

In The Loop

Refugee Voices Bulletin

“In The Loop” 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, Kakuma and Kolobeyei informal settlements. By providing analysis of the feedback gathered, Internews aims to achieve two-way community feedback loops to support the humanitarian community’s effort to put the concerns and feedback of the affected populations at the forefront of their response to enhance accountability.

The Community feedback in this report was collected by our community correspondents spread across the Dadaab refugee camps and host community during the course of their work, as well as feedback collected from the weekly live radio call-in show (Bilan) broadcasted in Dadaab by Star FM’s Radio Gargaar 97.1FM. The community comments were recorded during Vox pop interviews in no structured way but from those willing to comment on the **Coronavirus** issue. A total of 65 comments were recorded in the week of March 17 – March 20, 2020.

These highlights indicate broad trends in the refugee and host communities’ perceptions of the **COVID-19 Pandemic**.



ONGROUND Feedback



MYTHS

I was told that COVID-19 does not affect Somalis and Muslims in general. I also heard it cannot survive in a hot environment like Dadaab. As a result, there is no need to worry. It’s like Ebola which never affected us.

Adult, female, Hagadera Refugee Camp



MISCONCEPTIONS

We believe that Coronavirus cannot affect people in Dadaab camps because of the hot climate. I was told, it can only survive in a cold environment like in Europe, America, and Asia, so people should not worry.

Adult, male, Hagadera Refugee Camp

Camel milk can treat COVID-19, people should use it. I am sure they will be free from it. On the other hand, Corona will not affect Somalis. Have you seen any Somali with Coronavirus? These are only stories from the West, we should not concentrate on it.

Adult, male, Dagahaley Refugee Camp



CONCERNS

There is water scarcity in Fafi sub-county, and doctors are saying we should wash our hands to prevent ourselves from the Coronavirus. How can someone who is struggling to access water to drink, wash his/her hands? We want water, please.

Adult, female, Fafi Sub-County

Coronavirus is worrying us. We heard there is an outbreak in Nairobi, and Mogadishu. People come from Nairobi to the camps daily. There are no procedures in place to diagnose people before they arrive at the camps. Thus, we remain very vulnerable to be infected with the virus.

Adult, female, Fafi Sub-County

People in Dadaab camps move from one camp to the other without properly checked. We depend on food aid provided by humanitarian organizations but then the partners have stopped working without informing the refugees. We are confused. The national staff that works with the UN organizations come from Nairobi, and outside Kenya. When they return to the camps, they are not tested because there are no test kits available. This is risky, and as soon as they arrive, they mingle with us, hence anyone with the virus can spread. Organizations should screen their staff coming from Nairobi before they can come to the camps.

Adult, male, Dagahaley Refugee Camp



QUESTIONS

We hear on the radio that there is COVID-19, which is all over the world and has so far killed many people. Additionally, we heard it’s already in Kenya and Somalia. People come to the camps either from Mogadishu or Nairobi. Moreover, they are not tested which is agonizing. Therefore, we would like to know, what are the organizations doing to prevent the virus from hitting us?

Adult, female, Hagadera Refugee Camp.

The doctors are advising that people should avoid crowded areas, yet they know we usually go to the food distribution points to collect our food ration, which we all depend on for sustenance. Over 10,000 people gather at the distribution points to collect food items, while others come to do business. This can lead to the spread of the virus. The WFP and UNHCR should tell us, what plans do they have during the upcoming cycle of food distribution?

Adult, female, Hagadera Refugee Camp



SUGGESTIONS

The doctors tell us that we should avoid crowded areas, and stay at home, which is not possible. Both water sources and hospitals which we frequent are populated. Therefore, doctors should start sensitization with the organizations that serve the refugees.

Adult, female, Fafi, Sub-County

Community awareness creation is low at the camps despite the disease looming. Not much has been done to prevent the virus should it arrive here. We would request UNHCR and other partners working in Dadaab camps to conduct sensitization campaigns among the refugee community. The religious leaders should also take part in sensitizing the community.

Adult, female, Ifo Camp



FEARS

Coronavirus is a dangerous disease, and we fear it so much. We heard about it on the radio, but we don't know much. We haven't seen anyone affected by it. I would say, may God protect us from it.

Adult, female, Dadaab

There is widespread fear among people regarding the Coronavirus. These are people with low incomes who live in refugee status. If this virus has severely affected developed countries like China and others, we feel it might harm us. I would suggest that humanitarian organizations should put effort into preventing it.

Adult, female, Dadaab



MISCONCEPTIONS

We heard this virus which some people named Corona, and we are not a party to that. We are not the type it will affect. God forbid; we pray it does not reach us. Here there is no testing and treating kits. Advanced countries who usually support us are overwhelmed and grappling with it. We cannot believe something we have not seen. People are of different race and religion; we believe that it cannot affect Muslims. We heard that people should quarantine themselves, how can we do that when we rely on a daily wage. Any day you come home without something, you will have it rough with the kids and the wife. Those who have fridges and stock of foodstuff can quarantine themselves, but not us. Furthermore, Corona cannot survive in this hot temperature and as a result, it cannot affect us.

Adult, resident, Dadaab

We fear the Coronavirus. It's a fatal virus. We ask God not to infect any Muslim. People in Dadaab camp live in a border, households are very close which makes it a high-risk area if the virus reaches here. I would urge the community to reduce shaking hands and hugging. It's contacted if someone's breathe reaches another. I pray to God it doesn't reach us.

Resident, Dadaab

NEXT STEPS

SUGGESTIONS

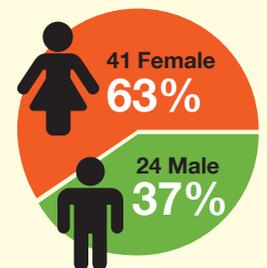
How should UNHCR and partners respond to community feedback?

Update your messages and activities to

- Address rumors and misinformation by providing the correct information
- Provide expert voices on COVID-19 during the weekly radio show to most relevant questions from community members and providing the needed facts live on air
- Debunk and demystify myths from the communities. Use religious leaders as much as possible
- Answer questions communities have about COVID-19, and
- Use community suggestions to improve the response where possible.

To support this process, the Internews team will;

- Support more community correspondents in Dadaab refugee camps and host communities to collect, use and act on community feedback for timely referrals where urgent need arises
- Continue mentoring and providing technical assistance to the Dadaab-based Radio Gargaar and Nairobi-based Star FM teams to produce Bilan – a weekly live radio call-in show that addresses thematic issues on health and protection.
- Produce a bi-weekly factsheet (In The Loop Bulletin) addressing the most commonly asked questions, rumors, myths, misconception and fears, collected in that period from communities across the refugee and host communities in Dadaab.



Methods of data collection



ONLINE



ON-GROUND



ON AIR