

THE 16 DAYS OF ACTIVISM SPECIAL EDITION

# Refugee

MAGAZINE

ISSUE #6 | DAADAB EDITION



#16DOA

FROM PEACE IN THE  
HOME TO PEACE IN  
THE WORLD:  
MAKE EDUCATION  
SAFE FOR ALL



1. KHADIJA; THE EDUCATIONIST

9. UNIVERSAL CHILDREN'S DAY

11. FORCED OUT OF SCHOOL DIPPED INTO MARRIAGE

17. DAADAB MARKS DAY OF THE GIRL CHILD

18. SOMALI PREMIERE IN DAADAB FOR REPATRIATION TALKS



**PLUS!** EXCLUSIVE! FILMAID'S 9TH FILM FESTIVAL PHOTO ALBUM

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## EDITORIAL

**A**s we head to the end of the year, we are looking forward to ushering in the new year. It is like turning a piece of garment inside out. Such is the irony of life! There are no days when the hands of the clock stop ticking. This analogy simply tells us that when one battle ends, another begins. Winning the ultimate battle therefore depends on the understanding of our previous misgivings in preparation for the future battle.

Covered in our previous issues were stories of motivation, articles on success amidst tribulations as well as educational pieces. These were stories inspired by real life events and covered by young journalism trainees tutored by FilmAid with support from PRM, UNHCR and other partners.

This issue of The Refugee Magazine turns its lenses to focus on educational matters. It is a pivotal issue which recognizes the challenges the girlchild goes through telling real stories of tribulations and positive strides made.

Today, girls and young women experience acute challenges such as early marriage or forced marriage, and the risk of school-related gender-based violence (SRGBV) that can cut short their education. Unfortunately, many other families equally choose to keep girls and young women from school to run errands and house chores preventing them from continuing their education.

It is with this understanding that this Special Issue is aligned to the global theme of 16 Days of Activism Campaign "From Peace in the Home to Peace in the World: Make Education Safe for All" and will be to be marked between the 25th of November to the 10th of December 2015.

Enjoy your read!

—Isaac Onyango—

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# DEFYING ALL ODDS IN SUPPORT OF EDUCATION

BY SAHAL HUSSEIN



Photo: Khadija posing outside her office in IFO

WITH EDUCATION AS  
HER ONLY SHIELD, SHE  
HAS WON BATTLES NOT  
MANY THOUGHT SHE  
WOULD AND SHE SHARES  
HER STORY WITH THE  
REFUGEE MAGAZINE

“Education  
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powerful  
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to change the  
world.”  
-nelson  
mandela-

The challenges she faced did not deter her from her vision. At the back of her mind, she believed in education as the only tool that would change her community.

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**N**elson Mandela in his address at the Planetarium in Johannesburg back in 2003 said, "Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world."

When Kadija, a 45 year old woman, first arrived in Dadaab in April 1992, the camp received her with hostility. Dust blew from every corner, with extreme temperatures and a scorching sun that was the least bit merciful. There were hardly any trees and people lived in makeshift camps.

Being from Mogadishu, Somalia's capital, Kadija never saw a situation where she would have to spend her nights in a camp. However, the condition in Somalia was beyond anybody's imagination. Blood rivers flowed along the streets. She had to flee and she found herself here, Dadaab's IFO camp. What kept her going was her commitment to making ends meet for her family.

Back in Somalia, she worked in government. When the then Somalia President Siyad Bare's regime collapsed and civil war broke out, she sought refuge in Kenya. It was a long and fruitless struggle for the regime to change the customs and beliefs of the rigid Somali community on the rights of women. Very few women had had access to education before the government collapsed in 1991. Khadija was among the lucky few. She had completed both primary and secondary school before she was employed as a government employee.

Two years after her arrival in Daadab, Khadija landed her first job as a community worker with Care International. Later that year, the organisation hired her as a full-time teacher. Her main role was to manage their education program. The job allowed her to receive training and short courses to boost her experience in that field.

After five years and with more experience, she became a librarian but later switched back to teaching sign language after just a year. Her diligence led to her promotion to the position of deputy head teacher. She served as the deputy head teacher for five years before she was ultimately promoted as the principal.

Despite her hard work, Khadija faced gender stereotypes, threats, insults on her person and disrespect by a section of community members. She recalls vividly, "When at one time I had gathered the courage to mobilize people in my school on the subject of reconstructing a demolished mosque and put forth advice on if we can add a lady's section, I never thought I would suffer so much humiliation and abuse. It stung and left a stain that would not easily wash off a faint heart. I was branded a non-Muslim and a woman who does not accept the word of God to be spread in her school."

The challenges she faced did not deter her from her vision. At the back of her mind, she believed in education as the only tool to change a community. Her struggle was based on love and loyalty for her nation and its people. Her efforts never went unnoticed. She was promoted to an Assistant Education Officer in 2013, a position no one in the camp had ever dreamt of holding. She gleefully took up the role which she holds to date.

Khadija hopes to be the leader that will change her country's attitudes towards education and the role of girls, a dream she is working towards.



PHOTO: Khadija seated at home during our interview.



PHOTO: School going girls and boys attending a classroom session

## WITHDRAWN FROM CLASSROOM, MARRIED OFF TO SETTLE A CLAN SCORE

"My clan had a conflict with another family so my dad gave me away for marriage in order to settle the conflict. I was in class 6 at the time".

**By Jimale mohamed**

**W**ith a combined population of over 350,000 people originating from all across the East African and Congo region, Daadab refugee camp enjoys a cosmopolitan feel. It is the melting pot of cultures, both good and bad from the various communities and tribes. The negative aspects of culture is evident in the camps with numerous gender based violence cases going unreported. In all instances, the victims are women and children.

Amina Abdullahi, 17, exclusively shares her story with The Refugee Magazine in a bid to highlight the grim reality of being forced to live as a child bride.

"I got married when I was only 14 years old. My clan had a conflict with another family so my dad gave me away for marriage in order to settle the conflict. I was in class 6 at the time. I loved school, it was the only safe place to be where one could learn new things and make good friends. It also helped us forget about our problems. We went to school to nurture our dreams and attain goals in life.

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But my dream did not see the light of day. I was woken up before it came true. A marriage was arranged for me. My consent of course wasn't necessary. It was not a forced marriage but I was a young girl naïve about marriage. After the ceremony, my husband became hostile and harsh. He beat and forced himself on me as I was all covered up with ignorance on what a wife's intimate role to her husband was."

"It is the tradition of our community that every woman should be beaten by her husband if she fails to serve him. It is the right of the husband to get what he demands from his wife" admits 70 year old Mumina Sheikh, a resident in Hagadera Refugee Camp.

Amina continues, "From the continuous beatings and his forcefulness, I got hurt and stayed in bed for two weeks due to bleeding. No one could help me as everyone remained silent. They said it was a tradition that every virgin lady should bleed and must be attested to by the blood from the bedding. To add salt to the wound, he would beat me day and night, my hands and whole body was bruised from his knocks. It was evident to everyone I was getting hurt, I looked weak and vulnerable but no one came to my aid. I even lost my pregnancy."

With so much pain in her voice, tears streaming down her cheeks and with a weakened voice she says, "I have been unhappy in the marriage. I believe the only reason my husband's family married their son to me was because they needed a servant. That was all I was to them. I have no worthy education like other girls. This marriage has severely affected my health."

As her frustrations continued, she suffered a near acute depression that lead to her admission for for a mental health assessment at the IRC hospital, where she is currently undergoing medication.

I asked her if she sought any assistance from the leaders to which she replied, "I did seek help from local religious leaders but they ignored me saying I should accept the marriage."

Amina admits that many girls live in constant fear of their husbands. "I am speaking for the first time to vent out my pain after seeing other girls who were victims of forced marriages who spoke to The Refugee Magazine. This is the only platform we have to share our stories, pain and dreams with the listening world", added Amina.

"We cannot get an education at the cost of victimization. If we escape from marriage, whether it is forced or early, we become victims of verbal abuse by the whole community," explains a form three student at Hagadera Secondary School". Her sentiments are echoed by Siyad Abdi, a Hagadera resident who admits that these girls have no idea of what really awaits them in these arranged marriages from physical abuse to marital rape.

She hopes that her story would be used by young girls to defy practices that hinder their growth and uproot them off the fertile soil of education.

Photo: Furaha Primary school classroom block Hagadera



How too late  
can it ever get  
to go back to  
classroom after  
a three years  
break, a child  
and a broken  
marriage?

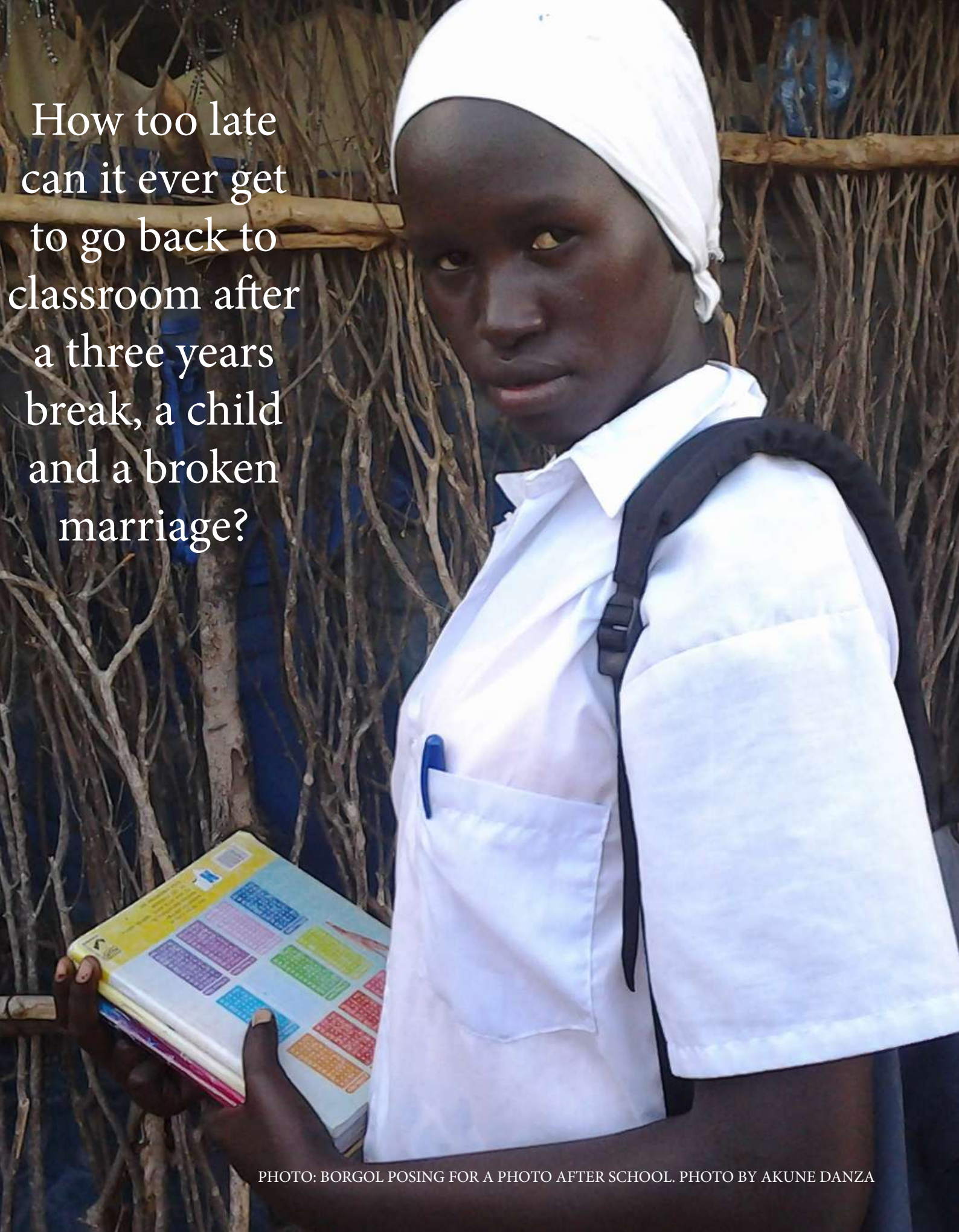


PHOTO: BORGOL POSING FOR A PHOTO AFTER SCHOOL. PHOTO BY AKUNE DANZA



# CLASSROOM AFTER MOTHERHOOD

**The roots of education have never been sweet. It gets even bitter if the society and its norms conspire against you that you do not have a safe place to run to. Such is the story of girls forced out of school and into early marriage. Borgol narrates her inspiring story to The Refugee magazine.**

It is worrying that in Daadab Refugee Camp, young girls who are supposed to be in class are instead at home nursing their babies. Their future is shattered by forced early marriage. At barely 16 years of age, these girls are already considered ripe for marriage.

Borgol says she got married and had to therefore drop out of school. A couple years into the marriage and a baby to show for it, an inner voice prodded her, her dreams, her future and she realized the importance of education and took the huge step to go back to school.

She was only 10 when she and her sister sought asylum at Dadaab Refugee Camp fleeing from strife back in Gambella in 2004. She firmly believes hunger contributed to the flight of her people from this sub-Saharan region. This inspired her a dream to one day help kick hunger out of her land and boost food security.

It is this dream that brought her back to school despite her numerous challenges.

Borgol started school at Friends Primary School in the year 2005. She joined standard one but dropped out in class six five years later when she got pregnant. Due to challenges of motherhood at a young age, she had to stay home and fend for her baby. As a young girl with great education ambition, she was determined to go back to school and resumed in 2013 sitting for her KCPE examinations in 2014. Currently she is a form one student at IFO Secondary School. Such is the story of girls forced out of school and into early marriage.

However, going back to school has not come easy for her as more than once she has found her mind drifting away from the classroom to worrying about her baby.

This divided attention leads to loss of concentration and sometimes a drop in performance. On some days, she is only able to attend school for half a day. "Sometimes the baby would fall sick and I have to miss school for up to two days in a row in order to visit a health facility," she laments.

On where she sees herself in the next few years, her face lights up with high optimism as she avidly says, "I am very happy beyond expression, and proud of myself too for making this bold move to pursue my dream again."

In a society where early or forced marriages is not unusual, there are more unfortunate girls who do not get the opportunity to go back to school to continue and finalize their studies. Such is the pitiful situation with Najma\* (she talked to us on condition of anonymity) now a married mother of two. "I dropped out of school in standard 8 and I have two children. My husband would not allow me to go back to school again because no one would take care of my children."

As motherhood comes, some have but altogether lost hope of ever tracking their way back into classrooms. "I have no future. My future is my children," another mother of three who declined to say her name remarks remorsefully.

As we bask in the spirit of 16 Days of Activism, let us celebrate and strive to empower the girl child to surmount the hurdles that come in their way of education from harmful cultures, from early pregnancy and forced marriages.

Why should society feel responsible only for the education of children, and not for the education of all adults of every age?

~Erich Fromm~



PHOTO: GUESTS HOLD HANDS AT THE INTERNATIONAL DAY OF GIRL CHILD CELEBRATIONS AT IFO

# DAADAB MARKS INTERNATIONAL DAY OF GIRL CHILD

By Isaac Onyango

According to UN data, girls the world over continue to be amongst the most excluded and discriminated people in the world. With shocking statistics stating that at least 1 in 5 adolescent girls is being denied their right to an education by the daily realities of poverty, conflict and discrimination.

WINDLE TRUST,  
FILMAID, DAADAB  
REFUGEE CAMP  
JOIN  
THE WORLD TO  
CELEBRATE THE  
DAY OF GIRL CHILD  
WITH CALLS FOR  
MORE ACTION IN  
PROTECTING AND  
EMPOWERING  
THE VULNERABLE  
FEMALE

**O**n the 11 of October every year for the past four years, the world comes together to celebrate the progress made towards protecting, nurturing and securing the world for the girl child. This year's theme focused on adolescent girls and the Sustainable Development Goals, which set a range of international targets to be achieved by 2030.

Joining the rest of the world in these celebrations to take stock of the progress made towards protection of the girl child was Daadab Refugee Camp. Located

in the far north east of Kenya, within the vast arid lands bordering the Somali border, the camp hosts a population of nearly 500,000 refugees.

It is noteworthy that the United Nations General Assembly adopted Resolution 66/170 to declare the 11th of October as the International Day of the Girl Child, to highlight issues concerning the gender inequality facing young girls.

This year's celebrations were held at IFO II camp under the organization

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of Windle Trust Kenya under its Kenya Equity in Education Project (KEEP), in collaboration with FilmAid International which through its outreach programmes uses the power of film and media to bring lifesaving information to communities affected by disaster, displacement and economic disparity.

Neither the scorching midmorning sun nor the distance between camps would deter the participants from arriving in numbers to voice their appreciation for the milestones covered or state their pleas to listening ears to come to their aid.

Presentations and skits by primary schools from IFO I and II, was performed with humor to the bursts of laughter from the entire gathering. Calm engulfed the white towering tent above us as FilmAid screened a short film on girl child education. Faces were pensive and mouths agape as the short film played.

During the speeches, speaker after speaker reiterated the need for active community involvement and support of education for the refugee community, children especially, as well as girls who face myriad challenges that keep them away from school more than their male counterparts.

In a brown kanzu and sandals, Abdi Mahat, the head teacher of Hawatako Primary School, who is also a devoted youth leader, while standing before the gathering urged the school going children to keep up the hard work and asked for more support from supporting organizations. "You have done so much, but more still needs to be done to ensure our pupils and students join and are retained in schools"

Mahat also hailed the massive support from the community elders and leaders in working hand in hand with the Humanitarian organizations to protect the rights of the girl child to education.

"Girls need empowerment.  
We have to support them  
but they equally need  
to work beyond their  
challenges. Life unravels  
mysteries but we must live  
with hope"

He however lamented that the school dropout rates indicated an inadequate coverage of programmes targeting girls. "The programme has not covered some schools leading to students dropping out of such schools to join the ones covered by the programme."

A powerful speech from the guest of honour, a devoted educationist and headteacher Ms Getrude, capped the celebration on a high urging all the community stakeholders, humanitarian organizations and families to stand with and help girls harness their power despite the challenges that life has thrown before them. "Girls need empowerment. We have to support them but they equally need to work beyond their challenges. Life unravels mysteries but we must live with hope" she remarked.

While adolescent girls hold the potential to become leaders and effect change, their empowerment can be hindered by factors such as unwanted pregnancy, forced early marriage, gender-based violence and limited access to education and reproductive health services. We need to join hands and pause for a day to look back at the year gone and audit every effort and record milestones covered.



PHOTO: (BELOW) SCHOOL GIRLS PRESENTING A POEM

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# **BREAK THE SILENCE AND STOP! VIOLENCE AGAINST CHILDREN!**

By Caleb Odhiambo



PHOTO: Pupils reciting a poem during a education event organized by Windle Trust Kenya in collaboration with FilmAid International.

“The one thing all children have in common is their rights. Every child has the right to survive and thrive, to be educated, to be free from violence and abuse, to participate and to be heard”

UN Secretary General  
-Ban Ki-moon-

According to UNICEF, every year millions of children around the world become victims of untold violence. Children in every country, every culture and at every social level face various forms of abuse, neglect, exploitation and violence. This violence and abuse severely affects a child’s development and psychological growth.

Since Kenya signed and ratified the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) way back in 1990, old challenges like harmful traditional practices have combined with new problems like child labor and neglect deprive many children of their rights and the benefits of development.

The 1990 UNCRC document is dear to hearts of Save the Children since its founder Eglantyne Jebb, in 1923, drafted the five points that gave birth to the UNCRC as it stands to date resonating the promise made to children to protect and promote their rights to survive and thrive, to learn and grow, to make their voices heard and to help children reach their full potential.

### **The Daadab Refugee Camp context**

The world made a promise to children that; we would do everything in our powers to protect and promote their rights to survive and thrive, to learn and grow, to make their voices heard and to help children reach their full potential.

In this regard, Save the Children will commemorate 26th Universal Children's Day this year on November 20th under the theme: Stop Violence Against Children! to take stock of contributions to upholding children's right both as a Country and as duty bearers. It is also a time for research on new ways of thinking and reflection on how far children's rights are and can be respected and protected around the world.

In Dadaab Refugee Camp, like in all the over 120 Countries that Save the Children works, our role is to prevent abuse and neglect from happening. We work to ensure the victims of violence are supported and that justice prevails.

There are several events that have been lined up in efforts to showcase Save the Children's global works and sensitize the various duty bearers on the need to understand the important role they play to enhance children's right.

Apart training sessions lined up for the UNHCR and DRA staff, the Police, the Administration police and the Dadaab Sub County Area Advisory Council which is the Government's oversight authority will also be sensitized on what it means to support the children to enjoy their rights.

### **Launch Children's Assembly**

To further enhance the role of children in the camp, the month of November will also witness the launch of the Dadaab Children's Assembly which aims at giving children a voice to contribute to the issues that affect them in the camp and the local community.

To meet the challenges, and to reach those children who are hardest to reach, we need new ways of thinking and new ways of doing. And we need to take stock and ask ourselves how we have fared in providing that nurturing environment for our children.

The writer is Save the Children Child Protection Manager  
Dadaab Refugee CampW

## **ORPHAN PLAGUED BY UNKNOWN ILLNESS**

By Simon Boi Dhiel



**M**amuch Rout Manyok was born in 2011 in Jonglei state South Sudan. He was unable to walk or talk. His parents therefore decided to move to the capital Juba to look for better medication for the boy. It was a tough decision that came with it challenging times as they knew no one in the city and they were financially constrained.

His father, then a small scale farmer, decided to go back home. He sold part of his cattle to foot the medical bills. He returned to the city to his wife and ailing son.

During the same period, civil war broke out which led to the death and displacement of hundreds of thousands of South Sudanese. Mamuch's parents were killed in cold blood on the morning of 15th December 2013. Mamuch and his elderly grandmother who could hardly see were spared.

Fortunately, help came their way and they were taken to the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) for their safety. At UNMISS, life was not a walk in the park as no one fended for them. A local church contribution enabled them to set forth and seek refuge in Kenya.

They arrived in Kakuma refugee camp in 2015 but later moved to Dadaab Refugee Camp. Mamuch was taken to Handicap International where he was enrolled for rehabilitation. He made remarkable improvement as he was soon able to move with the aid of a wheelchair which was provided to him by Handicap International. He has also been undergoing treatment at the Red Cross hospital in IFO 2, though the actual cause of his illness has not been identified.



PHOTO: AN UNDERAGE GIRL DOING FAMILY LAUNDRY

## MY PARENTS FORCED ME OUT OF CLASS FOR \$1500 DOWRY

Fardowsa Abdi Hassan shares her story of forceful withdrawal from school and being dropped into a pit of early marriage with ***Jimale Mohamed***.

**D**owry worth 1500 dollars for my hand in marriage is all it took my parents to offer my hand in marriage to the man who was to be my husband. As is the norm, my consent was not sought.

Two days after the agreement I was called in to our sleeping room. I went in and my parents were already seated. An awkward calm filled the whole room for a moment before my father signaled mum to break the news to me but she could hardly say a word.

Fardowsa Abdi Hassan was born in Hagadera camp. She comes third in her family. She says she grew up and played happily like any other child in

the camp. Her parents enrolled her into an Islamic school at the age of four. She later joined nursery school when she turned six. At that tender age she always envisioned herself a lawyer. Legal robes and gowns, wigs and large volumes of case files. She had the dream to have a place at the bar with the legal authority and power to empower other many women around the world.

Everything seemed right and falling into place as she always outperformed her classmates. Things were beautiful for Fardowsa until they started getting uglier each day when she got to class 7. Just a year into her final year exams she was married off!

When my mother could not break the news to me, father took it upon himself to. It broke my heart. It went deep into my soul. Then suddenly mother found her voice, "we have given your hand in marriage to a wealthy man that really deserves you", Mama Zeynab told me. "You are so lucky to be the wife of such a high society man" added my dad.

I broke down in tears and begged my parents not to kill my dreams but nothing I said would make them change their minds. "We are your parents and we know what is good for you, we have chosen for you this man and you have to accept it. You are not different from your sisters who never disobeyed our decisions!" added my



PHOTO: WOMEN SEATED WITH GIFTS AT A SOMALI CULTURAL WEDDING

“Young girls in Dadaab camps are used as property in exchange for cash and camels”, says Halima, Community worker with IRC.

dad. I had no choice at this moment. Tears did not stop flowing from my eyes.

The wedding day came, my family, friends and other relatives had merry but for me it was one of the longest day I ever had. The wedding night would get even worse. My body had not yet matured for intimacy. I pained and bled profusely. It was the highest height of affliction on me. I cried all night.

Things kept getting harder as days went by. I struggled with stress during my first pregnancy. I did not enjoy much of my husband's support. He would only come home in the evenings, thrice a week and spent the other four nights with his first wife.

When she neared the delivery of her first child, all odds went against her. The labour took quite a long time that she had to undergo a caesarean section (C-Section). After the operation, her body was so feeble she stayed in bed for three months. Her husband did not support her or provide any care for her. When she complained she was divorced.

Now as a single mother I have to do casual work in the villages for pittance as the baby also needs milk. I can hardly sleep at night because he cries so much. My parents are disappointed with their actions but it is a little too late now. My divorced husband has bequeathed any

responsibilities and wants nothing to do with me. I fend for myself.

I would love to go back to school and attain my goal of being a lawyer someday. I am aware of the fact that it will be difficult but I still want to study. If I would turn back the hands of time, I would go against my parents marrying me off that young.

“Young girls in Dadaab camps are used as property in exchange for cash and camels”, says Halima, Community worker in IRC. “This happens every single day to many girls in the camps my dad forced me to marry at just fourteen”, says Ayan Farah, early marriage survivor.

For many refugee girls in Dadaab camps the unkindness of their refugee status added to backward cultural beliefs and religious stiffness have all made them vulnerable. While the legal age of marriage in Kenya is eighteen, Sheikh Ismail emphasizes the provisions of the Holy Quran to The Refugee Magazine that, “Islamic law allows a girl to be married as long as she is over twelve years old”.

According to medical research and findings on sex and health, girls under fifteen years of age are at a highest risk of death during child birth as their bodies are not yet ready for the pain and process.

## HIS DISABILITY IS NOT INABILITY



PHOTO: Sentino working on a piece of wooden furniture at a technical workshop ( SOURCE H.I)

## SENTINO LUAL'S LONG TREK

BY HANDICAP INTERNATIONAL

When he was four years old, Section Lual suffered post-polio paralysis, which manifested with right lower limb weakness. Medically, Polio is preventable by immunization, but due to the civil strife and a non-operational health care system in his country, he did not receive the mandatory polio vaccination. He fled the civil war in 2000 and settled at Kakuma Refugee Camp. In 2006, he relocated to Dadaab Refugee Camp where he was registered by the UHPCR.

"When I became disabled, I never imagined that I would be able to walk again and more so be able to work and be accepted in the community", he remarks.

Hard working, strong willed, and a sturdy man, Sentino is a thirty-four years of age and the second born in a family of five siblings. He was born in Awil village in the Northern Bar- Gharzel region of South Sudan. Hundreds of miles away, he has a new home away from home; Block S3, IFO I refugee camp. Here is where he has honed his technical workmanship skills.

Upon arrival to the camp, he was identified by members of the community who referred him to Handicap International (HI) for assistance. On evaluation by the inter-disciplinary team at the rehabilitation center at IFO I, the officers identified his challenges as contractures, immobility, psychological disturbance and discrimination by the community.

With support from HI, a comprehensive individualized rehabilitation plan was drawn up. He started receiving rehabilitation assistance both at the rehabilitation center and at home through follow ups by the outreach refugee workers.

Not someone to despair at the face of tribulations, when his mobility improved through the use of a unilateral axillary crutch, he applied for a job which was part of an empowerment program to persons with disabilities. He was later to be employed as a cleaner at the Handicap International Rehabilitation Center at the IFO I camp.



After further assessment in 2014, he was referred to Kijabe - CURE Hospital where he underwent corrective surgery to release contractures to his right leg. He remained hospitalized for seven days before he was discharged to return to the camp with an appointment for further review. It is while awaiting for his next appointment that the situation got worse for Sentino. His surgical screws fell off and the wounds got infected. Given the efficiency in post-surgery care by the hospital, an accompanied referral was issued and he was taken to the Islamic Relief Hospital for further treatment.

A year later, in January 2015, he made his return journey to Kijabe Hospital for review. The doctors were impressed with his condition due to his remarkable improvement. He was now ready for deformity calipers and a raised shoe to balance the disparity between his right and left limbs. Having the shoe and calipers fixed came with its fair share of challenges. He had to train real hard to be able to walk in them. Given just one option, he hit the ground running.

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When I became disabled, I never imagined that I would be able to walk again and more so be able to work and be accepted in the community.

When I became disabled, I never imagined that I would be able to walk again and more so, be able to work and be accepted in the community.

Able to move by himself, he now carries out his duties as a cleaner without using an assistive device. He has also enrolled in an apprenticeship program to train in production, maintenance and repair of technical assistive devices and mobility aids. He has since been promoted to a Technical Aid Worker and placed in the Handicap International's technical aid workshop.

“Thank you Handicap International. My heart is full of joy”, he says with a grateful heart and a beaming smile.



PHOTO: SENTINO AT WORK BEFORE HIS CORRECTIVE SURGERY.

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# HARMFUL CUT

By Adow Mohamed Ibrahim



PHOTO: A surgical scalpel. Girls who undergo FGM are at heightened risk of infection, prolonged bleeding and infertility

SOURCE: INTERNET

She was my neighbour's daughter. A sprouting soul. Her tears streamed down her cheeks. Her brittle body under firm grip. At only four years of age, her young mind could not make out what was happening to her. She kicked! She trembled! She rolled on the ground, closing her legs trying to free herself from the chains of culture that had bound her at the shoulders.

"Hoyo! Hoyo! Please don't let them cut me!" She cried.

Long regarded as a human rights abuse against women and girls under international law, Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) continues to be practised by ethnic groups in over 60 countries in Africa, parts of Asia and in the Middle East. The greatest at risk are women and girls living in refugee camps and urban areas and is carried out for cultural or religious reasons.

Gory images flash through my mind. I recall it vividly. It was an early morning, the month lost on me but the events play like a well scripted film in my head. The rising golden sun was just breaking through the clouds. Ordinarily, I am up by 6 o'clock in the morning but I was still lost in my sleep one and a half hours later.

I jumped off my bed, awakened by the shrilling scream of a young girl. Half brave and half cowering, I coasted towards the direction of the screams. The cries suddenly muted into the drums and ululations by the women invited to witness the "bravery" of Halima. Was it a test of bravery or utter brutality against this helpless girl?

Like a coward, I hid behind a thicket between two collapsed mud houses. I was not supposed to be

## ELNINO PREPAREDNESS

peeping as it was against Dhaqanka (culture). It is a taboo for boys and men to be around when this happens.

A deep searing shrill rang out and like an old engine coming to a sudden halt, she lay unconscious on the blood drenched mat. The unbearable pain swallowing her entire delicate body.

For such an agonizing cut and stitch process where what is left is but a small hole the size of a maize grain or even smaller, it would take at least seven long days for the healing.

They call it culture passed from our forefathers but it is FGM, a crime against the vulnerable girl child.

In Somali society, the practice of FGM is an honoured tradition whose small circle of critics are looked upon as cultural outcasts. Some feel there is a problem with the culture but prefer to remain silent as it is a rule they have to respect and uphold.

FGM can cause severe health complications such as loss of adaptive natural elasticity of the birth canal, urinary incontinence, tetanus, sexual dysfunction, painful monthly periods and psychological trauma and can even lead to death.

If parents, society leaders and the gabdha guda (mutilators) were educated and empowered on the negative health consequences of FGM, it would go a long way in altering the perception and eventually uproot the practice from society.

### FGM GLOBAL ESTIMATES



PHOTO: FLOODS IN HAGADERA MARKET

**T**he Meteorological Department issued early warnings that the country will experience heavy rains in the period October to December 2015. The El-Nino phenomenon is likely to continue in some parts of the country up to January 2016.

Having been put on alert of the impending downpour, strategic plans were put in place across all the five camps to mitigate the hazardous effects of the “boy- child” (El -Nino).

However, the relevant agencies responsible for Disaster Management and Response in Daadab Refugee Camp, Red Cross and UN had long put in place contingency to mitigate possible risks.

### FLOOD RISK MANAGEMENT

Flooding risks mitigation contingencies include digging trenches and building of dykes along IFO – Dagahaley road and an active campaign on prevention of water borne diseases such as cholera, bilharzia and malaria. Residents have been advised to maintain cleanliness in the surrounding to prevent more diseases

Plans have also been made to move residents of flood prone areas like IFO and some parts of Kambios camp to Safe Grounds.



FOUR OPERATIONS  
WITH NO  
IMPROVEMENT, HE  
RESIGNS TO FATE

## WANING HOPE

BY LANG GATLUAK

**D**eng William Lul welcomes me to his house and offers me a seat under a shade outside his house. He offers me a cup of cold water.

"You don't look too well?" I observe.

"It all started in 1993 when I was 13 years old. The doctor's informed me that I had a minor ailment in my kidneys", he says.

"However, the condition worsened and my father had to take me to Khartoum for treatment. I went on my own and since I knew no one in the city, I was stranded. By good luck I met a lady who took me in to her home for three days as I continued with my check-up.

I was diagnosed with appendix failure and underwent an operation. Nothing came out of it. Before I fully recuperated, it started all over again. I went back after six months. The second visit resulted in the same diagnosis, same treatment and same result.

I opted to head east to Ethiopia for further treatment. I was in Ethiopia for four months before proceeding to Panyido Refugee Camp where I registered as a refugee with the

UNHCR in 1994. UNHCR provided me free healthcare services for six years but there was no improvement.

I went back home to Akobo, my homeland, to look for money to fund my treatment. I worked as a herd's boy and saved up some money. In 2005, I went back to Ethiopia for further treatment.

Back home, my younger brother had murdered someone and fled for his safety. The aggrieved party vowed to revenge their loss by killing me since I was the eldest brother. I escaped back to Panyindo Refugee Camp. They traced me in the camp but through the help of my church there, I was able to cross the border into Kenya, arriving in Kakuma Refugee Camp in July of 2013.

I later left Kakuma for Dadaab fearing for my safety. Due to the gravity of my health condition, I was operated on with help from UNHCR. Unfortunately, the situation worsened and I had to be referred to Garissa. It did not materialize. As my situation worsened, I was operated on for the fourth time but my body is still inflamed. The doctors promised to take me to Nairobi for treatment. My health deteriorates with each passing day but I hope that I will be well one day."

PHOTO: SOMALI PREMIERE (3RD FROM RIGHT)  
ARRIVES AT DAADAB AIRSTRIP



# SOMALIA PREMIERE IN DAADAB FOR RETURN TALK

BY DAADAB TEAM

A high-level delegation accompanied the Federal Republic of Somalia's Prime Minister Omar Abdirashid Ali Sharmarke in his maiden visit to Dadaab Refugee Camp on the 6th of November 2015.

The visit was to assess the situation of the refugees who fled the horn of Africa nation over two decades ago and to lay ground for voluntary repatriation.

He was accompanied by the Jubbaland leader Ahmed Madobe, members of the Somali cabinet and met with officials from the UNHCR at the Ban Ki Moon Conference Hall. He later held meetings with refugee households and attended a mock class with refugee students at IFO Secondary school with thousands of other Somali refugees thronging the roads to catch a glimpse of their visiting leader.

Top on the list of his agenda for the visit was the operationalization of voluntary repatriation of the thousands of Somali nationals currently seeking refuge in Kenya.

According to the November 2013 Tripartite

## REPATRIATION PRINCIPLES

- Voluntariness**  
No forceful repatriation
- Safety**  
Conducive conditions at home.
- Dignity**  
The refugee to be treated with respect dignity as a human being.
- Durability**  
The Repatriation process has to be sustainable

Agreement signed between the Federal Republic of Somalia, The Republic of Kenya and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), a tripartite commission was to be formed to ensure a conducive return process where there would be no coercion to return and ensured the returnees acted from an informed position about their repatriation.

The UNHCR data on repatriation indicates that since December 2014 to June 2015, 5485 Somali refugees have been repatriated voluntarily. The number is small considering the hundreds of thousands still residing at the camp.

Despite the many challenges affecting the return process and the volatile calm back in Puntland, the Somali government said it would cooperate with the UNHCR and the Kenyan government to ensure a smooth return of its citizens.

The UNHCR has established Return Help Desks in each camp to provide information to refugees on the return process and updates on the conditions back home so as to enable them make informed choices on their return. About 5,300 refugees' applications are being processed for their voluntary return back home.

FilmAid’s Film Festival held annually in Kenya strives to fulfill its vision of informing, inspiring and empowering refugees and other marginalized populations throughout the world.

Through its extensive programming in Nairobi, Kakuma and Dadaab, FilmAid is able to train, support and empower refugee youth to tell their own stories through the power of film. In addition, the Film Festival gives independent filmmakers worldwide the opportunity to share stories with refugees in the Kenyan camps, allowing for two-way artistic communication.

The 9th FAFF 2015 was themed “Home Away from Home” and provided filmmakers worldwide the opportunity to interpret and share their own stories of what “home” means to them.

The festival was held in both Kakuma Refugee Camp and Dadaab Refugee Camp with the main event held in Nairobi at the Safaricom Arena with high profile guests in attendance including The American Ambassador to Kenya, Robert Godec and FilmAid’s country Director Stella Suge.

This Issue of the Refugee Magazine takes you inside what happened during the Festival.





1. 2. Guests registration 3. US Amb Rob Godec, FAI Country manger Stella Suge pose with Refugee Film makers 4. FAI Nairobi Staff from left Evelyne Mwara, Mollyne Matara 5. FAI DMO Ag Field Manager Charity Kola 6. FAI ountry Manager delivering a speeh at the FAFF2015 7. US Ambassador Robert Godec during FAFF 2015 8. FAI Exeutive Diretors Stella Suge, Mordecai and Magu Ngumo. 9. FilmAid Daadab staff making preparations for the film festival event 10. FAI country manager Mrs Stella Suge awarding graduands 11. 12. Daadab's El Mangu group



**HAVE**  
YOUR **ARTICLES**  
**PUBLISHED**  
IN OUR **NEXUS**  
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