

INTRODUCTION

As of 31st August 2022, a total of 190,519¹, mostly South Sudanese refugees and asylum seekers resided in Kakuma refugee camps. During crisis, most refugees and asylum-seekers leave their home countries without a clear understanding of their destinations or their rights and obligations². A lack of access to timely information disenfranchises refugees by not only making them less empowered to make informed decisions about their future but also limiting their chances of accessing essential services, including resettlement opportunities³.

According to the information needs assessment conducted by FilmAid in 2021⁴ in Kakuma Refugee Camp, only 28% of assessed key informants (KIs) indicated having enough information to make informed decisions. In addition, 86% of radio listeners from the refugee community mentioned that they would welcome a special radio program to receive specific information in education, peace, security and health. Furthermore, results from the Kakuma socio-economic survey⁵ conducted in 2019 by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNCHR), suggest that approximately 4 in 10 households, particularly the poorest refugees, reported being in need of more information to guide their movement plans (information to decide whether to return, move to a new country, or stay in the camp).

In light of these existing information needs by the refugee population in Kakuma, REACH conducted an information needs assessment to provide more granular qualitative data that maps communication channels used by humanitarian, development and government actors to disseminate information to communities. The assessment explored feedback mechanisms used by refugees and asylum seekers and interrogated unique information dissemination networks that exist among refugee communities. From this assessment, REACH sought to rank information sources and needs of the refugees and asylum seekers so as to inform prioritization during programming.

METHODOLOGY

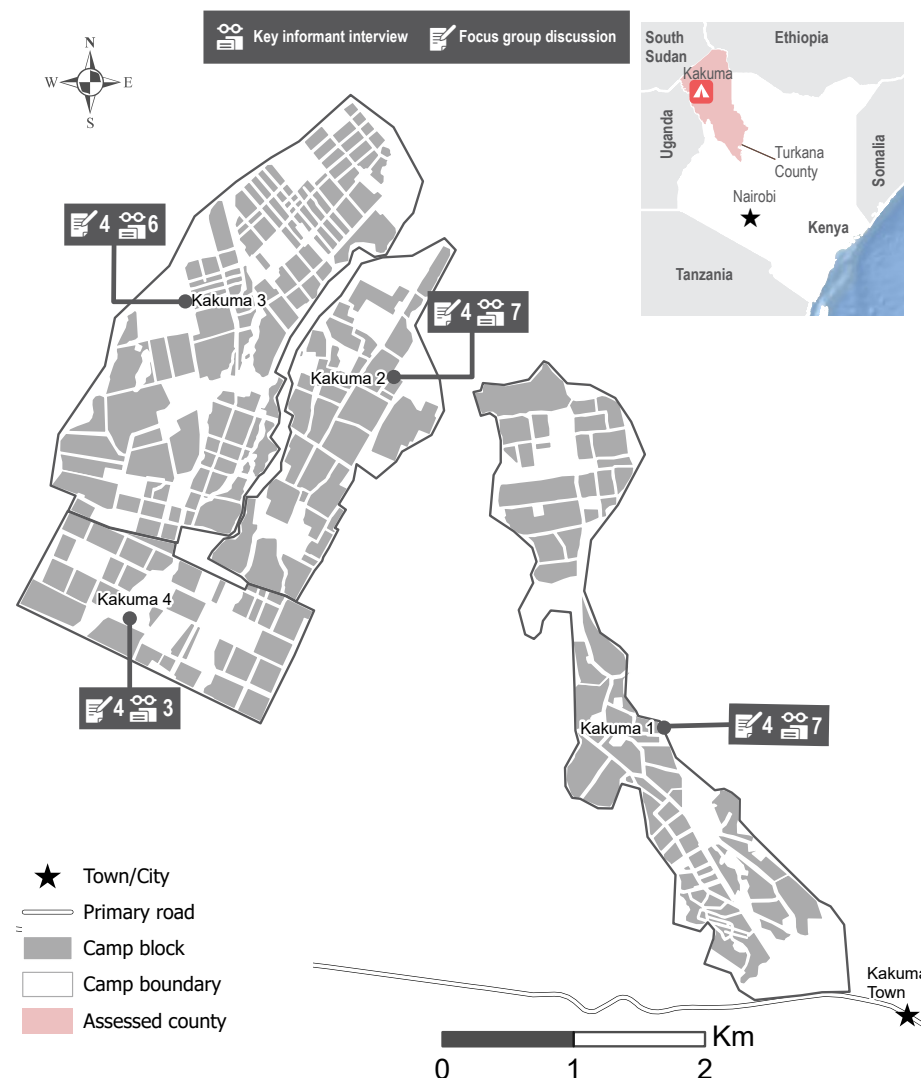
The study applied a mixed methods data collection methodology including quantitative key informant interviews (KIIs) with 24 refugee community leaders and 28 representatives of humanitarian, development and government agencies operating in Kakuma refugee camps. In addition, qualitative data was collected through 16 focus group discussions (FGDs) with male and female participants who were purposively selected and grouped based on their nationalities and ability to understand a common local language. More information about the methodology used for this assessment can be found in the [Terms of Reference](#).

Data was collected by REACH enumerators between 19 and 29 July 2022. Findings from the FGDs and KIIs are not generalisable with a known level of precision, and should rather be considered indicative of the humanitarian situation in the assessed areas.

1. Kenya infographics 31st August 2022 is found [here](#).

2. A discourse by UNHCR on migration and related exchanges is found [here](#).

Map 1: Assessed refugee camps in Kakuma, Kenya



3. More information about migrants informed decision-making can be found [here](#).

4. Information needs assessment in Kakuma refugee camp, conducted by FilmAid in 2021 is found [here](#).

5. Kakuma socio-economic survey conducted in 2019 by UNCHR is found [here](#).

KEY FINDINGS

- Findings from FGDs and community leader KIs suggest that community members commonly received information about **the government's intention of closing the refugee camps services**. Despite having received information on [durable solutions](#) for refugees, participants in the majority of FGDs mentioned that community members needed additional information to enable them to make better decisions.
- In the majority of FGDs, participants mentioned that community members received information from **their leaders** and via **public speakers**. The content of information disseminated using public speakers was commonly developed by FilmAid, and covered various topics and services including food distribution, education, sanitation or health services.
- Community members reportedly **trusted certain kinds of information over others**. Participants in some FGDs mentioned that the community perceived information about food distribution and education to be trustworthy, whereas information on the potential closure of camps, WASH⁸, and security updates was perceived not to be true. Furthermore, United Nations agencies, community leaders, and the Department of Refugees Services (DRS) were perceived to be trustworthy information sources by the community.
- In most of the FGDs, participants mentioned that community members preferred using **existing community structures** and **face-to-face communication** because they were **trustworthy** and community members could get **prompt feedback**, respectively. Face-to-face communication and use of community leaders were also reported by about half of the community leader KIs (12/24 and 10/24, respectively), as those that the community preferred most when communicating with humanitarian actors.
- Despite humanitarian actors being mindful of community members with special needs when disseminating information, there still exists **a language barrier** in communication. In some FGDs, participants mentioned that some community members **misunderstood communication passed through the radio**, or **could not communicate in English or Kiswahili**, especially when they visited humanitarian actor offices.
- In the majority of the FGDs, participants mentioned that community members consider information on **durable solutions for refugees, food distribution, registration** and the **rights of refugees, access to healthcare** and **education services** to be the most relevant in decision-making. Specifically, participants mentioned that community members needed to receive regular information about **payment of school fees for school-going children, employment opportunities, security updates, water services, access to shelter** and **feedback from actors concerning issues raised** in the community.

6. Humanitarian actors generally refers to government, development and humanitarian agencies providing services to the refugee community in Kakuma.

ACTORS AND SERVICES AVAILABLE IN THE CAMPS

The actors operating in Kakuma refugee camps, and the services they offer can be accessed in this [3W matrix](#).

Commonly reported challenges that humanitarian actors⁶ encountered while offering services in Kakuma refugee camps

Two-thirds (6/9) of KIs offering livelihood and economic recovery services and one-third (3/9) of KIs offering protection services, cited **inadequate coordination among humanitarian agencies** as a barrier that humanitarian actors⁶ encounter when offering services. This finding is consistent with findings from FGDs. For instance, a female participant in Kakuma 1 mentioned that humanitarian actors could provide more community incentive workers⁷ in the camps to enhance information sharing between humanitarian actors and the refugee community.

Humanitarian actors⁶ reportedly encountered **language barriers** while offering services due to the **different nationalities of refugee community members that are hosted** in Kakuma refugee camps. In particular, 4/9 KIs from agencies offering livelihood and economic recovery services reported encountering language barriers. This finding is consistent with that of the participants in the majority of FGDs, who mentioned that language was a barrier for community members who wanted to provide feedback to humanitarian actors. For instance, one participant in an FGD in Kakuma 2 mentioned that she could not understand English and Kiswahili, and it was difficult for her to express herself when she visited humanitarian agency offices. As a result, she misinterpreted some messages and could not provide feedback to humanitarian actors.

Other challenges reported by humanitarian actors⁶ KIs to have been encountered by agencies offering services in Kakuma were:

Thematic area	Challenges
Protection	Poor infrastructure (eg roads) (2/9 KIs)
Livelihoods	Illiteracy among the community members (2/9 KIs)
Education (Secondary/primary)	Overcrowding in classrooms (1/9 KIs) High turnover of teachers/Few trained teachers (1/9 KIs)
Food security	Inadequate food supply (3/6 KIs)
WASH ⁸	Increasing population of refugees and asylum seekers (2/9 KIs)

7. Incentive workers are individuals (from refugee communities) contracted (on a temporary basis) by NGOs, mostly to support community engagements including facilitating trainings, translations and language interpretation.

8. Water, sanitation and hygiene.

KINDS OF INFORMATION DISSEMINATED TO COMMUNITIES

Almost all the assessed humanitarian, development and government actor KIs (27/28), reported having disseminated different kinds of information to communities in Kakuma refugee camps in the 12 months prior to data collection.

The majority (21/24) of assessed community leader KIs reported being aware of humanitarian, development and government actors implementing programmes in Kakuma refugee camps in the 12 months prior to data collection. In addition, they reported that the community received information about services available in the camps, the status of the camps, durable solutions for refugees, among other kinds of information.

Top reported kinds of information received by the community from humanitarian actors, as reported by community leader KIs (n=20) :⁹

Status of the camps	11
Services available in the camps	9
Durable solutions for refugees ⁶	9



In some FGDs, participants reported that communities received information about **healthcare services**, which enabled community members to improve their hygiene practices. This included information about COVID-19 awareness, the outbreak of Malaria, and a decrease in drugs in some health facilities. In an FGD in Kakuma 2 for instance, a participant cited that the community received information about an outbreak of a new COVID-19 variant and rising cases of Malaria, from a humanitarian agency (FilmAid). In another FGD in Kakuma 4, a participant mentioned that information on access to health enabled community members to improve their hygiene practices.

However, participants in some FGDs mentioned that they would like humanitarian actors to scale up health services, particularly the provision of assistive devices for persons with disabilities. A female participant in an FGD in Kakuma 1 for instance, mentioned that community members would want humanitarian actors to be better informed about the healthcare needs of persons with disabilities.



Findings from FGDs suggest that communities in Kakuma refugee camps had received information on how they **could access food rations**. Specifically, the community reportedly received information from the United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) about plans of increasing food rations (Bamba chakula) that are distributed to households. Humanitarian actors commonly used public speakers (Through FilmAid), radio, phone calls and text messages to disseminate information about food distribution. A female participant in Kakuma 2 mentioned that she received information about food rations through public speakers.

Even so, participants in the majority of FGDs mentioned that community members would like to receive monthly updates on food distribution to enable them make better decisions for their families.



Findings suggest that community members had received information about **education services** available in the camps. Some of the services that participants in FGDs cited included; updates about changes in the school calendar, humanitarian agencies paying school fees for some students, and the roll-out of competency-based curriculum(CBC) in public schools.

That said, participants in some FGDs pointed out that humanitarian actors should expand the scope of education services that were being provided to communities in the camps. A participant in an FGD in Kakuma 2 cited that learners should be provided with desks in schools where children usually sit on the floor while learning. This suggests that while humanitarian actors provided information to the community about the available education services, communities have additional education needs that should be incorporated when disseminating information.



Despite community members reportedly receiving information about **livelihood opportunities available** in the camps, participants in some FGDs, participants mentioned that humanitarian actors should provide additional information particularly on **supporting community members to start businesses**. For instance, a male participant in an FGD in Kakuma 2 cited, "I received information about livelihood opportunities" A participant in a different FGD in Kakuma 2 mentioned that community members would want to receive regular information about employment opportunities for refugee communities.



Participants in FGDs also reported that community members received information about camp coordination activities, particularly the **process of registration of new arrivals**, and **cases of insecurity** in the camps. Participants in the majority of FGDs reported that community members perceived that **information on registration and the rights of refugees was quite relevant in decision making**. Even so, participants in some FGDs pointed out that humanitarian actors should have provided further information about the safety and security of community members, particularly the **potential for inter-communal violence**. Male participants in an FGD in Kakuma 1 mentioned that specific ethnic communities felt insecure and needed protection, due to cases of harassment targeting them.




⁹. Respondents could select more than one answer

INFORMATION SOURCES

Table 2: Commonly reported channels through which members of the community received information from humanitarian actors, as cited by participants in FGDs.

Topic of dissemination	Most reported types of channels
Food distribution (Bamba chakula)	Public speakers
	Radio
	Text messages
Durable solutions for refugees ⁴	Face-to-face with community leaders
	Phone calls
	Email
Health (Including disease outbreaks)	Public speakers
	Posters
	Community health promoters
Education (Changes in the school calendar and payment of school fees)	Public speakers
	Cinema
Hygiene and sanitation	Public speakers
	Face-to-face with community leaders
Economic situation of the country	Television

Reported channels that humanitarian actors adapted to effectively communicate with special community groups, as cited by participants in FGDs.

Special community group	Channels adapted to disseminate information to the group
 Persons with disabilities	Use of community incentive workers ⁷
	Special content created by FilmAid
	Language interpreters
 Children	Public speakers
	Teachers in schools/ Caregivers
	Through child protection organizations
	Children's radio programmes
 Youth	Community meetings
	Youth leaders

PREFERRED CHANNELS OF COMMUNICATION

Top reported channels that the community members prefer to receive information from humanitarian actors, as reported by community leader KIs (n=20)⁹ :

Face-to-face communication	12
Public speakers	11
Community leaders	10
Community group discussions	9

Commonly reported reasons why community members prefer these channels of communication, as reported by community leader KIs (n=20)

- According to KIs, some community members preferred **face-to-face communication** with humanitarian actors because they **trusted the sources** (7 KIs), because the **information is thought to be accurate** (6 KIs), and/or is disseminated in the local language (3 KIs). Some of the reasons cited by participants in FGDs as to the community's preference for face-to-face interactions with community leaders were: **getting prompt feedback** and the face-to-face **opportunities of raising concerns and having issues clarified**. For instance, in an FGD in Kakuma 1, a male participant pointed out that he prefers face-to-face communication with leaders because the community gets immediate feedback on the issues raised.
- Some KIs reported that community members preferred communication through **public speakers** because the information is **easily accessible** (4 KIs), thought to be **accurate** (3 KIs), and **uses familiar language** (3 KIs). Participants in some FGDs also mentioned that the community preferred to receive information from humanitarian actors through loudspeakers, which was also cited as the most commonly used channel to disseminate information to the community.
- Information disseminated through **community leaders** was reportedly preferred by some community members because community leaders are generally **trusted in the community** (6 KIs) and leaders **used a familiar language** (4 KIs). This is also consistent with findings from FGDs, in which participants mentioned that community members preferred receiving information from community leaders because their leaders used local languages to communicate.

Communication sources and channels that are perceived to be trusted most by the community.

- The **sources of information** that participants in FGDs commonly perceived as **trustworthy** included; the United Nations agencies, community meetings through their community leaders, the Department of Refugee Services¹⁰ (DRS), schools, and religious gatherings.
- In addition, participants in the majority of FGDs cited that community members generally trusted information shared through **different channels**, including **public speakers** (with content created by FilmAid). Other communication channels that participants identified as those that the community trusted included: Information passed through the **local radio station, television, phone calls** and **text messages from humanitarian agencies, social media** messages (Whatsapp), and other channels.
- In some FGDs, participants reported that **community members trusted certain kinds of information over others**. In particular, participants cited that community members trusted information on food distribution and information regarding educational services offered in the camps. However, participants in some FGDs cited that community members perceived certain kinds of information to be inaccurate and untrustworthy. In an FGD in Kakuma 4 for instance, participants mentioned that the community did not trust information about the potential closure of the camps, water and sanitation services, or security updates. In Kakuma 3, a female participant mentioned, "No, because they tell us about closing the camp but until now nothing is going on" Furthermore, a participant in an FGD in Kakuma 2 mentioned that he did not trust the information that he received, because he lacked a radio, television, or mobile phone that could allow him to access information directly from humanitarian actors.

Reported reasons why some kinds of information was not trusted by community members.

- Participants in some FGDs mentioned that community members did not trust information disseminated by humanitarian actors. Some of the reasons that participants cited for mistrusting information were; **a lack of feedback from humanitarian actors** and **community members perceiving that they were not receiving any humanitarian support**. In an FGD in Kakuma 2, a female participant cited "I do not trust any organization since the people bringing us information do not even bring us feedback". Another participant mentioned, "I do not trust any organization since I am struggling alone without any support". In Kakuma 3, a participant reported, "I do not trust most of the organizations since they do not fulfill their promises"

10. The department of government that is in charge of refugee affairs.

FEEDBACK MECHANISMS

Top reported channels used by the community to give feedback to humanitarian actors, as reported by humanitarian actor KIs (n=28)⁹ :

Community meetings	14
Phone calls from the community	11
Visits to help desks	10
Letters sent to suggestion boxes	9

- Trustworthiness** of the information disseminated through community meetings and the **privacy** of the information passed through phone calls were cited by participants in FGDs as reasons why community members preferred **community meetings** and **phone calls** to give feedback to actors, respectively.
- Language barriers** and **perceived inaccessibility of humanitarian actor offices** were among the mentioned reasons why community members preferred to give feedback through their leaders. These barriers were cited by participants in the majority of FGDs as those that the community members encountered when providing feedback to humanitarian actors. Moreover, participants in some FGDs mentioned that community members used **community incentive workers**⁷ to provide feedback to humanitarian actors. According to participants in some FGDs, incentive workers⁷ commonly **disseminated information to persons with disabilities**, and **spread messages in communities about healthcare services** available in the camps.

INFORMATION NEEDS

- Findings from FGDs suggest that community members in Kakuma camps have various information needs. In the majority of the FGDs, participants mentioned that community members consider information on **durable solutions for refugees⁶, food distribution, registration, the rights of refugees, access to healthcare** and **education services** to be the most relevant in decision-making. In an FGD in Kakuma 3, a female participant cited, "I would like to hear information about repatriation". In another FGD in Kakuma 1, a participant mentioned, "addition of food from general food distribution". In another FGD in Kakuma 2, a participant mentioned, "Health information such as the outbreak of diseases". In another FGD in Kakuma 1, a participant cited, "Issues with safety and security in between host and refugee community".

- In some FGDs, participants reported that the community would like to receive information about **education services** targeting girls. Furthermore, participants in FGDs also pointed out that communities would want to provide humanitarian actors with **information on challenges that community members encounter while accessing education**. Some of the challenges that participants cited were; a decrease of teachers in schools, inadequate learning materials, getting student scholarships, and some students experiencing difficulties paying school fees. In an FGD in Kakuma 3 for instance, a participant cited that the community would like to share information with humanitarian actors about the need for actors to provide "the information about school requirements, for instance pens, mathematical sets".
- In some FGDs, participants mentioned that community members would like to receive information about **shelter services, safety and security in the camps, livelihood opportunities, access to micro-finance**, and the **structure of the community leadership**. In an FGD in Kakuma 1 for instance, a male participant cited that he considered information about safety and security between the host and refugee community to be most relevant. Participants in FGDs also expressed the need for humanitarian actors to provide communities with information about the provision of shelter services (iron sheets to vulnerable communities), supporting community members to start businesses, and youth awareness on drug abuse.
- In an FGD in Kakuma 4, a participant mentioned that they would like to receive regular information on health, **to enable the community to maintain hygiene standards, food security information to enable them to plan their families, information on feedback channels to enable seamless communication with humanitarian actors** and enhance communication among community members.

BARRIERS TO COMMUNICATION

- Despite participants in FGDs commonly reporting that humanitarian actors used language interpreters to overcome the language barrier, participants in most FGDs also cited that **language was a barrier in receiving information disseminated to the community**. A female participant from one FGD said, "**Language is a barrier, the SMS we receive from humanitarian agencies is not usually in our local language**".
- Besides the language barrier, participants in FGDs also cited **delayed feedback from humanitarian actors**. A participant from one FGD said, "**We do not receive feedback for our problems**". Another participant in a FGD cited, "**I do not understand the correct channel to follow in order to reach humanitarian actors**".
- Participants in FGDs also cited inaccessibility of humanitarian offices and fear of being victimized when community members shared information with humanitarian actors. A participant in one FGD reported, "**It is very hard to access the offices for the concerned information**".

CONCLUSION

- The majority of community members in Kakuma refugee seemingly need **regular information about resettlement opportunities to enable refugee families to make better decisions about their future**. Whereas participants in some FGDs mentioned that the community had received information about the possibility of some community members being resettled, repatriated or integrated into the host community, participants in other FGDs mentioned that community members consider information on the availability of durable solutions for refugees to be the most relevant in making informed decisions.
- Refugee communities in Kakuma camps seem to **prefer receiving information through their leaders and via public speakers**. Community members perceive information shared through their leaders to be trustworthy. Furthermore, community leaders reportedly use local languages that most refugee members are familiar with. Community members also tend to prefer receiving information from their leaders because they get opportunities of asking questions and raising concerns on some pertinent issues.
- Despite humanitarian actors adapting different methodologies to overcome language barriers and making information accessible to persons with special needs, **some community members reportedly still experience challenges with language**. In some FGDs, participants mentioned that some community members misinterpreted information or could not understand English and Swahili. Such challenges with language reportedly **made it difficult for some community members to provide direct feedback to humanitarian actors**.

ABOUT REACH

REACH Initiative facilitates the development of information tools and products that enhance the capacity of aid actors to make evidence-based decisions in emergency, recovery and development contexts. The methodologies used by REACH include primary data collection and in-depth analysis, and all activities are conducted through inter-agency aid coordination mechanisms. REACH is a joint initiative of IMPACT Initiatives, ACTED and the United Nations Institute for Training and Research -Operational Satellite Applications Programme (UNITAR-UNOSAT). For more information, please visit our website: www.reach-initiative.org You can contact us directly at: geneva@reach-initiative.org and follow us on Twitter @REACH_info.