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Strengthening Refugee and Host Community Self-Reliance in Kenya

Lessons from use of SRI by DRC Kenya



Introduction

Data from SRI from Kakuma and Dadaab demonstrate how the Self-Reliance Index (SRI) is used to measure progress toward self-reliance among refugees and host communities. The SRI goes beyond reporting outputs, offering a deeper understanding of household-level changes across livelihoods, basic needs, economic resilience, and social capital.

Kenya's displacement context has increasingly prioritized self-reliance, through national initiatives and county level initiatives in Turkana and Garissa which aims to transform refugee camps into integrated socioeconomic settlements by 2036.

SRI in Kenya (since 2024)

Total reach: 35,000+ refugees and host community members

SRI data from 1,200 households

2 projects in Kakuma (14,386 participants)

2 projects in Dadaab/Garissa (21,300+ participants)

SRI Results by Domain

Figure 1: Dadaab

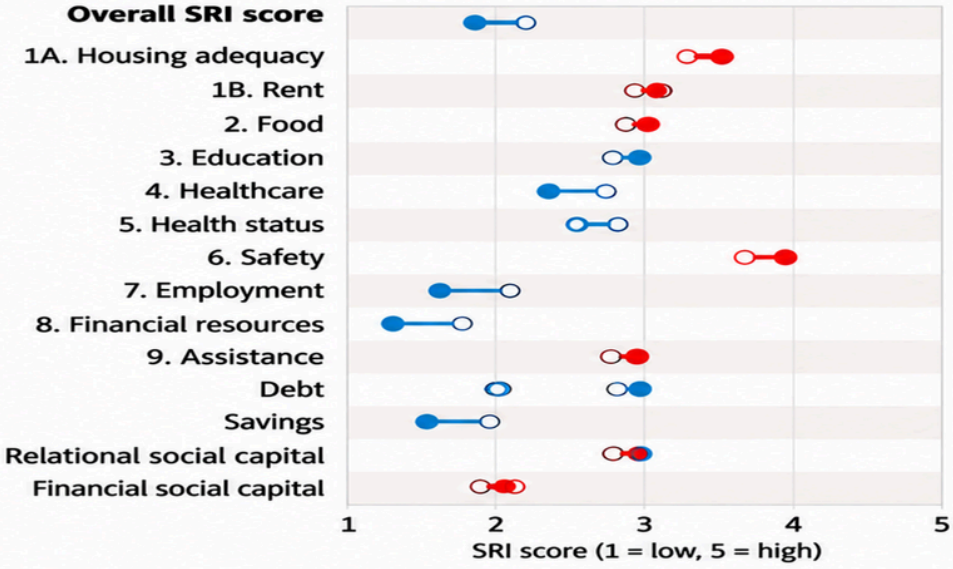
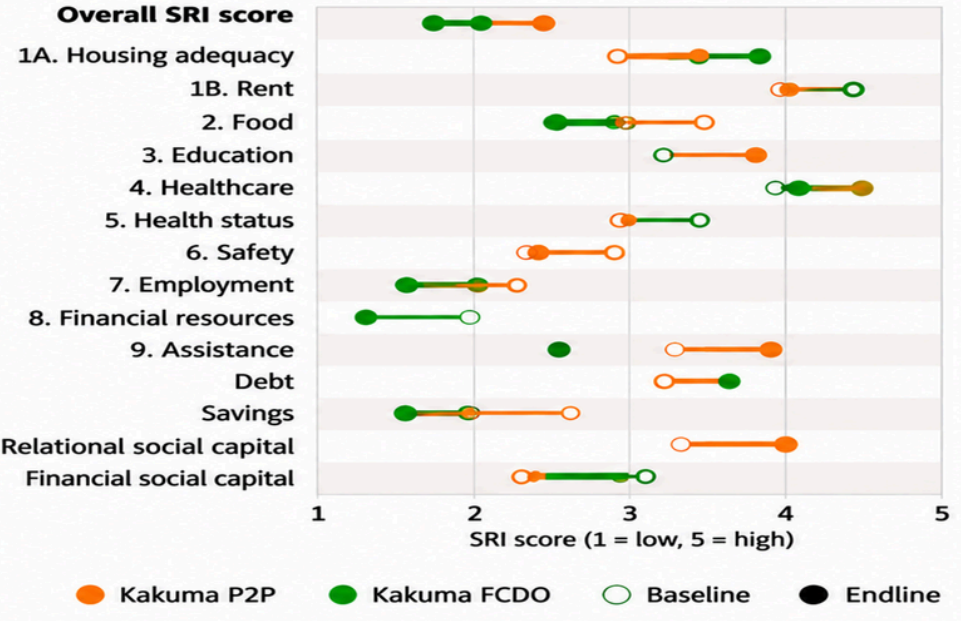


Figure 2: Kakuma (P2P and FCDO cohorts)



Social Capital and Community Networks

305
VSLAs supported in Kakuma and Dadaab

Stronger linkages between businesses and financial institutions

3,000+
people reached through enabling environments and one-stop-shop initiatives

Key results: Improving economic self-reliance

Across the programmes, the most notable improvements were recorded in economic self-reliance domains.

Employment and Livelihoods

Evidence from both Kakuma and Garissa shows significant gains in employment outcomes.

Employment domain (Kakuma)

1.99 Baseline ▶ **2.43** Endline

Significant increase in employment outcomes

Savings and Financial Resilience

Savings emerged as one of the strongest-performing SRI domains.

Savings score (P2P)

1.72 Baseline ▶ **2.49** Endline

One of the largest gains across all domains

Key programme achievements

1,374 TVET graduates
(564 in Kakuma, 810 in Dadaab)

Income from skills:
55% (P2P) and 41% (FCDO) in Kakuma; 46% in Dadaab transitioned to employment

Monthly earnings:
KES 1,000 → 7,600 (Kakuma)
KES 5,800 (Dadaab)

~1,000 jobs created
through business development

Climate-smart agriculture (Dadaab):
KES 943 (loss) → KES 2,936 (gain)
+68.2% increase in household savings

Dadaab findings:

Net household savings increasedKES 1,940 → KES 3,602

22%
growth in savings among VSLA beneficiaries

70%
of supported entrepreneurs reinvested loans into their businesses

Challenges and strategic lessons

Despite positive livelihood outcomes, several challenges continue to affect self-reliance.

Key Challenges

Uneven progress

Not all SRI domains improved across projects.

Time to impact

Some interventions need longer implementation periods to show results.

Complex operating context

Multiple actors influence outcomes, making it more a contribution than attribution.

Strategic Lessons

Interventions matter

The domains that improve tend to reflect the areas targeted.

Stability is an outcome

Even where scores do not improve, interventions help maintain household stability.

Context matters

Local programme and contextual knowledge is needed to interpret what is driving changes.

Partners

ReDSS

DCA actalliance

Pastoralist Girls Initiative — Empower Girls, Save Communities

Refugee Consortium of Kenya (RCK)

ROAD — Rights Organization for Advocacy & Development

TUPADO — Creating Change in Pastoralist Lives

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