

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, virtual community roundtable discussion 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 “16 days of Activism Against Gender-based Violence” and “Sexual Gender-based Violence in the Wake of COVID-19” in Dadaab refugee camps.

Internews recorded 67 cross-cutting responses in the feedback collected between the week of Dec 13- Dec 30, 2020.



Methods of data collection



ONLINE

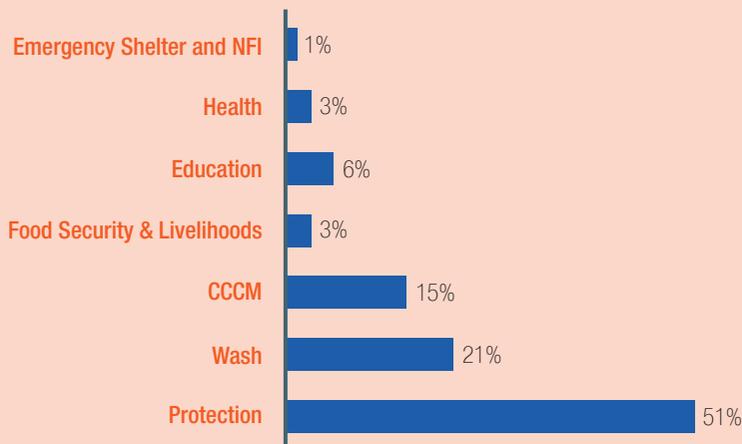


ON-GROUND



ON AIR

Feedback Sector Summary



16 days of Activism Against Gender-based Violence

PROTECTION

Creating a good working relationship between the community, the agencies, and the government is the best way to eradicate all sorts of violence against women. As women in the camps, we cannot move freely, specifically during the night, because of fear.

Adult, Female, Hagadera Camp

Women and young girls suffer violence like rape and physical harm. I would advise mothers to stand with their daughters to end violence against women. It is a collective responsibility for all of us to say no to violence against women. The partners and the community should join hands to end these shameful acts against women.

Adult, Female, Hagadera Camp

Women cannot move freely in the camps. If they walk alone at night, young girls get raped, which ends up unreported as the cases get settled in Maslaha (Elder’s dispute resolution and negotiations), and the girl’s dignity ends there.

Adult, Female, Hagadera Camp

Preventing violence against women can be done in several ways that require co-operation. The government must take legal action against the perpetrators, elders should not arbitrate cases, and religious leaders must raise awareness to prevent rape and reduce the cost incurred when marrying, which has become expensive in recent years.

Adult, Male, Dadaab

Anyone who abuses women must be penalized harshly, especially those who abuse young girls. Those who commit cruel acts do not deserve kindness.

Adult, Male, Garissa



Stopping violence against girls and women can be done by controlling drug use because a normal man cannot engage in bad acts.

Adult, Female, Hagadera Camp

Taking legal action against perpetrators and evading the use of the Maslaha system is the only way to eradicate violence against girls. At times, girls may be married off to those who sexually abused them, which makes them entirely give up on life.

Adult, Female, Ifo Camp

Public awareness is one of the measures to eradicate violence against women. Nowadays, violence against women has increased owing to lack of punishing for perpetrators. Therefore, settling the matter in a traditional setup must be reprimanded. Moreover, we should protect our girls' rights.

Adult, Female, Hagadera Camp

Violence against women has become a constant issue, which is hard to persevere. Whenever you report a case, elders arbitrate, causing trauma to victims. Maslaha system is one of the popular mechanisms used to sort GBV cases. It greatly sabotages women and girls' access to justice.

Informal Women Baraza, Hagadera Camp

WASH

Do organizations conduct a follow-up on the latrines they provide because some families with latrines are getting new ones and use the material to build a house, while others have none.

Adult, Male, Section A, Ifo Camp

There is a lot of rubbish around the tap stands and people refuse to clean. I want CARE to cut off water supply until the garbage is cleaned.

Adult, Female, Section N, Ifo Camp

EDUCATION

Since the schools were closed, drug use among youth has been on the rise in Ifo. We want the agencies to do something about the issue.

Youth, Section F, Ifo Camp



FOOD SECURITY AND LIVELIHOODS

Some of the *Bamba Chakula* traders have increased the price of food items, they sell more than the market price. World Food Programme (WFP) should act against such traders.

Adult, Male, Section A, Hagadera Camp

CAMP COORDINATION AND CAMP MANAGEMENT

The electricity at the blocks is faulty. People have died as result. It will continue killing people unless it is repaired.

Adult, Female, Section H, Hagadera Camp

I registered for repatriation to Somalia a year ago. I did not get any information after that. I would like to know what happened to the repatriation program.

Adult, Female, Section L, Hagadera Camp

EMERGENCY SHELTER AND NFI

Due to the rains, my house collapsed, and we are a large family. I am requesting shelter from UNHCR.

Adult, Female, Section D, Hagadera Camp



Community Roundtable Discussion on Sexual Gender-based Violence (SGBV) in the Wake of COVID-19 conducted on December 10, 2020

Concern 1- Every so often, girls who are schooling at the primary level get married off, but no one does anything about it. Why are the agencies not responding to this?

Adult, Female, Hagadera Camp

Concern 2- Girls get married off to rapists who raped them. Are the agencies aware of this?

Adult, Female, Hagadera Camp

Concern 3- When men beat their wives, women report the assault at the police station, but men pay a bribe to invalidate the case, and it ends there. There are many agencies working in Dadaab. Why are they not addressing this issue?

Adult, Female, Hagadera Camp

Concern 4- One of the reasons that hinder women from reporting assault of any kind is the presence of men at the offices. Additionally, whenever they report a case, they are told all they are after or want is resettlement. Nullifying their reported issue and shaming women is an existential predicament. Therefore, I would like to ask organizations that advocate for human rights how they can address this?

Adult, Male, Hagadera Camp

Concern 5- Women do not report GBV cases to safeguard their dignity. At the hospital where GBV cases get reported, some men and women would get to see the victim, which causes stigma. I request the agencies to find a suitable private space to shield women from experiencing stigma.

Adult, Female, Hagadera Camp

Concern 6- The assault inflicted on women is many and broad. Poor women, women with disabled children, those who are sick as well as women with orphans are vulnerable to GBV. There was a student raped by her Madrassa teacher; her mother reported the case, but no help was extended to them. Again, the girl was assaulted with a knife. Women do not report assault out of fear of attack either on them or their children. Agencies should be aware of this. We would also like to request agencies to help women.

Adult, Female, Hagadera Camp

Concern 7- When women report SGBV cases, sometimes the perpetrators are jailed, but just after two days, they get bailed out, and they continue with the usual crime. The question that begs an answer is, what is it that hinders agencies from detaining these criminals so that such criminal cases do not re-occur? Is there no committee in place that can manage these issues with justice?

Adult, Male, Dagahaley Camp

Concern 8- Since Covid-19 started, when women report an assault, they are told there are no services. Why are agencies sleeping on the job? Why can't there be services even though there is a Coronavirus?

Adult, Male, Dagahaley Camp

Concern 9- Agencies in charge of providing GBV services do not work at night. In case a girl or a woman is raped at night, there is nowhere to take them. We request service provision at night. On the other hand, I would like to tell agencies that the reason why women resort to elders and the Maslaha system is that they do not have confidence in agencies because no help is accorded to women even though they report GBV cases.

Adult, Female, Dagahaley Camp

Concern 10- Why don't agencies help girls put through the knife by women in the name of circumcision? Why don't they follow up on this? Why not jail these women?

Adult, Female, Dagahaley Camp

Concern 11- Every so often, girls who are schooling at the primary level get married off, but no one does anything about it. Why are the agencies not responding to this?

Adult, Female, Hagadera Camp



Responses from UNHCR and IRC

UNHCR and Child Protection Partners have program interventions in eradicating early marriages in the camp. The refugee community is sensitized about early marriage. Early marriage is a criminal offense in Kenya, however, these acts sometimes are hidden and supported by the community. We are working with government authorities including Police in the fight against early marriages.

In Dadaab, this is mostly the product of *Maslaha*. *Maslaha* is a Somali community conflict resolution mechanism. Refugees tend to resolve matters including SGBV through this forum, and families sometimes agree for the perpetrator to marry a survivor who has been raped just to cover themselves from shame and discrimination in the community.

We have a legal Partner (Refugee Consortium of Kenya) who support the survivor of SGBV to obtain legal justice. The partners also follow up with the police and court and escort the survivors in all SGBV cases. The survivors are, therefore, advised to get the support of our legal assistance partner.

Agencies have enough women staff who work in SGBV departments. We only have a limited number of women in the Police. UNHCR and Partners have well-trained staff in SGBV Response. Resettlement cases have a systematic way and criteria for being identified. PoCs should continue to report SGBV cases without fearing or thinking they will be seeking resettlement.

The support center is situated at the hospital. We all understand that if we designate a separate service provision center mainly for SGBV victims and survivors, it becomes apparent that everybody that goes there is either a victim or a survivor. On the contrary, it would be difficult to tell which service a PoC came for when they come to the hospital. The essence of establishing the center within the hospital was to protect and not create harm for the PoCs and to avoid stigma.

There is no reason to fear, SGBV cases are handled in a confidential manner and it is in the decision of the survivor to choose if he/she wants to proceed with the legal case after being properly counseled. Reporting SGBV cases will also ensure the PoCs receive proper medical and psychosocial support.

Bail remains a right to any accused person. A sentence is not issued until the perpetrator is proven guilty. The accused perpetrator can still be bailed after arrest by the police. Our legal partner always raises awareness on this matter to the refugees, and we continue doing the same.

Yes, we have reduced physical presence in the camp as a measure to mitigate the transmission of COVID-19 to the community. However, we continue to support the PoCs while following the COVID-19 guidelines. We have also established hotlines where refugees can report any SGBV incidence and receive adequate support.

We have a 24-hour service provision. Case workers or managers are ready to receive any one purported to be affected by SGBV issues, they are supported whether daytime or night-time. Sensitization to the community is ongoing. And Refugees are sensitized to use the formal legal system to obtain justice against SGBV. This will also prevent the perpetrators from continuing to commit SGBV offenses.

UNHCR and partners are doing a lot in engaging the community against this harmful FGM practice. However, it takes the community's willingness to end FGM. FGM is done in secretive ways and the incidents only come to be known when something has gone wrong. UNHCR and partners continue to raise awareness on FGM practices.

SUGGESTIONS

Suggestions to Partners

- Feedback from the community implores that the traditional Maslaha system of dispute resolution should not arbitrate gender-based violence (GBV) cases such as defilement, rape, and physical assault and instead subject offenders to the rule of law to deter them from repeat crime and enable victims access protection and justice.
- The community is requesting for awareness creation and a joint effort and coordination among themselves, partners and government to root out violence against women and girls to protect and serve justice for them.