

NRC’s operations in Kenya

Humanitarian overview

Kenya hosts more than 858,000 registered refugees and asylum seekers living in Kakuma and Dadaab refugee camps, as well as in urban areas, where approximately 14% of the refugee population resides.

Women and children account for around 80% of the refugee population, with children alone representing approximately 60%. Kenya continues to receive new arrivals from neighbouring countries, particularly Somalia and South Sudan. The country hosts both long-term and protracted refugee populations, including third-generation refugees who have lived in Kenya for decades, as well as those displaced by the 2010 Horn of Africa drought and the 2016 conflict in South Sudan.

Refugees' freedom of movement remains restricted, with most residing in the Kakuma and Dadaab camps, where livelihood and employment opportunities are limited. At the same time, Kenya has experienced severe climate-related shocks, including the worst drought in four decades between 2020 and 2023, followed by devastating floods in late 2023 and throughout 2024. These successive crises have significantly increased humanitarian needs across Kenya’s Arid and Semi-Arid Lands (ASALs).

Despite growing humanitarian needs and a rising refugee population, humanitarian funding in Kenya has declined substantially, placing increasing pressure on already stretched resources and service delivery systems.



Our core activities

-  Education
-  Information, counselling and legal assistance (ICLA)
-  Livelihoods and food security
-  Water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH)

NRC Kenya

Established	2007
International staff	0
National staff	26

Our areas of operation

- **Garissa County:** Dadaab refugee camp and surrounding host community areas
- **Turkana County:** Kakuma refugee camps, Kalobeyei integrated settlement and surrounding host community areas
- **Nairobi County:** Informal settlements resident to urban refugees



Humanitarian overview (continued)

In response to the challenges, the Government of Kenya, through the Department of Refugee Services (DRS), together with UNHCR, WFP, the County Governments of Garissa and Turkana, NGOs, and refugee-led organisations (RLOs), developed a Differentiated Assistance (DA) framework in early 2024. The framework aims to provide more tailored humanitarian and development support based on households' specific vulnerabilities and capacities rather than solely on refugee registration status.

The introduction of the DA approach represents a significant shift from blanket assistance models toward more targeted support. While the current rollout has focused primarily on food assistance, refugee households are categorised into four groups based on assessed vulnerability levels. Households in Category 1, identified as the most vulnerable, currently receive approximately 56 per cent of the Minimum Food Basket (MFB), while households in Category 4 do not receive food assistance, either in cash or in-kind. This transition has generated important discussions regarding protection risks, inclusion, and the adequacy of support available to vulnerable refugee households.



23,734 people reached in 2025 ▼

Education

In Kenya, the education programme targets vulnerable over-age out-of-school children (OOSC) aged 10 to 18 years who have never been to school or have dropped out of school before completion of primary school or have had some kind of sporadic learning. This includes refugees, internally displaced persons, and host communities in Dadaab and Kakuma refugee camps and Kalobeyei integrated settlements. NRC Kenya supports children's educational and psychosocial needs in the aftermath of emergencies leading to relevant and effective learning outcomes through the Accelerated Education Programme (AEP) and the Better Learning Programme (BLP) respectively.

- NRC Kenya collaborated with the Ministry of Education in the development and launch of AEP guidelines that provide a framework for teaching practices, assessment methods and learning outcomes, fostering a structured and effective learning environment around accelerated education. Currently, NRC is collaborating with KICD to develop an AE curriculum.
- NRC provides access to safe, quality and inclusive education for OOSC who have missed out on education by providing accelerated learning programmes that enable them to catch up with their peers.
- NRC Kenya is collaborating with the MoE and the National Council of Nomadic Education in Kenya (NACONEK) to institutionalise the Better Learning Programme (BLP) in formal schools.
- Through the KPEELP programme, NRC supported formal schools by providing

remedial learning in literacy and numeracy for early grade learners and language intensive programme for secondary school students to strengthen learning outcomes.

- NRC is conducting teacher professional development in collaboration with the MoE through continuous training, coaching and mentorship.



7,807 people reached in 2025 ▼

Information, counselling and legal assistance (ICLA)

Our ICLA programme in Kenya ensures that vulnerable displacement-affected populations exercise their rights towards increased protection outcomes and access to durable solutions. Our interventions largely target refugees and host communities in Dadaab and Kakuma camps. Our programmes are tailored around three thematic areas: promoting legal identity (LID), safeguarding housing, land and property (HLP) rights, and advancing employment laws and procedures (ELP).

Through ICLA we:

- assist displaced people to access civil and legal documentation such as birth and death certificates and identity documentation
- promote housing, land and property rights for refugees and host communities with a focus on women
- support refugees and vulnerable host community members to obtain business development documentation
- generate strategic research on legal protection issues
- collaborate with government and humanitarian partners to ensure Kenya's legal and policy frameworks protect displaced people long-term



500 people reached in 2025 ▼

Economic inclusion

We strive to improve living conditions, enhance access to food, and create sustainable livelihood opportunities that strengthen self-reliance among displacement-affected populations. We:

- provide market-driven skills development to enhance employability, entrepreneurship, and income-generation opportunities for target participants
- design and implement comprehensive programmes based on the Economic Inclusion framework, addressing the multi-dimensional challenges faced by displacement-affected populations, and supporting pathways towards self-reliance



Water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH)

We work to sustain the improved access to safe and sufficient water and collaborate with other actors to support the provision of safe access to sanitation facilities. We also deliver hygiene promotion for the displacement-affected populations in Dadaab, Kakuma and Kalobeyi camps and settlements. We:

- design and operate water supply systems including source siting, abstraction, storage, treatment and distribution
- work with communities to plan for preventive and corrective maintenance routines, rehabilitations and replacements
- mobilise and engage refugees and host communities on household water treatment and safe storage (HWTSS) and responsible water usage practices
- select and design suitable sanitation and hygiene promotion strategies, in collaboration with other actors
- undertake institutional capacity building to support long term sustainability of NRC investments

Emergency response

Our emergency response programme provides rapid, life-saving assistance to vulnerable populations affected by natural disasters, conflict and displacement, particularly in the Arid and Semi-Arid Lands (ASAL) regions. Our interventions focus on:

- delivering multi-purpose cash transfers (MPCT)
- provision of emergency shelter
- water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH)
- rebuilding livelihoods
- education in emergencies
- protection services

By partnering with local organisations and government authorities, NRC ensures that emergency aid reaches the most affected communities swiftly and efficiently. Through capacity building, community engagement, and coordinated response strategies, NRC is committed to enhancing resilience and reducing vulnerability to future shocks.

Climate and environment

NRC Kenya recognises the interconnectedness between climate change, environmental degradation and displacement, and actively works to develop and implement climate adaptation and environmental mainstreaming strategies in its interventions. One of the objectives under our new Strategic Plan (2024–2026) aims to ensure that displacement-affected communities strengthen their resilience to climate and environmental shocks and gain improved access to clean energy. We:

- conduct research and assessments to improve understanding of climate change, environmental risks and lack of access to clean energy in NRC's areas of focus, informing targeted interventions
- build community capacity through enhancement of community awareness and skills in climate adaptation, environmental conservation, and clean energy solutions to promote sustainable practises
- strengthen access to innovative climate-resilient solutions by supporting community-led and market-driven approaches in partnership with the private sector, local and national entities, and other key stakeholders

- advocate for supportive policies and standards implementation for climate adaptation, environmental conservation, and clean energy access in collaboration with government, the private sector, and relevant actors

We do so in partnership with local organisations, government and intergovernmental bodies, civil societies, the private sector and academia.

Localisation and strategic programming

NRC Kenya's 2022–2026 Country Strategy identified partnership as a core country objective and envisioned a gradual reduction in direct implementation in favour of delivery through local partners. The strategy defined success as NRC being recognised as an enabler rather than the default implementer. This reflected the strategic direction of the Kenya Country Office during that period and should not be interpreted as suggesting that NRC's current global localisation framework assumes a universal or linear transition away from direct implementation.

The transition accelerated between 2022 and 2023 through local partner assessments, organisational restructuring, and changes in programme delivery and partnership arrangements. From 2024 onwards, revised country and regional strategies placed greater emphasis on systems change, co-design, engagement with government and market actors, evidence generation, and influencing, while retaining specialised NRC technical functions where they add distinct value.

Our donors

We are grateful for the generous support from our donors:

- United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)
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- Innovation Norway
- German Federal Foreign Office (GFFO)
- IKEA Foundation
- World Food Programme (WFP)
- VISA Foundation

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