



4Mi Cities: Data Collection on Urban Mixed Migration Arua City Report

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About this report

This city report presents the work carried out by the Mixed Migration Centre and the Mayors Migration Council (MMC) in Arua, as part of the 4Mi Cities project.

In close partnership with city governments at the frontline of refugee and migrant reception and inclusion, 4Mi Cities collected data on the needs, assets and aspirations of urban refugees and migrants as they interact with local policies and services in three East African cities (Arua, Kampala and Nairobi). Data collected will be used by city governments involved in the project, as well as humanitarian and development actors, to improve their current migration policies and responses at city level.

The research methods, data sources and analysis structure are aligned across the project cities, to allow comparisons between the specific situation of refugees and migrants across locations. The other reports can be found here:

[4Mi Cities: Data Collection on Urban Mixed Migration - Nairobi City report](#)

[4Mi Cities: Data Collection on Urban Mixed Migration - Kampala City report](#)

The 4Mi Cities project in East Africa was supported by the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) of the United Kingdom. The views expressed herein should however not be taken, in any way, to reflect the official opinion of FCDO. Responsibility for the content of this report lies entirely with the Mixed Migration Centre and the Mayors Migration Council.

About the Mixed Migration Centre

MMC is a global network engaged in data collection, research, analysis, and policy and programmatic development on mixed migration, with regional hubs hosted in DRC regional offices in Africa, Asia, Europe and Latin America, and a small global team in Geneva.

MMC is a leading source for independent and high-quality data, research, analysis and expertise. MMC aims to increase understanding of mixed migration, to positively impact global and regional migration policies, to inform evidence-based protection responses for people on the move and to stimulate forward thinking in public and policy debates on mixed migration. MMC's overarching focus is on human rights and protection for all people on the move.

MMC is part of and governed by the Danish Refugee Council (DRC). While its institutional link to DRC ensures MMC's work is grounded in operational reality, it acts as an independent source of data, research, analysis and policy development on mixed migration for policy makers, practitioners, journalists, and the broader humanitarian sector.

For more information visit: www.mixedmigration.org and follow us at: [@Mixed_Migration](https://twitter.com/Mixed_Migration)

About the Mayors Migration Council

The Mayors Migration Council (MMC) is a mayor-led organization that helps cities shape national and international action on migration and displacement. Its mission is to ensure that global responses to pressing challenges—from pandemics to the climate crisis—both reflect and address realities on the ground for the benefit of migrants, displaced persons, and the communities that receive them.

To fulfil its vision, the Mayors Migration Council secures cities' formal access and representation to national, regional, and international policy deliberations; builds cities' diplomatic, advocacy, and communications skills so they can effectively influence decisions; unlocks technical and financial resources to cities so they can deliver better outcomes on the ground; and helps cities implement local solutions efficiently and at scale to accelerate global commitments.

Created by mayors for mayors, the Mayors Migration Council is a nimble team of political advisors and urban practitioners led by a Leadership Board composed of the mayors of Amman, Bristol, Dhaka North, Freetown, Kampala, Los Angeles, Milan, Montevideo, Montreal, and Zürich. It is managed as a sponsored project of Rockefeller Philanthropy Advisors and operate with the institutional support of Open Society Foundations, the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation, and the Robert Bosch Stiftung, in addition to other project-based donors.

For more information on the Mayors Migration Council visit their website: www.mayorsmigrationcouncil.org



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List of acronyms

DRC	Danish Refugee Council
DRC	Democratic Republic of the Congo
KII	Key informant interviews
INGO	International Non-governmental Organization
IO	International organization
IOM	International Organization for Migration
JLIRP	Jobs and Livelihoods Integrated Response Plan
OPM	Office of the Prime Minister
NGO	Non-governmental organization
RSD	Refugee status determination
UN	United Nations
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

Maps, tables and boxes

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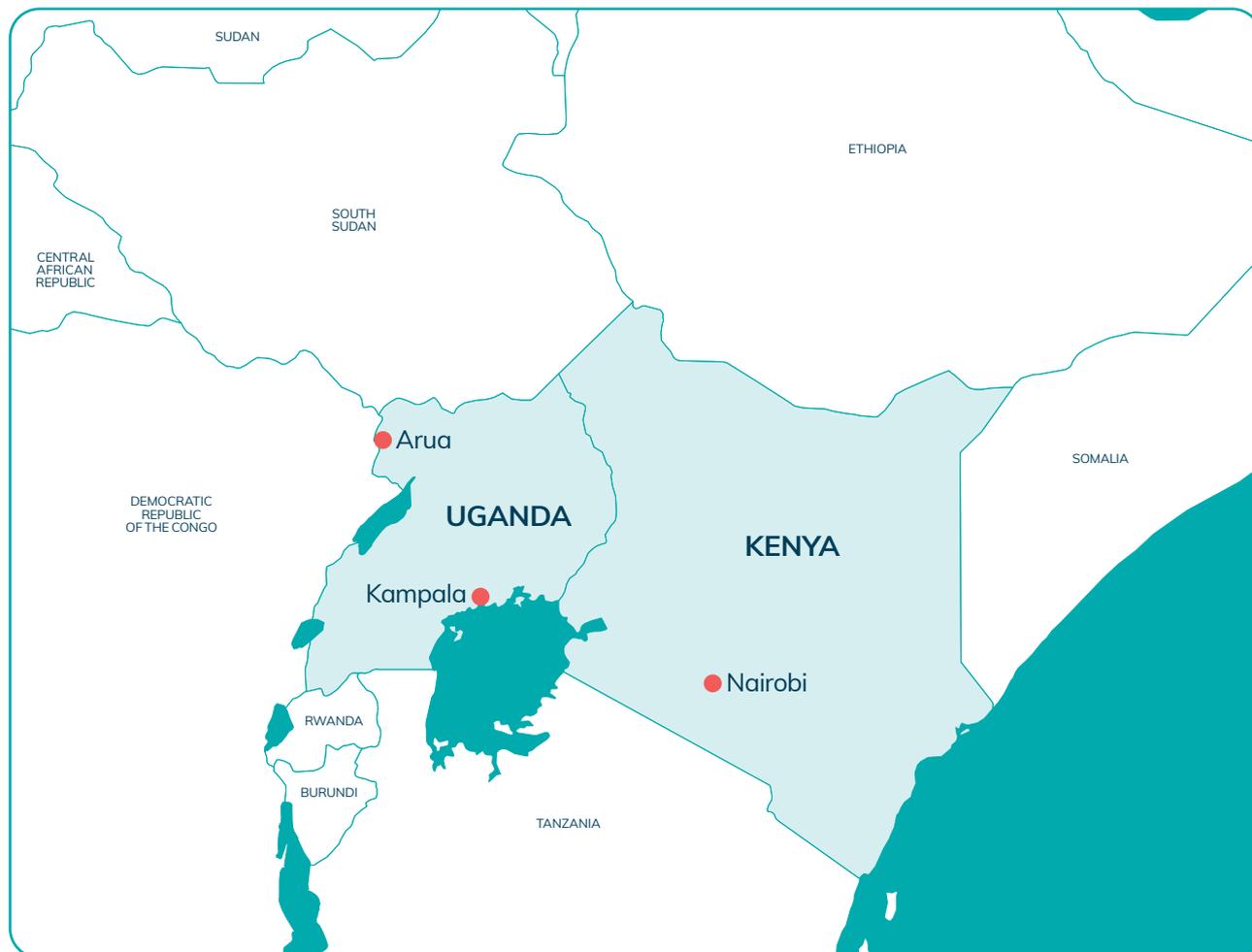
Summary and key findings

This report aims to fill information gaps on the experience of refugees and migrants in Arua, Uganda. It is based on survey data, key informant interviews and secondary sources. After a short introduction on the city's mixed migration dynamics and local responses to these movements, the report presents the main findings of the project. The report concludes by specifying the implications of the findings for policy and programming, and recording the outcomes of the project: the city's uptake of the evidence and their commitments on policy and programming for refugees and migrants.

Key findings from the surveys administered in Arua include:

- 1. Arua is a city of refuge.** 86% of respondents fled their countries due to violence and insecurity, and generally felt safe in the city: 93% rated their neighbourhood as moderately or very safe, and 81% reported that they personally felt either safe or very safe in the city.
- 2. Unemployment is a challenge,** with 62% of respondents not earning an income. The income gap is partially filled by the assistance provided by both NGOs and government: 72% of respondents had received some form of assistance. However, the assistance provided mostly focuses on short-term needs and does not ensure financial stability and self-reliance, which are essential elements of a long-term integration strategy.
- 3. The majority of respondents had access to key services.** 98% of those in need of health services said they received it, either in public or private hospitals. Among respondents who had children, 67% said all their children were attending school (23% said only some). Cultural centres and public spaces were also accessible, with only 19% not having access, mainly because of lack of interest or free time.
- 4. Mental health concerns were reported by a majority.** 53% reported experiencing depression, anxiety, stress or mood swings but this did not translate into their seeking medical attention, as only 5% went to health facilities. The majority resorted to social support systems with 61% seeking support from other family members, 54% from friends, 30% from spouse/partner and 22% from the church/mosque.
- 5. A majority of respondents live in a house with their family only (76%);** 20% have a room in a shared house, while 3% live in a hostel/group accommodation. When finding a place to live, lack of resources is more often a challenge for Congolese than South Sudanese respondents (cited by 63% of Congolese compared with 33% of South Sudanese). Congolese respondents also seem to be in a more precarious situation, with 44% having a formal contract, compared to 57% of South Sudanese.

Map 1. Project locations



About the 4Mi Cities project

Localized data and analysis on migration are often limited, hampering city government decisions and policy development. The Mixed Migration Centre and the Mayors Migration Council (shortened to MMC², given the matching acronyms), working in close partnership with three city governments, have designed and implemented a data collection project, 4Mi Cities. MMC developed and applied a new 4Mi toolkit to find out specifically about refugees' and migrants' urban experiences in a way that can support improved policy and service provision at the city level. The East Africa component of this project, which focused on Arua, Kampala and Nairobi, follows a similar study on three cities in Latin America ([Medellín](#), [Barranquilla](#) and [Mexico City](#)).

What is 4Mi?

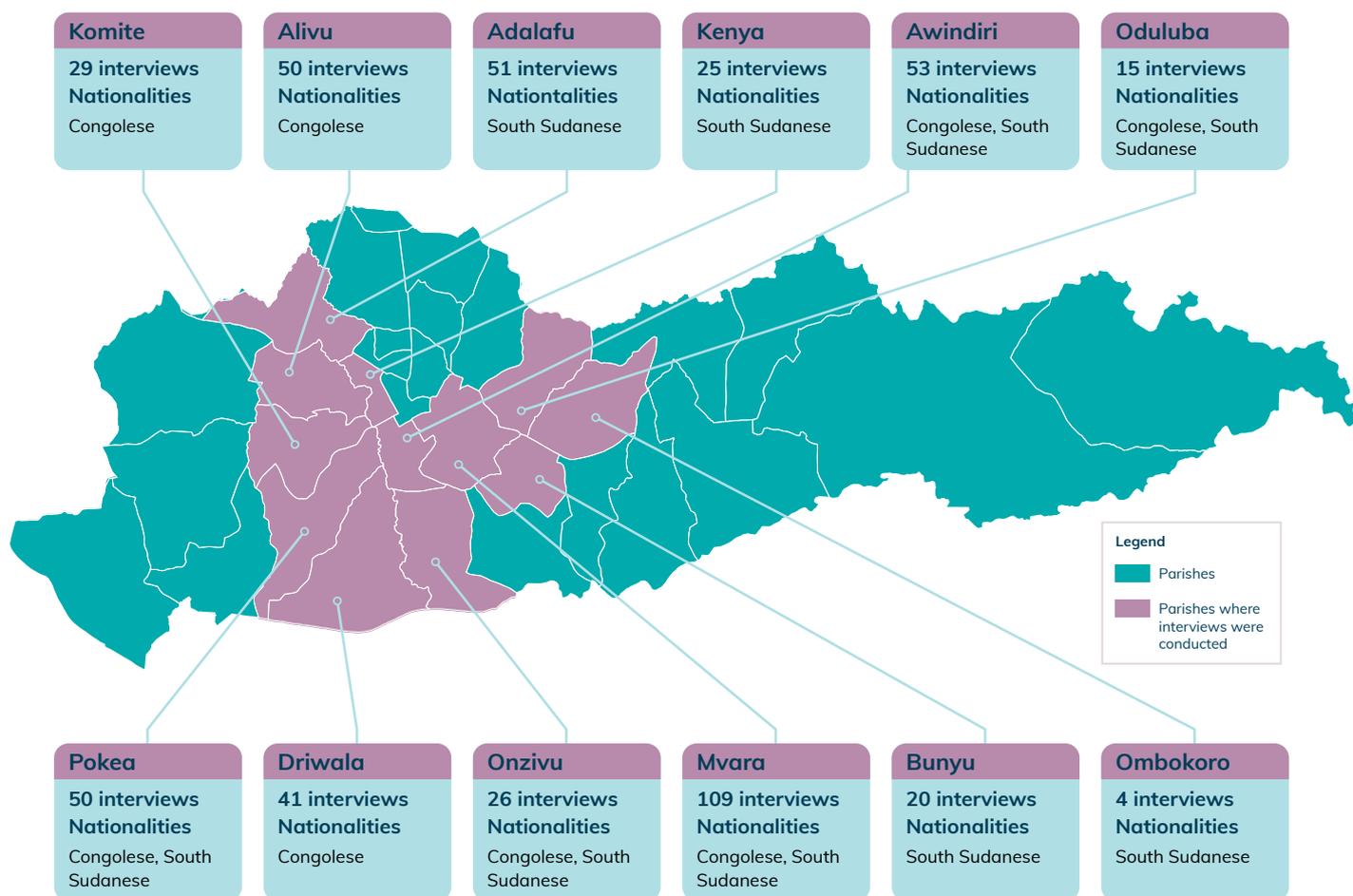
Set up in 2014, 4Mi is a unique network of field enumerators situated along frequently used mixed migration routes and in major migratory hubs. It aims to offer a regular, standardized, quantitative and globalized system of collecting primary data on mixed migration. 4Mi predominantly uses a closed-question survey to invite respondents to anonymously self-report on a wide range of issues, which results in extensive data relating to individual profiles, migration drivers, means and conditions of movement, the smuggling economy, aspirations and destination choices. 4Mi data allows MMC and its partners to inform migration policies, debates and protection responses for people on the move through the production of high-quality quantitative analysis.

Like many other urban centres, the three cities included in this project – Arua, Kampala and Nairobi – all host refugee and migrant populations. Whether they represent an intended, or final, destination or not, the cities offer economic

opportunities, access to services and a diaspora community, but at the same time, barriers such as xenophobia and lack of knowledge regarding available services and programmes persist. In addition, access to services is often tied to regular immigration status, which can be difficult to obtain outside of a camp setting in Kenya. Access to livelihoods can also be a challenge, along with housing. City governments have made efforts to meet refugees' and migrants' needs by developing policies, and designing assistance programmes, but gaps persist.

4Mi Cities aims to build evidence to better inform local responses to mixed migration in cities and create a strong case for national and international legal, fiscal and policy frameworks that enable cities to provide necessary services to refugee and migrant populations. The data collected will be used by city governments involved in the project, as well as humanitarian and development actors, to improve their current migration policies and responses at city level.

Map 2. Arua and data collection locations



1. Methodology

The research questions that the 4Mi Cities project set out to answer are:

1. What are the profiles of refugees and migrants in Arua?
2. What are the reasons behind their decision to choose Arua as a destination?
3. What are the protection risks and challenges they face in the city?
4. What are the opportunities that refugees and migrants encounter?
5. What access do they have to services in the city?
6. Are refugees and migrants satisfied with their decision to migrate to Arua and what are their future intentions?

The 4Mi Cities project took a mixed-methods approach, including a context analysis, key informant interviews, quantitative research as well as several consultation and validation workshops. The project in Arua was conducted between August 2021 and March 2022 and was based on the following activities:

- **Urban context analysis**, largely based on secondary sources and a limited number of key informant interviews with Arua City Government staff and sector actors.
- **Three workshops with mixed migration actors.** Experts from the public and private sector, IOs, NGOs and UN agencies participated in: i) a mapping workshop to determine key locations where the target population lives and gathers and to identify sites for data collection; ii) a survey workshop to ensure that the information to be collected by the project would fill gaps and meet the needs of local actors and iii) a validation workshop to discuss results with city government staff and other local actors.
- **465 surveys with refugees and migrants** across refugee and migrant-hosting locations in Arua, conducted by 10 4Mi Cities enumerators, 3 of whom were staff of the Arua city government.

The 4Mi Cities survey covered six main themes relating to the research questions: demographic and migration profiles; housing; access to services (healthcare, mental health and education); livelihood opportunities and challenges; safety and security and life in the city (interactions with the local population, with city government and NGOs, access to public places and transportation, among other topics). The closed-ended survey of 91 questions was answered only by refugees and migrants (18 years and older) who had been residing in Arua.

Several limitations to the data are worth noting. As the 4Mi Cities sampling process was not randomized and twelve specific data collection sites were prioritized, the survey responses are not representative of the entire refugee and migrant population in Arua. Additionally, the responses of participants in the 4Mi Cities survey cannot be independently verified, although they were triangulated with existing studies and primary qualitative data, and there may be response bias. Nonetheless, the findings from the survey can provide important insights into the lives of refugees and migrants in Arua. Informed consent and anonymity were communicated clearly with participants before, during, and after the surveys.

The next section of the report will present the context overview, based on the secondary data review and key informant interviews. The report then presents analysis of the survey results, according to the themes in the research questions.

2. Context overview

2.1 Migration dynamics in Arua City

Located in northern Uganda, Arua obtained city status in July 2020, and its population is growing at a rate of 3% per annum – 1% higher than Kampala.¹ Its population in 2020 was estimated at 361,400.² Due to its proximity to international borders (with the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) and South Sudan), Arua has become a hub for trade and commerce. This study focuses on the city of Arua, which forms a county in the wider Arua District. The city comprises two main divisions: Arua Central and Ayivu.

Its proximity to international borders has led to a growing number of refugees and migrants present in Arua, and an increased demand for social services and livelihoods support.³ The division of Arua Central is calculated to be home to more than 10,000 refugees, and a recent census estimates that more than 11% of Arua Central's population was born in another country, with 98% from South Sudan.⁴ However, refugees and migrants are neither included in the census nor systematically registered by the Office of the Prime Minister (OPM), city government authorities or UNHCR, as it is not considered by the national authorities as an official refugee-hosting district. This inhibits efforts to establish a clear picture of the refugee and migrant population in Arua.

Shared language and heritage facilitate cross-border movement to Arua and help urban refugees and migrants to build social networks. Connections span Uganda, South Sudan and DRC. For instance, the city's networks have

1 Abudu, D., Echima, R. A., Andogah, G. (2019). [Spatial assessment of urban sprawl in Arua Municipality, Uganda](#). The Egyptian Journal of Remote Sensing and Space Science. Vol.22(3). pp315-322

2 <https://aruacity.go.ug/about/>

3 Cities Alliance (2020). [Managing Migration in Arua, Uganda | City2City](#). 31 October 2020.

4 URN (2021). ['Arua City Leaders Cry to Government Over Increasing Burden of Urban Refugees'](#). 5 August 2021; Cities Alliance (2021). [Regional Network and Dialogue. Drawing attention to refugees residing in cities and their host communities](#). 23-24 March 2021.

formed through shared linguistic connections with South Sudanese from Yei, Morobo and Kajo-Keji and Congolese from Ituri.⁵ Within Uganda, refugees tend to move regularly between Arua and the settlements where they were initially registered, to collect food or cash assistance or to visit family and relatives. The decision on where to settle is influenced by ethnic ties, access to services and opportunities to earn a living.⁶ Constituting an information gap, there is no data available on the size of non-refugee migrant populations residing or transiting through Arua, nor if they engage in similar cross-border movement patterns.

In terms of national refugee legislation, Congolese (DRC), Burundian and South Sudanese refugees receive *prima facie* refugee status while people of other nationalities go through individual refugee status determination processes. Refugees who have not come to Arua upon arrival, and who choose to move out of refugee settlements where they initially settled to move to the city, officially forfeit their entitlement to humanitarian assistance and most provide for themselves in accessing services and generating income and assets.

2.2 Local responses to migration

The legal framework for the socio-economic inclusion of refugees locally lies in the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF), which underpins Uganda's progressive refugee principles and policies aimed towards strategies to promote refugee self-reliance. The CRRF steering group is developing the Jobs and Livelihoods Integrated Response Plan (JLIRP) for refugees and host communities in Uganda. However, this plan only includes Ugandan districts that host refugee settlements.⁷ Arua is not covered as it does not host any refugee settlement. Without Arua's inclusion in this plan and its foreseen support, which envisions self-reliant and resilient refugee and host community households in refugee-hosting districts by 2025, the capacity of Arua's city government will continue to be limited to support refugee and migrant populations residing in the city.

The CRRF is embedded within the framework of the Refugee Act (2006), which allows refugees freedom of movement, and the right to work, establish a business, own property and access national services, including primary and secondary education and healthcare. This creates a conducive environment for pursuing development-oriented planning for refugees and host communities.⁸ The government also addresses these needs embedded in legislation through the National Development Plan II & III.⁹ However, refugee numbers and indicators are not mainstreamed into either the National Development Plan II or District Development Plans. A lack of financial resources, partly attributable to this data and information gap in development and response plans, make it difficult for the refugee response services to reflect the conducive policy framework.

At the same time, limited funds and competences are distributed to local governments to implement any policies directed at refugee populations outside of the foreseen JLIRP. National funding dedicated to the city of Arua therefore excludes service provision to urban refugee (and migrant) populations. Moreover, limited consultations on urban planning further hampers efforts to integrate self-settled refugees in Arua. Members of the host community from the Oli wards - particularly women - have reported a noticeably low participation in local urban community planning forums, known as community barazas.¹⁰ Similarly, South Sudanese refugees have low to non-existent representation in the local barazas, leaving them ill-informed or negatively impacted by urban planning decisions.¹¹ Finally, with the national legal framework and policies in place catering towards registered refugees, the earlier mentioned information gap on non-refugee migrant populations could indicate that migrants residing in or transiting through the city might experience further or additional challenges in local urban representation and/or service provision.

5 Dawa, I. (2020). 'The Hidden Population. Identity and Livelihood of Urban Refugees in the Arua District, Uganda.' Accord

6 Agora (2018). [Urban community assessment Arua, Uganda - August 2018](#). Agora is a joint initiative of ACTED and IMPACT.

7 Including Madi Okollo, Terego, Adjumani, Kikuube, Yumbe, Obongi, Kiryandongo, Kyegegwa, Isingiro, Lamwo, Kampala, Kamwenge, and Koboko. See <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/country/uga>

8 Government of Uganda Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development (2021). Jobs and Livelihoods Integrated Response Plan for Refugees and Host Communities in Uganda

9 GoU. (2015). [Second National Development plan \(NDPII\)](#); GoU. (2020) [Third National Development Plan \(NDPIII\)](#)

10 Community forums where local urban development and planning are discussed.

11 Capici, V. (2020). [Refugeehood in Uganda's rapidly urbanizing cities](#). Lund University, January 2021

3. Profile of 4Mi Cities respondents

3.1 Survey respondents

465 refugees and migrants were interviewed for this project: 52% of respondents were men and 48% were women. The majority of respondents were 18–34 years old (64%) and were refugees (81%). Respondents had varied education levels: the largest group (36%) had completed secondary school, but 26% had not completed any schooling. 22% of respondents had completed primary school. Nearly half (45%) of respondents were married, and 35% were single.

The average household consisted of 6.9 people; in total the survey gathered data on 3,254 people. Most households (69%) included at least one child and the average number of children per household was 3.9 children. Almost half of all households (49%) had at least one person with specific needs, out of whom breastfeeding women were 53%, adults over 60 years of age alone and in charge of minors were 40%, and pregnant women were 24% (n=239).

Table 1. Profile of respondents

Country of nationality	Women	Men	Total
South Sudan	134	132	266
Democratic Republic of the Congo	105	91	196
Burundi	1	0	1
Republic of the Congo	1	0	1
Somalia	1	0	1
Total	242	223	465

4. Results: Life in Arua¹²

Arua is largely a destination city, with 65% of respondents having arrived in the city more than 5 years before the interview. Additionally, the majority of respondents, 72%, had no immediate intention of leaving the city. For the few respondents who intended to continue their journey (n=28), half of them intended to go to Europe and 32% to the United States of America.

“What I have realized since I’m here, is that whenever people arrive here life is so hard because we’re not yet used to it. We even feel like going back to our country of origin but [with] time you see people are used to and start a normal life in Uganda.”

57-year-old female refugee from DRC

Arua is a safe haven. Its proximity to international borders with South Sudan and DRC, and the shared ethnic connections between the three countries has enhanced a sense of kinship, hence interviewed refugees and migrants feel welcome in the city. Arua is a refuge, with 86% of respondents citing violence, insecurity and conflict as a reason for leaving their country of origin. 31% cited economic reasons; with Arua recently being declared a city and urbanization increasing rapidly, it has become a hub for trade and commerce within the region as well as with neighbouring countries.

¹² For more information, consult Appendix 1, which includes a profile of 4Mi Cities’ respondents, data disaggregation and more results.

"I can just say this is a welcoming country and peaceful even though sometimes life is hard, but of course, life is hard everywhere."

21-year-old female refugee from DRC

When asked about the reality of life in Arua vis à vis the expectations they had, there was an almost equal split, with 41% finding it to be better than expected, 40% more difficult than expected and the rest neutral.

4.1. Documentation and regularization

Refugees and migrants in Arua are often documented, with 81% of respondents reporting that they had documentation to support their stay. In addition, 59% reported that all members of their household had documentation (24% reported that some of their household members had documentation). The majority of respondents (81%) identified as refugees, 9% identified as irregular migrants, and others said they were asylum seekers (3%), permanent residents (2%), their permit had expired (1%) or they had no need for a permit (1%). 31% of respondents without documentation (n=181) thought they were at risk of arrest, 20% at risk of not receiving food rations and 15% at risk of harassment. 29% of those not having documents said there was no risk associated to not having a document.

"When I entered the border, I was just registered with my family without much difficulty. But then coming from South Sudan to Uganda, transport was expensive, there were many road blocks, people were also sent back and one could look for ways to sneak out of the situation."

57-year-old male refugee from South Sudan

4.2. Income, livelihoods and financial inclusion

Despite refugees in Arua city being self-settled and therefore having forfeited their claim to humanitarian assistance and services, **many commute to the refugee settlements where they were registered to receive food rations.**

Unemployment remains a challenge in Arua city. Youth unemployment stands at 85%,¹³ which explains why 62% of respondents mentioned they were not earning an income. In the absence of employment opportunities, many refugees and migrants rely on the informal market, working as street vendors, boda boda (motorcycle taxi) riders and restaurant staff: 54% of respondents were earning an income as business owners/self-employment and 36% as casual workers (n=169).

You have to be creative, and learn to hustle by doing what you are seeing other people doing. Don't think you have to do only what you were doing in DRC, stay in peace with everyone you're with. And also try to be social!

35-year-old female migrant from DRC

The two main refugee and migrant nationalities in Arua have distinct income profiles. 51% of Congolese were earning an income (n=196) compared to only 25% of South Sudanese (n=266). South Sudanese rely heavily on remittances from family and friends in the diaspora while Congolese generally do not rely on remittances. It is relatively common for South Sudanese men to bring their wives and children to seek refuge in Uganda then go back to South Sudan to work and earn a living for their families. For those not earning an income, the most cited reason for South Sudanese was 'being a student' while for Congolese was 'being unemployed'.

Lack of documentation and awareness regarding the right to work are the main causes of unemployment among refugees and migrants. Ugandans are hesitant to employ refugees and migrants as they are unclear about issues surrounding work permits. The top challenges to accessing a job, business or entrepreneurship were lack of documents at 62%, lack of opportunities at 60% and competition with the local population at 48%.

13 Capici, V. (2020). [Refugeehood in Uganda's rapidly urbanizing cities](#). Lund University, January 2021

“My husband just moved us to Uganda and registered us as refugees then he went back to look for other means.”

27-year-old female refugee from South Sudan

There is little access to loan services for refugees and migrants with 59% of respondents having no access to loans. Uganda has a policy allowing refugees to open bank accounts using their refugee cards or attestation cards, hence the high access to mobile banking at 61%, for example. Only 13% reported not having access to any financial facility. However, the policy does not translate to loan access as refugees are required to produce collateral such as title deeds, which many, understandably, do not have. 11% and 9% reported access to loans from mobile banking and formal banking, respectively.

Most respondents are not earning enough to cover household needs. Only 7% said that their household earnings are always enough to cover their needs. 62% cited their earnings were sometimes enough while for 29%, the earnings were never enough. Consequently, 69% of respondents mentioned they are not able to save after covering their household needs and this further explains why 61% do not work with a savings institution or initiative.

Respondents have adopted various - most often negative - coping mechanisms: the majority (60%) of respondents reduce food portions for everyone in the household, 43% borrow money and 39% reduce other expenses.

4.3. Access to public services

The majority of refugees and migrants in Arua city have access to education. 67% of respondents with children said all their children were attending school and 23% said only some were. Out of those attending school (n=281), 55% were enrolled in private schools while 50% were in public government schools. Despite the mandate for affordable education to all, non-nationals pay twice as much as nationals in school fees per year for private schools,¹⁴ and school fees were the top hurdle in accessing education, at 82%.

“I went through a very hard journey but today at least I can see my family safe and my children at school. I wish to be here for even more years to come.”

31-year-old female refugee from DRC

Uganda recorded the world's longest school closure due to Covid-19, lasting almost 2 years. This has had several effects, some of which are reflected in this study. 13% of respondents whose children were not attending school (n=88) cited fear of contagion by Covid-19 as a reason and 14% said their girls were pregnant or breastfeeding. Additionally, the Covid-related school closure has exacerbated the problem of over-age enrolment (students being far older than appropriate for a particular educational stage).¹⁵

Healthcare is accessible to refugees and migrants in Arua city with 98% accessing it mostly in public hospitals and private hospitals. The few respondents who did not access healthcare cited lack of money and distance to healthcare centres as the barriers. Disaggregated by nationality, South Sudanese are more likely to consult private health facilities at 71% than public facilities at 58%, while Congolese use more public facilities at 78% than private facilities at 46% (question was multi-select). This is however not the case with pregnant women, as both nationalities were more likely to consult public facilities.

Mental health concerns were common, with 53% (245/465) saying either they or someone in their household had experienced symptoms of mental ill-health (depression, anxiety, stress, mood swings). This, however, does not lead to them seeking medical attention: 5% sought support in local/state health services, while the majority resorted to social support systems with 61% seeking support from other family members, 54% from friends, 30% from spouse/partner and 22% from the church/mosque.

14 Agora (2018). [Urban community assessment Arua, Uganda - August 2018](#). Agora is a joint initiative of ACTED and IMPACT.

15 Uwezo Uganda (2021). [Uwezo National Learning Assessment Report, 2021](#).

4.4. Housing

Respondents were most often living in a house with their family only, at 76%, and 20% were taking up a room in a shared house with other families. In aggregate, there is an almost equal split in housing contracts, with 51% having formal contracts and 48% having informal contracts. However, by nationality, 57% of South Sudanese had a formal contract compared to 44% of Congolese. Furthermore, in finding a place to live, lack of resources was a major challenge for Congolese at 63%, compared to 33% for South Sudanese.

Despite the 3% population growth rate in Arua,¹⁶ survey results seem to indicate that **Arua is still able to provide amenities to its refugee and migrant population**. 73% had electricity, (although some reported having blackouts), while 63% had sufficient water from multiple sources, with the most common being piped water outside the house (47%). Notwithstanding, there is still a gap, as 27% cited no electricity throughout the day and 35% cited the water was not sufficient for their needs.

Most respondents have access to a shared bathroom, at 69%, while 34% have private bathrooms. 6% relied on city waste collection, while private collection was the most common (49%) followed by a dumpsite (42%) and burning (34%).

“Our life is way more secure in Arua than back in South Sudan. My husband sold the home in South Sudan to build for us this one in Uganda. Now we don’t have to pay for house rent like many other refugee homes.”
43-year-old female refugee from South Sudan

4.5. Safety and security

There is a general sense of safety and security among respondents, with 93% rating the security of their neighbourhood either as moderately or very safe. Despite this, 28% (128/465) report that either they or their families had been victims of crime. The majority (93) had filed a report. Most victims reported to police stations, at 72%, while 46% reported to the local council and 22% to community associations.

4.6. Coexistence, integration and inclusion

Nationality is the most common basis for discrimination among respondents. Although the respondents reporting discrimination were a minority at 29% (137/465), a staggering 94% of them cited nationality as the reason. This discrimination is experienced mainly in the street/ public spaces, at 58%.

There is overall a good relationship between respondents and the local population. 87% of respondents described their relationship with people in the neighbourhood as good or very good, consistent with 81% of working respondents (n=200) who described a similar relationship with people at work.

Public spaces are accessible to most respondents. A minority of 19% did not access public spaces and this was mainly due to lack of interest (60%) and not having free time to do so (21%).

“I am a musician, while coming here I encountered a lot of obstacles like being chased and attacked on the way while escaping. I had to pick a bodaboda rider to complete the journey. On arriving in Uganda, I met some friends who are musicians and they introduced me to a social event location where I now perform in a live band. It’s not easy here but only that the place is safe.”
27-year-old male migrant from DRC

16 Abudu, D., Echima, R. A., Andogah, G. (2019) [Spatial assessment of urban sprawl in Arua Municipality, Uganda, 2019](#).

4.7. Local actors providing assistance

Support from local actors is significant with 72% (333/465) of respondents receiving some form of assistance. 97% of them received assistance from UN, NGOs or other organizations. The top two types of assistance received were food at 31% and medical care at 29%.

When it came to awareness of assistance programs, **NGOs and INGOs are most commonly known for assistance provision** at 64%, understandably due to their footprint in the city. Additionally, the government is mostly known for providing healthcare support at 23% and food programs at 12%.

5. Conclusions

The 4Mi Cities project highlights how vital the city of Arua is in providing refuge to South Sudanese and Congolese, with most respondents having fled violence, insecurity and conflict in their origin countries. Moreover, most respondents have no immediate plans to leave Arua. On the whole, respondents have identity documentation, with a majority having received a refugee status and the associated refugee card. Refugees and migrants have fostered good relationships with the local communities where they live and work and they enjoy a general sense of safety and security in the city. There is also a good level of access to health, education and public spaces among the refugees and migrants.

Despite the city's many advantages, refugees and migrants still struggle with a number of issues including limited opportunities to earn an income, which means they resort to negative coping mechanisms. Interviewed refugees and migrants often use all the money they make and have nothing left to save, they also have very limited access to loans which makes it a hurdle to finance their businesses or fulfill other financial needs. This report has shown the vital importance of including refugees and migrants in city-level data collection exercises on all the populations residing within its boundaries. Such an 'inclusive city approach' enables local authorities to understand the opportunities and challenges faced by all residents and any specific displacement or migration-related challenges faced by refugees and migrants, such as a lack of clarity on the right to work and challenges with mental health. These insights can assist local government officials in designing programs and services or sharing information in a way that is more inclusive and less likely to marginalize specific groups of residents.

6. Evidence uptake for policy and programming

By working in close partnership with city governments and other local actors throughout the project's cycle, MMC² ensured that 4Mi Cities produced relevant and useful city-level data and analysis. It has produced information on the extent to which refugees and migrants are integrated in Arua and the main barriers they face in accessing services, which can guide the city government to develop and strengthen local policies. Detailed information on the needs and priorities of refugees and migrants in the city, especially on topics that are often not prioritized in emergency response, can also support humanitarian and development organizations in adjusting and consolidating their programming.

Arua City Government has identified concrete next steps based on the knowledge produced by 4Mi Cities and plans to:

1. Work with the Office of the Prime Minister (OPM), UNHCR and other national and international actors to **establish refugee and migrant voluntary registration in Arua City**, permitting the collection of more reliable data that the city can use to estimate service delivery needs, and enable refugees to access services that are currently only available in settlements outside the city.

2. Work with relevant Arua City stakeholders, including the City Development Forum, to engage migrant, refugee and receiving communities in decision-making processes and **reduce barriers to social cohesion and refugee and migrant awareness of and access to city-led services.**
3. Seek to allocate government expenditure in Arua City's Annual Work Plan and Budget to **create new services that address key gaps in refugee and migrant responses**, such as business registrations, access to public schools and hospitals and support for refugees and migrants living with disabilities.
4. In recognition of refugees' and migrant's desire to stay in Arua, **emphasize long-term self-reliance through livelihoods programs.** This could include programs which promote their involvement and employment in the environmental and economic sustainability of Arua City, such as connecting **refugees and migrants in employment which promotes the city's green transition**, including in waste management, tree planting and maintaining public spaces. This commitment is in line with Arua City's submission to the Mayors Migration Council's Global Cities Fund for Migrants and Refugees.



MMC is a global network engaged in data collection, research, analysis, and policy and programmatic development on mixed migration, with regional hubs hosted in DRC regional offices in Africa, Asia, Europe and Latin America, and a small global team in Geneva.

MMC is a leading source for independent and high-quality data, research, analysis and expertise. MMC aims to increase understanding of mixed migration, to positively impact global and regional migration policies, to inform evidence-based protection responses for people on the move and to stimulate forward thinking in public and policy debates on mixed migration. MMC's overarching focus is on human rights and protection for all people on the move.

MMC is part of and governed by the Danish Refugee Council (DRC). Global and regional MMC teams are based in Brussels, Geneva, Dakar, Nairobi, Tunis, Bogota and Dhaka.

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