Kenya is host to close to 500,000 refugees and asylum seekers, primarily from Somalia, South Sudan, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, and other countries in the region. The urban refugee population in Nairobi has increased; around 82,000 of the 500,000 refugees and asylum seekers live in Nairobi.

**HIAS Programs and Focus**

HIAS protects and supports refugees to build new lives and reunite with family members in safety and freedom. HIAS Kenya integrates best practices based on international standards with a focus on community-based protection and empowerment. HIAS works to advocate and promote durable solutions for refugees, including local integration, safe and voluntary repatriation, and third-country resettlement.

**Community-Based Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (CB-MHPSS)**

Refugees and forcibly displaced people face adversity and extreme stressors, including loss of loved ones, violence, and disruptions to daily life. HIAS’ community-based mental health programs train community members to recognize acute psychological and emotional distress in children and adults as a result of crisis, and how to respond with empathy and respect. HIAS’ team of psychologists, social workers, and community outreach workers collaborate with refugees to implement culturally appropriate interventions, activities, and community-based support systems. HIAS Kenya supports the development and empowerment of community support and peer groups, facilitating opportunities for connection in a safe environment, and ensuring access to mental health and psychosocial support by training on Psychological First Aid and Problem Management Plus and how to conduct psychoeducation sessions with communities. HIAS’ MHPSS interventions are aligned with adapted Inter-Agency Standing Committee guidance for the COVID-19 response. HIAS has adapted MHPSS services through in person and remote delivery of individual and group interventions and will continue to critically assess the appropriate method of service delivery depending on COVID-19 restrictions imposed by the government.
HIAS has also created programs that promote resilience, including temporary cash assistance for qualified refugees; capacity building of community-based organization; savings match for entrepreneur women and girls; and the creation of safe community spaces for peer mentorship and networking for girls.

**Legal Protection**

HIAS works to create partnerships to protect the rights of refugees and also promotes community-based protection by educating refugees and empowering them to speak up for their rights. Additionally, HIAS advocates for favorable policies and legislation for refugees. HIAS also engages in stakeholder coordination and capacity-building activities to advance refugee protection at the policy level. Partners include refugee community leaders, refugee organizations, civil society groups, government agencies, UNHCR, hospitals, schools, universities, lawyers, and other professionals. This coordination and capacity building allows HIAS to refer clients to needed services and trainings; build capacity in the sector on refugee rights; develop joint initiatives to advance policy change to increase refugee protection; and, as appropriate, support strategic litigation by other non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to advance refugee rights. As part of its legal protection work, HIAS also partners with local NGOs, resettlement country governments, and UNHCR to ensure the integrity of the refugee resettlement system and to advocate and promote durable solutions such as local integration, safe and voluntary repatriation, and resettlement.

**Safe House and Transit Center**

HIAS maintains a safe house for at-risk urban refugees who have heightened security concerns. Residents are provided with meals and non-food items, and access to appropriate medical, legal, and psychosocial assistance. HIAS also offers temporary accommodation to new arrivals and refugees with heightened security concerns at a transit center, pending travel to the camps or integration in the community.

**Child Protection**

HIAS is responsible for the case management of unaccompanied and separated children (UASC) registered with UNHCR in Nairobi. We coordinate with other partners to identify children at risk, either UASC or children within family units. HIAS also convenes monthly Best Interest Determination panel meetings.

**Gender-Based Violence (GBV) Prevention and Response**

Women, girls, and LGBTQ individuals are disproportionately affected by forced displacement. HIAS’ GBV services are driven by the needs and the voices of survivors, and our GBV programming helps forcibly displaced women, girls, and LGBTQ individuals pursue their potential, free from violence and gender-related oppression. HIAS’ Gender and GBV program in Kenya focuses on building strong, responsive pathways for survivors to access medical, mental health, and legal services. The program works to break the gendered cycle of vulnerability and violence for women and girls through strengthening community response and protection units, development of prevention models that seeks to transform men and boys to be allies, and empowerment of women and girls. Working closely with the local community, HIAS uses an array of strategic interventions to enhance the quality of care for survivors of GBV, including the provision of financial assistance, mental health and psychosocial counseling, therapy groups, and accessible and comprehensive health services. HIAS coordinates the GBV working group that is co-chaired by UNHCR, a collaboration that includes the collection of data and data management of GBV cases.
Economic Inclusion

HIAS Kenya has created programs that promote resilience using proven sustainable models, such as the scalable social economic support program, and household economic strengthening models, such as the Graduation Model Approach, which provides cash assistance, seed capital, access to savings, access to vocational and technical training, and intensive coaching. HIAS Kenya also works on capacity building of community-based organizations; savings matches for entrepreneur women and girls; promotion of savings groups in refugee communities; and the creation of safe community spaces for peer mentorship and networking for girls.

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