sites/default/files/documents/WRC%20Research%20Paper%20no.2.pdf> (Accessed 12 October 2020).

<sup>10</sup> See for example Campbell, E. H. 2006. “Urban refugees in Nairobi: Problems of Protection, Mechanisms of Survival, and Possibilities for Integration.” *Journal of Refugee Studies* 19(3), 396–413.; Grabska, K. 2006. “Marginalization in Urban Spaces of the Global South: Urban Refugees in Cairo.” *Journal of Refugee Studies* 19(3), 287–307.; Pavanello, S., S. Elhawary, and S. Pantuliano. 2010. *Hidden and Exposed: Urban Refugees in Nairobi, Kenya*. Overseas Development Institute: London.; Yotebieng, K. A., J.L. Syvertsen, and P. Awah. 2019. “Is Well-being Possible when You Are Out of Place?: Ethnographic Insight into Resilience among Urban Refugees in Yaoundé, Cameroon.” *Journal of Refugee Studies* 32(2), 197–215.; Field, J., A.D. Tiwari, and Y. Mookherjee. 2020. “Self-reliance as a Concept and a Spatial Practice for Urban Refugees: Reflections from Delhi, India.” *Journal of Refugee Studies* 33(1), pp. 167–188.

<sup>11</sup> Roberts, B. 2014. *Managing Systems of Secondary Cities*. Cities Alliance/UNOPS: Brussels.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> Jacobsen, K. 2017. “Refugees in Towns: Experiences of Integration.” *Forced Migration Review* 56, pp. 78–29. Available at: <https://static1.squarespace.com/static/599720dc59cc68c3683049bc/t/5a05ed4bf9619a90c24fc60/1510337868387/FMR+Refugees+in+Towns+Oct+2017.pdf> (Accessed 19 October 2020).

<sup>14</sup> See for example presentations made by mayors at the 2019 Global Meeting on Migration and the 2030 Agenda, “Cities as Drivers for Sustainable Development,” convened by the SDC Network on Migration & Development: <https://www.shareweb.ch/site/Migration/activities-from-the-network/2019-global-meeting-switzerland/reference-documents>.





## BOX 1 REGISTERING THE FORCIBLY DISPLACED



When requested by host governments, UNHCR leads or supports the registration process of refugees. The Asylum Capacity Support Group (part of the Global Compact on Refugees) aims to increase the fairness, efficiency, integrity, and adaptability of national asylum systems by addressing gaps and providing resources to host governments.



Many countries register refugees only or primarily in refugee settlements and camps, often led by a combination of host government actors and UNHCR.



In countries with refugee camps, refugees can often legally register as urban residents only in the capital city, as is the case with Uganda.



Few countries with refugee camps and settlements appear to have significant numbers of registration offices in secondary cities, generally because of a policy of encampment or outdated definitions of refugees as only those people residing in camps.



Some major refugee-hosting countries have suspended the registration of refugees in full, such as Lebanon since 2015, or have temporarily stopped registration for periods of time or particular regions, as in the case of Kenya at numerous points. This is generally seen as a deterrent tactic and creates significant issues for refugees in their ability to access basic services or legally reside in exile.



## LOCAL FUNDING AND THE URBAN DISPLACED

Secondary cities and towns may lack strong ties to central government and ministries compared to capital cities, or financing mechanisms can overlook municipal needs – all of which in turn can impede municipalities' ability to access funding or for relevant municipal issues to be shared. The Uganda case study presented in this report (see Chapter 3) provides a striking example of how government flows of money and influence impact the lives of both urban refugees and the hosts they live alongside.

In Lebanon, another major refugee-hosting country, there has been recognition of the huge role that many of the country's more than 1,000 municipalities have played in the refugee response, in part due to the lack of a cohesive national response.<sup>15</sup> While acknowledging that the role municipalities have played has brought some benefits, one brief states, "When considering local institutions' roles, it is important to note that municipalities would ideally act as an intermediary, coordinating between Syrian refugees and the central government."

<sup>15</sup> Mahdi, D. 2017. *Policy Brief: Understanding Refugee Politics in Lebanon and Calls for Repatriation*. Lebanese Center for Policy Studies, no. 30. Available at: [https://www.lcps-lebanon.org/publications/1518095691-lcps\\_brief\\_30.pdf](https://www.lcps-lebanon.org/publications/1518095691-lcps_brief_30.pdf).

The brief advocates that:

**"A STRUCTURED NATIONAL RESPONSE PLAN TARGETING SYRIAN REFUGEES SHOULD BE DEVELOPED IN ORDER TO FORMULATE UNIVERSAL POLICIES AT THE NATIONAL LEVEL THAT SIMULTANEOUSLY ADDRESS MICRO POLICIES, AS WELL AS IDENTIFY THE ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF VARIOUS ACTORS TOWARD SYRIAN REFUGEES, INCLUDING MINISTRIES, SECURITY SECTOR INSTITUTIONS, AND MUNICIPALITIES."**<sup>16</sup>

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.





WHEN CONSIDERING LOCAL INSTITUTIONS' ROLES, IT IS IMPORTANT TO NOTE THAT MUNICIPALITIES WOULD IDEALLY ACT AS AN INTERMEDIARY, COORDINATING BETWEEN SYRIAN REFUGEES AND THE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT.

Such recommendations for the clear delegation of roles and responsibilities to both national and local actors could indeed be valuable in many different responses to displaced people which involve urban areas as destinations. However, the suggestion of municipalities ideally acting as intermediaries to assistance rather than primary responders highlights the constrained roles that many municipalities find themselves in – as they often have no choice in what their role is.

Many municipalities are at the forefront of urban displacement, and, while they may be open or even eager to address it, they often lack the financial resources to adequately do so as well as connections to international humanitarian and development actors that might facilitate a more comprehensive response. This extends to issues beyond displacement, such as the lack of municipal authority and capacity for effective urban

and land use planning, which in turn affects both where displaced people end up in cities as well as city-level adaptation and hazard mitigation strategies to address extreme weather events and other climate shocks that disproportionately affect the most vulnerable urban residents, including displaced people. Research on the role of local politics in the Middle East on Syrian refugees notes that municipalities' opportunities to obtain additional funding for refugee assistance from central governments and public and private donors played a key role in the response refugees received.<sup>17</sup> Yet in the absence of such support, municipalities risk becoming de facto first and last responders without any means to do so.

<sup>17</sup> Betts, A., A. Ali, and F. Memisoglu. 2017. *Local Politics and the Syrian Refugee Crisis: Exploring Responses in Turkey, Lebanon, and Jordan*. Refugee Studies Centre, University of Oxford: Oxford.



# A LACK OF DATA AND RIGHTS

**Municipalities in many refugee-hosting countries struggle to have the existence of refugees and their impact on services recognised by other government and outside actors due to policies prohibiting the settlement of refugees in urban areas beyond the capital (or at all). As one article on refugees in towns succinctly explains, “If you ask about the number of refugees in Mombasa, Kenya, you get conflicting answers. According to the Kenyan Refugee Affairs Secretariat (RAS), there are 15,600 legally registered refugees in Mombasa, over 8,000 of whom are Somalis. Yet one local security official said there are no refugees legally in Mombasa, and a Kenyan businesswoman reported, ‘There are no more refugees in Mombasa.’ According to a local legal aid group, there are many more refugees than are formally counted. There seems to be some confusion about the number of refugees in Mombasa.”<sup>18</sup>**

As illustrated by the quote above, policies impact data and in turn both impact refugees’ rights. The extant gaps in data that preclude these possibilities from becoming reality demonstrate a clear need to include urban refugees in censuses and government planning, including development and city plans, and in cases direct more international programming and support to the urban displaced. However, it should also be acknowledged that data collection and subsequent dissemination is impacted by policy positions and priorities; a country that does not legally allow refugees to reside in cities, for example, is unlikely to collect data on their existence. An in-depth exploration of this is provided in Chapter 3 on refugees in Arua. This reinforces the broader need to continue advocacy and policy engagement regarding UNHCR’s 2009 Urban Refugee Policy and 2014 Policy on Alternatives to Camps, and the rights to urban refugees that they promote.

<sup>18</sup> Adan, A. and E. Duncan. 2020. *How Refugees Take Control of Who ‘Belongs’: A Case Study of Refugees in Towns – Mombasa, Kenya*. Refugees in Towns Project, Feinstein International Center, Tufts University. Available at: <https://static1.squarespace.com/static/599720dc59cc68c3683049bc/t/5e84ffba21f0f21a29fa29/1585774552612/RIT+Report+Mombasa+Kenya.pdf> (Accessed November 23 2020).



# ASSISTANCE ACTORS TO THE URBAN DISPLACED



This section presents some of the key assistance actors to the urban displaced, with an emphasis on municipal and civil society actors. Rising numbers of urban displaced people have opened discussions with a number of actors not commonly associated with such assistance. The 2009 Urban Refugee Policy acknowledged that, “In urban contexts, municipal authorities and mayors have a particularly important role to play in the objective of expanding protection space, and UNHCR will consequently place particular emphasis on its relationship with these actors. At the same time, and in pursuit of the same objective, the Office will work closely with the national authorities, the police and judiciary, the private sector, NGOs, legal networks, other civil society institutions and development agencies.”<sup>19</sup>

However, in many countries it is only more recently that the forging of partnerships with local actors such as local authorities have increased. This can be seen through the promising focus on urban areas and the support that local actors can play which has emerged in the last five years, as seen through events and initiatives including the 2018 High Commissioner’s Dialogue on Protection and Solutions in Urban Settings: Engaging with Cities, the Welcoming Cities initiative, and the Marrakech Mayoral Declaration (expanded on next page).

Such calls for the inclusion of local actors in general and in particular those within cities is needed to increase protection to the urban displaced as well as realise the ‘whole-of-society’ and ‘whole-of-government’ support the GCR advocates. To this end, cities and city systems can offer favourable environments for strengthening such multi-stakeholder approaches.

<sup>19</sup> UNHCR. 2009. *UNHCR Policy on Refugee Protection and Solutions in Urban Areas*. UNHCR: Geneva. 6.



"OF CENTRAL IMPORTANCE IS THE 2018 GLOBAL COMPACT ON REFUGEES, WHICH RECOGNISES LOCAL AUTHORITIES AS KEY STAKEHOLDERS IN REFUGEE ASSISTANCE, AS WELL AS CIVIL SOCIETY, HOST COMMUNITY MEMBERS AND REFUGEES THEMSELVES.<sup>20</sup> 'IN CONSULTATION WITH NATIONAL AUTHORITIES AND IN RESPECT OF RELEVANT LEGAL FRAMEWORKS,' THE COMPACT READS, 'SUPPORT BY THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY AS A WHOLE MAY BE PROVIDED TO STRENGTHEN INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITIES, INFRASTRUCTURE AND ACCOMMODATION AT LOCAL LEVEL, INCLUDING THROUGH FUNDING AND CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT WHERE APPROPRIATE.'<sup>21</sup> GOOD PRACTICES AND INNOVATIVE APPROACHES BY 'NETWORKS OF CITIES AND MUNICIPALITIES' HOSTING REFUGEES ARE WELCOMED.'<sup>22</sup>

20 UNHCR. 2018. *Global Compact on Refugees*. UNHCR: Geneva. Section I(3).

21 Ibid. para 37.

22 Ibid. para 38.



regardless of people's legal status.”<sup>25</sup> In 2021, C40 Cities, together with the Mayors Migration Council (MMC), launched the Global Mayors Task Force on Climate and Migration, a mayor-led initiative focused on addressing the impact of the climate crisis on migration in cities. Research institutions such as the International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED) have led major projects on urban refugees, assessing current responses to urban protracted displacement and building the capacity of municipal authorities, displaced people, and urban community-based organisations to address forced displacement.<sup>26</sup> Other major players such as the World Bank are taking a similar approach, funding local governments and expanding their focus on urban refugees.<sup>27</sup>

After the official adoption of the Global Compact on Migration and the Global Compact on Refugees in 2018, 150 city leaders endorsed the Marrakech Mayors Declaration, which called for local authorities to take action in implementing both compacts as well as their follow-up and review.<sup>28</sup> Among others, the Declaration recognised in regard to meeting refugees' needs and supporting communities that: “Cities and local authorities can experience significant impact in the short and medium term, and with the support of other relevant actors, to deliver assistance through our services in ways that benefit both refugees and our broader communities, where appropriate.”<sup>29</sup>



### Municipal authority advocates for the urban displaced

A variety of actors, including municipalities themselves, have begun advocating for the rights of the urban displaced. Many of the issues urban displaced people already face have been exacerbated by the Covid-19 pandemic. In turn, municipal authorities, other local actors, and international organisations around the world have sought to house asylum seekers safely, prevent illegal forced evictions, and continue to identify and remotely support displaced people with whom they can no longer meet in person.<sup>23</sup> Yet as the UNESCO Director-General notes,

**“DESPITE GROWING LITERATURE AND THE MULTIPLICATION OF CONVERGING ACTIONS, THE GAPS IN THE KNOWLEDGE BASE OF LOCAL AUTHORITIES [IN RELATION TO URBAN DISPLACEMENT], IN EXCHANGES AND IN NETWORKING, HAVE ONLY PARTIALLY BEEN ADDRESSED.”<sup>24</sup>**

United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG), Cities Alliance, and Metropolis are other examples of organisations and networks reinforcing the relevance of local action and advocacy on migration and displacement. As one UCLG statement reads, “As the level of government that is closest to citizens, local and regional governments bear the greatest responsibility for ‘leaving no one behind’,

23 See the Mayors Migration Council Live Action Tracker: Municipal Migrant and Refugee Sensitive Covid-19 Response & Recovery Efforts. Available at: [https://docs.google.com/document/u/1/d/e/2PACX-1vRqMtCR8xBONCjntcDmiKv0m4-omNzJxkEB2X2gMZ\\_uqLeiiQv-m2Pb9aZq4AIDvw/pub](https://docs.google.com/document/u/1/d/e/2PACX-1vRqMtCR8xBONCjntcDmiKv0m4-omNzJxkEB2X2gMZ_uqLeiiQv-m2Pb9aZq4AIDvw/pub).

24 UNESCO. 2016. *Cities Welcoming Refugees and Migrants: Enhancing Effective Urban Governance in an Age of Migration*. Available at: <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000246558>

25 UCLG. 2020. “Leveraging Migrants’ Contribution to the Emergency and Protecting the Most Vulnerable During the COVID-19 Crisis #BeyondTheOutbreak.” 2 April 2020. Available at: <https://www.uclg.org/en/media/news/leveraging-migrants-contribution-emergency-and-protecting-most-vulnerable-during-covid-19> (Accessed 15 November 2020).


26 For more information, see: <https://www.iied.org/responding-protracted-displacement-urban-world>.

27 Interview, World Bank, 2021; World Bank. 2018. *Cities of Refuge in the Middle East: Bringing an Urban Lens to the Forced Displacement Challenge*. World Bank: Washington, D.C. Available at: <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/28901>.

28 Marrakech Mayors Declaration. 2018. *Cities Working Together for Migrants and Refugees*. Available at: <https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5df133ed5c523d063ce20693/t/5ea5fe595aaf842048077e95/1587936857584/Marrakech+Mayors+Declaration.pdf>.

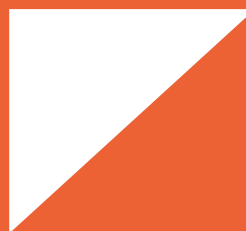
29 Ibid. p. 3.





THE MARRAKECH MAYORS  
DECLARATION RECOGNISED  
IN REGARD TO MEETING  
REFUGEES' NEEDS AND  
SUPPORTING COMMUNITIES  
THAT: "CITIES AND  
LOCAL AUTHORITIES CAN  
EXPERIENCE SIGNIFICANT  
IMPACT IN THE SHORT  
AND MEDIUM TERM, AND  
WITH THE SUPPORT OF  
OTHER RELEVANT ACTORS,  
TO DELIVER ASSISTANCE  
THROUGH OUR SERVICES  
IN WAYS THAT BENEFIT  
BOTH REFUGEES AND OUR  
BROADER COMMUNITIES,  
WHERE APPROPRIATE."<sup>29</sup>

THE DEVELOPMENT OF BYBLOS' RESILIENCE STRATEGY WAS INFORMED BY THE SYRIAN REFUGEE INFLUX, WITH ONE OF ITS CORE PILLARS TO BE A "PEACEFUL CITY THAT EMBRACES AND PROMOTES SOCIAL COHESION AND CULTURAL DIVERSITY."



In many places around the world, municipal assistance to the displaced is already occurring. In some cases, this takes place as part of wider urban strategies, as leaders recognise both the value and the necessity of addressing forced displacement in order to tackle other existing challenges. To take an example from Lebanon, Byblos – one of the oldest continuously inhabited cities in the world – is now home to over 1,600 Syrians in a population of only 27,000. While its annual population growth rate is an estimated .9 per cent, its annual city budget is a mere \$8.6 million, illustrating the challenges municipalities can face when their number of inhabitants rapidly rise.<sup>30</sup> Byblos was selected to join the 100 Resilient Cities programme funded by the Rockefeller Foundation,<sup>31</sup> which aims to build and strengthen social networks across the city, including to refugees, in order to increase economic, cultural, and political collaboration. The development of Byblos' resilience strategy was informed by the Syrian refugee influx, with one of its core pillars to be a "peaceful city that embraces and promotes social cohesion and cultural diversity."<sup>32</sup> The city has created neighbourhood committees of

four to five people that serve as representatives and advocates for different communities in Byblos, effectively becoming the link between the municipality and residents. The committees help residents tackle local issues and improve lives of all communities, including vulnerable groups such as refugees. As part of this, community and vulnerable groups are supported in participating in decision-making and project implementation. Other initiatives targeting social cohesion have also emerged in the city, such as a Spring Reception Exhibition, which offered Syrian refugee women the opportunity to present handmade embroidery, handicrafts, and food alongside Lebanese women.<sup>33</sup> This example highlights how assisting displaced people can occur as part of wider municipal strategies to strengthen cities in different ways, in this case as a way to reduce conflict and increase social cohesion, which has been cited as a broader challenge Byblos faces due to a longstanding lack of city planning.<sup>34</sup>

30 Byblos Municipality. 2016. *Resilient Byblos: Connecting with Our Past, Creating Our Future*. 100 Resilient Cities/Byblos. Available at: [http://www.resilientbyblos.org/pdf/Byblos\\_Strategy.pdf](http://www.resilientbyblos.org/pdf/Byblos_Strategy.pdf) (accessed 1 November 2020).

31 100 Resilient Cities. 2017. *Resilient Byblos: Connecting with Our Past, Creating Our Future*. 15. Available at: [http://www.resilientbyblos.org/pdf/Byblos\\_Strategy.pdf](http://www.resilientbyblos.org/pdf/Byblos_Strategy.pdf). Please note the 100 Resilient Cities programme concluded on 31 July 2019.

32 100 Resilient Cities. 2017. *Resilient Byblos: Connecting with Our Past, Creating Our Future*. 34.

33 Al Shahid. 2018. Syrian Refugees and Lebanese Women Participate in Exhibition, Byblos. March 28. Available at: <https://alshahidwitness.com/syrian-refugees-exhibition-byblos/>.

34 Byblos Municipality. 2016. *Resilient Byblos*. 14.





### Refugee-led civil society actors

Assistance to forcibly displaced people also comes directly from themselves. Cities can be powerful spaces for advocacy and lobbying around refugee rights and can create opportunities for displaced people to gain much-needed attention on issues of concern. Qualitative research on 80 refugee-led organisations and networks in cities and camps in Uganda (Kampala and Nakivale) and Kenya (Nairobi and Kakuma) found, for example, that organisations in urban areas were more likely to be advocacy-focused and internationally recognised than those in camps or settlements.<sup>35</sup> This appears to be due to a variety of factors, including proximity to government and international actors in cities, the education levels and other background characteristics of organisational leaders operating in cities, and in cases the pull factors that brought these organisational leaders into urban areas in the first place (for instance, as advocates for refugee rights).

<sup>35</sup> Pincock, K., A. Betts, and E. Easton-Calabria. 2020. *The Global Governed? Refugees as Providers of Protection and Assistance*. Cambridge University Press.

One prominent example of a collective of refugee-led initiatives is the Refugee-Led Organisation Network (RELON) in Kampala, Uganda, now a registered company limited by guarantee. Every Thursday afternoon in a small office, leaders of refugee-led organisations from around Kampala gather together to share news, best practices, and plan collaboration. This umbrella network is comprised mainly of Congolese organisations, but it also includes those from South Sudan, Eritrea, and Rwanda, and has now expanded to become a national network. Meetings are held weekly for 90 minutes, with the agenda circulated beforehand and meeting minutes kept as a record. It aims to create connection and partnership between refugee-led organisations in Kampala and act as a united front to the Government of Uganda and international agencies in order to advocate for particular refugee rights and issues. Although the network only began meeting formally in 2017, members have already expanded it to other parts of Uganda and aim to eventually expand it internationally. The network has received attention from international actors, including Amnesty International, for their work offering refugees assistance<sup>36</sup> and forging connections with other refugee-led movements, such as the Global Refugee-led Network (GRN).

<sup>36</sup> Amnesty International. 2020. "Refugee-led Initiatives Are Stepping Up and Need to Be Supported - During the Pandemic and Beyond." 1 June. Available at: <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/campaigns/2020/06/refugee-led-initiatives-are-stepping-up-and-need-to-be-supported-during-the-covid-19-response-and-beyond/> (Accessed 20 November 2020).





# HISTORICAL AND CONTEMPORARY PRACTICES ON ADDRESSING URBAN DISPLACEMENT

Historical examples of local practices and arrangements with local authorities to assist refugees in a variety of ways demonstrate the range of actors historically involved in assistance to urban displaced people, ranging from local authorities to international organisations. They also demonstrate how the presence of refugees has influenced cities. These examples illustrate the longstanding existence of refugees in cities as well as historical good practices to ease host country pressure and foster urban refugee self-reliance. In turn, similar ongoing issues as well as contemporary good practices can be identified from this historical reflection, several of which are discussed in this section.



## The settlement of refugees in urban or rural areas based on background

In the interwar years it was common practice for displaced people to be resettled in urban or rural areas based on their vocational and geographical background; this was understood to benefit refugees and host areas alike. The first international institutional response to refugees was in the 1920s in Greece, when the League of Nations helped establish the Greek Refugee Settlement Commission (GRSC) to assist the approximately 1.5 million ethnic Greek refugees expelled from Turkey as part of the Greek-Turkish population exchange. Although most funds from the GRSC were put towards rural rather than urban resettlement (just a quarter of the initial budget was devoted to urban settlements), by 1931, 2,000

agricultural colonies and urban quarters had been built around Greece.<sup>37</sup> Settling refugees in both urban and rural areas became the status quo in countries such as Bulgaria and Lebanon. In Syria and Lebanon, ambitious plans to turn Armenian refugee settlements into modern neighbourhoods occurred through organisations coordinated by the League, which provided entrepreneurial and agricultural loans, home ownership, and employment to refugees. One 1936 report to the League proclaimed that the construction of these neighbourhoods had turned "Aleppo and Beyrouth from Oriental into modern cities."<sup>38</sup>

<sup>37</sup> Skran, C. 1985. *The Refugee Problem in Interwar Europe, 1919-1939*. MPhil thesis. University of Oxford. p. 48.

<sup>38</sup> "Rapport de M. B. Nicolsky." See also Raymond Kévorkian et al., eds. 2006. *Les Arméniens, 1917-1939: La Quête d'un Refuge*. Presses de l'Université Saint-Joseph: Beirut. Cited in: Watenpaugh, K. D. 2014. "Between Communal Survival and National Aspiration: Armenian Genocide Refugees, the League of Nations, and the Practices of Interwar Humanitarianism." *Humanity: An International Journal of Human Rights, Humanitarianism, and Development* 5(2), pp. 159-181.



Notably, in Greece, the arrival of refugees marked the first plans of organised social housing in the country. However this housing did not occur within large-scale urban planning due to a lack of orchestration between the main assistance actors.<sup>39</sup> Illustrating how a wide range of unlikely local actors can become embedded in refugee assistance in urban areas, the Greek Ministry of Communications, which was responsible for town planning, actively sought to improve the coordination and coherence of the housing policy for refugees.<sup>40</sup> Despite these efforts, 'planning anarchy' reigned, although calls to subject "the planning aspect of the settlement of the refugees...to the general laws of the State" continued into the 1930s. Yerolympos argues that due to the sudden and significant influx of refugees into Greece, town planning policies were altered – and plans often abandoned entirely – in ways that are still evident today.<sup>41</sup> This demonstrates both the significant and unintended influence that refugee arrivals had and can continue to have on urban areas as well as the importance of adequately merging refugee assistance with urban planning.

39 Yerolympos, A. 2008. "Inter-war Town Planning and the Refugee Problem in Greece: Temporary 'Solutions' and Long-Term Dysfunctions." In Hirschon, Renee, ed. 2008. *Crossing the Aegean: An Appraisal of the 1923 Compulsory Population Exchange Between Greece and Turkey*. Berghahn Books: New York. pp. 133-143, 138.

40 Ibid.

41 Ibid.

In Greece, one way the GRSC sought to assist both refugees and stimulate urban economies was through advocating for refugees to start their own businesses in urban areas, which the government enabled through loans from the Greek National Bank. Loans were also offered through humanitarian organisations such as the American Women's Hospitals (AWH). In 1923, a member of the AWH, Dr. Ruth Parmelee, wrote in a report that 'time loans' amounting to \$1,500 had been provided to urban refugees. Two loans enabled refugees to open factories where over 150 men, women, and girls were employed to weave cloth, card and spin wool, and make rugs. She expressed hope that more funds would enable the factories to double in size. Multiple smaller loans offered craftsmen such as street vendors and shoemakers the opportunity to open their own businesses, which enabled more than 75 refugees to be "taken from the Charity Roll."<sup>42</sup> Through offering loans to refugees in urban areas, refugees contributed to local urban economies as well as supported each other in becoming settled.

42 Parmelee, R. 1923. Untitled private letter. Folder 3.13, Work Files AWH 1923-1952, Ruth A. Parmelee Papers, Hoover Institution Archives.

Longstanding practices of making cities viable living options for refugees as well as providing support through loans for them to become self-reliant demonstrate both the irony and the necessity of ongoing struggles to achieve both today. While refugees in Kampala, for example, have the legal right to reside in the city – still a rarity in many places in the world – and are expected by the government and humanitarian agencies to be self-reliant if they move out of settlements, accessing microfinance loans as well as support to access viable markets remains difficult.<sup>43</sup> Ensuring access to financial services to refugees in both urban and rural areas around the world remains a core component of UNHCR's livelihoods and economic inclusion strategy.<sup>44</sup>

43 Easton-Calabria, E. 2016. "Refugees Asked to Fish for Themselves: The Role of Livelihoods Trainings for Kampala's Urban Refugees." *UNHCR New Issues in Refugee Research Working Paper Series* no. 277. UNHCR: Geneva.; Easton-Calabria, E. and N. Omata. 2016. Micro-finance in Refugee Contexts: Current Scholarship and Research Gaps. *Refugee Studies Centre (RSC) Working Paper Series* 116. University of Oxford: Oxford.

44 UNHCR. 2018. Refugee Livelihoods and Economic Inclusion: 2019-2023 Global Strategy Concept Note. UNHCR: Geneva. Available at: <https://www.unhcr.org/publications/operations/5bc07ca94/refugee-livelihoods-economic-inclusion-2019-2023-global-strategy-concept.html>.



### The ILO's employment-matching scheme

Although the Greek settlement was considered a success, refugees in countries such as Lebanon and Syria struggled to find employment despite the assistance provided to them.<sup>45</sup> By 1924, it had become clear that the refugee 'problem' was not a temporary one and that "in the main their problem was to find work, or have it found for them."<sup>46</sup> In response, the International Labour Organization (ILO) was incorporated into refugee relief and rehabilitation efforts to address "the employment, emigration and settlement of refugees."<sup>47</sup> Between 1925 and 1929, ILO initiated a successful 'employment-matching scheme' by asking European countries about their needs for foreign employment in order to place skilled refugees, largely based on their existing livelihoods, into suitable positions. ILO, as well as charities, provided oversight in the resettlement process in an effort to prevent the exploitation of refugees. Fifty thousand refugees, mainly from China and European countries, were employed through

this endeavor, which proved both cost-effective and successful in enabling refugee self-reliance.<sup>48</sup> Many were settled in urban areas based on their knowledge or capabilities in manufacturing and other skills. By 1929, ILO had notably reduced the number of able-bodied refugees seeking employment from 400,000 to 200,000.<sup>49</sup> The majority of refugees that benefitted from this scheme were placed in France, which needed able-bodied labourers due to the heavy losses it had suffered during World War I.

Although this employment-matching scheme took place nearly a century ago, many current mobility schemes are strikingly similar. Labour mobility – the so-called 'fourth durable solution for refugees'<sup>50</sup> – often brings skilled refugees to cities where technology and industry is in highest demand. Wider efforts by UNHCR and other international actors to increase complementary pathways to resettlement, including through skilled work, were laid out in the Global Compact on Refugees, and discussions on these have increased in recent months in part due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

BY 1924, IT HAD BECOME CLEAR THAT THE REFUGEE 'PROBLEM' WAS NOT A TEMPORARY ONE AND THAT "IN THE MAIN THEIR PROBLEM WAS TO FIND WORK, OR HAVE IT FOUND FOR THEM."



45 Migliorino, N. 2008. *(Re)Constructing Armenia in Lebanon and Syria: Ethno-Cultural Diversity and the State in the Aftermath of a Refugee Crisis*. Berghahn: Oxford. pp. 75-77.

46 League of Nations. 1933 Human Welfare and the League, League of Nations Union, January 1933, No. 155. O.LNU/1933(8). p. 67.

47 ILO. 1928. "Refugee Problems and Their Solution." *International Labour Review* 68-85. p. 68.

48 ILO. 1928. "Refugee Problems and Their Solution." pp. 84-85.

49 Skran, 'The Refugee Problem in Interwar Europe'. p. 205.

50 Long, K. 2015. *From Refugee to Migrant? Labour Mobility's Protection Potential*. Migration Policy Institute.





### Historical refugee assistance in cities and towns

Other historical examples of assistance demonstrate how cities and towns can also be hubs of support to displaced people by a range of different actors. After World War II, refugees in Ireland were included in many social protection measures, including the 1939 Public Assistance Act, which required that “local authorities shall provide for the maintenance and assistance of all persons in their administrative areas who are unable to provide for themselves.”<sup>51</sup>

A 1940 article detailing the resettlement of European refugees fleeing the Nazis to the United States explained the services offered to refugees by a wide array of public, civil society, and faith-based actors. “Americanization begins when the refugees learn to speak English,” it reads. “Classes are conducted by the WPA, the public school systems, by refugee committees, churches, synagogues, by the Adult Education Council, and by the Y’s in New York City.”<sup>52</sup>

51 ILO. 1949. Reports and Enquiries: Conditions of Labour of Refugees and Displaced Persons. International Labour Review. Saenger, G. 1940. The Refugees Here. *Survey Graphic* 29(11), pp. 576-582. Retrieved from <http://socialwelfare.library.vcu.edu/issues/refugees-1940/>.

It goes on to discuss how commonly overlooked urban areas, such as small towns, offer advantages to some over the large metropolises, and in turn reduce the pressure on overpopulated cities:

Outside New York, in cities and towns all over the try, special committees have been founded which pledge their help in resettling the refugee. These committees enjoy the support of Protestant, Jewish, and Catholic congregations, of the YMCA, and of welfare and businessmen’s associations. Volunteers – in some of the largest cities, paid social workers – supervise the project. Opportunities for employment which does not create competition, for the establishment of small enterprises, are canvassed first. Reports are sent to the New York headquarters. M-town is willing to settle three refugee families a year, N-city will accept 20 units per annum. Once a refugee has expressed his willingness to go to a certain part of the country, a report about his personality and training is sent to the local community. When the community writes back, ‘Expect Mr. Refugee and family,’ arrangements for the trip are made.<sup>53</sup>

53 Saenger, The Refugees here.





**THIS RESEARCH HAS FOUND “LIMITED TRANSPARENCY, EXCLUSIONARY DECISION-MAKING, AND NARROW SPACES FOR LOCAL OWNERSHIP BY REFUGEES AND HOST COMMUNITIES” TO BE PRIMARY CHALLENGES THAT IN TURN CAN IMPACT REFUGEE INTEGRATION IN EUROPEAN MUNICIPALITIES.**



### **Contemporary urban resettlement, reception, and assistance**

Accounts such as these echo good practices that host municipalities themselves are increasingly seeking out today: more preparation and decision-making over receiving resettled refugees. Research on resettlement in Europe notes that while hosting municipalities, civil society actors, refugees, and migrants play a key role in receiving and integrating refugees, they do not play an active role in the process of resettlement itself. This research has found “limited transparency, exclusionary decision-making, and narrow spaces for local ownership by refugees and host communities” to be primary challenges that in turn can impact refugee integration in European municipalities.<sup>54</sup>

At the same time, good urban practices exist. The SHARE Network, for example, was created in 2012 as a platform for local and regional actors engaged in resettlement to exchange good practices and learning, with an emphasis on strengthening the capacity of local actors in smaller refugee-receiving cities and municipalities that may lack expertise or capacity to address refugees’ specific needs.<sup>55</sup> The network has identified the importance of pre-arrival planning, including improving the information provided to refugees about their municipalities prior to resettlement and vice versa; creating centrally coordinated partnerships for local integration support; and engaging local service providers, such as for healthcare, housing and education, on local placement to ensure that placement decisions consider a variety of factors for integration.<sup>56</sup> Despite these gains in both acknowledging and strengthening the role of municipalities in resettlement, Stürner writes,

54 Stürner, J. 2019. “Who Could Thrive Where? Imagining Resettlement as a Cooperative Mobility Strategy.” Rethinking Refugee Platform, Refugee Studies Centre, University of Oxford. Available at: <https://www.rethinkingrefuge.org/articles/who-could-thrive-where-imagining-resettlement-as-a-cooperative-mobility-str>.

55 SHARE Network. 2020. Welcome to the SHARE Network! Webpage. Available at: <http://www.resettlement.eu/page/welcome-share-network> (Accessed 12 September 2020).

56 SHARE Network (n.d.) *A Place to Live, A Place to Stay: A Good Practice Guide for Housing in Refugee Resettlement*. ICMC Europe. Available at: [http://www.resettlement.eu/sites/icmc.eu/files/ICMC\\_SHARE%20A%20Place%20to%20Live\\_Housing%20Good%20Practice%20Guide.pdf](http://www.resettlement.eu/sites/icmc.eu/files/ICMC_SHARE%20A%20Place%20to%20Live_Housing%20Good%20Practice%20Guide.pdf) (Accessed 12 September 2020).

"[I]n many EU countries, municipalities neither have the opportunity to voice their interest in resettlement nor reject participation in national schemes,"<sup>57</sup> demonstrating the steps that still need to be taken.

At the same time, as discussed above, many refugee-hosting municipalities today have stepped up to take responsibility for the people in their cities. Notably, some of the strongest municipal practices exist in countries which have experienced some of the largest influxes of refugees. Turkey, for example, now hosts approximately 3.9 million refugees, making it the world's largest refugee-hosting country for over five consecutive years.<sup>58</sup> Various relevant good practices exist at the local and national level in Turkey. Nationally, refugees' ability to live in urban areas promotes opportunities for integration and work that many other more restrictive countries lack. Ninety per cent of UNHCR's people of concern in Turkey are living in urban settings, meaning that the urban response is a crucial part of the assistance refugees receive. Almost one million refugees live in Istanbul alone. The creation of work permits, and the availability of free education and healthcare in some municipalities, are positive examples of refugee assistance practices, though they also need to be significantly expanded.

57 Stürmer, "Who could thrive where?"

58 UNHCR. 2018. *Global Trends: Forced Displacement in 2018*. Available at: <https://www.unhcr.org/5d08d7ee7.pdf>

At the local level, the city of Gaziantep, Turkey, offers an example of an assistance approach based on social justice and promoting the well-being of both refugees and refugee-hosting communities. The city has been highly affected by the Syrian refugee influx, and currently hosts between 350,000 and 600,000 refugees, who comprise at least 17 per cent of the population.<sup>59</sup> About 500,000 are these are Syrians living in the centre of the city. The former Director of Migration Management in Gaziantep explains, "...the fundamentals of addressing migration through a lens of inclusion and a respect for human rights has been core to successful management at the local level and an example of why a focus on people and our humanity can be every bit as impactful as building walls or closing down borders."<sup>60</sup> This so-called 'Gaziantep Approach' has been replicated by other cities in Turkey.

59 Yalcin. 2020. "The Gaziantep Migration Model for Building a Resilient City for All in a Time of Crisis." The German Marshall Fund of the United States, 1 June. Available at: <https://www.gmfus.org/blog/2020/06/01/gaziantep-migration-model-building-resilient-city-all-time-crisis>

60 Ibid.



**[I]N MANY EU COUNTRIES,  
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Gaziantep was the first municipality in Turkey to open its own Directorate of Migration Affairs in order to address migration at the local level.<sup>61</sup> First implemented in January 2016, the Gaziantep Metropolitan Municipality Migration Policy focuses on the needs of all residents to increase integration and has sought to remain flexible in order to shift priorities as needs and circumstances change. It has become responsible for improving access to education, health services, employment, social services, and humanitarian aid. One way it works to achieve this is through coordination and collaboration

with other municipalities, national and international organisations, and universities. The International Organization for Migration (IOM) Turkey, for example, has worked closely with the municipality to implement projects according to the policy. Collaboration also aids social cohesion itself, as the municipality holds monthly meetings with Turkish, Syrian, and international NGOs to diffuse any arising tensions.

The municipality has continually sought to create pathways to citizenship for Gaziantep's refugees.<sup>62</sup> It has created information and education centres as well as

community centres that provide schooling for Syrian students, counselling, and advice about rights and social resources. Free healthcare is provided for over 50,000 Syrian refugees in the municipal hospital and medical centre, and the local women's shelter offers support to women and children facing domestic violence.<sup>63</sup> These endeavors have resulted in more comprehensive support for refugees than is available in many other cities. The city has also undertaken broader advocacy for municipal refugee assistance, including through co-hosting an International Forum on Local Solutions to Migration and Displacement in 2019, which exchanged good practices between Turkish municipalities and local authorities from around the world. The event culminated with over 30 mayors of cities hosting refugees and other migrants signing the Gaziantep Declaration, which seeks a transition from emergency to development and resilience approaches in responses to migration and displacement.<sup>64</sup>

Local policy in Gaziantep provides important lessons about the value of coordination with a variety of actors at the local level that have led to both improved governance and social cohesion between refugees and Gaziantep's non-refugee residents. The vocational training that many refugees have received has improved their chances of becoming employed, and the Education Centre has contributed to higher levels of first-grade enrollment rates for Syrian children in Gaziantep (98 per cent) than when they were in Syria (85 per cent).<sup>65</sup>

61 International Organization for Migration. 2018. "Why Gaziantep Still Matters Seven Years After Start of Syrian Conflict." IOM. Available at: <https://reliefweb.int/report/turkey/why-gaziantep-still-matters-seven-years-after-start-syrian-conflict>

62 Jebreal, R. 2017. "How to Treat Refugees with Dignity: A Lesson from Turkey." *New York Times*, 27 September. Available at: <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/09/27/opinion/turkey-syrian-refugees.html>

63 Mediterranean Host Municipalities Network. 2017. *Best Practices in Hosting Refugees*. Center for Mediterranean Integration: Beirut. Available at: [http://cmimarseille.org/sites/default/files/newsite/library/files/en/Refugees%20English%20final\\_0.pdf](http://cmimarseille.org/sites/default/files/newsite/library/files/en/Refugees%20English%20final_0.pdf).

64 IFLSMD. 2019. The Gaziantep Declaration. International Forum on Local Solutions to Migration and Displacement, 26–27 November. Available at: <https://www.municipalforum2019.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/Gaziantep-Declaration-27-November-2019.pdf> (Accessed 15 October 2020).

65 Mediterranean Host Municipalities Network. 2017. *Best Practices in Hosting Refugees*. p.16.





# THE FUTURE ENGAGEMENT OF CAPITALS, SECONDARY CITIES, AND TOWNS WITH DISPLACEMENT

While previous sections of this chapter have highlighted both the challenges urban displaced people face as well as good practices from municipalities hosting displaced people themselves, the future increasingly looks like a significant departure from both the past and the present. In just a few rapid months, the Covid-19 pandemic has changed the world as we know it, and it will likely continue to significantly affect cities in terms of inhabitants, strains on infrastructure, and even changes in urban design. At the time of writing, an estimated 90 per cent of all reported Covid-19 cases are in urban areas, demonstrating them as the epicentre of the pandemic. Refugees and other forcibly displaced people are particularly vulnerable and are among the most likely populations to suffer both the direct and secondary impacts of the pandemic. On top of pre-existing barriers to protection and assistance, many are now excluded from host countries' national Covid-19 responses and relief programmes.<sup>66</sup>

<sup>66</sup> OHCHR, IOM, UNHCR and WHO. 2020. "The Rights and Health of Refugees, Migrants and Stateless Must Be Protected in Covid-19 Response." Joint press release, 31 March. Available at: <https://www.unhcr.org/en-us/news/press/2020/3/5e836f164/rights-health-refugees-migrants-stateless-must-protected-covid-19-response.html>; World Economic Forum. 2020. "Migrants and Refugees Are Being Forgotten in the Covid-19 Response. This Has to Change." 12 August. Available at: <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2020/08/refugees-migrants-covid-coronavirus-not-leave-behind/>.

As the Executive Director of the Mayors Migration Council explained, "Migrants and refugees are really on the front line of the pandemic because they play a big role as essential workers, from picking and packing food and caring for patients to stocking shelves at the grocery stores. But despite that, they face unique challenges – they are systematically excluded from national relief efforts."<sup>67</sup>

<sup>67</sup> Cited in: Wray, Sarah. 2020. "Mayors Urge Policymakers to Include Migrants and Refugees in Covid-19 Support." *Cities Today* 29 July. Available at: <https://cities-today.com/mayors-urge-policymakers-to-include-migrants-and-refugees-in-covid-19-support/>.



In urban areas in particular, humanitarian agencies struggle to find displaced people, as many offices and community centres they commonly work out of are closed. In some cities, such as in the case of Arua, Uganda (discussed later in this report), refugees are excluded from national relief because they are not legally registered as urban inhabitants. Yet particularly in the informal urban settlements and other dense urban areas where many displaced people reside, a lack of basic health infrastructure, overcrowding, and poor sanitation all contribute to the risk of transmission and infection,<sup>68</sup> meaning that both awareness of and access to these populations is of paramount importance.

These risks as well as the impacts that the pandemic has wrought on the protection, rights, and livelihoods of refugees and other forcibly displaced peoples in urban and rural areas alike, including in camps and settlements, demonstrate the urgent need to bolster assistance to displaced people wherever they reside. Particularly for displaced people already living among local hosts in urban and peri-urban areas, the need for inclusion in national systems such as healthcare and social protection is apparent for the safety of all.

Promisingly, the pandemic has accelerated this type of inclusion in certain contexts. In Peru, for example, the government issued Legislative Decree No. 1466, which has temporarily opened up the subsidised health system to refugees, asylum seekers, and other migrants

for Covid-19 care,<sup>69</sup> while in Rwanda the national Community Based Health Insurance (CBHI) has been extended to urban refugees and refugee students studying in urban areas.<sup>70</sup>

Mayors around the world have also responded to the pandemic by calling on states and multi-lateral partners to provide access to services regardless of migration status, including healthcare and economic relief; empower refugees and migrants to be part of the solution, including through the regularisation of work; and combat disinformation and build positive narratives of refugees and migrants.<sup>71</sup> The Mayors Migration Council has created a tracker of municipal responses to assist refugees and migrants during Covid-19 from around the world, ranging from multilingual information outreach and direct services to advocacy efforts. This list demonstrates the far-reaching and widespread efforts of cities to assist their inhabitants. This has evolved as the Covid-19 pandemic has progressed, such as a recent initiative by 11 mayors of C40 Cities to promote a sustainable and fair economic recovery from the Covid-19 crisis for all urban residents. The work of such local authorities to include displaced people and other migrants in often overburdened systems at a time of crisis demonstrates the strength of local action and points to areas where more support should be provided by national and international actors.

68 World Bank. 2020. *Urban and Disaster Risk Management Responses to Covid-19*. Urban, Disaster Risk Management, Resilience and Land, World Bank. Available at: <http://pubdocs.worldbank.org/en/575581589235414090/World-Bank-Urban-DRM-COVID-19-Responses.pdf>; IIED. 2020. "Dealing with Covid-19 in the Towns and Cities of the Global South." 27 March. Available at: <https://www.iied.org/dealing-covid-19-towns-cities-global-south>.

69 UNHCR. 2020. "Access to National Services for Vulnerable Refugees in Peru." 26 June. Available at: <https://globalcompactrefugees.org/article/access-national-services-vulnerable-refugees-peru>

70 UNHCR. 2020. "Health Insurance in Rwanda: The Covid-19 Response Is Accessible to Nationals and Refugees Alike." 24 June. Available at: <https://globalcompactrefugees.org/article/health-insurance-rwanda-covid-19-response-accessible-nationals-and-refugees-alike>

71 UNHCR-PHAP. 2020. Webinar: Inclusive Covid-19 Responses of Cities in the Americas. 30 July. Available at: <https://phap.org/PHAP/Events/OE/2020/OE/200730.aspx>.





### The future of forced displacement

UNHCR data shows that more than 1 per cent of the earth's population was forcibly displaced by the end of 2019, and that displacement continue to increase. While many people have found themselves *in situ* due to the Covid-19 pandemic, related displacement is anticipated. A new report posits that the climate crisis alone could displace over 1.2 billion people by 2050. It also found that the countries most under ecological threat are those experiencing, or more likely to experience, conflict. The report states, "Lack of resilience will lead to worsening food insecurity and competition over resources, increasing civil unrest and mass displacement,"<sup>72</sup> which suggests that mixed migration will become more common.

These figures matter for cities; many will likely significantly increase in size, while also (in some cases) battling the direct effects of climate change and social and political instability. The ability for localised responses to both displacement and crises is crucial in such scenarios and necessitates the transfer of both funding and responsibility to local actors in more significant ways than has previously occurred in the humanitarian and development sectors. This is particularly important because it is not just displaced people, but also many host community members in refugee-hosting countries and regions that require more recognition and support for their needs.

The following chapters provide case studies drawn from primary and secondary research in cities and towns in East Africa to further explore some of the main themes laid out here.

<sup>72</sup> IEP, 2020. *Ecological Threat Register 2020*. Available at: [http://visionofhumanity.org/app/uploads/2020/09/ETR\\_2020\\_web-1.pdf](http://visionofhumanity.org/app/uploads/2020/09/ETR_2020_web-1.pdf).

# CHAPTER 2: IDPs IN ADAMA, ETHIOPIA



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## INTRODUCTION

**In 2018, about 1,340 registered households as well as many unregistered IDPs fled ethnic conflict in the Somali region of Ethiopia to seek safety in Adama, in the Oromia region approximately 100 km southeast of Addis Ababa. The IDPs, who were mainly ethnic Oromo, arrived in Adama over the course of several months. The sudden and huge influx of IDPs put immense pressure on the city's capacity to provide the necessary support.**

While most of the focus on internal displacement in Ethiopia remains on the Somali region (which hosts the majority of the country's IDPs), significant lessons can be learned from Adama's response. In the absence of large-scale international assistance, a little-known campaign to address the needs of IDPs led to a multi-level response from federal, regional and – in particular – local urban actors. Ultimately, under the auspices of the city administration, all 28 sectoral government bureaus, hundreds of private sector actors, 18 kebeles (neighbourhood districts), 243 iddirs (community-based associations) and many local NGOs and individuals participated in supporting and settling the IDPs. This may be a unique instance of an entirely Ethiopian, collective, and largely local effort to operate successfully at this scale and within such a short period of time.







# ADAMA, ETHIOPIA

Adama, the former capital of Ethiopia's Oromia region, is an upcoming secondary city that is expected to triple its 2010 population by 2040, growing from 253,000 to over 954,000 inhabitants, and growing in area more than fivefold.<sup>73</sup> While known as a popular city for weekend breaks from Addis Ababa and a frequent choice for conferences and work events, Adama has also found itself at the nexus of multiple migrations including internal migration from conflict, trafficking, and smuggling.<sup>74</sup> It is the first main stop along the country's newly restored colonial railroad line, and

therefore an important site for both industrialisation and urbanisation. As part of this, the municipal and federal government are focusing on city planning in a way that has largely not been possible in older cities such as Addis Ababa. Adama was selected as one of four pilot cities in the Ethiopia Urban Expansion Initiative from 2013-2017 and currently participates in the initiative as a learning city.<sup>75</sup> Due to this combination of urbanisation and forced migration, it presents an important site for understanding how to support local government and other actors in receiving forced migrants settling both formally and informally in the city, as well as those aiming to move onwards.

73 Lamson-Hall, P., S. Angel, D. DeGroot, R. Martin, and T. Tafesse. 2018. "A New Plan for African Cities: The Ethiopia Urban Expansion Initiative." *Urban Studies* 0042098018757601.

74 Mulugeta, M., and T. Makonnen. 2017. "Illicit Cross-border Migration in Ethiopia: Causes, Patterns and Policy Responses." *Ethiopian Journal of the Social Sciences and Humanities* 13(2): 53-80.

75 Lamson-Hall et al. "A New Plan for African Cities: The Ethiopia Urban Expansion Initiative."





WHILE KNOWN AS A POPULAR CITY FOR WEEKEND BREAKS FROM ADDIS ABABA AND A FREQUENT CHOICE FOR CONFERENCES AND WORK EVENTS, ADAMA HAS ALSO FOUND ITSELF AT THE NEXUS OF MULTIPLE MIGRATIONS INCLUDING INTERNAL MIGRATION FROM CONFLICT, TRAFFICKING, AND SMUGGLING.

# BACKGROUND

**This case study focuses on displacement that occurred in 2018, a year when more people were displaced as a result of conflict, violence, and disaster than ever before (although the number has only risen since then). The number of IDPs around the world escalated from 28 million at the start of the year to an estimated 41.3 million IDPs by its end.<sup>76</sup> Sub-Saharan Africa was the region most affected globally, with over 10 million people displaced.<sup>77</sup> Ethiopia experienced a huge increase in its IDP population in 2018 - almost double that experienced by Syria, and more than any other country across the world. A total of over 3 million people were internally displaced following violence and conflicts between ethnic Somalis and Oromos. Several thousand of them ended up in Adama, the focus of this case study.**

Ethiopia is administratively divided into nine regional states and two charter cities - the capital Addis Ababa and Dire Dawa in the east - and is governed through a decentralised system of ethnic federalism, whereby regional states are accorded powers by the federal government. The two largest regions, Oromia and Somali, have experienced ongoing territorial disputes along a shared border that stretches over 1,400 km: "Historically, their relationship has been characterised by territorial competition which often leads to disputes and conflicts over resources, including wells and grazing land."<sup>78</sup> Mass displacement occurred after the regional government of Somalia expanded its regional periphery, leading to the forcible expulsion of many Oromos living in the Somali region and on the border of the two regions.

According to the Internal Displacement Monitoring Center (IDMC), "Conflict over resources and ethnic violence triggered 2.9 million new displacements in Ethiopia in 2018, more than in any other country worldwide and four times the figure for 2017."<sup>79</sup> Climate change also plays a role in internal displacement in Ethiopia, although at times it is difficult to fully attribute causation. However, in 2018 there were almost 300,000 IDPs due to climate-related causes, associated mostly with flood and drought in the Somali region.<sup>80</sup>

<sup>76</sup> GRID. 2019. *Global Report on Internal Displacement*.

<sup>77</sup> Of these, 7.4 million displacements were caused by conflicts and violence and 2.6 million by disasters, mostly weather related. IDMC Press Release. Available at: <http://www.internal-displacement.org/media-centres/10-million-people-internally-displaced-across-sub-saharan-africa-in-2018>.

<sup>78</sup> BBC. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-41278618>.

<sup>79</sup> IDMC Press Release. Available at: <http://www.internal-displacement.org/media-centres/10-million-people-internally-displaced-across-sub-saharan-africa-in-2018>.

<sup>80</sup> IDMC Country Report. Available at: <https://www.internal-displacement.org/countries/ethiopia>.





# ETHIOPIA'S NATIONAL POLICY ON REFUGEES AND IDPs



## IDP policies

Ethiopia lacks a comprehensive dedicated framework regarding responses to internal displacement. Although it is a signatory to the African Union Convention for Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons in Africa (Kampala Convention), it has not ratified the treaty, which is a major policy limitation.<sup>81</sup>

Ethiopia has taken positive actions to address humanitarian and development-oriented assistance for IDPs. In December 2019, the government launched a national Durable Solutions Initiative (DSI) with the aim to “[provide] a platform to connect life-saving humanitarian action to the longer-term development efforts of the country,” which “is development oriented and fully respects the humanitarian principles.”<sup>82</sup> However, at the time of research, no clear outcomes from the DSI had occurred.

81 Habte, Behigu and Yun Jin Kweon. 2018. “Addressing Internal Displacement in Ethiopia.” *Forced Migration Review* 59, October. Available at: <https://www.fmreview.org/GuidingPrinciples20/habte-kweon>.

82 UN Ethiopia. 2019. “Durable Solutions Initiative launched in Ethiopia.” 6 December. Available at: <https://ethiopia.un.org/en/27655-durable-solutions-initiative-launched-ethiopia>

Previously, in 2017, the government introduced an IDP Advisory Group to support more than one million IDPs resulting from the Somali-Oromo border conflict. This committee comprises the UN Resident/ Humanitarian Coordinator, the UN Humanitarian Affairs, IOM, UNHCR, Red Cross and Danish Refugee Council, and is led by the Deputy Prime Minister.<sup>83</sup> A regional durable solutions strategy by the Somali Regional State was also endorsed in October 2017. This strategy was a first for the region as well as the country,<sup>84</sup> and it is aligned with the UN Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement.<sup>85</sup>

83 Habte et al. “Addressing Internal Displacement in Ethiopia.”

84 Habte et al. “Addressing Internal Displacement in Ethiopia.”

85 National Legislative Bodies/National Authorities. 2017. Ethiopia: Somali Region Durable Solutions Strategy (Durable Solutions Strategy 2017–2020. The Durable Solutions Strategy of the Somali Regional Government of Ethiopia), October 2017, available at: <https://www.refworld.org/docid/5b34d30a4.html> [accessed 28 October 2020].



## Refugee policies

After Uganda, Ethiopia at the time of research had the second largest refugee population in Africa and has been similarly generous with accepting refugees from some 24 countries. The country's parliament adopted a national refugee law and regulation on 17 January 2019. The law grants privileges to refugees such as the right to work, habitation outside of camps, access to social and financial services, and registration of births and marriages.<sup>86</sup> In practice, though, these rights remain limited.

Although the majority of refugees in Ethiopia live in camps, the country has an out-of-camp policy for Eritrean refugees that represents a strong basis for pursuing further alternatives to encampment. This policy was initiated in 2010 to increase refugee self-reliance and relies on refugees having immediate Ethiopian relatives in urban areas who act as a sort of sponsor for them. For some Eritrean refugees, this policy has helped them decide against taking the perilous sea crossing to Europe in favor of striving to achieve self-reliance in Addis Ababa or secondary cities.<sup>87</sup>

86 UNHCR. 2019. Ethiopia Country Refugee Response Plan: The Integrated Response Plan for Refugees from Eritrea, Sudan, South Sudan and Somalia (2019–2020). Available at: <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/documents/download/67744>.

87 Sudan Tribune. 2016. “Feature: Eritrean Favors ‘Out of Camp Policy’ Over Peril Sea Route.” 12 February. Available at: <http://www.sudantribune.com/spip.php?article58008>

## RESEARCH FINDINGS

Prior to the end of 2017, the Somali region was home to many ethnic Oromo people, and Somalis and Oromos had cohabited somewhat peacefully for years. Overall, the Oromos considered the Somali region as their own. However, in late 2017, ethnic conflicts between the Oromos and the Somalis led to an estimated 1,074,000 people forcibly displaced in both regions. The crisis affected many lives and left countless IDPs traumatised. Some lost family members and some were physically injured, while others witnessed atrocities.

**"REGARDLESS OF THEM BEING SOMALI, I THANK OUR NEIGHBOURS. WE SURVIVED BECAUSE OF THEM... THE REGIONAL POLICE STARTED GOING AROUND TO ANNOUNCE THAT OROMOS SHOULD LEAVE THE REGION, OR THEY WILL BE KILLED... THEY USED TO GO AROUND KILLING, BEATING AND RAPING. THIS CONTINUED FOR DAYS. WE DIDN'T SLEEP OR EAT THE WHOLE TIME... MY FRIEND HAS MANY BROTHERS, SO SHE [THEN] BROUGHT THEM TO US... THE POLICE CAME TO CHECK... ASKED IF THERE WERE ANY OROMOS IN THE HOUSE AND THEY SAID NO. THEY KEPT US SAFE TILL WE LEFT."**

- IDP resettled in Adama.



**"WE DIDN'T LEAVE OUR HOUSE FOR SIX DAYS... THERE WERE [SOME] WHO GOT BEATEN, WHO DIED, WOMEN WHO GOT RAPED... THIS WHOLE CRISIS...WAS JUST BECAUSE OF ETHNICITY, AND IT IS AWFUL."**

- IDP resettled in Adama.





The Government of Ethiopia's IDP response plan focused on (1) voluntary return to areas of origin, (2) voluntary integration with host communities, and (3) voluntary resettlement to selected areas. An IDP intention survey led by Haromaya University identified areas for refugee settlement, gathered data on IDPs' place of origin, and noted whether IDPs sought return, reintegration or relocation.<sup>88</sup> A study on IDPs in four IDP sites in the East Hararghe Zone, one of the zones of the Oromia region, found that most preferred to stay in Oromia rather than be repatriated.

Many IDPs temporarily settled in different camps in Oromia, where they officially registered and received international humanitarian

assistance. According to our interviews, NGOs such as the Red Cross and Oxfam contributed greatly to support the thousands of IDPs in camps. Many of our informants stayed in camps for approximately eight months before being relocated to Adama.

The voluntary resettlement took place through a lottery system wherein an IDP household drew a ticket using a registration code they had been assigned to see where they would be relocated. This anonymous, random lottery was created to avoid competition and conflicts of interest. This system led to the distribution of approximately 86,000 IDPs across 11 cities in the Oromia region, of which Adama was one. A regional government committee was set up to implement the lottery and settlement while the municipal authorities created their own committees to address the needs of IDPs (expanded on below).

According to the IDPs we interviewed and other key respondents, most IDPs were positive about being relocated to Adama. In contrast to some of the other cities designated for relocation, Adama is a major city in Ethiopia and close to Addis Ababa. Adama was also preferable to many IDP households as they received free housing, which was not offered at each relocation site. IDPs mentioned the lottery system being fair and transparent.

The following sections present main findings from key actors involved in the response and thematic sectors, including education and healthcare.

<sup>88</sup> Government of Ethiopia. 2018. Ethiopia Humanitarian and Disaster Resilience Plan. Addis: Government of Ethiopia and Humanitarian Country Team. Available at: [https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/sites/www.humanitarianresponse.info/files/documents/files/ethiopia\\_2018\\_humanitarian\\_and\\_disaster\\_resilience\\_plan\\_2.pdf](https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/sites/www.humanitarianresponse.info/files/documents/files/ethiopia_2018_humanitarian_and_disaster_resilience_plan_2.pdf).

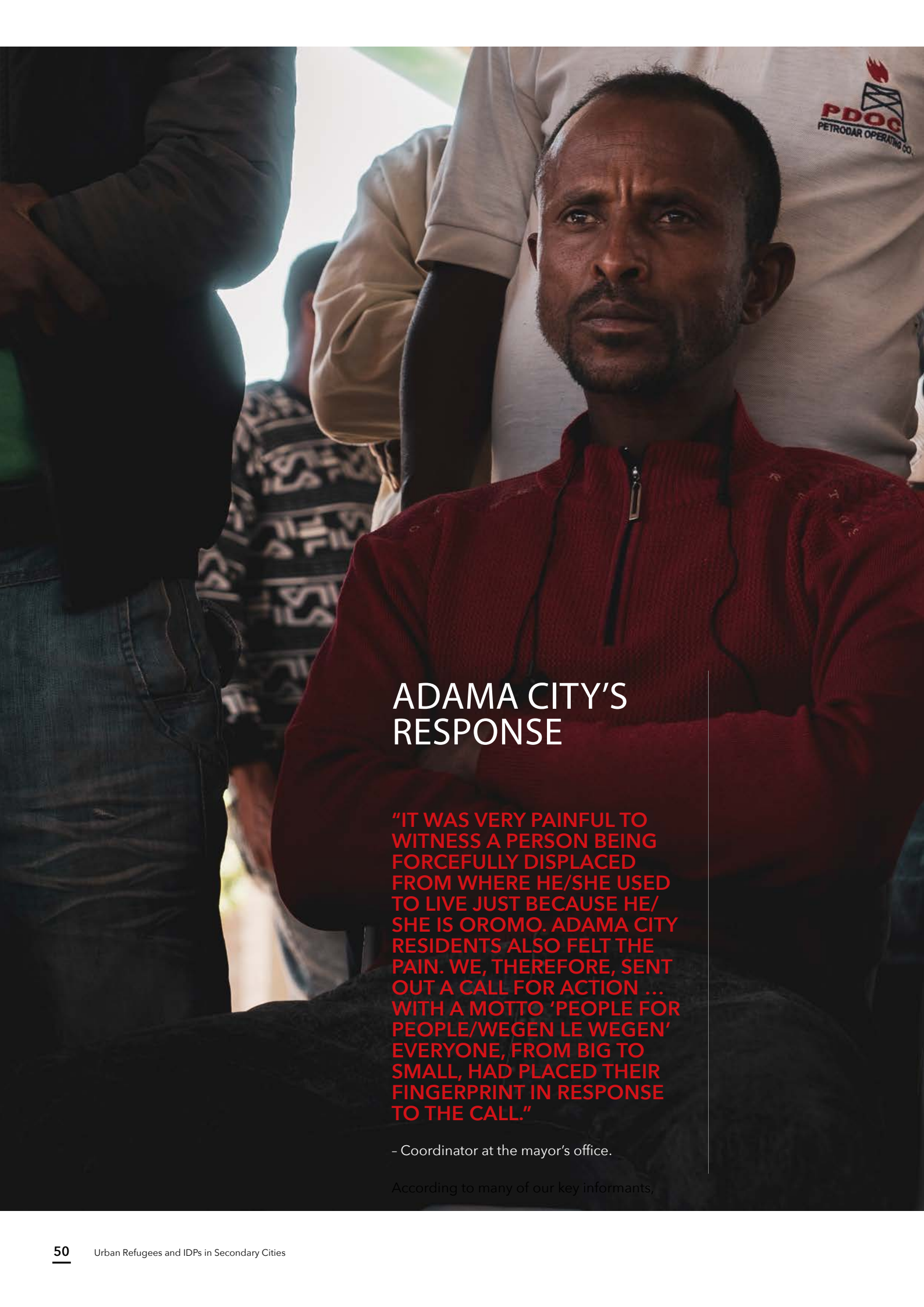
# REGIONAL GOVERNMENT

In response to the displacement, the regional government of Oromia called for action to help resettle the IDPs. Recognising that encampment was only a short-term solution, the Oromia regional government took the initiative to distribute and permanently resettle the IDPs in different parts of the region. The regional government considered the capacity of 11 cities<sup>89</sup> within the region to allocate acceptable numbers of IDPs to each according to their capacity. As a result, Adama was allocated 2,000 households and 506 unaccompanied IDP minors. According to our interviews, the regional government worked collaboratively with the Adama City Administration to agree on this number based on what the city could offer IDPs.

<sup>89</sup> The cities were: Adama, Bishoftu, Burayu, Dukem, Gelan, Legtafo, Modjo, Sebeta, Shashemene, Sululeta, and Zeway.







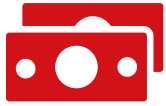
## ADAMA CITY'S RESPONSE

"IT WAS VERY PAINFUL TO WITNESS A PERSON BEING FORCEFULLY DISPLACED FROM WHERE HE/SHE USED TO LIVE JUST BECAUSE HE/SHE IS OROMO. ADAMA CITY RESIDENTS ALSO FELT THE PAIN. WE, THEREFORE, SENT OUT A CALL FOR ACTION ... WITH A MOTTO 'PEOPLE FOR PEOPLE/WEGEN LE WEGEN' EVERYONE, FROM BIG TO SMALL, HAD PLACED THEIR FINGERPRINT IN RESPONSE TO THE CALL."

- Coordinator at the mayor's office.

According to many of our key informants,





**"FIRSTLY, AS A HUMAN BEING, YOU FEEL SOMETHING WHENEVER SOMEONE IS GOING THROUGH A ROUGH TIME... YOU HAVE TO SHARE WHAT YOU HAVE. IF YOU CAN JUST MAKE A SMALL CONTRIBUTION BUT HELP THESE PEOPLE IN THE LONG TERM, THAT IS VERY SATISFYING. YOU ENJOY THE POINT OF LIVING WHEN YOU DO SUCH THINGS. SOME OF THE IDPs ACTUALLY LOST A LOT, BUT OUR SMALL CONTRIBUTION MADE THEM FEEL THAT THEY DO HAVE PEOPLE."**

– HR employee, private food industry.

Adama accommodated more IDPs than any other city in Oromia. The city hosted both temporary IDPs (who subsequently relocated to another resettlement area) and people who took up permanent residence in Adama. Most of these IDPs were temporarily staying in kebeles (the smallest administrative unit of Ethiopia, similar to a ward or neighbourhood group), and a private school compound.

This was a huge responsibility for the city as it had to facilitate and provide for 2,000 households without federal government support. The city administration therefore requested significant help from different sectors and stakeholders. Quickly, the city administration and regional government called society to action through social media and TV outlets, emphasising the need to build housing and advertising an emergency fund that had been established. Additionally, the city organised a committee to deal directly with the crisis.

As Adama holds city status, the municipality can freely administrate within the city, including collecting its own revenue and developing its own sectoral plans, which are approved and allocated budget by the regional government.<sup>90</sup> However, Adama has been very reliant on funds from the regional government, which make up about 75 per cent of the city's annual revenue.<sup>91</sup> Both Adama's autonomy as well as historical reliance on funding flows from the Oromia regional government influenced its IDP response. Many of Adama's sectoral bureaus, for example, directly responded to IDPs while the overall response was orchestrated in collaboration with the regional government.

<sup>90</sup> OECD. 2020. *Rural Development Strategy Review of Ethiopia*. OECD: Washington, D.C.

<sup>91</sup> Ibid.

# THE MEDIA

The media played an essential role in amplifying the Oromia regional government's message calling citizens to mobilise to support the IDPs. Both traditional media and social media proved effective channels for disseminating information. The call for support was spread through different strategies, notably a daily televised

report about the IDP situation and publicising the names of private investors who provided support. Media footage was also shared, ranging from showing how people were living in kebeles to showing IDPs and local community members celebrating Muslim holidays together.



# OROMIA BROADCASTING NETWORK

One media outlet that played a large role in calling for support to IDPs was the Oromia Broadcasting Network (OBN), the leading regional public service broadcaster in the Oromia region. It broadcasted on TV and radio from its

Adama headquarters, sent journalists to settlement areas to disseminate information to local communities and different stakeholders, and highlighted ways IDPs and locals were working together. This free coverage has continued for over three

years, and now occurs twice weekly. More than 600 OBN staff even contributed one month of their salaries to the IDPs. During the religious holidays, OBN gifted IDPs with live sheep and food for their celebrations.

Although the station is government-owned, it made efforts to maintain balanced reporting of the Somali-Oromo tensions it encountered, including visiting IDP settlements and interviewing the residents firsthand. The OBN newsroom manager described its role as “the voice of these people.”





# WELCOMING IDPs IN ADAMA

"WE WERE ASKED  
THIS QUESTION  
WHEN WE WERE  
IN CAMPS. IF WE  
WANTED TO  
RETURN, WE  
WOULD HAVE  
DONE SO THEN."

- IDP

Adama city is now home to 1,340 registered IDP households and 506 registered unaccompanied IDP minors who arrived through the lottery system. Only those who came via the formal lottery system were registered at all, as Adama has no official migrant voluntary registration process. This registration took place in the camp. In response to the city's call for action, and with the generous contribution of the local community and the private sector, four resettlement areas were constructed, and the lottery system was replicated to distribute the newly constructed houses fairly and equally to all registered IDPs. Each resettlement house is a single room constructed from iron sheets, has a total of 105 sqm plot of land, including a shared bathroom (one for two houses) and water access, but no access to power and individual electric counters.

At the time of research, IDPs had stayed in Adama city on average for two years. Based on interviews, it appears that for many, returning to their original home is not an option due to an ongoing fear of violence. Practically, many do not have assets to return to or even money to make the trip back, further reinforcing their preference to stay in Adama. As two informants explained:



"WE WENT THROUGH  
SO MUCH, SO WE JUST  
WANT TO SETTLE HERE.  
WE WANT TO WORK  
HERE AND CHANGE  
OUR LIVES. WE JUST  
WANT TO LIVE LIKE  
OTHERS."

- IDP



Since the IDPs' arrival, the local city administration has offered those who are registered free healthcare and education, although it appears that, while officially available, it is not always accessible to IDPs. In addition, through the collaboration of the federal and regional government, registered IDPs still receive monthly food rations from the National Disaster Risk Management Commission distributed based on family size. IDPs receive 15 kg of rice or flour and about half a litre of cooking oil per person/month, but no other groceries, so IDPs often sell some of their donated rations to buy spices and vegetables. However, IDPs commonly complain that the food rations are not large enough for their families, particularly since children born since their arrival are not included in the data transferred from the camps, which was used to calculate consumption. They also stated that delays in the arrival of food rations for one to three months is a major ongoing problem.

**"I DO NOT HAVE A JOB; I AM NOT WORKING. AS A [IDP] REPRESENTATIVE, I DO NOT EVEN GET MONEY FOR TRANSPORT TO COME HERE FOR DIFFERENT REASONS. I SELL A FEW KILOS FROM WHAT I GET TO COVER MY OTHER EXPENSES SUCH AS TRANSPORT COSTS. BUT WE DO NOT EVEN GET THE RATIONS ON TIME. WE HAVE TO WAIT TWO TO THREE MONTHS SOMETIMES. WE ALSO DO NOT GET OTHER NECESSITIES SUCH AS SOAP AND GROCERIES."**

- IDP



## **BOX 2 REGISTERING THE FORCIBLY DISPLACED IN ETHIOPIA**



**Registration takes place  
in IDP camps.**



**There is voluntary registration  
for IDP resettlement scheme.**



**No formal migrant/forced  
migrant registration process  
exists in cities except for  
Addis Ababa.**



**Urban registration takes place  
in Addis Ababa for select  
refugees who are part of the  
Urban Refugee Programme.**

# THE IMPORTANCE OF VOLUNTARY REGISTRATION AND IDs

A dual system of assistance has emerged in Adama based on whether IDPs are registered (e.g., if they came voluntarily through the formal lottery process) and have an IDP ID card specific to Adama, or whether they do not have one due to being unregistered, which meant they travelled to Adama independently of the lottery system. Those registered IDPs holding ID cards are privileged; the cards not only serve as documentation, but they also allow them to receive monthly food rations and free healthcare. The IDP card has the house code they live in, as well as where they are from. Having one makes it easier for them to be employed, as employers then have more information about them.



Yet in addition to the registered IDPs who were assigned by the regional government to live in Adama city, there is a significant number of undocumented IDPs in Adama who were assigned to live in other Oromia cities but relocated independently or were not assigned to a city at all. As Adama has no municipal voluntary registration process, there is no formal way for these IDPs to be registered as IDPs or inhabitants of the city.

Undocumented IDPs face many problems as they are not included in any official data, making them ineligible to receive monthly food rations, free housing, access to interest-free loans, and other benefits that are available for registered IDPs. For instance, Mr. Mohamed, an undocumented IDP, does not receive any benefits from the government or city administration because he does not have an IDP ID card and did not arrive in Adama through the government's IDP resettlement programme. Currently, he works as a casual daily labourer (wage employment) and his wife also has wage employment. From these jobs they are able to support themselves through earning about 3,000 birr (\$100) monthly, but survival remains precarious.





"UNDOCUMENTED IDPs  
WHO CAME TO ADAMA BY  
THEMSELVES SHOULD BE  
GIVEN LEGAL DOCUMENTS."

- Mohamed/IDP

To address this, an ID programme led by the government will likely be launched in the coming years. Since 2019, the Adama Science and Technology University – in partnership with the Adama City Level, Labour and Social Office – has piloted a migrant voluntary registration desk in Adama specifically to address this issue, funded by Cities Alliance with financial support from SDC. The pilot registered 700 IDPs and migrants in 2020, and as of June 2021 it has registered 2,050. However, as currently stands, there is a lack of data about the number of IDPs in Adama, as well as the number of those lacking ID cards and thus currently undocumented.

This presents huge bureaucratic hurdles to offering them assistance and has a stark impact on the quality of life for many undocumented IDPs.

# LOCAL INDIVIDUALS: CONTRIBUTIONS AND EXPERIENCES

Local individuals were primary responders to the crisis. Before the call for action, local individuals witnessed the emergency firsthand in their local kebeles where IDPs were sheltering and took action by donating cash and clothing to those they encountered. The work of these local individuals demonstrates the importance of civil society in its various forms in offering assistance. By utilising this assistance in ways demonstrated below, cities also have the opportunity to help foster positive interactions between locals and forced migrants, which in turn can promote acceptance and even social integration.



Soon after the IDPs' arrival, the city administration organised a committee to help resettle them in Adama. The committee was further divided at the sub-city and kebele level. The kebele committees were tasked with facilitating the support and donations from local individuals by collecting cash and in-kind donations on behalf of IDPs, which were then distributed in bulk. One interviewee summarised the structure as one of "individuals connected with kebeles, kebeles connected with sub-cities, and sub-cities connected with the city committee." This structure helped to avoid biased donations whereby only specific groups of IDPs benefited.

**"BOTH MUSLIM  
AND CHRISTIAN  
COMMUNITIES  
RECEIVED THE IDPs  
LIKE THEIR FAMILY.  
FOODS WERE SERVED  
FOR THREE DAYS  
IN A ROW, SUCH AS  
BREAKFAST, LUNCH,  
AND DINNER."**

- IDP





IDPs were not in a position to cook food for themselves when they first arrived in the city as they lacked money, groceries, materials, and a place to cook. Local individuals initially helped IDPs literally survive by providing food and taking turns preparing hot meals to feed the IDPs in kebele compounds. According to one of our respondents, "one neighbourhood would bring breakfast, another would bring lunch, and the other would bring dinner. Hot meals were the first response, then the rice donations continued..." No kebele meeting was called; instead, information regarding the cooking of hot meals was distributed through word of mouth. Individuals invited their neighbours to support and contribute to the welfare of IDPs, and these neighbours in turn passed the invitation on to their networks.





## IDP-LED SUPPORT



### Iddir (funeral association)

In addition to locals helping IDPs, IDPs also offered and continue to offer support to each other through cultural mechanisms of financial sharing and saving. One main way is through iddir, an indigenous voluntary association established primarily to provide mutual aid in relation to burial matters but also for addressing other community issues. It is one of the oldest informal self-help associations that exist in the country, emerging in the mid-twentieth century. Typically, an iddir has 70–100 members, although this varies considerably based on rural or urban settings. Households become members of the associations and pay regular, fixed contributions (e.g., weekly or monthly). Whenever death occurs among members, the

association raises an amount of money (depending on the specific bylaws) and handles the burial and related ceremonies. Rather than a means to financially save, iddir offer immediate, emergency support in the face of death or illness.

Similar to the above-mentioned studies, our research found that IDPs in Adama offer each other support through iddir. The emergency funds can be even more necessary in situations of displacement, and the associations also offer important psychological support and community building. In one instance, the father of one IDP in Adama died in Somaliland, but she did not have the means to travel to her family. Although iddir members did not have money or food rations to offer her individually, they took the money from the association's collections and savings and gave it to her so she could attend her father's funeral service. They then collected money again to restore the association's savings. They also raised 30 birr per household to help pay for the wedding of one of the iddir member's daughters, and among their 50 members divided tasks over three days to provide meals and hold a prayer for the new family.

In addition, the IDP's iddir founder informed us that iddir help to

resolve conflicts between people in the IDP compounds with the help of elders. They reported that social support is much more beneficial than money in solving their problems. When conflicts arose over the children of IDPs, for example, members mediated between both parties to try to solve the issue and then pray together.

In two Adama local communities, iddir participated in a range of community development initiatives by giving IDP children school materials, such as exercise books and uniforms, and collecting clothing from their communities and schools to donate to IDPs. Iddir leaders also organised a coffee ceremony every three months for women IDPs in a compound known as *Entebaber Iddir* ("Let us cooperate in iddir"). This is a support system in which IDP women can talk about the problems and issues they encounter.

One particularly striking example of the generosity of the local community is evident in the donations of 35,000 birr and 20,000 birr by two iddir associations for the construction of resettlement houses. They gave the money to their specific kebeles, and the government constructed the IDP houses. All 18 kebeles participated in this donation.



BEYOND OFFERING A SAVINGS MECHANISM, WHICH MAY BE PARTICULARLY VALUABLE FOR UNBANKED POPULATIONS, EQUB ALSO OFFERS MEMBERS AN AMOUNT OF MONEY MANY WOULD OTHERWISE BE UNABLE TO ACCRUE ON THEIR OWN AT ONCE, WHICH CAN HELP EXPAND BUSINESSES, BUILD OR RENT HOMES, AND MORE.



#### Equb (rotating saving and credit association)

IDPs in Adama have also created rotating savings and credit associations known as equb to offer each other financial support. Equb takes the form of regularly held meetings wherein members contribute a small amount of money for saving that is kept track of by the group, but ultimately gets lent out as part of a larger loan for a group member. Every member receives the loan at some point, although the timing is generally decided randomly through drawing numbers. Beyond offering a savings mechanism, which may be particularly valuable for unbanked populations, equb also offers members an amount of money many would otherwise be unable to accrue on their own at once, which can help expand businesses, build or rent homes, and more. Individuals may also join equb mainly for the purpose of saving, such as to deal with emergencies or purchase household items. Compared to iddir, equb usually tends to have fewer members and run for a limited and specified period.

In Adama's IDP settlements, women offered each other critical support through forming their own equb programme in their compound and contributing 12 birr every Sunday. Of the 12 birr contributed, 2 birr goes for tea or coffee, and 10 birr goes to the person who hosted the IDP women in her home. Then, they decide the next IDP woman whose turn it is to take the next round of funding. During their coffee and tea ceremony, they discuss their issues, such as family problems, economic challenges, domestic violence, and opportunities for self-reliance. According to informants, equb has had a great positive impact on IDPs' social relationship and economic empowerment.

While IDPs in Adama self-organised both iddir and equb, such mechanisms for both financial and social support could be explicitly promoted in situations of displacement by NGOs or even city bureaus. Moreover, research shows that similar types of rotating credit and savings associations, often known as ROSCAs, exist around the world, including in other displaced populations such as refugees.<sup>92</sup> However, it is only recently that they have begun to be utilised as a tool for displaced people.

<sup>92</sup> Easton-Calabria, E., and R. Hakiza. 2021. "In the Interest of Saving: Refugee-led Microfinance in Kampala, Uganda." *Development Policy Review* 39(1), 22-38.

# FROM EMERGENCY TO PERMANENCE: ADAMA'S POST-CRISIS RESPONSE

As a host secondary city, it was a huge responsibility for the Adama City Administration to settle IDPs in the city. Consequently, the city administration requested help from different stakeholders, which involved building 2,000 houses to assist in resettling the IDPs. The main actors who participated in building houses were private investors, local communities, churches, local communities, Adama University, and contractors. The following section presents the activities of local private sector actors in Adama who were involved in constructing houses for IDPs as well as offering other forms of support.







### Local private sector response

Ethiopian owners of private sector companies are willing to be involved when humanitarian crises occur, including in response to forced displacement and climate disasters such as drought and flooding. For instance, when a large-scale displacement occurred in Amhara region, the regional government called for different stakeholders to assist more than 90,000 IDPs. The Amhara Development Association raised more than 610 million birr (approximately \$2,033,333) at one single event, held at Sheraton Hotel in March 2019, for Ethiopians of ethnic Amhara origin displaced from different parts of the country.

The majority of the financial support collected by the Adama Government Communication Affairs came from the private sector, attributed in large part to the media coverage received. The bureau officer stated, “Most of the private sectors were competing against each other to get media coverage because whenever someone donates, we provide media coverage on roundabout screens for free... therefore, the private sectors and investors donated a large amount of money.”

Private sector actors supported IDPs by:

**Providing in-kind support, including basic necessities such as food, clothes, mattresses, and blankets when they arrived in Adama. As both registered and undocumented IDPs often had very few assets or cash at hand at the time of their arrival, such provisions were crucial lifesavers for them. All in-kind support that the local private sectors gave went to the kebele administration, and then the administration passed it to the IDPs.**

**Building houses and other buildings for the IDPs. A private car assembly firm built 64 houses worth about 3.5 million birr (about \$116,000). Another food complex company built 112 houses, which is three times more than what was requested by the city administration. The company spent about 7 million birr to construct the houses. The company also provided materials to the IDPs which helped to furnish *mushema* (a specific type of plastic carpet that is very common in the Harari Region where the IDPs came from) in each house. In addition, the private sector actors constructed churches and mosques for the IDPs in their compounds.**

**Offering wage subsidies and employment opportunities for IDPs. Several private companies employed IDPs after an official request from the sub-city administration. Registered IDPs were preferred, as they had documents that others lacked. Even so, employment often did not last long. In one case, a manufacturing company hired 125 IDPs; however, their employment lasted only one month of their training period because the IDPs mounted illegal strikes in the manufacturing compound twice in one week, leading to considerable financial losses for the company.**

**Visiting the IDP compounds during the holiday season and celebrating with them by bringing cows and foods.**

**Buying lottery tickets issued by the regional government as a form of fundraising.**

Despite making sizeable contributions, some company owners complained that their donation was not tax deductible, and that the government lacked transparency with regard to the money collected for the support of IDPs. Consequently, the owners were not incentivised to contribute more to the IDPs. However, many did benefit from media coverage, and thus used their donations as a marketing strategy. Ultimately, competition for free media coverage in exchange for donations played a huge role in successfully mobilising funds.



## Housing and utilities

After funding for housing construction had been raised, the Adama City Administration assigned one of the governmental sectorial bureaus, the Adama Housing Construction Bureau, to take on the task. Four IDP resettlement housing areas were constructed after the IDPs arrived in the city, including Chekeno 1, 2, and 3. Sekelelo (the fourth resettlement area) had already been constructed before the IDPs arrived in Adama. As soon as Chekeno 1 was completed, the sub-city and kebele determined which IDPs would live there. They also investigated invalid applications for housing by locals who claimed to be IDPs in order to secure free housing, ensuring that only registered IDPs were offered these. Unregistered IDPs had no recourse to housing support, meaning that they were at higher risk of homelessness and their situation was often much more dire than those who came by the national lottery.

Based on a lottery system, the housing and construction bureau distributed the houses for 1,340 registered IDPs. Since the main private dwellings were constructed with the aim of offering temporary residence to IDPs, the bureau plans to undertake construction of permanent houses in the future.

The Adama Housing Construction Bureau had multiple tasks, including:

### LANDSCAPE PREPARATION

**The land where the city administration decided to build IDP houses was heavily forested, so the bureau was tasked with preparing this forest land for IDP house construction.**

### ROAD CONSTRUCTION

**Initially no suitable road passed through the IDP resettlement area, so the bureau constructed one, helping IDPs connect with the city.**

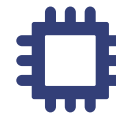
### WATER DRAINAGE

**The bureau constructed a drainage system in the IDPs' resettlement area to ensure access to running water.**

### HOUSING ALLOCATION

**The bureau allocated houses using the random lottery method based on IDP ID numbers.**

The work undertaken to build houses, and the collaboration to raise funds to build them in the first place, is laudable. At the same time, the location of the settlements has posed challenges for the IDPs living in them. Many lack the funds to take a bus or motorcycle into town, which means they must walk over 45 minutes to access markets to buy or sell goods or attend secondary schools. This has an obvious impact on the ability of the IDPs to earn an income and become educated and affects their chances to interact with locals and integrate into Adama.



## Electricity

After the IDPs were settled, two other government bureaus – Adama Electricity Cooperation and Adama Water Sewage Bureau – began supplying electricity and water for the IDPs. Adama Electricity Cooperation incurred a cost of 2.4 million birr (approximately \$10,500) to provide electricity, including new lines, transformers, conductors, and extension cables. Initially, 724 households received individual counters to track their electricity use. Due to a shortage of cables, there has been a delay in reaching all of the registered IDPs. However, the bureau did provide streetlights to improve the safety of the settlement. Over 1,340 IDPs have had free electricity for the last three years.



### Water and sanitation

The water and sewerage bureau spent over 3 million birr on materials to help distribute free water to the IDP sites, provided for the community in the form of central water stations. The water and sewerage manager stated: "Actually, there was no need for a call to action to support the IDPs with a free water service. The community facilitates the support of IDPs and as an institution we participated by distributing water for IDPs."

At the same time, this has placed a burden on local hosts. One local community member said, "The cost of water bills has dramatically increased since the IDPs arrived in Adama. I asked the water bureau why it happened, and they said to cover the free water service for the IDPs." Although this claim could not be verified through our research, it presents further evidence of assumptions related to the impact of IDP arrivals on local hosts, who are often struggling themselves. This suggests a further need for sensitisation on IDPs for locals in Adama as well as further study on the real and perceived impacts on hosts.



### Job opportunities, training, and financial support

According to different sources, some IDPs have received employment opportunities on a limited basis, mostly in the private sector with help from the government. However, these opportunities were primarily available to youth IDPs only, and several claim they were forced to resign due to a lack of skills training and cultural differences.

In addition to helping IDPs find decent jobs in the private sector, the Adama City Administration has offered an interest-free loan to those IDPs with identification cards and a business license. By forming business groups, some IDPs have received 20,000 birr (about \$625) per person. These business groups can be among families and/or friends over 18. However, IDPs reported that the market they were allocated to trade in was too remote from passing trade to develop profitable businesses, and delays to food rationing resulted in many spending the loan on food rather than on businesses to become self-reliant. This may put their ability to repay the loan, and their housing that is attached as collateral, in jeopardy.

The Ministry of Trade and Industry (Devex) also became involved in supporting the IDPs through job creation and employment opportunities. This government bureau worked in collaboration with Oromia credit association, Social and Labour Affairs, city job employment, and the job opportunities office. The responsibility of the bureaus was to register the youth who were capable of working and provide skills orientation. The bureau then contacted different private sectors for employment opportunities. At the time, there

were some private sectors which had shown interest in employing the IDPs. In addition, some got involved in the informal business of selling goods on the streets, which the government supported by grouping them, providing loans, and giving them space to work.

Challenges remained, however. As one informant shared: "About 33 million birr was granted to the IDPs as loans from one source/branch (one loan office). The IDPs were given a space to work, trading centre and a place [resettlement area] to live. As these IDPs were the first to come to us and report that they needed help, the City Administration gave them the working space. There was no space available for those who came after them. For example, IDPs who worked on animal husbandry who needed a lot of space were left without. As 151 groups focused more on selling items, they developed small shops, yet those IDPs without workspaces were forced to operate businesses from their homes or rent a place to work."

After the Micro and Small Enterprise bureau made arrangements for the IDPs to work, the Oromia credit bureau offered interest-free loans and a training course on credit and savings before the IDPs were given the money. The bureau provided about 41 million birr in loans to 2,100 individuals, although not all IDPs received these due to budget constraints. To qualify for the loan, IDPs were asked to demonstrate their business plans and workplaces, and the credit bureau took their property documents as guarantees before releasing funds. As one bureau employee explained, "We usually ask them if they have any previous experience with the work. We first give them 50 per cent of the fund, and then we check their progress regularly before we give them the remaining 50 per cent of the fund. We give them a one-year grace period. The overall payment period is three years." The bureau director reported that most IDPs saved the loans that were made to them.



# CHALLENGES OF INTEGRATION

While the majority of our informants shared that they were happy to have been resettled in Adama, there are ongoing challenges with integration. Many relate to the issues mentioned above, including the location of settlements, housing, and water access.



According to our research, in the two years since IDPs arrived in Adama, at least two major conflicts have erupted between IDPs and local communities. One issue appears to have been religious; most IDPs are Muslims, while the locals living near the resettlement area are Christians. The proximity led to tension between a church and a mosque near the sites. Locals set fire to a mosque and killed at least four IDPs because they claimed the IDPs had intended to destroy the church. However, IDP informants as well as the local government did not have any evidence demonstrating this intent.



There also were assertions that this tension arose due to conflict over water access, as it was reported that IDPs were refusing to allow local communities (who previously used the land where the IDPs settled) to have access to the free water and were in some cases even charging them. These assertions could not be confirmed through our research.



The second dispute between the local community and the IDPs arose over a marketplace that was originally built near the settlement for IDPs, as locals felt that they also had the right to sell their goods there.

These conflicts demonstrate the importance of appropriate locations for settlement sites and the need for clear communication between authorities designating the sites, IDPs, and surrounding locals both prior to and after resettlement. The latter conflict may also illustrate the need for economic support for locals as well as IDPs. Social tensions between IDPs and local communities have remained as time has passed and some IDPs fear for their security.

The following sections review research findings by theme: the experiences of and support offered to IDP women, education provided to IDP children, and healthcare assistance to IDPs in Adama.







# EXPERIENCES OF WOMEN IDPs

While displacement is always difficult, research shows that it exacerbates the violence and discrimination habitually faced by women. In Adama, IDP women face regular violence and have high workloads in the home. It is common for IDPs to live in large families of five or six children, and the birth rate has increased since resettlement. Since the responsibility for childcare falls primarily to women, it is essential to provide additional support to IDP mothers during and after resettlement. In Adama mothers and babies did receive baby food and sanitary pads at the beginning of the crisis, but this was inadequate and reduced over time while the birth rate increased, resulting in numerous reports of miscarriages and deaths of infants.

**"I GOT BEATEN WHEN I WENT TO FETCH WOOD FOR FUEL. I REPORTED THE CASE. THE PEOPLE WHO BEAT ME WERE IN JAIL FOR TWO TO THREE DAYS AND THEY GOT RELEASED. SO, I PERSONALLY DON'T THINK THERE IS ANYTHING THAT THE GOVERNMENT HAS DONE FOR WOMEN. ONE THING I'VE NOTICED IS WHEN SOME OF THEM GAVE BIRTH, THEY GOT A FEW THINGS SUCH AS OIL, POTS, AND STUFF."**

- IDP

Adama's Women, Children and Youth Affairs Bureau provided basic needs such as food, milk, sanitary pads, mattresses, blankets, and diapers for women who needed special attention, such as pregnant women and infants. However, this support has also reduced over time. In addition, the bureau cooperated with various stakeholders such as government, NGOs, and social entities to tackle the problem. For instance, they acted as interlocutors between various stakeholders and IDPs by collecting resources and distributing them to IDPs based on their family size.

Since the bureau did not have a budget for supporting the IDP women and children, it tried to approach different stakeholders to collect donations that would help IDPs. Donations are partly collected from various NGOs and partly obtained from women's associations, city administration, and local cooperatives such as equb. The bureau works in close collaboration with the women's association. Both supplied food and other materials to the displaced people at the kebele camp for around six months. This was a much longer span of time than other actors and formed a strong bond between many IDPs and the bureau. The bureau also provided a variety of other support, including psychological counselling and safe homes for women suffering domestic abuse, known as *setoch marfia*.









As time has gone on, the situation for some women has slowly improved. This is confirmed by the chairman of Entebaber iddir, who explained:

**"SOME [IDP WOMEN] HAVE EVEN STARTED WORKING, THEY ARE NO LONGER BEGGING. THEY SELL CHARCOAL, SPICES, SMALL THINGS ... SOME HAVE SETTLED ALREADY."**

The Adama Women's Association also contributed to IDP women's and families' well-being. The Association has 171 members, most of whom are Adama locals rather than IDPs. It offers financial and social support to members, who contribute on average 50 birr per month, which is then provided to women as loans. This lending system empowers women and makes them economically independent. When the IDPs arrived, the association's leader called its members for a meeting to discuss how to support the IDPs. At that time, the regional

government implemented a lottery system for resettling IDPs, and each member of the association bought lottery tickets at 20 birr each (18,000 birr in total). The association began supporting IDPs with in-kind goods such as clothes, mattresses, and material to build houses and provided food such as rice and meat during mourning periods. It also linked the IDPs to consumer associations so they could buy basic needs, as consumer associations only allow members to buy items from their shops.

In 2018 the International Rescue Committee (IRC) also worked to support women and girls in Adama through its Girl Shine programme, which aims to support, protect, and empower girls in humanitarian settings. The programme incorporated a life skill curriculum for young IDP girls and positive parenting curriculum for IDP caregivers and adolescent parents. According to our informants, the IDP community is facing serious challenges such as high rates of early marriage, cases of rape, and

unprotected sex. Although there are many cases of domestic violence, instances of forced early marriage are rarely perceived as a problem, as getting married at a young age is a largely accepted norm.

As part of the Girl Shine curriculum, IRC provided dignity kits for 1,800 vulnerable women and capacity building training targeting IDP women and girls. Although the capacity building training is not a proper school education and the teaching method is different from a lecture, the organisation provided knowledge on adolescent life skills and instruction in positive parenting. In addition, IRC converted two of the classrooms at the Sena Seba school (the school for IDPs) into a furnished safe space for girls where sessions were held. The programme was able to introduce attitudinal and behavioural change. Besides creating job opportunities for some IDPs as part of the Girl Shine programme, IRC also had a plan to work on water supply in the IDP community.



Unfortunately, despite wide interest shown by the adolescent IDPs themselves, the Girl Shine programme lasted only five months due to major opposition from the IDP community and challenges from government bureaus. During the five months, the organisation spent about two months trying to negotiate and resolve the issue. The opposition primarily came from the community and religious leaders (the sheikhs) who are particularly influential in the IDP community. They believed that the programme's agenda contravened their Islamic religious beliefs.

**"FOR EXAMPLE, A YOUNG GIRL WAS RAPED. A HEALTH EXTENSION WORKER HEARD ABOUT HER AND GAVE THE GIRL A POST-PILL TO PREVENT UNWANTED PREGNANCY. HOWEVER, THE HEALTH EXTENSION WORKER WAS SEVERELY BEATEN BY PEOPLE IN THE COMMUNITY WHO CLAIMED THAT SHE WAS TRYING TO DESTROY THE OROMO TRIBE... HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS ARE VERY HIGH; UNFORTUNATELY, WE CAN'T DO ANYTHING ABOUT IT."**

– IRC employee in Adama.

Besides our informant from IRC, other sources also indicated and confirmed the major opposition from primarily male community and religious leaders who believe that the programme promotes sexual orientations not accepted by their faith. On one occasion when IRC invited the influential community and religious leaders to clarify the aim of the programme, the invitees did not accept the per diem, thinking that it also contradicted their religious belief. Our respondent also expressed the challenges she faced in communicating with these leaders, despite speaking both Somali and Afaan Oromo.



### **BOX 3 THE ASSOCIATION FOR WOMEN'S SANCTUARY AND DEVELOPMENT**

The Association for Women's Sanctuary and Development (AWSAD/SASA) was established 14 years ago by Ms. Mariamwork, a former Supreme Court judge with experience in working on cases of gender-based violence, which motivated her to establish the association. The association employs 107 full-time staff who mainly support vulnerable groups such as women and children across its five temporary shelters in Adama, Addis Ababa, Dessie, and Hawassa. During the IDP crisis, the organisation provided mattresses, blankets, flour, oil, and sugar to 200 households, and additional support such as housing and medical assistance to pregnant women and women experiencing domestic violence.

As the founder explained:

**"THERE WAS ALSO ONE CASE WHERE A YOUNG WOMAN SAW HER PARENTS SLAUGHTERED IN FRONT OF HER DURING THE CONFLICT. WE TOOK HER IN AND GAVE HER THE HELP SHE NEEDED, INCLUDING PSYCHOLOGICAL HELP. WE THEN HELPED HER LOOK FOR THE REST OF HER FAMILY AND FOUND HER GRANDMOTHER, WHO WE HELPED HER RETURN SAFELY TO."**

– Association for Women



# EDUCATION



Like other forced migrants around the world, many IDPs in Adama face barriers to accessing education. The school structure of Adama city is similar to other cities in Ethiopia, with both private and public schools. While IDPs can attend private or public schools, most attend public schools due to financial constraints. Adama city has a cluster division structure of schools designed by the Ministry of Education, and the Adama Education Bureau plays an important role in organising school supplies for public schools. It also helped open a school for IDPs.

This school, Sena Seba, was constructed by the city administration and the Education Bureau to educate IDPs from kindergarten to fourth grade within the resettlement area. The school is free for every IDP and aims to provide access to education for younger IDPs (between the ages of 4 and 13) within close distance of their homes. To make it accessible for everyone, the school has a multi-shift (morning and afternoon) programme. All classes are taught in Afaan Oromo.

There are on average about 65-75 students per class and an overall 870 registered students in the school (Figure 2). Initially there were 1,200 registered students, but the dropout rate is high due in part to the lack of a school feeding programme and security issues. The absentee rate is also high, as many children help their parents during school hours. Although there are slightly more registered boys than girls, one teacher at the school reported that girl students tend to miss school more than boys because “they have to work [house chores] or they need to take care of a family member who is sick.” Figure 2 shows the students’ gender breakdown and class size at Sena Seba school.

The large influx of IDP students has affected the capacity of other public schools, because after completing fourth grade, IDP students attend public schools nearby. For example, at Odaa Sadarakaa school, the total number of students in a class rose from an average of 80 to 100-120 students. This school offers education to about 285 IDP students from kindergarten to eighth grade. Students pay only

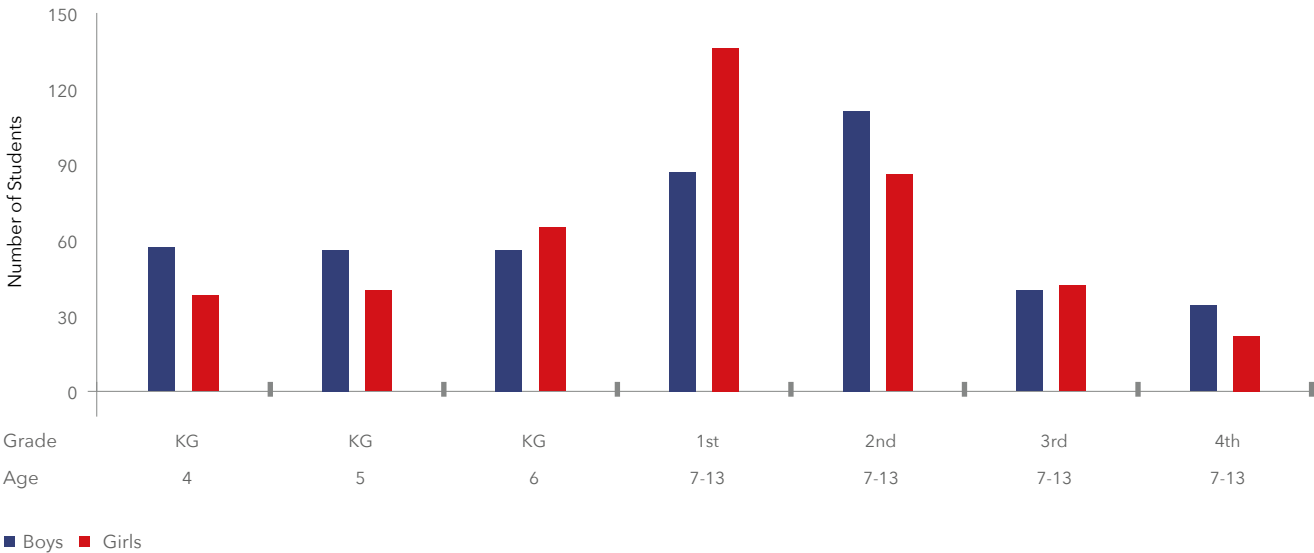
40-70 birr (\$1.3 to \$2.3) per month, while IDPs do not pay at all. The school also provides school supplies and donations of uniforms for students in need, including IDPs.

Sekekelo is another public school (up to eighth grade) around the resettlement area that enrolled many IDP students, adopting a multi-shift schooling programme. According to our interviews, there was a maximum of 430 students in the school before the crisis, and

now there are around 712 students including IDPs. It was mentioned that there are only about 24 students in grades 5-8 at age 13 or 14. Most of the IDP students are between the ages of 7 and 11 and are in grades 1-4. This is due to the limited space in the school. According to the school principal, “[The] standard class size is 50 students per class. [However] because the younger ones cannot travel far to attend school, we decided to take in more younger kids.”

“[THE] STANDARD CLASS SIZE IS 50 STUDENTS PER CLASS. [HOWEVER] BECAUSE THE YOUNGER ONES CANNOT TRAVEL FAR TO ATTEND SCHOOL, WE DECIDED TO TAKE IN MORE YOUNGER KIDS.”

**FIGURE 2**  
Number of Students at Sena Seba School (CRC Cluster Supervisor).



## CHALLENGES IN IDP EDUCATION

**Loss of documentation.** Students arriving in schools in Adama did not have their school records from previous years' education. This presented a challenge for schools to register and ascertain students' grades, despite the kebele providing a support letter for the IDP students. In some cases, schools had to ask other people, including families of the students, to determine which grade they should be placed in. As a result, some IDP students were placed in the appropriate grade but were not able to keep up with the course material. In such cases, schools moved IDPs to lower grades. The loss of documentation was also a problem for the staff, as the principal of Sena Seba school reported not having his degree certificate or his supporting materials with him when he arrived in Adama and had to rely on people back home who sent his documents to him, which is not possible for every IDP.

**Financial pressure on the government.** The costs of opening a school, hiring teachers, and providing a transport service for the IDPs are significant, and this has not been easy for the city administration, especially since it was not part of its budget. Consequently, Sena Seba school faces a shortage of supplies of stationery, teaching materials, and sanitary supplies.

## FINANCIAL PRESSURE ON IDP PARENTS.



### TRANSPORTATION COST

Teachers as well as IDPs have reported that transport is an issue. The cost of transport puts pressure on the parents of IDP students. Most public schools are located in the centre of the city; schools in the outskirts of the city and in new neighbourhoods are often private schools which the IDPs cannot afford. The significant distance from the resettlement area to most public schools is a challenge for pupils, who mostly walk to school and often arrive late as a result. In some cases, parents have their children repeat fourth grade at Sena Seba or allow their children to stay home due to the difficulty of the journey and issues with transport.



### LACK OF UNIFORMS

The cost of buying a uniform has been a challenge for IDP parents. In public schools with a school uniform policy, some IDPs do not have uniforms, which can lead to stigmatisation. On the other hand, the fact that Sena Seba school does not have a uniform has been reported as a major issue by teachers and the principal. A principal stated, "[they] are actually having a hard time managing [the] school because [they] cannot differentiate who is a student and who is not [since] they are not wearing uniforms."



### LACK OF SCHOOL SUPPLIES

Despite the annual school supply drive and the collaboration of schools through the clusters to collect school supplies from private schools, shortfalls persist, presenting a major challenge for parents and the schools.



### LACK OF A SCHOOL FEEDING PROGRAMME AT SENA SEBA SCHOOL

The lack of a school feeding programme at Sena Seba has been listed as one of the major factors for the high rate of school dropout. According to an IDP with two children, one of his children "is staying home because the school doesn't provide food, [students] have to bring their own food ... but the older [child] is in school because [the school] provide[s] food for the student."



## POOR INFRASTRUCTURE OF SENA SEBA SCHOOL.



### NOT A CHILD-FRIENDLY SPACE \*FOR LEARNING

The school lacks a dining hall, a proper sports court, a playground, sports equipment as well as a proper gate which allows students to leave the school compound.



### THE SCHOOL LACKS ACCESS TO WATER AND POWER.



### THE RESTROOMS ARE POORLY CONSTRUCTED AND NOT APPROPRIATE FOR CHILDREN, AND THEY ARE IN DESPERATE NEED OF RENOVATION.



### POOR CLASSROOM CONDITIONS

Classrooms were designed as temporary classrooms, yet no renovations have been carried out since they were built, and there are insufficient classrooms for the number of students. The classrooms are constructed with steel, which can get extremely hot in the afternoon and is therefore an unsuitable environment for learning. The classrooms are separated with board partitions, which provide inadequate soundproofing, making it difficult for teachers to teach and students to learn.

## CULTURAL GAPS.



### CONFLICTS

During our field work, it has been stated several times that local students and IDPs did not get along initially. There were fights and conflicts on many occasions in schools.



### LANGUAGE BARRIER AND ACCENT DIFFERENCE

IDP students tend to speak Somali first and then Afaan Oromo, whereas the local students speak Amharic and/or Afaan Oromo. According to teachers, IDPs' pronunciation is completely different and often very hard to understand.



### DIFFICULT PARENT-TEACHER RELATIONSHIPS

Initially, IDP parents and teachers did not get along well, as communication gaps and cultural differences led to misunderstandings and conflicts. However, according to our interviews, the cultural gap has been minimised to a great extent, and students, teachers, and parents are now getting along much better.

## GOOD PRACTICES IN IDP EDUCATION

Adama city has undertaken positive work to help IDPs have access to education. While schools for both displaced people and hosts can be an important site of integration, the location of the IDP settlements meant that no school already existed nearby. The creation of the Sena Saba school by the Adama Education Bureau represents integration at a bureaucratic level, as the Bureau oversees the school, although only IDPs and no local children attend it. In this way it represents a good practice in IDP education but not necessarily for day-to-day integration, which could instead be furthered by joint classes with locals and IDPs.

Overall, however, the city undertook a number of important and positive activities to further IDP education. It organised a school bus to transport IDPs, opened a school that is closer to the resettlement area, provided free education, allowed a multi-schooling system, and promoted an annual school fundraising drive.

The additional following good practices were also identified:



### AFTERSCHOOL PROGRAMMES

Odaa Sadarakaa school has a tutorial and catch-up classes for two hours over the weekend for students who are not performing well in school. Although this is not specifically for IDP students, they face particular challenges and therefore benefit widely from this programme.



### LANGUAGE PREFERENCE

Local and IDP students are given the option to take classes in either Afaan Oromo or Amharic, allowing IDPs to be taught in Afaan Oromo, which is their first or second language after Somali.



### TEACHING JOB

#### OPPORTUNITIES FOR IDPs

Although their number is quite small, two IDPs were able gain employment as teachers and one IDP a principal position at Sena Seba school.



### EDUCATIONAL CLUSTER CAPACITY BUILDING PROGRAMME

Kindergarten teachers from Sena Seba school were invited for an experience exchange programme twice.



### PARENT-TEACHER MEETINGS

Meetings between teachers and parents to discuss students' performance and the parent-teacher relationship has helped address some of the cultural gaps between the locals and IDPs. At Sena Seba school, these meetings occur weekly, while at Sekekelo public school they are held monthly.



### SCHOOL CLUBS

#### TO PROMOTE INTEGRATION

In schools such as Geda Kilole primary school, IDP students are part of the education quality package. Every two weeks, student groups in every class (grades 5-8) discuss issues relating to their behaviour, performance, and problems in the school. Students give advice to each other and report to their team leader and secretary. This platform has helped IDPs integrate well with the local and overcome some language barriers.



### ADAMA SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY UNIVERSITY DONATION

Adama University donated 600 chairs, two computers, blackboards, a photocopy machine, a bookshelf, and tables to Sena Seba school.



#### BOX 4 IDP STUDENT PERFORMANCES ACCORDING TO TEACHERS

"WHEN IT COMES TO EDUCATION, THE STUDENTS [IDP] ARE VERY GOOD. THEY ARE EAGER TO LEARN."

"THEIR PERFORMANCE IS SURPRISINGLY GOOD. WE STARTED TEACHING THEM FROM THE BASICS (FROM ABC), BUT THEY WERE ABLE TO GRASP THE INFORMATION AND MOVE QUICKLY... [A] UNIVERSITY ACTUALLY INVITED THE TOP 20 STUDENTS AND GAVE THEM RECOGNITION."

"THEIR PERFORMANCE IS MIXED. SOME ARE OUTSTANDING, SOME ARE IN THE MIDDLE, AND THERE ARE ALSO LOW PERFORMING STUDENTS."

"[IDP STUDENTS] EASILY UNDERSTAND THE SUBJECT MATTER OF THE COURSES."



# THE HEALTHCARE RESPONSE

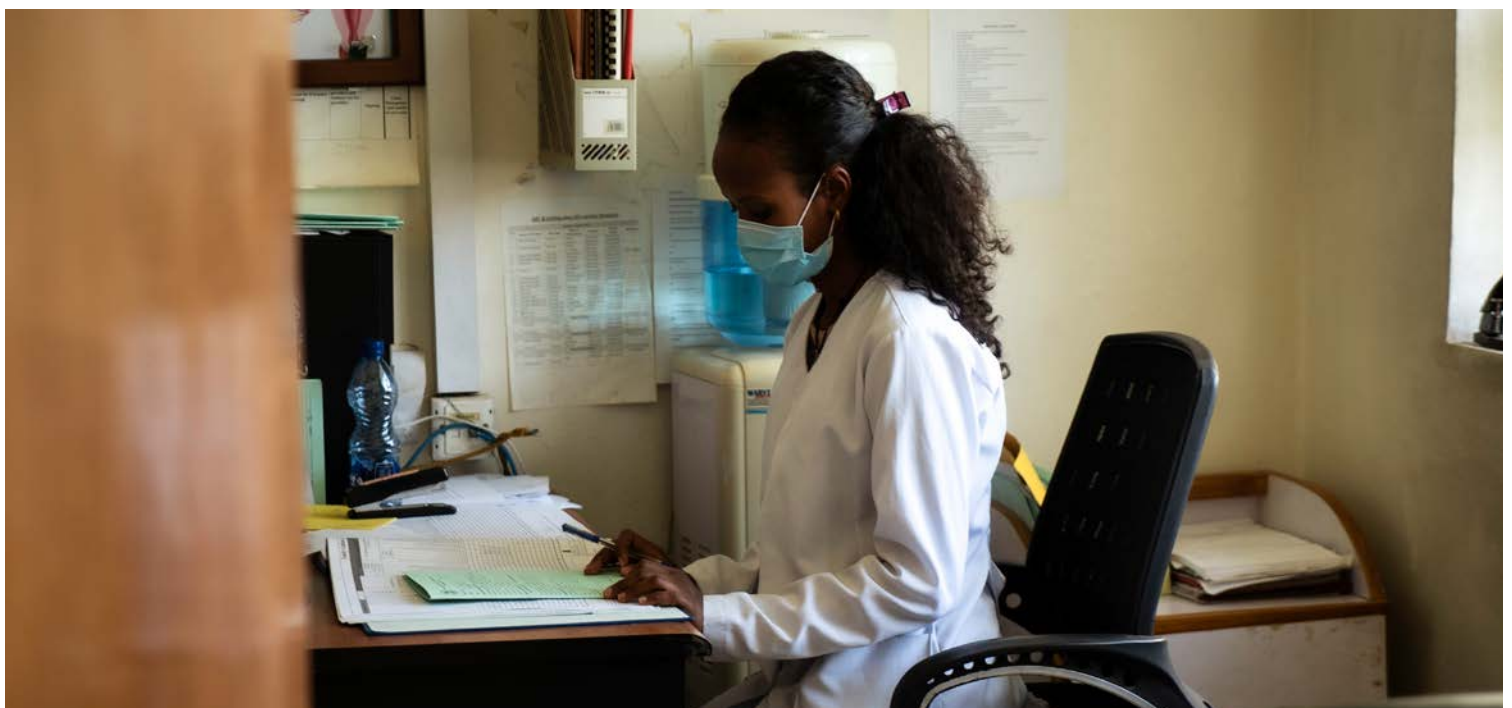
The health bureau has supported IDPs and provided help since the crisis. Initially, the bureau provided the necessary help in places such as kebeles and privately owned school compounds where IDPs temporarily settled. After the construction of the resettlement sites, the health bureau utilised resources by converting one of the resettlement houses into a free emergency clinic for the IDPs until it closed in July 2019. While the emergency clinic dealt with minor medical cases,

the city allocated a specific budget to help patients with serious cases that were beyond the capacity of the city's government hospital, to enable them to travel to Addis Ababa to receive the help they needed. IDPs now receive free health treatment from public health centres in the city. However, undocumented IDPs are ineligible for these services, and even those who are eligible often feel that there are not sufficient supplies or proper infrastructure to adequately meet their needs.

The health bureau not only played an important role in treating IDP patients, it also actively worked on disease prevention programmes. The programme included providing vaccines, malaria sprayings, and distributing malaria bed nets in collaboration with UNICEF and other stakeholders in the region and offering health education programmes. Additionally, the health bureau selected several IDPs for basic health training on communicable diseases such as tuberculosis and malaria so that they could educate other IDPs living in the settlements.

According to the bureau, an inadequate budget for the emergency crisis was a major challenge. Our interviewee stated:

**"[INITIALLY], HEALTH WORKERS DID NOT GET PAID FOR OVERTIME OR NIGHT SHIFTS ON TIME ... THERE WAS NO MONEY ALLOCATED FOR EMERGENCY PURPOSES."**





## BOX 5 A HEALTH OFFICER'S EXPERIENCE

Can you tell us about your experience working here in healthcare and supporting IDPs?

**"THERE WAS JUST A LOT OF TRAUMA. WE DIDN'T HAVE A WARD [IN THE CLINIC], SO IT WAS ESPECIALLY HARD FOR WOMEN [IDPS]. [IDPS] ARE MOST AFFECTED BY UPPER RESPIRATORY TRACT INFECTION. IF THERE ARE FIVE KIDS IN ONE HOUSE, ALL FIVE OF THEM WILL GET SICK. THERE IS ALSO A DIET IMBALANCE. WE DIDN'T HAVE A LABORATORY THERE; EVERYTHING WAS DONE IN THAT ONE ROOM. WE STAYED IN THE RESETTLEMENT AREA FOR MORE THAN A YEAR. ... I USED TO SEE ABOUT 90 PATIENTS A DAY OR 50-60 ON A SLOW DAY."**

Some of the major challenges:

**"[IDPS] ARE USUALLY AFFECTED BY COMMUNICABLE DISEASES WHICH ARE AFFECTED BY HYGIENE. FAMILY PLANNING WAS VERY HARD. THERE WAS ONE CASE WHERE A 12- OR 13-YEAR-OLD WAS MARRIED AND GOT PREGNANT. I WAS SO SHOCKED. I HAVE NOTICED THAT MOST OF THEM DON'T GO TO SCHOOL. EARLY MARRIAGE IS AN ISSUE. A WOMAN CAN HAVE A 6-MONTH-OLD BABY AND STILL BECOME PREGNANT."**



However, as a member of the health bureau explained, the help they were able to offer was significant.

**"IF [THE HEALTH BUREAU] HADN'T DAILY CHECKED THE SANITATION ISSUE, TREAT DEHYDRATED PATIENTS, PROVIDED AMBULANCE SERVICE FOR PREGNANT WOMEN AND PROVIDED PREVENTIVES, THE NUMBER OF DEATHS WOULD HAVE BEEN EXTREME."**

## The responses of a local health NGO

After the IDPs' arrival, a collective meeting was held with the health bureau, kebeles, the city administration, a local NGO, and other groups in response to the call for action. The NGO was provided with a kitchen material purchase list to support the IDPs. The NGO proceeded with purchasing and donating kitchen materials, such as plates, cups, and utensils worth more than 20,000 birr, and provided free healthcare for several months to IDPs.

## Challenges



### 1. LOSS OF DOCUMENTATION

Newborns and infants have been highly affected with loss of or absence of vaccine documentation

**"THERE WAS A PROBLEM WITH IMMUNISATION. BABIES WHO WERE BORN THERE [IN THE SOMALI REGION] STARTED TAKING VACCINES THERE, BUT THEY WEREN'T ABLE TO FINISH. SOME OF THEM HAVEN'T TAKEN ANYTHING TILL THEY WERE 9 MONTHS OLD. BECAUSE THEY HAD TO TRAVEL [LEAVE SOMALI] ... SOME WERE BORN ON THE ROAD, AND SOME WERE BORN IN THE CAMPS ... THEREFORE, BABIES WHO WERE BORN IN DIFFERENT PLACES THROUGH THIS WHOLE PROCESS WERE DISADVANTAGED."**

- Health Officer interview



### 2. POOR INFRASTRUCTURE

The emergency clinic at the resettlement area was poorly constructed, as it was a conversion from one of the residential buildings and not designed to treat patients in a clinical setting. The building had only one room and lacked a separate delivery room/space.



### 3. BUDGET SHORTFALLS

As the crisis was an emergency, the city faced budget constraints in meeting the arrivals' healthcare needs.



### 4. CULTURAL GAPS

According to our interviews, there were huge behavioural and cultural differences between IDPs and locals across all aspects of life. Among the health-related cultural practices, chewing khat and resisting family planning were the major ones IDPs reflected.



### 5. UNDOCUMENTED IDPs

IDPs without an official IDP identification card did not receive free health services at any of the health care centres.





## Good practices



### 1. IMMEDIATE RESPONSE

Many IDPs were able to get medical treatment while they were in camps and once they arrived in Adama city.



### 2. FREE HEALTH SERVICES AND MEDICATION

For the past two years, many IDPs have been receiving free health services and medication using their IDs. However, at times the right to free healthcare versus the actual access to it contradicted each other due to larger structural issues around lack of supplies.



### 3. TRAINING

The health bureau's training programme on communicable disease directly contributed towards minimising the spread of infection. A newer collaboration between Cities Alliance and the Ethiopian Family Guidance Association has also led to 14 trained IDP health workers working at the Adama Model Clinic, which was launched in 2020.<sup>93</sup>



### 4. FREE CHILDBIRTH CARE FOR WOMEN

Women received free ambulance and child delivery services, which should continue to be widely promoted.

<sup>93</sup> Cities Alliance. 2021. "Ethiopia: Promoting IDPs Inclusion in Adama City." 31 October. Available at: <https://www.citiesalliance.org/newsroom/news/results/ethiopia-promoting-idps-inclusion-adama-city>

# DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

**In the face of significant constraints, Adama city impressively responded to the needs of thousands of IDPs. Successful communication about the appeal for support came from 'cascading' a single message through federal, regional and local government. Social media was an important tool in spreading the message to different actors and communicating with potential donors, including in the Ethiopian diaspora. As well as television coverage, posts on Facebook, YouTube and Telegram groups popularised the call for support. This widespread targeting gave many of our informants a feeling of positive obligation; once a critical mass was reached, offering support became a kind of actionable norm, even for those not directly called upon. The focus on both in-kind and cash donations meant that actors could contribute in various ways, involving contributors with and without funds, both groups and individuals, and those motivated by both altruism and self-interest.**

Adama's IDP response also offers some lessons. Firstly, while rapid mobilisation can be successful for addressing some long-term needs such as housing as well as emergency needs including the immediate availability of food, it appears to be more difficult to facilitate other needs such as employment, which require ongoing relationships and the availability of certain skills. The following presents some important points for discussion for both Adama and other

cities around the world facing incoming forced migrants. Recommendations are then offered to the Adama City Administration and other relevant actors, which in many cases may be applicable to other cities assisting urban IDPs and refugees.

One notable facet of the response was the high level of local coordination, particularly given the number of actors involved. Clear leadership by the local government meant that lists of donation items needed were drawn up and advertised; monetary and in-kind donations were then collected by the local kebeles and distributed to IDPs through a clear chain of command. Private sector and other actors (such as NGOs) were both collectively and individually approached by the local government to make donations and help in other ways, and the heavily publicised appeal over social media, television, and radio led to a widespread response by both individuals and civil society.

In humanitarian crises, local organisations are crucially important first responders but often overlooked.<sup>94</sup> The local response to the arrival of IDPs in Adama was no different. Many established national NGOs and local associations provided both donations and direct support. In many cases, these organisations retained their thematic focus, such as assisting women or children, and simply extended their beneficiaries to include IDPs. The work of these organisations meant that abandoned children were taken in, women were hosted in emergency shelters, orphans were reunited with family members, and families received cash transfers.

<sup>94</sup> ODI. 2019. *Rethinking Capacity and Complementarity for a More Local Humanitarian Action*. Humanitarian Policy Group, Overseas Development Institute. ODI: London.



**"WE WORK CLOSELY WITH THE HEALTH BUREAU, WOMEN, CHILDREN AND YOUTH AFFAIRS AND THE CITY ADMINISTRATION. IN FACT, WE REPORT TO WOMEN AND CHILDREN AFFAIRS EVERY THREE MONTHS ON OUR PROJECTS AND THE WORK WE DO. WE ALSO HAVE PREVIOUS WORKING EXPERIENCE WITH THESE STAKEHOLDERS ON EMERGENCY CRISES SUCH AS THE FLOOD INCIDENT IN ADAMA."**

The leader of a women's association explained,

**"WE DIDN'T JUST SEND OUR DONATIONS, WE MADE PERSONAL CONNECTIONS. THEY [IDPs] FELT LIKE THEY HAD SOMEONE TO SUPPORT THEM. WE ACTUALLY GAVE MEDICAL SUPPORT TO SOME OF THEM BECAUSE WE SAW THE EXTENT OF THE PROBLEM OURSELVES. ELEVEN PEOPLE TO BE EXACT. INITIALLY, THEY THOUGHT WE WERE PART OF THE GOVERNMENT, SO THEY CONSIDERED OUR DONATIONS AS OUR DUTY AND RESPONSIBILITY. BUT THEY WERE VERY HAPPY WHEN THEY REALISED THAT WE WERE HELPING THEM JUST BECAUSE WE WANTED TO."**

In short, local organisations provided specialised care beyond what the government offered and were in cases also able to forge individual relationships with IDPs. In at least one instance, an IDP was hired to work at a local organisation. At the same time, many

of these organisations have close ties to the local government, which likely contributed to the cohesion of the response, as collaboration was already regularly occurring. The leader of another association explained, "We work closely with the Health Bureau, Women, Children and Youth Affairs and the City Administration. In fact, we report to Women and Children Affairs every three months on our projects and the work we do. We also have previous working experience with these stakeholders on emergency crises such as the flood incident in Adama."

Such examples demonstrate the value of building on different forms of local leadership in IDP and other emergency responses, as well as on the existing formal and informal structures between organisations, city administrations, and other actors. While the need for such coordination and leadership may seem obvious, it is particularly worth bearing in mind in cities, where responses may be disparate based on the multitude of actors involved, and the different locations and needs of IDPs. The case of Adama illustrates how the municipal government, with the support of both regional government and local organisations, led a streamlined response that was still able to address particular needs, such as that of child protection or healthcare.



# RELIEF- DEVELOPMENT GAP

Scholars such as Habte and Kweon argue that Ethiopia has been focusing largely on life-saving humanitarian action in response to the displacement crisis, with less emphasis on transitioning to development-oriented assistance.<sup>95</sup> This is reflected in the case of Adama, where IDPs are now only receiving food rations, with minimum attention to self-reliance programmes. Although humanitarian responses are necessary, it is important to examine *why* this approach remains necessary over two years after the so-called 'crisis' as well as what form of support may be more appropriate. As discussed in this report, IDPs in Adama have struggled to find and retain employment, for reasons including the distance of the settlement to the city, the location of the market in which they were allowed to sell, and apparent differences in 'mindset' and 'culture' that have made it difficult for employers and IDP employees alike. Larger structural factors such as the overall high level of unemployment in Ethiopia also play a significant role.

<sup>95</sup> Habte et al. "Addressing Internal Displacement in Ethiopia."

The result – as seen in many other situations around the world – is a relief-development gap, in which the transition to development support remains lagging or fully lacking even years after the arrival of forced migrants. This is especially notable in the case of Adama due to the concerted, collective, and largely successful efforts of different actors to support IDPs in the 'humanitarian emergency phase' after their arrival. The limited success afterwards in areas such as employment offers important lessons for other cities, especially the recognition of how IDPs *could be* making a greater contribution to Adama's economy than they already are. Most of our key informants, including IDPs themselves, noted that they are very active and successful in domestic and international trade with many networks, including to diasporas. These skills and connections could serve to increase Adama's economy and transnational business and social networks. However, more support is necessary to realise this potential.

At the same time, the government-led lottery system that allocated IDPs in camps to 11 different cities across Oromia is a promising practice of bridging the relief-development gap in and of itself. Based on our informants, the quality of assistance in these cities varied widely, with Adama ostensibly providing some of the most comprehensive support. This model presents an opportunity to build on in different contexts, such as identifying minimum standards for receiving cities to adhere to in assistance provision and the creation of a national or international financial support mechanism to receiving cities to promote IDP integration.



**It is crucial to document and register forced migrants for both emergency and long-term planning.**

Many of the IDPs who arrived in Adama came by way of a lottery system that designated their household to go to one of 11 cities in the Oromia region. The number of IDPs was predetermined and they were registered upon arrival. As a result, the city knew how many houses needed to be built and how many food rations provided. It seems likely that this played a large role in the overall success of the emergency response.

At the same time, it is evident that many more than the allocated number of IDPs arrived in Adama independently of the lottery system. Because they were undocumented their number is unknown, and they did not have access to housing or food rations, thereby increasing their vulnerability. This affected not only IDPs themselves but those mandated to care for them, such as clinics and hospitals that at times had more patients than they could treat. Based on our research, no effort to document and register these IDPs took place, meaning that the city could not adequately support them or understand the true extent of the demand they placed on local infrastructure. Creating avenues for documentation, voluntary registration, and information dissemination is crucial in situations such as this and could take place under the municipal government or in collaboration with an established, trusted NGO.



### The location of settlements for IDPs and refugees matters for development and long-term integration.

Members of government and policymakers must take a long-term view when settling forced migrants. They should be housed in areas where they can easily create or find employment, have access to healthcare and schools, and make contact with local hosts. The failure to do so contributes to the creation of an isolated population unable to support themselves and lacking the social ties to integrate and make use of community social and practical resources.



### IDPs need support integrating.

While the integration of refugees remains a common topic of research and discussion, there is much less of a focus on the challenges that IDPs face in integrating. Sharing a language, ethnicity, religion, or common heritage does not obviate the challenge to belong in a new city. Our research found that despite initial support arising in part due to the IDPs being considered kin, IDPs in Adama are still largely seen as outsiders in the city. The more

remote location of their settlements contributes to this. Locals we interviewed perceived the IDPs as very culturally different, with different social norms that in instances clashed with their employers' expectations. While training on workplace expectations may be useful on a case-by-case basis, creating more opportunities for interaction and connection between locals and IDPs is needed. Shared cultural mechanisms for social and practical assistance, such as iddir and equb, offer one means for locals and IDPs to interact and gain trust.



## BOX 6 CRUCIAL SUPPORT RECEIVED IN ADAMA ACCORDING TO IDP INFORMANTS



1. Access to free education for IDP children



2. Forming iddir and equb groups



3. Access to free healthcare



4. Provision of food rations



5. Access to microfinance and loans



6. Observation of Muslim holidays by private sector actors



7. Provision of resettlement housing

# LOCAL RECOMMENDATIONS TO IMPROVE ADAMA CITY'S RESPONSE TO IDPs

To address the ongoing challenges discussed above, this research presents recommendations for key stakeholders in Adama city, notably the municipal authorities, to improve the city's response to IDPs. Importantly, many of these recommendations can also serve local non-IDP community members.



## Humanitarian support

### 1. PRIORITISE FOOD RATIONS FOR IDPs UNTIL ECONOMIC INTEGRATION IS REALISED.

Food provision should be prioritised in all budget allocation decision-making to ensure a healthy amount and variety of food is distributed to those most in need. The amount should only be reduced when it is clear that IDPs have the means to feed themselves well and not due to an externally imposed timeline.

### 2. INCLUDE IDPs IN FAMILY PLANNING AND GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE AWARENESS-RAISING PROGRAMMES.

Engage with community leaders and influencers in the resettlement community to provide awareness-raising programmes on issues such as gender-based violence and family planning. This may be effective on its own but could also enable NGOs or members of government bureaus to enter communities and address these issues without resistance and conflicts.



## Social integration and overcoming cultural barriers

### 1. WORK WITH COMMUNITY INFLUENCERS AND MEDIA OUTLETS TO OFFER LEARNING AND EXPOSURE THROUGH MEDIA TO PROMOTE SOCIAL INTEGRATION.

Actively promote the social integration of IDPs through cultural programmes in mass and social media, including entertainment shows, dramas, music, and news segments which involve IDPs and share their cultures.

### 2. SHARE THE INTERESTS AND NEEDS OF IDPs IN FORMAL AND INFORMAL MEDIA OUTLETS.

Continue to reflect the voice of IDPs and cover current issues faced by IDPs, such as infrastructural and cultural challenges.

### 3. ENSURE IDPs ARE INTEGRATED IN SOCIAL AND CULTURAL GATHERINGS AND INITIATIVES SUCH AS IDDIRS, EQUBS, AND COFFEE GATHERINGS.

To minimise cultural gaps and promote social integration while simultaneously helping IDPs better manage their finances, local community iddirs and equbs should invite IDPs to join. IDPs and locals could further participate in regular coffee meetings, where knowledge can be exchanged, and ideas and practices shared.



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#### **4. GUARANTEE FULL TRANSPARENCY ON SENSITIVE DECISIONS REGARDING LAND ADMINISTRATION.**

In order to overcome conflicts over land property with the local community, the city administration should be transparent regarding the property of the resettlement area to minimise the tension and conflict among IDPs and the local community. Although land is owned by the government in Ethiopia, both IDPs and the local community have the right to know who can utilise the land, based on the government's lease. This will help address major security issues caused by the misunderstanding of the land proprietorship.

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#### **5. THE CITY ADMINISTRATION SHOULD OFFER SUPPORT WITH VOLUNTARY REPATRIATION FOR THOSE IDPs WHO WOULD LIKE TO RETURN TO THEIR ORIGINAL HOMES.**

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#### **6. THE CITY ADMINISTRATION SHOULD CREATE AN ENVIRONMENT WHERE THE IDPs AND THE LOCAL COMMUNITIES CAN MEET FREQUENTLY TO REDUCE CULTURAL DIFFERENCES.**

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#### **7. IT WOULD BE VALUABLE TO PURSUE MORE INCLUSIVE APPROACHES TO SERVICES THAT REACH BOTH IDPs AND OTHER URBAN INHABITANTS, I.E., A ONE-STOP-SHOP DESK OR SOCIAL SUPPORT SCHEME SERVING DIFFERENT VULNERABLE GROUPS, INCLUDING THE URBAN POOR AND IDPs. THIS COULD REDUCE ANIMOSITY TOWARDS IDPs WHILE ALSO INCREASING ASSISTANCE TO OTHERS WHO NEED IT.**

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### **Education**

*Role of the city administration:*

**Allocate a budget for school renovation and adjustment of existing programmes, including mixing IDP and local students.**

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**1. ALLOCATE A BUDGET TO RENOVATE SENA SEBA SCHOOL AND MAKE IT SUSTAINABLE FOR LEARNING AND SUITABLE FOR CHILDREN, AS IT IS CLEAR THE SCHOOL WILL BE NEEDED LONG TERM.**

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**2. CONSTRUCT ADDITIONAL CLASSROOMS WITH ELECTRICITY AND SAFE WASH FACILITIES.**

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**3. INCREASE CLASSES TO UP TO AT LEAST THE EIGHTH GRADE AT SENA SEBA SCHOOL.**

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**4. INTRODUCE A SCHOOL FEEDING PROGRAMME.**

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**5. PROMOTE BIENNIAL OR TRIENNIAL SCHOOL FUNDRAISING DRIVES TO INCREASE THE AVAILABILITY OF SCHOOL SUPPLIES FOR STUDENTS AND TEACHERS (BOOKS AND STATIONERY MATERIALS) AND UNIFORMS.**

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**6. HIRE MORE TEACHERS TO REDUCE THE CURRENT WORKLOAD ON TEACHERS AT SENA SEBA SCHOOL, WHICH SUFFERS FROM A SHORTAGE.**

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**7. OFFER ADULT EDUCATION OPPORTUNITIES FOR INTERESTED IDPs, AND PARTICULARLY INFLUENCERS SUCH AS COMMUNITY LEADERS (COMMUNITY ELDERS), IDP REPRESENTATIVES, AND SHEIKHS, WHO ARE CRUCIAL COMMUNITY ADVOCATES.**

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*Role of the Sena Seba school:*

**Schools should actively promote social integration.**

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**1. TEACHERS SHOULD CONTINUE TO PROMOTE SOCIAL INTEGRATION THROUGH EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES, SPORTS, GAMES, AND SCHOOL CLUBS. PROMOTE GROUP PROJECTS AND EXERCISES IN CLASSROOMS SO STUDENTS CAN WORK COLLABORATIVELY.**

---

**2. THE SCHOOL HEAD SHOULD PROMOTE REGULAR PARENT-TEACHER CONFERENCES TO FURTHER MINIMISE CULTURAL GAPS.**

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THE BIRTHS AND DEATHS OF IDPs SHOULD BE PROPERLY DOCUMENTED AND NECESSARY RECORDS ISSUED TO IDPs.



## Health

### 1. CITY ADMINISTRATION, REGIONAL GOVERNMENT, AND THE PRIVATE SECTOR SHOULD ACTIVELY COLLABORATE TO RAISE FUNDS SPECIFICALLY FOR HEALTH PROVISION.

Health should be prioritised during and after crisis, and sufficient budget allocated to provide clinics that can adequately serve thousands of IDPs, including creating separate delivery rooms for women and an examination room for children.

### 2. CREATE A SYSTEM TO OFFER AND RECORD THE FORMAL DOCUMENTATION OF BIRTH, DEATH AND IMMUNISATION CERTIFICATES.

The systematic assessment and recording of immunisation documentation for children of IDPs should be carried out by doctors and/or health officers. Doctors and health officers can issue vaccines and immunisation documentation where necessary to ensure blanket coverage and protect the health of babies in both IDP and wider local communities. The births and deaths of IDPs should be properly documented and necessary records issued to IDPs. The city administration should also keep track of these records to have a better overview of the number of IDPs in the municipality.

### 3. PROVIDE CATCH-UP VACCINATIONS FOR CHILDREN OF IDPs.

In cases where a child has not received any vaccinations, catch-up vaccinations should be immediately introduced according to the World Health Organization (WHO) or Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) schedule.

### 4. PROVIDE FREE ACCESS TO HEALTHCARE FOR UNDOCUMENTED IDPs.

Adequate health provision should include access to free healthcare for undocumented IDPs.

### 5. INCREASE RESOURCES AND SUPPORT FOR FEMALE IDPs, PARTICULARLY REGARDING PROTECTION AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH.



## Infrastructure, housing, and public services

### 1. RENOVATE TEMPORARY HOUSING AND DRAINAGE SYSTEMS.

- › Permanent building materials such as bucket cement should be used for housing, and temporary houses built from materials such as corrugated iron sheet, wood, and mud should be upgraded as soon as possible.
- › The city administration should ensure that water drainage systems are resilient to the location to avert supply problems. In the case of budget constraints, the city administration should consider collaborating with INGOs, the regional government, federal government, or the private sector to introduce sustainable water well projects in the resettlement area.

### 2. PUBLIC SERVICE FOR UNDOCUMENTED IDPs.

- › The regional government should continue to cooperate with cities to resettle undocumented IDPs or return them to their original settlement if that is their preference.
- › The city administration should introduce a voluntary registration office to help formally undocumented IDPs officially settle in Adama. This should then allow them access to food rations and public services.



## Self-reliance

### 1. PROVIDE WORKSPACE AND START-UP CAPITAL - CRUCIAL RESOURCES FOR INCOME GENERATION - FOR IDPs TO START THEIR OWN BUSINESSES.

- › Women and youth associations can play a role in alleviating the lack of working space faced by IDPs by lobbying the city administration.
- › Relevant bureaus should facilitate loans from microfinance institutions.

### 2. ENSURE A ROBUST SYSTEM FOR MICROFINANCE TO IDENTIFY AND PROCESS LOANS FOR IDPs.

The Oromia Small- and Microfinance Association should implement a robust IDP identification system to ensure that IDPs can access loans provided by microfinance institutions.

### 3. ELIMINATE HOUSING PRECARIETY BY DELINKING IT FROM LOAN COLLATERAL.

- › The Oromia Small- and Microfinance Association should consider extensions to the grace period of loan repayment for IDPs struggling with debt.
- › The Oromia Small- and Microfinance Association or relevant government bureaus should provide regular training for IDPs and poor urban locals on finance management to help them to plan and maximise their resources.



# AREAS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

**Our research has highlighted several gaps and areas for further research, both in Adama and on IDPs in Ethiopia.**



## Undocumented IDPs

First and foremost, a lack of information by the local authorities and many stakeholders on undocumented IDPs demonstrates a crucial gap in our understanding of the impact IDPs have on Adama, and the needs, challenges, and quality of life of these undocumented IDPs. As many undocumented IDPs and other migrants live in fear of repercussions if their legal status is discovered, careful research must be conducted to establish the trust of undocumented IDPs and ensure they do not face adverse effects for participating in research. Due to the nature of this research, IDPs trained as peer researchers may be best suited for identifying and interviewing informants.



## IDPs during the Covid-19 pandemic

This report was finalised during the first few months of the Covid-19 global pandemic, meaning that our research was conducted prior to lockdowns and a state of emergency in Ethiopia. Given that many of our IDP informants live hand-to-mouth and rely on petty trading to sustain livelihoods, we are deeply worried about the effect that lockdowns will likely have on their health and economic and mental well-being. Specific research is needed to understand the types of formal and informal support they receive during the pandemic, as well as the myriad effects of Covid-19 on their communities.

Specific questions include:

- › What role has a history of displacement played in IDPs' mental/psychological well-being during Covid-19?
- › Are IDPs in Adama provided healthcare and other assistance equal to that provided to locals during the pandemic?
- › What effect does Covid-19 have on the provision of government food rations to IDPs and other support offered by city bureaus and NGOs?



## Role of diaspora networks

The role of diaspora networks was not explored in our research but may yield interesting and important information regarding the assistance IDPs receive, and where their networks of support lie. The strength of the Ethiopian diaspora is well known for contributing to national development as well as individual household well-being, and a deeper examination of the role of diasporas for IDPs could contribute to understanding of displacement and diasporas.



### Job opportunities and training for IDPs

The Adama city administration worked in two ways to ensure self-reliance of the IDPs. Firstly, the administration tried to convince the local private sectors to hire IDPs. Secondly, it has provided interest-free loans to those IDPs with proper documentation and a business license. However, most IDPs remain unemployed and very poor. Deeper research into the local mechanisms that could help IDPs become economically independent in Adama is needed (e.g., access to markets, increased microfinance loans).

Specific questions include:

- › Given that most IDPs were independent traders before they moved to Adama, would it be more beneficial to offer support for self-employment or pathways to waged employment?
- › In light of Adama's local economy, which sectors, and type of work (e.g., self-employment or waged work) might offer more economic success?



### Local integration

Despite having lived in Adama for almost two years, most of our informants cited a lack of integration as an ongoing challenge for IDPs. While the location of the settlements as well as different religions and customs between IDPs and locals were mentioned as issues, more research is needed to understand how to increase belonging and integration in Adama.

Specific questions include:

- › Which mechanisms could narrow social and cultural gaps between IDPs and local residents in Adama (local gatherings, information dissemination, etc.)?
- › Which activities or changes could be undertaken by the municipality, IDPs, and local communities to facilitate stronger social integration?





## CONCLUSION

As rates of both forced migration and urbanisation rise, more and more IDPs and refugees will enter secondary cities like Adama. Following some of the good practices undertaken by the city offers possibilities to increase the coordination and level of responses in other urban areas to benefit both displaced people and locals. For example, a communication approach like the one used in the Adama response could spread the word about particular skill sets in a displaced population to a local or regional audience. Formalising individual and business donations, particularly those above a certain amount, by making them tax deductible may increase some actors' willingness to donate. Finally, registering all forced migrants upon arrival in cities can facilitate the assistance that is offered to them by providing better knowledge of how many have returned and the demographics and needs of those who remain.





# CHAPTER 3: URBAN REFUGEES IN ARUA, UGANDA



## INTRODUCTION

**Uganda is widely considered to be one of the world's most progressive host countries, allowing refugees the right to work and freedom of movement and promoting self-reliance through national strategies since the 1990s. As of October 2021, Uganda hosts a whopping 2,259,536 refugees, driven in large part by ongoing conflict in South Sudan. At the time of research South Sudanese refugees made up the majority of refugees in the country (over 1.2 million) followed by Congolese (over 750,000), Burundians (almost 99,000) and Somalis (approximately 85,000).<sup>96</sup>**

In recent years, Uganda has received increasing attention internationally for its generous approach to local integration, including to the livelihoods and self-reliance opportunities it affords refugees. Uganda is a pilot country of the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF) and one of UNHCR's priority countries for livelihoods initiatives, driven by the 2014-2018 Global Strategy for Livelihoods, for example. While compared to the policies of many major refugee-hosting countries, Uganda is indeed a generous host; however, some of its acclaim is misleading. In particular, it is little known that refugees are only considered refugees if they are living within settlements or legally registered in Kampala, the capital. They are often referred to as 'non-citizens' or 'migrants' and are not considered eligible for special assistance. This means that a significant but unknown number of urban refugees in Uganda remain unassisted, despite significant needs.

This chapter presents a case study of urban refugees in Arua, a town in Uganda's West Nile region, which is one of the major refugee-hosting areas in the country. It has 3 million inhabitants and hosts around 700,000 refugees.<sup>97</sup> The most recent UNHCR figures show that Yumbe and Adjumani towns together host 31.4 per cent (16 per cent and 15.4 per cent, respectively) of the total refugee population in Uganda.<sup>98</sup>

This chapter first provides a brief overview of the history of Uganda's refugee policies, followed by a section on urbanisation and Uganda's government structure. It then presents primary and secondary data on urban refugees and municipal responses to them, followed by discussion and recommendations.

<sup>96</sup> UNHCR. 2021. Uganda Comprehensive Refugee Response Portal. Webpage, available at: <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/country/uga>.

<sup>97</sup> UN Habitat. 2020. "West Nile Region, Uganda - Integrated and Multi Scalar Planning (Koboko, Arua, Nebbi)." Available at: [https://unhabitat.org/sites/default/files/2020/08/integrated\\_and\\_multi-scalar\\_planning\\_in\\_west\\_nile\\_region\\_uganda.pdf](https://unhabitat.org/sites/default/files/2020/08/integrated_and_multi-scalar_planning_in_west_nile_region_uganda.pdf).

<sup>98</sup> UNHCR, Uganda Comprehensive Refugee Response Portal.



**"THE FACT IS  
THAT URBAN  
REFUGEES EXIST."**

– Arua Deputy Town Clerk.



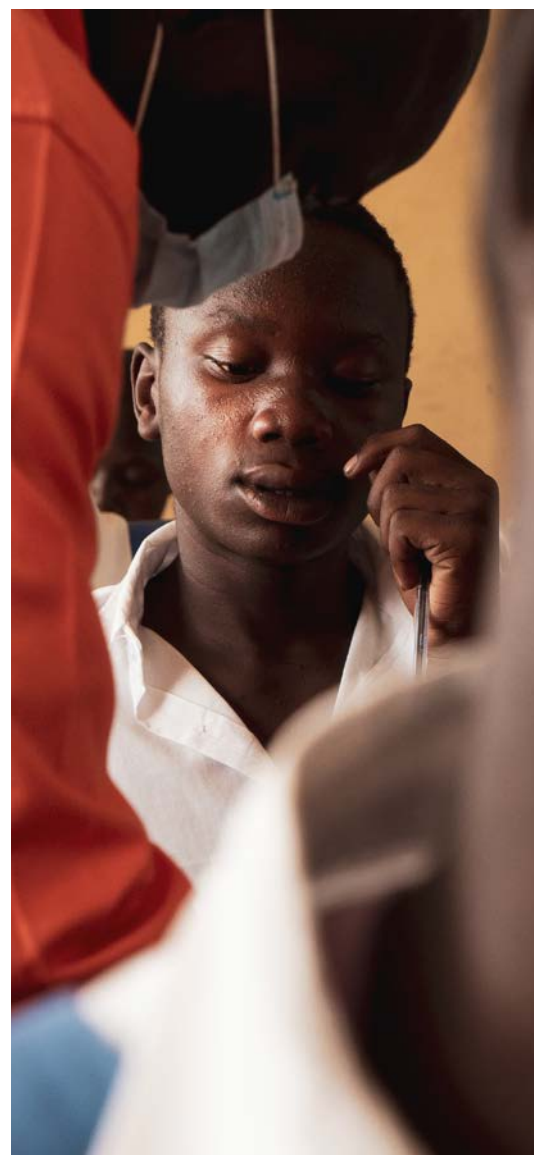


# A BRIEF HISTORY OF UGANDA'S REFUGEE POLICIES

UGANDA'S LEGAL  
CONTEXT CHANGED  
WITH THE 2006  
REFUGEE ACT, WHICH  
RECOGNISED HUMAN  
RIGHTS CONVENTIONS  
AND BROADENED  
REFUGEES' RIGHTS,  
PROVIDING THE ABILITY  
TO WORK AND MOVE  
FREELY BETWEEN  
CAMPS AND URBAN  
AREAS.

In 1999, the Government of Uganda and UNHCR jointly launched the country's Self-Reliance Strategy (SRS), followed by the Development Assistance for Refugees (DAR) in 2003 as part of the 'way forward' for the strategy. The SRS aimed to 'empower' refugees as well as nationals in refugee-hosting regions to support themselves, and "establish mechanisms...[to] ensure integration of services for the refugees with those of the nationals."<sup>99</sup> DAR, in turn, aimed to actualise the SRS and "address some of the problems of poverty and under-development in refugee hosting districts which could promote further peace, security and stability in the region."<sup>100</sup>

Uganda's legal context changed with the 2006 Refugee Act, which recognised human rights conventions and broadened refugees' rights, providing the ability to work and move freely between camps and urban areas. This theoretically addressed many of the critiques of the SRS, but also meant that an important gap arose in the service provision to refugees in urban areas, as NGOs in Uganda had up to that point mainly worked in settlements. It was largely after the 2009 introduction of the UNHCR Urban Refugee Policy that most of UNHCR's urban implementing and operational partners in Uganda began offering livelihoods trainings.



<sup>99</sup> Government of Uganda and UNHCR. 2004. Self-Reliance Strategy for Refugee Hosting Areas of Moyo, Adjumani and Arua Districts of Northern Uganda (SRS). UNHCR: Geneva.

<sup>100</sup> Ibid. p. 6.



## BOX 7 REGISTERING THE FORCIBLY DISPLACED IN UGANDA



The Government of Uganda, through its Office of the Prime Minister (OPM) and with support of UNHCR, registers refugees.



Registration takes place in refugee camps.



Urban refugee registration only takes place in Kampala, the capital, and not in secondary cities.



There is no formal refugee/forced migrant registration process in cities except for Kampala.



After 1995–1996 civil war in the northern part of Uganda, IDPs were registered in IDP camps.

Another recent self-reliance strategy is known as the 2016–2020 Refugee and Host Population Empowerment (ReHoPE) Strategic Framework, formulated by UNHCR on behalf of the United Nations Country Team and the World Bank. It has been considered one of the most progressive strategies in recent years involving refugees, host communities, and development. However, its aims were remarkably similar to that of the SRS. It too focused on developmental ‘solutions’ for refugees and aims to integrate refugees into existing institutional structures, as well as capitalise on their inclusion in the 2015/2016–2019/2020 National Development Plan II. Refugees’ integration into national services was seen as having the potential to improve refugees’ lives in a variety of areas, from providing access to loan services, more comprehensive healthcare, and government-sponsored livelihoods trainings. It epitomised the development approach that UNHCR has increasingly taken in recent years and was considered an important pilot for the durable solution of local integration in host countries, where refugees are provided with basic rights. This policy also further enables urban refugees to access national services although, as we will see, many urban services are already overstretched and now even more so due to higher numbers of residents.

# URBANISATION IN UGANDA

Uganda has one of the fastest growing rates of urbanisation in the East African region. With a total population of more than 11 million people living in urban areas and a 5.67 per cent annual urban population growth rate, Uganda has a total urban population of 24.95 per cent.<sup>101</sup> Given the high growth rate, Uganda's rural population is expected to drastically decrease, and the total urban population is projected to reach around 45 per cent by 2050. Expanding urbanisation has been one of the key elements of the country's 2040 Vision to achieve upper-middle-income status.<sup>102</sup> As a result, the Government of Uganda in 2019 approved the creation of 15 cities in four phases across the country.<sup>103</sup> As of July 2020, four cities – including Arua – have received formal city status, meaning they are now able to surpass the district level.

<sup>101</sup> World Bank. 2021. *Planning for Uganda's Urbanisation*. Inclusive Growth Policy Note, no 4. World Bank: Washington, DC. Available at: <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/27439>.

<sup>102</sup> Mbabazi, J., and P.A. Kirungyi. 2020. *Creation of New Cities in Uganda: Social Economic and Political Implications*. Advocates Coalition for Development and Environment (ACODE) Policy Briefing Paper.

<sup>103</sup> Ibid.

Urbanisation and development of secondary cities and towns play an important role in increasing economic growth. However, governments and city municipalities may face different challenges because of rapid urban expansion due to reasons such as the lack of adequate finance and/or poor urban planning. In the case of Uganda, the following are some of the major challenges emerging from Uganda's urbanisation process:<sup>104</sup>



**Prevalent slums and informal settlements**



**Poor solid waste management**



**Deteriorating urban environment**

<sup>104</sup> Mbabazi and Kirungyi, *Creation of New Cities in Uganda*.



**Weak urban economy largely dominated by the informal sector**



**Unprecedented level of urban sprawl**



**Inadequate urban infrastructure and services**



**Ineffective urban governance and management**



**Urban transportation challenges**





**"THE POLICY PROVIDES A FRAMEWORK THROUGH WHICH PROBLEMS ASSOCIATED WITH RAPID URBANISATION WHICH INCLUDE AMONG OTHERS: HIGH POPULATION GROWTH, URBAN POVERTY, POOR WASTE MANAGEMENT, UNEMPLOYMENT, ENVIRONMENTAL DEGRADATION, URBAN SAFETY AND SECURITY, INADEQUATE URBAN INFRASTRUCTURE AND SERVICES, INADEQUATE TRANSPORTATION AND TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT, POOR URBAN GOVERNANCE, AND INADEQUATE URBAN FINANCING ARE ADDRESSED.**

**THE VISION OF THE POLICY IS 'TRANSFORMED AND SUSTAINABLE URBAN AREAS'. WHILE THE GOAL IS 'TO PROMOTE LIVABLE URBAN AREAS THAT ARE ORGANISED, INCLUSIVE, PRODUCTIVE AND SUSTAINABLE.'"**

– Ministry of Lands, Housing and Urban Development, 2017

It is important to note that these challenges affect locals, migrants, and forcibly displaced people. The country's urban population is influenced by the large number of refugees and other forced migrants entering cities, contributing to rapid urbanisation. In fact, Uganda is among the main destination countries for international migrants in the African context. The number of international migrants in Uganda have increased from 635,000 in 2000 to almost 1.7 million in mid-2020.<sup>105</sup>

According to UNHCR, there are slightly over 92,000 urban refugees.<sup>106</sup> However,

there are an estimated 300,000 refugees residing in Kampala alone, according to the Kampala Capital City Authority (KCCA).<sup>107</sup> The number differs due to the fact that KCCA takes into account "those who are registered in settlements but nonetheless spend considerable amounts of time living in Kampala."<sup>108</sup> This number also includes household members of refugee families who have not yet gone through the official asylum process.<sup>109</sup> Although there are approximations for the number of urban refugees in Kampala (likely significantly underestimated), limited information exists on urban refugees elsewhere in the country.

<sup>105</sup> UN DESA. 2020. *International Migration 2020 Highlights*. UN DESA: Geneva.

<sup>106</sup> UNHCR. 2021. "Registered Refugees and Asylum-seekers as of June 2021." Available at: <https://www.unhcr.org/ke/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2021/07/Kenya-Infographics-30-June-2021.pdf>.

<sup>107</sup> Saliba, S., and I. Silver. 2020. "Cities as Partners: The Case of Kampala." *Forced Migration Review* (63), pp. 41–43. Available at: <https://www.fmreview.org/cities/saliba-silver>.

<sup>108</sup> Ibid.

<sup>109</sup> Ibid.

# UGANDA'S GOVERNMENT STRUCTURE



**"[P]ROVISION WITH RESPECT TO LOCAL GOVERNMENT IN UGANDA AND PROVIDES FOR REFORM OF LOCAL ADMINISTRATION. THE SYSTEM OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT SHALL BE BASED ON THE DISTRICT AS A UNIT UNDER WHICH THERE SHALL BE LOWER LOCAL GOVERNMENTS AND ADMINISTRATIVE UNITS. RURAL DISTRICTS SHALL HAVE A DISTRICT COUNCIL AND SUBCOUNTY COUNCILS. A CITY SHALL BE EQUIVALENT TO A DISTRICT. LOCAL GOVERNMENT ADMINISTRATIONS SHALL CARRY ADMINISTRATIVE FUNCTIONS AS OUTLINED IN THE SECOND SCHEDULE TO THIS ACT."**

– Local Government Act (UN InforMEA)

**The Republic of Uganda is a country with a decentralised government that comprises the major three bodies of government: the executive, legislative and judiciary.<sup>110</sup> In addition to the constitution's devolved system, the country specifically consolidates the Local Government Act 1997 (Cap 243) to further recognise the role of local governments.**

Accordingly, the five-tier local government structures vary in an urban versus rural setting. Furthermore, the country has four official administrative regions – the central, Eastern, Northern, and Western regions – including ten sub-regions.<sup>111</sup> Overall there are 135 districts, 11 cities (20 city divisions), 31 municipalities (89 municipal divisions), and hundreds and thousands of lower administrative units in Uganda.<sup>112</sup> Municipal and district councils are responsible for providing primary and secondary education, water supplies, and health services.<sup>113</sup>

While this decentralisation has many proponents, others view it as an ultimate means to consolidate control. As an employee of one longstanding refugee-serving organisation in Kampala explained, "In Uganda decentralisation is not really decentralisation in ways it's been touted. It has happened not for reasons of extending services but instead of extending patronage networks and control processes right down to very local level. The more districts you have, the more district commissioners you have – who are all political appointees. Endless districts have been created, but they are all under-resourced... So now you have towns gaining city status: but does it come with resources that are commensurate? No."<sup>114</sup>

This was echoed by a municipal employee in Arua as well, who explained: "Over time, the resources have been split between more and more districts. Today there are 135 districts and 41 municipalities – and before decentralisation there were 39!"<sup>115</sup>

<sup>110</sup> State House of Uganda. 2021a. Government Structure. Available at: <https://statehouse.go.ug/government>.

<sup>111</sup> CLGF (Commonwealth Local Government Forum). 2018. "Local Government System in Uganda." Available at: [https://www.clgf.org.uk/default/assets/File/Country\\_profiles/Uganda.pdf](https://www.clgf.org.uk/default/assets/File/Country_profiles/Uganda.pdf).

<sup>112</sup> State House of Uganda. Government Structure.

<sup>113</sup> CLGF. 2022. Uganda: Key Facts. Available at: <https://www.clgf.org.uk/regions/clgf-east-africa/uganda/>

<sup>114</sup> Interview, September 2021.

<sup>115</sup> Interview, A.M., Senior Community Development Officer.

# LOCAL GOVERNMENT

**Uganda's local government system is based on districts, and it composes the local government councils and administrative unit councils. These two bodies are collectively referred to as just local councils and are further categorised as urban or rural.<sup>116</sup>**

Local governments are key players in Uganda's decentralised system. To coordinate and support these local governments, the central government has a designated department, the Ministry of Local Governments. With a vision to have democratic and accountable local governments, the Ministry is responsible

"to coordinate and support Local Governments for sustainable, efficient and effective service delivery in a decentralised system."<sup>117</sup>

The Ministry of Local Government also encompasses the district administration, district inspection, urban inspection, local council development, local economic development, urban administration, and the finance and administration departments.<sup>118</sup> Particularly, the local council development is mandated "to build and sustain the necessary capacity of the Local Councils and Administrative Units to enable them perform efficiently and effectively."<sup>119</sup>

<sup>116</sup> UN Habitat. 2020. The Urban Law Database. Available at: <https://urbanlex.unhabitat.org/law/821>

<sup>117</sup> MoLG (Ministry of Local Government of Uganda) Official Website. Available at: <https://molg.go.ug/local-councils-development/>.

<sup>118</sup> Ibid.

<sup>119</sup> Ibid.





# FUNDING

In Uganda, taxes are collected by the central government and then distributed as grants to districts. Although transfers from the central government are the primary source of revenue for local governments, they are mandated to raise revenue

locally from property taxes, licenses, and user fees.<sup>120</sup> Districts and municipal councils also have the responsibility to provide public infrastructure such “the provision of primary and secondary education, safe

<sup>120</sup> CLGF, Government System in Uganda.

water supplies and public health, and are encouraged to devolve some services to the lower tiers. In addition, Local Economic Development (LED) is the responsibility of the districts and lower tiers of government.”<sup>121</sup>

<sup>121</sup> Ibid.





However, funding for municipalities is based in part on population size, which is determined by often outdated censuses. While Uganda's Local Government Act provides formulas for resource allocation including number of inhabitants, refugees and asylum seekers are not included in this equation. Despite decentralisation as a key policy reform for the Ugandan government in the early 1990s, municipalities still struggle to access the funding

they need to operate. This issue is compounded by the fact that in Uganda, refugee issues – and the concomitant international resources – are generally dealt with at the district level. UNHCR data on refugees in the country provides, for example, information on numbers in main refugee-hosting districts but does not have more detailed figures of refugees' geographic locations, except for estimates in camps and settlements.

While international investments appear to be slowly changing and targeting more municipalities directly – such as the World Bank's recent investment in 14 Ugandan municipalities to improve infrastructure, of which Arua is one – more work and research is needed to align investments with municipalities particularly affected by refugee influxes, as well as the type of assistance, with the needs of refugees and hosts alike.

**"THE PROVISION OF PRIMARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION, SAFE WATER SUPPLIES AND PUBLIC HEALTH, AND ARE ENCOURAGED TO DEVOLVE SOME SERVICES TO THE LOWER TIERS. IN ADDITION, LOCAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT (LED) IS THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE DISTRICTS AND LOWER TIERS OF GOVERNMENT."**

# ARUA CASE STUDY

Arua District in Western Uganda hosts approximately 250,000 South Sudanese refugees – an estimated 24 per cent of its population. A town since 1974, Arua officially gained city status in 2020,<sup>122</sup> although it is often still referred to as a town by its inhabitants. Arua sits in between multiple refugee settlements – Adjumani, Bidi Bidi, Imvepi, and Rhino, some of the largest in the country – and is only 75 km from the border with South Sudan. In part due to this proximity, Arua government officials estimate that many of these refugees reside in and outside of Arua City (some say the city has tripled in size), although an exact figure cannot be provided as refugees have traditionally not been included in the formal government census.<sup>123</sup> In 2020, a census of Central Division, Arua (conducted by the Uganda Bureau of Statistics, AVSI Foundation, and Cities Alliance, and financed by SDC) found that 10 per cent of the population in that division were refugees.<sup>124</sup> Given this and other research identifying many refugees living outside of central Arua due to the lower cost of living, the figure for the town as a whole is likely much higher.



## Municipal experiences and responses to urban refugees

When asked, members of Arua's municipal authority are quick to cite both the challenges that increased numbers of refugees in Arua have brought as well as their openness to serving them. While the needs remain enormous, efforts are being made to support refugee-hosting municipalities in Uganda, including in Arua. As one member of UNHCR Uganda described, "We already have direct support happening to municipalities and local authorities. UNHCR gives some small amount of money to municipalities for cars and so on, and we're trying to increase that. It [direct support to refugee-hosting municipalities] is happening...We are working to make teachers, health workers, NGOs, paid for via local government. We need more capacity building as we work to provide more support to refugees in urban areas."<sup>125</sup>

The following sections provide a snapshot of the situation in Arua based on sectors, followed by findings on refugees' own experiences living in Arua during Covid-19.

<sup>122</sup> Arua City. 2021. Homepage, website. Available at: <https://aruacity.go.ug/about/>.

<sup>123</sup> Interview, Mayor of Arua, 22 February 2020.

<sup>124</sup> Uganda Bureau of Statistics. 2020. *Arua Census Report*. Uganda Bureau of Statistics, Government of Uganda.

<sup>125</sup> Interview, B.









### Impact on the education sector

The impact of refugees on many primary and secondary schools in Arua is profound. As the Municipal Education Officer explained,

**"THE STANDARD CLASSROOM SIZE IS 55 CHILDREN, BUT NOW WE SEE 78 CHILDREN ON AVERAGE. WE USED TO HAVE ONE DESK FOR THREE CHILDREN, BUT NOW IT IS FOR FIVE... THE SITUATION WE ARE DEALING WITH IS NOT A NORMAL ONE."<sup>126</sup>**

The head of OPM Arua noted the need to improve facilities for schools in urban areas like Arua, due in part to the increased demand of refugees. Needs include more textbooks, desks, toilets – and, critically, more teachers.<sup>127</sup>

Beyond classroom size, one of the challenges described was the lack of specialised programmes for refugees – ‘children from conflict’ – who often need specialised emotional and educational support. Many children had skipped years of schooling due to conflict in their home country, so are often far older than their grade level. There is a need for programmes to account for this. Several head teachers echoed this need in interviews and described the challenge of helping students catch up in school when class sizes were so big. However, one head teacher at a secondary school noted that there was a very low drop-out rate for refugee students, who clearly wanted to learn.

The census of refugees in Arua's Central Division found that 20 per cent of the refugees aged 10 and above who were not in school had never attended school, suggesting a significant number of refugee children are being left behind in education.<sup>128</sup> Several schools in Arua have offered informal support to refugee families as a way to combat this issue, notably by waiving school fees or providing extra support. The head teacher and managing director of Bright View Nursery and Primary School, for example, was currently offering five free school spaces for refugees. He acknowledged it was important but not enough and noted that many parents of refugee children had extra barriers to earning an income. The father of one family interviewed, whose children were attending the school for free, had been blinded during the conflict in South Sudan, leaving only their mother to generate income for multiple dependents. Stories like these are common. When refugees started arriving at Bright View in 2011, the head teacher explained that there were only a few in total and only two South Sudanese refugees. In 2020, when the interview was conducted, there were 241 refugee students from South Sudan out of a total of 720 pupils, and the number of students was still rising.<sup>129</sup>



<sup>126</sup> Interview, A.M., Municipal Education Officer.  
<sup>127</sup> Interview, OPM Arua.

<sup>128</sup> Uganda Bureau of Statistics. *Arua Census Report*.  
<sup>129</sup> Interview, Bright View Nursery and Primary School.





## BOX 8 COMMON CHALLENGES FACED BY REFUGEE STUDENTS IN ARUA DESCRIBED BY TEACHERS



Paying school fees



Finding accommodation



Parents going back to South Sudan



Difficulty translating educational  
material



"HEALTH DOESN'T  
HAVE BORDERS."

– Arua Deputy Town Clerk



### Impact on the health sector

Refugees interviewed commonly discussed healthcare as both a reason for coming to Arua as well as a service directly in need of improvement. Multiple local Ugandans also mentioned the need for better healthcare, although they did not attribute the challenge to refugees directly. At Oli Health Centre, the main health centre in Arua, the senior nurse explained that before the 2016 influx of South Sudanese refugees into the town, funds were more or less adequate. However, since then funding and infrastructure has been strained. Refugees come for pre- and ante-natal services, for medicine and emergency help, and there have been outbreaks of diseases to treat in refugee communities in and around Arua, most recently measles.

**"BUT WHY," ASKED THE  
HEAD DOCTOR, "SHOULD I  
DENY SOMEONE MEDICINE  
JUST BECAUSE THEY'RE NOT  
CAPTURED IN A NATIONAL  
BUDGET?"<sup>130</sup>**

Due to this stretched capacity, every week the clinic runs out of prescription drugs on the same day that they are delivered because of the increase in demand. The head doctor

explained that the health centre's limited capacity for funding for drugs and staff was due to budgets being created based on an outdated census of Arua. The current budgeted amount did not take into account any non-residents in the town, such as refugees, nor did it factor in the many people living elsewhere in Arua district who regularly come into Arua town for access to services. The centre was only planned to cater for 100,000 residents. It now supports an additional 20,000 refugees and an estimated 60,000 Ugandans from the sub-county and wider region.

One site visit to the centre was conducted at the very start of the Covid-19 pandemic in February 2020, mere weeks before the country announced the first lockdown. The doctor waved towards a one-room building, newly constructed. This was to serve as the Covid-19 isolation ward for the entire West Nile region, just as it had previously for Ebola. The room had perhaps capacity for 30 people at most, illustrating a sad snapshot of the limitations the health centre faces every day.

When health challenges were broached, informants had different suggestions. While it is clear that clinics and health centres like Oli need more funding and resources, several informants also noted the need to improve health services within settlements near Arua in order to reduce the demand for services in town.<sup>131</sup> These suggestions illustrate the need for a holistic understanding of urban refugees' situations, which are influenced by situations in the settlements (and elsewhere) such as limited healthcare and reduced food rations.

<sup>130</sup> Interview, Oli Health Centre, C.

<sup>131</sup> Interview, OPM Arua.



### Lack of urban programming for refugees

Interviews with members of Arua Municipality and INGOs with offices in Arua reveal a lack of tailored programmes to meet refugees' needs, while refugees themselves in Arua explain that they receive no government or INGO support.<sup>132</sup> Interestingly, although a range of INGOs have offices in Arua, none of those interviewed had urban programmes. Instead, they solely operated in one of the three nearby refugee settlements. A member of UNHCR bluntly explained this rationale:

**"UNHCR AND INGOs CAN'T OPERATE IN SECONDARY CITIES BECAUSE OF THE GOVERNMENT'S POLICY [OF REFUGEES ONLY BEING RECOGNISED IN SETTLEMENTS OR KAMPALA]. THEY DON'T WANT TO CREATE A PULL FACTOR."<sup>133</sup>**

The head of OPM in Arua echoed this information, stating that there was an unwritten policy of refugees being free to stay in town. He cited pull factors of refugees to Arua as including more educational opportunities than in settlements, medical referrals to clinics in Arua, better business opportunities and a chance to use professional skills, and security needs. He also noted a contradiction that made it harder for urban refugees to receive services in Arua: The Government of Uganda drafted the national refugee policy while UNHCR wrote

the urban refugee policy.<sup>134</sup> While refugees ostensibly were free to live anywhere in the country, it is only when they are in settlements and Kampala, the capital, that they are considered refugees and thus eligible for services. As mentioned above, this tension also impacts refugee-serving organisations, which often want to offer support to the most vulnerable refugees. It was noted by several organisations that although the

poorest refugees often stayed put in the settlements, it was typically those with the most security needs, ranging from ongoing persecution by armed actors or discrimination due to being LGBTQ+, or extreme vulnerabilities such as disabilities, that brought others to urban areas. The lack of support for refugees in urban areas, therefore, represents a lack of assistance for some of those who need assistance and protection the most.

<sup>134</sup> Interview, OPM Arua.



<sup>132</sup> Surveys with urban refugees, #1-24. Collected August and September 2020, led by Evan Easton-Calabria.

<sup>133</sup> Interview, B.



## Refugee experiences in Arua

50 qualitative semi-structured interviews were conducted with refugees in Arua between 2020 and 2021. Forty-eight of the informants were registered at a settlement, with the majority registered at Imvepi or Rhino Settlement, and the remaining at Bidi Bidi. When asked why they had come to Arua, most informants cited needing better education for their children, and two to study themselves. After education, searching for better health facilities was the most common response. All informants, however, stressed

that the war in South Sudan was the driving factor in why they were in Uganda at all.

None of the informants had received any assistance from the central or municipal government, citing lack of information or being ineligible due to being refugees. Two informants had taken part in area meetings to receive information about Covid-19 from their local chairman.

Urban refugees face myriad challenges. The rising cost of rent, food, and transport were cited as the biggest challenges, along with the limited freedom of movement and the closure of schools. Many of these challenges are also faced by the urban poor in Arua, while others such as the closure of schools affected all parents and children in the city. One South Sudanese refugee, a mother of two, explained,

Question: Why did you come to Arua?

**"THE CIVIL WAR IN SOUTH SUDAN MADE ME TO COME TO UGANDA AND I COULD SETTLE IN THE CAMP BECAUSE I NEEDED TO HAVE ACCESS TO THE SERVICES THAT ARE NOT IN THE SETTLEMENT."**

(Informant #2)

**"I WAS FORCED TO COME TO ARUA CITY BY THE CIVIL WAR IN SOUTH SUDAN, BUT I COULD NOT SETTLE IN THE SETTLEMENT BECAUSE I NEEDED GOOD EDUCATION FOR MY CHILDREN."**

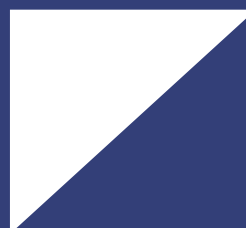
(Informant #13)

**"THE CIVIL WAR IN SOUTH SUDAN FORCED ME TO COME TO UGANDA, I SETTLED IN RHINO REFUGEE SETTLEMENT BUT WHEN MY BABY GOT VERY SICK, I WAS FORCED TO MOVE TO ARUA TO ACCESS BETTER HEALTH FACILITY FOR MY CHILD."**

(Informant #20)

**"MY MAIN AIM OF COMING TO ARUA WAS TO FIND A JOB WHICH CAN HELP ME EARN AND FURTHER MY EDUCATION."**

(Informant #25)





"Living in Arua is really so challenging in that rent is so expensive for me to afford a good house for my family. Landlord keep increasing rent charges which made me to move to where I am right now. The high prices in the market on food items have been hard, especially during the Covid-19 lockdown, yet the food I receive from the settlement cannot sustain my family to the end of the month."<sup>135</sup>

<sup>135</sup> Interview, S.S.

Refugees interviewed describe surviving in the city through a combination of small business and food rations from the settlement they are registered in. Several depend solely on food rations from the settlement, while others depend on family remittances as well as food rations. A sampling of responses can be found in the box below.



Question: How do you support yourself and your family?

**"I TRAVEL TO THE SETTLEMENT ON MONTHLY BASIS TO RECEIVE MY FOOD RATIO AND I ALSO BAKE CAKES AND SUDANESE COOKIES WHICH I SELL TO SUPPORT MY FAMILY." (1)**

**"I SUPPORT MYSELF WITH THE FOOD I GET FROM THE SETTLEMENT AND ALSO SUPPORT THAT I GET FROM MY FAMILY MEMBERS BACK IN SOUTH SUDAN."**

**"I HAVE A SMALL BUSINESS THAT I AM DOING TO HELP MYSELF AND THE FAMILY. SELLING JUICE AND CHAPATTI."**

**"I AM DOING CASUAL WORK IN THE TOWN, AND I ALSO RECEIVE MY FOOD RATIO FROM THE SETTLEMENT."**

**"I SUPPORT MY FAMILY WITH THE FOOD RATIO I RECEIVE FROM THE SETTLEMENT, AND I ALSO SELL PART OF IT TO GET MONEY WHICH I USE FOR OTHER NEEDS OF THE FAMILY."**

**"MY HUSBAND USED TO SEND US SUPPORT FROM SOUTH SUDAN, BUT NOW WE DON'T HAVE ACCESS DUE TO COVID-19."**

**"I DEPEND ON THE FOOD I RECEIVE FROM THE SETTLEMENT AND A SMALL GROCERY SHOP I HAVE OPENED NEAR MY HOME."**



### Urban-settlement mobility as an invisible coping strategy

This research found a troubling lack of support for refugees in Arua, which has become even more problematic during the Covid-19 pandemic.<sup>136</sup> The majority of refugees interviewed are registered in one of the three refugee settlements in Arua District and have generally returned to the settlements monthly to receive food rations. While not officially allowed, this livelihood strategy has enabled some refugees to pursue livelihoods in Arua city while still receiving much-needed extra support. However, as part of Covid-19 lockdown measures, non-essential movement was prohibited, meaning some refugees did not travel or else had to travel in dangerous nighttime conditions. Several reported having motorcycle accidents during these trips due to a combination of bad roads and lack of light. For those that did make the trip, the risk was worth it; they needed to feed their families.

Combined with the disruption of livelihoods activities, this lack of access to food has placed an exceptional burden on urban refugees' ability to take care of themselves and their families. As one South Sudanese refugee in Arua explained in response to refugee needs during the Covid-19 pandemic, "Since there is no data on how many refugees are in the city, there is no special consideration for the refugees in terms of food provision by the organisations."<sup>137</sup> Compounding this, the food rations provided by the World Food Programme (WFP) in the settlements were cut by 30 per cent in April 2020 and further cut in February 2021, leaving refugees with only 60 per cent of a full ration.<sup>138</sup> A WFP food assessment survey found refugees in all 13 settlements in Uganda had 'acute food insecurity'. Given this situation, it is little wonder that many refugees leave settlements in search of work opportunities, or that circular migration acts as a livelihood, and indeed survival, strategy.

<sup>136</sup> Lozet, F. and E. Easton-Calabria. 2020. "Counting Urban Refugees During Covid-19." *Forced Migration Review* 64, 79–80. Available at: <https://www.fmreview.org/sites/fmr/files/FMRdownloads/en/issue64/lozet-eastoncalabria.pdf> (Accessed 1 September 2020).

<sup>137</sup> Ibid.

<sup>138</sup> WFP (World Food Programme). 2021. "WFP Cuts Refugees' Food Rations in Uganda as Funding Declines." Available at: <https://www.wfp.org/news/wfp-cuts-refugees-food-rations-uganda-funding-declines>.

However, this invisible coping strategy of regular urban-settlement mobility in both directions represents a strategy in defiance of policy as it actually plays out in reality. As one head of a refugee-serving organisation explained,

**THERE IS A STORY ABOUT UGANDA AS HEAVEN ON EARTH FOR REFUGEES, AS THE COUNTRY WITH THE MOST PROGRESSIVE POLICIES. THE REALITY IS THAT THERE IS THIS LONGSTANDING PRACTICE THAT YOU HAVE FREEDOM OF MOVEMENT IN PRINCIPLE, BUT IN PRACTICE IF YOU WANT HELP, YOU HAVE TO BE SITTING IN A REFUGEE SETTLEMENT. IF YOU'RE IN A SETTLEMENT, HOWEVER, THEN YOU'RE MEANT TO GET AUTHORISATION TO LEAVE - MEANING THAT IN PRACTICE, FREEDOM OF MOVEMENT IS EXTREMELY CIRCUMSCRIBED. IT ALSO MEANS THAT THE MAJORITY OF PEOPLE IN URBAN AREAS ARE STILL LEFT HANGING BY THE HUMANITARIAN SYSTEM. THE INFRASTRUCTURE IS NOT REALLY THERE TO ACCOMMODATE OR PROCESS URBAN REFUGEES PROPERLY, AND THERE IS REALLY ONLY ONE PLACE FOR URBAN REFUGEES TO GET REGISTERED IN THE WHOLE COUNTRY - KAMPALA.**<sup>139</sup>

<sup>139</sup> Interview, September 2021.







Question: How have you paid rent during Covid-19?

**"YES, I WAS ABLE TO STAY IN MY HOUSE DURING THE PANDEMIC, BUT DESPITE THE PRESIDENT'S ORDERS FOR THE LOCKDOWN I STILL MOVED OUT FOR BUSINESS. I CONTINUED WITH MY BAKING BUSINESS TO GET MONEY WHICH I USED FOR PAYING MY RENT."**

**"I WAS ABLE TO PAY MY RENT FROM THE FINANCIAL SUPPORT I GET FROM MY RELATIVES."**

**"MY LANDLORD IS SO UNDERSTANDING ESPECIALLY DURING THE LOCKDOWN HE LET US STAY WITHOUT PRESSURE TO PAY RENT."**

**"I WAS NOT ABLE TO PAY RENT, SO IT ACCUMULATED, WHICH RESULTED TO MY EVICTION FROM THE HOUSE."**





## Work and access to financial institutions

Although many of the refugees interviewed had a small business in Arua, very few had access to a formal financial institution for either banking or loans. The majority of respondents attributed this to being a refugee and therefore lacking the necessary documentation; however, respondents often added that they did not have any savings and thus no use for a bank. As one employee of a Ugandan NGO working in Arua explained, “Refugees in Arua are allowed to work, but there are barriers in practice. For example, you can do business, but there are restrictions on access to finance as a refugee, and usually a language barrier. The opportunities are there but the context also matters. It affects people differently.”<sup>140</sup>

These findings echo findings on financial barriers to refugees elsewhere in Uganda, such as Kampala.<sup>141</sup> Other research has found that despite policies granting refugees access to financial institutions, a variety of barriers prevent this in practice, including a lack of documentation and/or often a refusal by banks to recognise refugee ID cards. In some instances, this can be attributed to bank policy, but in others it appears to be a lack of knowledge of national policy among staff, suggesting the value of extending literacy on refugee rights to those working in financial institutions. As a result, refugees’ access to finance generally comes through informal loans or grants by friends and family or informal savings groups such as SACCOs.<sup>142</sup> Although promising recent projects and partnerships exist in Uganda to address this challenge to banking, including by UNHCR,<sup>143</sup> the limitation this poses to both business growth and individual financial health raises questions of how ‘self-reliant’ refugees in Uganda can truly become.



Question: Do you have access to banks or loans in Arua?

**“I DO NOT HAVE ACCESS TO A FINANCIAL INSTITUTION, AND AS A REFUGEE I HAVE NO MONEY TO TAKE TO THE BANK OR EVEN PICK A LOAN.”**

**“I HAVE NO ACCESS TO A FINANCIAL INSTITUTION DUE TO LACK OF REFUGEE IDENTITY CARD, WHICH IS REQUIRED DURING THE ACCOUNT OPENING AND SECONDLY, I HAVE NOT ENOUGH FINANCES TO BE SAVED.”**

**“NO, AND THE REASON IS BEING, THE FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS GIVE CASH TO PEOPLE WHO HAVE NATIONAL IDENTIFICATION CARDS AND I HAVE NONE.”**

**“NO, BECAUSE I HAVE NO MONEY TO TAKE TO THE BANK.”**

<sup>140</sup> Interview, NGO, I.

<sup>141</sup> Easton-Calabria, E., and R. Hakiza, 2020. “In the Interest of Saving: Refugee-led Microfinance in Kampala, Uganda.” *Development Policy Review* 39(1): 22–38.

<sup>142</sup> FSD Africa/UK Aid. 2020. *Financial Inclusion for Refugees in Uganda: Baseline Report*. Available at: <https://www.fsdafrica.org/publication/financial-inclusion-for-refugees-in-uganda-baseline-report/>

<sup>143</sup> See for example: <https://www.unhcr.org/afr/events/conferences/5df234214/sida-unhcr-and-grameen-credit-agricole-foundation-join-hands-to-promote.html?query=SIDA>.



### Interactions between refugees and hosts in Arua

Despite barriers (such as to finance), most refugee respondents reported feeling positive about their reception in Uganda and reported varying – mostly positive – degrees of integration. This was attributed to the country's refugee policies as well as longstanding ties between many South Sudanese and Ugandans. As one NGO informant explained, "Most tribes are very interrelated – sometimes it is very hard to tell if they are refugees, in fact, because they have tribes across the border. In most cases refugees are living harmoniously."<sup>144</sup> These findings are in line with other research on refugees' perceptions in Uganda, which overwhelmingly found that refugees felt respected and welcomed in the country.<sup>145</sup>

Snapshot of refugees' perception of integration in Arua

**"MY LANDLORD IS VERY GOOD THAT HE DIDN'T BOTHER ME SO MUCH WITH RENT ARREARS, BECAUSE WHEN I WAS IN SOUTH SUDAN, HE STAYED IN MY HOUSE, SO WE HAVE A HISTORY OF PEACEFUL STAY WITH HIM."**

**"TO ME INTEGRATION MEANS STAYING AND SHARING WITH THE LOCAL SOCIETY. I FEEL INTEGRATED WITH THE LOCAL SOCIETY BECAUSE WHERE I STAY THE LOCALS ARE FRIENDLY WITH ME AND IN CASE OF ANY ACTIVITY IN THE COMMUNITY OR CHURCH, I AM ALWAYS INFORMED, FOR EXAMPLE DURING THE DISTRIBUTION OF THE FACE MASKS."**

**"INTEGRATION TO ME MEANS BEING INCLUDED INTO THE BUDGET OF THE CITY. I DON'T FEEL INTEGRATED BECAUSE AM NOT PLANNED FOR WITHIN THE CITY THOUGH IN THE AREA, THE LOCALS NORMALLY COME TO MY HOME IN CASE OF RESOURCE MOBILISATION."**

**"BEING INTEGRATED IS BEING ABLE TO ACCESS SERVICES EQUALLY WITH THE NATIVES OF THE LAND. YES, I FEEL INTEGRATED."**

<sup>144</sup> Interview, NGO, I.

<sup>145</sup> Ground Truth Solutions. 2020. *Refugee Perception Data in Uganda*. Available at: <https://www.alnap.org/system/files/content/resource/files/main/Refugee%20perceptions%202020.pdf>.

# REFLECTIONS ON REMOTE RESEARCH WITH REFUGEES

**While the above section provided an overview of the challenges surrounding urban refugees and data collection in Arua, this research project also offers some concrete practices to assist in conducting research during lockdowns and other situations where in-person research proves challenging. In particular, this research has benefitted from working with refugee and national researchers, and with and through refugee-led organisations. Other research including past projects that this paper's author was involved in have benefitted enormously from refugee peer researchers, a component of research which is gaining increasing recognition.**

Important research has drawn attention to the ways that engaging refugees as research assistants, including as interviewers, interpreters, and enumerators, can improve the quality of research. It can also pose risks for those refugees remaining in the 'field' and perpetuate ongoing issues of power and exploitation.<sup>146</sup> With this in mind, this paper advocates for the

participation of refugees in research relating to refugees in ways that truly co-produce knowledge, rather than outsource labour and risk.

In February 2020, approximately a month before lockdowns started globally, the principal investigator (PI) of the project (this paper's author) travelled to Arua, Uganda, to train two researchers to partake in the project, a South Sudanese refugee and a Ugandan national. The original research plan was for the two researchers to conduct interviews over the course of several months which would be transcribed and sent to the PI, with remote meetings planned 2-3 times a week. The PI was meant to travel to Arua every three months during the duration of fieldwork to conduct further interviews. Due to Covid-19, however, this research plan was quickly altered. Research was initially halted until July 2020, when the research team decided that a combination of remote interviews held over phone and WhatsApp as well as paper surveys provided directly to research informants would be used. Potential informants were contacted through snowballing as well as 'cold-calling', a slow process given that many organisational employees were working remotely and not using office phones. Due to existing contacts with South Sudanese refugees, as well as through making contact with refugee-led organisations in Arua and the surrounding areas, refugees were contacted to be interviewed. Despite initial challenges, remote research has worked remarkably well.

Both qualitative and quantitative information has been collected, although all involved researchers note that in instances it takes longer to establish rapport with informants than it might in-person; follow-up calls to collect more information have been useful to mitigate this.

The success of this research approach highlights the value of, and indeed necessity of, trusted community members or 'gatekeepers' to facilitate research. While many researchers would likely agree with this statement, it too often appears to be overlooked or considered not worthy to be mentioned within academia – which in turn risks perpetuating unequal research power dynamics and a neglect of important ethical discussions on research with vulnerable populations.<sup>147</sup> Yet having strong gatekeepers and researchers was particularly important in the case of partially remote research such as this, as normal venues where both organisational employees and refugees could in pre-pandemic times be reached – offices – were not available.

Other research adaptations also aided data collection during lockdown. The use of paper surveys was explicitly requested by several employees of international organisations, who preferred to reflect on answers through writing rather than speak directly. The research team also offered for interviews to take place over WhatsApp voice notes (messages) rather than through a direct call as needed, which several informants accepted due to time conflicts in scheduling interviews. Several in-depth qualitative interviews were conducted using computer-assisted telephone interviewing (CATI). Surveys were undertaken via KoBo Toolbox, a secure application for building and analysing surveys

<sup>146</sup> Mackenzie, C., C. McDowell, and E. Pittaway. 2007. "Beyond 'Do No Harm': The Challenge of Constructing Ethical Relationships in Refugee Research." *Journal of Refugee Studies* 20(2), 299-319.; Pincock, K., and W. Bakunzi. 2020. "Power, Participation, and 'Peer Researchers': Addressing Gaps in Refugee Research Ethics Guidance." *Journal of Refugee Studies*.

<sup>147</sup> McAreavey, R., and C. Das. 2013. "A Delicate Balancing Act: Negotiating with Gatekeepers for Ethical Research When Researching Minority Communities." *International Journal of Qualitative Methods* 12(1), 113-131.





**"REFUGEES OFTEN KEEP [THEIR] WHATSAPP NUMBER OR UPDATE WITH THEIR NEW ONE AFTER CHANGING COUNTRIES, MEANING IT CAN BE EASIER TO STAY IN CONTACT THAN WITH REGULAR NUMBERS THAT NO LONGER WORK ONCE BORDERS ARE CROSSED."**

and data in humanitarian contexts, which enables collected data to be immediately analysed on the platform. This combination of remote phone and WhatsApp interviews – including through voice notes, remote surveying, and paper survey – has proved successful for this qualitative research project.

For larger, quantitative projects, making use of SMS and WhatsApp interviewing and surveying has proven effective. For example, an UNDP study of WhatsApp surveys in Lebanon noted the value of both written and voice message function, the fact that WhatsApp is a widely used platform in Lebanon (and many other countries), and that "refugees often keep [their] WhatsApp number or update with their new one after changing countries, meaning it can be easier to stay in contact than with regular numbers that no longer work once borders are crossed."<sup>148</sup> Based on these features, it found that WhatsApp can function for research with refugees as a 'deep-dive qualitative survey tool', a 'real-time monitoring tool', and a 'cross-country communication tool' in addition to others. For similar reasons, other research on refugee phone usage in Lebanon suggests that humanitarian agencies should consider moving away from mass SMS communication with refugees and towards WhatsApp.<sup>149</sup> The researchers on refugee phone usage concluded, for example, that:

**"BY RETAINING A LEBANESE NUMBER THEY DO NOT NEED FOR OTHER PURPOSES, MANY SYRIANS ARE EFFECTIVELY PAYING A MONTHLY FEE FOR THE ABILITY TO RECEIVE SMS MESSAGES AND CALLS FROM UNHCR."**<sup>150</sup>

More recent technology can also offer large-scale research opportunities. Remote sensing imagery taken from drones or satellites are one way to gain or improve data on a range of situations, including, but not limited to, the population in a given area,<sup>151</sup> human rights violations as part of 'human-rights mapping',<sup>152</sup> and the state of infrastructure after conflict or natural disasters.<sup>153</sup> One remote sensing case study, for instance, counted the numbers of structures, such as tents, in African and Middle Eastern refugee settlements in order to estimate population size.<sup>154</sup> It found high levels of accuracy, but noted significant variation pixel data imagery from different sensors and regions, which can impede findings if not carefully examined.<sup>155</sup> While both advanced technology and expertise in analysing the resultant data is needed, remote sensing technology offers a safer (contactless) form of data collection particularly useful for large-scale research.

<sup>148</sup> UNDP. 2018. *WhatsApp Surveying Guide: Lessons Learnt from Two Qualitative WhatsApp Surveys in Lebanon*. UNDP: Geneva.

<sup>149</sup> Göransson, M. 2018. *Apping and Resilience: How Smartphones Help Syrian Refugees in Lebanon Negotiate the Precarity of Displacement*. Policy Brief, Clingendael, July 2018, at <https://www.clingendael.org/publication/how-smartphones-help-syrian-refugees-lebanon>.

<sup>150</sup> Ibid.

<sup>151</sup> Quinn, J. A., M. M. Nyhan, C. Navarro, D. Coluccia, L. Bromley, and M. Luengo-Oroz. 2018. "Humanitarian Applications of Machine Learning with Remote-Sensing Data: Review and Case Study in Refugee Settlement Mapping." *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society A: Mathematical, Physical and Engineering Sciences* 376(2128), 20170363.

<sup>152</sup> Marx A, and S. Goward. 2013. Remote Sensing in Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law Monitoring: Concepts and Methods. *Geographical Review* 103, 100-111. (DOI:10.1111/j.1931-0846.2013.00188.x)

<sup>153</sup> UNOSAT-UNITAR. 2015. *Impact of the 2014 Conflict in the Gaza Strip: UNOSAT Satellite Derived Geospatial Analysis*. See <https://unosat.web.cern.ch/> (accessed March 2018).

<sup>154</sup> Quinn et al., "Humanitarian applications of machine learning with remote-sensing data."

<sup>155</sup> Ibid.



### Next steps for remote research with refugees

Currently, a lack of testing and limited access to data on the pandemic in crisis-affected countries in Africa has led to fears that the 'Covid response is fighting the epidemic in the dark', with widespread ramifications both within countries and around the globe. It is assumed that many low-income countries, particularly those affected by conflict, have many more cases than official numbers suggest. Given the under-testing in many cities, it is hard to fully understand the impact of the virus and the level of support required to combat it. When this assumption is coupled with the extant lack of data on numbers and locations of urban refugees, it is evident that more robust data collection is crucial.

One clear way for this to occur, as alluded to earlier in this paper, is for the governments of host countries to acknowledge the reality of urban refugees by allowing them to legally reside in urban areas per the 2009

revised UNHCR urban refugee policy, if that is not already allowed. This then paves the way for refugees to be included in urban censuses to provide regular snapshots into the number and types of city inhabitants. At the same time, there is an obvious need for better data collection on all inhabitants in many urban areas of sub-Saharan Africa, particularly in secondary cities, where less data has historically been collected.<sup>156</sup> The Covid-19 pandemic presents one, though by no means the only, challenge of limited data on populations. How can peak infection rates be estimated if the number of city inhabitants is not known, for example? More optimistically, how can the number of needed vaccines in any given area be confirmed – and thus Covid-19 be contained – if refugees are not considered legal inhabitants to be included?

This research has highlighted a variety of remote research tools – including WhatsApp and phone interviews, paper surveys, and SMS qualitative and quantitative data collection – that can support states and other actors in conducting research on refugees during the

Covid-19 pandemic and in other similarly constrained contexts. In particular, it acknowledges the importance of engaging refugee researchers and gatekeepers as co-researchers and collaborators in research on refugee populations. This is both ethically and practically important and has the potential to greatly increase the breadth and quality of research. Refugee community organisations also offer important yet under-acknowledged pathways to accessing communities and sharing information from collected research.

During the Covid-19 pandemic and likely beyond, quasi-remote and creative forms of data collection will be needed to understand both the impact on refugees and their resulting needs. Identifying and improving effective modes of data collection that minimise risk to both researchers and informants, and which attend to power imbalances that may exist at both local and international scales, are crucial. Increasing data on urban refugees should represent a key area of focus to support the health, well-being, and dignity of not only refugees, but all urban inhabitants and cities as a whole.

<sup>156</sup> Borel-Saladin, J. 2017. "Where to Draw the Line: Data Problems and Other Difficulties Estimating Urbanisation in Africa." *Development Southern Africa* 34(2), 137-150.



### Discussion: No data? No funding - and 'no' refugees

The research presented above of refugees and municipal responses in Arua paint a picture of a welcoming city in need of resources. The political and financial structures that contribute to this situation – while assuredly also international in nature – are also generated by the national status quo. In Uganda, taxes are collected by the central government and then distributed as grants to districts; funding for municipalities is based in part on population size, which is determined from often outdated censuses. While Uganda's Local Government Act provides formulas for resource allocation including number of inhabitants, refugees and asylum seekers are not included in this equation.<sup>157</sup> Despite decentralisation as a key policy reform for the Ugandan government in the early 1990s, municipalities still struggle to access the funding they need to operate. This issue is compounded by the fact that in Uganda, refugee issues – and the concomitant international resources – are generally dealt with at a district level. For example, UNHCR data on refugees in the country provides information on numbers in main refugee-hosting districts but does not have more detailed figures of refugees' geographic locations, except for estimates in camps and settlements. In Arua, as refugees are not formally counted as urban inhabitants, no additional funding is allocated to yearly budgets to account for the increased demand on services that this significant number of people create. This combination of lack of data and funding makes it very difficult for cities such as Arua to adequately plan and provide for all their residents.<sup>158</sup>

<sup>157</sup> GoU. 1997. Local Government Act. Kampala, Government of Uganda.

<sup>158</sup> Lozet and Easton-Calabria, "Counting Urban Refugees During Covid-19."

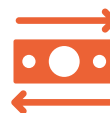
This in turn reflects a chicken-or-egg dilemma facing municipalities in many refugee-hosting countries: policies prohibiting the settlement of refugees in urban areas beyond the capital (or at all) then lead to a lack of data on those urban refugees that have settled, regardless of policy. In these situations, 'spontaneously settled' refugees in urban areas are at best invisible and at worst targeted and vilified. Of course, being invisible and in need is hardly a best-case scenario for either refugees or the cities and towns hosting them. Because they are not formally counted as urban inhabitants, no additional funding is allocated to yearly budgets to account for the increased demand on services created by this significant number of people.

If urban refugees were properly accounted for in censuses, the municipalities in which they reside would in theory receive more resources from the central government to support their populations, including refugees. The provision of support could then reflect the actual number of those in need, while also potentially shedding light on the contributions such as taxes that some refugees already offer urban areas.<sup>159</sup> Stronger healthcare systems designed for the real number of inhabitants of municipalities, rather than just their citizens, could be created. And in turn, the health and well-being of both urban refugees and local citizens could be improved. International organisations might have the information needed to develop urban programmes in cities and towns they do not currently operate in. Notably, in terms of research and data collection, census data offers an important starting point for further research. The extant gaps in data that preclude these possibilities from becoming reality demonstrate a clear need to include urban refugees in censuses and government planning, including development and city plans, and in some cases direct more international programming and support to the urban displaced.

<sup>159</sup> Please note the body of literature on tax contributions that refugees make in contexts of resettlement. However, this evidence is less robust in the Global South due to a lack of data collection as well as the fact that, according to estimates, 70 per cent of refugees live in countries with restricted or no right to work. In part due to this, most refugees in the Global South work in the informal sector. Sources: UNHCR. 2020. "Livelihoods and Economic Inclusion." Webpage available at: <https://www.unhcr.org/livelihoods.html> (Accessed 19 September 2020); Dempster, Helen, Thomas Ginn, Jimmy Graham, Martha Guerrero Ble, Daphne Jayasinghe, and Barri Shorey. 2020. *Locked Down and Left Behind: The Impact of COVID-19 on Refugees' Economic Inclusion*. Center for Global Development, Refugees International, and International Rescue Committee Policy Paper. Center for Global Development: Washington, DC. Available at: <https://www.cgdev.org/sites/default/files/locked-down-and-left-behind-paper-71320.pdf> (Accessed 19 September 2020).



# RECOMMENDATIONS



International agencies working with refugees in Uganda should advocate to provide assistance to urban refugees and consider how assistance could be channelled through local and national organisations that work in areas where refugees reside and, in this way, offer assistance through area-based approaches.



Arua Municipal Authority should continue to discuss and advocate for the rights of urban refugees in the municipality. The outspokenness of the former mayor, as well as the awareness of current employees of the existence and needs of refugees, should be built on by advocating for refugees to be included in further urban censuses, assistance from local as well as international agencies, and increased transfers by the central government to account for the increased demand for services due in part to refugee inhabitants.



Future gatherings of Arua's City Development Forum (CDF) should discuss interventions that could be targeted to both locals and refugees within the city and develop a concept note that can be used to approach potential donors.



The Government of Uganda should legally recognise urban refugees as refugees and provide them the right to legally reside in all urban areas of Uganda, in line with the 2009 revised UNHCR Urban Refugee Policy. In addition to increasing many refugees' quality of life and access to services, this offers an important foundation for badly needed data collection on urban inhabitants.



The Government of Uganda should include urban refugees in censuses to better understand numbers and needs and ensure that central government and international funding to municipalities takes displaced inhabitants into account.



National and international actors working with refugees in Uganda should convene to have frank discussions about the relationship between urban areas and refugee settlements in terms of refugees' circular migration and how both urban areas and settlements could adjust policies to promote the well-being of refugees and hosts. One example of this adjustment was the WFP's shift in policy during Covid-19 to allow food rations in settlements to be received in absentia by family and friends.



**Government actors such as the Uganda Bureau of Statistics and the Office of the Prime Minister as well as national and international agencies should collect more data and research on the locations of urban refugees in terms of size and type of city and town, and how these settings affect their lives, livelihoods, and integration, etc.**

**These actors should conduct flexible research by obtaining information through as many channels as possible to account for a variety of contexts refugees may be in (e.g., paper and online surveys, phone calls, WhatsApp messages and voice notes).**

- › Administering surveys via WhatsApp, for example, increases the likelihood of contacting refugees who have either changed their phone number or left the country.

- › WhatsApp voice notes offer a format of interviewing that is not dependent on a stable internet connection (though strong internet is needed at some point to send messages).
- › Computer-assisted telephone interviewing (CATI) can enable both small- and large-scale data collection to be quickly collated and analysed and can be more systematic than other qualitative interviewing methods.
- › Paper surveys, while slower to record and analyse, can reach informants without internet or phones and remains an important method of research, although surveys recorded via tablets by interviewers can be much faster.
- › Large-scale research, such as estimating populations, can be conducted fully remotely through remote sensing technology. However, ethical considerations surrounding consent remain.
- › Include refugees in research decision-making and design processes and involve them in data collection and analysis.



# CHAPTER 4: CASE STUDY OF CRISIS MIGRATION IN TURKANA COUNTY, KENYA



## INTRODUCTION

**When people hear of refugees in Kenya, they are more likely to imagine the sprawling complex of Dadaab, long the world's largest refugee camp, than refugees walking freely in cities. While the Republic of Kenya has a long history of rural-urban migration, economic-driven, cross-border migration, and forced migration, much of the international focus on refugees has remained on those in camps. However, forced migration to Kenya includes that to urban areas, and increasingly camps themselves are being compared to - or are even in the process of becoming - formal cities.**

This chapter draws on primary research conducted by UN-Habitat and secondary research and scholarship to present a case study of so-called crisis migration within Turkana County, Kenya. In so doing, it presents the reality of mixed flows of migration to urban areas in sub-Saharan Africa, ranging from refugees to 'economic migrants' to pastoralists joining others in urban destitution. While in some ways Turkana County is an outlier in terms of international funding and investment, it is also deeply emblematic of both the opportunities and challenges that forced migration flows bring to under-served urban areas.







A person stands in the center of the frame, wearing a vibrant, multi-colored patterned shuka (wrap) and a matching beaded necklace. They are positioned in a dusty, open area with sparse vegetation. In the background, there are trees and a small building under a warm, golden sunset sky. The word 'OVERVIEW' is written in large, white, sans-serif capital letters on the left side of the image.

## OVERVIEW

Since the 1980s, Kenya has accepted high numbers of refugees, building on its 1967 Immigration Act. Since 1991, a significant number of them have been Somali refugees. Currently, there are 521,185 registered refugees (89 per cent) and asylum seekers (11 per cent) in Kenya, although the actual number is likely much higher. Refugees mainly originate from Somalia, South Sudan, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia, and Burundi. Eighty-four per cent

reside in two camp complexes that are among the largest in the world – 44 per cent in Dadaab (Eastern Kenya), 40 per cent in Kakuma (Northwestern Kenya), and 16 per cent officially registered in urban areas (Nairobi).<sup>160</sup>


Although nowhere officially counted, research shows that many refugees and asylum seekers remain unregistered in Kenya. This makes

gaining a clear understanding of levels and impacts of forced migration in Kenya challenging. As O'Callaghan et al., 2019 state, "Despite Kenya's encampment policy, 75,000 refugees are registered as urban refugees outside the camps, with their presence implicitly endorsed by the Kenyan authorities. Due to lack of data, there are also an unknown number of unregistered refugees."<sup>161</sup>

<sup>160</sup> UNHCR. 2021. Kenya Registered Refugees and Asylum-seekers, 30 June 2021. Available at: <https://www.unhcr.org/ke/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2021/07/Kenya-Infographics-30-June-2021.pdf>.

<sup>161</sup> O'Callaghan, S., F. Manji, K. Holloway, and C. Lowe. 2019. "The Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework: Progress in Kenya." Humanitarian Policy Group Working Paper. Overseas Development Institute (ODI): London. Available at: <https://cdn.odi.org/media/documents/12940.pdf>.





## Rapid urbanisation and demographic change

Kenya is seen as an economic, financial, and transport hub of eastern Africa. It is also one of the fastest growing economies in sub-Saharan Africa, internationally known for tourism and horticulture exports, such as tea and coffee. However, wealth is not evenly distributed. Over 40 per cent of Kenya's citizens live on less than one dollar per day, and 90 per cent of those with one dollar per day live in rural areas.<sup>162</sup>

Strikingly, Kenya's population has doubled in the last 20 years. Currently, 73 per cent of Kenya's population lives in rural areas and 27 per cent in urban ones, with an annual population growth rate of 4.01 per cent – one of the fastest in the world.<sup>163</sup> By 2058, the population could exceed 100 million, with the urban population likely to reach 50 per cent by

2050. Kenyans move to cities to pursue economic, employment, and educational opportunities not found in rural areas. The country's capital and major urban area, Nairobi, has more than doubled its population since 1986 partly due to rural-urban migration.<sup>164</sup>

While urbanisation can have positive effects, the rapid urbanisation rate has raised major socioeconomic and environmental concerns, including high rates of youth unemployment and poverty. For example, despite urban development, more than half of Nairobi's population lives in slum areas.<sup>165</sup> In addition, a comparison between NASA's satellite image of Landsat 5 in 1986 and Landsat 8 in 2016 clearly shows the expansion of the city and the encroachment on former green spaces such as nearby national parks and forests (particularly the Karura forest).<sup>166</sup>

The case is similar and sometimes even more pronounced in the country's rapidly expanding secondary cities. Research has found that informal employment is higher in secondary towns in Kenya (Nakuru, Kisii and Kilifi) than in Nairobi, and that some towns have a 30 per cent higher rate of residents living in informal settlements than in Nairobi.<sup>167</sup> As will be discussed further in this chapter (and was also evident in the case of Arua, Uganda), research also finds that refugee camps can trigger urbanisation in Kenya. This has been particularly noted in Turkana County, where the Kakuma camp and Kalobeyei settlement are situated, and Garissa County, the location of Dadaab camps.<sup>168</sup> These counties host the largest number of refugees and asylum seekers in Kenya.

<sup>162</sup> UN-Habitat. 2021. *Socio-Economic Development in Turkana West, Kenya, Volume I : Report on Socio-Economic Conditions*. UN-Habitat Kenya.

<sup>163</sup> World Bank. 2021. "Urban population (% of total population) - Kenya." Available at: <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.URB.GROW?locations=KE>.

<sup>164</sup> Metcalfe, J. 2016. "Looking Down at Nairobi's Explosive Growth." *Bloomberg*. Available at: <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2016-09-30/nairobi-s-huge-urban-expansion-as-seen-from-space>.

<sup>165</sup> Ibid.

<sup>166</sup> NASA. 2016. "Nairobi Swells with Urban Growth." Available at: <https://earthobservatory.nasa.gov/images/88822/nairobi-swells-with-urban-growth>.

<sup>167</sup> UNICEF (2020) *Analysis of Multiple Deprivations in Secondary Cities in Sub-Saharan Africa*. Analysis Report, available at : <https://www.unicef.org/esa/media/5561/file/Analysis%20of%20Multiple%20Deprivations%20in%20Secondary%20Cities%20-%20Analysis%20Report.pdf>

<sup>168</sup> UN-Habitat (2021) *Socio-Economic Development in Turkana West, Vol II : A Report on Businesses and the Local Economic Development*. UN-Habitat Kenya. p.18.



# KENYA'S REFUGEE POLICY

Kenya is known for its restrictionist policy of encampment. Although many refugee rights are enshrined in the 2006 Refugees Act, they are difficult to realise in practice. The Government of Kenya has denied refugees the right to work and limited their movements outside of camps. The Act requires refugees to live in designated areas. Although legally refugees have the same employment rights as other non-citizens, they need a 'Class M permit' to work. These permits are issued by the Director of Immigration Services, and are generally only available in Nairobi, which makes them challenging for many to obtain. In places such as Kakuma and Kalobeyei, these practical restrictions contribute to critical movement and employment restrictions.<sup>169</sup>

<sup>169</sup> Betts, A., Omata, N., & Streck, O. (2018) 'Refugee Economies in Kenya' *University of Oxford, Refugee Studies Center*. Available at: [https://www.refugee-economies.org/assets/downloads/Report\\_Refugee\\_Economies\\_in\\_Kenya.pdf](https://www.refugee-economies.org/assets/downloads/Report_Refugee_Economies_in_Kenya.pdf)

Prior to 2006, Kenya lacked a national refugee legislation, although its approach before the 1990s was much freer, allowing refugees to work, move, and live around the country. A variety of agreements and amendments since 2006 have increasingly securitised refugees and sought to limit their arrivals. In fact, the 2014 Security Laws (Amendment) Act legitimised it as a criminal offense for refugees to reside outside of camps without government permission.<sup>170</sup> The amendment came after an attack on the Westgate Mall in Nairobi on 21 September 2013 that killed 68 people, and a second attack on 23 March 2014 by the Somali Islamist militant group al-Shabaab in Kenya<sup>171</sup> on a church in Mombasa that killed six people.<sup>172</sup>

In response to the emerging security challenges in urban areas, the Cabinet Secretary issued a statement that "all refugees residing outside the designated refugee camps of Kakuma and Dadaab are hereby directed to return to their respective camps with immediate effect. There are no other designated refugee camps outside these areas. Any refugee found flouting this directive will be dealt with in accordance with the law. Consequently, all registration centres in urban areas – Nairobi, Mombasa, Malindi, Isiolo and Nakuru – are hereby closed."<sup>173</sup>

<sup>170</sup> To learn more, see this commentary: <https://theconversation.com/kenyas-harsh-new-security-laws-put-hundreds-of-thousands-of-refugees-at-risk-35789>

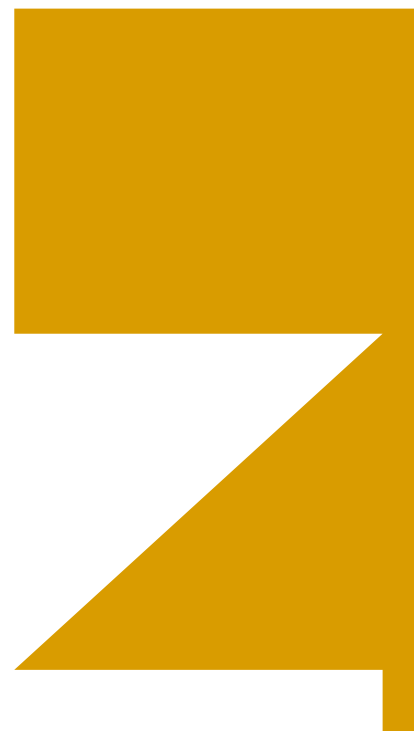
<sup>171</sup> Akwiri, J. 2014. "Gunmen Kill Six in Attack on Kenyan Church." *Reuters*. Available at: <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-kenya-attacks/gunmen-kill-six-in-attack-on-kenyan-church-idUSBREA2M0AG20140323>.

<sup>172</sup> Human Rights Watch. 2014. "Kenya: Plan to Force 50,000 Refugees into Camps, New Scheme Flouts Court Ruling." Available at: <https://www.hrw.org/news/2014/03/26/kenya-plan-force-50000-refugees-camps#>.

<sup>173</sup> Government of Kenya. 2014. Press Statement by Cabinet Secretary for Interior and Coordination of National Government on Refugees and National Security Issues. 26 March. Available at: [https://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/related\\_material/PRESS%20STATEMENT%20BY%20CABINET%20SECRETARY%20FOR%20INTERIOR%20%20COORDINATION%20OF%20NATI%20%20%20.pdf](https://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/related_material/PRESS%20STATEMENT%20BY%20CABINET%20SECRETARY%20FOR%20INTERIOR%20%20COORDINATION%20OF%20NATI%20%20%20.pdf).

**"KENYA IS RENOWNED FOR ITS EAGERNESS TO SUPPORT, DRAFT AND SIGN INSTRUMENTS AIMED AT PROTECTING THE RIGHTS OF REFUGEES AND ASYLUM-SEEKERS, BUT SADLY NOT FOR IMPLEMENTING THEM."**

- Amnesty International, 2018



Kenyan citizens were also told to report refugees who were not in compliance with this order to authorities and security was increased in urban areas.<sup>174</sup> Five hundred police officers were deployed in Nairobi and Mombasa to 'enhance security'.

This Act had a profound effect on many urban refugees in Kenya, who were threatened directly or indirectly with being forced back into a camp, where some faced increased discrimination. As one report described, "Changes [since 2014] to how refugees register and receive official refugee status in the country have created confusion among both refugees and the responsible agencies in Kenya. There are lengthy delays and multiple documents issued to refugees as proof of their registration. These barriers have left some refugees without any official documentation, which can negatively affect access to vital services such as healthcare."<sup>175</sup>

Since then, those refugees in camps have also received threats for forcible return. In 2016 Kenya announced its intention to close the Dadaab refugee camp. Following this, the Department of Refugee Affairs (DRA) was established and changed to Refugee Affairs Secretariat (RAS).<sup>176</sup> Today RAS is responsible for several major services, including refugee status determination (RSD), registration, protection, documentation, repatriation, and relocation.<sup>177</sup> In March 2021, the Government of Kenya ordered the closing of the Dadaab and Kakuma camps, and gave UNHCR two weeks to deliver a plan. Experts claim, however, that this action will not resolve Kenya's issues.<sup>178</sup> As Human Rights Watch stated, "Despite the Kenyan government's frequent statements that Somali refugees in Kenya are responsible for Kenya's insecurity, officials have not provided credible evidence linking Somali refugees to any terrorist attacks in Kenya."<sup>179</sup>

174 Hurlbert, E. 2020. "Kenya and the Securitization of Refugees." *Security Distillery*. Available at: <https://thesecuritydistillery.org/all-articles/kenya-and-the-securitization-of-refugees>.

175 IIED. 2019. *Urban Refugees in Nairobi: Tackling Barriers to Accessing Housing Services and Infrastructure*. December, Working Paper. Available at: <https://pubs.iied.org/sites/default/files/pdfs/migrate/10882IIED.pdf>.

176 O'Callaghan, S., et al., "The Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework: Progress in Kenya."

177 Refugee Affairs Secretariat (n.d.) Ministry of Interior and Coordination of National Government State Department for Interior and Citizen Services, Official website. Available at: [https://refugee.go.ke/?page\\_id=271#](https://refugee.go.ke/?page_id=271#).

178 Frelick, B. 2021. "Closing camps Won't Solve Kenya's Refugee Problem." *Human Rights Watch*. Available at: <https://www.hrw.org/news/2021/04/13/closing-camps-wont-solve-kenyas-refugee-problem>.

179 <https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2021/apr/01/kenya-issues-ultimatum-to-un-to-close-camps-housing-almost-400000-refugees>.



## BOX 9 REGISTERING THE FORCIBLY DISPLACED IN KENYA

In 2016, UNHCR handed over refugee registration to the Government of Kenya through its Refugee Affairs Secretariat (RAS).

Registration mainly occurs in refugee camps.

There is no formal migrant/forced migrant registration process in cities, except for the capital Nairobi and the secondary cities of Mombasa, Eldoret and Nakuru.

There is the regular suspension of refugee registration by the Government of Kenya, such as in Nairobi in 2012 and 2014, and frequently in the Dadaab camp.

There has been a stricter encampment policy since 2014, with the majority of registration efforts focused on camp-based populations.

# KENYA'S GOVERNMENT STRUCTURE

**In addition to the refugee-specific policies outlined above, the government structure of Kenya affects the reception of refugees and forced migrants in urban areas. This section provides an overview of Kenya's government structure and legislative acts relevant to the ability of cities and towns to effectively respond to crisis migration.**

The Republic of Kenya comprises three branches of government, including the executive, legislature, and judiciary.<sup>180</sup> Based on the 2010 constitution, the government structure is two-tiered, divided into national and county levels.

The 2011 Urban Areas and Cities Act was created "to provide for the classification, governance and management of urban areas and cities; to provide for the criteria of establishing urban areas, to provide for the principle of governance and participation of residents and for connected purposes."<sup>181</sup> Revised in 2015, the Act describes the "criteria for classifying urban areas and cities, i.e., the requirements for conferment of city, municipal and town status."<sup>182</sup> It has been instrumental in discussions on whether city status can be conferred

on the integrated refugee settlement of Kalobeyei, as will be further discussed in the chapter. The 2012 County Government Act, which focused on devolution and the development of, and investment in, resources to local communities, with the aim of creating a more balanced urban structure.

The recent process of government decentralisation has also impacted the management of forced migration. As summarised by the World Bank in 2013: "Kenyans voted to decentralize government, ushering in a new era of leadership with 47 governors and their teams taking up the reins of power in newly created counties. County governments negotiated a working relationship with the national government in terms of power and revenue sharing, and have encountered political, fiscal and administrative challenges in the delivery of services to Kenyans. As new entities, county governments lacked the capacity, knowledge and resources to effectively deliver the devolution dividend of shared prosperity, enhanced delivery of vital services and improved management of public resources."<sup>183</sup>

The process of decentralisation has included administration functions, which has been noted as particularly important for Arid and Semi-Arid land (ASAL) counties where:

**"MARGINALISATION HAS FOR DECADES CONTRIBUTED TO THE AREA AND ITS POPULATIONS SLOW RATE OF DEVELOPMENT. BY ASSIGNING URBAN MANAGEMENT DUTIES TO COUNTY GOVERNMENTS, THE COUNTY GOVERNMENT ACT EQUALLY PRESENTS OPPORTUNITIES FOR URBAN PLANNING AS WELL AS ENHANCED PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN URBAN PLANNING PROCESSES AT THE LOCAL LEVEL."**

Currently, the 47 county governments, which include a County Assembly and County Executive, aim to manage their own affairs and development, giving citizens a sense of identity and self-empowerment, in part through the existence of over 290 sub-counties. However, an urbanisation review of Kenya found that decentralisation led to significant challenges in "consistent and accountable service delivery."<sup>184</sup> As detailed in the case study of Turkana County below, the presence of refugees and other forced migrants have both challenged and enhanced service provision.

<sup>180</sup> Kenya Consulate Office (n.d.) Government Structure. Webpage, available at: <https://kenyaembassyuscat.com/government-structure.html>.

<sup>181</sup> <https://www.devolutionhub.or.ke/resource/urban-areas-and-cities-act-2011>.

<sup>182</sup> UN Habitat, *Urban Law Database*.

<sup>183</sup> World Bank. 2019. "Kenya's Devolution." 26 November. Available at: <https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/kenya/brief/kenyas-devolution>.

<sup>184</sup> World Bank. 2016. *Kenya Urbanisation Review*. World Bank: Washington, D.C. Available at: <https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/639231468043512906/pdf/AUS8099-WP-P148360-PUBLIC-KE-Urbanisation-ACS.pdf>.



Kenya's 47 county governments are further divided into different tiers of local government. According to Article 176 (2) of the constitution,

**"EVERY COUNTY GOVERNMENT SHALL DECENTRALISE ITS FUNCTIONS AND THE PROVISION OF ITS SERVICES TO THE EXTENT THAT IT IS EFFICIENT AND PRACTICABLE TO DO SO."<sup>185</sup>**

The source of funding for these local governments is government transfers that are done through the Local Authorities Service Transfer Fund, comprising locally collected revenue such as fees, property taxes, and donor funding, among others.<sup>186</sup> Article 203(2) of the constitution stipulates that "not less than 15 per cent of revenue raised nationally must be allocated to county governments."<sup>187</sup>

185 Government of Kenya. 2010. *Kenya's Constitution of 2010*. Available at: [https://www.constituteproject.org/constitution/Kenya\\_2010.pdf?lang=en](https://www.constituteproject.org/constitution/Kenya_2010.pdf?lang=en).

186 Bosire, C. 2010. "Local Government in Kenya." Available at: <https://dullahomarinstitute.org.za/multilevel-govt/local-government-bulletin/archives/volume-12-issue-2-june-2010/lgb-iss-12-2-local-government-in-kenya.pdf>.

187 CLGF (Commonwealth Local Government Forum). 2018. "Local Government System in Kenya." Available at: [http://www.clgf.org.uk/default/assets/File/Country\\_profiles/Kenya.pdf](http://www.clgf.org.uk/default/assets/File/Country_profiles/Kenya.pdf).

**"NOT LESS THAN 15 PER CENT OF REVENUE RAISED NATIONALLY MUST BE ALLOCATED TO COUNTY GOVERNMENTS."**

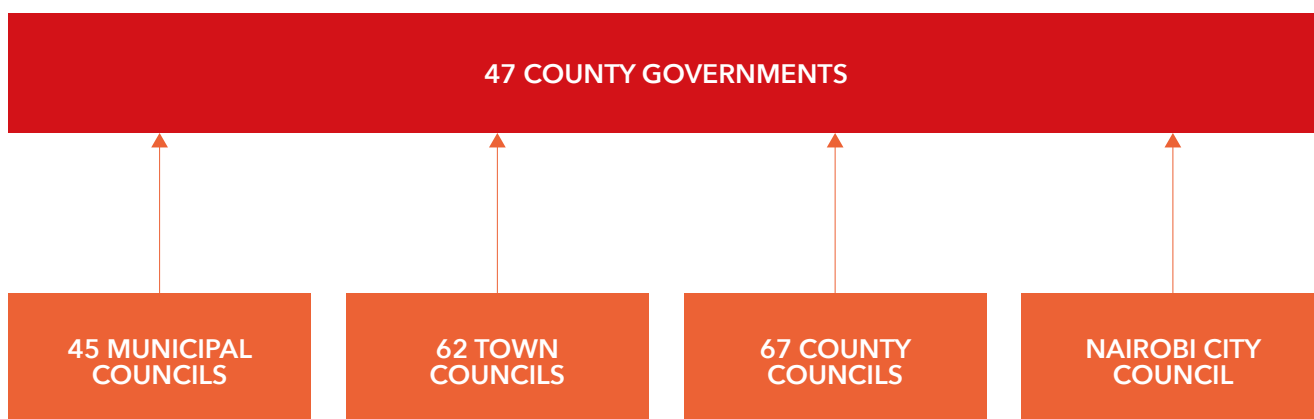
County governments receive revenue from the state and, according to Article 203(2), this will amount to at least 15 per cent of the revenue raised by national government. Marginalised communities within the counties also receive money from the government's Equalisation Fund, which benefits from 1.5 per cent of the national revenue based on the most recent audited accounts. Equalisation Fund money is available for the improvement of services such as water, roads, health and electricity to bring them up to the level of those in non-marginalised communities. The money is disbursed through conditional

grants.<sup>188</sup> However, in practice, there are challenges with the allocation and disbursement of funds, and both county governments and marginalised communities are in need of many more funds than they actually receive. This is all the more apparent in refugee-hosting regions such as Turkana County, which is discussed in the following section.

188 Ibid.

**FIGURE 3**

System of Government and Management of Urban Areas (World Bank, 2016).



# TURKANA COUNTY

**Turkana County illustrates many of the challenges of forced displacement, urbanisation, and climate change. Refugees, migrating pastoralists, and other rural-urban migration for economic survival makes up the so-called 'crisis migration' in the county. According to the County Government of Turkana, increased urbanisation is driven by rural-urban migration and the 'diminishing prospects of livelihoods' from traditional pastoralism. Climate issues, such as droughts, have caused people to move to the cities in search of urban-based opportunities, especially youth. Young people of Turkana County increasingly migrate to urban centres in search a change of livelihoods and access to education and trainings.**

In Turkana County, the largest section of the population lives in rural settlements, while the urban population is in Lodwar and smaller towns. Kakuma and Kalobeyi are the largest clustered human settlement, including the host community. According to 2019 census data, the population of Turkana County was reported as 926,976 persons,<sup>189</sup> a figure that is higher when refugees are included.<sup>190</sup>

Northern Kenya and Turkana County are categorised as Arid and Semi-Arid Lands where urbanisation tends to be slow. However, the small centres in Turkana are growing and play an important role in the socio-economic development of the region.

Northwest Kenya itself is one of the most neglected in the country. Decades of marginalisation by both colonial and post-colonial era regimes contributed to Turkana County emerging as a region with the highest poverty levels and under-investment of public resources in Kenya.

Turkana County is the second largest county in Kenya with a current population of 926,000, of which 196,000 are refugees.<sup>191</sup> Drought, climate change, rapid population increase, and environmental degradation have affected and continue to affect all residents. As one of Kenya's poorest counties, it is also considered to be at medium-high climate vulnerability, including flood risks and locust swarms.<sup>192</sup>

The county's population has doubled in size within about a decade, with the major causes of urbanisation being refugee influxes, climate-induced rural-urban migration, labour migration, and decentralisation and the loss of resources. Turkana County began hosting refugees in 1992 when camps in Kakuma Town were established. In 2013, Kenya experienced an influx of over 90,000 asylum seekers and with that, the numbers of refugees in Turkana County increased. Sixty-seven per cent of Kakuma's refugee population has arrived in the last five years.

189 Kenya National Bureau of Statistics. 2019. *Kenya Population and Housing Census, Volume I*. KNBS : Nairobi.

190 UN-Habitat, *Socio-Economic Development in Turkana West, Kenya, Volume I*.

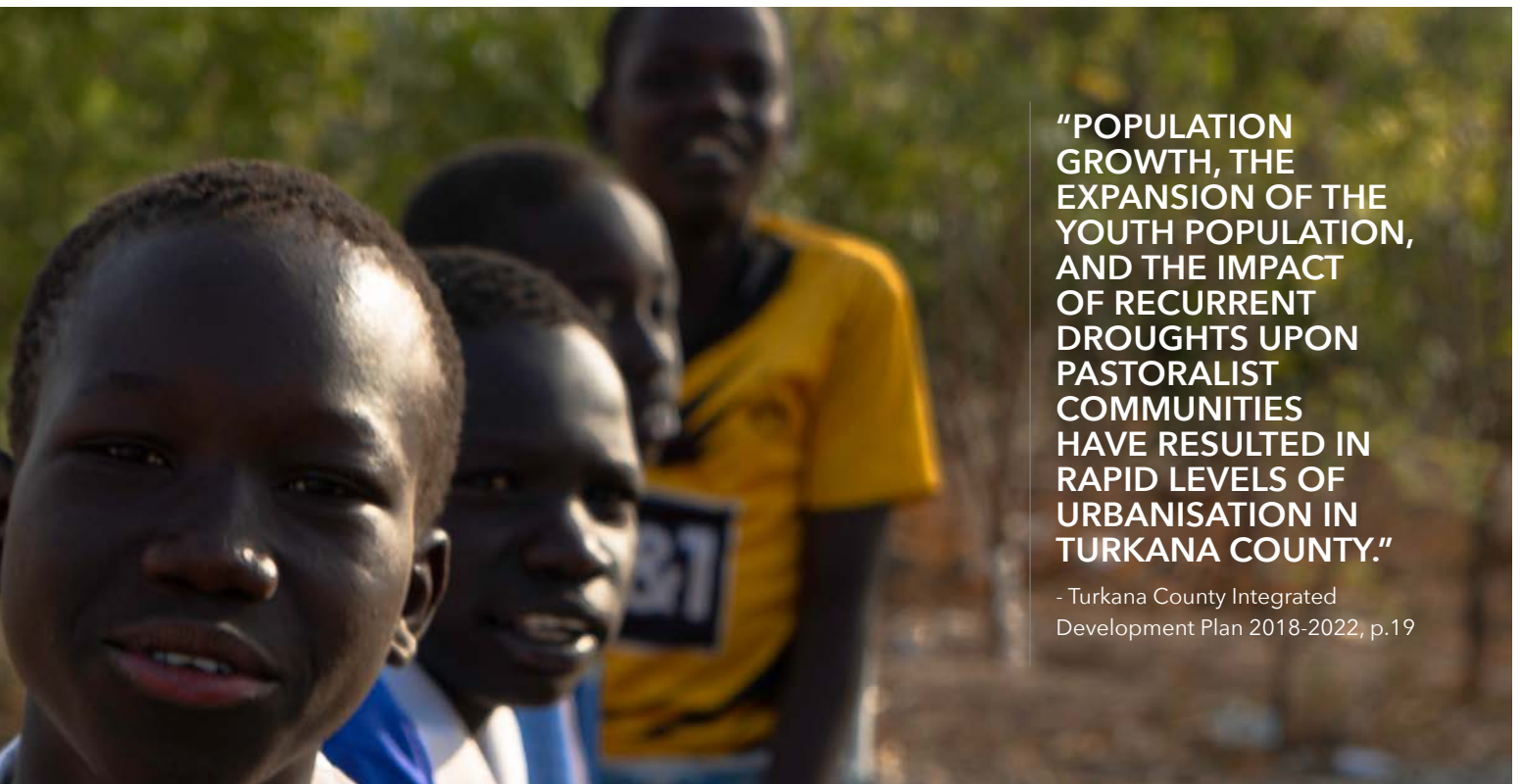
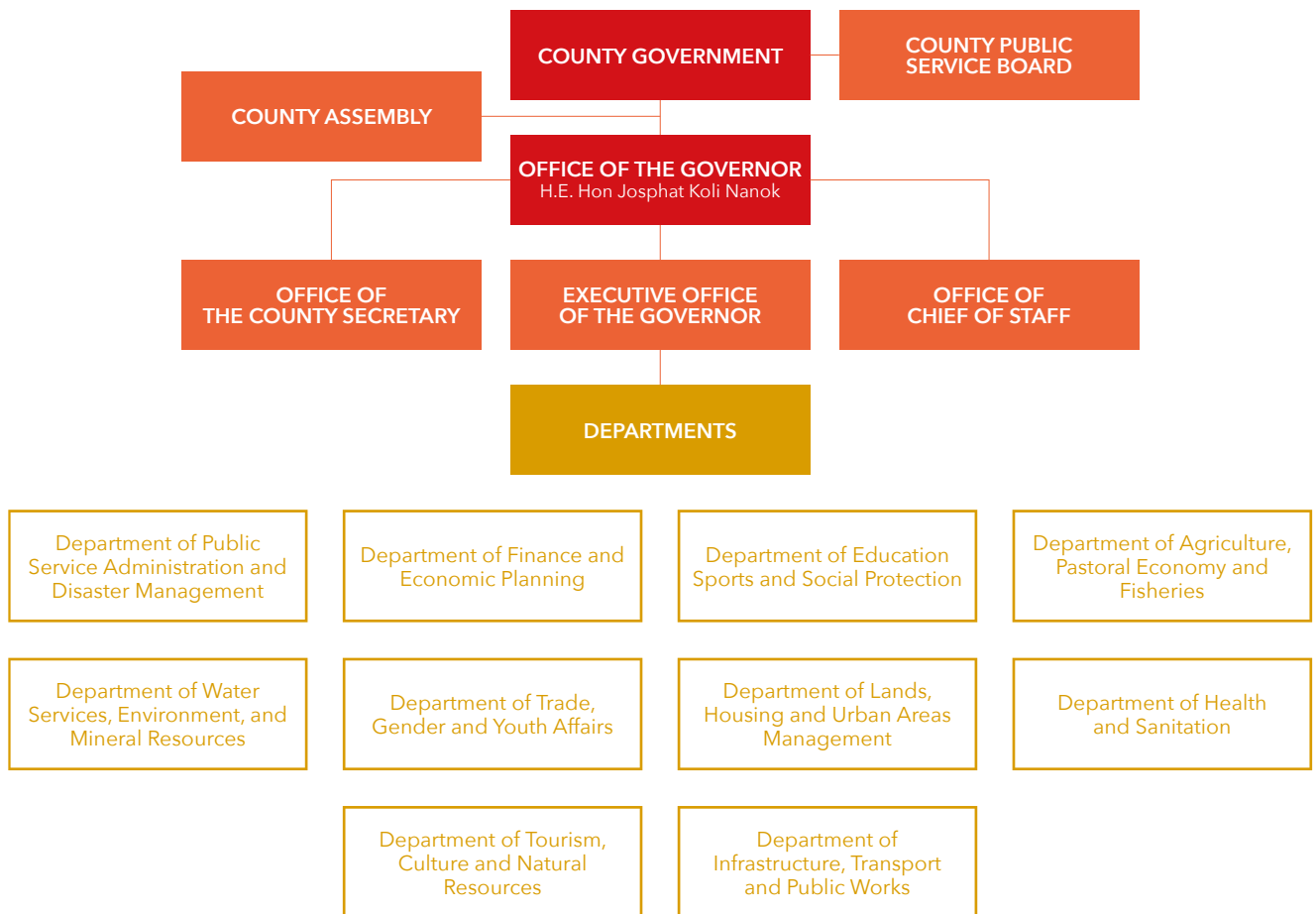
191 Ibid., p 32

192 ThinkHazard. 2022. *Country Profile: Kenya*. Available at : <https://thinkhazard.org/en/report/133-kenya>



**FIGURE 4**

Overview of the Turkana County Government.



**“POPULATION GROWTH, THE EXPANSION OF THE YOUTH POPULATION, AND THE IMPACT OF RECURRENT DROUGHTS UPON PASTORALIST COMMUNITIES HAVE RESULTED IN RAPID LEVELS OF URBANISATION IN TURKANA COUNTY.”**

- Turkana County Integrated Development Plan 2018-2022, p.19



# OVERVIEW OF TOWNS IN TURKANA

Turkana West is notable for being part of the North Rift Economic Bloc (NOREB), a cooperation of eight counties in the northern part of Kenya's Rift Valley. There have been historically low levels of urbanisation in this bloc, but a newer high rate of growth; like other counties in the NOREB region, there is a general trend of increasing urban population in Turkana.<sup>193</sup> NOREB urban centres are dominated by small towns which are sparsely distributed. This makes Kakuma and Lodwar important towns, as they connect the area to a broader regional system of urban centres. In this region, Kitale and Eldoret are the primary urban centres that connect the region to the national system of cities, municipalities, and towns, and even internationally, given their connectivity in the Northern Economic Corridor. There has been increased labour migration between South Sudan and Kenya - in addition to significant numbers of refugees - and increased in-migration to major urban centres in the NOREB region, including Kakuma-Kalobeyei in Turkana West.<sup>194</sup>

Eldoret is one of the major secondary cities in Kenya, ranking third in population size after Nairobi and Mombasa.<sup>195</sup> Eldoret nearly doubled in size over ten years, changing from a population of 247,500 to one of 475,716 between 2009 and 2019.<sup>196</sup> The city, strategically located along the Northern Corridor, is a significant transportation node that links the rich food production zones of the northern Rift Valley with the broader national and regional transportation network.<sup>197</sup>

Lodwar is Turkana County's largest urban centre/commercial hub, administrative capital and main destination for rural-urban migration due to pastoralists' movement. Lodwar has also experienced rapid expansion; the population increased from 44,153 in 2009 to 82,970 in 2019, according to the 2019 census. Socio-economic challenges are further complicated by the climate - arid and semi-arid conditions of Turkana County - and historical marginalisation. Similar to other regions in Kenya, inadequate infrastructure and urban planning, plus minimal opportunity to generate income, result in increasing poverty levels for both host and refugee communities. Like Kakuma, Lodwar is significant because of its location in the broader regional system of urban centres.

Lodwar, Kakuma, and Kalobeyei towns are considered the largest economic centres in Turkana County, with an approximate value of \$56 million per year - approximately 7.2 per cent of the county's gross product.<sup>198</sup> However, as UN-Habitat notes:

**"DESPITE THE VALUE OF THE LOCAL ECONOMY IN KAKUMA AND KALOBYEI TO THE WIDER ECONOMY, THE NDMA AND UNDP DO NOT DEFINE THE AREA AS A FORMAL EMPLOYMENT LIVELIHOOD ZONE. IT IS LIKELY THAT THIS IS A CONSEQUENCE ON THE HEAVY RELIANCE OF THE LOCAL LIVELIHOODS UPON THE AID SECTOR AND THE REFUGEES REMAINING IN THE AREA - LEADING TO A RELATIVE DEGREE OF INSTABILITY."**<sup>199</sup>

193 UN-Habitat, *Socio-Economic Development in Turkana West, Kenya, Volume I*.

194 UN-Habitat, *Socio-Economic Development in Turkana West, Vol II*, p 43.

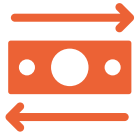
195 Kenya National Bureau of Statistics, *Kenya Population and Housing Census*.

196 Ibid.

197 UN-Habitat, *Socio-Economic Development in Turkana West, Vol II*, p 28.

198 UN-Habitat, *Socio-Economic Development in Turkana West, Kenya, Volume I*, p 40.

199 Ibid.



**"THE PRESENCE OF REFUGEES  
HAS THE POTENTIAL TO ACT  
AS AN ECONOMIC ENGINE...  
ONLY IF HARNESSSED PROPERLY...  
ENSURING THAT TENSION IS  
MITIGATED..."**

Together, the total population of the Kakuma-Kalobeyei area, including refugees and host community, is more than 343,210, which is significant given the climate, historically marginalised area, inadequate infrastructure, and limited natural resources. The enhancement of the A1 highway has improved travel between Lodwar and Kakuma, with more highway networks planned. As UN-Habitat states, "The presence of refugees has the potential to act as an economic engine...only if harnessed properly...ensuring that tension is mitigated..."<sup>200</sup>

Recent studies in Turkana have emphasised the economic significance of refugees in Kakuma,<sup>201</sup> despite the encampment policy that restricts their free movement. Many posit that this does not prevent refugees from being economically active, but it does limit their participation in the local economy.

An excerpt from a World Bank study states, "One striking observation about Kakuma refugee camp is how vibrant the economy is and how refugee-owned businesses also serve host communities. According to UNHCR, when there was talk about closing Kakuma in the early 2000s, there was an uproar among the host community, who saw the camp as their main source of employment, business opportunities, and commercial goods. The decision to move thousands of refugees from Dadaab to Kakuma in 2009 came as a relief to some."<sup>202</sup>

<sup>200</sup> Ibid. P 42.

<sup>201</sup> Sanghi, A., H. Onder, and V. Vemuru. 2016. "Yes" in My Backyard? *The Economics of Refugees and Their Social Dynamics in Kakuma, Kenya*. World Bank: Washington, D.C.

<sup>202</sup> Ibid.

According to the Turkana County Government, increasing urbanisation unfolding in the county is largely driven by rural-urban migration associated with diminishing prospects of livelihoods sustenance through traditional pastoralism.<sup>203</sup> Recurrent droughts have compelled many households to seek alternative livelihoods, including urban-based opportunities. Youth are increasingly opting to migrate to the county's major urban centres in search of alternative/change of livelihoods and access to education and trainings.<sup>204</sup> Refugee settlements in Turkana West sub-county have also been one factor driving urbanisation in the county.

Intriguingly, according to the Kenya 2019 population census data, Kakuma town's population has declined, partly due to outmigration occasioned by dwindling economic opportunities. Although the survey did not establish sufficient evidence to explain the decline in population, such a phenomenon is exceptional in Kenya's urbanisation context, where most of the towns are rapidly growing. Importantly, if the decline was triggered by outmigration, then this raises critical concerns about the sustainability of Kakuma Town. However, the county government issued a statement in 2019 questioning the Kenya Census Agency over the recorded decline of population, citing inadequate coverage of the vast county, as well as nomadic movements during the census period.<sup>205</sup>

<sup>203</sup> County Government of Turkana. 2018. Turkana County Integrated Development Plan 2018-2022.

<sup>204</sup> Vol I, p 26.

<sup>205</sup> UN-Habitat, *Socio-Economic Development in Turkana West, Vol II*, p 116.



# REFUGEE CAMPS IN TURKANA: FROM CAMPS TO CITIES



## Kakuma Refugee Camp

The Kakuma refugee camp, the largest in Kenya, was established in 1992 in the northwest corner of the country, an arid, desert-like region and one of the poorest, and most remote.<sup>206</sup> Before refugees arrived in 1989, 2,000 people lived there.<sup>207</sup>

<sup>206</sup> Vemuru, et. al., 2016.  
<sup>207</sup> Ohta, 2005.

Strikingly, as of June 2021, over 200,000 people lived in Kakuma, with the majority coming from South Sudan and Somalia.<sup>208</sup> Many residents were born into displacement and have lived in Kakuma for over 25 years.<sup>209</sup> Kakuma is often linked with “long-term aid dependency, particularly given regulatory restrictions on freedom of movement and right to work.”<sup>210</sup>

<sup>208</sup> UNHCR, 2021.

<sup>209</sup> O’Callaghan, S., et al. “The Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework: Progress in Kenya.”

<sup>210</sup> Betts, A., N. Omata, C. Rodgers, O. Sterck, and M. Stierna. 2019. “The Kalobeyei Model: Towards Self-Reliance for Refugees?” University Of Oxford: Refugee Studies Center. Available at: [https://www.refugee-economies.org/assets/downloads/Report\\_Kalobeyei\\_Model.pdf](https://www.refugee-economies.org/assets/downloads/Report_Kalobeyei_Model.pdf).

While Kakuma is a refugee camp, it also experiences similar challenges as other densely populated urban areas. These include stresses on resources due to both overuse and climate change. Droughts, for example, cause food and water shortages, leading to severe malnourishment and dehydration among the people in the area. People in Kakuma are forced to rely on boreholes for drinking water; however, the cost of the fuel to run the boreholes and pump water is extremely high.<sup>211</sup>

<sup>211</sup> UNEP. 2018. “Managing Environmental Stress in Kenya’s Kakuma Refugee Camp.” 28 February. Available at: <https://www.unep.org/news-and-stories/story/managing-environmental-stress-kenyas-kakuma-refugee-camp>.

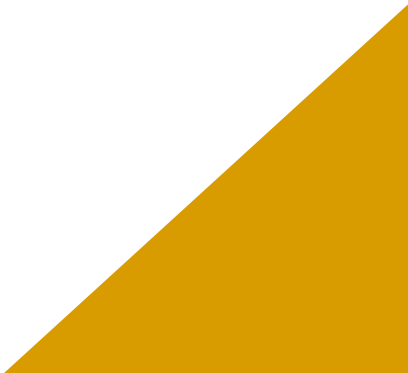




The area deals with other challenges due to limited natural resources. This includes a high demand for firewood, the primary source of cooking fuel which is leading to rapid deforestation.<sup>212</sup> The main income for the Turkana people living near the Kakuma camp is selling wood or exchanging it for refugees' food rations.<sup>213</sup> This potentially unsustainable livelihood illustrates how refugee camps can engender urban or peri-urban economies, thus highlighting the complex flows between refugee camps and urban areas.

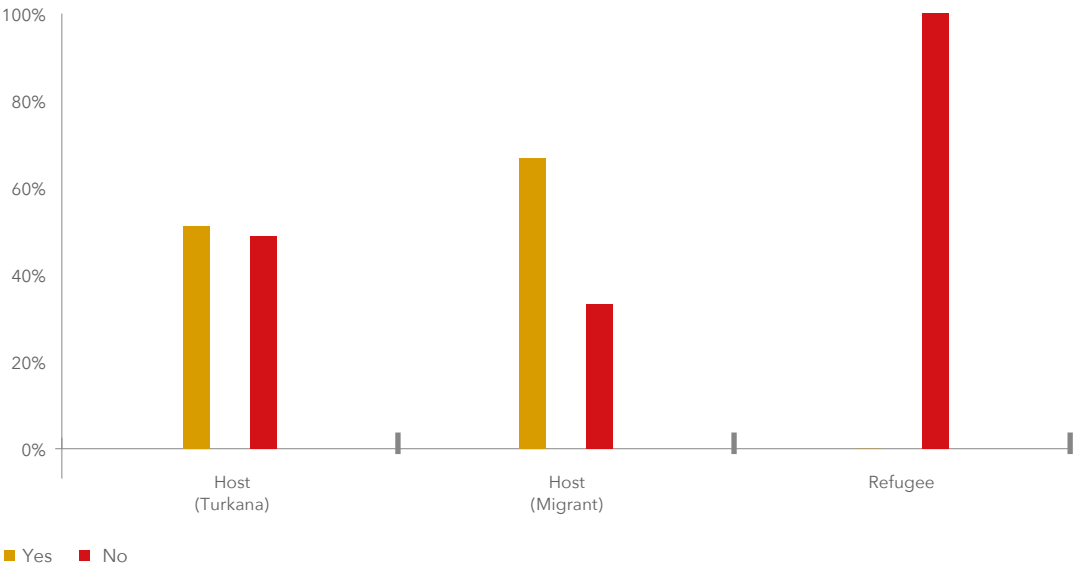
Some of the inequality between hosts and refugees in Turkana is also evident in how they access basic resources and whether or not they pay for them. Though refugees and some host community households reported free access to domestic water, they all recorded incidences of seasonal water scarcity or unavailability, with 88.9 per cent of host migrants, 66.2 per cent of refugees, and 52.8 per cent of host (Turkana) community respondents reporting seasonal scarcity. Most (55 per cent) of the main water facilities were being managed by NGOs, with main water providers including the Kenya Red Cross, RAS, and UNHCR. A sizeable portion (20 per cent) of those who

purchase water incurred a cost of Ksh 2.5 per 20 litres jerry can, meaning the average expenditure for both drinking and domestic water per day for both refugee and host community was Ksh 35 per day. It was noted during focus group discussions with the host community that the cost of water could go up to Ksh 50 for 20 litre jerrycan if it must be transported from the communal water points to the doorsteps. During water scarcity, Turkana residents must cover long distances to access water, with the livestock keepers forced to migrate temporarily to search for water and pasture for their livestock. In contrast, refugees, and some members of the host (migrant) community get trucked water from assistance organisations during times of scarcity.



212 Ibid.  
 213 Norwegian Refugee Council. 2015. "Changing Climate, Changing Lives." 8 September. Available at: <https://www.nrc.no/perspectives/2015/nr-3/changing-climate-changing-lives/>.

**FIGURE 5**  
 Payment for Domestic Water in Turkana County (UN Habitat / Turkana West Field Survey 2020).





### *Examining the Impact of Closing Kakuma on Turkana County*

In 2021 the Government of Kenya announced plans to close down the Dadaab and Kakuma refugee camps. While this plan was postponed in April 2021, the possibility of camp closures in the near or distant future come with huge considerations. First and foremost are the safety of refugees and access to protection. This is particularly worrying given ongoing instability in Somalia as well as other countries where refugees in Kenya originate. There is also a risk that closing these camps initiates a model for other major refugee-hosting countries eager to reduce their obligations to refugees. One refugee living in Kakuma explained of the planned closure:

**"IF IT HAPPENS, IT WILL BE...DISASTER. I WOULDN'T KNOW WHERE TO GO. I DEPEND ON WHAT NGOs AND THE UN PROVIDE...IT'S A PROBLEM MENTALLY, IT IS STRESSFUL. I CAN'T LIVE ELSEWHERE IN KENYA BECAUSE I DON'T HAVE THE CORRECT PAPERS."**<sup>214</sup>

Closures will also have significant ramifications on the regions hosting camps. For example, the growth of Kakuma-Kalobeyi town is uncertain as the future of the town itself is strongly linked to the presence of refugees. One report states, "[H]umanitarian and development interventions in the area have not created sufficient resilience capacity to ensure minimum negative impacts in that eventuality [of the camp closing]. Fundamentally, Kakuma-Kalobeyi needs to be imagined beyond a refugee-based economy, with a focus on investing in the long-term socio-economic development of the local area. However, this is



not the case with the secondary cities like Eldoret, Kitale and Lodwar, and other small towns in the region where rural-urban migrations are the main drivers of urbanisation, and where humanitarian inflows are not determinants of the structure of the local economies."<sup>215</sup>

Similarly, the refugee in Kakuma explained, "The economic status of Kakuma camp to Turkana County and Kakuma Town – it is helping a lot. If there is no long a camp, then banks would close and so would hotels and private schools. Other big organisations that the host community is also benefitting from would leave because they mostly focus on refugees. Now, because of the refugees, there is the construction of a big road going up to Sudan, helping development. But if the camp closes, there will be big challenges for hosts – they would also suffer in terms of education and business. When they first heard the news of Kakuma closing, even hosts were discouraged."<sup>216</sup>

Indeed, other examples of camp closures from Kenya suggest that refugee-hosting regions may experience economic decline due to aid withdrawal and a loss of refugee-related international investments. For example, after a temporary camp in the town of Lokichoggio was closed in 1992 and relocated to Kakuma Town, Lokichoggio struggled economically due to the loss of refugee-based operations. In Turkana, one could imagine a similar challenge compounded by the loss of the significant international recognition and political capital the region has gained through its engagement with refugees. At the same time, the unique arrangement of the Kalobeyi settlement (expanded on below) could offer an important model for integrating refugees and hosts in camps and settlements even after they officially close.

<sup>215</sup> UN-Habitat. 2021. "Socio Economic Development in Turkana West, Kenya." Research Briefing: Urbanisation in North Rift Kenya.

<sup>216</sup> Interview, refugee in Kakuma camp.

<sup>214</sup> Interview, refugee in Kakuma camp.





## Kalobeyei Settlement

A site near Kalobeyei Township was allocated to the Turkana County Government in June 2015, and the World Bank and UNHCR developed the Kalobeyei Integrated Social and Economic Development Programme (KISEDPP) to “develop the local economy and service delivery at Kalobeyei.” The initial objective was not to establish a new camp in response to the increasing numbers in the nearby Kakuma refugee camp, but rather to offer a new vision in this marginalised region by establishing a structure that would encourage interaction and eventually integration between host and refugee communities. It was meant to increase mutual economic benefit, including equal access to shared health, education, and recreation facilities. As UNHCR explained,

**“THE OVERALL OBJECTIVE OF THIS INITIATIVE IS TO RE-ORIENT THE REFUGEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAMME TO CONTRIBUTE TO IMPROVEMENT OF THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONDITIONS OF THE REFUGEES AND HOST COMMUNITIES, BETTER PREPARE THE HOST COMMUNITY TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF EMERGING ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES IN UPCOMING EXTRACTION AND POTENTIAL IRRIGATION-FED AGRICULTURE AND REDUCE OVER-DEPENDENCE ON HUMANITARIAN AID AND SUPPORT THE REFUGEES TO ACHIEVE DURABLE SOLUTIONS.”<sup>217</sup>**

217 UNHCR. 2021. Kalobeyei Settlement. Webpage, available at: <https://www.unhcr.org/ke/kalobeyei-settlement>.

The Kalobeyei settlement was designed as an ‘urban centre’ in collaboration with UNHCR and Turkana County, and it aimed in part to address overcrowding in Kakuma camp and support refugees’ transition from an aid-based model to a self-reliance model.<sup>218</sup> It is a unique example of a settlement built with the intention of gaining municipal status and presents an interesting model of both refugee assistance and urban expansion. As UNHCR states, “*The site is to be developed as an urban centre, using the same development and planning techniques, developers, assessments etc. as for cities*, in collaboration with the WBG (master plans, community engagement, sustainability, etc.). Conceptual framework for the development is the Local Economic Development (LED) approach, to facilitate collaboration between public, business and non-governmental sector partners to create better conditions for economic growth and employment generation in Kalobeyei.”<sup>219</sup> [emphasis added]

In addition to creating economic inclusion, this experimental approach also intends to increase interaction with the host community to further promote integration. However, as the Norwegian Refugee Council notes, “Despite the planned integrated settlement model, in practice Kalobeyei refugees are subject to the same movement restrictions as refugees in Kakuma...”<sup>220</sup> In this way, Kalobeyei represents a camp without borders. Although the initial plan for Kalobeyei was to relocate refugees from Kakuma camp, an unforeseen influx of refugees from South Sudan in December 2013 due to renewed conflict demanded emergency assistance. Therefore, the implementation of the Kalobeyei model came with a compromise of an immediate premise of emergency aid rather than self-reliance.<sup>221</sup>

KISEDPP is the roadmap guiding the first 15 years of the settlement’s development, focusing on eight key components which effectively cover municipal responsibilities: health, education, WASH, protection, spatial planning and infrastructure, agriculture, livestock and resources, sustainable energy, private sector development, and

218 Betts, A., R. Geervliet, C. MacPherson, N. Omata, C. Rodgers, and O. Sterck. *Self-Reliance in Kalobeyei? Socio-Economic Outcomes for Refugees in North-West Kenya*. Refugee Studies Centre, Oxford Department of International Development.

219 UNHCR, Kalobeyei Settlement.

220 NRC/IHRC. 2018. *Supporting Kakuma’s Refugees: The Importance of Freedom of Movement*. Available at: <https://hrp.law.harvard.edu/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/Movement-Briefing-NRC-IHRC-1.pdf>.

221 Betts, A., et al., *Self-Reliance in Kalobeyei? Socio-Economic Outcomes for Refugees in North-West Kenya*.



**"[T]HE SUCCESS OF THE OBJECTIVES OF THE CRRF IN KENYA RESTS ON THE SUCCESS OF THE KISED P STRATEGY AND ENSURING THAT LEARNING AND APPROACHES ARE ADOPTED COUNTRY-WIDE. THERE IS ALSO AN OPPORTUNITY TO LEARN FROM THE KISED P MODEL AND APPLY THIS LEARNING IN OTHER CONTEXTS - BOTH IN KENYA AND IN THE REGION."**

entrepreneurship. Partners include the Government of Kenya, Turkana County Government, UNHCR, and others. The programme also coordinates with the County Integrated Development Plan (CIDP) and the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF). Kalobeyei, and by extension KISED P, is commonly hailed as an exemplar of the CRRF in practice, although those familiar with both present a more nuanced perspective.<sup>222</sup>

Despite the stated importance of local engagement in the CRRF and the mention of refugees and KISED P in CIDP, in reality Turkana County is excluded from managing CRRF funding, illustrating a key tension between localisation in rhetoric and in practice. One community representative of the CRRF in Kenya explained,

**"THE FUNDING OF CRRF IS NOT VISIBLE - EVEN MINISTERS SAY THEY HAVE NOT HEARD OF FUNDING IN KAKUMA. THE CRRF FUNDING GOES THROUGH THE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT, BUT IT DOESN'T DROP DOWN TO LOCAL LEVELS LIKE IT SHOULD. SO, IT IS A GOOD IDEA BUT IT'S NOT VISIBLE...WHEN I WAS IN UGANDA EVERYONE WAS TALKING ABOUT IT, BUT HERE IN KENYA, WHEN YOU TALK ABOUT CRRF, NO ONE KNOWS."**<sup>223</sup>

<sup>222</sup> O'Callaghan, S., et al., "The Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework: Progress in Kenya."

<sup>223</sup> Interview, Kenya.

As one report on the CRRF in Kenya notes, "In the absence of agreed priorities, sequencing, and theories of change, investments are piecemeal and ad hoc, and distributed unevenly across refugee-hosting regions."<sup>224</sup> This gap in governance is particularly important as one study on the CRRF in Kenya posits that, "[T]he success of the objectives of the CRRF in Kenya rests on the success of the KISED P strategy and ensuring that learning and approaches are adopted country-wide. There is also an opportunity to learn from the KISED P model and apply this learning in other contexts - both in Kenya and in the region."<sup>225</sup>

According to UNHCR, both refugees and host communities will benefit from investments in basic infrastructure and access to social services, and increased opportunities for supporting income generating activities. However, it is clear that significant investment will be needed to achieve this. One way for this to happen is the conferment of municipality status on Kakuma-Kalobeyei, which was still pending at the time of writing.

<sup>224</sup> ReDDS. 2021. Financing for Solutions to Displacement: Kenya Country Study. Available at: [https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/Solutions\\_Financing\\_Exec\\_Summary\\_Kenya\\_SP.pdf](https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/Solutions_Financing_Exec_Summary_Kenya_SP.pdf).

<sup>225</sup> O'Callaghan, S. et al., "The Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework: Progress in Kenya." p. 15.

# ACCESS TO EDUCATION AMONG REFUGEES AND HOSTS

**In conversations with refugees living in Kakuma, many are quick to say that fellow refugees often have better education levels than those in Turkana, in part because of the primary and secondary schools in the camp. Generally, findings indicate good education access for the refugee community at all levels. The World Bank makes a similar observation that access to education is worse among the hosts compared to refugees. Focus group discussions brought out a change in the host community – parents embrace and support education so that youth will be able to compete for jobs in the future. Parents recognise that the traditional pastoral livelihood is threatened by less grazing land and unpredictable weather, and they are eager to enable their children to adopt alternative livelihoods.<sup>226</sup>**

Kalobeyei settlement generally has improved access and quality of education of both host and refugee communities. UN-Habitat focus group discussions revealed that the host community benefits from education and health facilities in Kalobeyei, a positive tendency in this complicated relationship. However, education, training and skills development in Kakuma-Kalobeyei need to be addressed. Local youth are not prepared to participate in the formal job market offered by the NGOs and INGOs. Interviews also highlighted that youth hope for alternative pathways and do not see education and employment opportunities for themselves in Kakuma-Kalobeyei. This stance underlines the out-migration to towns within Turkana.

Access to schools in urban areas – Kakuma, Kalobeyei, and Lokichoggio – are good compared to other areas. However, transition rates to secondary school are low in Turkana County due to “poverty, accessibility, insecurity, child labour and retrogressive culture.” Refugees reported better access to education and training in Kakuma compared to Kalobeyei. Schools in Kalobeyei are also severely congested.<sup>227</sup> Findings indicate that the teacher/student ratio in the sub county is 1:70, while Kenya’s Ministry of Education recommends a ratio of 1:45.<sup>228</sup>

<sup>227</sup> UN-Habitat. 2018. *Kakuma and Kalobeyei Spatial Profile*. Available at: [https://unhabitat.org/sites/default/files/2021/06/210618\\_kakuma\\_kalobeyei\\_profile\\_single\\_page.pdf](https://unhabitat.org/sites/default/files/2021/06/210618_kakuma_kalobeyei_profile_single_page.pdf).

<sup>228</sup> UN-Habitat, Vol I.

<sup>226</sup> UN-Habitat, *Socio-Economic Development in Turkana West, Kenya, Volume I*.







# PASTORALISTS, FORCED MIGRATION, AND URBANISATION

**While refugees receive the most attention of forced migrants in Turkana, they are by no means the only ones. Many of the country's pastoralists, particularly in the Turkana region focused on here, are forced to give up pastoralism and move to urban areas, generally once they reach destitution. Over the past several decades, floods and droughts have been the major climate issues in Kenya and continue to pose challenges for the country, including through triggering displacement. Over 80 per cent of Kenya consists of drylands with low erratic rainfall and periodic droughts.<sup>229</sup>**

According to Kenya's constitution, the pastoralists are by definition marginalised, whether they are nomadic or in a settled community that, because of its relative geographic isolation, has experienced only marginal participation in the integrated social and economic life of Kenya as a whole.<sup>230</sup> Most residents of Turkana are pastoralists with a semi-nomadic lifestyle and depend on livestock for survival.

The population of pastoralists in Kenya is estimated to be about 20 per cent of the national population,<sup>231</sup> although it has become increasingly more difficult to practice pastoralism due to climate change.<sup>232</sup> Precipitation variability, extreme weather events, destruction of natural vegetation, and soil degradation all contribute to the decline in available grazing areas for pastoralists, resulting in the scarcity of resources for livestock.<sup>233</sup> The decline in available grazing areas often leads to a decrease in herd sizes, which in turn affects pastoralists' food security and their ability to depend solely on their livestock for sustenance and income generation.<sup>234</sup> As Veronika Ekor, a Turkana woman, explained,

**"WE HAVE LIVED IN THE OUTSKIRTS OF THE KAKUMA REFUGEE CAMP FOR SEVEN YEARS NOW. OUR LIFE HAS CHANGED; WE USED TO LIVE AS NOMADS IN THE BORDER AREAS NEAR UGANDA. OUR LIVESTOCK IS DEAD, MOSTLY BECAUSE OF DROUGHT."**

Kenya's ASALs support about seven million people, who are predominantly pastoralists and agro-pastoralists, and about 50 per cent of the country's livestock population.<sup>235</sup> These regions are ecologically fragile and are often vulnerable to climate change and climate variability. Estimates place the impacts of climate change at costing up to 2.6 per cent of Kenya's GDP by 2030,<sup>236</sup> with the most direct financial impacts likely on the country's most vulnerable. Despite the projected harms of climate change, Kenya continues to be slow and irregular in implementing climate change policy.<sup>237</sup> Furthermore, the effects of climate change and climate variability are seen not only within the environment, but in the agricultural sector and pastoralism.

Urbanisation can also directly affect pastoralism by limiting the availability of grazing areas. The dramatic population growth in the Horn of Africa has produced a land shortage, as urban expansion has reached areas formerly recognised as communal land that pastoralists used.<sup>238</sup> Urbanisation has also disturbed traditional pastoralist routines by blocking access to certain grazing lands due to newly established farms, national parks, or agricultural schemes. More specifically, in Kenya, the fastest growing towns are in pastoral districts as pastoralists find less available grazing lands to migrate between and settle down,<sup>239</sup> illustrating an important linkage between urbanisation and the compounding effects of climate change.

235 FAO and GEF, 2018.

236 FAO and GEF, 2018.

237 Filho et al., 2017.

238 Filho, Walter Leal, Daniel Nzengya, Gladys Muasya, Judith Chemuliti, and Jokastah Wanzuu Kalungu. 2017. "Climate Change responses among the Maasai Community in Kenya." *Climatic Change*, Springer, 145(1), 71-83, November.

239 Little, P.D. 2012. "Reflections on the Future of Pastoralism in the Horn of Africa." *Pastoralism and Development in Africa*. First edition. Routledge, pp. 243-249.

229 Filho et al., 2017.

230 Republic of Kenya, 2010.

231 Nyariki and Amwata, 2019.

232 Catley 2017.

233 Filho et al., 2017.

234 Herrero, M et al. 2016. "Climate Change and Pastoralism: Impacts, Consequences and Adaptation." *Revue scientifique et technique* (International Office of Epizootics) 35(2), 417-433. DOI:10.20506/rst.35.2.2533.



## BOX 10 A NOTE ON TERMINOLOGY

A variety of terms exist to denote people displaced due to climatic events or disasters. Terms common in literature include 'climate migrant', 'environmental migrant', 'climate refugee', 'climate-induced migrant', and 'people forcibly displaced by climate change'. In contrast to the term 'refugee', which is a legal definition defined by the 1951 Refugee Convention and enshrined in international law, terms such as 'climate refugee' or 'climate migrant' do not obligate states to provide protection or assistance. This means that climate-induced displaced people have traditionally been ineligible for refugee status.

As UNHCR explains,

**"THERE MAY BE SITUATIONS WHERE THE REFUGEE CRITERIA OF THE 1951 CONVENTION OR THE BROADER REFUGEE CRITERIA OF REGIONAL REFUGEE LAW FRAMEWORKS COULD APPLY. PEOPLE MAY HAVE A VALID CLAIM FOR REFUGEE STATUS, FOR EXAMPLE, WHERE THE ADVERSE EFFECTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE INTERACT WITH ARMED CONFLICT AND VIOLENCE...REGARDLESS, THE TERM 'CLIMATE REFUGEE' IS NOT ENDORSED BY UNHCR, AND IT IS MORE ACCURATE TO REFER TO 'PERSONS DISPLACED IN THE CONTEXT OF DISASTERS AND CLIMATE CHANGE.'"<sup>240</sup>**

<sup>240</sup> UNHCR. 2021. "Climate Change and Disaster Displacement." Webpage, available at: <https://www.unhcr.org/uk/climate-change-and-disasters.html>.

An increasingly unpredictable climate in combination with high population growth also impacts the viability of pastoralism as a livelihood for a large proportion of the host community. More resilient livelihoods need to be explored to support resilience to droughts and floods, which affect food security and result in an increasing reliance on aid. Planning proactively to prepare for this is particularly important, as Turkana is already highly vulnerable to climate change and therefore needs active measures and to ensure that urban areas can become and remain inclusive, prosperous, and sustainable.<sup>241</sup>

### Pastoralists and urban poverty

While some forced migrants entering towns in Turkana rent existing homes, others build indigenous forms of housing. The traditional Turkana *manyatta* architecture is found in towns including Kakuma. However, in the urban context, these forms of shelter represent socio-economic deprivation and a 'symbol of urban poverty'. Data from UN-Habitat's study indicates that these households could not afford better shelter; hence, while inadequate, the 'urban manyattas' represent low-cost affordable housing in Turkana West towns. Some of the households combine urban and rural types of living, such as keeping a small herd of livestock and relying on nearby areas for grazing, construction materials, and firewood for energy. Some of the host community households living in the towns were once nomadic pastoralists, but loss of livestock through either drought or cattle rustling forced them to move into urban areas. However, a combination of many factors such as lack of capital, illiteracy, and education attainment challenges among members have locked many of these households in a poverty trap, as they have limited participation in the local urban economies.<sup>242</sup>

Overall, the future of pastoral livestock production remains challenged. The introduction of national boundaries, climate change and drought recurrences, and spatial marginalisation of pastoralists in present-day governance are concerns, as are increased inter-tribal conflicts over resources and livestock. Notably, such conflicts are not confined to rural areas and have now found their way into urban areas as former pastoralists have entered them.<sup>243</sup>

<sup>241</sup> UN-Habitat, *Kakuma and Kalobeyei Spatial Profile*.

<sup>242</sup> UN-Habitat, *Socio-Economic Development in Turkana West, Kenya, Volume I*.

<sup>243</sup> UN-Habitat, *Socio-Economic Development in Turkana West, Vol II*, p 32.



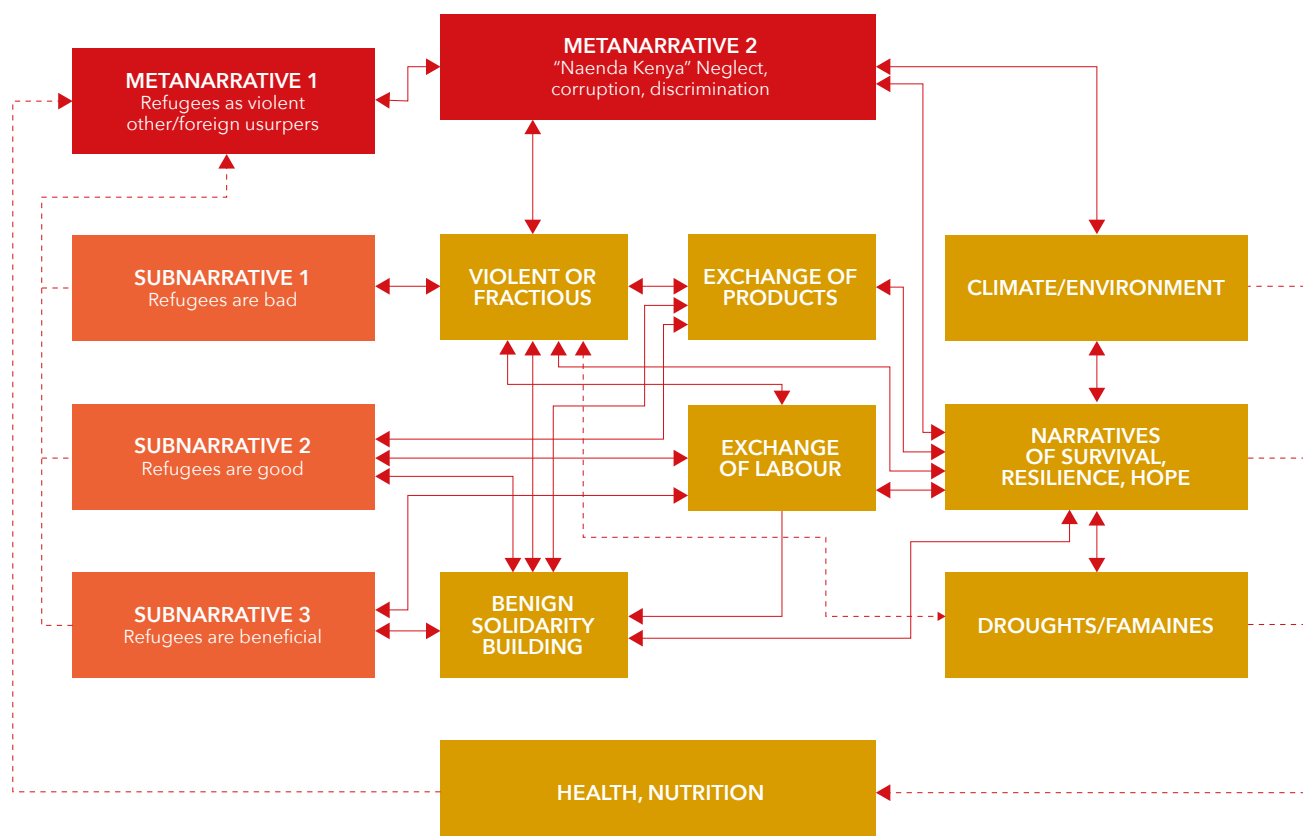
# REFUGEE AND HOST COMMUNITY RELATIONSHIP

Various scholars have sought to classify the refugee-host community relationship in the Turkana region. One study, for example, conducted a social impact analysis of refugee impacts on Turkana hosts, finding that “the final analysis demonstrates a net positive impact in terms of food and nutritional

intake and quality of interactions.”<sup>244</sup> Among other aspects, the study identified ‘metanarratives’ and ‘subnarratives’ about refugees among Turkana hosts – refugees as bad, good, or beneficial – and explored how these narratives play out in interactions.

244 World Bank/UNHCR/University of Notre Dame. 2016. *Refugee Impacts on Turkana Hosts*. Available at: <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/bitstream/handle/10986/25863/111309.pdf?sequence=5&isAllowed=y>.

**FIGURE 6**  
Narrative-Interaction Model (World Bank/UNHCR/University of Notre Dame, 2016).





While some identify an overall positive effect, others cite a complicated relationship between hosts and refugee communities, pointing towards tensions in Kakuma and Kalobeyei. One report states that there is 'persistent distrust' within the communities. The two greatest sources of tension are related to security and conflict over resources.<sup>245</sup>

In part, this can be attributed to the scale of displacement in the region. Kakuma was originally planned for approximately 80,000, and the population increased to over 160,000 by 2016 and nearly 200,000 since the camp was established. Basic resources for all are extremely limited and land is an increasingly contested commodity. For example,

"[N]EAR KAKUMA, THE INDIGENOUS TURKANA PEOPLE LIVE IN TENSION WITH THE REFUGEES, ESPECIALLY AS THE CAMP EXPANDS INTO TURKANA GRAZING AREAS."<sup>246</sup>

<sup>245</sup> Betts, A., et al., "The Kalobeyei Model: Towards Self-Reliance for Refugees?"

<sup>246</sup> Hurlbert, E. 2020. "Kenya and The Securitization of Refugees." *Security Distillery*. Available at: <https://thesecuritydistillery.org/all-articles/kenya-and-the-securitization-of-refugees>.

Tensions also exist due to persistent poverty. One UNHCR study shows both host communities and refugees live under severe poverty and vulnerability.<sup>247</sup> The study indicates that "68 per cent of Kakuma refugees... live below the poverty line of \$1.90 per day." Strikingly, the immediate surrounding host community in Turkana County is even more impoverished, with 72 per cent living in poverty.<sup>248</sup> As one report describes, "Local government actors have acknowledged the potential development gains associated with refugees' presence, while also emphasising ongoing pressures. Such narratives are particularly evident in Garissa and Turkana counties, where Dadaab and Kakuma camps are hosted."<sup>249</sup> With the construction of Kalobeyei and the ultimate conferment of municipal status on Kakuma-Kalobeyei, the hope is that the host community will continue to benefit from some of the resources established through assistance to refugees.

<sup>247</sup> Beltramo, T and U. Pape. 2021. "After Three Decades, How Are Refugees in Kenya's Kakuma Refugee Camp Faring?" UNHCR blog. Available at: <https://www.unhcr.org/blogs/after-three-decades-how-are-refugees-in-kenyas-kakuma-refugee-camp-faring/>.

<sup>248</sup> Ibid.

<sup>249</sup> ODI. 2020. *Public Narratives and Attitudes Towards Refugees and Other Migrants: Kenya Country Profile*. ODI: London. Available at: [https://cdn.odi.org/media/documents/kenya\\_migration\\_country\\_profile\\_final.pdf](https://cdn.odi.org/media/documents/kenya_migration_country_profile_final.pdf).

# DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Today, Kakuma camp – and by extension, Turkana County – finds itself at a crossroads. While plans are being drawn up to address the eventual closure of the camp, little information has been made publicly available, and many are hopeful that it ultimately will not be forced to close. Through the influx of refugees and the humanitarian and development interventions that have accompanied it, Turkana County has experienced both economic growth and development. At the same time, ongoing underinvestment in the region and growing climate change-related challenges place pressure on hosts and refugees alike. This in turn contributes to tension and challenges in integration.



When one considers existing tools to address ongoing and arising challenges, the CRRF and by extension KISEDIP come to mind. Both lay out pathways for sustainable development and assistance to refugees and hosts – aims which are clearly needed in Turkana County. However, it appears that limited autonomy over the CRRF process and funding exists in Turkana, which limits both planning and implementation. This appears to be in contrast to devolution, which is seen as an opportunity to institutionalise local management and offers a means to promote urban and other development in the region. Turkana County – like many others in Kenya – struggles with municipal financing challenges, which direct CRRF funding could in part address.

While extremely positive on paper, KISEDIP is also premised on the possibility of developing sustainable livelihoods for refugees and hosts – which may not be possible at the scale necessary for success, for climate and other reasons. In both these instances, ongoing and further engagement with local actors, ranging from Turkana County officials to refugees residing in Kakuma-Kalobeyei, would offer insights into how to support the livelihoods and other needs of refugees, urban, and peri-urban hosts in the most meaningful way.

This is important in part because of the need to address the socio-economic dimension of conflict and insecurity in border areas of Turkana. A lack of alternative livelihoods among pastoralist communities is cited as one reason for recurring strife, much of which is resource-driven, especially regarding access to water and pastures. This could be addressed by enhanced interventions to create sustainable urban settlements across Turkana West, the county and the wider region. Urban centres can offer alternative livelihood means, but they require effective urbanisation strategies. These are currently not evident in urban centres in the region or across the country.

One way of addressing the marginalisation problem facing Turkana might be by focusing on integrated refugee-host community policies and interventions that enhance its spatial-economic integration and connectivity in the region. Such a focus could either be hindered or made all the more necessary by the planned closure of Kakuma camp. Maintaining this focus is imperative, however, for both Kakuma camp and the towns surrounding it suffer from underdeveloped infrastructure and poor provision of basic services, including (in urban areas) inadequate and unaffordable housing, exacerbated by urban poverty and high unemployment. Paying more attention to addressing these areas has the potential to assist both refugees and local hosts.



Other recommendations for government, humanitarian, and development actors include:



Continue to focus on equitable access to resources for refugees and host communities to reduce tension and strengthen cohesion. This promotes peaceful coexistence.



Planning for the closure of Kakuma camp must include close attention paid to local Turkana hosts, who in many instances are poorer than the refugees in the camp.



Prioritise the urbanisation agenda in the CIDP, particularly in relation to urban-rural linkages, financing urban development, and developing regional connectivity infrastructure. Prioritising this should include discussions on urban refugees in Turkana as well as how cities might adapt if Kakuma camp closes in 2022.



Continue to focus on economic development and investment opportunities in Turkana, such as the Sustainable Economic Development Along Turkana West Development Corridor Through Enhanced Connectivity initiative.



Promote the CRRF at the local level in Turkana County through greater engagement with local authorities, hosts, and refugees, including the direct channeling of funding through the county government.



# CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION: FUTURE OUTLOOK ON SECONDARY CITIES AND THE URBAN FORCIBLY DISPLACED



As this report laid out at the beginning, global urbanisation is projected to continue to rise, and the number of urban forcibly displaced people is expected to follow. While capital cities are commonly perceived as the main urban 'pull' location, recent research challenges this notion. Global evidence demonstrates that city size and economic growth go hand-in-hand, but not necessarily in the way one might expect. For example, while Frick and Rodríguez-Pose cite a positive (but decreasing) effect of city size and urban density on the economic growth in developed countries, it is assumed that this relationship is in fact negative in

developing countries. Their research finds that larger city size affects more positive growth when it is combined with numerous industries, good urban infrastructure, and good urban governance – which many cities hosting the greatest number of forcibly displaced people may lack.<sup>250</sup> In sum, based on this research, it is not clear that big cities in developing countries have better economic growth than smaller cities and towns.

This has implications for urban displacement and the assistance that might be offered to address it. If large numbers of forcibly

displaced people are concentrated in particular cities, for example, might a voluntary relocation scheme to other smaller cities or towns offer them better economic prospects, and in turn reduce pressure on other cities? Could displaced people in camps or settlements be provided with similar options to pursue work or studies in non-capital urban areas identified as in need of particular skills? How might employment-matching best support smaller cities and towns in attracting the skills they need, including in sectors with climate mitigation and adaptation co-benefits, while also supporting displaced people in rebuilding their lives? Historical good practices ranging from Greece to the United States, as discussed earlier, offer examples of success and demonstrate the viability of such plans. Creativity in urban dispersal schemes that take into account the needs of displaced peoples, cities, and towns are important as forced displacement remains a reality.

250 Frick, S. A., and A. Rodríguez-Pose, "Average City Size and Economic Growth,"; and Frick, S. A. "Urbanisation, Cities and Economic Growth: Trends, Recent Evidence and Policy Implications." Available at: <https://regions.regionalstudies.org/ezone/article/urbanisation-cities-and-economic-growth-trends-recent-evidence-and-policy-implications/?print=print>.







# RECOMMENDATIONS AND TAKEAWAYS

As this report has shown, municipal good practices exist in a variety of different areas, including local leadership, social integration, employment and labour market integration, education, and refugee participation. The case of IDPs in Adama, Ethiopia, illustrated both the potential for assistance at the local and regional level as well as the challenges that even displaced nationals face in integrating into a new location. The challenges of Arua Municipality and urban refugees in Arua, Uganda, illustrated in particular the importance of documenting the presence of urban refugees - and acting on this information in terms of adjusting budgets, directing funds towards urban areas, and providing comprehensive support to municipalities hosting large numbers of refugees. Similarly, the impact of Kakuma-Kalobeyei on Turkana County, Kenya, as well as the expected impact of the camp closing on urban areas in the county, illustrate the nuanced relationship of hosting refugees on counties and municipalities, with refugees representing sources of tension as well as positive attention and investment.

While the cases in this study were not meant to be comparative, several themes emerge across them. They include the following:



A worrying lack of data on urban forcibly displaced people in all three countries, which will only become more problematic as more people in East Africa are displaced by climate change and conflict



Despite being part of decentralised government systems,<sup>251</sup> municipal (and in the case of Turkana, regional) authorities find themselves constrained in enacting local responses to forced displacement by particular government structures, such as how fiscal transfers are designated and national policies on refugees.

<sup>251</sup> As reviewed in the case studies, Ethiopia has a federal government structure with 10 regional states which are subdivided into different levels of local governments. Uganda has a central government system with a five-tier local government structure. Kenya has a national government and 47 county divisions.



International assistance for displaced people is rarely directed towards municipal responses in all three countries, but instead is often channelled through national or district/regional offices. This represents a key gap in the broader humanitarian and development localisation agenda across East Africa.



Municipal and regional authorities have interest and, in many cases, the capability to organise coherent responses to forced displacement, particularly if these responses are in coordination with other levels and sectors of government. Adama's response as well as the ongoing engagement of the mayor and other officials in Arua and Turkana County in displacement issues illustrate the knowledge and interest held by some local authorities.

When considering the case studies together, one clear takeaway is the importance of analysing not just the 'local' level of cities, but instead how cities are positioned within districts, regions, and ultimately countries. In each case, internal politics significantly influenced how municipalities responded to displaced people. In many ways, Adama's IDP reception represents a good practice of coordination and collaboration between the municipal, regional, and central government, illustrating how assistance can be obtained through clear messaging and coherent aims. The same holds true for different actors within Adama, as different government sectors and segments of the population 'played their part' to assist the IDPs, such as donations by the private sector or the creation of the Sena Seba primary school.

A similar good practice can be found in Arua Municipality's City Development Forum, which brings together representatives from different sectors and groups, including refugees. Such a platform offers a way to raise issues, consider solutions, and also act as a

platform for engagement with outside actors including humanitarian and development agencies. Building on platforms such as these for direct investment may offer a more equitable way for municipal authorities to identify key areas and local actors for action. The intersectionality evident in such forums illustrates how particular interventions in cities, such as area-based approaches, can support multiple populations; Arua's City Development Forum has representatives from both refugees and self-proclaimed 'slum dwellers', which in certain areas are one and the same.

At the same time, it is evident that 'the local' is of course multi-layered and complex, with different actors holding different and sometimes competing interests and agendas. It is sometimes due to this that funding has not flowed to 'local levels', representing a key area for ongoing discussion with municipalities, donors, and city actors alike. The clearest takeaway in this regard from this research was the value of shared platforms, such as coordinators in the Adama response and the CDF in Arua.



Taken together, these diverse case studies illustrate several key lessons and recommendations of use for major refugee-hosting countries' central and municipal governments, UNHCR, INGOs, and other key stakeholders. Case-specific recommendations are provided at the end of each case study (Chapter 2 on Adama, Chapter 3 on Arua, and Chapter 4 on Turkana). Broader findings and recommendations drawn from the three case studies and literature review presented in previous chapters include the following:



#### Increasing the engagement of and investment to municipal authorities:

- › **In instances, municipal authorities are essentially competing for funding and recognition** with other municipalities and sometimes other levels of government. It is important for any actor seeking to increase direct funding to municipalities to research and be aware of these realities and consider key areas of interest that overlap with different actors.
- › **Strengthening municipalities' ability to respond to forcibly displaced people can improve assistance in terms of quality and time of response** and create tailored integration efforts with better results for both forcibly displaced people and host communities.
- › **There is immense value in including urban forcibly displaced people and host communities in decision-making at the local, national, and international levels.** Alongside displacement, the climate crisis and pandemic recovery offer much-needed chances to establish inclusive participatory processes engaging a wide range of urban actors to increase urban equity.



#### Improving data and research gaps on urban forced migrants:

- › **More data and research are needed on the locations where urban refugees settle**, in terms of size and type of city and town, and how these settings affect their lives, livelihoods, integration, etc. As far as possible, refugees and locals should be involved as co-researchers and enumerators, including through offering research training as needed.
- › **It is crucial to document and register forced migrants for both emergency and long-term planning.** For example, in the case of IDPs arriving in Adama, Ethiopia (case study 1), the number of IDPs was predetermined through a lottery system and they were registered upon arrival. As a result of this, the city knew how many houses needed to be built and how many food rations provided. It seems likely that this played a large role in the overall success of the emergency response.
- › **Including urban refugees in censuses and government planning is important** to understand numbers and needs, and to ensure that central government and international funding to municipalities takes displaced inhabitants into account. Research into how different minority groups have been better recognised in particular cities may shed light on pathways to achieve this.



#### Increasing knowledge and engagement of local authorities and humanitarian actors:

- › **Humanitarian and development actors in refugee assistance could benefit from a deeper understanding of particular challenges facing the cities and towns refugees settle in** in order to address added challenges refugees may bring as well as the particular challenges they may face.
- › **Ongoing engagement between local authorities and humanitarian actors is essential**, particularly in urban areas where refugees are integrated with local populations.





## Learning from good practices on urban integration:

› **The location of settlements for IDPs and refugees matters for development and long-term integration.** Members of government and policymakers must take a long-term view when settling forced migrants. They should be housed in areas where they can easily create or find employment, have access to healthcare and schools, and contact local hosts. The failure to do so contributes to the creation of an isolated population unable to support itself and lacking the social ties to integrate and make use of community social and practical resources.

› **IDPs need support integrating, too.** While the integration of refugees remains a common topic of research and discussion, there is much less of a focus on the challenges that IDPs face in integrating. Sharing a language and ethnicity, or perhaps a religion and common heritage, does not obviate the challenge to belong in a new city. Our research in Ethiopia found that despite initial support arising in part due to the IDPs being considered kin, IDPs in Adama are still largely seen as outsiders in the city.

› Continue to **focus on equitable access to resources for refugees and host communities** to reduce tension and strengthen cohesion. This can promote peaceful coexistence.



## Including refugees in local, county, and regional development planning:

- › **Embedding support to urban forcibly displaced people within wider city strategies or plans for the urban poor may help** manage resentment, increase social cohesion, and enable quicker results for local economies and public services.
- › **Promote the CRRF at the local level in refugee-hosting regions** through greater engagement with local authorities, hosts, and refugees, including the direct channeling of funding through the county government.



## Upholding the rights of urban refugees and IDPs:

- › **Upholding and advocating for policies to recognise and support the rights of urban refugees is crucial** to improving their safety, well-being, and the assistance they are given. This includes host countries enacting changes to incorporate UNHCR's 2009 Urban Refugee Policy and 2014 Policy on Alternatives to Camps into their national policy frameworks, and continued advocacy and engagement by humanitarian and other actors to keep these policy shifts on the table.
- › **More awareness and direct assistance to urban IDPs is needed by governments at all levels to uphold their rights.**





## NEXT STEPS

As we look at the state of the forced migrants in cities and towns today, many questions remain. How can cities' capacities to help displaced people be harnessed? How can cities best be supported to do so? Historical practices, such as allowing refugees to settle in urban areas based on their backgrounds or preferences and supporting skilled refugees to find ways to access work in cities through labour mobility schemes, demonstrate the importance of responding to displacement with the agency of displaced people at the forefront.

Displaced people themselves know best why they live in particular cities or towns, and assuredly know how they could be assisted to improve their lives. Similarly, municipalities and other local urban actors experience the pressures of urban displacement firsthand and are the first to know where labour gaps, community support mechanisms, and opportunities for inclusion exist. As the number of urban displaced people rises, so too must the amount of support offered to the cities that become their home.







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# ANNEX 1: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

**Through a global literature review and field research in two secondary cities in the Global South, this project generated evidence on best practices for strengthening the capacities and improving the mandates of local authorities and civil society actors to receive, manage, and integrate urban forced migrants.**

Our research was divided into two main lines of enquiry. First, we assessed the status quo of local responses to forced migrants by asking:

**What is happening?** This resulted in baseline information for each partner city and a global literature review on the state of municipal responses to forced migration. This line of enquiry was also used when developing case studies for each city. The evidence generated from this line of enquiry is critically analysed through published and in-progress academic outputs.

We also gathered recommendations and possible pathways for improved management by normatively asking, **What should be happening?** This line of enquiry contributes to both the flagship report and the report on improved local governance. The evidence gathered from this part of the research culminated in a policy brief aimed at local, national, and international policymakers.

**Sample questions related to each of the main aspects of the research are as follows** (note: these questions targeted non-native English speakers and were adapted for the purposes of the literature review as well as based on the proficiency of the interview informant):

## RECEPTION:

How are refugees/IDPs/irregular migrants currently received in your city? What is your role in this? Do you believe this is an adequate response? How could this response be improved? What would you do differently [in your role] to improve this response? What changes should [normatively] occur in order to make the reception of forced migrants in your city successful [define success]?

## MANAGEMENT:

How are forced migrants dealt with in your city? Who takes care of them? Are they considered people to help or nuisances to the city? Why/why not? What is the municipal government's role in managing forced migrants? Are they doing more or less than they should [normatively] be doing? Who oversees forced migrants and school/healthcare/food/shelter/work/other aspects of life? Can you draw out the management structure on this piece of paper? If I were a forced migrant that had just arrived in your city, which people [e.g., local authorities, migrant organisation] would I meet for different reasons [e.g., shelter, registration, food, etc.]?

**Integration:** Do formal integration procedures exist in your city? If so, what are they? Who helps forced migrants integrate? Where do forced migrants live in your city? Do forced migrants and locals have places where they live and/or work together or interact? What helps or stops forced migrants from integrating? What would help them integrate better?



## Snapshot of Methodological Process: Research in Adama

Before launching the research project Responses to Crisis Migration in Ethiopia: Researching the Role of Local Actors in Secondary Cities, the research team members travelled to Adama on 20 August 2019 to pilot research questions. We discussed the following broad research questions with three major stakeholders: Adama University, the Department of Labour and Social Affairs, and the Adama Chamber of Commerce:



### What type of migrant does Adama have?



### Who are the major actors in assisting IDPs?



### How have local actors assisted IDPs?

Based on the pilot findings, we categorised the main actors who played significant roles in assisting the IDPs. These are: private sector, various government bureaus, international and local NGOs, local communities, IDPs, and equb and iddir associations. Before officially launching the project and approaching those actors, two local researchers met with the mayor to request approval to undertake the research activity in the city. After launching the fieldwork, two local researchers travelled to Adama twice a week and conducted interviews with local actors. During the project, the local researchers made 30 trips to Adama and conducted 67 interviews with respondents. We used snowballing sampling techniques to gain access to the informants through existing contacts in our fieldwork sites and prepared well-structured qualitative research questions for each actor.

The researchers successfully interviewed 21 of the 28 government bureaus. Because of time and resource constraints, it was not feasible to reach all 100 private actors who were involved in supporting IDPs. Therefore, the research team interviewed the seven major private actors who made the greatest contributions toward the IDPs in terms of cash and in-kind donations. Other major actors who played a significant role in supporting IDPs were local and national NGOs, nine of which were approached by the research team to learn their best practices for supporting IDPs. Interviews were also conducted with six local community groups, in which they shared their experiences of participating in efforts to assist IDPs.





## Select Interview Questions for Adama City Officials

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### QUESTION 1

How did the city administration respond to IDPs who come from the Somali region in 2018?

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### QUESTION 2

How many IDPs did city administration support during IDP settlement programme in Adama?

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### QUESTION 3

What were the main challenges for the city administration towards the 2,000 IDP households?

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### QUESTION 4

Is/was the city administration working in collaboration with federal government in order to alleviate IDPs' problems in Adama or raise awareness about it?

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### QUESTION 4B

If so, how did the collaboration work?

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### QUESTION 5

Beside basic support such as food and shelter, what was/is city administration working to address IDPs' problems in the long run/relating to self-reliance?

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### QUESTION 6

What do you consider to be a helpful benefit IDPs received or good practice towards IDPs?

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### QUESTION 7

Have the IDPs benefited Adama city? If so, how?

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### QUESTION 8

As government high officials do you have anything else would like to tell us about IDPs and forced migration?







