

PROSPECTS Partnership

Kenya: Building Inclusive Pathways for Refugees and Host Communities

Supported by



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Country Context

Kenya hosts more than 864,000 refugees and asylum seekers, primarily from Somalia, South Sudan, the Democratic Republic of Congo, and Ethiopia. The majority reside in Dadaab and Kakuma camps and the Kalobeyei settlement, while tens of thousands live in urban centers such as Nairobi. Over three-quarters of the refugee population is children, and women and girls continue to face heightened protection risks. The communities hosting refugees, particularly in Kenya's arid and semi-arid northern counties, also face significant socioeconomic and environmental pressures.

For decades, Kenya managed refugees under a camp-based model that restricted movement and limited access to employment and services. This changed with the passage of the 2021 Refugee Act and the launch of the Shirika Plan in March 2025, which signal a transformative shift toward refugee inclusion. By integrating refugees into national systems, enabling greater freedom of movement and directing investment towards refugee-hosting counties, the reforms aim to strengthen local systems and expand access to livelihoods, basic services and protection, fostering greater self-reliance and local development for both refugees and host communities. Yet, the transition comes amid persistent challenges. Refugee-hosting regions are among Kenya's most fragile, grappling with high levels of poverty, drought, food insecurity, weak infrastructure, and high youth unemployment. Public services remain overstretched, and competition over scarce resources (such as land) risks fueling tensions. Ensuring the success of Kenya's progressive approach and aligned reforms requires sustained investment in local systems and opportunities that benefit both refugees and the communities that host them.



David, 11, is a Congolese refugee while Mayiel, 9, is a South Sudanese refugee. They've been friends and classmates for three years.
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PROSPECTS in Kenya

Supported by the Netherlands and implemented by IFC, ILO, UNHCR, UNICEF, and the World Bank, PROSPECTS is helping turn Kenya's progressive policy vision into practice. What makes PROSPECTS different in Kenya is its ability to align directly with the Government's Shirika Plan, ensuring that national commitments are backed by coordinated investment and technical expertise. Working closely with the Government of Kenya and county authorities, the partnership focuses on four pillars:



Strengthening Protection and Social Protection to facilitate civil registration and IDs, bolster child protection and gender-based violence services, and improve refugee access to national social protection systems. Together, these interventions help ensure that refugees and Kenyans alike can access rights, protection and essential services.



Promoting Employment and Livelihoods to support Kenya's shift from camp-based assistance to economic inclusion by strengthening pathways to decent work, supporting entrepreneurship and enterprise development, promoting private-sector investment and expanding access to financial services and livelihood opportunities for refugees and host communities.



Expanding Education and Training to improve access to schools in hosting areas, strengthen teacher training, expanding technical and vocational education and training (TVET), work-based learning and digital skills development. These initiatives help refugees and host youth gain the tools needed for employment and self-reliance.



Investing in Critical Infrastructure by upgrading water, sanitation and renewable energy systems in hosting counties, PROSPECTS improves essential services and creates local employment for both host communities and refugees. These projects also support Kenya's Shirika Plan, which is transforming camps into integrated communities.

This fact sheet covers cumulative results from March 2019-April 2026.

Outcomes and Impact

In Kenya, PROSPECTS has translated its integrated approach into tangible results for both refugees and host communities. Schools have been improved, teachers trained, and children and young people supported to access education, skills development and work-based learning. Refugees and host communities have also benefited from protection and social protection services, employment and entrepreneurship opportunities, financial inclusion, and improved infrastructure, strengthening livelihoods, resilience and access to essential services.

Together, these efforts are enabling tens of thousands of people to move beyond survival toward greater resilience, opportunity, and inclusion.

Protection and Social Protection

- **805,139 refugees and asylum seekers** benefitting from national civil status, identity or legal status documentation
- **57,515 individuals** benefitting from legal support and case management services, including mental health and psychosocial support

Education and Training

- **210,343 children** enrolled in primary or secondary education programs
- **84,696 children** received school support through cash and in-kind aid
- **21,001 individuals** enrolled in quality apprenticeships, internships and work-based learning opportunities

Economic Inclusion

- **10,354 new jobs** and/or self-employment opportunities created
- **11,170 individuals** accessed financial services to support their businesses
- **5,316 individuals** gained entrepreneurship, financial and business skills

Critical Infrastructure

- **20,685 individuals** now accessing basic sanitation services
- **11,149 individuals** gained access to clean water

Note: Some activities have relied on multi-donor contributions.

“As we move into Phase II, the government remains fully committed to creating an enabling environment where refugees can rebuild their livelihoods and achieve self-reliance. The Shirika Plan reflects this vision – ensuring that refugees and host communities actively participate in Kenya’s economic development and stand on their own feet.” - Joshua Owuor, Deputy Commissioner, Department for Refugee Services

Masika’s Story



Photo: ILO

“Before, I employed only three people. Now, twelve refugees are working with me. Their families also benefit.”

Bahati Birego, an entrepreneur in Kakuma, used a loan accessed through an ILO-supported PROSPECTS initiative to expand her hair and beauty business and purchase new equipment. The investment helped her grow her enterprise and increase employment from three to twelve workers, demonstrating how inclusive access to finance can support enterprise growth, employment and more resilient livelihoods.