

THE Refugee

MAGAZINE
ISSUE #14 | DADAAB

**How prepared are
we to fight Coronavirus?**

**Agony grips family after
losing Kin to covid-19 in US**

**Covid-19 emptied my
pockets**



Muhammad

Corona Hampered My Resettlement Plan



WASH THEM FREQUENTLY



COVER YOUR FACE WITH ELBOW WHEN YOU SNEEZE OR COUGH



DON'T TOUCH YOUR FACE



KEEP SAFE DISTANCE FROM ONE ANOTHER



STAY HOME & STAY SAFE



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Letter From the Editor

The COVID-19 pandemic is affecting the lives of billions of people world over.

Measures to stop its spread have been drastic with strict restrictions imposed, affecting the lives of people. Fundamental freedoms such as socializing is restricted to social distancing, cessation of movement, lock-down of homes or entire cities is a norm.

The hope is that these measures will slow the spread of COVID-19, saving thousands of lives. The pandemic dumps the dreams of many longing for better futures, including the hundreds of thousands of refugees in Dadaab. Refugees are fully aware that the current virus outbreak is a global challenge that must be addressed through international solidarity and cooperation. The refugee camp bears the same risk if the virus broke out and maybe suffer far worse damage from its effects.

Refugee and host communities living in Dadaab worry about how the pandemic will be handled and its impact. The COVID-19 crisis has already had significant consequences for the refugees in camps, forcing humanitarian organizations to work with the refugees to adjust their work and operations strategies immediately. All Community leaders spared efforts to mobilize, sensitize, and educate refugees on the risks of contracting the COVID-19. Thus, making sure that refugees feel protected at best under this problematic period.

Garissa county closed the Dagahley livestock market in Dadaab sub-county on May 1 to mitigate against the virus reaching its jurisdiction and spreading. The government has restricted human movement in and out of Dadaab and also suspended travel of people into or out of the county.

In this edition, we speak to Dr. Harun Mwadali, a Health Manager at the International Rescue Committee (IRC), based in Hagadera on the team's preparedness to combat the virus as we shed light on the challenges that come with it.

Enjoy.

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The Refugee Magazine

Ramadan Under the Shadows of Coronavirus

Muslims across the world have had to go back to the drawing board on how to mark the month of Ramadhan, as the Coronavirus has changed the narrative

By Ismail Aden

During the holy month of Ramadan, Dadaab refugees are accustomed to preparing adequately by purchasing foodstuff they will consume as a family or plan for activities they will engage in to make an extra coin, and organize a get together during the celebration of idd. Unfortunately, this season, it's different. Social distancing is practised to keep safe. Many have had to go back to the drawing board as the Coronavirus has changed the narrative.

At the camp level, the Refugee Affairs Secretariat had suspended the issuance of movement passes for movements between Kakuma, Dadaab, and Nairobi until further notice limiting the move in and out of the camp. UNHCR as well suspended Voluntary repatriation and resettlement programs. The business community would frequently move in and out of refugee camps to trade but have now been impacted by travel restrictions.

"We as Muslims living in this refugee set up have worries about Ramadan because it's a month that Muslims gather at the mosque to pray in congregation and ask forgiveness from Allah. This month is not possible because of the pandemic we are grappling with now," says Sheikh Mohamed of Hagadera.

Mohamed confirms that the community is aware of the dangers of the virus through the awareness programs done by medics and the humanitarian organization. He affirms that more needs to be done as some community members are not keenly following up on life-saving information like social distancing and



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A residence of Dagahaley walking along the street of Dagahaley market

washing of hands.

"Even though refugees are aware of the current virus outbreak, the risk of contracting and transmitting these diseases could be higher due to the living condition. The environment provides minimal chance to ensure social distancing when going for essential services like water, food, and medication," states Mohamed.

As a tradition, during Ramadan, Muslims spend time in the evening to visit the poor and offer them food commonly known as Iftar at their homes as a sign of love, care, and compassion. But with the advent of the Coronavirus and the restrictive measures, this may not happen.

"Coronavirus has forced the community to have their prayers in their homes and break the long day fast with

their immediate families, unlike the norm where we gather at the mosque and break our fast together."

Ramadan, which this year began on Thursday, April 23 evening, is considered the holiest of months in the Islamic calendar. Usually, it sees Muslims fast by not eating or drinking during daylight hours as well as being a time for prayer and reflection.

Muslims in Dadaab will observe Ramadan under a curfew declared by the Kenya Government countrywide on March 26 from 7 pm to 5 am to slow the spread of the virus, which is still in force and tight restrictions due to the Coronavirus outbreak that has paralyzed most of the operations.

Abdullahi's Hubaal Peace Band Champions Refugee Affairs

My art is not politically driven. I only use my talent to help raise awareness on issues affecting the refugees

By Mohamed Jimale

Abdullahi Weheliye Anshur, 39, has lived in Dadaab refugee camps since 2008. He lives a life of daily struggle, synonymous with thousands of other refugees in the Dadaab Refugee Complex.

Abdullahi was born in Somalia's capital, Mogadishu, in 1980. His father died when he was 10 years old, and his family depended on small-scale business that was run by his mother, until January 2008 when a bomb blast destroyed their only source of income. They fled to Kenya to seek asylum. It took them 24 days to reach the camps.

"When our family business was destroyed, we decided to flee and look for a safer place. We chose to go to Dadaab camps, a place where many of our neighbors went. We had a dreadful journey to Dadaab. It took us almost a month to reach here, but thanks to God with all the challenges we managed to reach safely and were received and registered by the UNHCR," he says.

Back at home, Abdullahi was a member of 'Ubaxa Kacaanka,' a group of musicians that performed during government functions in Mogadishu. He dreamt of becoming a successful artist and looked up to Hassan Aden Samatar, a legendary Somali musician, as his role model. His love for art started at an early age when he was in school. Once, he was even awarded as the best student in art and music.

"During my school days back at home, I was the best student in music and art. I won many art competitions for my

school," he says.

Despite having the talent, Abdullahi never got a chance to showcase it until FilmAid Kenya put out an advertisement for a theatre training program.

"When I saw the advert, I felt so happy. I saw myself training with other artists because I believed I could impress in the auditions. I could not let this opportunity pass, and I hurriedly applied. Thanks to God, I was selected and got to join the training program," he says.

Abdullahi uses his art as a tool to raise awareness on the issues refugees and migrants face during their journey in search of safety and food. "My art is not politically driven. I only use my talent to help raise awareness on issues affecting



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the refugees such as cholera outbreaks, drug abuse, early marriages, illegal migration, and other issues that are off-limits in the camps," he adds.

Abwaan Khalif Muse Samatar, aka Sanyare, 56, is a well-known poet and comedian in Dadaab refugee camp. Sanyare sees art as an outlet that helps people heal, express emotions, and a tool for social change.

Abdullahi has set goals for himself. He wants to take his talent to the highest level possible and show the world what he can offer, despite his refugee status. He has already formed the Hubaal Peace Band, and a troupe made up of singers and actors.

"I formed this group with other young boys and girls. I train them in theatre. So far, we have produced three songs that we want to use to sensitize the youth on issues affecting their lives," he says proudly.

"FilmAid Kenya has long been giving refugee youth a platform to discover, explore, and display their talent. They should continue coaching trained youth so that they can make a living from the talents they have," says Mohamud Odowa, a former Hagadera Youth Chairman. "We sensitize people against harmful practices like rape. We do this during gatherings and calendar events," says Nasro, a member of the Hubaal Peace Band.

Abdullahi has now developed as a good singer, a great guitarist, and a top-notch theatre performer. His story is an inspiration to the many ambitious youths



Refugee girl donates 3000 masks and makes soap to former home

By Bapwoch Omot

Born in the Unity State in South Sudan in 1995, a border state in the north, in a village called Pariang, Adiew Achuil together with her family had to flee for safety in fear for their lives due to the ongoing conflict and lack of peace between South and North Sudan.

At a tender age of 3 months, Adiew with her family arrived safely in Kakuma refugee camp in Kenya, where they were received and taken in under the protection of UNHCR and the government of Kenya (GOK). "Life was so difficult and challenging in the camp," says Adiew, who was informed by her mother. "Despite the pain, the agony and the dark memories of the motherland, my mother still enrolled my siblings and me into a primary school in the camp, in the year 2002 and joined high school in 2011," Adiew added.

In the year 2013, Adiew and her family stint in Kakuma refugee camp came to a halt after the UNHCR and Kenyan Government transferred their data to Dadaab refugees due to protection concerns.

According to Adiew she thought her future was jeopardized by this relocation from camp to camp since her family had to start from scratch again for them to settle in their new home, Dadaab. However, it didn't take long for Adiew to realize that Dadaab is where her fate lies. After performing well in high school, Adiew got a job with FilmAid international as a facilitator in Dadaab Ifo Camp. She used her role to mentor and talked to different communities about girl child empowerment.

Vocational training that is being offered by the Danish Refugee Council (DRC) on soap making got Adiew's interested she got enrolled, and this is where she gained a lot of skills.

Cometh 2016," this is when God answered my prayers, this was my year," says Adiew. Adiew is one of the beneficiaries of the DAFI program (Albert Einstein German Academic Refugee Initiative), enabling young refugees to unlock their potential by addressing key barriers to higher education.

According to the UNHCR, once the scholarship is issued, one of the strategic priorities of the DAFI program is to promote the self-reliance of sponsored students through employment and entrepreneurship opportunities. It is also meant to empower students to contribute knowledge, skills, and leadership to the refugee community, and to facilitate peaceful coexistence with host communities during displacement.

"This is what I needed, this is why I worked hard in my high school despite my community's perception of considering school a place for boys alone," says Adiew.

For this and other reasons and Adiew's devotion to studies, while at the University, she still commits to not only mentor girls from schools in the camps but also in some schools in Nakuru and Nairobi.

Due to the outbreak of Covid-19, that's the word pandemic, Adiew didn't, therefore, make it to follow her scheduled mentorship programs in both the camps and urban centers. But that didn't stop her from helping the needy and fellow Refugees. She's still working with camp leaders and few trusted colleagues to reach the needy.

Adiew got more concerned about the lives of the most vulnerable people, including the elderly ones, she then out of her own. The caring heart used her school allowance to put on work the skills she gained both in the camps and in school to produce homemade bar soaps and 3000 masks to be distributed in Kakuma and Dadaab Refugee camps and urban centers to fight Covid-19.

Adiew has been working alone and using her pocket money meant for school upkeep allowance to help her fellow refugees and the needy ones.

When asked of the material she used in making the soaps, Adiew confidently states, "I used the available home materials like utensils and knowledge gained in the camp to help myself produce the soaps."

The items were dispatched to their respective destinations; Kakuma, Dadaab, and urban refugees received their shares on Monday the 4th of May 2020. Individual team leaders in the camp working with her received the items and distributed them to the needy according to her wish.

From a room littered with bottles, buckets, manilla paper, and other containers, Achuil's selfless efforts were capped when she packed the donations in the trunk of a vehicle to have them shipped to those in need.

"Margaret of UNHCR and the entire UNHCR team, Allan Mwaika from Windle Trust Kenya and Dadaab FilmAid manager Fatuma Roba have been supportive," happily says Adiew.

Adiew is hailed by a section of Kenyans for selfless sacrifice and remembering where she started her life, with others calling for her to be supported to get the project going.

How I Made a “Tippy Tap” Hand Washing Station to Fight Corona

As the Coronavirus continues to bite with the death rate rising globally, Doctors and researchers are burning the midnight oil to find a vaccine and save humanity. So far, there has been few reported cases in the refugee camps in Kenya as the Kenyan government and UNHCR put up measures to limit movement in and out of the camp and advocate for personal hygiene.

In a view to curb the spread of the virus in the refugee camps in Kenya, some residences of the Dadaab refugee complex, which hosts over 200,000 refugees majority being Somalis, have become creative to mitigate the spread in their unique way.

In a facemask at a tap stand in section M of Hagadera Camp is Deko Abdi, who doubles up as a section leader and business lady. Deko has been making her handwashing tap stand popularly known as tippy tap. She made using the old plastic containers to work as a tap stand with a hollow lid, and the soap on the side was raised with a stone so that it does not become soggy.

Her tippy tap is supported by two straight sticks firmed up on the ground, which holds the bottle at a raised level where all her family members can reach out to have their hands cleaned.

The improvised tap will help her efficiently fight the COVID19 virus at her home through frequent handwashing.

Dekho has also been on the frontline, encouraging handwashing activities to prevent the virus after directives issued by the health ministry in Kenya and WHO were delivered to her through a multiagency information campaign launched soon after the virus was detected in Kenya.

“After getting to know about all the preventive measures of covid19 from the radio and mass awareness in the camp, I am now following up the well known old proverb which is prevention is better than cure,” states Dekho Abdi.

She has now placed one jerrycan tap stand outside my home compound and one inside for my children to keep personal hygiene.

“The old people in my community are not educated; thus, and I have to pass the message of handwashing in the language they understand better. They believe in cultural practices with no worries about the pandemic, which is a worrying trend,” she posed.

Saynab Gedi, 52, a single mother of 4 children, has not yet heard much about the deadly covid19 virus. She does her usual house chores and wonders why there is a ban on public gathering and school closure. She inaccurately related the virus to Chikungunya. The virus spreads to people by the bite of an infected mosquito. The most common symptoms of infection are fever and joint pain, headache, muscle pain, joint swelling, or rash.

“I believe in God, and I can not do all those things heard from the media. This virus resembles the Chikungunya,” states Gedi.

Humanitarian organizations working in the camps have taken up their roles to educate the masses on the preventive measures to combat the virus and how to handle cases if they are reported in the field through a local community radio station known as Radio Gargaar.

The misinformed understanding of this disease by elders in Dadaab will quicken the spread of this virus in the crowded blocks.



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A Mother's Dilemma



By Ombok

Fatima, not her real name, wears a dejected solemn face but affords a wry smile as she cast her eyes in a distant past. After taking a long breath, she pulls her smile wider and turns to me feeling proud, happy and refreshed.

I asked her where her thoughts are, and with an easy nod, she responds, “I am happy with a decision I made 5 years ago.

” I ask her to tell me more about this decision, and she quips, “I refused to let my son join Al-Shabaab. The urge

to join was strong since he had already received money that helped him pay for his Form 4 school fees. I was confused by the offer as we had benefited from them, Al-Shabaab, without fully knowing it was a strategy to recruit the innocent boy. Given that I was financially helpless, I accepted the sponsorship without thinking about its source. On the other hand, at the same time, I was fearful that if he didn't join, they would come for him in one way or another. I know that they have killed young men who did not join them after their sponsorship. ”

Being a single mother with 3 children, Fatima found it challenging to keep her children in school and fend for their daily needs. As a committed Muslim, she performed ‘halaal’ errands for others, earned honestly, and lived one day at a time.

She admits to me, finally, that the reason for her risky refusal was the following:

“it was a better gamble to risk my sons killing here, rather than surrender him and never see his return. The gamble paid off, thanks to almighty Allah”.

Corona Hampered My Re



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By Ismail Aden

For a year, Muhidin mukhtar Bashir, a refugee artist, has been waiting for his resettlement to Canada.

When his opportunity landed, the invisible enemy coronavirus came calling to suspend his dream. He now finds himself between a rock and a hard place since he has to wait a little bit longer. The pandemic forced governments to close their borders. Kenya's government and UNHCR initiated measures to control the spread of COVID-19 and suspended movement into or out of the camp. Sadly Muhidin flight had to be pushed forward

to a later date.

During our interview, Muhidin exuded confidence that momentarily makes him forget his troubled past. He recalls the long wait and patience he had to endure to secure the opportune moment.

"I have to accept that we are under serious time of fighting with COVID-19 and this virus is a killer, I hope after this disease is eradicated everything will resume to normal and I will be going to Canada," states Muhidin.

Born in Somalia, Muhidin, 31,

fled Somalia's conflict with his family when he was just at a tender age of 10. He has since spent 21 years in Dadaab refugee camp in Kenya. Together with his family of 5, he was lucky to receive a resettlement opportunity for Canada. His flight was scheduled in March, after a successful series of interviews, a process that took a year since March 7, 2019. The news came that his travel was rescheduled to a later date, as a human, he did not receive it with both hands.

The talented fine artist studied his O level in Hagadera camp, one of the

Resettlement Plan

3 camps in Dadaab complex. He started practising his talent of art by working with local agencies in the camp to put up illustrations on the walls and papers to sensitize the community on different thematic issues.

Raised with a single mother, Muhidin belongs to a minority Somali community known as the Somali Bantu. Without a doubt, he admires his mother, who has nurtured his love of art and gave him the platform to explore more. He is proud to say that he comes from a family or artist as his siblings followed suit. Muhidin is the sole breadwinner of his family, and he describes himself as a supportive and obedient father.

Besides that, the refugee affair secretariat has suspended the issuance of movement passes between Dadaab Nairobi and Kakuma until further notice also the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees suspended voluntary repatriation and resettlement program. The business community affected by the cession of movement cannot access other markets and services critical for their business. However, UNHCR and partners are implementing measures to create awareness about who to do to keep staff and where to access help when affected.

At the camp level, the Refugee Affairs Secretariat has suspended the issuance of movement passes for movements between Kakuma, Dadaab, and Nairobi until further notice. UNHCR has also suspended Voluntary repatriation and resettlement programs.



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Elderly man makes Somali artifacts for a living

By Abdirizak Jama Shire

Grey-haired Shueib Mohamud, 85, is among the many elders who have been pushed to create opportunities for themselves to make ends meet. He lives in Dagahaley refugee camp in Kenya, and at his advanced age, he endures the scorching sun daily to operate his business making mats and whisks in a makeshift workshop without any shade. Even though the conditions are harsh, he loves his job and endures the elements to make a living and support his family.

Shueib started with nothing but a needle to sew mats, boxes, and make whisks. He set himself up under a tree in 1992 when Dagahaley camp was first established. There, he met many customers who bought his merchandise. However, all that ended the day a tractor uprooted the tree in operation to expand the road. Not only did he lose his workspace, but also the 28,750 Kenyan Shillings in his pockets as the tractor lifted him off the ground while trying to

save his property. While there was given another place to operate from, he was ordered out by camp management shortly afterward.

Most of Shueib's clients pay in advance. He sells one whisk to shopkeepers at 100 Kenyan shillings, while a box made from a sack fetches 200 shillings and sews mats with sack bags for 250 shillings.

Fatima Hassan, a shopkeeper, says, "I'm his regular customer. I bought a whisk to remove dust from the items in my shop at a low price. Once, he also made a box sewed from a sack for 200 Shillings." According to Fatima, Shueib is serving the community with items that would otherwise be expensive in other parts of Kenya.

Shueib's son is in high school and provides for him with the income he generates from this job.

"This is not a big job. However, circumstances force me to do it. Sometimes I make money, but other times there is none at all. I give my son Sh100

a day when I have work, but I will soon depend on him because I don't have any other source of income," says Shueib.

"My father started this job when I was in class three. I depend on him for everything. He has many customers in this big market. Every shop in this market has bought a whisk from him. After high school, I am going to help him," says Abdirizak, Shueib's son.

Back in Somalia, Shueib lived a vibrant life as a police officer with a rank of captain. He married six wives and had 20 children, out of which only six are alive. Five of his children are now married in Somalia. One of his sons is currently working in Bakool Somalia as a teacher but doesn't support him. Before coming to Kenya, he divorced five of his wives in Somalia and flew to Kenya's Dadaab camp with his last wife.

Currently, Shueib is the only man making these kinds of artifacts in the camp. He comments, "I don't have competitors because it requires a rare skill."





How Prepared are we to Fight Coronavirus





How prepared are

Exclusive interview with Dr. Harun Mwadali, the health manager at the International Rescue Committee (IRC) situated in Hagadera, Dadaab, Dr. Mwadali has over 6 years experience working in the medical field. He has worked in different capacities and spheres of life to offer life-saving medical assistance to the community.

By Kamil Ahmed

With a possible COVID-19 outbreak in Dadaab refugee camp, what concrete steps is IRC with the help of UNHCR taking to deal with the Pandemic?

The IRC being the lead health implementing partner in Hagadera refugee camp has a difficult task to respond adequately to the COVID-19 outbreak within Hagadera and the surrounding host community.

Currently, in line with the various preventive measures, the IRC has introduced a triage area at the main hospital and two health posts to ensure that the patients are screened before the consultation. The triage works to separate patients with flu-like symptoms and other patients. So far, no patient who fills the COVID-19 case definition has been identified from our triage areas.

The IRC has designated the former Cholera Treatment Centre as the COVID-19 Treatment Centre this isolation center will be used to manage any suspected case of COVID-19 in Hagadera refugee camp. The isolation center is a 15-bed capacity facility with relevant amenities such as donning and doffing area with separate bathrooms and toilets for staff and patients. All confirmed cases of COVID-19 will be managed from IFO-2 isolation center. We have a limited number of visitors coming to the hospital to ensure that there's no unnecessary crowding and social distancing is observed.

The hospital has procured the necessary Personal protective equipment (PPE) for frontline workers and essential medical supplies for COVID-19 response.

Community engagement on risk communication has been done extensively to sensitize the community on COVID-19. Groups that have been reached are the overall camp refugee leadership, CPPT, Hagadera community health committee, Police, section leaders, and the religious leaders. Social mobilization and radio

messaging are ongoing to the entire Hagadera community.

The IRC, with support from UNHCR, has identified Undungu Primary school as the quarantine center for the Hagadera refugee camp. The center will accommodate 33 households and will be supported by a multiagency team. LWF has provided cleaners and cooks, CARE has provided WASH facility, and WFP has provided food ration. The IRC will ensure daily medical screening of the quarantined individuals is done and necessary measures implemented.

To coordinate well, the IRC is working closely with health partners within the Camp and UNHCR to ensure preparedness and readiness measures are in place. The Hagadera IRC team is also working in cohorts of technical working groups, namely community engagement, clinical management, infection prevention and control, staff welfare, supply chain, and communication. The move ensures the participation of communities and their staff in decision making and for them to own the process.

Could you describe your role in health manager, and how you are currently working with front-line colleagues on COVID-19?

As the Health Manager, I play a critical role in ensuring our preparedness and response measures conform to various WHO/Ministry of Health (MOH) /IRC Internal Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs). I work closely with our senior management team to ensure that adequate resources are mobilized for the response. We achieve this by obtaining views from staff in the best way we can respond and consolidating them into a concept note. The resources so far mobilized have been utilized in prepositioning the infection prevention & control supplies, including

How do we fight Coronavirus?



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PPE's, soaps, alcohol hand sanitizers, masks, to name a few and renovation work in our isolation ward, triage area, and community engagement activities.

Since there's no confirmed case in our area of operation, our frontline colleagues are currently involved in the medical screening of the beneficiaries at the triage area and quarantine center. All frontline staff has been provided with PPE's and other supplies to support them execute their roles.

Has IRC increased its medical stockpiles? How about things like training of health workers, public awareness activities, monitoring for symptoms?

The IRC is in the process of increasing stockpiles not only for COVID-19 response but for usual mainstream health programs. Currently, we have enough infection prevention and control supplies that might be needed for COVID-19 response.

Training of staff is ongoing with weekly Continuous Medical Education course for staff that is available offline and virtual. Another online training has been provided by our headquarters technical advisors. The refugee staff also have not been left out. They also have weekly training done by our national team.

Public awareness activities

currently being undertaken are radio shows and social mobilization that is covering the Hagadera camp. Our Community Health Workers have been giving health talks to the beneficiaries at the main hospital and health post waiting for bays.

Monitoring for signs and symptoms is currently being undertaken at the main hospital triage area. Here we look at a history of cough, difficulty in breathing, and travel from an area with a high transmission rate of COVID-19 then take axilla temperature. Currently, no patient has been noted to fulfill the above COVID-19 case definition.

IRC has dealt with previous epidemics, including outbreaks of cholera, Measles and chikungunya. How is that experience and expertise being brought to bear in tackling the COVID-19 pandemic? And what lessons can we share with the world from our experience battling the spread of epidemics among refugee populations?

The IRC in Hagadera indeed has responded to several disease outbreaks such as Cholera, Measles, Chikungunya and Dengue fever. Lessons from these events are being applied to contain in COVID-19. The experiences that stand out include the allocation of resources for disease outbreaks is one of the strategies that has

worked well, timeliness in response by having standby staff, and a well-structured community engagement model.

In refugee camps or best known as common areas in the COVID-19 context are particular sites that are already having weak health systems, poor WASH conditions, and overcrowding. Community engagement should, therefore, be a daily activity to sensitize the population about various notifiable diseases before they occur. Some norms, such as hand washing, good personal hygiene, and cough etiquette, should be communicated right from early childhood. The refugee community leadership should be engaged right at the beginning of any health event.

The virus stirs deep fears and anxieties in individuals and societies. What are the public health consequences if people turn that fear against refugees and others on the margins?

You and I can be affected by displacement caused by war or natural disasters and become refugees. We are not immune. It is ridiculous to pin COVID-19 on refugees or anyone for that sake. All of us are vulnerable. Refugees might be running away from civil strife within their country, and with this, they are not carriers of COVID-19, but individuals who want a better future for their family



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and themselves. The fear will result in isolation of the refugee community with minimal support coming their way, which will have an impact on their psychological well-being and worsening of the disease outbreak among them.

Why is it important to ensure that refugees, asylum-seekers, stateless people and migrants have access to health facilities and services without facing discrimination?

Refugees are humans like me, and you. They deserve quality medical services that are available like any other person without discrimination. Discrimination of refugees and any other person in terms of health services provision is the worse human right violation that any person can face. In medical practice, all people who seek health services are patients who deserve care regardless of their citizenship status, creed, race, tribe, clan, or class.

About 200,000 refugees are hosted in Dadaab, where intensive care units often have fewer beds and fewer ventilators. How important is it to prevent outbreaks among refugee populations?

Indeed prevention is better than cure. In this context, the number of resources

needed to manage a COVID-19 case for an average of 4 – 6 weeks is substantial, and health partners within the camp cannot sustain with the limited resources available. In Dadaab, we are focused on ensuring we attain zero caseloads. The conditions at the camp sacrifice social distancing on the altars of seeking livelihood. It is a fertile ground for the quick spread of diseases like COVID-19. Several measures have been put in place, including quarantining all new arrivals and people traveling back to the camp. Government lockdown of counties with the highest transmission rates will go a long way to ensure transmission to other areas is prevented or slowed as best..

What challenges are you encountering in the fight against the pandemic?

Limited resources to adequately respond to the pandemic is the biggest challenge. Dadaab currently doesn't have an ICU where a critically ill patient with COVID-19 can be managed. What this means is that any patient requiring ICU/ HDU services will be at the mercies of usual general wards and equipment that will be provided. It is a sad tale when

you think about it as a practitioner. PPE's an essential medical supply isn't enough to cater for a prolonged outbreak. Our current load of work is to lobby for more resources and preparing for any cases. Cession of the movement in the Nairobi metropolitan area and the lockdown at the refugee camp has led to our personnel on their leaves unable to report back to work.

There have been reported cases of COVID19 in Somalia, how porous are our borders with our neighboring country? Does this pose a risk to the existing measures put in place?

The porous border between Kenya and Somalia is the most significant threat we face of COVID-19 getting to Dadaab from smugglers, and nomads, making their way to the camps. COVID-19 cases are currently on the rise in Somalia, and that's why we are placing every new arrival from Somalia on quarantine at the camp level.

Any other issue of concern?

We have contained Cholera, Dengue fever, and Chikungunya. COVID-19 is but another disease we will fight and bring under control.

Who is to blame? by Bapwoch

It was in December
When I was left with no mother
But I'm still stronger
I don't even bother
Coz I still think wiser
They heard me like a thunder
No need for you to wonder
No I can't stay down any longer
Coz for me no retreat no surrender

They accused people of murder
No, never, can't stay down forever
They wouldn't go hunger
Coz they eat people like vulture
As a child so young and thunder (tender)
I can still recall and remember
Coz I'm not alone in this drama
Let's fight this fight together

Sometimes I'll do wrong in order to get things right
I have to go for days without food and water for it was not an option
People were lined up in a queue one after the other
For death was waiting for them
My mother didn't know I'll survive coz she was not with me for days.
As a child I wanted to cry
Coz my life was kept in the dark
The music I heard was blasts of bombs and sound(s) of guns
So many people died that I don't even cry no more
For it was so hard to watch a friend die
Guns took their life away, younger (young) before their time
No one to help not even myself

Left home and don't even know the day I'll ever return
What am I here for?
When the rest of the children were learning how to read and write
I was learning how to use guns and how to save to my life

I was forced to eat mud and birds
I know it's a shame but who is to blame?

The Forbidden Love By Bapwoch

The highest was your price
I choose you with a pride
Coz you were the right
And I promised to give you all the rides
And now about you is all I write

I have tasted the sweetest divine fruit of true love
How can I ever be expected to go back to the bitter sweet life of the past
We can't help that life led us to each other in the way that it did
Our souls could not resist for they searched for so long

The love you gave me was truly sent from above
This type of love comes less than once in a lifetime
So how can we deny ourselves this chance for infinite fulfilment?
When I don't see you, my heart still feels you near longing for your embrace

I always knew looking back on the tears would make me laugh
But I never knew looking back on the laughs would make me cry
You have been mine
In my heart you're still mine
And you will forever be my Angel

Would they accept us if they knew that you were my dream lover and I was your fantasy King for so long?
How can I not want you when you're all I want inside?
How can I let you go, when I can't see us apart?
How can I not love you, when you control my heart?
With God's help, hope we will love again!



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Agony grips family after losing Kin to covid-19 in US

By Mohamed kassim

A family in Hagadera is mourning following the death of their son Farah Ahmed Hassan who succumbed to Covid-19-related complications in the US.

Speaking to the Refugee Magazine, Hodan Hussein Abdullah, Farah's mother, disclosed that the family got the sad news through a phone call from his uncle who also lives in the US.

Farah, 27, died on April 14 after two weeks of hospitalization.

"He passed away on Tuesday, April 22. His uncle called me to break the sad news," cries Hodan.

The forty-seven-year-old widow noted that the news took them by surprise, given the good health he had enjoyed prior.

Described as an intelligent, humble and a person with a heart of

giving, Farah left to Canada three years ago for an academic scholarship after attaining a high grade of A- in his O level in Hagadera high school. The scholarship was possible through the Student Refugee Program (SRP), which is a unique program that gives young refugees a chance to access postsecondary education. It is managed by the World University Service of Canada (WUSC). He was admitted to the University of Nebraska in Canada, where he later dropped out and moved to the US to live with his uncle and find a job and fend for his family. His family has been proud of him and looked up to him to support them and move them out of poverty.

Farah's sister, Fatima Ahmed Hassan, 21, who dwells in Mogadishu, is yet to receive the news as she is in a

coma. She went into a coma upon hearing of her father's death two years ago. The situation that led her to be admitted to the intensive care unit in a hospital in the Somali capital where she is receiving treatment.

“Who cursed me, my son died and my daughter is in a coma. I can not bear this, I would rather die too,” Hodan screamed.”

As fate would have it, Hodan is confused as she is caught between a rock and a hard place. The uncertainty of mourning a departed son and grappling with the original state her daughter finds herself in. She has been contemplating taking away her life as she considers all her hopes are lost.

“Who cursed me, my son died, and my daughter is in a coma. I can not bear this. I would rather die too,” Hodan screamed.

From a glance, her pain and agony keep tormenting her as Hodan spends most of her time gloomy and alone crying.

Losing Farah has been a big blow to her family since he was the breadwinner. She had accommodated four orphaned children of her brother who died six years ago and were supported by Farah.

“He used to provide for the basic needs and pay fees of all the children,” states Hodan.

At the time of publishing this article, 3 million had tested positive of the disease that has claimed more than 200,000 lives worldwide.

In Kenya alone, over 400 infections had been reported with more than 20 people have succumbed to the virus.

Kenya’s Cabinet Secretary of health, Mutahi Kagwe, revealed that 48 percent of the country’s infections were female. However, only a small percentage had succumbed to the virus. He stated that more men had died from the virus than women, noting that females also had a higher recovery rate.

He further announced that no persons aged between 15 and 30 years had

succumbed to the virus, attributing it to stronger immunity, but warned against recklessness, arguing that they may be carriers of the virus and pose a danger to others.

Community infections continue to grow in Kenya with confirmation of cases in several counties, including those neighboring Garissa, which hosts Dadaab refugee camp, which calls for an urgent need to upscale the camp preparedness to fight the pandemic.

Given mitigating the spread of the virus, Garissa county closed the Dagahley livestock market in Dadaab sub-county on May 1. The market’s risk level informed the closure since the traders are known to move across the border to Somalia to get their stock.



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Hodan with her niece and nephew she took in after her the demise of her brother.

Kusey's steady steps to self employment



By Fardowsa Sirad Gelle

Kusey Mohamed Mohamud, 55, was among the first refugees to arrive in Dadaab in 1992. Fleeing the civil war in Somalia, gunshot wounds weakened her upper and lower bilateral limbs. Although with some difficulty, Kusey walks with an assistive aid.

Currently, she resides in Hagadera in Dadaab Refugee camp, where she has lived for over 25 years while taking care of her sister's children. Her sister died during the civil war, as were her husband and five children.

Kusey is a respected leader in Hagadera. She is the chair lady of the Community Based Rehabilitation Committee. She was appointed to this position in 1993 after displaying great leadership capacity by forming the first self-help group for women with disabilities.

Kusey had no formal education and was a housewife who eked out a living by weaving mats. Arriving in Dadaab, she was unable to work due to the injuries she had sustained. Furthermore, one of the children under her care was



Kusey Mohamed (in purple) with Lutheran World Federation staff during graduation ceremony for students in the Vocational and Skills Training Program in Hagadera, Dadaab Refugee Camp, on August 30, 2018.

diagnosed with cerebral palsy, and her family had to rely on agencies for most of their essential needs.

However, in 2017, Kusey underwent corrective surgery on her left hand and attended a series of therapy sessions, which enabled her to regain the use of the hands. In September 2018, Kusey and other recruits were enrolled in the Lutheran World Federation's vocational and technical skills training program, where they pursued a tailoring course. The initiative was launched through the whole employment project developed by Stephen Areba, a Rehabilitation Officer working with Lutheran World Federation during his Fellowship at Kansas University Centre on Developmental Disabilities (KUCDD). The KUCDD program helps individuals with disabilities in Dadaab Refugee Camp find a path to employment.

"My Fellowship in Kansas helped me learn evidence-based practices for inclusive employment that I have adapted to support individuals with disabilities in Dadaab as they set and accomplish their own

goals," states Areba.

Areba has applied practices learned during his fellowship, including the Self Determined Career Development Model (SDCDM), which has a structured process designed to support PWDs as they set and achieve employment-related goals.

For his efforts, 20 Persons living with disabilities have been enrolled in technical skills programs (nine in tailoring and 11 in ICT). They are scheduled to sit for their Grade III examination in tailoring and ICT this August.

Kusey attributes her motivation for joining the tailoring program to the need to support her family. She has learned a lot and can make clothes for women and children.

She is excited that she managed to earn some making clothes for her neighbors during the Eid Ul Fitr holiday on June 5. She aspires to proceed to Grade IV in the tailoring program and learn how to make school uniforms so that she can start up her own business someday and be self-reliant.



Covid-19 emptied my pockets



Mohamed Aden outside his home in Hagadera Camp, Dadaab

Mohamed Aden Mohamed is commonly known by the byname Hamari. He is a Somali refugee working as a receptionist and ticket seller of Wamo travel agency in Hagadera. For the past 3 years, Mohamed has shown resilience and dedication in his job despite the hustle and bustle of the transport industry, to this where he earns his daily bread and makes saving for services rendered in reserving bus tickets for his clients moving from Dadaab to Nairobi.

Because of COVID-19, it is apparent that appropriate response to the pandemic is critical to ensure that refugees survived the vagaries of the disease that has put the world on a real lockdown. The Kenyan Government issued a 21-day Partial lockdown of movement in and

out of 4 counties; Nairobi, Mombasa and Kilifi and Kwale in a bid to curb the spread of the deadly virus. At the camp level, Refugee Affairs Secretariat has suspended the issuance of movement passes for movements between Kakuma, Dadaab, and Nairobi until further notice. UNHCR has also suspended Voluntary repatriation and resettlement programs.

Although the measures are for the good of every person, the 30-year-old has nothing to smile about the unfolding circumstance. As the breadwinner, his daily income has been cut short. He has been rendered jobless in the past few weeks, and he is unsure if the ban will be lifted for him to continue with his job.

“I now have nothing to do after the move from the city to Dadaab refugee camps has been suspended, and this has

directly affected my family and me,” stated Hamari.

“My wife gave birth a week ago. She needs extra care which comes with a cost, and my children need food,” he posed.

Hamari used to earn a minimum of KES 2000 a day from his job depending on the day’s activities before it was interrupted with the virus. He now depends on the food ration provided by WFP in the camps, which he finds insufficient to sustain his family.

A minimum of 15 buses carrying passengers from Nairobi, Garissa, and other towns used to come to Hagadera daily.

“This situation started getting worse when I noticed that my daily income was dwindling, then the partial

lockdown came, and the business halted,” cries Hamari.

Hamari finds the current circumstance strange, something he has never witnessed before. He states that the closure of schools, mosques, and the Quran schools has affected the business sector in the camps.

” My older son is eight years old and knows nothing about what I am feeling and how this virus yet to land in the camp has affected my only source of income,” says Hamari while nodding in deep thoughts.

“ I now have nothing to do after the movement from the city to Dadaab refugee camps has been suspended and this has directly affected me and my family ”

Following the social distancing regulations put in place, public and private vehicles have to carry passengers with masks, 60 percent of its seating capacity, which means a 67 seater that Hamari has been working with will have to take a maximum of 43 passengers if the lockdown lifts. The measures are to stop the spread of the virus.

Public transport has been affected too, with the matatus ordered to cut their occupancy by 40%. The direction provided is that 14-seater commercial vehicles will carry only 8 passengers, 25-seater to carry a max 15 passengers and the 30-seater and above to maintain only 60% maximum seating capacity.

Kenya’s Interior Principal Secretary Karanja Kibicho warned that stiffer penalties might be issued to curb the spread of the disease.

“We are now properly mapping hotspots. We are going to do cessation of movement within those hotspots. We have also done cessation of movement in other countries (Kwale, Kilifi, Mombasa). We have discussed that the cessation will be replicated in other hot spots where infection increases, according to our observation,” Kibicho warned.



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Mohamed Aden at his booking office in Hagadera

Spirit of Service During Corona Pandemic

By Ismail Aden

Ibrahim Khalid is a refugee community health worker who takes the temperature of refugees queuing up at the distribution centre in Hagadera camp in an effort to fight the COVID-19 Virus.

He, together with other health workers, has been giving life-saving support to refugees in the camp after the first case mentioned in March.

Aged 28 years old, the youthful Somali refugee grew up in the sprawling Hagadera camp if Dadaab refugee complex hosting over 60,000 refugees. He has lived there for the past 20 years with his mother and three other siblings. As the sole breadwinner, his mother nurtured and raised her children with a high level of discipline and encouraged them to follow their dreams.

Ibrahim studied his o levels in the camp and started looking for incentive jobs in the organizations operating in the field. He attests to the struggles to secure an opportunity which he describes as competitive with less vacant positions posted. One day luck fell on his laps as the dream job came calling.

“ I did not get the chance for further studies after completing my secondary school and got a job in IRC hospital as a community health worker,” states Ibrahim.

“ I am proud of what I do and appreciate the work of my hands. So far, we are in a hard period of fighting pandemic disease. I Am highly committed to serving my community by showing them where to wash their hands and how to social distance before collecting food ratio.”

Inspire to serve his community, Ibrahim is pleased with the work he is doing for the community.

UNHCR has scaled up its work to keep refugees and internally displaced people safe by responding to the coronavirus with life-saving support,



Ibrahim Khalid at the Hagadera food distribution centre taking temperature of one of the beneficiaries

including water, medical care, and hygiene materials.

“We help monitor the spread of the outbreak and take action to limit infections. Wherever possible, we boost public health and hygiene in areas hosting displaced people, including airlifting emergency supplies and establishing isolation units,” reads part of a statement

on their website.

To fight the Virus, The Refugee Affairs Secretariat has suspended the issuance of movement passes for movements between Kakuma, Dadaab, and Nairobi until further notice. UNHCR has also suspended Voluntary repatriation and resettlement programs.

Together We Are Saving Lives

FilmAid has been hard at work converting our programs, projects and campaigns to aid in the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic. In Kenya, and Zimbabwe, it is your support that is making it possible for FilmAid to share life-saving information with refugees and other ultra-vulnerable communities facing the unprecedented COVID-19 crisis.

How FilmAid is Taking Action

Sharing Live-Saving Information on Every Platform

FilmAid is sharing life-saving information with the 400,000 refugees living in Dadaab and Kakuma Refugee Camps using loudspeaker trucks, radio, SMS, social media and messaging services like WhatsApp.

ENSURING EVERYONE IS INFORMED ABOUT COVID-19

- 📍 Bulk SMS: Sending regular messages about COVID-19 and social distancing to 40,000 households.
- 📍 Radio: Broadcasting Public Service Announcements about COVID-19 in 13 languages - Amharic, Afaan Oromoo, Somali, English, French, Lingala, Dinka, Nuer, Didinga, Anyuak, Swahili, Lotuka and Turkana.
- 📍 Loudspeaker Trucks: Covering the camps block-by-block with announcements in 13 languages.
- 📍 WhatsApp: 140 listenership groups formed in Kakuma and doubling to 240 soon. Groups receive audio messages on COVID-19 and information about changes in camp services.

RADIO CALL-IN SHOWS FOR 200,000 PEOPLE IN DADAAB

Abdullahi Mire is a freelance journalist and former FilmAid student who recently packed his bags in Nairobi and transplanted himself to Dadaab Refugee Camp to inform the 200,000 people in Dadaab through a daily radio show about COVID-19.

SOCIAL DISTANCING & DIGITAL DISTRIBUTION

FilmAid is using its Bulk SMS service with 40,000 subscribers, as well as WhatsApp, Facebook and other messaging platforms to reach the communities we serve with information about COVID-19 through podcasts, videos, and and info-graphics.



HAVE
YOUR **ARTICLE**
PUBLISHED
IN **NEXT**
OUR **PUBLICATION**

Email us on: therefugeemag@gmail.com



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