



Refugee Opportunity Index

Kenya

Access to economic opportunity for refugees and other displaced people is improving in Kenya as the country begins to implement a progressive new refugee law (Refugee Act of 2021) that will end the country's policy of encampment. However, refugee's mobility and ability to work are still significantly constrained as the government has yet to fully implement the new law at the time of research.

Country environment

Refugees	481,048
Asylum seekers	59,001
Internally displaced people (IDPs)	244,000
Stateless people	16,779
Total people of concern	800,828
Nominal GDP (PPP\$ bn)	275
GDP per head (US\$ PPP)	4,996
Population (m)	55

Overall score on
Refugee Opportunity Index **40.6/100**

Source: UNHCR, IDMC

Overview

Overall, Kenya performs similarly on the index compared to the other East African countries with a score of 40.6 out of 100 compared with an average of 42.6 for all three East African countries analyzed. Kenya's admission policies are well instituted and the country collects and publishes disaggregated data on the economic status of refugees.

However, integration programs and assistance for new arrivals continues to be limited in practice. Refugees continue to face mobility restrictions and lack access to financial services due to significant hurdles to getting a national identification document in a timely manner. As the Department of Refugee Affairs continues to implement the Refugee Act of 2021, new programs and greater mobility should improve refugee integration into host communities. While the government currently provides temporary education and healthcare facilities, it will need to ensure refugees have access to these and other services in host communities as the country moves away from encampment and toward broader integration.

Strengths

The Refugee Act of 2021 gives refugees the right to move around the country and shifts away from a policy of encampment to one of integration. However, at the time of research, the new law has not been fully implemented, and many de facto restrictions remain in place. Even so, Kenya still performs well in certain areas. For example, refugees in Kenya can own a business without requiring a local partner, paving the way for entrepreneurs to start businesses and build self reliance. Legal assistance is provided to refugees by UNHCR in partnership with the Legal Consortium of Kenya. There is evidence that cash assistance is delivered via bank or mobile money accounts, which can help encourage financial inclusion among the displaced population. National labor rights and job benefits are extended to some displaced people with the legal right to work in Kenya, such as refugees, but this means some displaced people are not covered by these protections.

Challenges

While ending the policy of encampment is the goal of Kenya's new refugee policy, many elements remain unimplemented and refugees still face restrictions on where they can live and work, which limits their ability to access economic opportunity. Work permits are still required for many displaced people and can be difficult to get, further limiting refugees' ability to participate in the economy. Many processes, such as ascertaining a national identification document or recognizing foreign credentials, exist but can be difficult or costly for refugees to navigate. Further implementation of the new 2021 law should make these processes easier and more streamlined, simplifying the process for refugee integration.



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Kenya



Category	Score
1 Admissions, integration and resettlement	54.2
2 Basic rights and access to services	25.2
3 Employment conditions	42.4

Sub-category	Score
1.1 Admissions policies	83.3
1.2 Refugee resettlement and integration programs	25.0
1.3 Assistance for new arrivals	25.0
1.4 Data for policy monitoring and evaluation	83.3
2.1 Freedom of movement	0.0
2.2 Right to hold a national identification document	0.0
2.3 Property rights and access to housing	25.0
2.4 Access to education and healthcare	40.0
2.5 Financial inclusion	16.7
2.6 Equality between women and men	69.6
3.1 Employment policies and laws	16.0
3.2 Job-seeking support	44.4
3.3 Support for entrepreneurship	66.7

Strengths of Kenya's enabling environment

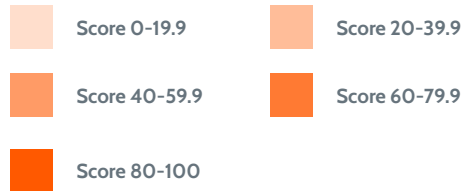
- 1.2.1) Existence of a national policy on admissions
- 2.4.2) Recognition of foreign qualifications
- 2.5.4) Digital cash assistance payments
- 3.3.1) Refugee right to own a business
- 3.3.2) Lack of requirement for a local partner

Focus areas

- 1.1.3) Recognition of climate change and disaster-related displacement
- 1.3.3) Integration education
- 2.1.1) Right to move freely within host country
- 3.1.1) Right to employment
- 3.1.5) Local job market distortions



Opportunity Index (overall score)		40.6/100
1	Admissions, integration and resettlement	54.2
1.1	Admissions policies	83.3
1.1.1	Participation in international agreements	100
1.1.2	Existence of a national policy on admissions	100
1.1.3	Recognition of climate change and disaster-related displacement	0
1.1.4	Existence of national refugee agency	100
1.2	Refugee resettlement and integration programs	25
1.2.1	National policy on refugee resettlement	100
1.2.2	Matched resettlement	0
1.2.3	Family reunification	0
1.2.4	Pathway to citizenship	0
1.3	Assistance for new arrivals	25
1.3.1	Language education	0
1.3.2	Legal assistance	100
1.3.3	Integration education	0
1.3.4	Cash assistance	0
1.4	Data for policy monitoring and evaluation	83.3
1.4.1	Collecting and publishing data	66.7
1.4.2	Disaggregated data	100
2	Basic rights and access to services	25.2
2.1	Freedom of movement	0
2.1.1	Right to move freely within host country	0
2.1.2	Residence restrictions	0
2.1.3	Work location restrictions	0
2.2	Right to hold a national identification document	0
2.2.1	Right to a national identity document	0
2.3	Property rights and access to housing	25
2.3.1	Property ownership rights	25
2.3.2	Access to housing	25
2.4	Access to education and healthcare	40
2.4.1	Access to education	25
2.4.2	Recognition of foreign qualifications	100
2.4.3	Access to healthcare	25
2.5	Financial inclusion	16.7
2.5.1	Requirements for opening bank and mobile money accounts	0
2.5.2	Stringency of ID requirements	0
2.5.3	Non-discrimination provision	0
2.5.4	Digital cash assistance payments	100
2.6	Equality between men and women	69.6
2.6.1	Equal requirements obtain a national identity document	100
2.6.2	Equal property rights	100
2.6.3	Equal requirements for a bank account	100
2.6.4	Equal business ownership	0
2.6.5	Gender equality	48.2
3	Employment conditions	42.4
3.1	Employment policies and laws	16
3.1.1	Right to employment	0
3.1.2	Job permit requirement	0
3.1.3	Restrictive work permits	0
3.1.4	Work permit renewal	100
3.1.5	Local job market distortions	0
3.2	Job-seeking support	44.4
3.2.1	Inclusive labor rights and protections	66.7
3.2.2	Government Information on hiring disadvantaged groups	0
3.2.3	NGO information on hiring disadvantaged groups	0
3.3	Support for entrepreneurship	66.7
3.3.1	Refugee right to own a business	100
3.3.2	Lack of requirement for a local partner	100
3.3.3	Access to finance for businesses	0





About the Refugee Opportunity Index

Refugees' self-reliance depends on unfettered access to economic opportunity in their host communities, yet unequal and inconsistent policies often create unintended barriers and constraints to refugee employment and entrepreneurship.

Recognizing the immense economic potential of refugees, the Refugee Opportunity Index (ROI) seeks to measure the extent to which a country's policy environment enables access to economic opportunity for refugees within their host communities. The ROI includes 43 qualitative and quantitative indicators organized into 13 sub-categories and 3 categories.

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For further information, please contact:

Economist Impact

Durukhshan Esmati, Project lead: durukhshanesmati@economist.com