

# INFORMATION NEEDS ASSESSMENT

Dadaab refugee complex, Garissa County, Kenya,

August 2021

## BACKGROUND

As of 31 August 2021, a total of [228,308](#) refugees mostly of Somali origin, resided in Dadaab refugee complex (Dagahaley, Hagadera and Ifo). A majority of these refugees fled their countries of origin due to conflict and are currently under pressure to return to their countries of origin. However, findings from the [2019 Intentions Assessment](#) suggest that many refugees in Dadaab do not have access to information about their potential areas of return. Moreover, findings from the [October 2020 multi-sectoral needs assessment](#), conducted by REACH and the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) indicated a more general lack of information on access to essential services in Dadaab, such as how to apply for birth certificates, where to receive nutrition services, and how to access hygiene promotion messages, among camp residents. Without access to sufficient and relevant information, some refugees and vulnerable host community members may miss out on access to services. Without the relevant information on legal rights and registration processes, access to these services can be challenging.

Various actors implementing programmes in the camps use a mix of mechanisms to disseminate information and collect feedback from the community. To improve the dissemination of information and collect feedback from the community, the Communication with Communities (CWC) working group, led by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), aims to assess and harmonise the different communication channels used to avoid duplication of efforts and ensure coordinated implementation of communication with communities.

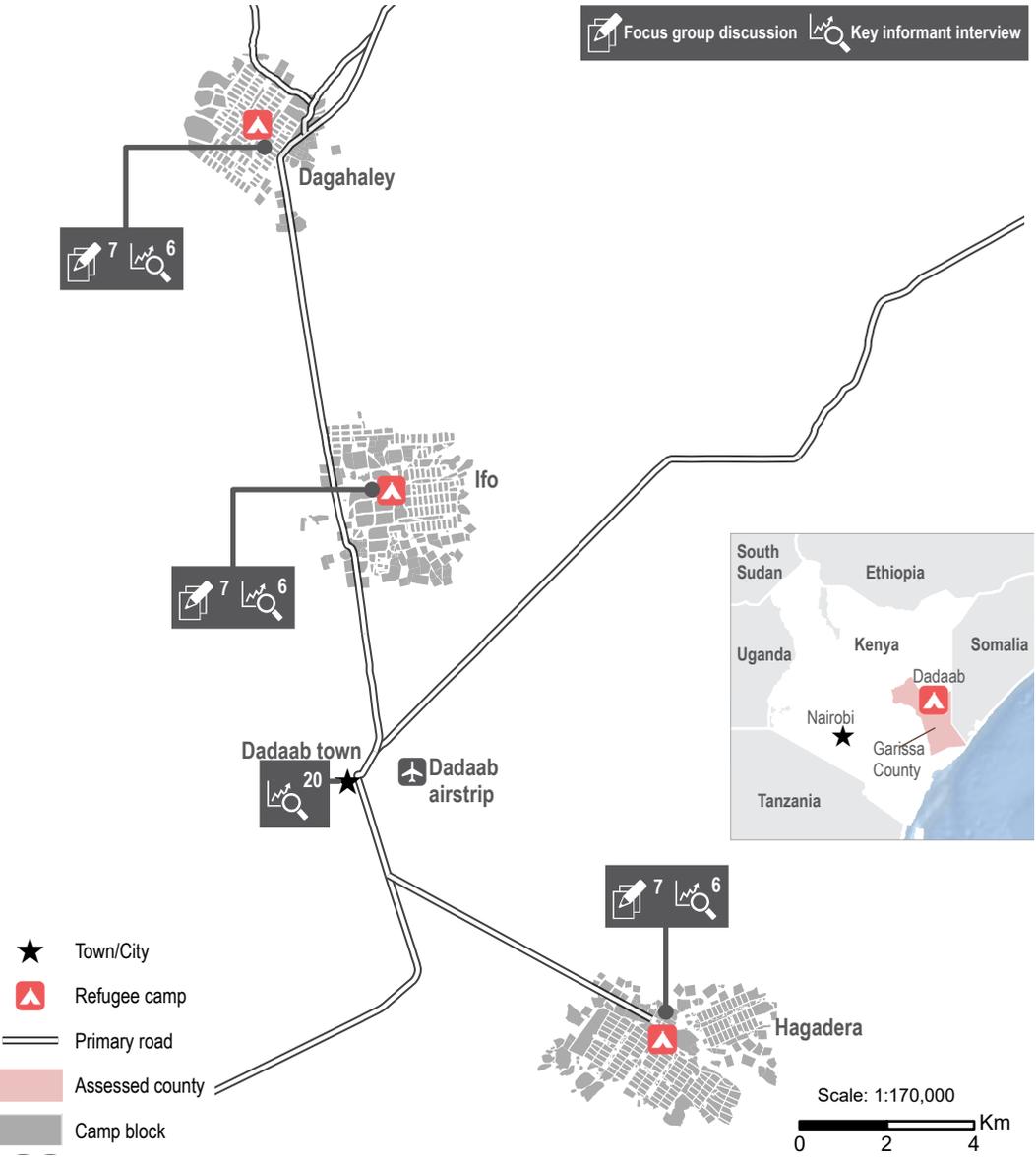
To support the CWC in streamlining the communication channels and improve understanding among humanitarian actors of the information gaps of the camp population, REACH, in close coordination with NRC and the CWC, conducted an information needs assessment in Dadaab in August 2021. Equipped with information from this assessment, humanitarian actors could streamline humanitarian funding decisions with the identified priority needs of the refugee community.

## METHODOLOGY

The assessment used a mixed methods approach. Key informant interviews (KIIs) were conducted with 18 community leaders (2 camp chairpersons, 2 section leaders and 2 youth representatives per camp) and 20 humanitarian actors, including the CWC working group members and other partners working in Dadaab refugee complex. Moreover, 21 focus group discussions (FGDs) were conducted with men and women above 70 years old, boys and girls aged below 18 years, adults aged 18 to 60 years and persons living with disabilities, in each of the three camps. More information about the methodology of this assessment can be found in the [terms of reference](#).

Data was collected between 18 and 31 August 2021. KIIs had an option of taking the survey through a phone interview or face-to-face. All health protocols to prevent contracting or spreading COVID-19 were followed for KIIs who chose face-to-face interviews. Findings from the FGDs and KIIs are not generalisable with a known level of precision, and should rather be considered indicative only of the experiences with information dissemination in the assessed areas.

## DATA COLLECTION LOCATION MAP



## KEY FINDINGS

- Despite a majority of humanitarian actor KIs reporting having disseminated different kinds of information to the community, findings from FGDs suggest that there was still a **need for humanitarian actors to scale up the information provision to the community**. For instance, some of the humanitarian actor KIs reported having disseminated information about services available in the camps. However, findings from FGDs suggest that the community still needed information about different services, including education opportunities and scholarships, job opportunities, water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH), health services, food rations, registration and verification updates, etc, as reported by FGD participants.
- **The most commonly reported information needs were related to repatriation, reintegration, and resettlement**, likely in light of the potential camp closures, which were commonly reported by community leader KIs and FGD participants alike. No humanitarian actor KI reported having disseminated this kind of information.
- Half of the humanitarian actor KIs reported that humanitarian organisations disseminated information to the community using text messages. However, despite the majority of community leader KIs reporting about the community having access to mobile phones, **the use of text messages was not reported as a preferred channel of communication in Dagahaley**. In addition, only 7 community leader KIs reported about text messages as the preferred channel of communication in Ifo. The low preference of use of text messaging might be attributed to the illiteracy and language barriers within the camps.
- **The majority of humanitarian actor KIs and community leader KIs reported preferring face-to-face interactions with communities over other dissemination channels**. However, COVID-19 restrictions, as well as language barriers were reported by both humanitarian actor KIs and community leader KIs as challenges to the face-to-face interactions. In addition, FGDs participants reported inaccessibility of the humanitarian actor offices as a barrier to face-to-face interactions.
- Just over half of the humanitarian actor KIs reported that humanitarian actors passed information to the community through community leaders. In addition, **about two-thirds of the community leader KIs reported that the community indeed preferred the community leaders to pass information to the community**, likely because community leaders used a language that the refugees and asylum seekers could understand. This was further reflected by the FGD findings, which suggest that the community would trust the information delivered to them more, if humanitarian actors could provide community leaders with more accurate and updated information regularly.
- According to community leader KIs in Hagadera and Dagahley, community members did not frequently ask questions and/or raise concerns about their needs with humanitarian actors, while community leaders in Ifo, on the other hand, reported perceiving that the community does frequently engage with humanitarian actors in this way. About half of those KIs reported that **feedback was usually received in good time**, through the same channels used to ask questions or raised concerns, with the majority reporting that the **feedback received by the community was generally deemed to be satisfactory**.

## TYPES OF INFORMATION DISSEMINATED TO COMMUNITIES

All humanitarian actor KIs reported that humanitarian actors disseminated different types of information to the community, in the 12 months prior to data collection. A majority of humanitarian actors KIs reported that humanitarian actors more commonly disseminate information in the camps than to the host community. In addition, the majority of humanitarian actor KIs reported that humanitarian actors disseminated information to the community on a daily basis.

All community leader KIs reported that the community had received different types of information from humanitarian actors in the 12 months prior to data collection. A relatively high number of the community leader KIs reported having received the information from community leaders, aid workers, and officials working for the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). A lower number of community KIs reported having received from non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and national government officials.

FGD participants seemed to generally agree with community leader KIs, commonly reporting that the community had received information about COVID-19, repatriation, resettlement and reintegration, verification exercise, registration, security, status of the camps, counseling and legal assistance, education, health, child vaccinations and water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH).

Although a high proportion of the community leader KIs reported that the community received information about the status of the camps, no humanitarian actor KI reported humanitarian organisations had disseminated this kind of information, which suggests that the community might have received this information from other, perhaps more informal sources. However, findings from FGDs suggest that some community members did not trust the information they received about camp closure.

### Top reported types of services that humanitarian actors disseminated information about, as reported by the number of community leader KIs and humanitarian actor KIs:<sup>1</sup>

	Humanitarian actor KIs	Community leader KIs
Education services	10	14
WASH	6	14
Birth certificates	7	13
Health and Nutrition services	3	11
Food rations	3	11
Protection assistance	14	9
Counselling & legal services	6	7
Financial institutions	6	0
Business permits	6	0

About a quarter of the humanitarian actor KIs reported having disseminated information to the community on how to access services from financial institutions and business permits. However, findings from some FGDs and community leader KIs suggest that the community had not received any information on this topic in the year prior to data collection. These findings therefore, suggest a need for humanitarian actors to update the communication channels and language used to disseminate information about how communities can access services offered by financial institutions as well as business permits.

### COMMUNICATION CHANNELS

Findings from FGDs, humanitarian actor KIs, and community leader KIs indicate that humanitarian actors used various communication channels to pass information to the community. Some of the most commonly reported channels included dissemination through community leaders, face-to-face communication, use of humanitarian workers, text messages, and radio.

### Top reported channels used by humanitarian organizations to disseminate information to the community as reported by humanitarian actor KIs:<sup>1</sup>

	Humanitarian actor KIs	Community leader KIs
Community leaders	11	15
Face-to-face	16	10
Humanitarian workers	10	8
Text messages	10	7
Radio	13	6
Social media	7	4
Posters/notice boards	9	2
Leaflets	6	0
Television	5	0

A relatively small number of humanitarian actor and community leader KIs reported that humanitarian actors disseminated information to the community using leaflets, television, community visits, emails or telephone/voice calls. On the other hand, FGD participants reported that the community had received information through emails, television and text messages. Findings from the community leader KIs also indicate that text messaging was more commonly used in Hagadera as compared to Dagahaley and Ifo. In fact, none of the community leader KIs in Dagahaley reported being aware of text messages having been used by organisations as a dissemination mechanism in the camp in the 12 months prior to data collection.

FGDs participants also reported the use of posters/notice boards, radios (especially radio Gargar - a local radio station), community meetings, friends and relatives, the television and use of emails by the community to receive information from the humanitarian actors.

In addition, discussion forums (specific to different community groups e.g. youth forums) were identified as some of the existing unique communication networks among communities in Dadaab refugee camps. Other communication networks included social media (Facebook pages, WhatsApp groups and TikTok).

Findings from FGDs suggest that most community members trusted information received from the humanitarian actors using the different communication channels. However, in Hagadera, some FGD participants reported that the community did not trust information on potential closure of the camps while other FGDs reported that they did not trust information received through text messages, community leaders, and friends.

### ACCESS TO COMMUNICATION CHANNELS IN THE CAMPS

All community leader KIs in Hagadera and Ifo reported that people in their communities had access to radio in the 12 months prior to data collection. About two-thirds of community leader KIs in Dagahaley reported perceiving their community members had access to radio.

Findings from community leader KIs suggest a limited to no access to newspapers in all the camps. None of community leader KIs from Dagahaley reported that community members had received newspapers in the 12 months prior to data collection.

All community leader KIs from Hagadera and Ifo reported that community members had access to mobile phones, smart phones, and internet connection in the 12 months prior to data collection, while, in Dagahaley, access to mobile/smart phones and internet connectivity was less commonly reported.

<sup>1</sup> Could select multiple answers

### FEEDBACK MECHANISMS

Approximately two-thirds of humanitarian actor KIs reported having received feedback from the community in the 12 months prior to data collection. Findings suggest that Ifo camp residents more commonly shared feedback with humanitarian organisations than people in Dagahaley and Hagadera.

The majority of humanitarian actor KIs reported that humanitarian actors received feedback from the community everyday. However, findings from community leader KIs indicate that community members do not frequently ask questions or raised concerns with humanitarian actors about the services offered in their camps. None of the community leader KIs in Hagadera and Dagahaley reported being aware of community members frequently asking questions or raising concerns. Furthermore, just about a third of community leader KIs in Ifo reported that community members frequently asked questions and raised concerns with humanitarian actors. About half of those KIs reported that feedback was usually received in good time, through the same channels used to ask questions or raised concerns, with the majority reporting that the feedback received by the community was generally deemed to be satisfactory.

#### Top reported channels used by humanitarian actors to receive feedback from the community as reported by humanitarian actor KIs and community leader KIs:<sup>1</sup>

	Humanitarian actor KIs	Community leader KIs
Community meetings	10	10
Phones calls	25	12
Visits to help desks	21	14
Household surveys	6	7
Focus group discussions	10	5
Text messages	20	7
Radio	6	4

Although humanitarian actor KIs reportedly received feedback from the community through television and suggestion boxes, the community leader KIs reported not being aware of community members who provided feedback to the humanitarian actor through the television and suggestion boxes.

### PREFERRED COMMUNICATION CHANNELS

#### Most preferred communication channels by humanitarian actors and the community as reported by humanitarian actor KIs and community leader KIs respectively:<sup>1</sup>

	Humanitarian actor KIs	Community leader KIs
Face-to-face	15	16
Community leaders	13	12
Radio	12	8
Text messages	9	6
Social media	7	5
Notice boards	7	3
Humanitarian workers	10	2
Voice calls	7	2
Community visits	6	2
Religious leaders	5	2

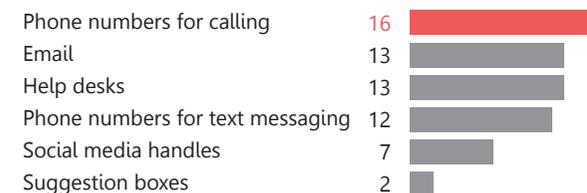
The majority of community leader KIs reported that the community preferred face-to-face interactions with humanitarian actors to receive information and provide feedback, mostly because the information passed through face-to-face interactions was trusted by the community, as reported by most of the community leader KIs.

Findings from FGDs indicate that the community preferred using text messages, community leaders, radio, social media and posters, among other channels, to receive information from the humanitarian actors.

During some FGDs, participants suggested that humanitarian actors could create posters, send text messages, or disseminate information through the radio, using different languages to enable more people to receive the information. Furthermore, they recommended that community leaders could be given accurate and updated information regularly, so that the information that is delivered to the community would be trusted. In addition, FGD participants pointed out that text messaging and social media were preferred by the youth, while radio was generally more preferred among older people, and children might prefer to receive information via their teachers.

In order to sensitise the community on how they could contact humanitarian organisations, just over half of the humanitarian actor KIs reported having provided channels for communication to the community in the 12 months prior to data collection.

#### Channels that were provided to communities for contacting humanitarian organisations, as reported by humanitarian actor KIs:<sup>1</sup>



#### Reported reasons for the community's preference for face-to-face communication channels, as reported by community leader KIs:<sup>1</sup>



### Reported reasons for the community's preference for text messages as communication channels, as reported by community leader KIs:<sup>1</sup>



### Reported reasons for the community's preference for communication through community leaders, as reported by community leader KIs:<sup>1</sup>

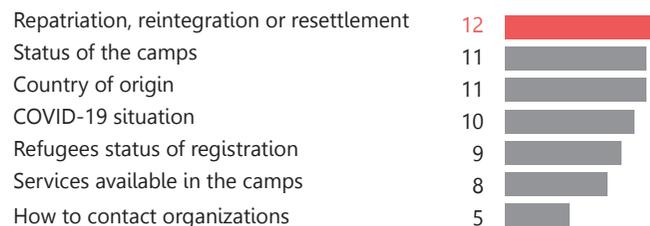


## INFORMATION NEEDS

At the time of data collection, some community leader KIs and FGD participants reported that the community needed additional information from the humanitarian actors. The top reported information required was about repatriation, reintegration or resettlement, in light of the potential closure of the camps.

From the FGDs, particularly those comprising the youth and adults aged between 35 to 60 years, it was found that the youth required information about education and job opportunities, vocational training and scholarships. Information regarding registration of refugees, verification, services provided by humanitarian actors, sports, emergency response, birth certificates, supportive devices for persons living with disabilities, shelter, security, counseling and legal assistance (ICLA), and child protection was also reported during FGDs.

### Information that community members reportedly needed at the time of data collection, as reported by community leader KIs:<sup>1</sup>



Findings from FGDs suggest that, at the time of data collection, community members would have liked to receive information about resettlement, repatriation and reintegration, education and verification exercises. Moreover, it was found that the community needed information about food distribution, non-food items, livelihood support, and services on resettlement and repatriation. Additional findings from FGDs indicate that the community required humanitarian actors to provide to them with information about WASH, health services, and COVID-19 updates on a daily basis.

## COMMUNICATION CHALLENGES AND BARRIERS

Both humanitarian actors and the community reportedly faced communication challenges. Some of the most common challenges were found to be language barriers, illiteracy, and lack of clear communication channels. Furthermore, the restrictions put in place to prevent the spread of COVID-19 was found to be another major communication challenge to the humanitarian actors and the community.

These findings from humanitarian actor and community leader KIs were reflected by FGD findings; participants commonly cited language barriers as a communication barrier, particularly among minority groups. FGD participants noted that some information was passed on via radio and through loudspeakers in a language that persons from minority groups could not understand.

FGD findings suggest that community members could generally not access humanitarian actor offices, due to security concerns and COVID-19 restrictions. Consequently, refugees who wanted their alien cards activated or those who wanted to be registered were reportedly unable to do so, as they were not aware of the process to be followed or were denied access to humanitarian actor offices. FGD participants also pointed out that humanitarian workers, especially security guards manning humanitarian actor gates, were disrespectful and denied them access to the offices to pass information and/or feedback to the relevant officials. Furthermore, some community members reportedly did not have access to information because they lacked access to mobile phones, and, as a result were not able to receive text messages, and voice calls.

## SENSITIVITY TO PERSONS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

Humanitarian actor KIs most commonly reported disseminating information to the general public; less than half of them reported particularly targeting persons with disabilities, older people, or minority groups when disseminating information. In addition, all community leader KIs reported perceiving that humanitarian actors were sensitive to the needs of community members living with disabilities while disseminating information. For instance, some community leader KIs reported that organisations worked with language interpreters to pass information to community members who could not understand the local language.

From the FGDs, it was found that persons living with different kinds of disabilities faced different barriers to accessing information. For instance, those with mobility difficulties could not attend physical community meetings. Furthermore, findings suggest that, in the eyes of the community, humanitarian actors might generally be more sensitive to older persons and persons with disabilities than to minority groups and children when disseminating information. Together, these findings indicate that using various different channels and methods of dissemination might be necessary to reach all members of the community.