



Dreams Deterred

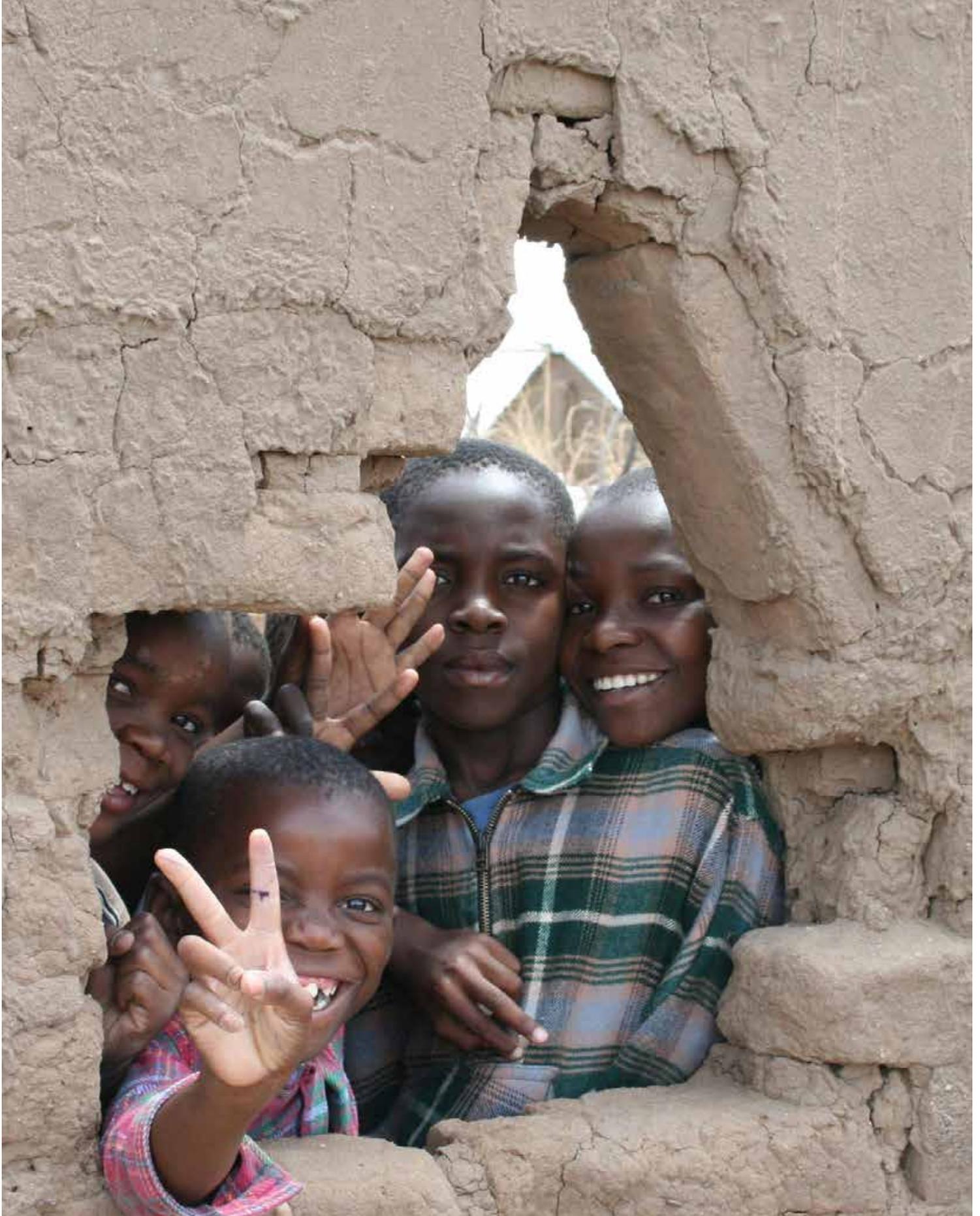


Opportunities to Promote Self-Reliance
for Somali Refugee Youth in Kenya

11 November 2018

Kenya

From Harm to Home | [Rescue.org](https://www.rescue.org)



*Children on their way home from school stop to play in one of the abandoned houses near Kakuma Camp, Kenya.
Credit: Joanne Offer/IRC*

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Somali refugees in Kenya currently find themselves in limbo with only restrictive and impractical options available to them. The majority of these refugees are unable to return to Somalia, despite recent efforts by the Governments of Kenya and Somalia and UNHCR, due to sustained threats to their protection, safety and dignity in what continues to be a fragile post-conflict situation. Opportunities for third country resettlement are concurrently diminishing, particularly in Europe and the United States of America, due to a sharp decline in refugee resettlement quotas. In Kenya, basic economic and social activity outside refugee camps is prohibited, despite the vast human capital that exists amongst the refugee populations. Consequently, after almost three decades, since 1991, the majority of Somali refugees in Kenya are still entirely dependent on dwindling humanitarian aid without any viable path towards self-reliance.

Since the beginning of the repatriation program in 2014, more than 80,000 Somali refugees have repatriated, however an additional more than 250,000 remain¹. The sentence should read: The majority of these fled from the southern and central regions of Somalia, which remain highly insecure. One-third are youth aged 18 to 35 years. Thirty percent are youth aged 18 to 35 years. The African Union and UNHCR have declared Somali refugees from southern and central regions of Somalia to have profiles that may bring them within the scope of the 1951 Refugee Convention, requiring continued international refugee protection.

In Kenya, local integration is a seemingly obvious but otherwise neglected solution as refugee demands for greater economic and social rights are often interpreted summarily as demands for citizenship. This research concentrated on refugee self-reliance, as both an outcome and as characteristic of local integration, which does not necessarily imply a demand for citizenship. The UNHCR describes self-reliance “the social and economic ability of an individual, a household or a community to meet essential needs (including protection, food, water, shelter, personal safety, health and education) in a sustainable manner and with dignity.”² The research identified both formal and informal barriers to self-reliance.

Informal barriers stem from weak political will, in spite of untapped public support for inclusive asylum policy. The asylum space in Kenya has been eroded by political rhetoric on counterterrorism and the notion that Somali refugees pose an existential threat to national security. In 2016, the rhetoric metastasized into a formal policy to end Somali refugee hosting, which was shortly after declared unconstitutional by the High Court of Kenya. The court decision quelled the adverse political rhetoric but the negative effects linger. National polling data demonstrate that policy and political rhetoric do not align with public perception; Kenyan citizens are particularly empathetic towards the notion of Somali refugees becoming self-reliant.

Formal barriers stem from the denial of constitutional rights, including the rights to work and freedom of movement, exacerbating labor market exclusion. Contrary to popular perception, the right to work is an integral part of asylum law in Kenya, although realization of this right is frustrated by insurmountable administrative barriers underpinned by weak political will. Somali refugee youth are generally unaware of their right to work or challenged by opaque work permit application procedures. Further, movement restrictions that confine refugees to camps make it impossible to obtain the prerequisite employment offers for work permit application. The *Security Laws Amendment Act*, which placed all refugees and asylum seekers under forced encampment, is the bane of refugees’ right to work and self-reliance.

Kenya’s development frameworks exclude refugees including Vision 2030, which makes no mention of displacement or refugees. Refugee support interventions depend on international donors whose contribution has declined in recent years resulting in insufficient resources to meet basic needs, let alone promote refugee self-reliance support activities. In 2018 the UN humanitarian appeal, received only US\$97 million, down from \$340 million in 2017. Development initiatives to support refugee self-reliance in refugee camps and localities have been piloted at local level by donors and county governments but the needs and economic potential of Somali refugees far exceed current opportunities created at the micro level.

Consequently, material safety (adequate standards of living, access to livelihoods, restoration of housing land and property.³) of Somali refugees continues to be severely compromised: unemployment and underemployment rates amongst Somali refugee youth are extremely high compared to the national average. Very low percentages of

1 UNHCR Repatriation Update 1-30 June 2018 <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/documents/download/64858>

2 UNHCR Handbook for Self-reliance. Geneva 2005

3 Regional Durable Solutions Secretariat ReDSS https://drc.ngo/media/3007785/redss_somalia_solutions_framework_lower_juba_region_201601-2.pdf

refugee youth have access to sustainable employment conditions, with incentive work and small business the only options available. While the camps provide economic opportunities for refugees involved in small business, the majority remain impoverished with incomes of only about 35 percent of those in the host communities, who are themselves some of the poorest and most marginalized in the country.

While the removal of barriers to self-reliance may unlock opportunities for some refugees, particularly the educated and those with entrepreneurial capabilities, a significant number will remain marginalized as they lack the capacity to engage in employment or economic activities due to special needs and vulnerabilities. Persons with disabilities are unlikely to benefit without additional support, while women may be disproportionately marginalized owing to cultural practices that disadvantage women. While durable solutions are no less important for persons with special needs and vulnerabilities, this report focuses on refugees who have capacity to become self-reliant.

Self-reliance for Somali refugees can be achieved through integration, fair administrative action, political will, regional cooperation and international responsibility sharing through the following recommendations:

Government of Kenya and UNHCR

- a. A national strategic framework on refugee self-reliance that sets out clear guidelines and procedures for the acquisition of work and business permits and provision of mechanisms that are expeditious, efficient, lawful, reasonable and procedurally fair.
- b. An enhanced refugee registration and management system capable of supporting national surveillance without the need to geographically corral refugees in remote and desolate locations.
- c. Inclusion of refugee self-reliance in national development plans as a basis of international responsibility sharing, enabling development partners to understand cost implications and determine the level of investment required to support refugee youth integration.
- d. Public participation platforms for refugee and asylum policy to encourage public engagement in defining a national framework for refugee self-reliance and to promote national unity, social cohesion and peaceful coexistence.

Donors and Development Partners

- e. Prioritization by donors of measures to strengthen public institutions and include performance indicators based on refugees' right to work, freedom of movement and formal labor force participation.
- f. Demonstration of solidarity by international partners through investment in national policy reform and formal institution strengthening to support refugee self-reliance beyond designated refugee hosting areas.

Non-Governmental Organizations

- g. Fostering of public participation in support of refugee self-reliance by NGOs through identification of appropriate methodology to ensure sustained engagement of civil society policy formulation. This should be linked with enhanced quality of information on refugee self-reliance and its contribution to national development and social cohesion.
- h. Partnership building by NGOs with key legislators and policymakers to support their capacity as champions of refugee self-reliance with a focus on the policy and legislative processes linked to the Nairobi Declaration, Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework and legislative reforms.

INTRODUCTION

In November 2013, UNHCR, the Government of the Federal Republic of Somalia and the Government of Kenya signed a tripartite agreement governing the voluntary repatriation of Somali refugees living in Kenya, with the aim of creating favorable conditions for repatriation and reintegration through a gradual and phased approach.⁴ This approach was foreclosed in April 2016, when the Government of Kenya abruptly revoked the *prima facie* refugee status of Somalis, ordered immediate repatriation, closure of refugee camps and phase out of humanitarian aid; citing overcrowding in refugee camps, terrorist attacks, huge economic costs, human trafficking, proliferation of arms and strained government resources.⁵ The repatriation process has seen 83,669 Somali refugees return to Somalia with an additional 255,500 still remaining in Kenya.⁶

The majority of Somali refugees who remain fled from the southern and central regions of Somalia, which remain highly insecure. Returnees from Kenya have primarily consisted of those who fled Somalia in more recent years, due to famine.⁷ The majority of those who have failed to repatriate are from caseloads linked to earlier displacement from Southern and Central Somalia, due to civil war and insecurity. A significant proportion (30 percent) are youth aged 18 to 35 years, for whom repatriation is simply not an option as they have lived their entire lives in Dadaab or Kakuma refugee camps and are ill-prepared for the precarious post-conflict conditions in Somalia.⁸ The African Union and UNHCR have confirmed that this group have profiles that may bring them within the scope of the 1951 Refugee Convention, requiring continued international refugee protection.⁹

While political crises and civil war in Somalia have begun to resolve since parliamentary elections in December 2016 and presidential elections in February 2017, public institutions remain nascent with low capacity for civilian protection and provision of basic social services. Southern and Central Somalia remain volatile with different conflict dynamics at play involving Al Shabaab militants, clan militias and inter-clan disputes over land and political control.¹⁰ Pre-famine conditions occur frequently and are widespread due to diminished community resilience and absence of basic public services.¹¹ Consequently, more than 6.2 million people out of approximately 15 million depend on humanitarian aid, of which 1.5 million are internally displaced persons (IDPs).

"Why would I go to a place I have not ever been, trading a refugee camp in Kenya for an IDP camp that has less security and support in Kismayo or Mogadishu? I just want to be able to provide for myself where I have lived for nearly all my life."¹² – Somali refugee youth in Hagadera

The international community continues to fund the care and maintenance of refugees in the refugee camps in Kenya, which in 2018 will cost US\$ 191.1 million, of which only 19 percent is currently funded. The US (US\$ 13.9 million), European Union (EU) (US\$ 8 million) and Japan (US\$ 3 million) are the largest donors.¹³ Critically, international support does not currently include support for refugee self-reliance outside of camps.

International support for third country resettlement opportunities for Somali refugees are shrinking, particularly in Europe and the US where political exigencies surrounding the European Migration Crisis and the US entry ban, respectively, have resulted in a global net decrease in resettlement places.¹⁴ In 2016, Somali refugees accounted for 22 percent of those resettled from Africa in third countries, with the US receiving 90 percent of all submissions. Since then the US has retreated, registering a 50 percent drop in overall refugee admissions. In the first three months of 2018, only 73 Somali refugees have been resettled in the US, a 97.4 percent decrease from 2016.¹⁵ The EU's overall contribution to resettlement has been woefully inadequate with member states collectively resettling

4 UNHCR <https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/2016-KCRP5.13fv.pdf>

5 <https://www.independent.co.uk/voices/as-the-kenyan-minister-for-national-security-heres-why-im-shutting-the-worlds-biggest-refugee-camp-a7020891.html>

6 UNHCR Repatriation Update 1-30 June 2018 <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/documents/download/64858>

7 UNHCR, Statistical Summary for Refugees and Asylum Seekers in Kenya. UNHCR, Nairobi Kenya March 1, 2018.

8 Personal Communication from UNHCR official on a panel discussion on Kenyan Citizen Perceptions of Refugees, June 19, 2018.

9 UNHCR, UNHCR Position On Returns To Southern And Central Somalia https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/1300150/1930_1403598415_53a04d044.pdf

10 UN Security Council (UNSC), Report of the Secretary-General on Somalia, 8 January 2016, S/2016/27, <http://www.refworld.org/docid/5698a0b64.html> para. 12

11 OCHA, 2016 Somalia Humanitarian Needs Overview, 25 November 2016, <https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/en/operations/somalia/document/2016-somalia-humanitarian-needs-overview>

12 Interview with Somali youth in Hagadera, Dadaab, May 10, 2018.

13 UNHCR Funding Update July 2018 <http://www.unhcr.org/ke/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2018/08/Kenya-Funding-Update-31-July-2018.pdf>

14 UNHCR <http://www.unhcr.org/593a88f27.pdf>

15 Global Citizen <https://www.globalcitizen.org/en/content/us-accepted-refugees-2018/>

9,451 out of 1,190,000 refugees with resettlement needs in 2017.¹⁶

Somali refugees in Kenya find themselves ensconced in a durable solutions limbo with only restrictive and impractical options available to them. A critical mass are youth who may not be in a position to repatriate in the short term for legitimate reasons, despite efforts by the Governments of Kenya and Somalia and UNHCR, while opportunities for third country resettlement are concurrently diminishing. A distinct solution lies in Kenya if barriers to social and economic integration are removed, particularly to the extent required for refugee self-reliance.

While the removal of barriers to self-reliance may unlock opportunities for some refugees, particularly the educated and those with entrepreneurial capabilities, a significant number will remain marginalized as they lack the capacity to engage in employment or economic activities due to special needs and vulnerabilities. Persons with disabilities are unlikely to benefit without additional support, while women may be disproportionately marginalized owing to cultural practices restricting them to reproductive roles. While durable solutions are no less important for persons with special needs and vulnerabilities, solutions for this group falls outside of the scope of this report.

"I was born in Somalia and came to Dadaab as a two year old in 1992 with my grandmother after both of my parents were killed in Mogadishu during the start of the civil war. I have overcome many obstacles over the years including losing my grandmother, who died in Dadaab in 1994 when I was only four years old. Despite the loss of my family, I was able to get an education and persevered to become the leader of the Youth Education program in Dadaab, which is run by an INGO.

I completed my primary and secondary education at the refugee camp, a long road which started in 1996 and completed in 2004. As a result of hard work at school which I enjoyed, I managed to get a chance to proceed with my high school education within the camp. I had finished secondary education in 2008 and was hoping to get an opportunity to study university despite the kind of situation I was in at that time. I had tried to explore all means to get further studies outside the camp. I had shared my ambition to learn with a number of humanitarian agencies including UNHCR and IRC itself when they first came to the camp in 2009. I received a scholarship to study outside the camp but that was only for up to Diploma level and I would love to attend university to keep improving my skills and opportunities in the job market.

I still have the hope of one day being able to pursue the course of my choice and to realize my long-held dreams.

I have several diplomas and certificates and would like to find work outside Dadaab. But for now, I can only be an incentive worker¹⁶ and I struggle to provide for my wife who came to Dadaab in 1994 and my two sons who were born here in Hagadera. I tried to apply for jobs in Somalia in different positions in the education sector. I was interviewed and I was selected for the post of education officer in Somalia, but rejected the offer. The rejection was a difficult choice, but after flashbacks of what happened to my parents and how they were brutally killed in front of me... I could not go back. With that trauma and no relatives in Somalia I don't feel comfortable there.

I have lived here in Kenya where I don't have freedom of movement like you, I live like a bird in a cage." - Mohamed, Somali Refugee Youth in Dadaab

¹⁶ The IRC Rescuing futures Europes Vital Role in Refugee Resettlement <https://www.rescue-uk.org/sites/default/files/document/1224/rescuingfutures-europesvitalroleinrefugeeresettlement.pdf>

¹⁷ Incentive work refers to the arrangements between humanitarian agencies and refugees, in which the latter provide informal or non-contractual labor in exchange for incentive in-kind or wages, at a much lower rate than would be paid to a Kenyan in a similar position. Incentive work exists primarily because refugees cannot obtain work permits

METHODOLOGY

This report is based on research conducted between February and July 2018, by IRC researchers using a mix of qualitative and quantitative methods. Interviews were conducted with refugees, host communities, citizens and policy makers. A total of 45 interviews involving 120 refugees and host community members took place in Kakuma, Dadaab and Nairobi where IRC implements refugee support programs. The interviews centered on capturing the experiences and aspirations of young refugees who are trying, or have the desire, to become self-reliant through employment or economic activities in Kenya. Researchers also interviewed key informants from humanitarian organizations, UNHCR, government departments and development partners whose programs provide education, vocational and skills building and employment to young refugees. The research included a national survey of citizens' perceptions on refugees and refugee policies in Kenya containing specific questions on Somali refugee youth and local integration.¹⁸ The research is supplemented by literature on durable solutions for Somali refugees, including statutes and international instruments.

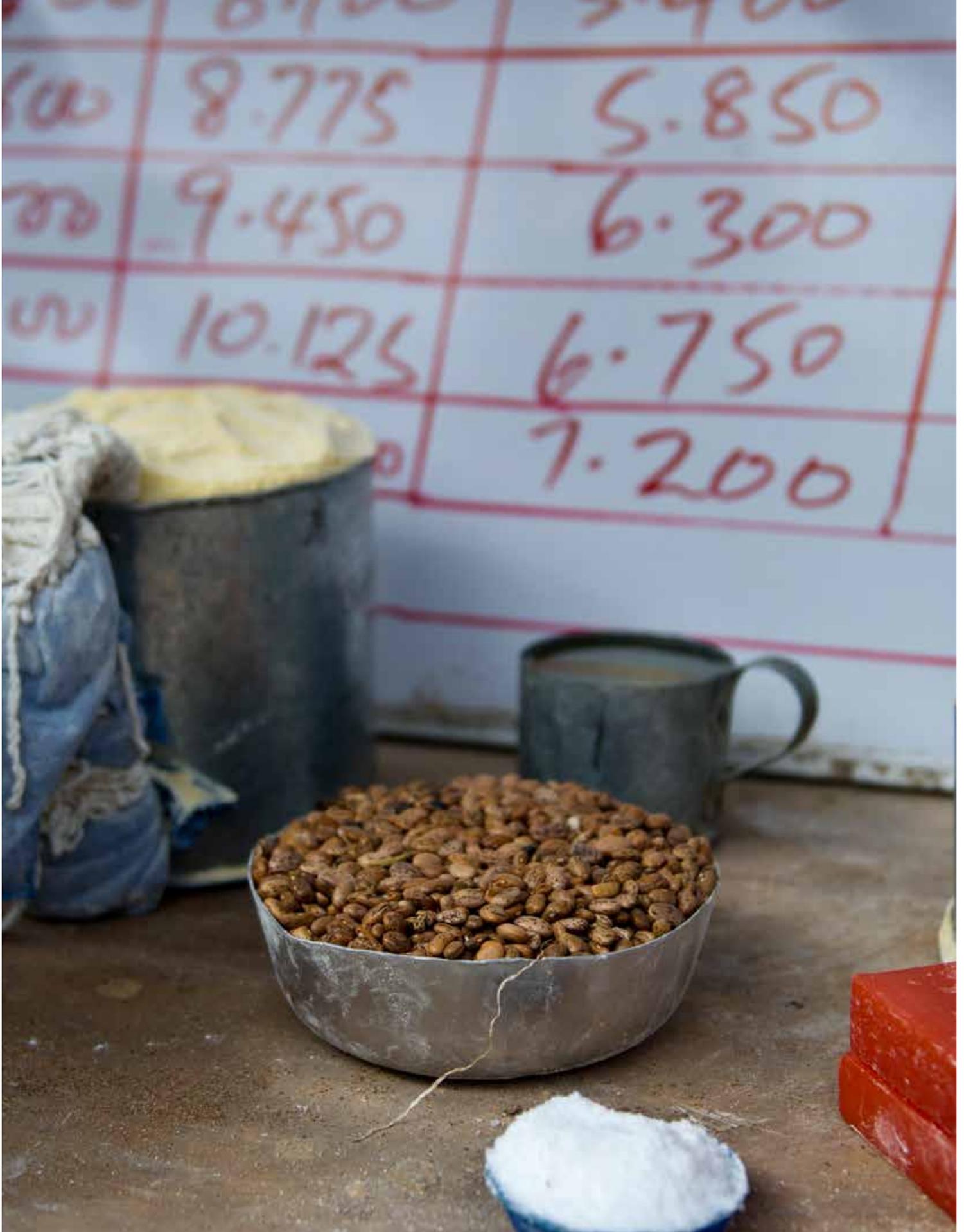
The analysis combines a root cause analysis with a durable solutions analysis (Regional Durable Solutions Secretariat Solutions [ReDSS] analysis framework). The ReDSS analysis framework is a rapid analytical tool that offers a snapshot of the extent to which durable solutions for displaced populations have been achieved in a particular context.¹⁹ The traffic light system provides a comparative assessment of conditions for refugees compared with those of the local population, with reference to 30 indicators that fall in three broad categories: Physical Safety, Material Safety and Legal Safety. This research focuses on material safety, as the most pertinent to self-reliance, particularly access to livelihoods in terms of income generation and job creation for Somali refugee youth. A root cause analysis is used to account for the multiple factors that contribute to the creation of ideal asylum conditions in a country, and to investigate structural dysfunctions involved in the creation of the present conditions.



Urban refugees in an IRC-run class in Eastleigh, Nairobi. Credit: Matja Kovac/IRC

18 The International Rescue Committee Kenya: Citizens' perception on Refugees <https://www.rescue.org/report/kenya-citizens-perceptions-refugees>

19 A full description of the ReDSS Solutions framework can be found here: <http://regionaldss.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/ReDSS-guidance-note-to-develop-a-solutions-framework-analysis.pdf>



Food rations in Dadaab Refugee Camp, Kenya. Credit: Sven Torfinn/SV

BARRIERS TO SELF-RELIANCE AMONGST SOMALI REFUGEE YOUTH

Discrimination and inequality on the basis of refugee status and nationality

The majority of refugees interviewed in this study expressed a profound sense of discrimination on the basis of their Somali nationality or refugee status, which this report identifies as an underlying cause of their inability to become self-reliant. Local integration is a complex and gradual process of economic, social, cultural and political inclusion of individuals into the receiving society.²⁰ The number and extent of economic, social, cultural and political rights enjoyed by individuals may reflect the degree of inclusion; with the fullest extent possible being through citizenship. In Kenya a key issue is that refugee demands for economic and social inclusion can be interpreted by policy makers as a demand for citizenship. This research concentrates specifically on refugee self-reliance as a component of the durable solutions process, which, in some cases, can lead to deeper local integration of refugees in the country of asylum, but may not necessarily involve citizenship.

Refugee status is a defining factor when accounting for acute disparity in levels of self-reliance of refugees as compared to the rest of the Kenyan population. Somali refugees in Kenya are almost entirely dependent on humanitarian aid to meet their basic needs, with less than 10 percent defined as self-reliant compared to 64 percent of the general population.²¹ A dominant theme emerging from interviews with Somali refugee youth was this desire to become self-reliant, defined by UNHCR as “the social and economic ability of an individual, a household or a community to meet essential needs (including protection, food, water, shelter, personal safety, health and education) in a sustainable manner and with dignity.”²²

In Kenya refugees are legally required to reside and remain in designated refugee camps, with the majority of Somali refugees living in Dadaab and Kakuma refugee camps, both of which are located in predominantly arid and semi-arid remote locations with long histories of socio-economic and political marginalization.²³ Refugees are segregated and isolated from the national economy including the main socio-economic activities, which in Kenya are subsistence agriculture, formal employment and employment in small and micro-enterprises. Prior to the introduction of the *Security Laws Amendment Act* in 2014,²⁴ a policy of refugee encampment was enforced somewhat liberally, allowing many Somali refugees to participate in economic and social activities outside refugee camps. This fostered dreams of eventual full integration into Kenyan society, despite the absence of a formal national policy on integration. These hopes fueled thriving informal social and economic interactions between Somali refugees, host communities and Kenyans in many parts of the country, particularly in large cities and urban areas like Nairobi and Mombasa. After the introduction of the Act, a combination of the following informal and formal factors has served to disenfranchise Somali refugees.

Like many Somali youth living in refugee camps, Fatuma tries to help to support her family with odd jobs and what she can do to contribute to the family economy.

20 UNHCR <http://www.unhcr.org/local-integration-49c3646c101.html>

21 World Bank <https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/kenya/publication/kenya-economic-update-poverty-incidence-in-kenya-declined-significantly-but-unlikely-to-be-eradicated-by-2030>

22 UNHCR Handbook for Self-reliance. Geneva 2005

23 Kenya Transitional Justice Network Summary: Truth Justice and Reconciliation Commission Report <http://www.acordinternational.org/silo/files/kenya-tjrc-summary-report-aug-2013.pdf>

24 Republic of Kenya, The Security Laws Amendment Act, 2014 http://kenyalaw.org/kl/fileadmin/pdfdownloads/AmendmentActs/2014/SecurityLaws_Amendment_Act_2014.pdf

"I would like to look for formal or informal work outside of the refugee camp, but I cannot because I can't leave Dadaab. I finished high school and ever since I have been looking for some kind of stable employment, applying mainly for jobs in health and education. However, because of the lack of freedom of movement I cannot widen my search or go to get more education to enable me to get a job. But even if I could get one of the jobs I have applied for, salaries for us [refugees] would not be the same as Kenyans although we do the same work. There is also discrimination that we as refugees face in hiring. I have never heard of a refugee getting a work permit. Corruption and targeting of Somalis is a major block for me and other Somali refugee youth in getting jobs.

We as young female refugees only want the freedom and opportunity to be able to compete for jobs in Kenya. Freedom of movement here and the chance to get steady jobs needs to be an option for us even if our stay here in Kenya is only temporary. Please pass our dreams on to the women of Kenya and America and tell them to keep us in their minds and hearts. We only want the freedom and opportunities to live our lives and support ourselves for a decent life." – Fatuma Somali refugee youth in Dadaab.

Informal barriers

Weak political will and public demand for inclusive asylum policy

Conditions of asylum for Somali refugees have become increasingly politicized, since counterterrorism operations began with the entry of the Kenya Defense Force into Somalia to fight Al Shabaab militants. In the period since, hundreds of civilians have been killed and thousands injured in violent attacks attributed to the group. The situation escalated between 2013 and 2016, after major attacks in Nairobi²⁵, Mombasa²⁶, Lamu,²⁷ Wajir²⁸ and Garissa.²⁹ With each terrorist attack the political discourse on asylum for Somali refugees in Kenya has been laden with the notion that Somali refugees pose an existential threat to national security.³⁰ This rhetoric has been characterized by profiling, xenophobia³¹ and general criminalization of Somali refugees based on the perception that they harbor, or are sympathetic to, Al Shabaab as a result of their shared nationality.³² In 2016, after months of intense litany, the political rhetoric metastasized into policy with the Government's decision to end refugee hosting on the grounds of national security interests.³³ The policy statement bore the hallmarks of the preceding political rhetoric.

Shortly after, in May 2017, following a petition by human rights organizations, the High Court of Kenya ruled that the political statements and resulting policy were in contravention of the Constitution of Kenya, particularly the human rights to asylum, the prohibition against discrimination and the right to fair administrative action. The decision of the High Court quelled the political rhetoric but the negative effects linger with little done by politicians to rescind their statements or by policymakers to undo the policy. However, the primary view of refugees by Kenyan citizens is not that of a security threat, rather, as demonstrated in Figure 1, as people in need.

25 <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/oct/04/westgate-mall-attacks-kenya>

26 <http://familyradio316.com/church-yet-to-know-attackers-three-years-after-the-likoni-attack/>

27 <https://www.nation.co.ke/news/Al-Shabaab-Mpeketoni-Lamu-Attack-Terrorism/1056-2350568-n8q9u0z/index.html>

28 <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/africa/2014/11/killed-kenya-bus-attack-201411226446296802.html>

29 <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-32169080>

30 Oscar Gakuo Mwangi (2018). The "Somalinisation" of terrorism and counterterrorism in Kenya: the case of refolement, Critical Studies on Terrorism, DOI: 10.1080/17539153.2018.1498190

31 Jesuit Refugee Services <https://reliefweb.int/report/kenya/rising-xenophobia-affects-refugees-nairobi>

32 <https://www.standardmedia.co.ke/article/2000071416/government-media-guilty-of-xenophobic-attitude-towards-somalis>

33 Republic of Kenya, Government Statement on Refugees and Closure of Refugee Camps. June 2016. <https://minbane.wordpress.com/2016/05/06/httpwp-mep1xtjg-2ed/>

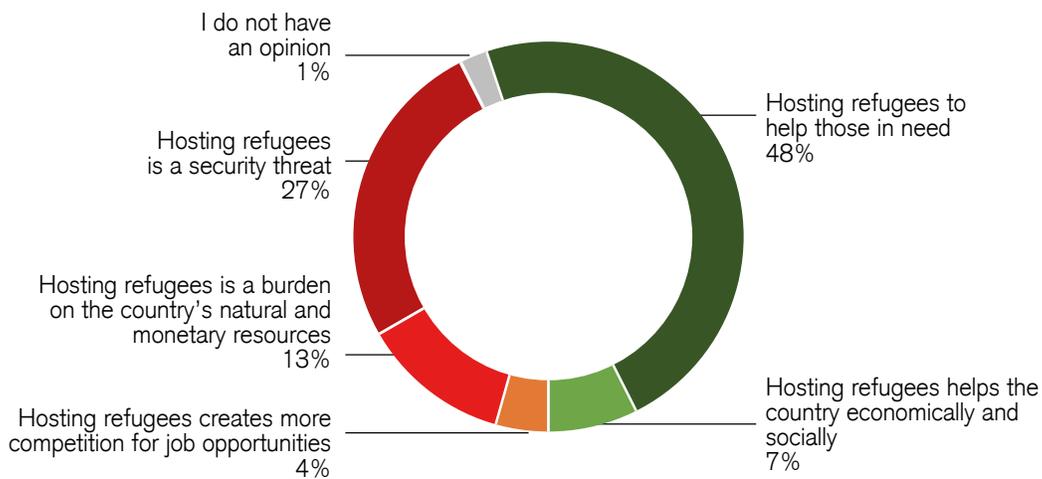


Figure 1: Kenyans' primary opinion of refugee hosting in Kenya
 Source: Sauti za Wananchi Mobile Phone Survey (Round 21, May 2018 n= 1,672)

Political will and public perception are interrelated and can be mutually reinforcing although, in the case of Somali refugees, they have become more divided over time. The perception that refugees are a threat to national security is low (27 percent) and a significant majority of Kenyans (88 percent) would like to see the Government support refugees to become self-reliant through livelihood activities (Figure 2). The majority (72 percent) believes that the Government should provide permission for refugees to be allowed to work (Figure 2), while many (42 percent) would also like to see refugees able to move freely³⁴ (Figure 3).

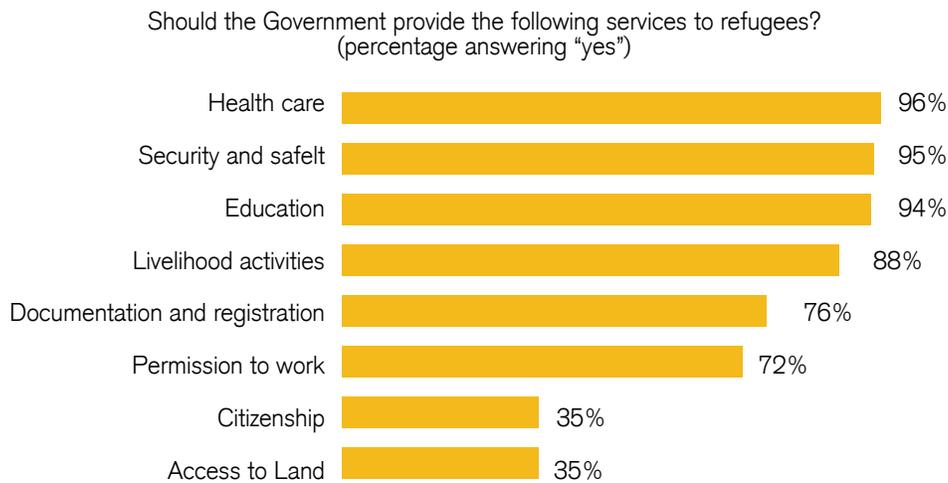


Figure 2: Kenyans' support for various public services to refugees in Kenya
 Source: Sauti za Wananchi Mobile Phone Survey (Round 21, May 2018 n= 1,672)

³⁴ Kenyans' views on refugees are mixed and to some extent contradictory in that on the one hand many support freedom of movement while also supporting keeping refugees in camps, suggesting the need for better and more information about refugees and refugee policy for the general public in Kenya.

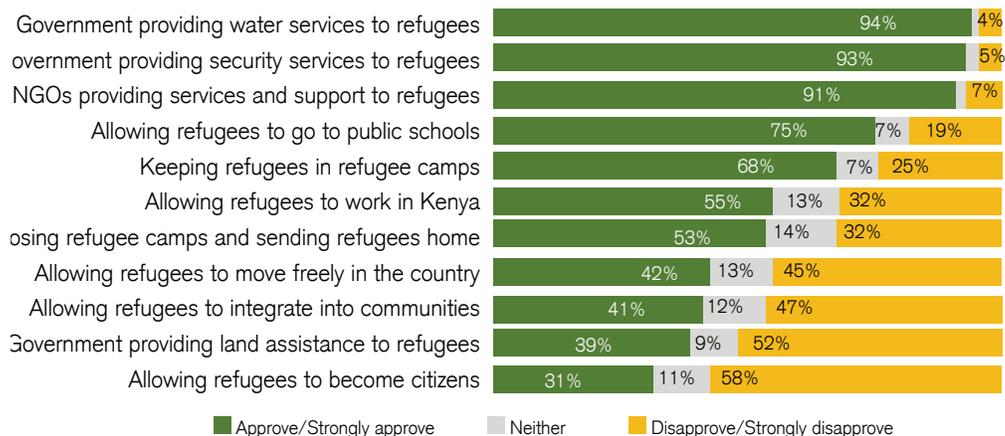


Figure 3: *Approval of Kenyans for various services and policies for refugees in Kenya.*
 Source: *Sauti za Wananchi* Mobile Phone Survey (Round 21, May 2018 n= 1,672)

Kenyans are particularly empathetic towards Somali refugees who were born in Kenya, or who were brought to Kenya as young children as shown in Figure 4. A vast majority (94 percent) support rights of Somali refugee youth to education, (81 percent) support their right to work, to start a business (82 percent), and to move freely in the country (76 percent). Overall, a significant proportion of Kenyans (41 percent) would like to see better integration of Somali refugees into Kenyan society (Figure 3).

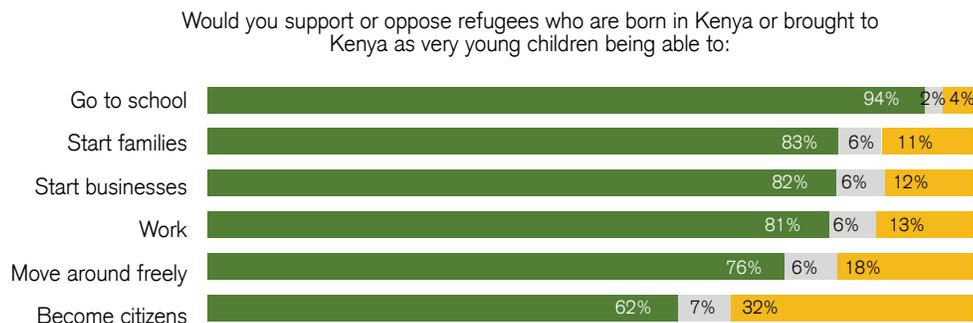


Figure 4: *Kenyans' support or opposition to refugee youth in the country in having various rights along the spectrum of integration in Kenya.*
 Source: *Sauti za Wananchi* Mobile Phone Survey (Round 21, May 2018 n= 1,672)

Issues of national security and inadequate resources have been cited by the government as reasons for the policy to end the hosting of Somali refugees in Kenya, however public sentiment does not currently align with this rationale. National data demonstrates that the majority of Kenyans do not see refugee self-reliance and national security as mutually exclusive. While the majority of Kenyans appear to oppose summary integration through citizenship, there is popular support for levels of integration that support self-reliance on the basis of freedom of movement and the right to work, in line with the expectations of many Somali refugee youth. Despite positive public perception regarding the need for refugees to be self-reliant, Kenya's refugee policy remains driven by discriminatory political sentiments on counterterrorism.

Formal barriers to self-reliance

Denial of right to work and labor market exclusion



ReDSS Durable Solutions Analysis Framework, Livelihoods Indicator 1: *Percentage of Somali refugee youth who face legal or administrative obstacles to employment or economic activity compared to the national population.*

Only 10 percent of refugees in Kenya are self-reliant, the majority cannot be employed or engage in business due to the way the law is enforced, despite constitutional guarantees.

Contrary to popular perception, all refugees in Kenya have the right to work enshrined in the Constitution of Kenya, and detailed in statute, although realization of this right is generally frustrated by insurmountable administrative barriers. The Bill of Rights in the Constitution, which applies to all persons within the country's borders including refugees,³⁵ guarantees the right to work and the right to freedom from discrimination, however, the majority of Somali refugees in Kenya are denied the right to work or movement as a result of their nationality and refugee status.³⁶

The *Citizenship and Immigration Act 2011* stipulates that a Class M work permit may be issued to a "Conventional Refugee" whether in gainful employment or voluntary service. By doing so, the Act affirms the right to work as an integral part of asylum in Kenya. The Act requires that refugees present documents including a letter of recognition from UNHCR; a letter from the prospective employer; copies of a valid national passport; passport-size photos and a recommendation from the Department of Refugee Affairs.³⁷ The Act makes it an offense for any non-citizen to participate in gainful employment or voluntary service without a work permit, meaning that refugees cannot work until the administrative processes are complete and a work permit issued.

The majority of Somali youth in Kakuma and Dadaab refugee camps told researchers that they were not aware they had a right to work in Kenya, nor that they were entitled to apply for a Class M work permit. The few respondents that were aware of this entitlement were skeptical about their eligibility and lacked knowledge of the application procedure. In contrast, urban refugees were aware of the work permit, although they were equally skeptical about their eligibility and uncertain about the procedures for application. None of the respondents in this study knew of any Somali refugee who had obtained a work permit. Although procedures for application of a Class M work permit are clearly detailed on the government website, in practice refugees find the application process opaque and difficult to navigate. According to one young Somali college graduate in Hagadera, "You know you can apply, but you also know you can't get it."

A handful of refugees in the refugee camps shared with researchers the lengths they had gone through, despite movement restrictions, to obtain offers of formal employment only to be rejected once their refugee status became apparent to potential employers. This experience is even more common amongst urban refugees. There are an estimated 62,000 refugees living in urban areas under special dispensation provided by UNHCR and the State on account of extreme vulnerability and special protection concerns that may not allow them to live in the refugee camps. Urban refugees live in poor neighborhoods and informal settlements where they depend on informal employment or businesses, including petty trading and domestic work, and are generally vulnerable to exploitation and abuse owing to their status as refugees. For this reason, humanitarian agencies, including the IRC, have established projects to enhance the capacity of urban refugees for self-reliance.

35 Attorney General Versus Kenya National Commission on Human Rights and Kituo Cha sharia Republic of Kenya, Constitutional Petition 227 of 2016

36 UNHCR, Executive Committee of the High Commissioners Programme, Local integration and Self-reliance <http://www.unhcr.org/excom/standcom/42a0054f2/local-integration-self-reliance.html>

37 Government of Kenya, Kenya Citizenship and Immigration Act 2011, Section 45.

Building Incomes and Leveraging Livelihoods for Youth (BILLY)

BILLY is a project by the IRC targeting urban refugee youth in Nairobi's informal settlements, which are home to over two million vulnerable people. These include both refugees eschewing encampment and poor Kenyans, the majority of whom have insufficient education, work experience and lack the resources to secure formal income to provide for themselves and their families. Refugees in particular have severely limited livelihood prospects due to discrimination and lack of strong familial or social connections. With services and infrastructure already limited, the poor need access to sustainable livelihoods to meet their basic needs.

Through BILLY, the IRC supports a flexible approach to income generation for youth through the delivery of "bundled services", enabling multiple income-generating pathways based on beneficiaries' interests and needs. At drop-in livelihoods centers, beneficiaries can access a customizable package of services that will prepare them for employment or for enterprise start-up, provide skills training, access to capital and facilitate connections to the private sector. The BILLY project targets vulnerable individuals directly in their communities and provides joint programming for the host population as well as refugees, further reducing community tensions between groups.

Through this approach the project has built relationships between refugees and private sector partners who have provided vocational training and job placement opportunities. A noteworthy example is that of the partnership with one of Kenya's leading supermarket chains, which have accepted 65 BILLY clients for their apprenticeship program, and have indicated a desire to hire high-performing BILLY clients following the apprenticeship stage. Further discussions are also underway to develop a micro-franchising model for BILLY clients who receive business startup support, and it is exciting to see a private sector partner seek to engage in multiple BILLY pathways. However, the inability to secure work permits for participating refugees remains a major impediment to the rollout of the program.

With a significant number of urban refugees engaged in informal employment (as well as refugees in refugee camps), informal contracts may imply that they are precluded from subsidiary employment rights, such as social security benefits, unemployment payments, disability insurance, general labor rights protection and the freedom to join unions; all of which would complement the refugees' right to work. Restrictions on the right to work are often paired with other supplementary legal limitations on access to livelihoods, such as permission to establish a business, own property and access financial services.

Denying refugees the right to work deepens apathy amongst potential employers. Employers' attitudes and perceptions have significant, though difficult-to-detect, impacts on refugee ability to obtain work permits. There are many reasons why employers do not hire refugees, including fear of breaking the law, based on mistaken assumptions that the law prohibits them from hiring refugees. There is also confusion regarding the difference in employment rights between refugees and foreign nationals. Employers may also be reluctant to employ refugees due to social stigma and stereotyping, which result in refugees being hired for less attractive types of work, being subject to higher levels of exploitation, poorer remuneration and poorer working conditions including longer hours. Without formal contracts, refugees are also unable to access welfare benefits.



Livelihoods Indicator 2: *The unemployment and underemployment rates among Somali refugee youth compared to the national population.* The unemployment rate in refugee camps is much higher compared to the rest of the population due to the above mentioned. The unemployment rate in Kakuma refugee camp, at 27 percent, is almost double that of the host community at 14 percent and more than triple the national rate (7 percent).³⁷The majority of refugees earn their livelihoods through employment as incentive workers and small-scale traders.³⁸ Incentive work refers to the arrangements between humanitarian agencies and refugees, in which the latter provide informal or non-contractual labor in exchange for incentive in-kind or wages, at a much lower rate than would be paid to a Kenyan in a similar position. The unemployment rate in Kakuma—incentive work presents the only opportunities for youth to obtain an income in exchange for skills obtained from formal education and training.

As an IRC incentive worker in Hagadera explained, the incentive workers are the same as national staff, “We have the capacity but not the paper work. That is the only difference. How can we be self-reliant with only 10,000 KES per month? Such small money makes it so we have to rely on humanitarian support (rations) to survive.”

Denial of free movement

An essential requirement for a Class M work permit application is an offer of employment. Thus begins the futility of applying for a work permit with the challenge of first obtaining a movement pass in order to leave the refugee camp. Without the ability to leave the camps, it is impossible for refugees to obtain employment offers or to engage in day labor or other areas of the large formal economy in Kenya. As numerous youth explained to the researchers, camp authorities do not issue movement passes to Somali refugees to enable them to seek employment. Even prior to the *Security Laws Amendment Act of 2014*, when issuance of movement passes was more liberal, seeking employment was not a valid justification for obtaining a movement pass.

In April 2014, in reaction to a spike in terrorist attacks, security forces began to round up thousands of people in predominantly Somali neighborhoods in urban areas across the country. Dubbed Operation *Usalama Watch*, they focused on the Somali community, including refugees and asylum seekers, in response to accusations that that it harbored terrorists. In December 2014, Parliament enacted the *Security Laws Amendment Act*, which placed all refugees and asylum seekers under forced encampment.⁴⁰ Since then all refugees are required to remain in designated refugee camps and are unable to leave without the permission of the camp officer.

Prior to changes in the security laws, some refugees were able to obtain movement passes on certain permissible grounds, such as requiring specialized medical attention. They were then able to connect with relatives and social networks in urban centers, particularly Nairobi, where some engaged in employment or business. Several refugees told researchers that the issuance of movement passes is riddled with corruption, which only intensified with the introduction of the security laws. Several youth interviewed for this research reported having paid bribes to obtain movement passes. Refugees obtaining a pass are not guaranteed safe passage with refugees reporting repeated harassment and extortion at the numerous security checkpoints along the roads from the refugee camps to the cities. Those using temporary movement passes to travel to cities and engage in informal employment seemingly manage to overcome the work permit obstacle but face grave danger in terms of frequent security swoops and dragnets in the poor neighborhoods where the majority of refugees live. These informal excursions to seek employment and business opportunities may partially explain the large number of refugees caught in the *Usalama Watch* operation in 2014.⁴¹

38 Ibid.

39 UNHCR Kenya <http://www.unhcr.org/ke/livelihoods>

40 Republic of Kenya, The Security Laws Amendment Act, 2014 http://kenyalaw.org/kl/fileadmin/pdfdownloads/AmendmentActs/2014/SecurityLaws_Amendment_Act_2014.pdf

41 Human Right Watch, *Kenya: Counterterrorism Operations Undermine Human Rights* <https://www.hrw.org/news/2015/01/29/kenya-counterterrorism-operations-undermine-rights>



Livelihoods Indicator 3: *Percentage of refugee youth who have access to sustainable employment conditions compared to the national population.* Access to sustainable employment conditions for refugees in Kenya is significantly more difficult compared to the national population. Sustainable income from formal sources is undermined by poor terms of humanitarian incentive work; the challenges of small business licensure; poor access to banking and financial services; restriction of movement; and weak legal protection for assets. The majority of refugee businesses must operate informally to survive.

Small businesses are a major source of income for Somali refugees in the camps, who primarily engage in retail of food and essential household commodities, and on average conduct more business than refugees of other nationalities. Movement restrictions limit access both to stock and raw materials as well as limiting their customer base. The majority of youth engaging in business in the camps complained that their businesses are severely impaired by their inability to move outside the camps to personally procure stock and raw materials or to negotiate prices. The majority is forced to rely on middlemen who distort business by inflating prices and providing sub-standard or uncompetitive goods. In contrast, businesses that belong to those in the host communities suffer none of these restrictions.⁴² Refugees also face camp-specific restrictions such as prohibitions on livestock (cattle, goats and camels) rearing, which are otherwise the main livelihood activity practiced by the predominantly pastoralist host communities.

“What kind of business can you do this way? My business has become crippled. They (Kenyan police) will arrest you if you leave the camp or can't pay a bribe to get a pass.”⁴³

Exclusion of refugees in national development plans

Kenya's national and county development frameworks exclude refugees. Vision 2030, Kenya's development blueprint, makes no mention of displacement or refugees. Consequently, the Medium Term Expenditure Framework, which guides budgeting and expenditure does not allocate resources to the refugee response. In recent years the Kenya Comprehensive Refugee Programme led by UNHCR, costed the refugee response in Kenya at US\$ 1.5 billion between 2011 and 2016, primarily funded by international donors.⁴⁴ A steep decline in donor funding in recent years has resulted in insufficient resources to meet basic needs (let alone promote refugee self-reliance⁴⁵) or to provide the investment necessary for the prerequisite policy reforms.

At County level there is an initiative in Turkana County, led by UNHCR and the County Government, to address the self-reliance needs of refugees through a settlement approach. As part of a 15-year plan, the Kalobeyi integrated settlement combines elements of strengthening income-earning opportunities, in urban, agricultural and livestock development, integrated service delivery and private sector engagement. In contrast to the adjoining Kakuma camp, the plan is to develop Kalobeyi into an integrated settlement with the intention of hosting 60,000 refugees, in addition to 20,000 persons from the host community.⁴⁶ While the settlement is in its third year, it is yet to be formally included in the County Integrated Development Plan. Without anchoring in the national development plans there will remain significant gaps for refugees' inclusion in the broader economy.

42 University of Oxford, *Refugee Studies Center Refugee Economies in Kenya*. While 40% of Turkana have travelled outside Kakuma the year before the survey, only 17% of Somali, 13% of Congolese and 8% of South Sudanese refugees have left Kakuma (Figure 15).

43 Focus Group Discussion with Somali refugee youth business people in Hagadera, Dadaab, May 8, 2018.

44 Kenya Comprehensive Refugee Response Programme <https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/2016-KCRP5.13fv.pdf>

45 UNHCR <https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/2016-KCRP5.13fv.pdf>

46 UNHCR Kalobeyi Settlement <http://www.unhcr.org/ke/kalobeyi-settlement>

Refugee self-reliance in Kenya cannot be successful at scale in the absence of a formal development framework against which to appropriate the requisite public resources (which are not merely limited to funding), which calls for a comprehensive multiagency approach to service delivery. The needs and economic potential of Somali refugee youth far exceed the opportunities available in the camps and adjacent localities. For example, in Turkana the labor force in the county consists mainly of the youth who constitute 49.34 percent of the entire population, but only 2.4 percent of the national labor force,⁴⁷ resulting in a large proportion of unemployed youth in Turkana County due to inadequate opportunities. Therefore, without opportunities outside the county, self-reliance opportunities for Somali youth may remain stifled.



Livelihoods Indicator 4: *Poverty levels among refugees compared to the national population.*

Contrary to popular expectations, and despite stifled productivity, Somali refugees are not always worse off in terms of poverty compared to the national population. Poverty in Kenya has been on the decline, dropping from 43 to 35 percent between 2005/6 and 2015/16. However, poverty still remains endemic in the refugee hosting counties, which continue to suffer from the effects of historical economic and social marginalization, characterized by widespread food insecurity and scarcity of social services and economic infrastructure. Both Turkana and Garissa which host the Kakuma and Dadaab refugee camps, respectively, continue to benefit immensely from the presence of refugee camps which have provided these communities with opportunities for both social services and economic development. Yet, while the camps provide an economic boost for the host community, the majority of refugees remain in poverty, with incomes of about 35 percent of incomes in the host communities. Similarly in urban settings studies have also demonstrated that, compared to Somali refugees at 44 percent, Kenyans at 60 percent are significantly more likely to have an economic activity, with the income from this activity also being significantly higher.



Hope for the Vulnerable is a refugee-run community-based organization in Kakuma that works to empower the community to take control of their own sanitation and education using waste management as an income-generating activity within the camp. Credit: Jane Yang/IRC

⁴⁷ International Finance Corporation, “Kakuma as a Marketplace: A consumer and market study of a refugee camp and town in northwest Kenya.” IFC Washington, D.C.: World Bank Group. April, 2018.

OPPORTUNITIES TO PROMOTE REFUGEE SELF-RELIANCE

Nairobi Declaration and Action Plan

In 2017 the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), of which Kenya is a member state, released the *Nairobi Declaration on Durable Solutions for Somali Refugees* with the objective of delivering durable solutions for Somali refugees, including through the promotion of self-reliance in the countries of asylum.⁴⁸ In the Declaration Member States commit to align domestic laws and policies in order to enable refugees to access gainful employment and self-reliance, agreeing to:

- a. *Invest in comprehensive skills development for refugees, strengthening their employability, self-reliance, social inclusion, and resilience; to create an enabling business environment for Somali refugees to access employment opportunities, by benefitting from the private sector and through generating a favorable climate for domestic and regional investment to support both refugee and host community.*
- b. *Consider introducing or expanding Out-of-Camp Policies and progressively increase the number of refugees who may benefit from the policy; and provide relevant documents and permits to facilitate the free movement of refugees.*
- c. *Endeavour to provide work permits to refugees, those with permanent residence IDs and refugee graduates access to work within the bounds of domestic laws in the areas permitted to foreign workers.*

Kenya specifically pledged to undertake self-reliance and inclusion measures including providing economic opportunities in accordance with the laws of the country. The Nairobi Declaration is also the cornerstone of the upcoming Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF). However, Kenya is yet to make significant progress towards these commitments, with the main reason provided as the inability to review the *Refugee Act 2006*.⁴⁹

In 2017, Parliament passed the *Refugees Bill 2017* in order to repeal the *Refugee Act 2006* but the Bill failed to obtain the mandatory presidential assent due to a cited lack of adequate public participation, contrary to the requirements of the Constitution.⁵⁰ The Bill was widely reported to be a progressive attempt by Parliament to anchor refugee self-reliance in Kenya, particularly by granting rights to work and land ownership.⁵¹ However, notwithstanding the merits of any proposed reform to existing statutes, a new refugee law is not essential to realizing these commitments due to the ample existing legal basis for refugee self-reliance in the Constitution and Laws of Kenya.

48 IGAD Nairobi Declaration on Durable Solutions for Somali refugees <https://igad.int/communique/1519-communique-special-summit-of-the-igad-assembly-of-heads-of-state-and-government-on-durable-solutions-for-somali-refugees>

49 IGAD. First annual report on the Implementation of the Nairobi Declaration and Plan of Action on Durable Solutions to Somali refugees and reintegration of returnees in Somalia.

50 Government of Kenya Refusal to Assent to the Refugees Bill 2016, Memorandum

51 <https://www.businessdailyafrica.com/economy/Uhuru-rejects-bill-giving-refugees-right-to-jobs-and-land/3946234-4178936-xf36adz/index.html>



Young urban Somali refugee in her flat in Eastleigh. Credit: Peter Biro/IRC

RECOMMENDATIONS

Somali refugees will continue to be part of the population of Kenya for the foreseeable future, notwithstanding likely progress in voluntary repatriation and third country resettlement. Failure to remove barriers to refugee self-reliance and to factor refugees into the country's development plans is counterproductive and wastes significant economic and social capital without addressing the basic needs of refugees and the unsustainable costs of refugee encampment. The Constitution of Kenya envisages the coexistence of both national security interests and refugee self-reliance as has been demonstrated in a growing number of IGAD member states, including Ethiopia and Uganda. However this balance requires political commitment, strong formal institutions, inclusive planning and coordination, with leadership from the Kenyan Government and UNHCR, consistent with the principles of the proposed Global Compact on Refugees, the CRRF, and IGAD's *Nairobi Declaration on Durable Solutions for Somali Refugees*.

Recommendations to the Government of Kenya and UNHCR

- a. Formulate a national strategic framework on refugee self-reliance. The Department of Immigration and Registration of Persons and the Refugee Affairs Secretariat should develop a national framework that promotes refugee self-reliance based on refugee rights to work, freedom of movement and fair administrative action, in order to remove the prevailing administrative obstacles and allow refugees to participate in economic and social activities outside refugee camps. The framework should set out clear guidelines and procedures for acquisition of work and business permits and should provide mechanisms that are expeditious, efficient, lawful, reasonable and procedurally fair. Specifically, the guidelines may:
 - (i) Define the parameters of the right to work on equal terms with other non-citizens, taking into account the unique vulnerabilities of refugees.
 - (ii) Establish the Refugee Identity Card (proof of registration) as the primary reference document for issuance of work permits and access to employment-related benefits.
 - (iii) Repeal the Refugees Regulations to abolish Designated Areas and requirement of a Refugee Movement Pass.
 - (iv) Establish a quasi-judicial mechanism to adjudicate disputes regarding work permit applications.
- b. Enhance the integrity of the refugee registration system and integration with the national registration database to facilitate freedom of movement. The Refugee Affairs Secretariat and the Integrated Population Registration Services Department should integrate the refugee registration system into the national registration database and ensure a robust system that is not vulnerable to corruption. This will be key to supporting surveillance of refugees without the need to geographically corral refugees in remote and desolate locations and is critical to dispensing with designated areas and movement passes. This action is important for building the confidence and trust of the different government agencies, state organs and private sector.
- c. Include refugee self-reliance in national development plans as a basis of international responsibility sharing. The Ministry of Interior and Coordination of National Government should work with the Ministry of Devolution and Planning to include refugees in national development plans. This will enable government and development partners to understand cost implications and determine the level of investment required to support refugee youth integration. This may be an opportunity for international refugee responsibility sharing to contribute to the national economic agenda including the Vision 2030, the Medium Term Expenditure Framework and the Big Four Agenda, particularly regarding jobs and economic opportunities.
- d. Establish a national platform for public participation in refugee and asylum policy. The Refugee Affairs Secretariat and the Ministry of Devolution and Planning should establish a national platform through which citizens, refugees and policymakers can engage in defining a national framework for refugee self-reliance. The platform should also act as a tool to promote policies of national unity; social cohesion and peaceful coexistence of Somali refugees and host communities; and to address negative perceptions of refugees to enhance social inclusion. This will include supporting the development of positive narratives, messaging and other communications on refugee self-reliance.

Recommendations to IGAD

- Encourage the Government of Kenya to adopt a national strategic framework for refugee self-reliance as a core indicator of the Nairobi Declaration Results Framework, in which Kenya committed to undertake self-reliance and inclusion measures, including the provision of economic opportunities to refugees. Kenya made this commitment subject to the laws of the country, which already permit refugees the rights to work and to freedom of movement.
- Encourage the Government of Kenya to include refugees in the national development plans as a way to realize the commitment in the Nairobi Declaration through the allocation of financial resources towards the development of infrastructure and social amenities and to expand access to economic opportunities and social services in refugee hosting areas.
- Encourage the Government of Kenya to remove restrictions on refugee movement and grant access to out-of-camp labor markets and business opportunities as a means of meeting the commitment under the Nairobi Declaration for expansion of business infrastructure and economic opportunities for refugee populations in order for them to pursue sustainable livelihood opportunities in trade occupations.

Recommendations to Donors and Development Partners

World Bank

- Prioritize measures to strengthen public institutions, particularly the Department of Immigration and Registration of Persons and the Refugee Affairs Secretariat to enable the formulation of a national strategic framework for refugee self-reliance. Performance indicators based on refugee **freedom of movement**, **formal labor force participation**, **identification documents** and work permits should be included as detailed in the specifications of the IDA 18 Regional Sub-Window for Refugees and Host Communities.

The European Union

- Invest in national policy reform and institution strengthening to support refugee self-reliance beyond designated refugee hosting areas. While it is important to promote better economic integration and self-reliance of refugees and host communities within their current hosting areas, refugee self-reliance needs, as well as their economic potential, exceed the opportunities that currently exist in designated refugee hosting areas like Kakuma and Kalobeyei, which have been earmarked for support by the EU Trust Fund Programs: *Piloting Private Sector Solutions for Refugees and Host Communities in North-West Kenya and Regional Development and Protection Programme in Kenya: Support to the Kalobeyei Development Programme*. It is therefore essential for reform and institutional strengthening to support refugee self-reliance beyond these designated hosting areas.

United Nations

- Expand the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) to support institutional socio-economic integration of refugees beyond the designated refugee hosting areas. The current UNDAF limits support for refugees, asylum seekers and host communities to designated refugee hosting areas (Turkana, Garissa and Wajir counties), despite self-reliance needs of refugees as well as their economic potential exceeding current opportunities in those areas. The UNDAF's commitment to innovative measures to address institutional bottlenecks should target the removal of administrative barriers to refugee self-reliance.

Non-governmental organizations

- Foster public participation in support of refugee self-reliance by identifying appropriate methodologies to ensure sustained engagement of civil society policy formulation. This should be linked with enhanced quality of information on refugee self-reliance and contribution to national development and social cohesion.
- NGOs should build partnerships with key legislators and policymakers to support their capacity as champions of refugee self-reliance with a focus on the policy and legislative processes linked to the Nairobi Declaration, Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework and legislative reforms.



A young Somali refugee plays in front of her home at Kakuma Refugee Camp in northern Kenya where she has been living for six years. She and her family were meant to fly on July 19 to be resettled in Denver, Colorado. Their flights were cancelled after a limited version of President Trump's travel ban took effect on July 13. Credit: Kellie Ryan/IRC

Written by Victor Odero and Sterling Roop.

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Cover Photo:: *Hundreds of people gather outside the fence at one of Dadaab's refugee reception centers. Here, refugees are registered, receive food rations and IRC medical screening. Credit: Peter Biro/IRC*

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