

Written on 2019-11-04

## UNHCR Comments

### Joint Evaluation of the Integrated Solutions Model in and around Kalobeyei, Turkana, Kenya

1. The joint evaluation with the Danish Evaluation Service of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Integrated Solutions Model in and around Kalobeyei, Turkana, Kenya **came at an opportune moment for UNHCR**. With the GCR, the need for a new approach to responding to large scale refugee situation has been endorsed by Member States, and UNHCR is taking steps to make the necessary change both to internal processes and to ways of working with partners, including development actors.
2. **The Government of Kenya has been a generous host to refugees and asylum seekers** for more than twenty-six years. Since the first meeting in 2014, where the Government of Kenya, UNHCR, World Bank and partners discussed the establishment of Kalobeyei settlement, significant steps have been made, and the momentum has resulted in **over 40 partners across the humanitarian-development spectrum to be working through complementarity and coordinating efforts to maximize impact and promote socio-economic development of Turkana West**. The Kalobeyei Integrated Socio-Economic Development Plan (KISED) was successfully launched in 2018 with all stakeholders from the Government, World Bank, UN agencies, donors, NGOs, private sector and refugee and host communities as a culmination of these efforts.
3. **The KISED is therefore a practical implementation of the GCR**, as it aims to strengthen its partnerships with development and private sector actors to better address the underlying causes of displacement and to provide a more adapted response to protracted as well as newly displacement situations.
4. This evaluation is **a forward-looking evaluation and comes at an early stage of the implementation**. Such an evaluation therefore was able to examine the factors that drive implementation success and provide important lessons learned that can inform the future development of the strategy. The focus on **what works, and how the process evolved provides valuable insights as we look to develop similar approaches in other parts of the world**. The insights and learning from the KISED evaluation will therefore be relevant in moving this forward, not only in Kenya, but for the organization more broadly. The insights described below have proved valuable to UNHCR.
5. As highlighted in the evaluation, development and private sector actors including the World Bank Group have increasingly engaged and included refugee objectives within their strategies and programmes. As a result, **there is an anticipated scale-up in investments in large-scale development projects and a more conducive investment climate for private sector**. The evaluation highlights the **critical role played by the county government and specifically the governor in initiating and developing this sort of an approach**, and the inclusion of refugees in the county investment development plan as a resource is an important indication of this support and a critical success factor in building the momentum for increased engagement. **Refugee and host community participation in planning and strategy development processes** has been part and parcel of the efforts to date. However, as pointed out by the evaluation these processes will be further strengthened to safeguard that the voices of refugees and host populations are heard and considered throughout the implementation process. As brought forward by the evaluation, building self-reliance will be central to the sustainability of the KISED, and reduce

dependency on humanitarian assistance. As mentioned above, greater private sector and development actor engagement is now better positioned as a result of this model.

6. To strengthen these efforts and ensure successful implementation in the long-term, the ***importance for increased engagement by the national Government has been highlighted, particularly to promote a conducive environment and legal framework for improved access to documentation and movement for refugees.*** In supporting the future development of such models, international donors have an important role to play, both in terms of financial support and advocacy. Given the current policy situation in Kenya, advocacy is particularly important, and an important contribution of this evaluation was to initiate a collective dialogue with the government on the issue of policy support to the KISED P.
7. Further investments in knowledge development will be central to the monitoring of the KISED P. To further enhance transparency and accountability, ***a progress report with an overview of the first 18 months of implementation was endorsed by the steering committee and will be available in the public domain during the month of November.*** This will be further enhanced with the finalization of the monitoring and evaluation log frame using a risk -based management perspective which will be used to strengthen evidence for programming and reporting.
8. ***UNHCR has started to apply the lessons learned accumulated through KISED P to Garissa county where a similar model is being developed.*** In particular, the evaluation contributed to a deeper understanding of the complex factors that drive key relationships between stakeholders and sectors involved in such an integrated approach that crosses the humanitarian-development nexus.
9. The KISED P evaluation was carried out jointly between UNHCR and a long-standing partner and donor country, Denmark. Its focus was shaped by both UNHCR and the Danish Evaluation Office's ***shared commitment to joint learning and mutual respect. Learning-focused evaluations are integral to how UNHCR's*** Evaluation function contributes to greater effectiveness and impact, and UNHCR has ***committed to engage in inter-agency, joint and IASC-commissioned evaluations whenever appropriate.*** Both the evaluation aims and the evaluation process focused on learning and strategic thinking among a group of stakeholders far wider than the two agencies involved in commissioning the evaluation. As a result, broader stakeholder engagement and up-front consultations with all involved was a key element in this evaluation. In particular, a multi-stakeholder validation workshop held in Kenya in June 2019, with broad participation from varied stakeholders, was critical to ensuring uptake and usefulness of the evaluation.
10. ***Joint evaluations, like the KISED P evaluation, create great opportunities for joint learning and also carry certain risks that can lead to additional delays and difficult clearing processes.*** Having both a donor country and the UN entity mandated with refugee protection and leading the response on the ground over several decades, the evaluation ***leveraged respective strengths and convening powers,*** thereby motivating a more diversified engagement in the evaluation. This was particularly evident in the initiation phase, where thorough preparation and in-depth discussions were required to ensure common understanding of scope, aim, purpose and process. ***This period was used to build trust,*** and required openness and respect from both parties; which became essential components for further good cooperation and successful completion. The process was further supported by the creation of a MoU, where the cooperation parameters were outlined and agreed. ***Timelines in a joint evaluation are particularly sensitive to the multiplicity of actors,*** and did lead to some delays. ***The flexibility and willingness to find solutions,*** especially from UNHCR's team in the field to accommodate missions, made this otherwise challenging task manageable.