

In The Loop

Refugee Voices Bulletin

“In the Loop” Bulletin is a bi-weekly data-driven humanitarian feedback newsletter, produced to inform organizations and local authorities delivering services to refugees, returnees, and host communities in Dadaab. Internews aims to achieve two-way humanitarian communications for closing feedback loops to support the humanitarian community’s effort to put the concerns and feedback of the affected populations at the forefront of their service delivery to enhance accountability. The Community feedback used in this report is sampled from recorded Vox pop interviews, social media highlights, one-on-one community meeting, and other feedback collected from the weekly live radio call-in shows (Bilan) broadcasted in Dadaab by Nairobi’s Star FM’s Radio Gargaar 97.1 FM. The topics of discussion for the period mapped were “Role of mothers in preventing child malnutrition”, “Harmful cultural practices”, and “Alleged lack of teachers in Dadaab Refugee camps”.

Internews recorded 49 cross-cutting responses in the feedback collected between the week of Jan 11- Jan 29, 2021.

Data collected from 49 persons



34 Female
69%



15 Male
31%

Methods of data collection



ONLINE



ON-GROUND



ON AIR

Role of mothers in preventing child malnutrition in Dadaab

NUTRITION

Practicing child spacing for at least two years can be used to prevent malnutrition. Mothers should breastfeed their children for six months without giving anything else, including water. A child will be safe from malnutrition if a mother breastfeeds for two years, but if she gets pregnant early, the child will get malnourished.

Adult, Female, Dadaab

We are vulnerable refugees. There are families whose children are malnourished, lack proper shelter, food to eat, and grapple with poor hygiene. Such families cannot prevent malnutrition of their children.

Adult, Male, Dadaab

A healthy mother equals a healthy child. If a mother works on her nutrition, her child will be safe from malnutrition. I would urge fathers to ensure mothers are taken to hospital when they fall sick.

Adult, Male, Hagadera Camp

Every mother has a responsibility to ensure her child gets a balanced diet; nevertheless, mothers at the refugee camps cannot solely fulfill this role as it is pegged on resource availability. The ration provided for the refugees is not enough leaving many families deal with child malnutrition, anemia, and other diseases.

Adult, Male, Hagadera Camp

Pregnant women used to get porridge from the health posts, but it has been gradually reduced. We request for a weekly distribution of porridge to boost our nutritional intake.

Adult, Female, Section D, Hagadera Camp

Harmful Cultural Practices



GENDER BASED VIOLENCE

Women get abused by their husbands, sons, and brothers. Partners, the government, and the community can collectively work to respond. If stakeholders are not united, then nothing gets sorted.

Adult, Female, Hagadera Camp

Men engage in harmful practices that hurt women. They physically harm and abuse them, which is not good. The only way to address and eradicate these practices is to raise awareness. Women should not be disturbed; they are the backbone of the community. How can you abuse your sister?

Adult, Male, Hagadera Camp

Women endure a lot of problems presented by culture. They are raped and killed. Women should be united to end this humiliation perpetrated against them,

Adult, Female, Dadaab

HEALTH

We are worried about a rumor that all the health posts in all the camps will be closed. We want the partners to tell us the facts.

Adult, Female, Section E, Hagadera Camp

In Ifo camp, we have no access to medications for diabetes and blood pressure.

Adult, Female, Section A, Ifo Camp

FOOD SECURITY AND LIVELIHOODS

The food ratio we get is not adequate to take us two months. We request an increment.

Adult, Female, Section D, Ifo Camp

Drug abuse among the youth is increasing due to the lack of job opportunities. We want the partners to create livelihood opportunities.

Youth, Section B, Ifo Camp

HYGIENE

There is poor hygiene in Ifo section N, we fear it might lead to out-break of diseases if action is not taken.

Adult, Female, Section N, Ifo Camp

Virtual Community Roundtable Discussion on Lack of Teachers in Dadaab Refugee Camp Conducted on 28th Jan 2020

EDUCATION

Concern 1- We have many schools opened and operated by humanitarian organizations. For me, I have six children in Ndugu primary school. After schools re-opened, all parents were called and told they are only seven teachers available. You can imagine the ratio of 3,000 pupils to seven teachers. Initially, they were 35 teachers at this school. Every class had three streams, with every stream having close to 80 pupils. We hear all those pupils will use the same classroom. Does this mean agencies want our children killed by Coronavirus because what this means is that at least four kids or more will have to share a seat with others standing next to them. We feel that this shortage of teachers is a Coronavirus containment measure. Let agencies increase the teachers or tell us they cannot offer education service.

Adult, Female, Hagadera Camp

Concern 2- United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) has in the past told us all essential services including, health, water, education, and food are free. Now we are told we must pay for education. We want UNHCR to clarify if this will be the norm going forward. What has changed? We heard rumors that we will have to pay for all services, and by the look of things, it seems the information was correct since we have been told to pay teachers. We want answers from UNHCR.

Adult, Female, Hagadera Camp

Concern 3- I am a refugee from Ogadenia, Ethiopia. UNHCR told us that we will be relocating to Kakuma and Kalobeyei, but we refused and requested repatriation to our country, which UNHCR accepted. The problem we have is that our children who were planning to sit for KCPE and KCSE were sent away from schools before they closed last year. Now that schools were re-opened, does it mean our children will still stay out of school? We want UNHCR to answer us.

Adult, Female, Hagadera Camp

Concern 4- Schools used to shield girls from getting into early marriages. Girls are at home because we cannot pay the expected money. Aren't agencies then motivating girls to fall into early marriages? Is UNHCR aware that children are not accessing schools?

Adult, Female, Hagadera Camp

Concern 5- I have two boys and two girls in school, and it was all free. Following the announcement to pay teachers, I was forced to send only the boys to school and keep the girls at home because I cannot afford to pay for them all. I blame the agencies for this, and they are best suited to answer this.

Adult, Male, Dagahaley Camp

Concern 6- This issue of seeking payment for teachers will result in children dropping out of school to become criminals and commit all sorts of criminal acts. Agencies through Radio Gargaar have been telling us that all services are free of charge. We would like to know what changed.

Adult, Female, Dagahaley Camp

Concern 7- I am a mother who has six children in school. To earn a living, I wash clothes for households, and I manage to get KES1000. Will I use the same meagre income to buy vegetables to feed them or pay school fees? No one told us of the plan before. I would request agencies to increase the number of teachers and cater for them. At times you would see children all over in front of the school gate; when you ask what the matter is, they would tell you they do not have masks. We request the agencies working in the education sector help us manage the education of our children.

Adult, Female, Ifo Camp

Concern 8- Thanks to agencies for providing services such as education, water, and security. We used to get good education services, but now, we have a challenge. We were to pay for children to study. I have many children in school, and I was a committee member, but no one consulted me. We were abruptly called and told that we need to pay money. Parents got frustrated by this requirement and only accepted to pay KES100. However, not every parent can afford to settle even the KES100. I request UNHCR to help us sort this matter. I am a committee member in one of the schools. Community members are blaming me for not speaking with teachers on their behalf to explain their situation. Education agencies did not bother to sit us down to discuss this matter ahead of the schools re-opening. We were just suddenly informed of the news.

Education committee member, Ifo Camp

Concern 9- Whoever said we need to pay teachers is misleading. Refugee communities do not have money to pay for studies. Among us, we have single parents and people with dependent children. If a mother settles for her children,

she cannot pay for her dependents. We send children to school, but the teachers send them away. Young boys will take advantage of the situation and roam in town. Schools even refused to take half the money. It is not possible to pay for 10 children, each KES200. School heads will be to blame for any spillover effect this will have on our children. We do not get food, and now education has become a problem. I think UNHCR should tell us to surrender the cards since they cannot deliver anymore.

Adult, Female, Ifo Camp

Concern 10- We all know education is the key to life. One of the reasons I stayed behind in the refugee camps when my family got repatriated was to get an education. I am dependent on another family. I am in Class Seven. Some pupils paid the money, while others like me came back home to stay. I asked my caregivers to pay for me, but they say they cannot manage. To agencies, what plans do you have for dependent pupils like me?

Adult, Male, Ifo Camp

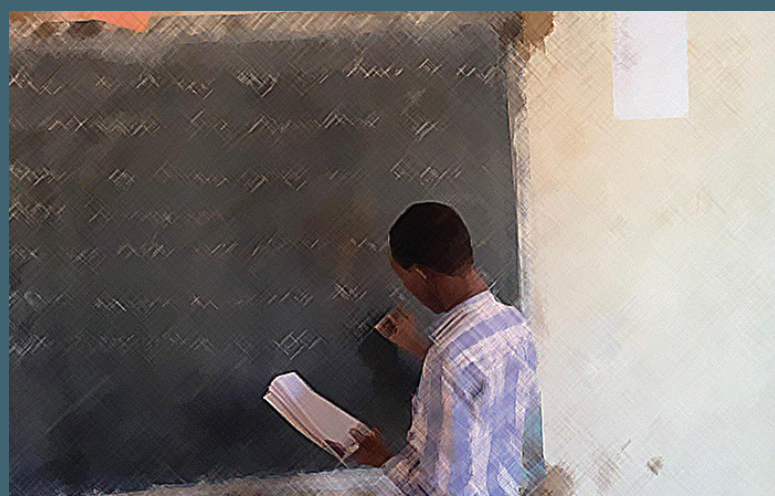
Responses from UNHCR, Lutheran World Federation (LWF) AND Windle International Kenya (WIK)

“A lot of resources have gone to COVID-19 response via Health and Wash sectors. The budget available for other sectors including education and protection was reduced. Consequently, the number of teachers at the secondary and primary level were slashed by 50%. When schools re-opened, many children showed up. UNHCR and other education partners conducted meetings at the three camps. We met community leaders, parents, teachers, and the school board of management committee. The stakeholder’s meeting strongly recommended that it was essential to have all teachers resume work because education is one of the free services the refugee community enjoyed in Dadaab. Therefore, UNHCR has identified additional resources that shall result in the redeployment of all the teachers in the primary schools effective February 1, 2021. UNHCR and LWF held discussions on the matter this week; we are currently working on contract adjustments. LWF will re-hire all teachers that were laid-off towards the end of 2020.

This current arrangement only covers primary schools, but within February, we will start a similar discussion to identify resources to support the secondary schools because they too were affected by the reduction of teachers. UNHCR and other education partners remain committed to supporting the education of the refugees and asylum seekers in Dadaab and across Kenya. We will continue to collectively fundraise for the refugees’ education services and prioritize the deployment of additional qualified teachers so that schools operate in an organized manner.

In line with the government of Kenya guidelines and mitigating the risk of COVID-19 infection, UNHCR and education partners have heavily invested in water and sanitation infrastructure, including the provision of handwashing facilities to all secondary and primary schools such as portable 20-liter jerricans while we set-up and construct permanent handwashing facilities. Schools will also get soaps and masks. Last year when schools were closed, we built 68 latrines to ensure improved hygiene and sanitation when children resume learning. Furthermore, 16, and eight classrooms were built in Ifo and Dagahaley camps, respectively.

As per UNHCR and the refugee policy, schools managed by UNHCR and other agencies are free of charge. A few weeks ago, we got notified that following the laying off of teachers, school management committees and school managers took advantage of the situation and came up with community initiatives to fill the gap of the lack of teachers. In trying to sort the matter, they pushed for some costs from the parents to hire teachers. We informed school managers to



drop the issue. Here again, we reiterate and refute the decision solely taken by the school management. Resorting to such acts without prior notice or approval from UNHCR is wrong. UNHCR manages schools on behalf of the Kenyan government, which stipulates basic education as free under the free education program. We are telling the community plus the school management committee that the problem has been solved. LWF, UNCHR, together with other education partners, will increase the number of teachers in schools according to the standards we had the last two years (2019 & 2020).

For learners that were to relocate to Kakuma, the process was ongoing until schools closed in March 2020. Unfortunately, due to COVID-19, and resultant restricted movement, the process was halted. Some of the learners that were in Grade 8 and Form Four were registered to sit for their national exams in Kakuma. Some relocated while others are still in Dadaab. According to the Kenya government exam rules and regulations, a learner can only sit for exams at the school of registration, therefore, UNHCR will support learners to go to Kakuma even if their family has not relocated. We advise all learners that were supposed to go to Kakuma but did not go to visit the nearest primary or secondary school and register while informing the headteachers that they are to sit their exams in Kakuma. Once we get their details, UNHCR will organize transport to Kakuma to enable learners to sit for their exam.

Dakane Bare– Assistant Education Officer I UNHCR

LWF has an open-door policy. Any child at the refugee camp, whether registered, unregistered or a new arrival, with or without uniform can access school anytime. School heads are aware of this policy. Learners can continue to learn until they get relocated. LWF is in coordination with UNCHR to do the listing of learners who planned to relocate to Kakuma, particularly candidates.

Yes, school is a protection tool regarding issues that affect girl's education and keeping them away from challenges that may befall them along the way committed either by community members or parents. Unfortunately, some measures the community take affects the objective of educating girls. Furthermore, not all learners resumed school. LWF and WTK are conducting back-to-school campaigns on checking on students' data to follow up on who is missing.

LWF has 40,000 learners in school, which is a huge number in terms of the distribution of masks. Nonetheless, we received 19,100 masks from World Food Programme (WFP), and distributed to all the schools. If learners come to school without masks, headteachers should be able to provide them. However, we will follow up to ensure the available masks are accessible for learners.

Lawi Malenje- Education Coordinator | Lutheran World Federation

WIK distributed 5,000 masks to students in January and is currently procuring another 7,000 pieces. We advise students to ask for masks from teachers. Our data indicates that out of 3,000 girls who were in school in 2020, only 1,614 girls reported back, prompting us to liaise with community leaders to help mobilize parents to ensure girls report back to school to continue learning.

Jibril Issack- Education Officer | WIK

FilmAid Kenya and WIK partnered to conduct public address announcements across all the camps to ensure the community is sensitized to the back-to-school strategies. The campaign also targets those that dropped out of school to return".

Samuel Murimi - Programmes Officer | FilmAid Kenya

To support this process, the Internews team will;

- To close the feedback loops, Internews will package partner responses to community questions and concerns into a radio show so that fears surrounding the reduction of teachers as well as inferred cost to parents to cover hired teachers by school management is cleared.
- Support communication efforts of partners by giving free radio airtime during the weekly live call-in shows at Radio Gargaar in Dadaab, Star FM in Nairobi and Radio Atta Nayece in Kakuma for purposes of community sensitization.
- Support community correspondents in Dadaab and Kakuma refugee camps and host communities to gather community feedback for timely referrals and response.
- Continue mentoring and providing technical assistance to the Dadaab-based Radio Gargaar, Nairobi based Star FM and Radio Atta Nayece (in Kakuma) teams to produce a weekly live radio call-in show that addresses thematic issues on health and protection.
- Produce a bi-weekly newsletter (In the Loop Bulletin) capturing the most asked questions, rumors, needs, requests, suggestions, myths, misconception, complaints, and fears, collected in that period from communities across the refugee and host communities in Dadaab, Kakuma and Kalobeyi Informal Settlement.

SUGGESTIONS

Suggestions to Partners

- Agencies working in the education sector to continue raising awareness for the community through their back-to-school campaigns to assure parents that education services are still free of charge same as before to achieve access and retention of learners in schools.

For more information on "In The Loop" Bulletin and Communicating with Communities efforts by Internews in Kenya, please contact Stellar Murumba on smurumba@INTERNEWS.ORG