Building Evidence to Enhance the Welfare of Refugees and Host Communities in Kenya

Insights from Two Waves of the Kenya Longitudinal Socioeconomic Study

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Acknowledgments

This report draws on two waves of the Kenya Longitudinal Socioeconomic Study of Refugees and Host Communities (K-LSRH), conducted under the Kenya Analytical Program on Forced Displacement (KAP-FD)—a collaboration between the World Bank, UNHCR, and the Center for Effective Global Action (CEGA) at UC Berkeley. This work is supported by the PROSPECTS Partnership, which brings together the World Bank, IFC, ILO, UNHCR, and UNICEF, funded by the Kingdom of the Netherlands and administered at the World Bank through the Multi Donor Trust Fund for Forced Displacement. The principal investigators are Edward Miguel, Nistha Sinha, Precious Zikhali, Theresa Beltramo, and Utz Pape. Antonia Delius coordinated the design and fieldwork for the first wave of the Kenya Longitudinal Socioeconomic Study of Refugees and Host Communities (K-LSRH), while Caleb Gitau and Esther Owelle coordinated various aspects of the second wave.

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Abbreviations and Acronyms

AMREF	African Medical and Research Foundation
CAPI	Computer-Assisted Personal Interview
CATI	Computer-Assisted Telephone Interview
CBE	Competency Based Education
CEGA	Center for Effective Global Action
CRA	Commissioner for Refugee Affairs
CSI	Coping Strategy Index
CWPM	Correct Words per Minute
DA	Differentiated Assistance
DRC	Democratic Republic Congo
DRS	Department of Refugee Services
EGMA	Early Grade Mathematics Assessment
EGRA	Early Grade Reading Assessment
GAD-7	Generalized Anxiety Disorder Score
GCR	Global Compact on Refugees
GISEDP	Garissa Integrated Socio-Economic Development Plan
GoK	Government of Kenya
ILO	International Labor Organization
IGAD	Intergovernmental Authority on Development
JS	Junior School
KAP-FD	Kenya Analytical Program on Forced Displacement
KCSE	Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education
KIHBS	Kenya Integrated Household Budget Survey
KISEDP	Kalobeyei Integrated Socio-Economic Development Plan
K-LSRH	Kenya Longitudinal Socioeconomic Study of Refugees and Host Communities

KNBS	Kenya National Bureau of Statistics
KPSEA	Kenya Primary School Education Assessment
KSh.	Kenya Shilling
KUSP2	Second Kenya Urban Support Program
MPI	Multidimensional Poverty Index
NDOC	National Disaster Operations Center
NGO	Nongovernmental Organization
PHQ-8	Patient Health Questionnaire
PPP	Purchasing Power Parity
proGres	Profile Global Registration System, the UNHCR refugee database
PROSPECTS	Partnership for Improving Prospects for Host Communities and Forcibly Displaced Persons
PTSD	Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder
RRPS	Kenya Rapid Response Phone Survey
SES	Socioeconomic surveys
SHA	Social Health Authority
SHIF	Social Health Insurance Fund (SHIF)
SS	Senior School
SWIFT	Survey of Well-Being via Instant and Frequent Tracking
TR	Target Respondent
UC Berkeley	University of California, Berkeley
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
WASH	Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene
WFP	United Nations World Food Program

Executive Summary

The Kenya Longitudinal Socioeconomic Study of Refugees and Host Communities (K-LSRH) is the first national panel survey of registered refugees and hosts in Kenya. It provides a unique opportunity to inform efforts to enhance the socioeconomic integration of refugees. Unlike previous surveys that lacked comparable host-refugee data, K-LSRH includes both refugee and host communities, offering comprehensive and longitudinal insights into their living conditions, challenges and opportunities. The first wave was collected between May 2022 and June 2023, while the second wave followed between March and November 2024. The survey covers refugees in Kakuma Refugee Camp, Dadaab Refugee Complex, Kalobeyei Integrated Settlement, as well as refugees in Nairobi, Mombasa, and Nakuru. The survey instrument covers a wide range of socioeconomic modules, including but not limited to employment, consumption, food insecurity, shocks, migration histories and mental health as well as dedicated survey modules on women's empowerment and child education outcomes. With its extensive scope and panel structure, K-LSRH is well-positioned to assess programmatic changes and their impacts.

K-LSRH is implemented in a rapidly evolving humanitarian and development context. After three decades of relying on the aid-driven encampment model, Kenya is moving towards a model of integrated settlements through the Shirika Plan. The Shirika Plan is a government-led, multi-year initiative to transform the country's refugee policy by shifting from short-term humanitarian aid toward long-term socioeconomic inclusion and self-reliance for refugees and host communities. It aims to integrate refugees into national systems by turning camps into sustainable, integrated settlements where refugees can access education, healthcare, work, and business opportunities alongside Kenyan citizens.[1,2] The promotion of self-reliance is even more critical in a global context where rising demand for international assistance is facing constrained donor funding and overstretched aid budgets. To address these challenges, the World Food Program (WFP), the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the Department of Refugees Services (DRS) are introducing a Differentiated Assistance (DA) model for Kenya. Under this model, aid will be tailored to refugees' levels of vulnerability, moving away from the current blanket support system. Training programs will be introduced to enhance self-reliance with refugees facing the highest levels of vulnerability remaining eligible for full assistance, while those able to meet their basic needs will see reduced support. In a context where high levels of multidimensional poverty, food insecurity, and job vulnerability persist among most of the population, accurately identifying those most in need will be essential to ensuring equitable and effective assistance.

In addition, Kenya has recently experienced several events that have implications for socio-economic well-being. In June 2024, the Finance Bill 2024 proposed various tax reforms, including increased taxes on essential goods and services. While the government eventually withdrew the bill in response to public dissent, the proposals led to widespread protests resulting in the destruction of property, disruption of supply chains and weakening of the shilling against major currencies, which exacerbated inflationary pressures. Furthermore, between March and May 2024, Kenya experienced severe flooding resulting in the displacement of over 200,000 people and the destruction of homes, infrastructure, and farmland (Relief web, 2024). Estimates suggest that floods and subdued business sentiment contributed to a slowdown in the country's economic growth to 5 percent in 2024, down from 5.6 percent in 2023 (World Bank, 2024).

[1] The Shirika Plan is a multi-year collaborative initiative between the Government of Kenya and UNHCR aiming to promote the socioeconomic inclusion of refugees in Kenya by transforming refugee camps into integrated settlements for both refugees and asylum seekers. It builds on the experiences from the Kalobeyei Integrated Socio-Economic Development Plan (KISEDP) and the Garissa Integrated Socio-Economic Development Plan (GISEDP). Its inception started in 2023, and the Government is currently consulting with partners on the plan's implementation. See for reference:https://refugee.go.ke/kenya-shirika-plan-overview-and-action-plan.

[2] In practice, job discrimination, administrative hurdles, travel distances to registration centers and associated costs often prevent refugees from obtaining work permits or movement passes. In the first wave of K-LSRH less than 1 percent of refugees had a work permit (World Bank, 2024b).

PHOTO/ Alamy

Building on the findings of the first wave of K-LSRH and in this evolving context, this report assesses changes in refugees' ability to meet their basic needs, examines whether they have the necessary resources to do so, and identifies key barriers to achieving self-reliance.

The main findings are as follows:

Refugees in camps struggle to meet basic needs but so do host communities

Multidimensional poverty remains high and has not changed significantly between 2022/23 and 2024. An estimated 85 percent of Kakuma refugees, 87 percent of Kalobeyei refugees and 84 percent of Dadaab refugees are still considered 'multidimensionally poor' (up from 82, 83, and 75 percent, respectively), meaning they experience deprivation in at least one third of weighted indicators comprising the index.[3] Among Turkana host households, the share of multidimensionally poor households is even higher (90 percent, up from 86 percent), underscoring the overall high levels of deprivation in Turkana County. While improvements were registered in terms of education and water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) outcomes, they have been offset by a sharp reduction in employment outcomes, which increased from around 80 percent to over 90 percent in Turkana camps. Notably, multidimensional poverty among refugees and hosts in camp areas remains significantly above that of their urban counterparts.[4]

Monetary poverty remains widespread, particularly in Turkana County. An estimated 49 percent of refugees in Kakuma, 72 percent in Kalobeyei, and 61 percent of host community households lived on less than US$2.15 a day (2017 PPP), compared to 53, 58, and 68 percent, respectively, in 2022/23. Poverty,

[3] The index adapts previous work from the Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative (OPHI) and encompasses 14 indicators across six dimensions of well-being, namely, education, employment, energy, housing, water and sanitation and nutrition.

[4] 16 percent of refugees in Nairobi and 35 percent in Nakuru and Mombasa are considered multidimensionally poor. Among hosts, the share is less than 10 percent.

whether measured monetarily or multidimensionally, is strongly associated with household employment and size. Households with at least one employed member are significantly less likely to be poor, while larger households face higher poverty risks. Employment transitions further underscore this vulnerability: households that experienced job loss between survey waves were significantly more likely to fall into multidimensional poverty. Food insecurity also remains severe, affecting 71 percent of refugee households in Kakuma and 76 percent in Kalobeyei. Host communities face similar challenges, with food insecurity in Turkana at 78 percent, though down from 88 percent in 2022/23.

Although under the new education system students in grade 6 can automatically progress to Junior School (JS), the vision of 100 percent transition to JS is far from being met, particularly among Dadaab refugees, where only 50 percent of children previously in grade 6 in the first wave are in JS. Kenya's Competency Based Education (CBE) automatically transitions children completing Grade 6 to junior school (JS), without the need for a national exam as a selection criterion.[5] As the JS is located within the primary schools, the new system implies reduced transition costs. The child sample in the second wave of K-LSRH includes the first cohort to enter junior school; in the first wave, these children were enrolled in Grade 6 of primary school. An estimated 85 percent of Kakuma refugee children, 77 percent of Kalobeyei refugee children and 50 percent of Dadaab refugee children in grade 6 transitioned to JS. This compares to 62 percent among Turkana hosts and 91 percent among Dadaab hosts. Most of those who did not transition remained in the same or a lower grade, only a small share—2 to 4 percent among Turkana refugees and 14 percent in Dadaab—were out of school. The transition to JS is also low among Turkana hosts at 62 percent. Similarly, net primary enrolment is still low among Dadaab and Turkana hosts. Among children who are out of school, school costs are the main barrier, with 30 percent citing it as the main reason. Furthermore, it remains to be seen whether CBE achieves high transition rates into Senior School (SS) when the full costs associated with secondary school transitions (fees, school uniforms, geographical distance) materialize.[6] While expanding enrolment, it is also crucial to move beyond enrollment and prioritize improving learning outcomes. Despite students retaking the same test, mathematics competency scores remained stagnant among refugees in Kalobeyei and Dadaab, as well as host students in Dadaab. While reading fluency has improved among refugee and host children in Dadaab, overall fluency rates remain low, and progress in other locations has been modest.

A decline in humanitarian assistance amidst scarce employment opportunities and climate shocks limits ability to meet basic needs

Few hosts and urban refugees receive assistance and while nearly all camp refugees continue to receive some form of assistance, the total dollar value of assistance has decreased sharply. Since the completion of the first wave of data collection in June 2023, funding shortfalls forced food rations to be cut from 80 percent of the minimum food basket (KSh 2,500 per person per month as of 2024) for sustainable caloric intake to 50 percent between February and April 2024 and further to 40 percent in October–November 2024. In addition, food vouchers were suspended during May–June 2024, and refugees only received food items in-kind during that period. As a result, the median amount of aid received by refugees has fallen by 53 percent in Kakuma, 23 percent in Kalobeyei and 33 percent in Dadaab. This has led to a contraction of incomes as refugees were unable to offset aid reductions through employment incomes or remittances. On a positive note, the timeliness of aid delivery improved, as delays in food assistance decreased significantly for both camp-based refugees (from 80 percent reporting aid delays to 49 percent) and host communities (from 84 percent to 49 percent).

[5] 16 percent of refugees in Nairobi and 35 percent in Nakuru and Mombasa are considered multidimensionally poor. Among hosts, the share is less than 10 percent.

[6] Since the CBE rollout was only in 2022, the first cohort of children have yet to reach the end of JS before they can transition to SS.

The contraction in incomes has had ripple effects on the labor market, reflected in a sharp decline in labor force participation, particularly among refugees. Employment and self employment among refugees have fallen by half, from 13 to 6 percent in camps and from 49 to 37 percent in urban areas. The economic slowdown has affected both men and women, but women, especially those in camps, face the lowest employment rates. Care responsibilities remain the main driver of female economic inactivity, constraining their participation in paid work. In 2024, 89 percent of camp based refugees were economically inactive, and most had not attempted to find employment, citing the lack of available jobs as the primary reason (64 percent, up from 41 percent in 2022/23). In contrast, no comparable decline in employment is observed among host communities, whose employment and inactivity rates remained stable. This could be because, unlike refugees, hosts face fewer restrictions on their mobility and economic activity.

Rising food prices and excessive rainfall have compounded vulnerability among both refugees and host communities. Although fewer households reported experiencing inflation in 2024 (just over 70 percent) than in 2022/23 (over 90 percent), host communities were more affected than refugees. Excessive rainfall and flooding also emerged as major shocks in 2024, with impacts more pronounced in urban areas than in camps. Within camp settings, host households were particularly affected, reflecting their greater reliance on agriculture and thus higher exposure to climate related shocks.[7]

More frequent shocks, alongside food ration cuts, have led to a sharp rise in negative consumption-based coping strategies. Households reducing food consumption and purchasing food on credit both increased to 64 percent and 44 percent in 2024, up from 49 percent and 32 percent in 2022/23 among camp-based refugees and their hosts respectively. This growing dependence on credit and the depletion of personal savings among both refugees and hosts are particularly concerning, given the limited economic


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[7] The encampment model restricts refugees from engaging in certain protected occupations reserved for hosts, including agriculture (except for self-sufficiency use of small kitchen gardens in Kalobeyei), the collection of firewood, and pastoralist activities.

opportunities that raise doubts about their ability to repay debt. Combined with reductions in humanitarian assistance, the unpredictable weather conditions, and the tightening of the labor market, these challenges are likely to further strain livelihoods. This underscores the urgent need for carefully designed targeted interventions and continuous data monitoring to address the compounding effects on refugees and host communities alike.

The challenges of declining humanitarian assistance, extreme weather conditions, tightening labor markets, and rising food prices are likely to further strain livelihoods, raising critical policy questions on the path to self-reliance for refugees and host communities. Most refugees reside in underdeveloped areas with limited economic opportunities, leaving both groups vulnerable. In this context, what strategies can effectively support their transition to self-reliance? How can humanitarian assistance be structured to protect the most vulnerable while fostering long-term resilience in the face of repeated shocks, shrinking budgets, and persistent food insecurity? Addressing these challenges requires tackling structural and policy constraints that extend beyond humanitarian aid, which is expected to continue declining.

The evidence presented in this report suggests that key policy areas for consideration include: (i) improving access to quality education by reducing financial barriers to education, (ii) creating jobs and self-employment opportunities that benefit both refugees and hosts, ensuring real access, and (iii) enhancing the efficiency and targeting of aid to maximize its impact amid funding shortfalls. Achieving these goals requires improved coordination and the use of data and evidence to monitor progress.

Focusing on both the quality and accessibility of education for refugees and host communities is essential for fostering and sustaining self-reliance in the long term. Policies that reduce the financial burden of education—such as school fees, uniforms, and transportation costs—are crucial and can be addressed through scholarships, financial aid, and the provision of free school materials for vulnerable populations. Programs like e-Limu scholarships have already enhanced educational access for thousands of refugee students in Kenya. Additionally, collaboration with the Ministry of Education has integrated refugee learners into the national education system through initiatives like the National Education Management Information System (NEMIS), improving tracking and support mechanisms. Beyond access, improving learning quality is key to strengthening learning outcomes and fostering long-term resilience by equipping students with the skills necessary for economic participation. Targeted interventions, such as remedial programs and teacher training, can enhance educational standards and ensure meaningful progress. By investing in both educational access and quality, policies can help bridge the gap between learning and economic participation, ultimately enhancing self-reliance and resilience for both refugees and host communities.

Creating and enabling effective access to sustainable employment and entrepreneurship opportunities for both refugees and host communities is essential for self-reliance. Most refugees in Kenya live in underdeveloped regions with poor infrastructure, restricted movement, and limited job opportunities, keeping many dependent on aid. Public-private partnerships can play a transformative role in workforce integration through business incubators, sector-specific job placements, and supply chain linkages that connect refugee-led enterprises to broader markets. Access to financial services such as banking, credit, and investment, is essential for economic inclusion. The creation of jobs and entrepreneurship must go hand in hand with removing barriers to access. For refugees to be able to take advantage of economic opportunities, full recognition of refugee documentation across financial and employment sectors is important and so is enhanced mobility. Reducing bureaucratic constraints, such as documentation requirements for work permits and business registration, will also be critical to enabling meaningful economic participation. While area-based development can help, a more effective approach may be allowing refugees to move to regions with better job prospects and higher earnings potential (Hoogeveen, Leander and Nsababera, forthcoming). Special attention should be given to women and youth, who face additional challenges in securing employment and financial services.


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Funding shortfalls, combined with growing economic and weather-related shocks and food insecurity, are straining resources, underscoring the need for more efficient and targeted aid. As the transition to a differentiated assistance model unfolds, the severe food insecurity and ration cuts in refugee camps require careful management to avoid further hardship. In the short term, continued assistance is essential due to persistent food insecurity and poverty. In the medium term, efforts should focus on supporting the transition to independent livelihoods and reducing long-term aid dependency. A well-structured graduation approach can help guide individuals toward self-reliance while safeguarding those still at risk. Investments in financial services such as credit, savings, and insurance, are key to supporting income-generating activities. Strengthening economic resilience in host communities, particularly through value addition in the livestock sector, can also bolster local economies. Given increasing funding challenges, improving aid efficiency and targeting remains critical.

The Shirika Plan presents a promising opportunity to advance the self-reliance of refugees and host communities through a government-led and development-oriented approach, but its success hinges on addressing key structural barriers, such as limited mobility and restricted access to work permits. Improving access to quality education, expanding movement rights, removing bureaucratic hurdles around documentation and work permits, streamlining business registration, and attracting private sector investments are essential for enhancing self-reliance. To ensure long-term success, policies must also strike a balance between economic inclusion and social cohesion, benefiting both refugees and host communities. Effective coordination between governments, humanitarian agencies, and development partners, supported by data-driven decision-making, is essential for successful implementation and translating policies into tangible improvements for both groups.

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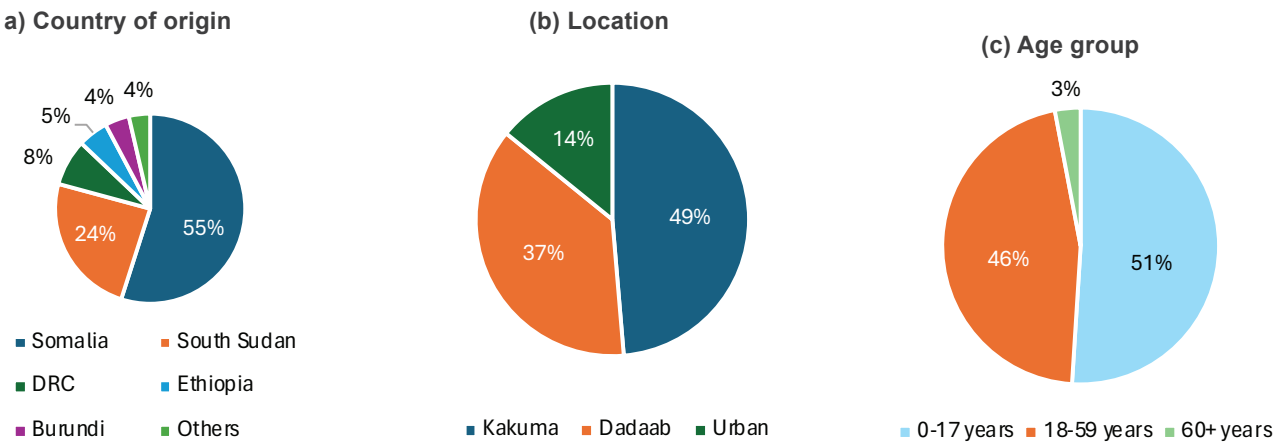
01 Background and Context

Kenya is a major refugee-hosting nation and home to some of the world's largest refugee camps, accommodating refugees from protracted displacement situations in neighboring countries, some lasting over three decades.[8] As of December 2025, Kenya hosted 835,793 registered refugees and asylum seekers most of whom reside in three designated areas: urban areas, primarily Nairobi, Mombasa and Nakuru (14 percent), Dadaab Refugee Complex in Garissa County (49 percent), and the Kakuma Refugee Camp and Kalobeyei Settlement in Turkana County (37 percent) (Figure 1 and UNHCR (2025)). Established in 1991 and 1992, respectively, Dadaab and Kakuma rank among the five largest refugee camps globally (UNHCR, 2023). Women account for approximately 49 percent of registered refugees, while women and children together comprise about 75 percent of the refugee population (UNHCR, 2025).

Figure 1: Demographic characteristics of refugees in Kenya



Source: *UNHCR Operational Portal* ***Note:*** *Data as of December 2025.*

The composition of refugee populations varies significantly across different locations. The Dadaab camp in Kenya is nearly homogenously resided by Somali refugees primarily due to the proximity of Dadaab to Somalia. On the other hand, refugees from South Sudan make up the highest number of refugees residing in Kakuma and Kalobeyei. Camp refugees are younger (ages between 0-17 years) than urban ones, have a larger share of women and their heads of households are more likely to be female. Finally, camp settings have higher child dependency ratios than urban settings.[9]

1.1 An Evolving Context

Kenya's planned policy shift from the encampment model to integrated settlements marks a significant transformation in refugee management. In 2023, the Government of Kenya (GoK) proposed the development of the Shirika Plan, an innovative refugee management framework which furthers the idea of socioeconomic integration of refugees into Kenyan society.[10] The transition to settlements was first conceived in the Refugees Act 2021, whose General Regulations were published in February 2024.[11] Drawing on over three decades of

[8] Estimates from global refugee figures in 2022 suggest that Kenya hosts 8 percent of the total Sub-Saharan refugee population (Sarzin & Nsababera, Forthcoming).

[9] For more details on the demographic profiles, please refer to (World Bank, 2024b).

[10] The Plan can be accessed here: https://refugee.go.ke/sites/default/files/2025-04/SHIRIKA%20PLAN%20FOR%20REFUGEES%20AND%20HOST%20COMMUNITIES.pdf.

[11] See for reference: Kenya: The Refugees (General) Regulations (2024).

experience in refugee hosting and recognizing the limitations of the aid-driven model, the new approach aims to transition refugee camps into settlements where refugees will live alongside host communities and be supported to achieve self-reliance. The plan seeks to enhance the welfare of both refugees and hosts through improved infrastructure, services, and economic opportunities. Additionally, the establishment of the two municipalities of Dadaab and Kakuma, which include the refugee camps, aims to integrate services and governance, enhancing the management and support of both refugees and host communities.

The move towards integrated settlements has gained momentum across the national and county governments and development partners.[12] This is illustrated by the fact that the earlier county plans on local area development have been made components of the national Shirika Plan. For instance, the second phase of the Kalobeyei Integrated Socio-Economic Development Plan (KISEDP) and the Garissa Integrated Socio-Economic Development Plan (GISEDP) are now considered part of the Shirika Plan. Turkana County has established the special Kakuma Municipality which also aims to offer integrated services to both refugees and host communities. The county is working together with the national Ministry of Lands, Public Works, Housing and Urban Development to set up the municipality under the second Kenya Urban Support Program (KUSP2). Dadaab's and Bura municipality's recent designation as municipalities in 2023 is also expected to enhance governance, service delivery, and private sector engagement and improve access to economic opportunities for refugees and host community entrepreneurs.

Box 1: Integrated Settlements

In protracted displacement situations, an integrated settlement is a space where refugees and members of the hosting community live together with common access to essential services such as water, healthcare and education (UNHCR, 2023). These settlements could also be characterized by shared infrastructure, agricultural land, markets, and coverage by social protection programs by the national governments. The integrated settlements model is advanced as a solution in host countries that have experienced protracted displacement, yet refugees have limited or no access to durable solutions. The integrated settlements model is increasingly seen as a solution in host countries facing protracted displacement, where refugees have limited or no access to durable solutions. The three durable solutions for refugees—voluntary repatriation, third-country resettlement, and local integration (UNHCR, 2003)—are often unfeasible for most refugees. Repatriation is impossible for many as home countries remain engulfed in conflict, and only about one percent of refugees is resettled in Western countries annually. In addition, local integration, which involves refugees becoming citizens of the host country, is not a popular option in less developed countries. For these reasons, governments and the UN community, under the Global Compact on Refugees (GCR), view integrated settlements as a viable option, as they can expand refugees' ability to work, move, and engage in business—if implemented effectively. Indeed, many governments, including Kenya, Uganda, South Sudan, and Ethiopia made a total of 49 pledges around Human Settlements at the 2023 Global Refugee Forum (Global Compact on Refugees, 2023).

Integrated settlements can promote social cohesion, self-reliance and local economic development. Under the encampment model, refugees mainly rely on aid and face restrictions with regards to work and movement. In contrast, integrated settlements promote socioeconomic integration and could lead to better social cohesion, shared resources and self-reliance, hence reduction in reliance on aid and eventual sustainability in refugee management. Integrated settlements attract international donors and investors (Betts, 2019). Investments in infrastructure for integrated service delivery, business growth and agriculture could lead to local area development and have the potential to boost sub-national and national economies.

[12] The World Bank through the financing Window for Refugees and Host Communities is supporting sectors such as education, health and WASH.

Despite Kenya's progress to improve the legal and policy environments, refugees still face many challenges that curtail their livelihoods. Although the Refugee Act 2021 specifies that refugees have the right to work in Kenya, they are required to have Class M permits, which are often challenging to access in practice.[13] Freedom of movement for refugees is also limited as under the Act refugees are required to stay in 'designated areas' unless they apply for an exemption. To leave the designated area, they are required to apply for movement passes, which are valid for a specified period and have extensive verification processes before issuance. Refugees and asylum seekers found outside the designated areas face arrest and prosecution. In addition, due to the challenge of documentation, refugees are quite limited in terms of labor force participation and the businesses they can operate. They are often employed as 'incentive workers' for humanitarian organizations and receive lower wages than Kenyans for equivalent work (Vuni & Iragi, 2023; Omata, 2021). Refugees also face significant financial inclusion barriers including lack of documentation, geographical barriers, limited knowledge on financial literacy, and access to existing financial services (Vuni & Iragi, 2023). This is despite some efforts to ensure that refugee documentation is better recognized, notably the gazette notification in 2023 recognizing forms of refugee documentation. [14]

In addition, UNHCR Kenya and the United Nations World Food Program (WFP) have faced increased budget cuts, making the promotion of self-reliance of refugees even more critical. There have been many instances of reduction (and volatility) of food rations as well as cash transfers, which often caused unrest in refugee camps. For instance, the minimum food basket (KSh 2,500 per person per month as of 2024), representing the essential food items required to meet basic nutritional needs, has experienced fluctuations in support coverage, with assistance covering only 40 to 60 percent of its value throughout the year. In the wake of sustained aid cuts, the humanitarian agencies proposed implementing the Differentiated Assistance (DA) model whereby refugees will receive aid based on their level of vulnerability. This will be a shift from the traditional blanket assistance whereby refugees were supported by virtue of being refugees. The UNHCR, WFP and the Department of Refugee Services (DRS) intend to roll out DA from 2025 onwards.

Box 2: Differentiated Assistance

Differentiated Assistance (DA) is a framework developed by all stakeholders with the leadership of DRS, WFP and UNHCR to provide assistance to refugees based on their ability or inability to meet basic needs. Typically, WFP uses a one-size-fits-all approach that does not consider that refugees have different vulnerabilities or capacities to meet their basic needs. As a result, food rations and e-vouchers were distributed equally to all refugees and asylum seekers registered by UNHCR and DRS. However, in a protracted displacement situation, this approach is no longer sustainable, especially amidst declining humanitarian funding. The DA process grouped refugees into four categories from Category 1 (29 percent of population) representing the most vulnerable to Category 4 (4 percent), representing the self-reliant group. In between are Category 2 (40 percent) with less vulnerabilities, and Category 3 (16 percent) which includes those expected to benefit from livelihood support to move towards the self-reliant group. Given that not all refugees could be reached during the exercise, some having moved to other locations, the categorization covered approximately 89 percent of the population.

The categorization process was informed by 18 months of extensive community engagement, during which more than 6,000 beneficiaries participated in discussions to identify the key parameters that distinguish households between able or unable to meet their basic needs. This process was further strengthened by data

[13] To obtain a work permit, a recommendation from a prospective employer must be accompanied by a letter from the DRS confirming refugee status. This process is complex and in practice, permits are rarely issued. In the first wave of K-LSRH less than 1 percent of refugees had obtained a work permit (World Bank, 2024b).

[14] The recognized documents include Asylum Seeker Pass, Proof of Registration, Movement Pass, Letter of Recognition, Refugee Identity Card, Conventional Travel Document (Kenyan Ministry of Interior and Coordination of National Government (2023, October 27). Legal Notice No. 143: *Gazette notification on refugee documentation.* Kenya Law. https://new.kenyalaw.org/akn/ke/act/ln/2023/143/eng@2023-10-27/publication.

Box 2: Differentiated Assistance *continued*

from the House to House Enhanced Single Registry (ESR), as well as verified information from the Chamber of Commerce, County licensing records, employment data from various sectors, Bamba Chakula trader information, and date of arrival data (specifically for those who arrived within the previous 12 months).

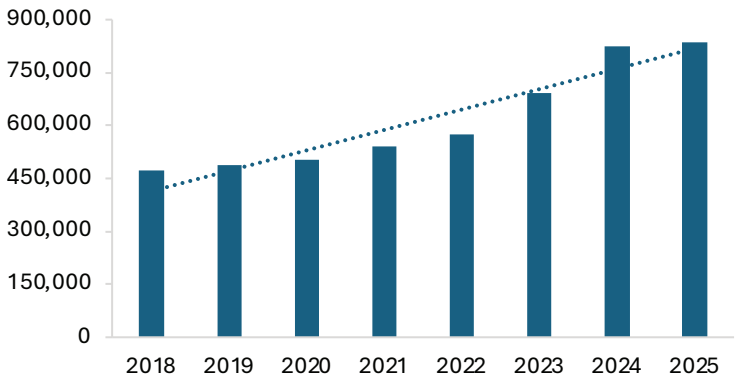
This categorization is not static. It may be revised through established recourse mechanisms, Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability and Learning (MEAL) processes, or when length of stay exceeds 12 months. In such cases, an assessment is conducted to determine whether households should transition into different categories.

Differentiated Assistance (DA) extends beyond food support and is designed to be applied across multiple service sectors, including Health (SHA/SHIF enrolment), Water, Education, and Livelihoods. Current livelihood interventions primarily target Category 3 households, and to a lesser extent Category 2 households. Category 4 households are mainly reached through policy advocacy, with a notable achievement being the ability to register SIM cards using refugee identification documents. With respect to food assistance, Category 1 households receive 60 percent of the full ration, Category 2 receive 40 percent, and Category 3 receive 20 percent, while Category 4 households do not receive humanitarian assistance. Nonetheless, Category 4 households benefit from documentation and targeted support aimed at sustaining their livelihoods.

The DA team is developing a centralized database to serve as the official reference for all individuals eligible for livelihood support. In addition, the DA framework includes a recourse mechanism to address grievances, monitor progress toward self-reliance, and respond to shocks affecting self-reliant households, ensuring that support can be reinstated if their circumstances deteriorate.

Despite the reductions in donor funding, refugee inflows into Kenya surged between May 2022 and November 2024. At the start of K-LSRH in May 2022, Kenya hosted a total of 555,183 refugees and asylum seekers, of which 51 percent were male, and 49 percent were female (UNHCR, 2022). At the end of the first wave in June 2023, the number had increased to 623,865 refugees and asylum seekers with the gender distribution remaining close but a notable increase in the number of children aged 5-17 years (UNHCR, 2023). At the start of the second wave of K-LSRH in March 2024, Kenya hosted 767,294 refugees and asylum seekers which as of December 2025, had increased to 835,793 (Figure 2). Part of the increase in numbers can be attributed to refugee registration being restarted in Dadaab after 6 years, which has led to an increase of registrations of refugees who had already been in Kenya.[15]

Figure 2: Total number of refugees and asylum seekers



Source: *UNHCR Operational Data Portal.* ***Note:*** *Cumulative total number of refugees, as of December for each year.*

[15] Based on information from UNHCR field office.

PHOTO/Freepik

1.2 Data and Conceptual Framework

Refugees are not systematically included in national surveys resulting in a lack of data that is comparable to the national population. Kenya has made substantial progress in closing data gaps at the national and county level to help understand the impact of displacement on refugees, hosts, and nationals. Socioeconomic surveys (SES) have been carried out in Kalobeyei Settlement and Kakuma Refugee Camp in Turkana County, and in urban areas (Nairobi, Nakuru and Mombasa). However, data gaps persist, particularly due to the absence of comprehensive surveys that capture all refugee and host communities, including modules that align with national survey standards.[16] Looking ahead, the inclusion of refugees in the 2025/26 Kenya Integrated Household Budget Survey (KIHBS) conducted by the Kenya National Bureau of Statistics (KNBS) represents a major step toward institutionalizing the collection of nationally comparable data on displaced populations. This will help ensure that refugee welfare is systematically monitored and integrated into national development planning.

The Kenya Longitudinal Socioeconomic Study of Refugees and Host Communities (K-LSRH) provides comparable socioeconomic panel data on refugees and host communities to inform evidence-based policy, planning and programming over time. The first wave was collected between May 2022 and June 2023 while the second wave was collected between March and November 2024. The survey covers (i) refugees in Kakuma Refugee Camp, Dadaab Refugee Complex, Kalobeyei Integrated Settlement; (ii) refugees in urban areas of Nairobi, (iii) refugees in 'Other Urban areas' namely, Mombasa and Nakuru, and (iv) host communities drawn from households within 15 kilometers of the refugee camps and from urban neighborhoods where a large share of the urban refugees reside.[17] The sampling frame for refugee camps is based on UNHCR's population database (proGres).[18] In each wave, up to

[16] While the SESs shed light on the living conditions and challenges of refugees, they do not include host communities and only allow for a limited comparison to official statistics in Kenya. Although the Kenya COVID-19 Rapid Response Phone Survey (RRPS) included national and refugee households, the survey only covered individuals with registered phone numbers and only included a reduced number of socioeconomic indicators compared to face-to-face surveys. Finally, the Refugee and Host Household Survey in Nairobi, while comparable to national survey frameworks, was only representative of the refugee and host population of the country's capital.

[17] The survey does not cover the small percentage (6%) of refugees living outside target strata.

[18] The sampling frame included all registered refugees and asylum seekers in Kenya. Thus, this report focuses on individuals who fall within the legal definition of refugees and asylum seekers even if they may have other reasons for leaving the country of origin.

Numbers

4 In each wave, up to four respondents were interviewed per household.

5,892 Refugee households

3,498 Host households were interviewed in the first wave.

96% For the second wave, all households interviewed in the first wave were followed up and **96 percent of the targeted sample were successfully interviewed.**

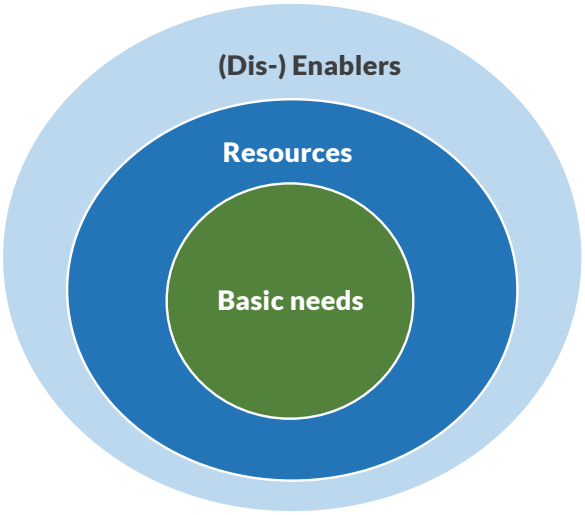
four respondents were interviewed per household.[19] 5,892 refugee households and 3,498 host households were interviewed in the first wave. For the second wave, all households interviewed in the first wave were followed up and 96 percent of the targeted sample were successfully interviewed (See Annex 1 for further details). The survey instrument includes questions on household-level outcomes (demographic characteristics, consumption, dwelling characteristics, food insecurity, assistance, income sources, shocks); adult individual-level outcomes (labor supply and earnings, access to financial services, social cohesion, movement to and within Kenya, health and psychosocial well-being, marriage and fertility, gender norms); and children's outcomes (learning assessments; aspirations; social cohesion). K-LSRH is the first representative longitudinal survey of registered refugees in Kenya with comparable host-refugee data. Its coverage of less understood themes such as psychosocial well-being, weather perceptions and social cohesion aims to provide data to advance knowledge and inform programming in these areas.

This report analyzes changes in welfare across K-LSRH waves through the lens of self reliance and resilience.[20] As displacement becomes increasingly protracted and widespread, policy and programmatic attention has shifted toward promoting self reliance—defined as 'social and economic ability of an individual, a household or a community to meet its essential needs in a sustainable manner and with dignity' (UNHCR, 2005). Figure 3 presents the conceptual framework for self reliance, placing fundamental human needs at its core. While humanitarian assistance typically focuses on meeting these basic needs, self reliance requires moving beyond needs fulfillment to assess whether households possess the resources and capabilities to meet them independently and sustainably. It also entails identifying the factors that enable or constrain households' ability to sustain these outcomes over time (outer ring). Importantly, self-reliance goes beyond merely not receiving aid (Leeson, Slaughter, & Buscher, 2022). Individuals should not be considered self reliant solely because they no longer receive assistance if their living standards or protection needs remain unmet. As emphasized by (Hoogeveen & Hopper, 2024) self reliance is not about surviving without humanitarian support, but about achieving a locally acceptable minimum standard of living through independent income generation. This report adopts this perspective by emphasizing sustainable economic independence as a core dimension of self reliance. Resilience—the ability to anticipate, cope with, recover from, and adapt to economic shocks—is therefore a critical complement to self reliance (Barron, Cord, Cuesta, Espinoza, & Woolcock, 2023). Refugees and poor host communities are often more exposed to shocks, and their resilience plays a central role in determining their capacity to recover and sustain welfare gains over time.

[19] A household respondent, an adult random respondent, a child respondent, and a woman respondent. For interviews with child respondents, appropriate procedures were followed to ensure adherence to ethical protocols. These included asking for parental or guardian consent to allow the child to participate in the interview, asking the child for assent and explaining that they could decline any part or all of the interview if they want to. An ethical review of the interview plans was also done at the University of California Berkeley and with African Medical and Research Foundation (AMREF).

[20] Although data collection periods considered differ slightly between the waves, seasonality is unlikely to systematically bias mean comparisons between the two waves because both cover multiple months across different seasons. Wave 1 spans over a year, ensuring all seasonal variations are captured, while wave 2, though shorter, still includes a mix of seasonal conditions. Since data collection is spread out rather than concentrated in a single season, seasonal effects should largely cancel out in aggregate comparisons. For example, we examined trends in mean consumption per capita/day (USD PPP) and found no clear seasonal pattern that would affect comparability. A drop observed in August/September of Wave 2 is attributable to a reduction in ration sizes rather than seasonal fluctuations.

Figure 3: Conceptual framework



Source: *Adapted from the Self-Reliance Initiative.* [21]

The analysis aims to foster evidence-based discussions on policies and interventions that enhance the self-reliance of both refugees and host communities, thereby strengthening their resilience. The report provides an overview of the status and, where possible, trends of key indicators by location and other key disaggregation levels across three dimensions: basic needs, resources, and (dis-)enablers. While not exhaustive, the report strikes a balance between breadth and depth to offer insights that can drive further analysis using the microdata from the first and second waves of K-LSRH.

The report is structured as follows: The next section assesses how well households are meeting basic needs, highlighting dynamics between the first and second waves of K-LSRH. It discusses both monetary and non-monetary poverty indicators and uses a multidimensional poverty measure to assess welfare. The section also places particular emphasis on education, recognizing its role in fostering long-term self-reliance, especially considering Kenya's shift to a Competency Based Education (CBE) and the national commitment to universal transition to Junior School. The third section focuses on the resources households rely on to meet basic needs, including an analysis of income sources, with particular attention to aid and employment. The fourth section addresses the incidence of shocks, and the coping strategies commonly employed as well as psychosocial well-being. The fifth and final section concludes with a discussion on policy implications.

[21] See for reference Leeson, Slaughter, Buscher (2022).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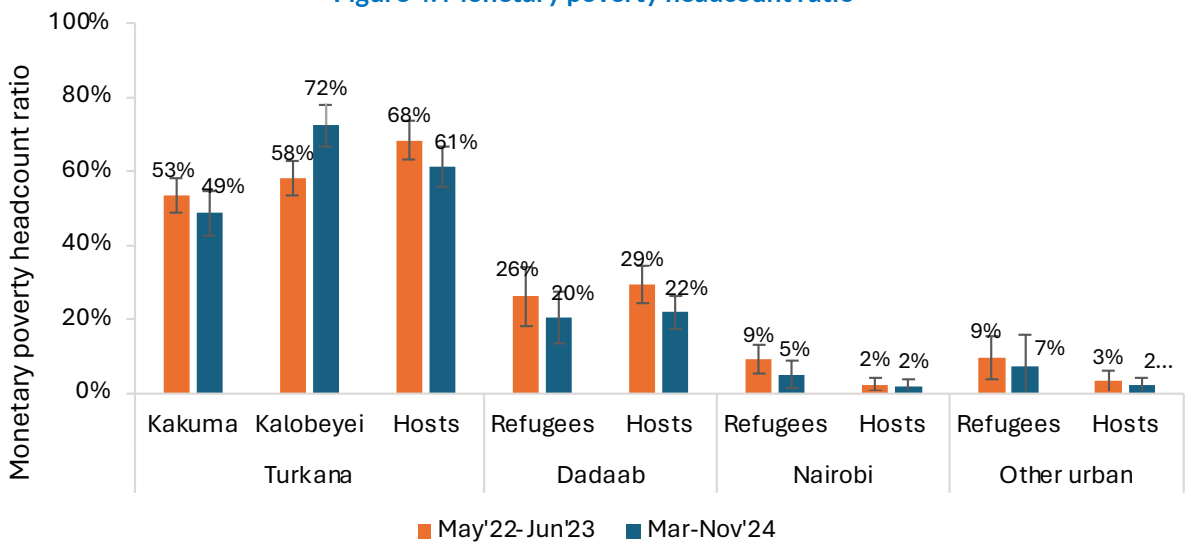
02 Basic Needs

Monetary poverty remained largely unchanged outside of Turkana since 2022/23.[22] The only statistically significant change in monetary poverty occurred in Kalobeyei, where the share of individuals living below $2.15 per person per day (2017 PPP) increased by up to 14 percentage points between 2022/23 and 2024 (Figure 4). In all other locations, monetary poverty remained largely unchanged—there were no statistically significant improvements or deterioration. As discussed further in Section 3, aid transfers – make up the largest share (75 percent) of camp refugees' total income (Figure 13). Thus, camp refugees' welfare is strongly linked to assistance.

The deterioration in Kalobeyei, compared to relative stability elsewhere, likely reflects the combined impact of several factors. First, this may be due to ration cuts introduced in August 2024 (Table 1). While food rations were also reduced in Kakuma, humanitarian assistance accounts for a smaller share of total income in Kakuma than in Kalobeyei (Hoogeveen, Silva-Leander, & Nsababera, Forthcoming). Second, Kalobeyei operates under the Bamba Chapaa system—an unrestricted cash transfer modality that allows households to allocate funds across a wide range of needs such as food, rent, and education. While this flexibility can support self-reliance in stable times, it also means that when aid is reduced, households must make difficult trade-offs across essential expenditures. The relative stability of poverty rates in other areas, despite falling incomes there, may partly reflect lags in how monetary poverty responds to short-term shocks. In-kind or restricted transfers, such as food vouchers under Kakuma's Bamba Chakula program, can mask reductions in real welfare by maintaining apparent consumption levels even when broader household resources decline. Third, changes in household composition may have contributed to the rise in monetary poverty. Findings from a regression model controlling for key household characteristics highlight employment and household size as important determinants of poverty: households with at least one employed member are significantly less likely to be poor, while those with more members face a higher likelihood of poverty. In Kalobeyei, average household size increased, possibly due to a recent influx of refugees, which may have mechanically raised poverty levels as existing income is spread across more individuals.

Figure 4: Monetary poverty headcount ratio



Source: *Authors' calculations based on K-LSRH (2022-2024).*
Note: *Estimates are from SWIFT imputations using $2.15 PPP per person/day poverty line.*

[22] Refugees and host communities acquire food and essential goods through different means (e.g., in-kind assistance versus market purchases), which may raise concerns about comparability. To mitigate this issue, consumption was imputed using the Survey of Well-Being via Instant and Frequent Tracking (SWIFT) method for all households that purchased less than 80% of their total consumption. The rationale for this threshold was to establish a baseline for model training using the subset of households that primarily rely on market purchases—considered the most "accurate" benchmark—ensuring consistency in estimating consumption across both refugees and hosts. This approach was chosen to enhance comparability between groups rather than across survey rounds while maintaining sufficiently large subsamples for robust modeling. SWIFT allows estimating poverty levels by imputing missing data on household income or expenditure using a comprehensive set of poverty correlates, allowing for faster and more frequent poverty monitoring compared to the traditional expenditure-based approach. For more details on the exact methodology used, see Silva-Leander (Forthcoming).

Table 1: Changes in mean household size and aid received (KSh. per household/ time)

	HOUSEHOLD SIZE		TOTAL AID		FOOD AID	
	May'22-Jun'23	Mar-Nov'24	May'22-Jun'23	Mar-Nov'24	May'22-Jun'23	Mar-Nov'24
Kakuma refugees	5.8	5.9	7,366	3,960	6,672	3,647
Kalobeyei refugees	6	6.6	11,884	8,507	1,701	1,335
Turkana hosts	5.2	5	449	364	104	82
Dadaab refugees	4.3	4.3	4,674	3,276	3,885	3,154
Dadaab hosts	5.5	5.6	221	205	26	6
Nairobi refugees	2.6	2.6	559	30	300	8
Nairobi hosts	3.2	3	734	94	13	1
Other urban refugees	2.8	2.8	728	146	225	128
Other urban hosts	2.8	2.7	158	32	11	6

Source: *Authors' calculations based on K-LSRH (2024).*
Note: *Amounts refer to total received within preceding 30 days.*

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Box 3: Comparing consumption across population groups

Comparing consumption across population groups is challenging because the welfare derived from consumption depends on a range of factors, including prices, access to public services, and individual preferences. In welfare economics, consumption is an observable proxy for the underlying and unobservable concept of utility or welfare, from which normative assessments are derived. Differences in these factors imply that identical consumption levels may correspond to different levels of welfare across individuals or groups.

The challenge is particularly pronounced in refugee settings, where large and varying shares of consumption are in the form of in-kind assistance that is chosen by a provider rather than by the consumer. This means that observed consumption may not always correspond to the consumer's preferences, violating the assumption of utility maximization, which is central to normative economic theory. In the presence of secondary markets, the problem might be mitigated if aid beneficiaries are able to exchange less desired goods for more desired ones. This, however, does not appear to be the case in Kenya.

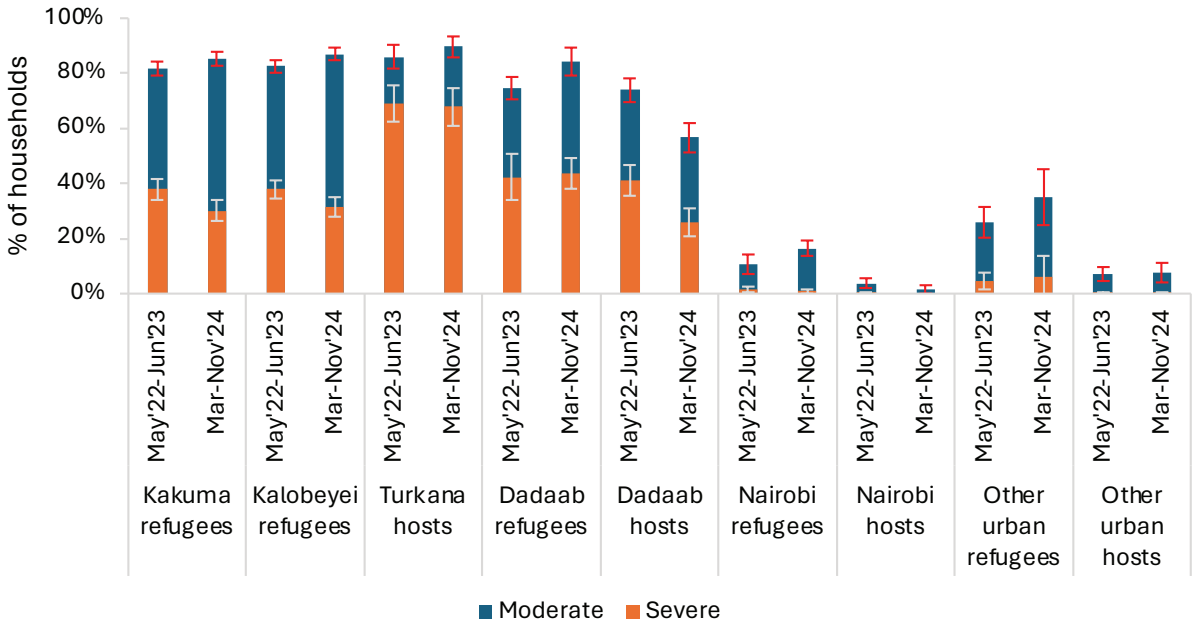
An in depth analysis of consumption patterns in K-LSRH reveals several inconsistencies and anomalies that suggest departures from utility maximizing behavior. These include mismatches between self reported food consumption and food insecurity, as well as violations of Engel's law regarding the share of food in total household expenditure. In practical terms, higher observed consumption does not necessarily imply higher welfare: individuals may not be better off than their peers if part of their consumption is involuntary, externally determined, or poorly aligned with their preferences.

For this reason, the decision was made to impute consumption using the Survey of Well-Being via Instant and Frequent Tracking (SWIFT) method, to obtain comparable estimates of welfare across groups consuming from different sources. It is important to recognize that SWIFT provides a counterfactual: it estimates what household consumption might look like if individuals—particularly refugees in camps—were fully participating in a functioning, unrestricted market economy. In this sense, SWIFT-imputed consumption represents an alternative that is not directly observed in reality. Nonetheless, while actual consumption under aid constraints may not represent utility maximization in the neoclassical sense, it still reflects efforts by households to make the best possible choices within the limits of their environment. Thus, SWIFT offers a useful—but theoretical—benchmark for assessing relative welfare under counterfactual market conditions. Various robustness checks were carried out to ensure that the estimates are consistent for a range of plausible assumptions. The detailed diagnostic analysis, as well as original non-imputed consumption estimates are available in a working paper (Silva-Leander, Forthcoming).

Estimates confirm a significant disparity in monetary poverty between camp and urban areas, with poverty levels much higher for both hosts and refugees in camp areas. The situation is particularly concerning in Turkana with a monetary poverty rate of nearly 70 percent, measured at $2.15 per person per day (2017 PPP). This gap in monetary poverty also mirrors the disparity observed in multidimensional poverty. An Oaxaca-Blinder decomposition carried out in a different study (Government of Kenya, 2024) showed that there were no major differences in endowments (e.g. education, age, assets, etc.) between camp and urban refugees. For hosts, endowment differences explained about one third of the camp-urban income gap. Therefore, the difference between camps and urban areas is most likely due to different market conditions (i.e. higher wages for the same job), or unobservable characteristics (entrepreneurial spirit, etc.).

Multidimensional poverty has also not changed significantly between 2022/23 and 2024 and remains high in camp areas (Figure 5).[24,25] One exception is among Dadaab hosts, for whom, both moderate and severe poverty decreased significantly, due mainly to an improvement in employment. By contrast, 85 percent of Kakuma refugees and 87 percent of Kalobeyei refugees were considered 'multidimensionally poor' meaning they are considered deprived in at least one third of weighted indicators making up the index.[26] This is a slight increase from 82 and 83 percent respectively in 2022/23. In the same period, however, severe multidimensional poverty decreased from 38 percent to just over 30 percent in both camps. Changes in employment status are a key driver of household welfare. Households in which a member lost employment between survey waves were significantly more likely to fall into multidimensional poverty, underscoring the central role of employment in sustaining non-monetary well-being across multiple dimensions.[27]

Figure 5: Multidimensional poverty



Source: *Authors' calculations based on K-LSRH (2022-2024).*

[23] The key findings—that poverty remains highest in camps, that aid continues to be the dominant income source for many, and that welfare outcomes have deteriorated amid declining assistance—are triangulated across multiple non-monetary indicators, including food insecurity, employment, and coping strategies in subsequent sections.

[24] See Annex A1 for a description of the multidimensional index.

[25] There has been a slight increase in moderate multidimensional poverty (more than a third of weighted deprivations) in most areas, combined with a slight decrease in severe multidimensional poverty (more than half of weighted deprivations; see Figure 5). Few of the changes are statistically significant, however, except for Dadaab hosts.

[26] The multidimensional poverty index (MPI) adapts existing work on the global MPI by the Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative (OPHI). It encompasses 14 indicators across six dimensions of well-being, namely, education, employment, energy, housing, water and sanitation and nutrition.

[27] While employment is one of the indicators used to construct the Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI), this analysis specifically examined the dynamic effects of employment loss—how changes in household employment status between waves influence transitions into or out of poverty.

All dimensions of well-being, except for employment and education, improved slightly in most study locations. Education deprivations (households with out-of-school children) worsened sharply in urban areas, whereas employment worsened for all groups, except Dadaab and Nairobi hosts.[28, 29] The pronounced worsening of education deprivation in urban areas may potentially be linked to disruption from floods which were more pronounced in urban areas (see Section 4).

Despite recent improvements, Turkana hosts still exhibit the highest multidimensional poverty rate across refugee hosting locations. They continue to lag behind Turkana refugees in education outcomes, housing conditions, and access to water sources. Overall, both hosts and refugee communities in camp areas continue to exhibit high levels of multidimensional poverty which lie significantly above the rates exhibited by their urban counterparts (Table 2).[30]

Table 2: Percent of population deprived in each dimension, by location[31]

May'22-Jun'23	Kakuma refugees	Kalobeyei refugees	Turkana hosts	Dadaab refugees	Dadaab hosts	Nairobi refugees	Nairobi hosts	Other urban refugees	Other urban hosts
Education	27.6%	27.1%	68.5%	79.2%	76.7%	32.8%	21.9%	34.6%	21.3%
Employment	79.8%	83.2%	45.1%	62.5%	54.6%	31.4%	14.4%	68.2%	11.8%
Energy	87.0%	81.1%	92.3%	70.0%	70.4%	6.1%	1.5%	34.6%	19.2%
Housing	16.4%	27.4%	46.7%	17.7%	22.6%	8.0%	4.4%	2.8%	2.0%
WASH	30.7%	20.8%	62.3%	31.3%	30.4%	7.4%	5.4%	11.1%	22.4%
Nutrition	8.0%	13.3%	25.6%	4.3%	1.5%	13.7%	9.7%	6.3%	1.4%
Mar-Nov'24	**Kakuma refugees**	**Kalobeyei refugees**	**Turkana hosts**	**Dadaab refugees**	**Dadaab hosts**	**Nairobi refugees**	**Nairobi hosts**	**Other urban refugees**	**Other urban hosts**
Education	26.0%	18.4%	64.8%	68.3%	71.0%	45.9%	23.3%	49.3%	38.9%
Employment	90.0%	92.1%	50.3%	72.5%	31.3%	41.3%	9.3%	81.6%	17.1%
Energy	87.3%	81.6%	87.1%	61.5%	57.6%	2.4%	0.6%	32.2%	16.5%
Housing	17.8%	31.8%	46.6%	17.2%	23.1%	7.0%	3.9%	2.1%	1.7%
WASH	12.6%	15.5%	70.3%	40.6%	29.3%	5.5%	4.5%	10.7%	20.4%
Nutrition	11.9%	12.3%	12.2%	0.1%	0.3%	3.4%	4.5%	0.8%	0.1%

Source: *Authors' calculations based on K-LSRH (2022-2024).*

Notes: *For dimensions with more than one indicator (energy, housing, WASH, nutrition), the statistic shows a weighted average of the individual deprivation indicators for that dimension.*

[28] Comparing the reasons for children not being enrolled in school between 2022/23 and 2024, the data suggests that school costs were a significant factor, more so than differently spaced school holidays. In urban areas, the percentage of children not enrolled due to costs rose sharply from 49 to 73 percent, whereas in camps, this increase was more modest, from 7 to 9 percent. In contrast, the increase in non-enrollment due to school holidays was similar across both areas.

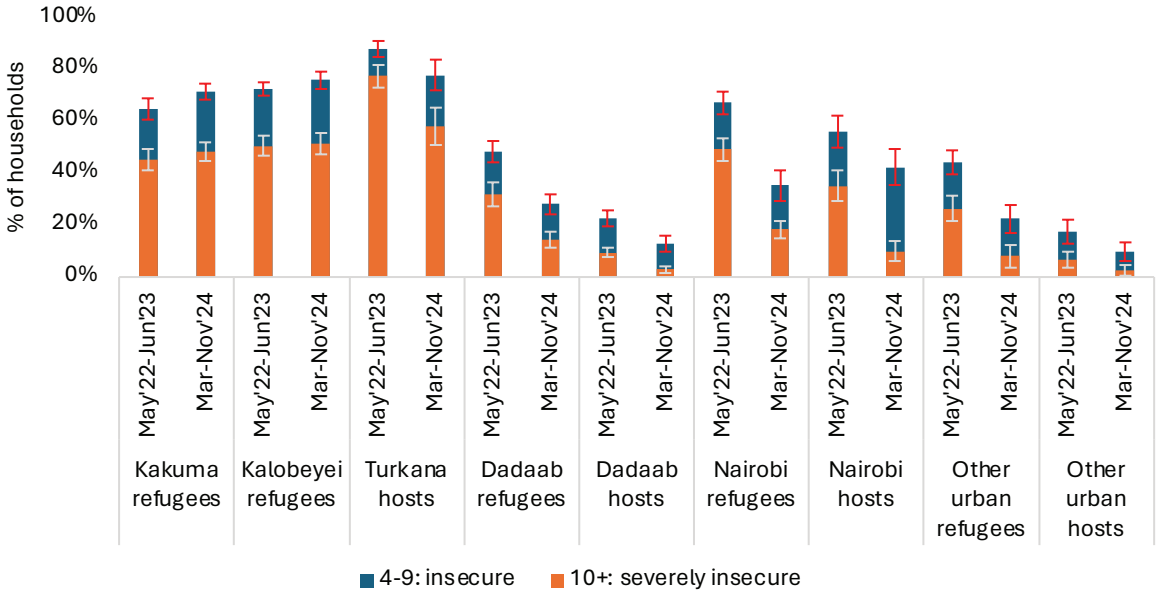
[29] The employment indicator measures whether any one adult member in the household is employed. It is therefore higher than the individual-level employment indicator that is used later in the brief.

[30] As previously noted, camps are in counties that have historically lagged in development indicators (World Bank, 2024b). The relatively higher poverty levels among host communities reflect the lower coverage of assistance they receive compared to refugees.

While food insecurity eased in urban areas and Dadaab, it remains a pressing concern overall, and increased in Turkana.

Food security has improved in urban areas and in Dadaab but remains at alarming levels in Turkana.[32] This is consistent with the decrease in food inflation between 2022 and 2024. An estimated 28 percent of Dadaab refugees and 13 percent of hosts are moderately to severely food insecure, an improvement from 48 and 22 percent respectively (Figure 6). In Turkana, however, food insecurity remains widespread.[33] An estimated 71 percent of Kakuma refugees are moderately to severely food insecure, up from 64 percent since 2022/23.[34] Similarly, in Kalobeyei, 76 percent are food insecure, up from 72 percent in 2022/23. The relatively high level of food insecurity causes challenges for defining beneficiary groups within a differentiated aid model. Notably, a consistently large share of Turkana refugees remains moderately food insecure but would be at risk of falling into severe food insecurity if living conditions were to worsen like in the event of aid withdrawal. For all groups other than Turkana refugees, food security has improved since 2022/23. The improvements are statistically significant for all groups, except other urban hosts.

Figure 6: Food Insecurity (Coping Strategy Index, CSI)



Source: *Authors' calculations based on K-LSRH (2022-2024).*

Although under the new Competency Based Education (CBE) children in grade 6 can automatically progress to Junior School, not all children are doing so, particularly among Dadaab refugees, where only 50 percent of children previously in grade 6 in the first wave are in JS in the second wave. Under the CBE, JS is located within the same primary schools and learners in the last grade of primary school (grade 6) are guaranteed automatic placement (see Box 4). The first CBE cohort completed primary school in 2022. By 2024, as shown in Figure 7, while most had transitioned into Junior School (JS), the Ministry of Education's 100 percent transition

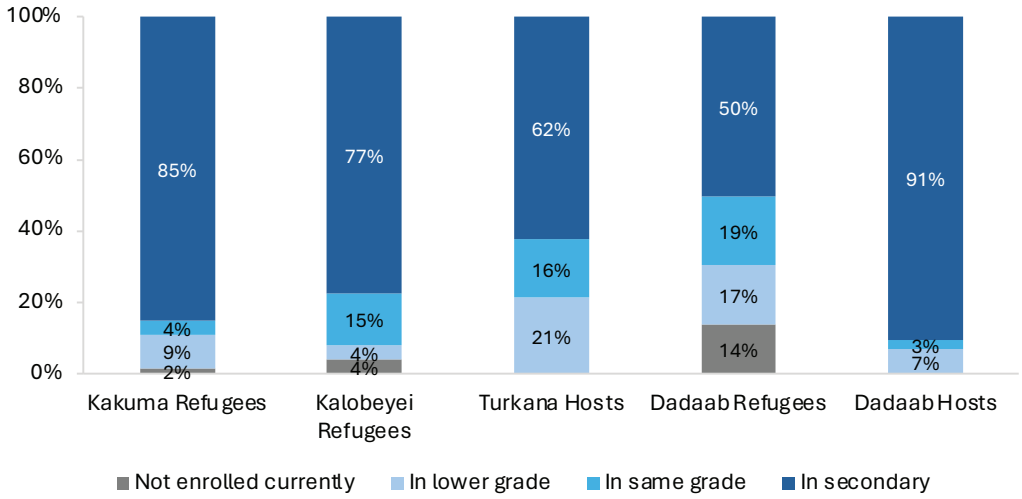
[32] The Coping Strategy Index (CSI) aggregates 6 coping strategies related to food consumption, including whether the household had to limit portion sizes, eat less preferred foods, or borrow money for food (see Annex A2 for a detailed description).

[33] The high levels of food insecurity have persisted for years. In the 2019 Kakuma Socioeconomic Survey 83 percent of refugees were food insecure (World Bank and UNHCR, 2020).

[34] The changes, however, are not statistically significant at the 5 percent confidence level.

vision is yet to be achieved – only 85 percent of Kakuma, 77 percent of Kalobeyei, 50 percent of Dadaab refugee children in grade 6 transitioned to JS. Transition rates are also low for Turkana hosts. Nevertheless, nearly all children who did not transition to JS remained enrolled in school either in a lower grade or same grade except among Dadaab refugees, where 14 percent of this cohort are not enrolled. [35, 36]

Figure 7: Transition rates into secondary school



Source: *Authors' calculations based on K-LSRH (2024).*

Note: *Transition rates measure the share of children who were in the last grade of primary school in 2022/23 (grade 6) and who have transitioned into junior school. It is not possible to show transition rates for urban refugees and hosts as the data for grade levels comes from the child respondent module which was only administered to camp refugees and hosts. While grade level data was also collected for all children in the household roster in all locations, there were data inconsistencies between child's reported grade in the first and second waves in the household roster.*


PHOTO/Freepik

[35] Unfortunately, the data does not indicate why children repeated a grade or were moved to a lower grade. For those who are out of school, the primary reason reported are school costs. See also Figure 9.

[36] For more information on the transition to the CBE curriculum, see Box 4.

Box 4: Changes to Kenya's education curriculum

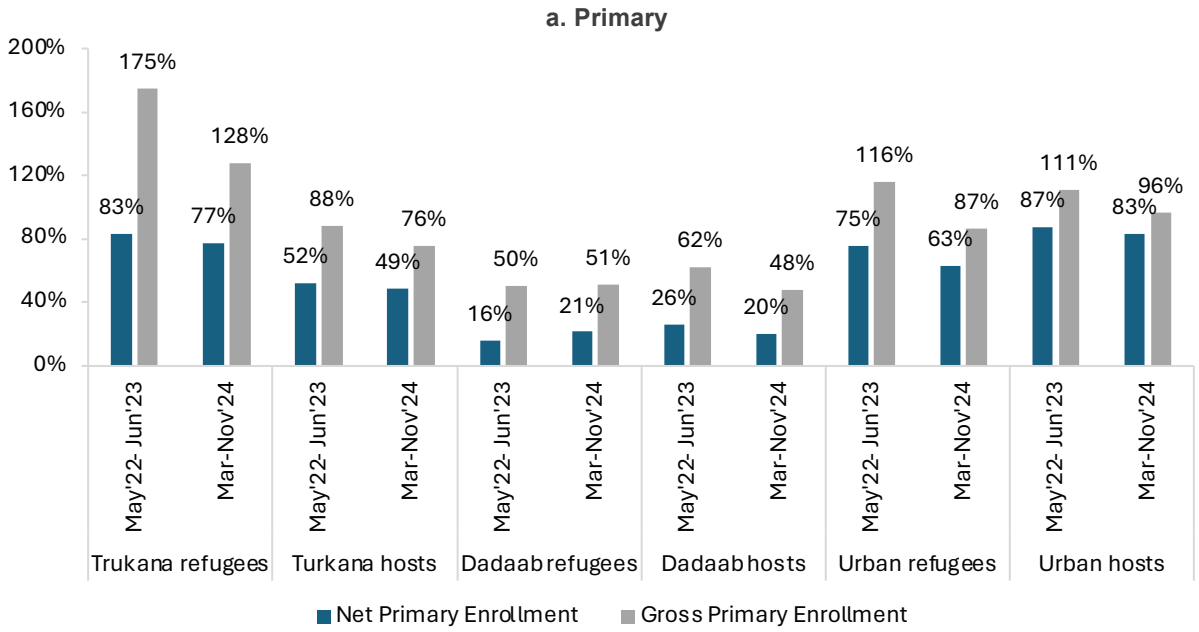
Kenya's education system has undergone significant transformations to adapt to the country's evolving needs. Three key milestones define this journey: the 7-6-3 system, the 8-4-4 system, and the current Competency Based Education (CBE). The 7-6-3 system, introduced in 1963, was Kenya's first post-independence education framework, consisting of 7 years of primary education, 6 years of secondary education, and 3 years of university education. The 8-4-4 system, which replaced the 7-6-3 system, structured education into 8 years of primary education, 4 years of secondary education, and 4 years of tertiary education. In 2017, CBE was introduced as a learner-centered approach designed to foster critical thinking, creativity, and practical skills. The first cohort of children joined JS in 2023. The CBE replaces the 8-4-4 system and follows a new 2-6-3-3 cycle: 2 years of pre-primary, 3 years of lower primary (Grades 1-3), 3 years of upper primary (Grades 4-6), 3 years of Junior School (Grades 7-9), and 3 years of Senior School (Grades 10-12). To ensure a smooth transition, the government is gradually phasing out the 8-4-4 curriculum, with the last cohort under this system expected to sit for their Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education (KCSE) national examination in 2027.

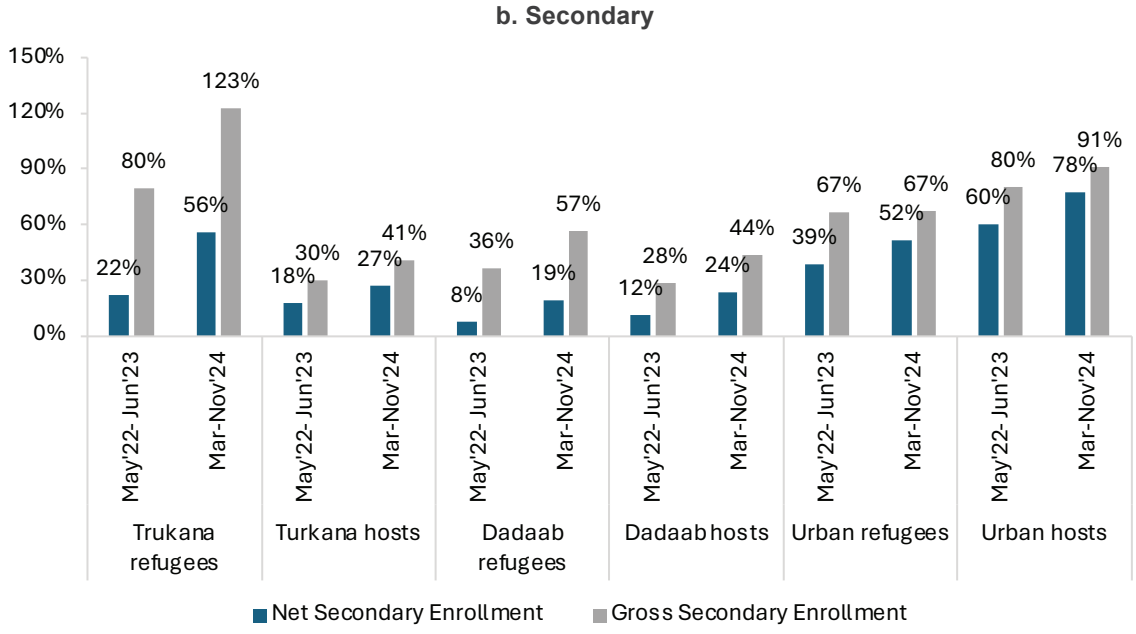
The CBE features four key transitions. The first transition occurs as learners move from pre-primary to Grade 1 in primary school; then from Grade 6 to Junior School (JS) at Grade 7; from JS (Grade 9) to Senior School (SS) at Grade 10; and finally, to tertiary education or the workforce. JS is primarily domiciled within existing primary schools, allowing children completing Grade 6 to transition seamlessly to JS within the same school. The transition from Grade 6 to JS does not involve a competitive national exam like the one used for transitioning to SS. Instead, every learner is guaranteed automatic placement in JS, as part of the government's commitment to ensuring 100 percent transition in basic education. While Grade 6 learners take the Kenya Primary School Education Assessment (KPSEA), its purpose is to gauge the learner's competencies and readiness for JS, rather than serve as a selection criterion.

Secondary school enrolment rates are higher in 2024; however, this increase largely reflects a structural change in the education system rather than a genuine expansion in participation. With the phasing in of CBE, secondary schooling in Wave 2 now includes what were previously Grades 7–8 under the old system, reclassified as JS. As a result, enrolment rates between Wave 1 and Wave 2 are not directly comparable. This reclassification explains the sharp increase in secondary school enrolment among refugees in Kakuma and Kalobeyei, from 22 percent in 2022/23 to 56 percent in 2024 (Figure 8). In Dadaab, secondary school enrolment among school age refugee children rose from 8 percent to 19 percent. At the same time, while gross primary enrolment rates declined, net primary enrolment remained stable, suggesting that over aged learners who previously remained in primary school have transitioned into secondary education.[37] Abstracting from these definitional changes, primary school enrolment remains very low for children in Dadaab and among Turkana host communities, while secondary school enrolment continues to be low across all locations.

[37] While an increase in the school-age population could generally influence enrollment rates, in this case, the population of primary school-going children declined between Wave 1 and Wave 2. Therefore, the observed changes in primary enrollment rates are more likely driven by structural shifts, notably the transition to the Competency Based Education (CBE), which reclassified grades 7-8 as Junior Secondary School (JSS), rather than by demographic changes.

Figure 8: Primary and secondary school gross and net enrolment rates



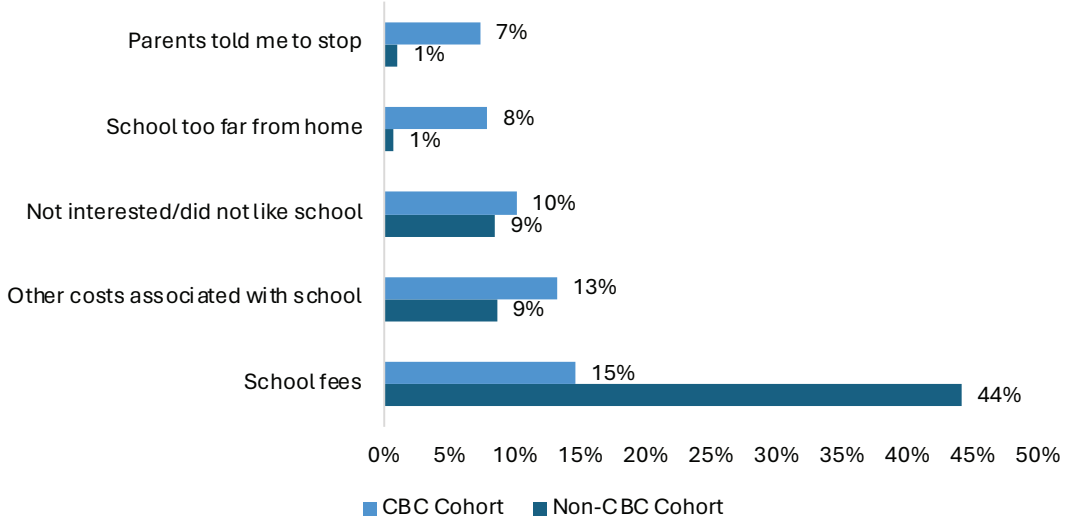


Source: *Authors' calculations based on K-LSRH (2022-2024).*

Note: *Under the new CBE, primary school age children are typically between 6 and 11 years old. However, during the Wave 1 survey, some older students (ages 12-13) were still enrolled in primary school under the previous 8-4-4 system. As a result, primary school age in the 2022/23 survey was defined as 6-13 years. Secondary school age was defined as 14-18 years. For the Wave 2 survey, primary school age was adjusted to 6-11 years, while secondary school age now includes 12-17 years. Therefore, enrolment rates between Wave 1 and Wave 2 are not directly comparable, as Wave 2 includes children in what would traditionally be grades 7-8 under the old system, now classified as secondary school. This explains the high gross secondary enrollment as it captures 6th graders automatically transitioning into JS.*

The cost of education may hinder children from eventually transitioning to Senior School (SS). While education at both JS and SS is officially free under the CBE, school fees continue to be the main reason why children are not enrolled in school. Additional costs such as uniforms, books, and transport also remain significant barriers. When examining the reasons why secondary school-age children are not attending school, school fees are more commonly reported as the barrier by children under the 8-4-4 system (44 percent) compared to those under the CBE system (15 percent; see Figure 9). Since the first cohort of the CBE is yet to enter Senior School, this indicates that financial barriers could still affect the transition rates in the future, particularly as children progress to the senior levels of education. Thus, the full impact of the CBE system on transition rates into secondary school is yet to be fully understood, and future research could focus on the transition from JS to SS.

Figure 9: Top reasons for not attending school among secondary-school-aged children



Source: *Authors' calculations based on K-LSRH (2024).*

Primary school test scores have improved, especially among Turkana host children, who lagged behind in 2022/23.[38] In the Early Grade Mathematics Assessment (EGMA), camp-based refugees initially outperformed their hosts, with 88 percent of refugees passing the assessment compared to 75 percent of hosts in 2022/23, a significant difference. However, when the same cohort of children was interviewed in 2024, host children made significant improvements, with 94 percent passing the exam compared to 91 percent for refugees Figure 10. Notably, nearly all Turkana host children are now deemed competent in grade 1-3 level mathematics, marking a remarkable improvement from 2022/23 (Figure 10). It is important to note, however, that these scores are designed for grade 1-3 students, and competency is defined as scoring at least 50 percent. As children have had an extra year of education and are also taking the test for the second time, improvement in performance is expected. However, the lack of significant changes in competency scores among refugees in Kalobeyei and Dadaab, as well as hosts in Dadaab, in 2024 suggests the need for closer examination of the factors affecting learning outcomes in these contexts.

Fluency in reading English has significantly improved, particularly for children in Dadaab who lagged behind. In 2022/23, only 28 percent of Dadaab refugee and 23 percent of host children were fluent in English, compared to 41 percent and 54 percent among Kakuma and Kalobeyei refugees, respectively, and 37 percent among Turkana hosts. By 2024, fluency rates in Dadaab more than doubled, a statistically significant change, reaching 61 percent for refugees and 58 percent for hosts (Figure 11). In Turkana, there were notable improvements for Kakuma refugees, while fluency scores among children in Kalobeyei did not change significantly. Similarly for their hosts, although English fluency improved, the change between the two periods is not statistically significant. The substantial improvement in English fluency, although it is still low, among Dadaab children may be attributed to the medium of instruction. The education policy mandates instruction in the local catchment area's language up to grade 4. Dadaab children begin their education in Somali, transitioning to English as they progress to higher grades. Similarly, Turkana host children start with Turkana before shifting to English. By the time the children were reassessed in 2024 they had had an additional year with English as the medium of instruction which appears to have supported better outcomes in English literacy, particularly in locations where children faced challenges the year before.

[38] Tests were administered to refugee and host children in camp areas who were attending primary grade 6 in April 2022 or students in the Accelerated education Program attending AEP level 3 in July 2021 in 2022/23 and the same cohorts were interviewed in 2024.

Figure 10: Proportion of students who pass the 50% competency benchmark: Math

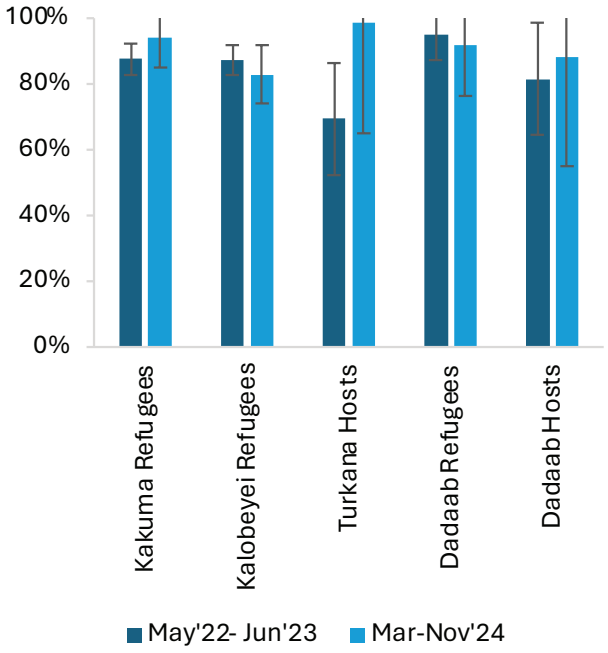
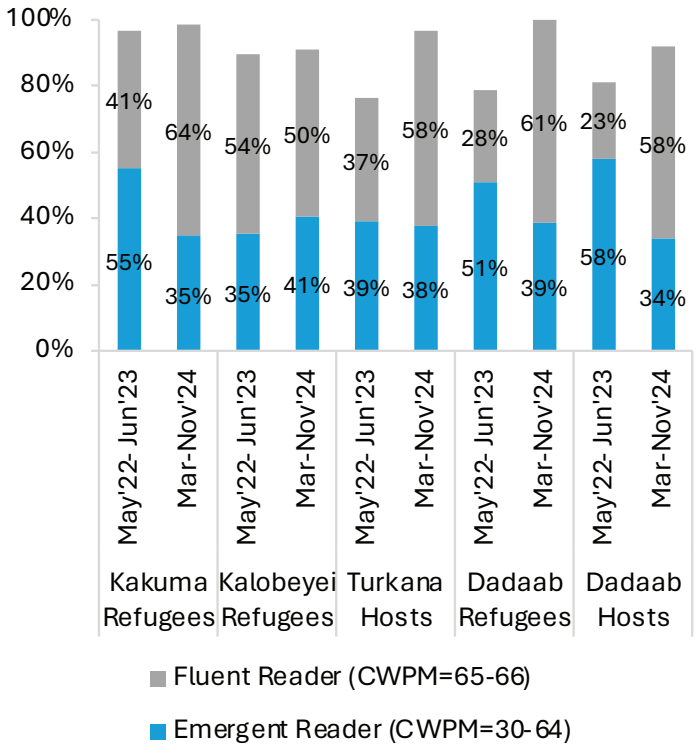


Figure 11: English reading fluency



Source: *Authors' calculations based on K-LSRH (2022-2024).*

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03 Socioeconomic Resources to Meet Basic Needs

The proportion of Turkana and Dadaab hosts receiving assistance has increased since 2022/23, possibly contributing to an improvement in food security. Around half of hosts in Turkana and Dadaab received assistance in 2024, up from 43 percent in Turkana and 25 percent in Dadaab in 2022/23. This is due primarily to an increased share of households receiving emergency aid distributed in response to the widespread flooding in May 2024. In Turkana, the proportion of hosts receiving food assistance almost doubled from 27 percent to 48 percent in the same period. As noted in section 2, these two groups have seen sharp improvements in food security and monetary poverty since 2022/23, as well as multidimensional poverty in Dadaab.

The share of households receiving assistance decreased sharply for both hosts and refugees in urban areas. In Nairobi, fewer than 4 percent of host households received any form of assistance between March and November 2024, down from 13 percent in 2022/23. Among refugees in Nairobi, assistance coverage fell from 15 percent to 5 percent over the same period. In Mombasa and Nakuru, the proportion of refugee households receiving assistance declined from 20 percent to 13 percent, while coverage among host households decreased only marginally, from 7 percent to 6 percent.

43%

In Turkana, the proportion of hosts receiving food assistance **almost doubled from 27 percent to 48 percent** in 2024.

Table 3: Percent of households receiving assistance in past 12 months

	FOOD AID		ANY AID	
	May'22-Jun'23	Mar- Nov'24	May'22-Jun'23	Mar- Nov'24
Kakuma	99.8%	99.6%	99.8%	99.5%
Kalobeyei	99.4%	99.1%	99.4%	98.8%
Turkana host	27.0%	47.5%	43.3%	52.5%
Dadaab camp	98.3%	99.7%	98.6%	99.6%
Dadaab host	15.0%	25.1%	24.6%	48.5%
Nairobi refugee	8.3%	2.2%	15.1%	5.3%
Nairobi host	2.4%	1.2%	13.2%	3.5%
Other urban refugee	10.3%	12.0%	20.4%	12.8%
Other urban hosts	1.5%	2.3%	7.2%	5.9%

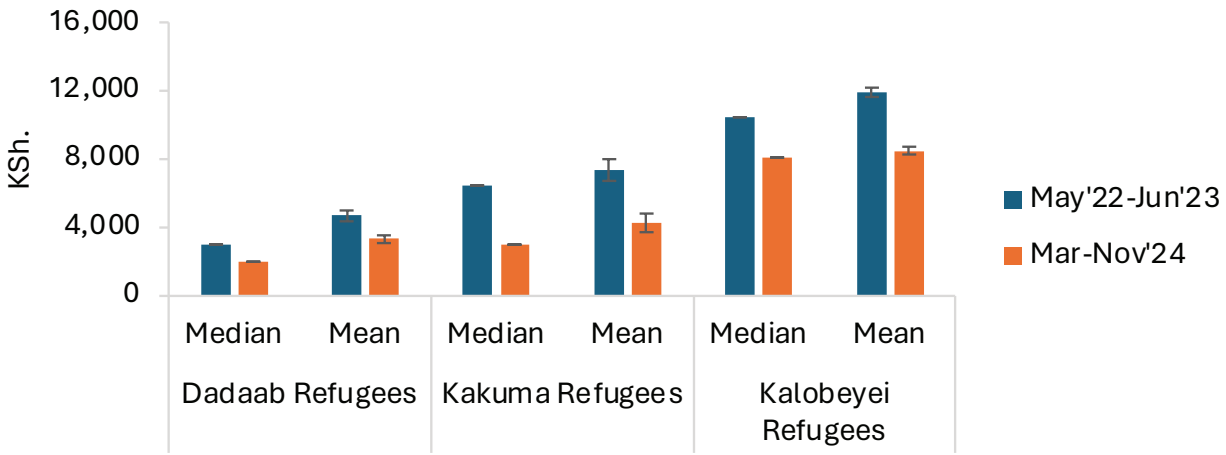
Source: *Authors' calculations based on K-LSRH (2022-2024).*

While receipt of assistance is still universal among camp refugees, the type of aid has changed, and the amount received has declined. The share of households receiving UNHCR cash transfers dropped from 59 percent of Kakuma refugees and 19 percent of Kalobeyei refugees to 10 and 2 percent, respectively, in 2024. However, Bamba Chakula, Bamba Chapaa, and in-kind food aid, the three main assistance pillars of WFP's food aid, are still widely available to the majority (80+ percent) of households.[39] Additionally, the median amount of aid received by refugees has fallen by 53 percent in Kakuma, 23 percent in Kalobeyei and 33 percent in

[39] Bamba Chakula is a cash-based transfer program by the World Food Program (WFP) that provides refugees in Turkana and Dadaab with electronic food vouchers via mobile money to purchase food from contracted traders. Bamba Chapaa is an unrestricted cash transfer program where refugees receive money in ATM cards to purchase whatever they want, including non-food items.

Dadaab (Figure 12). This is in line with a contraction of aid delivery to camps. Since the end of the first wave of survey collection in June 2023, funding shortfalls forced food rations to be cut from 80 percent of the minimum food basket for sustainable caloric intake to 60 percent in July 2023 and further to 50 percent between February and April 2024. There was another reduction to 40 percent during May–June 2024, followed by an increase to 60 percent between July and September, and a further reduction to 40 percent in October–November 2024. In addition, food vouchers were suspended during May–June 2024, and refugees only received food items in-kind during that period. A high reliance on aid, as measured in the first wave of K-LSRH, places refugees in a vulnerable position, especially during periods of fluctuating aid delivery.[40] Only 2.5 percent of Nairobi refugees and 4.2 percent of other urban refugees received assistance in the 2 months preceding the survey. Among MPI-poor households (>1/3 deprivations), aid-receipt rates were slightly higher at 7.5 and 8.4 percent, respectively.

Figure 12: Mean and median value of aid received per household



Source: *Authors' calculations based on K-LSRH (2022-2024).*

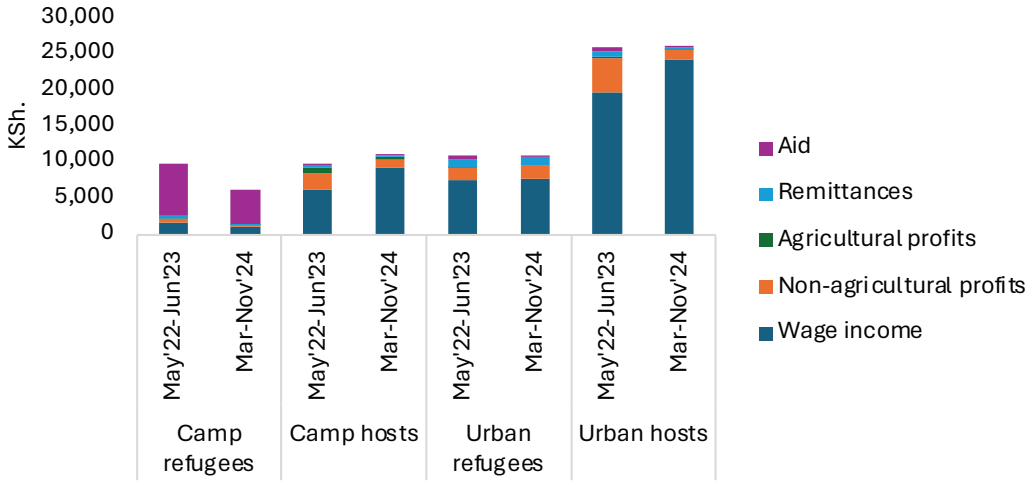
The total income of refugee households decreased sharply. Aid transfers constituted 75 percent of camp refugees' total income in 2024, and their reduction has resulted in an overall contraction of refugee incomes (Figure 13). Remittances still account for only a small share of household income, making up just 3 percent for camp refugees, leaving few alternatives to cope with financial strains from assistance cuts (Figure 13).[41] Wage earnings and profits from self-employed activities have also contracted over the same period, mostly because of refugees losing their jobs.[42] Among urban refugees, in contrast, total household incomes have stayed relatively stable. A reduction in available aid to urban refugees can be observed, although it was met with an equal increase in income from salaries and non-agricultural profits.

[40] Cash and in-kind aid constituted 79 percent of all income among camp refugees as found in 2022/23. In comparison, wage earnings and profits from self-employed activities constituted only 11 and 3 percent of total income respectively (World Bank, 2024b).

[41] Urban refugees rely more on remittances, which constitute 11 percent of their total household income. Among host communities, remittances contribute 12 percent of income for those in camps but only 2 percent for urban hosts (Figure 13).

[42] As shown in later figures, median wages from employment and profits from household businesses have stayed relatively constant or have even moderately increased among those who have held an activity in both survey rounds. However, the total number of refugees with economic activities has nearly halved, resulting in fewer households earning any income from economic activity.

Figure 13: Income sources as a proportion of total household income



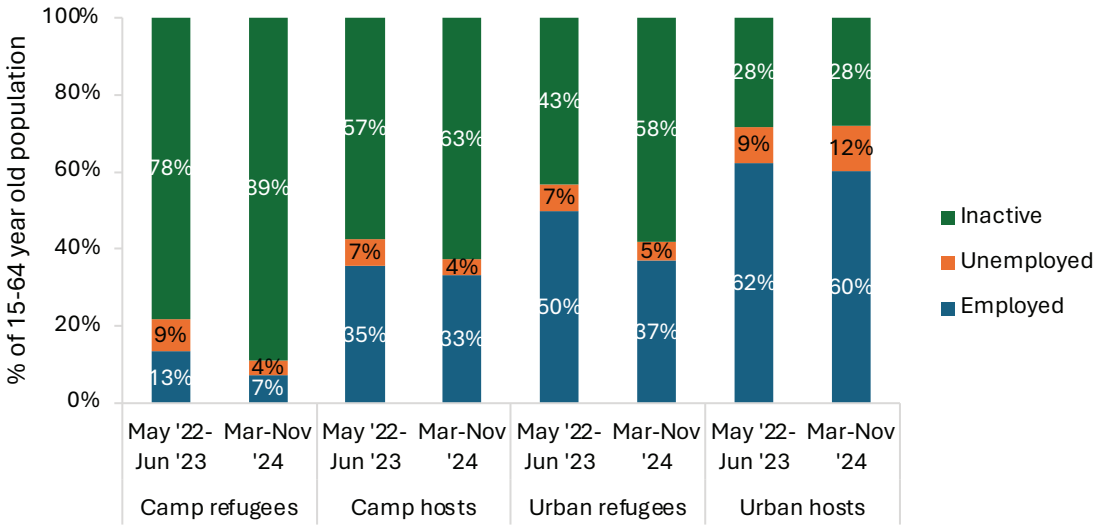
Source: *Authors' calculations based on K-LSRH (2022-2024).*

Before the downturn, refugee employment in camps was already fragile. In 2022/23, most refugees who worked did so as "incentive" workers for international organizations in sectors like education (30 percent), health (24 percent), and administration (16 percent). Nearly 90 percent of wage workers in camps were engaged exclusively or partially in these low-paid, short-term roles. While often preferred due to their association with NGOs, these jobs offer little protection or upward mobility. Refugees not engaged in incentive work, especially those in urban areas, relied on informal services, petty trade, or self-employment.[43] These jobs, while critical for survival, are typically short-term, insecure, and highly vulnerable to funding shifts.

[43] For further discussion on employment in Wave 1 refer to (World Bank, 2024b).

Between 2022/23 and 2024, employment among refugees declined sharply. The share of refugees engaged in wage or self employment halved in camps, falling from 13 percent to 6 percent, and declining in urban areas from 49 percent to 37 percent. Over the same period, inactivity increased markedly—from 78 percent to 89 percent in camps and from 44 percent to 58 percent in urban areas (Figure 14). Labor force participation fell for both men and women; notably, only 5 percent of refugee women in camps reported any economic activity in 2024, down from 11 percent in 2022/23. In contrast, employment and inactivity rates among host communities—both in camps and urban areas—remained broadly stable, indicating that labor market deterioration disproportionately affected refugees. Against the backdrop of declining aid volumes and overall contractions in refugee incomes (Figure 13), consumer demand is likely to have weakened. In the camps' predominantly service oriented local economies, this negative income shock is likely to have translated into a widespread contraction of economic activity.[44]

Figure 14: Labor force participation



Source: *Authors' calculations based on K-LSRH (2022-2024).*

Kakuma, Kalobeyei, and Dadaab experienced the highest rates of job loss. An estimated 79 percent of refugees in Kakuma and 70 percent of refugees in Kalobeyei and Dadaab who had jobs in Wave 1 lost their jobs between 2022/23 and 2024 (Figure 15), while, on average, only 5 percent gained employment. In comparison, job losses were less severe among camp hosts (49 percent) and urban refugees (43 percent). Notably, job losses in camps were broadly distributed across wage workers, incentive workers, and own account workers, with no single employment category disproportionately affected. Similarly, no specific demographic group was over or under-represented among refugees who exited economic activity, underscoring the generally precarious nature of both salaried and self employment opportunities in the camps.

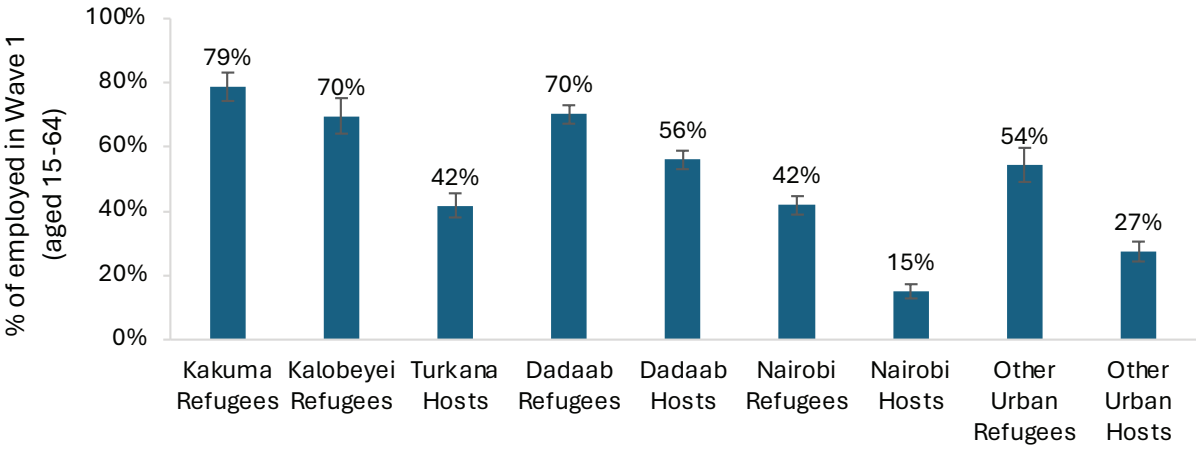
[44] Another possible explanation could be that refugees underreported employment in the hope of receiving increased assistance from UNHCR, an agency that co-administered the survey.

> **Between 2022/23 and 2024, employment among refugees declined sharply. The share of refugees engaged in wage or self employment halved in camps, falling from 13 percent to 6 percent, and declining in urban areas from 49 percent to 37 percent.**

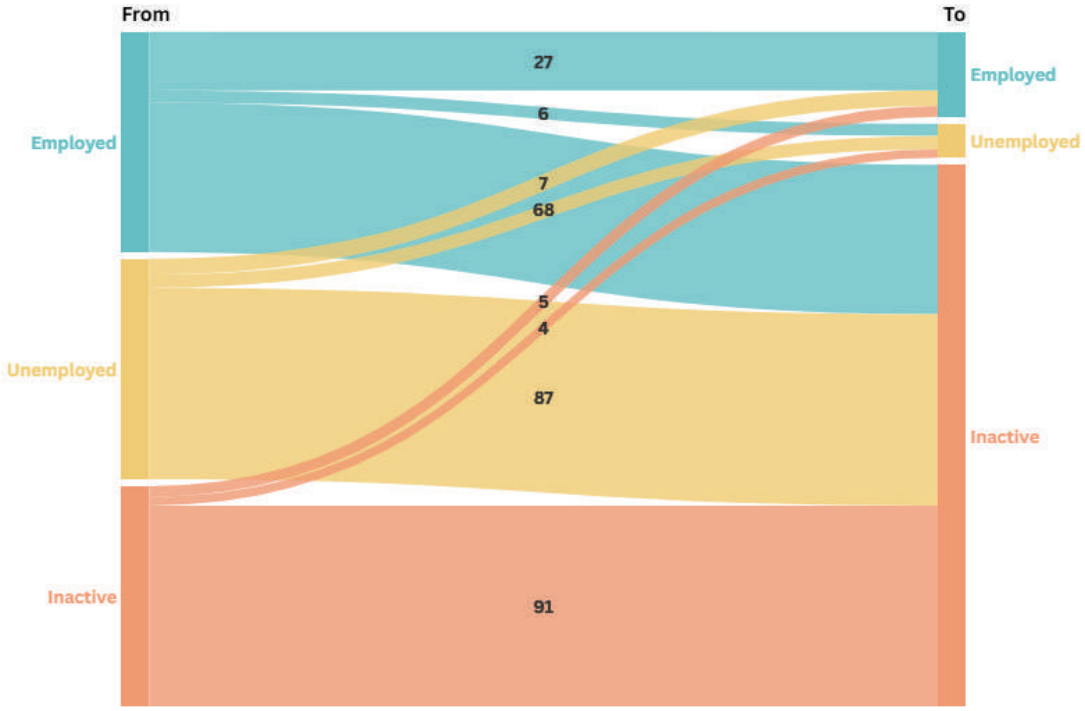
PHOTO/Pexels

Figure 15: Employment and self employment losses and labor market transitions between survey waves (2022/23–2024)

a. Share of individuals who lost their jobs or self-employment between May 2022–June 2023 and March–November 2024



b. Labor force transitions (%) for camp-based refugees between May 2022–June 2023 and March–November 2024

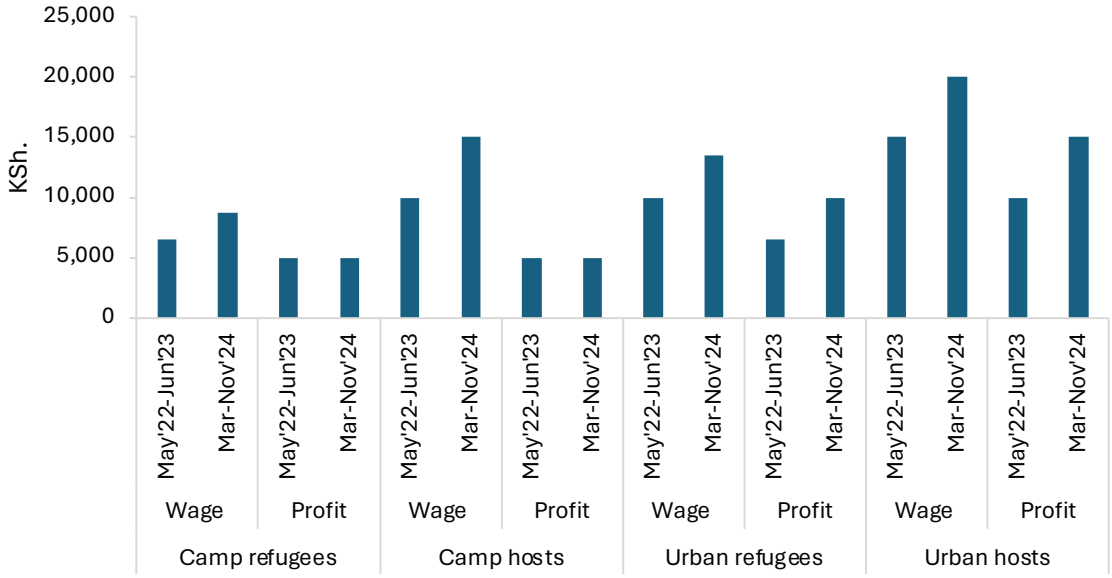


Source: *Authors' calculations based on K-LSRH (2022-2024).*

Note: *Numbers denote the percentage of individuals transitioning from the status in Wave 1 to the indicated status in Wave 2.*

Among refugees without economic activity, more were discouraged in 2024 compared to 2022/23, with 95 percent of camp refugees and 92 percent of urban refugees not having actively sought employment or self-employment in the last four weeks.[45] The high level of inactivity cannot be explained by jobs paying less, as median monthly wages in camps have increased from KSh 6,500 to KSh 8,700 in 2024, while median profits of household businesses remained constant at KSh 5,000 (Figure 16). Instead, a lack of available jobs emerged as the most frequently cited reason for inactivity, reported by 64 percent of camp refugees and 41 percent of urban refugees—representing a substantial increase relative to 2022/23 (Figure 17). Among camp based refugee women, pregnancy, childcare, and household responsibilities remain the primary reasons for economic inactivity.[46] While the proportion of urban refugees citing a lack of available jobs as a reason for inactivity has also increased significantly, an increasing share also reported a lack of documentation as a the reason for inactivity.[47] Given that most refugees work in the informal sector, factors such as increased enforcement of work regulations, shifts in demand for informal labor may have contributed to the rising difficulty of securing jobs between the two waves.

Figure 16: Median monthly income from wages and self-employed activities



Source: *Authors' calculations based on K-LSRH (2022-2024).*

[45] Discouragement was already high during May 2022-June 2023, when 88 percent of not-employed camp refugees and 85 percent of urban refugees took no action looking for a job.

[46] 31 percent of women in 2022/23 cited a lack of jobs and 38 percent household responsibilities as the main reason for inactivity. In comparison, in March-November 2024 only 24 percent were not looking for employment due to household responsibilities and 55 percent due to a lack of jobs.

[47] In the questionnaire lack of documentation is defined as lack of work permit or other documents.

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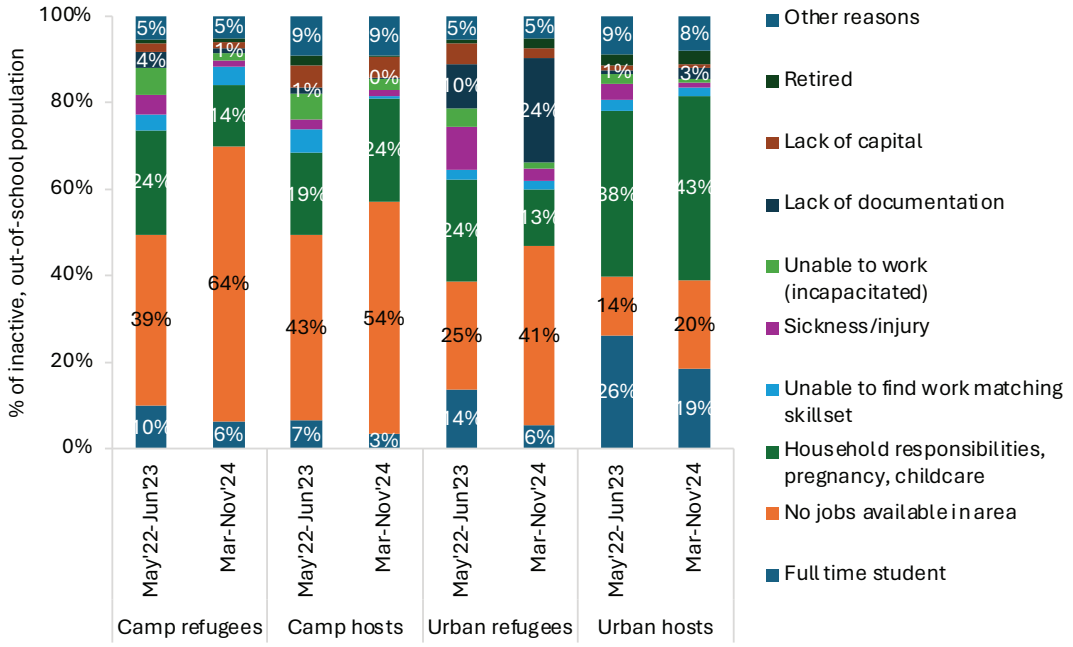
Figure 17: Reasons for not looking for a job/self-employment opportunity



Source: *Authors' calculations based on K-LSRH (2022-2024).*

Even refugees who have recently lost their jobs are discouraged. Ninety-one percent of camp refugees who lost their job between survey rounds have not taken any action to find new economic activity in the past four weeks. Among urban refugees, the equivalent share was slightly higher, at 92 percent (Figure 18). The main reason reported among both groups was again a lack of opportunities, cited by 59 percent of all refugees who had lost their economic activity between survey rounds (Figure 19). Overall, a lack of opportunity continues to affect all groups, including those in urban areas and host communities, highlighting an increasingly challenging demand-side labor market.

Figure 18: Not taken any action looking for a job in the past four weeks

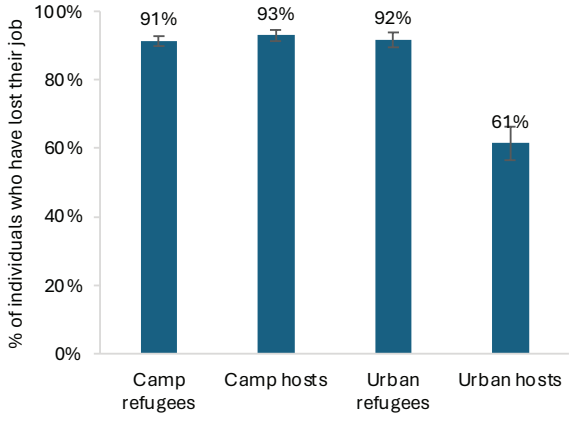
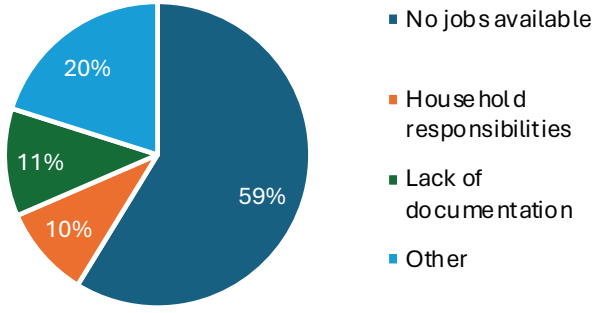


Figure 19: Reasons for not looking for jobs



Source: *Authors' calculations based on K-LSRH (2022-2024).*

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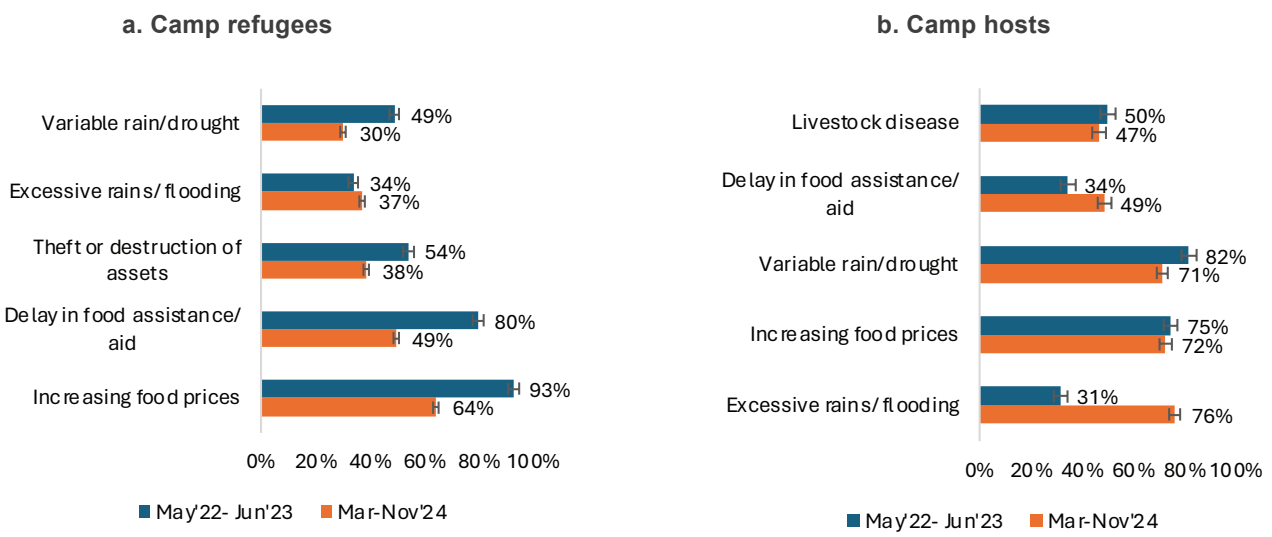
04 (Dis)-Enablers to Sustaining Self-Reliance and Resilience

Rising food prices remain the most frequently experienced shock, although their incidence has declined since 2022/23. Across all locations, more than 70 percent of households continue to report experiencing inflation in 2024, a decrease from over 90 percent in 2022/23, with higher rates among host communities compared to refugee households (Figure 20).

Although the total value of assistance has decreased, the delivery of aid appears to have become more timely, as evidenced by the reduced number of households in camp areas reporting delays in food assistance. The percentage of camp-based refugee households reporting delays has decreased from 80 percent in 2022/23 to 49 percent in 2024, and from 84 percent to 49 percent for host community households (Figure 20).[48]

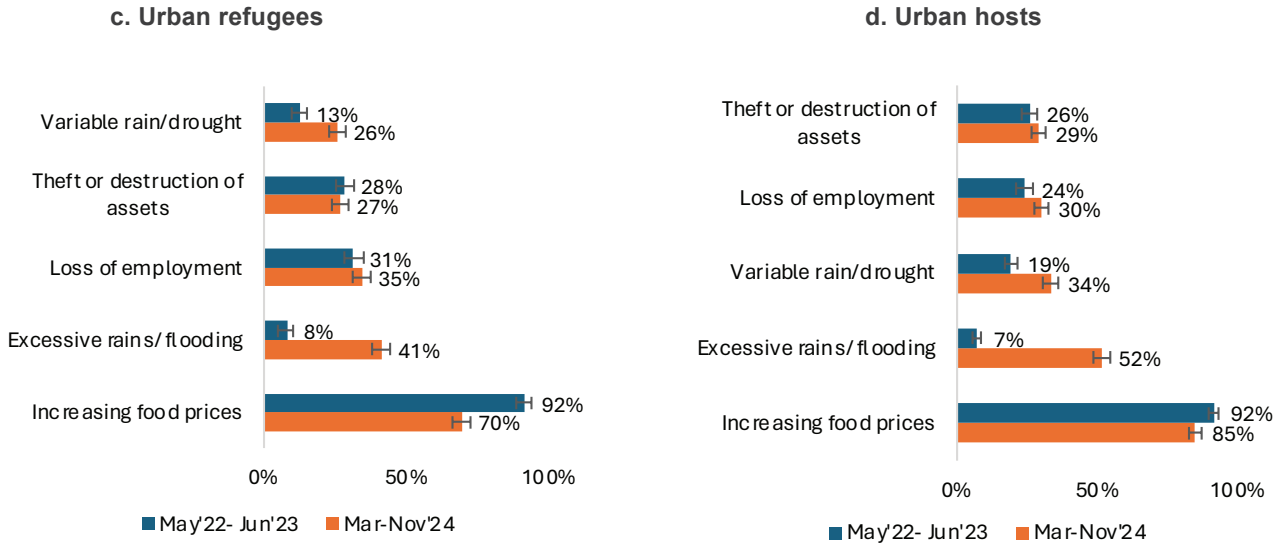
The number of households experiencing excessive rainfall and flooding has significantly increased, particularly in urban areas and camp host communities. The long rains season, which began in late March 2024, brought heavy rains and widespread flooding in Kenya. This led to an increase in water levels, infrastructural damage, livestock and property losses, and restricted road access in various regions. By June 2024, the National Disaster Operations Center (NDOC) reported that excessive flooding had affected over 306,520 households in Kenya (61,304 in urban areas), displacing more than 290,000 people, causing hundreds of deaths, and devastating crops, roads, schools, and homes (OCHA, 2024). The impact is reflected in the striking increase of households reporting excessive rainfall and flooding as a shock between 2022/23 and 2024. In urban areas, the host community households report a sevenfold increase in their experience of excessive rain and flooding, rising from 7 percent to 52 percent. Urban refugee households saw a five-fold increase, jumping from 8 percent to 42 percent. In camp areas, the share of host community households experiencing this shock more than doubled, from 31 percent to 76 percent, while the increase among refugees was marginal, rising slightly from 34 percent to 37 percent. This disparity is likely due to the impact on livestock and agricultural output, which primarily affects host communities, as camp refugees are generally not permitted to engage in agricultural activities. Camp refugees and hosts who were affected by flooding are also significantly more likely to have suffered disease outbreaks, a result that is corroborated by first indicative findings from panel regressions.[49]

Figure 20: Incidence of the top 5 shocks experienced



[48] Reports from the ground confirm that transfers from WFP have become timelier in 2024, following demonstrations around the time of aid entitlements were reduced from KSh 2,000 to KSh 1,200 in Kalobeyei and KSh 640 in Kakuma.

[49] Having experienced a rainfall shock in the last 12 months significantly predicts having experienced disease outbreaks over the same time horizon, controlling for time and individual-level fixed effects in a 2-wave-panel setup.

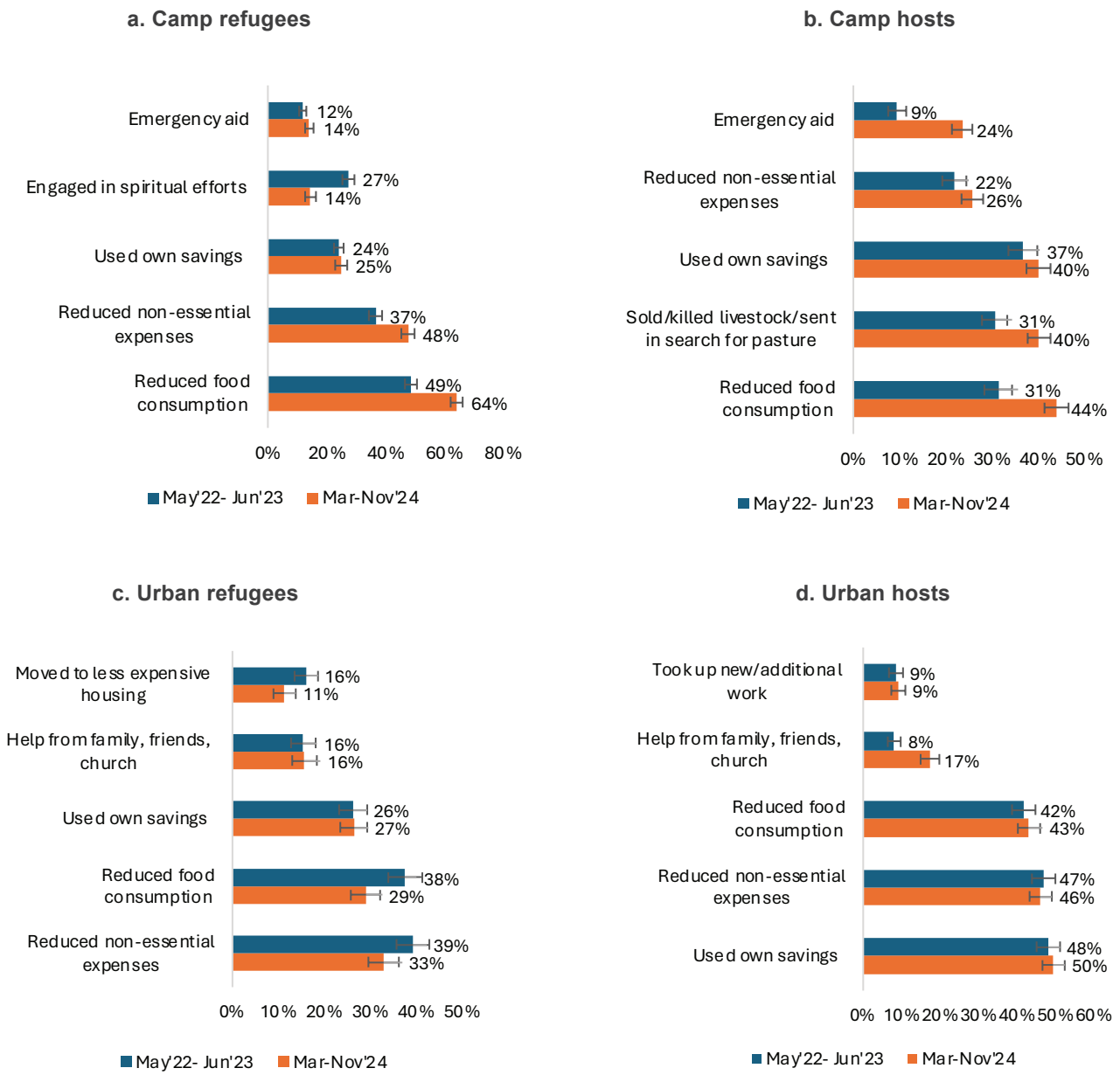


Source: *Authors' calculations based on K-LSRH (2022-2024).*

In camp areas, an increasing share of households report reducing food consumption or purchasing food on credit, reflecting efforts to cope with declining humanitarian assistance and high food prices. These strategies are now the most common forms of coping in camps. Among camp based refugee households, the use of these strategies increased from 49 percent to 64 percent, while among host communities it rose from 32 percent to 44 percent (Figure 21). Given the repeated and fluctuating cuts in food assistance, together with the suspension of food vouchers in May and June, it is not surprising that reliance on these coping mechanisms intensified in Wave 2. In practice, refugees often use ATM or SIM cards as collateral to obtain credit from traders, enabling them to purchase food on credit during periods of reduced rations. Beyond food related strategies, nearly half of camp based refugees reported cutting non essential expenditures, and one quarter reported depleting their savings. Among host households in camp areas, the sale, slaughter, or migration of livestock in search of pasture increased from 31 percent to 40 percent, likely reflecting worsening weather conditions. At the same time, emergency assistance from government and NGOs to host communities increased substantially, consistent with responses to excessive rainfall and flooding. In urban areas, both refugees and hosts continue to rely on similar coping strategies, including reducing food consumption, purchasing food on credit, cutting non essential expenses, and drawing down savings. While these strategies have remained relatively stable among host households, refugees have reduced both food and non food related expenditures. In addition, reliance on external support from family, friends, and religious institutions has increased notably among urban hosts, rising from 8 percent to 18 percent.

> **Nearly half of camp based refugees reported cutting non essential expenditures, and one quarter reported depleting their savings.**

Figure 21: Top 5 coping strategies



Source: *Authors' calculations based on K-LSRH (2022-2024).*

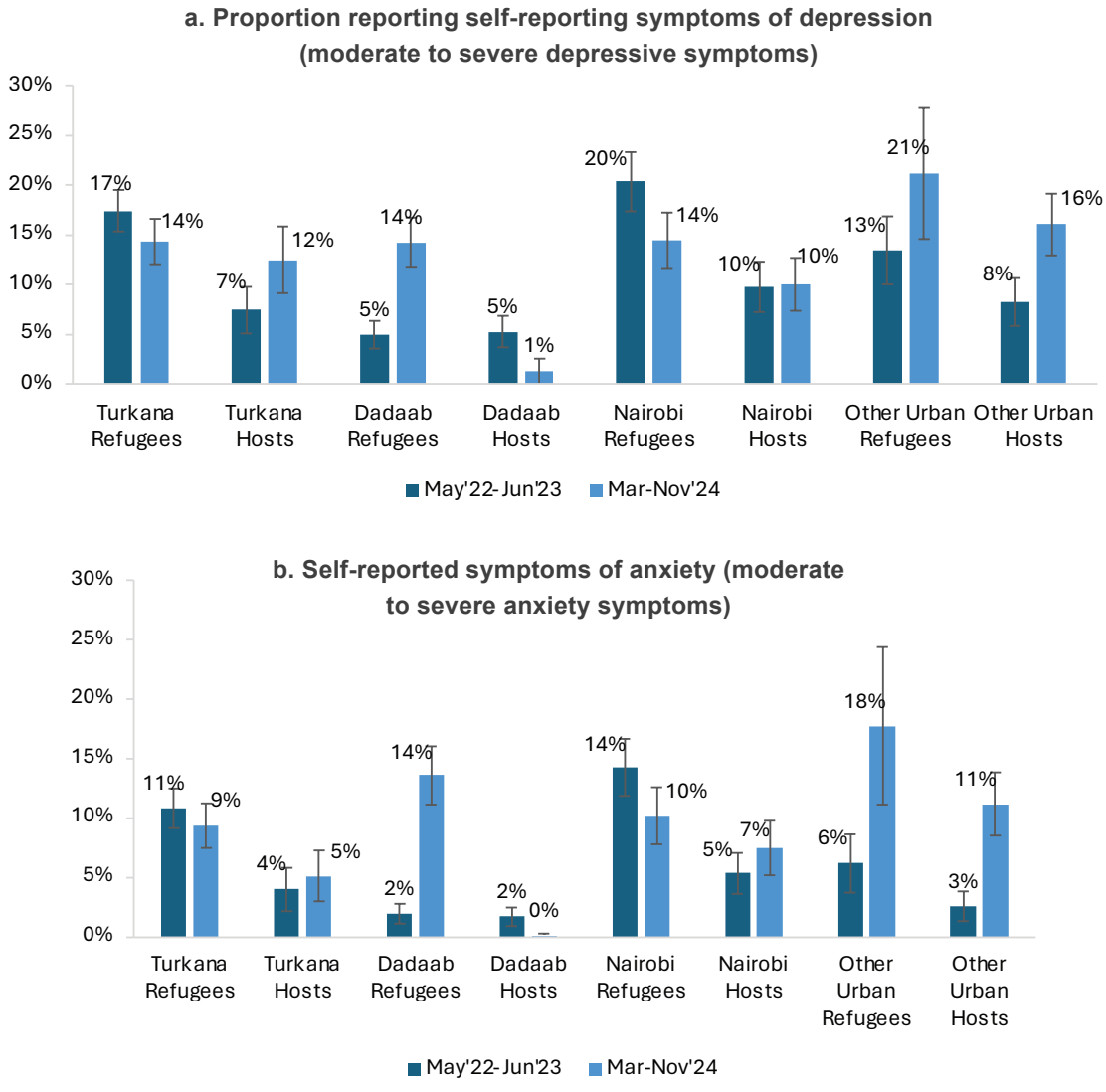
Mental health and psychosocial well-being are critical (dis)enablers of self-reliance. While the inner ring of the conceptual framework presented in Section 1.2 (Figure 3) captures basic needs, the outer ring includes factors such as mental health that can either support or constrain a household's ability to sustain those needs over time. In this context, rising symptoms of depression and anxiety are cause for concern, as they may undermine individuals' capacity to engage in income-generating activities, access services, or respond to shocks.

Box 5: Measuring psychosocial well-being

The K-LSRH uses the Patient Health Questionnaire (PHQ-8) for screening symptoms of depression. PHQ-8 is a self-reported measure used to screen depression symptoms, and it is not a diagnostic tool. The scale includes eight questions with overall scores ranging from 0 to 24, scores of 0-4 indicating no symptoms of depression, 5–9 = mild, 10–14 = moderate, 15–19 = moderately severe and ≥20 = severe symptoms of depression (Kroenke et al. 2001). A person is likely to be depressed if he shows moderate to severe depressive symptoms (a score of 10 and above). Anxiety is screened by the Generalized Anxiety Disorder (GAD-7) scale which is not a diagnostic tool. It is made up of seven questions each with responses ranging from 0-3. Scores of 5,10 and 15 are taken as the cut-off points for mild, moderate, and severe prevalence of anxiety symptoms, respectively (Spitzer et al. 2006). A person is likely to have Generalized Anxiety Disorder (GAD) if he shows moderate or severe anxiety symptoms (a score of 10 and above).

Depression and anxiety symptoms have increased significantly among Dadaab refugees, who were the least likely to experience these symptoms in 2022/23. Across all locations and time periods, refugees are generally more likely to exhibit symptoms of anxiety and depression than their host community counterparts, except for Dadaab refugees and their hosts in 2022/23 (Figure 22). These findings align with the limited existing research on psychosocial well-being among refugees in East Africa.[50] In 2022/23, refugees in Turkana and urban areas were more likely to show symptoms of depression and anxiety than their counterparts in Dadaab. However, by 2024, while the share of individuals reporting depression symptoms declined among refugees in Turkana and Nairobi, they increased among Dadaab refugees, making them equally likely to experience these symptoms. For anxiety disorders, Dadaab refugees in 2024 are now more likely to experience anxiety symptoms than those

Figure 22: Self-reported experiences that may indicate symptoms of depression and anxiety



Source: *Authors' calculations based on K-LSRH (2022-2024).*

[50] Pozuelo, Bradenbrink, Stierna, & Sterck (2023) find higher prevalence of elevated depressive symptoms among refugees compared to the host population. Similarly, Klabbers et al. (2022) reported higher rates of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), depression, anxiety, and lack of social support among refugees and asylum seekers compared to nationals in Nakivale refugee settlement, Uganda. Pozuelo, Bradenbrink, Stierna, & Sterck (2023) find higher prevalence of elevated depressive symptoms among refugees compared to the host population. Similarly, Klabbers et al. (2022) reported higher rates of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), depression, anxiety, and lack of social support among refugees and asylum seekers compared to nationals in Nakivale refugee settlement, Uganda.

PHOTO/Alamy

05 Conclusions and Suggestions for Policy Direction

5.1. Conclusions

The Kenya Longitudinal Socioeconomic Study of Refugees and Host Communities (K-LSRH) is a pioneering survey offering comparable panel data on refugees and hosts in Kenya. The first wave was collected between May 2022 and June 2023 while the second wave was collected between March and November 2024. The surveys covered refugees in Kakuma Refugee Camp, Dadaab Refugee Complex, Kalobeyei Integrated Settlement, as well as urban refugees in Nairobi, Mombasa, and Nakuru. It focused on household, individual, and children's outcomes, as well as understudied themes such as psychosocial well-being and trust among hosts and refugees. Its panel dimension makes it valuable for tracking changes including humanitarian assistance, economic conditions, and shocks. While no major policy shifts occurred between the waves, the data remain valuable for informing future policy and interventions, including Kenya's planned shift from refugee camps to integrated settlements.

Refugees and hosts continue to face high levels of poverty and food insecurity. Access to aid has decreased significantly due to funding shortfalls, with food rations cut and voucher systems suspended. The cut in assistance, together with shocks such as floods, have disrupted the labor market, resulting in decreased employment. As a result, many households are relying on negative coping strategies, such as reducing food consumption and increasing credit usage, deepening their vulnerability. Although the new education curriculum has facilitated secondary school enrolment through automatic progression to Junior School, the transition to Senior School remains uncertain. These developments underline the need for carefully designed interventions and ongoing monitoring to address the compounding challenges faced by refugees and host communities.

5.2. Policy Implications

The results presented in this report raise critical policy questions about the path to self-reliance for refugees and host communities. In a context where most refugees live in lagging and impoverished areas with limited economic opportunities for both groups,[51] what strategies can effectively support their transition to self-reliance? In the face of repeated shocks, limited coping capacities, shrinking humanitarian budgets, and persistent and high food insecurity, how can humanitarian assistance and support systems be structured to protect the most vulnerable while fostering long-term resilience?

Addressing these challenges requires tackling structural and policy constraints that extend beyond humanitarian aid, which is expected to continue declining. The economic model in refugee settlements and surrounding areas is largely service-oriented, with a significant portion of demand driven by refugees themselves. As global support diminishes and humanitarian and development budgets are cut,[52] reductions in assistance risk triggering negative knock-on effects on local economies, further weakening livelihoods and deepening vulnerabilities. With most refugees reliant on aid as their primary source of income, and labor markets offering few alternatives to offset these losses, a significant share of both refugees and hosts face worsening poverty and food insecurity. Without targeted efforts to create sustainable economic opportunities, the ability of these communities to achieve self-reliance will remain severely constrained.

The transition to integrated settlements under the Shirika Plan represents a promising policy shift; however, its impact on self reliance will ultimately depend on whether it translates into substantive relief of binding structural constraints. The plan raises several critical policy issues that must be addressed to maximize its effectiveness. In particular, limited mobility in a context of scarce employment opportunities risks confining refugees to economically stagnant areas where host communities also face constrained prospects, undermining the objective of fostering self reliance. In this context, expanding mobility to include the right to move within designated zones and streamlining access to work permits are important steps. Yet their ability to translate

[51] Camps are in counties that have historically lagged in development indicators (World Bank, 2024b). Tackling self-reliance among refugees should therefore be part of a broader strategy to address Kenya's spatial disparities.

[52] WFP is already reporting 72 percent funding shortfall between the total requirements for January and June 2025 and the total allocated contributions (WFP, 2024).

into tangible welfare gains will depend largely on the availability of economic opportunities within these areas, or on refugees' ability to access livelihoods beyond the settlements. While attracting private sector investment into integrated settlements and promoting digital and remote work opportunities—supported by targeted vocational training—could create alternative pathways to economic inclusion, greater mobility may also be necessary, not only within but beyond designated areas. Such measures could be implemented in a phased and well managed manner that addresses legitimate concerns related to security and social cohesion, while supporting more sustainable livelihoods for both refugees and host communities.

The evidence presented in this report suggests that key policy areas for consideration include: (i) improving access to quality education by reducing financial barriers to education, (ii) creating jobs and self-employment opportunities that benefit both refugees and hosts, ensuring real access, and (iii) enhancing the efficiency and targeting of aid to maximize its impact amid funding shortfalls. Achieving these goals requires improved coordination and the use of data and evidence to monitor progress.

Improving the quality of education is as critical as expanding access: education meets basic needs, enhances welfare, and equips individuals with the skills required for economic participation and long term success. Addressing financial barriers and supporting transitions to secondary education are therefore essential for improving educational outcomes and laying the foundation for sustained welfare gains. Yet financial constraints—such as school fees, uniforms, and transportation costs—continue to impede educational progression for many children, particularly refugees and host communities in camp areas. Policy responses should prioritize reducing or eliminating these barriers through scholarships, targeted financial assistance, and the provision of free school materials for vulnerable learners. Scholarship programs such as e Limu, which provide financial support through digital learning platforms,

have already expanded access to education for refugees and host communities in Kenya; as of October 2024, approximately 8,000 refugee students were benefiting from these scholarships (UNHCR, 2024). While these initiatives highlight the potential of digital tools and targeted support, their effectiveness in improving learning outcomes remains to be fully assessed. Collaboration with the Ministry of Education has further strengthened system integration, including the development of a national Strategy on Education and Training for Refugee and Host Communities, as well as the registration of refugee schools and learners in the National Education Management Information System (NEMIS). These steps improve tracking, planning, and service delivery, and can be leveraged to further raise enrolment and retention. However, progress on enrolment alone is insufficient. Persistently low and stagnant test scores suggest that many students advance through the system without acquiring foundational skills. Addressing this challenge requires targeted interventions—such as remedial learning programs, teacher training, and classroom level support—to improve educational quality and ensure that schooling translates into meaningful learning.

Priority should be given to creating jobs that benefit both refugees and hosts, exploring strategies to facilitate self-employment while addressing barriers to real access (not just on paper) such as documentation. The current economic landscape presents significant barriers with limited employment opportunities and high levels of inactivity, especially for refugees, who face legal and administrative constraints. Both refugees and host communities consistently cite the scarcity of jobs as a major obstacle to employment with refugees also citing lack of documentation. Given the limited formal employment opportunities, fostering job creation will require a multi-faceted approach that includes creating an enabling environment for private sector investments, strengthening public-private partnerships, enhancing financial and technical support for refugee-led enterprises, and facilitating access to financial services.[53] In addition, investments in skills development—particularly in sectors with growing demand, such as digital and remote work—can help bridge employment gaps and provide sustainable income sources. However, this potential also raises important questions that merit attention: *How can digital jobs be made accessible to refugees and host communities in camp settings, given challenges related to digital literacy, language barriers, and limited infrastructure?* In these efforts, ensuring a gender-responsive approach is also crucial, as refugee women face compounded barriers to employment and economic inclusion. Achieving refugee self-reliance requires more than just policy frameworks like the Shirika Plan. It demands removing implementation barriers that hinder real access to economic opportunities. Streamlining procedures for work permits and business registration will be key to enabling economic participation and reducing dependence on shrinking humanitarian aid budgets.

Enhancing the efficiency and targeting of aid will maximize its impact amid funding shortfalls. Although the timeliness of aid delivery has improved, the amount of assistance received by refugee households has dropped significantly, with food ration cuts in some instances going up to 60 percent of what would be required to meet caloric needs. This has exacerbated vulnerabilities, especially in camps where many rely on aid as their primary source of sustenance. In Kakuma and Kalobeyei, over 70 percent of refugees experience moderate to severe food insecurity. Refugees and host communities are frequently exposed to economic and environmental shocks, such as rising food prices and floods, which undermine their ability to recover and adapt. In camp areas, 64 percent of refugee households reported reducing food consumption as a coping strategy, while many host communities rely on selling livestock during crises. Both strategies have long-term negative impacts on welfare and future productivity. Yet, given the funding shortfalls, the need for alternative targeting mechanisms is more urgent than ever.[54]

[53] One example is a $20 million risk-sharing facility between IFC and Equity Bank of Kenya, supported by PROSPECTS—the first globally dedicated to financial inclusion for refugees and host communities.

[54] One possible approach is integrating ability-based targeting, which prioritizes assistance based on an individual refugee's capacity to work. This method would ensure that those unable to engage in income-generating activities receive immediate support, while further refining eligibility according to vulnerability. However, the concept of "ability to work" must be carefully operationalized, considering variables such as job availability, legal barriers, and prevailing labor market conditions.

As assistance transitions toward a differentiated model, it is important to ensure that reductions in aid do not exacerbate food insecurity among vulnerable populations. A well designed graduation approach will be essential to support a gradual transition toward self reliance while protecting households that remain at risk. To strengthen resilience, complementary interventions should prioritize access to emergency financial support, alongside investments in disaster preparedness and early warning systems.

Expanding access to financial services—including credit, savings, and insurance—can enable alternative livelihood pathways by allowing refugees and host communities to invest in income generating activities, smooth consumption during shocks, and reduce reliance on humanitarian assistance. For host communities around camps, targeted investments in value addition along the livestock value chain—such as upgrading breeds to increase milk yields, improving processing and packaging, and expanding livestock based products including meat, dairy, leather, and by products—offer significant potential to strengthen economic resilience and enhance food security

Delivering on these objectives will require stronger coordination and systematic use of data and evidence to monitor progress and ensure alignment between policy commitments—such as the Shirika Plan—and implementation on the ground. Enhanced coordination among national and county governments, humanitarian agencies, and development partners is essential to ensure that predictable resource flows are integrated into municipal budgets and translated into effective service delivery. Partnerships with the private sector, civil society, and local institutions will also be critical for expanding economic opportunities, as discussed above.

Data driven decision making is central to tracking progress, identifying gaps, and adapting policies in real time. Initiatives such as K-LSRH provide a strong foundation for evidence based policymaking, while the inclusion of refugees in the Kenya Integrated Household Budget Survey (KIBHS) represents a significant step toward fully integrating refugee welfare into national statistical systems. Sustained investment in data collection, harmonization, and integration will be necessary to monitor evolving needs and outcomes for both refugees and host communities and to support accountability in policy implementation.

The cost of inaction is high. Refugee numbers continue to rise even as humanitarian funding contracts, while poverty and food insecurity remain alarmingly high—particularly among camp based refugees and host communities. These conditions risk undermining national development objectives and straining social cohesion in already vulnerable regions. Without a deliberate expansion of economic opportunities in the context of declining humanitarian assistance, household resilience will continue to erode, and prospects for long term development in refugee hosting areas will weaken further.

Integrating refugees into essential services is necessary but not sufficient. Urgent action is required to expand access to economic opportunities through policies and interventions that enhance mobility, legal inclusion, and livelihoods. These efforts must be embedded within a broader strategy to address long standing spatial inequities in regions such as Garissa and Turkana. While rising refugee numbers underscore the importance of tackling the root causes of displacement in countries of origin, host country policies—supported by sustained international engagement—remain central to enabling refugee self reliance.

On a positive note, Kenya continues to foster a more enabling policy environment, as evidenced by the adoption of the Shirika Plan. The Plan provides a strong framework for moving beyond an aid driven model toward integrated service delivery, economic inclusion, and shared development outcomes for refugees and host communities. If effectively implemented and adequately resourced, the Shirika Plan offers a critical opportunity to translate policy commitments into tangible gains in welfare, resilience, and self reliance. Seizing this opportunity will be essential to ensuring that the vision of refugee self reliance becomes a practical and achievable reality rather than a distant aspiration.

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Annexes

Annex 1: From Wave 1 to Wave 2 of K-LSRH

The same households were interviewed between Waves 1 and Wave 2. The target sample for the first wave consisted of 9,500 households, comprising 6,000 refugee households and 3,500 host community households. After replacements, 5,892 refugee and 3,498 host households were successfully interviewed in Wave 1.[55] For the second wave, all households interviewed in the first wave were followed regardless of their current location within the country. Three attempts were made to interview the original respondent that was surveyed in baseline. If the original respondent was deceased or entirely unavailable, another household member was interviewed. In such cases, an additional three attempts were made to reach the replaced household member before marking the interview as unsuccessful.

To ensure high response rates, several tracing strategies were implemented. A phone tracing exercise was conducted prior to data collection to update household contact details. Fifty eight percent of the sample were successfully reached through this exercise. Households that were not successfully reached via phone surveys were physically traced by enumerators supported by refugee community leaders, block leaders, camp chairperson and camp leaders. Additional tracing measures included: using GPS coordinates to track participants that were completely unreachable, tracing of participants who were beneficiaries of the monthly cash assistance (Bamba Chakula / Bamba Chapaa) during verification exercise which took place every last week of every month for about three to five days in Kalobeyei, and physical tracing of participants in Kakuma through the food distribution exercise. Most of the enumerators recruited in the second wave had previously worked in the first wave, which gave them valuable prior knowledge of the context of the survey. In addition, prior to data collection a pilot study was conducted with 61 participants to give the field team real tracking experience. By implementing these measures, the study was able to achieve high response rates across both waves.

In Wave 2, 96 percent of the targeted sample was successfully interviewed. Response rates were particularly high in urban areas and in Dadaab, approaching 100 percent. Attrition was somewhat higher among refugees in Kakuma and Kalobeyei, averaging 11 percent and 20 percent, respectively. This elevated attrition may be linked to outbreaks of violence in late June 2024, following reductions in ration entitlements, which likely prompted some refugees to leave the camps in search of safety.

[53] For more details on the sampling approach of wave 1, please review the technical Annex in (World Bank, 2024b)or the World Bank microdata library deposit for K-LSRH wave 1, which can be found here: https://microdata.worldbank.org/index.php/catalog/6409 .

Table 4: Panel survey attrition

	Kakuma Refugees	Kalobeyei Refugees	Turkana Hosts	Dadaab Refugees	Dadaab Hosts	Nairobi Refugees	Nairobi Hosts	Other Urban Refugees	Other Urban Hosts	Total
All	89.30	80.23	99.87	99.73	100.00	99.17	98.67	98.86	99.73	95.60
N	1,252	1,229	742	1,500	1,244	1,201	753	699	752	9,372
Batch 1	87.65	82.22	100.00	99.00	100.00	98.45	94.70	93.81	98.72	94.75
N	243	225	149	299	240	194	151	97	156	1,754
Batch 2	90.87	83.27	99.29	100.00	100.00	98.81	99.34	100.00	100.00	96.33
N	252	251	141	295	250	253	151	152	160	1,905
Batch 3	85.20	75.40	100.00	99.67	100.00	99.60	100.00	100.00	100.00	94.74
N	250	252	150	302	253	253	150	153	156	1,919
Batch 4	91.02	77.11	100.00	100.00	100.00	99.60	100.00	100.00	100.00	95.74
N	256	249	152	300	250	253	150	152	140	1,902
Batch 5	91.63	83.33	100.00	100.00	100.00	99.19	99.34	98.62	100.00	96.41
N	251	252	150	304	251	248	151	145	140	1,892

Source: *Authors' calculations based on K-LSRH (2022-2024).*

Non respondent households in Kalobeyei were more likely to be male headed and to have fewer dependents. Among respondent households, 69 percent were headed by men, compared to 57 percent among non respondents. Non respondent households also had fewer dependents on average, suggesting that more economically active households may have been more likely to move. Differences in education outcomes were inconclusive. While non respondents appear slightly less likely to have had no schooling, they were not more likely than respondents to have completed primary, secondary, or tertiary education. Across all other observed characteristics, respondents and non respondents were broadly balanced, providing confidence in the overall sampling approach. To account for the higher probability of non response, survey weights were adjusted for Kakuma and Kalobeyei.

Table 5: Characteristics of respondents and nonrespondents in Kalobeyei

		Not Responded		Responded	Pairwise t-test
	N	Mean/(SE)	N	Mean/(SE)	Mean difference
DEMOGRAPHICS					
Head gender	242	0.574	986	0.693	0.118***
		(0.032)		(0.015)	
Head age	242	32.810	986	33.397	0.587
		(0.647)		(0.311)	
Employed member	242	0.240	981	0.247	0.007
		(0.027)		(0.014)	
Dependency ratio	242	0.504	981	0.562	0.059***
		(0.019)		(0.008)	
Household size	242	6.202	981	6.369	0.167
		(0.242)		(0.105)	
Arrival year of TR	243	2014.580	986	2014.646	0.066
		(0.292)		(0.134)	
EDUCATION					
No schooling	242	0.405	986	0.469	0.064*
		(0.032)		(0.016)	
Primary	242	0.281	986	0.262	-0.019
		(0.029)		(0.014)	
Secondary	242	0.248	986	0.229	-0.019
		(0.028)		(0.013)	
Tertiary	242	0.050	986	0.030	-0.019
		(0.014)		(0.005)	
Other	242	0.017	986	0.010	-0.006
		(0.008)		(0.003)	
HOUSING					
Number of habitable rooms	243	1.687	986	1.697	0.010
		(0.053)		(0.026)	
Has access to electricity	243	0.263	986	0.278	0.015
		(0.028)		(0.014)	
Improved wall material	243	0.700	986	0.667	-0.032
		(0.029)		(0.015)	
Improved roof material	243	0.975	986	0.946	-0.029**
		(0.010)		(0.007)	
Improved floor material	243	0.342	986	0.346	0.004
		(0.030)		(0.015)	
NATIONALITY					
Somalia	243	0.004	986	0.000	-0.004
		(0.004)		(0.000)	
South Sudan	243	0.724	986	0.687	-0.038
		(0.029)		(0.015)	
DRC	243	0.033	986	0.056	0.023*
		(0.011)		(0.007)	
Ethiopia	243	0.140	986	0.154	0.014
		(0.022)		(0.012)	
Other	243	0.099	986	0.103	0.005
		(0.019)		(0.010)	
SUBCAMP LOCATION					
Kalobeyei Village 1	243	0.346	986	0.366	0.020
		(0.031)		(0.015)	
Kalobeyei Village 2	243	0.296	986	0.322	0.025
		(0.029)		(0.015)	
Kalobeyei Village3	243	0.354	986	0.309	-0.045
		(0.031)		(0.015)	

Source: *Authors' calculations based on K-LSRH (2022-2024).*

Annex 2: Multidimensional poverty

The multidimensional index used in this document, uses the Alkire-Foster (2007) method for constructing indices, where each indicator of deprivation is given a weight, reflecting its importance in the overall index, and an indicator-specific deprivation threshold, defining the level after which a household will be considered deprived in that indicator. For instance, for nutrition indicators, the deprivation thresholds are set to 5 out 7, meaning that a household needs to have suffered from, say, food shortages in at least 5 out of the past 7 days in order to be considered deprived in that indicator.

In addition to indicator-specific deprivation thresholds, the Alkire Foster index requires a multidimensional poverty cut-off *k*, indicating the minimum number of weighted indicators in which the household must be deprived to be considered multidimensionally poor. A person may, for instance, be temporarily deprived in nutrition because they are fasting, in which case they should not be considered poor. But if they are simultaneously deprived in nutrition and health and education, for instance, it is unlikely to be voluntary. In this paper, we have used two different multidimensional cut-offs, *k*=0.33 for moderate multidimensional poverty, and *k*=0.5 for severe multidimensional poverty, meaning that a household will be considered severely poor if they are simultaneously deprived in at least ½ of weighted indicators. The Alkire-Foster headcount poverty ratio, H^0, for a sample of N individuals, can be written as:

$$H^0 = \frac{1}{N}\sum_{i=1}^{N} I_i(d_i \geq \mathrm{k})$$

Where d_i is the number of weighted deprivations experienced by household *i* and *I(·)* is an indicator function, taking the value 1 if household i is deprived in at least *k* weighted indicators, and 0 otherwise. The index contains 14 indicators, which are grouped into 6 different dimensions. It uses a nested weighting system, where each dimension weighs 1/6 of the overall index, and each indicator has equal weight within the dimension. Dimensions with more indicators will therefore give less weight to each specific indicator.

Table 6 provides an overview of the index composition and definitions of deprivations.

Table 6: Multidimensional poverty index composition

Dimension	Deprivation	Weight	Definition
Education	School attendance	1/6	1+ household member aged 7-15 is not currently attending school.
Employment	Paid employment	1/6	No household members aged 18-64 are in paid work or studying.
Energy	Cooking fuel	1/12	Household uses solid fuels: wood, farm residue, charcoal, waste.
	Electricity	1/12	Household does not use electricity (grid, generator, solar) for lighting.
Housing	Crowding	1/12	Household has more than 4 members per habitable room
	Construction	1/12	House has unimproved roof (grass/dung/plastic/tin cans, other) and unimproved floor (earth, dung, planks, palm, other) and unimproved walls (none, cane, plywood, mud, other)
WASH	Water	1/12	Household uses unimproved water source: not piped, borehole, protected well/spring, rain, bottle, water booster
	Toilet	1/12	Household uses unimproved toilet (not flush, ventilated, slab)
Nutrition	1.Not enough	1/36	Household had not enough food for at least 5 out of the last 7 days
	2.Less preferred	1/36	Household had to eat less preferred foods for at least 5 out of the last 7 days
	3.Borrowed	1/36	Household had to borrow food for at least 5 out of the last 7 days
	4.Smaller portions	1/36	Household had reduced portion sizes for at least 5 out of the last 7 days
	5.Adult meals	1/36	Household had to reduce adult intake for at least 5 out of the last 7 days
	6.Fewer meals	1/36	Household had eaten fewer meals for at least 5 out of the last 7 days

Annex 3: Food security

This report uses the Coping Strategy Index (CSI) to assess food insecurity. The CSI provides a snapshot of household food security at the time of the survey by capturing the frequency with which households adopt six common food related coping strategies. An index score between 4 and 9 indicates moderate food insecurity, while a score of 10 or higher signals severe food insecurity. The CSI draws on the second through sixth nutrition related indicators used in the Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) discussed above. However, these indicators are combined differently to form a composite index that reflects the intensity and frequency of food related coping behaviors:

$$CSI_i = \sum_{j=2}^{6} w^j \cdot D_i^j$$

Where w^j denotes the weight assigned to the j^{th} nutrition indicator, and D_i^j represents the number of days in the past week that household i experienced the corresponding deprivation. Nutrition indicators 2, 4, and 6 in Table 6 are assigned a weight of 1 in the CSI, indicator 3 is assigned a weight of 2, and indicator 5 is assigned a weight of 3.

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Annex 4: Recently conducted surveys of refugees in Kenya

Table 7: Overview of recently conducted World Bank-UNCHR surveys with refugees

Survey	Timing	Survey type	Survey mode	Populations covered	Representativeness
Kalobeyei SES	Nov 2018 – Jan 2019	Cross-section	In-person	Refugees	Kalobeyei Settlement
Kakuma SES	Oct – Dec 2019	Cross-section	In-person	Refugees	Kakuma Refugee Camp
Urban SES	Nov – Dec 2020	Cross-section	Phone	Refugees	Urban refugees owning a phone
Kenya COVID-19 RRPS	May 2020 – Jul 2022	Panel	Phone	Refugees and hosts across Kenya	National, phone-owning population
RHHS Nairobi	May – Jul 2021	Cross-section	Phone	Refugees and hosts in Nairobi	Nairobi
K-LSRH	May 2022 – Jun 2023 Mar – Nov 2024	Panel	In-person	Refugees and hosts in Turkana, Garissa, Nairobi, Mombasa, Nakuru	Kalobeyei Settlement, Kakuma Refugee Camp, Dadaab Refugee Complex, Urban Refugees, host communities for each of the refugee groups

Note: *Phone-based interviews were conducted using a computer-assisted telephone interview (CATI). In-person interviews were conducted using a computer assisted personal interview (CAPI).*

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