

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. 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 platforms, and other feedback collected from the weekly live radio call-in show (Bilan) broadcasted in Dadaab by Nairobi’s Star FM’s Radio Gargaar 97.1FM. The topics of discussion for the period mapped were “health benefits of breastfeeding”, “importance of vocational skills for women in Dadaab”, World Humanitarian Day” and “Plight of people with disabilities in the current Covid-19 crisis”.

A total of 90 interactions were recorded in the week of August 3 - August 23, 2020

Data collected from 90 persons

36 Female
31%

54 Male
69%

Methods of data collection

ONLINE

ON-GROUND

ON AIR

HEALTH BENEFITS OF BREASTFEEDING

MATERNAL AND CHILD HEALTH

Breastfeeding has a lot of significance for a child. A breastfed child is never the same as a non-breastfed one. A breastfed child grows faster, healthier, and understands better. Many children you see at the health posts, were not breastfed, and they become prone to any disease hence put under medication. The more you breastfeed your baby, the healthier he becomes and grows.

Adult, Female, Fafi

This week is world breastfeeding week, which is held August every year. Islamic religion teaches us to breastfeed a child for two years, while health organizations recommend the same. A breastfed child is not the same as another that did not breastfeed. They perform in school and have good health. I breastfeed my child three times at night, let alone day time.

Adult, Female, Fafi

Unfortunately, our Somali mothers need awareness when it comes to breastfeeding, and this is due to the lack of knowledge about the importance of breastfeeding. In some cases, when the baby is born, instead of breastfeeding, they start feeding with other milk which is not beneficial but harmful to the baby. All this is culturally based but I do not believe it.

I support breastfeeding. I am a girl, and I have no family yet, but I hope when God gives me a baby, I will put efforts to breastfeed. I also hope that all other women will do the same.

Adult, Female, Dagahaley Camp

I do not think the breastfeeding that you talk about is something women nowadays do because I have seen women who say if they breastfeed, their breasts will fall.



Most of these women are those who get married not knowing much.

Adult, Female, Ifo Camp

Breastfeeding is good for both the mother and the baby. Health organizations have repeatedly told us that breastfeeding helps children to grow well, so it is recommendable that mothers breastfeed their babies.

Breastfeeding is great for children for up to 6 months, after which, you introduce food and strive to keep them healthy.

Adult, Female, Hagadera Camp

Breastfeeding is good for babies but, it is not fit to breastfeed a big baby. Anything up to 6 months is right, though more than that harms the mother.

Adult, Male, Dadaab.

Through phone calls, adults and youth emphasized on the importance of breastfeeding for children’s growth. They stated that breast milk contains lots of nutrients, which enhance intelligence, and overall health of a baby. They cited instances where mothers give children other supplementary milk before they are six months old, implying that breast milk is not enough. They insisted and encouraged mothers to abandon such practices. Moreover, the callers indicated that mothers must ensure they breastfeed their children for two consecutive years, alluding that it is also an obligation as directed by the Islamic religion.

Adults and youth, Dadaab.

IMPORTANCE OF VOCATIONAL SKILLS FOR WOMEN IN DADAAB

Vocational training is important for women in the camps. It develops their skills. Making of hand made products like mats, brooms, tie-dye, or dressmaking helps women to support their families through the work of their hands. I would urge the refugee women to learn skills and earn from it. We have been here in the camps for so many years. Working with the skills we have learned in the camps gave us a lot of opportunities. So, women should disregard the stereotypes associated with them, and learn skills like tie and dye that can help them grow.

Adult, Female, Hagadera Camp

If you learn a skill, it will help you and your family because it will be a source of income for sustenance. For instance, if you learn tailoring skills, the demand is so high at the camps, and you will make good money and become independent instead of relying on food aid.

Adult, Female, Hagadera Camp

The significance of vocational training is so many. When women learn a skill, it helps them get job opportunities and support their family with the money they make through the work of their hands, they pay school and Madrasa fees for their children. It helps the person personally wherever he goes. We have been in the camp for years, and we have been using our skills to raise our children. We have provided books for children and anything they needed for their studies, but nowadays, due to the Covid-19, the business has decreased because of the restrictions brought by the pandemic.

Adult, Female, Hagadera Camp

Honestly, this is a program I got satisfied with, and it is a source of inspiration for our Somali girls. Indeed, women with vocational skills can be independent of their husbands. They must continue their efforts, and others should imitate their friends.

Adult, Male, Mandera

Women these days work for themselves, whether they are married or not. Even if they are not educated, still, they fend for their family. On the contrary, it is men who are jobless and idle.

Adult, Male, Hagadera Camp

It is not good for women to work. If they acquire skills and can work at home that is fine. The Islamic religion prohibits women from going out alone and obligates them to stay at home. If they indeed go out, they sin. I do not support it.

Adult, Male, Mandera

Having a skill is useful for any woman. Agencies provide women with free skills acquisition. I would advise women to take up the free skill development offered by humanitarian organizations. They say a man who does not work does not drink tea. Therefore, let women acquire the skills to become independent.

Adult Male, Hagadera Camp

I think mothers must learn a skill specific to them to become self-sufficient. I also applaud the women I have just listened to; they set an example to other women.

Adult, Male, Hagadera Camp

Somali women need to learn the various skills offered by charitable organizations. Women are the backbone of Somali society and the foundation of a diverse family. I welcome and commend them for learning.

Anonymous Respondent

World Humanitarian Day

The humanitarian day is an important day for us refugees because we depend on the aid provided by humanitarian partners. This year is different as we cannot come together to celebrate this important day due to Covid-19. I want to thank all the agencies who served us with dignity and dedication. We depend on their aid for a living.

Adult, Female, Ifo Camp

Greetings to all the organizations serving humanity across the world we appreciate the partners for the good service in health, water and education sectors. We are sorry that we cannot celebrate with them on this humanitarian day because of Covid-19 restrictions. I would request the humanitarian partners to continue serving the vulnerable population around the world.

Adult, Female, Ifo Camp



The humanitarian day is important; we honor the heroes in the humanitarian world. Despite the restrictions brought by Coronavirus, the organizations are still serving us. We pray to God that the Covid-19 era ends soon, life resumes to normalcy, and schools to re-open for our children.

Adult, Female, Ifo Camp

World humanitarian day is an important day. This year, there will be no celebration, unlike the other years because of Covid-19. We will pray for the aid workers sacrificing their time to serve us. We do appreciate and thank them for their efforts.

Adult, Female, Ifo Camp

We are thankful to the agencies, however, since the advent of Coronavirus the services have reduced.

Adult, Female, Ifo Camp

Thank you for the program. We have concerns regarding food ratio distributed. We request increment of Bamba chakula.

Adult, Male, Ifo Camp

First, thanks to aid agencies for their services. We would like to request the increment of Bamba chakula

Adult, Male, Dagahaley Camp

May God bless the organizations; they gave us a helping hand. I was in need and I have a card now. I am very grateful for all the services.

Adult, Female, Dagahaley Camp

We are happy with the services by the aid agencies in Dadaab. I am one of the beneficiaries of a scholarship by UNHCR. Moreover, UNHCR has given some students scholarships to Sudan. The registration was done back in 2019, but there was no further communication. I would like to request the UNCHR to speed up the process for those students.

Youth, Ifo Camp

The services are so far good. We only request for improvement of the services.

Adult, Male, Dadaab

The services are so far good. We request for the improvement and increment of the services.

Adult, Male, Hagadera Camp

I am happy with the help the agencies provide us. I see the services they provide as beneficial to all refugees and the host community because half of the people live on the resources provided by the agencies. They have no other income.

Adult, Male, Hagadera Camp

In my opinion, the humanitarian services provided at DADAAB is a little help to people, but not enough to meet their needs. In comparison to the past, when the refugees were new, and a lot of stuff used to be distributed in Dadaab. Currently, the funding of the organization who used to provide services is diminishing.

Adult, Male (no location given)

Greetings Radio Gargaar team. I see the humanitarian services provided in Dadaab refugee camps as good. We are grateful to all aid agencies for their support. Thanks, Bilan hosts.

Adult, Female, Dadaab

We welcome the services provided in Dadaab by humanitarian organizations. Although this year, the humanitarian activities of the donors have been affected by Coronavirus, we are still happy with the service they provide.

Adult, Male, Hagadera Camp

Services provided by agencies are not enough for the refugee community. I would say, let the world stand with these people who are suffering, flee their country due to war. Let something be done for them.

Adult, Male, Hagadera Camp

Community Concerns and Questions- Virtual Roundtable Discussion Conducted on August 20, 2020



Plight of people with disabilities in the current Covid-19 crisis.

Concern 1- As we know Humanity and Inclusion (HI) is in charge of people with disabilities, initially, they used to give aid in terms of devices twice a year, and it was done in a public forum. There were also therapy sessions, however, from 2019 to date, we have not seen such interventions. It was the only aid we used to get. People currently use worn-out devices, which hinders them to access massage therapy sessions when possible. Furthermore, in the advent of Coronavirus, massage therapy has reduced. Moreover, UNCHR used to support us through other partners who used to provide devices and therapy. This no longer occurs.

Concern 2- The food quantity we get is not enough, the food ratio we get is equivalent to 1000 KES, and we all understand such amount cannot cater to the whole month's food need. There is also 500 KES Bamba Chakula we get from WFP; this is barely enough. We have heard that Danish Refugee Council (DRC) provides a food voucher, and we requested the same through HI, but we did not receive anything. Therefore, we request UNHCR and HI to provide specific food vouchers whether in the form of cash or food meant for people with disabilities only, separate from the usual food ratio provided for all.

Concern 3- There was a car that used to ferry people especially those who are bedridden and cannot afford to hire a car for themselves to attend massage therapy, this no longer happens. There are a lot of needs and it has increased with the pandemic.

Chairman, People with disabilities Committee, Dagahaley Camp

Concern 4- Since the onset of Coronavirus, all organizations stopped working, same with Lutheran World Federation (LWF). We do not blame

them, but we ask for services. Only a few people receive massage therapy. I would like to ask UNHCR why they are not helping vulnerable people with disabilities during this challenging and tough times.

Concern 5- On behalf of everyone with a disability, I request all organizations such as International Rescue Committee (IRC), Refugee Affairs Secretariat (RAS), UNHCR, LWF, and others to come to our aid, we are suffering. Let them do something before we suffer dire consequences. We also would like to request for friendly latrines.

Chairman, People with disabilities Committee, Hagadera, Camp

Concern 6- Access to services has reduced since Coronavirus started. We do not even get a quarter of the services we used to get. Even getting equipment is a problem. We think LWF does not get the support it used to get, which is affecting us too. We request organizations to come to our aid. The other day, we were allocated five toilets, we say thank you, but five toilets cannot cater for everyone. We would like to request for more. There used to be referrals to hospitals like Kijabe, this has stopped since Coronavirus started. We need the resumption of such services.

Adult, Female, Hagadera Camp.

Concern 7- We need help in health interventions, which is not available at the local level?

Caregiver, Ifo Camp

Humanitarian Actors' Responses



- We do procure assistive devices once a year, but we give out twice a year. The assistive devices including wheelchairs and tricycle were supposed to be procured in March, 2020, but due to Covid-19 prevailing situations, we could not. We have now procured, and they are in our offices. The devices will be taken to Ifo and Dagahaley either end of August or first week of September, 2020. HI also produces assistive devices locally, we have been doing that, therefore, we advise the beneficiaries to come, we assess them and give the locally produced devices as per need.
- On the issue of therapy, we have two centers one in Ifo and one in Dagahaley. The therapy sessions are ongoing. We have walk-ins to the blocks by our outreach staff who conduct therapy sessions.
- DRC identifies the most vulnerable among community members for food vouchers, and we have some people with disabilities who benefit from it, but not all meet the criteria for targeting. This is also dependent on fund availability.
- WFP provides food once for two months. We do not have control over food quantity, it is the mandate of WFP and UNHCR, whether food is enough or not is a subject for discussion with WFP and UNHCR.

Wycliffe OSANGO, Mainstreaming Officer | Humanity & Inclusion-Dadaab

- Our design of the project is rehabilitation and access to services, for now, we do not have any cash program interventions.
- For HI, our mandate evolves around rehabilitation, access to services, advocacy, psychosocial support, and Inclusive education. If PWDs need any other service outside our mandate, we do referrals to concerned agencies.

Erick MAKHAGA-Occupational Therapist-Inclusive Education Officer | Humanity & Inclusion- Dadaab

- HI has taxis in IFO and Dagahaley to support persons with disabilities with mobility challenges. In Dagahaley, we have allocated 20 trips and Ifo 10 trips for a taxi. We also support PWDs with donkey cart transport assistance in IFO and Dagahaley, but then because of Covid-19, we adopted an appointment-booking approach, where we book transport services for clients. None the less, I understand services have scaled down, but we are trying to make sure the services are up and running while ensuring precautions are taken.

Erick MAKHAGA-Occupational Therapist-Inclusive Education Officer | Humanity & Inclusion Dadaab

- I understand and feel for our people of concern (POC) whom we have been giving total service, which has slowed down a bit due to Covid-19. Much is going to improve now that protocols and precautions on Covid-19 are being observed. We are going to have more of the staff going to the field for support.

Lawi MALENJE- Education Coordinator | Lutheran World Federation

- I understand operations have reduced; though, it has not completely stopped, but perhaps our presence at the camps is not as good as it used to be. There are a lot of activities going on, such as community and Radio sensitization. Maybe physical services delivery has reduced, but I hope the community can access services in the different ways we are trying to deliver.
- We need to work on how accessible the services are, and how much the community is aware of what is going on. Thanks, Internews for connecting us with the community and sharing their concerns, requests, and views with us.

Hani ABDIRIZACK-Psychosocial Officer | Lutheran World Federation

- Care is responsible for the provision of toilets. As HI, our role is to conduct an environmental assessment, identify the person who needs a toilet; once we verify, we refer them to Care. If the person has a toilet but lacks a seat, we provide locally fabricated seats at our centers.

Erick MAKHAGA-Occupational Therapist-Inclusive Education Officer | Humanity & Inclusion – Dadaab

- Care International is mandated to provide wash interventions. We only present them with the list of people in need of toilet facilities. It is up to Care, based on the budget they have, to allocate slots of toilets in the different camps. We do not have control over this.
- On the issue of Kijabe referral for corrective surgeries, we managed to refer 12 persons in February 2020.

Wycliffe OSANGO- Mainstreaming Officer | Humanity & Inclusion -Dadaab

- For health interventions in Ifo, it is the mandate of Kenya Redcross and UNCHR. If the case is related to PWDs, we do referrals to Kenya Redcross and MSF with a recommendation that the case should be referred to Nairobi or Mombasa. Then, it is the responsibility of health staff at those agencies to assess the case further to facilitate the referral of the case for specialized external medical service. Our mandate as HI and LWF ends after we have done the referrals.

Wycliffe OSANGO- Mainstreaming Officer | Humanity & Inclusion - Dadaab

SUGGESTIONS

How should UNHCR and partners respond to community feedback?

- Based on the feedback we received, it turns out that many people, if not all, know and understand the importance of breastfeeding. The missing link lies at the practice level. Though there are those who still have scanty information on how long a mother should breastfeed. Consequently, the challenging task of intervention is to translate knowledge into action through vigorous and continuous awareness-raising.