



Somali refugees in Kenya

Increasing camp-urban mobility

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Kenya hosts more than 500,000 refugees, most of whom live in camps. The new Refugee Act (2021), which came into force in 2022, creates potential for new policy allowing increased mobility between camp and city. This paper reports on findings of the Protracted Displacement in an Urban World project, which examined the wellbeing and livelihoods of people living in protracted displacement in camps and cities, focusing on Somali refugees in Dadaab camp and Eastleigh, Nairobi. Key findings highlight the need for increased recognition of urban refugees, free movement between camp and city, and more targeted support, particularly for women refugees in the city.

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Acronyms

CBO	Community Based Organisation
CIDP	County Integrated Development Plan
CRRF	Global Compact on Refugees and its Comprehensive Response Framework
DEF	Displacement Economies Framework
DFID	Department for International Development (UK Government) <i>now closed</i>
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
DRS	Department of Refugee Services
GISEDP	Garissa Integrated Socio-Economic Plan
IDP	Internally Displaced People
IGAD	Intergovernmental Authority on Development
IHRC	International Human Rights Clinic (Harvard, USA)
ILO	International Labour Organization
KISEDP	Kalobeyei Integrated Socio-Economic Development Plan
KRA PIN	Kenya Revenue Authority Personal Identification Number
NHIF	National Health Insurance Fund
NRB	National Registration Bureau
NRC	Norwegian Refugee Council
PCA	Principal Component Analysis
PDUW	Protracted Displacement in an Urban World (the project)
RAS	Refugee Affairs Secretariat (now DRS)
rCSI	Reduced Coping Strategy Index
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
WASH	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene

Summary

This working paper reports on the findings of the Protracted Displacement in an Urban World (PDUW) project¹ in Kenya – a project which focuses on the wellbeing and livelihoods of people living in protracted displacement in camps and urban areas.

In 2023 Kenya hosts more than 500,000 refugees, most of whom live in refugee camps in two main complexes, where there are very limited livelihood opportunities. The new Refugee Act (2021), which came into force in 2022, creates potential for new policy enabling refugees to live in urban areas and move more freely between camp and city.

Outlining the study

The aim of the project was to deepen the understanding of refugees' experiences of life in camps and urban areas through the exploration of two themes: wellbeing and displacement economies.

The project focused on the country's 280,000 Somali refugees, who make up more than half the refugee population in Kenya. Most of them, numbering around 230,000, reside in one of the camps within the Dadaab complex in Garissa County, and around 24,000 are registered in Nairobi. The study looked specifically at the refugee experience in Dadaab and Eastleigh in Nairobi.

Our wellbeing metrics explore five dimensions – bodily, economic, political, social and psychosocial – derived as composite indicators from the quantitative surveys, supplemented by other data.

Displacement economies in PDUW are understood as the: collective economy created by refugees and Internally Displaced People (IDPs) through their livelihood activities, enterprise, need for services and consumption, and through their mutual support and diaspora inputs.

Key findings

In the camp

Refugee wellbeing in Dadaab is consistently lower than in the city, across all wellbeing dimensions investigated. The differences are most stark in the areas of physical health and income, due to the lack of sufficient food

aid and income-earning opportunities. Most (60%) of survey respondents in Dadaab stated that they had not eaten enough in the preceding week.

Respondents also cited access to water as being problematic, and maternal health issues were also highlighted as of serious concern.

The economy in Dadaab is largely dependent on humanitarian aid, with only 33% of men and 16% of women surveyed working. While the camp population's purchasing capacity depends mostly on cash transfers that can barely sustain refugee enterprises.

Refugee enterprises are registered with, and paying taxes to, county authorities, getting supplies from host businesses and middlemen, and contributing to the local economy.

Mobility restrictions imposed on refugees in camps impact negatively on their livelihoods and wellbeing, and many feel as though they are imprisoned. The ability to overcome these restrictions is dependent on networks and connections, particularly trade networks connecting Dadaab and Eastleigh.

Registration in the camp can take many months, and during that time unregistered refugees are in effect homeless and without food, unless other refugees take them in. Some opt to move to the city if they lack this support, which goes against the image of the camp as providing care for the most vulnerable.

However, there is evidence of strong peer support within the camp, particularly between the women, but also in the wider community where individuals in need can get help with, for example, medical bills.

¹ Out of camp or out of sight? Realigning responses to protracted displacement in an urban world www.protractedisplacement.org/home

In the city

Eastleigh is an environment that enables refugee entrepreneurship, not only allowing residents to start businesses, but providing opportunities for these to develop and expand. A shared ethnic background with Somali Kenyan hosts, refugee diaspora investment and remittances support their economic activities. But female refugee entrepreneurs generally receive less support and find it difficult to access key trade networks.

Despite better economic opportunities and physical health, and greater possibilities for social interaction, refugees in Eastleigh have only marginally better psychosocial health than those living in Dadaab, and are often left with a feeling of not being supported. Wellbeing is also more gendered in the city than in the camp, in particular for single mothers who often struggle to provide for their families.

Urban refugees are mainly self-employed in trade activities. The enactment of the Refugee Act (2021) is increasingly enabling them to register their businesses, but there are still issues with refugee documentation and information on their rights.

Police harassment, arbitrary arrests, abusive inspections and bribes appear common in Eastleigh, based on qualitative data. This impacts negatively on refugees' livelihoods as well as their wellbeing, mobility, access to support and sense of feeling at home in the community.

Refugee solidarity and exclusion coexist in Eastleigh, with uneducated refugee women street vendors receiving only peer support while striving to keep their businesses solvent.

Recommendations

The project was undertaken at a pivotal moment for refugees in Kenya, with the Refugee Act (2021) being adopted during this time. It is important that the Government maintains the momentum of this moment, and that the expanded legal rights and recognition for refugees are communicated clearly to them.

Our research confirmed that mobility issues are a key hindrance to improving livelihoods and wellbeing. These currently affect both camp and city dwellers – with the limited out-of-camp movement for Dadaab residents, and the security fears for those in Nairobi. New policies should prioritise freedom of movement for refugees in both settings to allow them to take advantage of the new freedoms enshrined in the act – the right to own and register businesses in their own names, or to access the wider labour market.

Refugee businesses in the city, and in the camp, already make a positive contribution to local economies. But there is an opportunity to create an environment which nurtures this, potentially benefitting the national economy as well, and importantly reducing aid dependency for those in Dadaab.

It is also important to remember that although the economic environment for refugees in Nairobi is beneficial compared to that of Dadaab, it remains challenging, particularly for single women supporting their families on one income, so targeted support will be essential.

The Kenyan Government should build on the positive direction within the Refugee Act (2021) with policies that allow increased camp-urban mobility and better enable the substantial economic contributions of refugees in both locations. Importantly, freedom of movement should be considered a key component of any integrated settlements created, as they will otherwise risk replicating the poor wellbeing of the current refugee camps.

1

Introduction

For decades, the response by the international community to mass movements of people fleeing war or political persecution has been to provide humanitarian assistance in camps. Despite highly-charged debates on the negative impact of maintaining people in often remote regions and dependent on humanitarian assistance, camps remain the default response to new displacement crises. As short-term emergencies turn into protracted displacement,² camp living can erode residents' dignity and increase aid dependency. In response, displaced people are increasingly moving to cities, or avoiding camps to seek autonomy and opportunities over dependency and isolation, and estimates suggest that more than 60% of refugees and at least half of Internally Displaced People (IDPs) now live in towns and cities.

'Out of camp or out of sight? Protracted Displacement in an Urban World' (PDUW) is a comparative mixed-methods research project focusing on the wellbeing and livelihoods of displaced people in camps and urban areas in Afghanistan, Ethiopia, Kenya, and Jordan. Our research has sought to deepen understandings of refugees' experiences of life in the camp and the city, elaborating its own analytical framework to explore its two thematic areas: wellbeing and displacement economies.

This report summarises the main findings of this research in different settings; **Eastleigh in the capital Nairobi**, and the **Dadaab camp complex** located in Garissa County. Through the lens of the PDUW analytical framework on wellbeing and displaced economies, we focus on Somali refugees to understand their different experiences in the camp and the city. Following a brief introduction to the dataset and research methods, the report offers an analysis of the refugee context in Kenya, including refugee figures, an overview of legislation and policy and its implementation, background information on displacement from Somalia, and an introduction to the locations in which research was conducted. The analysis is then structured following the main thematic areas: wellbeing and displacement economies, to provide an analytical framework which enables the exploration of the collected data. To conclude, the report summarises the main findings in lessons to stir the debate around refugee wellbeing and displacement economies in Kenya.

² Protracted situations are defined by UNHCR as those where more than 25,000 refugees from the same country of origin have been in exile for at least five consecutive years in a host country without achieving a durable solution to their displacement. This definition does not refer to circumstances of individual refugees, but to the displacement situation as a whole.

2

The project's dataset for Kenya

The quantitative analysis is derived from a survey of 382 Somali refugees in Dadaab, 315 Somali refugees were surveyed in Eastleigh, Nairobi, and a further 156 Kenyan nationals ('hosts') in Eastleigh. The proportion of women and men surveyed was roughly the same and evenly distributed within the sample across all three groups.

Most survey respondents in these settings were under 40 years old (75% in Dadaab, and 86% in Eastleigh).

Refugee respondents in Dadaab were thus slightly older than their counterparts in Eastleigh. Household size was on average smaller in the city than in the camp, with an average of five members in the city, against 6.5 in the camp. In both locations, most displaced respondents reported growing up in rural areas (66% in Dadaab, 60% in Eastleigh) as opposed to in an urban setting (34% and 40%, respectively). More than half of the urban-displaced respondents moved directly to Nairobi from their country of origin, as a first destination.

Figure 1. Age distribution of respondents by migration status

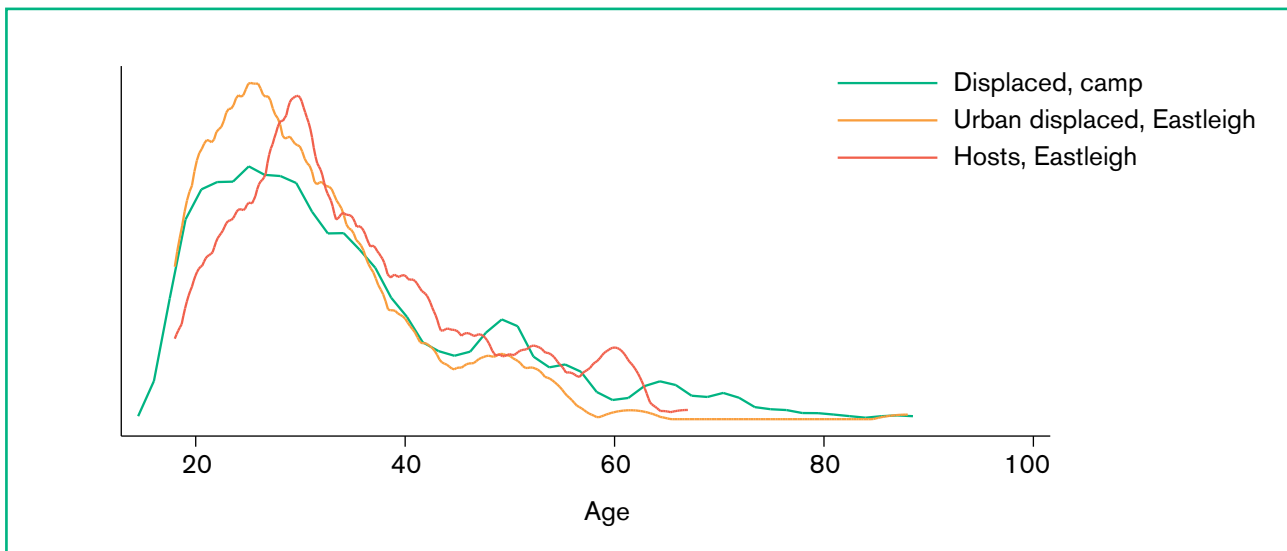
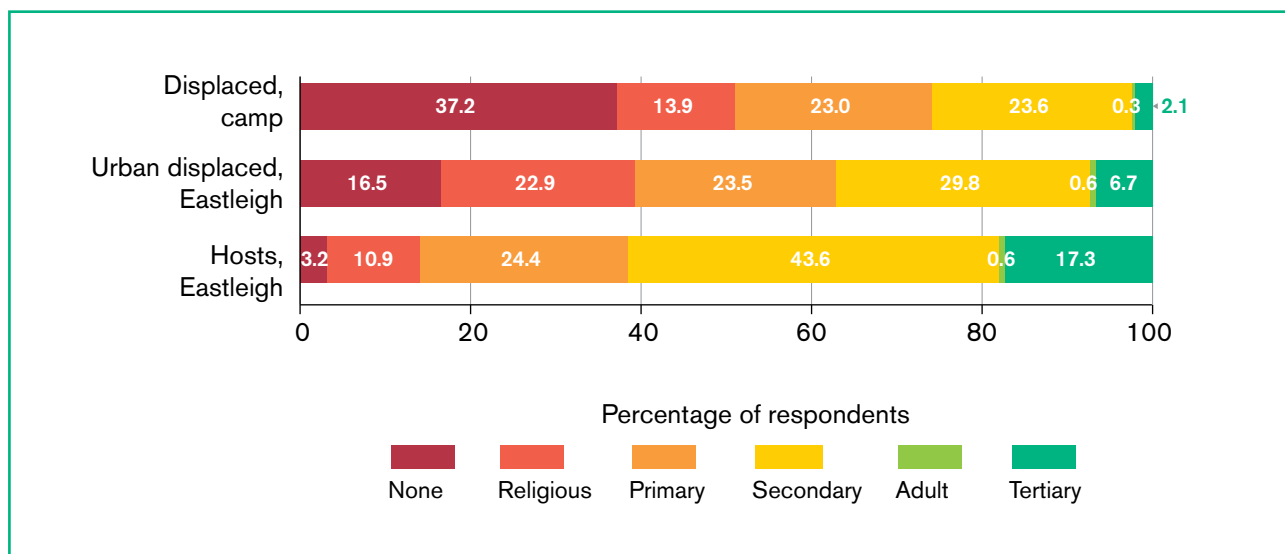


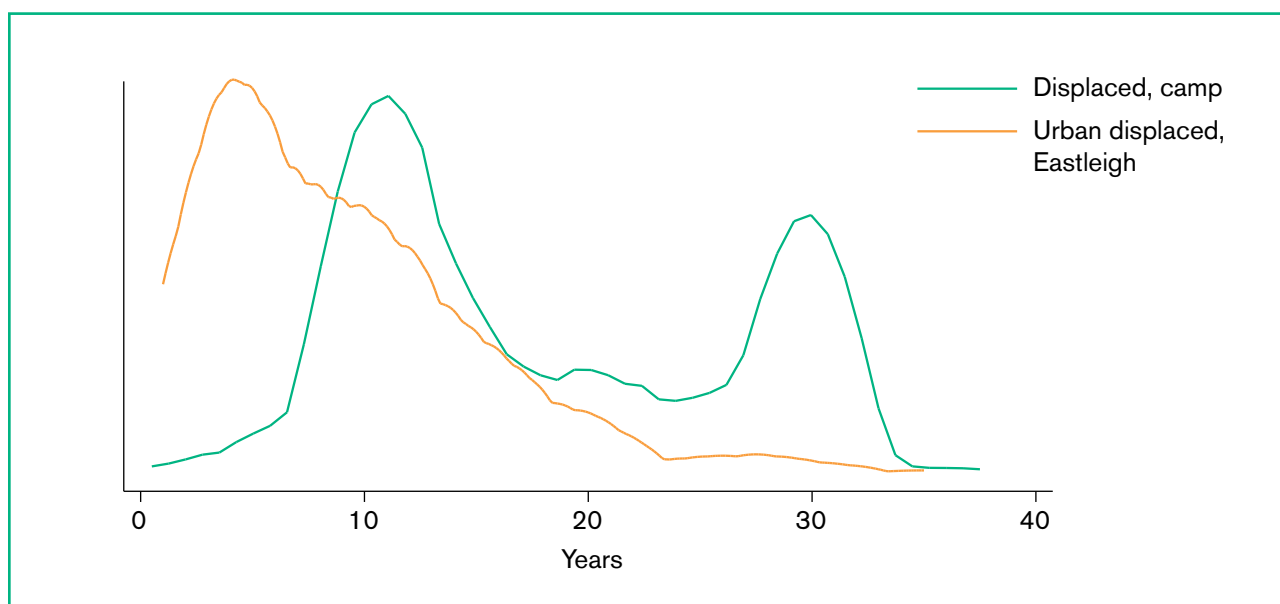
Figure 2. Highest level of education completed by migration status



On average, Dadaab respondents had received lower levels of formal education and lower literacy rates compared to those based in Eastleigh. Nearly 40% of respondents in Dadaab reported receiving no education, compared to only 16% among displaced Somalis surveyed in Eastleigh. Hosts most frequently

reported having completed secondary or tertiary education (61%), followed by Eastleigh-based Somalis (37%). In comparison, only around a quarter of Dadaab interviewees (26%) said they had completed at least secondary education.

Figure 3. Years lived in Kenya by migration status



On average Dadaab-based respondents had lived longer in Kenya compared to their urban counterparts, most of whom had lived in the country for less than ten years. There was also more variation in the Dadaab sample: while many camp respondents

had lived in Kenya for 10-15 years, around 9% of respondents reported that they moved to Kenya 30 years ago, around the time the Dadaab complex first opened in the early 90s.

A total of 48 qualitative interviews were undertaken with 12 men and 12 women in each location (Dadaab and Eastleigh). These are not a representative sample but are intended as a deep dive into thematic issues around wellbeing, identified through the quantitative survey. Interviewees were selected based on their profiles with a view to achieving a mix of ages, income and education levels, as well as family situations. In Nairobi, this sample was supplemented with interviewees accessed through refugee community centres and representatives.

Interviewees were asked to describe the place they lived in and how they came to be there, as well as whether they had ever lived in a different setting – a camp for those based in the city, and vice versa. They described their main challenges in life, what would be needed to alleviate these concerns, and whether they thought they would face the same challenges if they lived in the ‘opposite’ location. They were asked to describe their daily lives and to talk about what sorts of things give them joy, their role in the community and

whether they feel at home there. They were asked about registration and documentation as well as community representatives and where they can turn to for support. Finally, they were asked whether they would go back to their country of origin if the conflict there were to end. Interviews with men and women were conducted by interviewers of the same sex in order to minimise potential discomfort and barriers to speaking about personal issues.

For work on livelihoods a different approach to qualitative interviewing was undertaken. Following the identification of the main livelihood sectors for refugees in the quantitative survey, 50 semi-structured interviews were conducted with refugee and host-run enterprises in Eastleigh and Dadaab. The interviews explored business creation, decision-making, trade networks, enterprise achievements and challenges, as well as refugee enterprises’ contributions to the local economy, refugee self-fulfilment, and self-reliance.

Table 1. Breakdown of livelihoods interviews by location and gender of interviewees

	EASTLEIGH		DADAAB CAMP		TOTAL PER STATUS
	Male	Female	Male	Female	
Refugee	13	12	8	7	40
Host	6	4	-	-	10
Total per gender	19	16	8	7	
Total per location	35		15		
Total					50

Key informant interviews were carried out with representatives from the Kenyan Government, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), NGOs, service providers and refugee representatives (see Annex I for a full list). All key informants were asked to describe their organisation and role in supporting the refugee community in Nairobi, and for a background on refugee policies, encampment, and refugee presence in the city.

They were then asked to describe key challenges for the refugee population from their perspectives, on wellbeing and livelihoods respectively, and what would be needed to address those challenges. In the case of the refugee community representatives, this included a group of refugees who shared their own experiences and problems living in the city.

3

Refugees in Kenya

3.1 Overview

Kenya has a long history of hosting refugees, starting in the 1930s following the Italian occupation of Ethiopia (Meckelburg 2020). Today, Kenya hosts 516,437 refugees³ and a further 95,976 asylum seekers, which makes it one of the top refugee-hosting countries in Africa. Most refugees in Kenya are from the Horn of Africa and Great Lakes region. The largest proportion are from Somalia with nearly 308,367 people (50.4% of the total), followed by South Sudan at 161,822 (26.4%), the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) at 56,582 (9.2%) and Ethiopia at 35,073 (5.7%).

Statistics from UNHCR show an increase of more than 100,000 refugees in Kenya over the last four years⁴ (2018-2022). In addition, an estimated 87,194 refugees were awaiting registration in the Dadaab camps at the end of 2022. The 2023 drought in East Africa⁵ will also have increased the number of recent arrivals, particularly from Somalia – but also from Ethiopia. The majority of Kenya's refugees (84%) live in one of two camp complexes, Dadaab or Kakuma, with only 16% residing in urban areas. Most of the urban refugees live in Nairobi, with smaller numbers in Mombasa, Nakuru and Eldoret (UNHCR 2023).

The Department of Refugee Services (DRS) – formerly the Refugee Affairs Secretariat, (RAS) – operating under the Ministry of Interior and National Administration in the State Department of Immigration and Citizen Services, is the agency in charge of refugee management, including reception, registration and issuance of documentation in collaboration with UNHCR. Local governments in the relevant counties (Turkana, Garissa and Nairobi) are also involved – to varying degrees – in the planning and delivery of services to the refugees. However, refugee management remains within the mandate of the national Government of Kenya but has not been subject to a coherent national approach, which can create issues for municipalities and counties. For example, data access is challenging as refugees are not currently included in national surveys (World Bank 2021), while the National Registration Bureau (NRB) does not make its data on refugees accessible to others, according to project informants.

In addition to government actors, a range of international organisations, local and community-based organisations, and private sector actors all support refugees in Kenya, predominantly within the camps. For urban refugees, aid and services are more limited but UNHCR has a local office in Nairobi where refugees can request support and referrals.

3 According to figures from the UNHCR Data Portal, as of May 2023.

4 According to figures from Kenya Statistics and Infographics as of 31 December 2022 (unhcr.org)

5 See DROUGHT SITUATION | Affected displaced populations in the EHAGL region - 30 April 2023 (unhcr.org)

3.2 Encampment of refugees

Since the opening of Kakuma and Dadaab camps in the early 1990s, Kenya has operated a de facto encampment policy whereby all refugees are required to live in the camps, which are far removed from urban centres and economic opportunities (Kerubo 2013). This policy was enshrined into law through Kenya's first comprehensive Refugee Act⁶ in 2006, which established the normative and institutional framework for the management of refugee affairs and was still in operation at the time of the Protracted Displacement in an Urban World (PDUW) project. Selected studies from this period suggest that Kenyan locals feared that refugee integration would have a negative impact on the local job market (Addaney 2015, Omata 2019, cited in Ngendakurio 2021).

Despite the requirement for refugees to live in camps, many defy this rule and make their way to urban areas. The reasons are many, including lack of access to education and healthcare, and livelihoods opportunities, as well as maladjustment to the remote camp life for those who come from urban areas in their home countries. It is possible for refugees to register in Nairobi under certain conditions (to be discussed in more detail below). Additionally, there are urban refugees who have formally registered in one of the camps, but subsequently left the camp to live as unregistered refugees in the city. In these cases, refugees living in the city without the correct documentation are more likely to face harassment and extortion by the authorities (NRC and IHRC 2018).

In 2016, a new refugee settlement, Kalobeyei, was opened 3.5km from the existing Kakuma camp, in Turkana County. It was intended as a shift from encampment towards local integration. The Kalobeyei Integrated Socio-Economic Development Plan⁷ (KISEDIP) in 2018 described this settlement as part of a new approach built on 'Choice Theory' and an attempt to move away from humanitarian delivery models towards increased economic opportunities for both refugees and hosts. Within the new settlement, markets and services are shared between refugee and host populations. There is also a focus on developing agriculture and livestock for both refugees and hosts to increase food sustainability and economic self-sufficiency.

However, studies from the first few years of the settlement's existence indicate that there is little difference in living standards and economic opportunities compared to Kakuma camp, which is more established as an economic centre. While there is a different cash-based aid model and slightly higher employment rates in Kalobeyei, most refugees are still reluctant to be relocated there due to the potential loss of social networks (Betts et al. 2020). The Kenyan Government has on several occasions announced that they intend to close Dadaab and Kakuma camps, most recently in 2021, due to security reasons (Reuters 2021). Later the Government planned to move towards integrated settlements like Kalobeyei (Owiso 2022), but it is unclear from current data to what extent an integrated settlement is in practice different from a refugee camp (see Refugee Act 2021).

Following the integrated settlement initiative there have been further policy shifts towards local integration that resulted from Kenya's signing of the Global Compact on Refugees and its Comprehensive Response Framework (CRRF) in 2017 (ibid). In the same year Kenya became a CRRF pilot country, and hosted and signed the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) summit that adopted the 'Nairobi Declaration and Action Plan on Durable Solutions for Somali refugees and Reintegration of Returnees in Somalia'. The two provide a normative, strategic framework re-orienting Kenya refugee policy. By doing this, Kenya has committed to:

1. Give refugees the option to obtain citizenship and/or residence through birth, marriage or long-term, lawful residence
2. Strengthen refugees' self-reliance and economic inclusion and provide livelihood opportunities
3. Make additional investments in social and technical infrastructure to improve access to employment opportunities and services in host communities
4. Integrate refugees and hosts in a pilot settlement scheme (see below) and involve refugees in local development planning in counties with refugee camps, and
5. Promote school enrolment and develop measures to increase refugee access to the education system at all levels (Dick and Rudolf 2019).

⁶ The Refugee Act from 2021 will be discussed in the following sections.

⁷ See <https://www.unhcr.org/ke/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2018/12/KISEDIP.pdf>

3.3 A new direction

Following these shifts in policy, Kenya adopted a new Refugee Act in 2021, which came into force in 2022. The new law does not explicitly contain an encampment requirement, but instead provides for the establishment of ‘designated areas’ for refugees (Government of Kenya 2021). These areas have yet to be delineated and gazetted and, according to project informants, the camps will likely still be utilised since most transit areas and reception centres are found there. The practicalities of implementing the new law are still under development, primarily through a draft Policy Paper on Kenya’s Comprehensive Refugee Management Programme (the Shirika Plan, previously known as the Marshal Plan, announced in June 2023). It is designed to create a framework for the gradual transition to solutions that are voluntary, safe, sustainable, orderly and in line with Kenya’s international and domestic legal obligations (UNHCR 2023). The approach will build on the experiences of Kalobeyei Settlement, which in many ways resembles a camp with more permanent housing structures. The Government of Kenya has indicated that the main objective of the new policy is to facilitate a gradual transition from the current model to integrated settlements with improved service delivery, to promote refugee and host community inclusion for enhanced self-reliance and resilience.⁸ While these various commitments suggest an approach premised on enabling refugees to enjoy more rights and greater independence, it remains unclear to what extent rights — including freedom of movement — will be granted to refugees within the new approach. This is partly because it is not clear whether restriction of movement will be maintained under the Shirika Plan.

The draft Garissa Integrated Socio-Economic Plan (GISED) in Garissa County is very similar to the Turkana County equivalent, KISED. The plan is part of the County Integrated Development Plan (CIDP) of Garissa and focuses on refugees living in Dadaab and hosts within the surrounding area. Importantly, the Third Garissa CIDP covering 2023-2027 recognises the diverse population of Garissa, which encompasses a refugee population living in the five camps: Ifo, Ifo II, Dagahaley, Kambios and Hagadera (Government of Kenya 2023). GISED is another practical example of integrating refugees into county plans, which was launched in September 2023 (Astariko 2023). It lays out sector-specific and area-based roadmaps for healthcare, education, water supplies, sanitation and hygiene, spatial planning, infrastructure, agriculture, livestock breeding, environmental protection, sustainable energy, the private sector and the protection of vulnerable groups (Owiso and Manji 2020).

Another provision within the Refugee Act, Section 29(8) provides that a person from the East African Community who has been recognised as a refugee, may opt to voluntarily give up his/her refugee status to enjoy any benefits due to him/her under the Treaty for the Establishment of the East African Community, the Protocol for the Establishment of the East African Community Common Market and any other relevant written law (Government of Kenya 2021). This has important implications for many refugees, particularly for their rights to work (albeit with work permits) and to live anywhere in Kenya. The East African Community currently includes Burundi, Rwanda, South Sudan, Tanzania, Uganda and the DRC. People from these countries make up around 40% of the refugee population in Kenya (Refugees International 2022). For other refugees, including the Somali refugee population, Section 28(5) of the new law states that a refugee “shall have the right to engage individually or in a group in gainful employment or enterprise or to practice a profession or trade where he holds qualifications recognized by competent authorities in Kenya.” It is, however, not clear from the legislation whether refugees will be allowed to work anywhere in the country, or whether this will be limited to the ‘designated areas’ where settlements are located. Freedom of movement and documentation are therefore outstanding questions for this group.

3.4 Refugees in Dadaab

Dadaab is a refugee complex near the border with Somalia, composed of three locations, Hagadera, Dagahaley, and Ifo camps hosting nearly 233,805 refugees as of May 2023 – most of them Somalis (UNHCR Operational Data Portal 2023). Located in Garissa County, the camp is a 25-minute drive from the nearest village of Dadaab and up to four hours’ drive from Garissa town. Established by UNHCR in 1991 to accommodate the refugees arriving from Somalia, the camps also host small groups of refugees from Ethiopia, South Sudan, DRC and Uganda. Over the past decades, Dadaab’s population has fluctuated as more refugees have entered the country. There were sharp rises in the 2000s as violence in Somalia escalated, and in 2010-2011 as a result of famine (Owiso and Manji 2020). The drought and increased insecurity in Somalia in 2022 again brought about new movements from Somalia. This prompted Kenyan authorities to reopen the Ifo II camp, which has a capacity to hold up to 66,000 people, and had previously been closed in 2018 (ECHO, 4 November 2022). Initially created to host 90,000 refugees, by 2023 the Dadaab complex population was hosting close to triple that number.

8 See: https://refugee.go.ke/?page_id=1431

Garissa is one of the most underdeveloped regions in Kenya, with limited social services and low levels of economic development and education. The harsh agro-climatic conditions and weak market linkages impact negatively on sustainable livelihood opportunities for both refugees and host communities (ILO 2022). The region is also geographically isolated. The main economic activities in the county are pastoralist livestock rearing and traditional small businesses. A recent study highlights that the entrepreneurial ecosystem in the region is “at a nascent stage”, and that new entrepreneurs are largely dependent on humanitarian, development or donor funds to provide training and business group formation programmes where there is often a lack of focus on innovation (International Trade Centre 2020:4).

There are three main economic centres or markets in Dadaab, one in each camp. Here, business creation is often a response to a growing demand from refugees to fill the gaps in traditional humanitarian assistance and to their determination to do something productive with their lives in protracted displacement (de la Chaux and Haugh 2020). Refugees need valid documentation issued by DRS to travel between the camps and between Dadaab and other cities such as Nairobi. In the absence of valid travel documentation, to travel outside the camps they must be prepared to pay substantial bribes at military and police roadblocks. (Pavanello, Elhawary and Pantuliano 2010:23).

Somali refugees living in Dadaab share a language and culture with the host community. It is not uncommon that “both groups use this fact with great skill in order to survive” (Horst, 2008:23). The Somali nomadic culture, which is shared with the host population, is based on unrestricted mobility, strong and often clan-based social networks, and dispersed livelihood strategies. However, livelihoods have changed as a result of displacement, becoming increasingly transnational and with remittances playing a significant role in the camp economy (ibid).

3.5 Refugees in Nairobi

Nairobi is the largest urban area in Kenya, with an estimated 4.4 million population and an annual growth rate of 4.1%. A young and vibrant city, 49% of people are aged 15-36 years, 34% of residents have completed tertiary studies, and 1.8 million are working out of its 2.3 million working-age population, according to the 2019 census. The main productive sectors in 2021 were manufacturing, trade, and hospitality, followed by construction, transport and communication industries (Kenya National Bureau of Statistics 2022). There are no estimates for the proportion of workers informally employed in Nairobi,

but nationally it is estimated that 83% of total employment in Kenya is informal, and at least 813,000 people are estimated to be working in the informal sector in precarious working conditions. Around 36% of the city’s population live in densely-populated informal settlements (Gachanja et al. 2023).

A total of 92,778 refugees are officially registered in Nairobi. A quarter of them are Somalis, making them the second largest refugee nationality living in Nairobi. The largest group are Congolese refugees from DRC, who make up 37% of the total refugee population there (UNHCR Operational Data Portal 2023). While not a homogenous group, many urban refugees experience inadequate housing and marginalisation, and confront challenges related to their status as non-citizens. They face threats of arrest and detention, refoulement, harassment, extortion, vulnerability to sexual and gender-based violence, and human smuggling and trafficking (UNHCR, World Bank 2021).

Refugees in Nairobi face similar problems to the urban poor. Women refugees report being targeted and sexually abused in the city, for example by police officers at checkpoints and during arrests (Women Refugee Commission 2019). Somali refugees living in Nairobi’s Eastleigh neighbourhood have reported experience of harassment by police on a daily basis, along with threats of detention – regardless of whether they have proper documentation or not (Pavanello et al. 2010). Such harassment is common for all informal workers in Nairobi (IFKE 2021), but refugees have also suffered xenophobic incidents, for example due to an assumed association of Somali refugees with terrorism, piracy and arms smuggling. This was particularly exacerbated⁹ after the Westgate Mall terrorist attack in September 2013 (Wambui, 2022).

Between 1990 and 2000, UNHCR, although aware of the growing numbers of refugees in Nairobi, turned a blind eye to the presence of urban refugees (Campbell and Kiragu 2011). However, during the 2000s, the Nairobi UNHCR office took a series of steps to improve protection and services for refugees living in the city. These included investing in community services, establishing partnerships with refugees and civil society, leveraging resources from the private sector and other agencies, and, critically, working with government (Campbell 2015: 112).

In 2009, the UNHCR policy on refugee protection and solutions in urban areas recognised, for the first time, the right of refugees to settle in urban areas (UNHCR 2009). This new global urban policy provided a basis for enhanced communication and cooperation with various agencies in Nairobi. It also led to dialogue between the Department of Refugee Affairs, the Ministry of Local Government and the Mayor of Nairobi

9 BBC (Sept 30, 2013). Westgate attack: MPs to call for refugee camps to close. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-24339508>

who participated in the Mayors' Forum that preceded the High Commissioner's Dialogue in 2009. The forum pointed out that despite the encampment policy, Kenya had an increasingly large refugee population in the capital city of Nairobi and other urban centres (Campbell et al. 2011).

According to UNHCR's 2017 refugee *Operational Statistics*, displaced people in Kenya must meet certain criteria to be legitimately accepted as urban refugees (NRC 2017:1). Under the recent Refugee Act this mandate sits with the Government of Kenya, which requires refugees to be granted an exemption from residing in camps or designated areas – but the processes for this remain unclear (ILO 2022). According to project informants, refugees must first prove self-reliance, and secondly provide a specific reason to be in the city, which can be a medical need, family connections or education. This route has many challenges which complicate successful urban refugee status acquisition including: stalled processes; inconsistencies and delays; confusion about next steps due to lack of information; administrative issues and travel costs. Further issues are caused by the police who request bribes and harass urban refugees and asylum seekers without accepting their provisional documentation (ibid). While there are new provisions within the 2021 Refugee Act, project informants suggested it remains unclear how changes will be operationalised for urban refugees and how they should confirm their status and secure their documentation.

Refugees currently need a 'Class M' work permit to apply for formal employment in Nairobi, but these are rarely provided, due to both restrictive policy and lack of information. As a result, most refugees work in the informal sector, using their networks to find employment. They are allowed to register their own businesses with the Nairobi City Council, although previous studies show that only a few large enterprises do so, and most refugees work as casual workers or petty traders (O'Callaghan et al. 2019:5). Somali refugees often create partnerships with Somali Kenyans who formally register the enterprise, or find opportunities for casual or more stable labour within their community. However, they are also more likely to be targeted by the police and the cost of bribes negatively affects their livelihoods (Omata 2020).

Eastleigh

Although exact figures are not available, the majority of displaced people in Nairobi are of Somali origin (UNHCR 2023). Eastleigh is the preferred location for Somalis because of the substantial number of Kenyan Somalis living in the area, which makes interactions easier. Ethiopian Oromo are also drawn to Eastleigh by social ties, as many are Muslims sharing a religious identity with the Somalis (DRC and UNHCR 2012). Eastleigh is divided into two distinct neighbourhoods: built-up Eastleigh in the north and east, where most of the housing stock is high-rise buildings, and southern Eastleigh, where single storey dwellings, including shacks, predominate. There is an industrial area in between. Somali refugees live in both areas, but in greater concentrations in built-up Eastleigh. Survey results and interviews in this report focus on built-up Eastleigh.

Dubbed 'Little Mogadishu', Eastleigh is identified as a 'refugee economy' or a 'city of malls' (Carrier 2017). An Asian residential area in the early days, mostly populated by people of Indian origin, Eastleigh has become a centre for the Somali diaspora, returnees and refugees. Trade, employment and labour opportunities are at the centre of Eastleigh's economy. Asylum seekers and refugees own and operate micro, small and medium-sized businesses, find daily casual labour opportunities or are employed by various retail outlets. They have established Community Based Organisations (CBOs) to provide social assistance and navigate the documentation process and work opportunities. Some of the CBOs among the Somalis include the Somali Urban Elders Committee, Iftin and Horseed Women's Groups. The Solidarity self-help group is the largest and most prominent organisation for refugees from the Great Lakes region, and the organisation, OdaaNebee, dominates among the Ethiopian Oromos (ibid).

4

Refugee wellbeing

The approach taken to understanding and measuring wellbeing in the PDUW project seeks to serve as an alternative to standard vulnerability analyses most often used to profile refugee populations. These are often narrowly focused on basic needs – nutrition, access to shelter, WASH (water, sanitation and hygiene) and health – and do not give a full picture of life in protracted displacement. Building on a framework developed by the University of Bath Wellbeing in Development research project in the 2000s (White 2009, 2010, 2016), the PDUW study has generated a holistic refugee wellbeing framework, based on five dimensions: bodily, economic, political, social and psychosocial wellbeing. This framework has been used to code qualitative interviews, and it has also informed the creation of a refugee wellbeing metric, composed of indicators from the PDUW survey that correspond to the five dimensions of wellbeing.¹⁰

This section begins by presenting wellbeing metric scores for displaced respondents surveyed in Dadaab and built-up Eastleigh, and hosts in built-up Eastleigh, considering these scores alongside data from qualitative interviews with refugees in both locations. It then examines the theme of refugee mobility in more depth. This is a cross-cutting issue that impacts almost every aspect of wellbeing for both camp-based and urban refugees and is key to current policy debates around the integrated settlement approach in Kenya.

The PDUW team initiated this work expecting to find higher levels of wellbeing in the urban areas compared to the camps. This is borne out by the analysis of quantitative data presented below – across the five dimensions, the median wellbeing score for urban refugees is higher than that of their camp counterparts. However, the scale of the camp-urban divergence varies considerably between the wellbeing dimensions, and qualitative data provides plausible explanations for these variances. Scores are closest in the psychosocial and political dimensions of wellbeing, and most markedly different in the economic wellbeing dimension. Scores for urban hosts in Eastleigh across the dimensions are also presented alongside the urban and camp-based refugee scores. Hosts consistently score higher than both urban and camp-based refugees across all wellbeing dimensions but are much closer to urban refugees living in the same areas than to those based in the camp. The only dimension where the scores of urban refugees were closer to camp-based refugees than to hosts was the political wellbeing dimension. This is an expected outcome since many of the indicators are related to refugee documentation and legal rights that do not impact Kenyan citizens.

¹⁰ For an in-depth exploration of the literature on wellbeing and its application (or lack thereof) in displacement contexts see Earle, Dajani, Barratt and McAteer (forthcoming). See Barratt and Earle's (2023) IIED working paper for a detailed explanation of the construction of the refugee wellbeing metric.

Table 2. Indicators and dimensions used in the wellbeing metric

BODILY WELLBEING	ECONOMIC WELLBEING	POLITICAL WELLBEING	SOCIAL WELLBEING	PSYCHOSOCIAL WELLBEING
Respondent health	Financial situation of the household	Perceived ability to work legally	Access to a place of worship	Life satisfaction
Quality of healthcare in the area	Income stability	Perceived ability to start a business legally	Access to community and sports facilities	Optimism (life in one year)
Access to healthcare in the area	Household ability to cover expenses	Perceived freedom of movement	Ability to attend social gatherings	Feeling purposeful
Access to a pharmacy and health centre	Earners ratio	Refugee status	Ability to meet friends and family	Feeling independent
Food security – reduced Coping Strategy Index (rCSI)	Household savings	Legal documentation for residence	Ability to partake in group activities	Feeling that own time is spent constructively
Access to safe drinking water	Absence of concerning debt	Access to information on rights	Getting along with the displaced/ non-displaced community	Expected future living standards of children
Access to sanitation	Ability to borrow	Perceived degree of representation	Perceived advantages of living in the area, such as social networks	Mental wellbeing (Warwick-Edinburgh 7-Item Mental Wellbeing Scale)
Quality of housing	Wealth by proxy of household asset index	Perceived ability to make a difference in the community		Feeling respected in the community
Perceived safety of the area	Access to finance	Quality of courts and perceived availability of justice		Feeling at home
	School attendance of children	Perceived treatment by police		
		Perceived availability of support if in danger		
		Access to education		

4.1 Bodily wellbeing

The dimension of bodily wellbeing is based on indicators relating to physical health and security. It covers access to a range of basic services including water, sanitation, healthcare and pharmacies, alongside a number of subjective assessments, including respondents' own rating of their general health, their housing situation, quality of healthcare in the area and perceptions of safety. A measure of food security scale was also included in the dimension – the reduced Coping Strategy Index (rCSI). Comparing the overall outcomes of bodily wellbeing indicators in Dadaab and built-up

Eastleigh, we find that displaced households living in Eastleigh exhibit higher bodily wellbeing on average compared to those living in the camp.

The graph below shows the distribution¹¹ of bodily wellbeing scores (between 0 and 1) for displaced people in Dadaab (red), displaced people in Eastleigh (green), and hosts living in the same urban area (blue). While this report focuses on the difference between Dadaab and Eastleigh for displaced respondents, it is worth noting that the difference in bodily wellbeing is much smaller between hosts and urban refugees than between urban and camp-based refugees.

Figure 4. Distribution of bodily wellbeing scores by location and migration status



One of the factors that contributes to differences in bodily wellbeing scores across groups is food security, which is considerably worse in Dadaab than in Eastleigh. On average, survey respondents living in Dadaab experience higher levels of food insecurity compared to those living in the urban areas. As many as 79% of respondents in Dadaab experience a stressful, critical or urgent (emergency) level of food insecurity, compared to 41% in Eastleigh. Additionally, 60% of respondents in Dadaab stated that they did not have enough food in the preceding week, compared to 41%

of women and 25% of men in Eastleigh. Irrespective of the location, female-headed households within the survey were likely to experience a higher risk of food insecurity compared to male-headed households living in the same locations. This gendered difference is also reflected in our qualitative interviews, where many women who were widowed, divorced or separated from their husbands describe serious difficulties with providing for their families and feeding their children (see economic wellbeing section for more details).

11 In the graph, the X-axis represents the bodily wellbeing score, where 0 stands for the lowest possible and 1 for the highest possible score. The Y-axis represents density, or distribution, of respondents' scores. The vertical lines indicate median scores for each group being compared.

Shelter and WASH are two additional areas where the Dadaab respondents are at a major disadvantage to city dwellers. Dadaab has the highest proportion of households without shelter (3.7%) and around 30% of respondents live in makeshift shelters. In Nairobi the majority of displaced people surveyed (98%) live in houses or apartments. Qualitative interviews show that it is a known problem that people live without shelter in the camp while awaiting registration, which can take many months. Our survey also shows challenging conditions within the camp regarding water, sanitation and hygiene. Water access (including distance to and functionality of pumps) was brought up as a concern by some camp residents in qualitative interviews, while hygiene was generally not mentioned.

When survey respondents were asked to assess their general health, there were no major differences between the camp and the city, but female respondents declared that their health situation was worse than that of males. In the qualitative interviews maternal healthcare services came up as a key concern for women, which could help explain this difference. The state of maternal health is particularly concerning in Dadaab. Several women in Dadaab gave detailed accounts of ill-treatment causing long-lasting health issues after childbirth. Even women in Dadaab who did not have stories of their own referred to the experiences of women they knew, communicating fear about giving birth at the camp hospitals.

“If the doctors at the hospital are replaced and new doctors brought in, because the hospital needs changes, then maybe we would not lose so many mothers. Women fear going to the hospital and having their babies there, either by normal delivery or caesarean section.”

Refugee woman (aged 29), Dadaab

In the survey, there were no major differences between Dadaab and Eastleigh on the accessibility and quality of healthcare. Individuals surveyed in the urban areas did however have higher levels of satisfaction with regards to the accessibility of pharmacies compared to those living in Dadaab, although there are issues of affordability of prescriptions in Nairobi. According to PDUW key informant interviews with healthcare providers in Nairobi, resources for health clinics are distributed based on census data which does not include foreigners. Therefore, the availability of drugs will always be scarce in neighbourhoods where many refugees live.

In theory, all refugees in Kenya should have access to public healthcare through the National Health Insurance Fund (NHIF), which has a fee of 500 Kenyan shillings

(around 3.50 US\$) per month (UNHCR 2022), but in practice many refugees are unaware of this provision. They can also access private healthcare by paying more, or healthcare provided by non-profit organisations which is usually free of charge (De-Falco 2022). In the Dadaab complex, non-profit health centres and hospitals have been built, and free healthcare is offered to refugees. In Nairobi, some non-profit care is available through NGOs and community organisations, but many make use of the public healthcare system. As a consequence, most urban refugees have to pay the monthly NHIF fee. Since 2022 UNHCR has had a Memorandum of Understanding with NHIF, and pays the fees for the most vulnerable refugee households – about 16% of all refugees (UNHCR 2022).

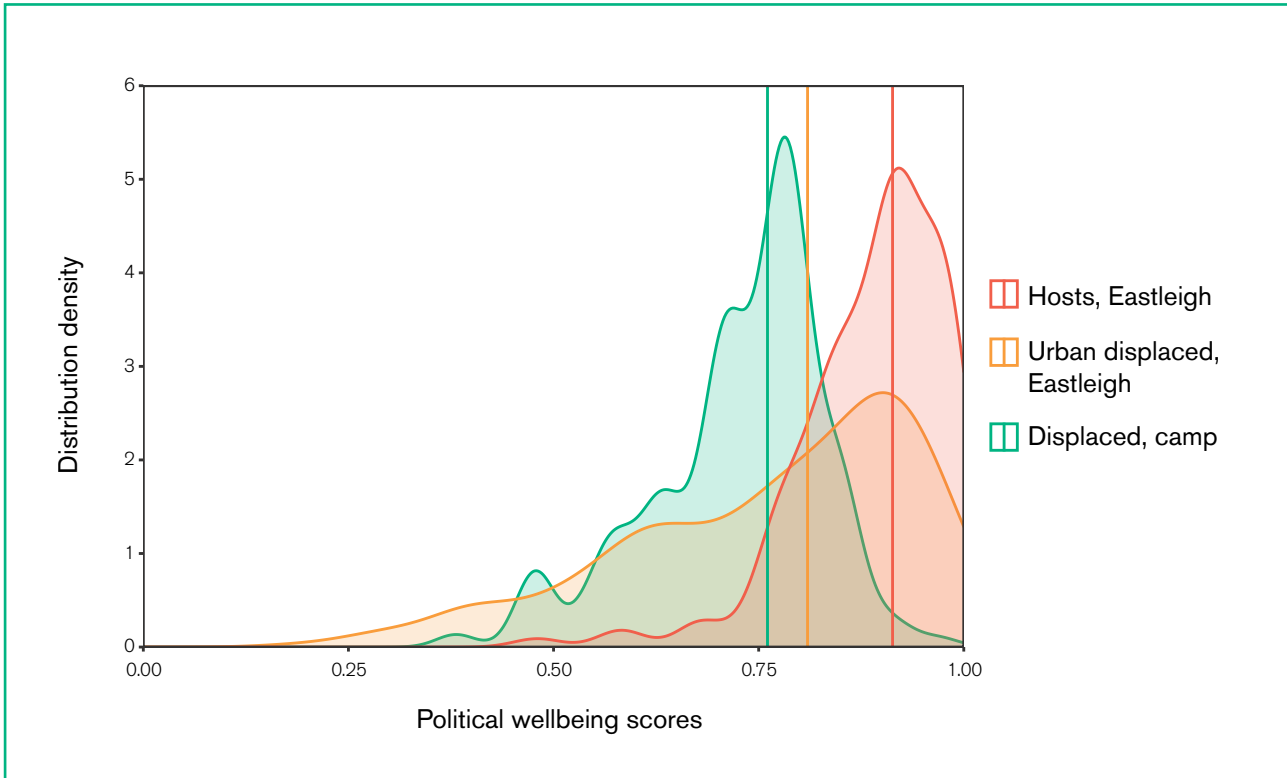
Although reported satisfaction with healthcare access and quality were similar between Dadaab and Eastleigh within the survey, healthcare facilities in Dadaab were reportedly not well equipped according to qualitative interviews. Official permission is required to leave for a hospital in, for example, Garissa or Nairobi and this involves considerable bureaucracy. For some interviewed refugees with ongoing health issues, the potential delay in receiving care creates a sense of insecurity. Interviewees living in Eastleigh were more likely to bring up concerns around the NHIF fee. However, since these concerns were not reflected in the larger survey, they could be specific to our sample of qualitative interviewees.

4.2 Political wellbeing

Refugees do not have the right to vote and are not officially represented by members of parliament. However, refugees are still affected by public affairs within the host country, particularly concerning their own rights as displaced people, and their representation within local communities. To reflect this, the political wellbeing dimension is based on indicators relating to rights to movement, education and work, documentation and legal status, access to justice and information on rights, relationships with institutions and people in authority, and perceived degree of representation.

The analysis of scores shows a larger clustering of higher political wellbeing scores in Eastleigh, suggesting that displaced respondents there are better off politically than their counterparts in Dadaab. Unsurprisingly, hosts score significantly higher on political wellbeing than both Dadaab- and Eastleigh-based refugees in this dimension, since all citizens will automatically have many of the rights that refugees lack. There are however variations within the host population too, for example around awareness of rights or community representation.

Figure 5. Distribution of political wellbeing scores by location and migration status



Variations in political wellbeing scores between displaced people in Dadaab and Eastleigh can be explained by differences in individual indicators. Our survey data indicates that 78% of respondents in Dadaab camp do not believe they can work legally in the country. Conversely, only 33% of displaced Somalis sampled in Eastleigh have reported that they were unable to work legally in Kenya. The data is similar for perceived ability to open a business. Around 42% of camp respondents declared being unable to legally start a business in Kenya. In the case of Nairobi's displaced, only 16% of respondents state that they were not able to start a business legally. Since this is about the perception of rights rather than de facto legal rights, it could potentially be explained by more exposure to refugee-owned businesses in the city.

Our qualitative interviews point towards difficulties with documentation. Not all refugees interviewed in Eastleigh had managed to register as urban refugees, or to transfer their registration from the camp, which could cause problems. For example, several interviewees in the city explained that they had been told to “go back” to the camps in order to access certain services – even for those who were never registered in a camp, or had never lived there.

In terms of representation, discontent among displaced survey respondents tends to be slightly higher in Eastleigh. In Dadaab, only 6% of respondents feel ‘not at all’ or ‘hardly’ represented, compared to 16% of displaced Somalis in Eastleigh. In the qualitative sample, however, most refugees said they did not feel

well-represented. Even those who could name a local representative who would listen to their concerns where they lived, most interviewees felt these representatives lack the power to change things. In Eastleigh, there was also gendered differences in the qualitative findings, as most refugee women interviewed in the city could not name a leader they felt represented them, while most men in the city named the MP in the local Kamukunji constituency. In Dadaab, interviewees refer to community leaders or ‘block’ leaders who represent a specific section of the camp.

One political wellbeing issue that came out very strongly in the interviews, but did not stand out in the survey, is police treatment of refugees in Nairobi. While there are no official restrictions on mobility within the city, all refugees we interviewed referred to a higher risk of arrests in areas of the city where fewer Somalis live and work – which in practice restricts their movement. From the qualitative sample, it appears to be common knowledge among refugees that arrests happen more frequently at night, and many described strategies to avoid arrest that include restricting movement to daylight hours and within Eastleigh. Refugee community members in Eastleigh, interviewed as key informants in 2022, pointed out that the new location of UNHCR's office in Nairobi is outside the area they consider safe, which makes it difficult for them to access.

The problem of arrests seems widespread. In the qualitative interviews every single interviewee made reference to personal experience, and those of their friends and family. They describe how police stop

people with physical traits associated with Somali ethnicity, and request identification. Once their documentation (or lack thereof) confirms that they are a refugee, they are arrested and required to pay a bribe to be released. Somali refugees depend on their networks for bail support and money, which prevents some interviewees from considering living in other cities in Kenya even if they might otherwise have the ability and desire to move. In the words of one male interviewee, “if I am arrested here in Nairobi, I can call my uncle who can run to me and get me out. But in those cities, I would be alone, and no one would support me.”

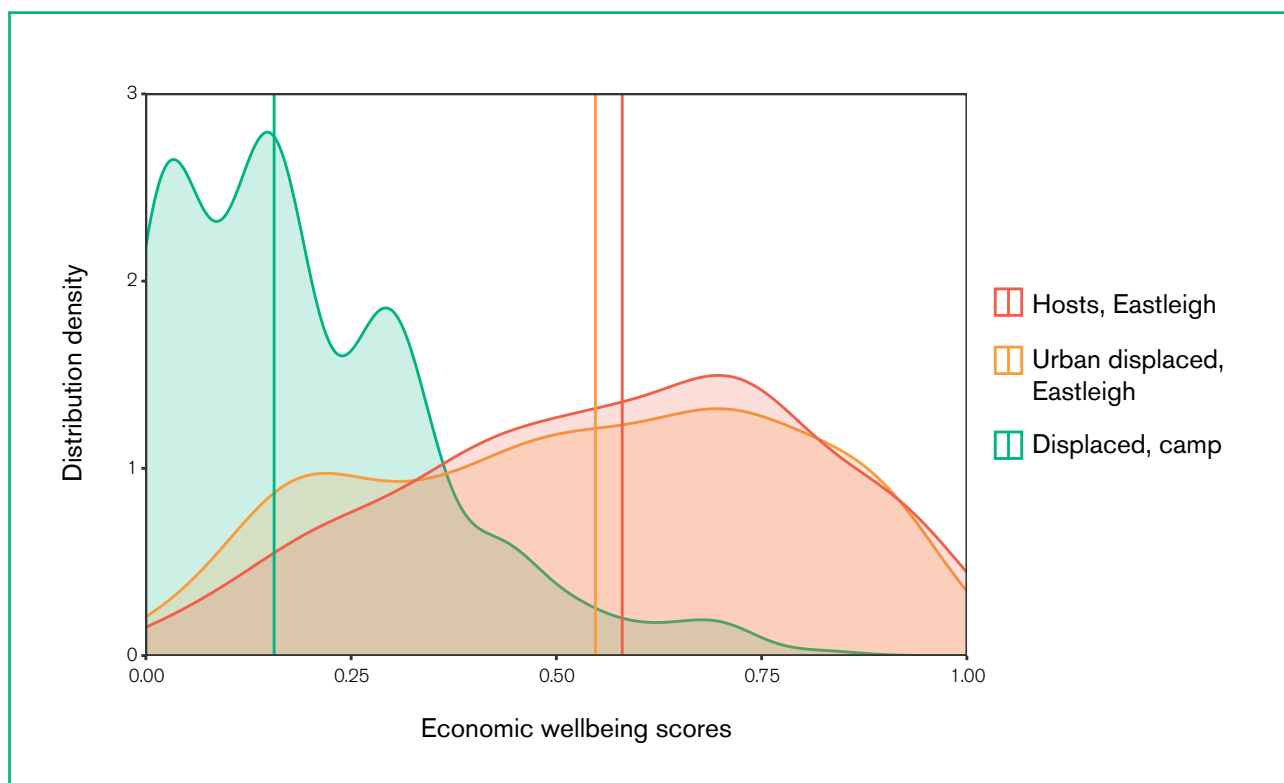
Despite the scale of this problem most of our urban refugee respondents think the city is a better option than the camps. Only five (out of 315) survey respondents (all women) living in Eastleigh state that they plan to move to a camp (Dadaab or Kakuma). From the qualitative sample, interviewees refer to opportunities in the city

that they do not have in the camp, which make them stay despite the difficulties.

4.3 Economic wellbeing

In addition to the livelihoods component of this study, the wellbeing metric includes an economic dimension, which is defined as being in a comfortable financial situation. This includes a stable and predictable income, the ability to cover one's expenses from work, savings, the capacity to borrow when needed, absence of concerning debt and access to finance. It also includes the earner ratio (number of household earners/ number of household members) and approximate wealth using a household asset index.¹² We observed substantially higher overall scores in Eastleigh compared to Dadaab. The host population in Eastleigh also displays better median scores than the displaced urban population.

Figure 6. Distribution of economic wellbeing scores by location and migration status



¹² Asset index includes assets such as cars, motorcycles, bikes, TVs, radios, fans, mobile phones, fridges, computers and internet connections. As ownership of these items is typically highly correlated, we used the variance-maximising Principal Component Analysis (PCA) method to assign a score to each respondent.

Unsurprisingly, given the remote location of Dadaab, restrictions on movement and limited employment opportunities within the camp, economic wellbeing is considerably higher in Eastleigh than there. Based on the financial situation of surveyed individuals, those residing in Eastleigh exhibit more favourable financial conditions than those residing in Dadaab. On average, 34% of the displaced respondents in Eastleigh reported having a 'comfortable' or 'very comfortable' financial situation compared to only 5% in the camp – despite living costs in Dadaab being subsidised. In terms of economic stability, the surveyed Somalis living in Eastleigh also appear to have greater ability to cover their household expenses through work income (47%) than respondents living in the camp (11%).

Living in camps also has a detrimental impact on refugees' ability to save money due to unstable sources of income from work. This, in turn, limits their ability to borrow money from personal networks (family and friends) or financial institutions (if available in the area). Almost all the refugees surveyed in Dadaab (99%) declared not holding any savings compared to 41% of refugee respondents in Eastleigh. And 84% of Dadaab respondents were unable to borrow money, compared with 28% of those in Eastleigh.

As a proxy for wealth among respondents we have created a household asset index. As ownership of these items is typically highly correlated, we used the variance-maximising Principal Component Analysis (PCA) method to assign a score to each respondent. Upon comparing the score distribution, we discovered that individuals surveyed in the Dadaab camp had significantly lower asset wealth scores than displaced Somalis sampled in Eastleigh.

Gendered differences in economic wellbeing are significant across both locations. Refugee men had higher economic wellbeing scores than refugee women in both Nairobi and Dadaab, although the difference was more marked in the city. One possible reason for this, that came up in the qualitative sample, could be the precarious situation of women who are widowed, divorced or otherwise separated from their husbands and live alone with their children in the city.

The vulnerability of female-headed households in Nairobi, which make up 35% of the randomly sampled female survey respondents, emerged in many of the

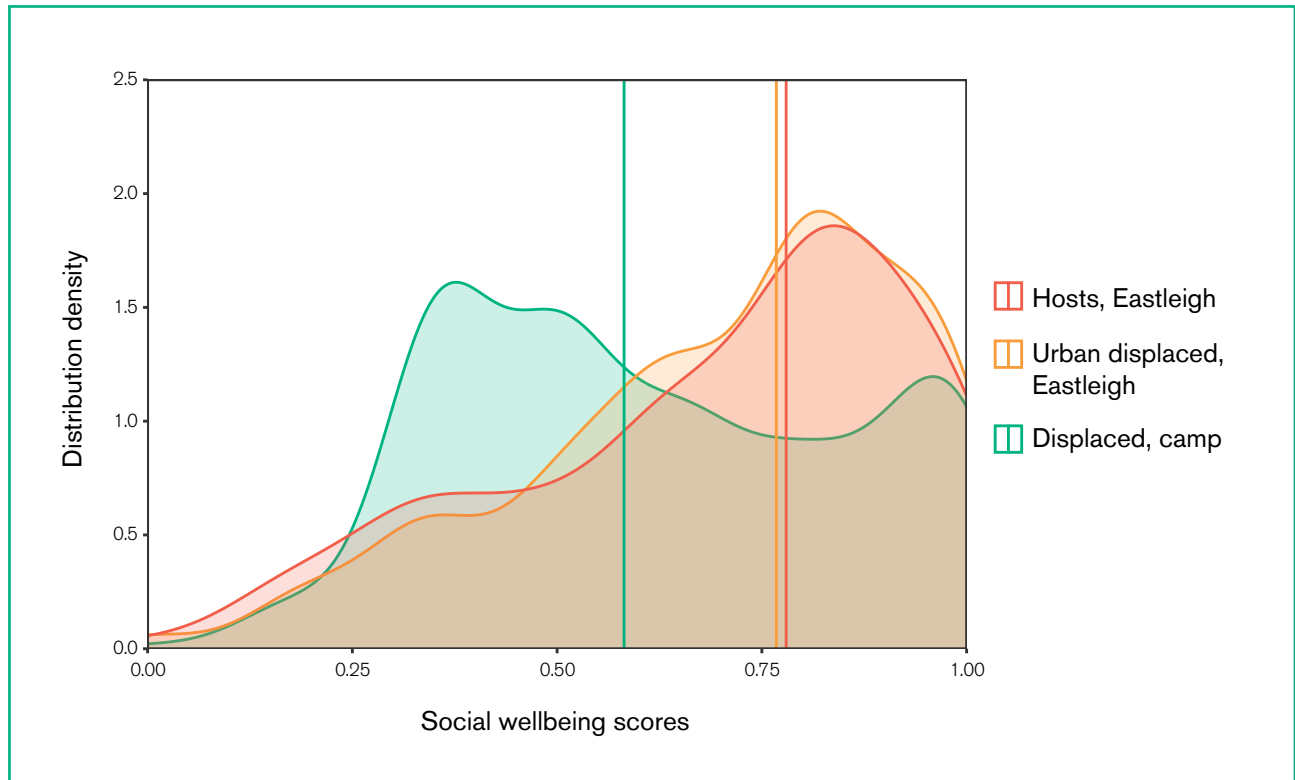
qualitative interviews. Single mothers often described difficulties with earning enough money to provide as the only adult in the household being, as many of them put it, "both mother and father" to their children. However, some women spoke of their choice to go to the city specifically because they were single mothers. In the absence of family support networks in the camp, they saw better opportunities to earn money in the city as the only option for their family's survival.

While there are significant differences between camp and urban refugees in levels of economic wellbeing, our qualitative interviews reveal that concerns around earning money are at the forefront of every interviewee's mind, whether in Dadaab or Eastleigh. Being able to earn enough money to improve the quantity and quality of food is a key concern for many of the respondents in our qualitative sample. However, having a cash income in the city is particularly important, as refugees must pay rent. Perhaps not surprisingly, refugees drew connections between their economic wellbeing and the bodily wellbeing of themselves and their families. This is also supported by a positive and statistically significant relationship between economic wellbeing and bodily wellbeing scores in the quantitative sample. But in the city, qualitative interviews also described how frequent arrests (discussed above under Political wellbeing) and accompanying fines or bribes add to overall economic stress. Refugees working informally, particularly those working on the streets must factor in the likelihood of arrests which can result in loss of earnings and seizure of goods.

4.4 Social wellbeing

The social wellbeing dimension incorporates indicators relating to social interactions – the ability to spend time with friends and family and to partake in group activities, alongside access to a place of worship, community centre and/or sports facilities. It also includes perceptions of whether the displaced and non-displaced get along well in the community and the presence of social networks. The median score on social wellbeing is lowest for displaced individuals surveyed in the Dadaab camp and higher for refugee residents sampled in Eastleigh. The difference between hosts and urban refugees is less significant.

Figure 7. Distribution of social wellbeing scores by location and migration status



In our survey, men score consistently higher than women in the social wellbeing dimension in Dadaab. There appears to be no clear correlation between age and social wellbeing in the camp, whereas in Eastleigh older refugee men have higher social wellbeing scores. Conversely, older women in Eastleigh do not typically exhibit higher social wellbeing scores than their younger counterparts.

The survey also reveals a gendered difference within the degree of satisfaction with one's ability to socialise outside the home, which is greatest in Eastleigh (especially for men) and lowest in Dadaab. On average women report less access to leisure facilities, compared to the men living in the same locations. This suggests that social facilities are used mainly by men. Another contributing factor to poor social wellbeing revealed by the qualitative interviews is time poverty: refugees interviewed state that they do not have the time to engage in leisure activities because they are constantly working or worrying about earning money. This is particularly true for single mothers, both in Eastleigh and Dadaab, who often say they do not have time for any social or leisure activities.

However, despite lower satisfaction rates around both access to facilities and socialising opportunities among survey respondents, most women in our qualitative interviews in both Dadaab and Eastleigh, say that they feel a part of the community where they live and that they have informal groups of neighbours and friends that they turn to for support. This includes monetary support, for example

collecting small sums of money to help pay for a hospital bill, but also social support. Women meet in groups to talk about their issues and help each other with childcare. Many qualitative interviewees referred to the social clan structure in Somalia, which is maintained among displaced communities in both Dadaab and Eastleigh.

The religious community is another important social space for both men and women, and many refer to praying and attending the mosque as important activities and practices that give them joy. Another common response is that spending time with family is the most important priority during leisure time. Most (though not all) have strong family networks where they live, whether in the camp or in the city, and would not consider changing locations because of them. Interestingly, some refugees residing in Dadaab say that they believe life would be better in Nairobi but they prefer not to leave their community in the camp.

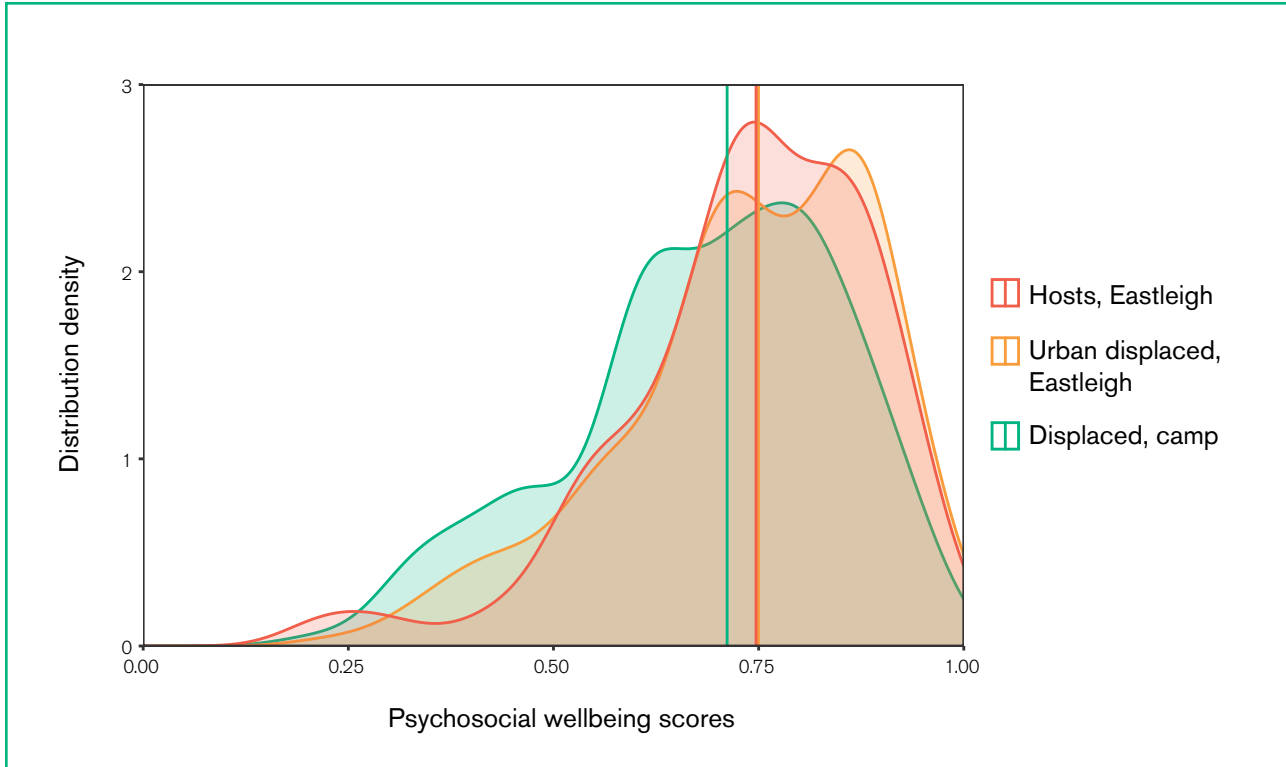
There are additional gendered differences in the social wellbeing dimension that are evident from the qualitative interviews. For example, single mothers are often negatively affected by unequal power dynamics between themselves and their ex-husband's family, and fear for their own and their children's safety. In the interviews there were several examples of children being taken from single mothers and kept away from them, at times sent to Somalia, leaving the mother no legal route to have them returned to Kenya. There are also instances of domestic abuse and physical violence impacting women's choices around where to live.

4.5 Psychosocial wellbeing

Psychosocial wellbeing is defined here as a composite of life satisfaction, feeling at home, optimism for the future for the respondent and the next generation of their community, feelings of independence and agency, and being treated with respect. It also includes the Warwick-

Edinburgh (7-item) Mental Wellbeing Scale, where respondents are rated from high or average mental wellbeing down to possible or probable depression (Ng Fat et al. 2016). Overall, the distribution of scores is similar between Dadaab and Eastleigh, with a slight advantage in Eastleigh.

Figure 8. Distribution of psychosocial wellbeing scores by location and migration status



Our qualitative interviews do however point towards interesting differences between Dadaab and Eastleigh in the reasons why people have poor psychosocial wellbeing. Simply put, in Dadaab refugees feel trapped and in Eastleigh they feel unsupported. Many people living in Dadaab described it as a prison, underscoring that they are not able to leave at will. Interviews with key informants gave more information about how refugees can leave the camp. In order to relocate officially, refugees must have a legitimate reason to move to the city – this could be a family connection, or a medical need. But they must also explain how they will be able to provide for themselves, independently or through family connections. This was described as ‘proving self-reliance’. This requirement might contribute to the feeling of being stuck in the camp, not just because they cannot prove ‘self-reliance’ in advance, but also because of the significant barriers to achieving a decent standard of living.

In Dadaab psychosocial wellbeing scores reduce with age for both men and women. Conversely, for those living in Eastleigh psychosocial wellbeing scores are higher for older respondents if they are men, but not if they are women. Camp-based survey respondents do

better with regards to the perceived level of respect enjoyed by their neighbours: 86% of individuals living in Dadaab feel respected by their neighbours, compared to 71% of displaced respondents living in Eastleigh. However, when it comes to optimism about the future, we find the residents of Eastleigh to be more positive, and the camp-dwellers by far the most likely to assume things will remain the same and not change.

As noted above in the discussion on social wellbeing, in qualitative interviews, most refugees reported feeling a part of their community. However, this does not necessarily translate into feelings of being at home. Many interviewees think of Somalia as home and would like to return if there was an opportunity. Men in Eastleigh in particular refer to their lack of rights as something that infringes on their happiness and sense of worth. When asked what would bring them joy in life, many of them speak of increased recognition for refugees, and extended rights. They express a desire to be allowed to live in the city like everybody else, without harassment and arrests. These issues could account for some of the lower scores recorded in the city in relation to life satisfaction and feeling respected by neighbours.

4.6 Wellbeing conclusions

The wellbeing metrics and our quantitative survey findings demonstrate that the biggest differences between Dadaab and Eastleigh are in the bodily, economic, and social wellbeing dimensions, where refugees based in urban areas are at an overwhelming advantage to those based in the camp. The political and psychosocial dimensions also put urban refugees at an advantage, but the differences are much smaller.

The qualitative data supports the bigger differences in the bodily, economic and social dimensions, highlighting the characteristics of camp life that limit the enjoyment of wellbeing: insufficient food, limited healthcare access, few employment opportunities, and a lack of communal spaces and recreational activities. However, it is also important to note that the city had a much wider spread of economic wellbeing scores than the camp. While average scores were higher in Eastleigh, there are still many refugees in the city who are really struggling to get by. This was also reflected in our interviews, particularly among single mothers.

With regards to political wellbeing, it is to be expected that rights and documentation do not vary significantly between locations, since the majority of the sample population in both locations are registered with UNHCR and have similar documentation and rights in Kenya. However, there are certain elements of political wellbeing that are experienced quite differently between the two locations, giving an insight into the way in which both the camp and the urban environment can limit wellbeing. For example, one might expect urban refugees to have greater freedom of movement than camp-based refugees, but the qualitative data shows that while refugees based in Eastleigh are not prevented by law from moving around the city, they still experience limited mobility due to the high risk of arrests and police harassment. Political representation is managed very differently in the two locations, but interview data points towards similar experiences among camp and urban refugees, who do not see their representatives as having real power to deal with the issues they raise.

Finally, interrogation of qualitative data relating to the psychosocial wellbeing dimension, also reveals different reasons behind the similar scores in the two locations. Long-term camp residents described Dadaab as a prison and a place where it is difficult to feel at home in the present or be hopeful about the future. In Eastleigh, on the other hand, many interviewees described feeling like secondary citizens without rights.

4.7 Camps as prisons: “I am not free; I am a refugee.”

A key theme emerging from the qualitative analysis of semi-structured interview data is restricted mobility. Our interviews demonstrate that the lack of free movement is an issue that affects all Somali refugees in Kenya, whether they are based in the camp or the city, and it impacts all aspects of their wellbeing.

Dadaab has, alongside other long-term refugee camps, often been described by reporters and residents as an open prison.¹³ As academic scholars have discussed, this is not an imprisonment caused purely by physical fences or barriers to the outside world, but also a reflection of the power structures that keep refugees from moving (Brankamp 2021a, Landau 2019). The provision of aid, disguised as a humanitarian regime of care, is conditional on refugees staying put, since leaving a refugee camp in most countries equates to leaving all support behind (Harrell-Bond 1986, Hovil 2007). In Kenya, this conditioning is further institutionalised by movement passes, through which authorities have the power to approve – and, one must assume, also reject as they see fit – refugees’ wishes to exit the camp, even temporarily (NRC and IHRC 2018). The result, termed by Brankamp (2021a) as “carceral humanitarianism” is indeed very similar to imprisonment, except that unlike criminal prisoners, most of the world’s encamped refugees do not have an end date to their confinement (Crisp 2003).

Among our qualitative interviewees in Dadaab, the sense of imprisonment appears internalised. Many refugees we interviewed did not consider moving outside the camp to be a possibility. When asked if they were free to move around, some of our qualitative interviewees responded ‘yes’ and then explained that they were free to move around as they wish **within** the camp, at least during the day when security is not a concern. To these refugees, the idea of being free to move – or live – **outside** the camp seemingly did not occur to them. The mobility they do enjoy within the camp allows them some level of freedom to create a life within these boundaries, as documented in ethnographies of camp life (Jansen 2018, Agier 2011). But it has clear limitations since it occurs within the camp itself.

The movement passes required to leave the camp are timebound, and it is a criminal offence¹⁴ to not return to the camp before the pass expires. In order to permanently relocate to the city, refugees must be considered ‘self-sufficient’ (Ramos and Njoka 2021), which means they must be able to sustain themselves without recourse to humanitarian assistance. According to key informants and interviewees, self-sufficiency is

13 See for example: Voa News (2023) Young Refugees from Somalia Caught Between ‘Open Prison’ and Unstable Homeland; CNN (2016) Sanctuary without end: The refugees the world forgot.

14 See DRS FAQ: https://refugee.go.ke/?page_id=341

most often ‘proven’ by demonstrating family connections in the city, but official sources and documentation of this process – and who is in charge of making decisions within it – are scarce. It is however clear from qualitative interviews that refugees in the camp are aware that the process of relocating to the city can be very difficult, and that returning to the camp to renew documentation can also be prohibitively expensive. This acts as a deterrent. As one interviewee explained:

“...even if today they gave me permission to go out to another place I would not go because my heart believes I cannot survive out there.”

Refugee woman (aged 35), Dadaab

Another interviewee said she would like to move to the city but feels she does not have the ability. To her, this is not only a matter of resources, but also about the amount of effort she knows it would take to start a new life outside of the camp. Here, social connections are an important resource for those who would like to move.

“I don’t have the freedom of movement. I also don’t have the resources, the morale, and the energy to move and start a life outside this camp.”

Refugee woman (aged 29), Dadaab

Among our survey respondents in Dadaab, 46% believe that it would be easier for them and other displaced people to live a good life in the city rather than in the camp, compared to 43% who thought the reverse. However, only 4% said they have plans to move to the city in the next 12 months. While around half of the respondents believe that life would be better outside the camp, qualitative data illustrates that they do not feel they have the resources, social connections or even the energy to bypass the obstacles in their way. Simultaneously, it is increasingly harder to get by within the camp.

“Now that services we used to get are limited, we would need aid organisations to create for us income generating opportunities that will help us to meet our needs.”

Male traditional leader in the refugee community (aged 85), Dadaab

While this quote could be interpreted as a typical example of refugee aid dependence (Crisp 2003), it is a damning indictment of the impossibility, for so many, of even meeting their most basic needs in the camp. Rations are no longer sufficient to live on, but opportunities to earn money from work to buy additional food and necessities are extremely limited. The man quoted above requests aid organisations to resolve this. Since

refugees cannot move outside of the camp, he suggests bringing opportunities into the camp instead. However, as discussed in the livelihoods section below, those who do work and run businesses inside the camp also face many barriers. They have to rely on middlemen suppliers who drive prices far above market value, which is particularly difficult for people in the camps who have such limited cash income. Any livelihoods initiative brought into the camp will inevitably be restricted by the lack of mobility of those within it, as well as its remote location.

It is well established that encampment has negative impacts on the physical and psychological health of refugees, particularly in the long term (Crisp 2003, Slaughter and Crisp 2009). But camps are also emotional spaces, holding “spatial expressions of compassion, fear, care, suspicion, or antipathy towards encamped people, while also incubating hope, solidarity, and belonging among them” (Brankamp 2021b:383). Our work contributes both to understanding negative physical impacts and the consequences of confinement for individuals, through qualitative testimonials that highlight how these feelings are “stretching temporally both into the past and into an anticipated future” (ibid: 384).

While limited by scarce resources and infrastructure, social structures and support have emerged in the camp. Refugees are in close proximity to other refugees who share the same language, culture and experience, which many interviewees described as a positive and supportive community. However, qualitative data also shows that not all ethnic groups in Dadaab benefit from this, and the isolation and closed nature of the camp can increase social marginalisation for some vulnerable refugees. One woman from a minority group in Somalia described in an interview how she and her family were mistreated by their neighbours in the camp because of their ethnicity. She feared for her children’s future there and wished she had somewhere else to go. Another woman had been ostracised by the camp community because she was accused of having a child out of wedlock, after the man she married declared their wedding ceremony invalid and left her. In the circumscribed environment of the camp, refugees can become highly dependent on each other for survival. However, not being able to avail oneself of this support because of ethnicity or personal circumstances, while also not being able to leave, can have serious impacts on wellbeing.

“The only difference between where we ran from and here is the peace, but otherwise, we are trapped in the camp. It’s suffocating, it’s like living in a bottle enclosed from all ends and recycling the same oxygen. That’s not a good life to live, is it?”

Refugee woman (aged 45) who has lived in Dadaab for 30 years

For those who do make it to the city, mobility is still limited because of the risk of frequent arrests for Somali refugees in Nairobi, as described above. Regardless of having the correct documentation, men and women describe being arrested simply because they are refugees, and only released once they pay a bribe to the police. This adds to the impossible choice facing refugees in Kenya: the camp, which despite its limitations is, for most, a safer environment; or the city, which offers better opportunities and, in some ways, more freedom, but also greater risks. Among interviewees in Eastleigh, their lack of freedom contributes to a sense of injustice, particularly for those who have lived most or all of their lives in Kenya.

“I was born in Kenya in a refugee camp, but I cannot go anywhere that I desire today. I was born, raised, schooled, working and in future I might get married here. What kind of life would I be living, when I cannot go out at night to take my sick child to the hospital for fear of being arrested because my alien card is expired. Why do we always need to prove everything?”

Refugee woman (aged 27), Eastleigh

In conclusion, restricted mobility has a huge impact on the wellbeing of Somali refugees, whether they are in the camp or in the city. For those who have managed to leave the camp, or bypass it, the threat of being returned or relocated there remains, and creates a shared feeling between the camp and the urban, that all refugees lack freedom in Kenya. In this way, the camp ‘haunts the city’ (Darling 2016). The recent policy change promoting integrated settlements (like the one in Kalobeyei) rather than camps, has the potential to make a difference to refugee wellbeing in Kenya — but as this discussion has shown — only if restrictions on mobility are lifted.

5

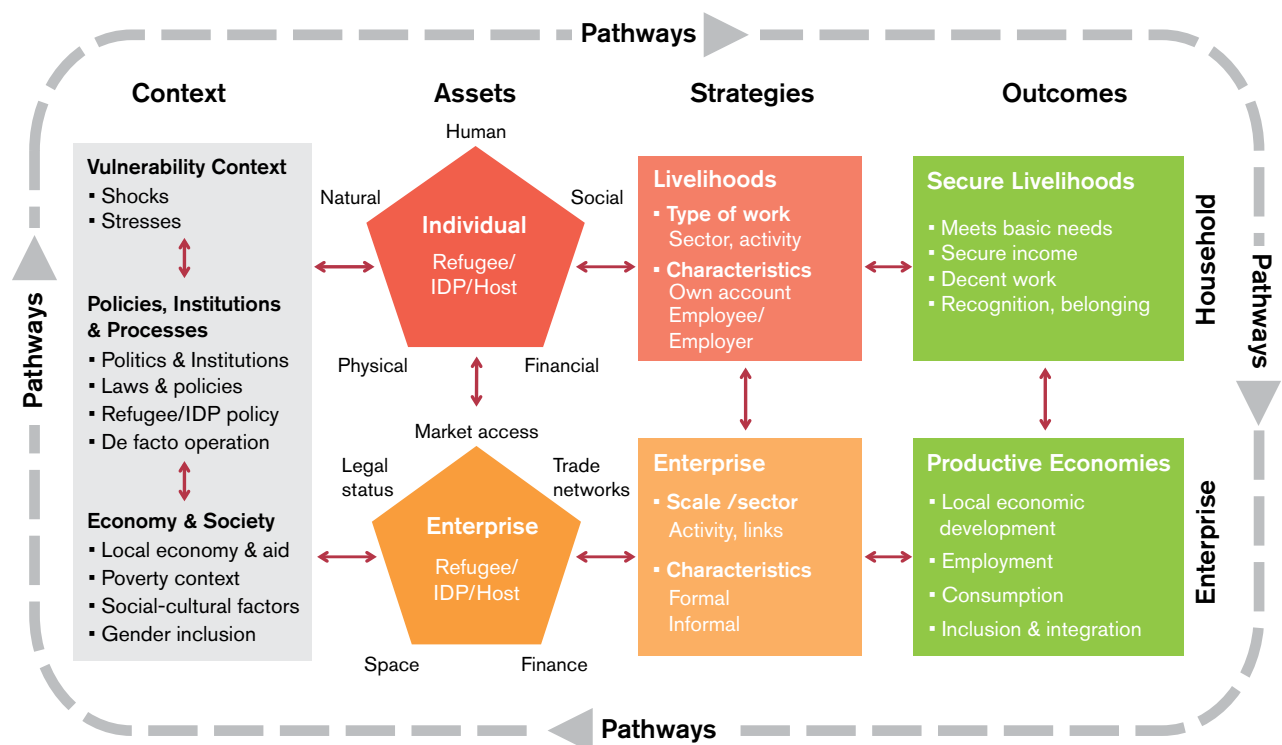
Displacement economies, livelihoods and enterprise

Alongside a new, holistic approach to refugee wellbeing, the PDUW project has also devised a new framework for considering the economic activities of refugees. By introducing the concept of 'displacement economies', the project brings together displaced people's livelihoods and entrepreneurial activity, as well as their contributions to society. In this project, displacement economies are understood as the collective economy created by refugees and Internally Displaced People (IDPs) through their livelihood activities, enterprise, need for services and consumption, and their mutual support and diaspora inputs. The Displacement Economies

Framework (DEF) has been developed as an expansion of the Sustainable Livelihoods Framework (DFID 1999). It looks beyond the usual focus response on refugee livelihoods and self-reliance found in both academic literature and humanitarian response, to include both individual livelihoods and refugee-run enterprises, their dynamic links, and collective impacts. This reveals the extensive connections between displaced, local, national and international markets.

The findings in this section have been organised following the Displacement Economies Framework (Figure 9).

Figure 9. Displacement Economies Framework



Refugee economies are rooted in a context (grey rectangle) that combines structural and dynamic factors (such as legislation, policies, cultural norms) and unexpected or recurrent events (shocks and stresses). The DEF frames the analysis of displacement economies in two interconnected themes: individual livelihoods and enterprise. The first theme explores refugee livelihoods based on the Sustainable Livelihoods Framework, developed by Chambers and Conway in 1992. The top pentagon illustrates refugee assets in terms of human, social, financial, physical, and natural capital. Based on these assets, and their own experience, priorities and aspirations, refugees make decisions on the type of economic activities to pursue in that context, generating strategies for subsistence and accumulation. The resulting livelihood outcomes could be economic (such as a higher income) or non-economic (like self-esteem, social status). Data on refugee livelihoods was collected through the household survey and the results have been condensed in two composite indices: the 'livelihoods assets index', and the 'livelihoods outcomes index', which provide the basis for our discussion on refugee livelihoods below (Section 5.1).

The second theme of the DEF captures the creation and evolution of refugees' enterprises (own-account work, or enterprises established or run by refugees). The bottom pentagon illustrates the assets of refuge-

run businesses in terms of market access, trade networks, financial resources, space access and legal status (degree of formality). It also shows the enterprise strategies adopted by refugees based on their assets and aspirations, and the outcomes and how they contribute to refugees' lives and local economic development. The analysis of refugee enterprises in section 5.2 draws on the analysis of 50 semi-structured interviews conducted with refugees and hosts in Nairobi, and with refugees in Dadaab camp complex, supplemented by insights and discussions with key informants in both locations.

5.1 Refugee livelihoods: assets and outcomes

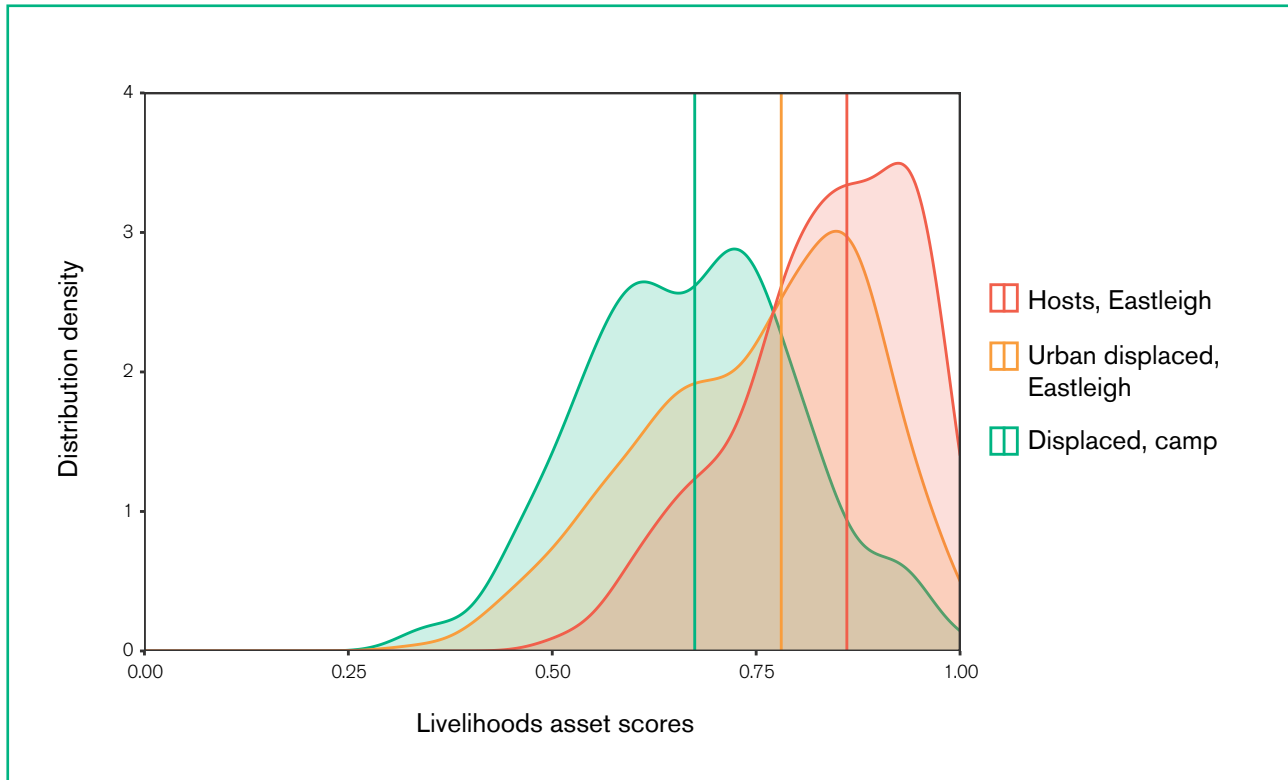
Debates on the economic capabilities and performance of refugees in camps and cities have mostly revolved around their contributions to the local economy, but far less effort has been devoted to measure their potential and the extent to which this is fully realised in countries in the global South. The livelihood assets and the livelihood outcomes indices illustrate the potential that refugees hold to perform economic activities and the extent to which this is being harnessed in host countries.

Livelihood assets

The Livelihood Assets index is based on a range of variables extracted from the survey which reflect human, natural, physical, financial and social capital relevant in

finding employment (Figure 10).¹⁵ A higher livelihood asset score means the respondent is more likely to be prepared for work. Principal Component Analysis (PCA) was used to maximise the variance and create a score for each individual respondent.

Figure 10. Distribution of Livelihood Assets scores by migration



In Kenya, scores show that livelihood assets of Somali refugees in Eastleigh are greater than those of camp refugees, but smaller than the host population in Eastleigh. Regression analysis was used to explore the relevance of gender, age, years of residence in the country and place (living in the camp or the city) in explaining the index scores for refugees. The regression results show that higher scores for refugees are positively associated with years spent living in Kenya and living in the city, and that being female or older is associated with lower scores.¹⁶

Analysing the indicators in the Livelihoods Assets Index, we identified the variables that are most relevant in explaining the resulting scores. In Kenya, higher level of education completed and level of concern over debt are the indicators with greatest explanatory capacity for the livelihood assets scores of refugees and hosts. Figure 11, 12 and 13 below show that camp-based refugees are less educated and more concerned about debt than urban refugees, resulting in worse human and financial capital (assets) and drawing down their overall livelihood assets scores. This is relevant, since having higher livelihood assets scores makes refugees more likely to be working in Eastleigh and Dadaab, as shown in Figure 13.

¹⁵ See Annex II for a detailed explanation of the index variables.

¹⁶ See Annex II for regression model results.

Below: Explanatory factors affecting livelihood asset scores.

Figure 11. Respondent highest level of education completed

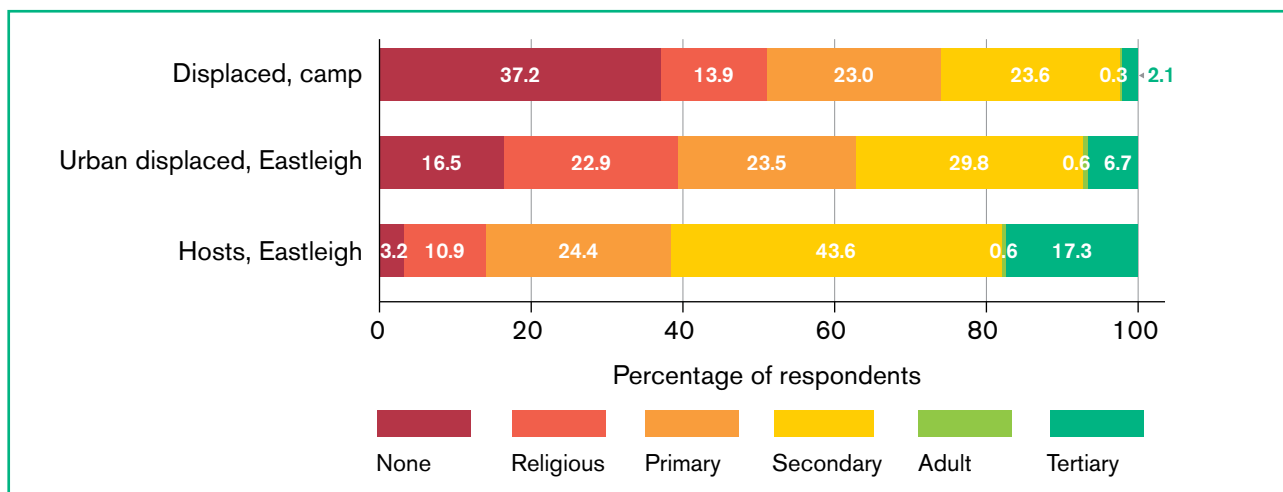


Figure 12. Is the level of debt concerning to you?

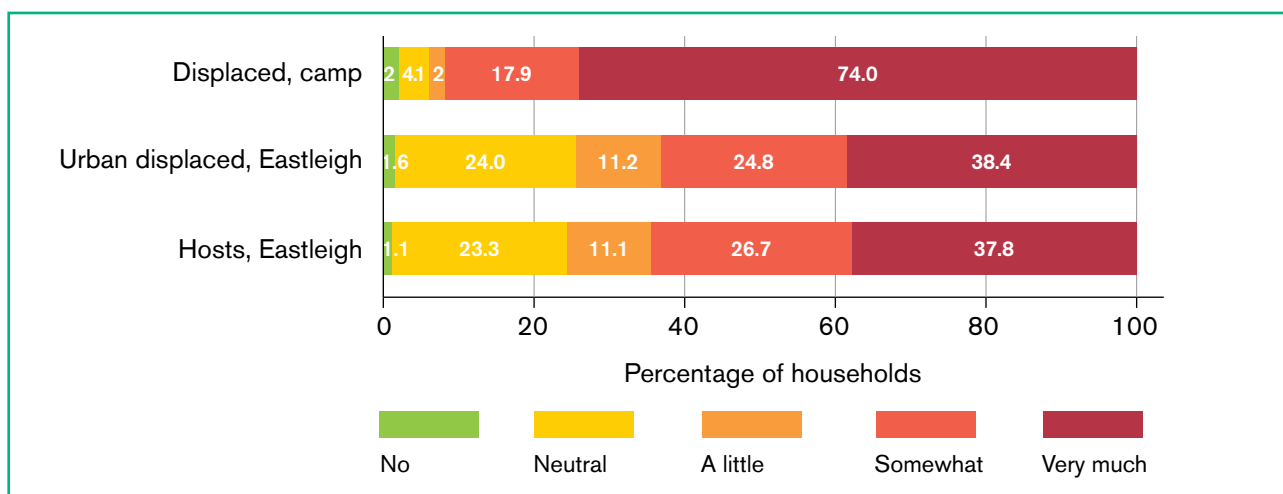
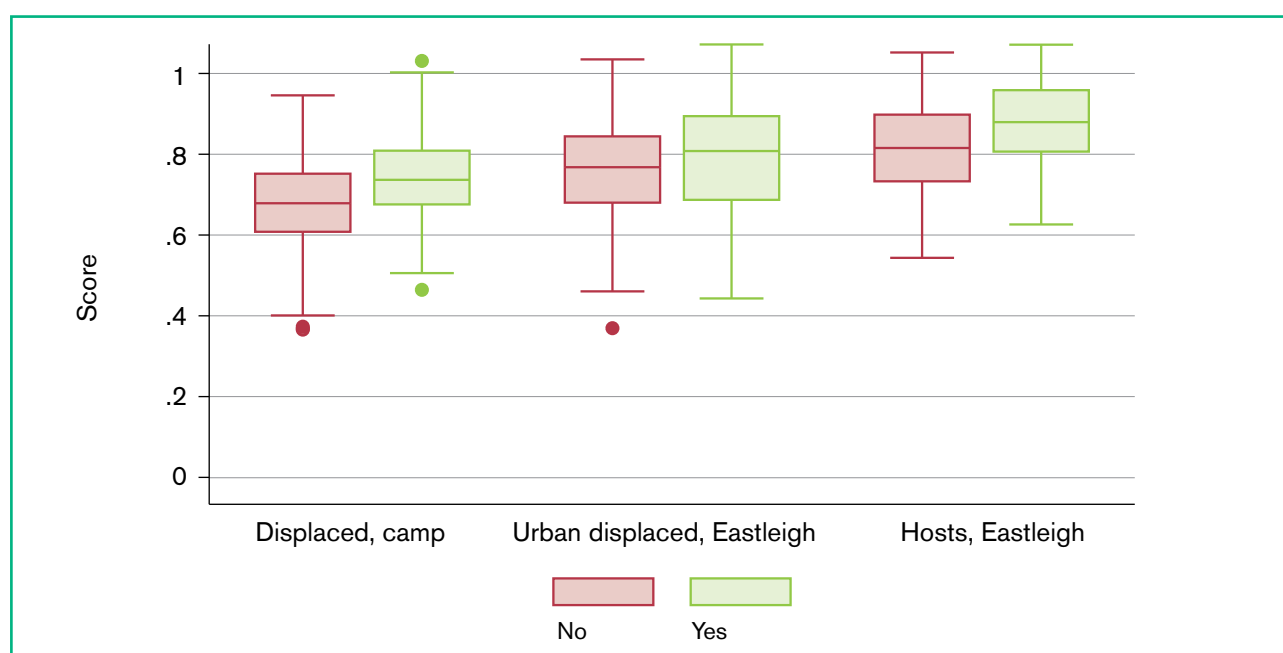


Figure 13. Distribution of livelihood assets scores, by whether or not receives income from work



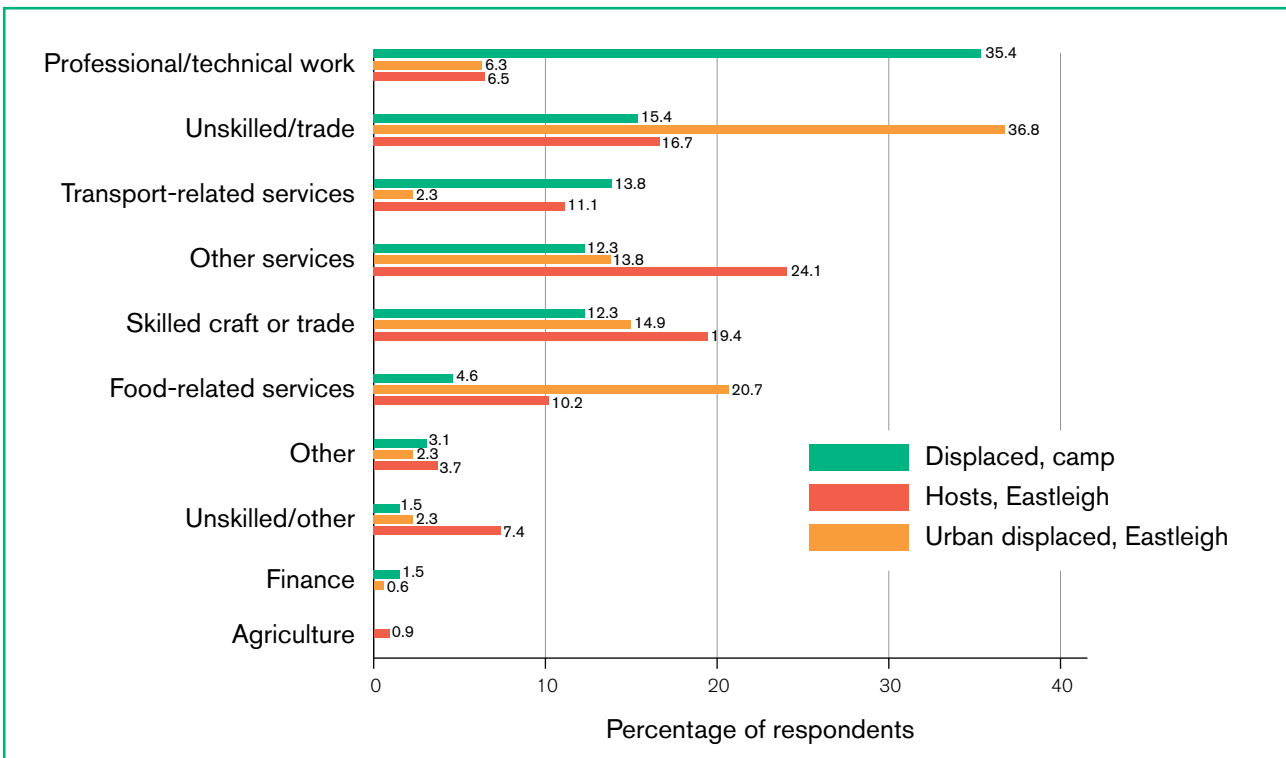
Livelihood outcomes

For a better understanding of refugee livelihoods, we need an accurate picture of the main income earning activities of refugees and the quality of those activities in terms of decent work standards. Work is the main source of income for many refugees, particularly in cities where aid distribution is relatively low by comparison. Survey results show 54% of Somali refugees in Eastleigh were working compared to 25% in the camp. Only 2% of refugee households in Nairobi reported having aid as a source of income, against 68% in the camp. Disaggregating the results by gender shows that only 33% of men and 16% of women were working in Dadaab, in contrast with 64% of men and 47% of women in Eastleigh. In the city the number of working refugees was low in comparison to hosts: 70% were working (81% men and 57% women).

However, 83% of urban refugee households reported businesses or wages from work as a main source of income in Eastleigh.

Refugees in Eastleigh work mainly as own account workers (72%) in textiles and food products, both wholesale and retail, and the hospitality sector. Trade is refugees' main source of income at all levels (see Figure 14), from street hawking to companies with multiple shops in the area. However, refugee women are more likely to be selling goods on the streets, with 30 out of 34 street vendors surveyed being women. In Dadaab camp, technical work in education and healthcare is the most common sector, with refugees working on incentives for NGOs or in refugee enterprises, followed by unskilled trade in small shops and handicrafts (mostly tailoring).

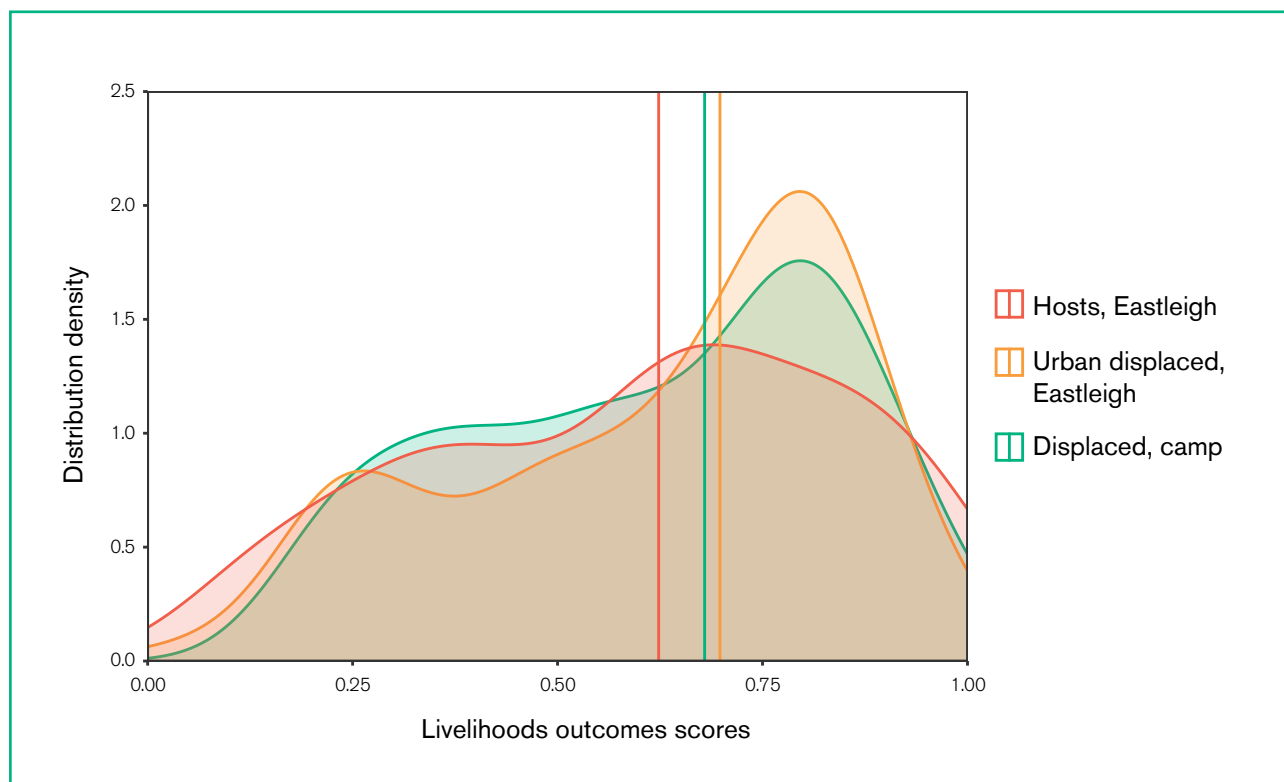
Figure 14. Sources of income in different locations



Having identified the extent to which Somali refugees are working, and their income-earning activities, it is necessary to assess the quality of those jobs. The Livelihood Outcomes index reflects the extent to which the working respondents are involved in decent work. Decent work is defined by the International Labour Organization (ILO) as work that is productive and delivers a fair income in decent working time, security in the workplace and social protection. It further

enables personal development, social dialogue, and equality of opportunity and treatment for all women and men in the workplace (ILO 2023a, 2023b). Following this definition, the index is calculated for each respondent who is working, based on working hours, work satisfaction and conditions, employment matching skills, work safety and security, social protection and tax registration.¹⁷

Figure 15. Distribution of livelihoods outcome score by migration status

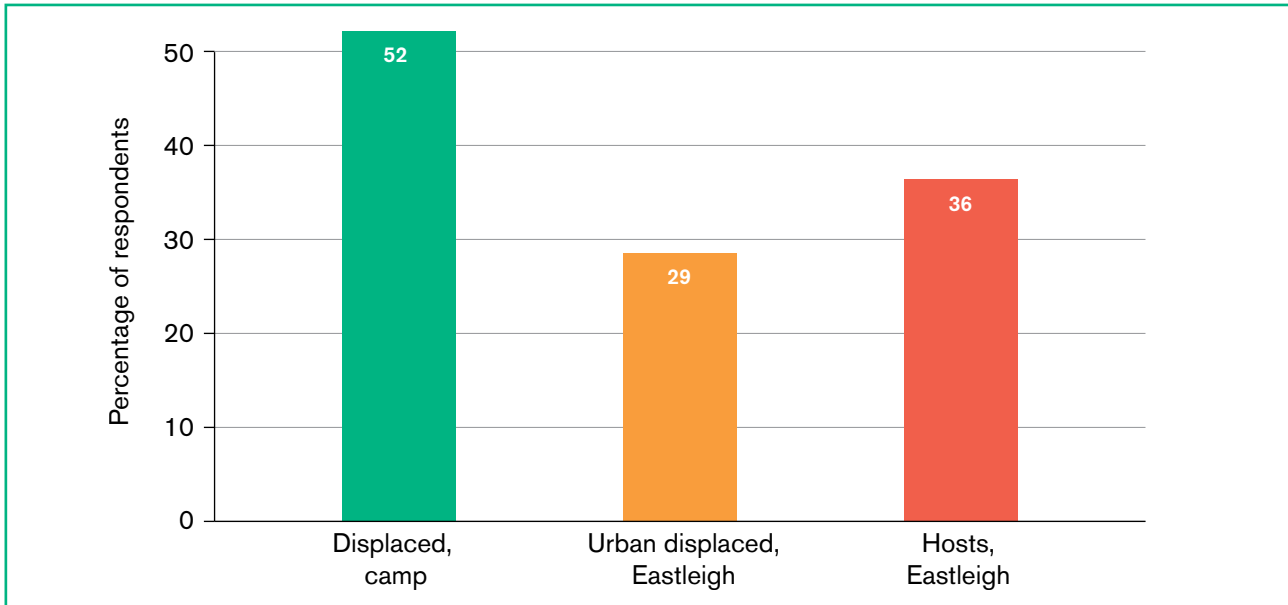


In Kenya, scores show that the livelihood outcomes for Somali refugees are similar in Eastleigh and Dadaab and, perhaps surprisingly, hosts present lower livelihood outcome scores than both displaced groups. Following the distribution curve for urban refugee scores, we also find that most refugees in Eastleigh obtain better scores than the other two groups, but there is a smaller section, creating a second mode, who are getting worse scores than both host and camp refugees. This indicates that a group inside of the Somali refugee community in Eastleigh might have worse working conditions than the average refugee in the same context.

However, the overall scores in the Livelihoods Outcomes index for refugees in Eastleigh and Dadaab, disguise the significant divergences between the two contexts which can be appreciated in the analysis of the constituent variables in the index. In the camp, there are few refugees working but they are more likely to have a work contract (Figure 16), a fact that provides them with a higher livelihood outcomes score. The limited presence of contracts for workers in Eastleigh could nevertheless be explained by a higher proportion of own account, self-employed workers among refugees (72%) and host (60%).

17 See Annex II for a detailed explanation of the index variables.

Figure 16. Respondents who have a work contract



Moreover, contracts in the camp are often linked to agencies and NGOs who hire refugees as ‘incentive workers’ for activities connected with the provision of assistance and services to the displaced community. Most respondents in the camp were refugee teachers who are required by the UNHCR to sign a contract with implementing partners and are paid on incentives (West et al. 2022:56). Such work is often characterised as temporary volunteering rather than employment. The incentive, generally lower than a wage, is a payment to acknowledge the volunteer effort (Morris and Voon 2014). Although a contract provides greater work security in principle, incentive work is not sustainable and payment is often not adequate.

In Eastleigh, survey data shows refugees are more satisfied with their work than camp refugees, and feel more confident they can keep working in their current activities as long as they want. However, urban refugees have generally experienced more abusive work environments than camp refugees. For instance, Figure 17 shows that while nearly 80% of refugees in Dadaab have not suffered from any type of workplace abuse, only 50% of urban refugees and 40% of hosts can state the same. Abuses reported by urban refugees and hosts include theft of tools or goods, and withheld wages – mainly 29% of hosts (Figure 18).

Figure 17. Respondents who said they have not suffered at work

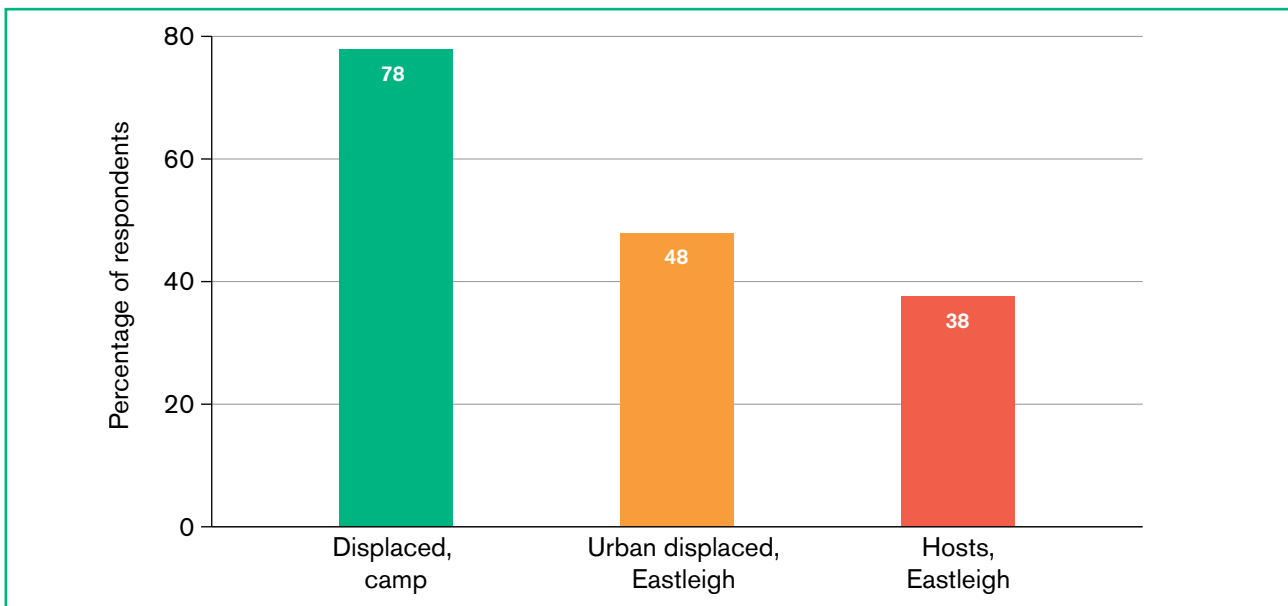
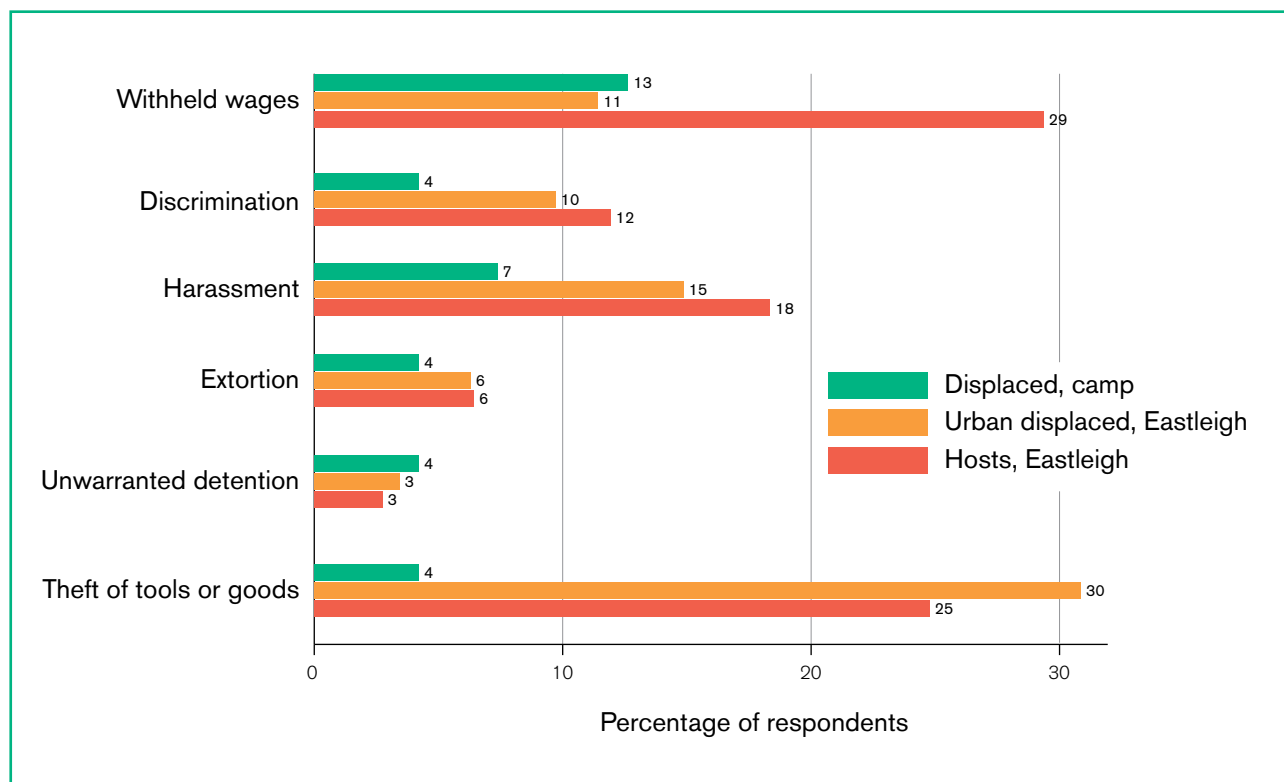


Figure 18. Have you suffered from any of the following at work...



Hosts in Eastleigh were more likely to perceive their working conditions as unsafe (15.6%) in comparison to urban refugees (8.4%); and to think that they were not receiving fair pay for their work (24%), in contrast to urban refugees (11%). This could be related to lower wages in a refugee context like Eastleigh when compared to the average Nairobi salary. Earlier studies show that refugees are generally earning less than hosts in Nairobi, and that refugee and host wages are average in Eastleigh – although some report that Somali Kenyans might be earning more than Somali refugees in the area (Betts et al. 2018:4, UNHCR and DRC 2012:19).

Our data also shows that 45% of working hosts in Eastleigh have some social protection, compared to only 6.4% of working Somali urban refugees, and that 55% have a tax registration number in comparison to only 1.7% of working Somali refugees. This suggests that hosts are more likely to work formally, either as employees or own-account workers, or enjoy medical insurance, maternity leave or unemployment benefits when working, showing a better protection of their working rights as citizens.

The analysis suggests that the camp economy provides limited livelihood opportunities for refugees, hindering their personal and professional development. Camp-based refugees may have more contractual security than

urban refugees, but for fewer and generally poorly-paid employment opportunities, working on incentives for NGOs and agencies. In addition, the camp economy depends on humanitarian presence and assistance, which undermines its long-term viability.

Somali refugees are more likely to be working in the city than in the camp, although in a less secure working environment. Urban refugees enjoy less protection and fewer working rights than Kenyan citizens, even where they express greater satisfaction than hosts, revealing important protection gaps that call for action to ensure their livelihoods and to achieve decent work standards.

5.2 Displacement enterprises

Complementing these quantitative metrics, the interviews with refugee entrepreneurs shed light on the greatest challenges and opportunities in each location – the city and the camp – for livelihoods to flourish. This section focuses on refugees' entrepreneurial activity, the strategic use of their assets to start and sustain their businesses, the effects of shocks and stresses in camp and urban environments, the gendered nature of enterprises in displacement, and the outcomes of the enterprise in terms of livelihoods, durable solutions to displacement, and contributions to the broader Kenyan economy.

Assets and strategies of displacement enterprises

Enterprise assets are explored through five different domains: **legal status, market access, trade networks, finance** and **space**. This section explains how refugee enterprises capitalise on their assets, taking decisions to navigate barriers and unleash their economic potential.

Legal status

In every country, the refugee legal framework sets the boundaries for the economic performance of refugee enterprises. In Kenya, the 2021 Refugee Act awarded refugees the right to work and to register their enterprises with the county administration using their refugee ID. The interviews, conducted between October 2021 and August 2022 in Eastleigh, reflect the changes in formal registration for refugee enterprise following the enactment of the law in February 2022. Refugees interviewed in 2021 had their enterprise registered in partnership with Kenyan nationals, as their only option to operate legally. From mid-2022 some refugees reported using their refugee ID to register their enterprise. But they described the process as difficult, costly and slow, and suggested that obstacles could be reduced through bribes, speeding up the process.

“During the first registration, it's difficult, you have to know people in power or use brokers. The ones in charge of registration will say something like, you know you are a foreigner and you are taking opportunities from other Kenyans, and that simply means ‘pay some bribe so that they can assist you’. But after registration, the licence fee and the rest are just the same as the host pays.”

Male refugee entrepreneur (aged 25 years), Eastleigh

Despite the changes in legislation, most refugees were still operating in partnership with Kenyans by August 2022. Some interviewees stated that only Kenyans can register enterprises, while others either had an expired refugee ID or did not meet the criteria – mainly being registered as urban refugees in Nairobi. In practice, refugees cannot apply for a Kenya Revenue Authority Personal Identification Number (KRA PIN), which

is mandatory to register an enterprise, because the number of digits in refugee IDs is not the same as in national IDs. The DRS assured us they were working to address this problem, but the process is still ongoing.

Many refugees wanted to register their enterprise to avoid problems with the police or local authorities. Refugees find they cannot operate informally and that their enterprises are under constant scrutiny by the police and county inspection authority looking to fine them or asking for bribes. Those operating informally pay 20 Kenyan shillings per day (around 0.13 US\$), or weekly (100 KES) to the metropolitan police (*kanjos*), according to refugee entrepreneurs interviewed.¹⁸ Lack of IDs further expose unregistered urban refugees to police extortion.

“Eastleigh has become an ATM for the police and kanjo because they know refugees do not want any trouble with the authorities and would rather give them the little money they have. This is difficult, even more when the refugees are trying to make ends meet.”

Female refugee entrepreneur (aged 45), Eastleigh

Street vendors in Eastleigh, both refugees and hosts, mostly operate informally and are more vulnerable to police extortion and brutality. Working in the streets without a business permit, they are routinely asked for money, have their goods confiscated, are chased away and sometimes even teargassed, by the *kanjos*. In addition, refugees may be threatened with deportation for not possessing the right documentation. Being mostly female and foreign, refugee street hawkers in Eastleigh find nobody listens to them or will support them. Lack of language skills, with few speaking fluent Swahili, adds to the feeling of being defenceless and at risk of being deceived by authorities, suppliers or customers. For example, refugees can be asked to pay non-existent taxes or fees.

“I always meet people with no local identification and language barriers who are detained by the police which is similar to what I used to experience when I first arrived and before I picked the Swahili language from the streets.”

Female refugee entrepreneur (aged 31), Eastleigh

¹⁸ In 2022-23 changes to the Nairobi County Metropolitan Police Unit were introduced to increase professionalism of the city's police force (Kinyanjui 2022).

In Dadaab camp, most refugee enterprises are registered directly by refugees with the local authority and taxes are collected every year. The registration fee is fixed based on the type and size of business. However, the mobility restrictions imposed on refugees living in the camp significantly reduce the earnings and expansion potential of their enterprises. Permission to leave the camp is mainly granted for medical or educational purposes, but rarely for other reasons, although UNHCR can provide a special exception to attend a meeting. This means refugee businesses must buy supplies from middlemen, often hosts who inflate prices, unless they can create their own supply networks.¹⁹

“[A]s you know, for us we do not have that power to move from the camp to Nairobi to bring the commodities. There are some people who go to Nairobi to bring commodities. Normally when they bring them here, they sell at high price. With that price, we will only make a profit of 10 shillings or 50 shillings. Out of this it is impossible to make any savings.”

Female refugee entrepreneur, Dadaab

Some refugees manage to leave the camp, paying bribes to get through. On the bus to Nairobi, they must pay the police at every checkpoint, increasing the cost of the trip. Then once in the city, they are at risk of being detained if found without a permit.

Market access

This section explores the reasons and incentives to start an enterprise, and the strategies used by refugees to enter the market, secure contracts and attract customers and clients. Refugee entrepreneurs in Eastleigh understand business as a ladder where you start working for others, learning management, getting familiar with suppliers, and knowing the sector before you start your own enterprise with savings or support from family via remittances. In many cases, refugees continue working in the same sector, but can change to more profitable or comfortable activities if the business succeeds.

“I used to run a restaurant before I moved into textiles because I found the restaurant business challenging and competitive due to low sales, food spoiling and opening of other restaurants. I did informal market research in Eastleigh [...] and chose this activity because it was something I could manage. I found three people who were interested in the same business, and we found a middleman

that imports goods directly from Turkey and China, so we can have our unique designs and products, and supply goods to smaller business that do not have external links to import their goods or containers from abroad.”

Female refugee entrepreneur (aged 50), Eastleigh

Those with few resources or who face difficulties in accessing an employment – often single women and mothers who are divorced, separated, or widowed – find that starting an enterprise is their only chance to provide for their families in Eastleigh. Their access to the market is more limited and they often count on the support of their peers – other women – to pool resources.

In Dadaab the main reasons given for starting an enterprise were lack of employment opportunities, poor salaries, and the need to provide for the family to supplement aid. Most of the refugees interviewed had previous business experience in Somalia, although not always in the same sector. There are a few examples where new enterprises were supported by humanitarian programmes, through training and tools, or start-up money.

Trade networks

Connections and collaboration with other enterprises, nearby or abroad, establishes a network which can provide market opportunities and support expansion. Refugees in Eastleigh receive the support of their own community, which helps them thrive – or at least survive – but access to networks is mediated by a person’s position within the Somali community.

Refugee entrepreneurs with established and profitable enterprises were generally those with good access to business associations that could control prices, make collective purchases to reduce import shipping costs, and advocate with local authorities. Refugees with fewer resources, often women, participate in *ayautos* – interest-free, rotating saving schemes providing small business loans. However, those with irregular profits found it difficult to join due to the requirement to make regular payments.

Collaboration with other enterprises, particularly suppliers, is stronger once the enterprise is established. Smaller enterprises find it more difficult to buy on credit and often look for suppliers in Eastleigh providing lower-cost goods.

Eastleigh, functioning as a regional business hub, has all the transport and bank services needed to facilitate trade with other countries. Many of the refugees interviewed trade with Somalia and the East Africa region using courier and bus companies usually owned

¹⁹ For further information see the following section on trade networks.

by Somali nationals – according to key informants. Many manufactured goods in Eastleigh, mostly textiles, are imported from China. Refugees use middlemen travelling to China, or online purchases, to import goods, with the latter increasing as a result of COVID-19. They have an established system for customs clearance and transport to Eastleigh from the main ports in Kenya, mostly run by Kenyans to avoid mobility restrictions on refugees. Importing from China brings opportunities and is seen as a sign of prosperity. Goods are also imported from Somalia, Turkey and Dubai.

Refugee enterprises in Eastleigh attract customers from both refugee and host communities, although some products are tailored to the Somali diaspora, such as traditional clothing or food. Clients also come from abroad, with buyers from Uganda, Tanzania, DRC, Sudan and elsewhere in the region, as well as online from the USA.

Some refugee enterprises in Eastleigh report selling to Dadaab camps, and several interviewees in Dadaab explained how they had an established link with a collaborator in Nairobi, bypassing middlemen. Middlemen also import goods from Somalia to sell inside the camp. At the same time, Dadaab refugee enterprises have become suppliers to host community retailers, particularly in the clothing wholesale sector. Collaboration between businesses in the same sector is also common inside the camp, filling gaps in stock and exchanging information about suppliers and prices.

“Apart from organisations, there are some customers from the countryside who own shops in their localities and they request us to make 20 to 30 shirts, which we send when done.”

Male refugee entrepreneur (aged 45), Dadaab

Some refugees in Dadaab receive remittances from abroad and can buy better quality products than hosts. This is appreciated by the local community that often prefer to buy from refugee businesses, according to key informants.

Finance

Accessing start-up capital, financial resources and debt management are central to understanding refugee enterprise finance. According to PDUW key informants, the lack of policy or framework that explicitly secures the right for refugees to access financial services, combined with a lack of assets for providing collateral and social networks to obtain guarantors, make it difficult for refugees who wish to start a business to formally access loans. So refugees in the city and the camp often use their savings and/or a loan from relatives or friends. The composition of the sample in Eastleigh allows us to compare businesses of different sizes in

the textile sector. Generally, male refugees receive more financial support from relatives, often from remittances, which allows them to start with a larger operation, while single women and widows are often provided with a smaller sum for a more modest business.

Diaspora willingness to invest in Eastleigh is key to understanding refugee entrepreneurship in the area. Somali refugees resettled abroad see Nairobi as a profitable investment opportunity and often help relatives and friends to establish their businesses there – further contributing to the expansion of the local economy.

“I had a relative who lived in Denmark and was looking into opening a business in Nairobi, and I wanted to invest the money I had saved from working at different restaurants since I moved here, so we decided to open a business together.”

Male refugee entrepreneur (aged 38), Eastleigh

Another source of start-up capital, although less common, is *Qaaran*. Defined as clan welfare tax, money is usually collected between respectable members of the clan or sub-clan for a cause, like a community project, or to support someone in need. This is mainly done physically but the internet can be used to reach those in the diaspora.

In the camp, support from aid institutions in cash (seed money) or in kind (training and tools) occasionally provides the initial business capital, but camp refugees mostly start their business with savings or by borrowing money from friends and relatives. Informal saving schemes and mobile banking are common for both men and women entrepreneurs in Dadaab, although most found it difficult to save from their business profits. The economic resources of camp-based refugees are limited, and they often buy on credit which is not always repaid. Mobile payments are enabled in the camp via *Bamba Chakula*, a World Food Programme cash transfer programme, which allows refugees to buy from associated refugee businesses inside the camp using their phone. Although this has become a tool for refugee enterprises to save and manage their finance, it is also a sign of how camp economy and refugee purchase capacity is dependent on aid flows.

Access to banking services in Eastleigh further shows a significant difference between female-run and male-run refugee businesses. While many men refugees report they have a savings bank account and disregard *ayuutos* as a ‘women’s thing’, women refugee entrepreneurs mostly used Mpesa mobile money system instead of cash, and *ayuutos* to save and pool resources for their enterprise. This difference is probably because big business owners find it easier to open a bank account

irrespective of whether they are a refugee or not. Nevertheless, according to key informants only a few commercial banks allow refugees to use their services, and Somali refugees show a preference for Islamic banks, reducing the number of available options.

In Eastleigh, savings are the key to expanding and opening additional outlets in the area. The interviews show how Eastleigh creates an environment where it is possible for refugee enterprises to grow and expand, taking people from street hawking to owning more than one location, although it is difficult to identify the steps to success, and some refugees remain in a precarious situation for years.

Paying taxes and bribes is ubiquitous in the city and the camp. Unregistered refugee enterprises are more exposed to police extortion, however formal refugee enterprises in Eastleigh may have to pay to release a refugee employee if found without documents, or to avoid being fined if the authorities find any irregularity during an inspection (such as expired or counterfeit products). In camps, refugees can use bribes to get a travel document, although this may not be affordable to all entrepreneurs.

Space

Enterprise location and access to trading space is an important asset for refugee enterprises. Premium space in Eastleigh's malls is expensive, and it is customary to pay a year's rent in advance. Malls are often joint ventures with more than one investor, and frequently dedicated to one activity, generating business clusters. Entrepreneurs may rent a space or buy it when the building is still under construction to secure a better price. Refugees invest their savings and take family loans to access space in Eastleigh, hoping this will pay off. Access to these spaces requires privileged information and lobbying. Other refugees rent properties from previous business owners in cheaper areas where spaces are already fitted out and are more accessible to those with fewer resources.

“When I chose this location, it was mainly because it is a good location for selling female clothes and because the building was new. In Eastleigh we reserve shops or register when the building is still under construction which is cheaper than renting it from someone who booked it in advance who then rents it out at a higher price to make profit.”

Female refugee entrepreneur (aged 45), Eastleigh

However, many refugees do not have the means and documents needed to rent a shop in Eastleigh and access to space depends on other arrangements. For instance, renting the entry space of an existing shop

or mall for a small stall or sewing machine for tailoring is common. Refugees pay rent for these spaces and can work under the main business licence without being disturbed by the authorities. For those with few resources, a table, small cart or street hawking in Eastleigh are the only options. Street hawkers still have to negotiate access to space with their peers and pay a daily informal fee to the local police to operate. Street hawkers compete for space and customers, but solidarity is evident to support those who have had goods stolen or confiscated.

In Dadaab camp there are three established ways to get a space in the market areas: allocated and authorised by the city council, or rented or purchased from the designated city council beneficiary. Some refugees sub-let the market stall from other refugees with space allocation. Higher prices are paid in areas with greater market opportunities. Refugees pay rent to the stall owners, who pay the council authorities for the licence. A few interviewees also explained how they have dedicated some space in their house, in residential areas of the camp, to start a business.

Refugee enterprise vulnerabilities

There are critical events in the life of refugees that put them under considerable strain, affecting their entrepreneurial performance. This section discusses the different ways in which shocks and stresses affect the refugee enterprise and shape their use of assets. In doing so, it explores how the experience of living in exile, the wider political and economic environment, and socio-cultural norms create or limit refugee enterprise capacity to respond to these circumstances.

In Dadaab, the recurrent threat of camp closure by the Government of Kenya affects businesses, who question whether it is worth investing in the enterprise, and whether they will be able to continue their activity in Somalia. Entrepreneurs in Dadaab see their benefits reduced as refugee customers save for closure or are pressured into debt repayments.

In Eastleigh, safety is a concern particularly for enterprises with few resources, like small shops and street hawkers. Assaults and robberies after dark are common when many street hawkers work to avoid being chased by the police during the opening hours of malls. Refugee women working as street hawkers are particularly vulnerable since many are illiterate or are not registered as urban refugees, so they feel they have nobody to turn to in case of aggression.

COVID-19 affected refugee enterprises in Dadaab, delaying supplies, increasing debt and decreasing the opportunities for buying on credit. Lockdown further affected the mobility of enterprise employees, increased police harassment, and sales plummeted. Eastleigh's refugee-run enterprises were affected by price inflation

and rent hikes, and were forced to dismiss employees. Some enterprises started ordering online from China, rather than through an intermediary. Restrictions on regional mobility following lockdown led to an acute reduction of customers in Eastleigh. This affected both refugee and host businesses but national entrepreneurs received government assistance during lockdown that was not available to refugees – according to refugees we interviewed.

Gendered refugee entrepreneurship

Societal gender norms and gender roles influence entrepreneurial activity. This affects the likelihood of opening an enterprise, or conditioning the type of business, and the financial and social support it receives – among other issues. At the same time, displacement has an effect on gender roles, changing or reinforcing social and cultural norms that dictate what is expected from men and women, and their options to engage in income-earning activities. But it can also create opportunities for socio-economic and cultural transformation, redefining power relations between men and women (Holloway et al. 2019:9). To understand better how refugee, gender and enterprise intersect, we asked refugees about the differences between men and women in running their businesses.

The Somali culture is business-driven based on the caravan trade and a nomadic lifestyle. Refugee families still find it more important to run a business than receive a full education. Although this attitude is now changing within the Somali community, girls are less likely to go to school and refugee women in Nairobi are more likely to have limited education than their male counterparts.²⁰

An interesting finding from Kenya is that a change in marital status seems to be a driver for opening a business. Men see getting married as a reason to start their own business, while for women the entrepreneurial drive is often the result of divorce, separation or widowhood. Women are frequently questioned by their relatives about running an enterprise and receive less family support than men. However, some married women run a business to support their family, for which the husband often provides start-up cash.

Refugee women are generally considered as competent as men when running businesses in Eastleigh. However, some men argue women are less capable in businesses requiring physical strength. One example given by a refugee male entrepreneur was curtain businesses, which he claimed was too heavy for women to run alone. Others claim that women are less capable of dealing with clients or suppliers, or are more vulnerable

to security threats and theft. Some refugee women mentioned sexual harassment in beauty salons and restaurants and had been assaulted while street hawking. Combining household chores and child rearing with running an enterprise is an added problem for women in business, especially for refugees with no extended family support network.

“I get really worried whenever I leave my kids. Sometimes I ask people to stand in for me at work so that I can go and check whether my children are okay. I live with my kids alone with my older daughter who is 16 years old. I used to leave them with my son, but since he disappeared it is just my two daughters and two grandchildren.”

Female refugee entrepreneur (aged 31), Eastleigh

Female Somali refugee street hawkers are probably one of the most vulnerable groups in Eastleigh. Mostly undocumented, with little education or competence in Swahili, they face rejection from their community who consider it inappropriate for women to work in the streets and treat those doing so – usually single mothers – as prostitutes. Seen as a disturbance and as unfair competition by some business and mall owners, street hawkers are routinely chased and face police extortion. Several female refugee hawkers reported being assaulted or raped while working on the streets at night. As a result, many suffer from trauma but are still forced to work in the streets as their only means of survival. To protect themselves, they are organised in *ayutos* or pool resources to support members when their goods are confiscated, or they need money to pay for hospital or school fees.

In Dadaab, female refugee entrepreneurs are both despised and praised. It is not deemed appropriate for a woman to be in the market or outside of the house, and they are often harassed while working. However, camp life and displacement are changing perception of women’s roles, since work is often essential for family survival.

“The community thinks that women should just sit and take care of their families. Not to come out to the market. They disagree. But you see that is up to them. You have children you must take care of. You have to start a business and provide for your children.”

Female refugee entrepreneur, Dadaab

²⁰ Key informant interview with CBO in Eastleigh.

Aspirations

The aspirations of refugee entrepreneurs combine their hopes and uncertainties about business expansion with durable solutions to displacement. In Kenya, most Somali refugee entrepreneurs would like to expand their businesses, creating branches beyond the camp/Eastleigh, and even abroad. To do so, refugees in Dadaab demand mobility permits allowing them to deal directly with producers in Nairobi and Garissa without middlemen. In Eastleigh, refugees call for refugee IDs to be on a par with national ID cards relating to enterprise registration, licencing and bank services. Financial support is seen as crucial to achieve their objectives, both in the camp and in the city, with requests for institutional assistance for start-ups, training and credit. Meanwhile, refugee street hawkers call for the allocation of space to carry out their activities freely and safely in Eastleigh.

Although many Somali refugees plan for their future in Kenya and are grateful to their host country, some still think that resettlement will provide better opportunities, or complain that they will never have the same rights as citizens or be free of police harassment.

"I came here as a child, but there are still basic things I cannot enjoy, despite living in this country for the last 17 years. Kenya is a good country, we are grateful that they hosted us, but we also have a life. We want to travel, go to Nairobi town, or visit other countries without fearing the police and always being asked to produce our documents."

Male refugee entrepreneur (aged 25), Eastleigh

Business outcomes: the contributions of displacement enterprises

Refugees' contribution to Kenyan society is often gauged by their social and economic inputs, but refugee enterprises are also a means for integration and support for other members of the refugee community, and leave an imprint on refugees' perceptions of themselves. Feelings of self-worth and accomplishment are strong among the refugee entrepreneurs in Eastleigh, who generally feel proud of being self-reliant, providing for their family, and donating to their community when possible. Their enterprises make them feel part of the community and create closer relations with Kenyans. However,

Somali refugees are perceived as a closed group, establishing relations only with the Somali community in Nairobi and detached from their surroundings.²¹

"I have also learned Swahili. [...] I smile a lot and I have developed good relations with Kenyans. The business has enabled me as a refugee to demystify the fear I had of other people and realised we are all humans and we can have good relations."

Female refugee entrepreneur (aged 28), Eastleigh

Eastleigh refugee businesses are not only creating employment opportunities for refugees, hosts and economic migrants, but supporting future business creation by training their employees and providing advice to new refugee entrepreneurs.

"[...] when you are setting up your business you will be supported on the do's and don'ts by other refugees who are already in such businesses and it is very helpful. They share numbers or suppliers and even sometimes vouch for us."

Male refugee entrepreneur (aged 26), Eastleigh

Work contracts are verbal and with few additional benefits other than a paid lunch. The owners of more successful refugee enterprises are willing to pay their employees if sick, contribute to hospital fees, and even pay dividends to senior workers. When hired, family members receive a salary like any other employee. Refugees also said that their taxes and licence payments, buying from local suppliers, and hiring local services contribute to the local economy and to the betterment of Eastleigh.

In Dadaab camp, enterprise achievement is measured by capacity to provide for the family, expand the business, buy properties (in the camp or in Somalia), and even allow some young male entrepreneurs to marry. Enterprises overwhelmingly contribute to positive feelings of becoming a respected member of the community and less dependent on external support. Again, refugees also said that their enterprises contribute greatly to the local economy with their purchase of supplies from middlemen, payment for services and taxes, creating employment opportunities for refugees and hosts, or directly supporting members of the host community in starting a business – enhancing their relations with locals as a result.

21 Government representative, key informant.

Mobility restrictions limit the potential of camp refugee entrepreneurs, but the isolated location of Dadaab has meant they are also important suppliers to the host community, bringing products to the area that would be otherwise difficult to find. Enterprises also provide goods and services not included in aid distributed to refugees.

“I was told that before the refugees settled here the people in this area used to go to Garissa and Nairobi to buy things but when the refugees settled here, they set up different businesses and the locals started buying from them.”

Female refugee entrepreneur (aged 46), Dadaab

5.3 Refugee economies conclusions

The Somali refugee economy in Kenya differs greatly between the situation in cities and in camps. Livelihoods and enterprises in Dadaab camp are largely dependent on humanitarian aid provision and programming, and the capacity of refugee enterprises, NGOs and agencies to hire refugees in a limited labour market. Mobility restrictions hinder camp refugees' economic activity although limitations have stirred their ingenuity, generating trade networks that connect Dadaab with Eastleigh.

In Eastleigh, Somali refugee entrepreneurship has flourished in an environment that enables partnerships with Somali Kenyans and the investment and remittances of the Somali diaspora in a growing local economy. Recent legislative changes introduced by the Refugee Act 2021 are progressively increasing the legal security of urban refugee entrepreneurs who can now register their business in their own names. However, not all urban refugees have benefitted in the same way from Eastleigh's burgeoning economy. Access to business networks and resources – key to entrepreneurial success and expansion – is based on social status within the Somali community, which often leaves women and street vendors outside. Unsafe working conditions, and police extortion and harassment, are negatively affecting refugee livelihoods and enterprise performance – being particularly tough on unregistered refugees living in Nairobi.

Most of all, the Somali refugee economy contributes positively to local economic development both in Nairobi and Garissa County – paying taxes, creating employment opportunities, and strengthening trade links nationally, regionally and internationally. As a result, urban refugee entrepreneurs often feel integrated in Nairobi and are willing to settle in the city, while camp refugee businesses can partially reduce their aid dependency – but with unsustainable livelihoods that cannot support durable solutions.

6

Conclusion

Our research was conducted at a significant time in Kenya, as the Refugee Act (2021) was adopted during the course of the project. This has expanded the legal rights of refugees, particularly for those from the six countries of the East African Community. While much of the implementation remains to be done, this has created momentum and potential for further change.

This paper has demonstrated the limitations of the camp environment in Dadaab compared to that of Eastleigh. Limited out-of-camp mobility for refugees in Dadaab is a key hinderance for both livelihoods and wellbeing within the camp. Despite monetary investments to subsidise living costs in the camp, the wellbeing of refugees remains better in Eastleigh across all five dimensions. Additionally, the camp economy in Dadaab is aid-subsidised, so refugees who find opportunities to work are still 'dependent' on aid for their livelihoods. In Eastleigh, the economic environment for refugees is beneficial compared to that of Dadaab, but remains nevertheless challenging. In both locations, refugee businesses make positive contributions to local economies. With regards to wellbeing, there are particularly stark differences between Dadaab and Eastleigh within bodily and economic wellbeing.

Our findings show that the recent legal changes are important and helpful, particularly in relation to work and enterprises, for example by granting refugees the right to own and register businesses in their own name. The camp environment, however, remains restricted. Additionally, it is not clear whether these changes will have any impact on the encampment practice, and to what extent integrated settlements in designated areas – the remote settlements replacing camps – will be different from camps in terms of mobility and access, and thereby in their impact on refugees' abilities to meet their own needs.

Despite the difficulties that come with living as an urban refugee in Nairobi, the city is where refugees find opportunities. The implementation of the Refugee Act (2021) is still ongoing, through development of its regulations and particularly the potential municipalisation of Kakuma and Dadaab. And specifics such as definitions, roles and responsibilities within the law are still under discussion. During this time, it will be important to incorporate these lessons to avoid creating new integrated settlements that repeat the mistakes of the current camps and previous encampment policy.

Annex 1: Protracted Displacement in an Urban World

Out of camp or out of sight? Protracted Displacement in an Urban World (PDUW) is a comparative mixed methods research project focusing on the wellbeing and livelihoods of displaced people in camps and urban areas in Afghanistan, Ethiopia, Kenya and Jordan. The 3.5-year project is funded by the UK Research and Innovation Global Challenges Research Fund, the IKEA Foundation, the Swiss Agency for Development Cooperation and the Bernard van Leer Foundation.

The PDUW study aims to build an evidence base for national and local governments, humanitarian agencies and donors on the opportunities and challenges of hosting displaced people in camps versus urban areas. It also aims to assess current responses to urban protracted displacement, raise awareness of unmet needs and examine the economic contributions of refugees and IDPs. Finally, the project aims to support municipal authorities, displaced people, NGOs, organisations of the urban poor, and other local actors to use participatory planning to co-produce innovative and inclusive solutions to forced displacement in cities.

Our research has sought to deepen understandings of refugees' experiences of life in the camp and the city through the exploration of two thematic areas: wellbeing and displacement economies. The project is comparative in nature – we have primarily sought to compare displaced people's wellbeing and livelihoods between the camp and the urban area in each country, although we are also able to make some cross-country comparisons and will publish these findings in an overview paper and a series of thematic journal articles and working papers. To facilitate the comparison, we have focused on one nationality of refugee per country. In Ethiopia, our original aim was to

compare Tigrinya-speaking Eritrean refugees in Addis Ababa with those in a camp in the Tigray region. After the outbreak of war in 2020 – initially in the Tigray region – the research focus shifted to Eritrean refugees in the Afar region. However, we were not able to identify significant numbers of Afari speaking refugees in Addis Ababa, and there are marked cultural differences between Afari (who are traditionally semi-nomadic pastoralists) and Tigrinya people who have moved from camps to the capital. We therefore added an additional urban site – Semera Logia, the regional capital in the Afar region, with significant populations of Afar Eritrean refugees. In Afghanistan, we administered a follow-up survey after the Taliban takeover in 2021 to enable comparison of livelihoods, wellbeing and mobility patterns before and after this significant change. Findings from this will be presented in the Afghanistan Country Working Paper and other project outputs, so as to consider how the place where they find themselves – a camp or a city – has impacted on their wellbeing and ability to make a living.

A key aim of this research project has been to promote interaction between urban refugees/IDPs, residents of low-income informal settlements, municipal authorities and other local actors. To this end, PDUW has supported participatory forums on urban displacement in Addis Ababa, Amman, Jalalabad and Nairobi, in which city stakeholders, including urban refugees and IDPs, have been involved in regular conversations about service delivery, protection challenges and the policy environment, informed by presentations from PDUW's quantitative and qualitative datasets. The findings from these participatory processes throughout the project have been presented in a series of City Notes and policy briefs.

Project methods

The project has taken a mixed-methods approach and generated significant new qualitative and quantitative datasets for each country. Following concept testing focus groups in the project's inception phase (February-December 2020), a survey was designed and delivered to camp and urban displaced people and urban hosts (50/50 men and women) in: Nairobi and Dadaab camp in Kenya (May-July 2021); Addis Ababa, Aysaita camp and Semera Logia, in Ethiopia (March-April and October 2021); Amman and Zaatari camp in Jordan (February-March 2022); and Jalalabad and Barikab settlement in Afghanistan (February 2021 and August 2022). Following preliminary analysis of the survey results from each country, a total of 450 qualitative interviews were held across all camp and urban locations. These were complemented by key informant interviews with government, UN and NGO representatives in each country. Findings in this report draw on the project's full range of data collection methods. For the purpose of this report, the analysis will focus on the displaced population, but graphs from the survey and metric data will also display findings from the hosts, in order to provide a point of comparison.

Quantitative data

The PDUW survey was translated into local languages but was largely identical in each country, with some minor amendments to questions on legal status to ensure accurate reflection of the policy environment. It covered basic demographic information, migration trajectories and future plans. The livelihood component gathered information around income, assets, individual and household livelihoods, decent job standards, and human, social, physical, natural and financial capital. The wellbeing component covered physical health and access to healthcare, WASH and shelter; debt and economic comfort; community representation and access to justice; access to social spaces and ability to socialise; hope and aspirations, and the extent to which respondents feel at home and supported in their communities.

The survey applied a randomised, purposeful sampling to ensure the same number of female and male respondents. The sample included a smaller reference group of hosts from each urban location, as well as displaced people from each camp and city. To ensure randomisation, sampled areas were divided into geographical clusters on a map, based on a satellite image. Some of these clusters were then selected for data collection. A random walk pattern, based on the random starting point, was then established in collaboration with the field coordinator, and a random adult respondent was selected in each household.

PDUW QUANTITATIVE SURVEY SAMPLE

Afghanistan

- Barikab camp: 362 displaced (204 reached in round two)
- Jalalabad: 371 displaced and 156 hosts (241 displaced and 79 hosts reached in round two)

Ethiopia

- Aysaita camp: 366 displaced
- Semera Logia: 372 displaced
- Addis Ababa: 365 displaced and 153 hosts

Kenya

- Dadaab camp: 382 displaced
- Nairobi: 315 displaced and 156 hosts

Jordan

- Zaatari camp: 398 displaced
- Amman: 368 displaced and 217 hosts

To facilitate the comparison between the camp and urban locations, a selection of indicators from the survey have been used to create three metrics. The indices also demonstrate how life in displacement differs for men and women in each location.

1. **The Refugee Wellbeing Metric**, covering five wellbeing dimensions (bodily, economic, political, social, and psychosocial wellbeing). This permits a comparison of wellbeing between different cohorts, for example camp vs urban, old vs young, men vs women, educated vs non-educated, those who spent a long time in the country vs those who did not. As far as the research team can ascertain, the wellbeing metric is the first of its kind to be specifically designed for displaced people. It provides a holistic picture of wellbeing, beyond a typically narrow focus on basic needs.
2. **The Livelihoods Assets Index**, is a work-readiness metric designed to ascertain who shows the highest potential for labour market integration. The index builds on the concept of sustainable livelihoods (DFID 1999), based on age, physical and mental health of respondents, education, legal status, housing quality, adequacy of income, financial inclusion, security, and social integration.

3. **The Livelihoods Outcomes Index**, looks at decent work and labour conditions for those who do have a source of income, in order to study who among those with income from work had the best working conditions. The index builds on the concept of 'decent' work, advocated by the ILO as productive work for women and men in conditions of freedom, equity, security and human dignity (ILO 2023a). The index includes components on working hours, job security, work satisfaction, fair pay, tax status, working conditions and social protection.

The metrics are a weighted sum of target indicators, where the weights correspond to a rotation into the first principal component of all the observations of the indicators in the training sample. The principal components of a dataset where each record (row) corresponds to an observation (respondent) and each column corresponds to a variable (indicator) within each observation. There are exactly as many principal components as there are variables, and the original dataset can always be reconstructed from its principal components. However, unlike the original variable set, the principal components explain (rapidly) decreasing proportions of the total information content (variance) of the original dataset.

Qualitative data

In each location, qualitative interviews were also conducted within each of the projects' two main workstreams: refugee/IDP wellbeing and refugee/ IDP enterprise, using purposive sampling. On wellbeing, 25 semi-structured interviews with displaced people (roughly equal between men and women) were conducted in each location (camp and urban) exploring themes from the survey in more depth. On enterprise, 25 semi-structured interviews were conducted with refugee- and host-run enterprises in each location (camp and urban) exploring business creation, decision-making, networks, achievements, and challenges. Additionally, key informant interviews were conducted in all four countries to follow up on emerging themes from the survey and semi-structured interviews. All data was collected during 2021-2022.

Project outputs

The PDUW project will produce a range of written outputs, all of which will be made available on the project website: www.protracteddisplacement.org. These include:

- **Country Working Papers**, to summarise findings on livelihoods and wellbeing from each country.
- **City Notes**, to summarise the process of running participatory forums in each country.
- **Policy Briefings**, to summarise findings from each country, and draw out cross-country learnings from the participatory planning processes in each city.
- **Academic articles**, to provide further thematic analysis of key data, including the Autumn 2024 special issue of IIED's journal *Environment and Urbanization*.
- **Qualitative and quantitative datasets** will be made available to researchers via the UK's Reshare Data Archive.

Annex 2: Refugee livelihood assets regression scores

capital_overall	Coef.	Std. Err.	t	P> t	[95% Conf. Interval]
gender_female	-.0223255	.0089067	-2.51	0.012	-.0398111 -.0048398
place_camp	-.0458385	.0120235	-3.81	0.000	-.0694431 -.0222339
respondent_literacy	.1145842	.0100175	11.44	0.000	.0949178 .1342506
years_country	.0017101	.0006924	2.47	0.014	.0003507 .0030694
respondent_age	-.0017002	.0004575	-3.72	0.000	-.0025984 -.000802
_cons	.7064749	.0180268	39.19	0.000	.6710846 .7418651

Annex 3: Refugee livelihood assets indicators

How old are you? (working age)

Reduced Coping Strategies Index

Is healthcare in this area readily available to you?

In general, would you say your health is ...

Does your physical health currently limit you in these activities?

Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale

Have you acquired any technical and vocational skills in the past?

Before arriving in this country, did you work elsewhere? /
Have you worked in the past in this country, doing something different from what you are doing now?

Can you read?

What is the highest level of education you have completed?

On an average day, how many hours do you spend doing unpaid work around the house / chores?

How well do you speak the language spoken by people (non-displaced hosts) in this area?

Are qualifications from your country of origin recognised in this country?

In this area, is it safe to walk the streets at night?

Can you legally work in this country?

If you wanted to, could you legally open a business in this country?

Do you regularly use the internet?

How would you describe your current housing situation?

Do you feel your current home is sufficient for your household's needs?

What is the primary source of drinking water for this household?

What type of toilet facilities do you have access to in your household?

In your local area, how satisfied are you with the access to public transport?

Does your household hold savings?

What are your household's sources of income today?

Do you have a bank or micro-finance account?

Is the level of debt of your household concerning to you?

If needed, is your household able to borrow money?

In this area, if you felt threatened or in danger, could you turn to...

How would you judge the quality of dispute-solving mechanisms / justice / courts in this area?

Is it secure, affordable, and physically possible for you to access justice in this area?

Do you feel you can make a difference in your community when you work with others?

How well do you feel represented / do you feel your issues are raised with the relevant authorities?

How satisfied are you with your ability to attend social gatherings outside of your home?

How well respected by your neighbours/your community do you feel?

How satisfied are you with your ability to meet up with friends or family who do not live with you?

Annex 4: Refugee livelihood outcomes index indicators

How many hours do you work on an average workday in your primary income-earning activity?

How many days do you work in an average week in your primary income-earning activity?

Do you have a written contract?

Do you feel secure you can keep doing this work (primary activity) for as long as you are willing / able to?

How satisfied are you with your current primary work?

Have you suffered from any of the following while working in your current work?

Would you say you are being paid fairly at your current job?

Would you say working conditions are safe at your current job?

Would you say your current work matches your skillset?

Do you have a tax registration number?

Do you have social protection like medical insurance, unemployment insurance, maternity leave?

Annex 5: Key informant interviews

ORGANISATION	TYPE	LOCATION	DATE
Department of Refugee Services (DRS)	Government	Nairobi	26.10.2022
Somali refugee community leader	Refugee representative	Nairobi	26.10.2022
Member of Parliament	Government	Nairobi	27.10.2022 and 29.10.2022
Valley of Welfare	Local NGO	Nairobi	27.10.2022
Refugee street vendors	Refugee representatives	Nairobi	27.10.2022
Norwegian Refugee Council	International NGO	Nairobi	28.10.2022
RefuSHE	National NGO	Nairobi	28.10.2022
European Union Delegation to Kenya	Donor	Nairobi	28.10.2022
Kenya National Alliance of Street Vendors & Informal Traders (KENASVIT)	Trade Union	Nairobi	28.10.2022
UN High Commissioner for Refugees	UN agency	Nairobi	31.10.2022
Eastleigh Business Association	Business organisation	Nairobi	31.10.2022
International Rescue Committee	International NGO	Nairobi	31.10.2022
Kituo Cha Sheria	National NGO	Nairobi	31.10.2022
Regional Durable Solutions Secretariat	Regional NGO	Nairobi	02.11.2022
Eastleigh Health Centre	Local health clinic	Nairobi	03.11.2022
Community group	Local refugees	Nairobi	03.11.2022

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Kenya hosts more than 500,000 refugees, most of whom live in camps. The new Refugee Act (2021), which came into force in 2022, creates potential for a new policy allowing increased mobility between camp and city. This paper reports on the findings of the Protracted Displacement in an Urban World project, which examined the wellbeing and livelihoods of people living in protracted displacement in camps and cities, focusing on Somali refugees in Dadaab camp and Eastleigh, Nairobi. Key findings highlight the need for increased recognition of urban refugees, free movement between camp and city, and more targeted support, particularly for women refugees in the city.

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