

# Challenges that South Sudanese Refugees Face in their Livelihood Strategies, Eldoret City, Kenya

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## ABSTRACT

Refugees are increasing worldwide and according to United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), their hosting is the preserve of the destination countries and the international community. Support to refugees is sometimes challenging because refugee agencies and host governments lack adequate resources to take care of their welfare. Most of the refugees are left to fend for themselves. The main objective of this study was to establish the challenges that South Sudanese refugees face in their livelihood strategies in Eldoret City. The study incorporated both the individualist theory and the model developed by Harris and Todaro. The study adopted a descriptive research design and utilized mixed methods approach. The target population comprised of all adult South Sudanese living in Eldoret City, Kenya. The population size was 1396 adults. The sample size of the study as determined by Krejcie and Morgan formulae was 301. The respondents were picked from their households using systematic sampling technique in which every 5<sup>th</sup> household was selected until the desired sample (n=301) was reached. The study instruments included a questionnaire and interview guide. Three hundred and one questionnaires were disseminated to refugees while seven (7) interviews were conducted for government officers. Data was coded, entered and cleaned with the aid of SPSS software. Quantitative analysis was done using descriptive statistics while qualitative data was thematically analyzed and interpreted. The quantitative findings of the study were presented using tables and charts while the qualitative data was presented using themes, narrative descriptions and use of participant quotes. The study findings indicated that 30.2% of the refugees believed that provision of job opportunities could be a way out to solve the challenges they have on livelihoods. Data from qualitative interviews indicated that sometimes refugees lack money to use, and in such situations the religious members assist them. In addition, other challenges experienced include discrimination by landlords and security enforcement officers. The challenges experienced on refugee livelihoods was exacerbated by inadequate refugee funding. The study concluded that there was a myriad of challenges which refugees face in their day-to-day life and engagement in business is not able to solve most of these challenges.

The study recommends provision of jobs and funds to help urban refugees mitigate on challenges.

**Keywords:** Challengers, Refugees and Livelihood.

## Background to the Study

Despite the enticing and increasing move to urban centres, urban life has challenges too to refugees' livelihood, thus a lot of dynamism on livelihood strategies. According to CARE (2014), half a million Syrian refugees living in urban areas in Jordan are struggling more than ever to cope with inadequate housing, high debts, rising costs of living and educational challenges for their children. According to CARE's household assessment of more than 2,200 Syrian refugees, 90 percent of the refugees are living in debt to relatives, landlords, shopkeepers and neighbors and rents have increased by almost a third in the past year. The insecurity to provide for their families causes increasing levels of stress and sets women at risk of sexual exploitation. In many cases, young sons become the family's breadwinner to make ends meet. Three years after the Syria crisis started refugee families are becoming more and more destitute. More than 80 percent of the refugees in Jordan do not live in camps, but in poor neighborhoods in the urban areas or the outskirts of Jordan's cities, often in

inadequate dwellings, informal tented settlements and makeshift shelters. Often, they have to share tiny, run-down flats with more than one family.

In the international refugee regime, the issue of how to understand and support the livelihoods of refugees began to emerge as a pressing agenda around the beginning of this century. Its emergence is largely due to the failure of the international refugee regime to provide any effective solutions for the numerous protracted refugee situations. Currently, over two-thirds of refugees in the world are trapped in prolonged exile in poor developing regions where host states and communities often have scarce resources (Milner & Loescher, 2011). With the declining financial commitment of the international donor society, it has become clear that UNHCR is unable to ensure essential needs for all prolonged refugee populations (Jamal, 2000).

Urban refugees face similar challenges as the urban poor such as growing slum areas, rising unemployment rates, insecure housing access, increased pressure on state and community resources, compounded with barriers such as xenophobia and insecure legal status that makes them more vulnerable to exploitation and marginalization. The situation of Columbian refugees in Ecuador (Lo, 2005) as cited in De Vriese (2006) illustrates this rather sharply: unlike the urban poor with whom they share many hardships, Columbians face the additional strains of severe discrimination, problems regarding legal status. They also lack the community and family networks that most Ecuadorians depend upon for daily survival and in times of crisis, and so their livelihood tends to be of a gamble. Apart from economic limitations, other factors may limit the pursuit of refugee livelihoods. For example, although the refugee certificate issued by the Government of Gabon implies the right to engage in income-generating activities similar in all ways to that of a Gabonese national, refugees encounter considerable difficulties or are not allowed to carry out economic activities due to restrictions imposed by the local authorities and employers. The refugee certificate issued by the national government does not seem to be recognized by all arms of the government services leading to harassment at barriers and check-points (Stone and De Vriese, 2004).

As argued by Durieux and McAdam (2004), there is no doubt that a large number of states - no matter how good their intentions - lack the resources to immediately grant the full range of the 1951 Refugee Convention rights to sudden large influxes of refugees. It is a sad but common feature of mass influx situations that refugees are denied many of the economic and social protections stipulated by the Convention. Nevertheless, Durieux and McAdam continue by stating that while some rights restrictions may be justifiable during the initial emergency phase of a mass influx, protection should, in the spirit of the Convention, improve over time rather than stagnate or deteriorate. Except a handful of refugees who are entirely dependent on remittances and charitable support from fellow refugees and the church, a number of refugees are making a living in the private sector affirms Omata (2012). Studies have shown that even in countries where refugees are restricted in work, in reality, refugees do engage in petty trading or gain employment in small-and medium-sized businesses (Omata, 2012; Pavanello et al. 2010). Majority refugees are also self-employed and can even create jobs and new markets for the host economy. Refugees often face greater expenses than other urban poor because of costs associated with bribes, often related to the lack of documentation. Refugees are discriminated against by landlords and employers who often require higher rents or extra “fees”. Refugees are targeted by criminals, who know they are less likely to seek recourse. The poor are more likely to rely on child labour and to engage in risky coping strategies including illegal and criminal activities such as prostitution and smuggling. Accessing public health and education services may pose a financial burden on refugees that exceed the burden experienced by other urban poor. In many cases financial shocks come in the form of school fees and hospital bills that exceed their monthly income and may indebt them to their community or employers (UNHCR, 2011).

Stakeholders on refugees’ livelihood are constrained by certain legal frameworks that guide refugees’ life and which often define who they are and their relations to host nations. In all these, there are constant meanings from diverse instruments that stakeholders use. Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) in the Article 23.1, and in the Article 6 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights (ICESCR); The Right to Work is a right established which allows men and women of all ages and backgrounds to live in

dignity and to become self-reliant. According to Articles 17, 18 and 19 of the 1951 Geneva Convention, this right to work includes refugees.

Other challenges affecting refugees in urban centres include prostitution and theft which Conway (2004) identifies as survival strategies. This, he points were more present in Banjul than in the rural camp settings. This can be attributed to two factors: a) the high population density of the urban context and competition over resources, making people highly vulnerable and desperate, and b) easy access to activities that are harmful and illegal. Often, refugees suffer from the absence of civil, social and economic rights including freedom of movement and residence, freedom of speech and assembly, fair trial, property rights, the right to engage in wage labour, self-employment and the conclusion of valid contracts, access to school education, access to credit; protection against physical and sexual abuse, harassment, unlawful detention and deportation. De Vriese (2006) states that; by depriving refugees from access to education, refugees will lack the means to a better life for their children in any future durable solution. Education is a way to prevent the recurrence of violence and to create economic opportunities that allow refugees to become self-reliant, both in their situation as refugees and in the event of a durable solution.

With the declining financial commitment of the international donor society, it has become clear that UNHCR is unable to ensure essential needs for all prolonged refugee populations (Jamal 2000). These challenges have pressed UNHCR and other refugee-supporting agencies to pay attention to refugees' economic capacity and to improve their understanding of how refugees construct their livelihoods (Conway, 2004). For example, in launching the Refugee Livelihood Project in 2003, the Evaluation and Policy Analysis Unit of UNHCR expressed its interest in enhancing its understanding of refugees' livelihood strategies and promoting sustainable livelihoods in protracted refugee situations (Omata, 2013; UNHCR, 2003). Consequently, Colombian refugees must sustain illegal livelihoods during the asylum application process. Lo (2005) argues that removing the restriction on asylum-seekers will reduce the fear associated with working illegally, but will not help Colombians find work.

According to Ecuadorian law, asylum-seekers are not permitted to work until their legal status is resolved. The waiting period, which can be as long as one year, is full of fear and anxiety and is more stressful because of the refugees' inability to legally engage in formal employment, the lack of labour opportunities and discrimination. In contrast, the ability of Liberian refugees in Ghana to exercise the rights of freedom of movement, access to employment and public education has contributed to their relative success to become self-reliant (Dick, 2002). It is worth noting that the categorizing of refugee strategies is rather superficial, especially given that most households do not limit themselves to one activity. On the contrary, many authors have found that diversification is often used as a livelihood strategy. By carrying out different income-generating activities, refugees try to make the most of the opportunities available to them. The strategies are not just limited to diversification of activities but also of location. As illustrated by Levron (2006) Liberian and Sierra Leonean refugee households in Guinea strategized their settlement to diversify their resources. The situation of urban refugees living in Uganda's capital Kampala is less conducive. According to Machiavelli (2003), an estimated 15,000 refugees live in Kampala but are unable to fully use their skills for the benefit of their families or the Ugandan economy. This is mainly caused by the failure of Ugandan law to give refugees legal rights to work.

Refugees have limited freedom of movement, difficulty getting permission to work, no access to land for agricultural production, and no access to the credit or saving sector. Essentially, the refugees are confined to the camp areas. Further research by Horst (2001), on the situation of Somali refugees in Dadaab, states that the search for a livelihood is mainly complicated by the following two factors. First, Somali refugees are forced into the "informal sector" because their economic activities are considered illegal given the fact that they are not granted work permits. Second, the location of the Dadaab refugee camp further complicates attempts to secure a livelihood because the camp is located in an ecologically marginal area where refugees can hardly fall back on available natural resources.

In urban settings, protection and livelihoods are closely intertwined. Forcibly displaced people need to acquire goods and services, and cash every day, but many aspects of urban settings make the pursuit of livelihoods risky. Host government policy often makes it illegal for refugees to work or to own property or businesses. Even in situations where refugees can legally work, access to decent employment continues to be a huge obstacle. Cases of discrimination and harassment by the state (police, immigration authorities) can make it difficult for refugees to move around freely to work or engage in economic activities (UNHCR, 2011). This is despite instruments such as Geneva Convention, International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), and Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) in their various stipulations upholding and linking right to life with certain obligations.

According to Nahr (2015), “Syrian refugee women living in Iraq’s host communities are more vulnerable to exploitation and face more unsanitary living conditions than those in refugee camps”, says an international women’s charity. “Some women squat, some rent unfinished buildings that are exposed to rain and wind where the kitchen is a building site. They have their own life but their vulnerability increases because the protection [of the refugee camp] is not there,” said Hendessi. “When Syrian women go out to find work, we hear many reports they are told, ‘Either you sleep with me or you don’t get a job’.” Female refugees from Syria’s conflict, who seek a normal life and some autonomy by living outside the camps, live in “grotty and poorly equipped” buildings because they have little money to afford better accommodation, said Hendessi, regional director for the Middle East and Europe ([www.womenforwomeninternational.org.uk](http://www.womenforwomeninternational.org.uk)).

In conclusion, the challenges faced by Syrian refugees living in urban areas, including inadequate housing, high debt, and rising costs of living. Many refugees rely on child labor or engage in risky coping strategies such as prostitution and smuggling. Female refugees living outside of camps are particularly vulnerable to exploitation and unsanitary living conditions. These challenges are exacerbated by discrimination from landlords and employers, and financial burdens associated with accessing public services.

### **Limitation of the Study**

The study was limited by the fact that the South Sudan refugees could not be accessed in large numbers, as they opted to be represented by their community leaders. It is also worth noting that a good number of refugees, especially the elderly had language barrier, such that they were unable to communicate effectively either using Kiswahili or English. The inability to access the refugees and language barrier was overcome by getting them through their community leaders and translators respectively. The study was also affected by fear on the part of the South Sudan refugees. The refugees sometimes were doubtful of some of the probing questions asked to them by the researcher. This was necessitated by the nature of their citizenry; being refugees does not give them the freedom to associate, just the way Kenyan citizens would do. So, they were fearful sometime and this made them not to divulge adequate information. To overcome this, the researcher attempted to assure them anonymity and hence treating the information obtained as confidential.

### **Theoretical Framework**

The study used the individualist theory of migration proposed by (John Locke's (1689). The key texts where Locke proposed his ideas include "Two Treatises of Government", where he laid out his theories on natural rights, the social contract, and the role of government. These works have had a profound influence on the development of political thought and are foundational to classical liberalism. Harris and Todaro (1970) proposed the Harris-Todaro Model, which is anchored on individualistic theory. The model explains rural-urban migration in developing countries. This It postulates that refugees move from designated camps as a matter of personal benefits. It is a rationally guided decision whereby individuals are guided by their skills e.g. educational level, training and work experience. The theory was used to compare agricultural wages and the wages earned from the manufacturing sectors in the cities. The refugee livelihood strategies have a close link to this. They choose to migrate to urban settings in pursuit of good life i.e. good health, careers, educational systems and economic opportunities. The search for personal survival causes refugees to leave camps. Harris and Todaro are complimented by Betts et al (2014) who term this search ‘refugee economies. Their meaning is



a compound terminology which encompasses stakeholders benefitting from refugees as a business, it again links itself to the subject of this research in a way of terming their livelihood strategies as their economy.

According to Betts et'al (2014), it is stated that, 'Refugee economies' remain under-researched and poorly understood. Few economists work on refugees. There is a lack of good data available on the economic lives of displaced populations. Existing economic work on refugees tends to focus narrowly on refugee livelihoods or on the impact on host states. Yet, understanding these economic systems may hold the key to rethinking our entire approach to refugee assistance. If we can improve our knowledge of the resource allocation systems that shape refugees' lives and opportunities, then we may be able to understand the mechanisms.

## Research Design and Methodology

A research design, as outlined by Kombo and Tromp (2006), serves as a specific framework that guides a researcher in conducting a study. They describe it as the foundational structure of research, acting as the cohesive force that integrates various components of a research project. Gay, Mills, and Airasian (2009) characterize a research design as a comprehensive plan devised for investigating a particular problem, encompassing elements such as literature review, discussion of the design itself, methodologies, and data analysis techniques. They emphasize that a well-thought-out research design is crucial as it compels researchers to consider all facets of the study, aids in its evaluation, and ensures methodological rigor, ultimately leading to higher quality research. Similarly, Kothari (2008) views a research design as a blueprint essential for data collection, measurement, and analysis, outlining the overall strategy for a study. The study adopted a descriptive design. This design is deemed appropriate because it provides information as it is on a practical perspective. While adopting mixed methods, explanatory approach (Almeida, 2018) was used, in which the questionnaire was utilized as the main tool to collect quantitative data and interview schedule as a supplementary tool. Mixed methods approach was used because it served to help validate and corroborate the findings (Mertens, 2015), and at the same time it provides flexibility in addressing multiple types of research questions (Greene, 2007). The qualitative data from the questionnaires was used to supplement quantitative data from the questionnaires and hence mixed methods, explanatory approach. Therefore, quantitative data was given more weight (high) because the research goal was to quantify refugees' transition livelihood strategies, challenges and mitigation efforts on refugees' challenges.

## Sampling Technique

The researcher obtained information on South Sudanese households from the Refugee Affairs Secretariat in Eldoret. The refugees live in private rented apartments in the expansive Kapsoya estate. Households were identified using the refugee register available at the Refugee Affairs Secretariat, then contacting them via their telephone contacts. For any given household, the study used systematic sampling in which every  $k^{\text{th}}$  ( $k=3, 4, 5, 10...$ etc) household was selected, so that the desired sample of 301 would be reached. Systematic sampling is a probability sampling method where every  $k^{\text{th}}$  element in a population is selected for inclusion in a sample. The value of  $k$  was determined by dividing the size of the population by the desired sample size. This sampling method is often used in situations where the population is too large to be enumerated, and a simple random sample is impractical. For example, if a researcher wants to select a sample of 100 individuals from a population of 1000, the researcher would select every 10th element ( $1000/100=10$ ).

In the study, the desired sample was based on the total number of households in the refugee community, and this was 1396. To obtain the  $k$ , 1396 was divided by the sample ( $n=301$ ) to obtain 4.637, which is approximately 5. Therefore, from the registry at the refugee office, every 5<sup>th</sup> household was selected until the 301 household is reached. The study also used purposive sampling technique to get information from experts and persons who were knowledgeable about refugee issues. The goal is to help researcher as Mugenda puts it, removing biasness during the sampling in a study (Mugenda, 1999).

## Sample Size

Considering the accessible population of 1396, the Krejcie and Morgan (1970) Formulae for determining the sample size was used as follows:

$$x^2N(1 - p)$$

$$n = \frac{x^2N(1 - p)}{d^2(N - 1) + x^2p(1 - p)}$$

$X^2$  =table values of chi-square at d.f. =1 for desired confidence level (0.5=3.841)

N= Population size

P=population proportion (assumed to be 0.5) d=degree of accuracy (expressed as a proportion)

Substituting for N=1396, we have

$$n = \frac{3.841 * 1396 * 0.5(1 - 0.5)}{0.0025(1396 - 1) + 0.025(1 - 0.5)}$$

$$= 301.$$

Therefore the sample size 301

$$x^2N(1 - p)$$

$$n = \frac{x^2N(1 - p)}{d^2(N - 1) + x^2p(1 - p)}$$

$$n = \frac{3.841 * 24 * 0.5(1 - 0.5)}{0.0025(24 - 1) + 0.025(1 - 0.5)}$$

## Data Collection Instruments

The researcher collected data from the urban South Sudanese refugees in Kapsoya estate, Eldoret City, UasinGishu County, Kenya. Because matters of refugees involve security issues of hosting governments, it implied there was need to access the officers of the state and other non-state actors that work with the refugees. The state actors included Ministry of Special programmes, County commissioner and Area chief, while the non-state actors Kenya Red Cross Society, North rift region, international organization for Migration (IOM), Refugee affairs secretariat and diocese of Eldoret. These organizations were instrumental in giving relevant data inform of statistics at their disposal when sought.

This study employed data collection by use of questionnaires. This method was good because it allowed for both face-to-face interaction with respondents while at the same time where the respondents are busy, one can drop an instrument for later collection. Questionnaires enabled all participants to respond to the same standard set of questions, and this ensured uniformity, thus ensuring that the data can be compared and analyzed systematically (Fowler, 2013). Additionally, Questionnaires offered a relatively low-cost method for collecting large amounts of data as the tool can distributed to many participants simultaneously without the need for extensive resources (Babbie, 2020). The questionnaires were also designed to collect both quantitative numerical data and qualitative information, providing a holistic view of the research subject (Creswell & Creswell, 2017).

## Validity and Reliability

To determine and improve the validity and reliability, the study put emphasis on sources of gathering scholarly materials to bring about relevancy, then data collection tools were subjected to checks and corrections as advised to ensure this is attained. The researcher ensured right persons are sought for after the right sampling technique is approved. Kothari (2004) states that the reliability refers to the ability of the test to consistently yield the same result on repetition. Accordingly, reliability therefore implies the degree to which a research instrument yields consistent results or data after repeated trials. In normal circumstances, instruments must also be coherent with the existing body of thoughts.

## Data Collection

Data was collected via primary and secondary sources. The primary source included a structured questionnaire and interview schedules, while the secondary sources included data from other research works. The questionnaire was mostly used to collect quantitative data while the interviews schedules were used to collect qualitative data. On the day of data collection, questionnaires were disseminated to designated respondents, who would then fill and hand it back to the researcher. Responses from oral interviews were captured as per the objective in the interview schedules.

## Study Findings

The study findings indicated that 75(24.9%) of the refugees face inadequate housing was a challenge. However, 91(30.2%) were undecided while 60(19.9%) strongly disagreed that inadequate housing was a challenge. A higher proportion of 105(34.9%) of the refugees strongly agreed that high debts, rising costs of living was a challenge. Another challenge in which 135(44.9%) strongly agreed costs relating to rent. Insecurity to provide for their families was another challenge was as agreed and strongly agreed by 135 (44.9%) and 75(24.9%) respectively. Other challenges experienced by the refugees include stress sexual exploitation 135(44.9%), unconditional housing -exposed to rain and wind 106(35.2%) and high costs associated with bribes as agreed and strongly agreed by 121(40.2%) and 105(34.9%) respectively (Table 1). Other challenges include being discriminated against by landlords and employers 61(20.3%) agree and (75(24.9%) strongly agree, prostitution and theft with 135 (44.9%) agreeing and 45(15.0%) strongly agreeing so; deprivation of adequate funding as agreed 166 (55.1%) strongly agreed by 60(19.9%); Inadequate refugee funding 90 (29.9%) agree and 150 (49.8%) strongly agree and lack of sufficient food security tied to inadequate food rations as agreed by 106 (35.2%) and strongly agreed by 60(19.9%). More challenges are depicted in Table 5.1.

**Table 5.1 Challenges Experienced by refugees in Livelihood Strategies**

Challenges	Strongly disagree		Disagree		Neutral		Agree		Strongly agree	
	N	N%	N	N%	N	N%	N	N%	N	N%
Inadequate housing	60	19.9	91	30.2	0	0.0	60	19.9	75	24.9
High debts, rising costs of living	15	5.0	60	19.9	0	0.0	76	25.2	105	34.9
Educational challenges	15	5.0	15	5.0	15	5.0	181	60.1	60	19.9
Rent costs	15	5.0	15	5.0	0	0.0	136	45.2	135	44.9
Insecurity to provide for their families	0	0.0	30	10.0	61	20.3	135	44.9	75	24.9
Stress sexual exploitation	15	5.0	76	25.2	45	15.0	135	44.9	15	5.0

Unconditional housing-exposed to rain and wind	30	10.0	105	34.9	60	19.9	106	35.2	0	0.0
High costs associated with bribes	0	0.0	30	10.0	30	10.0	121	40.2	105	34.9
Discriminated against by landlords and employers	0	0.0	105	34.9	60	19.9	61	20.3	75	24.9
Prostitution and theft	15	5.0	76	25.2	30	10.0	135	44.9	45	15.0

Source: Research findings, 2021

The study findings indicate that there is a myriad of challenges that the South Sudanese refugees experience. However, some are prominent, and they include high debts and increasing cost of living, educational challenges where they may not access funding because they are foreigners, high cost of house rent and insecurity. Other prominent challenges include high costs associated with bribes after being harassed by policemen, prostitution and theft, inadequate refugee funding, lack of sufficient food security tied to inadequate food rations, lack of access to credit, rampant fear of security personnel, rampant prejudice, dealing with tenants and local competition for their businesses. Often there is no action taken due to harassment by the policemen since they are the ones who are supposed to provide security.

Interview for in depth information from one of the officers who works with the office of refugees indicated that the Sudanese's nationals experience challenges from corrupt locals (Kenyans). For instance, to open their MPESA business, they need registration and because they cannot register, they use Kenyans who have identity cards, and in the process they get cheated by the Kenyans. Refugees coded 7 said that:

*'The Uasin Gishu county revenue staff visits us at the shop and demand for business permits and because we are aliens they harass us and demand bribes. In some situation they forcefully pick our items from the shop if one is unable to pay.'*

Another problem that relates to not being a Kenyan is that they cannot be able to register CBOs and freedom of association is not guaranteed. They cannot also be able to register to borrow loans and often depend on loans borrowed from individuals. With regard to business registration, rogue county employees take advantage of them by making them to pay more because they are at the mercy of these rogue policemen. The police officers understand too well that those with business especially petty informal ones do not have any form of registration and as such they harass them. Sometime they also get hostilities from the host communities. For businesses such as transport (taxi), NTSA does not recognize refugee documentation, and as such they operate their transport business in very restrictive environments.

## Illiteracy

The urban South Sudanese have a challenge in education in that a good number of the adults do not know how to read and write. They also have fees problems while attempting to put their children in school especially post primary and secondary levels. Whereas United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) steps in to educate children / pupils who score highly in standard 8, those who are not lucky to get good grades in class 8, remain under sponsorship of the parents who are poor. This can get worse when there is failure on reception of remittances by close family members living back home and abroad. The recent covid-19 outbreak March – October in 2020 and April - June, 2021 drove this reality home to the urban refugees in Kapsoya.

When schools fully re-opened in October, 2020, a good number of the children who had gone back to Kakuma Refugee Camp in Turkana West, had to be brought back. Covid-19 school closures subjected the refugee families to starvation in the urban centres necessitating return to the camps. To bring back the pupils / students to Eldoret, the parents and other sponsors had to sacrifice more resources and this was a real constrain to them (Lokiru, 2009).



South Sudanese Refugees face many challenges on their livelihoods both in camps and urban residence. The assistance provided to them is inadequate due to policy and resource constraints from the remittances by the family members and other actors outside the host country. This makes them to devise livelihood strategies that enable them access supplementary assistance and support in order to safeguard their livelihoods. Essentially, livelihoods strategies are the ways in which, families deploy their diverse assets – i.e. financial, social, human, natural and physical assets and use their capabilities in order to meet their objectives.

Refugees strategies and efforts to develop and protect livelihoods include deliberate maintenance and formation of social networks that enable them to exploit opportunities within, around and beyond the refugee camp (Jacobsen, 2002). Often displaced populations face challenging environments and this can impose economic environmental and security burdens on their hosts. A good example (Lo, 2005), the economic crisis in Ecuador has resulted in high levels of discrimination against Columbians as they compete for resources and employment opportunities.

The other challenge that South Sudanese face is language “barrier” this is commonly noticed when interacting with adult refugees who cannot learn Kiswahili in schools due to age factor. Although some of them have enrolled as adult learners within Kapsoya Centre, their manner of attendance is not adequate. The teaching programme is organized by the Light House leaders who help the adult Sudanese to know how to read and write (Researcher; June 2002).

### Inadequate Housing

Housing system in any urban area is always a challenge to many people even under normal urbanization residence. The existence of slum centres in our major towns affirms this, many times coupled with ethnic enclaves typical in such areas. What encourages these socio-cultural and economic orientation where people tend to be attracted to certain areas of residence following their ethnic communities (Kericho Ndogo, Kisumu Ndogo”, Kiamba estates) syndrome. It is the power of language that persuades this group of people into settling together in such areas. The other common practice can be nature of trade, i.e. fish mongering etc.

For South Sudanese in Eldoret Kapsoya centre is ideal for them because there is fairly good housing system. The South Sudanese moved in here when Kapsoya was a newly emerging estate in late 1990s to 2000s with large spaces for construction of houses. This attracted many Sudanese refugees and Kenya government luckily agreed to allow the refugees to live here. However, the local Kenyan population also quickly moved into this place by acquiring pieces of land for building rental houses.

**Table 5.2: Challenges Experienced by Refugees in Livelihood Strategies**

Challenges	Strongly disagree		Disagree		Neutral		Agree		Strongly agree	
	N	N%	N	N%	N	N%	N	N%	N	N%
Deprivation of adequate funding	15	5.0	0	0.0	15	5.0	166	55.1	60	19.9
Inadequate refugee funding	15	5.0	15	5.0	15	5.0	90	29.9	150	49.8
Lack of sufficient food security tied to inadequate food rations	30	10.0	90	29.9	15	5.0	106	35.2	60	19.9
Lack of adequate space and structures for longer-term food storage	45	15.0	135	44.9	0	0.0	61	20.3	45	15.0
Lack of access to credit	0	0.0	30	10.0	0	0.0	151	50.2	60	19.9

Rampant fear of security personnel	45	15.0	0	0.0	30	10.0	136	45.2	75	24.9
Rampant prejudice	45	15.0	0	0.0	30	10.0	121	40.2	105	34.9
Language problem makes communication hard	30	10.0	0	0.0	15	5.0	121	40.2	135	44.9
Dealing with tenants	15	5.0	0	0.0	15	5.0	151	50.2	105	34.9
Local competition	15	5.0	0	0.0	30	10.0	91	30.2	165	54.8

Source: Research findings, 2021

Since the refugees are assumed to get financial support from various bodies i.e. United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), NGO's, charitable organizations and that some of them are rich the rent rates went up so suddenly. The result of this being that refugees are not of the same socio-economic standing, some of them are very poor only that they share same status of being refugees. Due to this status, a number of refugees live in dilapidated houses.

The other reason for poor housing is that United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) funding continues to dwindle even in the camps where they support refugees. This is also being felt by the urban refugees because they also lack regular remittances etc. From the above, it is clear that, despite the good housing system in Kapsoya, the rent rates are too high for the refugees of low-income i.e. petty traders, young families whose incomes are hardly enough to support their children in schools.

Critically this is a socio-economic pressure. It is widely perceived that refugees are a drain on national resources and social-economic burden to the state (Horil 2007, Jacobson 2007). The refugees lack employment and hence the good reason why in most cases host governments confine refugees to the camps. Housing as a social concern remains a big challenge even to the host communities especially in urban cities. Due to this, the Kenya national government since 2013 has been attempting constructing houses to the working class, but it has not been able to fully accomplish this. This is due to lack of adequate funding by the government and the sponsoring partners.

## Security Challenges

Encampment policies are a deliberate strategy to exert control over refugees in a contexts of real and perceived security concerns (Bailey 2004), the security concern has many faces i.e. in a way refugees are seen as a threat to host state (Crisp, 2009), a threat to their country of origin (Soma, 2001) and a threat to themselves (Hori, 2009). The Urban South Sudanese refugees experience police harassment in their social interactions business and even Association wise i.e. church or religious groupings. This is generally experienced despite the Alien certificate, that they possess and no wonder they simply see it as extortion.

In Egypt, before 1995 urban refugees had substantial rights to education and livelihood opportunities. However, following an Assassination attempt on Egyptian president which was carried out by Sudanese extremists the Freedom of urban refugees were cut (Grapska, 2006). To counter frequent police harassment on the South Sudanese refugees, they have formed community leaders groups within the residences with the mandate of preventing any arrests. They operate a register of all their people almost on a daily basis which is manned by older people and a group of young informed boys and girls. In case of any arrests, once reported they take up the issue with the relevant authority to resolve the matter amicably (Researcher, 2022). This approach has proved fruitful as it has tamed their youth from pad associations especially those that they may span into long night stays - i.e youth parties, birthday bashes etc.

Before the establishment of community leadership's many of their youth were arrested charged in courts and even jailed in Kenyan prisons. However, with the operationalization of community leadership, close contact

with national government official i.e. assistant chiefs and chiefs. This trend has gone down. If there is any security threat, the community leaders address it through their Barasas together with the Kenyan authorities.

### **Stress and sexual exploitation of South Sudanese refugees in Eldoret City**

According to Usdin et al (2000), sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) remains a disturbing phenomenon which exists in all areas of the world. It affects individuals, societies and Nations. Given its difficulties, sexual and gender-based violence is best addressed by multiple actors and subsectors, who should assist in identification and security assuring measures.

In Kapsoya centre where Urban South Sudanese live, it is not very common. This is because security measures put in place by the community leaders. The two Sudanese ethnic groups who live in Kapsoya i.e. the Nuer and Dinka groups administer heavy penalties to the parties in case it occurs especially among their youth. On the other hand, Kenyan authorities have also strict measures in dealing with sexual offences and rape and this has acted as deterrence restraining Kenyans from such attempts on refugees in their areas of residence.

As indicated by United Nations Population Fund, UNFPA (2013), sexual and gender-based violence, includes sexual threats, exploitation, humiliation, assaults, molestation etc. Female genital mutilation and other harmful traditional practices (such as early marriages, which increase illness and death) are forms of sexual and genderbased violence against women which cannot be justified on the grounds of customs or culture (Van, 2004). The UN Declaration on the elimination of violence against women defines gender-based violence (GBV) as any act of violence that results in physical, sexual or psychological suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary denial of liberty.

According to South Sudanese community leader in Eldoret, Kapsoya estate, in case of sexual harassment resulting to especially pregnancy the man involved is made to pay a heavy fine and the girl involved can easily be declared as a social misfit. This is what restrains their youth from such engagements. In their inter community interactions with Kenyan families this practice has been made clear to them so that no Kenyan youth can be involved in such acts. The national security agencies have also been informed accordingly especially the police. In Kenya the sexual offences Act of 2006 is entirely committed to the prevention of UN response to sexual violence through different minimum punishing guidelines and improved sentences ranging between ten years to life imprisonment. All the offences are put under one law for sentencing to be realized, technological advancement such as DNA testing is used to help in proof of such offences.

In comparison with Somali community, in case of disputes, they use a traditional dispute resolution called Maslahah Court. This is a system that is rooted in Somali culture where community members, mainly men intervene informally to resolve a communal conflict.

The other challenge faced by South Sudanese refugees in Eldoret is high cost of bribes while looking for business permits. This is because they are holders of Alien Identification Cards, which are not easily recognized by some unscrupulous government officials. During application for such, they get frustrated and more often they have to use Kenyan friends to acquire these permits. Even where heavy bribes have been used, it takes another long time to process the permits and this causes fatigue to the refugees as it impedes in their livelihoods. However according to United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), they practice non-tolerance to bribery whether it is for business registration or for third country resettlement. If it happens, and one is caught practicing it, he or she definitely loses their job. The Kenyan government officials have also been trained to shun taking bribes from refugees.

### **Discrimination by Landlords in as far as Tenancy is concerned**

The UN Refugee Agency United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) has left the issue of housing to community-based organizations who assist in identifying housing needs. This is because housing needs discrimination is but one of the challenges faced by asylum and refugees in Kenya. For urban refugees, it

can be very competitive because of socio-economic ability of the refugees. Where the landlords know the economic status of refugees in a group, a preference will be accorded to the “rich” ones while others considered “poor” may be disregarded. *Refugee coded 8 said that, ‘the landlords are discriminative, and would prefer people who are well endowed with financial resources’* (Interview notes page 11 line 5). The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) operates through local charity groups to assist refugees in getting safe housing. However, this can be frustrated by lack of money to support monthly rental and engagements. The landlords would rather give their houses to individual refugees that they see as being able to meet regularly monthly rent payments. This has led many low-income refugees to live in poor housing estates. Although a small number of refugees receive support from international organizations, the churches, mosques or local foundations / United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) provides no housing assistance to refugees. Only in high-risk security cases would it do or bother to find housing for refugees i.e. where the refugee is a senior government official back in his/her country of origin (HRW, 2002.)

According to the refugees living in Kapsoya, Eldoret, many landlords make refugees to pay rent three months in advance to avoid failure on monthly basis. This denies them access to affordable and adequate housing. Because of this, many refugees are forced to live in overcrowded or substandard housing conditions due to a lack of affordable options and discrimination in the rental market. In some cases, refugees may also face legal barriers to accessing housing, such as restrictions on their ability to sign rental contracts or access social housing programs. They added that other challenges they face include discrimination and social exclusion, and precarious living conditions. Refugees face discrimination and social exclusion in the housing market, which can limit their options for housing and contribute to their marginalization in their host communities. Discrimination can take many forms, including landlords refusing to rent to refugees, or neighbors expressing hostility or harassment towards refugees living in their community.

Finally, refugees may also experience precarious living conditions, such as living in informal settlements or temporary housing arrangements that lack basic services and infrastructure. These conditions can pose significant risks to the health and safety of refugees, particularly in situations where they are exposed to environmental hazards or at risk of forced eviction. Research has highlighted the importance of addressing these challenges in order to promote the well-being and long-term livelihoods of refugees. For example, a study published in the *Journal of Refugee Studies* found that access to affordable housing is critical for refugees' social and economic integration in their host communities (Krogstad & Sandnes, 2017). Another study published in the *International Migration Review* found that addressing discrimination in the housing market can help promote the social integration of refugees (Kwak, 2019).

Addressing the housing challenges facing refugees requires a comprehensive approach that involves a range of stakeholders, including government agencies, non-governmental organizations, and community groups. This approach should include efforts to increase the supply of affordable housing, address discrimination in the rental market, and promote the development of safe and sustainable housing options for refugees

### **Employment / Unemployment**

This is very hard to come by except within centre. Being aliens, refugees do not have permit to work in Kenya. In many instances, refugees only engage in self-employment using their learned skills after attaining education and training. Unemployment is rampant especially among the older south Sudanese refugees in Kapsoya estate, Eldoret City. Ordinarily, securing employment is a big challenge even among the Kenyan population, especially the youth. A general survey among educated Kenyan youth reveals that a number of them, despite the good education they have, remain unemployed.

### **CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

These include inadequate housing, rise cost of living, insecurity, discrimination by landlords and other social vices and illiteracy. However, many stakeholders led by United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) have stepped in to contain these challenges. It has engaged partners to enhance community safe

housing and livelihood safety nets. In doing this, it has identification or use of foster care arrangements for separated children and unaccompanied minors. In order to sustain this, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) continues to provide vocational training both in the camps as well as urban settlements. The other challenge is medical services which is being availed to refugees by building facilities near the camps as well as encouraging refugees to enlist with National Hospital Insurance Fund (NHIF) in the urban centres. They also encourage entrepreneurship as well as private financial institutions to engage with refugees.

### **Security Challenges**

This has been brought into control by ensuring that refugees both in the camps and urban settlements are issued with Alien cards or Movement Passes in case of new arrivals. The Kenya government especially department of National Police Service has units that deal with refugee matter in liaison with Refugee Affairs Secretariat apart from available general Police Services. This approach has helped bring down sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) against refugees especially by Kenyans – Usdin et.al., (2000). The South Sudanese also have their own way of handling this vice.

Discrimination by landlords in the tenancy - This has been handled well by United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), which left it to community-based organizations CBOs and individuals except where there are persons of concerns (PoCs). This only applies in high-risk security cases especially former government officials in the former countries. Generally, housing remains a challenge even to Kenyans since the government is unable to guarantee good housing to her own workforce.

### **Employment / Unemployment**

This has remained a big problem even to Kenyans. The only way to help urban South Sudanese is to allow them to do private business, get good education or training for subsequent use back home once they get a chance to go back to South Sudan.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

From the above conclusion and recommendation, it is clear that there is need for a policy decision to help refugees become productive members of society with constant engagement. United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) should continue making support and promotion of refugees' livelihood part of its policy as it continues to work with Kenya government.

What comes out clearly is that United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) is committed to assisting refugees as well as Kenya government being the host. It is therefore necessary for United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and Kenya to look for more funding from other organizations such as European Union (EU). There is also need for United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) to create the right environment and important role to play at political level for advocacy for protection of refugee rights. This would ensure productive economic rights, resulting into more funds to support urban refugees just as it does for the camp refugees.

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