

Researchers

Jens Hainmueller
Stanford University

Mae MacDonald
Immigration Policy Lab, Stanford University

Adam Lichtenheld
Immigration Policy Lab, Stanford University

Timeline

2023-2027

Study Status

In Progress

Research Implemented by IPA

No

What Drives Backlash Against Refugee Integration Policies? Evidence from Kenya



A street in Nairobi © 2022 mehdi33300/Shutterstock

Abstract: Funded by IPA's Displaced Livelihoods Initiative, researchers are conducting a panel survey in Kenya to assess the impact of the 2021 Refugee Act and Shirika Plan on attitudes towards refugee hosting, refugee integration, and the government. Kenya's 2021 Refugee Act is expected to improve refugee livelihoods, transitioning refugee camps into "integrated settlements" and strengthening refugees' right to employment and movement.

Throughout the world, countries are becoming more progressive with respect to refugee livelihoods and integration. Low- and middle-income countries such as Colombia, Ethiopia, Uganda, and Jordan have adopted “local integration” policies that provide refugees with greater work rights, freedom of movement, and increased access to services. The latest example of this trend is Kenya, where the ongoing implementation of the 2021 Refugee Act and “Shirika Plan” transitions the country away from its long-time model of forced refugee encampment to “integrated settlements,” with improved access to work and services. What are the public’s attitudes towards refugee integration in Kenya, and how will attitudes towards refugees change in the wake of the 2021 Refugee Act and Shirika Plan?

Funded by IPA’s Displaced Livelihoods Initiative, researchers are conducting a panel survey to assess country-wide attitudes towards refugees prior to and several years after the implementation of the policy changes. Specifically, they will identify changes in public attitudes towards refugees, support for the Kenyan government and its policies, and the perceived impact of refugee hosting on citizens. Results will inform future interventions that target reducing obstacles to refugee integration.

Results are expected in 2027.