Mapping the refugee journey towards employment and entrepreneurship: Obstacles and opportunities for private sector engagement in refugee hosting areas in Kenya
## Research Objectives and Methodology

### Research Question

“What obstacles and opportunities exist for private sector firms to successfully support refugees in Kenya, either as employers or as catalysts for entrepreneurship?”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Motivations for the Study</th>
<th>Methodology</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Understand process for refugee employment and entrepreneurship</td>
<td>• <strong>Primary research</strong> - 24 KIIs</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Map areas + levers for private sector engagement with refugees in Kenya</td>
<td>○ Camp implementation partners (4)</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Analyse barriers to private sector involvement in refugee economic inclusion in Kenya</td>
<td>○ Refugees (11 - 4 Dadaab, 3 Kalobeyei, 3 Kakuma, 1 Nairobi)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>○ Gov’t representatives (3)</td>
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<td>○ Private Sector (5)</td>
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<td>○ Donors (1)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• <strong>Desk-based research</strong> - 113 sources</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Currently, private sector involvement with refugees in Kenya is limited by information-, infrastructure-, policy-, and market-related barriers.

**Private Sector Actors**
- Local private sector (mostly SMEs) in Turkana + Garissa
- Select large Kenyan companies
- Corporate (adjacent) philanthropies
- Int’l companies
- Regional companies

**Barriers to private sector engagement**
- Uncertainties in policy + legal environment
- Market distortion effects of free goods
- Poor infrastructural conditions
- Product price points matching local incomes
- Information gaps on how to engage

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Refugees must have the right to work, freedom of movement, and required documentation to access economic opportunities.

There are real opportunities for promoting private sector engagement in Kenya’s refugee hosting areas, but opportunities are constrained by refugees’ limited access to right to work legally and travel outside camps.

Protection from exploitation, increased job security, and reliable wages are all key concerns for refugees regarding employment.

Movement outside camps is essential:
- Enables refugees to take advantage of opportunities beyond immediate areas
- Allows camp entrepreneurs to access goods without intermediaries.

Documentation & registration are imperative for refugees’ employment/entrepreneurship, but processes for obtaining documentation are ambiguous, change frequently, and dissuade refugees from applying.
Any intervention to catalyse private sector engagement with refugee economic issues must consider host-refugee dynamics

Refugee-host relationships are multi-dimensional:

- Hosts employ refugees to attract certain customer segments
- Refugees employ hosts for specific jobs
- Seller-seller competition
- Customer-seller relationships
- Hosts as general partner in business with refugee as silent partner
- Shared ethnic, religious, communal ties in some areas
- Hosts experience with marginalisation in some areas

Refugee-host relationship dynamics must inform employment/entrepreneurship programme development and private sector engagement to promote social cohesion and mitigate tensions and marginalisation.
Information, a coordinated strategy, and enabling environment are key for private sector engagement with refugee employment & entrepreneurship.

Lack of adequate information among private sector actors on how to engage or employ refugees.

A cohesive + coordinated private sector engagement and partnership strategy is vital for greater private sector involvement in refugee-hosting areas.

An enabling environment and incentives, facilitated by gov’t, would promote greater private sector engagement in refugee economic inclusion.
Recommendations

Private sector engagement
- Targeted assistance for initiatives in refugee-hosting areas
- Addressing information gaps & asymmetries re: working in refugee-hosting areas + employing refugees

Refugee documentation and movement
- Freedom of movement + easier documentation processes
- Address info + understanding gaps among refugees re: right to work and documentation process

Local economic development
- Support local economic development in refugee hosting areas using a rights-based approach

Multi-stakeholder platform for cross-sectoral coordination
Annexes
Legal frameworks & policies

**Intl Instruments**
- 1951 Refugee Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees
- New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants (2016) with the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF) annexed
- 2018 Global Compact on Refugees

**Regional Instruments**
- 2017 Nairobi Declaration on Somali Refugees
- 2018 Djibouti Declaration on Refugee Education
- 2019 Kampala Declaration on Jobs, Livelihoods, and Self-Reliance for Refugees, Returnees and Host Communities in the IGAD Region

**IGAD Instruments**

**National law**
- Refugee Act 2017
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Supported by the EU Trust Fund, the Research and Evidence Facility (REF) conducts research relating to migration and displacement dynamics, drivers, and implications in the greater Horn of Africa. The REF is a consortium made up of the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS, University of London) as the lead partner, the University of Manchester (based in the United Kingdom) and Sahan (based in Nairobi, Kenya). The REF was created in 2016 to collate and produce evidence and policy relevant knowledge that can inform the work of the EUTF, as well as stakeholders more broadly.