



REPUBLIC OF KENYA



The UN Refugee Agency



World Food Programme

Differentiated Assistance in Kenya

1. What is Differentiated assistance (DA) and how does it work?

The Differentiated Assistance (DA) approach is a comprehensive and inclusive initiative led by the Government of Kenya through the Department of Refugee Services (DRS), working together with UNHCR, WFP, and partners supporting refugees hosted in Dadaab and Kakuma refugee camps and Kalobeyei settlement.

For over 30 years, assistance in Kenya's refugee camps has been largely uniform. Every household received similar support based mainly on refugee status. DA changes this. It shifts from a one-size-fits-all model to tailored humanitarian and development assistance that reflects each household's unique needs and capacities.

The goal is to:

- **Reduce dependency** on humanitarian assistance.
- **Strengthen self-reliance** and economic participation.
- Foster inclusion through **community engagement** and accountability.

2. The DA Journey: Progress so Far-

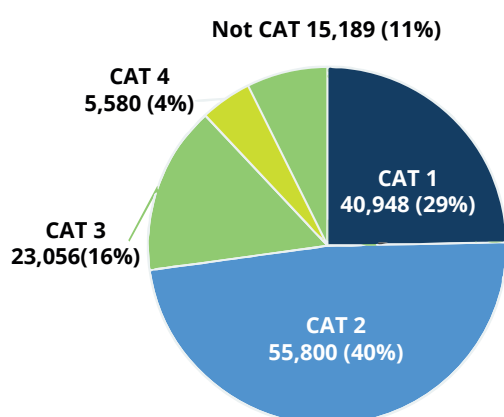
To make sure assistance matches reality on the ground, partners have developed detailed **household profiles**. These profiles draw from a mix of data sources; the World Bank's Kenya Analytical Programme on Forced Displacement, WFP's Food Security Outcome Monitoring, and UNHCR's ProGres database. These data sources were complemented by insights gathered from community engagements, providing a comprehensive foundation for classifying households into four distinct categories.

- **Category 1:** Vulnerable households,
Examples: *New arrivals below 12 months, child headed households, unaccompanied minors, and households with disabled or elderly heads confirmed to have compounding characteristics like high dependency ratios.*
- **Category 2:** Households with limited ability to meet basic needs.
Examples: *Aged out unaccompanied minors and households not in category one but with high dependency ratios and limited income.*
- **Category 3:** Partially self-reliant households
Examples: *Households not in category one or two with members engaged in employment or livelihood activities with income able to meet their basic needs.*
- **Category 4:** Self-reliant households
Examples: *Households not in category 1, 2 or 3 with members engaged in livelihood activities and having income levels able to meet beyond their basic needs. These include traders, business owners and those who have voluntarily opted out of humanitarian assistance.*

Household Identification

Data from multiple sources including UNHCR's ProGres, WFP's socio-economic surveys, partner livelihood datasets, and government trader lists are analyzed to assign each household a category.

The pie chart below shows the categorization data as of **September 2025**. The number of uncategorized households is expected to decrease further with the ongoing **socio-economic data collection** exercise being undertaken by DA partners in **Garissa and Turkana Counties**.



NB: Households that couldn't be categorized due to missing or incomplete data are invited to report to helpdesks for review.

The socio-economic data collection exercise is being conducted between October and November 2025 by DA partners in Dadaab, Kakuma and Kalobeyei, is intended to mop up the pending households that were not enumerated by the Enhanced Single Registry data teams between April and September 2025. The data will further support household categorization and inform programming decisions by partners.

3.Assistance Packages

The envisioned DA assistance packages comprise both humanitarian and livelihood interventions tailored to the needs and capacities of beneficiaries. Food assistance was planned based on the minimum food basket (MFB) at distribution levels of 60%, 40%, and 20% for categories 1, 2, and 3, respectively. However, due to a severe funding gap at both global and national levels, WFP adjusted its approach in the August/September cycle, prioritizing households in categories 1 and 2 with reduced rations of 40% and 20%, respectively. Thanks to additional funding in September, **the October/November ration were adjusted to 55%, 35%, for categories 1, 2, and, crucially, assistance reinstated for Category 3 households at 20%.** This will further improve from the December 2025 to March 2026 cycles to the envisioned DA **60%, 40%, ration levels for categories 1, 2 and maintained at 20% for category 3.**

In addition to food assistance, other humanitarian services such as social health insurance, WASH and education are being actively prioritised by mandated partners, to address the broader needs of affected populations. Importantly, protection interventions continue to be available across all beneficiary categories, reinforcing the commitment to safeguarding vulnerable individuals regardless of their classification.

The **DA livelihood assistance packages** are being finetuned through various co-creation forums. With each new and ongoing projects guided to align to the DA framework across the household categories and value chains for better coordination and outcome monitoring.

The development of the Livelihood Module of the Kenya Refugee Management System dubbed the "Single Source of Truth (SST)" is underway, with a Technical Working Group in place, co-chaired by DRS and UNHCR. The SST will:

- Enable accurate targeting and referrals.
- Support monitoring of household transitions between categories.
- Improve coordination and reduce duplication among partners.

At the same time, DRS and UNHCR are leading data-sharing discussions with NGOs to strengthen collaboration and ensure seamless integration once the SST module is rolled out.

4. The DA Transition Framework

The DA Transition Framework is a **structured, multi-stakeholder guide** that provides a **harmonized approach to support refugee and host communities in progressing from dependency on aid towards self-reliance**. The framework has six key components which serving as the structural backbone that aligns stakeholders, optimizes available resources across diverse needs towards self-reliance of targeted households.

5. Communication and Community Engagement

Ongoing engagement and communication with refugee communities and other stakeholders are central to the DA approach, enabling a shared understanding amid dwindling resources. Key communication channels include inter-agency and community townhall meetings, radio talk back shows, bulk SMS, WhatsApp, mobile caravans, video messages and posters. The DA teams has also been sharing the Kenya experience with other countries through the Joint WFP-UNHCR Country knowledge exchange forum facilitated by the WFP- UNHCR joint programme excellence and targeting hub.

6. DA Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) Framework

The MEL Workstream forms the backbone of the DA approach, ensuring that implementation is evidence-based, coordinated, and adaptive. Established through strong partnerships across UNHCR, WFP, the Department of Refugee Services (DRS), and NGO MEL focal leads, the MEL Framework harmonizes indicators, data collection tools, and reporting systems across agencies. This joint effort provides a unified structure for measuring outcomes across the four DA household categories, ensuring that progress is tracked consistently, and that data informs decisions at every stage.

Beyond monitoring performance, the MEL Workstream plays a strategic role in fostering learning, accountability, and continuous improvement. It coordinates research, evaluations, and quarterly learning sessions to capture lessons, share evidence, and inform adaptive management. The framework helps monitor household transitions and the effectiveness of the recourse mechanism to ensure equitable and responsive assistance. Through collaborative evidence generation and a shared data repository, the “single source of truth”, the MEL Workstream strengthens transparency,

supports policy dialogue, and underpins the transition from humanitarian relief to sustainable, inclusive, and needs-based programming.

7. Refining of DA Tools and Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs)

After nearly two years of foundational work and the progressive rollout of the DA implementation, the technical teams took a reflective pause during the After-Action Review held in September. Drawing on valuable feedback from refugees, partners, and donors, the technical teams are revisiting the Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) and guidance documents to refine and strengthen the framework.

The review process is expected to enhance the seamless implementation of key components, including coordination and collaboration with partners, the identification methodology, the recourse mechanism, the design and delivery of assistance packages, communication and community engagement and the Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL) framework. These improvements aim to ensure greater coherence, responsiveness, and impact across all aspects of the initiative.

8. Recourse Mechanism

Under the DA approach, WFP, UNHCR, DRS, and NGO partners have established a joint recourse mechanism that enables refugee households to formally submit/request for information or category review. This mechanism is a key accountability measure to ensure fairness, inclusivity, and responsiveness to the diverse needs of refugees. Between August and October 2025, over 14,600 households accessed helpdesks across Dadaab, Kakuma, and Kalobeyei. Of these, more than 4,000 cases have been reviewed and closed, with feedback provided to households. The remaining cases are under review, supported by the ongoing socio-economic data collection exercise to fill information gaps and ensure accurate resolutions. Refugee households can reach the recourse mechanism through multiple platforms:

- **Helpdesks** operated by WFP, UNHCR and DRS in the camps
- **Toll-free helplines** (WFP: 0800 722 446)
- **SMS and email** communication (WFP SMS: 0707 722 446; Email: kenya.feedback@wfp.org)

Recourse Mechanism

The Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) to manage the receipt and processing of feedback on the DA processes has been finalized. Training for the established multi-agency team responsible for the continuous review of feedback is planned for March 2026. These processes for recourse (in-case a household is not satisfied with their categorization) have been communicated widely to the refugee population using different forum.

Activity	Dates
1. Review of recourse mechanism cases and feedback to households	Ongoing
2. Third, DA food assistance distribution.	1 st Week of December 2025
3. Development of the Single Source of Truth MIS module	October 2025 to January 2026
4. Finalization of DA Transition Framework	November 2025
5. Household level socio economic data collection for un-categorized households	28 th October to 30 th November 2025
6. Stakeholders' engagement and communication on DA implementation	Ongoing
7. Field level inter-agency meetings to update on DA progress, opportunities and stakeholders roles and responsibilities	3 rd Week of November



WFP Helpline

Mon to Thur 8:00am to 1:00pm

Fri 8:00am to 1:00pm

UNHCR Helpline

Mon to Sat 8:00am to 4:00pm

Sun 8:00am to 8:00pm



WFP
Helpdesks

UNHCR
Helpdesks

DRS
Helpdesks

Sector specific partners

9. Voices from the community

We understand that support must go to those who need it most. If the new system of categories is fair and listens to our voices, then it can bring dignity—not just food. But we also hope it won't leave behind families like mine who are still struggling to stand on their own."

— Anonymous,

Refugees are all the same, if you categorize us, there will be conflict and insecurity in the camp because we all have nothing. We ran from our countries because of problems, now we are being forced to go back because of the new approach."

— Anonymous



**Differentiated
Assistance**



World Food Programme

For further information reach out to

Department of Refugee Services: Jashon Kinoro Awuor _jkawuor@gmail.com
United Nations High Commission for Refugees: John Burton _burtonj@unhcr.org
World Food Programme: Felix Okech _felix.okech@wfp.org