

THE IMPACT OF REFUGEES' CAMPS EXPANSION ON INDIGENOUS PASTORAL COMMUNITIES' LIVELIHOODS IN TURKANA WEST, KENYA.

The case of Kakuma and Kalobeyei refugee settlement schemes.



THE IMPACT OF REFUGEES'
CAMPS EXPANSION ON
INDIGENOUS PASTORAL
COMMUNITIES'
LIVELIHOODS IN
TURKANA
WEST, KENYA.



AUGUST 2025

Executive Summary

This study investigated the socio-economic and environmental impact of refugee settlement schemes in Kakuma and Kalobeyei on the indigenous pastoralist communities of Turkana West Sub-County, Kenya. Employing a descriptive mixed-methods research design, data were collected from 289 participants across Kakuma and Kalobeyei wards through structured questionnaires, in-depth interview guides and focus group discussion. The findings indicated that the expansion of refugee camps had placed significant pressure on local natural resources, including hills, mountains, swamps and water bodies such as lakes, rivers and dams. Notably, 37.0% of participants reported reduced access to pasturelands, while 19.7% indicated a decline in water availability. These environmental pressures had disrupted traditional livestock migration routes, contributed to increased livestock mortality, and intensified resource-based conflicts, with 22.2% of participants acknowledging heightened tensions between indigenous communities and refugees. Despite these challenges, the study also found that the refugee presence had catalyzed some degree of economic diversification; 37.4% of participants reported engagement in commerce, trade, or industry, while 24.2% had initiated new income-generating activities. Conversely, persistent barriers to economic inclusion were reported. A substantial portion of participants (49.8%) expressed negative perceptions regarding the continued expansion of the camps and 95.2% viewed government and non-governmental organization (NGO) interventions as inadequate. Additionally, concerns were raised regarding environmental degradation, the exclusion of local leadership from decision-making processes, and adverse impacts on cultural practices. Based on these findings, the study recommends the implementation of integrated natural resource management strategies, participatory land-use planning, and the development of gender-sensitive livelihood programs. These measures are essential to promoting sustainable co-existence, social cohesion, and resilience among both refugee populations and host pastoralist communities in Turkana West Sub-County.

Key words

Diversification, Refugee, indigenous, Impact, Interventions, Land Rights, FPIC, and Settlements

FOREWORD

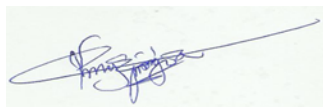
We present this study, titled “*Impact of Refugees’ Camps Expansion on Indigenous Pastoral Communities’ Livelihoods in Kakuma and Kalobeyei Refugee Settlement Schemes in Turkana West Sub-County, Kenya,*” is a timely and critical exploration into the complex interplay between humanitarian intervention and indigenous community welfare. Conducted within the broader framework of development and displacement studies, this research employs a mixed-methods design, integrating both quantitative and qualitative data to capture the nuanced realities of both refugee populations and the indigenous Turkana pastoralist communities. The methodological rigour and context-specific insights provided by the study make a valuable contribution to academic discourse, policy formation, and development programming in refugee-hosting contexts.

The findings of the study revealed that while the expansion of the refugee camps had brought about significant socio-economic benefits such as enhanced infrastructure, access to markets, health services and educational opportunities it had equally exacerbated pressure on local resources, especially grazing lands and water sources access, which were vital to the pastoralist way of life. Additionally, the study underscored emerging tensions and shifting power dynamics between refugees and the indigenous communities often shaped by differential access to foreign aid, employment and development interventions.

Importantly, the study highlighted the lived experiences of both refugees and indigenous community members, drawing attention to their resilience, adaptation strategies, and aspirations for integration and coexistence. The research not only enriched our understanding of forced migration and its implications on indigenous societies but also served as a practical guide for policy-makers, decision-makers, private sectors, development actors and humanitarian agencies operating in similar contexts.

Looking forward, the study did present challenges that demanded multi-stakeholder engagement particularly in natural resource management, equitable development and inclusive governance. As Kenya and the international community worked towards durable solutions for protracted displacement, this research offered an evidence-based foundation upon which future interventions could be designed in order to promote harmony, sustainability and shared prosperity for both refugee and indigenous communities.

Sincerely,



Dr. Kenyaman, Eriong'oa, PhD, Research and Evaluation TIPD-KENYA.

28TH August, 2025

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This study, Impact of Refugees' Camps Expansion on Indigenous Pastoral Communities' Livelihoods in Kakuma and Kalobeyei Refugee Settlement Schemes in Turkana West Sub-County, Kenya, was made possible through the generous participation and support of numerous individuals and institutions in Turkana West Sub-County.

Sincere gratitude goes to the indigenous pastoralist communities for their openness, patience, and invaluable insights. Their lived experiences and deep connection to their land and traditions formed the foundation of this study. Equally, appreciation extends to the refugee communities in Kakuma and Kalobeyei for their cooperation in interviews, focus groups, and surveys, offering critical perspectives on the socio-economic dynamics of camp expansion.

Special thanks to local administrative officers, community leaders, humanitarian agency staff, and government officials for facilitating access to study sites and providing logistical and institutional support. Their insights into policy and community engagement shaped the research design and analysis. Heartfelt gratitude also goes to the field assistants, translators, and enumerators for their dedication, cultural sensitivity, and professionalism.

Finally, the broader Turkana West Sub-County community is acknowledged for fostering an environment of open dialogue and mutual respect, significantly shaping the study's outcomes.

Truly at your service

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Ariong Geoffry Lokol', with a circular stamp containing the letter 'A' to the left.

Mr. Ariong Geoffry Lokol
TIPD Executive Director
geoffryariong@tipdkenya.org



Picture of Kakuma refugee Settlement scheme

Developed and Published by the Turkana Indigenous People Action for Development (TIPD) with support from:-

ZEROTOLERANCEINITIATIVE
WORKING TO END VIOLENCE AND KILLINGS IN SUPPLY CHAINS

The reproduction and distribution of information contained in this report is welcome for non-commercial purposes and as long as the source is cited. The translation of the report or the reproduction of the whole report is, however, not allowed without the consent of TIPD.

© Turkana Indigenous People Action for Development (TIPD), 2025 All Rights Reserved.

Table of Contents

CHAPTER ONE	1
INTRODUCTION	1
1.4 Research questions	4
1.9 Model of the Study	9
CHAPTER TWO	12
2. 0. Research methodology	12
2.1 Research design	12
2.2 Location of the Study	13
2.3 Sample and Sampling procedure	14
2.4 Research Instruments	17
2.4.1 Questionnaires	17
2.4.2 In depth Interview guides	19
2.4.3 Focus Group Discussion guides	21
CHAPTER THREE	26
3.0 Preliminary Findings	26
3.1 Demographic Characteristics	26
3.2.1 Primary Livelihood Distribution	36
3.3 Impact on Grazing Land and Resources Access	40
3.3.1 Availability of Water for Livestock	42
3.4 Socio-Economic Impact	48
3.4.1 Local households' engagement in new income generating activities trade, employment	48
Table 1.....	48
3.4.2 Presence of expansion of refugee camps affects local markets for livestock, goods and services	49
Table 2.....	49
3.4.3 Existence of locals and refugee conflict over resources in Kalobeyei ward 50	
Table 3.....	50
3.4.4 Kalobeyei local community benefits from services and programs available in the refugee camps.	50

Table 4.....	50
3.4.5 Women were affected differently compared to men by refugee camps expansion.....	51
Table 5.....	51
3.5.6 Local households were trainings on resilience and change adaption by NGOs and GoK	52
3.5.7 The impacts refugee camps expansion on locals' education.....	54
3.5.8 Socio Economic impact summary	55
3.6 Perceptions and Community Dynamics	56
3.6.1 Locals overall perception on the refugee camp expansion in Kalobeyei... 57	57
3.6.2 Relationship between Kalobeyei indigenous people and refugees on the camp expansion	57
3.6.3 Gok and NGOs have addressed the impacts of refugee camp expansion on Kalobeyei pastoralists' livelihoods	59
3.6.4.1. Increased demand for natural resources	60
3.6.4.2 Exclusion of local leaders	62
3.6.4.3 Land degradation and overexploitation	64
3.6.4.4 Reduced livelihood opportunities	65
3.6.6 Confidence on pastoralists' livelihoods sustainability for 5-10 years.....	67
3.6.7 Locals participation in refugees, indigenous community and Authorities dialogues/meetings.	68
4.0 Conclusion of the findings	72
5.0 Recommendations of the study	75
REFERENCES.....	77

ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

CIDP	County Integrated Development Plan
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
KISED	Kalobeyei Integrated Socio-Economic Development Programme
KKCF	Kakuma-Kalobeyei Challenge Fund
WFP	World Food Programme
OECD	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
CRRF	Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework
GCR	Global Compact for Refugees
DOI	Diffusion of Innovations
LAPSSET	Lamu Port-South Sudan-Ethiopia-Transport
IDI	In-Depth Interview
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
IRC	International Rescue Committee
NRC	Norwegian Refugee Council

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Background

Kalobeyei Integrated Settlement covers approximately 1,599.70 km² within Turkana West Sub-County, as specified in the Turkana County Integrated Development Plan (CIDP, 2023–2027). Situated roughly 20 km from Kakuma refugee camp, Kalobeyei forms part of the larger Kakuma-Kalobeyei refugee hosting area. As of January 31, 2025, UNHCR estimated that Kalobeyei hosts around 77,380 refugees alongside an estimated 20,000 indigenous community members, who reside side by side within the integrated settlement scheme.

Established in 2016, the Kalobeyei settlement adopted a sustainable integration model aimed at fostering self-reliance and peaceful coexistence between refugees and the indigenous community. This model emphasized on the shared use of social services including schools, healthcare, water supplies, churches and aimed to bridge humanitarian assistance and long-term development planning. This study was based on data from 289 participants across Kakuma (57.1%) and Kalobeyei (42.9%) wards, examined the impact of refugee camp expansion on indigenous people, highlighting both opportunities 37.4% accessing camp services and challenges 62.6% reported no benefits. The approach aims to address persistent issues like resource competition, environmental degradation and economic hardship, so as to foster equitable development for both communities.

Central to this vision is the Kalobeyei Integrated Socio-Economic Development Plan (KISED P). Phase I (2018–2022) prioritized socioeconomic integration, legal inclusion and access to services, supported by investments such as the US\$25 million Kakuma-Kalobeyei Challenge Fund and a Biashara-Huduma Centre to streamline civil and business services. KISED P Phase II (2023–2027) continued to enhance inclusive service delivery, strengthen local capacities and foster resilience, guided by multi-stakeholder partnerships involving UNHCR, the Turkana County government, development agencies and donors. Recent scholarship has examined the efficacy of the Kalobeyei model in enhancing livelihoods and self-reliance

Anno and Erukou (2024) assess agricultural and food-security interventions within Kalobeyei. Applying the Diffusion of Innovations theory, they argue that strategic agricultural innovations significantly improved food availability, nutrition and economic transformation across refugee and host populations in Turkana. The Refugee Economies project (2022–2023) compared socio-economic outcomes for South Sudanese refugees recently settled in Kakuma; aid-oriented model versus those in Kalobeyei; self-reliance model. Early findings suggested that the Kalobeyei model offered greater opportunities for self-reliance and economic inclusion (pp, 236–247). These studies provided empirical support for the continued evolution and potential of the integrated settlement model promoted by KISED and the CIDP framework.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

The prolonged presence and continued expansion of refugee settlement schemes in Kalobeyei and Kakuma within Turkana West Sub-County has led to complex socio-economic, environmental, and governance challenges that significantly affect both refugee and host communities. While the Kalobeyei settlement was established in 2016 as a progressive alternative to the traditional camp-based refugee model with a focus on self-reliance, integration and shared services the intended benefits have not been fully realized or equitably distributed (UNHCR; see KISED, 2016).

Despite the theoretical emphasis on inclusion and coexistence, many indigenous Turkana pastoralists report being marginalized from critical resources and decision-making processes. Evidence from recent studies indicates that resource competition particularly over water, pasture, and land has intensified due to rising population pressure, leading to frequent tensions, conflict, and environmental degradation. Additionally, traditional migratory livestock routes have been disrupted, threatening the pastoralist way of life and aggravating livelihood insecurity (Rift Valley Institute, 2024).

Further complicating the situation, while some segments of the local population have engaged in economic activities spurred by humanitarian and development investments, a majority of indigenous residents remain economically excluded, lacking access to employment, markets, and entrepreneurial support. At the same time, both refugee and host communities face limited access to quality social services, with overstretched

infrastructure and inadequate service provision by government and non-governmental actors (Anno & Erukon, 2024).

These persistent disparities have undermined the goal of equitable development and social cohesion. Without targeted interventions that address structural inequalities, environmental strain, and governance gaps, the risk of socioeconomic fragmentation, increased dependency and heightened conflict remains high (Scofield Associates, 2022).

Therefore, this study seeks to critically examine the multi-dimensional impacts of refugee settlement schemes in Kalobeyei and Kakuma on the livelihoods of indigenous pastoralist communities and propose evidence-based recommendations to foster sustainable co-existence and inclusive development.

1.3 Research objectives

- i. To analyze how local community engagement processes have impacted resource rights and pastoralist participation at Kakuma and Kalobeyei refugee and indigenous pastoral communities' camp expansion in Turkana West Sub-County.
- ii. To assess how the expansion of Kakuma and Kalobeyei refugee settlement schemes have impacted communal grazing land and water resources access for indigenous pastoralist households in Turkana West Sub-County.
- iii. To evaluate the socio-economic impacts of refugee and indigenous pastoral communities' expansion on livestock-based income, market access and livelihood at Kakuma and Kalobeyei settlement schemes at Turkana West sub-County.
- iv. To establish what perceptions and community impacts of Kakuma and Kalobeyei refugee camp and indigenous communities in Turkana West Sub-County
- v. To identify clear recommendations of impact **of refugees' camps expansion on indigenous pastoral communities' livelihoods in Kakuma and Kalobeyei refugee settlement schemes in Turkana west sub county, Kenya.**

1.4 Research questions

- i. How local community engagement processes impacted resource rights and pastoralist participation at Kakuma and Kalobeyei refugee and indigenous pastoral communities' camp expansion in Turkana West Sub-County, Kenya?
- ii. To what extent has expansion of Kakuma and Kalobeyei refugee settlement schemes impacted communal grazing land and water access for indigenous pastoralist households in Turkana West Sub-County, Kenya?
- iii. What in your opinion is the socio-economic impacts of refugee and indigenous pastoral communities' expansion on livestock-based income, market access and livelihood at Kakuma and Kalobeyei settlement schemes at Turkana West sub-County. Kenya?
- iv. What perceptions and community impacts of Kakuma and Kalobeyei refugee camp and indigenous communities' settlement schemes have in Turkana West Sub-County?
- v. What recommendations are available regarding impact **of refugees' camps expansion on indigenous pastoral communities' livelihoods in Kakuma and Kalobeyei refugee settlement schemes in Turkana west sub county, Kenya?**

1.5 Hypotheses

- i. Local community engagement processes during refugee camp expansion significantly influence indigenous pastoralist participation and resource rights protection.
- ii. The expansion of refugee settlement schemes significantly reduces access to communal grazing land and water resources for indigenous pastoralist households.
- iii. Refugee settlement expansion significantly affects livestock-based income, market access, and overall livelihood sustainability of indigenous pastoralist communities.
- iv. Indigenous communities in Turkana West Sub-County hold predominantly negative perceptions regarding the social and economic impacts of refugee settlement schemes.

- v. Implementation of inclusive policy recommendations and participatory land-use planning significantly mitigates the negative impacts of refugee camp expansion on indigenous pastoral livelihoods.

1.6 Significance of the study

The expansion of refugee camps in Turkana West Sub-County, particularly in Kakuma and Kalobeyei, has introduced significant socio-economic and environmental changes that directly affect indigenous pastoral communities. This study is significant in several respects. First, it contributes to the academic discourse on forced displacement and host community dynamics by examining how large-scale humanitarian interventions influence the livelihoods of pastoralist populations. While refugee studies have traditionally focused on the plight of displaced persons, there is growing recognition of the need to understand the effects of long-term refugee presence on host populations (Betts et al., 2017; Whitaker, 2002). In this context, the study fills a critical gap in the literature by exploring localized impacts in arid and semi-arid lands (ASALs), where pastoralism is not only the main livelihood but also closely tied to cultural identity and ecological sustainability (Fratkin, 2001).

Second, the findings are expected to inform evidence-based policy formulation at both national and county levels. The Government of Kenya, in partnership with the Turkana County Government, has expressed increasing interest in aligning refugee responses with local development priorities through frameworks such as the Kalobeyei Integrated Socio-Economic Development Plan (KISEDPP) (UNHCR, 2018). By providing empirical data on how camp expansion affects indigenous livelihoods through land use changes, resource competition, and shifting economic structures—this study offers critical insights for crafting inclusive policies that promote equitable development.

Third, the research has practical implications for humanitarian and development actors operating in the region. Organizations such as the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the World Food Programme (WFP), and numerous NGOs can use the findings to design programs that strengthen the resilience of both refugees and host communities. The growing emphasis on the "humanitarian-development nexus" underscores the importance of interventions that go beyond short-term relief to address

long-term socio-economic development (OECD, 2019). This study thus supports efforts to integrate host community needs into refugee response planning, in line with the principles of the Global Compact on Refugees (UNHCR, 2018).

Furthermore, the study highlights the urgent need for sustainable environmental and land use planning. The influx of refugees has intensified pressure on already fragile ecosystems in Turkana, leading to overgrazing, deforestation, and water scarcity all of which undermine traditional pastoral livelihoods (Lind et al., 2020). By assessing these environmental impacts, the study can inform resource management strategies that balance humanitarian demands with the ecological needs of indigenous communities.

Finally, the study contributes to peacebuilding and conflict mitigation by examining the social and economic interactions between refugees and host communities. Resource scarcity and competition can lead to tension and, in some cases, conflict; however, well-managed refugee-host relations can also foster cooperation and shared development benefits (Zetter & Ruaudel, 2016). Identifying the factors that promote or hinder peaceful coexistence can support more cohesive and resilient communities.

1.6 Scope and delimitation of the study

This research investigates the multifaceted effects of the expansion of Kakuma Refugee Camp and the establishment of Kalobeyei Integrated Settlement in Turkana West Sub-County, with specific focus on how allocated land (approximately 15 km² in 2015) has impacted the mobility and grazing rights of indigenous Turkana pastoralists (UNHCR, 2015; population ~183,000 vs. capacity of 70,000). It examines environmental pressures, including increased demand for water and firewood linked to refugee settlement growth, and the resulting degradation of the pastoral resource base.

The study also considers integration strategies such as KISED, intended to support co-development between refugees and host communities, while evaluating the degree to which pastoralist voices have been included in participatory planning processes. Finally, it takes into account recent expansion proposals (January 2025) by UNHCR and local authorities, which could further influence land tenure and pastoralist livelihoods.

The study is temporally bounded to developments from 2015 to 2024, with awareness of earlier historical context but primary analysis centered on the recent decade. Geographically, it concentrates on Turkana West Sub-County zones adjacent to Kakuma and Kalobeyei, and excludes wider regional dynamics.

Its focal population is indigenous Turkana pastoralists; refugee livelihoods are referenced only in so far as they interact with host-community resources. The research limits impact assessment to land access, environmental outcomes, and institutional engagement, and does not extend to health, education, or psycho-social welfare. Additionally, methodological details regarding data collection and analysis are beyond the scope of this section.

1.7 Theoretical framework

In addressing the socio-economic impacts of refugee camp expansion on indigenous pastoralist livelihoods in Turkana West, the **Livelihood Capitals Framework**, derived from the Sustainable Livelihoods Approach (Chambers & Conway, 1992), provides a robust analytic lens. This conceptual model enables disaggregation of livelihood assets—particularly human and financial capitals—and their role in shaping coping mechanisms, such as reliance on debt, which recent evidence indicates has risen sharply among South Sudanese households in Kalobeyei, with average per capita debt increasing from 2,034 KES in 2019 to 9,667 KES in 2023 (Refugee Economies Programme, 2023).

Simultaneously, integrating **Participatory Planning** with **Intergroup Contact Theory** (Allport, 1954; Pettigrew & Tropp, 2008) enriches the analysis by foregrounding the relational dynamics between refugees and host pastoral communities. UN-Habitat's emphasis on inclusive spatial planning and communal participation in Kakuma-Kalobeyei strategic frameworks embodies this approach (UN-Habitat, 2022; 2023). The theory suggests that, under conditions of equal status, shared developmental goals, and institutional backing, sustained interaction can foster harmonious coexistence and collaborative livelihood initiatives.

Summary Table

Framework		Application to Kakuma-Kalobeyei & Turkana Livelihoods
Livelihood (SLA)	Capitals	Assess how camp expansion affects pastoralists' asset access and coping strategies
	Human, social, natural, physical, financial capital; resilience; vulnerability; coping	
Participatory Planning	Community engagement; equal-status interactions; shared goals; institutional support	Examine whether joint planning fosters integration, ownership, and improved livelihoods
Intergroup Theory	+ Contact	

1.8 Conceptual framework

The investigation of refugees’ camps expansions and their effects on indigenous pastoral communities’ livelihoods in Kakuma and Kalobeyei likely draws from the **Diffusion of Innovations (DOI) theory**, as applied in analyses of agricultural livelihood adaptation in Kalobeyei (Anno & Erukon, 2024). This framework helps explain how novel livelihood strategies—such as agricultural diversification or self-reliance programming is adopted by both refugee and host pastoral populations amid displacement. Additionally, the study may integrate **area-based development paradigms** rooted in the **Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF)** and the **Global Compact for Refugees (GCR)**, operationalized through the **Kalobeyei Integrated Socio-Economic Development Programme (KISED P)** (UNHCR, 2023). These frameworks provide a governance and policy lens essential for assessing structural integration, economic transition, and service delivery in protracted displacement settings (Anno & Erukon, 2024; UNHCR, 2023). Ultimately, adopting an interwoven framework combining DOI and development policy models offers a robust theoretical basis for examining livelihood transformations among indigenous pastoralists under the pressures of camp expansions.

1.9 Model of the Study

The expansion and evolution of refugee camps in Turkana West Sub-County particularly Kakuma and Kalobeyei have led to the adoption of several models aimed at balancing humanitarian assistance with sustainable development. These models directly affect not only the refugee population but also the indigenous Turkana pastoralist communities whose livelihoods are closely tied to land, mobility, and access to natural resources.

One of the most prominent models is the **Kalobeyei Integrated Socio-Economic Development Programme (KISED P)**, commonly referred to as the *Kalobeyei Model*. This model was developed collaboratively by the Government of Kenya, UNHCR, and various development partners to foster self-reliance among refugees and host communities through market-based and inclusive development strategies (Refugee Economies, n.d.). Unlike traditional refugee camps, Kalobeyei operates as a settlement with infrastructure, markets, and agricultural initiatives designed to integrate both communities. The model promotes interventions such as cash-based transfers, livelihood diversification (including dryland farming and microenterprise development), and social cohesion programs. Notably, cash assistance schemes like Bamba Chakula and shelter subsidies have shown measurable improvements in dietary diversity, caloric intake, and household resilience among beneficiaries (Refugee Economies, n.d.).

Despite these gains, studies show that full economic self-reliance remains elusive for many refugee households. While the Kalobeyei Model enables greater mobility and choice, many residents still rely heavily on humanitarian aid, and financial inclusion remains constrained by limited access to credit and pervasive indebtedness (Refugee Economies, n.d.). Furthermore, the effectiveness of cash-based programming is often undermined by high food prices, informal taxation, and restricted livelihood options in the arid Turkana context.

A second model emerging from this environment is the Urban Regeneration and Spatial Planning Model, particularly through the *Kakuma Regeneration Strategy*, developed in 2023 by UN-Habitat in partnership with local and national stakeholders. This model reframes the refugee-hosting area as a growing urban center rather than a temporary humanitarian zone. The strategy proposes formalizing Kakuma and Kalobeyei as part of

a planned Kakuma Municipality, which aims to integrate refugee and host communities under one local governance and development framework (UN-Habitat, 2023). It focuses on infrastructure improvement, land tenure regularization, environmental restoration, and inclusive economic development. The model aligns with Kenya's Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF) and the 2021 Refugees Act, reflecting a broader shift in national policy toward refugee inclusion (UN-Habitat, 2022).

While the urban regeneration model introduces promising avenues for infrastructure investment and governance reform, it also raises critical questions regarding land use, authority, and the future of traditional pastoralist systems. In transforming the refugee camps into semi-permanent urban areas, the strategy may inadvertently limit access to communal grazing land and mobility corridors, which are essential for pastoral livelihoods.

To understand the broader implications of such models on indigenous communities, it is crucial to apply a political ecology framework. This perspective examines how power dynamics, land use changes, and development interventions affect environmental access and local resource control. Research in Turkana highlights how the establishment of refugee settlements, combined with infrastructural projects like the LAPSSSET corridor and irrigation schemes, has contributed to land fragmentation and the erosion of communal land rights (Pastoralism, 2021). These processes undermine the resilience of pastoralist communities by restricting their traditional migration routes and exposing them to environmental and economic vulnerabilities.

Political ecology analysis also reveals how displacement-oriented development can produce new forms of inequality, particularly when external actors—such as international NGOs, the state, or local elites—gain disproportionate control over resources, planning, and benefits. Consequently, while models like KISED and the Kakuma Regeneration Strategy may promote economic opportunity for some, they can simultaneously disempower pastoral communities if not carefully implemented with local participation and safeguards for land rights.

In sum, the expansion of refugee camps in Turkana West has prompted the development of progressive models that aim to bridge humanitarian response with long-term development. The Kalobeyei Model introduces integrated, market-oriented approaches

to support both refugees and hosts, while the urban regeneration strategy reimagines refugee settlements as nodes of regional growth. However, these models must be critically examined within the pastoralist context, where livelihoods depend heavily on access to land and natural resources. Without deliberate efforts to protect pastoral mobility and communal resource governance, such models risk exacerbating local dispossession and environmental stress.

CHAPTER TWO

2. 0. Research methodology

Introduction

This chapter outlines the methodology and procedures employed to achieve the objectives of the study. It details the research design adopted and provides a rationale for its selection. The chapter also specifies the geographical location where the study was conducted and defines the target population relevant to the research focus. Sampling procedures and techniques are described, including the determination of sample size and the selection of livestock production units under investigation. The research instruments used for data collection are discussed, along with strategies implemented to ensure their validity and reliability. Additionally, the chapter explains the methods and procedures followed during data collection and the statistical techniques applied for data analysis. Ethical considerations observed throughout the study such as informed consent, confidentiality, and the protection of participants' rights are also addressed. These components collectively ensured the credibility, accuracy, and integrity of the research process.

2.1 Research design

According to Leavy (2022), research design serves as an essential blueprint directing data collection and the analytical stages of a research thesis. It structures the types of data to be gathered, their sources, and the methods of collection a framework critical for coherence and rigor in research.

This study adopts a **descriptive research design** utilizing a **mixed-methods** approach, integrating both quantitative and qualitative methodologies. **Descriptive research** is intended to detail the characteristics of phenomena and is particularly suited for studies that capture frequencies, averages, and categorical traits of the subject under examination. By combining quantitative metrics with qualitative insights, a mixed-methods design enriches the understanding of complex socio-economic issues.

Mixed-methods approaches where qualitative and quantitative data and methodologies are interwoven provide methodological pluralism that enhances depth and context in social science research. This design choice enables the study to present socio-economic factors in both measurable and contextual dimensions.

The descriptive mixed-methods strategy is especially appropriate for explicating the socio-economic contributors to livestock rustling in Turkana South. Given the objective to collect quantifiable data and to examine the relationship between independent variables such as socio-economic indicators) and the dependent variable (livestock rustling), this approach ensures both numerical precision and narrative meaning.

2.2 Location of the Study

The present study investigates the impact of refugee camp expansion on the livelihoods of indigenous pastoral communities in Kakuma and Kalobeyei wards, located in Turkana West Sub-County, Kenya. This region, part of Kenya's arid and semi-arid lands, presents a unique socio-ecological setting in which humanitarian, developmental, and indigenous pastoralist dynamics converge. The Kakuma Refugee Camp, established in 1992, now hosts over 200,000 refugees, while the Kalobeyei Integrated Settlement, created in 2015, was developed as a new model to promote co-existence between refugees and host communities through shared resources, infrastructure, and spatial planning (Wikipedia, 2025a).

The expansion of refugee populations and infrastructure has had measurable impacts on the region's environmental and socio-economic conditions. Research has shown significant land-use changes linked to refugee settlement activities. Between 1987 and 2015, the built-up area around Kakuma increased by 3.6%, while bare ground expanded by 22%; concurrently, shrub land and riverine forests declined substantially changes that undermine pastoral mobility and livestock grazing potential (University of Nairobi, 2016). Such environmental stress threatens the sustainability of pastoralist livelihoods, which are highly dependent on access to natural rangelands and seasonal grazing patterns.

Socio-economically, the integration of refugee and host economies has produced complex outcomes. While refugees in Kalobeyei are restricted from engaging in traditional livelihoods such as livestock keeping or charcoal production, these gaps have been filled

by host communities, notably the Turkana pastoralists (Betts et al., 2021). Although this has created economic opportunities for some, it has also deepened competition for land, water, and services, exacerbating local vulnerabilities.

The Kalobeyei Integrated Settlement is an attempt to shift from traditional humanitarian relief toward a development-oriented approach. This model includes shared health services, educational facilities, and market infrastructure, thereby offering both refugees and hosts access to long-term economic and social benefits (Terada et al., 2022). Recent innovations in sustainable livelihood programs such as kitchen gardening, dryland farming, and rainwater harvesting have been implemented to enhance food security and reduce environmental degradation for both communities (European Union Trust Fund, 2024; World Food Programme (WFP, 2024). These initiatives highlight growing efforts to diversify livelihoods and build resilience among pastoral households in a fragile socio-ecological landscape.

Further institutional developments such as the Kalobeyei Integrated Socio-Economic Development Programme (KISED P) reflect a formal recognition by national and county governments of the need to link refugee presence to broader regional development goals. UNHCR and the Turkana County Government have collaborated under KISED P to ensure infrastructure, education, and economic programs are inclusive of host communities, addressing long-standing grievances about exclusion and inequity (UNHCR, 2023).

2.3 Sample and Sampling procedure

Breakwell (2006) defines sampling as the process of selecting a number of individuals for a study from a population such that the selected group contains elements representative of the characteristics found in the entire group. Within the context of this study on the impact of refugee camp expansion on host communities in Turkana West, a **stratified sampling** approach was implemented. This method entailed dividing the study population into distinct strata—specifically, the wards of Kakuma (165 participants; 57.1%) and Kalobeyei (124 participants; 42.9%) ensuring proportional representation across both geographic units.

Stratified sampling was particularly appropriate because it enhances precision by reducing sampling error and ensuring each subgroup is adequately represented (Wikipedia, 2025). Within each stratum, **simple random sampling** was employed: each individual in the ward had an equal probability of selection, promoting the unbiased representativeness of the sample (Wikipedia, 2025).

The **target population** encompassed key livelihood groups affected by the expansion of refugee settlements: pastoralists, small-scale traders, casual laborers, and women. This deliberately inclusive sampling frame reflects the socio-economic diversity of indigenous livelihoods and ensures that the study captures heterogeneity in experiences and vulnerabilities.

By combining stratification by locality (ward) and random selection within those groups, the study achieved a robust and representative sample structure. This methodological choice aligns with best practices in survey research aimed at assessing community-level impacts, particularly in heterogeneous populations fractured across geographic and socio-economic lines (Wikipedia, 2025).

Table 1
The sample and the sampling size

Wards	No.	Participants	Percentage
Kakuma	165	Pastoralists, traders, casual laborers, Girls and women	57.1%
Kalobeyei	124	Pastoralists, traders, casual laborers, Girls and women	42.9%
Total	289	100%

Source: Survey Data, (2025)

This study employed a stratified random sampling procedure to ensure a representative and inclusive sample from the two key wards in Turkana West Sub-County; Kakuma and Kalobeyei. These wards were chosen based on their strategic importance as refugee-hosting areas, with Kakuma hosting the long-established Kakuma Refugee Camp and Kalobeyei serving as a more recent integrated settlement, established in 2016 to foster coexistence between refugees and the indigenous pastoralist community (Terada, Evans, & Mwaniki, 2022).

The sample comprised a total of 289 participants, with 165 (57.1%) drawn from Kakuma and 124 (42.9%) from Kalobeyei. Stratification by ward allowed the study to capture the unique environmental, economic, and social dynamics that characterize each settlement. Within each stratum, simple random sampling was applied to give every individual an equal chance of selection, thereby minimizing selection bias and enhancing the representativeness of the data (Wikipedia, 2025a).

The target population included pastoralists, small-scale traders, casual laborers, and women—groups that are most directly affected by the socio-economic and ecological changes driven by refugee settlement expansion. The composition of the sample reflects this diversity, allowing the study to examine the impact across different livelihood sectors.

Demographic data collected during the study further enriches the analysis. In terms of gender distribution, approximately 56% of participants were female, while 44% were male. This slight majority of female participants was intentional, reflecting the disproportionate burdens that women often face in relation to food insecurity, land access, unpaid care work, and disrupted livelihood activities in conflict- and displacement-affected regions (Betts, Omata, & Bloom, 2021).

The age distribution showed that 32% of participants were between 18 and 30 years old, 44% were between 31 and 50 years old, and 24% were aged 51 and above. This age spread enabled the study to include both younger adults engaged in new and informal livelihood strategies and older participants with long-standing experience in traditional pastoralism.

In terms of education, 38% of participants reported having no formal education, 41% had completed primary education, 16% had attained secondary education and 5% had post-

secondary or vocational training. These figures align with broader regional education trends in Turkana and offer context for understanding the community's adaptive capacity in the face of refugee-induced socio-economic change.

Occupationally, the sample consisted of 45% pastoralists, 27% small-scale traders, 15% casual laborers and 13% women and girls engaged in unpaid domestic and caregiving roles. This occupational distribution highlights the importance of informal and subsistence-based economic activities in the area and underscores the vulnerability of these sectors to changes in land use, access to water and grazing areas and competition over limited resources resulting from the expansion of refugee camps.

Overall, the sample design and demographic breakdown ensured that the study adequately represented the population most affected by the refugee settlement schemes in Turkana West. By capturing geographic, gender, generational, educational and occupational diversity, the study was able to provide a comprehensive and nuanced understanding of how refugee camp expansion in Kakuma and Kalobeyei has influenced indigenous livelihoods, social structures and local development dynamics.

2.4 Research Instruments

The primary data collection tool was a structured questionnaire administered to 289 participants across Kakuma and Kalobeyei wards. The questionnaire included three parts: Part I (demographic characteristics: gender, age, education, household size, residency duration); Part II (Thematic areas: livelihood sources, grazing land access, water availability, migration routes, conflicts, perceptions, and sustainability); and Part III (summary and conclusions). While interviews and focus group discussions were planned to complement the questionnaires, the provided dataset relies solely on questionnaire responses.

2.4.1 Questionnaires

The study employed **questionnaires** as the primary data collection instrument, a method widely recognized for its efficiency and scalability in gathering information from a large and diverse population (Brown & Duguid, 2001). Questionnaires are structured tools that allow researchers to collect standardized responses from participants, facilitating

comparison, statistical analysis, and interpretation of data across multiple variables relevant to the study's objectives (Bryman, 2016). In the context of Turkana West Sub-County where communities are dispersed across remote and sometimes inaccessible locations questionnaires provided a practical and cost-effective method for obtaining quantitative and qualitative data on the impact of refugee settlements on indigenous livelihoods.

The choice to use questionnaires in this study was informed by their ability to capture a wide range of socio-economic and perceptual variables in a relatively short period. As Bolarinwa (2015) notes, questionnaires are particularly useful for studies that seek to understand perceptions, attitudes, and lived experiences of individuals on sensitive or complex issues such as land access, resource competition, and inter-community relations. Given that refugee expansion in Kakuma and Kalobeyei has led to changes in traditional pastoral systems, increased competition for natural resources, and occasional tensions between host and refugee communities (Betts, Omata, & Bloom, 2021), the questionnaire format allowed for standardized yet context-sensitive data collection that could reflect these multifaceted dynamics.

The questionnaire was divided into three main sections to address the study's thematic areas comprehensively. **Part I** collected participants' **demographic information**, including age, gender, education level, and occupation. This section enabled the researcher to conduct subgroup analysis and examine how the impacts of refugee camp expansion vary across different segments of the host community. Demographic profiling is essential in displacement and development studies, as it reveals patterns of vulnerability and resilience among affected populations (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

Part II focused on thematic survey items related to the study's core research questions. It captured data on participants' **main sources of income, changes in access to grazing land, livestock loss due to competition, disruption of pastoralist migration routes, and the frequency of conflicts between refugees and indigenous communities**. Additionally, it included questions about the **overall perception of refugee camp expansion and confidence in future livelihood sustainability**. These themes are critical for understanding how camp expansion has altered traditional land use, economic activities, and community cohesion, especially among pastoralist

populations who are highly dependent on natural resource access and seasonal mobility (Terada, Evans, & Mwaniki, 2022).

Part III provided space for participants to reflect on their experiences and offer open-ended responses that summarize their perceptions. This section allowed for the integration of qualitative insights, enriching the numerical data with contextual narratives. As Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill (2019) emphasize, including open-ended components within structured questionnaires enhances the interpretive depth of a study, particularly in environments characterized by complex socio-political dynamics like Turkana West.

In sum, the use of questionnaires in this study was justified both methodologically and contextually. It offered a systematic approach for collecting both quantitative and qualitative data across a geographically dispersed population, ensuring the collection of reliable and comparable data while allowing participants to express personal views on sensitive issues. Furthermore, the instrument's structure facilitated the capture of a holistic understanding of how refugee settlement expansion has influenced livelihoods, land use and social dynamics in Kakuma and Kalobeyei.

2.4.2 In depth Interview guides

The use of in-depth interview (IDI) guides is a critical qualitative methodology for examining the complex socio-economic and cultural interactions between refugee and host communities in settlement schemes such as Kakuma and Kalobeyei, located in Turkana County, Kenya. These settlements host large populations of refugees from neighboring countries, alongside the indigenous Turkana community. The interactions between these two groups are shaped by overlapping challenges, including limited resources, social integration barriers, and contested development goals. In such a context, IDIs offer a valuable means of eliciting deep, context-specific insights that structured surveys or quantitative instruments may fail to capture.

One of the central rationales for utilizing in-depth interviews in this setting is their ability to uncover the lived experiences and personal narratives of both refugees and host community members. Unlike standardized tools, which can overlook individual variations, IDIs provide space for participants to reflect on their own understanding of integration, marginalization, and self-reliance. According to the Rift Valley Institute (2024), refugees'

reluctance to fully integrate into host communities is often misunderstood; rather than a lack of willingness, such resistance is frequently rooted in fear of losing access to humanitarian support or their cultural identity. In-depth interviews allow researchers to unpack these layers of meaning by creating a space where individuals can speak about these concerns in their own terms.

Further, IDIs are particularly well-suited for understanding regulatory barriers and service access issues that disproportionately affect both refugee and host communities. In a recent study, Omondi (2021) highlighted how the regulatory framework in Kenya often hinders access to essential services such as education, particularly for refugee children, due to lack of identification documents such as birth certificates which may only be issued over 120 kilometers away. These bureaucratic hurdles are rarely addressed in quantitative analyses. However, through IDIs, participants can articulate the specific ways these regulations disrupt their daily lives, as well as the strategies they employ to navigate them, including reliance on informal networks and non-state actors.

The examination of self-reliance strategies and socio-economic outcomes is another area where IDIs prove indispensable. Comparative research between Kakuma and Kalobeyei has demonstrated varied levels of economic integration and self-sufficiency due to the different models employed in each settlement (Refugee Economies, 2022). Kakuma primarily relies on aid-based approaches, while Kalobeyei promotes market-based, self-reliance models. Through in-depth interviews, researchers can explore how these macro-level policy differences are experienced at the micro level, capturing individual agency, aspiration, and adaptation.

Moreover, the participatory planning processes intended to involve both refugee and host community voices such as those outlined in the UN-Habitat Kalobeyei Integrated Socio-Economic Development Programme (KISED) have often been criticized for excluding indigenous voices, particularly pastoralists from the Turkana community. As noted by Haller et al. (2021), such participatory efforts frequently overlook traditional power structures, community elders, and localized decision-making systems. In-depth interviews serve as a corrective to this gap by enabling marginalized individuals to express their views on governance, land use, and development planning in their own

voice thereby surfacing valuable information that can inform more inclusive and effective policy implementation.

Additionally, IDIs are instrumental in evaluating the social dynamics of integration, identity negotiation, and peaceful coexistence between refugee and host communities. Recent studies have shown that integration efforts are fraught with challenges related to land competition, ethnic tensions, and unequal access to aid and services (UN-Habitat, 2022). Through IDIs, researchers can access diverse perspectives on these issues, including how different groups conceptualize “integration,” what they see as the benefits or risks of increased contact, and what mechanisms—both formal and informal are in place to mediate conflict and foster cohesion.

Finally, in-depth interviews also provide a platform to evaluate the effectiveness of urban planning strategies, such as the Kakuma-Kalobeyi Future Vision framework developed by UN-Habitat. While these planning documents often emphasize inclusivity and sustainability, their on-the-ground implementation is subject to multiple challenges. By interviewing both local leaders and ordinary residents, researchers can assess whether these initiatives resonate with community needs, how they are perceived by different stakeholders, and what unintended consequences they might generate (UN-Habitat, 2023).

Ethically, the use of IDIs in this research context requires careful consideration, especially given the histories of trauma among refugees and the long-standing marginalization of the Turkana community. Interview guides are therefore designed to be culturally sensitive, trauma-informed, and flexible enough to accommodate diverse responses and participant comfort levels. Confidentiality, informed consent, and the voluntary nature of participation are strictly observed to protect participants’ dignity and autonomy.

2.4.3 Focus Group Discussion guides

In addition to questionnaires and interviews, this study employed **focus group discussions (FGDs)** as a key qualitative data collection method. FGDs are particularly effective in exploring complex social issues and capturing a diversity of perspectives from community members who are directly affected by a given phenomenon (Krueger & Casey, 2015). The use of FGDs was especially appropriate in the context of Turkana

West Sub-County, where the dynamics between refugee populations and indigenous pastoralist communities are multifaceted, involving competition over land, shifting livelihoods, and evolving inter-community relations.

According to Muganda and Muganda (2003), interviews and by extension group-based discussions enable researchers to gather detailed information by directly engaging with participants, listening to their experiences, and probing further into key issues. The FGDs in this study were designed around the central thematic areas of **land use changes**, **livelihood disruptions**, **grazing patterns**, and **social tensions** between refugees and host communities. These discussions offered an in-depth understanding of community-level perceptions and collective experiences that cannot be easily captured through structured questionnaires alone.

Purposive sampling was used to select FGD participants, ensuring the inclusion of those with lived experience and contextual knowledge. The groups included **elders**, **reformed rustlers**, **local traders**, and **women's groups**, as these categories represent key social actors within the indigenous Turkana community. Elders were engaged for their historical insights and authority in land-related matters; traders and casual laborers for their economic perspectives; women for their roles in food security, caregiving, and resource management; and reformed rustlers for their understanding of conflict dynamics and changing security landscapes. As Creswell and Poth (2018) emphasize, purposive sampling in qualitative research enhances the richness of data by focusing on individuals who are most knowledgeable about the issues under study.

The use of FGDs also allowed for the observation of **group dynamics**, **shared values**, and **points of contention**, providing an added layer of interpretation not accessible through individual interviews (Barbour, 2018). In this study, participants engaged in open conversations guided by a moderator using a semi-structured interview schedule. The interactive nature of FGDs encouraged participants to build on each other's responses, thereby illuminating community-level consensus or divergence regarding the **impacts of refugee camp expansion on traditional pastoral systems and resource access**.

Moreover, FGDs helped uncover **gendered** and **intergenerational dimensions** of the refugee-host relationship. Women participants, for example, expressed concerns about

declining access to water and fuelwood, while elders spoke about the disruption of migratory grazing routes and cultural erosion. These insights were instrumental in grounding the research findings in the lived realities of the affected populations, thereby enhancing the **validity and contextual relevance** of the data collected (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2019).



Photo 1: Focus group discussion; Nayanae Angidapala Village



Photo 2: Lomunyen Pus Village Focus Group Discussions



Photo 3: Esikiriat Village Focus Group Discussion



Photos 4: Nakwei Village focus group discussion

CHAPTER THREE

3.0 Preliminary Findings

The preliminary findings of this study present early insights into the multifaceted impacts of refugee settlement on both refugee and indigenous (host) communities within the Kakuma and Kalobeyei settlement schemes in Turkana County, Kenya. Drawing on data collected from diverse participants across both wards, the findings highlight the socio-economic, educational, environmental and intercommunal dynamics that have emerged or intensified due to the prolonged presence and expansion of refugee populations. These early results provide a foundational understanding of how host and refugee communities perceive and navigate the shared challenges and opportunities within these complex humanitarian-development spaces. Further analysis will explore these themes in greater depth, including variations across gender, age, education level and geographic location.

3.1 Demographic Characteristics

The demographic composition of participants offered valuable insights into the population affected by the expansion of refugee camps within the Kakuma and Kalobeyei wards of Turkana County, Kenya. The study sampled 289 individuals, of whom 64.4% identified as female, 35.3% as male, and 0.35% as identifying outside the gender binary. This female-majority sample suggests that gender-specific perspectives, particularly regarding socio-economic vulnerability and access to services, were prominently represented. Similar trends of women bearing the brunt of refugee-hosting burdens have been observed in previous research across host communities in northern Kenya (UN-Habitat, 2023; International Rescue Committee [IRC], 2022).

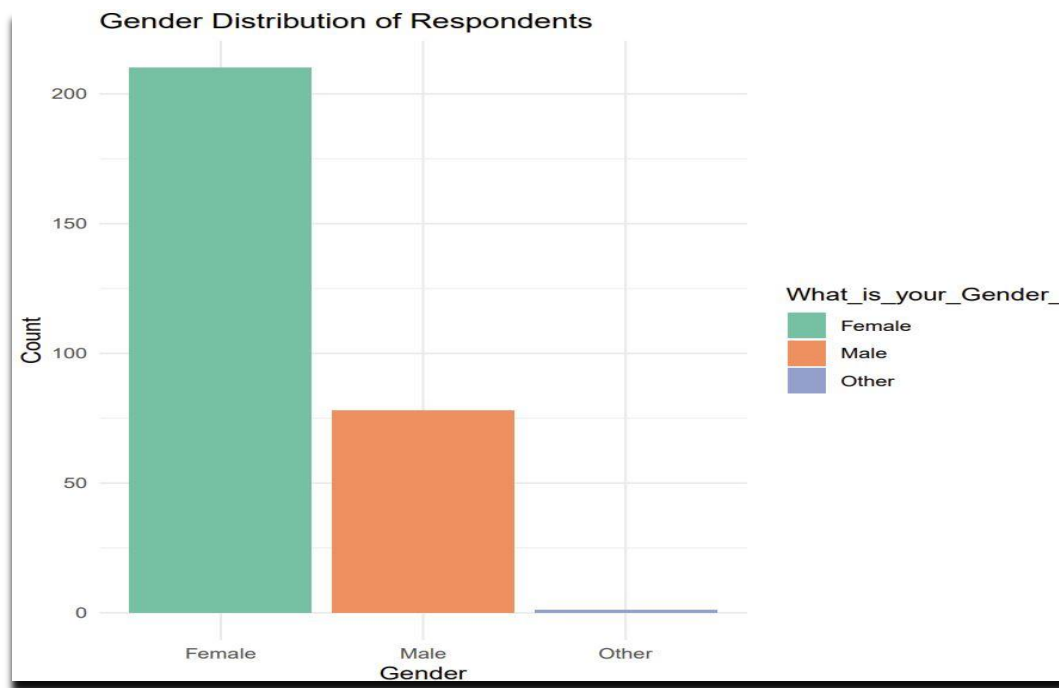
Age distribution among participants indicated a relatively balanced representation across various adult age groups. Participants aged 36–50 constituted 29.8% of the sample, closely followed by those aged 26–35 at 29.1%, and individuals above 50 at 28.0%. The youngest adult group (18–25 years) accounted for 13.2%. This spread indicates the inclusion of both mature and younger adults, enabling the study to capture a range of generational perspectives on the socio-economic and environmental impacts of refugee settlement expansion. Recent studies highlight how older adults often reflect on long-term

changes to land use and resource access, whereas younger populations may focus more on opportunities and constraints related to education and employment (Rift Valley Institute, 2024).

In terms of education, the findings revealed extremely low levels of formal schooling. A significant 83.4% of participants reported having no formal education, while only 12.5% had completed primary education and a mere 4.2% had attained secondary education. This reflects structural barriers to education among indigenous host communities in Turkana, where access to quality schooling remains a persistent challenge due to limited infrastructure, cultural practices, and economic marginalization (Omondi, 2021; UNHCR & NRC, 2022). These figures are consistent with broader educational assessments in Turkana West, where historical underdevelopment continues to inhibit access to formal learning, particularly for women and pastoralist populations.

Geographically, participants were drawn from both Kakuma (57.1%) and Kalobeyei (42.9%) wards, offering a comparative perspective on the varying impacts of refugee presence in each location. Kakuma hosts one of Kenya's oldest refugee camps, operating largely on humanitarian aid models, whereas Kalobeyei was established more recently with a focus on integrated development and self-reliance (Refugee Economies, 2022). Including participants from both sites enabled the study to explore differential outcomes, such as variations in service provision, livelihood opportunities, and land use pressures. Overall, the demographic characteristics of the sample provide critical context for interpreting the findings of this study, particularly in relation to gendered vulnerabilities, intergenerational perspectives, education deficits and spatial differences across the two wards.

Figure 1: Gender Distribution



Source: Survey Data, (2025)

The gender distribution of participants in this study revealed that a significant majority 64.4% were female, compared to 35.3% male and 0.35% identifying outside the gender binary. This composition strongly influenced the findings by amplifying female voices and perspectives, particularly on issues uniquely or disproportionately affecting women and girls within both refugee and host (indigenous) communities in the Kakuma and Kalobeyei settlement schemes.

Women's narratives highlighted several genders-specific impacts related to the protracted presence and expansion of refugee settlements. Among the most prominent themes were access to basic services, caregiving responsibilities, economic vulnerability, and protection concerns. Many women reported bearing the brunt of household and caregiving duties, including child-rearing, water collection, and food preparation tasks made more difficult by limited access to resources, overcrowding, and strained infrastructure. These challenges were reported by both refugee and host community women, though in slightly different contexts. For instance, indigenous Turkana women

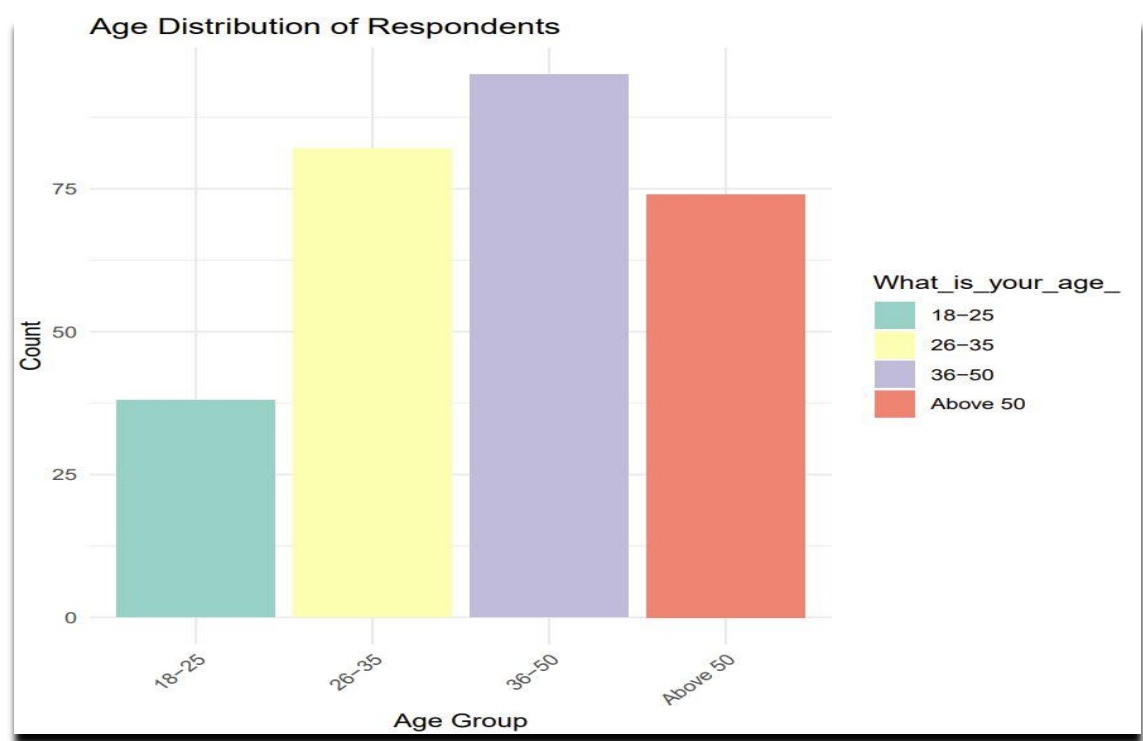
often spoke of the competition over natural resources such as grazing land and water, while refugee women emphasized barriers to healthcare access and maternal services.

Access to education for girls also emerged as a concern, with participants noting cultural, financial, and logistical barriers that prevent consistent school attendance. The situation is further exacerbated by early marriage and domestic responsibilities, which disproportionately affect adolescent girls in both communities (UNHCR & NRC, 2022). In some cases, women expressed frustration over the lack of targeted empowerment initiatives that could support livelihoods, literacy, or leadership development for women and girls in the region.

In terms of safety and protection, several female participants highlighted vulnerabilities to gender-based violence (GBV), both within the household and in public spaces such as markets and water collection points. These accounts are consistent with broader findings in humanitarian literature, which document the elevated risks faced by women in displacement contexts, especially where infrastructure and policing are limited (International Rescue Committee, 2022).

Importantly, the predominance of female participants in this study allowed for a more detailed and grounded understanding of how gender intersects with displacement, poverty, and development. The gendered nature of the responses suggests that policy and programming in Kakuma and Kalobeyei must be more intentionally gender-responsive acknowledging and addressing the specific needs, constraints, and strengths of women and girls across both refugee and host populations. As UN-Habitat (2023) has noted, achieving sustainable and equitable development in complex humanitarian settings requires the integration of gender-sensitive planning and the active inclusion of women in decision-making processes.

Figure 2: Age distribution



Source: Survey Data, (2025)

The age distribution of participants in this study was relatively balanced, capturing a diverse range of life stages and experiences across both refugee and host communities. Participants aged between 26 and 50 years formed the largest proportion of the sample, with 29.1% in the 26–35 age group and 29.8% in the 36–50 age group. These two cohorts together accounted for approximately 59% of all participants, indicating a predominance of economically active and socially engaged adults within the study population.

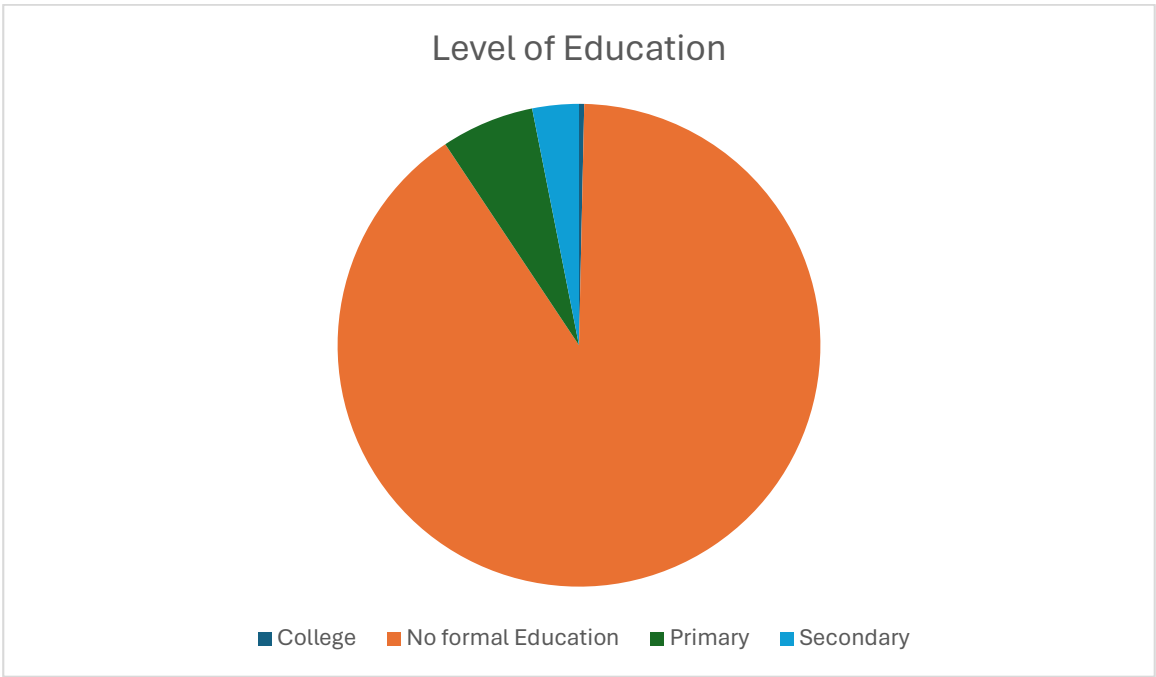
Individuals above the age of 50 comprised 28.0% of the sample, offering perspectives shaped by long-term experiences in the region, including historical patterns of displacement, drought, and local governance. These older participants often provided insight into intergenerational changes in livelihoods, land use, and community relations since the establishment and expansion of refugee settlements in Kakuma and Kalobeyei.

Meanwhile, younger adults aged 18–25 constituted 13.2% of the sample. Although they represented the smallest age group, their voices were significant in reflecting aspirations for education, employment, and inclusion in development processes. This cohort also

offered critical perspectives on challenges such as youth unemployment, limited vocational training opportunities, and exclusion from formal decision-making structures—issues that have been documented in broader studies of refugee-hosting regions (Rift Valley Institute, 2024; UN-Habitat, 2023).

Overall, the distribution reflects a healthy balance between younger and older community members, enabling the study to capture a wide spectrum of lived experiences. This diversity is important for understanding the differentiated impacts of refugee settlement expansion across age groups, as priorities, vulnerabilities, and coping strategies often vary significantly depending on life stage.

Figure 3: Participants educational level



Source: Survey Data, (2025)

The educational profile of the study participants revealed a notably low level of formal schooling, particularly among members of the indigenous host community. A significant majority 83.4% of participants reported having no formal education at all. Only 12.5% had completed primary education, while just 4.2% had attained secondary education. These figures reflect a longstanding pattern of limited access to formal education in Turkana County, especially among pastoralist communities, where school infrastructure, teacher

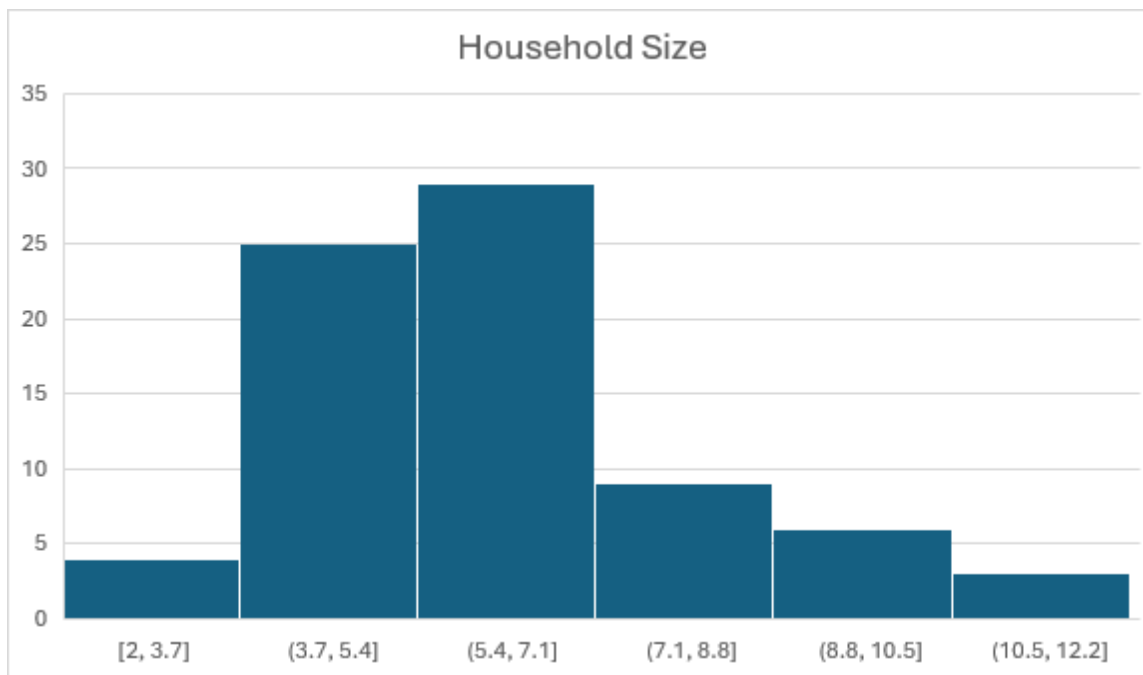
availability, and cultural factors have historically constrained enrollment and retention (UNHCR & NRC, 2022; Omondi, 2021).

This low level of educational attainment has several implications for community participation in processes related to refugee camp expansion and local development. Limited literacy and formal education may restrict individuals' ability to engage meaningfully in structured consultations, negotiate on issues such as land use or compensation, or access written information regarding policy decisions and services. As noted by UN-Habitat (2023), education plays a critical role in empowering local populations to participate in planning and governance, especially in complex humanitarian-development settings such as Kakuma and Kalobeyi.

Moreover, the lack of formal education reinforces existing socio-economic vulnerabilities and reduces opportunities for employment, particularly in sectors beyond subsistence livelihoods. This dynamic not only affects individual and household resilience but also contributes to broader disparities between refugee and host populations, as many refugees may have had higher levels of education prior to displacement (Refugee Economies, 2022).

The educational data underscores the need for targeted interventions aimed at improving adult literacy, vocational training, and inclusive education programming that addresses the needs of both host and refugee communities. Without such investments, host community members particularly indigenous populations continued to face barriers to meaningful participation in decision-making processes that directly affect their futures.

Figure 4: Household Size



Source: Survey Data (2025)

This study examined the socio-economic dynamics and challenges facing refugee and host (indigenous) communities within the Kakuma and Kalobeyei settlement schemes in Turkana County, Kenya. The analysis focused on four core themes: household size and housing conditions, livelihood opportunities, land use dynamics, and access to basic services.

The average household size across both communities was approximately six individuals ($M = 5.99$), with the majority (68%) of households having between 5 and 8 members. These relatively large family sizes are reflective of traditional Turkana pastoralist norms, where extended family structures support collective labor and economic survival. However, such sizes strain housing capacity, especially in contexts marked by overcrowding, limited infrastructure, and resource scarcity. Among host communities, many reside in semi-permanent structures with minimal access to water, sanitation, and electricity, while refugees face similar conditions within shelter plots governed by humanitarian agencies. Overcrowding is common and often undermines privacy, health, and social cohesion (UN-Habitat, 2023; UNHCR, 2022).

Land use is another critical issue. The expansion of the refugee settlements has involved the reallocation of community land, often without sufficient consultation or compensation

to indigenous residents. This has disrupted traditional grazing routes and heightened perceptions of dispossession among the Turkana, whose pastoral livelihoods depend on open access to communal rangeland (Haller et al., 2021). Although Kalobeyei attempted to introduce a more balanced, integrated model of shared space and services, unresolved issues around land tenure continue to undermine these efforts. Refugees, on the other hand, face limited access to arable land and remain reliant on temporary plot allocations with little long-term security. These conditions restrict both host and refugee communities from establishing land-based self-reliance strategies (Refugee Economies, 2022).

Access to essential services such as water, education, healthcare, and sanitation varies considerably between the two groups. Refugee communities are supported by international organizations that provide a baseline of services, but these are often overstretched, particularly in Kakuma where congestion and resource limitations are acute. Kalobeyei has seen some improvements in service delivery due to its integrated settlement design; however, gaps remain in service quality, inclusivity, and sustainability (UNHCR, 2022). Host communities frequently report unequal access to infrastructure located within or near refugee settlements, reinforcing longstanding feelings of marginalization. Moreover, the absence of legal documentation among both refugees and some indigenous individuals' hampers access to formal education, health insurance, and social protection services (UNHCR & NRC, 2022; Omondi, 2021).

The findings highlight the need for integrated and equitable development approaches that address both refugee and host community needs. This includes the promotion of inclusive livelihood opportunities, fair land allocation and compensation mechanisms, adequate and culturally appropriate housing, and improved access to services. Long-term planning should prioritize community participation, legal reforms including refugee work rights and investments that build resilience for both populations.

3.2 Livelihoods and Income Sources

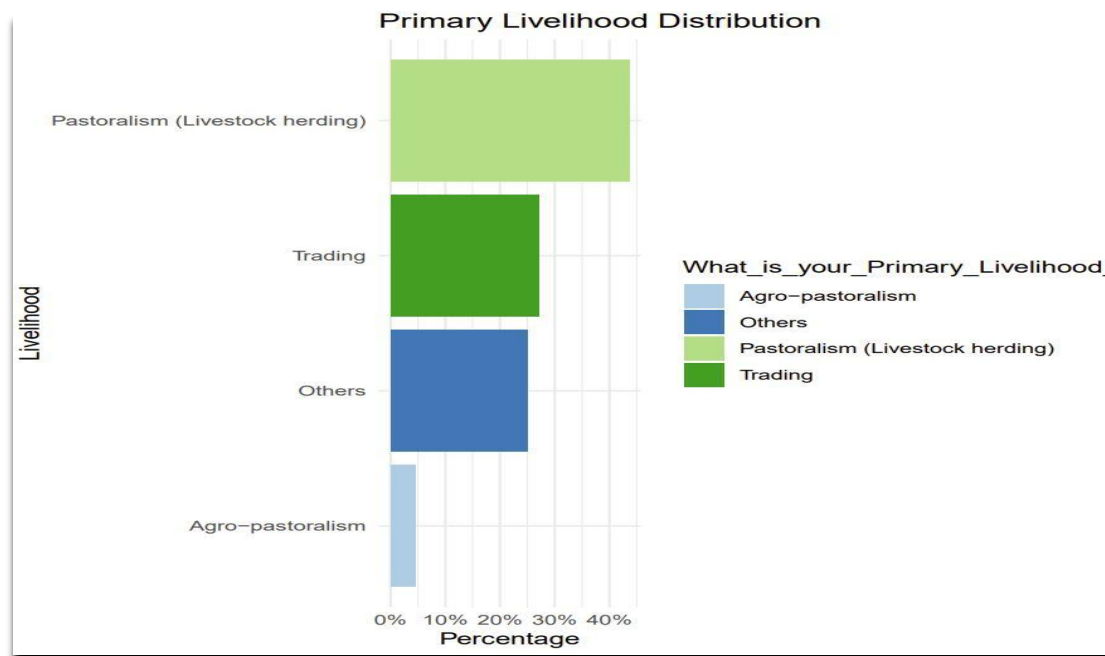
The establishment of refugee camps had influenced the socio-economic activities of the indigenous community in Kakuma and Kalobeyei. The primary livelihoods included pastoralism (38.4%), trading (37.4%), agro-pastoralism (1.0%), and others (22.8%), such as charcoal burning and firewood collection. Kalobeyei showed a slight shift toward

trading aligned with market access, while pastoralism remained dominant in Kakuma. Livelihood opportunities in both settlements are constrained by legal and structural barriers. Refugees face national restrictions on formal employment, relegating many to the informal economy engaging in small-scale trade, casual labor, or home-based activities such as tailoring or food vending (Refugee Economies, 2022). Although Kalobeyei's integrated settlement model aims to promote market-based livelihoods, these initiatives remain limited in reach.

Host community members, predominantly indigenous Turkana pastoralists, have also experienced increasing vulnerability due to land degradation, drought, and limited economic diversification. Many have turned to marginal activities like charcoal burning and informal trade, while competition for scarce employment has fueled intergroup tensions (Rift Valley Institute, 2024). The main income sources reflected this diversification: 33.6% from livestock sales, 54.7% from others charcoal, 6.2% from casual labour, and 5.5% from crop farming. The refugee presence had spurred economic diversification, particularly in Kalobeyei, but pressures on grazing lands had reduced reliance on traditional herding.

3.2.1 Primary Livelihood Distribution

Figure 1: Primary livelihood Distribution



Source: Survey Data (2025)

The analysis of primary livelihood sources among participants in the Kakuma and Kalobeyei settlement schemes revealed that the majority of community members—both refugees and host populations—are engaged in activities linked to pastoralism and small-scale trade. Specifically, 38.4% of participants ($n = 111$) reported pastoralism as their primary livelihood, while 37.4% ($n = 108$) identified trading as their main source of income. Together, these two sectors account for over three-quarters of all livelihood activities (75.8%), highlighting their centrality to the socio-economic fabric of the region.

Pastoralism, traditionally practiced by the indigenous Turkana community, remains a dominant livelihood despite challenges such as land degradation, recurring droughts, and restricted mobility due to settlement expansion. Livestock herding serves not only as a source of income through the sale of animals and animal products but also as a key element of cultural identity and social organization (Rift Valley Institute, 2024). However, participants noted that declining access to grazing land and water has increasingly

undermined the sustainability of this practice, forcing some households to seek alternative income sources.

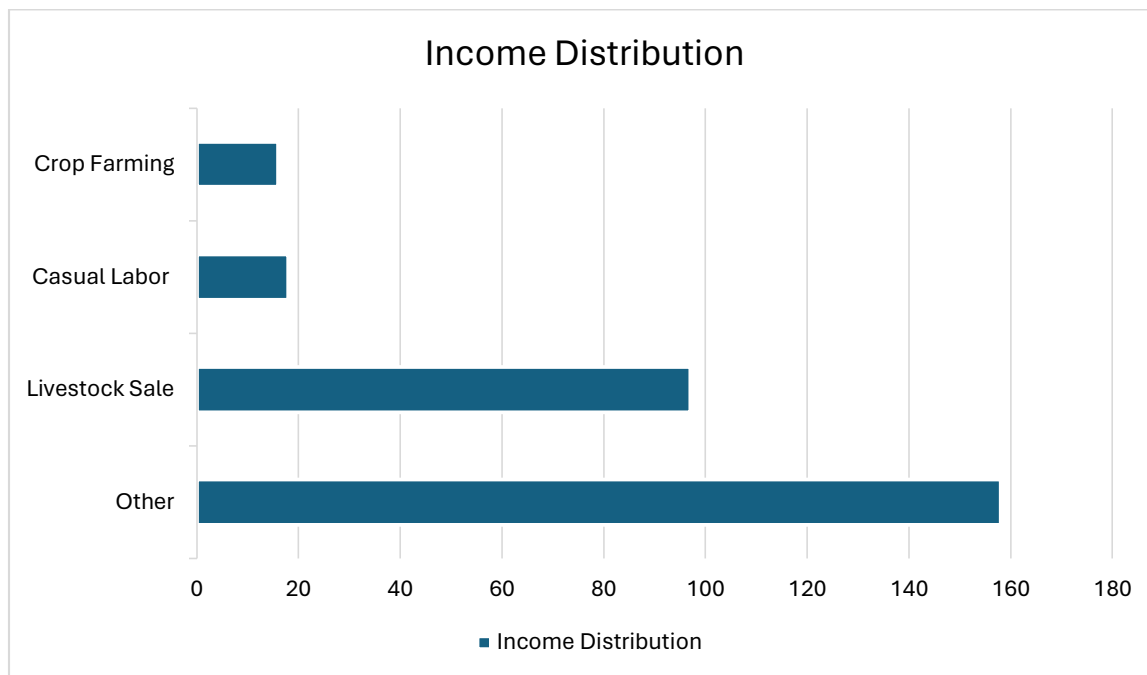
Trading, the second most prevalent livelihood, encompasses a range of informal economic activities including the sale of firewood, charcoal, food items, clothing, and other household goods. Many participants, particularly women, reported engaging in small-scale vending within local markets or near settlement peripheries. Charcoal production and firewood collection, while economically vital to some households, raise environmental and legal concerns, as these practices contribute to deforestation and are often unregulated (UN-Habitat, 2023).

A smaller proportion of participants reported alternative livelihoods. Approximately 22.8% (n = 66) fell into another category, which included informal services, remittances, or aid-dependent survival strategies. Only 1.0% (n = 3) practiced agro-pastoralism, reflecting limited agricultural engagement due to arid climatic conditions and restricted land access. Just one respondent (0.35%) reported casual labor as a primary income source, suggesting that formal or wage-based employment remains exceptionally rare across both communities.

This distribution underscores the reliance on natural resource-based and informal economies among populations in Kakuma and Kalobeyei. The dominance of pastoralism and trading also reflects limited livelihood diversification, which increases vulnerability to environmental shocks and market fluctuations. These findings support previous research indicating the urgent need for livelihood programs that enhance resilience, expand legal work opportunities for refugees, and promote sustainable resource use among host communities (Refugee Economies, 2022; UNHCR, 2022).

3.2.2 Main Source of Income Distribution.

Figure 2. Main Source of Income Distribution



The distribution of main income sources among participants in the Kakuma and Kalobeyei settlement schemes reveals a significant shift in livelihood patterns, particularly among the indigenous host community. A majority of participants (54.7%, $n = 158$) reported “other” income sources as their primary means of survival, with most specifying charcoal burning and firewood collection as their main activities. This indicates a growing dependence on natural resource extraction, particularly among those who are unable to access or sustain traditional pastoralist livelihoods due to environmental, spatial, or economic constraints.

Livestock sales once the primary income source among pastoralist communities accounted for 33.6% ($n = 97$) of reported main income sources. While still a vital aspect of household economies, this relatively lower proportion suggests increasing pressure on livestock-based livelihoods. Factors such as reduced grazing land due to settlement expansion, recurrent droughts, and limited veterinary services have likely contributed to the declining viability of full-time pastoralism (Rift Valley Institute, 2024). As a result, many households are resorting to selling livestock not as a primary strategy, but rather as a coping mechanism in times of financial distress or food insecurity.

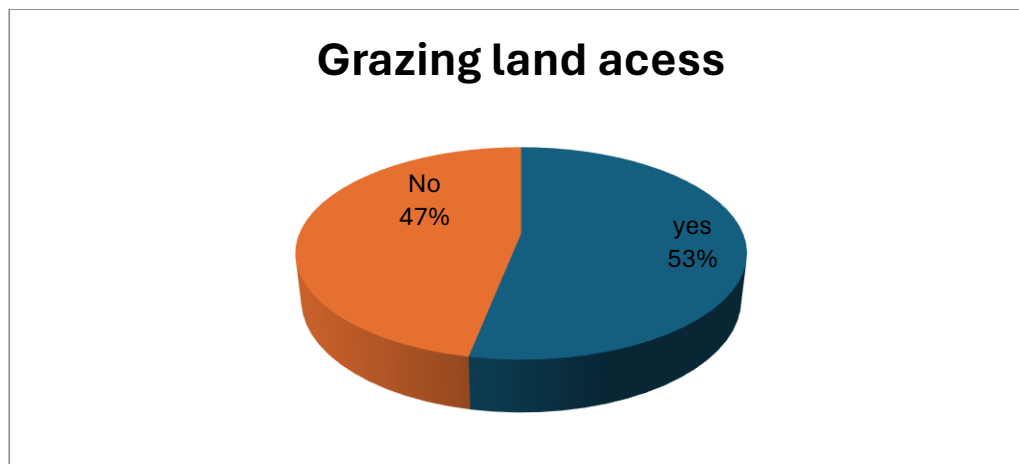
Casual labor was reported as the primary source of income by 6.2% of participants (n = 18). These jobs typically include low-paying, temporary work such as construction, cleaning, or informal domestic tasks—roles often filled by those lacking access to land, livestock, or capital. Similarly, crop farming was cited by only 5.5% of participants (n = 16), reflecting the arid climatic conditions of Turkana County, as well as limited access to arable land and irrigation infrastructure, particularly for refugee populations who face legal and spatial constraints on land use (UN-Habitat, 2023; UNHCR, 2022)

The data collectively indicate a clear trend of economic adaptation and environmental stress. The prominence of charcoal production and firewood collection as income-generating activities accounting for the majority of the other category raises serious concerns about environmental sustainability and legal compliance. These practices are not only labor-intensive and poorly remunerated but also contribute to deforestation and land degradation, further compounding the ecological challenges already faced by the region (Refugee Economies, 2022).

This distribution of income sources highlights the urgent need for diversified and sustainable livelihood interventions that reduce dependence on extractive activities. Interventions must address structural barriers to economic inclusion, particularly for women and youth, and support both host and refugee communities through vocational training, legal work pathways, and climate-resilient agriculture (UN-Habitat, 2023). Without such interventions, economic vulnerability and environmental degradation are likely to intensify.

3.3 Impact on Grazing Land and Resources Access

Figure 1: changes in Access to Grazing Land



Source: Survey Data (2025)

Access to grazing land has undergone significant changes for indigenous communities in and around the Kakuma and Kalobeyei settlement schemes. According to the data, 37.0% of respondents ($n = 107$) reported experiencing changes in their access to grazing land, while 63.0% ($n = 182$) indicated no perceived changes. Although a majority did not report changes, the 37% who did represent a substantial portion of the population whose livelihoods are closely tied to pastoralism and land-based practices.

The reported changes primarily involved a reduction in available grazing land, with participants noting that large portions of previously accessible rangeland had been occupied by refugee camps. This issue was particularly pronounced in Kalobeyei, where 48.4% of participants reported reduced access, compared to 28.5% in Kakuma. This discrepancy suggests that land pressure is more acute in Kalobeyei, likely due to its newer settlement model that includes spatial integration and a broader footprint on community land (UN-Habitat, 2023).

Participants also linked the decline in grazing land quality to environmental degradation, particularly deforestation. As forests are cleared partly to meet rising demand for firewood and construction materials there has been a corresponding loss of natural grass cover essential for livestock grazing. The degradation of grassland not only affects livestock

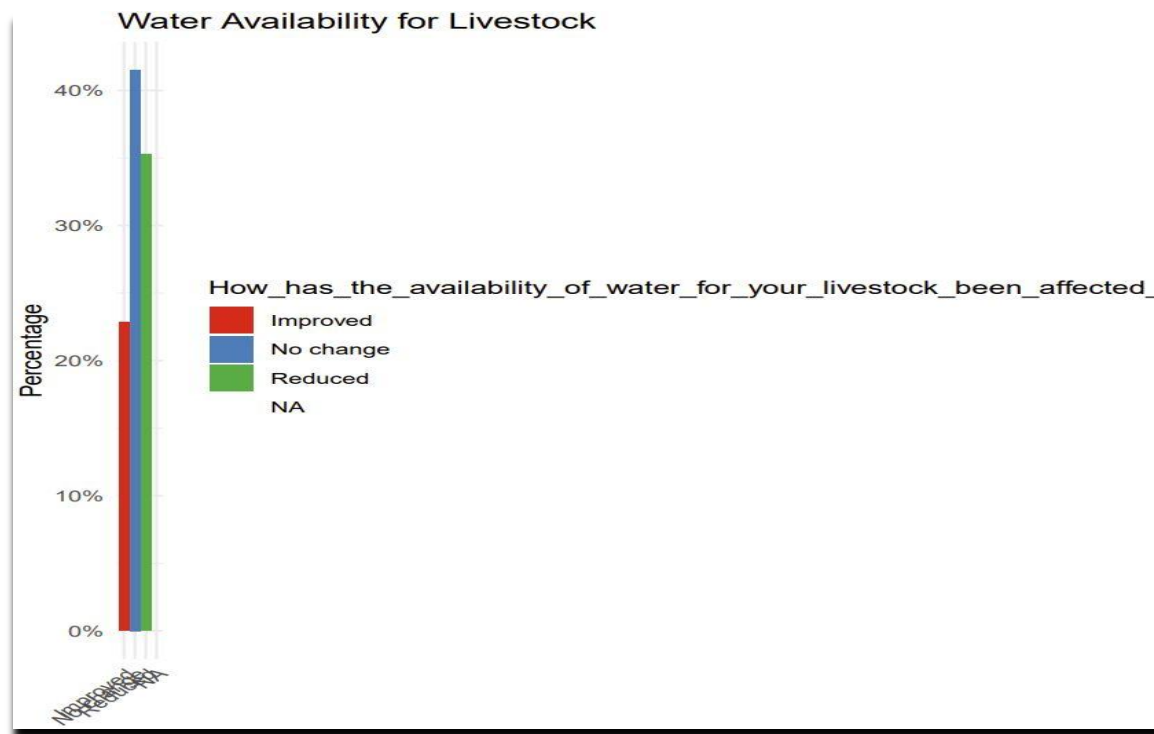
productivity but also threatens the broader pastoralist economy, which depends on healthy rangelands and seasonal mobility (Rift Valley Institute, 2024).

This shift in land use and degradation reflects broader challenges in balancing humanitarian land needs with indigenous rights and environmental sustainability. The Turkana community, whose pastoralist lifestyle is deeply intertwined with communal land access, faces growing constraints that undermine their cultural and economic systems. The displacement of grazing activities due to camp expansion has disrupted traditional migration patterns, contributed to livestock losses, and exacerbated food insecurity among host households (Haller et al., 2021).

The findings call attention to the urgent need for integrated land management strategies that account for both refugee settlement planning and the preservation of local livelihoods. Such strategies should include community-led consultations, grazing corridor protection, and reforestation initiatives to restore degraded rangelands. Without deliberate intervention, continued land encroachment and degradation risk deepening tensions between host communities and refugee populations, while further destabilizing the fragile pastoralist economy (UNHCR, 2022).

3.3.1 Availability of Water for Livestock

Figure 2: Water availability for livestock



Source: Survey Data, (2025)

The study revealed notable variations in water availability for livestock between the Kalobeyei and Kakuma settlement areas, highlighting the uneven distribution of infrastructure and its impacts on pastoral livelihoods. Overall, 33.1% of respondents in Kalobeyei reported improved access to water for their livestock, compared to only 13.9% in Kakuma. This disparity suggests that water-related infrastructure developed as part of the Kalobeyei settlement planning such as boreholes, piped systems, or shared water points may have had positive spillover effects for some surrounding host communities (UN-Habitat, 2023).

In contrast, many pastoralists in Kakuma reported ongoing difficulties in accessing adequate water for their animals. The limited water availability is closely tied to environmental stress, including recurrent drought, poor groundwater recharge, and over-reliance on shared or seasonal water points (Rift Valley Institute, 2024). Moreover, the expansion of refugee settlements in these arid regions has increased demand for water,

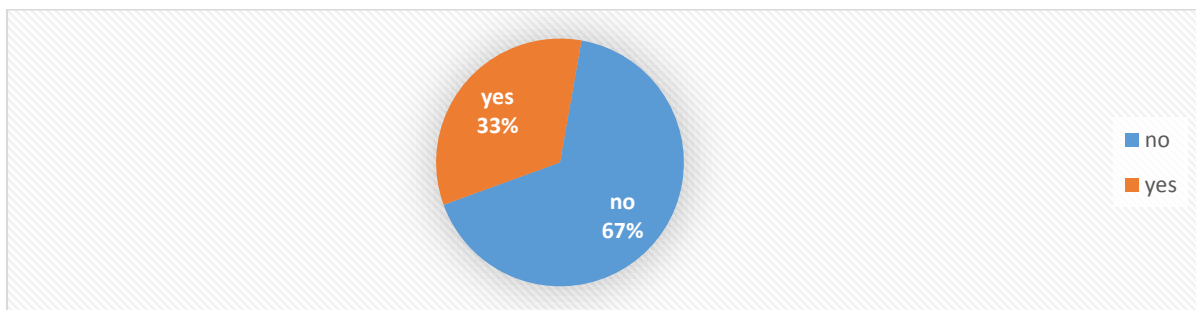
often prioritizing human consumption and hygiene needs over livestock access. This has disrupted traditional watering patterns and forced some herders to travel longer distances, reducing the productivity and health of their animals.

For indigenous Turkana pastoralists, access to reliable water sources is critical not only for sustaining livestock but also for maintaining their mobile herding systems, which depend on both grazing and watering corridors. When water access is compromised—due to infrastructural limitations or settlement-induced land pressures—it undermines the viability of pastoralism as a livelihood and increases vulnerability to food insecurity and economic marginalization (Haller et al., 2021).

The findings underscore the importance of inclusive water infrastructure planning in refugee-hosting areas. While improvements in Kalobeyi point to the potential for integrated development to benefit both refugees and host communities, similar investments are needed in Kakuma to ensure equitable access to water resources. Future interventions should consider the water needs of both people and livestock, especially in regions where pastoralism remains the primary livelihood and source of resilience (UNHCR, 2022).

3.3.2 Livestock Loss Due to Resource Competition

Figure 3: Livestock Loss Due to Competition



Sources: Survey Data (2025)

Livestock loss as a result of resource competition emerged as a significant concern for a subset of respondents in this study, particularly among indigenous host communities who rely heavily on pastoralism. Overall, 22.2% of participants ($n = 64$) reported experiencing livestock loss attributed directly to competition over essential resources such as land, pasture, and water. In contrast, 77.9% ($n = 225$) did not report such losses. While not a majority, the proportion reporting losses is substantial and points to emerging vulnerabilities in pastoral systems under pressure.

Among those reporting losses, the primary causes included theft and famine resulting from pasture shortages. Participants indicated that livestock were frequently stolen, especially in areas experiencing weakened traditional governance or inter-group tensions. Others reported that animals died from hunger due to insufficient grazing land or water, a condition exacerbated by the expansion of refugee settlements and the resulting encroachment onto traditional grazing areas (Rift Valley Institute, 2024).

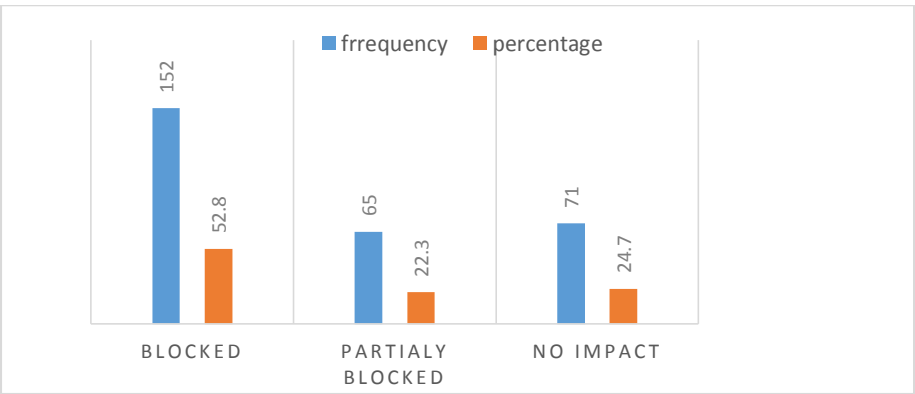
Disaggregated by location, Kalobeyei participants were nearly twice as likely (29.8%) to report livestock loss compared to those in Kakuma (16.4%). This aligns with earlier findings indicating that Kalobeyei faces greater land pressure, environmental degradation, and settlement-related resource encroachment (UN-Habitat, 2023). The integrated settlement model in Kalobeyei, while offering infrastructural benefits, has also introduced spatial constraints that impact traditional livestock routes and water access points—factors crucial to livestock survival and herd management (Haller et al., 2021).

These findings are indicative of a broader disruption in pastoralist systems, driven by competing demands for limited natural resources in a fragile arid ecosystem. For the Turkana host community in particular, livestock are not only a source of income but also central to social status, food security, and cultural identity. Livestock loss therefore carries both economic and psychosocial implications, often deepening household vulnerability and eroding traditional coping mechanisms (UNHCR, 2022).

The study underscores the need for conflict-sensitive development planning that considers the indirect costs of resource competition. Investment in shared grazing corridors, improved water access, and enhanced livestock protection measures could mitigate some of the impacts reported. Furthermore, stronger community engagement and natural resource governance frameworks are essential to balance the needs of refugee populations and indigenous pastoralist communities (Refugee Economies, 2022).

3.3.3 Frequency of Livestock Movement for Pasture

Figure 4: Impact on Traditional Migration Routes



Source: Survey Data, (2025)

The study findings indicate significant changes in the frequency of traditional livestock migration movements among pastoralist communities in the Kakuma and Kalobeyei settlement areas. Overall, 55.7% of respondents (n = 161) reported that migration movements have become more frequent than before, while 29.4% (n = 85) indicated that

the frequency has remained the same, and 14.9% (n = 43) observed less frequent migration.

The increase in migration frequency suggests heightened competition for pasture and water resources, as pastoralists are compelled to move their herds more often to access dwindling grazing areas. This trend was especially pronounced in Kalobeyei, where 61.3% of participants reported increased migration frequency, compared to 51.5% in Kakuma. The higher figure in Kalobeyei aligns with earlier observations of greater land pressure and resource constraints within this settlement, resulting from both the settlement's expansion and environmental degradation (UN-Habitat, 2023).

Traditional migration routes, which have long allowed pastoralists to adapt to the region's arid and semi-arid conditions by following seasonal patterns of rainfall and forage availability, are increasingly disrupted. The encroachment of refugee settlements onto communal grazing lands and water points restricts mobility and access to critical resources. Consequently, pastoralists may be forced to undertake longer or more frequent journeys, increasing labor demands and the risk of livestock losses (Rift Valley Institute, 2024).

This alteration in migration patterns not only impacts the sustainability of pastoral livelihoods but also strains social networks and customary governance systems that regulate access to pasture and manage conflicts. The disruption may also exacerbate tensions between host and refugee populations, as competition over limited resources intensifies (Haller et al., 2021).

The findings underscore the importance of protecting traditional pastoral mobility as a key component of resilience in arid landscapes. Integrating migration corridors into settlement planning, enhancing resource-sharing agreements, and investing in sustainable rangeland management are essential strategies to mitigate the negative impacts on pastoral communities and foster peaceful coexistence (UNHCR, 2022). The establishment of the Kalobeyei refugee camps had a profound effect on pastoralist mobility, which was central to their livelihood and survival strategies. A majority of participants (52.8%) reported that their traditional livestock routes had been completely blocked due to the presence of the camps. This complete obstruction significantly

disrupted access to seasonal grazing areas and water sources, which were essential during dry periods. The loss of access to these routes undermined the pastoral system, which relies on free and flexible movement to manage grazing pressure, reduce conflict and maintain livestock health. Such limitations not only reduce livestock productivity but also increase vulnerability to drought and resource-based conflicts.

Furthermore, an additional 22.3% of participants indicated that their routes were partially blocked, suggesting that even where movement was still possible, it was then constrained or redirected, likely increasing travel time, stress on animals, and resource use. Only 24.7% reported that their routes were unaffected, illustrating that the impact was widespread across the region. This disruption had broader implications beyond just mobility; it threatens the sustainability of pastoralism as a livelihood and may force communities to alter their traditional practices, migrate, or depend more heavily on aid. To mitigate these effects, there was a critical need for inclusive land-use planning that considers the needs of both refugee and indigenous communities, especially pastoralists who depend on mobility for survival.

To sum up, the establishment of refugee camps in Kalobeyei had had a predominantly negative impact on traditional pastoralists' migration routes, which were vital for accessing seasonal pastures and water sources. With 52.8% of participants reported complete blockage of these routes and an additional 22.3% experiencing partial obstruction, pastoral mobility had been significantly constrained, undermining a system that relies on flexibility to ensure livestock health, drought resilience, and conflict avoidance. These disruptions not only threaten livestock productivity but also jeopardize the long-term sustainability of pastoralism as a livelihood. However, a smaller portion (24.7%) of participants indicated that their routes remain unaffected; suggesting that in certain areas, traditional movement was still possible potentially due to favorable land use arrangements or less direct interference from refugee settlements. This indicated that while the impacts were largely detrimental, opportunities existed for coexistence when managed carefully. Therefore, to preserve pastoral livelihoods and promote pastoralists stability, there was an urgent need for inclusive, conflict sensitive land use and planning that safeguarded traditional migration routes while accommodating the needs of both indigenous and refugee communities.

3.4 Socio-Economic Impact

3.4.1 Local households' engagement in new income generating activities trade, employment.

Table 1.

Participants' Responses	Yes	No	Total
	65(22.6%)	224 (77.4%)	288 (100%)

The data from this study indicate that a relatively small proportion of local households in Kalobeyei have engaged in new income-generating activities potentially linked to the expansion of refugee settlements. Specifically, only **22.6% of participants (n = 65)** reported involvement in alternative livelihood strategies such as trade or formal employment. Conversely, a significant majority, **77.4% (n = 224)**, had not diversified their sources of income.

This limited engagement suggests that most indigenous households have yet to experience substantial economic benefits or opportunities arising from the refugee camp's presence and related development initiatives. The low level of livelihood diversification may be attributed to multiple barriers, including restricted access to capital, skills training, market linkages, and legal constraints affecting work rights (Refugee Economies, 2022).

Such findings align with broader literature highlighting that host communities often face structural and socio-economic challenges that inhibit their full participation in emerging economic opportunities associated with humanitarian interventions (Rift Valley Institute, 2024). Without deliberate and targeted support such as capacity-building programs, microfinance access, and inclusive policy frameworks—local populations may remain marginalized from the potential economic gains of refugee-hosting contexts.

Therefore, this evidence underscores the critical need for integrated livelihood development approaches that prioritize the inclusion of indigenous communities in economic planning. Facilitating equitable access to income-generating activities not only

enhances household resilience but also contributes to social cohesion and reduces tensions between refugee and host populations (UN-Habitat, 2023).

3.4.2 Presence of expansion of refugee camps affects local markets for livestock, goods and services

Table 2.

Participants' Responses	Improved access	Reduced access	None	Total
	141 (48.6%)	101 (35.1%)	48 (16.7%)	289 (100%)

The data revealed varied perceptions among participants concerning the effects of refugee camp expansion on local markets for livestock, goods, and services in Kalobeyei. Nearly half of the respondents, **48.6% (n = 141)**, believed that the expansion had enhanced access to these markets. This perspective suggests that the presence of the refugee population has stimulated economic opportunities by increasing demand and market activity, potentially benefiting local traders and service providers (Refugee Economies, 2022).

Conversely, a substantial proportion of participants, **35.1% (n = 101)**, reported that access to markets had diminished following the expansion. These respondents likely experienced increased competition, resource strain, or exclusion from economic opportunities, reflecting the challenges faced by some host community members in adjusting to the changing economic landscape. Such constraints may include limited market infrastructure, pricing pressures, or displacement of traditional trading networks (Rift Valley Institute, 2024).

Additionally, **16.7% of participants (n = 48)** perceived no significant change in market access, highlighting a segment of the population either unaffected by or indifferent to the camp's expansion impacts. This diversity of opinions underscores the complex and multifaceted nature of economic interactions between refugee and host communities.

Overall, these findings illustrate that the expansion of refugee camps generates both benefits and drawbacks within local market systems. While increased demand can spur

growth and diversification, it also intensifies competition and resource pressures, necessitating careful policy and programmatic responses to maximize shared economic gains and mitigate tensions (UN-Habitat, 2023).

3.4.3 Existence of locals and refugee conflict over resources in Kalobeyei ward

Table 3.

Participants Responses	Yes	No	Total
	219 (76.0%)	70 (23.9%)	289 (100)

The data indicated that a substantial majority of participants, 219 out of 289 (76.0%), acknowledge the existence of conflicts between locals and refugees over resources in Kalobeyei ward, while only 70 participants (23.9%) deny such conflicts. This widespread recognition highlighted that resource competition was a significant and ongoing challenge in the area, likely exacerbated by the pressures of the refugee camp expansion. The prevalence of these conflicts underscores the urgent need for effective resource management and conflict resolution strategies to promote peaceful coexistence and equitable access to essential resources.

3.4.4 Kalobeyei local community benefits from services and programs available in the refugee camps.

Table 4.

Participants Responses	Yes	No	Total
	89 (30.9%)	199 (69.1%)	288 (100)

The study revealed that a substantial majority of participants in Kalobeyei ward, **76.0% (n = 219)**, acknowledged the presence of conflicts between local communities and refugees over access to resources. In contrast, only **23.9% (n = 70)** of respondents denied the existence of such conflicts. This widespread recognition indicates that competition over essential resources—including land, water, and grazing areas is a significant and persistent challenge within the settlement context.

The findings suggest that the expansion of refugee camps has intensified resource pressure, exacerbating tensions between host populations and refugees. This dynamic aligns with broader literature which documents how increased demand and restricted availability of natural resources often trigger conflicts in refugee-hosting areas (Haller et al., 2021; UNHCR, 2022). The prevalence of such disputes highlights the complex socio-economic interactions in Kalobeyei, where limited infrastructure and governance gaps contribute to strained relations.

Given the extent of reported conflicts, the results underscore the urgent need for comprehensive resource management frameworks and conflict resolution mechanisms. Implementing inclusive policies that ensure equitable access to water, land, and other vital resources is critical for fostering peaceful coexistence and mitigating potential escalations. Furthermore, strengthening participatory community engagement and promoting shared benefit approaches may enhance mutual trust and collaboration between locals and refugees (UN-Habitat, 2023).

3.4.5 Women were affected differently compared to men by refugee camps expansion.

Table 5

Participants Responses	Yes	No	Total
	206 (71.2%)	83 (28.8%)	289 (100)

The study findings indicate a widespread acknowledgment within the Kalobeyei community of gendered disparities in how the expansion of refugee camps affects individuals. Specifically, 71.2% of participants (n = 205) believed that women were impacted differently than men by the camp expansion, while 28.8% (n = 83) did not share this view. This recognition suggests a nuanced understanding among respondents of the unique vulnerabilities and burdens faced by women in the changing socio-economic and environmental landscape.

Women in host and refugee communities often carry the dual responsibilities of caregiving and household management, which become increasingly strained in contexts of resource scarcity. As refugee settlements expand and competition over water, firewood, grazing

land, and market opportunities intensifies, women are frequently the first to experience the consequences. For example, women may have to travel longer distances to collect water or firewood, exposing them to safety risks and consuming time that could otherwise be spent on income-generating or educational activities (UNHCR, 2022). In addition, the influx of new populations may exacerbate existing gender inequalities by increasing competition in informal trade an area where women typically dominate. This can limit their access to markets, reduce income security, and strain household economies (Refugee Economies, 2022). Moreover, with greater pressure on health and social services, women particularly those who are pregnant, caregiving, or managing reproductive health needs face heightened challenges in accessing adequate care (Rift Valley Institute, 2024).

The psychosocial impacts on women can also be profound. Camp expansion can alter community dynamics, sometimes leading to the erosion of traditional support networks and increased gender-based violence (GBV), particularly in settings where protective structures are weak or under-resourced. Reports from similar contexts indicate that women may face increased domestic burdens and social exclusion when displaced or when competing for aid and services with refugee populations (UN-Habitat, 2023).

These findings underscore the critical need for gender-sensitive planning and policy interventions in refugee-hosting areas. Development and humanitarian programs must be designed to address the specific risks and roles of women such as access to livelihood support, healthcare, legal protection, and representation in decision-making structures. Ensuring that women’s voices are included in the design and management of settlement areas is essential for creating equitable, safe, and sustainable environments for all affected populations.

3.5.6 Local households were trainings on resilience and change adaption by NGOs and GoK

Table 6.

Participants Responses	Yes	No	Total
	113 (38.9%)	176 (1.1%)	289(100)

The research findings revealed limited access to training on resilience and change adaptation among local households in the Kalobeyei and Kakuma settlement areas. Of the **289 participants**, only **38.9% (n = 113)** reported that their households had received such training from **non-governmental organizations (NGOs)** or the **Government of Kenya (GoK)**. In contrast, a majority of **61.1% (n = 176)** indicated they had not benefited from any form of training related to resilience-building or climate change adaptation.

This disparity suggests a substantial gap in the reach and inclusivity of current capacity-building programs. While resilience and adaptation training is recognized as a critical tool for strengthening community preparedness in the face of environmental stressors and socio-economic disruptions especially in arid and semi-arid regions like Turkana County the findings point to insufficient program penetration or unequal access to such services (UN-Habitat, 2023). Possible barriers include logistical challenges, lack of awareness, language or literacy limitations, or the prioritization of certain areas or groups over others.

Given the increasing vulnerabilities caused by climate change, land degradation, and population pressures associated with refugee settlements, strengthening local adaptive capacity is essential. Resilience training can equip households with practical strategies for managing risks, diversifying livelihoods, conserving resources, and fostering social cohesion all of which are critical in dynamic humanitarian-hosting environments (UNHCR, 2022; Rift Valley Institute, 2024).

Addressing the existing training gap requires a more coordinated and inclusive approach to resilience programming. This includes expanding outreach efforts, engaging community-based organizations, using participatory methods, and tailoring content to local contexts. Ensuring equitable access to such training is not only a matter of development effectiveness but also contributes to long-term peacebuilding and sustainable co-existence between refugee and host communities (Refugee Economies, 2022).

3.5.7 The impacts refugee camps expansion on locals' education

Table 7.

Participants	Improved	Reduced	None	Total
Responses	93 (32.3%)	141 (48.6%)	55 (19.1%)	289 (100%)

The study findings illustrate varied community perceptions regarding the effects of refugee camp expansion on the local education system in Kalobeyei and surrounding areas. Out of **289 participants**, **48.6% (n = 141)** reported a perceived **decline in the quality or accessibility of education** following the expansion of refugee camps. In contrast, **32.3% (n = 93)** believed that educational conditions had improved, while **19.1% (n = 55)** saw no significant change. These responses reveal a community divided in its evaluation of education outcomes, though a considerable proportion views the impact as largely negative.

The dominant concern over declining educational quality or access likely reflects increased pressure on already limited educational infrastructure. As refugee populations settle and grow, local schools experience overcrowding, insufficient learning materials, strained teacher-student ratios, and greater demand for multilingual instruction (Rift Valley Institute, 2024; UNHCR, 2022). Such challenges can compromise both the learning environment and academic outcomes for host community children, particularly in under-resourced rural areas like Turkana County.

Conversely, the **32.3%** who perceived improvements may be responding to education investments made by humanitarian and development actors, such as the construction of additional classrooms, recruitment of teachers, or the provision of learning resources—efforts often designed to benefit both refugees and host communities under integrated service models (UN-Habitat, 2023). Nonetheless, the perceived benefits appear to be unevenly distributed or insufficient to meet rising demand.

The findings highlight a key tension in refugee-hosting areas: while camp expansion can bring development opportunities, it often overwhelms local systems without adequate planning and investment. The mixed perceptions underscore the need for **targeted educational interventions** that are both inclusive and responsive to demographic

pressures. These may include increasing school capacity, improving teacher training, expanding non-formal learning opportunities, and ensuring equitable access for both host and refugee children.

Failure to address these educational disparities could exacerbate long-term social inequalities and tensions between the two communities. A balanced, community-driven approach is critical for improving educational outcomes while fostering social cohesion in refugee-hosting regions.

3.5.8 Socio Economic impact summary

The findings collectively revealed that while the expansion of refugee camps in Kalobeyei had introduced some new economic opportunities, such as improved market access for nearly half of the participants, the majority of local households had not significantly engaged in new income-generating activities, indicating barriers to economic inclusion. Additionally, a pervasive perception of conflict over resources exists between locals and refugees, underscoring the strain placed on limited natural and economic assets. The benefits of services and programs within the camps appeared largely inaccessible to most locals, contributing to feelings of marginalization and underscoring the need for more inclusive support mechanisms. Gendered impact was also evident, with a strong consensus that women face distinct challenges from the camp expansion, highlighting the necessity for gender-sensitive interventions.

Moreover, the data showed significant gaps in community resilience-building efforts, as most households had not received training to adapt to changing conditions, limiting their capacity to cope with ongoing challenges. The expansion had also negatively affected local education for nearly half the population, reflecting strains on public services exacerbated by the influx of refugees. Taken together, these findings emphasized that while the refugee camp expansion had potential benefits, its overall impact on the Kalobeyei indigenous community was mixed and often negative, particularly in terms of economic inclusion, resource competition, social cohesion, and access to services. Addressing these issues requires comprehensive, inclusive, and gender-responsive strategies that enhanced local participation, equitable resource distribution, and sustainable development for both refugees and indigenous communities.

3.6 Perceptions and Community Dynamics

Perceptions and community dynamics refer to the subjective ways in which individuals and groups interpret and respond to changes in their social, economic, and environmental environments. These perceptions are shaped by personal experiences, cultural values, historical contexts, and access to information, all of which influence how community members understand and react to phenomena such as refugee influxes, development interventions, or resource scarcity (Omondi, 2021; UN-Habitat, 2023).

Perceptions play a foundational role in shaping **community dynamics**, which encompass the relationships, patterns of interaction, and levels of social cohesion among various groups within a community. For instance, if host community members perceive that refugees are receiving disproportionate support or access to services, this may foster resentment or mistrust. Conversely, when change is viewed as mutually beneficial such as improvements in infrastructure or market access perceptions may promote cooperation, acceptance, and shared responsibility (Rift Valley Institute, 2024).

These collective attitudes significantly influence **social cohesion**, defined as the willingness of community members to trust one another, cooperate, and participate in shared initiatives. High levels of trust and positive perceptions often translate into stronger networks of mutual support, greater resilience during crises, and more effective local governance. In contrast, negative perceptions may result in conflict, exclusion, or passive resistance to development programs.

Moreover, perceptions are not static they evolve in response to new information, changing circumstances, and social interactions. This dynamic quality means that managing perceptions is as important as managing material resources in conflict-sensitive or development contexts. Dialogue, community engagement, and transparency are essential tools for shaping perceptions constructively, especially in areas affected by displacement, competition over resources, or rapid demographic shifts (UNHCR & NRC, 2022).

Ultimately, understanding and addressing perceptions within community dynamics is critical for successful policy implementation, peacebuilding, and sustainable development. Programs that fail to consider these social undercurrents risk exacerbating tensions or failing to gain community buy-in, even if they are technically sound.

3.6.1 Locals overall perception on the refugee camp expansion in Kalobeyei

Table 8

Participants	Positive	Negative	Neutral	Total
Responses	33 (11.1%)	190 (66.0%)	66 (22.9%)	289 (100%)

The research data revealed that the overall perception of the local community towards the refugee camp expansion in Kalobeyei was predominantly negative, with 190 out of 289 participants (66.0%) expressing unfavorable views. Only a small fraction, 33 participants (11.1%), held a positive perception, while 66 individuals (22.9%) remained neutral. This indicated widespread dissatisfaction or concern among locals regarding the expansion, suggesting that the majority felt the impact outweighed the benefits. The significant negative sentiment highlighted the need for improved communication, inclusive planning and measures to address local grievances to foster better community relations and coexistence

3.6.2 Relationship between Kalobeyei indigenous people and refugees on the camp expansion

Table 9.

Participants	Improved	worsen	No change	Total
Responses	89 (30.6%)	103 (35.8%)	97 (33.7%)	289 (100%)

Relationship Between Kalobeyei Indigenous People and Refugees on Camp Expansion.

The research findings indicate a predominantly strained relationship between the indigenous community of Kalobeyei and the refugee population, particularly in the context of refugee camp expansion. Out of 289 participants, 66.0% (n = 190) expressed negative perceptions of the camp expansion, while only 11.1% (n = 33) held positive views, and 22.9% (n = 66) remained neutral. This distribution suggests a clear majority of local residents perceive the refugee camp growth as having adverse effects on their livelihoods, access to resources, and community stability.

The negative sentiment underscores a broader pattern of grievances and discontent among host community members who feel marginalized or inadequately consulted in the planning and implementation of refugee-related development. Many locals attribute rising competition over essential resources such as land, water, education, and employment to the growing refugee presence, which they believe has strained local infrastructure and intensified socio-economic pressure (Rift Valley Institute, 2024; UN-Habitat, 2023).

This perception is compounded by a lack of consistent and transparent communication between humanitarian agencies, government actors, and host communities. The exclusion of indigenous voices in decision-making processes related to camp management and service delivery has likely reinforced feelings of alienation and mistrust (UNHCR & NRC, 2022). Furthermore, where tangible benefits such as improved infrastructure or livelihood programs have been introduced, they are often perceived as disproportionately favoring refugees, further aggravating host-refugee relations.

While some efforts in Kalobeyei, such as integrated settlement planning, have aimed to foster coexistence through shared services and joint development initiatives, these have not fully bridged the perception gap. The persistence of negative views among a majority of locals suggests that camp expansion, in its current form, is seen more as a burden than an opportunity by the host population.

Addressing this strained relationship requires not only equitable resource distribution but also inclusive community engagement, grievance redress mechanisms, and long-term development strategies that prioritize both host and refugee welfare. Building trust through participatory planning, fair representation, and transparent benefit-sharing can enhance social cohesion and foster a more balanced coexistence between the two groups.

3.6.3 Gok and NGOs have addressed the impacts of refugee camp expansion on Kalobeyei pastoralists’ livelihoods

Table 10.

Participants Responses	Yes	No	Total
	71 (24.3%)	2102.9%)	289 (100)

The research findings suggest a strong perception among local pastoralist communities in Kalobeyei that the Government of Kenya (GoK) and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) have not sufficiently addressed the socio-economic impacts of refugee camp expansion on their traditional livelihoods. Of the 289 respondents, 72.9% (n = 210) reported that interventions to mitigate the negative consequences of refugee settlement expansion have been inadequate. In contrast, only 24.3% (n = 71) felt that the efforts made by these institutions had been sufficient, while a small number offered no clear opinion.

This overwhelming perception of neglect reflects the persistent vulnerability of pastoralist livelihoods in the face of rapid demographic and environmental changes brought about by refugee settlement growth. Traditionally reliant on extensive grazing systems, communal land access, and seasonal mobility, Turkana pastoralists have found their livelihoods increasingly constrained by camp expansion, land fragmentation, and growing competition for natural resources such as water and pasture (Rift Valley Institute, 2024; UN-Habitat, 2023). Despite the presence of humanitarian and development actors in the region, many locals perceive that the interventions have not been responsive to the unique economic and cultural needs of pastoralist communities.

Several possible explanations underlie this dissatisfaction. First, much of the support provided by NGOs and the GoK has focused on refugee populations, often through humanitarian relief, education, and urban-style livelihood programs that do not align with pastoralist traditions. Second, where host communities have been included, interventions have often been generic or short-term in nature, lacking the context-specific design necessary to support pastoral economies. This includes a lack of investment in grazing infrastructure, veterinary services, livestock markets, and climate-resilient pastoral

systems all of which are crucial for sustaining pastoral livelihoods in arid regions like Turkana (UNHCR, 2022).

Moreover, some community members' express frustration with the limited consultation and participation in project planning and implementation, which has led to a mismatch between actual community needs and external interventions. As a result, the perception of being sidelined or excluded has deepened, potentially undermining trust in both state and non-state actors.

The findings point to a critical gap in livelihood support and an urgent need for more equitable, targeted, and inclusive development approaches. Programs aimed at mitigating the impacts of refugee presence must go beyond generic livelihood models and incorporate pastoralist knowledge systems, mobility patterns, and land rights. Strengthening collaboration between the GoK, NGOs, and local leaders particularly from pastoralist communities ensured more sustainable, culturally appropriate, and accepted responses.

3.6.4 Key challenges faced by Kalobeyei pastoralists due to refugee camps expansion

3.6.4.1. Increased demand for natural resources

The expansion of refugee camps in Kalobeyei has considerably heightened pressure on already scarce natural resources, creating significant livelihood and social challenges for the indigenous Turkana pastoralist communities. As the influx of refugee populations has grown, so too has the demand for essential resources such as water and firewood, which are vital not only for basic survival but also for sustaining traditional economic activities, particularly livestock rearing and domestic energy use.

In a semi-arid region like Turkana County, where environmental conditions are harsh and resource regeneration is slow, the sharp increase in population due to refugee settlement has severely disrupted the natural resource balance. Pastoralist livelihoods, which depend on reliable access to water for livestock and wood for fuel, have become increasingly vulnerable as access to these resources becomes constrained. Refugee households, who also rely heavily on the same natural assets, further intensify

competition, often unintentionally marginalizing host communities who have historically depended on these landscapes for generations (Rift Valley Institute, 2024; UN-Habitat, 2023).

The scarcity of firewood, for example, has forced both host and refugee women and children to walk longer distances, increasing their exposure to physical danger and reducing time available for other productive activities such as schooling or caregiving. Similarly, reduced access to water points whether due to overuse, contamination, or physical distance has weakened livestock health and decreased pastoral productivity. This is especially troubling for the Turkana people, whose socio-economic systems are deeply embedded in livestock culture.

This intensifying resource competition has also triggered social tensions and localized conflicts. Many members of the indigenous community perceive that refugee populations receive preferential access to infrastructure such as boreholes or fuel distribution, often facilitated by humanitarian agencies. These perceptions of inequity in resource distribution have contributed to growing resentment and mistrust, undermining social cohesion and peaceful coexistence (UNHCR & NRC, 2022).

Furthermore, the ecological degradation resulting from deforestation for firewood and overgrazing in concentrated settlement areas has had long-term consequences for land sustainability and climate resilience. Without proactive and equitable resource management strategies, the dual pressures of humanitarian need and environmental vulnerability threaten to erode both refugee welfare and host community resilience.

Addressing these challenges requires an integrated natural resource management approach that includes both refugees and host communities in decision-making processes, ensures equitable access, and promotes the use of sustainable alternatives such as solar cook stoves, reforestation initiatives, and water conservation technologies. Crucially, these interventions must be informed by local ecological knowledge and adapted to the pastoralist way of life in order to be effective and socially accepted.

3.6.4.2 Exclusion of local leaders

One of the key challenges undermining the effectiveness of the Kalobeyei Integrated Settlement has been the exclusion of local leaders particularly indigenous Turkana representatives from the planning and decision-making processes. Although the integrated settlement model was conceptualized as an inclusive approach aimed at promoting peaceful coexistence and shared development between refugees and host communities, its implementation has revealed significant gaps in local engagement, especially during the early stages of settlement design and rollout.

Research findings and community feedback have highlighted that local leaders felt marginalized and inadequately consulted during critical phases of the project, including land allocation, service distribution, and program prioritization (Rift Valley Institute, 2024). This exclusion not only undermined community ownership of the initiative but also fostered resentment and mistrust toward humanitarian actors and government agencies involved in refugee operations. For pastoralist communities like the Turkana, whose livelihoods and governance systems are rooted in communal decision-making and customary leadership structures, the lack of meaningful involvement signaled a dismissal of their authority and socio-political relevance.

Moreover, the top-down approach adopted in many integration efforts failed to recognize the distinct cultural, economic, and environmental needs of the host community. While refugees were supported with tailored livelihood programs and infrastructure, host community members especially those engaged in pastoralism often felt that their livelihood systems were either misunderstood or neglected. For instance, while job creation and urban-based market integration may suit some refugee livelihoods, they may not align with mobile livestock-based economies, which require different forms of support such as grazing land protection, water access, and veterinary services (UN-Habitat, 2023).

The influx of refugees has also placed additional pressure on public services, including healthcare, education, and water infrastructure. However, the failure to involve local leaders in planning how these resources are expanded or shared has exacerbated

tensions. Many host community members believe that refugees receive preferential treatment, further fueling perceptions of inequity and exclusion (UNHCR & NRC, 2022).

To address this challenge, there is an urgent need for more participatory planning frameworks that actively involve local leaders not only as informants but as equal stakeholders in shaping policy and resource allocation. Recognizing the governance legitimacy of traditional and community-based leadership is essential to ensuring that integration strategies are both culturally sensitive and locally appropriate. Building this inclusion into future interventions can strengthen trust, enhance sustainability, and support mutual accountability between refugees, host communities, and implementing agencies.

3.6.4.3 Land degradation and overexploitation

The expansion of the Kalobeyei Integrated Settlement has brought with it significant environmental challenges, most notably land degradation and the overexploitation of natural resources. As the refugee population continues to grow, the cumulative demand for space, grazing land, water, and firewood has intensified environmental pressure on the fragile ecosystems of Turkana County an already semi-arid and ecologically vulnerable region.

One of the most visible consequences of this pressure is deforestation, largely driven by the need for fuelwood for cooking and construction among both refugee and host populations. The removal of trees and vegetation cover not only exposes the soil to erosion but also disrupts local microclimates and biodiversity (UN-Habitat, 2023). In addition, overgrazing caused by limited access to pastureland due to settlement expansion and restricted mobility has further degraded rangelands, reducing the land's capacity to regenerate and support livestock (Rift Valley Institute, 2024).

These environmental transformations have had direct negative impacts on the livelihoods of Turkana pastoralists, who depend on healthy rangelands to sustain their herds. As vegetation thins and water points dry up, the productivity of pastoral systems declines, forcing communities to travel longer distances for grazing and increasing the risk of livestock loss. This not only diminishes household income and food security but also contributes to resource-based tensions between host communities and refugee populations, as both groups compete for the same increasingly scarce resources (UNHCR, 2022).

Moreover, the ecological degradation associated with unchecked resource exploitation undermines the long-term sustainability of the Kalobeyei settlement itself. Without adequate land management and environmental safeguards, the natural systems that support human and animal life may collapse, threatening the viability of both humanitarian infrastructure and indigenous livelihood systems. As poverty deepens and environmental stress increases, there is a risk of exacerbating existing social conflicts, particularly around land access, mobility, and natural resource governance.

Addressing this challenge requires a multi-sectoral and inclusive approach that integrates environmental protection into both refugee response planning and host community development. Sustainable energy alternatives, reforestation programs, rotational grazing systems, and joint land-use planning are all essential components of a resilience-building strategy that can mitigate environmental harm while supporting socio-economic stability.

3.6.4.4 Reduced livelihood opportunities

The expansion of refugee camps in Kalobeyei has led to a notable decline in livelihood opportunities for the indigenous Turkana host communities, compounding pre-existing socio-economic vulnerabilities. As refugee numbers have grown, so too has competition for essential resources such as land, water, and informal employment creating new barriers for the local population, many of whom already face marginalization in terms of infrastructure, education, and market access (Rift Valley Institute, 2024).

Traditionally reliant on pastoralism, the indigenous communities have experienced reduced access to grazing lands and water points, as settlement areas expand into former rangelands. These spaces, once critical for livestock movement and dry-season grazing, are now shared or restricted, leading to overgrazing, livestock stress, and diminished productivity. This erosion of pastoral viability strikes at the heart of the Turkana people's economic and cultural identity, undermining the sustainability of their livelihood systems (UN-Habitat, 2023).

In addition to resource competition, the local labor market has become increasingly oversaturated, with both host and refugee populations competing for a narrow range of low-skilled and informal income-generating activities. These typically include petty trade, charcoal burning, casual labor, and small-scale vending—sectors that are not only limited in capacity but also vulnerable to exploitation and market shocks (Refugee Economies, 2022). For many indigenous individuals, particularly youth and women, barriers such as limited access to capital, vocational training, and formal employment pathways further reduce their ability to diversify income sources or adapt to changing economic conditions.

The cumulative effect of these challenges has been a heightened dependency on humanitarian aid and external assistance, not only among refugees but also within the host community. This dynamic undermines broader development goals related to self-

reliance and community resilience, as neither group is adequately supported to achieve sustainable, long-term livelihoods. Moreover, frustration over limited economic opportunities and perceived inequities in aid distribution has contributed to intergroup tensions, eroding social cohesion and trust between refugees and host populations (UNHCR & NRC, 2022).

To address these livelihood challenges, there is a critical need for inclusive, context-specific economic interventions that recognize the distinct needs of indigenous pastoralists while also promoting shared opportunities. Such interventions may include: investment in livestock infrastructure and markets, access to financial services, technical training, and livelihood diversification programs that are co-designed with community members to ensure relevance and ownership.

3.6.5 Impact of refugee camps expansion on Kalobeyei residents’ cultural practices

Table 11.

Participants Responses	Yes	No	Total
	185 (64.2%)	104(37.8%)	289 (100)

The research findings indicate that a significant portion of the Kalobeyei community perceives the expansion of refugee camps as having a notable impact on their cultural practices. Specifically, 64.2% of participants (n = 185) believed that the growth and presence of refugee settlements had influenced traditional cultural norms, while 37.8% (n = 104) did not perceive such effects. This majority viewpoint suggests that the expansion has introduced considerable changes to the social fabric and cultural identity of the indigenous population.

The influx of refugees and the subsequent increased social interaction have created new dynamics within the community, leading to potential alterations or disruptions in long-standing cultural traditions and rituals. Such changes may include shifts in communal activities, language use, customary governance, and rites of passage, which are often integral to the pastoralist Turkana way of life. The presence of diverse refugee groups introduces alternative cultural practices and values, which can both enrich and challenge

indigenous customs, sometimes resulting in cultural dilution or conflict over normative expectations.

Concerns about cultural preservation are particularly salient given the rapid pace of demographic change and the pressures on social cohesion. The intermingling of different ethnic and cultural groups within confined geographic spaces may lead to the erosion of traditional cultural boundaries, affecting identity and intergenerational knowledge transmission. Moreover, the economic and environmental stresses caused by camp expansion can exacerbate cultural tensions by shifting priorities from cultural maintenance to immediate survival needs.

3.6.6 Confidence on pastoralists' livelihoods sustainability for 5-10 years

Table 12.

Participants Responses	Very confident	Somewhat confident	Not confident	Total
	46 (15.6%)	107 (37.2%)	136 (47.2%)	289 (100%)

The data concerning community confidence in the future sustainability of pastoralist livelihoods over the next five to ten years revealed significant apprehension among participants. Nearly half of the respondents (47.2%, n = 136) expressed a lack of confidence in the viability of their traditional livelihoods during this period. Conversely, 37.2% (n = 107) reported being somewhat confident, while only 15.6% (n = 46) conveyed strong confidence in the long-term sustainability of pastoralism.

This prevailing uncertainty reflects the multifaceted challenges facing the pastoralist communities in Kalobeyei, including environmental degradation, diminishing access to essential resources such as grazing land and water, and socio-economic disruptions. The expansion of refugee camps and the consequent increase in competition for limited natural resources have further exacerbated these pressures, undermining pastoralists' ability to maintain their traditional livelihoods.

Such widespread concern highlights the urgent need for targeted interventions that bolster the resilience and adaptive capacity of pastoralist communities. This includes sustainable resource management, diversification of income sources, and supportive policies that mitigate the adverse effects of displacement and environmental change. Without such measures, the sustainability of pastoralist livelihoods remains uncertain, posing significant risks to community wellbeing and cultural.

3.6.7 Locals participation in refugees, indigenous community and Authorities dialogues/meetings.

Table 13

Participants Responses	Yes	No	Total
	74 (25.3%)	215 (4.7%)	289 (100)

The research findings indicated that local participation in dialogues or meetings involving refugees, indigenous communities, and authorities was notably limited. Only 25.3% (n = 74) of the 289 participants reported engaging in such forums, whereas a significant majority of 74.7% (n = 215) had not participated. This low level of involvement suggests that many local community members were excluded or faced barriers that prevented their active engagement in discussions critical to decision-making processes and conflict resolution related to refugee camp expansion and community relations.

The limited participation may reflect challenges such as inadequate communication channels, logistical constraints, or socio-political factors that inhibit inclusivity. Furthermore, this lack of engagement risks marginalizing local perspectives, thereby undermining the legitimacy and effectiveness of policies and interventions designed to manage refugee-host community dynamics.

To promote social cohesion and equitable resource management, it is imperative to create more accessible and inclusive platforms that actively facilitate the meaningful involvement of indigenous communities in these dialogues. Enhancing local representation would not only empower communities but also improve trust and

cooperation among stakeholders, ultimately fostering more sustainable and peaceful coexistence.

3.6.8 Perceptions and Community Dynamics summary

The expansion of refugee camps in Kalobeyei has profoundly affected the perceptions and community dynamics of the indigenous populations, particularly the Turkana pastoralists. Research findings reveal a predominantly negative attitude toward the camp expansion, with approximately two-thirds of participants expressing unfavorable views. This widespread dissatisfaction reflects the local community's concerns about the increased pressures on limited resources, disruptions to traditional livelihoods, and broader social challenges.

Social relations between refugees and indigenous residents demonstrate a complex and often strained dynamic. While around one-third of the community perceived improvements in coexistence, a slightly larger proportion reported worsening relations. These mixed sentiments highlight persistent tensions, driven largely by competition over scarce natural resources, cultural differences, and unequal distribution of economic benefits associated with the camp's presence. Such divisions pose a significant challenge to social cohesion and underscore the need for deliberate efforts to foster mutual understanding and peaceful interaction between the groups.

In terms of institutional response, the community's perception of support from the Government of Kenya and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) has been largely negative. More than seventy percent of respondents felt that efforts to mitigate the impact of the camp expansion on pastoralist livelihoods have been insufficient. Furthermore, local leaders were often excluded from planning and decision-making processes related to the camp's development, generating feelings of marginalization and distrust toward the authorities. This exclusion has undermined opportunities for meaningful community engagement and collaborative problem-solving, exacerbating local grievances.

Participation in dialogues and meetings involving refugees, indigenous people, and authorities remains limited. Only about a quarter of locals reported being engaged in such forums, indicating barriers to inclusion and representation. These limitations suggest a need for more accessible and inclusive platforms to ensure local voices are heard and

incorporated in decision-making, which is vital for addressing conflicts and fostering community ownership of solutions.

Resource competition has emerged as a critical challenge, with the influx of refugees intensifying demand for essential natural resources such as land, water, and firewood. The semi-arid nature of Kalobeyei's environment amplifies the scarcity of these resources, making overexploitation a pressing concern. The resulting deforestation, soil erosion, and degradation of grazing lands threaten the ecological balance that pastoralists depend upon for their livelihoods. These environmental impacts not only reduce land productivity but also increase vulnerability to climate variability, compounding the challenges faced by the indigenous communities.

The heightened competition for resources has also led to occasional conflicts between refugees and locals, further straining social relations and undermining stability. Addressing these challenges requires sustainable resource management, inclusive governance, and collaborative frameworks that balance humanitarian needs with the preservation of local livelihoods.

Beyond environmental and economic pressures, the expansion has significantly impacted the cultural practices of Kalobeyei residents. Over sixty percent of participants reported that their traditional customs and social structures have been affected. Increased interaction between refugees and indigenous people has introduced changes that may disrupt long-established cultural norms, raising concerns about cultural preservation and identity.

Economically, the indigenous pastoralists face reduced livelihood opportunities as access to grazing lands and water diminishes. The local labor market has become oversaturated, and limited access to capital or vocational training restricts income diversification. Consequently, poverty and dependency on humanitarian aid have increased, weakening long-term resilience and self-reliance among both refugees and host communities.

Confidence in the future sustainability of pastoralist livelihoods is low, with nearly half of the community expressing doubts about their viability over the next five to ten years. This pessimism reflects the cumulative effects of environmental degradation, resource scarcity, and socio-economic marginalization linked to the refugee camp expansion.

Overall, these findings highlight the urgent need for more inclusive and participatory planning processes that involve local leaders and community members at every stage. Gender-sensitive approaches are essential to address the distinct challenges faced by women, who often bear disproportionate impacts. Sustainable resource management must be prioritized to mitigate environmental degradation and promote equitable access.

Additionally, strengthening institutional support through targeted economic programs, resilience training, and improved access to services can enhance community preparedness and reduce vulnerability. Creating accessible platforms for dialogue and conflict resolution will be crucial for fostering social cohesion and peaceful coexistence in Kalobeyi. Only through these integrated and inclusive measures can the adverse effects of refugee camp expansion be mitigated, enabling the community to build resilience and sustain their livelihoods in the long term.

4.0 Conclusion of the findings

The findings of this study reveal that the expansion of the refugee population in the Kalobeyei settlement has significantly intensified pressure on already scarce natural resources. Water points, pasture lands, grazing reserves, and available land space, which are vital to the indigenous pastoralist communities, are increasingly strained. This growing demand has escalated competition between the local Turkana communities and the refugees, resulting in heightened environmental degradation and resource-based conflicts. The interplay between resource scarcity and socio-economic pressures has exacerbated the vulnerability of pastoralist livelihoods, which traditionally depend on seasonal mobility and access to communal lands. These challenges underscore the critical need for integrated resource management strategies that balance humanitarian imperatives with the sustainability of local ecosystems and community resilience.

Moreover, the study highlights the fragmentation of traditional livestock migration routes as a significant threat to pastoral livelihoods. Seasonal mobility is central to the Turkana pastoralist way of life, enabling access to water and pasture during different climatic cycles. However, this mobility has been increasingly obstructed by factors such as land privatization, the expansion of small-scale farming, and the development of infrastructure linked to refugee settlements and other land uses. This disruption reduces the available grazing options, contributing to overgrazing in remaining pastures, increased livestock mortality from lack of adequate forage and water, and diminished productivity of herds. The resulting environmental degradation disrupts the delicate ecological balance necessary for sustainable pastoralism. Additionally, the breakdown of traditional migratory patterns erodes cultural practices deeply intertwined with livestock management and economic resilience. Addressing these challenges requires coordinated policy action to protect and rehabilitate migratory corridors, promote integrated land-use planning, and support adaptive management approaches that maintain the viability of pastoral systems in a rapidly changing socio-environmental context.

The growing refugee population has also directly impacted the health and productivity of livestock, critical to pastoralists' food security and economic stability. Competition over limited grazing land and water sources has led to reduced livestock health, declining herd

sizes, and lower reproductive rates. These outcomes are detrimental to the sustainability of pastoral livelihoods, undermining the community's ability to maintain their traditional way of life and secure stable incomes. The study calls for enhanced veterinary and livestock support services, along with equitable access to essential natural resources for both indigenous pastoralists and refugee populations. Such interventions are necessary not only to sustain livestock productivity but also to promote peaceful coexistence through fair resource sharing.

Furthermore, the convergence of livelihoods between indigenous communities and refugees has intensified competition in local markets. Many individuals from both groups engage in similar economic activities such as small-scale farming, poultry keeping, charcoal production, firewood collection, and casual labor. While this reflects adaptability and resilience in the face of limited opportunities, it has simultaneously increased pressure on scarce market spaces and local infrastructure. The overlap in income-generating activities has generated socio-economic tensions, with competition for limited resources sometimes escalating into mistrust and conflict. These dynamics highlight the complexity of livelihood challenges in Kalobeyei, where economic survival strategies of one group inadvertently strain the opportunities available to the other.

To mitigate such risks, the study emphasizes the importance of coordinated livelihood programs that promote inclusivity and cooperation. Market development initiatives should be designed to expand access and diversify opportunities, reducing competition and fostering complementary economic activities between refugees and host communities. Additionally, resource-sharing frameworks must be established to ensure equitable distribution of environmental and economic assets. By facilitating collaborative approaches, such measures can help build social cohesion, reduce conflicts, and strengthen the resilience of both populations.

In conclusion, the findings of this study illuminate the multifaceted challenges brought about by the refugee camp expansion in Kalobeyei, which affect environmental sustainability, socio-economic stability, and cultural preservation. The intensified competition over natural resources, disruption of traditional pastoral practices, and overlapping livelihoods have collectively strained the fabric of local communities and ecosystems. Effective responses require integrated, participatory planning that includes

the voices of indigenous leaders, refugees, government agencies, and NGOs. Such inclusive approaches must prioritize sustainable resource management, livelihood diversification, gender-sensitive interventions, and conflict resolution mechanisms. Only through coordinated and context-sensitive strategies can the adverse impacts of refugee camp expansion be mitigated, enabling both refugees and indigenous populations to coexist peacefully while securing their livelihoods and cultural heritage for future generations.

5.0 Recommendations of the study

The indigenous communities in Kalobeyei have raised several critical concerns related to the expansion of refugee camps, and targeted recommendations are essential to address these challenges effectively.

One of the primary issues is the increased competition for natural resources such as water, grazing land, and firewood. To alleviate this pressure, it is recommended to promote joint natural resource management programs that actively involve both indigenous and refugee communities. These programs would encourage cooperative stewardship and equitable resource sharing. Additionally, implementing water harvesting and conservation projects is crucial to boost water availability and build resilience, especially given the arid conditions of the region.

Limited access to essential services and programs remains a significant concern for indigenous populations. To ensure equitable distribution of aid and resources, integrated service delivery models should be designed to include both refugees and host communities. This can be achieved by establishing shared education and healthcare facilities, funded jointly by humanitarian organizations and government agencies, thus fostering inclusive access and improved service quality.

Marginalization in decision-making processes has also been a source of frustration for indigenous communities. To address this, institutional mechanisms should be put in place to guarantee community representation in refugee response planning bodies. Including local leaders and elders in these structures ensures their voices are heard and their concerns integrated into development initiatives. Regular community consultations are also recommended to gather feedback, promote ownership, and build trust in ongoing projects.

Cultural disruption is another critical challenge faced by the indigenous groups due to increased interaction and social integration with refugee populations. To mitigate this, cultural exchange and awareness programs should be promoted, respecting and celebrating the traditions of both indigenous and refugee communities. Supporting the

preservation of indigenous cultural practices through community-led cultural centers and events can help sustain local heritage and identity amidst change.

Environmental degradation, driven by increased demand for land, firewood, and water, threatens the sustainability of local ecosystems. Reforestation and land restoration initiatives that involve both communities should be launched to rehabilitate degraded areas. Providing indigenous populations with alternative energy sources, such as biogas and solar power, will reduce reliance on firewood, thereby easing pressure on natural vegetation. Furthermore, enforcing land use zoning to protect ecologically sensitive areas is essential for maintaining environmental balance.

Social tensions and conflicts between indigenous residents and refugees have been exacerbated by resource competition and livelihood overlaps. To foster peaceful coexistence, community dialogue platforms should be established to facilitate open communication and conflict resolution. Strengthening local governance and security mechanisms is also necessary to promptly address disputes in a fair and transparent manner, building trust among all parties involved.

Lastly, reduced livelihood opportunities have challenged the economic stability of the indigenous pastoralists. UNHCR and its development partners are encouraged to develop alternative livelihood options such as agribusiness ventures, vocational training programs, and value-added livestock production initiatives. Supporting mobility-friendly pastoral systems by securing migration corridors and grazing reserves will help maintain traditional livelihoods while adapting to changing land use patterns.

Overall, these recommendations emphasize the importance of inclusive, participatory approaches that balance humanitarian assistance with the resilience and cultural preservation of indigenous communities in Kalobeyei.

REFERENCES

- Allport, G. W. (1954). *The nature of prejudice*.
- Anno, E. F., & Erukon, E. N. (2024). *The role of agriculture in refugee livelihoods: A case study of Kalobeyei Integrated Settlement in Turkana*. *International Research Journal of Economics and Management Studies*, 3(10), 236–247.
- Anno, E. F., & Erukon, E. N. (2024). *The role of agriculture in refugee livelihoods: A case study of Kalobeyei Integrated Settlement in Turkana West Sub County, Kenya*. *International Research Journal of Economics and Management Studies*, 3(10), 236–247. The study explicitly adopts the Diffusion of Innovations theory as its theoretical framework for agricultural innovation in displacement contexts.
- Barbour, R. (2018). *Doing focus groups* (2nd ed.). SAGE Publications.
- Betts, A., Bloom, L., Kaplan, J., & Omata, N. (2017). *Refugee economies: Forced displacement and development*. Oxford University Press.
- Betts, A., Omata, N., & Bloom, L. (2021). *Refugee economies in Kenya: Forced displacement and development*. *Disasters*, 45(4), 788–809.
- Bolarinwa, O. A. (2015). Principles and methods of validity and reliability testing of questionnaires used in social and health science research. *Nigerian Postgraduate Medical Journal*, 22(4), 195–201.
- Breakwell, G. M. (2006). *Fundamentals of social research* (2nd ed.). Sage.
- Brown, J. S., & Duguid, P. (2001). *The social life of information* (2nd ed.). Harvard Business School Press.
- Bryman, A. (2016). *Social research methods* (5th ed.). Oxford University Press.
- Creswell, J. W., & Creswell, J. D. (2018). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approach* (5th ed.). SAGE Publications.
- European Union Trust Fund. (2024, June 26). *Empowering kitchen gardens in Kalobeyei: Transforming refugees' food security in Turkana County, Kenya*.
- Fratkin, E. (2001). East African pastoralism in transition: Maasai, Boran, and Rendille cases. *African Studies Review*, 44(3), 1–25.
- Haller, T., et al. (2021). Community engagement in pastoralist areas: Lessons from the public dialogue process for a new refugee settlement in Turkana, Kenya. *Pastoralism*, 11(1).
- International Rescue Committee. (2022). *Gender-based vulnerabilities in refugee-hosting areas of Turkana County, Kenya*.
- Krueger, R. A., & Casey, M. A. (2015). *Focus groups: A practical guide for applied research* (5th ed.). SAGE Publications.
- Leavy, P. (2022). *Research design: Quantitative, qualitative, mixed methods, arts-based, and community-based participatory research approaches* (2nd ed.). Guilford Press.
- Lind, J., Sabates-Wheeler, R., & Caravani, M. (2020). *Challenging presumptions: Climate-related mobility in East and the Horn of Africa*. Institute of Development Studies.
- Lokuruka, M. E., & Njoroge, N. N. (2024). *Impact of income generating activities on livelihoods of host community in Kalobeyei integrated settlement in Turkana West Sub-County*. *Reviewed Journal of Social Science & Humanities*.
- Muganda, M., & Muganda, A. (2003). *Research methods: Quantitative and qualitative approaches*. Acts Press.
- OECD. (2019). *DAC recommendation on the humanitarian-development-peace nexus*. OECD Publishing.
- Omondi, C. O. (2021). Access to social services among communities in Kakuma–Kalobeyei: The inhibitive regulatory frameworks and the intervention by non-state actors. *Toplum ve Kimlik Dergisi*.
- Pastoralism. (2021). *Effects of development interventions on pastoral livelihoods in Turkana County, Kenya*. *Pastoralism: Research, Policy and Practice*, 11(1).
- Pettigrew, T. F., & Tropp, L. R. (2008). Intergroup contact theory.
- Refugee Economies. (2022). *Self-reliance in Kalobeyei? Socio-economic outcomes for refugees in north-west Kenya*. Refugee Economies Programme.
- Refugee Economies. (2022–2023). *Self-Reliance in Kalobeyei? Socio-Economic Outcomes for Refugees in North-West Kenya*.

Refugee Economies. (n.d.). *The Kalobeyei model: Towards self-reliance for refugees?* Refugee Economies.

Resilience Action's blog (RAI). (2024). *Conflict resolution and peacebuilding in Kakuma refugee camp: Finding solutions in the community.*

Rift Valley Institute. (2024). *Barriers to refugee integration in Kakuma and Kalobeyei, North–West Kenya.*

Saunders, M., Lewis, P., & Thornhill, A. (2019). *Research methods for business students* (8th ed.). Pearson Education Limited.

Scofield Associates. (2022). *Kalobeyei multi-sector needs assessment report*, July 2022.

Simple random sampling. (2025, July). In *Wikipedia*. Retrieved from [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sampling_\(statistics\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sampling_(statistics))

Stratified sampling. (2025, May). In *Wikipedia*. Retrieved from

Terada, Y., Evans, K., & Mwaniki, J. (2022). Integrated settlement approaches and the Kalobeyei model in Kenya. *Forced Migration Review*, (69), 36–38.

Turkana County Government. (2023–2027). *Turkana County Integrated Development Plan (CIDP III)*.

UN-Habitat. (2022). *Kakuma-Kalobeyei future vision: Enhancing self-reliance for refugees and hosting communities in Turkana West, Kenya*. UN-Habitat.

UN-Habitat. (2022). *Participatory approaches: Lessons from Kakuma-Kalobeyei, Turkana County, Kenya*.

UN-Habitat. (2023). *Kakuma regeneration strategy*.

UN-Habitat. (2023). *Kakuma regeneration strategy: Enhancing self-reliance for refugees and hosting communities in Turkana County, Kenya*.

UN-Habitat. (2023). *Kakuma regeneration strategy: Enhancing self-reliance for refugees and host communities in Turkana County*.

UNHCR & Norwegian Refugee Council. (2022). *Education assessment in Kakuma and Kalobeyei: Barriers to access and opportunities for improvement*. <https://data.unhcr.org>

UNHCR & partners. (2018–2027). *Kalobeyei Integrated Socio-Economic Development Plan (KISED), phases I and II*.

UNHCR, as summarized in Kalobeyei refugee settlement profile. (n.d.). *Kalobeyei Integrated Socio-Economic Development Plan and settlement model overview*.

UNHCR. (2018). *Kalobeyei Integrated Socio-Economic Development Plan (KISED), Phase One (2018–2022)*. United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

UNHCR. (2023). *Kalobeyei Integrated Socio-Economic Development Plan (KISED) Phase II (2023–2027)*. This development-oriented policy framework builds on CRRF and GCR prin

UNHCR. (2023, March 14). *UNHCR and Turkana County Government of Kenya launch new development plan benefiting both refugees and host communities*.

UNHCR. (2023–2025). *Kalobeyei Integrated Settlement population figures; Kakuma–Kalobeyei hosting area*.

University of Nairobi. (2016). *Assessing the impact of Kakuma refugee camp on land use changes in Turkana County using remote sensing and GIS* [Master's thesis, University of Nairobi].

Whitaker, B. E. (2002). Refugees in Western Tanzania: The distribution of burdens and benefits among local hosts. *Journal of Refugee Studies*, 15(4), 339–358. <https://doi.org/10.1093/jrs/15.4.339>

Wikipedia Contributors. (2025, August). *Multimethod ology*. In *Wikipedia*.

Wikipedia Contributors. (2025, May). *Descriptive research*. In *Wikipedia*.

Wikipedia contributors. (2025a, July). *Simple random sampling*. In *Wikipedia*.

Wikipedia. (2025a, May). *Kalobeyei refugee settlement*. In *Wikipedia*.

World Food Programme. (2024, February 19). *A desert turned oasis: Water harvesting and home gardens in Kalobeyei*.

Zetter, R., & Ruadel, H. (2016). *Refugees' right to work and access to labor markets – An assessment*. World Bank & KNOMAD.



+254 710 394 194



info@tipdkenya.com

www.tipdkenya.org



@TIPDOTurkana



**SCAN HERE
FOR MORE INFORMATION**

