

## CASE STUDY

## KENYA 2021–2022 / SOUTH SUDAN CRISIS

KEYWORDS: Coordinations and partnerships, Disability inclusion, Permanent houses

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| <b>CRISIS</b>                          | <b>Conflict and Violence (South Sudan Crisis: Refugees in Kenya)</b>   | <p><b>TURKANA COUNTY</b></p> <p>Project Location</p>   |
| <b>PEOPLE WITH SHELTER/NFI NEEDS</b>   | <b>3,435 persons with specific needs</b> in Kalobeyei settlement*  |  |
| <b>PROJECT LOCATION</b>                | Kalobeyei Settlement, Turkana County, Kenya  |  |
| <b>PEOPLE SUPPORTED BY THE PROJECT</b> | <p><b>20 HHs with persons with specific needs</b> (11 families with their members living with disability and 9 families with child-headed families and GBV survivors; 50% male, 50% female)</p> <p>- <b>18</b> refugee HHs and <b>2</b> HHs from host community (Turkana)</p> <p><b>55</b> masons/artisans from both host and refugee communities with <b>trainings and casual labor</b></p> |  |
| <b>PROJECT OUTPUTS</b>                 | <p><b>20</b> individual <b>permanent shelters and latrines</b> (Natural Turkana stone blocks and Hollow blocks)</p> <p><b>55 masons/artisans trained</b> on how to construct the shelters and use of the locally available materials</p>   |  |
| <b>SHELTER SIZE</b>                    | <b>25.6 m<sup>2</sup></b> per HH   |  |
| <b>SHELTER DENSITY</b>                 | <b>5 m<sup>2</sup></b> per person  |  |
| <b>DIRECT COST</b>                     | <b>USD 4,254</b> per HH  |  |
| <b>PROJECT COST</b>                    | <b>USD 5,952</b> per HH  |  |
| *UNHCR, <a href="#">Kakuma-Kenya</a>   |  | <p><b>PROJECT SUMMARY</b></p> <p>In the newly established Kalobeyei settlement near Kakuma camp, the project targeted households with vulnerable individuals such as persons with disabilities, GBV survivors, as well as elderly and children, for the provision of inclusive shelters adapted to their needs, which had previously been overseen within the humanitarian response. The project participants were engaged from the early stages of the process, throughout its completion. Masons and artisans were trained in the construction techniques considered for the shelter design, which used locally available materials.</p> |



**Dec 2013:** South Sudanese civil war, movements to Kenya.

- 1 **Jun 2015:** Land allocated for development of new integrated refugee and host community settlement in Kalobeyei.
- 2 **Jan 2016:** Establishment and spatial Planning of Kalobeyei new settlement to host approximately 45,000-60,000 persons.
- 3 **May 2016:** Emergency response activities began in Kalobeyei new settlement after crisis erupted in South Sudan.
- 4 **Jul 2016:** The Kalobeyei Integrated Socio-Economic Development Plan (KISED) Framework MoU signed.
- 5 **Dec 2020:** Population in Kalobeyei settlement reached over 40,000 persons, majority being from South Sudan 29,778.
- 6 **Mar 2021:** Funding approved and allocated.

- 7 **Aug 2021:** Planning of activities, local partners engagement and signing of agreement of corporation.
- 8 **Feb 2022:** Beneficiaries' selection.
- 9 **5 & 11 Mar 2022:** Two community engagement forums.
- 10 **Mar 2022:** Project planning and shelter design.
- 11 **Mar 2022:** Training on the basic construction skills, tools and planning.
- 12 **Apr 2022:** Construction commenced.
- 13 **Jul 2022:** Full construction of all the shelters.
- 14 **Aug 2022:** Selected beneficiaries are issued their shelters.

CONTEXT

Kalobeyei Integrated Settlement is located in Turkana, the second largest of the 47 counties in Kenya, covering an area of 71,597.6 km<sup>2</sup> (County Government of Turkana, 2016). The county is in the Northwest of Kenya and borders Uganda to the west and South Sudan and Ethiopia to the north and northeast respectively. The main town that serves the settlement of Kalobeyei is Kakuma Town, whose economy and growth is mainly linked to the refugee support system – active for many years in the region. In addition, Kakuma is home to Kenya’s second-largest refugee population, (as the camp was established in 1992 following an influx from Sudan, then later from Ethiopia and Somalia, among other origins), which represents a unique human settlement and economic system that requires policymakers to strategize on how to build resilience and support sustainability and socio-economic development (UN-Habitat, 2018)

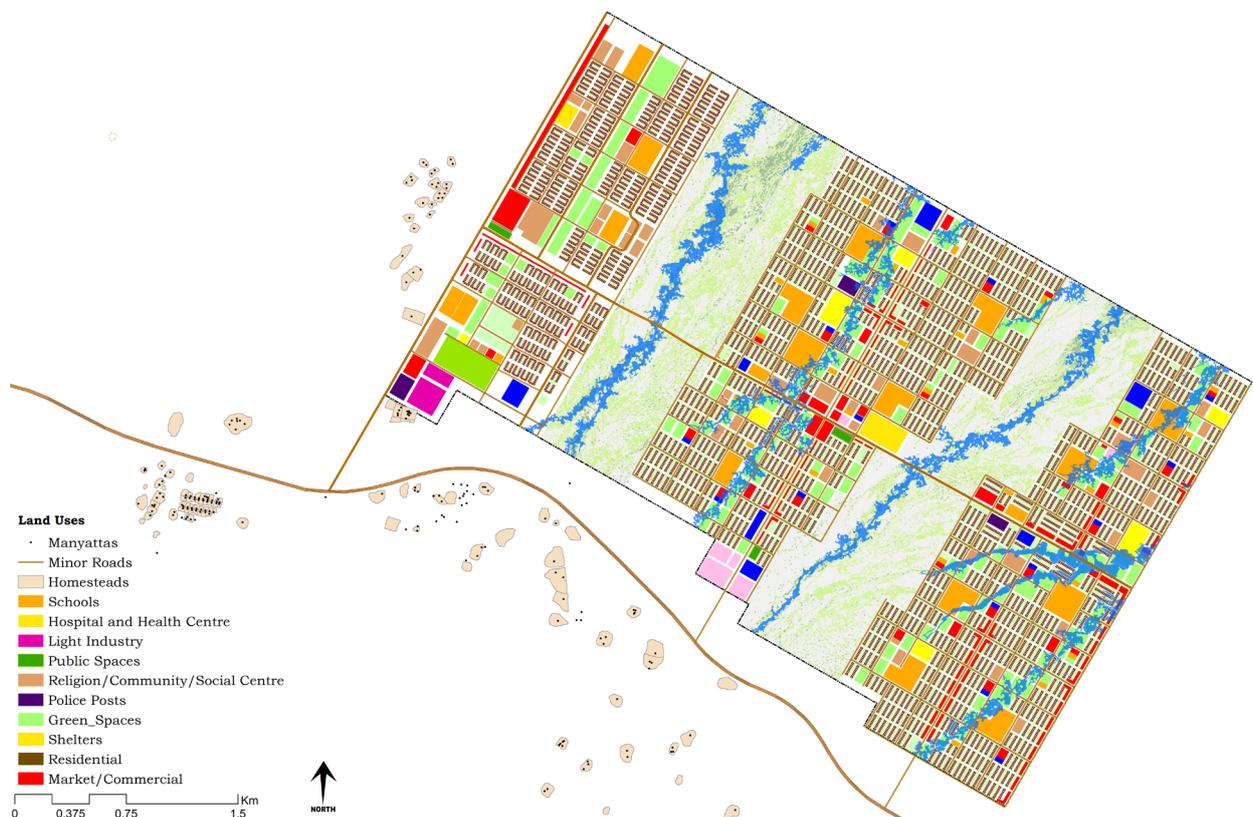
Turkana County is generally characterized by a hot and dry climate with temperatures ranging between 15°C and 35°C. While precipitation in the area is highly variable, the ‘long rains’ occur between April and July, and the ‘short rains’ between October and November. The Kakuma-Kalobeyei region is susceptible to both flash flooding and drought. Heavy rains cause seasonal river flooding, blocking roads and leading to the loss of agriculture, infrastructure, and sometimes human life. Protracted droughts impact the ability of refugees to farm, increasing their dependence on humanitarian aid.

Following the South Sudan Civil War in 2013, and the consequent arrival of refugees to the area, Kakuma camp was extended, and a new camp named Kakuma 4 was set up to receive the new influx. The land was initially bare, with no existing infrastructure, and had just the presence of local shrubs. The collapse of the South Sudan peace deal in 2015 exacerbated the arrival of refugees to the new settlement.

NATIONAL SHELTER STRATEGY

In 2015, the Government of Kenya and the County Government of Turkana, in collaboration with the United Nations and partners, officially established Kalobeyei Settlement with the aim to reduce the population burden on Kakuma camps, improve the living conditions of the refugees and facilitate a shift towards an area-based development model that addressed the longer-term prospects and needs of both refugees and host communities (UNHCR, 2019). This was made the core of the Kalobeyei Integrated Social Economic Development Program, a 15-year, comprehensive, multi-sectoral, and multi-stakeholder plan. As the plan was aligned with the Turkana County Government objectives, the program was also integrated into the Turkana County Integrated Development Plan.

The plan proposed the construction of permanent and durable shelters with local materials. Key to the improved assistance was innovative cash-based intervention (CBI) programming, where refugees received cash on special ATM cards to purchase cement, sand, stone blocks, and the rest of the materials to build shelters and latrines.



Land use map of the Kalobeyei settlement with zoning of the different services.



Images of the site construction activities. (Left) Excavations carried out by an artisan and two helpers for 2-3 days depending on the nature of the ground. (Right) Dressed stones were used for the walling of the superstructure.

## PROJECT DESIGN/STRATEGY

The project covered in this case study was designed aiming to assist in the recovery and to enhance the integration and self-reliance of Persons with Disabilities, and those with special needs through the provision of a more durable and accessible shelter. Additionally, the project sought to promote skills development and knowledge dissemination as well as capacity building for both host communities and refugees, particularly for those who were involved in the design and construction of the shelters. In doing so, this project promoted social cohesion between the two communities and encouraged peaceful coexistence.

Kalobeyei Settlement hosted refugees with disabilities and special needs, but these individuals' needs were not fully mainstreamed in shelter planning and design. Thus, these refugees were living in an environment that did not meet their unique standards. This project aimed to address these identified basic components and gaps. Most refugees transitioned their shelters from the T-shelter (Transitional Shelter) to more permanent and durable shelters constructed of Natural Turkana Stone Blocks.

## IMPLEMENTATION

The organization adopted a community led approach in planning, design, beneficiary selection, and activity implementation. The participants and community members were given priority to comment on the design and to suggest their preferred location, and all feedback was incorporated into the final plan.

### SHELTER DESIGN

The shelter was designed considering the need of privacy for improving the dignity of the users while maintaining a reduced footprint. The shelters measured 8m by 3.2m and accommodated an average household size of five. The components include a partitioned bedroom, a kitchen, and a sitting room accessible for people with reduced mobility. Ramps were provided accordingly, and adequate openings and wide windows were incorporated to ensure adequate ventilation.

The internal height was increased to reduce room temperature. Security and safety needs were incorporated using strong reinforced steel doors and windows. Sanitation blocks were also provided, detached from the shelter.



3D view of the shelter design.

|   |  |
|---|--|
| 1 | The floor lined with concrete to ease mobility inside the shelter.   |
| 2 | The kitchen has its walling made of fabricated steel sections to allow ease circulation of air and also located on one of its gable side to allow access to the room especially during night and when its raining. |
| 3 | Hollow blocks used to help control maximum temperatures inside the shelter.  |
| 4 | A ramp to help access the shelter which is raised to help prevent flooding water.  |
| 5 | Door and windows increased in size to enable accessibility. Quality of material for the window and door strengthened to guarantee security.  |

### SKILLS TRAINING

Construction workers were selected in coordination with relevant stakeholders within the settlement i.e., village and neighborhood leaders as well as organized community based organizations. For gender inclusivity, female members were considered and trained as well to become skilled laborers. The project involved a one day skills training for all selected artisans and masons on how to construct the shelters. Both refugees and host communities were included in the selection of workers for the project.

## TARGETING

### PARTICIPANT SELECTION

Participant identification and selection for the provision of new shelters were carried out through a collaborative approach with partners working in shelter and protection programs, particularly those involved in activities with persons with disabilities and those with special needs (older persons at risk, children at risk, GBV survivors and LGBTQI+ individuals). Criteria for selection were based on specific physical disability or medical conditions as well as other factors including impairments and the degree of impairment and special protection required. The assessment and verification of people supported by the project were implemented in collaboration with community leaders from different nationalities in the camps as well as in the host community. Community leaders assisted in the identification and tracking of selected participants. A final assessment verified their location, taking into consideration alternative areas in the settlement where they expressed their interest to be resettled.

### PLOT IDENTIFICATION

All partners, specifically those in charge of site planning in the settlement, were involved in the identification of appropriate and safe plots for shelter construction, following the Kalobeyei Settlement Advisory Plan, a master plan governing land use and allocation in the settlement. Other factors considered in site/plot selection were, among others, proximity to close relatives, caregivers, essential basic facilities, plot adequacy, and availability as well as flood risks, involving the different communities living in the area.

## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Cross-coordination with all village and neighborhood leaders as well as host community representatives was enhanced to reduce any chance of tension during the project. Moreover, the involvement and participation of community members, particularly those with special needs, led to strengthened ownership and understanding of the project. Communication was addressed involving the relevant protection actors in the settlement as well as the community leadership and case workers employed

for the project throughout the settlement. Mobilization for community meetings was done door-to-door by the settlement case workers. The organization promoted the participation of both men and women and ensured age, gender, and village representation in community forums.

## DISASTER RISK REDUCTION

Flood risk areas were identified in the settlement-wide integrated planning, as the land of Kalobeyei Settlement had recurrently experienced flash floods during the rainy season. Additionally, efforts were made to construct nature-based water retention facilities to reduce the surface run-off of the rainwater. Some delineated areas were converted to green spaces while others near the streams were used as agricultural plots. Considering the flood risks, shelters were built with deeper foundations and raised the ground floor slab incorporating a ramp. Drain channels using sandbags were also implemented around the shelters.

## MAIN CHALLENGES

**COVID-19:** The COVID-19 crisis directly impacted the implementation and delivery of the project, as work was meant to begin in mid 2021 but – due to the prevailing conditions and government restriction protocols – engagement and planning were delayed significantly.

**Inadequate project resources:** The initial planning and programming of this project, unfortunately, omitted one critical aspect required to make shelters highly inclusive and accessible for people with disabilities. That critical facet was accessible sanitation blocks. This resulted in changes in implementation with recommendations to source extra funding and material support from partners to include the construction of the WASH blocks. This resulted in the delayed completion of sanitation blocks and increased pressure from participant complaints that were already settled while construction was ongoing.

**Logistics involved in the construction:** Plots identified during a joint assessment spread across the entire Kalobeyei settlement. This resulted in major challenges, especially when delivering construction materials and supervising the project.



Community engagement forum attended by the project participants.



Camp officer training the masons on the inclusive shelter design.



(Left) A view of the completed shelter. (Right) After relocation, refugees took ownership of the shelters and some evidence of it were the external painting added or the shaded space over the entrance.

### LINKS WITH RECOVERY

Selected participants had lived in the camp for some time before the project started. , despite the lack of adequate shelters or having to live with relatives or caregivers. Selected households were also allowed the shelter design to better satisfy their needs. For example, some participants painted their shelters and others added extensions such as an outside overhang for shading. These alterations required minimal supervision and were built at their own expense. The shelters as constructed were durable and flexible, with adequate partitions – aiming to provide adequacy, safety, security, and privacy.

### MATERIALS AND SUPPLY

The stone blocks, sand, and aggregate were sourced locally. Iron sheets, reinforcing steel, cement, and timber were supplied by locally authorized contractors and suppliers. All materials were delivered to the site using trucks. The storage of hardware material was off-site, while construction materials such as quarry stones and sand were

delivered and stored on-site for ease of access and use. Delivery was done in phases depending on the work plan and construction areas. The use of local materials, building techniques, and local skills and capacities (including labor) was cost-effective and contributed to the local economy. The construction tools purchased under this project were handed over to trained masons/carpenters to enable them to continue with their daily activities.

### OUTCOMES AND WIDER IMPACTS

Effective community engagement fostered meaningful interaction, ownership, and understanding within both communities. The project also aimed to ensure the sharing of resources through the provision of shelters to the host community, in support of peaceful coexistence and reduced potential conflict. The project provided a very simple all-inclusive, durable, and easy-to-construct model shelter for people with disabilities that can easily be replicated in other parts of the settlement. Partners involved found it acceptable for scaling up in future interventions.



Families await the completion of their shelters. Passive cooling methods such as the use of natural turkana stone blocks and hollow blocks used in the construction controlled the temperatures inside the shelters.

## STRENGTHS, WEAKNESSES AND LESSONS LEARNED

### STRENGTHS

- √ **Inclusive shelter planning and design:** The planning and design of the shelter was done in close consultation with community members as well as relevant organizations taking into consideration the specific needs of all households. This included protection issues and specific requirements for PWDs.
- √ **Coordination:** Working through local NGOs helped to ensure an enhanced understanding of the local context, the prevailing circumstance for persons with special needs, and areas in need of intervention.
- √ **Shelter durability:** The shelter will enhance safety and privacy for participants.
- √ The **availability of locally sourced raw construction materials** increased opportunities for employment for the local population.
- √ **Enhanced livelihoods**, skill development, training, and income generation for the artisans and masons who were selected from the host and refugee communities.
- √ **Skills development and training** were carried out prior to the commencement of the construction works, which greatly contributed to skills and knowledge enhancement for both communities and increased social cohesion.
- √ The design and construction of shelters **were appropriate for the settlement and the host areas** and were relatively easy to construct using local knowledge and skills.
- √ **Community integration:** Enhanced social integration and cohesion between the host and refugee communities through working and training together.

### RECOMMENDATIONS MOVING FORWARD

- The project intended to model and use the existing 20 shelters to mobilize funding from the donor for future upscaling of the project. The planning phase failed to establish the importance of sanitation blocks to be constructed concurrently with the shelters, resulting in a delay in filling the gap and resourcing for additional funds. Sanitation blocks and accessibility to all existing amenities are vital factors in adequately addressing the needs of persons with special needs.

### WEAKNESSES

- × **Many participants required modified shelters to fit their specific needs:** The organisation had no plan to support or intervene for the majority in terms of new or full construction due to budget constraints.
- × **Limited scale of the project** due to limited donor funding.
- × Shelters constructed were located across the community and **difficult to monitor**.
- × No training was provided on **repair or maintenance of the shelters**.
- × Engagement of the participants during construction work was **constrained** due to various factors such as their current living location and the type of disabilities.

### LESSONS LEARNED

- There is a significant gap in shelter inclusion for PWDs, as well as those with special needs and lack of involvement of people with disabilities and special needs during the planning stages.
- Coordination with other agencies already working for people with special needs is imperative and was strengthened.
- Communication and community engagement is paramount in shelter project provision: Many people with disabilities are open and willing to participate in planning and designing of their shelter, and the organization intends to engage more with these participants and stakeholders in the future.
- Effective community engagement and shelter allocation.
- It was imperative for partners to continuously promote community project programming and the inclusion of persons with special needs in their projects.
- Promoting the use of locally available materials, especially earth materials, reduced costs and promoted social economic cohesion for the host community.
- The alignment of the project with Kalobeyei Integrated Social and Economic Development Program (KISDEP) objectives was achieved.



### FURTHER READING ON SHELTER PROJECTS

**On South Sudan:** [A.9 / SOUTH SUDAN 2018](#); [A.23 / SOUTH SUDAN 2013–2016](#); [A.26 / SOUTH SUDAN 2012](#)

**On permanent houses:** [A.22 / SOMALIA 2011–2013](#); [A.14 / PHILIPPINES 2016–2020](#); [A.11 / DOMINICA 2017–2018](#)

**On Disability Inclusion:** [A.21 / LEBANON 2018–2021](#)