

In The Loop

Refugee Voices Bulletin

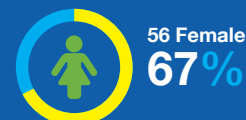
“INTERNEWS is currently implementing a project dubbed “Refugee Voices: Two-Way Humanitarian Communications” project in Dadaab, Kakuma, and Kalobeyei Integrated Settlement in Kenya, together with FilmAid Kenya, GeoPoll, Star Media Development Centre (owner of Eastleigh-based Star FM and Dadaab-based Radio Gargaar) and Radio Atta Nayece in Kakuma as consortium partners.

“In the Loop” Bulletin is a bi-weekly data-driven humanitarian feedback newsletter, produced to inform organizations and local authorities delivering services to refugees and host communities in Dadaab, Kakuma and Kalobeyei, of community concerns that need urgent response. Internews aims to achieve two-way humanitarian communications for closing possible 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 thus enhancing accountability. The Community feedback used in this report is sampled from recorded Vox pop interviews, social media highlights, one-on-one community meetings, with all COVID-19 protocols observed, and other feedback collected from the weekly live radio call-in shows Bilan, broadcasted in Dadaab by Nairobi’s Star FM’s Radio Gargaar 97.1FM and Sauti Ya Mwanamke by Radio Atta Nayece in Kakuma. The topics of discussion for the period mapped were community-led health initiatives, commemoration of World Malaria Day and role of women in conflict resolution.

Internews recorded 84 cross-cutting community feedback collected between the week of April 15, 2021 to April 30, 2021.



Data collected from **84 persons**



Methods of data collection



ONLINE



ON-GROUND



ON AIR

HEALTH

Having women volunteers has had a significant impact on community-led health-related issues. They managed to change many community perceptions, particularly among women, through sensitization, hard work, and dedication. There is significant behavior change in practices like women delivering at home, failure of breastfeeding children, and female genital mutilation. I would urge them to continue sensitizing the community at the tap stands, health posts, and in all public places.

Adult, Female, Dagahaley Camp

The women volunteers voluntarily work for us to better our health status. UNHCR does not pay them. They advise and encourage pregnant women. They have personally helped me so much, and I believe in them. I urge the community to benefit from the health education they provide. Partners should motivate them with employment opportunities for the excellent job they are doing.

Adult, Female, Dagahaley Camp

Nowadays, nobody cares about Malaria. In the past, health organizations used to carry out preventive measures such as spraying the blocks, sensitizing the community, but in the last 10 years, the fight against Malaria stopped. When you visit the hospital with signs of Malaria, you get informed that Malaria is no longer in the camps necessitating people to seek medication from the private clinics. The shelter structures in the camps are hot during the night, which compels people to sleep outside without mosquito nets, consequently exposing them to malaria infection. We want the partners to distribute mosquito nets and spray residential places.

Adult, Female, Hagadera Camp

Malaria is a killer disease. We have no mosquito nets despite being in a rainy season prevalent to mosquitoes. We cannot afford to buy mosquito nets for ourselves. In addition, when we do a Malaria checkup at the hospital, we get a negative result, but when we do it at the private clinics, we get a positive result. We are confused! We request the humanitarian partners to provide mosquito nets and spray the danger zones to prevent people from contracting the disease.

Adult, Male, Hagadera Camp

For years health partners have been informing us Malaria does not exist. Doctors do not run Malaria tests on patients. However, mosquitoes continue to be prevalent, particularly during the rainy season. People complain and manifest signs and symptoms of Malaria. People seek treatment at private clinics at their own cost. I request doctors at the health clinics to test and treat us for Malaria.

Phone Call, Resident Dadaab

Is there medicine that kills mosquitoes in the nets because mosquitoes penetrate inside the net?

Adult, Male, Kakuma 3 Camp

There are no injections in the hospital for Malaria treatment. Instead, you only get tablets, which are not efficient.

Adult, Male, Kakuma 3 Camp

There is a new type of mosquito nets in the market. I want to know the type of mosquito nets doctors recommend.

Adult, Male, Kakuma 1 Camp

Can I know the best mosquito repellent? The one we use are not durable, the mosquitoes start biting you as early as 9pm?

Adult, Female, Kakuma 2 Camp

Where are some of the counseling centers in Kakuma and Kalobeyei found?

Adult, Female, Kalobeyei Integrated Settlement

WATER SANITATION AND HYGIENE

Block A in Dagahaley is very dirty particularly the common routes between the blocks. We are in a rainy season that comes with risks of cholera outbreak, flies, breeding of mosquito and diarrhea. I call upon the concerned partners to carry out sanitation services such as spraying the houses.

Informal Women Baraza member, Dagahaley Camp



PEACE AND SECURITY

Women like men should be involved in conflict resolutions. I am sure they can be the best in solving cases. The problem is that they are ignored and undermined. It is high time women get a chance and voice to solve conflict cases. I become delighted when I see women taking the frontline in conflict resolutions.

Adult, Male, Kakuma 1 Camp

The way women handle conflict at home depicts their ability to solve conflict even at the community level.

Adult, Male, Kalobeyei Settlement

Virtual Community Roundtable Discussion on Shelter Interventions in Dadaab Refugee Camps Conducted on April 22, 2021.

Concern 1 - We live in a block prone to flooding. We face danger every rainy season. Why are agencies not doing something about this?

Adult, Female, Dagahaley Camp

Concern 2 - In the past, we used to get plastic sheets during the rainy season. In recent years, we have not received any, why?

Adult, Male, Ifo Camp

Concern 3 - Some refugees have left the camps. Why is it that the houses they vacated are not issued to people who lack shelter?

Adult, Male, Ifo Camp

Concern 4 - Whenever it rains, there are families whose shelter submerge in water to the extent they cannot even cook; other people cook for them. They take refuge at the schools. Are agencies aware of this? Can they extend help to them?

Adult, Female, Ifo Camp

Concern 5 - I moved from block N and moved to a new area. I run a shop and live with an elderly person living with a disability. I was attacked at 2 am. When I opened the door in the morning, I got assaulted with machetes and knives. I took a taxi and fled. I received threats never to come back. Are agencies aware of these discriminatory acts happening to the minority group? I am left with no shelter and have nowhere to go. Are agencies aware of these cases, if yes do they do a follow-up?

Adult, Female, Ifo Camp

Concern 6 - We have a mix of families, and there are those living with other families, and do not have ration cards. Some live in houses with poor conditions or in rented houses, while others live in areas with poor drainage. Are agencies aware of these people? They are refugees and have rights. Can they be assisted? What help can they get?

Adult, Female, Ifo Camp

Concern 7 - Some mothers are divorcees with no shelter and a general lack of care. They risk rape and robbery. I want to ask UNHCR, why are issues of this kind not addressed?

Youth Chairlady, Hagadera Camp

Concern 8 - I want to ask a question to UNHCR, RAS, and Peace Winds Japan. Due to sleeping in the open because of a lack of space in their house, many girls get pregnant because of rape. Why is it that such families do not get extra housing?

Youth Chairlady, Hagadera Camp

Concern 9 - When a woman is divorced, men take over the house to bring their new family after marrying again hence violating women and children's rights. This trend is increasing at the refugee camps. Why are agencies not responding to this?

Adult, Female, Hagadera Camp

Concern 10 - When agencies do registration at the blocks for shelter, some people pay money to get registered, as much as KES5,000 or more; this leaves out the right and deserving poor people who cannot afford to pay such an amount. Is UNHCR aware of this? If yes, why are they not doing anything about it?

Adult, Male, Hagadera Camp

Concern 11 - I want to ask agencies why they are not replacing old mud thatched houses built a long time ago? When it rains, such houses collapse, others, the mud falls, which is very dangerous. Why are these houses not replaced?

Adult, Female, Hagadera Camp

Concern 12 - Many women risk their lives looking for trees to build a house from the outskirts of the camps. In the process, they suffer sexual gender-based violence. How can agencies prevent this?

Adult, Female, Hagadera Camp

Concern 13 - It is dangerous with the way houses at the blocks are constructed. When a house catches fire, it all burns. Why are agencies not responding to this?

Youth, Hagadera Camp



Humanitarian Actors' Response

We provide tarpaulins annually. It is one of our first responses during the rainy season. In 2020, we distributed 7,911 across the three camps. We already have the tarpaulins in-store for this year's distribution. It is not a blanket distribution; therefore, we want to conduct a multi-agency, multi-sectoral assessment to measure the effect of the rain. The result will help map the affected households for targeting.

Family members share plots in the camps, when a family member vacates, the remaining ones will still occupy it. Refugee Affairs Secretariat (RAS) allocates it to the needy anytime a plot becomes vacant. Although, they are not as many as people may think, considering the high population in Dadaab.

We are aware they are flood-prone zones, especially in Ifo and Dagahaley camps, with some sections experiencing floods during the

rainy season. We did put in a lot of effort to relocate residents but realized it all depends on the refugee population since they always move back. In 2015, we created a new section in Ifo called N (section 0 to 31), a higher ground area to relocate people affected by floods, but people are hesitant to move. Once relocated, they go back because the higher grounds are on the periphery of the camps, while the flood-prone areas have proximity to the markets. If anyone is ready for relocation, we will give them plots on higher grounds. All they need to do is to report at RAS camp management.

We support people affected by floods through multi-agency, a multi-sectoral response by providing plastic tarpaulins and reconstruction of shelter, Core Relief Items (CRI), and food with support from WFP.

Any assault case must be reported to the nearest police station. In addition, I advise

the victim to report to RAS and the UNHCR protection team for any protection concerns to access the needful protection help.

We are aware that they are several undocumented persons in the camps, but they have tokens to access food and other assistance. Registration is done in coordination with the government, and UNHCR is in talks with the government, which we hope to get the go-ahead to register the undocumented refugees. However, they can access the services provided in the camps using the token provided.

Due to budget constraints, we do not have shelter provisions that can cover the whole refugee population. We know the gap is far wide, and one financial year is not enough to address them all. Every year, we help some households targeting the most vulnerable within the population. To ascertain the most vulnerable benefit, we work with the refugee

leaders (camp chairpersons, section leaders and block leaders) and protection partners to identify them. We target the most vulnerable beneficiaries, including divorcees, the elderly, persons living with disability (PLWD), the sick and female-headed households.

Agencies conduct physical verification for each registered household before allocating any shelter to ensure the beneficiary meets the set criteria. We advise beneficiaries to report their need for shelter to their block leaders alongside protection partners. I further reiterate

that whether someone is registered or not, if they meet the criteria and have a token, they will get the necessary assistance.

On matters of protection, the community needs to understand that they must report any assault they face to get the necessary assistance as every case is unique. We have protection partners and law enforcement agencies on standby to offer protection-related services.

We know they are houses with mud in the blocks constructed by occupants. We have a system of providing repair kits targeted to

replace the roofing element for these houses. In 2019, we repaired 200 old houses. In 2020, due to Covid-19, we could not do repairs, but we plan to repair the shelters that the current budget will allow.

We are not aware of any payment for shelter. All humanitarian services offered in the refugee operations are free. I want to advise the population to come forward and report to the police when they encounter such cases so that drastic action is taken against that perpetrator.

Abdinoor Ibrahim – Snr. Shelter Associate, UNHCR



Peace Winds Japan (PWJ) is doing joint shelter interventions with UNHCR. On request of beneficiaries for extra housing, I want to clarify that there is a process we follow right from selection of beneficiaries to verification to ensure equitable sharing of

the limited resources we have, which may limit everyone's wish. In 2021, Peace Winds Japan (PWJ) does not have funds for shelter construction.

We encourage PoCs to be proactive enough in terms of repairing and maintaining their

shelter. We are struggling to find funds for constructing new shelters, and it would be hard and not feasible if everybody seeks the repair of their shelter.

Umayya Kepha – Project Engineer, Peace Winds Japan

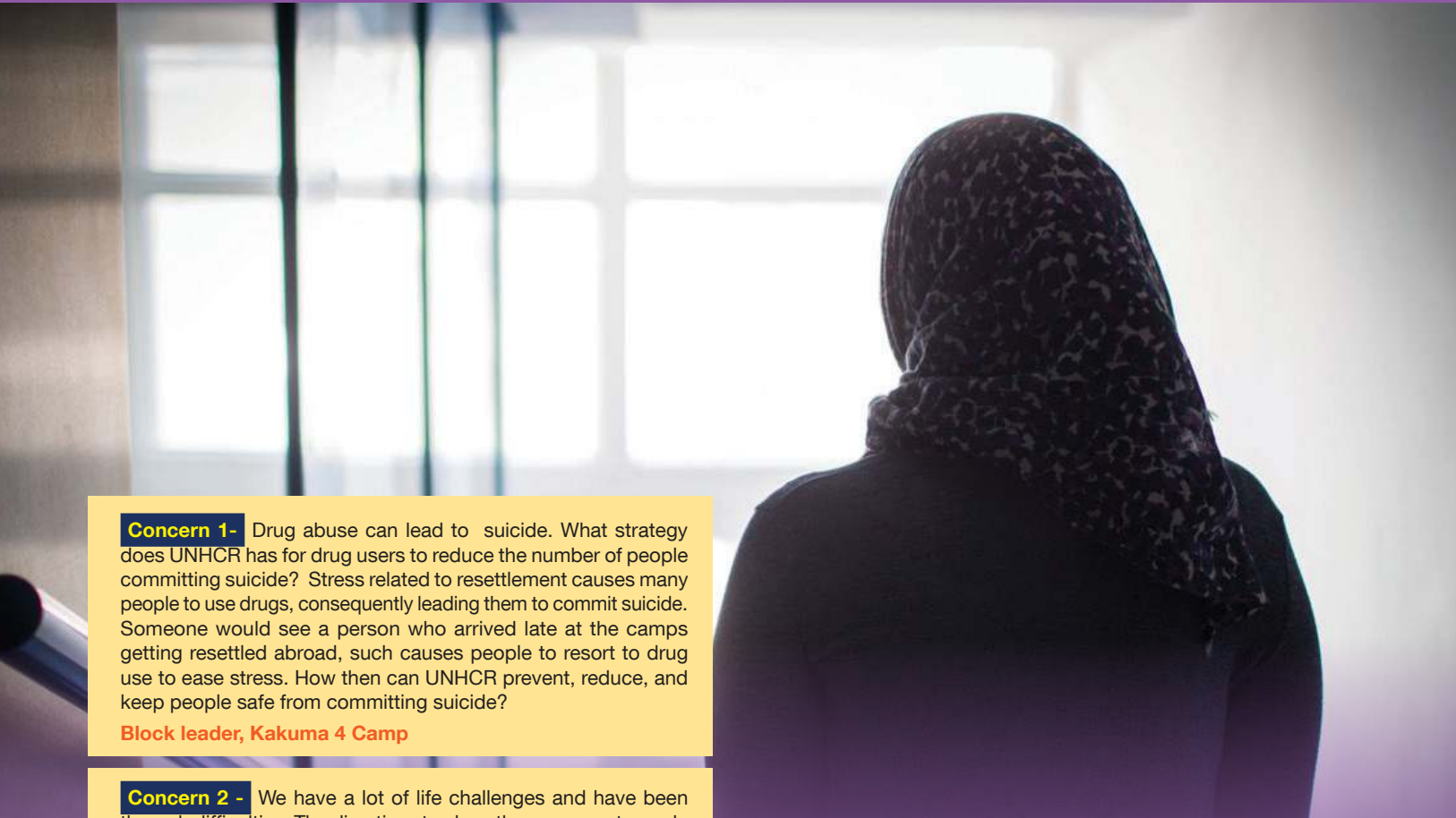
We discourage people encroaching on surveyed areas such as be in between blocks, flood-prone areas, and near markets. The current situation is that roads are impassable to the extent intervention during a fire outbreak is hard. We always

create awareness of the risks involved and on the avoidance of this practice. We work in coordination with camp leaders and UNHCR technical team to ensure the challenges of encroaching into public spaces are discouraged.

In recent years, we faced budget constraints yet, the population of refugees is growing. It will not be appropriate to give more than one shelter to one family, whereas we have many people in need.

Shafi Sheikh – Field Officer, Peace Winds Japan

Virtual Community Roundtable Discussion on Rise of Suicide Cases in Kakuma Refugee Camps and Kalobeyei Integrated Settlement Conducted on April 29, 2021.



Concern 1 - Drug abuse can lead to suicide. What strategy does UNHCR has for drug users to reduce the number of people committing suicide? Stress related to resettlement causes many people to use drugs, consequently leading them to commit suicide. Someone would see a person who arrived late at the camps getting resettled abroad, such causes people to resort to drug use to ease stress. How then can UNHCR prevent, reduce, and keep people safe from committing suicide?

Block leader, Kakuma 4 Camp

Concern 2 - We have a lot of life challenges and have been through difficulties. The directives to close the camps got people stressed. We do not know what to do and where to go. We want UNHCR to help us. The issue is painful and can make people commit suicide. In addition, the resettlement process gets people stressed. You find someone staying for only three years and gets resettled, while others stay for 10, 15, 20 years and beyond. We do not know what is happening. We request UNHCR to help us.

Block leader, Block 1, Kakuma 1 Camp

Concern 3 - There have been many cases of people committing suicide. Follow-ups indicate a specific thing triggered the person, yet UNHCR is there. For instance, there was a boy who finished his primary level, scored good grades, and wanted to further his studies, but he missed a scholarship because of age limit. He got irritated, a few days later, he committed suicide. I want to ask UNHCR, what measures they have in place to prevent people from committing suicide. We appreciate the great work they do, but the camps are wide; hence, there are areas people do not get services.

Adult, Male, Kakuma 1 Camp

Concern 4 - Incidences of suicide are rampant in Kakuma, Kalobeyei, and the host community. I have witnessed several cases. I know many agencies supporting mental health like IsraAid, JRS, and many others. Since the onset of Covid-19, life became hard, making people depressed, hence a rise in suicide cases. I have not seen any reaction from agencies like UNHCR, IsraAid, and JRS. What exactly are you doing? You watch people die, and you do not act.e.g. (No counseling services). My question is, who are the right people to go to? Where does one report upon seeing someone with suicidal behavior or signs? I hope organizations will come forward to stop such kind of incidences!

Adult, Male, Kakuma 1 Camp

Concern 5 - Poor living conditions and lack of food make people commit suicide. What solutions can agencies provide regarding this issue?

Adult, Male, Kakuma 4 Camp

Concern 6 - I want to ask a question on the rate of suicide in the Kakuma 1 and Kalobeyei settlement. Why do men commit suicide more than women? Is it possible to predict suicide?

Adult, Female, Kakuma 1 Camp

Concern 7 - Do alcohol and other drug abuse increase the risk of committing suicide? Apart from encouraging a suicidal person to seek counseling, what else can we do to prevent suicide?

Adult, Female, Kakuma 1 Camp

Concern 8 - Some time back, organizations used to offer training to the community. Why is it that they are no longer offered? Many youths commit suicide due to stress, why then are such training not offered?

Adult, Female, Kakuma 3 Camp

Concern 9 - I want to ask a question to all organizations operating in the camps about the activities they used to offer to overcome and prevent idleness among youth and elders?

Adult, Male, Kalobeyei

Concern 10 - Are there guiding and counseling officers to provide counseling to the bereaved family or victims of suicide?

Adult, Female, Kakuma 4 Camp

Humanitarian Actors' Response

Concerns about resettlement are real. It can stress our persons of concern (PoCs), especially when they see others who came behind them overtake them in the process. They do not quite understand the process because being a recognized and registered refugee does not guarantee one resettlement; neither is the resettlement process dependent on how long a person has stayed at the camp. Globally, out of all refugee population, only 1% of persons get resettled. Assessment and interviews of refugees seeking resettlement have to be done to determine case priorities. To relieve the anxiety and stress persons of concern (PoCs) experience, partners need to ensure they understand the different steps and processes. In addition, all services provided by UNHCR towards resettlement are free of charge, it is a straightforward process, and nobody gets skipped because they did not pay money.

Internews recorded community concerns matches a situational analysis report on suicide and self-harm in Kakuma and Kalobeyei conducted in March 2021 by a multi-agency mental health and psychosocial support working group (MHPSS-WG) spearheaded by UNHCR and the Suicide Prevention Task Force in Kakuma and Kalobeyei whereby 20.9% of people interviewed reported to have attempted to kill themselves, with 25.9% have thought of hanging themselves using a rope mainly because it is a method that is easy and executable at home. The major stressors reported for causing suicide include environmental, mental health, and cultural factors.

We advise and encourage persons of concerns (PoCs) to make a better choice of action whenever they are stressed. They need to understand the process of resettlement might not be as fast as they want. Seeking counseling services provided by different agencies will help them cope. Mental health professionals may not be able to reach the whole camps or are at times dealing with moderate or severe stressors, however there are community workers trained in basic counseling who can help manage and alleviate basic stressors.

Currently, DRC is the lead child protection agency in Kakuma, offering counseling services to children who have psychological problems and need counseling. There are counselors stationed in Kakuma 1, 2, 3, 4, and reception center. The service is not limited to children only; adults too can seek counseling.

JRS offers psychosocial services to children with special needs and their parents. We also extend psychosocial first aid to post-secondary education students. However, agencies have a mandate to do certain interventions in specific areas making it difficult to step on another agency's mandate. Nevertheless, it does not mean we cannot act because we can still refer.

The concerns raised by the PoCs are valid. There is indeed a gap in service provision. There is a big disconnect between the services provided by organizations and realities on the ground. It is our role as partners to ensure refugees get assistance in an orderly manner.

UNHCR acknowledges the concerns and the challenges raised by persons of concern

(PoCs), for instance, the reduced number of agencies working last year or years back but not currently rendering services. We all know the effects of Covid-19, not only in our camps but everywhere. Other countries and various organizations getting support were also affected. We have had a reduced funding opportunity with many organizations pushed to restructure and cut down on staff. We continue to work and raise advocacy on matters of mental health so that we provide continuous support.

Counseling is one-on-one basis and not done with a group. Sometimes, it may appear the impact is minimal, but the staff still support as much as they can. UNHCR, through its protection department, is updating the help website. The information on services will be shared with community leaders for escalation to other community members to inform which agency is where and offering what service.

Unfortunately, a schoolboy committed suicide due to cut off age in scholarship grant. Age is important, but interventions should investigate issues on a case-by-case basis. We admit it was a sad occurrence. We will plan to do better in the future. To increase awareness of our presence in the refugee camps, we will closely work with the community peace and protection team (CPPT). They will receive a briefing on a psychological first aid kit to enable them to refer any individual exhibiting unusual behavior to organizations on the ground.

Partners need to go back to the drawing board to formulate a road map to mitigate the existing gaps.

In as much there are counselors and trained teachers serving the community, it is not enough, and much needs to be done. There is a need to determine how better to create awareness for beneficiaries to know and understand where they can access services and the proper referral pathways.

We will update the existing counselling and lifestyle manuals to incorporate suicide topics to facilitate its application at the school level. This will

inform students to know about suicide, how to report and where to get the services. It will further enable teachers understand referral pathways.

Anchoring community messaging or probing beneficiaries about suicide is indispensable. It is not wrong to inquire if someone has suicide ideations. Unless investigated, it will be hard to know if an individual is suicidal. Identifying people during the first stage of the suicide cycle makes it easy to extend the essential support.

Suicide Prevention Taskforce- Kakuma Refugee Camps and Kalobeyei Integrated Settlement



To support the two-way humanitarian communications, Internews team will

- Support communication efforts of partners by giving free Radio airtime in a segment called “Agencies Response Segment” during the weekly live call-in shows at Radio *Gargaar* in Dadaab, Star FM in Nairobi and Radio *Atta Nayece* in Kakuma.
- 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 quality weekly live radio call-in shows that address thematic issues on health and protection in the camps.
- Produce a bi-weekly factsheet (“In the Loop” Bulletin) capturing the most asked questions, rumors, needs, requests, suggestions, myths, misconception, complaints, and fears, collected in a particular period from communities across the refugee and host communities in Dadaab, Kakuma and Kalobeyei Integrated Settlement.

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