

EXAMINING THE COMPOSITION OF URBAN REFUGEE HOUSEHOLDS IN KAMPALA

Ace Policy Research Institute (APRI), with support from the Hilton Foundation, conducted a scoping study to better understand intersecting challenges of sustaining their livelihoods while managing the burden of unpaid childcare among Urban refugee women in order to inform actionable interventions.

Urban households covered



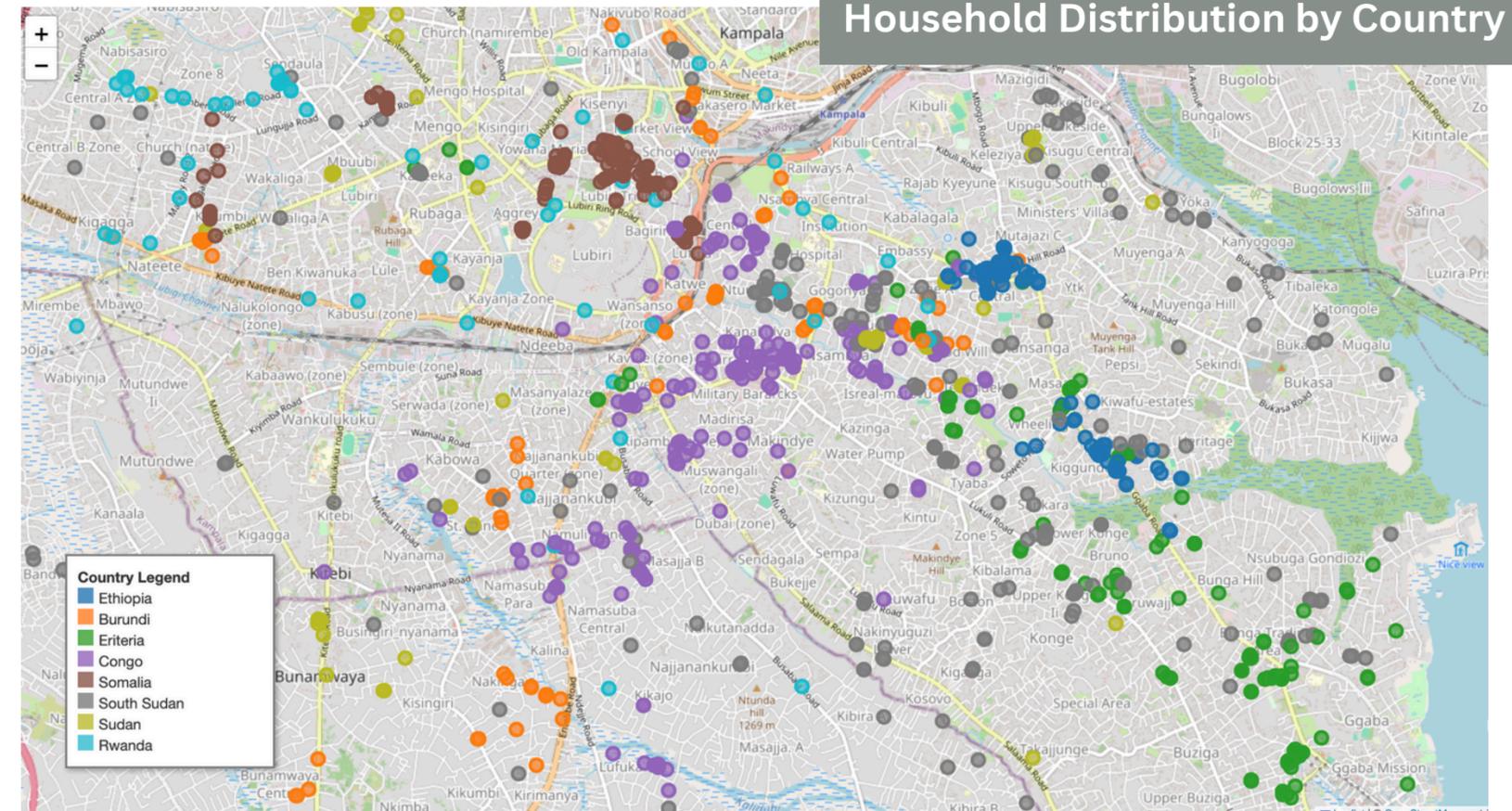
1528

refugee households surveyed

comprising

7616

individuals



Household Distribution by Country

STUDY OBJECTIVES

1. Understand the socio-economic status of urban refugees and their sources of livelihood in Kampala.
2. Assess the extent of the childcare burden on urban refugee women and the role of social networks.
3. Explore women's participation in businesses, including barriers to growth and opportunities for improvement.



WHY IT MATTERS

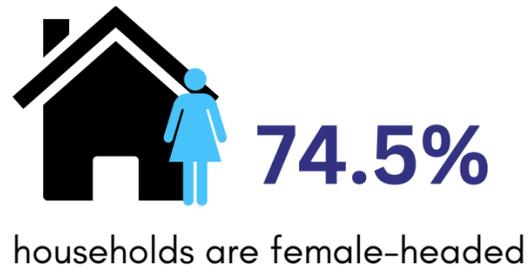
The dual role of refugee women as both business owners and primary caregivers poses significant challenges to their economic well-being. This study will inform targeted programs to reduce the childcare burden and boost economic participation, ultimately improving family welfare and community resilience.

DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF URBAN REFUGEE HOUSEHOLDS

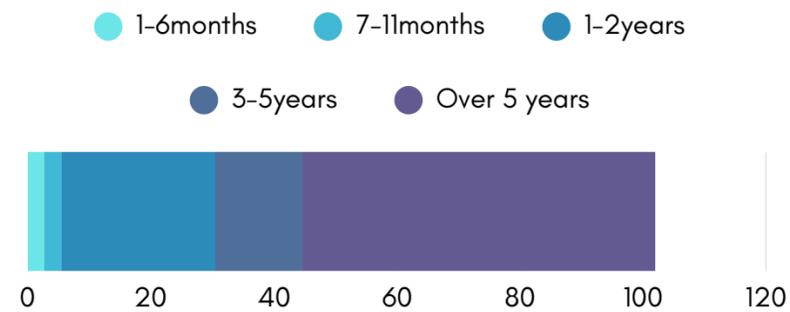
Understanding the composition and socio-economic status of urban refugee households is key to designing effective interventions. The profile of these households provides insight into gender dynamics, education levels, livelihood activities, and living conditions, which directly impact their economic resilience and vulnerability.

FINDINGS

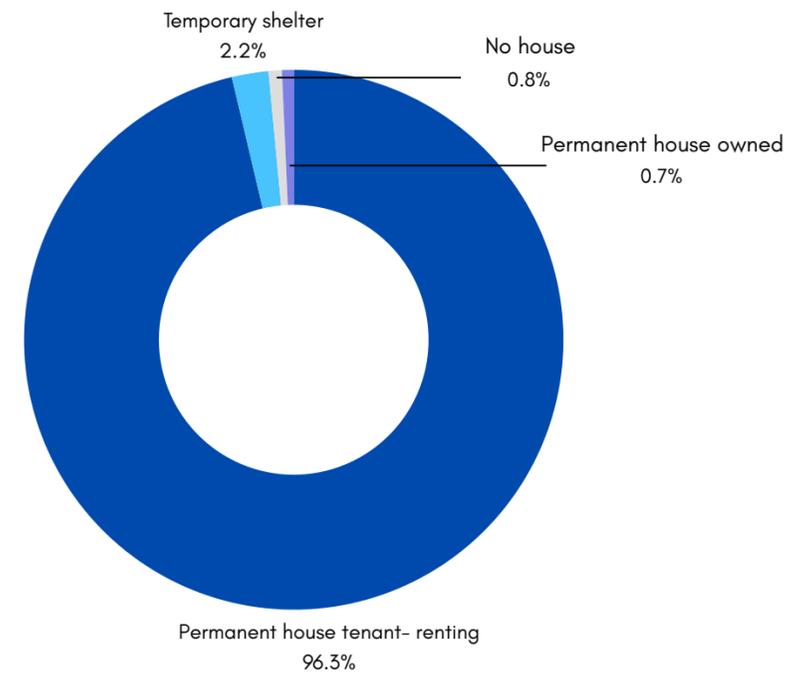
Gender and Urban household headship



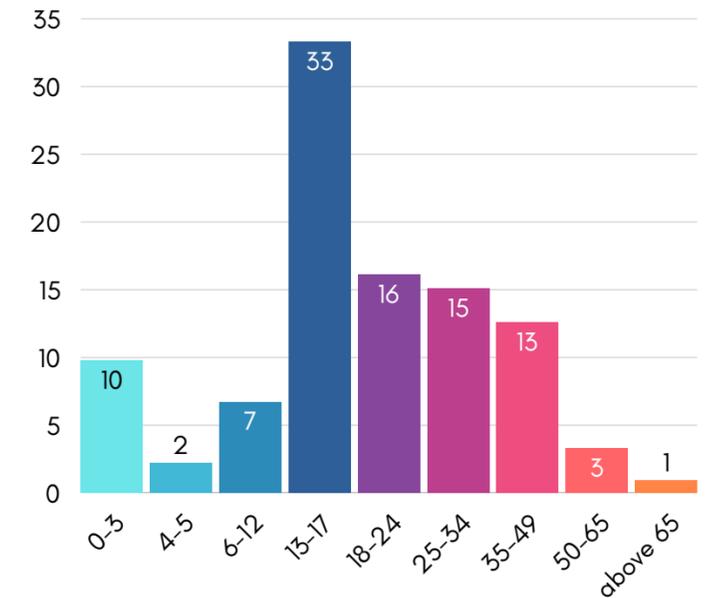
Length of stay in Uganda



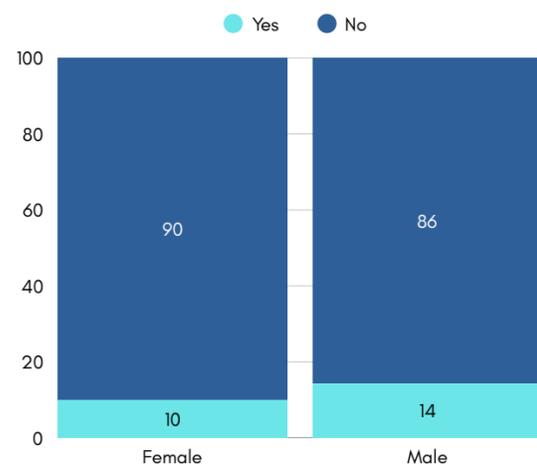
Housing status in urban refugee households



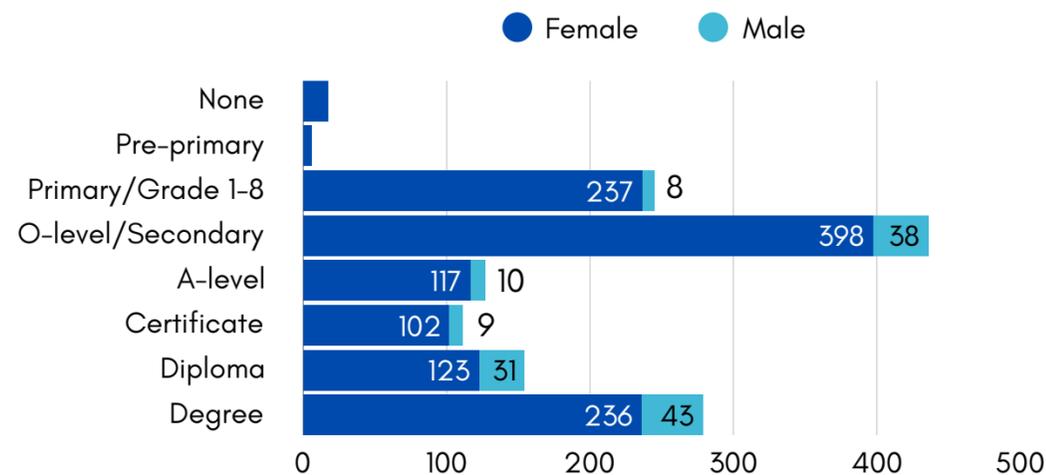
Age of the household members



Income generating activities in Urban Households



Education levels among the Urban Refugee - Households



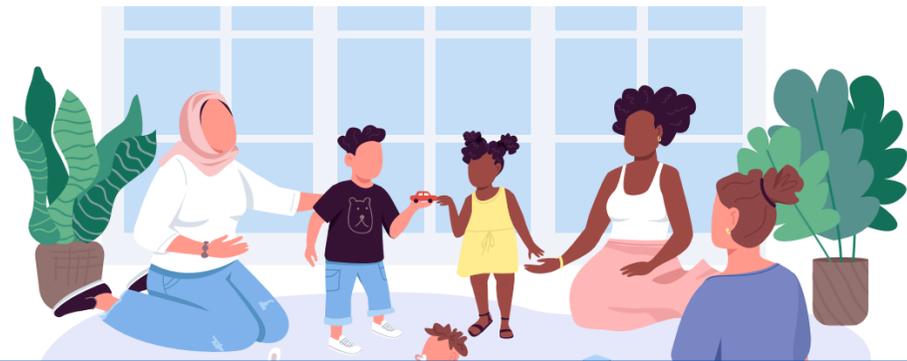
Food security in Urban Refugee Households



TAKEAWAYS

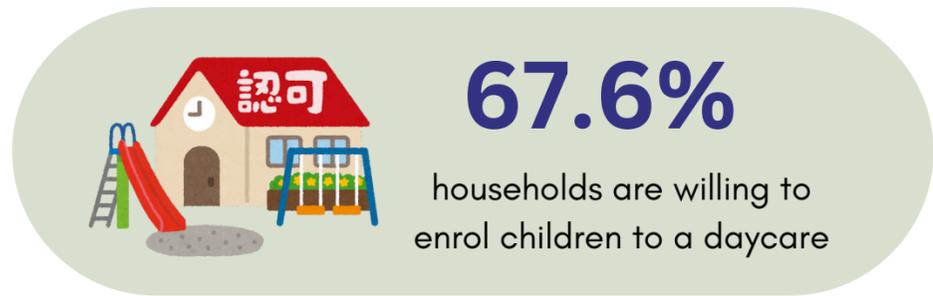
- Urban refugee households in Kampala are predominantly female-headed, with women bearing the brunt of providing for large, extended families.
- High dependency ratios, with over half of household members being children under 18, create additional economic strain.
- Despite low education attainment, the majority of refugees are actively engaged in informal income-generating activities, primarily micro-businesses.

CHILDCARE BURDEN & SOCIAL NETWORKS



Childcare responsibilities heavily influence the ability of refugee women to participate fully in economic activities. In urban refugee settings, the lack of formal childcare services compounds the burden on mothers, who overwhelmingly shoulder caregiving duties.

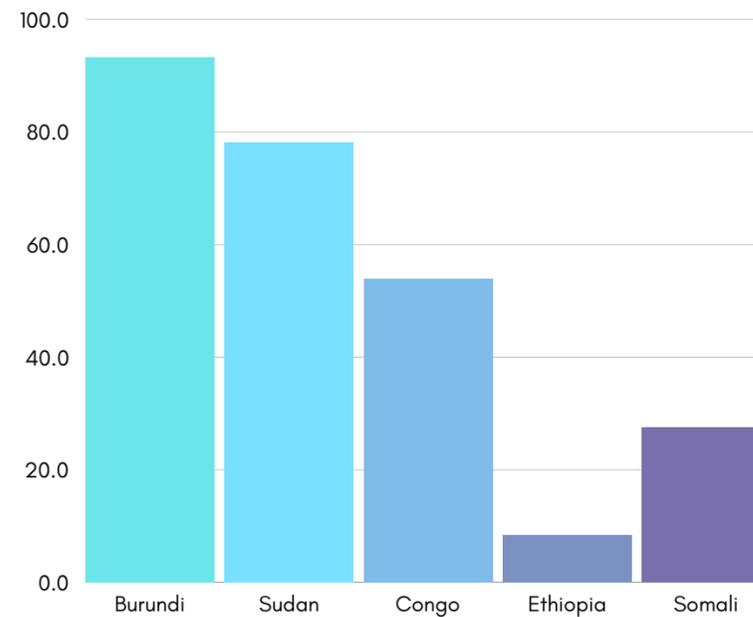
FINDINGS



Households with children below 3 years and number of children aged 0-3years



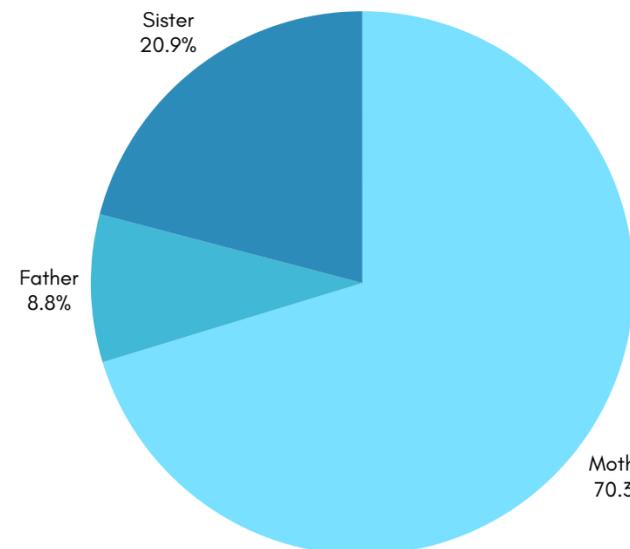
Households with children 0-3years and country of origin



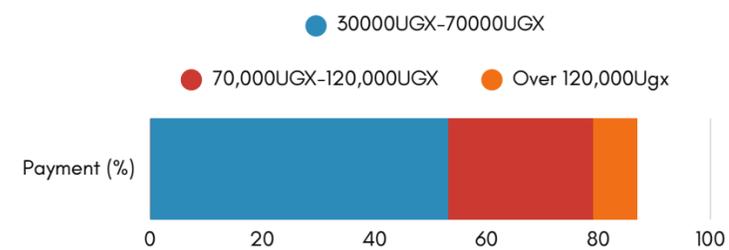
Presence of daycare center



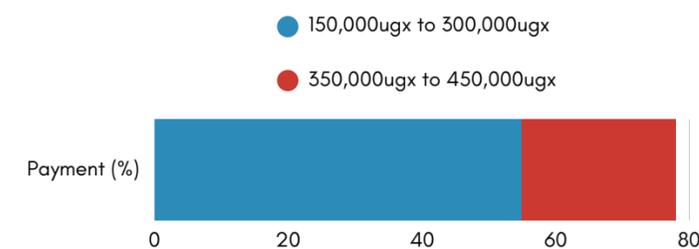
Time devoted to childcare



Childcare Affordability (Monthly)



Childcare Affordability (Per term)



TAKEAWAYS

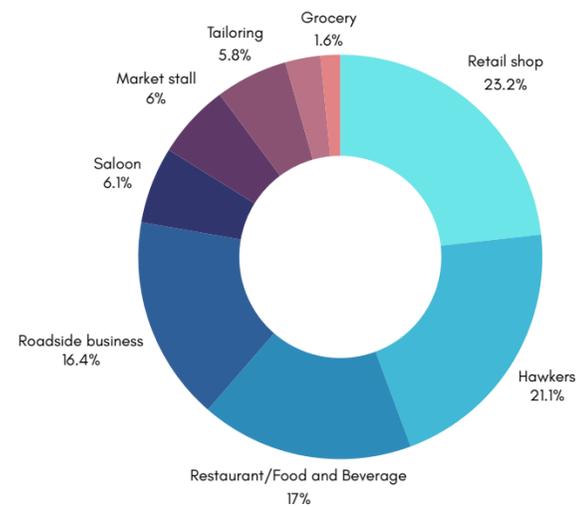
- Mothers overwhelmingly shoulder childcare responsibilities (84%), limiting their ability to fully engage in economic activities.
- Access to childcare services is severely limited, with 75% of households lacking any form of support like daycare or nannies.
- There is strong demand for affordable and culturally sensitive childcare solutions, with 67.6% of parents willing to enroll children in care centers if available.
- Social support networks exist (SACCOs, religious groups), but informal care arrangements prevail due to financial and cultural barriers.
- Cultural expectations and financial constraints exacerbate the childcare burden, leaving women to balance caregiving and livelihood activities under difficult conditions.

REFUGEE WOMEN'S BUSINESSES & CHALLENGES

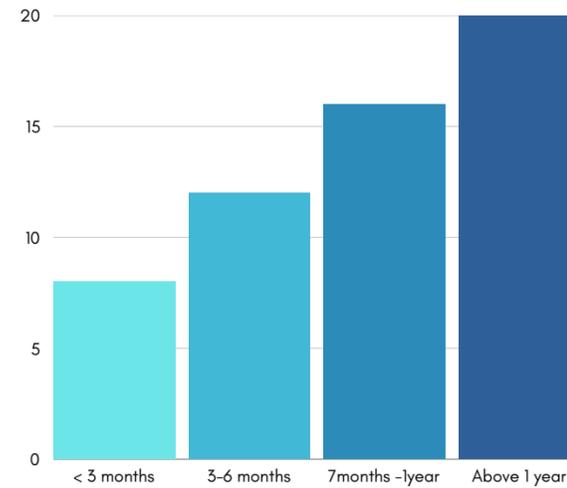
Urban refugee women in Kampala are highly entrepreneurial, often engaging in small-scale, informal businesses to sustain their households. However, multiple structural and socio-economic barriers hinder the growth and profitability of their enterprises. This fact sheet provides an overview of refugee women's business participation, the types of businesses they operate, their access to training and financing, and the key impediments they face, including how the burden of unpaid care work limits business productivity.

FINDINGS

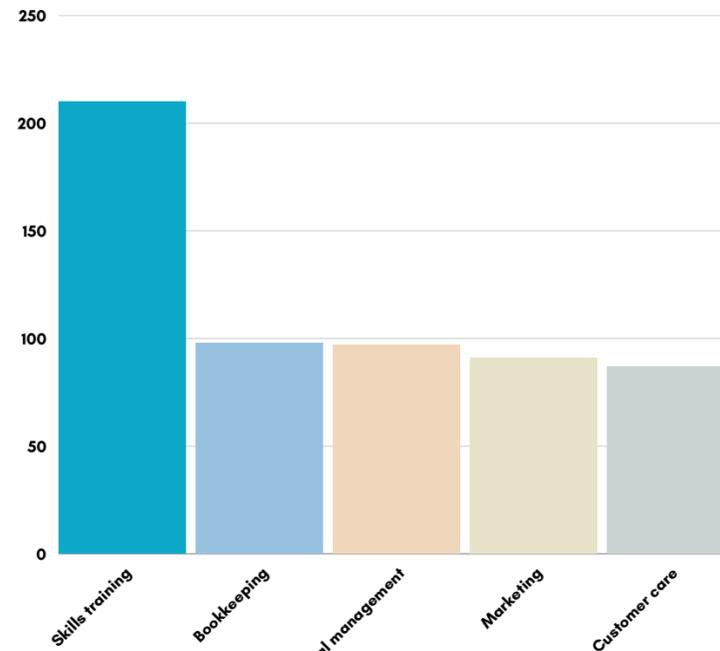
Nature of business for refugee women



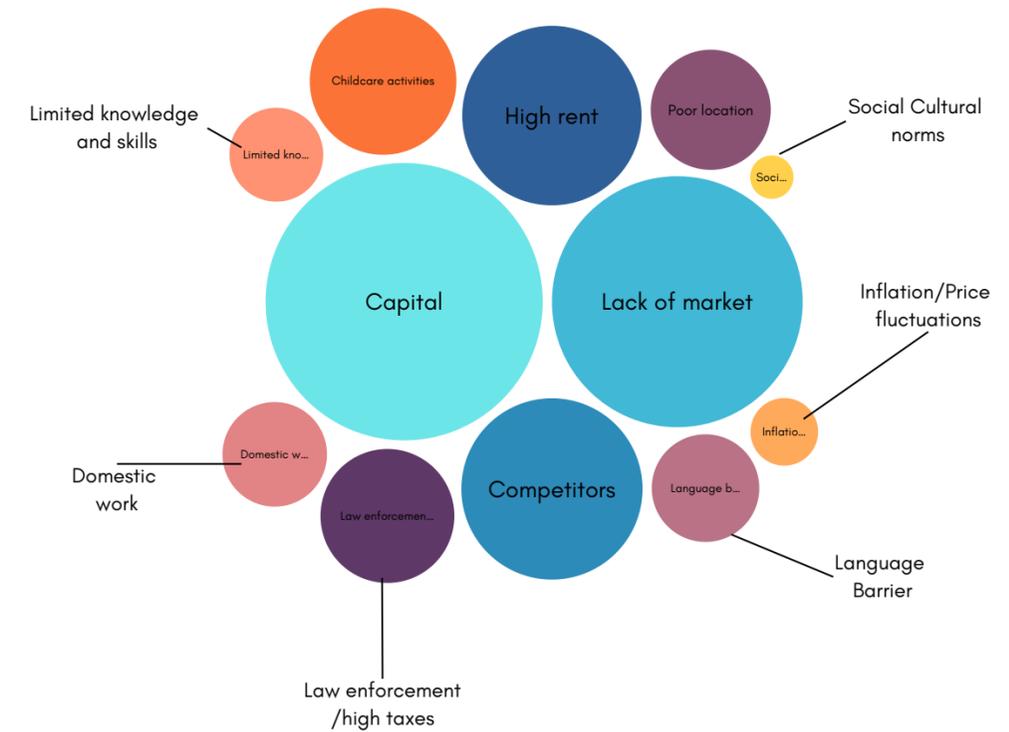
Period of running business



Business training for women in business

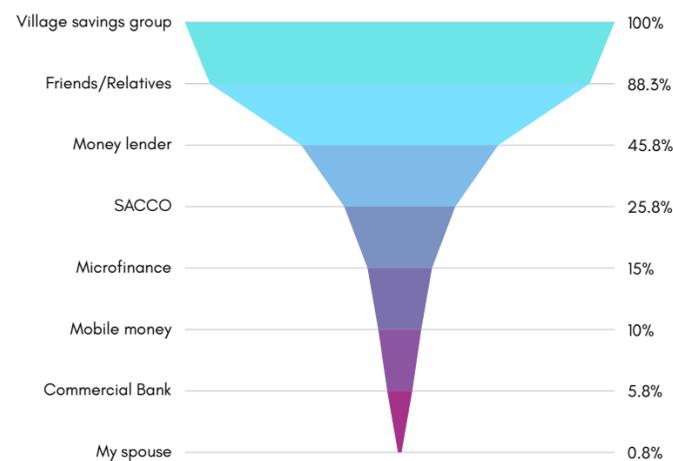


Challenges faced in business

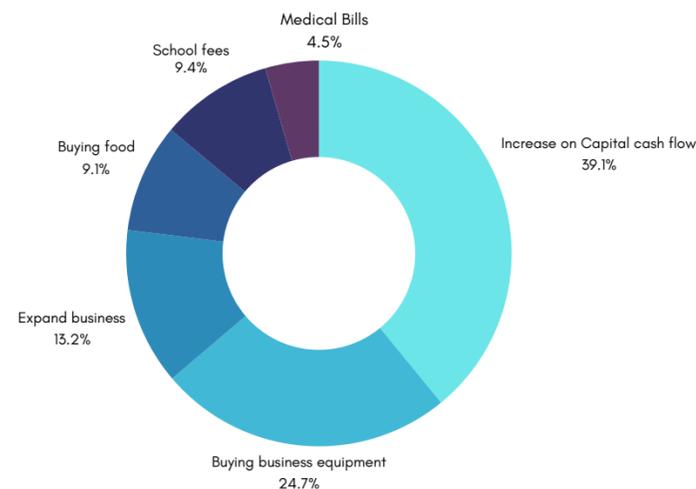


Access and utilization of business loans

A) Source of the loan



B) Loan Utilization



“Women are often expected to care for children, making it difficult to go to work and in our culture, women are restricted from interacting with men outside their family, limiting their work opportunities.”
(FGD, Somali Community)

TAKEAWAYS

- Refugee women are highly entrepreneurial, with 85.6% running their own businesses mostly in informal sectors like hawking, retail, and food vending.
- Despite their resilience, limited capital (83%) and lack of access to formal loans (only 30.8% accessed loans) significantly hinder business growth.
- 71% of refugee women lack any formal business training, impacting their ability to scale or diversify.
- Childcare burdens and high rent costs are key non-financial barriers that restrict productivity.