

KENYA

LESSONS LEARNED FROM COLLABORATION WITH LOCAL GOVERNMENT TO INTEGRATE REFUGEE ENERGY NEEDS INTO DEVELOPMENT PLANS AND POLICIES

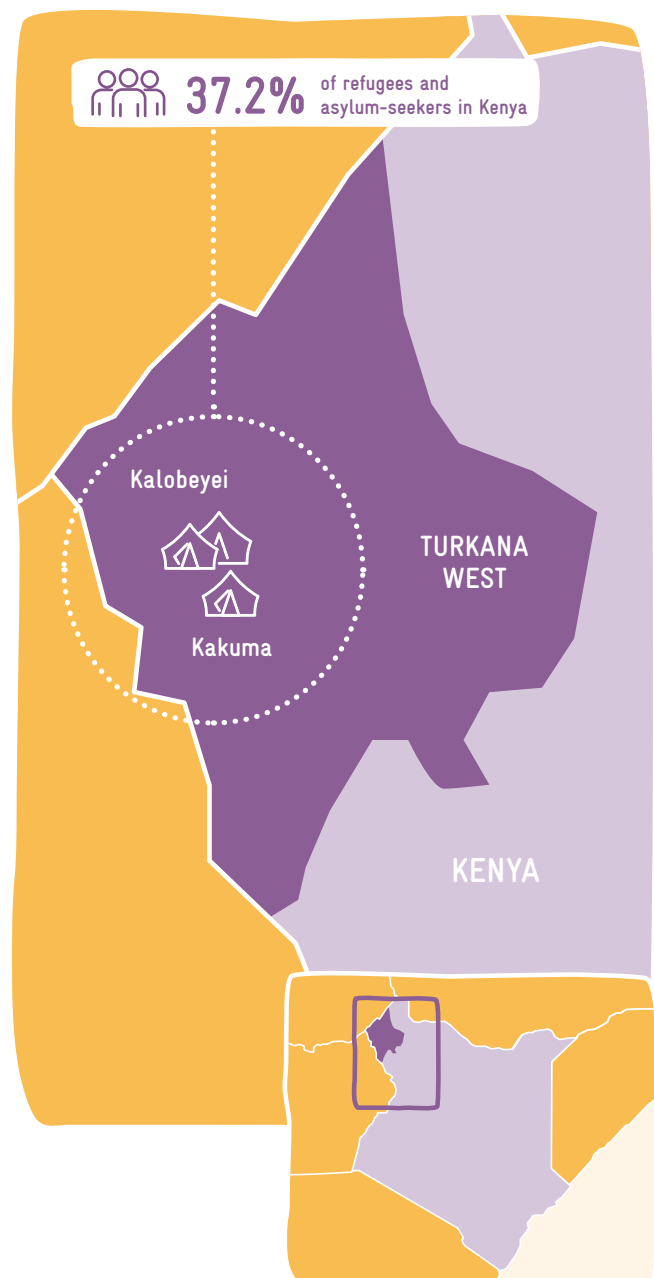
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INTRODUCTION

The Energy Solutions for Displacement Settings (SUN-ESDS) Kenya Project, which is commissioned by the **German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ)**, as part of the global program 'Support to UNHCR in facilitating the operationalization of the Global Compact on Refugees in the Humanitarian-Development-Peace nexus (SUN)', and implemented by Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ), has been working to strengthen the Turkana County government in the implementation of the Kalobeyei Socio-Economic Development Plan (KISEDPP). The project has focused on the promotion of sustainable energy services to refugees and their host communities through market-based approaches. Various policy frameworks have been developed between 2019 and 2024.

This policy brief outlines lessons learned by the project while collaborating with the host government, to create an enabling policy environment for the integration of refugees' and host communities' energy needs within local development and policy frameworks in Turkana West sub-county. The region is host to Kakuma refugee camps and Kalobeyei integrated settlement. The two settlements are home to 37.2% (288,206) of the total 774,370 registered refugees and asylum-seekers in Kenya. This brief highlights some of the key policy bottlenecks that must be overcome in the long term to improve energy access in displacement settings globally, using the experience drawn from Kakuma and Kalobeyei.

Map Kalobeyei integrated settlement and Kakuma refugee camps in Turkana West region of Kenya

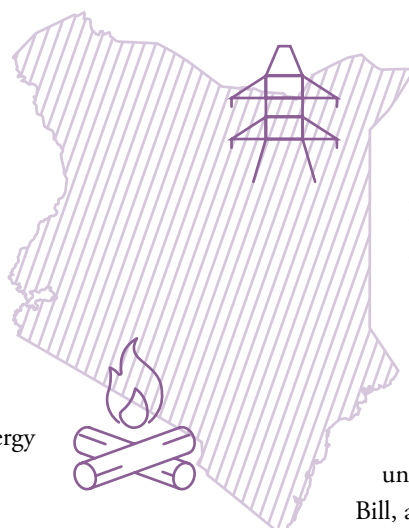


SITUATIONAL ANALYSIS

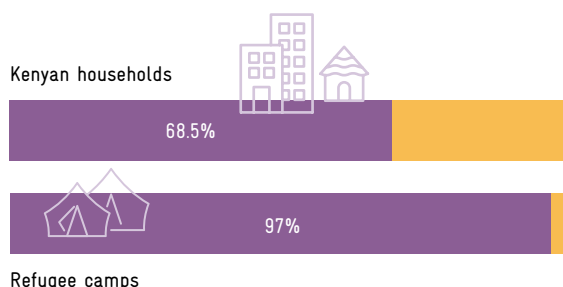
The 2022 Kenya National Bureau of Statistics (KNBS) Demographic and Health Survey (DHS) shows a high dependence on traditional cooking fuels across the country. It noted that 68.5% of Kenyan households rely on firewood and charcoal as their primary energy source.

The situation is worse in refugee camps where over 97% of refugees rely on biomass to cater for their cooking and heating energy needs.¹ While this mirrors the overall situation in the country, it is worth noting, that while many Kenyan households can diversify into alternative fuels, such a switch may not be as easy for refugees due to the limited freedom of movement, and source of income/livelihood that drives their ability to pay. This results in pressure on available resources becoming a source of conflict among both refugees and host communities.

In Turkana West, only 5% of households have access to electricity. Most rely on firewood as the primary energy source but other energy sources such as charcoal, paraffin, and solar lamps also exist. According to KISED II, high investment costs for power production, transmission and distribution infrastructure, limited metering systems, and low per capita consumption, cost reflective or exorbitant and often unregulated electricity tariffs are additional difficulties faced by the Turkana West energy supply sector.



Biomass as primary source of energy



EXISTING POLICY FRAMEWORKS FOR INCLUSION OF REFUGEE ENERGY NEEDS IN KENYA

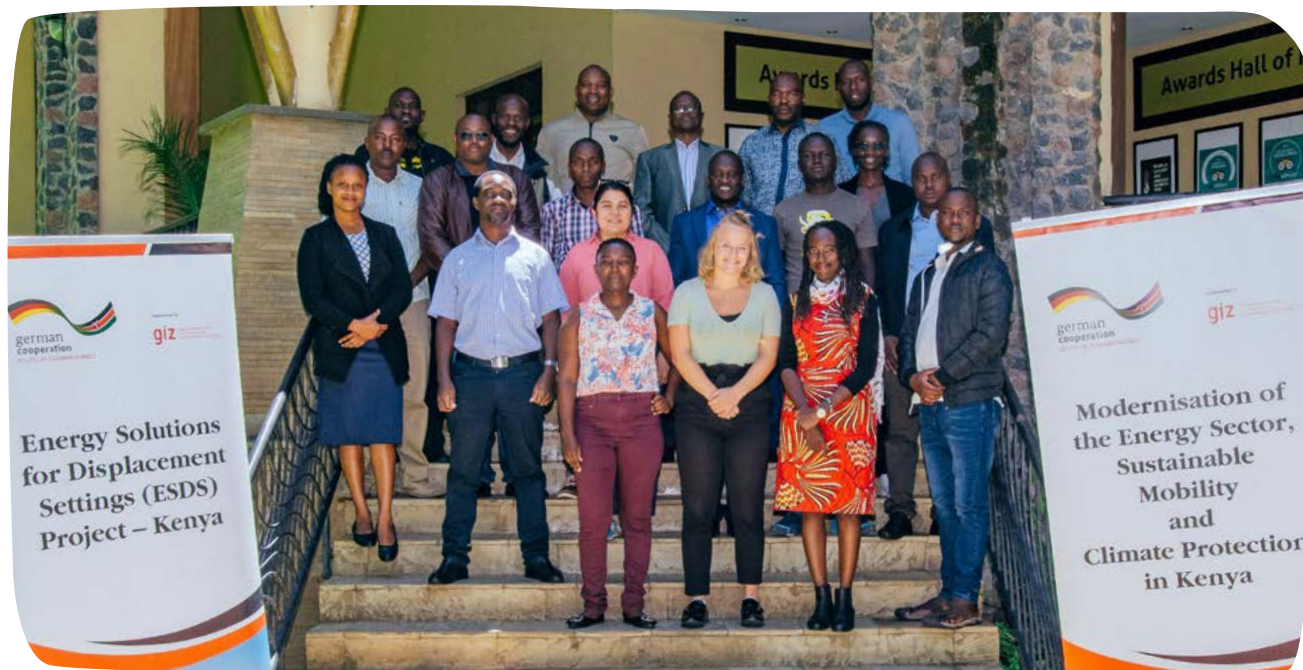
Kenya has existing laws and policies, including the Refugee Act of 2022, to guarantee the rights of refugees to essential services. The Act grants refugees the right to employment, enabling them to engage in gainful employment, enterprise, or practice a profession or trade. The Act also requires the Commissioner for Refugee Affairs to collaborate with national and county governments to incorporate refugee matters into sustainable development and environmental plans. This collaboration is aimed at promoting inclusion and enhancing the capabilities of refugees and host populations to contribute to the local and national economies through self-reliance initiatives.

Within the energy sector, the Energy Act of 2019 mandates state agencies to provide and ensure easy access to power services throughout the country. Kenya aims to achieve universal access to electricity by 2030 and generate 100% of its electricity from renewable sources by the same year, as outlined in the Least Cost Power Development Plan (LCPDP) 2021-2030.

Locally, the Turkana County Government, in partnership with the ESDS Project, has developed the draft Turkana Energy Policy of 2022. The policy aims to integrate energy needs of refugees exercising a high extent of gender and social inclusivity to achieve the county's universal energy access. The Turkana Energy Bill, and Proposed Regulations of 2024 are intended to provide governorship for devolved energy functions. These include electricity and gas reticulation, sustainable exploitation of biomass and other renewable resources in collaboration with national government agencies, energy data management, private sector involvement in the development of energy infrastructure and community involvement, as well as establishment of consolidated energy funds.

In Turkana West sub-county, the county government in collaboration with development partners, has been implementing the KISED II to promote increased energy access in displacement settings. The KISED II, implemented from 2023 to 2027, envisions a strengthened service delivery and increased socio-economic opportunities for both refugees and host communities in Turkana West Sub-County.

¹ Turkana County Government (Draft TCESP 2021), SNV (MBEA 2022), IFC (Baseline 20223), UNHCR (JAM 2022; KISED II 2023) and GIZ (Socio-Economic Impact 2023)



ESDS Kenya partners during an annual joint activities planning workshop

LESSONS LEARNED FROM COLLABORATION WITH LOCAL GOVERNMENTS TO INTEGRATE REFUGEE ENERGY NEEDS INTO DEVELOPMENT PLANS AND POLICIES

Strengthening the technical capacity of partner institutions through human capacity development strategies is critical for enhancing local policy making processes

The national and sub-national Governments are critical to the stewardship and realization of sustainable energy access, providing the much-needed policy direction and regulatory frameworks required to drive the local development plans. The technical capacity development of government counterparts to effectively discharge their mandates has therefore always been an integral component of development cooperation globally.

The ESDS Project initially partnered with the host government, Turkana County, to carry out a capacity needs assessment and develop the appropriate human capacity development strategy that would be implemented under the project's policy and capacity development interventions. For example, the need to train policy makers on effective policy making and communication skills was one of the areas identified for capacity development in the short term and continuously in response to the ever-changing societal dynamics. These trainings targeted policy makers and technical officers working closely with these policies. In addition, the project targeted officers from government agencies that work within Turkana to provide multi-stakeholder solutions

to the county's energy sector needs, from policy making to implementation. These partner capacity building measures have been instrumental in the development of the Turkana County Energy Policy, and operationalization of the Kalobeyei Integrated Social Economic Development Plan.

Public Private Partnership for successful implementation of long-term energy solutions

Partnerships across humanitarian organizations, government agencies, private sector entities, and local communities enable the combining of expertise and resources for sustainable energy solutions. Collaborative efforts can improve technology transfer and knowledge sharing. The market-based approach in setting up mini-grids within refugee and host community settlements that can run commercially, for instance, has proven to be a viable option for addressing energy needs. Partnership between the host government, who provided the land on which the infrastructure is constructed and granting of local permits required by developers to obtain necessary operation licenses from the Energy and Petroleum Regulatory Authority (EPRA) and the National Environmental Management Authority (NEMA), was critical to the expansion of existing mini grids in Kalobeyei settlement and host town which now serve over 3,000 customers.

However, for private sector companies to thrive in displacement settings, further adoption or enactment of supportive policies and regulations is needed to facilitate the deployment of renewable energy solutions. This could include tariff incentives for mini-grid developers, streamlined permit



Remarks by Turkana County Executive Committee member in charge of Energy during a partners engagement

processes, and regulatory frameworks that prioritize clean energy investments.

Joint Activities Planning, Implementation and Periodic Monitoring Structures for greater impact and resources efficiency

To work more effectively with multiple partners and manage expectations, it is important to discuss and agree in advance on activities that will be implemented as part of the project. Co-creation workshops, annual joint activities planning, progress monitoring and reflections on partner contributions to the overarching local comprehensive refugees' response framework, as captured within the KISEDIP have been important aspects of the ESDS Project Implementation in Kenya. This allowed the project to achieve its own objectives while equally supporting other partners to achieve their own objectives that ultimately feed into the same long term development plan. Cooperation between stakeholders ensured that efforts are not duplicated and that stakeholders leveraged their unique skills to ensure maximum benefits to the intended beneficiaries and community.

Activities planning and resources allocation should be done early for easier cooperation and progress tracking throughout the implementation period. There is also a need to undertake quarterly stakeholders' coordination forums to re-strategize or map out ongoing and planned projects and minimize duplication of funding under different commissioned programs.

Establishment of a project exit strategy for a seamless transition

The ESDS Project has been preparing partners to take over implementation of activities post project closure. The project convened its core partners in a workshop to jointly develop its exit strategy two years before closure. The strategy outlined the roles and responsibilities to be taken over by each partner, the required additional capacity building measures, resources and any sustainability measures that ought to be put in place. The two-year exit strategy window gave the project ample time to consult with partners on additional measures that were required. The exit strategy was reviewed a year later to determine the progress in partners' assumption of their roles. New measures to institutionalize capacity building measures locally within Turkana County such as equipping of a local training facility with training kits were carried out. The project also offered operation and maintenance of grid infrastructure trainings to the private mini grid developers, developed operator handbooks, and created a platform for their own exchange.

Conflict resolution mechanisms for inclusive energy provision in displaced settings

While conflicts can be triggered by energy or non-energy related interventions, it is important to minimize conflicts that may directly arise because of unequitable provision of energy services within a displacement setting. Involving both host communities and refugees in project implemen-



Mr. Filippo Grandi, UNHCR High Commissioner, visiting ESDS project sites

tation helps to minimize the occurrence of energy resource conflicts. For example, where the ESDS project constructed power distribution networks, the hiring of casual laborers followed a 50-50 rule in opportunity sharing between refugees and their host community. Similarly, the project has encouraged private developers to budget for and ensure that their interventions are not only targeting potential refugees' customers but the host community as well. The expansion of Kalobeyei town mini grid in 2024 sought to improve electricity supply to host town connections, following the expansion of Kalobeyei settlement mini grid in 2022. Conflicts are also minimized through promotion of Productive Use of Energy (PUE) to enhance the self-reliance of refugees and their host communities. Raising awareness and building capacity among households and businesses connected to solar mini grids is essential for empowering the community source of income while stimulating electricity demand to meet the supply essential to generate revenue required to operate and maintain the electricity infrastructure sustainably by the energy service companies.

Gender mainstreaming by government partners at institutional level although desired, will not always be the case

The Kenya Ministry of Energy's Gender Policy envisions a gender inclusive institutional arrangement within the public sector. The Policy articulates that mainstreaming gender perspectives in Kenya's national energy policy, budgeting,

planning and project management is critical in ensuring the effectiveness of energy programs and all development activities that involve energy use by both men and women.² It argues that projects dealing with people should not be gender neutral.

During the ESDS Project implementation period, one of the challenges faced was an imbalance in participation of men and women in capacity building measures. Often, more men were reached given the pre-existing institutional arrangements. While this may not have directly impacted how counterparts discharge their mandate, the project observed gender mainstreaming in the energy sector as requiring more concerted efforts starting inwardly by gender mainstreaming within local governments and streamlining this outward to energy policy making processes such as public participation forums and policy decision making processes. This will shape the designing and implementation of gender transformative energy interventions in the long term.

² <https://www.energy.go.ke/sites/default/files/KAWI/Other%20Downloads/Gender-Policy-in-Energy.pdf>

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

SUN-ESDS has been working in partnership with Turkana County Government to address the energy needs of refugees and their host communities in Kenya's Turkana West sub-county. Collaboration with the host government at both local and national level was critical for the development and implementation of inclusive energy plans, policy and legal frameworks which align to Kenya's universal energy access targets. The creation of these enabling energy frameworks cannot, however, lead to the realization of socio-economic development in displacement settings on their own. There is a need for more multi-sector coordination to address both energy and non-energy barriers that are faced in these contexts. For example, interventions geared towards financial inclusion to ease refugees' ability to pay for energy services, regulations on refugees' movement, ease of trade or access to employment opportunities locally are some of the non-energy barriers that must be addressed. The Kalobeyei Integrated Economic Development Plan sets the blueprint for a more holistic development agenda within Turkana

West sub-county. Nationally, the Ministry of Interior and Administration through the State Department of Refugee Services has embarked on the development of a more long-term integrated development plan for refugees locally referred to as the *Shirika* Plan.

This policy brief calls on policy makers to support the implementation of such integrated development plans, while noting the lessons learned to improve the coordination and implementation of inclusive energy projects locally, regionally and globally.



Key recommendations

Host governments should prioritize coordinating with stakeholders

to minimize resource duplication and realize higher benefits for universal access to sustainable energy by refugees and their host communities.

Early involvement of stakeholders and managing partner expectations, including community engagements, is critical to improve the project's success.

For long term development, greater efforts are needed to mainstream gender within government institutions and cascade this outward during policy making processes for improved projects design, implementation and gender transformation.

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