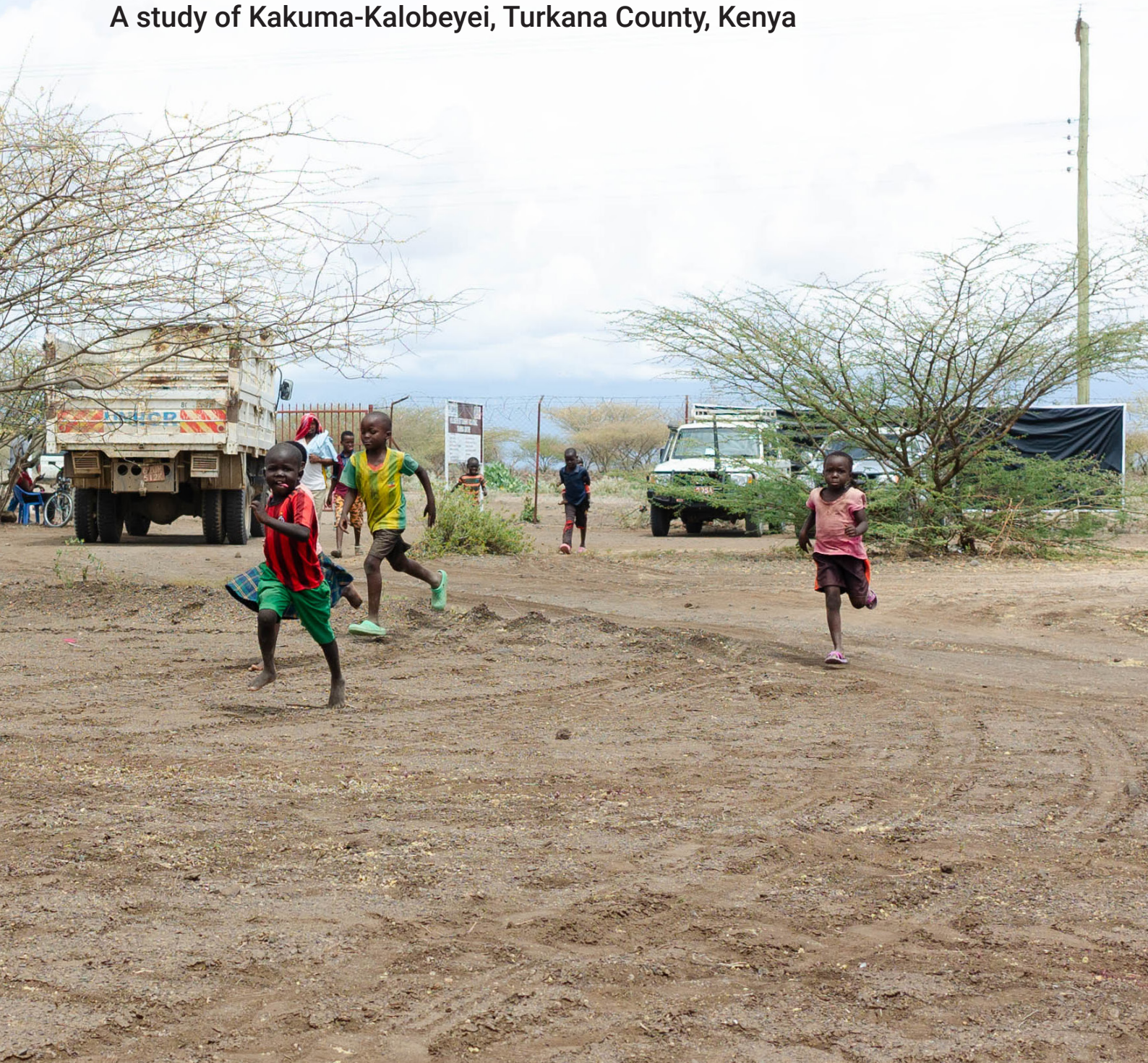


The Role of **Public Spaces** for **COVID-19** Response in Refugee Settlements

A study of Kakuma-Kalobeyei, Turkana County, Kenya



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ACRONYMS

ADB	Asian Development Bank
GCoP	Global Community of Practice
IASC	Inter-Agency Standing Committee
IDPs	Internally Displaced Persons
IPC	Infection Prevention Control
KISED	Kalobeyei Integrated Socio-Economic Development Programme
LAPSSET	Lamu Port-South Sudan-Ethiopia-Transport
NACTO	National Association of City Transportation Officials
NFIs	Non-food Items
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PAHO	Pan American Health Organisation
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNDRR	United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
WFP	World Food Programme
WHO	World Health Organisation

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Executive Summary

Turkana County, Kenya, has been hosting refugees for nearly three decades. These refugees have arrived from neighbouring countries facing civil conflict and war in South Sudan, Somalia, Ethiopia, and Uganda. Just like other refugee-hosting counties in the region, Turkana County has been supporting refugees through collaborations with international donors and partners, while at the same bringing in the socio-economic opportunities accompanied with refugee hosting.

Like other cities and settlements, in Kakuma-Kalobeyei, streets, public spaces and shared public facilities have played a critical role in supporting host and refugee communities in their day-to-day activities. UN-Habitat's 2017 *Socio-Economic Baseline Survey and Mapping Report* noted that "92.9% [of respondents] accessed lower-order services (dispensaries) on foot" and "80.2% of respondents travelled on foot [to access hospitals]".¹ Well-planned and designed public spaces provide a range of benefits and advantages to developing settlements and towns, such as through ensuring accessibility via walkable distances, availability and access to facilities that meet the needs of residents, and a location for social interaction and exchange.



Photo Above:

Public Spaces are multi-functional spaces that support the everyday lives of both host and refugee communities.

¹ UN-Habitat, 2016, pg. 25.

Since 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic has drastically altered people's relationship with "[...] streets, public spaces and public facilities. Restrictions, while necessary, are impacting on people's quality of life and disproportionately hurting the urban poor, many of whom have lost their livelihoods, pushing them to the edge and threatening the economy, safety, security, peace and stability".² Access to well-designed and suitable public spaces have become increasingly essential, and especially for hosts and refugee communities who live with greater vulnerabilities – including a lack of access to basic and essential services and livelihoods such as marketplaces, aid distribution centres, healthcare centres.

In Kenya, national restrictions and measures for the management of COVID-19 transmission have been put in place since early 2020 to increase social distancing and reduce transmissions. Physical distancing reduces intimate personal connections and often exacerbates the feeling of social isolation and exclusion, which can worsen already fragile relationships between host and refugees. These restrictions on movement and access do not mean "reduce[d] demand. People still need to go outside, for essential grocery shopping, to work and study, for play and leisure as well as to socialize and [for their] mental health."³

UN-Habitat, through its ongoing programmes in Kakuma-Kalobeyi, and in close partnership with the Turkana County Government and partners, aims to continue making public spaces an essential component of a holistic COVID-19 response to help limit the spread of the virus, improve physical and mental health, and to ensure equal access to services and public facilities. The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted several gaps in public spaces in Kakuma-Kalobeyi which need to be addressed in the short-, medium-, and long-term including accessibility, flexibility, design, management and maintenance, connectivity, and equitable distribution. As Kakuma-Kalobeyi starts to open from lock-down, we need to re-build confidence about being out in public spaces and redefine the role these spaces will play moving forward.

² UN-Habitat, 2020(a), pg. 2.

³ Ibid.



01

Introduction

1.1 Overview

The last half century has seen a rise in global conflict, which has translated into an ever-growing refugee crisis. Sub-Saharan Africa currently hosts more than 26% of the world's refugee population.⁴ Most of these refugees, both originated from and sought asylum in countries in the greater horn of Africa region, continued to experience sustained armed conflict and civil war. Kenya showed relatively stable political and economic environments over the decades and has continued to receive a high number of refugees. In August 2021, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) recorded that Kenya hosts 529,854 refugees and asylum seekers – 228,308 in Garissa, 218,380 in Turkana, 83,166 in Nairobi.⁵ The consistent rise in refugee migration has placed pressures on local development within the refugee hosting regions in Kenya and stretched humanitarian-development assistance. In Kenya, traditionally, the increase in refugee populations had also resulted in increased conflicts between refugees and host communities.



Photo Above: Surveying the readiness of existing facilities to the pandemic.

⁴ UNHCR(a), accessed September 2021.

⁵ UNHCR, 2021(a), accessed September 2021.

Kakuma camp in Turkana County was initially established in 1992 owing to the plight of 30-40,000 Sudanese boys. The camp experienced rapid expansion in the last decades, owing to waves of large influxes of refugees from neighbouring countries, resulting in the establishment of Kalobeyei Settlement in June 2015. The new settlement was rooted in the need by the County Government of Turkana to tap into opportunities from “growth stimulation” in urban conditions of refugee settlements, complete with the associated agglomerations of populations and economies. UN-Habitat supported the Turkana County Government and UNHCR in designing an Advisory Development Plan for Kalobeyei Settlement which agreed with a condition by the county for a 50:50 investment sharing between the refugees and host communities. The settlement was designed using an integrated planning approach, to be completed with social and physical infrastructure and the provision of a diversity of economic opportunities. Since 2015, there have been various efforts by the local government, UN agencies and partners towards the incremental development of the settlement.

In 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic reached Kenya and has since drastically altered people’s relationship with public spaces and streets. Restrictions has affected both the host and refugee communities, from their livelihoods to mental health, and social resilience. Access to well-designed and suitable public spaces have become increasingly essential, and especially communities who live with greater vulnerabilities – including a lack of access to basic and essential services and livelihoods such as marketplaces, aid distribution centres, healthcare centres.⁶

1.2 Purpose and Objectives of the Study

UN-Habitat is mandated by the UN General Assembly to promote socially and environmentally sustainable towns and cities. It is the focal point for all urbanization and human settlement matters within the UN system. UN-Habitat has played a pivotal role in the development of Kakuma-Kalobeyei through various programmes over the years and continues to contribute to the Kalobeyei Integrated Socio-Economic Development Programme as technical lead for the Spatial Planning and Infrastructure Development thematic component. In Kalobeyei, the collaborations between UN-Habitat’s Humanitarian-Development Practices team and partners continue to support the realisation of pioneering urban planning, infrastructure, and development projects that include host and refugee communities alike.

Since early 2020, UN-Habitat has been responding to a growing volume of requests from both, the national and Turkana County governments, to support their communities to prepare for, respond to and recover from the COVID-19 pandemic. Part of the discussions take into consideration the growing importance of public spaces and their role in helping to limit the spread of the virus (including viruses like Ebola Virus Disease⁷), improve physical and mental health, and to ensure equal access to services. The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted several gaps in public spaces which need to be addressed in the short-, medium-, and long-term. As Kakuma-Kalobeyei starts to open from lock-down, there is a need to rebuild confidence about being out in public spaces and redefining the role these spaces will play from now onwards for both host and refugee communities.

⁶ UN-Habitat, 2020(a).

⁷ *In An Exploration of the Spatiotemporal and Demographic Patterns of Ebola Virus Disease Epidemic in West Africa using Open Access Data Sources*, Suchar et al. showed that “there was significant spatial, temporal, and spatiotemporal dependence in the evolution of the disease,” which could be correlated with demographic and social risk factors. This finding is also applicable in the case of COVID-19, demonstrating the importance of providing authorities, NGOs and stakeholders greater insight into the role of spatial components in a pandemic. This would create greater awareness around the role those spatial components play in the “prevent[ion], suppress[ion], and slow[ing]” of transmission and spread. (Suchar et al., 2018)

This report aims a better understanding and analysis of the current conditions of public spaces in Kakuma-Kalobeyei and further identifies the relationship of public spaces to the management of COVID-19 transmissions and impact on host and refugee communities. Throughout this process, the report aims to determine and present the role of public spaces in contributing towards COVID-19 pandemic response. Insofar, the role of public spaces will be explored in relation to the following categories: (1) **reducing risk factors and ensuring safety**; (2) building an **informed community on safe practices**; and (3) ensuring **continued access to basic needs, essential services, and livelihoods for all**. It will build upon the reports: *UN-Habitat's support to Preparedness and Response strategies in Kakuma-Kalobeyei, Kenya* and refers to *UN-Habitat's Guidance on COVID-19 and Public Space*.



Photos: Children playing and resting in Kalobeyei Settlement Village 2's Public Space

These findings will contribute to the UN-Habitat Programme, "Planning for Humanitarian Development Practice-connecting normative to operations", through advancing the programme's technical support to humanitarian-development projects and operations in Kakuma-Kalobeyei. In addition, it will contribute towards strengthening the humanitarian-development-peace nexus which focuses on encouraging the reflection of the status quo of the aid system for enhanced coordination between partners and projects to coherently address the need for sustainable solutions. Furthermore, it will support the efforts of the UN-Habitat Global Public Space Program which aims to encourage local governments in creating and promoting socially inclusive, integrated, connected, environmentally sustainable, and safe streets and public spaces, especially for the most vulnerable - still promoting a better quality of life for all. The outcomes of the COVID-19 approaches can also be used to provide insight to local authorities, programme developers and partners in monitoring of the 2030 New Urban Agenda, Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) 11.7 and thematic aspects such as inequality, accessibility, resilience, and health.

1.3 About Kakuma-Kalobeyei

Kakuma-Kalobeyei is located in Turkana West, one of the seven sub-counties of Turkana County. The region is amongst one of the most marginalized and underdeveloped areas in the country.⁸ The 2019 census reported the sub-county population as 239,627 persons, comprising 44,740 households and average density of 14 persons per square kilometre.⁹ The density indicates the dispersed nature of population distribution within the sub-county, which is primarily linked to the dominance of nomadic pastoralism as the main mode of livelihood sustenance and enterprise.

The region has hosted refugees for the last three decades and has significantly contributed to human rights protection and peace in the region, combined with the local, immediate, and long-term development needs of the host community to present a crucial humanitarian-development-peace context. This reality demands a fundamental shift in how programming for humanitarian and development interventions is conceptualised, designed, and implemented in Turkana West. The multi-agency Kalobeyei Integrated Socio-Economic Development Programme (KISDEP), formulated in 2015¹⁰, is an area-based approach that commits to a departure from the business as usual, encouraging inclusive programming and a fundamental reconfiguration of assistance. Recently, the Government of Kenya (GoK) announced plans to close all refugee settlements in the country¹¹. This will present another layer of complexity – opportunities and challenges – to address the refugee hosting in Kakuma-Kalobeyei, and the socio-economic development in the region.



Box 1: Demographics and population growth

The refugee population in Kenya has been steadily increasing over the last decades. Before Kalobeyei Settlement was gazetted, refugees were originally hosted in Kakuma Refugee Camp, Dadaab Refugee Complex (initially consisted of five camps) and in urban areas like Nairobi. In the last decade, the refugee population in Dadaab decreased due to the closure of 2 camps - Ifo 2 and Kambioos - which resulted in several refugees returning to their places of origin and a sizeable population relocating to Kakuma-Kalobeyei.

In Turkana County, there is currently a total population of 1,123,026 people, of which 786,185 are locals and 196,050 are refugees.¹² In the sub-county Turkana West, the refugee population in Kakuma Refugee Camp and Kalobeyei Settlement comprises 45.7% of the total population in the sub-county.¹³ In comparison, Kakuma Town and Kalobeyei Town make up approximately 12% of Turkana West's total population.¹⁴ By 2030, UN-Habitat expects the population numbers within these settlements to increase from 2.28% per year to 3.35% per year, resulting in these expected population numbers: Kakuma Town will grow from 57,454 to 63,789 persons; Kakuma Refugee Camp will grow from 197,660 to 219,339 persons; Kalobeyei Town will grow from 2,506 to 2,781 persons; and Kalobeyei Settlement will grow from 43,465 to 54,054 persons. In the recently published Kakuma and Kalobeyei Spatial Profile, UN-Habitat noted that in Turkana, "(t)he legacy of historic rapid population growth has however resulted in Turkana County having a particularly young population profile"¹⁵, with approximately 52.5% of the population being under 18 years old.¹⁶

8 UN-Habitat, 2021(a), pg. 50.

9 KNBS, 2019(a).

10 UNHCR(b), accessed September 2021.

11 UNHCR, 2021(b), accessed September 2021.

12 UN-Habitat, 2021(a), pg. 32.

13 UN-Habitat, 2021(a), pg. 76.

14 UN-Habitat, 2021(a), pg. 76.

15 UN-Habitat 2021(a), pg. 32.

16 KNBS 2019(b).



Figure 1: Population ratio in Turkana West, disaggregated by age and gender*

* KNBS 2019(b).

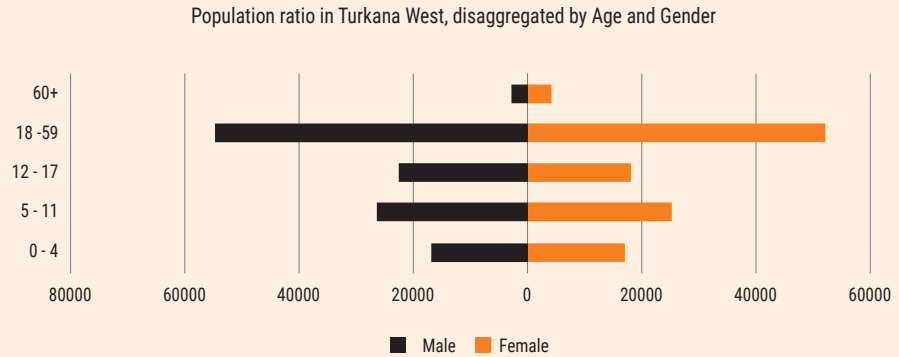
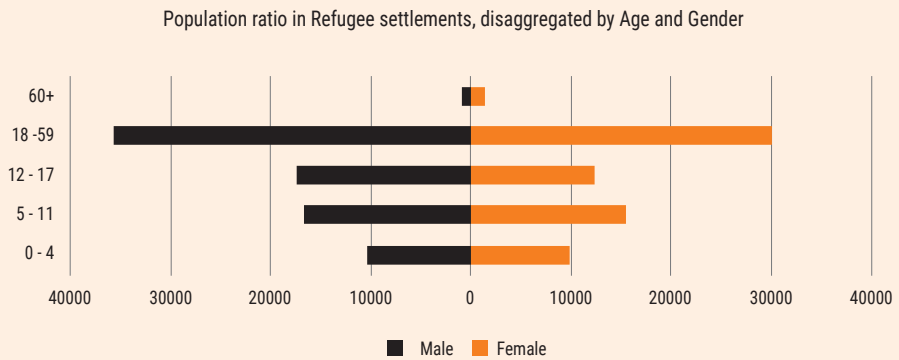


Figure 2: Population ratio in Kakuma Refugee Camp and Kalobeyei Settlement, disaggregated by age and gender*

* UNHCR, 2020(a).



The population growth in turn has contributed to increased population density within each settlement in Kakuma-Kalobeyei. UN-Habitat has recognised that the impact varies depending on the type of settlement. Refugee settlements are “constrained in terms of growth” due to limitations in land and allocated residential plot sizes. On the other hand, host communities which reside on community land tend to own larger land or residential plot sizes¹⁹ – it is likely that this had resulted in an exponential increase in the density of refugee settlements compared to the relatively low density of host community settlements in Kakuma-Kalobeyei. UN-Habitat also noted that comparatively (in 2020), the density of settlements in Kakuma-Kalobeyei were higher than the average population density (14 p/km²) in Turkana West.²⁰ Kakuma Refugee Camp has the highest population density of 11,580 p/km², followed by Kakuma Town at 3,549 p/km² and Kalobeyei Town at 3,333 p/km².²¹ The current density in Kalobeyei Settlement, which has yet to reach its planned density of at the capacity of 60,000 people, is currently 3,770 p/km².²²

17 KNBS 2019(b).
 18 UNHCR, 2020(a).
 19 UN-Habitat 2021(a), pg. 76.
 20 Ibid.
 21 Ibid.
 22 Ibid.



Box 2: Access and Connectivity

In the Kakuma and Kalobeyei Spatial Profile, UN-Habitat noted that while Turkana County is closely located to and shares borders with three neighbouring countries - Uganda, South Sudan, Ethiopia – which increases the county's opportunity "to link trade [...] and even boost bilateral trade agreements between Kenya and its neighbours", its "lack of infrastructure in terms of road and rail network" limits its connectivity to the rest of the region, including within the county itself.²³ Kakuma-Kalobeyei region's connectivity to other regions is mainly through the A1 highway, which connects Kenya and South Sudan, and the airstrip in Kakuma Town.²⁴ In addition, the A1 highway provides Kakuma-Kalobeyei access to two airports in Turkana County in Lokichoggio and Lodwar respectively – which have commercial flights to Nairobi and Eldoret everyday.²⁵ For many years the road was in poor conditions with few transportation activities, but on-going reconstruction are set to open-up the road for intense transportation between locations and countries. In addition, the countries, within the Lamu Port-South Sudan-Ethiopia-Transport (LAPSSET) programme have planned to invest in a railway, pipeline and highways that enhance connectivity in the future - Kakuma-Kalobeyei is situated along the planned LAPSSET Corridor which will run adjacent to the A1 highway and provide access to the three neighbouring countries mentioned above.²⁶

1.4. Conceptual Framing and Methodology

The study undertook a desk review of existing literature and examined the existing public spaces in Kakuma-Kalobeyei within the COVID-19 context. A mixed methods research design was applied, with a combination of qualitative and quantitative techniques of data collection and analysis by means of primary and secondary data.

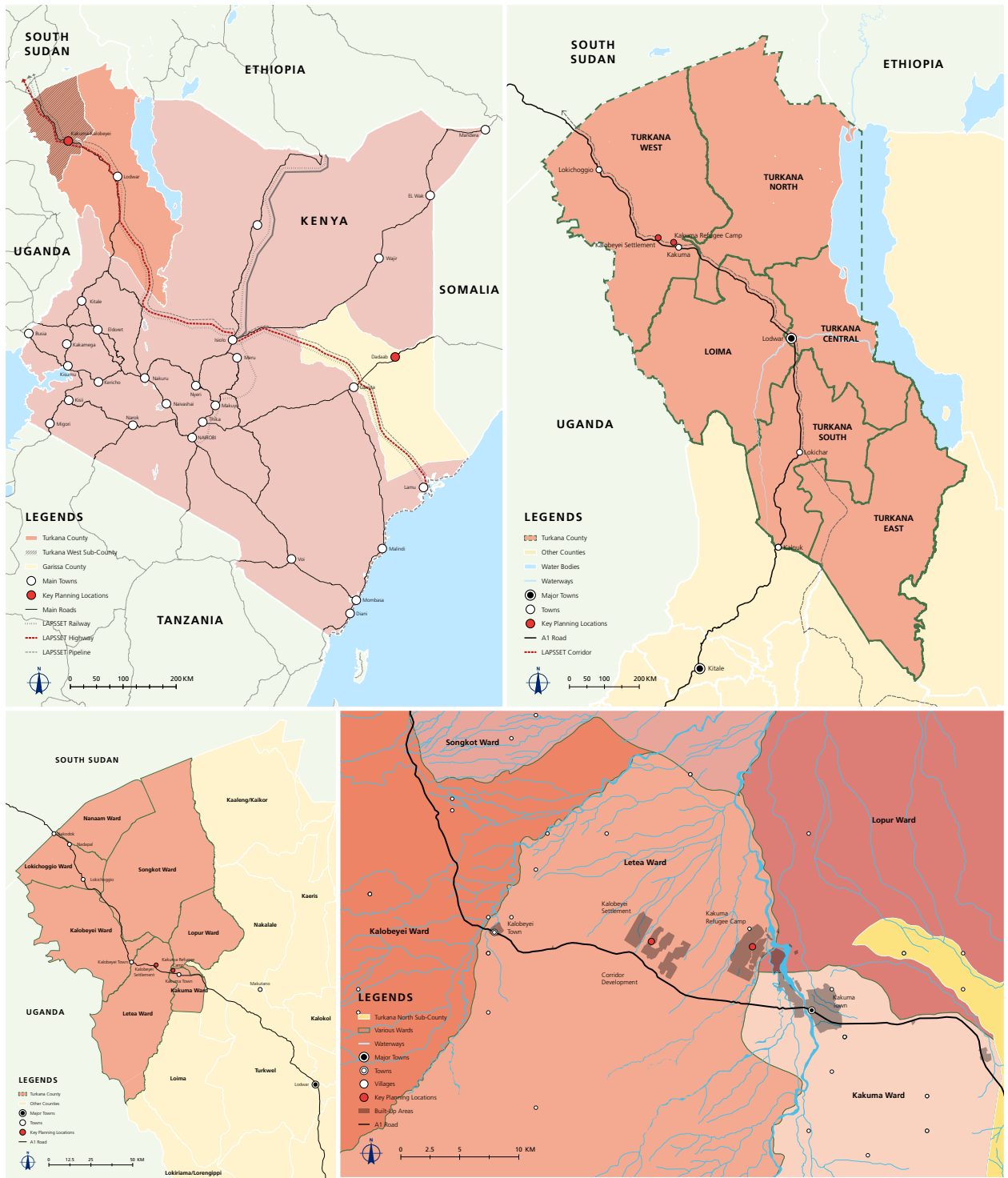
Secondary data focused on the review of recent studies and literature related to COVID-19 Pandemic, Public Spaces and research conducted on Kakuma-Kalobeyei. This desk review provided critical entry points for the formulation of primary data collection activities that combined quantitative and qualitative tools. The primary data was collected from June 2020 to December 2020 and was analysed and synthesized with the secondary data analysis. This data was collected during the COVID-19 pandemic, with the stipulated health protocols observed. However, as argued later, this timing presented various limitations to the study. The field consultations and surveys entailed a collection of qualitative data from UN agencies, implementation partners and beneficiaries. Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) were designed to gather qualitative data, by engaging participants in in-depth conversations. These were done virtually due to movement restriction regulations from early March 2020 in Kakuma-Kalobeyei. This involved engagements through officers working within various humanitarian-development support organisations, such as IOM, UNHCR, UN-HABITAT and other partners.

23 UN-Habitat 2021(a), pg. 34.

24 Ibid.

25 Ibid.

26 UN-Habitat, 2020(b), pg. 2.



Source: UN-Habitat



Figure 3: Turkana West and Kakuma-Kalobeyei region presented at four different scales - National, County, Sub-County, and across the neighbouring settlements/camps.






1.4.1. Study Limitations

The study encountered various limitations. Notably, conducting fieldwork during the COVID-19 pandemic was challenging in various ways. Although the research relied on virtual meetings, the evolving emergency of the COVID-19 pandemic in the region at that time, resulted in most partners focusing on the immediate response and management of the pandemic. The movement restrictions and regulations that were put in place further discouraged against in-person meetings, which presented challenges in obtaining updated information during the study.

Secondary data sources, studies and literature specific to COVID-19 were scarce at the time of the study, whereby limitations appeared in finding research work that analysed Kakuma-Kalobeyei during the COVID-19 pandemic. This was expected to increase as agencies and governments work to develop more information on COVID-19 responses. At the start of the study, the report relied heavily on studies and literature from other similar virus outbreaks in similar contexts, such as outbreak of the Ebola Virus Disease in West Africa between 2014 to 2016. The growing body of secondary data over the last year has been integrated into the study, but there remains further refinement as new study-findings appear.

1.5 Structure of the Report

This report is organized into five main chapters as follows:

- 
Chapter One: Introduction – which provided a general introduction and background to the study.
- 
Chapter Two: Theoretical Findings and Analytical Framework – which presents the desktop review/ literature findings of secondary data on COVID-19 pandemic and similar histories through four themes, and which is used as groundwork for the analytical framework of primary data in Chapter three.
- 
Chapter Three: Public Spaces in Kakuma-Kalobeyei during COVID-19 – this chapter presents findings from the analysis on public space conditions, including the key issues emerging for policy and programming of Public Spaces in Kakuma-Kalobeyei.
- 
Chapter Four: The role of Public Spaces in Kakuma-Kalobeyei in the ‘New Normal’ – this chapter presents the analysis of public spaces, the key roles as well as recommendations that they will play in the future in supporting the strengthening of resilience.
- 
Chapter Five: Recommendations and Conclusions – this chapter summarizes the issues and gives an outlook for Public Spaces moving forward.



02

Theoretical Findings and Analytical Framework

2.1 Overview

This chapter presents the theoretical findings from the desk review of existing studies and literature related to COVID-19 and Public Spaces. This desk review provided critical entry points for the formulation of primary data collection activities that combined qualitative tools. The sources provide four themes through which the COVID-19 pandemic response in Kenya could be better understood, namely:

- 1) *Recognising the pandemic as an unprecedented crisis and its impacts and opportunities*
- 2) *Building back better, and bridging the gap between humanitarian and development solutions*
- 3) *The role that urban centres play in a crisis/pandemic*
- 4) *'Leaving No One Behind' through an inclusive response*



Photo Above:
Participatory planning of public spaces at Kalobeyei.

The findings from the desk review provided the framework in which the collection and analysis of primary data on public spaces in Kakuma-Kalobeyei during COVID-19 is carried out.

2.2 COVID-19 pandemic as an unprecedented crisis

The first theme recognises COVID-19 as an unprecedented “human crisis” that is “unlike any in the 75-year history of the United Nations.”²⁷ The World Bank and the International Monetary Fund have noted that COVID-19 “has profoundly impacted human capital, including lives, learning, basic well-being, and future productivity.”²⁸

2.2.1 COVID-19’s impact on lives and livelihoods

In March 2020, the United Nations released a report by the Secretary General, titled *Shared Responsibility, Global Solidarity: Responding to the socio-economic impacts of COVID-19*. This report is a call to action for the immediate health response required to suppress transmission of the virus to end the pandemic; By simultaneously tackling the many social and economic dimensions of this crisis. It is above all a call to focus on people, in particular on “vulnerable groups who are already at risk.”²⁹ A breakdown of the Secretary General’s recommendations address the causality between the pandemic and employment, with one example demonstrating how the disruption of education “put pressures on work and life balance, especially for women and parents”.³⁰



Table 1: Key first steps from UNSG on the COVID-19 pandemic.

<p>The first step is to mount the most robust and cooperative health response the world has ever seen. Health system spending must be scaled up right away to meet urgent needs and the surge in demand for tests, expanded treatment facilities, adequate medical supplies and more health care workers; and for health system preparedness and response in countries where the virus has not yet manifested or where there is no community transmission to date. (UNSG, 2020(a), pg. 1)</p>	<p>The second step is to do everything possible to cushion the knock-on effects on millions of people’s lives, their livelihoods and the real economy. That means the direct provision of resources to support workers and households, provision of health and unemployment insurance, scale-up of social protection, and support to businesses to prevent bankruptcies and massive job losses. That also means designing fiscal and monetary responses to ensure that the burden does not fall on those countries who can least bear it. (UNSG, 2020(a), pg. 1)</p>	<p>The third step is to learn from this crisis and build back better. Had we been further advanced in meeting the Sustainable Development Goals and the Paris Agreement on Climate Change, we could better face this challenge - with stronger health systems, fewer people living in extreme poverty, less gender inequality, a healthier natural environment, and more resilient societies. We must seize the opportunity of this crisis to strengthen our commitment to implement the 2030 Agenda and the 17 Sustainable Development Goals. By making progress on our global roadmap for a more inclusive and sustainable future, we can better respond to future crises. (UNSG, 2020(a), pg. 2)</p>
<p>Shared Responsibility, Global Solidarity: Responding to the socio-economic impacts of COVID-19</p>		

In Kakuma-Kalobeyei, the refugee and host population are concentrated in an arid and historically marginalised area, with poorly developed infrastructure combined with environmental challenges. While the local population traditionally practiced nomadic pastoralism as their main source of livelihood, climate change and the presence of refugee economies led to an increasing trend of pastoralists choosing for a more settled residence and livelihood in the settlements. Throughout the last decade, several programmes provided host and refugees in settlements with improved access to basic needs, better healthcare, and more job opportunities. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) policy brief argues that the pandemic’s impacts on “health and livelihoods of families and communities” will affect and even “regress” existing progress towards the SDGs – and “policymakers should adopt a whole of government and society approach to lessen the adverse impacts.”³¹

28 World Bank, 2020, accessed September 2021: <https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/feature/2020/04/17/decisive-action-in-an-unprecedented-crisis>.

29 UNSG, 2020(a), pg. 13 - 19

30 Ibid.

31 UNDP, 2020, pg. 2.

2.3 Building back better, and bridging the gap between Humanitarian and Development responses

In *A UN Framework for the Immediate Socio-Economic Response to COVID-19*, the Secretary General noted that “the impacts of the COVID-19 crisis have been indiscriminate, with whole of society impacts”³² with cross-sectoral, cross-temporal, cross-spatial, and cross-socio-economic impacts on the society-at-large³³.

Specifically, the pandemic has notably impacted already vulnerable populations as seen in the *World Cities Report 2020* where “[t]he COVID-19 pandemic is exacerbating urban inequality: Lockdowns and other public health measures to control the spread of COVID-19 have exposed and worsened inequalities, [...] Informal workers dependent on day wages were shut out of their basic livelihoods [...], [w]omen were forced to juggle childcare, education and work without access to schools and day care services. Extreme poverty is expected to increase globally for the first time in over two decades due to the deleterious effects of COVID-19.”³⁴ Hence, in urban settlements which include settlements hosting refugees, there is a pressing need for “an integrated and inclusive approach” to control communicable diseases (such as COVID-19), by means of a multi-sectoral coordination between “water, sanitation and hygiene, camp coordination and management, education, shelter and site-planning and community-based protection”.³⁵ These recommendations support the efforts towards strengthening the triple Nexus, which advocates for long-running efforts to link humanitarian and development actors for building long-term resilience, especially in protracted crises, complex emergencies or situations of chronic vulnerability.

2.3.1 Phased and incremental interventions

In *COVID-19: Opportunities for Resilient Recovery* UNDRR noted that, compared to other disasters, the COVID-19 pandemic is unique in its “uncertainty in transitioning from the response to recovery stage.”³⁶ UNDRR recommends that instead of shifting completely into recovery, recovery interventions should be integrated “into the ongoing responses, prioritising health interventions and preparedness measures, followed by socio-economic interventions.”³⁷

Likewise, in the *UN Framework for the Immediate Socio-Economic Response to COVID-19*, the Secretary General³⁸, recommended two strategies: (1) engaging the COVID-19 pandemic which should resonate with the country- and/or conflict specificness, and (2) intervening by taking into account the evolution of the COVID-19 spread and its “spill over effects”³⁹ to the population and businesses. This is pointedly phrased in three objectives of the framework: “Tackling the immediate emergency”, “Focusing on the social impact and the economic response”, and “Recovering better”.⁴⁰

In Kakuma-Kalobeyi, UN-Habitat recognises the need to “bridge humanitarian and development modalities,”⁴¹ working under the KISED P – which provides a phased framework for a multi-agency partnership with the Turkana County Government to “guide the development of Kalobeyi New Settlement and other programmes in Kakuma-

32 UNSG, 2020(c), pg. 6.

33 Ibid, pg. 6 – 7.

34 UN-Habitat, 2020(c).

35 UNHCR, 2020(b), accessed September 2021: <https://www.unhcr.org/news/latest/2020/3/5e7dab2c4/qa-access-health-services-key-halting-COVID-19-saving-refugee-lives.html>.

36 UNDRR Asia Pacific, 2020, pg. 3.

37 Ibid.

38 UNSG, 2020(c), pg. 3.

39 Ibid, pg. 5 – 6.

40 Ibid, pg. 5.

41 UNDRR Asia Pacific, 2020, pg. 53.



Table 2: Three key phases in the COVID-19 efforts

Kalobeyei area.⁴² In line with the abovementioned approaches, this report identifies three key phases in the COVID-19 efforts:

No.	Three key phases in the COVID-19 efforts
1	Preparedness and Response The initial phase where local authorities and NGOs assess and respond with the settlements' capacity to "prevent, suppress and slow transmission" ⁴³
2	Recovery The post-pandemic/ endemic phase when communities are recovering from the impacts of the pandemic
3	"Future-ready"⁴⁴ The last phase where resilient strategies applied in the short- and medium-term will protect communities and settlements against future shocks

2.3.2 "Build Back Better"⁴⁵

UN-Habitat and partners have also recognised that there are opportunities available in the crises to "build back better."⁴⁶ The United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR) stressed that "[w]e can never go back to business as usual" – suggesting that there will be a 'new normal' post-COVID-19. In the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015 - 2030, it is noted that "[d]isasters have demonstrated that the recovery, rehabilitation and reconstruction phase, which needs to be prepared ahead of a disaster, is a critical opportunity to "Build Back Better", including through integrating disaster risk reduction into development measures, making nations and communities resilient to disasters."⁴⁷

The need for strategic re-opening of economies and societies have become imminent over the duration of the COVID-19 pandemic. An opinion paper, *Building Back Better - Policies for Building Resilient Economies in Post-COVID-19 Africa* based on policy dialogues⁴⁸, established to harness and globally synthesize knowledge and experiences to inform policy responses to COVID-19 pandemic in Africa, shared that "COVID-19 presents a unique opportunity for Africa to re-think its development policies. It presents policy options to help African countries to build back better - more inclusive, equitable and sustainable economies post-COVID-19."⁴⁹ Kakuma-Kalobeyei presents many opportunities for the local government and partners to introduce and implement policies that encourage the practice of building back better and increasing the urban settlements' resistance to future shocks. The multi-actor and multi-sector approach which is practiced under KISEDPA could be seen as an entry point.

2.4 Urban areas as epicentres of a crisis/pandemic⁵⁰

In the World Cities Report 2020, the Secretary General noted that more than half of the population is inhabiting urban areas which is estimated to increase up to 68% by 2050 therefore, "Our rapidly urbanizing world must respond effectively to this pandemic and prepare for future infectious disease outbreaks."⁵¹ A study by Cornell University suggest that in the beginning of the pandemic, some of the largest global cities (e.g., London, Madrid, Milan, New York City) are at risk of higher incidence of COVID-19 cases per

42 UN-Habitat, 2018, pg. 24.

43 IASC, 2020(a), pg. 12.

44 UNSG, 2020(b), pg. 8.

45 UNISDR, 2015, pg. 21.

46 Ibid.

47 Ibid.

48 Held under the auspices of the African Development Institute's Global Community of Practice (GCoP).

49 AFDB, 2020, pg. 1.

50 UNSG, 2020(b), pg. 2.

51 UN-Habitat, 2020(c), pg. iii.

capita. Urban areas have high levels of interconnectivity, which could increase their likelihood of increased transmissions.⁵² However, despite early fears of urban density, the COVID-19 pandemic transmission had been successfully managed in “very dense places like Seoul, Singapore, Tokyo and even New York City, an early epicentre [...] As epidemiologists have come to better understand COVID-19, a consensus has emerged that overcrowding, not density, is the chief culprit.”⁵³ These countries managed to bring prevalence down dramatically by “emphasizing anticipation, early preparation and a proactive approach when caseloads were still low and using mitigation measures such as mask-wearing”.⁵⁴ In UN-HABITAT’s *Report on Cities and Pandemics: Towards a More Just, Green, Healthy Future*, a comparative case study of rural and urban areas revealed that transmission rates could be due to many factors, including social behaviour, location of workplaces and basic services, or connectivity with other infected areas.⁵⁵

Alexander et al. noted that urbanisation influences “infrastructural needs, resources, and population density,” which in turn affects “contact networks, outbreak dynamics, and intervention success.”⁵⁶ Within these urban areas, existing public spaces play an increasingly important role during the pandemic since public spaces are essential in providing flexible, multi-functional and adaptable space for the swift and rapid establishment of temporary and secondary facilities.⁵⁷ In a time of crisis, where social mobility is reduced, and where lack of adequate and access to housing is coupled with reduced access to the outdoors (and the detrimental effects on mental and physical health)⁵⁸, public spaces are essential in supporting alternative mobility, providing important opportunities for recreation and sport and for many individuals, a livelihood. Hence this report critically recognises the duality that public spaces display in either (1) contributing to the exacerbation of COVID-19’s transmission or (2) “prevent[ing], suppress[ing], and slow[ing]”⁵⁹ transmission of the virus. In order to provide a comprehensive understanding, this section will explore some of the risk factors identified in the response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

2.4.1 Urban form, function of public spaces during a pandemic

The *UN-Habitat policy brief COVID-19 in an Urban World* observed that “overcrowding in low-quality housing increases the risk of rapid transmission” and that built environments can even “undermine COVID-19 responses.”⁶⁰ This report expounds the idea that the built environment can both – increase or reduce – transmission or support efforts through 1) its urban form and function, and the 2) management of spaces and its users. One of the four key priorities mentioned in the UN-Habitat Report *Cities and Pandemics: Towards a More Just, Green and Healthy Future* focuses on “Rethinking the Form and Function of the City”, sharing how urban morphologies and systems should be reconfigured to allow the promotion of compact design, accessible mobility and mixed land use which can support the development of safer, more liveable urban environments.⁶¹

In efforts to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic, *UN-Habitat’s Guidance on COVID-19 and Public Space* recommends planning for a “15-minute compact city neighbourhood” which would allow residents to access their needs within 15 minutes of travel (by foot, bike, or vehicles), and in turn contribute to the containment of the spread of the pandemic within a limited area.⁶²

52 UNSG, 2020(b), pg. 2.

53 UN-Habitat, 2020(c), pg. xviii.

54 OECD, 2021.

55 UN-Habitat 2021(b).

56 Alexander et al., 2015, pg. 13.

57 UN-Habitat, 2020(a), pg. 2.

58 UNSG, 2020(b).

59 IASC, 2020(a), pg. 12.

60 UNSG, 2020(b), pg. 3.

61 UN-Habitat, 2021(b).

62 UN-Habitat, 2020(a), pg. 3.



Photo Above: Commercial shops in Kalobeyei Settlement provides improved access at a neighbourhood level, while markets provide greater scale of services at a village level.

However, it was also noted that this is just proven to work if residents have equitable access to “essential services, streets and public space”.⁶³ This was also mirrored in the *UN-HABITAT Report on Cities and Pandemics: Towards a more Just, Green, Healthy Future* further where “neighbourhoods with robust street networks also appeared to be better able to provide access to essential services during the pandemic. Initial evidence suggests that walkable, mid-rise developments provide more dispersed pedestrian travel, which reduces contagion risks and improves community liveability in many ways.”⁶⁴

2.4.2 Management of communities

As mentioned above, urban form and function can contribute to the efforts towards addressing and responding to the COVID-19 pandemic. In the case of Kakuma-Kalobeyei, where the transportation systems are less developed compared to other urban areas, a compact design would indicate that residents are not in the need to travel more than 15 minutes to earn a living, buy food, seek medical treatment or for their children to go to school. Aid organisations, humanitarian and development partners, and local healthcare services would also be better able to identify, isolate and treat positive cases, while allowing residents continued access to basic needs, essential services, and livelihoods without risking increased contact over long distances.

Equally important is the management and guidance put in place for community members during the pandemic. The adequate management of communities and social services can also ensure compliance to safe practices and measures to reduce risk of transmission even with the increased contact. In the case for Turkana County, which has been hosting refugees for three decades, conflicts and tensions due to diverse cultures and practices have caused strains between communities. In the case of the Ebola Virus Disease outbreak in West Africa, Alexander et al. noted that “sustained armed conflict” could contribute to a deterioration of “societal resilience” which reduces the capacity of the communities to curb the spread.⁶⁵ It is critical to continue engaging with the communities during the pandemic and support them in reducing risk of transmission. In *COVID-19 Wuhan Guidance Papers*, UN-Habitat recognised “the community as the space-based city’s smallest governance unit” which is key in “local epidemic prevention and control.”⁶⁶

63 UN-Habitat, 2020(a), pg. 3.

64 Ibid.

65 Alexander et al., 2015, pg. 14

66 UN-Habitat, 2020(d), pg. 4.

In a case study on Sitai Community in Wuhan, UN-Habitat recommends establishing a team of residents, NGOs, and officials which serves as “temporary prevention and control group” and would support in the delivery of services on the ground including sensitisation and compliance to measures and restrictions.⁶⁷

Besides the management of communities and putting in place adequate regulations and guidance, it is also important to ensure that urban services and facilities, even healthcare facilities, are managed and equipped for a pandemic – or risk becoming hotspots. In the journal, *Outbreak of Ebola Virus Disease in Guinea: Where Ecology Meets Economy*, Bausch & Schwarz noted that when an infected individual visits “an impoverished and neglected healthcare facility” with limited infection prevention control (IPC) supplies such as “gloves, clean needles, and disinfectants”, it can result in increased transmission risks.⁶⁸ As public facilities like hospitals are often central nodes visited by the community, it risks (and easily) becoming hot spots that will further aggravate the spread. This is further compounded when an infected person, who could be healthcare workers return to their community and transmit the virus – further amplifying the cycle.⁶⁹ Zinszer et al. compared Ebola Virus Disease outbreaks in the general population versus in healthcare settings, suggesting that “healthcare settings with low standards of hygiene and sanitation” can contribute to increased transmission rates, including to healthcare workers.⁷⁰ On the other hand, “general population outbreaks” were noted to be “small and appear to end spontaneously” after a few generations of transmission.⁷¹

2.5. ‘Leaving no one behind’ through an inclusive response

In the *United Nations Development Assistance Framework Guidance*, the United Nations Development Group (UNDP) explains that ‘leave no one behind’ both (1) addresses “the situation of those most marginalised, discriminated against and excluded” and (2) empowers them as active agents in the development process.⁷² *UN-Habitat’s Strategic Plan 2020 – 2023*, encompasses four dimensions of social inclusion:



Table 3: UN-Habitat’s dimensions of Social Inclusion*

* UN-Habitat, 2020(e), pg. 51 – 54.

No.	UN-Habitat’s dimensions of Social Inclusion
1	Human rights
2	Gender
3	Children, Youth and older persons
4	Persons with disabilities

These dimensions guide UN-Habitat programmes and our partners in ensuring that the voices of marginalised and excluded groups are included, enabling them to (1) benefit from sustainable urban development and (2) participate in the development process.⁷³

Likewise, in *UNHCR’s Policy on Age, Gender and Diversity*, a comprehensive set of dimensions are identified to ensure that UNHCR’s interventions remain accountable to affected people.⁷⁴ UNHCR noted that “[f]orced displacement and statelessness impact people different, depending on age, gender, and diversity,”⁷⁵ and an inclusion of the whole society will enable their “capacities and priorities” to be integrated into UNHCR’s planning and ensure that interventions do not exclude anyone.⁷⁶

67 UN-Habitat, 2020(d), pg. 8 and 54.

68 Bausch et al., 2014, pg. 4.

69 Ibid.

70 Zinszer et al, 2017.

71 Ibid.

72 UNDG, 2017, pg. 9.

73 UN-Habitat, 2020(e), pg. 51 – 54.

74 UNHCR, 2018, pg. 6.

75 Ibid, pg. 5.

76 Ibid, pg. 10.

2.5.1 Data Disaggregation

In the UNDP publication *What does it mean to leave no one behind*, UNDP noted that, among other factors, “shock and fragility” can contribute to why people are “being left behind”.⁷⁷ Hence, it is critical to understand the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on communities, including both existing and new vulnerable groups. According to the Pan American Health Organisation (PAHO) and the World Health Organisation (WHO) in the publication *Why Data Disaggregation is key during a pandemic?* data disaggregation helps to identify “underlying trends and patterns” by breaking down “compiled information into smaller units”.⁷⁸ Moreover, the compiled information can be separated differently according to different “dimensions”⁷⁹, with PAHO and WHO recommending a minimal set of dimensions: “sex, age, education, income/economic status, ethnic origin, geographic location, and disability”⁸⁰ among other socioeconomic conditions, which potentially highlight or reveal different trends and patterns to better understand the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

In order to deliver effective interventions, PAHO and WHO note that disaggregated data is critical since it helps to identify (1) factors that affect transmission allowing for targeted intervention, and (2) vulnerable populations in the pandemic that require support.⁸¹ As earlier mentioned, the COVID-19 pandemic is an unprecedented crisis and targeted interventions supported by data will ensure that interventions are impactful and also do not further exacerbate the situation, in line with the ‘do no harm’ maxim . In addition, UNDRR noted that the COVID-19 pandemic, if not well managed, can contribute to “create new vulnerable groups.”⁸² The urge for efforts to protect the most vulnerable groups are echoed by UN-Habitat who recommend that an understanding of inequalities is supported by (1) “spatial mapping and analysis of inequalities” and (2) “disaggregated [data] by gender and age.”⁸³ This approach ensures efforts of “leave no one behind reach[ing] the most vulnerable.”⁸⁴



Photo Below: Public Spaces provide opportunity for various activities, including for children to play in.



77 UNDP, 2018, pg. 17.

78 PAHO & WHO, 2020, pg. 2.

79 Ibid.

80 Ibid, pg. 3.

81 Ibid, pg. 2.

82 UNDRR Asia Pacific, 2020, pg. 3.

83 UNSG, 2020(b), pg. 21.

84 UNSDG, 2016, accessed August 2020: <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/index.php?page=view&type=20000&nr=348&menu=2993>.



03

Roles and risks of Public Spaces in Kakuma-Kalobeyei during COVID-19

In Kakuma-Kalobeyei, most host and refugee communities travel by foot to access basic needs, essential services, and livelihoods which are usually located in public spaces and facilities. Therefore, it was important for this research to explore the current condition of streets and public spaces during the COVID-19 pandemic in order to understand how public spaces play a role in COVID-19 transmission and recovery in Kakuma-Kalobeyei. This document utilises the 'Leave No One Behind' approach and will examine public spaces through their constituent parts. Each of those constituent part or 'spatial components' will seek to identify: (1) existing vulnerable groups that are affected by the ongoing pandemic and (2) new vulnerable groups that are created by the pandemic.



Photo Above: Different households in Kalobeyei Settlement are observed to gather in the shade to converse or participate in vocational activities like sewing.

3.1 Streets in the COVID-19 pandemic

In *Streets for Pandemic Response & Recovery*, the National Association of City Transportation Officials (NACTO) et al. noted that streets support not only movement but other activities including access to basic needs and services, and spaces for businesses like markets.⁸⁵

⁸⁵ NACTO et al., 2020, pg. 6.

In addition, UN-Habitat recognises the role of streets in supporting the informal sector, and in turn providing an enabling environment to support the livelihoods of informal workers, during the COVID-19 pandemic.⁸⁶ Besides contributing to accessibility and the local economy, streets are critical in animating the communities' social life, as noted by the non-profit organisation, Project for Public Spaces^{87,88}

3.1.1 Access to basic needs, essential services, and livelihoods

In Kakuma-Kalobeyei, the distribution of public spaces and facilities such as marketplaces, aid distribution centres, and healthcare facilities provide varied levels of accessibility (see Figure 5, Figure 6, and Figure 7). Public spaces in Kakuma-Kalobeyei have been made more accessible to refugees than to host communities as most of these public spaces are located within the refugee settlements and camps. During the COVID-19 pandemic, this poses challenges within non-compact settlements or settlements which display an inadequate or well distributed public space: (1) when public spaces and basic facilities such as food stations and health centres are not within proximity to Persons of Concern, they may need to travel long distances to access appropriate services. This may result in several inconveniences and require time and energy; and (2) most Persons of Concern would thereby potentially expand their area of exposure, or risk exposing the communities they enter to as they travel through.

A. Non-compact settlement

In *Health Pandemic Resilient Cities*, Boerwinkel et al. noted that overcrowded or dense settlements can contribute to increasing vulnerability to communicable diseases, and additionally make it difficult to follow measures such as physical distancing. In contrast, compact cities can support the response to COVID-19 as (1) "residents have easier access to better healthcare facilities" and (2) "their proximity to essential services" limits the potential spread of COVID-19 as their movement is confined to a smaller area.⁸⁹ Similarly, UN-Habitat designed the Advisory Development Plan for Kalobeyei Settlement with two key principles (among others): (1) a "mixed land use distribution scheme" which enables easy access for both the host and refugee communities, and (2) a "neighbourhood concept" to allow "equitable access to service(s)".⁹⁰

However, as demonstrated in Figure 4, UN-Habitat found that within a 15-minute walking radius, 37% (likely 120,039 Kenyans and refugees) of the population within the surveyed areas across Kakuma-Kalobeyei have access to three kinds of facilities, 54% (likely 87,410 Kenyans and refugees) have access to two kinds of facilities, and 9% (likely 24,000 Kenyans and refugees) have access to only one kind of facility.^{91,92} These preliminary findings show that access to services and facilities within the Kakuma Refugee Camps are better than in the other settlements (including Kalobeyei Settlement which is not fully developed yet). UN-Habitat noted that this can be attributed – inter alia – to the longer existence of the Kakuma Refugee Camps.⁹³ It was also observed that a significant portion of Kakuma Town is not within a 15-minute walk of three types of facilities, leading to the conclusion that host community settlements in Turkana County fare worse in terms of accessibility to facilities than refugee settlements.

86 UN-Habitat, 2020(a), pg. 3.

87 PPS, 2015, accessed September 2020: <https://www.pps.org/article/streets-as-places>

88 Boerwinkel et al., 2020, pg. 13.

89 UN-Habitat, 2018, pg. 17.

90 UN-Habitat, 2021(a), pg. 80.

91 The analysis is prepared through open source data, and will be field verified and validated.

92 UN-Habitat, 2021(a), pg. 80.

93 Ibid.

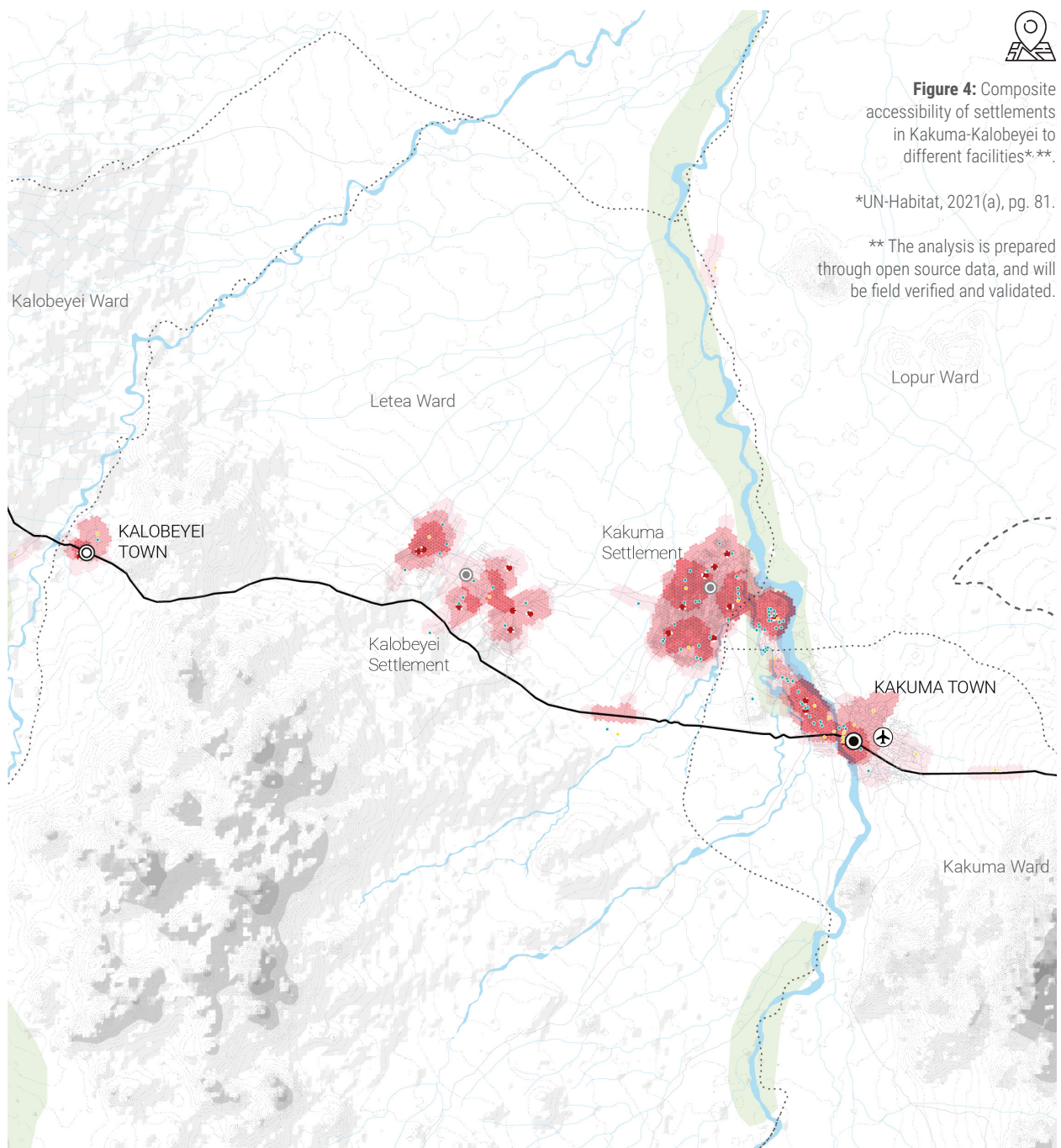


Figure 4: Composite accessibility of settlements in Kakuma-Kalobeyei to different facilities*.**.

*UN-Habitat, 2021(a), pg. 81.

** The analysis is prepared through open source data, and will be field verified and validated.

LEGEND

- Sub-County Boundary
- Ward Boundary
- Major Road
- Minor Road

- Waterway
- Built-Up Area
- Bushland
- Refugee Camp
- Village

- Facility
- Education
 - Market
 - Health

- Opportunity Index
- Access to 3 Kinds of Facilities (Educational, Market & Health within 15 minutes Walk - 3km/hr
- Access to 3 Kinds of Facilities
 - Access to 2 Kinds of Facilities
 - Access to 1 Kinds of Facilities



Kakuma-Kalobeyei area opportunity index.
Sources: KNBS, ESRI, UN-Habitat analysis

A compact neighbourhood can capitalise on the advantages of both urban agglomeration and density, by providing improved accessibility to a larger population within a smaller area. From Figure 4, there are still portions of Kakuma Refugee Camp that are not very accessible and would require its residents to travel longer distances to access these facilities.

Moreover, in the following service area and using Voronoi analysis⁹⁴ (see Figure 5, Figure 6, and Figure 7), it can be observed that other factors can further contribute to an increased risk of transmission. This could be factors such as marketplaces being less adequately distributed in Kalobeyei Settlement compared to Kakuma Refugee Camps. On the other hand, while marketplaces are well distributed across Kakuma Refugee Camps, food and resources distribution are conducted through the aid distribution centres, which are distributed even less adequately and more difficult to access.

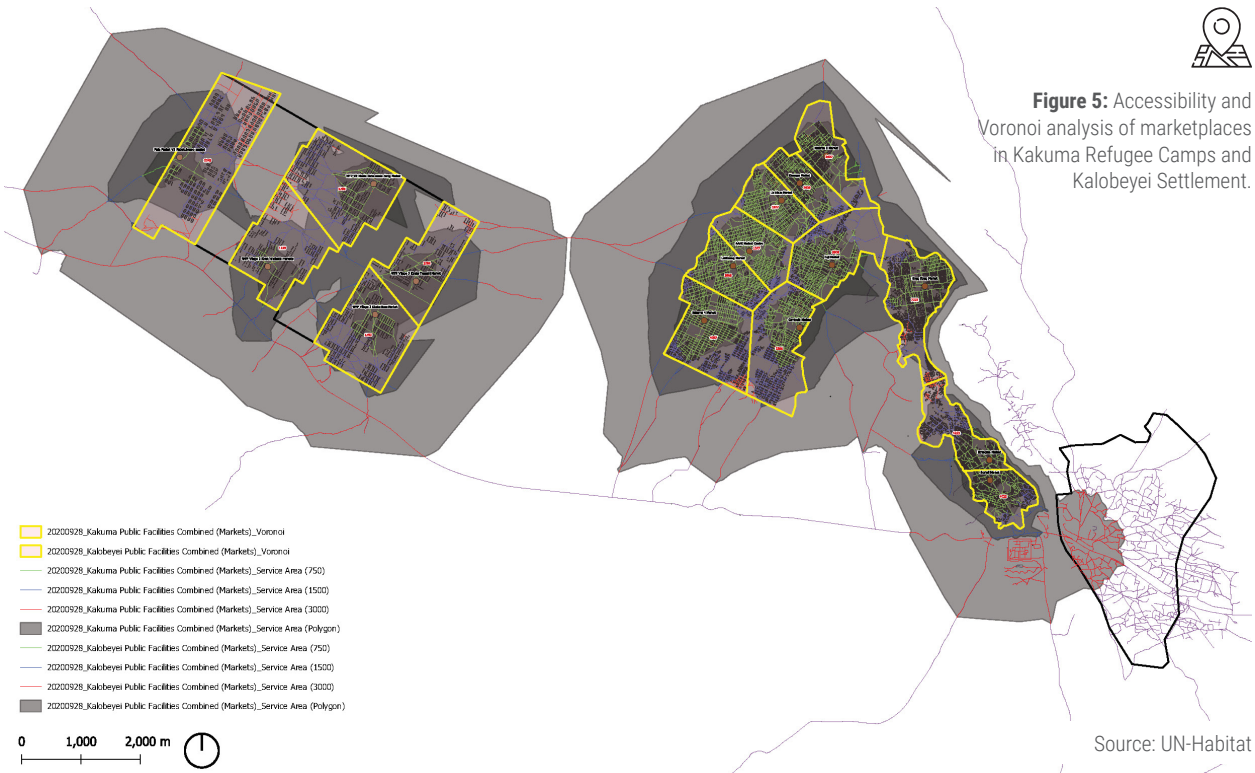


Figure 5: Accessibility and Voronoi analysis of marketplaces in Kakuma Refugee Camps and Kalobeyei Settlement.

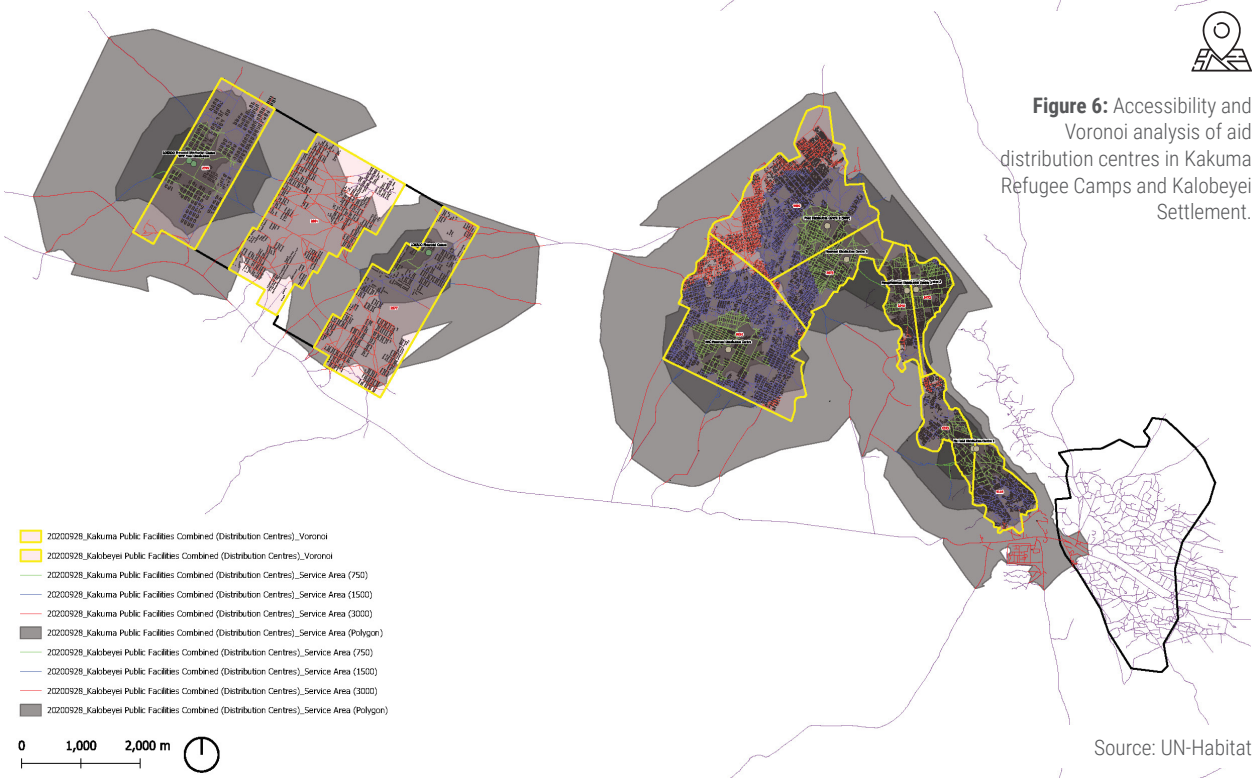
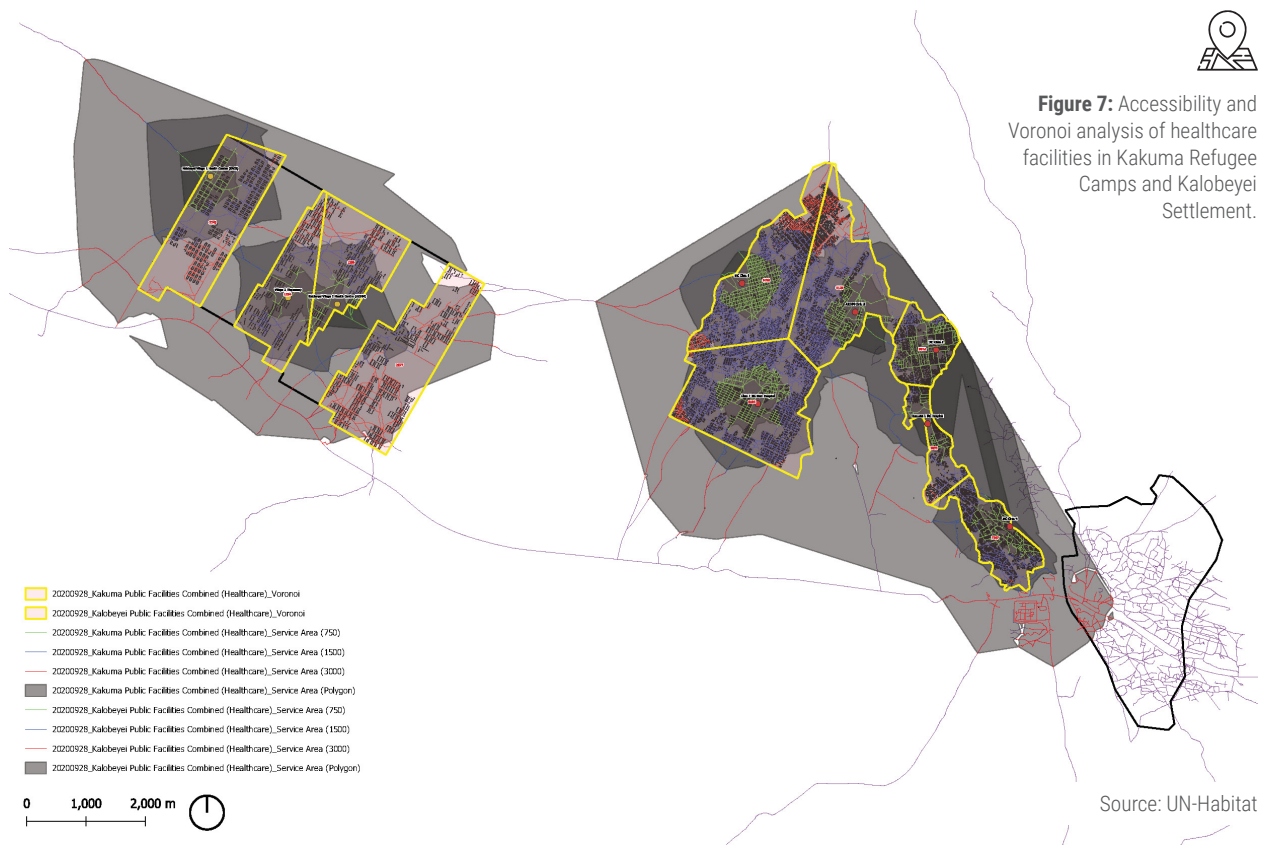


Figure 6: Accessibility and Voronoi analysis of aid distribution centres in Kakuma Refugee Camps and Kalobeyei Settlement.

94 Refer to http://webhelp.esri.com/arcgisdesktop/9.2/index.cfm?TopicName=Voronoi_maps for more information on Voronoi maps.



Healthcare facilities are also poorly distributed within the settlements. In some areas, it requires pedestrians up to an hour to reach their nearest healthcare facility. Accessibility to healthcare facilities for host communities is even more challenging, with travel times increasing to over an hour.

B. Foot travel

As detailed within the *UN-Habitat Report on Cities and Pandemics: Towards a more Just, Green and Health Future*, and within the literature on the Ebola Virus Disease presented earlier, sanitation and population sizes do not directly correlate to increased transmission risks, however they can contribute to increased contact between people that leads to increased transmissions. Therefore, the lack of equitable access to services, and the lack of compact neighbourhoods in Kakuma-Kalobeyei could contribute to extensive travel of community members across the settlements – potentially increasing transmission risks and creating outbreaks. This is further compounded by UN-Habitat’s 2017 findings that “private and (public) transport [...] is extremely limited.”⁹⁵ In *The Kalobeyei Model*, Betts et al. found that among the respondents “2% have a bicycle, 0.7% have a motorcycle, and 0.5% have a car.”⁹⁶ In line with this, the findings from UN-Habitat state “92.9% accessed lower-order services (dispensaries) on foot” and “80.2% of respondents travelled on foot” to access hospitals.⁹⁷

In addition, the streets in Kakuma-Kalobeyei are rarely tarmacked, which makes them extremely susceptible to erosion and waterlogging when it rains (see photo on the right). UN-Habitat’s Kakuma Field Office is also aware of the difficulties for persons with disabilities to traverse these streets, especially during the rainy season. In Kakuma Refugee Camp, this challenge is further compounded by the narrow streets (see photo on the right) used by hosts and refugees to reach their households.

⁹⁵ UN-Habitat, 2018, pg. 99.

⁹⁶ Betts et al., 2019(a), pg. 19.

⁹⁷ UN-Habitat, 2016, pg. 25.



Photo Right: A street in Kakuma Refugee Camp heavily affected by the rains, making mobility difficult for both vehicles and pedestrians.

3.1.2 Livelihoods in the informal sector

As UN-Habitat noted, streets are important platforms for the informal sector such as vendors to operate in.⁹⁸ During the COVID-19 pandemic informal vendors have adapted using tactical urbanism, an approach that uses temporary, affordable, and easily implemented solutions which are often small scale and can be used as pilots for more permanent changes. Instancing the street-infrastructure, cities have embraced turning over roadways into pedestrian and cyclist streets for space to walk, bike and to conduct essential errands.⁹⁹ This can have a direct impact on street vendors who often require community access to streets and public spaces for their livelihoods.

In Kakuma-Kalobeyi, street vendors in all settlements continue to sell a variety of goods (from clothes to food and raw products) and have remained operational through the COVID-19 pandemic. The lack of adequate market or street services also make it difficult for vendors to operate “at sufficient distance from each other” as recommended by UN-Habitat¹⁰⁰ or practice physical distancing among and with customers.



Photo Right: An aerial view of the streets in Kakuma Refugee Camp, showing both primary and secondary streets.

⁹⁸ UN-Habitat, 2020(a), pg. 3

⁹⁹ Transportation Alternatives, 2020, accessed September 2021: <https://transalt.medium.com/a-tactical-urbanist-response-to-COVID-19-3f15f81f47c7>.

¹⁰⁰ UN-Habitat, 2020(a), pg. 3.

3.2 Public spaces in the COVID-19 pandemic

Public spaces are important platforms for socio-economic opportunities for both – host and refugee communities. UN-Habitat’s *Guidance on COVID-19 and Public Space* reinforces the importance of public spaces during COVID-19 – encouraging “local and national governments to focus on (key recommendations) to prevent the spread of COVID-19 and to develop resilience to and preparedness for events of a similar nature.” The COVID-19 pandemic has drastically changed our relationship with public spaces and public facilities. “Restrictions, while necessary, are impacting on people’s quality of life and disproportionately hurting the urban poor, many of whom have lost their livelihoods, pushing them to the edge and threatening the economy, safety, security, peace and stability”, which is in particular a concern in Kakuma-Kalobeyei since refugees and hosts are already living on extraordinarily little.

3.2.1 Water collection and water points

In *A review of water and sanitation provision in refugee camps in association with selected health and nutrition indicators – the need for integrated service provision*, Cronin et al. found that in refugee camps in Ghana and Kenya, women and children are usually in charge of water collection with adult males collecting water in only 11% or less of the time.¹⁰¹ In Kakuma-Kalobeyei, children and women make up most of the demographic that collects water for their households (see photo below). Considering COVID-19, this creates a disproportionate impact on women and children as they are exposed to continued community contact, and therefore increased transmission risks. In addition to increased risk through encountering individuals at the water points, it is also possible to be exposed through contact with surfaces handled when operating water pumps or taps. WHO noted that respiratory droplets from an infected individual landing on a surface can remain a viable source of transmission.¹⁰²

Moreover, the need for water has also substantially increased as communities require water not only for their daily needs but also to practice necessary hand hygiene. In *Water, sanitation, hygiene, and waste management for SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19*, WHO explains that hand hygiene – and therefore water – is “extremely important to prevent the spread of SARS-CoV-2.”¹⁰³ This means that children and women will need to continue collecting water and more than before, increasing their exposure and risks of transmissions.



Photo Right: Children collecting water from water points, along with others.



¹⁰¹ Cronin et al., 2008, pg. 7.

¹⁰² Ibid, pg. 1.

¹⁰³ Ibid, pg. 4.

3.2.2 Communal latrines

WHO recognises that while transmission of COVID-19 through faeces is “possible but unlikely”, it is recommended that wastewater and faecal sludge is contained, managed, and treated off-site.¹⁰⁴ In addition, WHO recommends that, where possible, suspected, or infected patients should have access to their own toilets, and where not possible, their toilets should not be accessed by patients from other hospital wards. In the context of Kakuma-Kalobeyei, where most latrines are shared between households (e.g., 68% of Kakuma Refugee Camp’s population relies on communal latrines¹⁰⁵), WHO’s recommendations suggests that the latrines can pose a potential risk of transmission.

3.2.3 Play spaces for children

In *The Value of Public Space*, Carmona et al. noted that play is crucial to children’s development. As an example, Carmona et al. noted that the school playground is an important platform for children to interact with others and develop their social skills.¹⁰⁶ Likewise, in *Shaping Urbanization for Children*, UNICEF noted that public spaces provide opportunities for children to develop their cognitive capacity, relationships with others, and physical health.¹⁰⁷ In Kakuma-Kalobeyei, with the closure of schools,¹⁰⁸ children face a reduced daily “social contact that is essential to learning and development.”¹⁰⁹ Movement restrictions in Kakuma-Kalobeyei, which involved restricting travel between settlements and out of the region could continue to affect children and youth’s access to public spaces where they can interact with others (see photos below).



Photo Right: Children playing together in Kalobeyei Settlement Community Centre.

¹⁰⁴ Cronin et al., 2008, pg. 2.

¹⁰⁵ UNHCR, 2020(c), pg. 30.

¹⁰⁶ Carmona et al., 2004.

¹⁰⁷ Aerts, 2018, pg. 99.

¹⁰⁸ Nyambasha, 2020, accessed September 2020: <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2020/06/we-must-close-the-connectivity-gap-for-refugees-this-is-how/>.

¹⁰⁹ UNESCO, accessed September 2020: <https://en.unesco.org/covid19/educationresponse/consequences>.



Photo Right: A child's drawing on what public space means.

3.2.4 Women and informal livelihoods

A study by Sanghi et al., in *Yes, in my Backyard*, noted that, compared to Turkana men, Turkana women benefit most from the presence of refugees, UN agencies, and NGOs.¹¹⁰ Sanghi et al. suggests that this is because Turkana women provide a diverse set of services to the refugees, wide-ranging from labour (such as housework) to goods (such as charcoal and firewood).¹¹¹ This means that, in the face of COVID-19 measures, such as movement restrictions, and possible stigmatisation, Turkana women were likely to face more negative repercussions and discriminations than Turkana men. This could be due to the role that women play in households – feeding and caring for children or members of the household and being responsible for livelihoods and economic activities.

In addition, Sanghi et al. suggest that Turkana men interact with the refugees through more formal arrangements – including providing labour (often through NGOs), exchanging goods (such as livestock, controlled by brokers), and engaging in social interactions with refugees (such as through the consumption of alcohol).¹¹² While it is difficult to identify which group interacts most with refugees, Turkana women are more inclined to interact with refugees under more informal circumstances such as for livelihoods engagements or in areas of economic activities and at health centres. Likewise, in Kalobeyei Settlement, refugee women from different households are observed gathering to converse and participate in vocational activities like sewing (see photo on the right).

¹¹⁰ Sanghi et al., 2016, pg. 39.

¹¹¹ Ibid.

¹¹² Ibid.



Photo Above: Different households in Kalobeyei Settlement are observed to gather in the shade to converse or participate in vocational activities like sewing.

These activities are usually observed in shaded public spaces which are usually close to or next to their shelters. With COVID-19 pandemic restrictions put in place, Turkana and refugee women may be less likely to meet due to closures of public spaces or to meet without proper social distancing measures put in place or enforcement of physical distancing and wearing of protective equipment.

Before the COVID-19 pandemic, Turkana women and children were often observed travelling long distances to sell or trade their goods in the refugee settlements (see photos below). Public spaces provide the women and their children the opportunity to rest in shade from the harsh environment, and refugees as well as hosts were observed to share water points. Without adequate measures in place, women and children remain exposed to the aforementioned challenges.



Photo Above: Refugees sharing a waterpoint with host community members selling firewood in Kalobeyei Settlement (left); host community members selling charcoal to Kalobeyei Settlement Community Centre (right).

UN-Habitat has also noted that public spaces are important platforms for people to socialise and are essential for mental health and wellness.¹¹³ In Kakuma-Kalobeyei, women are observed to gather in groups, usually under shade, outside of their shelters or under trees to converse, care for their children, or participate in vocational activities (see following photos). Considering Inter-Agency Standing Committee's (IASC) concern on the "heightened risk of intimate partner and other forms of domestic violence" that women and girls face in the COVID-19 pandemic, and UN Women coining COVID-19 as "The Shadow Pandemic" through their campaign¹¹⁴, public spaces are more critical than ever in providing a platform for victims to speak and reach out to other peers and seek assistance.

¹¹³ UN-Habitat, 2020(a), pg. 3.

¹¹⁴ UN Women, accessed September 2021: <https://www.unwomen.org/en/news/in-focus/in-focus-gender-equality-in-COVID-19-response/violence-against-women-during-COVID-19>.



Photo Above: Women gathering under a tree in Kalobeyei settlement, engaging in conversation while taking care of their children.

3.2.5 Social resilience and safety

In *COVID-19: Opportunities for Resilient Recovery*, UNDRR raised concerns about the socio-economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on the community, further noting that repairing “physical and economic infrastructure” is easier than repairing “social and cultural infrastructure and networks.”¹¹⁵ For example, UNDRR is concerned about the impacts of COVID-19 measures on the community, such as the “social disruption caused by COVID-19 lockdowns” which they claim will contribute to an erosion of “social trust and social capital among individuals and communities.”¹¹⁶ In addition, UNDRR noted that the prolonged nature of the COVID-19 pandemic risks eroding community resilience and deepening inequalities.¹¹⁷ This is particularly concerning in Kakuma-Kalobeyei as a combination of erosion of community resilience and social resilience can threaten efforts to encourage co-existence between the host and refugee communities.

UN-Habitat noted, in the *Kalobeyei Settlement Advisory Development Plan*, that conflicts and tensions between host and refugee communities in Kakuma-Kalobeyei arose primarily from (1) “unbalanced assistance” towards the refugees; (2) perceived lack of benefits from the presence of refugees; and (3) “competition over limited resources.”¹¹⁸ The prolonged pandemic could risk deepening existing inequalities which will further heighten existing tensions as refugees continue to receive aid while the host community are excluded. In addition, UN-Habitat also noted that the multi-cultural nature of the settlement (including within diverse groups of refugees) can also contribute to conflicts. In the *UN-Habitat Guidance on COVID-19 and Public Space*, one of the mid to long-term interventions involved building ‘social resilience’ - “[t]he pandemic and nature of the virus affects the way we socialise, challenging existing cultural and familiar practices, which can create tensions in public spaces. The social and connection elements of public spaces remain important and can serve to strengthen resilience in communities”.¹¹⁹

Public spaces can provide the opportunity for different groups to interact and build social trust – described by CAFE Space as “[p]romoting neighborliness.”¹²⁰ In addition, the World Bank also noted that public spaces contribute to “social integration and civic pride” as well as the development of a community by providing spaces for economic, commercial and productive action.¹²¹

115 UNDRR Asia Pacific, 2020, pg. 4.

116 Ibid.

117 Ibid, pg. 3.

118 UN-Habitat, 2018, pg. 24.

119 UN-Habitat, 2020(a), pg. 3.

120 Carmona et al., 2004.

121 Kim, 2015, accessed August 2020: <https://blogs.worldbank.org/endpovertyinsouthasia/public-spaces-not-nice-have-basic-need-cities>.



Photo Above: Host community members are observed to use the public space in Kalobeyei Settlement Village 1.

The movement restrictions and measures that were put in place against public gatherings in spaces in Kakuma-Kalobeyei, and the resultant reduction in or lack of interactions between refugee and host communities could damage existing social trust between the communities and potentially lead to tensions.

3.2.6 Public Spaces as opportunities for safety

In *Cities for People*, Jan Gehl noted that cities should be lively, safe, sustainable, and healthy.¹²² Likewise, during the planning process for the Kalobeyei Settlement, UN-Habitat designed the Land Use Framework with a focus on developing an accessible, inclusive, and safer settlement.¹²³ As an example, the urban layout of urban typologies such as residential blocks, public spaces and circulation paths provide a network of interconnected safe and accessible spaces that encourage walkability for both the host and refugee communities.¹²⁴ This network also fosters “strong and positive integration”¹²⁵, one of which is through the introduction of opportunities for interaction between the communities. In addition, these public spaces are designed to allow for “passive observation” by locating “sites of daily activit[ies] such as water collection” in the vicinity of residential blocks,¹²⁶ promoting safer streets and public spaces.¹²⁷

In *COVID-19 and Ensuring Safe Cities and Safe Public Spaces for Women and Girls*, UN Women highlighted that COVID-19 measures, such as physical distancing and movement restrictions, have “decreased the number of people on the street.”¹²⁸ According to the same publication, this will further strain women’s access to “autonomous mobility”, and in turn “employment and essential services.”¹²⁹ During the pandemic in Kakuma-Kalobeyei, measures have been put in place to restrict groups from gathering and limiting the number of pillions (a seat for passenger behind a motorcyclist) on boda-bodas (motorcycle taxis). This created two challenges – firstly, the lack of people on the street reduces passive observations which are necessary for safer streets, and secondly, limiting the number of pillions on boda-bodas could raise the price of every trip taken and reduces options for travel by women and children.

122 Gehl, 2013, pg. 6.

123 UN-Habitat, 2018, pg. 138.

124 Ibid, pg. 139.

125 Ibid, pg. 138.

126 Ibid, pg. 139.

127 Ibid, pg. 153.

128 UN Women, 2020, pg. 3.

129 Ibid, pg. 6.

3.3 Public Facilities in the COVID-19 Pandemic

3.3.1 Marketplaces

Continued and safe access to marketplaces during the COVID-19 pandemic is necessary for members of communities, both for their livelihoods and to meet their basic needs. However, marketplaces face heavy daily human traffic and are always crowded. This poses potential risks for customers and for vendors who earn their livelihoods in marketplaces. Often, because of the need to keep their livelihoods, vendors are forced to keep working in less-than-ideal situations which may not adhere to recommended health and safety protocols. In Kakuma-Kalobeyei, UN-Habitat's Kakuma Field Office has observed that many persons continue to visit the marketplaces during the COVID-19 pandemic with minimal adherence to COVID-19 safe practices. This increases the risk of transmission, potentially transforming marketplaces into hotspots. It was cited in the *Report of the Multisector Impact Assessment of Gender Dimensions of the Ebola Virus Disease in Sierra Leone*, where Sierra Leone's Ministry of Social Welfare et al. noted that the economic and livelihoods impact of Ebola Virus Disease can force girls (from households with limited resources) to "engage in income-generating activities" – even if it breaches quarantine.¹³⁰ In Kakuma-Kalobeyei, this risk is also prevalent and could be addressed by building greater resilience and to implement more explicit measures to ensure that refugees and hosts can continue to earn an income and maintain safe social interactions in markets and facilities during the pandemic.



Photo Above: There are a variety of users of roads in marketplaces, both pedestrian and vehicular.

¹³⁰ Ministry of Social Welfare et al., 2014, pg. 33.



Box 3: Cash-based systems

Betts et al. noted in *Doing Business in Kakuma*, that World Food Programme (WFP) and UNHCR are “gradually transit[ing] from in-kind assistance towards cash-based assistance,” referred to as Bamba Chakula, in Kakuma-Kalobeyei.¹³¹ In the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, as aid programmes shift away from centralised aid distribution facilities towards privatised businesses such as Bamba Chakula, this may result in potential benefits and/or impacts that could affect the transmission of COVID-19. With persons being able to access aid items and support from Bamba Chakula vendors in their vicinities, there may be a reduced need for them to travel across settlements to meet their basic needs. This could potentially support the containment of the spread of COVID-19 to smaller areas, allowing authorities and NGOs to respond to contain spread within each area. However, the decentralisation of aid distribution to Bamba Chakula may result in challenges for authorities and NGOs to supervise distribution processes, which could have been better managed in centralised facilities where safety measures could be established and enforced. Betts et al. estimates that the markets in Kakuma Refugee Camp and Kalobeyei Settlement see transactions of about 3 million USD a month¹³², which attest to the number of transactions. Without the enforcement of measures amongst Bamba Chakula vendors, risk of transmission may increase.



Photo Right: Streets in Kakuma-Kalobeyei are usually congested, with both people and vehicles vying for space.



Photo Right: Both host and refugee communities are observed to access marketplaces in both Kalobeyei Settlement and Kakuma Refugee Camp.



¹³¹ Betts et al., 2019(b), pg. 6.

¹³² Ibid, pg. 7 – 8.

3.3.2 Aid distribution facilities

In Kakuma Refugee Camp the majority of aid items, in the form of food, firewood and non-food items (NFIs) are still distributed through centralised facilities. The Inter-agency Steering Committee noted in *Scaling-up COVID-19 Outbreak Readiness and Response Operations in Humanitarian Situations*, that refugee settlement modalities for aid distribution may increase the risk of transmission as it encourages gatherings.¹³³ Measures (such as spill-over of activities) put in place to facilitate safe food collection demonstrate the flexible role that public spaces can play in disease outbreaks with conditions similar to those of COVID-19. UN-Habitat recognises that “[p]ublic spaces are an important asset in a time of crisis,” allowing for the “deployment of temporary and secondary facilities.”¹³⁴ In this case, in Kakuma-Kalobeyei, UNHCR and partners deployed the use of shelters to allow persons of concern to socially distance while queuing to receive aid items (see photos below).

However, UN-Habitat’s Kakuma Field Office also observed that measures put in place during food collection varied in success rates and location. Within the aid distribution facilities, the number of people entering at any time is controlled, making it easier for authorities and NGOs to manage and enforce physical distancing measures (see photos below). However, outside the facility, the queues for food collection were often long and physical distancing measures were difficult to enforce. Moreover, with challenging weather conditions, people tended to congregate in the shade, subverting physical distancing measures altogether (see photos below).



Photo Right: During food collection, measures are put in place such as physical distancing and mandatory handwashing.



Photo Right: Physical distancing measures were challenging under the harsh weather conditions.



¹³³ IASC, 2020(b), pg. 2.

¹³⁴ UN-Habitat, 2020(a), pg. 2.

3.3.3 Healthcare Facilities

During the COVID-19 pandemic, it is important for Persons of Concern to still be able to access healthcare facilities. However, UN-Habitat's Kakuma Field Office reported stigmatisation of healthcare facilities with certain host and refugee members assuming the risk of contracting the virus was higher if they visited these facilities. The IASC noted that health services must "remain available" while separating suspected and infected COVID-19 patients from other patients.¹³⁵

UN-Habitat's 2017 *Socio-Economic Baseline Survey and Mapping Report* noted that refugees in Kakuma Camp "had access to a multiplicity of healthcare options, which ranged from clinics offering basic services to hospitals providing specialised treatment."¹³⁶ The same report noted that there are "11 health facilities within the larger Kakuma area, including six (54.5%) in the refugee camp – two hospitals and four clinics."¹³⁷ On one hand, healthcare facilities are accessible to Persons of Concern, on the other hand resource-poor and neglected healthcare facilities with inadequate equipment could be ill positioned to respond to treating patients effectively.



Photo Below: IRC's General Hospital in Kakuma is one of the few hospitals in the area that is well equipped, but continues to face overwhelming demand for its services.



¹³⁵ IASC, 2020(b), pg. 7.

¹³⁶ UN-Habitat, 2016, pg. 24.

¹³⁷ Ibid, pg. 24.



04

The role of public spaces in the “New Normal”

In *Public Space & Public Life during COVID 19*, Gehl noted that without any vaccine or cure, “physical space” is key to “fight, prevent, and control the spread while providing benefits these places have”.¹³⁸ Likewise, this report has tried to contextualise lessons and recommendations from past and recent literature including studies from the Ebola Virus Disease transmission in West Africa, *UN-Habitat’s Guidance on COVID-19 and Public Space*, and other sources, to explore and understand the new role that public spaces will play during and after the COVID-19 pandemic in Kakuma-Kalobeyei. The IASC recommends that measures should recognise and adapt to the context, including factoring in “the complex interplay of demographics, socio-cultural strengths and disparities, the prevalence of other diseases, the density of the living conditions, environmental and potentially other different factors associated with poor COVID-19 outcomes.”¹³⁹



Photo Above: In Kalobeyei Settlement, public spaces are planned in conjunction with public services such as transport and marketplaces.

¹³⁸ Gehl Architects, 2020, pg. 3.

¹³⁹ IASC, 2020(a), pg. 2.

4.1 The 'New Normal'

UN-Habitat and partners have recognised the gaps which the pandemic has highlighted over the last two years. As earlier mentioned, UN-Habitat has emphasized a need to shift "from a mindset of emergency to recovery", to "continue to focus on strengthening public health, economic resilience and service access for all".¹⁴⁰ The *UN-Habitat Report on Cities and Pandemics* emphasizes the importance of local level action in spatial planning, poverty and inequality, the economy and governance, and recommends a rights-based principle to recovery including policies to tackle access to water, sanitation, public transport, electricity, health, financial resilience amongst others.¹⁴¹ In *Liveable Cities: Post-COVID-19 New Normal*, the Asian Development Bank (ADB) has also identified three key priorities as cities "build back better" towards the new normal: (1) "Coverage, quality, efficiency, and reliability of services in urban areas improved; (2) Urban planning and financial sustainability of cities strengthened," and (3) "Urban environment, climate resilience and disaster management of cities improved."¹⁴²

Our relationship with streets, public spaces and public facilities have changed drastically since the COVID-19 pandemic. Public spaces can and should be utilised as "part of the response whether they help limit the spread of the virus, or improve mental and physical health ensuring we do not 'leave anyone behind'".¹⁴³ Public spaces can also be utilised for COVID-19 response operations to support resilience efforts towards future crises, including health pandemics.¹⁴⁴ The COVID-19 crisis has revealed short-, medium-, and long-term gaps in public spaces, including on aspects such as its accessibility, adaptability of the public space to a variety of functions, management and maintenance, and equitable accessibility to all persons.¹⁴⁵ This is also in line with UNDRR's statement on the need to invest in "resilient and adaptable infrastructure that can effectively operate during moments of crisis [...] even as they deal with the present crisis."¹⁴⁶



Photo Right: Community members remain a key stakeholder in UN-Habitat's participatory planning and design - enabling for more resilient and sustainable futures.

4.2. Recommendations

The following table summarises the roles, identified by UN-Habitat, that public spaces can play during the COVID-19 pandemic that could be considered in the context of Kakuma-Kalobeyei. In the following section, recommendations on streets, public spaces, and public facilities will be shared, considering two phases of response 1) preparedness, and 2) recovery and futureproofing.

¹⁴⁰ UN-Habitat, 2021(b), pg. 172.

¹⁴¹ UN-Habitat, 2021(b).

¹⁴² ADB, 2020, pg. 10.

¹⁴³ UN-Habitat, 2020(a), pg. 2.

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid*, pg. 2 – 3.

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid*, pg. 1.

¹⁴⁶ UNDRR Asia Pacific, 2020, pg. 7.



Table 4: The role of public space in the COVID-19 pandemic.

No.	The role of public space	Description
1	Public spaces and facilities as multi-functional spaces that can support additional functions in times of crisis	Public spaces can be adapted to address and meet different needs and to accommodate different functions in times of crisis.
2		UN-Habitat recommends the employment of "agile adaptation" to allow additional space for the spill-over of existing essential services (e.g. public spaces to marketplaces) to reduce the strain on existing infrastructures and allow for better physical distancing.
3		Public spaces can be used to accommodate essential basic services that are unavailable within poorer households, but necessary in times of crisis e.g. communal handwashing points.
4	Public spaces and streets provide areas where basic needs, essential services, and livelihoods can be supported	Public spaces can be used for the rapid deployment of "temporary and secondary facilities" such as for healthcare and aid distribution.
5		Public spaces in the form of streets provide essential spaces for safe mobility, including alternative mobility.
7	Public spaces as communal and social areas to foster relationships and build resilience	Public spaces are essential spaces for people to earn their livelihoods, particularly in the informal economy. Public spaces can be adapted to allow for street vendors to continue operating safely during lockdowns.
8		Public spaces are important areas to build social resilience among communities but also for individuals (in particular mental health). The pandemic affects the way people socialise, challenging existing cultural practices, which can create tension. The social and connection elements of public spaces are important and can serve to strengthen resilience in communities.
		Public spaces can serve as a platform for community engagement, such as sharing of information on safe practices during the COVID-19 pandemic and clarifying misinformation. Public spaces can also provide opportunities for dialogue, allowing both the government and local communities to discuss and mobilise appropriate measures to combat COVID-19 transmission.

4.2.1. Spaces that are multi-functional and can support additional functions

- **Preparedness and response**

The current level of development and urbanisation in Kakuma-Kalobeyei is different across all settlements – Kakuma Town, Kakuma Refugee Camp, Kalobeyei Settlement, and Kalobeyei Town. Out of all the settlements, Kalobeyei Settlement is the only settlement which has been planned according to UN-Habitat planning principles, with the land-use and other plans captured within the *UN-Habitat Kalobeyei Settlement Advisory Development Plan*.¹⁴⁷ As development progress in the region is slow and has largely been driven through contributions from external donors and aid programmes in collaboration with the local government, to access their basic needs, essential services and livelihoods, most Persons of Concern still require frequent and long travel times between settlements, by foot and by boda-boda. Host and refugees in Kakuma-Kalobeyei still lack basic infrastructures such as piped water and electricity in their homes/shelters, which is more accessible in shared or communal and shared public spaces.

Hence, the role of public spaces in the preparedness and response phases are essential to these communities, as they rely on access to their basic needs and services there. Public spaces can be used to accommodate these essential services while they are unavailable within private households. During response planning, in the event of an identified cluster, authorities and NGOs in Kakuma-Kalobeyei can rapidly deploy 'agile adaptation' procedures, such as 'temporary or/and secondary facilities' such as healthcare and aid or food distribution which would better support the access to basic/ essential items and services to affected communities. School

¹⁴⁷ UN-Habitat, 2018.

grounds, institutions and marketplaces can also be transformed to public spaces with supportive functions to reduce the strain on existing infrastructures and allow for better physical distancing. Other examples are programming streets and public spaces to allow for organised street vending on select days or times of day, ensuring multi-use and shared use of the spaces, repurposing street space by expanding sidewalks to facilitate safe walking and mobility.



Photo Right: Installation of handwashing stations by UNHCR and WFP for a food collection exercise.

Lockdown measures and restrictions on gatherings in public spaces in Kakuma-Kalobeyei were introduced for a period during the COVID-19 pandemic too. This resulted in fewer people on the streets, which reduced “passive observation”¹⁴⁸ across the settlements. Safety is a concern in settlements, especially in situations where pedestrians are often compelled to travel long distances across settlements to access their basic needs, essential services and livelihoods and potentially exposing them - especially women and children – to unsafe conditions. In the short-term, it would be important to introduce measures to ensure safe access. For instance, authorities and NGOs could decentralise and install temporary basic services such as healthcare and aid distribution in public spaces across the settlement that will provide equitable access to everyone, including vulnerable groups. This can help reduce the need for extensive travel in potentially unsafe conditions. Moreover, Boerwinkel et al. also suggests that equitable access will create “hyper-proximity” that will allow for localised lockdowns¹⁴⁹ in case of outbreaks, which will help to limit the spread across the settlements.

In public areas and facilities in Kakuma-Kalobeyei, social distancing measures and restrictions have also changed the mode of operations. These have included queues lengthening at aid distribution facilities as people adhere to physical distancing measures and a reduction in the total number of persons allowed within public facilities at any one time (such as marketplaces). The latter has also resulted in longer waiting times for Persons of Concern, often in the hot, semi-arid environment outside these facilities and in unused and unbuilt public spaces. Where possible, authorities and NGOs could put in place design improvements in these public spaces to meet these needs. Temporary shelters or open-side pavilions could provide shaded areas where persons could wait before their turn to enter. These could also be designed in compliance with social distancing requirements, and in the outdoors (see following photos).

¹⁴⁸ UN-Habitat, 2018, pg. 139.

¹⁴⁹ Boerwinkel et al., 2020, pg. 14.



Photo Right: A simple structure built by a refugee in Kalobeyei Settlement.



Photo Right: A hospital constructed a shelter to triage persons visiting the facility.



- **Recovery and futureproofing**

Good urban planning and design is critical to the development of the settlements in Kakuma-Kalobeyei. It allows the local authorities and communities to anticipate the expected population growth, identify the required needs that should be prioritised and met for an improved quality of life which in this case means, responding to and recover from a pandemic. In the *Kalobeyei Settlement Advisory Development Plan*, UN-Habitat points out that planning can factor in growth through planned “extension and densification”.¹⁵⁰ It is necessary for authorities and NGOs to recognise and plan for public spaces and facilities to meet the needs of the communities. For example, the anticipated growth of the settlement in the long-term would be essential in building a futureproof recovery.

Besides good urban planning, compact city designs such as the concept of the ‘15-minute compact city neighbourhood’ could also be recommended. The design not only allows people to access services and needs conveniently, but it also supports the containment of the spread of the pandemic within a limited area.¹⁵¹ This is echoed by Boerwinkel et al. in the role of ‘compact cities’ in limiting the potential spread of COVID-19.¹⁵² UN-Habitat shared as a precondition to the functioning of this compact city, is to provide equitable access to “essential services, streets and public space”¹⁵³. Hence, authorities and NGOs can build upon the suggestion to decentralise basic services and develop necessary infrastructures across the settlements.

¹⁵⁰ UN-Habitat, 2018, pg. 66.

¹⁵¹ UN-Habitat, 2020(a), pg. 3.

¹⁵² Boerwinkel et al., 2020, pg. 13.

¹⁵³ UN-Habitat, 2020(a), pg. 3.

Public spaces also play a key role in urban planning, good urban design and contribute to the overall well-being of people. Good planning and management of public spaces can also ensure that informal developments do not occur, which can undermine sustainable development and prosperity in an area.¹⁵⁴ In Kakuma-Kalobeyi, public spaces have provided opportunities for rapid adaptation and spill-over of essential services (such as being used to accommodate services otherwise unavailable to households) and have been used for the rapid deployment of temporary or secondary facilities for healthcare and aid distribution. In the long-term and in the face of future pandemics, public spaces should be made more available to the public and adapted to meet their needs, which can also support building greater resilience against future pandemics.

4.2.2 Spaces where basic needs, essential services, and livelihoods can be supported

- **Preparedness:**

Streets can provide marketplaces and private vendors additional space to enable both the vendors and customers to comply with physical distancing requirements. In Kakuma-Kalobeyi, many marketplaces and private vendors rely on streets for spill-over of commercial activities (see photo below). There are opportunities for authorities and NGOs to introduce safe spatial interventions that can help to ensure both vendors and customers follow physical distancing measures. Examples from NACTO include creating markings on the floor to separate vendors and customers, and defining one-way routes for customers to follow to reduce physical interaction (see Figure 8).¹⁵⁵ Where necessary, streets in Kakuma-Kalobeyi's marketplaces should be closed off to vehicular traffic to enable pedestrians to be able to comply with physical distancing requirements¹⁵⁶ – this is also because streets are often congested by pedestrians and vehicles vying for space. In addition, streets provide authorities and NGOs an opportunity to actively manage access to public facilities like marketplaces and aid distribution centres, which has proved especially important during the COVID-19 pandemic (see following photos).



Photo Below: One of the private vendors receiving customers on the street.



¹⁵⁴ UN-Habitat, 2018.

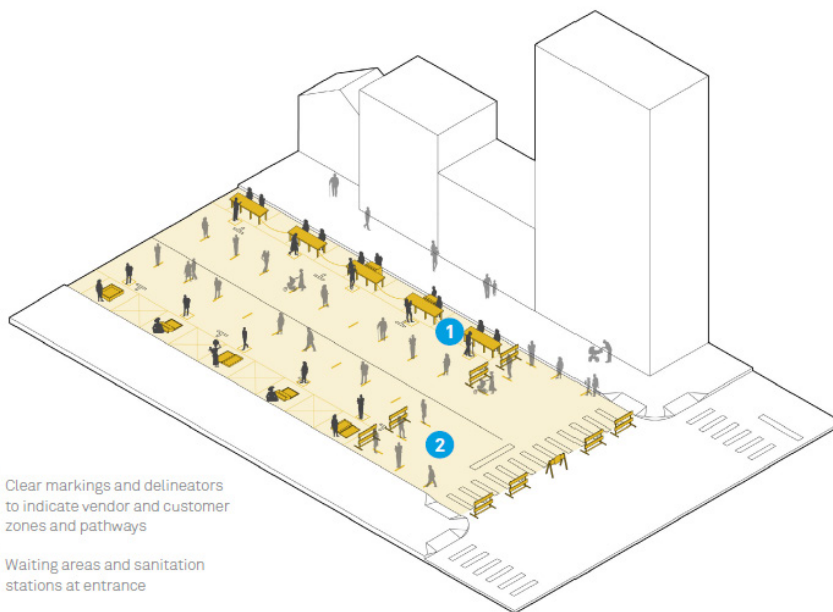
¹⁵⁵ NACTO et al., 2020, pg. 28.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid, pg. 14



Figure 8: Diagram on streets and markets during pandemic response and recovery.

- 1 Clear markings and delineators to indicate vendor and customer zones and pathways
- 2 Waiting areas and sanitation stations at entrance



Source: NACTO



Photo Above: Figure 30 Private vendors continue to sell to customers with proper physical distancing measures*.
© Source: Aljazeera

* Aljazeera, 2020, accessed August 2020: <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2020/04/somalia-struggles-coronavirus-infections-undetected-200428193056599.html>.



In the *Kalobeyi Infrastructure Corridor Development Plan*, UN-Habitat noted that Kakuma Town and Kakuma Refugee Camp face infrastructure challenges¹⁵⁷ with concerns raised over the condition of roads.¹⁵⁸ Streets in Kakuma-Kalobeyi are susceptible to erosion and waterlogging during rains which can force pedestrians into more narrow passageways, potentially lowering the possibility for physical distancing measures to be followed. Hence, it is critical for authorities and NGOs to repair and build good quality streets to improve ease of mobility and to enable pedestrians to comply with physical distancing requirements.

157 UN-Habitat, 2020(b), pg. 3

158 UN-Habitat, 2020(b).

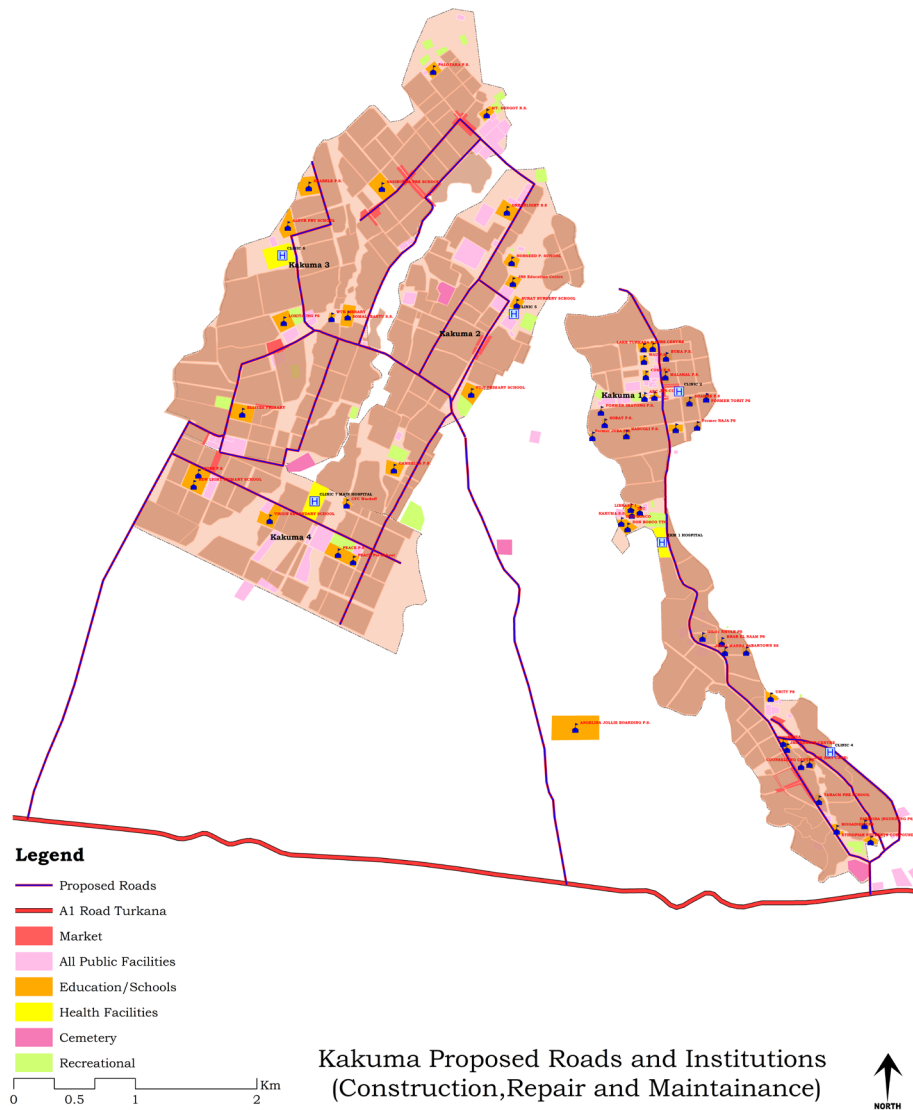


Figure 9: A number of key roads are identified in Kakuma Refugee Camp that need repair.
© Source: UN-Habitat

Authorities and NGOs can prioritise streets that encounter high volumes of pedestrian and vehicular traffic and have a history of heavy erosion and waterlogging.¹⁵⁹ In such cases, this report recommends prioritising the streets in Kakuma Refugee Camps due to their often-overcrowded conditions and the need for Persons of Concern to continue accessing their basic needs and health facilities.¹⁶⁰

- **Recovery and futureproofing**

In the long-term, it is critical to plan and design streets which can provide: (1) “safe, efficient and pleasant connectivity;”¹⁶¹ (2) “places of interaction;”¹⁶² and (3) “more connectivity and support larger footfall [...] which are more conducive to supporting commercial activity.”¹⁶³ Besides providing for equitable access to basic needs, essential services, and livelihoods, it is critical that walkability is improved in Kakuma-Kalobeyei which will also “reduce congestion and boost local economy and interactions.”¹⁶⁴

159 NACTO et al., 2020, pg. 19.

160 UNHCR, 2019, pg. 2.

161 UN-Habitat, 2018, pg. 99.

162 Ibid.

163 Ibid, pg. 146.

164 Ibid, pg. 99.

As settlements enter the recovery phase, properly planned and designed streets are also critical to reduce overcrowding and exposure and manage risks of transmissions and the potential resurgence of COVID-19 spread.

Both long-term planning and management of public spaces are important to ensure that no informal developments occur in public spaces, and that public spaces are well managed and can be utilised by the communities that they serve. Public spaces remain essential spaces for people to earn their livelihoods in Kakuma-Kalobeyei where the informal economy is large. These spaces can be adapted to ensure long-term safety and health is maintained for street vendors to continue operations.

UN-Habitat has developed the *Kalobeyei Settlement Advisory Development Plan*¹⁶⁵, and is also supporting the regeneration strategies for Kakuma Refugee Camp, which can provide recommendations on how to improve and ensure adequate access to public spaces that can meet the basic needs of beneficiaries and securing their livelihoods.

4.2.3 Spaces as communal and social areas to foster relationships and build resilience

- **Preparedness and response**

Public spaces provide a shared common area for people to interact and build social relationships. This is crucial within the context of Kakuma-Kalobeyei, where refugees and hosts may come from different cultural backgrounds and have historically faced tensions between one another due to inequal access to resources. During the COVID-19 pandemic, lockdown measures and restrictions on gatherings in public spaces could lead to reduced opportunities for both communities to interact in these shared spaces. Where regulations are eased, strict measures and social distancing regulations may still be put in place, which can result in difficulties forming and maintaining bonds and relationships between community groups. In addition, messaging that is targeted to address mental and physical health would also be important to both communities.

In *Applying Humanitarian standards to fight COVID-19*, Sphere noted that “hygiene promotion [...] can only work if the community is fully engaged” as the nature of COVID-19’s transmission is through droplets¹⁶⁶ – both through contact and proximity.¹⁶⁷ Therefore, without the full cooperation of the community, infected patients can continue to infect others. Sphere recommends to fully engage with the community, since it is necessary to “[build] trust and mutual understanding” through involving the community in “communications and decision-making.”¹⁶⁸ In Kakuma-Kalobeyei, public spaces can provide appropriate platforms to engage the community in a pandemic as these spaces are usually able to accommodate large groups of people with sufficient space to ensure physical distancing. In addition, as public spaces can collectively and safely engage a group on “perceptions, rumours and feedback”¹⁶⁹ there is an opportunity for the community to cross-check the dissemination of misinformation through face-to-face questions and answers (Q&A).

165 UN-Habitat, 2018.

166 Sphere, 2020, pg. 3.

167 WHO, 2020, accessed August 2020: https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/question-and-answers-hub/q-a-detail/q-a-how-is-covid-19-transmitted?gclid=Cj0KCQjw-035BRDVARIsAJU5mQX9SVsA06hrioycLy0OPY88UPb0DXheLbwhmPCpgPP67RvuqZvRk8oaAm7XEALw_wcB.

168 Sphere, 2020, pg. 3.

169 IASC, 2020(b), pg. 5.

- **Recovery and futureproofing**

In the long-term, where the socio-economic integration of host and refugee communities is necessary for the sustainability of Kakuma-Kalobeyei^{170, 171} interventions that develop social capital are critical. Social capital is defined by Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) as the "network together with shared norms, values and understandings that facilitate co-operation within or among groups."¹⁷² Public spaces would be important venues for both host and refugee communities to build social trust and in turn social capital on which development can be built on.¹⁷³

UN-Habitat also noted that after lockdowns are lifted, it would be critical to "re-build confidence"¹⁷⁴ in both host and refugee communities to return to and interact safely within these public spaces. Authorities and NGOs can encourage this through a series of sensitisation exercises conducted in public spaces to 1) inform communities on safe practices going forward and related updates, and 2) allow them freedom to utilise public spaces safely. In the long-term, public spaces can continue to serve as appropriate platforms to engage communities, especially considering the overcrowded characteristics of the settlements, such as in Kakuma Refugee Camp. Properly designed and cared for public spaces can robustly support community development and integration as both hosting and refugee communities are able to use the spaces. This also provides an opportunity for authorities and NGOs to better engage both communities collectively.



Photo Below: Developing public spaces for, and with the community will key to a resilient and sustainable future.



170 UN-Habitat, 2018, pg. 24.

171 UN-Habitat, 2018, pg. 26.

172 Keeley, 2007, accessed September 2020: <https://www.oecd.org/insights/37966934.pdf>, pg. 103.

173 Carmona et al., 2008.

174 UN-Habitat, 2020(a), pg. 2.



Photo: Women selling their wares along the street.



05

Conclusion

Public spaces have been a crucial element in supporting host and refugee communities in their day-to-day activities across Kakuma-Kalobeyei, even before the pandemic. They are instrumental in providing access to basic necessities such as water and aid, livelihoods, and safe movement across the settlements. In Kakuma-Kalobeyei, public spaces are important platforms for host and refugee communities to carry out their livelihoods, share public resources, socialise and improve their relations – encouraging better integration.

Since 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic has unprecedentedly impacted the lives of individuals and communities globally. Restrictions and measures that were put in place had disrupted everyday life in societies and had also limited people's access to public spaces. The settlements and populations in Kakuma-Kalobeyei were also subjected to local and national lockdowns where their access was limited in public areas. Since the start of the pandemic until now, UN-Habitat has recognised the value in framing this study by (1) identifying the different users of public spaces in Kakuma-Kalobeyei, and (2) analysing the ways in which they use different constituent parts of the public spaces during the COVID-19 pandemic. In Chapter 3, UN-Habitat has shown that the pandemic has not only exacerbated vulnerabilities in existing groups but also created additional vulnerable groups, highlighting an imperative need to investing resilient and equitable public spaces for all.

In Chapter 4, UN-Habitat proposed different strategies to 'build back better', leveraging past experiences and lessons learnt in bridging humanitarian response to sustainable development goals through foresight and long-term considerations. The combination of immediate-to-long-term strategies provide multiple advantages. During the pandemic, it can provide the communities safe and continued access to public spaces which in turn can support their access to basic necessities, livelihoods opportunities, and safe movement and interaction. The strategies also provide opportunities for these physical interventions to develop into infrastructure projects that can serve the communities beyond the pandemic and support the design of a more resilient settlement.

While these solutions can be helpful, UN-Habitat has recognised some of the challenges posed by the pandemic, such as restrictions to conducting in-person engagements. To protect the vulnerable communities, UN-Habitat recognises the need to suspend these participatory engagements until the situation improves and notes that the findings in this document may continue to evolve. In line with this, an iterative approach to planning is employed – especially in a resource-constrained environment such as Kakuma-Kalobeyei – to give room to allow new findings, innovative and safer strategies¹⁷⁵ to be integrated into the process. This can also provide communities with the opportunities to steer and contribute towards realising interventions, which can help to ensure they remain relevant to their needs – a key element in supporting the communities to recover from this pandemic stronger than before and better equipped for future crises.

¹⁷⁵ Currently, UN-Habitat is working and improving on virtual engagement strategies such as Zoom, Miro boards, and WhatsApp groups that can continue to be employed safely during the pandemic.

06

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