



Uganda

Needs and Intentions of Newly-Arrived Refugees and Asylum Seekers in Kampala

July 2025



Co-funded by
the European Union



Norwegian Ministry
of Foreign Affairs



NORWEGIAN
REFUGEE COUNCIL



REACH

Informing
more effective
humanitarian action

Cover photo by: Photo by: Andrew Moore, licensed as **CC BY-SA 2.0**.

"Kampala Street" by andryn2006 is licensed under CC BY-SA 2.0. To view a copy of this license, visit <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/2.0/?ref=openverse>.

About REACH

REACH facilitates the development of information tools and products that enhance the capacity of aid actors to make evidence-based decisions in emergency, recovery and development contexts. The methodologies used by REACH include primary data collection and in-depth analysis, and all activities are conducted through inter-agency aid coordination mechanisms. REACH is a joint initiative of IMPACT Initiatives, ACTED and the United Nations Institute for Training and Research - Operational Satellite Applications Programme (UNITAR-UNOSAT). For more information, please visit [our website](#). You can contact us directly at: geneva@reach-initiative.org and follow us on Twitter @REACH_info.

To subscribe and receive future analysis, reports and datasets from IMPACT-REACH Uganda, kindly click on this [link](#) to register

Collaboration with The Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) and the Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS):

This assessment was conducted in close collaboration with the **Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC)** and the **Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS)**, whose partnership and support were instrumental in ensuring its successful completion. NRC's and JRS's expertise and commitment were vital in facilitating key aspects of the assessment, from design and data collection to analysis. We recognize and value NRC's and JRS's role in this process, which has contributed to generating meaningful insights for newly arrived refugees in Greater Kampala and Kiryandongo.



Acknowledgments

We would like to thank the **European Union** and the **Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs** for their funding and support of this assessment.



**Co-funded by
the European Union**



Norwegian Ministry
of Foreign Affairs

We also extend our heartfelt thanks to **Young African Refugees for Integral Development (YARID)**, **Kele Global** and **Refuge & Hope** for their support in identifying refugee led organizations (RLOs) and refugee community leaders (RCLs) to participate in the workshop. Their assistance in recruiting seed households was crucial to the success of this assessment.



SUMMARY

Background

- Due to the substantial increases in refugee and asylum-seeking households arriving in Uganda since January 2023¹, actors within the Uganda Refugee Response called for additional information to feed into programming. These increases in new arrivals were comprised substantially of Sudanese households, but also of other nationalities. Given the developments in movement and settlement of households between Kampala and Kiryandongo in 2023-24, both locations were covered under this wider, two-component assessment. Kampala serves as a major destination for new arrivals and hosts a large, diverse refugee population, while Kiryandongo became the government-assigned refugee settlement for newly arrived Sudanese refugees after registration closer in Kampala in December 2023. Both locations experience significant influxes, concerning resource constraints and have been flagged by many response actors, especially Kiryandongo.
- This report discusses needs and vulnerabilities among newly arrived refugee and asylum-seeking households, registered or unregistered, in Greater Kampala (the five divisions of Kampala, Entebbe, Mukono, Bombo, and Wakiso). Newly arrived households constitute households who reported having arrived in Uganda during or after January 2023, until the end of November 2024, when data collection completed. The nationalities explored in this report are the top five reported: Eritrea, Somalia, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Ethiopia, and Sudan. Sectors and themes discussed include Demographics, Displacement & Intentions, Protection (general and legal), Livelihoods, Financial Services, Education, Health, MHPSS, and Housing.
- Given that the household profiles of interest are harder-to-reach than those for other assessments, for this assessment's Greater Kampala component, the Response-Driven Sampling methodology was applied to guide its data collection in order to reach newly-arrived households, and profiles within this demographic, such as unregistered households or single-female-headed households. Reporting for this research has been split up into two components; the general ToRs can be found [here](#), and a full report on findings pertaining to Sudanese refugee households in Kiryandongo can be found [here](#).

Key Messages

- New arrivals primarily choose Greater Kampala as a destination due to better access to services such as education, healthcare and livelihood opportunities. The urban environment seems to provide greater prospects for employment and resources. However, new arrivals continue to experience substantial barriers to access these services and opportunities, particularly unregistered households.
- New arrivals in Greater Kampala are constrained by limited formal employment opportunities, and are particularly dependent on remittances and support from friends and family in Uganda. While the city offers more economic opportunities compared to rural areas, the high cost of living and lack of stable employment leave many refugees and asylum-seekers economically vulnerable. While some households reported savings, these are reported to last for a short time, while debt outweighs savings.
- Legal protection of newly arrived refugees and asylum-seekers in Greater Kampala remains a significant challenge, with many facing barriers to registration and legal documentation. A large portion of households, particularly Congolese and Somali struggle to be registered, leaving them more vulnerable and unable to access services. The complex and lengthy

¹ [UNHCR Refugee Arrival Monitoring Dashboard 2022-2025](#)

registration process exacerbates these challenges, leaving households vulnerable to exploitation, particularly when looking for accommodation, and unable to fully integrate into the urban environment.

- Education access for newly arrived refugee and asylum-seeker children in Greater Kampala is exacerbated by financial barriers, the lack of documentation and the long and difficult process of diploma equivalency. Children from unregistered households struggle to attend school regularly or at all, with about half of children not being enrolled during the 2023-2024 school year. This was particularly the case for Congolese and Somali children.

CONTENTS

SUMMARY	1
Background	1
Key Messages	1
CONTENTS	3
List of Acronyms	5
List of Figures, Tables and Maps	5
INTRODUCTION	7
METHODOLOGY	9
Methodology	9
Quantitative Component	10
Qualitative Data Collection	14
DEMOGRAPHICS	16
FINDINGS: GREATER KAMPALA	19
Displacement and Movement Intentions	19
Displacement	19
Movement Intentions	21
Legal Protection	24
Legal Stay and Refugee Status Determination (RSD)	24
Civil Documentation	26
Livelihoods	29
Household Income	29
Needs and Barriers to Livelihoods	32
Financial Services	35
Savings	35
Debt	35
Education	38

Health	40
Persons with Disabilities (PWDs)	42
Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS)	43
Protection	45
Housing	46
CONCLUSION	50
Key Findings.....	50
Discussion.....	50
ANNEXES	52
Annex 1: Network recruitment chains by nationality.....	52
Annex 2: Demographic comparison of official population and RDS sample.....	55

List of Acronyms

FGD	Focus Group Discussion
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
HINGO	Humanitarian INGO Forum
HoH	Head of Household
INGO	International Non-Governmental Organization
JRS	Jesuit Refugee Service
KCCA	Kampala Capital City Authority
KII	Key Informant Interview
MHPSS	Mental Health and Psychosocial Support
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NRC	Norwegian Refugee Council
ODK	Open Data Kit
OPM	Office of the Prime Minister
PWD	Persons with Disability
RCL	Refugee Community Leader
RDS	Respondent-Driven Sampling
RLO	Refugee-led Organization
RSD	Refugee Status Determination
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
WASH	Water Hygiene and Sanitation
YARID	Young African Refugees for Integral Development

List of Figures, Tables and Maps

Figure 1: Recruitment chain of surveyed portraying the recruitment chain of surveyed Sudanese households in Greater Kampala	11
Figure 2: Proportion of head of households (HoH) by gender	16
Figure 3: Average household size at the time of data collection, by country of origin and head of household	16
Figure 4: % of households with a member over 5 years old with a disability (WGSS 3+), by country of origin and head of household	17
Figure 5: % of individuals by registration status	17
Figure 6: Proportion of unregistered individuals by country of origin	18
Figure 7: Proportion of households that lived in another country than their country of origin before being forced to flee to Uganda, by country lived in (other than their country of origin)	20
Figure 8: Proportion of households registered in a refugee settlement, by the 3 main reasons why the household move/choose to leave the settlement (multiple choice: total may exceed 100%)	21
Figure 9: Proportion of households by how their decision to move to Greater Kampala impacted their household's livelihoods	23
Figure 10: Proportion of households planning to move out of Greater Kampala in the 6 months following November 2024, by the 3 main reasons for moving (multiple choice: total may exceed 100%)	24
Figure 11: Proportion of households who reportedly faced barriers to register as asylum seekers/refugees in Uganda, by type of barriers faced to register as asylum seekers/refugees (multiple choice: total may exceed 100%)	25
Figure 12: Proportion of households with access to civil documentation	26
Figure 13: Proportion of households facing barriers to access civil registration, by type of barriers (multiple choice: total may exceed 100%)	27
Figure 14: Proportion of households by the main reasons why civil documentation is important for their household (multiple choice: total may exceed 100%)	28
Figure 15: Average income received in the form of money over the 30 days prior to data collection, by country of origin, head of household gender, and registration status	30
Figure 16: Average equivalized household income received in monetary form over the 30 days prior to data collection, by country of origin, head of household gender, and registration status	31

Figure 17: Average income received in the form of money over the 30 days prior to data collection, by main sources of income declared by households	32
Figure 18: Proportion of refugee households by type of barriers to livelihood activities, country of origin, gender and registration status of head of households (multiple choice: total may exceed 100%)	32
Figure 19: Proportion of households by Livelihood Coping Strategy Index (LSCI) categories	33
Figure 20: Proportion of households reporting not having enough money for food, education, or health needs within the month prior to data collection	34
Figure 21: Proportion of households by main unmet livelihood needs (multiple choice: total may exceed 100%)	34
Figure 22: Proportion of households with savings, by country of origin, gender and registration status of the head of household	35
Figure 23: Proportion of households with a debt, by country of origin, gender and registration status of the head of household	36
Figure 24: Average amount of debt (UGX) among households who reported having debt, by country of origin, gender and registration status of the head of household	36
Figure 25: Proportion of individuals aged 5 to 17 not enrolled in a formal school for the 2023-2024 school year, by country of origin and registration status	38
Figure 26: Proportion of households with a healthcare need and needed to access healthcare in the 3 months prior to data collection, that could not get their need met (unmet healthcare need), by country of origin, gender and registration status of the head of household	40
Figure 27: Proportion of households with at least one female or male member facing barriers to health care, by type of barriers	41
Figure 28: Proportion of individuals over 5 years old by physical/cognitive difficulties (WGSS 3 or above) per WGSS domain at the time of being interviewed, by type of function	42
Figure 30: Proportion of households with members experiencing MHPSS difficulties, in the 3 months prior to data collection (multiple choice: total may exceed 100%)	43
Figure 31: Proportion of households with members experiencing MHPSS difficulties, by type of challenge in accessing the needed support (multiple choice: total may exceed 100%)	44
Figure 32: Proportion of households with members experiencing MHPSS difficulties, who believe more support is needed for MHPSS difficulties	44
Figure 33: Proportion of households reporting awareness of specialized support services for women or girls available in their community (multiple choice: total may exceed 100%)	46
Figure 34: Proportion of households by occupancy status	47
Figure 35: Proportion of households feeling they could not continue to reside in their current housing situation for the next 3 months after data collection	47
Figure 36: Proportion of households by type of reported housing issues (multiple choice: total may exceed 100%)	48
<hr/>	
Table 1: Target sample size per country of origin in Greater Kampala	10
Table 2: Target sample sizes per country of origin and location	12
Table 3: Actual number of surveys per country of origin and location	13
Table 4: Summary of KIIs conducted in Greater Kampala, per nationality, location and type	14
Table 6: Proportion of households by the top five first reason of displacement (multiple choice: total may exceed 100%)	19
Table 7: Proportion of households that lived in a third country other than their country of origin before being forced to flee to Uganda, by the first reason (top 5 reasons shown) for leaving the third country (fleeing to Uganda), by country of origin	20
Table 8: Proportion of households by the 5 main reasons why the household chose Greater Kampala as their place of settlement, by country of origin (multiple choice: total may exceed 100%)	21
Table 9: Proportion of individuals over 18 years old by their current work/occupation in Uganda, by country of origin	29
Table 10: Proportion of households by 3 main income sources during the 30 days prior to data collection, by country of origin (multiple choice: total may exceed 100%)	31
Table 11: Proportion of households with a debt, by reasons for debt, by country of origin (multiple choice: total may exceed 100%)	37
Table 12: Proportion of children aged 5 to 17 years old enrolled in a formal school for the 2023-2024 school year, by reason for choosing this education facility (multiple choice: total may exceed 100%)	39
Table 14: Proportion of households feeling concerned about the following issues at least once or twice in the three months prior to data collection, by country of origin (multiple choice: total may exceed 100%)	45

INTRODUCTION

As of January 31st 2025, Uganda hosted 1,772,707 refugees and 37,939 asylum-seekers, making it the largest refugee-hosting country in Africa.² The majority of refugees reside across 13 formal settlements (91%) and Kampala (9%).³ In 2023, Uganda experienced a substantial inflow of refugees, particularly from Sudan: the country received a total of 98,232 new arrivals, 49.3% of whom were received in Kampala.⁴ Due to the ongoing conflict in Sudan since April 2023, Uganda received approximately 61,693 Sudanese refugees by the end of 2024, and an additional 75,063 are expected to arrive in 2025.⁵ Arrival trends, which peaked to 1,200 persons a week in 2024, are expected to continue in 2025 as the situation in Sudan continues to deteriorate.⁶

Kampala as a location itself (relative to the 13 refugee settlements) hosts the fifth largest and most diverse population of registered refugees and asylum seekers in Uganda, with 159,503 refugees and asylum seekers as of January 2025.² These individuals come from various countries, including Eritrea (37%), Somalia (25%), the Democratic Republic of the Congo (17%), Ethiopia (8%), and Sudan (6%).⁷ While these are official UNHCR/OPM figures, Kampala is known to host refugee households which are unregistered, or which are registered in a settlement but reside in Kampala.⁸ Households from both of these demographics were eligible for inclusion in this assessment.

Past research in Kampala and other urban centers in Uganda has shown it is often assumed that urban-based refugees are more self-reliant and therefore do not require as much support.^{9,10} However, evidence shows that urban refugees nonetheless face significant barriers in accessing essential services, such as healthcare, education and business or general livelihoods support. These barriers are often linked to the lack of proper identification.^{4,5,11} In Kampala, urban refugees also encounter substantial challenges in securing housing. The high costs of housing, inadequate documentation, and exploitation and discrimination by landlords all contribute to these difficulties. The major financial burden of high housing costs for refugees in the city reportedly caused them to move towards peripheral Kampala.^{4,5}

Since November 2023, the Government of Uganda has granted Sudanese prima facie status¹², requiring all new arrivals to register in Kiryandongo refugee settlement. Since then, Kiryandongo saw an unprecedented influx of 54,742 Sudanese new arrivals, marking a substantial increase of 18.5%.¹³ Several reports highlighted the concerning reception conditions in Kiryandongo for Sudanese new arrivals, such as in WASH, health, and protection. The strained infrastructure poses significant health and safety risks, particularly for vulnerable individuals such as women and girls fleeing conflict and

² OPM, UNHCR. 2025. [Overview of Refugee and Asylum-seekers in Uganda as of 31-Jan-2025](#).

³ Ibid.

⁴ UNHCR. 2023. [Annual Results Report 2023: Uganda](#).

⁵ UNHCR. 2025. [Sudan Emergency Regional Refugee Response Plan January-December 2025](#).

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ OPM, UNHCR. 2025. [Uganda Refugee Statistics January 2025 – Settlement & Urban Profiles](#).

⁸ [Forced Migration Review, Cities as partners, the case for Kampala](#), 2020

⁹ Tshimba, D & Research and Evidence Facility. 2022. [Asylum in urban spaces: the case refugees in cities in Uganda](#).

¹⁰ Kotut, J; Vos, A & Tang, H. 2024. [How Donors can Better Support Urban Refugees in Kampala and Nairobi](#).

¹¹ Okello, O. 2022. [Self-Settled Urban Refugees in Kampala and Labor Market Dynamics](#).

¹² Prima facie status means that a group of people fleeing conflict or persecution are automatically recognized as refugees, without needing to go through individual assessment. Uganda grants prima facie status to refugees from South Sudan, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Sudan.

¹³ UNHCR. 2023-2025. Settlements overview and active refugee and asylum seeker dashboards from January 2023 to January 2025. Data compiled by IMPACT-REACH.

undermines the ability to provide dignified reception services.^{14,15,16} Drastic funding cuts continue to exacerbate these challenges.¹⁰

Lastly, the 2024 [Uganda Multi-Sectoral Needs Assessment \(MSNA\)](#)¹⁷ covering all refugee settlements and Kampala, focused mainly on four divisions within Kampala (Makindye, Rubaga, Central, and Kawempe), leaving other urban areas, and nationality-specific refugee needs, largely unexplored. However, it was possible to substantially include themes such as registration or movement intentions, which are key areas of interest among actors operating in Kampala. Furthermore, Uganda is now part of the USD 1.8 billion [Sudan Emergency Regional Refugee Response Plan](#) for 2025.

This assessment seeks to fill critical information gaps on the needs and vulnerabilities of refugee and asylum seeker households from DRC, Somalia, Sudan, Eritrea, and Ethiopia in Greater Kampala (which includes all of Kampala's five divisions, and the peripheral urban centers of Entebbe, Mukono, Wakiso Town Council, and Bombo). Driven by strong demand from urban response actors, including members of the Humanitarian International NGO (HINGO) Forum's Urban Working Group, this assessment aims to inform more effective interventions, programming, and service delivery for newly arrived refugees and asylum seekers in Greater Kampala.

¹⁴ IRC. March 2024. [Press release: Funding cuts could increase health and protection risks in Ugandan refugee settlements as more Sudanese refugees arrive, warns IRC.](#)

¹⁵ IFRC, Uganda Red Cross. June 2024. [Uganda: Population Movement – 06 -2024 – Sudanese Refugee Influx in Uganda.](#)

¹⁶ [IRC. Sep 2024. Over a third of the 100,000 refugees arriving into resource-strained Uganda are Sudanese fleeing horrific conditions, warns the IRC.](#)

¹⁷ Additional links and resource: [Uganda 2024 MSNA Report](#)
[Uganda 2024 MSNA Quantitative Analyses & Cleaned Datasets](#)
[Uganda 2024 MSNA Qualitative Analysis](#)
[Uganda 2024 Multi-Sector Needs Index \(MSNI\) Refugee Households Bulletin](#)
[Uganda 2024 Multi-Sector Needs Index \(MSNI\) Host Community Households Bulletin](#)
[Uganda 2024 MSNA and MSNI Sector Findings Presentation](#)
[Uganda 2024 MSNA: Adolescents' Needs and Experiences in Refugee-hosting Districts \(Report\)](#)
[Uganda 2024 MSNA Terms of References](#)

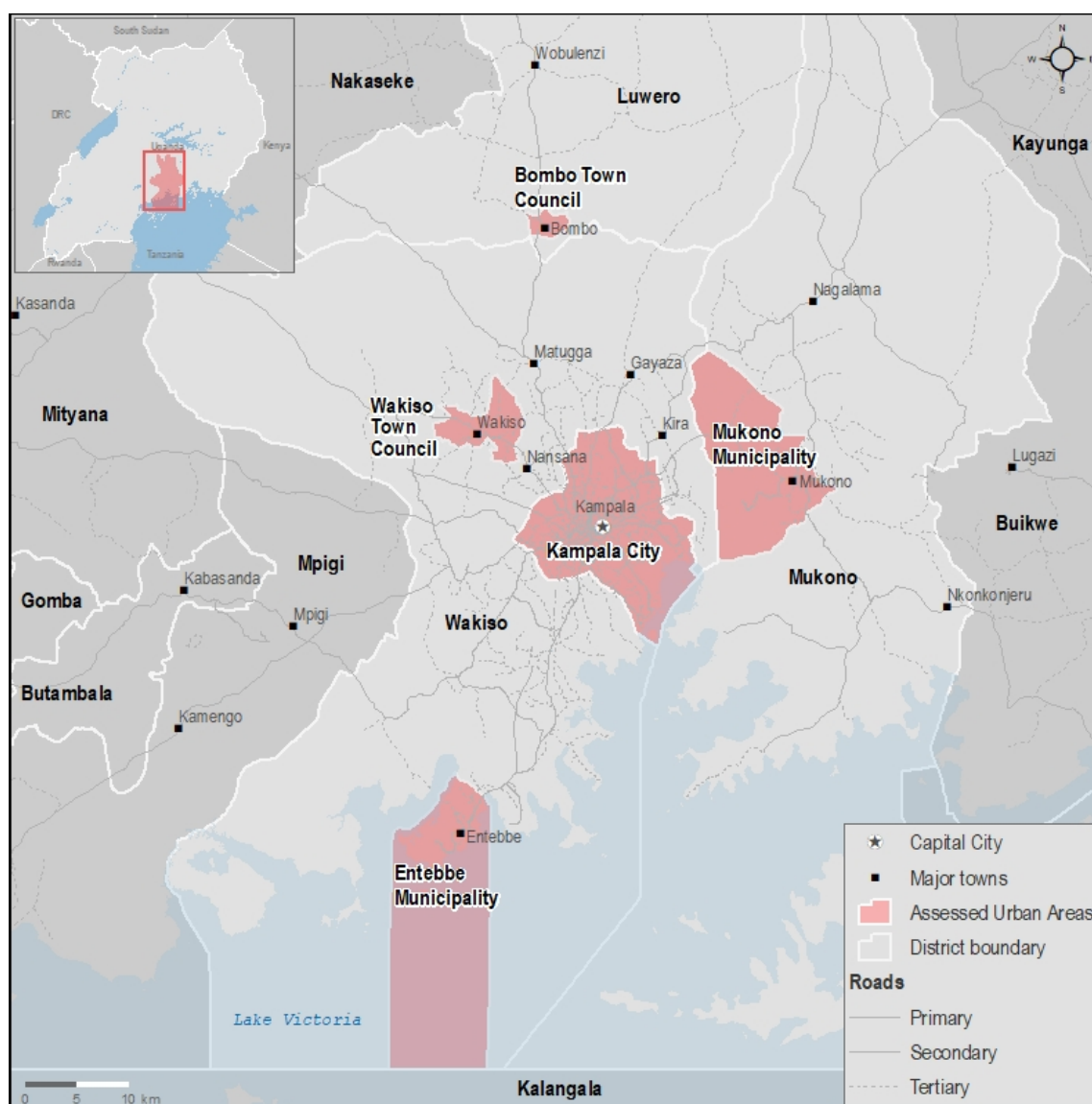
METHODOLOGY

This assessment, consisting of a Greater Kampala-oriented component and a Kiryandongo component (the latter being reported in a [separate output](#)), used a **mixed-method approach**, incorporating both quantitative and qualitative data collection methods. Household surveys and key informant interviews (KIIs) were conducted with refugees and subject-matter experts in Kampala and Kiryandongo¹⁸. Respondent-Driven Sampling (RDS) was used for household identification and surveying in Greater Kampala, alongside KIIs. In Greater Kampala, recruitment and data collection were completed in collaboration with the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) and Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS).

Methodology

Data collection was conducted in **Greater Kampala**, which includes all five divisions of Kampala (Kawempe, Nakawa, Rubaga, Central and Makindye), and peripheral areas : Entebbe, Bombo, Mukono and Wakiso towns (refer to Map 1).

Map 1: Locations of data collection in Greater Kampala



¹⁸ FGDs were also conducted, but only in Kiryandongo.

The population of interest is **newly arrived refugees and asylum-seeking households** living in the selected locations in Greater Kampala, defined as households who arrived in Uganda during or after January 2023. This includes registered¹⁹ and unregistered²⁰ refugees as well as registered and unregistered asylum-seekers.²¹ The assessment focused on new arrivals from the following countries of origin: Eritrea, Somalia, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Ethiopia, and Sudan.

Quantitative Component

Respondent-Driven Sampling (RDS)

Structured refugee and asylum seeker household surveys were conducted through face-to-face interviews with self-reported head of households (HoHs) or respondents who were above 18 years old and confirmed to be able to answer on behalf of the household. The questionnaire included questions at the household and individual level sections to collect information about each member of the household. Sampling was conducted according to the **Respondent-Driven Sampling (RDS) methodology**. RDS was developed to survey populations that are difficult to reach because they are small, hidden, or mobile.²² To ensure the inclusion of refugee and asylum-seeking households from various nationalities, while minimizing the risk of exclusion from geographic or area-based sampling, the RDS methodology was deemed most appropriate. This approach was particularly valuable for reaching unregistered or single female-headed households in Greater Kampala.

The RDS methodology, propelled by referrals from respondents, is driven by the design effect and assumption about the recruitment process, rather than by direct adjustments for the population size. In other words, RDS accounts for how people recruit one another in the population, rather than relying on the population itself. To determine the appropriate sample sizes for this assessment using RDS, we adhered to a rigorous process that ensures both statistical validity and practical relevance for the population studied. A 90% confidence interval, 10% margin error, a design effect of 2 and a 10% buffer were used to determine the sample size. The final target sample size (i.e., the planned number of surveys) in Greater Kampala was **780**. Table 1 presents the target sample size per country of origin. Findings are representative among the newly arrived refugee population in Kampala, per country of origin. Please refer to the [Terms of Reference](#) for more details on how the sample size was determined using RDS methodology.

Table 1: Target sample size per country of origin in Greater Kampala

Country of Origin / Nationality	Target Sample Size for Household Surveys
Democratic Republic of the Congo	156

¹⁹ Defined as an individual who has been formally recognized as a refugee by, in the context of this assessment, the Government of Uganda or the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) through a registration process.

²⁰ Defined as a refugee who has not yet completed the formal process of registration. As a result, they may lack access to official refugee protection, assistance, and services provided by the government or humanitarian organizations.

²¹ Defined as someone who intends to seek or is awaiting a decision on their request for international protection. In some countries, it is used as a legal term for a person who has applied for refugee status and has not yet received a final decision on their claim.

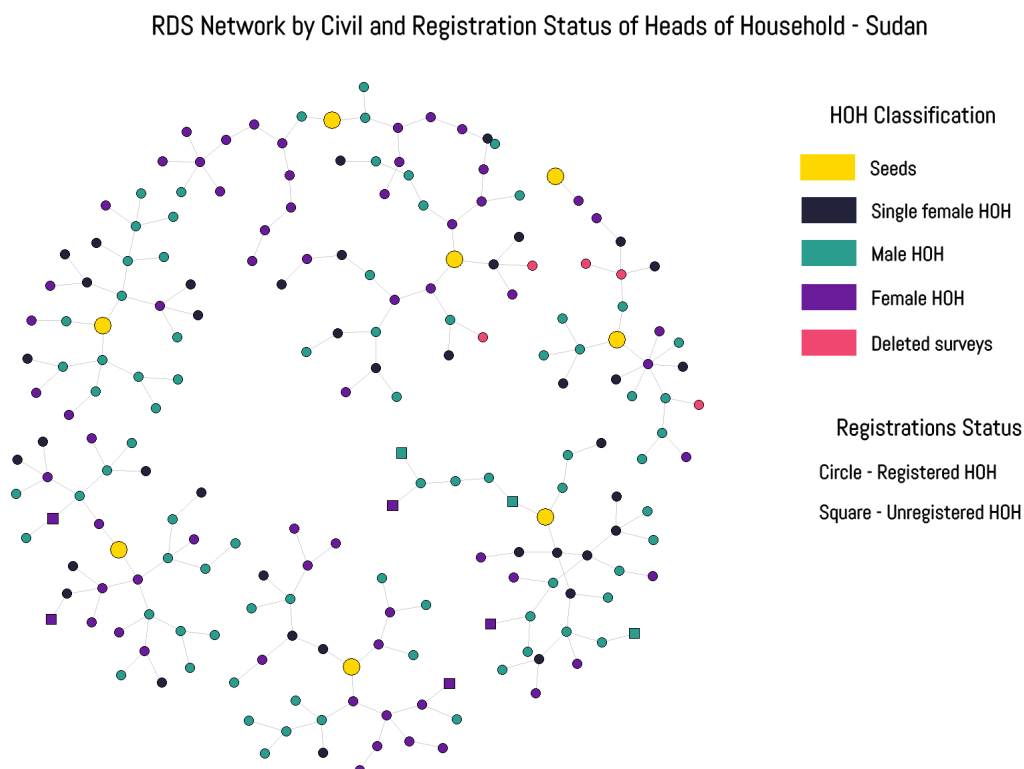
²² Hipp, L., Kholer U. & Leumann, S. (2019). How to Implement Respondent-Driven Sampling in Practice: Insights from Surveying 24-Hour Migrant Home Care Workers. Survey Methods: Insights from the Field. [How to Implement Respondent-Driven Sampling in Practice: Insights from Surveying 24-Hour Migrant Home Care Workers | Survey Methods: Insights from the Field \(SMIF\) \(surveyinsights.org\)](#).

Sudan	156
Ethiopia	156
Eritrea	156
Somalia	156
Total	780

In RDS, the study begins with a small, strategically selected group of individuals from the target population, known as **seeds** (i.e., 'seed households' for this assessment). These seed households were chosen because of their large network within their community (i.e., high degree of connection) and their likelihood of referring others. For each nationality, the assessment began with several seed households (split amongst registered, unregistered or single female-headed household). The goal was to maximize network reach and avoid referral bias toward any specific group. In short, RDS is an advanced form of snowballing, where the chain of recruitment process helps access hidden population by leveraging peer relationships.

Once the seed households were selected and their interview completed, each were asked to refer (provide phone numbers of) three newly arrived households from their network (i.e., same country of origin). If possible, they were asked to recruit households based on specific characteristics (registered, unregistered or single female-headed household). This process continued in waves, with each new wave consisting of households referred by the previous wave. Over time, the recruitment reached deeper into the social networks of the target population, allowing the sample to grow into a "chain", becoming increasingly representative. Note that none of the chains are connected or overlapped. Figure 1 illustrates the Sudanese recruitment chains, starting from seed households, and expanding into specific networks across Greater Kampala. The chain for each nationality can be found in [Annex 1](#).

Figure 1: Recruitment chain of surveyed portraying the recruitment chain of surveyed Sudanese households in Greater Kampala



For this assessment, each nationality started with **six seed households** and both the seed households and subsequently referred households were asked to **refer approximately three households**. A higher number of seed households or referrals risked reaching the target of 155 surveys per nationality too quickly, compromising the diversity of the sample. Each seed household was targeted to generate on average 26 surveys. Table 2 outlines the planned number of surveys by location and country of origin.

Table 2: Target sample sizes per country of origin and location

Location	Target sample size / Nationality					Total
	Sudanese	Eritrean	Congolese	Ethiopian	Somali	
Kampala	52	104	130	156	156	598
Entebbe	26	26	0	0	0	52
Wakiso	26	26	26	0	0	78
Bombo	26	0	0	0	0	26
Mukono	26	0	0	0	0	26
Total	156	156	156	156	156	780

Typically, RDS chains of recruitment rely on coupons with monetary incentives: one incentive for participating and a second incentive for successfully recruiting others. However, to avoid setting a precedent which would result in similar expectations among households during future data collection, and based on recommendations from UNHCR, HINGO, JRS, NRC and key other actors, this assessment did not involve monetary incentives. This approach also helps prevent selection bias, as participants may strategically only refer the most educated or easily accessible households to maximize successful recruitment, rather than providing a representative sample of their network.

In order to prevent the sampling of economic migrants, as per OPM's and UNHCR's request, only households who met at least one of the following criteria were sampled:

- Being compelled or forced to flee their home
- Residing in DRC, Sudan, Ethiopia, Somalia, or Eritrea prior to fleeing, or
- Fleeing due to one or more of the listed reasons, including armed conflict, the death, injury, or disappearance of a family member, expulsion by governmental or non-governmental forces, damage or destruction of property due to conflict or disaster, occupation of house or land without consent, presence of landmines or unexploded ordnance (UXO), or natural disasters.

To drive the identification of appropriate seed households, as well as to create an understanding of this assessment's purpose, secure trust and buy-in, and garner feedback on questionnaire design from the refugee communities in Greater Kampala, this assessment leveraged a network-based approach through Refugee-Led Organizations (RLOs) and Refugee Community Leaders (RCLs) across Greater Kampala. These RLOs were identified by NRC, JRS, Yarid, Kele Global, and Refuge & Hope, due to their extensive networks with newly arrived refugees and asylum seekers established through urban programming. IMPACT-REACH organized a collective workshop with RLOs and RCLs across Kampala, Entebbe, Mukono, Wakiso and Bombo working with refugee and asylum seekers from the DRC, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Somalia and Sudan, and representatives from the Office of the Prime Minister (OPM), Kampala Capital City Authorities (KCCA) and UNHCR. The workshop aimed to leverage the expertise and reach of these RLOs and RCLs with new arrivals in Greater Kampala to ensure successful data collection. Specifically, the workshop:

- Provided a clear overview of the assessment's purpose, methodology, and intended outcomes.
- Discussed and reviewed data collection tools and ensured cultural appropriateness in the assessment approach.
- Confirmed RLO's participation in identifying seed households from key subgroups of interest (e.g., unregistered new arrivals).

Following this workshop, RLOs and RCLs graciously supported in the recruitment of six seed households per nationality to initiate the RDS methodology, allowing the start of data collection.

Quantitative Data Collection

Data collection in Greater Kampala was conducted between the 4th and 29th of November 2024. The assessment surpassed its overall target sample size, **collecting 837 surveys across all nationalities and locations** in total. While the total survey target was exceeded, persistent challenges with identification of seed households prevented interviews with Eritreans and Congolese in Wakiso, and Eritreans in Entebbe. To ensure that the overall target per country of origin was met, a number of these intended interviews with Eritreans and Congolese were shifted to the five divisions of Kampala. Table 3 summarizes the actual number of surveys conducted per country of origin and location.

Table 3: Actual number of surveys per country of origin and location

Location	Number of surveys conducted / Nationality					Total
	Sudanese	Eritrean	Congolese	Ethiopian	Somali	
Kampala	65	152	158	172	151	698
Entebbe	56	0	0	0	0	56
Wakiso	28	0	0	0	0	28
Bombo	27	0	0	0	0	27
Mukono	28	0	0	0	0	28
Total	204	152	158	172	151	837

The [Data Analysis Plan](#) outlines the questionnaire used. As noted earlier, this assessment was conducted in collaboration with NRC and JRS, who contributed resources to research design, data collection, and analysis, leveraging their expertise in working with urban refugees and asylum seekers in Greater Kampala. Their focus areas included livelihoods, registration, and legal protection support. To support data collection, both organizations provided enumerators who were trained by IMPACT-REACH:

- NRC covered surveys with Sudanese refugees in Kampala, Entebbe, Wakiso, and Bombo, as well as Eritreans in Kampala.
- Both NRC and JRS facilitated surveys with Congolese refugees in Kampala.

Quantitative Findings

The quantitative findings of this assessment can be considered representative, with a 90% confidence level and 10% error margin of households of origin (nationality) across Greater Kampala. This entails that findings for households living in specific locations within the Greater Kampala area are indicative only of those households. For additional information on the quantitative sample, please refer to the [quantitative analysis](#). While RDS is somewhat complex in nature given the interplay between purposive

sampling and the estimation of representativeness, this assessment deems to hold true to basic principled proscribed for RDS sampling. Furthermore, the age and gender demographic proportions within the final sample of all individuals across all surveyed households broadly aligns with those of overall Kampala-registered refugees according to UNHCR's Kampala November 2024 population figures.²³ A demographic comparison can be found in [Annex 2](#). Minor demographic misalignments could be attributed to UNHCR's figures pertaining to registered households only.

Weights were used to adjust for the biases introduced in the sampling process, ensuring the findings reflects the situation of the broader population more accurately. The adjustment is essential because participants are not selected randomly but are recruited through their social network. Respondents with larger networks were more likely to be recruited, which can lead to overrepresentation of these individuals. Weights in RDS differ from standard weights in that each variable (i.e., respondent) requires its own weights. Those with larger networks received a smaller weight, and those with a smaller network received a larger weight, balancing the influence of each respondent. For more details on weighting in RDS, please consult Annex 2 of the [Terms of Reference](#).

Qualitative Data Collection

Selection of KIIs

Qualitative data collection took place from the 4th of November to the 18th of December 2024. Key informant interviews (KIIs) were conducted with Refugee Led Organizations (RLOs) and Refugee Community Leaders (RCLs) for each of the five nationality covered in Greater Kampala, and with Local Councils representatives (LCs) in Entebbe and Kampala. In total, **12 KIIs** were conducted in Greater Kampala, including five with RLOs, five with RCLs and two with LCs. Key informants were selected according to the nationalities they support and work with, to ensure a spread pertaining across nationalities served. One questionnaire was developed for RLOs, RCLs and LCs, which can be viewed in the [Data Analysis Plan](#). The table below outlines the number of KIIs conducted by nationality, location and type informant. Out of the 12 KIIs conducted, NRC conducted five.

Table 4: Summary of KIIs conducted in Greater Kampala, per nationality, location and type

Nationality	Location	Type of Key Informant Interview
Somalia	Kampala	Refugee Community Leader
Somalia	Kampala	Refugee Led Organization
Ethiopia	Kampala	Refugee Community Leader
Eritrea	Kampala	Refugee Community Leader
Democratic Republic of the Congo	Kampala	Refugee Community Leader
Democratic Republic of the Congo	Kampala	Refugee Led Organization
Democratic Republic of the Congo	Kampala	Refugee Led Organization
Sudan	Kampala	Refugee Community Leader
Sudan	Entebbe	Refugee Led Organization
Sudan	Kampala	Refugee Led Organization
All	Entebbe	Local Council Level 1
All	Kampala	Local Council Level 2

²³ UNHCR. 2024. [Uganda: Refugee Statistics November 2024 - Settlement & Urban Profiles](#)

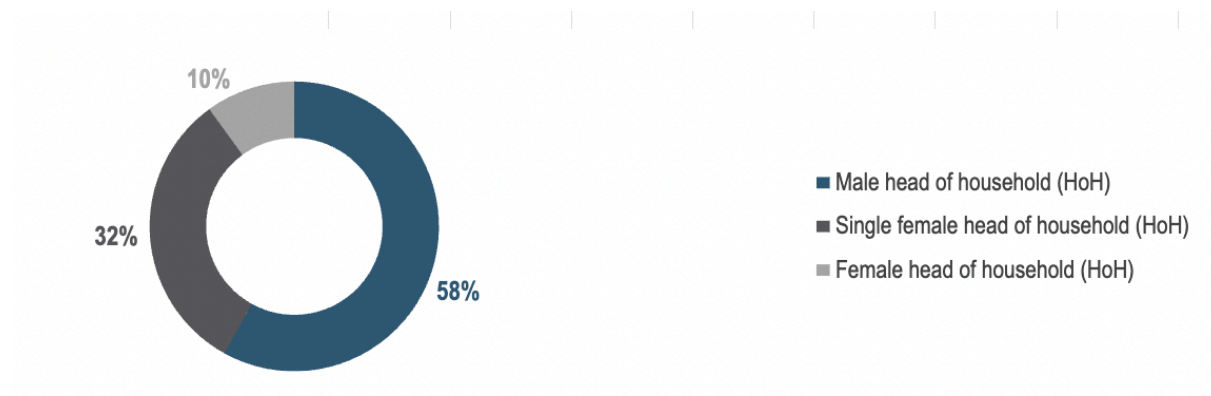
A minimum of one RLO and one RLC per nationality were planned for KIIs. However, mobilization challenges, including informant availability and assessment timelines, prevented interviews with one Eritrean and one Ethiopian RLO. To compensate, Local Council representatives (LCs) in Entebbe and Kampala who engage with Eritreans and Ethiopians were interviewed instead.

The published qualitative analysis of these KIIs (i.e., data analysis and saturation grid) can be viewed [here](#).

DEMOGRAPHICS

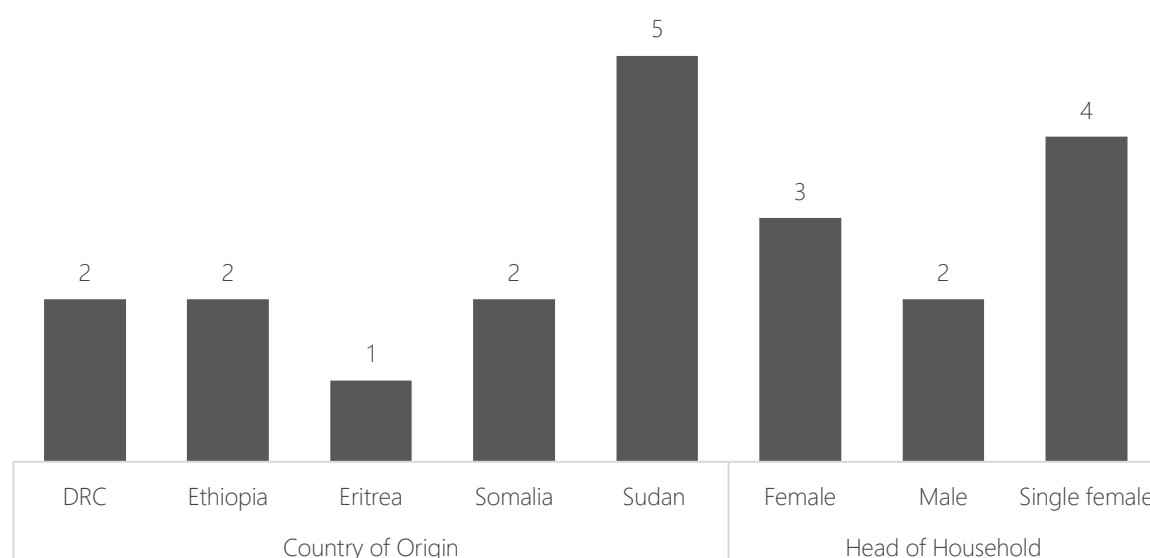
Of the households interviewed, 83% were living in Kampala, 7% in Entebbe, and 3% in Wakiso, Bombo, and Mukono towns. Within Kampala (n=698), 61% of the interviews were conducted in Makindye, 24% in Rubaga, 11% in the Central division, and 2% in Kawempe and Nawaka divisions.

Figure 2: Proportion of head of households (HoH) by gender



In Greater Kampala, 58% of interviewed households were headed by a man, while 42% were headed by a woman. Of the female-headed households (n=371), 13% were led by a single woman (unmarried, divorced, widowed, separated, with no cohabiting partner, or whose partner remains in the home country or is abroad). Households from the DRC and Sudan had the highest proportion of single-female-headed households, at 41% and 39% respectively. Of the total interviewed households, 7% reported having at least one member who was pregnant or lactating, with 22% of Sudanese households indicating that at least one member was either pregnant or lactating.

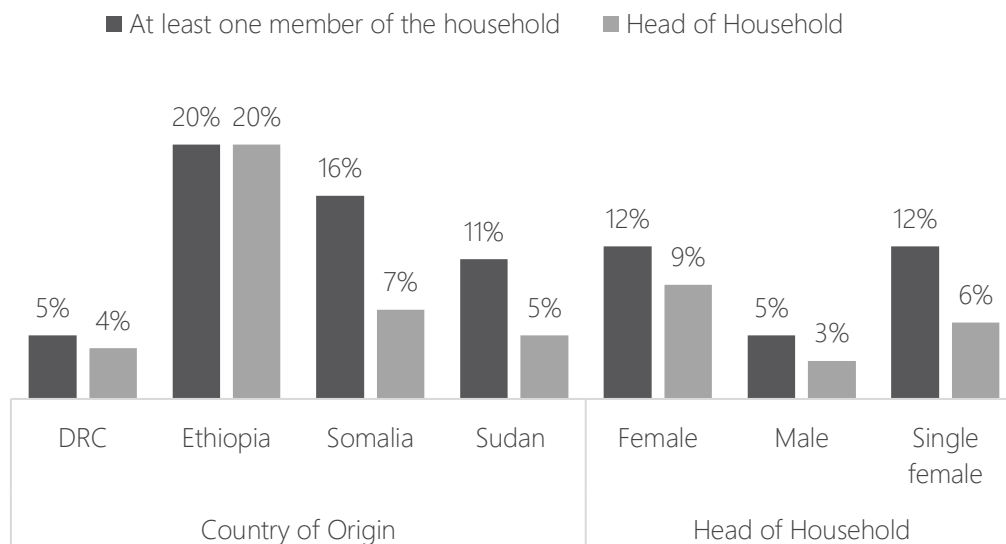
Figure 3: Average household size at the time of data collection, by country of origin and head of household



The average household size in Greater Kampala consisted of 2 members. This varied across countries of origin (as shown in Figure 3), with Sudanese households having the largest average size, while Eritrean households had the smallest average household size, as many were one-person households. Additionally, household size varied by the head of household, with female-headed households reporting on average more members, particularly single female-headed households, compared to

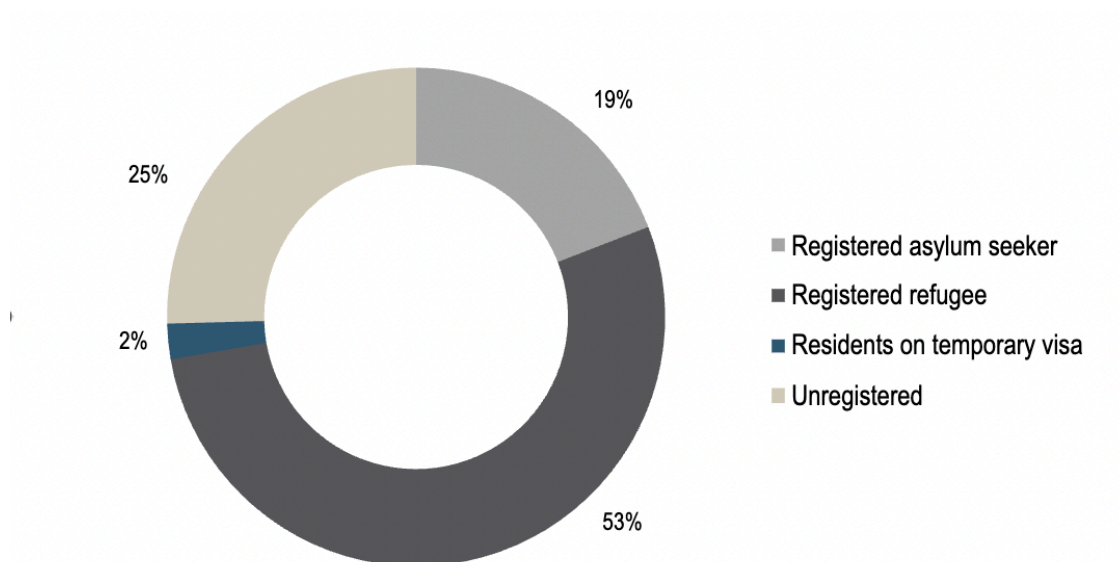
male-headed households. Sudanese households reported the highest number of children per households in Greater Kampala, with on average 3 children per households. Additionally, 6% of households reported having at least one separated child, compared to 2% for orphaned children, with orphaned children being reported only by Sudanese and Somali households. The proportion of separated children was notably higher in Ethiopian and Somali households, with 17% of Ethiopian households and 15% of Somali households reporting separated children.

Figure 4: Proportion of households with a member over 5 years old with a disability (WGSS 3+), by country of origin and head of household



Of the total households interviewed, **8% reported having at least one member of their household with a disability level 3²⁴**, and 7% reported that the head of household had a disability level 3. This was particularly higher among Ethiopian households, as well as female or single female-headed households in both cases (see Figure 4).

Figure 5: Proportion of individuals by registration status

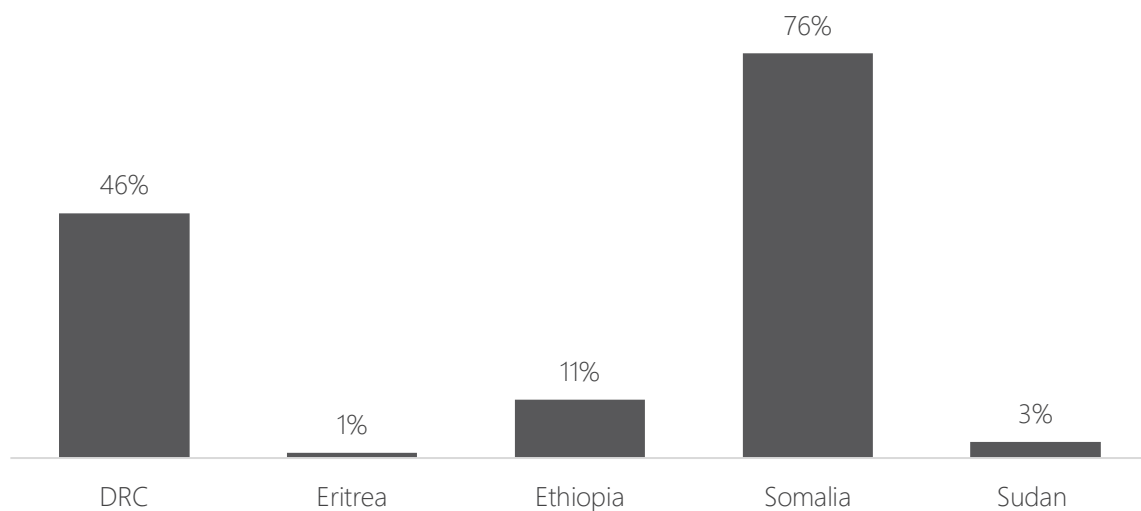


²⁴ Disability level 3 means a severe disability, the individual has major difficulty in performing most activities and may require significant assistance.

About three-quarters of refugee or asylum-seeking individuals were registered in Uganda, while one-quarter were not. Among those registered (n=1615), 11% between January and June 2023, 19% between July and December 2023, 25% had registered between January and June 2024, and 13% between July and November 2024. Unregistered individuals (n=445) are primarily aged 24 years and under, accounting for 69% of those not registered as asylum seekers or refugees.

Significant differences are observed among unregistered individuals based on their countries of origin. About three-quarters of Somali individuals and nearly half of Congolese individuals are not registered as asylum seekers or refugees (see Figure 6). This is likely due to the fact that registration for both Somali and Congolese individuals in Kampala was closed at the time of data collection. Additionally, non-prima facie households are often met with prolonged wait times for registration to complete. While Sudanese individuals are also currently unable to register in Kampala, they were previously allowed to register until December 2023. Since then, they were still granted prima facie status but were required to register in Kiryandongo.

Figure 6: Proportion of unregistered individuals by country of origin



FINDINGS: GREATER KAMPALA

Displacement and Movement Intentions

This section will explore the primary drivers of displacement for refugees in Greater Kampala, focusing on the causes of their flight and their movement intentions. Key factors, such as armed conflict, political instability, and the search for better services, will be examined to understand why refugees have chosen Greater Kampala as their destination and what motivates them to settle in urban areas.

Displacement

The **primary driver** of displacement across all households was found to be armed conflict in or near the area of origin, affecting 52% of households in Greater Kampala (see Table 4). However, there were key differences between countries of origin. Sudanese households reported the highest rate, with 94% displaced by conflict, followed by Somali households at 72%. On the other hand, Ethiopian and Eritrean households reported much lower figures at 16% and 30% respectively.

Fear of forced conscription represented the second most common reason of displacement overall (19%), particularly among Eritrean households, where 46% reported it as their top reason for fleeing their country. Political instability contributed notably to displacement for Ethiopian households, at 37%, and Congolese households, at 21%. Expulsion by government forces was more common among Ethiopian (12%) and Eritrean (10%) households, with near minimal proportions for other nationalities. Death or injury of family members, were more prominent in Somali households.

Table 5: Proportion of households by the top five first reason of displacement (multiple choice: total may exceed 100%)

	Overall	DRC	Ethiopia	Eritrea	Somalia	Sudan
Armed conflict in or near area of origin	52%	66%	16%	30%	72%	94%
Fear of forced conscription by armed forces	19%	2%	17%	46%	8%	3%
Political instability	14%	21%	37%	7%	0%	1%
Expulsion by government forces	5%	0%	12%	10%	0%	1%
Death/injury/disappearance of family member(s)	5%	5%	9%	0%	13%	1%

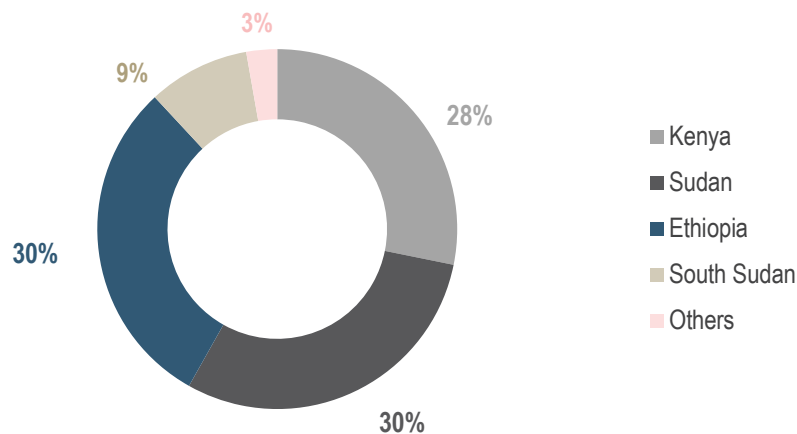


The **most reported reason** for second choice of reason of displacement was the death, injury, or disappearance of a family member, affecting 19% of households in Greater Kampala. Sudanese households had the highest rate, with 58% citing this as the second cause of displacement, followed by Congolese households at 30%. For Ethiopian, Eritrean, and Somali households, death, injury, or disappearance of a family member was not the dominant second reason. Among Ethiopian households, 19% reported political instability as the second cause, while 31% of Eritrean households mentioned fear of forced employment in national services. For Somali households, 40% cited fear of forced conscription by armed forces as the second cause of displacement.

Most households in Greater Kampala did not reported an additional reason for displacement (39%). However, among Congolese households, 22% mentioned fear of forced conscription by armed forces, and 36% of Somali households cited death, injury, or disappearance of a family member as their third reason for displacement.

Figure 7: Proportion of households that lived in another country than their country of origin before being forced to flee to Uganda, by country lived in (other than their country of origin)

[subset: Proportion of households that lived in another country than their country of origin before being forced to flee to Uganda, n=306]



Before being forced to flee to Uganda, 43% of households in Greater Kampala lived in another country other than their country of origin, particularly for Eritrean (91%), Ethiopian (81%), and Sudanese (16%) households. Among the Eritreans households who had lived in a country other than their country of origin (n=136), 46% had lived in Ethiopia and 45% in Sudan before being forced to flee to Uganda. For secondarily-displaced Ethiopians (n=127), 97% had lived in Kenya, while almost all secondarily-displaced Sudanese households (n=33) had resided in South Sudan before being forced to flee to Uganda (91%). Figure 7 presents the countries that our sampled households lived in before coming to Uganda, other than their country of origin.

Table 6: Proportion of households that lived in a third country other than their country of origin before being forced to flee to Uganda, by the first reason (top 5 reasons shown) for leaving the third country (fleeing to Uganda), by country of origin

[subset: Proportion of households that lived in another country than their country of origin before being forced to flee to Uganda, n=306]

	Overall (n=306)	DRC (n=6)	Eritrea (n=136)	Ethiopia (n=127)	Somalia (n=4)	Sudan (n=33)
Political instability	38%	16%	48%	22%	0%	4%
Armed conflict in or near area of origin	27%	0%	36%	5%	80%	15%
Fear of forced conscription by armed forces	24%	0%	31%	15%	0%	1%
Expulsion by non-government forces	17%	0%	24%	6%	0%	0%
No work available	12%	16%	4%	25%	0%	44%

0% 100%

Political instability was the primary reason mentioned for leaving countries other than the country of origin, particularly by Eritrean and Ethiopian households, as most of them were residing in countries

with active conflicts, such as Sudan and South Sudan. Armed conflict, fear of conscription, expulsion and livelihoods were also commonly cited as key reasons for leaving the previous country.

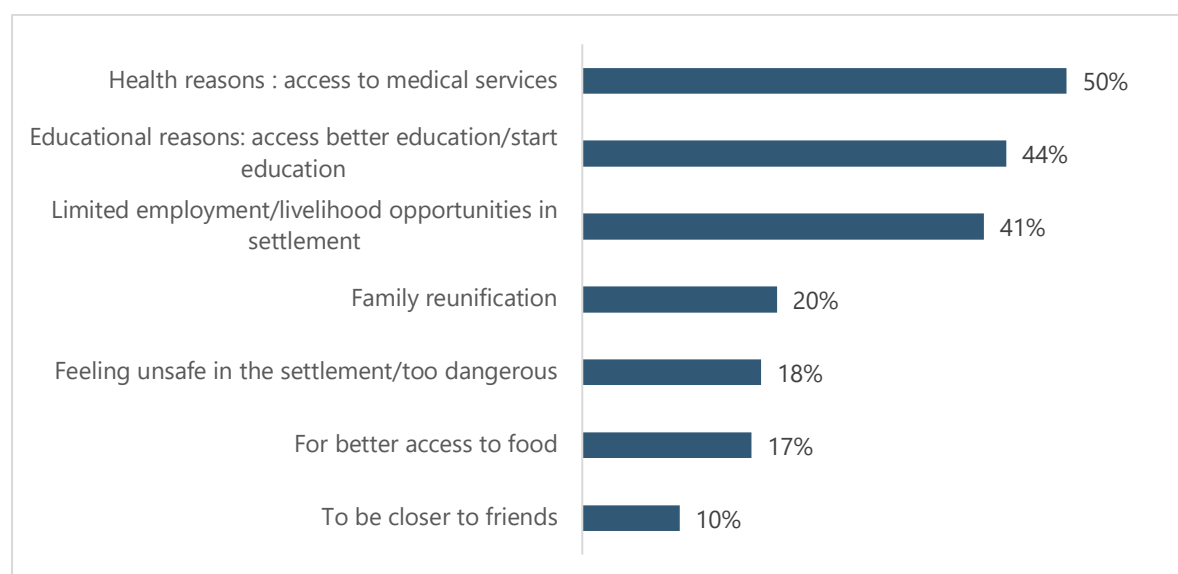
This indicates that while some households, such as those from Sudan, were forced to flee twice due to armed conflicts, instability or a lack of livelihoods opportunities. Households from other nationalities, especially Eritreans and Ethiopians, reportedly came to Uganda seeking both security and opportunity. This demonstrates that displacement is not driven solely by conflict and political instability but by a combination of compounding factors.

Movement Intentions

Over a quarter (26%) of households reported being registered in a refugee settlement in Uganda while residing in Greater Kampala. This pattern concerns primarily Congolese (28%) and Sudanese (65%) households. Among these households, Sudanese were most frequently registered in Kiryandongo (44%) while Congolese were mainly registered in Nakivale (16%) and Rwamwanja (22%) settlements.

Figure 8: Proportion of households registered in a refugee settlement, by the 3 main reasons why the household move/choose to leave the settlement (multiple choice: total may exceed 100%)

[subset: Proportion of households registered in a refugee settlement, n=251]



The three main reasons cited by households for leaving the settlement centered on access to better medical services, education, and employment/livelihood opportunities (see Figure 8). Sudanese households (n=162) primarily mentioned access to medical services (81%), education (80%), family reunification (36%) and better access to food (29%), in contrast to other nationalities. While Congolese households (n=71) also noted these factors, their decision to leave the settlement was primarily driven by limited employment/livelihood opportunities (80%) and safety concerns (27%).

Among male-headed households (n=121), 54% identified limited employment/livelihood opportunities as a reason for moving out of refugee settlements, compared to 28% of female-headed households (n=130). Family reunification in Greater Kampala was more commonly mentioned by female-headed households (33%) than by male-headed households (9%), while 22% of single female-headed households (n=54) cited better access to food as a reason for relocating, compared to 16% of male-headed households.

Table 7: Proportion of households by the 5 main reasons why the household chose Greater Kampala as their place of settlement, by country of origin (multiple choice: total may exceed 100%)

	Overall	DRC	Eritrea	Ethiopia	Somalia	Sudan
Feeling safer/less dangerous	59%	40%	87%	89%	41%	19%
Employment: better access to livelihood/job opportunities	31%	62%	33%	15%	8%	3%
Prefer to be near more people from my own country	24%	8%	49%	40%	2%	3%
Health: access to medical services	24%	28%	5%	2%	29%	78%
Education: better education/start education	23%	19%	6%	2%	37%	79%
Preference for city/urban context	18%	8%	49%	40%	2%	3%
Less conflicts between the refugee and host communities	14%	6%	30%	19%	1%	7%
To be closer to friends	13%	12%	19%	9%	16%	2%
Access to better housing/accommodation	12%	9%	24%	4%	5%	10%

0%  100%

The five main reasons for choosing Greater Kampala as their place of settlement are outlined in Table 7, with more than half of the households citing perceived safety and lower levels of danger as key factors. Key differences are observed among countries of origin, with Eritreans (87%) and Ethiopians (89%) reporting more safety compared to other nationalities. Employment opportunities were more frequently mentioned by Congolese households (62%), while the preference to be near people from their country of origin was more common among Eritreans (49%) and Ethiopians (40%). Sudanese households more often mentioned access to medical services and education facilities, while Eritreans and Ethiopians showed a stronger preference for living in a city or urban context.

When asked to rank the five main reasons, 36% of households identified feeling safer as the **first reason** for choosing Kampala (mainly by Ethiopian, Eritreans and Somali households), followed by access to better livelihood opportunities at 14% (mainly by Congolese households). For the **second reasons**, access to basic services such as education, health, and livelihoods was ranked higher by 33% of households than other factors (mainly by Congolese, Somali and Sudanese households), such as the preference to live near people from their country of origin or in an urban context. However, for the **fourth and fifth reasons**, the latter two factors were ranked higher than access to basic services, with 28% of households citing the preference to live in an urban context as the fourth reason and 31% mentioning living near people from their country of origin as the fifth reason (mainly Eritrean and Ethiopian households).

Overall, results indicate that Congolese, Sudanese, and Somali households settled in Greater Kampala prioritized access to basic services and safety, followed by a preference for being closer to their community of origin or living in an urban setting, whereas Eritrean and Ethiopian households place greater importance on safety, proximity to their community, and living in an urban setting.

Figure 9: Proportion of households by how their decision to move to Greater Kampala impacted their household's livelihoods

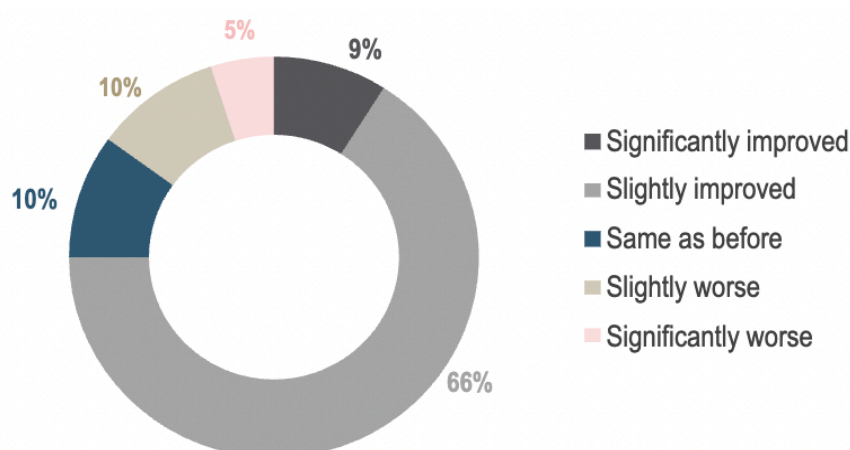
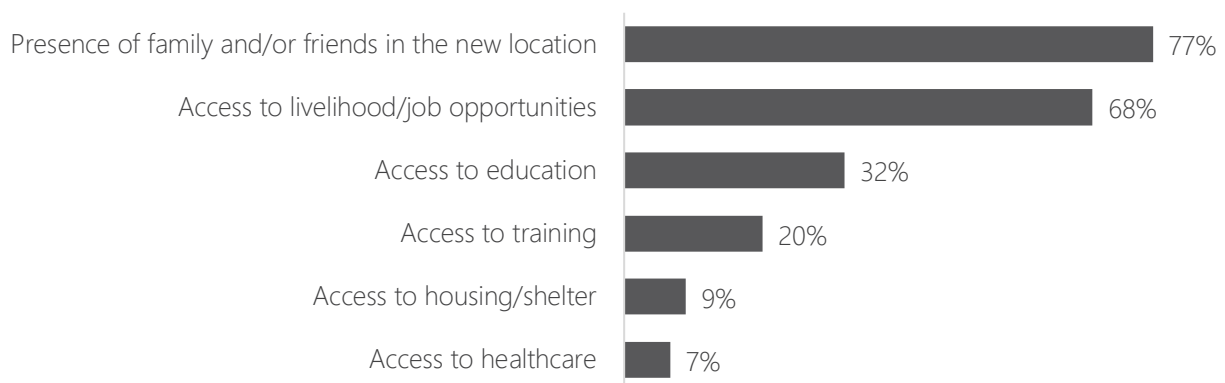


Figure 9 illustrates the impact of the decision to move to Greater Kampala on the livelihoods of new arrival households, with **75% reporting a positive effect**. There are a few differences across countries of origin and head of households regarding how their decision to move impacted their livelihoods. Only 1% of single female-headed households reported a significant improvement in their livelihoods after moving to Kampala, compared to 8% of female-headed households and 9% of male-headed households. **Unregistered heads of households more frequently reported that their livelihoods worsened**, with 27% indicating a slight or significant decline after moving to Greater Kampala, compared to 11% for registered heads of households. **Congolese and Ethiopian households more frequently reported a decline in their livelihoods than Eritrean, Somali, and Sudanese households, with 23% of Congolese and 37% of Ethiopian households stating that their livelihoods had slightly or significantly decreased after relocating to Kampala.**

A total of 15% of households reported plans to move out of Greater Kampala within six months following November 2024. This trend was most pronounced among Eritrean, Ethiopian, and Sudanese households, with 36% of Eritrean households planning to relocate, followed by 11% of Ethiopian households and 10% of Sudanese households. In addition, among registered heads of households (n=615), 18% expressed similar intentions, compared to only 3% of unregistered heads of households (n=199). Of the total number of households planning to move out of Greater Kampala within six months (n=97), 86% declared plans to move to another country outside their home country. This pattern held true for most households, except for unregistered heads of households and Sudanese households. Among unregistered heads of households planning to relocate (n=10), almost half intended to move to another city or town within Uganda, and a quarter planned to move to a settlement. For Sudanese households (n=27), over half planned to move to another city or town in Uganda, and less than a quarter intended to relocate to a rural location (village) in Uganda.

Figure 10: Proportion of households planning to move out of Greater Kampala in the 6 months following November 2024, by the 3 main reasons for moving (multiple choice: total may exceed 100%)

[subset: Proportion of households planning to move out of Greater Kampala in the 6 months following November 2024, n=97]



The three main reasons for planning to move outside of Greater Kampala are presented in **Error! Reference source not found..** Notable differences are observed among countries of origin, with 94% of Eritrean households citing the presence of family and/or friends as one of the three main reasons for moving out of Kampala. This is substantially lower for Ethiopian (33%) and Sudanese households (16%). Access to livelihood or job opportunities was mentioned by 82% of Eritrean households, compared to 32% for Ethiopians and 17% for Sudanese households. Access to education was more frequently mentioned by Sudanese households, with 56% citing it as a reason, along with 37% mentioning access to healthcare and 45% noting access to housing as key factors.

Newly arrived households in Greater Kampala are primarily displaced due to armed conflict, especially for Sudanese, but also by political instability, forced conscription, and violence. Households in Kampala are often seeking safety and better access to healthcare, education, and livelihood opportunities. The movement intentions of refugees highlight a preference for urban centers like Kampala due to the availability of these services, despite challenges related to housing and legal documentation.

Legal Protection

This section explores the legal challenges refugees face in Kampala, particularly in terms of registration and access to legal documentation. The impact of lacking proper legal recognition on refugees' ability to access services and protection will also be addressed.

Legal Stay and Refugee Status Determination (RSD)

Refugee Status Determination (RSD) is a crucial process that grants legal recognition to individuals seeking asylum, ensuring their protection under international and national refugee law. In Uganda,

RSD is conducted free of charge as stipulated by law and falls under the mandate of the Office of the Prime Minister (OPM), which oversees refugee affairs in the country.

The refugee status determination (RSD) framework assigns the Refugee Eligibility Committee (REC) responsibility for determining refugee status at first instance. Of the five nationalities included in the assessment, asylum-seekers from Sudan and the DRC have continued to be recognized as refugees on a prima facie basis and must first register in designated settlements before relocating to Greater Kampala. Ethiopian and Eritrean asylum seekers have been undergoing individual RSD by the REC, – although registration of Eritreans closed in January 2025. Registration of Somali asylum seekers closed in March 2023, meaning that new asylum-seekers from Somalia have been unable to register their asylum applications since then.²⁵

Kampala is a “refugee-gazetted area” where the Office of the Prime Minister (OPM) provides refugee registration services only for non-prima facie nationalities residing within the five divisions. For this assessment this includes, Ethiopian and Eritrean asylum seekers. Ethiopian and Eritrean asylum seekers residing outside the five divisions must register in Kampala and must return to Kampala for any verification exercise and to update their registration details. Congolese and Sudanese refugees are required to register in designated settlements. Refugees and asylum seekers residing in Kampala are required to make their presence known to the Local Council and authorities of the location in which they settle.²⁶

51%

of households in Greater Kampala reported challenges registering as refugees regardless of the RSD process (individual or prima facie). Eritrean households were the one reporting most challenges (71%), followed by Somali (60%), Congolese (51%), Ethiopian (40%) and Sudanese (7%) households.

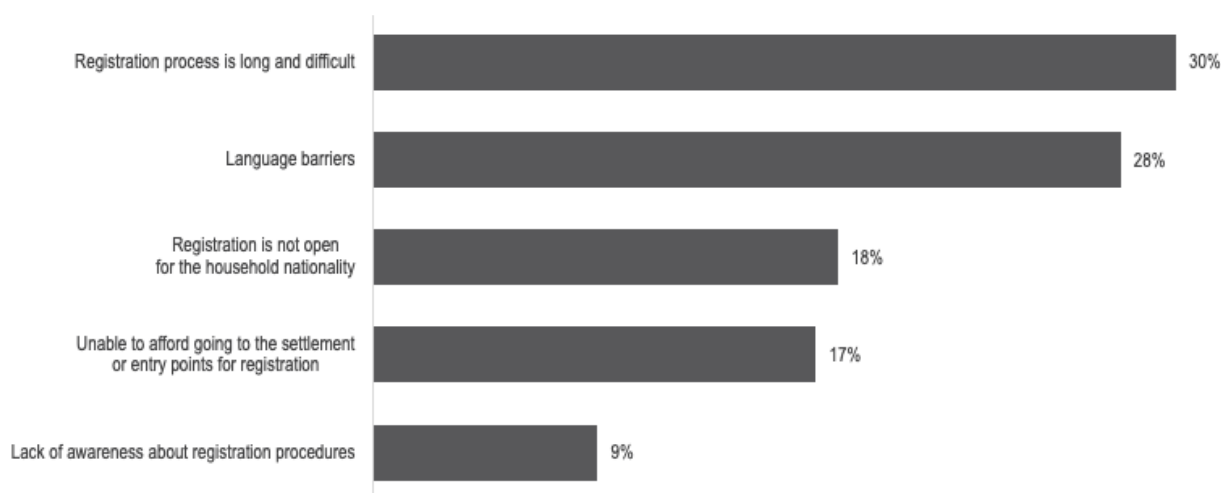
More than half of households reporting challenges with registration (n=360) mentioned that the registration process was long and difficult (30%) and that they faced language barriers (28%). About one-fifth reported that registration is not open to the household nationality, which was cited by 82% of Somali households, 14% of Congolese households, and 46% of households with an unregistered HoH, that reported challenges with registration. Approximately one-fifth also mentioned that they are unable to travel back to the settlement or entry points due to high transport or accommodation costs, with this primarily affecting Sudanese households (85%). The lack of awareness about the registration process was reported more frequently by female respondents than male respondents, whereas language barriers were more acute for male respondents.

Figure 11: Proportion of households who reportedly faced barriers to register as asylum seekers/refugees in Uganda, by type of barriers faced to register as asylum seekers/refugees (multiple choice: total may exceed 100%)

[subset: Proportion of households who reportedly faced barriers to register as asylum seekers/refugees in Uganda, n=360]

²⁵ UNHCR. 2024. [Uganda: Refugee Policy Review Framework Country Summary as at 30 June 2023](#)

²⁶ Government of Uganda. 2024. Uganda Urban Refugee Response Strategy 2024-2028, p.12.



Civil Documentation

The importance of civil documentation – in particular birth registration – for refugees cannot be overstated. A birth certificate is crucial for identifying a child, as it proves the legal relationship between the parents and the child. It offers protection against exploitation, including trafficking, illegal adoption, child labour and child marriage. Birth registration is compulsory in Uganda, with the National Identification and Registration Authority mandated to register all births and deaths in the country.²⁷ The issuance of the birth certificate is free for refugees,²⁸ whereas fees for marriage and death registration are not waived. Death registration is important, for instance, to start inheritance proceeding and claim custody.

New arrivals reported a very limited access to legal identity documentation (birth, marriage, and death registration) with about 40% of households reporting not having access to civil registration at all and 20% only for some household members. Only 20% of households reported having the required documents for all household members (presented in Figure 12). Over half of Ethiopian households (60%) reported having no access to civil document at all, while 66% of Sudanese households reported civil documentation for only some members of the household. Almost half (47%) of households with a male HoH reported that none of the members had access to civil documentation, compared to 38% for households with a female HoH, while 27% of households with a single-female HoH reported documentation for only some members of the households.

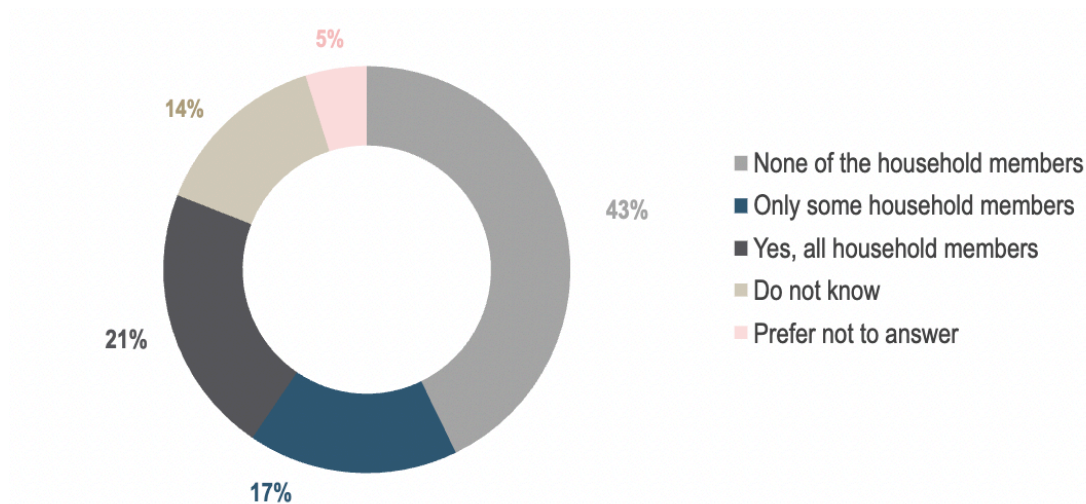
The situation varies substantially by nationality. Among Ethiopian households, 60% reported no access to civil documentation whatsoever. In contrast, 66% of Sudanese households indicated that only some members were documented, highlighting partial and uneven access within family units.

Disparities were also noted based on the gender of the head of household (HoH). In households headed by men, 47% reported that none of the members had civil documentation. This figure dropped slightly to 38% for households headed by women; for single-female-headed households, 27% reported that only some members had access to legal identity documents. These patterns underscore the need for targeted interventions to improve access to civil registration services, particularly for displaced populations and vulnerable household types like female-headed households.

Figure 12: Proportion of households with access to civil documentation

²⁷ NIRA, [Birth Registration Handbook](#), p.2.

²⁸ For Ugandan nationals the fee for a birth certificate is UGX 10,000.

**20%**

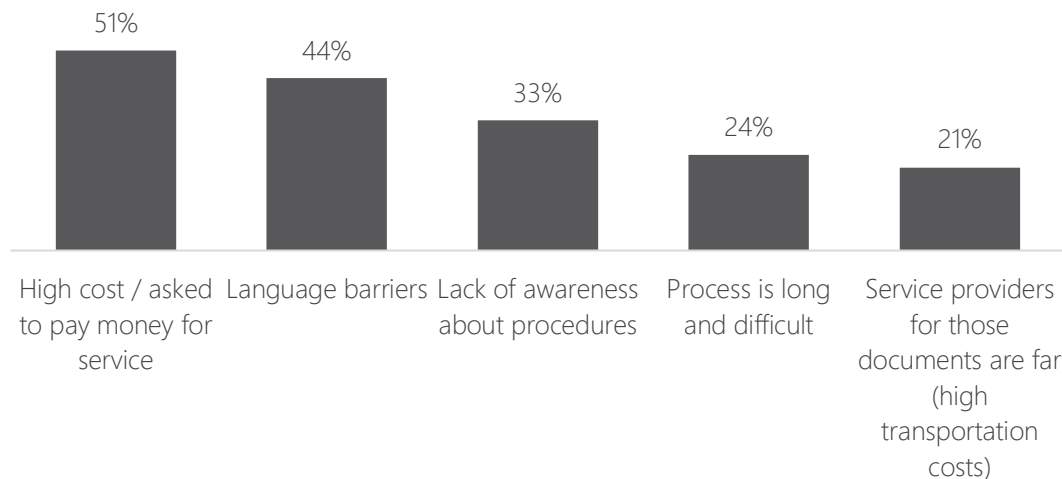
of households in Greater Kampala reported facing barriers to access civil documentation. This was reported by 27% of Somali households (n=151) and 33% by households with an unregistered HoH (n=209).

Among the households that reported encountering challenges in accessing civil registration documentation (n=198), over half cited high associated costs as the most common barrier (see Figure 16). This was closely followed by language barriers, limited awareness of procedures and requirements, lengthy and complex processes, and the physical distance to registration service points. Notably, language barriers disproportionately affected male respondents, with 58% of men highlighting this as a key obstacle compared to 26% of women. Conversely, a greater proportion of female respondents (36%) compared to male respondents (31%) reported a lack of awareness about the steps involved in the civil registration process.

Substantial disparities also emerged across different nationalities. For instance, nearly all Eritrean households surveyed (21 out of 22) identified high costs as a primary challenge, and 16 of these also cited language barriers. Among Sudanese households, the most commonly reported issue was a lack of awareness regarding the civil registration process, with 21 out of 29 households highlighting this gap. These findings underscore the intersection of gender, nationality, and socio-economic factors in shaping access to vital legal documentation among displaced populations.

Figure 13: Proportion of households facing barriers to access civil registration, by type of barriers (multiple choice: total may exceed 100%)

[subset: Proportion of households facing barriers to access civil documentation, n=198]



Regarding the amount spent on issuing documents related to legal stay registration and civil registration, households saw an average of UGX 278,000 (about \$77 USD) in the past six months. However, these costs varied significantly across different nationalities. Congolese households reported the highest expenditure, spending approximately 52% more than the overall average amounting to around UGX 422,560 (about \$118 USD) suggesting higher documentation needs (potentially as a result of not being able to register in Kampala), challenges in access, or potential informal fees. In contrast, Sudanese households reported significantly lower expenses, spending 48% less than the average, which translates to roughly UGX 144,560 (about \$40 USD). These disparities may reflect differences in documentation requirements, awareness levels, access to legal assistance, or the prevalence of informal practices in different communities.

"Without proper documentation, we cannot work, open businesses, or even buy a SIM card. The process takes months, sometimes a year, leaving us stuck and unable to support ourselves."

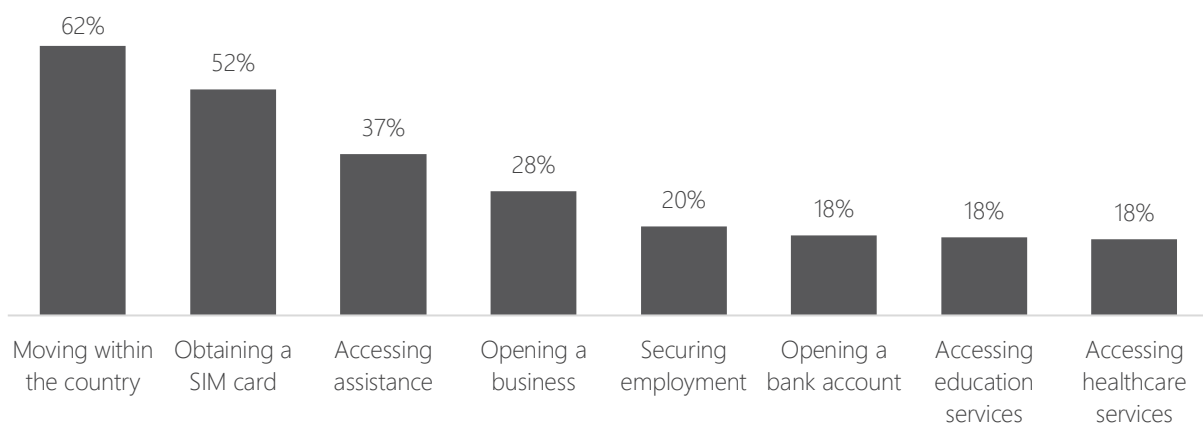
- KII, Refugee Community Leader, Ethiopia

Refugees in Greater Kampala interact with different authorities more frequently than in settlements, therefore these documents hold increased value and are used in everyday life. As presented in Figure 14, possessing these documents is crucial for several reasons for new arrivals households, particularly for movement, communication, and access to other basic services.

"From education to jobs, you can't access anything without an ID."

- KII, Refugee-Led Organisation, DRC

Figure 14: Proportion of households by the main reasons why civil documentation is important for their household (multiple choice: total may exceed 100%)



Notably, female-headed households more frequently mentioned the need for documentation to move around the country (67% compared to 58% of male-headed households) and to register children in school (22% compared to 15%). In contrast, more male-headed than female-headed households highlighted the importance of documentation for obtaining a SIM card (58% compared to 43% of female-headed households) and securing employment (23% compared to 16%).

Variation between geographic locations and nationalities was significant, with 93% of households in Entebbe (n=56) mentioning the importance of documents for movements within the country, while only 9 households in Wakiso (n=27) did. The need for civil documentation to access assistance was higher among Congolese households (68%) compared to other nationalities, while 74% of Sudanese households reported the importance of carrying civil documentation for movement around the country.

Legal protection remains a significant concern for newly arrived households in Greater Kampala, with many facing barriers to registering and obtaining necessary documentation. The lack of documentation and formal recognition prevents refugees from fully accessing their rights, such as housing, healthcare, and education. The complexity and additional costs of the registration process further complicate their ability to integrate and thrive in Uganda.

Legal protection remains a critical concern for newly arrived refugee and asylum-seeking households in Greater Kampala. **Many face significant barriers in registering with the authorities and obtaining essential legal documentation**, such as refugee attestation, asylum seeker certificates, and national identification numbers (NINs). Without these documents, refugees are often excluded from accessing fundamental rights and services, including safe and secure housing, affordable healthcare, formal education, and livelihood opportunities. **The legal invisibility caused by the absence of documentation leaves them vulnerable to exploitation, arbitrary arrest, and forced eviction.** Moreover, the complexity of the registration process coupled with language barriers, limited awareness of legal procedures, and the financial burden of transport and administrative costs makes it difficult for refugees to navigate the system effectively. As a result, many remain undocumented for extended periods, undermining their ability to integrate into host communities and live with dignity in Uganda.

Livelihoods

This section delves into the household income, livelihood needs and challenges faced by newly arrived households in Kampala, exploring employment opportunities, income sources, and economic self-sufficiency. It will also examine how factors like legal status and access to services influence the refugee population's ability to earn a living.

Household Income

More than half of the newly arrived individuals in Kampala, aged over 18 (n=1458), are unemployed and one-sixth are unpaid family workers. Clear differences are observed by country of origin, as presented in Table 8, with more than three-quarters of Eritreans (n=189) and Ethiopian (n=242) individuals being unemployed. Among the individuals over 18 years that are unemployed (n=726), 26% had previously worked before.

Table 8: Proportion of individuals over 18 years old by their current work/occupation in Uganda, by country of origin

	Overall (n=1458)	DRC (n=230)	Eritrea (n=189)	Ethiopia (n=242)	Somalia (n=209)	Sudan (n=488)
Unemployed, looking for work	57%	50%	77%	76%	23%	52%

Unpaid family worker	14%	14%	2%	3%	35%	20%
Paid employee	8%	7%	14%	15%	3%	1%
Self-employed (including casual labour)	7%	19%	1%	4%	2%	3%
Full-time student	5%	4%	1%	0%	14%	10%
Business owner	3%	1%	5%	1%	9%	1%

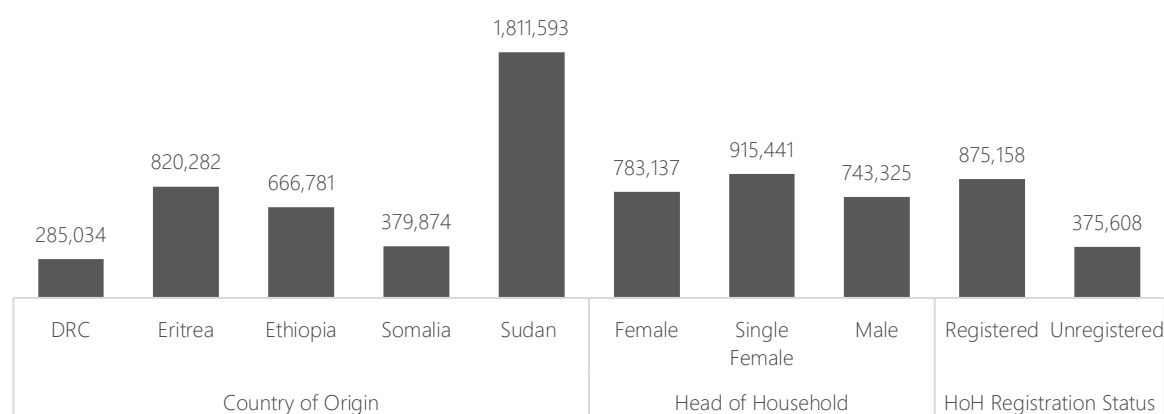
0%  100%

35%

of individuals over 18 years old reported that they are prevented from practicing their work/occupation from their country of origin because of their status of refugee or asylum-seeker in Uganda.

The **average household income for new arrivals in Greater Kampala per month is 760,515 UGX** (about \$212 USD). Substantial disparities are observed between households from different countries of origin (presented in Figure 15), with Sudanese households reporting a household income that is 238% higher than the overall average, while Congolese households report a household income that is 63% lower than the overall average. Single female-headed households reported a household income 17% higher than female-headed households and 23% higher than male-headed households. Unregistered heads of households reported a household income 57% lower than that of registered household heads.

Figure 15: Average income received in the form of money over the 30 days prior to data collection, by country of origin, head of household gender, and registration status

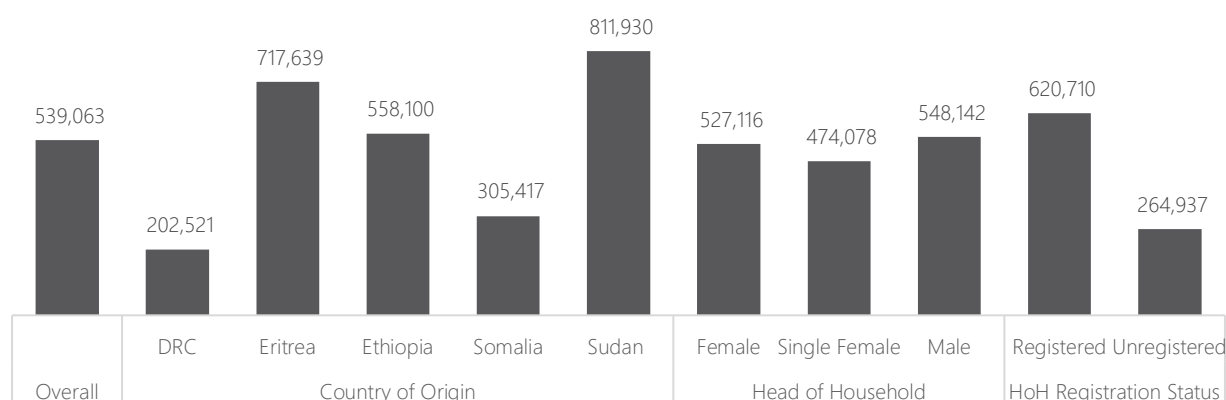


However, given the differences in household size and composition per nationality discussed in the [Demographics](#) section, and what these differences imply for adult/children dependency ratios and income, square-root equalized income has also been analyzed to offer additional insights.²⁹ As seen in Figure 16, given that Sudanese households tend to be larger than those of other nationalities while

²⁹ Equalization offers income or expenditure analysis which takes into account the economies of scale in terms of household member profiles. The 'square-root' method is a simplified manner of expressing variables such as income or expenditure while adjusting for household-size, by taking an integer value such as household income within 30 days prior to the survey, and dividing it by the square root of the household size. Other equalization models take into account adults and children per household, but are comparable in outcome and are more widely-used in western or high-development contexts.

also having the highest average (non-equivalized) income, equivalized average household incomes become more evenly-spread. However, stark differences remain, particularly when considering the relatively low equivalized averages for Congolese, Somali, and unregistered households – a group that also largely consists of these two nationalities as previously discussed.

Figure 16: Average equivalized household income received in monetary form over the 30 days prior to data collection, by country of origin, head of household gender, and registration status



The **three main income sources** reported by newly arrived households are remittances, support from family and friends in Uganda, salaried employment and casual/seasonal labour (presented in Table 98). Key differences are observed across countries of origin, with Eritrean (91%) and Sudanese (82%) households reporting higher levels of remittances than other households. Support from family and friends in Uganda was more commonly reported by Congolese (43%) and Somali (53%) households. Sudanese households reported no income from salaried employment in Greater Kampala. Casual/seasonal labor was more prominent among Congolese households (43%), while income from own businesses was more frequently reported by Somali households (31%).

Regarding registration status, 67% of registered heads of households declared remittances as part of their top three income sources, compared to 26% of unregistered heads of households. The latter group more frequently reported support from family and friends in Uganda (37%) and casual/seasonal labor (33%) as part of their top three income sources.

Table 9: Proportion of households by 3 main income sources during the 30 days prior to data collection, by country of origin (multiple choice: total may exceed 100%)

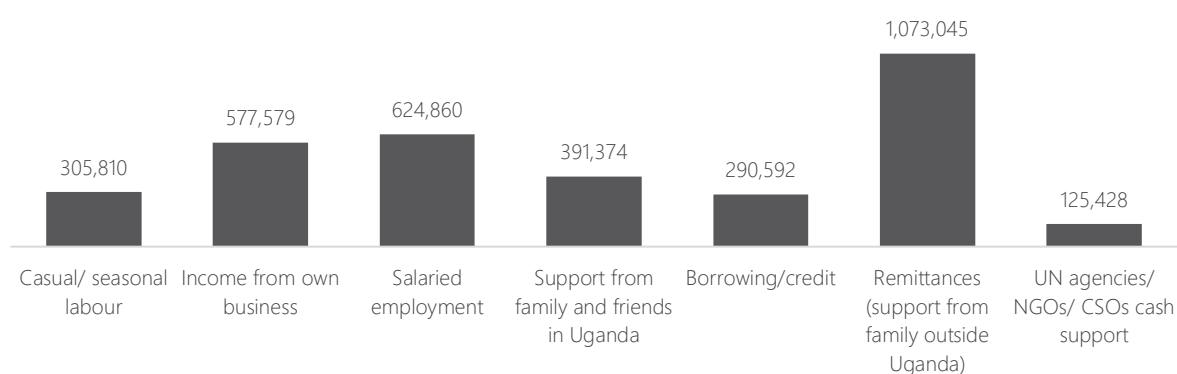
	Overall	DRC	Eritrea	Ethiopia	Somalia	Sudan
Remittances (support from family outside Uganda)	57%	16%	91%	67%	24%	82%
Support from family and friends in Uganda	31%	43%	20%	32%	53%	5%
Salaried employment	14%	10%	15%	19%	25%	0%
Casual/seasonal labour (irregular work, needs-basis)	14%	43%	0%	3%	10%	8%
Income from own business	12%	14%	8%	5%	31%	4%
Borrowing/credit	6%	1%	9%	1%	12%	3%
UN agencies/NGOs/CSOs cash support	2%	3%	0%	0%	0%	6%

0%  100%

When asked to rank their three main sources of income, half of the newly arrived households in Greater Kampala cited remittances, and one-fifth reported support from family and friends in Uganda as their **primary source of income**. This trend is also observed among 76% of Eritrean, 55% of Ethiopian, and 77% of Sudanese households, as well as 56% families with a registered HoH. Support from family and friends in Uganda was reported as the primary source of income by 35% of Congolese households and 45% of Somali households, and 30% of households with an unregistered HoH. Regarding the second source of income, one-fourth of households reported support from family and friends in Uganda and remittances. Among the households that reported their sources of income (n=800), only 32% reported a second source of income and 8% a third one.

Overall, this indicates that, newly arrived households in Greater Kampala are highly **dependent on external assistance from family and friends inside and outside Uganda** for their income and have few diversified sources of income. Figure 17 presents the average income received in the form of money over the 30 days prior to data collection by the main sources of income declared for new arrival households in Greater Kampala.

Figure 17: Average income received in the form of money over the 30 days prior to data collection, by main sources of income declared by households



Needs and Barriers to Livelihoods

Half of the new arrival households in Greater Kampala reported facing barriers in their livelihood activities. Among these households (n=444), approximately three-quarters cited a lack of opportunities, while about two-fifths mentioned a lack of documentation and language barriers as obstacles to their livelihood activities (presented in Figure 18). While the lack of work opportunities affected all nationalities, genders, and registration statuses of heads of households, the lack of documentation was reported by 87% of households with an unregistered head of household, 77% of Somali households, and 40% of Congolese households. Language barriers were slightly more prevalent among Ethiopian (49%) and Somali (50%) households, while the lack of skills and qualifications was more commonly reported by Eritrean households (38%). The lack of credit to start or continue a business was less frequently mentioned by single female-headed households (7%) and was not reported by Somali households. Low wages were more frequently cited by Sudanese households (41%), while only 5% of Eritrean households mentioned this issue, and Somali households did not report this challenge.

Figure 18: Proportion of refugee households by type of barriers to livelihood activities, country of origin, gender and registration status of head of households (multiple choice: total may exceed 100%)

[subset: Proportion of households who experienced barriers in their livelihood activities, n=444]

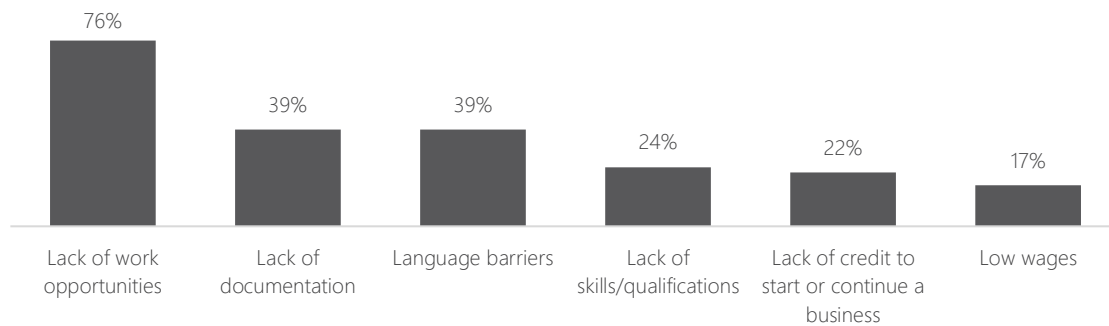
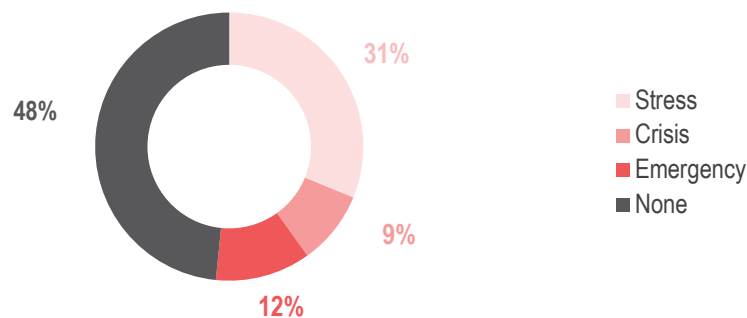


Figure 19: Proportion of households by Livelihood Coping Strategy Index (LSCI) categories



Among the refugee and asylum-seeker households interviewed in Greater Kampala, 21% fell into crisis³⁰ or emergency³¹ categories based on their livelihood coping strategies (presented in Figure 19). Variations exist across countries of origin, with a higher proportion of Congolese households, 23%, falling into the emergency category and a higher proportion of Sudanese households, 47%, falling into the crisis category. Eritrean and Somali households were notably doing better, with 73% of Eritrean and 61% of Somali households being falling in the “none” category. Differences in registration statuses are also observed, with 25% of households with an unregistered HoH falling into the emergency category, compared to 7% for households with a registered HoH.

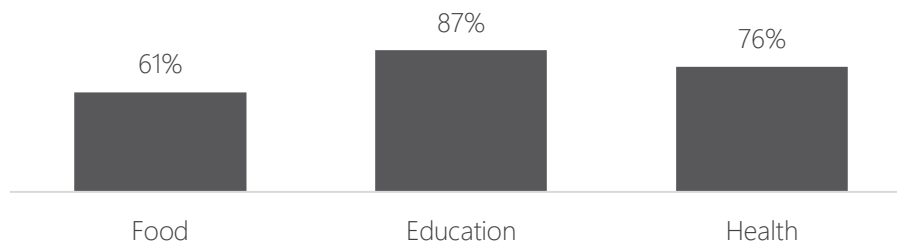
Education was the most critical basic need that households reported lacking sufficient funds for in the month prior to data collection. Among Congolese, Somali, and Sudanese households, over 90% indicated insufficient money for all three basic needs: food, education, and health. Key differences were observed among Ethiopian and Eritrean households compared to others, which appeared to fare better in meeting these needs. Specifically, only 7% of Eritrean households reported insufficient funds for food, and 37% for health needs, compared to the overall average across households where 61% did not having enough money for food and 76% with insufficient money for health. Additionally, 52% of Somali households stated they did not have enough money for education, compared to the 87% overall.

Male HoHs reported linsufficient funds for health needs in 73% of cases, compared to 85% of single female HoHs. Around 60% of both female and male HoHs indicated not having enough money for food in the month prior to data collection, with 76% of single female HoHs reporting similar challenges. Unregistered households appeared more vulnerable than registered households, with 88% reporting insufficient funds for food in the month prior to data collection and around 95% declaring lacking funds for education and health needs.

³⁰ This means the households is facing significant difficulties and is starting to compromise its future livelihoods sustainability, such as selling productive assets (e.g., livestock, tools) or reducing non-food expenditures.

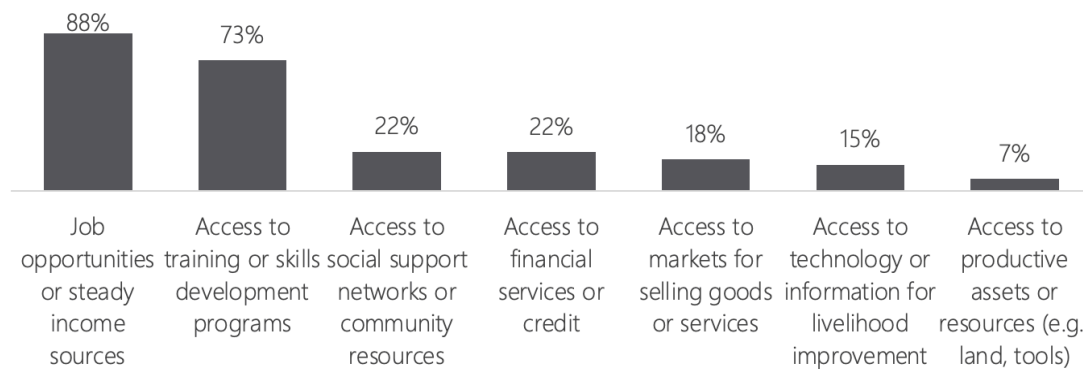
³¹ This means the households is facing severe difficulties and is putting in place irreversible measures that signal extreme hardship and long-term vulnerability (e.g., selling the last remaining productive asset, engaging in illegal or high-risk activities for income).

Figure 20: Proportion of households reporting not having enough money for food, education, or health needs within the month prior to data collection



Job opportunities, access to training or skills development and access to support network or community resources, alongside access to financial services or credit emerged as primary unmet livelihood needs (presented in Figure 21). These unmet needs were consistent across all countries of origin, household head gender, and registration status, with a few key differences. Congolese households reported access to social support networks or community resources as a primary unmet need in 44% of cases, while around 40% of Ethiopian and Sudanese households, as well as female HoH, identified access to financial services or credit as a key unmet need. Additionally, Somali households (42%) and Sudanese households (32%) highlighted access to markets for selling goods or services as an unmet need.

Figure 21: Proportion of households by main unmet livelihood needs (multiple choice: total may exceed 100%)



When asked to rank their three main unmet livelihood needs, job opportunities were ranked first by approximately 80% of households across countries of origin, household head gender, and registration status. Access to training or skills development programs was ranked second by about 50% of all households. However, for Sudanese households, the responses were more varied, with 38% mentioning training or skills development programs and 32% highlighting access to markets for selling goods or services as their second main unmet need. For the third most cited unmet need, responses were more diverse, with 24% of households reporting a need for access to social support networks or community resources, and another 24% mentioning access to training or skills development programs.

Newly arrived refugees and asylum-seekers in Greater Kampala face high unemployment rates, relying primarily on informal or irregular work to survive. While remittances and family/friends support play a critical role, limited access to formal employment and business opportunities prevent newly arrived refugees and asylum-seekers from achieving financial independence. These economic challenges underscore the need for more robust livelihood support systems in the city and its periphery.

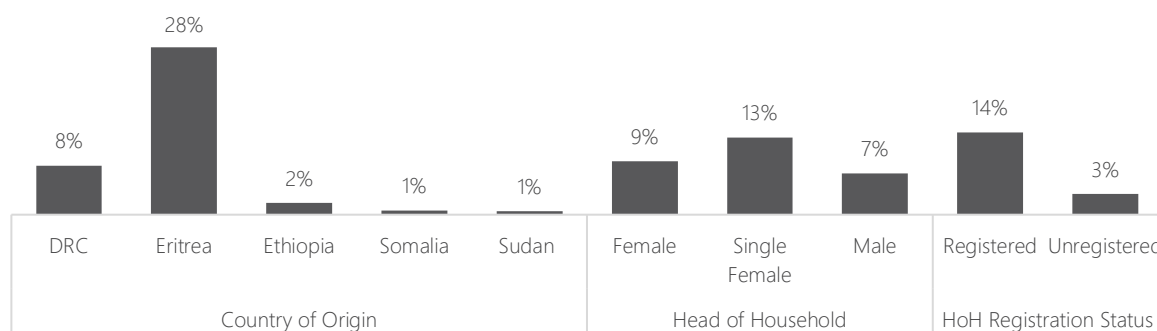
Financial Services

This section focuses on the savings and debt of newly arrived households in Greater Kampala, as well as the barriers refugees encounter when accessing financial services, including banking, loans, and savings. It also dives into how the lack of documentation affects refugees' and asylum-seekers' ability to engage in economic activities.

Savings

Just **11% of newly arrived households overall in Greater Kampala reported having savings**, with key differences observed across countries of origin, gender, and registration status of the head of households (presented in Figure 22). Over a quarter of Eritrean households reported having savings as well as 8% of Congolese households, while few households reported savings among Ethiopian, Somali, and Sudanese households. Female-headed and single-female-headed households more frequently reported having savings compared to male-headed households. Additionally, households led by an unregistered HoH less often reported having savings than those led by a registered HoH.

Figure 22: Proportion of households with savings, by country of origin, gender and registration status of the head of household



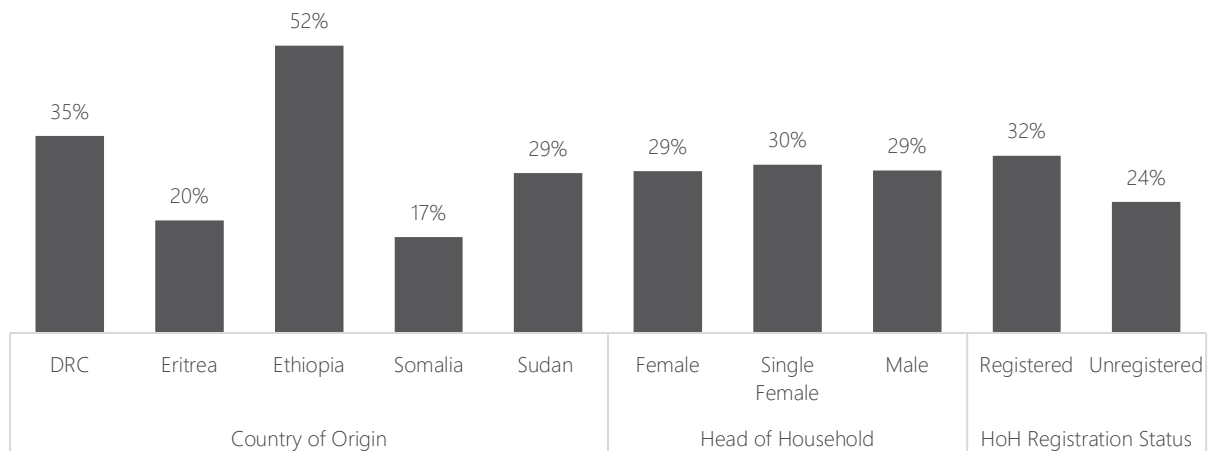
Among the 11% of households with reported savings (n=68), the average amount was **434,475 UGX** (about \$121 USD). Disparities were observed across countries of origin, with Eritrean households (n=35) reporting savings that were 22% higher than the overall average. In contrast, Congolese (n=16) and Sudanese (n=4) households reported average savings approximately 70% lower than the overall average, and Somali households (n=9) reported average savings 84% lower than the overall average. Single female-headed households (n=9) reported average savings 18% higher than the overall average, while female-headed households (n=29) reported savings 36% lower than the overall average. Households (n=16) led by an unregistered HoH reported average savings 65% lower than the overall average.

Of the households that declared savings (n=68), 83% reported that their savings would last for 1 to 3 months, 15% for 4 to 6 months, and only 1% for more than a year. Interestingly, while Eritrean households had the highest average savings declared (529,833 UGX or \$147 USD), the majority indicated that this would only last for 1 to 3 months. In contrast, Somali households, had the lowest average savings declared (69,167 UGX or \$20 USD), yet 7 out of 9 households mentioned this amount can last for more than a year.

Debt

When asked about debt, **30% of newly arrived households reported having debt**, with key differences observed across countries of origin and registration status of the head of households (as presented Figure 23). While almost no Ethiopian and Sudanese households reported having savings, more than half of Ethiopian households and nearly one-third of Sudanese households indicated that they had debt.

Figure 23: Proportion of households with a debt, by country of origin, gender and registration status of the head of household



Among the 30% of households with debt (n=294), the average amount was **565,469 UGX** (about \$157 USD). As shown in figure 24, disparities were observed across countries of origin and household types, with Sudanese households (n=80) reporting an average debt of 1,980,921 UGX (about \$551 USD), which was 350% of the overall average. Eritrean households (n=32) reported an average debt of 179,801 UGX (about \$50 USD), only 31% of the overall average, while Ethiopian households (n=64) reported an average debt of 332,950 UGX (about \$93 USD), 59% of the overall average. Congolese and Somali households reported averages closer to the overall average. Male (n=172) and female-headed households (n=119) reported an average amount comparable to the overall average, unlike single-female-headed households who had an average debt of 141% of the overall average. Households with an unregistered head of household (n=80) reported an average debt 132% of the overall average, much higher than households with a registered head (n=211), who were closer (92%) to the overall average debt.

Figure 24: Average amount of debt (UGX) among households who reported having debt, by country of origin, gender and registration status of the head of household

[subset: % of households with a debt, n=291]

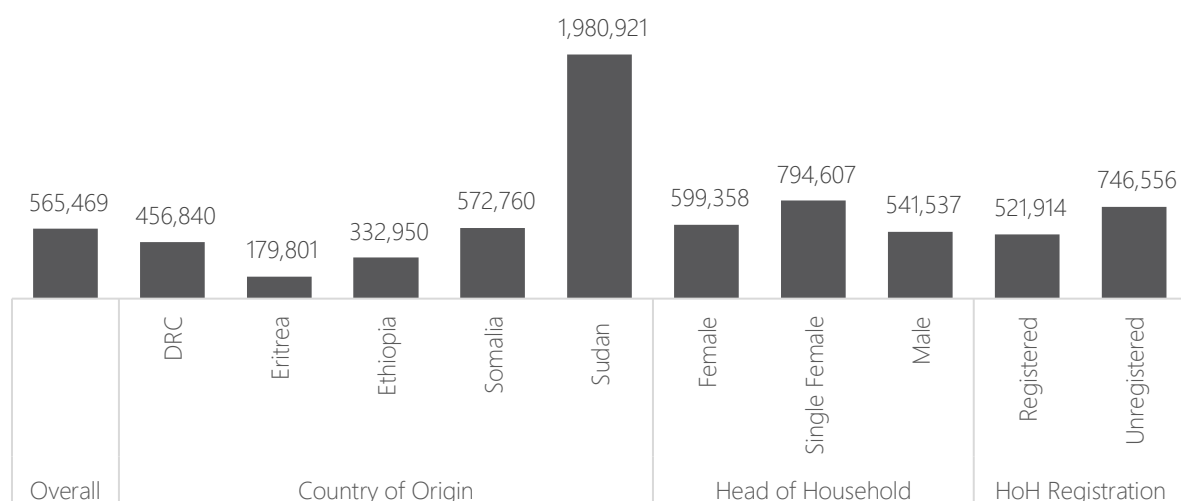


Table 10: Proportion of households with a debt, by reasons for debt, by country of origin (multiple choice: total may exceed 100%)

[subset: % of households with a debt, n=291]

	Overall (n=291)	DRC (n=60)	Eritrea (n=32)	Ethiopia (n=64)	Somalia (n=55)	Sudan (n=80)
Pay for food	60%	63%	19%	74%	99%	66%
Pay for accommodation/rent	46%	29%	51%	51%	75%	55%
Pay for health services	29%	38%	6%	16%	73%	41%
Pay for school fees and/or material	11%	1%	15%	7%	17%	32%
Cash flow to start a business	5%	9%	0%	0%	0%	17%

0% 100%

As presented in

Table 10, three-fifths of the newly arrived households with debt (n=294) reported taking a loan to cover food expenses, while nearly half indicated accommodation/rent purposes. Overall, newly arrived households in Greater Kampala are incurring debt to afford basic services such as food, accommodation, healthcare, and education. Among Congolese households, paying for healthcare services was more frequently mentioned than paying for accommodation/rent. Notably, 21% of Somali households reported taking a loan to repay previous debts.

When asked to rank the three main reasons for taking a loan, 39% of households with debt (n=294) identified paying for food as the **primary reason**. This varied significantly for Eritrean households (n=32), where 40% stated that paying for accommodation/rent was the main reason for taking a loan. Regarding the second most common reason, 35% of households mentioned both paying for food and accommodation/rent. For the third reason, 45% of households reported paying for health services as their primary reason for taking a loan.

Lastly, only **4% of households took out a formal loan in the six months prior to data collection**. Of these households (n=47), about half obtained a loan from financial services provided by members of their community, and 20% took a loan from a mobile money agent. Additionally, **8% of households faced challenges in receiving loans from financial service providers during the same period**. Of

these households (n=76), 53% reported missing documents as a barrier to accessing loans, 46% cited language barriers, and 20% stated that their refugee documentation was not accepted. These challenges were consistent across countries of origin, gender, and registration status of the HoH, with a few exceptions. Missing documents were particularly mentioned by 79% of households with an unregistered HoH (n=24) and by 65% of Somali households (n=11) that experienced challenges.

Overall, **the average amount of debt of new arrivals in Greater Kampala exceeds the average amount of savings**. This suggests that many households are in state of financial distress, with debt levels surpassing their ability to make ends meet and save. Sudanese households reported the highest level of average debt, indicating a particular severe financial burden. Households led by an unregistered HoH less frequently reported having savings and more frequently reported having higher debt, suggesting registration status might influence financial stability, potentially affecting access to resources or formal financial systems. Additionally, most households that took out a loan were in debt to pay for basic services, further highlighting the vulnerability of new arrivals.

Newly arrived households in Greater Kampala report more debt than savings and face significant barriers to financial inclusion, with many unable to open bank accounts or access loans due to a lack of documentation. This exclusion restricts their ability to save, invest, or build economic stability. The limited access to financial services highlights the need for financial systems that are more accessible to refugees and asylum-seekers.

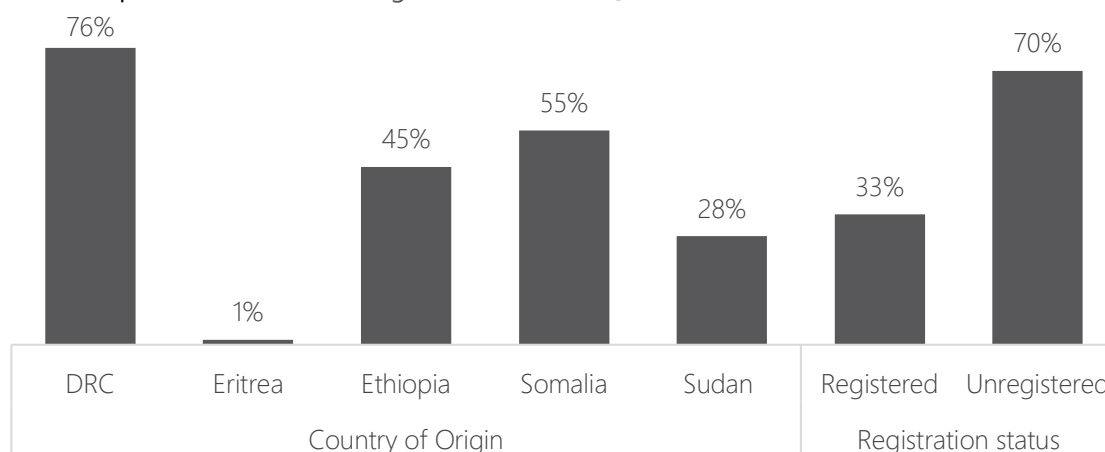
Education

This section will explore the enrolment and attendance of newly arrived refugees and asylum seekers in Greater Kampala, as well as the challenges they face in accessing education in the region, including barriers related to cost, legal status, and school enrolment. It also highlights the significance of education as a key factor influencing refugees' decision to settle in these localities..

Of the individuals aged 5 to 17 (n=623), more than half in Greater Kampala had achieved a primary level education, 16% pre-primary level, 14% lower secondary, and 4% lower secondary and upper secondary level. However, about **half were not enrolled in any school for the 2023-2024 school year**. This rose to 76% for Congolese and 70% for unregistered individuals aged 5 to 17 years old (presented in Figure 25). Among Sudanese individuals aged 5 to 17 living in Wakiso (n=26), more than half were not enrolled, while those living in Mukono (n=57) were almost all enrolled.

Figure 25: Proportion of individuals aged 5 to 17 not enrolled in a formal school for the 2023-2024 school year, by country of origin and registration status

[subset: Proportion of individuals aged 5 to 17, n=623]



For those that were enrolled in the 2023-2024 school year (n=393), only 3.5% were not attending regularly. Of those (n=31), the inability to afford education related costs such as tuition and supplies, was the primary reason mentioned (82%) for why they did not attend regularly.

74%

of the individuals not enrolled in any schools for the 2023-2024 school year (n=230) cited inability to afford education-related costs, such as tuition and supplies, as the primary barrier.

Additionally, 13% of individuals were not enrolled in a formal school for the 2023-2024 school year due to a lack of refugee or asylum-seeker status documentation. This affected half of Somali individuals (n=52) and one-quarter for unregistered individuals (n=93). For Ethiopian individuals (n=10), language barriers were the primary reason cited for half of the students.

Concerning individuals aged 5 to 17 enrolled in a school for the 2023-2024 school year (n=393), about half attended private school and the other half attended government public schools. For unregistered (n=36), Eritrean (n=17), Ethiopian (n=19) and Somali (n=25) individuals, the majority attended private schools, while for Sudanese individuals (n=306), 63% attended government public schools. The reasons for choosing these schools are presented in Table 11.

Table 11: Proportion of children aged 5 to 17 years old enrolled in a formal school for the 2023-2024 school year, by reason for choosing this education facility (multiple choice: total may exceed 100%)

	Overall (n=188)	DRC (n=26)	Eritrea (n=17)	Ethiopia (n=19)	Somalia (n=25)	Sudan (n=305)
Lower fees	53%	58%	58%	11%	7%	65%
Distance to school	35%	42%	73%	50%	32%	24%
Better quality education	26%	27%	15%	63%	10%	28%
Did not require refugee ID	9%	7%	0%	0%	61%	0%
They accept refugees	8%	19%	22%	14%	10%	2%
Reduced fees for refugees	7%	24%	23%	6%	7%	1%

0%

100%

Regarding individuals over 18 years old, only 4% reported attending a tertiary/higher education program at any time during the 2023-2024 school year. This was mostly observed among Somali individuals (n=209), with 11% reporting participation. Of those individuals over 18 attending a tertiary/higher education program during the 2023-2024 school year (n=71), 49% attended university, 40% participated in vocational training, and 11% attended technical training.

11%

of the individuals over 18 years old reported attending or having attended vocational or technical training at a Refugee Led Organisation (RLO) or Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) in the 3 months prior to data collection.

Regarding heads of households (HoH) and education, almost half (44%) of HoHs reportedly obtained upper secondary (or a self-reported equivalent), 21% had finished a tertiary/university diploma, 12% lower secondary, 9% primary, and 7% reportedly had no formal education at all. Sudanese (65%) and Ethiopian (47%) HoHs were most-often reported to have obtained a tertiary or university degree.

Male and female HoHs were generally reported to have obtained similar levels of education. However, among single female HoHs (n=118), almost all registered single female HoHs (n=92) reportedly had obtained some level of formal education, almost half of unregistered single female HoHs (n=26) reportedly lacked any form of formal education.

Education represents a key priority for many newly arrived households in Greater Kampala, but access to schooling remains limited due to financial barriers and the lack of documentation, especially among unregistered refugees. While households emphasize education, especially Sudanese households, as a reason for relocating, many children still face significant challenges in enrolling and attending school regularly.

Health

This section discusses the challenges newly arrived households in Greater Kampala face in accessing healthcare services, focusing on availability, affordability, and the impact of legal status on health outcomes. It also addresses the need for improved healthcare access for vulnerable refugees and asylum-seekers, including unregistered individuals.

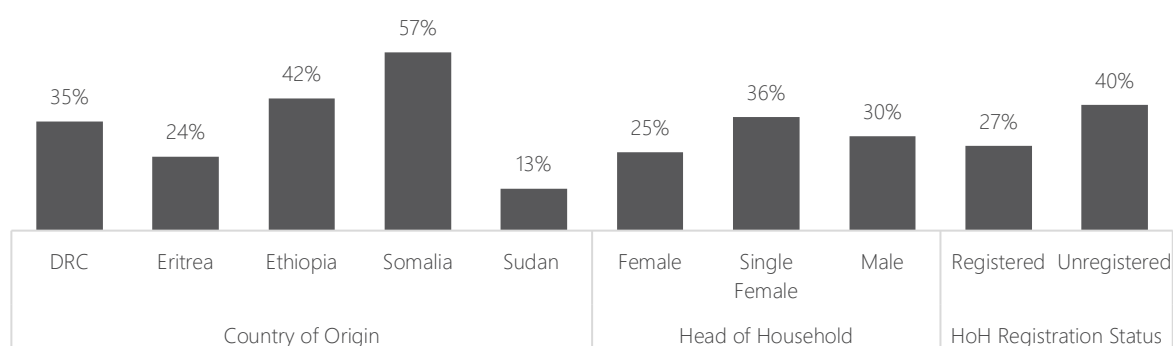
Of the newly arrived households in Greater Kampala, 35% reported having a healthcare need in the three months prior to data collection and required access to healthcare. This was particularly true for **Sudanese and Congolese households, with 82% of Sudanese households and 53% of Congolese households mentioning they had a healthcare need**. In contrast, only 7% of Eritrean households reported similar needs.

Of the households that had a healthcare need and were able to meet their needs (n=203), 39% sought healthcare from government health centers, followed by 22% at private hospitals and 20% at drug shops/pharmacies. This varied across countries of origin, with Congolese households (n=59) seeking health care at drug shops/pharmacies (38%) and private hospitals (31%). Looking at specific populations, half of the single-female-headed households (n=39) sought healthcare from government health centers whereas 30% households with an unregistered HoH (n=36) turned to private hospitals as their top choice, likely due to the lack of documentation.

Lower costs (64%) were the most common reason cited by households that were able to meet their healthcare needs (n=203) for choosing the facilities outlined above, followed by distance to the facility (29%) and better quality services (16%). However, for Ethiopian households (n=26), language was the most important factor when choosing a healthcare facility, with 59% of Ethiopian households citing this factor.

Figure 26: Proportion of households with a healthcare need and needed to access healthcare in the 3 months prior to data collection, that could not get their need met (unmet healthcare need), by country of origin, gender and registration status of the head of household

[subset: % of households with a healthcare need who needed access to healthcare, n=321]



Of the households reporting a healthcare need (n=321), **31% reported not being able to access the required healthcare when needed**. This varies according to the country of origin, gender, and registration of the head of household, as presented in Figure 26. More than half of Somali households that reported a health need (n=34) were not able to obtain healthcare when they needed it, while

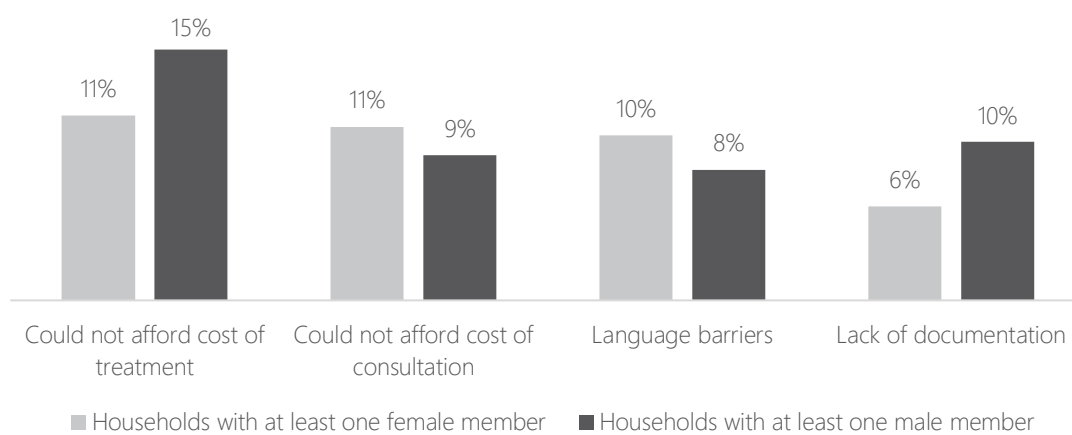
about 40% of single female-headed households (n=62) and households with an unregistered HoH (n=79) declared the same.

For those that were unable to access health when needed (n=113), 47% of households reported it was for a consultation or drug for acute illness, such as fever and diarrhoea, 34% mentioned it was for a preventative consultation/check-up and 31% reported it was a consultation or drugs for chronic illness, such as diabetes and hypertension. This varies for Sudanese households (n=32), who reported they unmet needs was more often related to preventative consultations/check-ups (55%) and consultations or drugs for chronic illness (44%) than for acute illness.

Figure 27: Proportion of households with at least one female or male member facing barriers to health care, by type of barriers

[subset: Proportion of households with at least one female member, n=713]

[subset: Proportion of households with at least one male member, n=736]



For households with at least one female member (n=713) or male member (n=736), **35% reported facing barriers to accessing healthcare**. The barriers mentioned were similar for both types of households, with difficulty affording treatment or consultations being the most commonly cited by both. The lack of documentation was slightly more frequently mentioned by households with at least one male member (presented in Figure 27).

Eritrean households reported the fewest barriers, with only 10% of households with female members (n=135) and 5% of households with male members (n=128) citing barriers to accessing healthcare. Approximately 50% of Congolese, Ethiopian, Somali, Sudanese, single-female-headed households, and households with an unregistered HoH, with at least one female or male member, reported facing barriers. The barriers mentioned were largely similar to those presented in Figure 27, with limited exceptions. Sudanese households with at least one female or male member more frequently reported language barriers (31%), while Somali households and households with an unregistered HoH more frequently reported the lack of documentation. This corresponds with the fact that Somali households reported having the fewest registered individuals within a household, as shown in Figure 6. Specifically, 14% of Somali households (n=151) and 20% of households with an unregistered HoH (n=191) with at least one female member reported the lack of documentation as a barrier. For households with at least one male member, this increased to 40% of Somali households (n=151) and 33% of households with an unregistered HoH (n=191).

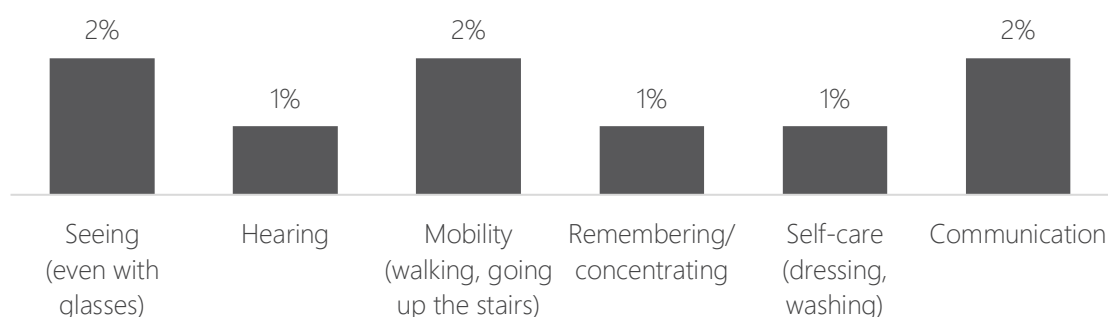
Newly arrived households in Greater Kampala face substantial barriers in accessing healthcare, with many unable to afford medical services or find adequate treatment due to overcrowded and underfunded facilities. Those without legal documentation are especially vulnerable, as they often cannot access basic healthcare services. Expanding healthcare access and improving service delivery are essential to meeting the needs of the newly arrived population.

Persons with Disabilities (PWDs)

This section focuses on the challenges and needs of newly arrived persons with disabilities (PWDs) in Greater Kampala, highlighting the barriers they face in accessing services such as education, livelihoods, health care, and participating in community life and daily activities. In the context of surveys, disabilities are commonly determined through the use of the [Washington Group Short-Set \(WGSS\)](#) module, developed by the Washington Group for Disability Statistics. The module entails asking the household respondent, for every individual age five or above, about the degree to which a person has difficulties (e.g., no difficulties, some difficulty, a lot of difficulty, etc.) in several functional (physical or cognitive) domains, such as seeing, hearing, self-care, remembering or concentrating. For this assessment, Humanity & Inclusion provided training to surveying staff from IMPACT-REACH, NRC, and JRS on the correct conduct of this module. Following data cleaning, computation and analysis, each individual is scored. A WGSS score of 3 or above is considered a disability.

Figure 28: Proportion of individuals over 5 years old by physical/cognitive difficulties (WGSS 3 or above) per WGSS domain at the time of being interviewed, by type of function

[subset: Proportion of individuals over 5 years old, n=1982]



As mentioned in the Demographics section, about 23% of households reported having at least one member of their household aged five or above with a disability level 3 or above³², while 12% reported that the head of household had a disability level 3 or above.

KIs identified critical needs for refugees with disabilities in accessing medical assistance, specialized aids like wheelchairs and walking sticks, and cash-based support to meet their basic needs. Many PWDs require support devices to assist with mobility and daily tasks, while others face barriers to education and housing, as facilities are often not disability-friendly. Psychosocial support is also crucial to help PWDs cope with isolation and stigma. KIs emphasized that there is a strong need for financial support to help PWDs sustain themselves, as many face challenges in accessing employment or self-employment opportunities due to discrimination or lack of skills, or encounter difficulties with fully integrating into society.

Newly arrived people with disabilities in Greater Kampala face multiple challenges, including difficult access to education, healthcare, lack of financial support and awareness on where to access specialized services. The lack of accessible infrastructure and specialized support systems further marginalizes them. Ensuring inclusion and equal access to services for PWDs is crucial to improving their quality of life.

³² Disability level 3 means a severe disability, the individual has major difficulty in performing most activities and may require significant assistance.

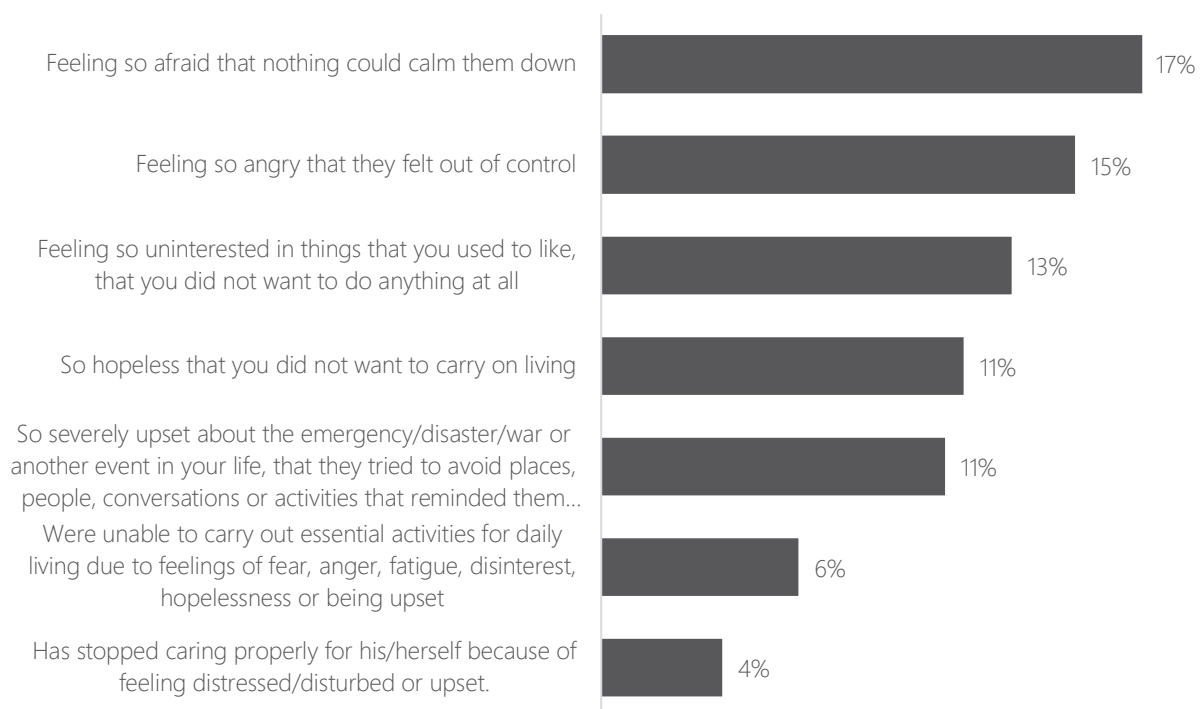
Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS)

This section dives into the mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) situation of newly arrived households in Greater Kampala, focusing on the type of services available, needs and challenges to access those said services.

Just under half of the newly arrived households in Greater Kampala reported household members facing mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) difficulties in the 3 months prior to data collection. This varies for Congolese and Ethiopian households, and households with an unregistered HoH, with 76% of Congolese and 50% of Ethiopian households, and 64% of households with an unregistered HoH reporting household members facing MHPSS difficulties in the 3 months prior to data collection.

The MHPSS difficulties reported were similar across households of different countries of origin, gender, and registration status of the HoH, with “feeling so afraid that nothing could calm them down” being the most commonly reported MHPSS difficulty by households (presented in Figure 29). A key difference was that the feeling of being “severely upset about the emergency/war or another life event, leading the person to avoid places, people, conversations, or activities that reminded them of such events”, was mentioned by 31% of Ethiopian households (n=172). Additionally, feelings of hopelessness, where the individual does not want to carry on living, was reported by 23% of Congolese households (n=158) and 22% of households with an unregistered head of household (HoH) (n=209).

Figure 29: Proportion of households with members experiencing MHPSS difficulties, in the 3 months prior to data collection (multiple choice: total may exceed 100%)



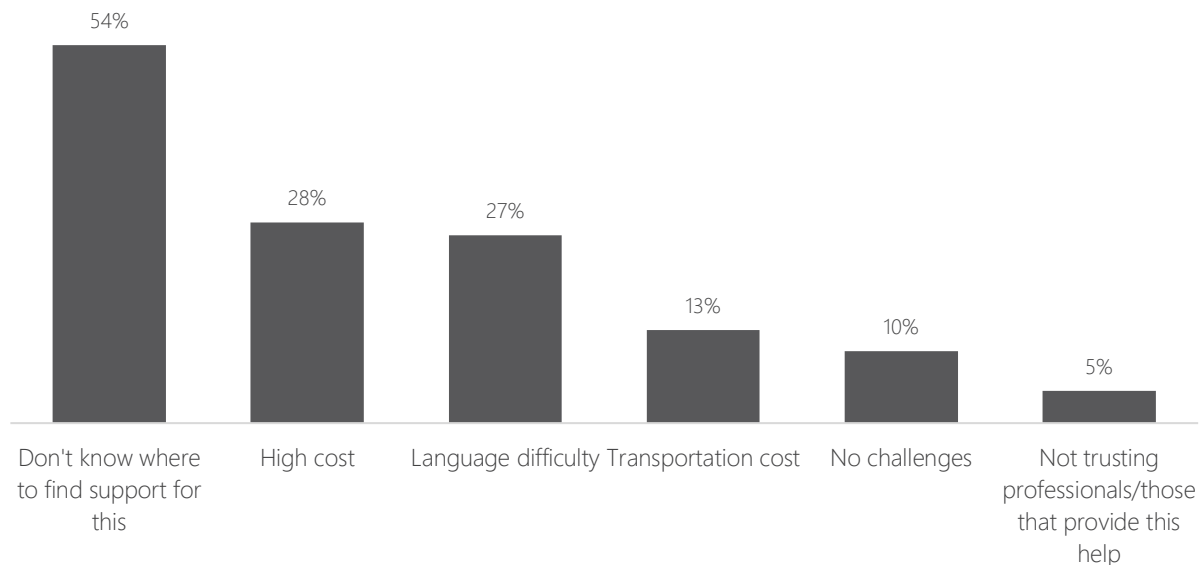
Of the households that reported MHPSS difficulties (n=315), **35% tried to find support**. Among households with an unregistered HoH (n=14), 20% were Congolese, 13% Sudanese, and 8% Somali.

Of the households that reported MHPSS difficulties and sought support (n=93), 78% turned to religious leaders/clergy and 61% sought help from friends and family. A total of 27 out of 29 Congolese households reported seeking support from friends and family. In contrast, 26 out of 28 Ethiopian households sought more support from religious leaders/clergy. Most households (n=93)

reported satisfaction with the help they received with only 3% of households reporting they were dissatisfied with the support received.

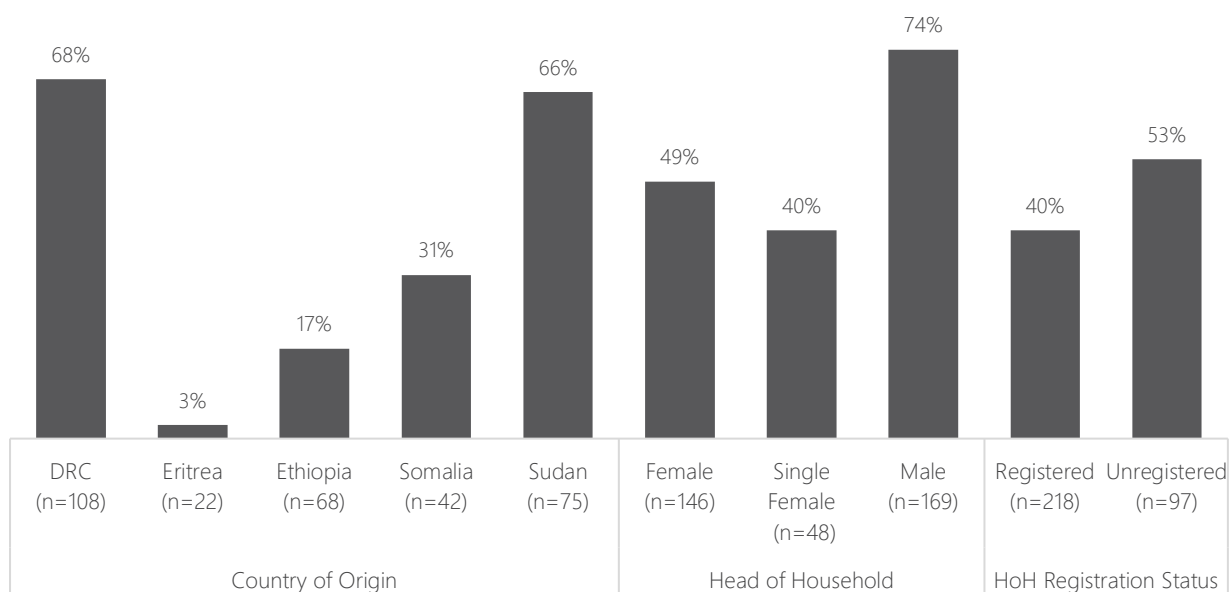
Figure 30: Proportion of households with members experiencing MHPSS difficulties, by type of challenge in accessing the needed support (multiple choice: total may exceed 100%)

[subset: % of households with members experiencing MHPSS difficulties, n=315]



Of the households with members experiencing MHPSS difficulties (n=315), 90% reported facing challenges in accessing the needed support. More than half of these households stated they did not know where to find the required support, while one-quarter cited high costs and language difficulties as barriers to accessing help (presented in Figure 30). Eritrean (n=22) and Ethiopian (n=28) households reported facing more language difficulties, with about half of each group citing this issue. In contrast, for Somali (n=42) and Sudanese (n=75) households, transportation costs appeared to be a more significant barrier, with about 30% of both groups reporting this challenge.

Figure 31: Proportion of households with members experiencing MHPSS difficulties, who believe more support is needed for MHPSS difficulties



Lastly, of the households with members experiencing MHPSS difficulties (n=315), **44% believed more support is needed to help addressing their household members MHPSS needs**. Disaggregation by country of origin, gender and registration status of the head of households is presented in Figure 31. Approximately two-third of the Congolese (n=108) and Sudanese (n=75) households believed more support is needed, while more than half of households with an unregistered HoH (n=97) and 74% of male headed households (n=169) thought the same.

The mental health needs of newly arrived individuals in Kampala are substantial, with many dealing with trauma from conflict and displacement. However, MHPSS services are limited and often inaccessible, particularly for women and children. Expanding mental health support services is essential to address the growing psychosocial needs.

Protection

This section explores protection concerns among newly arrived households in Kampala and discusses the services available for reporting and addressing these issues.

Table 12 presents protection concerns, such as engaging in risky activities, losing a home, violent conflict etc. that newly arrived households in Greater Kampala felt concerned about at least once or twice in the 3 months prior to data collection.

Table 12: Proportion of households feeling concerned about the following issues at least once or twice in the three months prior to data collection, by country of origin (multiple choice: total may exceed 100%)

	Overall	DRC	Eritrea	Ethiopia	Somalia	Sudan
Engaging in risky activities	9%	21%	0%	2%	10%	11%
Losing their home	13%	29%	2%	6%	20%	7%
Violent conflict	13%	29%	1%	9%	14%	11%
Violence in the community	16%	32%	7%	8%	11%	13%
Kidnapping, detention or exploitation	10%	27%	1%	0%	11%	2%
Persecution or discrimination	15%	39%	2%	7%	10%	11%

0%  100%

The vast majority of households reported not being concerned with at least one member of their households **engaging in risky activities** in the last three months prior to data collection. Yet, 21% of Congolese households and households with an unregistered HoH reported feeling concerned with at least one of their household members engaging in risky activities in the last three months.

27%

of households indicated at least one female member of their household feeling unsafe at least once or twice in the 3 months prior to data collection. This was reported by 34% of Ethiopian and 33% of female-headed households.

Close to four-fifths of households reported not being aware or not knowing about specialized support services for women and girls in their community, while 15% were aware of psychosocial support for women and girls, and less than 10% were aware of recreational activities, reproductive services, and services for victims of violence for women and girls (presented in Figure 32). This trend was consistent across countries of origin, gender, and registration status of the head of household (HoH). Sudanese households were the exception, with only 37% reporting lack of awareness about specialized services for women and girls. They were much more aware of psychosocial support (62%), recreational activities

(55%), and reproductive health services (29%). Less than 5% of Congolese, Ethiopian, Somali households, and households with an unregistered HoH were aware of any support services for women and girls available in their community.

Figure 32: Proportion of households reporting awareness of specialized support services for women or girls available in their community (multiple choice: total may exceed 100%)



In terms of children's support towards household chores and income, results show that the vast majority of children aged 5-17 (n=623) do not engage in any kind of chores or work (93%), while 5% reportedly supported the household's domestic chores less than 14 hours per week, 1% more than 14 hours a week, and 1% reportedly helped out in a family business. No major differences between boys and girls, or children among different nationalities or registration status of the HoH were found.

Protection concerns regarding Housing Land and Property (HLP) are discussed in the [Housing](#) section.

Protection remains a key concern for newly arrived households in Greater Kampala, with many individuals, particularly women and children, facing risks of violence and exploitation. The lack of adequate protection mechanisms and support services makes it difficult for refugees to feel safe and secure. Strengthening protection systems is essential to ensuring the well-being of the most vulnerable.

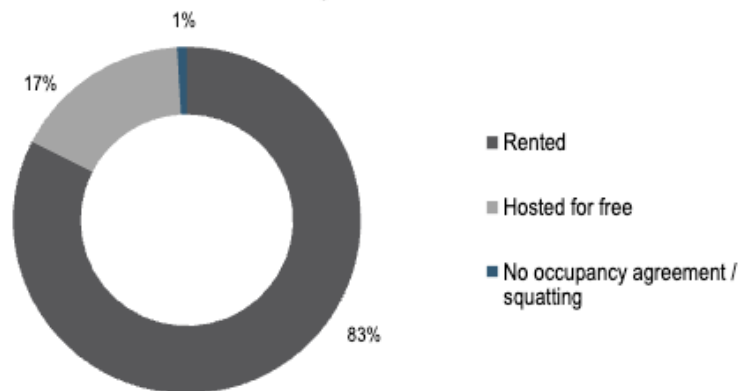
Housing

This section discusses the housing challenges newly arrived households face in Greater Kampala, including the high cost of rent, overcrowding, and discrimination. It also explores the impact of legal status on refugees' and asylum-seekers' ability to secure adequate housing.

The majority (**70%**) of newly arrived households in Kampala lived in individual housing, followed by 19% being hosted by friends or relatives, and 8% residing in shared accommodations (multiple households sharing one accommodation). A higher proportion of Congolese (41%), Somali (36%), and households with a single-female HoH (28%) and unregistered HoH (38%) were hosted by friends or relatives. This trend also held true for living in shared accommodations, with 13% of Congolese, 16% of Somali households, and households with an unregistered HoH reporting this living arrangement. These patterns suggested a potentially more vulnerable housing situation for Congolese and Somali households, as well as for households with an unregistered or single-female HoH. The higher proportion of unregistered household members in Congolese and Somali households, as shown in Figure 6, could potentially explain their more vulnerable housing situation.

More than **85% of households reported living in a solid/finished house** (with or without a corrugated iron roof). The exception was Somali households (n=150), with only 58% living in this type of accommodation, 15% lived in a solid/finished apartment and 10% in an unfinished/non-enclosed building. Almost one-fifth (18%) of households with an unregistered head of household (HoH) (n=207) reported that their solid/finished house lacked a corrugated iron roof, compared to 8% of households overall. It is also worth noting that 16% of Sudanese households (n=204) reported living in a solid/finished apartment.

Figure 33: Proportion of households by occupancy status



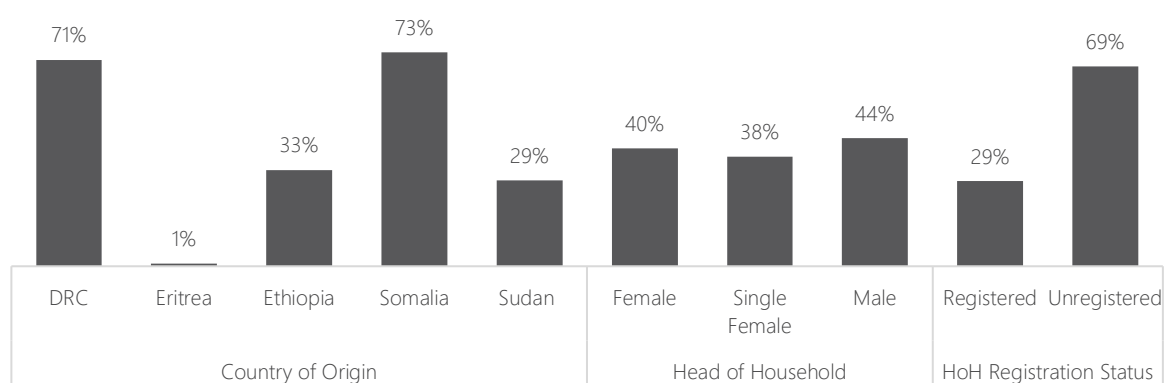
The **majority (83%) of households reported renting their housing**, while around 17% were hosted for free. Key differences were observed for Congolese (n=154), Somali (n=150), and households with an unregistered HoH (n=207), with 42% of Congolese households, 29% of Somali households, and 39% of households with an unregistered HoH reporting being hosted for free.

47%

of households who are renting their housing (n=374) reported having **no written agreement for their current accommodation**. This rose to 79% for households with an unregistered HoH (n=167) and 69% for Congolese and 97% for Somali households (n=130).

When asked if they felt confident about being able to continue residing in their current accommodation for the next three months after data collection, **39% of households said they were not sure at all**. As presented in Figure 34, this was reported by around 71% of Congolese (n=154) and 73% of Somali households (n=150), and 69% among households with an unregistered HoH (n=207), pointing again to weak tenure security and higher vulnerability of these groups. This points to the higher vulnerability these households face in accessing and securing accommodations in Greater Kampala.

Figure 34: Proportion of households feeling they could not continue to reside in their current housing situation for the next 3 months after data collection

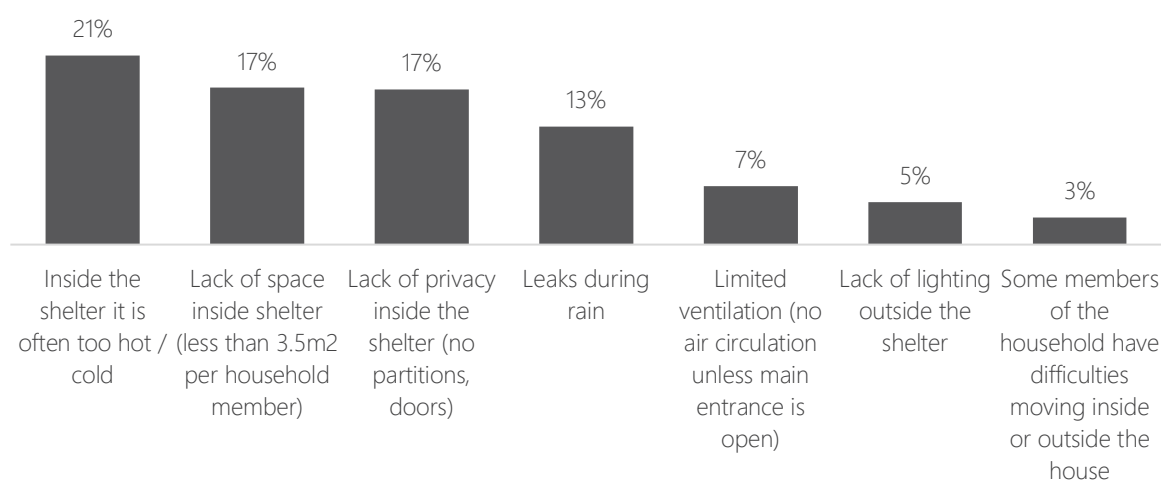


54%

of households reported having noticeable issues in their housing. This rose to about 60% for households with an unregistered HoH and 66% for Congolese and Somali households. Less households noticed issues in their housing in Entebbe and Mukono.

About one-fifth of households reported that their housing was often too hot or too cold inside, while 17% said their housing was too small for their family and lacked privacy (presented in Figure 35). Temperature-related issues were primarily mentioned by Sudanese households (53%), while the lack of space and privacy was cited by 40% of Congolese households and about 30% of Somali households and households with an unregistered HoH.

Figure 35: Proportion of households by type of reported housing issues (multiple choice: total may exceed 100%)



Newly arrived refugees are under the threshold for crowdedness (3 people sleeping in one room), at **1.7 person per room**. This more than doubled at 2.4 person per room for Sudanese households and 2.8 person per room for single-female-headed households.

On average, households spent 1,974,518 UGX (about \$550 USD) on accommodation (including rent, house rehabilitation, building shelter, and latrine materials) in the 6 months prior to data collection. Both Sudanese and Eritrean households reported spending more than the overall household average in the 6 months prior to data collection, with 52% more for Sudanese households and 35% more for Eritrean households. In contrast, households with an unregistered HoH, as well as Somali and Congolese households, reported spending 55% less than the overall household average on housing during the same period.

With regards to housing, land and property (HLP), 13% of households reported concerned about **losing their homes** at least once or twice in the three months prior to data collection. Congolese (29%) and Somali (20%) households had a higher level of tenure insecurity compared to other countries of origin. Additionally, this concern was also reported by 31% of households with an unregistered HoH. Tenure insecurity remains a significant challenge for a notable proportion of the refugee population. Overall, 13% of surveyed households reported having experienced concerns about the risk of losing their homes at least once or twice in the three months preceding data collection. These concerns reflect underlying issues related to insecure tenure arrangements, lack of formal documentation, and the precarious living conditions faced by many refugee families. The level of housing insecurity varied by nationality, with Congolese households reporting the highest levels of concern – 29% indicated fears of eviction. Somali households also expressed elevated insecurity, with 20% reporting similar fears. These findings suggest that certain nationalities may face more significant barriers to securing stable housing, potentially due to discrimination, lack of documentation, or limited access to legal housing arrangements.

In addition, households led by unregistered Heads of Household (HoH) were disproportionately affected, with 31% reporting concerns about losing their shelter. This highlights the critical role that registration and legal status play in ensuring access to stable housing and protection against forced eviction or displacement. Strengthening legal recognition and documentation, as well as targeted support for the most vulnerable groups, remains essential to enhancing HLP security across the refugee population.

"Landlords can evict us anytime, raise rent without notice, and we have nowhere to turn."

- KII, Refugee Community Leader, Sudan

Key informants (KI) reported challenges in renting accommodations across Greater Kampala, including lack of written tenancy agreements, high arbitrary rent increases, forced evictions and disputes with landowners. They noted that newly arrived households often live in overcrowded conditions with multiple families sharing small spaces to reduce costs. Accommodations often fail to meet humanitarian standards, lacking reliable water sources and proper facilities, which increases health risks. It was reported that unregistered and undocumented refugees and asylum seekers struggle to find landowners willing to rent and therefore often have to rely on brokers who inflate prices. This underscores the need for HLP legal services including awareness of rights, support with written tenancy agreements and assistance to prevent evictions and resolve disputes. Special provisions for vulnerable groups (e.g., single mothers, large families, the elderly, and individuals with disabilities) are also required to guarantee they have access to adequate housing.

Newly arrived households generally enjoy a safe and peaceful relationships with the host population of the assessed localities. The vast majority of the households reported not being worried about violent conflict (86%) and violence in the community (83%) in the three months before data collection and not fearing persecution (84%). Congolese households (29%) and households with an unregistered HoH (32%) were more concerned about these issues.

The majority of households (90%) were not concerned about kidnapping, detention or exploitation in the three months prior to data collection. More household felt less insecure in Kampala (7% respondents reported always being at risk) compared the other localities while Congolese (27%) and households with an unregistered HoH (29%) were more concerned about kidnapping, detention or exploitation in the three months prior to data collection than other countries of origin.

About 15% of households reported being concerned about **persecution or discrimination** (e.g., denial of access to basic services due to any reasons, such as nationality, ethnicity, religion, disability, etc.) in the three months prior to data collection. This was, again, more reported as a concern by Congolese (39%) and households with an unregistered HoH (33%).

Notwithstanding the generally safe relations, disputes linked to different cultures, ways of living and language barriers and HLP do occur in the community. Trust in community leaders and police varied among refugees, with some relying on community networks, while others expressed distrust due to concerns about fairness and transparency.

"Refugees often experience arguments due to language barriers and different cultural habits, and evictions and land disputes only increase the tension within the community."

- KII, LC1, Kampala

Housing is one of the most substantial challenges for newly arrived households in Greater Kampala, with many facing overcrowded living conditions and high rental prices. The high cost of housing, combined with limited documentation, makes it difficult for newly arrived households to secure stable and adequate accommodation. Addressing these issues is critical to improving refugees' overall living conditions in the city.

CONCLUSION

Key Findings

This report outlines the needs and vulnerabilities in a variety of sectors and themes among refugee and asylum-seeking households from five key countries of origin in Greater Kampala, who arrived in Uganda during or after January 2023, from a sample which was interviewed in November 2024.

New arrivals primarily chose Greater Kampala as a destination due to better access to services such as education, healthcare and livelihood opportunities. The urban environment seemed to provide greater prospects for employment and resources, which also translated for improved livelihood outcomes for most households. However, new arrivals continue to experience substantial barriers to access these services and opportunities, particularly unregistered households.

New arrivals in Greater Kampala are constrained by limited formal employment opportunities, and are also particularly dependent on remittances and support from friends and family. While the city offers more economic opportunities compared to rural areas, the high cost of living and lack of stable employment leave many refugees and asylum-seekers economically vulnerable. While some households reported savings, these are reported to last for a short time, while debt outweighs savings.

Legal protection of newly arrived refugees and asylum-seekers in Greater Kampala remains a challenge, with **many facing barriers to registration and civil documentation**. A large portion of households, particularly Congolese and Somali, struggle to register, leaving them more vulnerable and unable to access services. The complex and lengthy registration process exacerbates these challenges, leaving households vulnerable to exploitation, particularly when looking for accommodation, and unable to fully integrate into the urban environment.

Education access for newly arrived refugee and asylum-seeker children in Greater Kampala is relatively low, primarily due to financial barriers and the lack of documentation. Children from unregistered households struggle to attend school regularly or at all, with about half of children not being enrolled during the 2023-2024 school year. This was particularly the case for Congolese and Somali children.

Discussion

Uganda's urban refugees are anecdotally considered, and expected to be more economically stable and generally less vulnerable than refugees or asylum-seekers in Uganda's settlements. This expectation may, among other factors, stem from the financial ability implicitly required for these households to settle in Greater Kampala. The ability to do so goes hand-in-hand with the perception that these households are supported by remittances from abroad and support from friends and family in Uganda – a perception which holds true for a large proportion of households especially from certain nationalities according to this assessment. This perception of relative economic stability of refugees and asylum seekers in Greater Kampala (compared to those living in the settlements) is also hinged on expectations from the distinctions in nationalities among refugees or asylum seekers in the settlements and Greater Kampala, where many or most registered Eritrean, Ethiopian and Somali refugees or asylum-seekers, as well as Sudanese refugees, live (and can afford to live) in Greater Kampala, and many live in Kampala for closer access to third-country solutions. These nationalities are often assumed to have higher incomes and education, which this assessment's findings support.

However, newly arrived refugees and asylum-seekers in Greater Kampala, having fled from violence, persecution, and other security hazards in their own countries or countries of secondary displacement, nonetheless display specific vulnerabilities and needs. This assessment has shown that while assumptions about factors such as higher educational attainment and income than households in the settlements may be correct – e.g., when looking at results from other assessments such as the [Multi-Sector Needs Assessment](#) – this does not mean that the situation in which new arrivals find themselves

is tenable. Remittances from outside of Uganda – also a common source of income among urban refugees in [Mbarara](#) and [Adjumani Town](#) – and support from friends and family in Uganda are of course a favorable resource to have access to, but remain unsustainable as these are not self-generated, and may not last. Meanwhile, school attendance for children was found to be lower than in the settlements, mental health issues are pervasive, and opportunities are scarce, especially among households who struggle to find opportunities or meet the necessary requirements to perform the professions for which they were trained. Households continue to face barriers to registration and civil documentation, leaving many in limbo and without access to basic services, and at risk of exploitation.

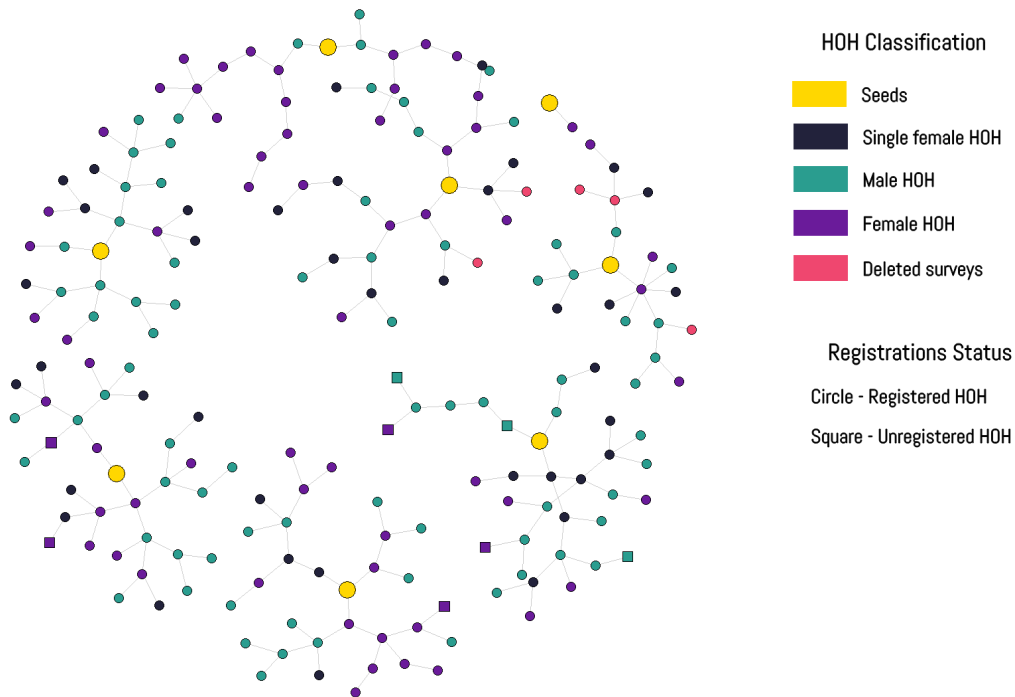
Given the general decrease in funding towards humanitarian causes in Uganda, as outlined in IMPACT-REACH/UNHCR's joint brief on [The Consequences of Reduced Funding in the Ugandan Refugee Response \(2025\)](#), new arrivals may well expect to see a decrease in assistance and access to services in Greater Kampala. Furthermore, this change in funding could entail settlement-based households to move towards urban areas in search for livelihoods. As a related and compounding factor, the Government of Uganda may face difficulty maintaining its registration capacity, despite the rate of arrivals not having subsided since January 2023: Uganda saw 94,000 new arrivals registered between late December 2024 and April 2025, totaling a caseload of nearly 1.9 million registered refugees and asylum-seekers (not counting those who remain unregistered).³³ Hence, it remains to be seen how the response adapts, how the trend of new arrivals develops, and how resources, in the context of the UCRRP 2026-29 generally and towards urban programming, can take into account the most pressing needs and the most efficient enablers among new arrivals and urban refugees more widely.

³³ UNHCR. 2024. [Uganda Operational Data Portal](#).

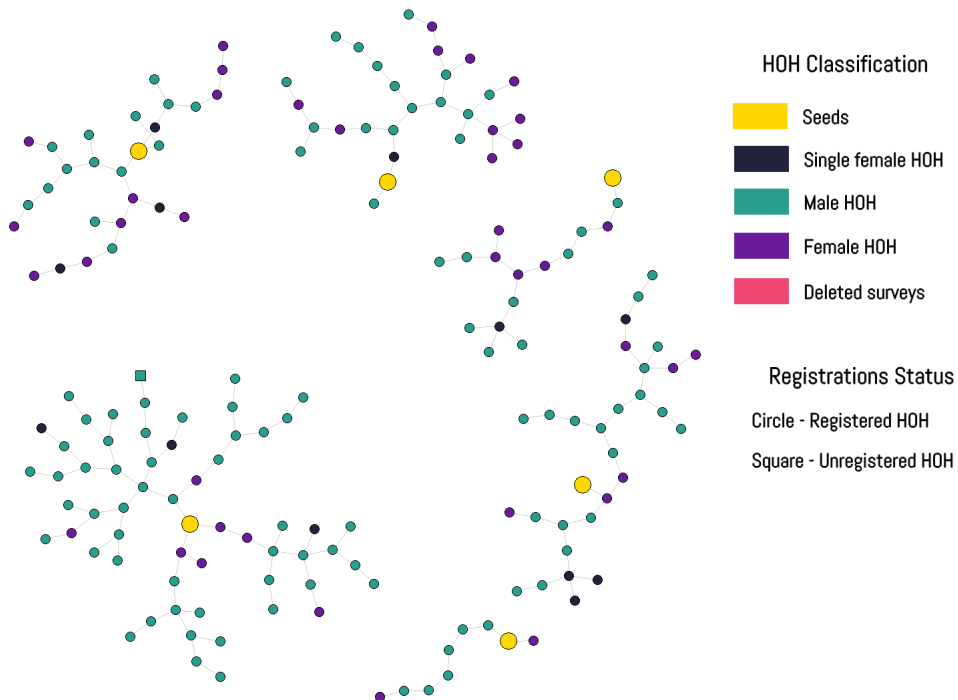
ANNEXES

Annex 1: Network recruitment chains by nationality

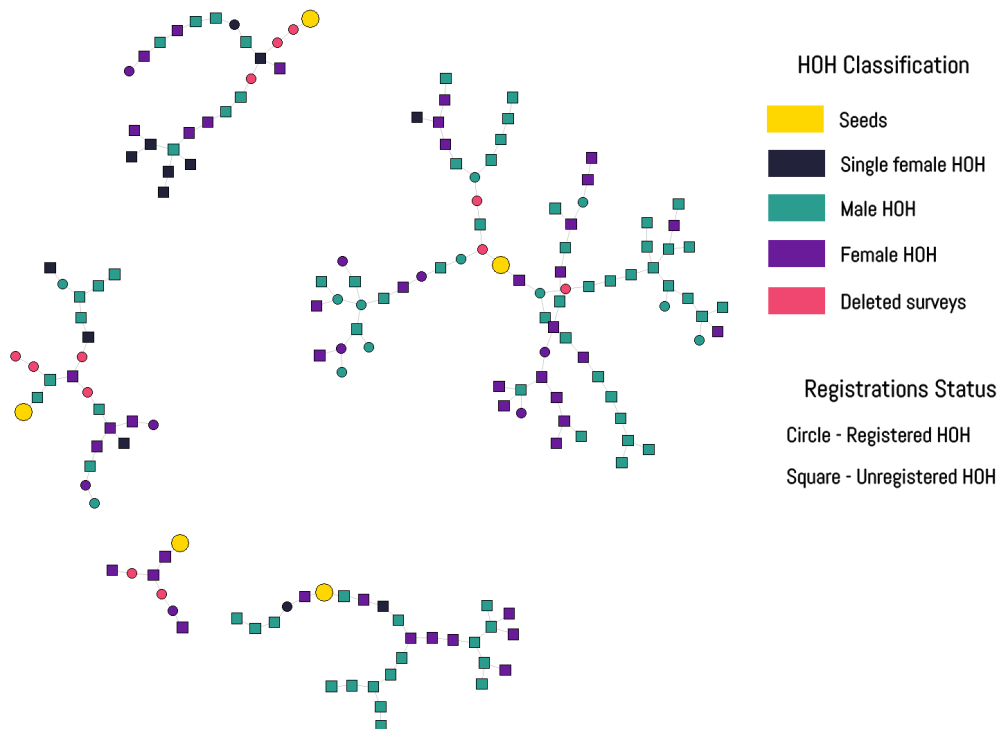
RDS Network by Civil and Registration Status of Heads of Household - Sudan



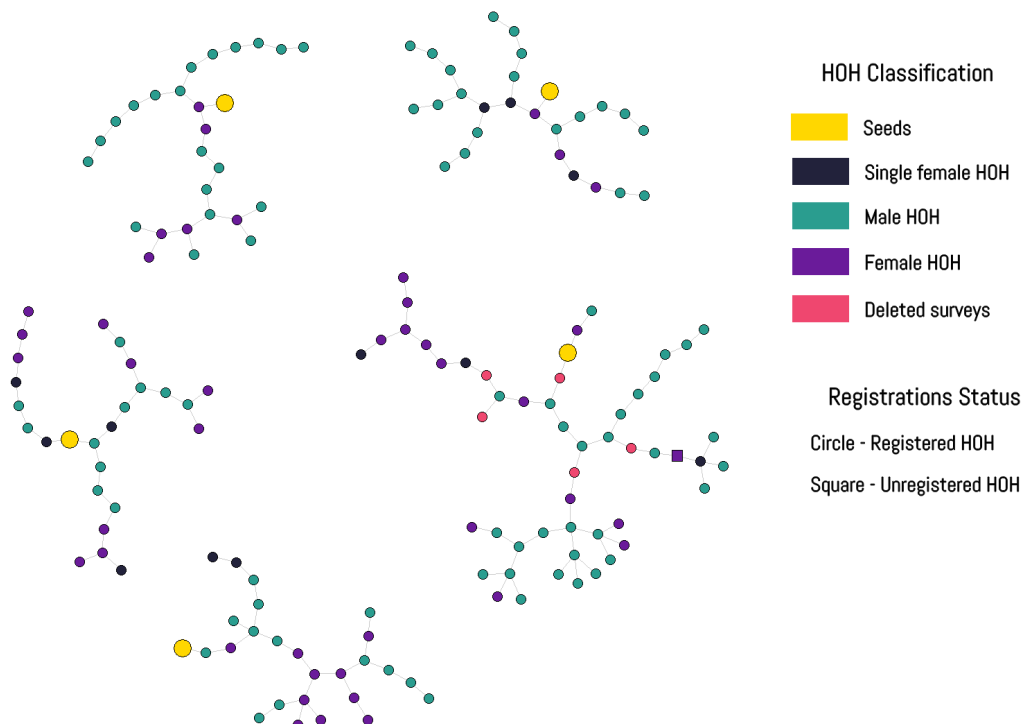
RDS Network by Civil and Registration Status of Heads of Household - Ethiopia



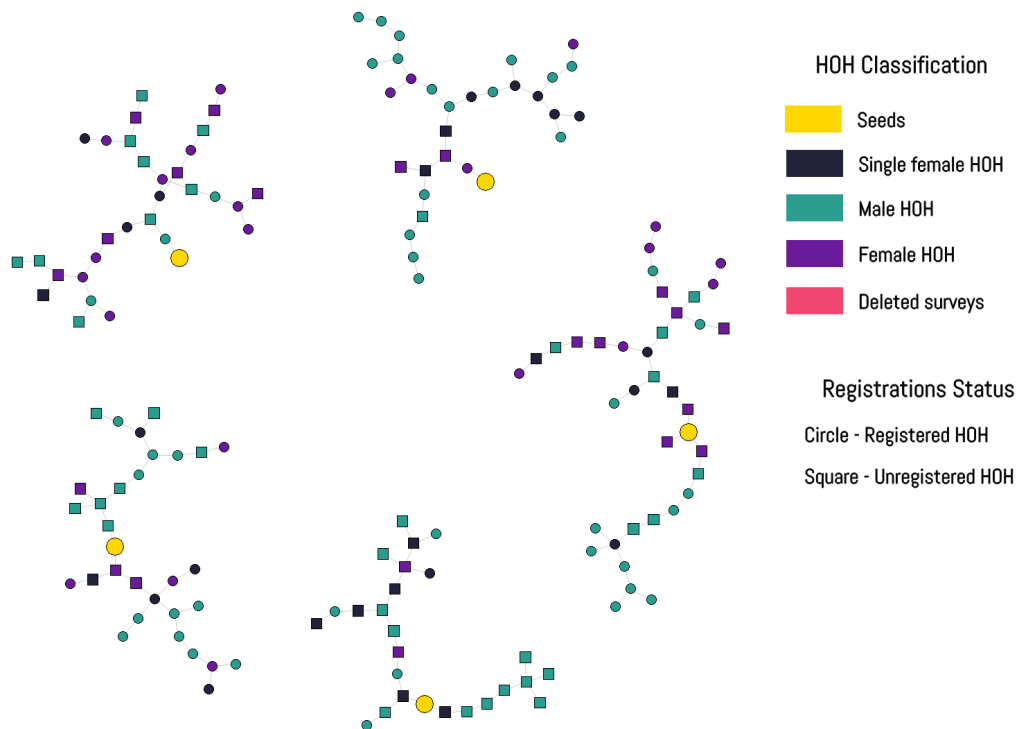
RDS Network by Civil and Registration Status of Heads of Household - Somalia



RDS Network by Civil and Registration Status of Heads of Household - Eritrea



RDS Network by Civil and Registration Status of Heads of Household - DRC



Annex 2: Demographic comparison of official population and RDS sample

UNHCR: Kampala Population Stats. (Nov. 2024)

Age	female	male	Total
0-4 years	3%	4%	7%
5-11 years	6%	6%	12%
12-17 years	4%	5%	9%
18-59 years	31%	39%	70%
60+ years	1%	1%	2%
Total	45%	55%	100%

REACH: Final RDS Sample Stats. (Nov. 2024)

Age	Female	Male	Total
0-4 years	0%	0%	1%
5-11 years	3%	3%	6%
12-17 years	4%	3%	7%
18-59 years	40%	37%	77%
60+ years	5%	4%	9%
Total	52%	48%	100%

Note: there are key differences between UNHCR's Kampala population statistics and the RDS sample's demographic statistics, in that UNHCR statistics comprise individuals from all households which are registered in Kampala, whereas the RDS sample comprises individuals from the sample's households which includes 1) only households who arrived in Uganda during or after January 2023, and 2) unregistered households. The differences in gender and age groups seen between the above tables may therefore be explained by these key differences, especially given the inclusion of unregistered households. These tend to be most prevalent among the Congolese and Somali communities. In relation, as explained in the Demographics section, household composition varies across nationalities.