

ALSO INSIDE: THE MAKING OF THE REFUGEE MAGAZINE | KAKUMA'S GOT TALENT IN PICTURES

THE
Refugee
MAGAZINE

Issue #9 | Kakuma Edition

NOT FOR SALE



Margaret Awuk

TOP BRAIN



Funding provided by the United States Government.



TOP GIRL INSPIRED BY THE REFUGEE

"I GOT INTERESTED IN THE STORY OF ACHOL, A SOUTH SUDANESE GIRL WHO HAD SCORED HIGHEST IN KAKUMA AND TURKANA COUNTY WITH 418 MARKS AND I SAID TO MYSELF THAT I WANT TO BE IN THIS MAGAZINE ONE DAY,"



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TALK TO US



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HAPPY NEW YEAR!

Everyone has a new year resolution to make as we usher in the new year, if you do not have one yet how about we help you make one?

Our resolution this year is to give you a voice in a timely yet effective way we know how. We want to touch many lives this year by sharing motivational yet informative stories. We want to understand your needs better and provide you with ways in which you can achieve your dreams. This year will also see our Magazine go digital for easy access on mobile phone and devices such as Ipads and tablets so as to reach out to all our readers i the camp and across the globe.

In our first edition this year, we start on a high note as we bring you features that are aimed at motivating you. We mat the KCPE best performer in Kakuma Refugee Camp and among the best performers in Turkana County. Meet Margaret Awuk, a South Sudanese national whose dream of appearing in The Refugee Magazine motivated her to work extra hard in school to become the best girl in the region.

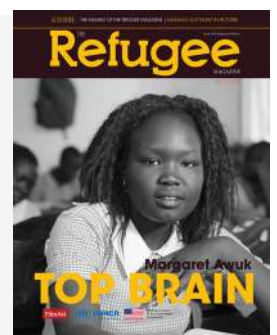
We also bring you an Editorial Note that tells you different ways in which you can put into practice your writing skills and also what it takes to make The Refugee Magazine. We help you understand the efforts put by each and every dedicated writers and what they go through to bring you every loved edition of The Refugee Magazine.

It is our hope that you will find this read motivational and hope that it helps kick start your new year. From The Refugee Editor's Desk, we want to wish you a prosperous 2016.

Editor

THE TEAM

EDITOR: UKECH DANIEL. **CHIEF EDITOR:** OTIENO SAMUEL.
PHOTOGRAPHY: OTIENO SAMUEL. ABDUL PATIENT. KALO YOUSIF
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Varsity Education now a walk away

HIGHER LEARNING IS NOW ACCESSIBLE TO REFUGEES, HOST COMMUNITY, AND HUMANITARIAN WORKERS IN KAKUMA WITH THE OPENING UP OF MASINDE MULIRO UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY KAKUMA CAMPUS (MMUST). YOUSIF KALO WRITES.



PHOTO: Former FilmAid's Journalism student Chelia Rose attends a class at MMUST

The number of refugees traveling outside the camp to get access to higher education has been increasing over the years. This has become a necessity, as the overall camp performance in national examinations has been steadily improving each year prompting learners to enroll in tertiary institutions.

Education in Kakuma Refugee Camp has received a facelift, with the opening of Masinde Muliro University of Science and Technology (MMUST) Kakuma Campus. The campus is strategically located in the heart of the Kakuma Refugee Camp making it accessible to both the Refugee and Host community, offering quite a number of courses ranging from certificates, diploma, and degrees

certificates.

"The MMUST started when we arrived in Kakuma back in the year 2010. We started training teachers who then worked under the Lutheran World Federation (LWF). Since then, we have been training teachers every year. In 2015, however, we decided to set up a campus to cater for the rising demand for higher education," says Mr. Micieka, Coordinator Center for Refugee Studies .

The establishment of the university has not only opened up opportunities for refugees and host communities to access higher learning, but also for the humanitarian workers who would wish to further their careers. MMUST is now the second public university to establish a campus in Turkana



PHOTO: Mr Edome lectures a class at MMUST

County, after Mount Kenya University- Lodwar campus. Mr. Micieka confirmed that the university is considering partnering with other stakeholders and the government to possibly set up scholarship programmes to see more students join the institution.

Zuwa Abass, a degree student in social work, terms the establishment of MMUST campus as a big step towards a better future for refugees. He urges humanitarian agencies working in the education sector to improve the quality of O-level and primary school education to ensure more students meet the benchmark required for admission into MMUST.

Speaking to The Refugee Magazine, Mr. Peter Edome Resident Coordinator for Kakuma Campus, expressed optimism that the current school population will multiply as Kakuma's performance index steadily increases.

The courses that are currently being offered at the school include; Bachelors in Education, Social work, Commerce, Disaster Management, International Relations and Diplomacy, Early Childhood Development (ECD) among others. Dr. Peter confirms that the campus will soon roll

out Masters and PhD programmes once it is officially launched.

The campus is set to launch officially on the 4th of March this year. Plans are underway to complete constructions of lecture halls before the launch, which will be presided over by the Vice Chancellor for Masinde Muliro University, Prof. Fredrick A. Ochieng' accompanied by Government representatives, Heads of agencies among other invited guests. The campus will hold its first graduation ceremony on the day of the launch, with teachers from LWF being conferred with various degrees and certificates.

There are currently slightly over 140 students in the campus. Mr. Peter Edome confirms that some of the students are sponsored by the UNHCR and Windle trust. "University, latin: universitas, is universal and so we welcome people from different backgrounds, communities and origin to join our programmes," says Mr. Edome.

The campus resident coordinator called on all humanitarian agencies to lend a hand in any way possible so as to make higher education accessible to all.

Just how much should I read?

Let's face it, most students don't know how to study. Everybody talks of grades and test scores, yet we neglect to show the students how to do well in school. These students either don't study at all or spend hours trying to study every night. Neither choice is good. The whole thing ends up being a waste of time. How much should we read? This question would have varying answers and the answers depend largely on who has been asked. What we should always ask ourselves is 'what are we reading?' Is what we are reading giving us the information we need? If it isn't, what should we do to get the information we want? If we answer these questions, I am certain that we will succeed in our education be it at Primary, Secondary or tertiary school level.

Most students find it hard to enjoy studying. They tend to get bored too fast with books and some writing. These students will set less time for their studies, which can be very fatal to their success as students. Their inability to decode with ease or translate written words into ideas presents a major barrier to the enjoyment of reading. Students with these qualities should always be encouraged to employ more enjoyable methods of studying. These methods may include making studies

a routine and something that they need to do every day.

Most students also think that success comes from studying for very long hours. This causes stress and fatigue; because of doing something that only requires a pre-set amount of time for extended periods of time. Stress is very unhealthy for young people and it often causes lack of sleep, slipping grades, fatigue, depression and other issues that may affect your health negatively. Students often need to put in some extra studying before a test, but it is possible to grasp more information within short, intermittent periods of studying rather than studying for hours on end.

Some students do enjoy hours of studies and before they know it they have spent copious amounts of time studying without actually internalizing

what they should. This surmounts to wastage of time and time should be used wisely when studying. A question like, 'how long should I study?' consumes our minds and we end up being confused. The reality is that the recommended amount of time spent studying will depend on each individual and the general amount of time it takes them to internalize the information at hand.

It can become difficult to know how much of what you've read is fact and what is misinformation. For that information to be useful, you'd actually need to verify it. A good reader develops a systematic technique for absorbing the most amount of information in the least amount of time. After studying for about an hour, always analyze what you have gotten from it and if need be go through it one more time.



When you've done it enough times, you'll realize that you are satisfied enough.

They say that the more you study, the smarter you get. What would you advise a student who comes to you and says that, "I have studied so hard for exams but I still fail." My advice would be not to study hard but to study smart. For those kind of students, their problem is not studying their problem might be reading too much while

understanding very little about what they've studied. It is best to consult with teachers on which areas of study they need to focus on. Teachers should also be very supportive to these students, which I know they are, and therefore it is up to individual students to utilize the available materials/resources including teachers and their fellow students. If we all become self-driven and ready to learn, I think we can change for the better.



Knowledge, Abilities, & Skills

Knowledge is something everyone desires and it also is something we gain daily throughout life. However, what do we do with the knowledge gained on a daily basis? Some people choose to use knowledge negatively. Besides having knowledge, you must have skills in transforming that knowledge into everyday solutions to problems. The simple truth in life is that the problems we encounter daily are the stepping-stones to our success. A number of people at the Kakuma Refugee Camp are thirsty for knowledge, but where do they begin in their quest to find it? You must have an open mind and a caring heart to be able to use your skills to actively solve problems. This is one of the secrets of achieving success in life.

For instance, all the books in any library are there to be read. This is common knowledge, which everyone knows and accepts. It however takes someone with a good sense of knowledge to grasp and actively use the information derived from books. In order to become skilled at any field, you must spend a lot of time studying that field. Focusing your attention in any given field paves the way to

becoming an expert in that field. It takes a lot of determination and hard work to accomplish this.

Once you become an expert, use your skills to alleviate other people's suffering. Take for example trainers who always fly from far distances to come to the camp and train refugees in different fields. They are a good example of using skills honed from daily practice to help others, which goes towards problem solving.

In fact, the more you use your skills to help others the better you become at it. An additional advantage of your efforts is that the very same people you help will spread news of your expertise far and wide. There is no greater marketing strategy than the word of mouth from a satisfied customer. Most people chase wealth when it will easily chase them if they have something of value to offer. Wealth always follows hard work and determination.

I always believe that wealth will always follow you if you show a considerable amount of

determination and hard work and also deliver value to others. To start with, you could offer your services for free just to get people to know you and what you do. The focus should not be of monetary gain but selfless service. You must also believe in yourself and confidently offer your service to those in need.

There are a lot of skilled people at the Kakuma Refugee Camp. These skills will be of great help to us if we only use them the right way. Everybody should take inventory of their skills and use them to make life better for others around them. Anyone can change their life and other people's lives, if only you use your skills the right way.



COVER STORY:
PHOTO BY OTIENO
SAMUEL
ASST. KALO YOUSIF



TOP GIRL INSPIRED BY THE REFUGEE

MARGARET AWUK WANTED TO ONE DAY APPEAR ON THE PAGES OF THE REFUGEE MAGAZINE AFTER READING ABOUT THE BEST GIRL IN KCPE AND KCSE IN KAKUMA. THIS MOTIVATED HER TO WORK HARD IN SCHOOL AND TODAY SHE MAKES OUR COVER STORY AFTER BEING ANNOUNCED THE BEST GIRL IN 2015 KCPE IN KAKUMA AND THE LARGER TURKANA DISTRICT. KALO YOUSIF WRITES.

Margaret Awuk, was born in 1998 in South Sudan. She was forced to flee African youngest country, South Sudan, in the year 2010 after war broke out. Awuk crossed the border accompanied by her grandmother and aunt to seek refuge in Kenya. Her grandfather would often abuse her grandmother and this would torment her.

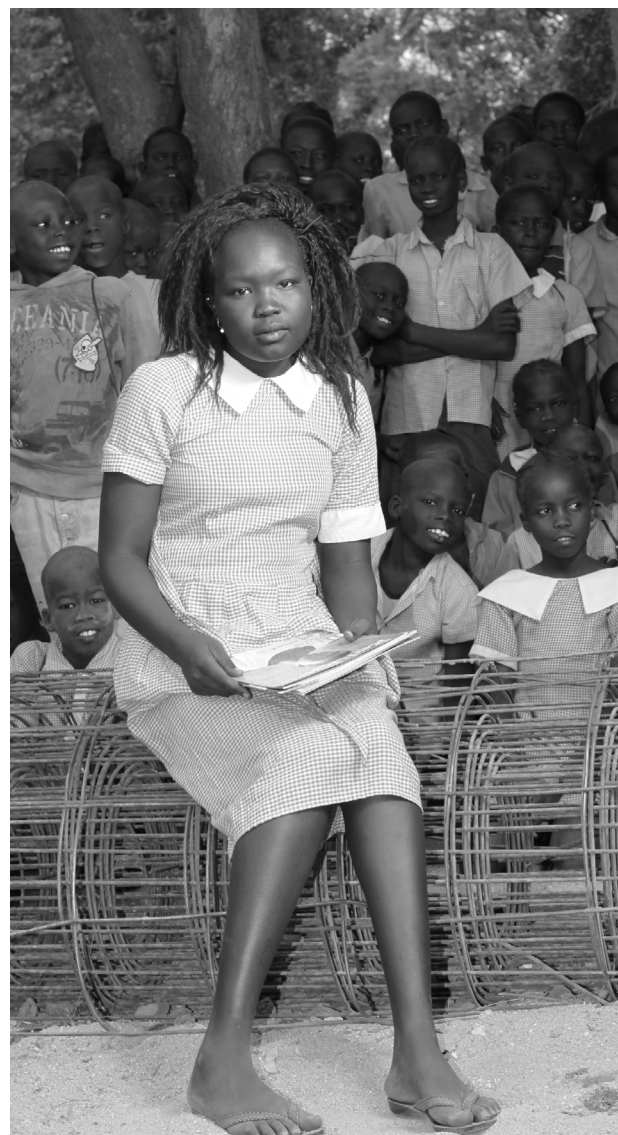
Upon arrival in the camp, they had to adapt to the harsh climatic conditions at the Kakuma Refugee Camp. They were given shelter, food and had access to clean water. In 2011 she was admitted to Shambe Primary School where she joined class four. She had a tough time adjusting to her new environment. "I did not know anyone and everyone would make fun of me," says Margaret.

Language

She did not know any other language apart from her mother tongue. Learning the Kiswahili language was challenging. She could not communicate with anyone, and anyone she tried to make a conversation with would make fun of her. She vividly remembers the many times she cried after coming home from school and at some point felt like giving up. She felt she could not take the bullying any more.

"Whenever I wanted to give up, my grandmother and teachers would encourage me to work harder. My grandmother told me that I had the power to learn, and even the subjects that others thought I could not learn I could if only I worked extra hard at them," she says.

"WHENEVER I WANTED TO GIVE UP, MY GRANDMOTHER AND TEACHERS WOULD ENCOURAGE ME TO WORK HARDER. MY GRANDMOTHER TOLD ME I HAD THE POWER AND EVEN THE SUBJECTS THAT OTHERS THOUGHT I COULD NOT MAKE IT, I COULD IF I WORKED EXTRA HARD AT THEM





SAVOURING VICTORY
SOUTH SUDANESE GIRL EMERGES TOP IN 2014 KCPE, KAKUMA

BY CATHY WACHANA

KAKUMA REFUGEE CAMP, Kenya, February 08 (IHS) — 18-year-old Margaret Chelangat sat in the middle of a well-lit classroom in the morning, her eyes fixed on the pages of the Kenya Certificate of Primary Education (KCPE) examination. She was the only girl in the class to score 418 out of a possible 500 marks.

Chelangat is a member of the Kakuma Refugee Camp, North-Western Kenya. She is the highest-scoring student in the camp, having scored 418 out of a possible 500 marks in the KCPE examination, which she sat for at Kakuma's sole Primary School in 2014.

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418
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POSSIBLE 500

The Refugee Magazine (Issue 07)

PHOTO: Margaret reads a book at her former class in Shambe Primary School | By Otieno Samuel

"I GOT INTERESTED IN THE STORY OF ACHOL, A SOUTH SUDANESE GIRL WHO HAD SCORED HIGHEST IN KAKUMA AND TURKANA COUNTY WITH 418 MARKS AND I SAID TO MYSELF THAT I WANT TO BE IN THIS MAGAZINE ONE DAY

As time went by, English became my favorite subject and Kiswahili was becoming easier. I am among the best scorers in English and Swahili exams in the camp scoring as high as 92% and 80% in English and Swahili respectively.

In 2014, Margaret was in class 7 with only one year before she sat for the dreaded Kenya Certificate of Primary Education (KCPE). She could only think of herself as among the best performers in her year. "I remember there's this one day when a Journalist came to our school to distribute copies of the 5th edition of The Refugee Magazine and I got curious about it," she says with a smile. "I got interested in the story of Achol, a South Sudanese girl who was the highest scorer in the K.C.P.E exams in Kakuma and Turkana County with 418 marks. I said to myself that I wanted to be in this magazine one day," she adds.

With this, Margaret set her mind at becoming the best student in the year 2015. She knew she had slightly over a year to prepare and so she started reading every chance she got. Her grandmother, though not educated, understood

the importance of education and stood by her all throughout. Described by her class teacher Mr. Ndungu as a shy, obedient and determined girl; Margaret achieved the fete of being the best student in KCPE in the year 2015 with 400 marks. The score also makes her the best performing girl in the K.C.P.E exams in Turkana County. The past two years has seen schools in the camp produce some of the county's top performers.

Margaret dreams and aspirations do not end with her KCPE performance; she wants to become a judge in future and she is determined to work for it. "I want to bring peace and justice back to my home country," she says.

She is yet to secure a place in secondary school, but she is hopeful that she will not miss a place. "I did not know much about schools when we were filling secondary school selection forms, but my dream school is Kipsigis Girls High School in Kericho District. However, whichever school I get will not stop my dreams," she says. The Lutheran World Federation (LWF) and the UNHCR have promised her scholarship once she gets a place in secondary school.

MEN WHO DARE

THERE ARE THOSE WHO DARE TO DREAM, THOSE WHO DARE TO FLY, AND THOSE WHO DARE TO DO WHAT OTHERS WILL NOT DARE. **PENDO CHERYL** MET KAKUMA 3 ACROBATS TO FIND OUT THEIR INSPIRATION

What does acrobatics means to you?

Acrobatics is a performing art that makes use of coordination skills.

How long have you and your crew been performing?

We started with 13 members, but three have so far opted out.

Our main aim of starting the group was to improve our lives. We realized that the camp was full of talented people and especially those talented in performing arts. We also wanted to build our skills by learning from each other and not forgetting, we wanted to entertain our communities.

What is the group's greatest achievement?

We have on several occasions been called by different organizations to perform at different events in the camps. This has exposed us a lot, although we are not at the level we would like to be at yet. We would love to perform outside the camp in competitions and win awards for our communities.

Are you getting any support?

At the beginning when we started the group, we got support from Lutheran World Federation (LWF). The LWF bought our group uniforms and training mats, which made us unique and made our practice sessions safe and fun. We also receive support from organizations that invite us for performances at their events.

Have you performed outside Kakuma?

Yes, we once had an opportunity to perform for large crowds in Lokichogio and Lodwar. Most of the people who attended appreciated our performances with some of them giving us some money as a token of appreciation.

What other activity are you involved in?

Most of our time is spent studying, as we are also students in different grades. However, this does not keep us from practicing. We usually meet over the weekends to practice new moves and exercise for fitness.

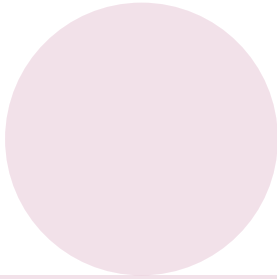
What challenges do you face as a group?

The biggest challenge is negative publicity. Most people think that we use magic/charms, as most of the things we do are extra ordinary and sometimes not normal. We want to assure everyone that we do not use any magic; we use our God given talents to perform acrobatics. Everyone has a talent, but not everyone will discover or learn to perfect theirs.

What can you tell talented people in the community?

Everyone has a talent. No one is an empty vessel. Discovering your talent is not easy and may take time to perfect. Some talents are learnt or acquired, and so the sky should not be the limit. If you are lucky to have discovered yours, get a group to join and learn from people who have the same talent as you.

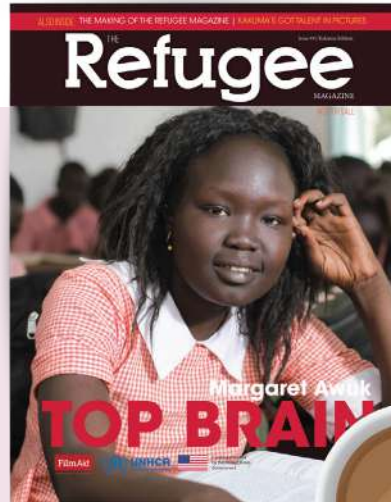




ARE YOU AN ASPIRING JOURNALIST? HERE IS HOW YOU CAN IMPROVE YOUR WRITING SKILLS

GIVING A VOICE TO REFUGEES

BY UKECH DANIEL



The Refugee Magazine is a quarterly magazine publication that is produced by FilmAid International-Kenya with the support from the US government through the Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration (B.P.R.M) and United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). There are four publications each year that are produced by students under the FilmAid's Journalism Training Programme (JTP) and volunteer writers from around the camp. The group of 20 students, per year, is selected through a highly competitive interview process that tests their skills and creativity in writing. The students are then taken through a rigorous 8-month training course in Journalism, before graduating in September each year.

THE TEAM

The Refugee Magazine team comprises of writers (current students and alumni students as well as members of the refugee and host community), a volunteer Edition Editor (from the current class), The Editor, The Chief Editor (Journalism Trainer), and a Creative and Content Team from FilmAid who check the overall quality before being sent to a pre-qualified printer in Nairobi.

The Refugee Magazine was born at the Dadaab Refugee camp in 2010. The idea was brought about by a group of young men in Daadab who wrote stories and articles about the camp but had nowhere to publish them. The only alternative they had was to print their stories on normal printing paper and sell them to the public, to cover the printing costs and not to make any profit. They later approached FilmAid International-Dadaab to help them in publishing their work.

FilmAid took their request into consideration and decided to train them on Basic Journalism skills, before they could publish their work following journalistic ethics and standards. This marked the birth of The Refugee Newsletter.

THE CHANGE

The Refugee Newsletter was introduced to the Kakuma Refugee Camp in the year 2013, three years after its inception at the Dadaab Refugee Camp. The first publication was well received by both the refugee and the host community. The year 2013 also saw the first class of Journalism kick off with 15 students from the different communities in Kakuma.

The Newsletter was then changed into a bi-weekly magazine so as to meet the growing demand for local stories that had

more impact and more shelf life. These would include feature stories that were positive and would in turn give hope to the ever-growing number of readers. The first magazine was published in February 2014 and was applauded by readers from all walks of life. The official launch saw the refugee and host communities appreciate the first full color magazine that featured stories from the camp and was distributed for free. Since then, Kakuma has had 8 successful issues produced by the Journalism Training Students and slightly over 20,000 copies distributed in Kakuma alone.

Despite the many challenges that the students and the group of volunteer writers face, The Refugee Magazine has given a voice to many refugees and helped some get better lives. Among our success stories is that of Mama Dewit who had suffered from cancer for many years and through airing her plight, she was able to receive better treatment and help for her son. "I will never forget The Refugee Magazine," she said as she bid our team farewell.

Mama Dewit's story was featured in the second issue of The Refugee Magazine produced by FilmAid. Her emotional story attracted the attention of her community and that of the humanitarian agencies who came out to help her. The Refugee Magazine gave her a voice and through the publication she received better health care and services. 'I had been suffering in silence; I felt that no one would come to my rescue and that my life would never be any better' she says.

Mama Dewit is among millions of refugees and asylum seekers in the world who at one time feel like they do not have a voice. Thousands more in Kenya's Dadaab and Kakuma refugee camps continue to suffer in silence. Many rely on FilmAid to get life-saving information on services available in the camps. With both camps having access to only one or two radio stations as the main source of news, an alternative source of information is necessary.

THE STORY

The making of TRM starts with an editorial meeting between the students who discuss the emerging trends in the camp and narrow down on what stories would make it into the next publication. After the discussion, the editor then assigns specific stories to different writers who then go to the field to conduct interviews with their subjects and take photographs. The interviews are recorded using voice recorders and sometimes video camera. The student/writer then goes back to the FilmAid's students' office to key in their articles into an assigned journalism laptop, and edits it before sharing it with the editor.

The editor then edits the submitted articles and makes comments before giving them back to the authors for amends. Once this is done, the articles are kept in folders and given to the chief editor who checks for accuracy and grammar before putting them on a layout in readiness for publication. Once the Chief Editor is satisfied with the overall look of the publication, he/she then shares it with The Creative and Content Team for feedback before sending it to the printer. The whole process is continuous and may take up to 5 weeks.

After this, the magazine is printed and flown to Kakuma for distribution by the writers and FilmAid's outreach team. The number of copies produced depends fully on funding and they are never enough copies for everyone in the camp. However, most people from the camp and around the globe access The Refugee Magazine through the internet link www.filmaid.org/publications, through TRM's social media pages; The Refugee Magazine Kak Ed (facebook) and twitter; @TheRefugeeMagazine

I WILL NEVER FORGET THE REFUGEE MAGAZINE

I know you are probably wondering how to get that article/photograph/poems that you have been writing published on The Refugee Magazine, well its as simple as;

1. You can send your article through our email address therefugeekak@gmail.com with the title of your article as the subject of the email.
2. You can deliver your hand written article to FilmAid's offices with your contacts and name clearly indicated at the back of the interview
3. You can approach any JTP student to help you write your story and guide you on what to do
4. You can write a brief description of the story you have in mind on any of our social media platforms

For any breaking news, you can share on our social media pages of call us through 0722540833

You can also subscribe to get every publication sent to you via email by sending us an email with the word SUBSCRIBE as the subject of the email to therefugeekak@gmail.com





KAKUMA'S GOT TALENT

KAKUMA'S GOT TALENT EVENT ENDED THE YEAR 2015 IN STYLE WITH GROUPS AND INDIVIDUALS BATTLING IT OUT TO BE THE BEST IN DIFFERENT CATEGORIES

BY OKELLO'O JOSEPH



Kakuma's Got Talent is an annual event that sets the podium for refugee youth to showcase their talents with the aim of being crowned the best in the camp. The 2015 event saw various artists, actors, dance groups, poets, and cultural dance groups from all the four youth centers in the camps compete for the top

prize. The three-day event took place at Monreau Shapelle Secondary School with the award ceremony being held at the Lutheran World Federation Cafeteria in compound 1.

Speaking at the event, Octopizzo, a Kenyan rapper and star, challenged the youth to use their different talents to make a living and better their lives. Other speakers at the event echoed his sentiments.

The crowd loved the cultural dances and modeling performances as they brought pomp and color to the event, with Congolese Women taking first position in cultural dance category. You may all remember the Gobole dancers who also competed in the Kenyan TV show Sakata Dance competition, well they did not disappoint as they battled out with different dance groups to emerge winners

in the dance category.

The audience was brought to laughter by a group of young comedians called Crazy Boys. The Crazy Boys stormed the stage with their flamboyant limousine made of wire and wheelbarrow, and presented a short skit on the Bamba Chakula Programme leaving everyone laughing their hearts out. Another lucky group was the 'Street Boys Group.' The young boys got a chance to perform live with Octopizzo as other artists watched in disbelief. The trio comprise of young boys from the host community.

The Kakuma's Got Talent event is part Lutheran World Federation (LWF) youth programme. The 2015 event was held in collaboration with UNHCR, DRC, and FilmAid International.



FOR THE LOVE OF ART

KOANG IS A SOUTH SUDANESE ARTIST LIVING IN KAKUMA 1. HE TELLS US THE INSPIRATION BEHIND HIS ARTISTIC LIFE. BY JEREMIAH PUOT

Kakuma Refugee Camp is home to close to 180,000 refugees from close to 15 different nationalities. The high number of people in an enclosed area makes competition for scarce resources cutthroat, with more weight being felt when it comes to getting formal employment. A number of youth are using their God-given talents to make ends meet for themselves and their families. Many organizations like Action Africa Help International (AAHI) are currently implementing livelihood projects that aim at helping the youth and vulnerable beneficiaries to access livelihood projects that will help better their lives while at the camps.

THAKIY STEPHEN KOANG was born in South Sudan's Unity State more than 46 years ago. He is a born artist currently living in Kakuma One. The camp has dozens of registered art groups and an increasing number of youth are currently receiving arts-based trainings

I am a professional artist with a difference. My style involves putting what I see in real life on canvas

under different NGO's like the Lutheran World Federation (LWF), FilmAid, among others. Other NGOs like the AAHI have come up with livelihood programmes that are specifically tailored to suite groups, individuals and the vulnerable beneficiaries to access loans and projects that are aimed at providing different opportunities to better lives.

Koang has been working for the LWF as an art trainer for some time. He trains various groups around the different youth centers in Arts. He also paints for a living although he confesses that many people in the camps do not appreciate art and some find it too expensive. Among the challenges faced by artists in Kakuma is the access to quality art supplies, as movement to the capital and other towns is restricted and there are no shops in the camp that stock these supplies. "We are sometimes forced to sell our art pieces at a very low price since we sometimes use substandard materials to make our paintings. Those lucky to have once traveled outside the camp have

established contacts with other artists in the big cities who are able to send them supplies here in the camp," says Koang.

Koang is a man of many talents. He tells us that he has been trained and worked as a mason, a carpenter, and a welder, and he also holds a B.C.E. class-driving license. "Most of the income I receive is through work I have done for agencies around Kakuma. The money I earn from these work is enough to take care of my wife and family," says Koang. "Most of the time when the work is too much I get other artists to help out," he adds.

There is need to help boost talented artists at the Kakuma Refugee Camp. With a better market and strategy, many idle youth in the camp may find a way to earn an extra coin and make their lives and those of people around them better. The Artists for Refugees (A4R) program is an example of what such a project could achieve. Koang was part of this project last year and it enabled him to have his artworks exhibited at the Nairobi's Alliance Française where he sold all his pieces. Other exhibitions that he participated in include the World Refugee Day where Koang and other artists got a tent on location to exhibit their work. The A4R project is funded by the UNHCR and implemented by FilmAid International. In 2015, the project saw Koang and other 9 artists fly to Nairobi for a week and they had their artwork exhibited alongside work from Refugee artists living at the Kakuma and Dadaab refugee camps.

"I am a professional artist with a difference. My style involves putting what I see in real life on canvas," says Koang. "Everyone has a talent hidden somewhere, once you realize it use it to make something for yourself," he added as we parted ways.



I HAVE HOPE



Life as a refugee is miserable,
Living in a house and dwelling in a tent,
When strong winds come, the tent is sent away,
leaving the owner without a roof over their head.
Unluckily, there is no place to spend the night no
house to rent.
Truly life as a refugee is full of accidents.

The food received is little,
Children have grown thin and their skin has turned
white,
I am sure if a strong wind blew, they would fly like
kites, Unable to stand and fight, against to wind's
strong might,

They would cling to their mothers tight,

Crying for food, which is their right,
They are hungry and moan and at night,
Oh, what a pitiful sight.

Although being a refugee is an abrupt fate; living
an unexpected life can be depressing,
But it is not too late to change your fate,
With each coming day and month,

There are high chances of living a good life.

Becoming a refugee is so sudden,
Many victims are frightened about the unknown,
While others are extremely saddened by their fate,
The thought of carrying the refugee-burden,

But I advise you, the best way to live is to remain
hopeful.



US President Barack Obama addresses youth at The Safaricom Stadium during his Kenya visit. Photo downloaded from the telegraph

TIME FOR THE YOUTH IS NOW

BY UKECH DANIEL

Recently during President Barack Obama's visit to Kenya, one of his main goals was to empower the youth. I totally agree with that because the youth are an important part every society. The youth often have a strong decision-making power in different aspects of the society. However, there are a lot of problems they face, which prevent them from actively taking part in various decision-making processes in the society. What can be done to reduce or solve the problems that the youth face in the society?

The main problem facing the youth is drug abuse. Alcohol, bhang, tobacco, and khat famously known as 'miraa' are the most abused drug substances. The youth enjoy the excitement that comes with them, but they tend to forget the damage that these drugs cause to their lives. Drugs don't make us feel strong, but instead they kill us slowly. We should all come up with strategies that aim at stopping drug abuse.

One of the strategies can be making the production/ consumption of these drugs illegal. By doing so, the number of youth abusing drugs will reduce. Creating awareness can also be a solution, and sensitizing the youth about the adverse effects of using drugs. Since most of them are addicted to certain drugs, they should be advised to go for rehabilitation.

Peer pressure is also one of the problems the youth that need solved. Once in a while we find ourselves in groups of friends. These friends can either change our lives for the better or destroy our future depending on the choices we make. Most people do not do things just because they want to, but because their friends are doing the same. All these are brought about by peer pressure and the desire to have more of everything in life, which is prevalent during the adolescent stage. Evaluating our choices when making friends can stop peer pressure, as well as learning to be decisive and standing by the decisions we make for ourselves.

Without forgetting, teenage pregnancies it is also a huge

problem that the youth are facing. This is influenced by peer pressure and drug abuse. Under the influence of either, teenagers find it hard to control their emotions and feelings. Consequently, they end up having unwanted pregnancies. Our peers can also influence us to engage in immoral activities thinking that they are doing the right thing, but actually they are wrong. At puberty they tend to think that they are big enough to do what 'grown people' do. We should always avoid friends who may lead us to immoral deeds. After realizing their irreversible mistake, most teenagers who face pregnancy opt for abortion. Abortion is illegal and it is morally wrong; abortion is taking a life and can also cause result in grave complications.

In addition, early marriage has for a long time affected the youth. Poverty is one of the causes of early marriage. Many parents marry off their children for material gains. These girls normally drop out of school and start handling family issues at a very young age. Most of them are not old enough to sire children and might end up with pregnancy complications. Parents should be educated about the importance of protecting their children and the negative effects of marrying them off.

The number of youth completing their secondary education in the camp has been increasing at a high rate over the years, hence leaving many of them unemployed for a very long time. This causes some to engage in criminal activities, in a bid to make ends meet. The youth should be encouraged to get into self-employment, or find training and mentorship programmes that are in-line with their career aspirations.



THE DEADLY LIQUOR

Stop drug abuse' is a phrase not new to our ears. This phrase is of great importance, but many of us take it for granted. No matter how much we try to talk about it, drug abuse may not end but at least we can save a few vulnerable people from this deadly practice. Illicit alcoholic brews are amongst the most abused drugs in Kakuma.

The consumption of this brew is increasing at a very high rate. It has affected many people, especially the youth. Despite the government's efforts to stop the production of the illicit brew, its production still continues. Alcoholics fail to realize the damage that alcohol causes in their lives. The effects of alcohol consumption are extensive and they may result in serious health problems in the long run.

Overconsumption of alcohol has been known to lead to the development of liver cirrhosis, which has claimed the lives of many.

Alcohol dependency among the youth has become a serious problem in the society. Addiction leads to risky behavior, which also has a financial implication to the friends and family of the alcoholic.

Let's stay safe and stop drug abuse. If we do that, I am certain that our future will take a positive turn.

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