

THE Refugee

MAGAZINE

Issue #8 | Kakuma Edition

16 DAYS SPECIAL EDITION

Patience

THE SYMBOL OF STRONG WILL &
DETERMINATION

KAKUMA MARKS
THE 16 DAYS OF
ACTIVISM



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WHATEVER IT TAKES

WITH MORE OPPORTUNITIES FOR SCHOLARSHIPS NOW AVAILABLE, GIRLS IN KAKUMA REFUGEE CAMP ARE NOW MORE THAN EVER MOTIVATED TO MAKE THEIR DREAMS TRUE. RECENTLY, KENYA, ETHIOPIA AND ZIMBABWE LAUNCHED AND ALL-FEMALE CREW COMMERCIAL FLIGHTS. COULD THIS BE THE START OF A REVOLUTION AND AN OPPORTUNITY FOR GIRLS LIKE FARHIYA? AYAN MOHAMED WRITES.



#MakeEducationSafeForAll
#16DOAKakuma
#16DaysOfActivism

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The Refugee Magazine
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HOW KAKUMA MARKED THE 2015 16 DAYS OF ACTIVISM AGAINST SGBV IN BRIEF

Exactly one year ago, the refugee team brought you a 16 Days of Activism Special Edition that focused on early marriage. The Edition outdid our expectation as over 5,000 people shared it on the social media and other digital platforms apart from the 4,500 copies that were printed and distributed in Kakuma Refugee camp.

This year, we bring you yet another informative and eye opening special edition that is in-line with this years 16 Days of Activism theme; Making Education Safe for All.

In this special edition we bring you heart tearing yet inspiring stories of GBV survivors and their quest to achieve their dreams through education. We also take you into the world of PLWD (persons living with disabilities) and the achievements that have been made so far to ensure that these people have equal access to education.

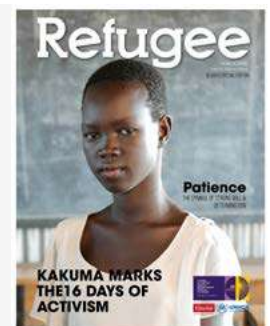
The right to education can never be stressed more. What many people may overlook is the fact that education can also be used as a tool to stop GBV. Schools can be an alternative Safe Havens as the school environment if managed well will provide security to the vulnerable and keep GBV perpetrators away as The Refugee Team came to find out through interviews with both beneficiaries and Education Service providers.

It is my hope that this edition will help move the fight against GBV a notch higher and enlighten many more people, both male and female, to join the fight to making the world a better and secure place to live in for all. Lets make education safe and accessible for all.

Editor

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Education, hidden key to fighting SGBV?

HURE MOHAMUD, EDUCATION OFFICER AT UNHCR, IN A ONE ON ONE INTERVIEW WITH OUR EDITOR, UKECH DANIEL, ON THE LINK BETWEEN EDUCATION AND SGBV AND WHY THIS YEAR'S 16DOA THEME IS IMPORTANT.

In a nutshell, what does your work entail?

My job entails coordinating education services for UNHCR and ensuring the implementation of education within the provisions of both international and UNHCR standards. Some of my roles include monitoring partners, activities, and providing technical guidance to the provision of education.

What is the relationship between Gender-Based Violence (GBV) and education?

Gender-Based Violence and education in some way have a relationship; for example, children might be victims of gender-based violence. In such instances, it affects their access and participation in education. At the same time, if children are taught and sensitized about the respect for both genders then they can go back with that knowledge to the communities and become champions of attitude change.

Is the fight against GBV being won?

It is a difficult fight. Gender-based violence has different manifestations in different communities. There are some very deep cultural practices in different communities that predispose them to such violence. With the effort that is being made and the awareness that is being created and with more people getting education, I think significant progress is being realized more and more. Men and boys are participating in positive activities including positive messaging about the effects and the impact of gender-based violence.

What milestones have been achieved so far?

We see more and more children going to school, we have less cases of gender-based violence being reported within schools and also in the communities. At the same time, the enrollment of girls and their participation is increasing. I think those are very positive indicators that there is change of mindset within different communities.

What are some of the forms of GBV in the camp?

There is always domestic violence, which affects children even if it is between the parents, but it affects children's confidence. It breaks families with the strains being passed on to the children and this in turn affects them psychologically. The malfunction within family units tends to also affect children's participation in education as well as their achievements. When gender-based violence is perpetrated against children especially young girls it causes them to drop out of school and affects their motivation to learn.

Are children the only ones affected?

Children are not necessarily the only ones affected, but the consequences of gender-based violence on children are far much greater than others. That is why it is important to eliminate and fight against gender-based violence so that a conducive situation for children is created which can allow them to attend school without the specter of the challenges associated with gender-based violence.

How should UNHCR, schools, and the community respond to new cases on GBV especially in schools?

In schools gender-based violence is taught as part of a life speed and this is mainstreamed in the curriculum so that children, both boys and girls, appreciate the complementarity of both genders in their daily life. At the same time teachers create awareness on the co-existence of both genders, which is very important. The most important thing that happens in schools is that the boy child appreciates the importance of girls and women and the role they play in the society. This is what is inculcated in them as they go through school then they can take that positive understanding and messaging they get to the community, which results in a wider impact.

What measures have been put in place to ensure safe access to education for all?

Safe access is paramount for us. Schools should be free from violence and conducive for children to learn. We always strive to provide safe learning spaces for children,

where we discourage the use of corporal punishment. We also try to improve the wash facilities for the girls and ensure that the buildings and structures meets the minimum standards required by the ministry of education and ensure that the school provides a conducive learning environment for girls. In schools there are gender-segregated latrines and there are also teachers who are gender focal persons. They are responsible for ensuring referral of cases to relevant agencies and specialized services. Within the school there are guidance and counseling departments for children who have psychosocial issues and those who have faced difficult situations have an opportunity to be counseled so as to overcome some of the trauma.

How effective are those measures?

We have a lot of challenges. There is a high level of overcrowding and congestion in schools especially in classrooms. This makes it very difficult for teachers to identify children who have specific needs. At the same time we have shortage of teachers, which affects the student-to-teacher contact. The other challenge is that many of our teachers are not trained and they might not necessarily be in a position to provide support to children who might have psychosocial needs and other difficulties.

Apart from a different theme, what different thing should we expect during the Sixteen Days of Activism?

I see the Sixteen Days of Activism as another opportunity to renew our resolve to fight and discourage all kinds of violence perpetrated against women and girls. We also need to increase the advocacies that we do and the engagement that we have with communities so that we have an attitude change especially in relation to people having respectful



COVER PHOTO: A portrait of Hure at his UNHCR Office | Otieno Samuel

relationships.

Any message you have for the community during the Sixteen Days of Activism?

My message for the community is to encourage them to realize and appreciate the differences and the complementarity of different genders that we have and the fact that violence is not necessarily a solution to challenges and problems that we have. If issues can be solved through other means then it is more worthwhile.

We always advocate for the girl child when it comes to gender-based violence, are boys affected and what measures have been taken to secure their access to education?

Boys are also affected victims of GBV sometimes. They could be living in homes where there is gender-based violence and sometimes violence is

perpetrated directly against them, which affects their learning. So at the school level, we provide equal support to both boys and girls. Our identification mechanism for children who are at risk is systematic and consistent for both boys and girl. We do not necessarily focus on girls alone, but we also look at the specific needs that some of the boys have especially those who are unaccompanied and those who are separated and also face significant risk in the camp.

Anything you need to add?

The Sixteen Days of Activism theme is very important. We will be able to reflect on what we are currently doing, take stock of the progress and appreciate some of the difficulties and challenges that we are facing. I think it will be an opportunity for us to see what we can do differently so that we ensure that our schools are safe spaces for children to learn.

GBV FACTS

FACT 1. VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS IS PREDICTABLE AND PREVENTABLE

Levels of violence against women are not the same in all places and at all times. By identifying the social, cultural, legal and economic factors that influence such violence, it is possible to predict its occurrence and to understand how to prevent it. School-based programmes to prevent dating violence; reducing the harmful use of alcohol; changing social and cultural norms through education and awareness raising, and intervening with maltreated children to avert their later involvement in violence can reduce violence against women

FACT 2: VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN CAN DAMAGE THE HEALTH AND WELL-BEING OF CHILDREN.

Witnessing intimate partner violence can damage the normal

development of children in the family. Studies have shown that some children exposed to violence between parents have more social, emotional, behavioural, cognitive and general health problems than children from families where there was no violence between partners.



Making schools safe

In today's civilized world, the wealth of information and opportunity that education offers is immense. However, there is a darker side to this environment that leaves individuals vulnerable to all kinds of accidental or intentional harm. We all need to have the best security around us wherever we are. This is all because we need to stay safe. We want our homes to be safe, our working environment to be safe, everybody wants their streets to stay safe, but do we all know how safe our education is?

Violence has become part of the fabric of our society. It is manifested throughout; on television, sports, music, and work places and even in schools. Schools are no longer safe havens for children. Students cannot afford to learn in unsafe environments. A welcoming environment is particularly important for those students who are struggling in school and need extra support.

A safe learning environment is focused on academic achievement, maintaining high standards, fostering positive relationship between staff and students, and encouraging parental and communal involvement. It is important to create a school climate that does not tolerate bullying, intimidation, and gender-based harassments. Causes of unsafe environments in schools should be identified so as to find appropriate solutions to them. Antisocial and aggressive behaviors are strong indicators of unsafe school environment.

Gender-based violence has always been a challenge to school going children especially girls. Whenever

these students find themselves in such situations, most of them do not know what exactly to do. They remain confused and do nothing. When it becomes hard to overcome such challenges, they become afraid. Students who are afraid always stay away from school. This in turn becomes another problem of its own as it contributes to a high number of school dropouts. For such situations, a comprehensive safe school plan is vital to the well being of the students. It is a specialist solution dedicated to the protection and safety of children and young people in the schooling environment.

In most cases, the children who fall victims of gender-based violence are afraid to report such cases mainly because they are being threatened from time to time. They therefore have no choice but to remain quiet when they find no one to turn to and no one in particular to trust. They should be well informed about the reporting system and know that it is safe. The comprehensive threat detection and reporting system enables a child's exposure to any kind of violence to be significantly reduced whilst also educating young people.

Resolving conflict and preventing violence are important factors in creating a safe learning environment. Students respond to violence by confronting it, usually in a violent manner, or avoiding it. Neither of these responses helps them learn how to deal with conflict in an appropriate way. Students need interpersonal skills to cope with gender-based violence. It is important for students to know how to deescalate violence, manage it and resolve it. Who else is there to let them know if not us?



I WILL SURVIVE

PASCA, 18 YEARS, IS A GBV SURVIVOR LIVING IN KAKUMA REFUGEE CAMP. FORCED TO FLEE HER HOME COUNTRY, SOUTH SUDAN, PASCA HOPED TO BUILD HER FUTURE HERE IN THE CAMP THROUGH GOOD EDUCATION. HOWEVER, HER DREAMS BECAME FAR FETCHED WHEN SHE GOT PREGNANT AT AN EARLY AGE FORCING HER FAMILY TO TURN THEIR BACK ON HER.

Almost each one of us came to the camp for safety reasons. We migrated here hoping to find a peaceful environment which some have found. For others it is the exact opposite. Peace has never been something they found in the camp since their arrival. Their life in the camp has been filled with nothing but a series of disappointments. Consequently, it affects their dreams of becoming successful people and it also affects their education.

Pasca Awaye is an eighteen-year-old South Sudanese girl. Just like everyone else, she came to the camp in 2012 hoping that it would give her a chance to fulfill her dreams. She was hoping to get a chance to pursue her education in the camp. The war in South Sudan made her flee to Kakuma hoping to find a safe place to go to school. While she was still at the Reception Center, she got into a relationship with a man who made her pregnant. On realizing that, the man abandoned her and never came back. After leaving the Reception Center and integrating into the Kakuma Camp community, she told her aunt the

news about her pregnancy. Her aunt suggested that the baby should be aborted. She refused to do so. "Since I was a child, until I grew up, I have been going to church with my father and to me it was a sin to commit such a crime." She said. Her aunt then told her that if that was what she wanted then she had to leave her compound. The poor girl left her aunt's house and went to her in-laws.

She explained everything to her aunt-in-law, but she would not believe her and they went for a pregnancy test. The results of the checkup confirmed that she was pregnant, but she also had to be tested for HIV and the results were negative. They were then told to go for testing after three months. When the time came for the testing, they went to the hospital and she tested HIV positive. "When my health status was known in the community, no one wanted to talk to me or even socialize with me." She said. The time came when she was about to deliver, but she had nobody to help her. She went to the hospital alone and stayed there. No one went to visit her and the time came for her to be discharged from the hospital. "I carried my child home with

no clothes to protect him from the dust. When I reached home I had to do everything on my own since there was nobody willing to help me in any way, sometimes I would go for days without eating." She said.

When her aunt came from South Sudan, she kicked her out of her house claiming that she wanted to infect her children with the disease. The only place that she could go was to her aunt-in-law, but when she went there she was no longer welcomed. Her parents back in South Sudan disowned. She had nowhere else to go and no one to turn to. The streets were the only place for her and her baby, but she was afraid and therefore she went and stayed at the 'laga' (the seasonal river). Her case was referred to the Block Leader who took her back to her aunt, but the aunt refused to take her in. She was then taken to the Chairlady's home and stayed there for one week. She was then taken to the New Area (Kakuma 4) by the gender caseworkers. She was given a house and some utensils to use.

She stayed peacefully in Kakuma 4 before something horrible happened. While she was at the hospital with her child, everything in her house was stolen including the food ration she had. She was moved to Kakuma,1 because of the incident. She thought she had found a peaceful place to live at last. A man befriended her and they ended up in a relationship. She tried to explain her medical condition to him, but he insisted that he would stay with her. She got pregnant and had to go for medical checkups. Fortunately, he tested HIV negative. After sometime, he left and never visited her again. She gave birth to her second child, but just like the first time round she had no one to help her.

Eleven months later, he came to claim his daughter back. "I told him that I couldn't be separated from my children." She said. He tried to forcefully take the child from her, but she wouldn't let him. The commotion attracted the attention of neighbors who came to witness what was happening. The Block Leader was then called to handle their case. The case was reported to the police station. The father took custody of the child and she returned home without her daughter. "Later that night I asked myself what was the use of me staying alive? Since I set my feet in the camp all I ever encountered was suffering. It is better I die to relieve myself from all these suffering." She said with a drop in her tone. "If God wanted me to die, why did he not let me go since I was still alone?"

She went to a friend for help. They called her daughter's

Later that night I asked myself what was the use of me staying alive? Since I set my feet in the camp all I ever encountered was suffering

father and begged him to return the child to her mother. They went to the DC to report the case. After a discussion at the DC's office her daughter was returned to her.

Back at home she faced a lot of discrimination. She was never allowed to fetch water and her children were always chased away when they were found playing with the neighbors' children. As if that was not enough, her property was stolen. "When I think about my life, I realize that there is no place for me on earth." She said.

She had nowhere else to go, no one to turn to, she was confused to the extent of attempting to commit suicide. Her suffering was more than she could handle. She pushed her children outside and locked the door behind her. She then hanged herself. Fortunately, the neighbors noticed her children crying outside. They came to find out what the problem was and discovered that the door had been locked from the inside. They had to break the door to save her. She was found lying on the ground as the rope she used broke. The Block Leader was called to witness the incident. He took her to the police station where she was locked up together with her children. She was to be taken to prison, but she got lucky and was released. When she went back to her house the people in her community were not happy with the fact that she was had not been jailed. She received threats from some community members and decided to leave. She went to her friend's house and was welcomed.

Her suffering stemmed from not being strong enough for her and her innocent children. Her level of education also did not allow her to get a good job. The fact that she had no job and had nothing to do to cater for her family's needs made her suffering worse. She had dropped out of school at when she was in Standard 6 and was not able to continue with schools due to the problems that she was facing. "If there was somebody who could stay with my children I would go back to school." She said. Together with her children, Ezekiel Mubarak who is two and a half years old, and Cynthia Nyabaa who is now a year old, she lives at her friend's place and has no place to call her own. She knows nowhere else to go to or what to do next.

COVER PHOTO: A portrait of Farhiya in a classroom | Marti Corn



WHATEVER IT TAKES

WITH MORE OPPORTUNITIES FOR SCHOLARSHIPS NOW AVAILABLE, GIRLS IN KAKUMA REFUGEE CAMP ARE NOW MORE THAN EVER MOTIVATED TO MAKE THEIR DREAMS TRUE. RECENTLY, KENYA, ETHIOPIA AND ZIMBABWE LAUNCHED ALL-FEMALE CREW COMMERCIAL FLIGHTS. COULD THIS BE THE START OF A REVOLUTION AND AN OPPORTUNITY FOR GIRLS LIKE FARHIYA? AYAN MOHAMED WRITES.

Education is not attained by chance, it must be sought for and attended to with diligence." This powerful quote kick starts our conversation about a young, strong and determined girl who will sacrifice anything to achieve her goals in life. She is down to earth and smiles a lot, but little does one know the strong character and inspirational story behind that smile.

Farhiya Abdirashid arrived in Kenya in the year 2000 after being forced out of her home country. She was young and innocent and did not understand why they had to leave their home. "I thought it was an adventure, not knowing the situation at hand." She tells me softly. She attended her nursery and part of her primary education in Nairobi, before moving to the camp in December 2008. She was registered as a candidate the following year at Baar El Naam Girls Primary School. "After experiencing how life

was in the camp, I made up my mind that nothing but education could move me out of this situation, I made a quick decision then which I am very proud of now when I look back."

She passed her KCPE scoring 318 out of the possible 500 marks, making her scoop the PRM secondary school scholarship, making her one of the first three girls to get the scholarship opportunity. This was a memorable moment for her as she got a chance to join one of the best schools in Turkana County, Turkana Girls Secondary School. "Life was not that smooth at first because it was a catholic school which did not allow Muslim girls to put on their traditional scarf," she explains. This was one of her biggest challenges but she had to look for ways to curb it so that it did not stop her from realizing her dreams.

Weeks made months, months made years and soon four



COVER PHOTO: A portrait of Farhiya I Marti Corn

years were over. She sat for her KCSE in 2013 with high hopes of doing well because she knew she had worked for it and deserved the best. "Fortunately I managed to get a B (plain), which I was very happy about because in the end you reap what you sow." She believes that nothing comes on a silver platter and it's through her hard work, perseverance and determination that she managed to get

After experiencing how life was in the camp, I made up my mind that nothing but education could move me out of this situation, I made a quick decision then which I am very proud of now when I look back

a good grade in the end.

Next in the line was the WUSC sponsorship application, which she describes as a 'headache' in a way. "It takes courage and self-trust to apply twice for this sponsorship with the hope of making it." She says. It is from this statement that I get to know that it took her and her sister a second time to qualify for it. They both missed out the first time around, but through focus and knowing what

they wanted in life, they applied once again and got the sponsorship. "I was over the moon when I received the news that both my sister and I had made gotten the sponsorship. It was a dream come true." She narrates.

When I ask her about what she would like to do in university, the answer she gives me is marvelous. "I want to study medicine and become a renowned doctor worldwide helping the poor," she says. "Many poor people are dying in hospitals every day, because of lack of good medical care. My dream is to help the poor and treat them, because as humans they deserve the best too," she confidently adds.

Before we part ways she gives advice to other students, especially the girls. "Life is all about giving your very best, sacrifice and perseverance, with all this in mind I am sure girls will change the world." She tells me that gone are days when girls were thought to be second to boys and that we are in an era where girls take the lead. "We were three girls sponsored to high school and one dropped in form two to get married. She now has two children, but not happy. The third girl, Monica Naboi, is in Canada and I will be leaving next year for Canada. It's all about the decisions we make in life and how they'll affect us in future," she concludes. It's up to every individual person to decide what they want and go for it!

Taking It Back

WHAT DOES IT TAKE TO GET YOUR LIFE BACK ON TRACK AFTER AN GBV ORDEAL? IZERE (NOT HER REAL NAME) HAS BEEN THERE AND NOW IS PUTTING UP PIECES OF HER LIFE TOGETHER WITH THE HOPE OF ONE DAY BECOMING A RIGHTS ACTIVIST FOR GIRLS LIKE HER.

BY AYAN MOHAMED

It's normally said that take what fate gives you. Izere (not her real name) had to defy odds to create her own fate instead. Born and raised in Rwanda, she went to school just like any other child and by 2009 she was in form three. Izere lived with her mother and her seven siblings in one of the villages in Rwanda. One particular day in January, something that was to change their lives happened. A letter came to them from the "Gacaca" court asking their mother to come to the court and she heeded the call. They did not hear any news from their mother until a month later when they were informed that the mother had been jailed and sentenced for 20 years in prison with regard to the Rwandan genocide. Izere and her big brother went to visit the mother and met her but they were told not to come back again because according to the law anyone who was not around when the genocide took place was not allowed anywhere near the court. They then went and talked to their school headmaster privately and told him about what had happened requesting him to allow them to continue with school but what followed absolutely shocked them. The headmaster humiliated them at the school assembly and then after expelled them from the school saying that he didn't want anyone related to the genocide in the school. "We had to drop out of school to take care of our young ones." She says.

They were attacked one night by unknown men who beat her brother and badly injured him. Two of the men abducted her and took her to a forest. "They severely beat me with knives leaving scars on my whole body and raped me later abandoning me near a lake," she recalls the scary incident. After gaining consciousness, she ran away to look for help. She knocked on the door of the first house that came to her view and shared with her what had happened to her to the woman who was the owner of that house. The woman directed her to a man who was the woman's neighbor and the man told her he could help her by taking her to Uganda. Out of innocence and fright, she accepted the offer and was ready to travel with the man. The man changed his mind on the way and used her to his selfish motives until they arrived in Uganda. While there she lived with the man as his wife in a deserted area but after some time he said that his business was not doing well and that he had to move to Kenya. They came to Nairobi together and he took her to live with two other girls who were also Rwandese and left her with them saying he was to come back. She did not see him for two weeks and the girls chased her away saying that life wasn't easily affordable and they couldn't take care of her anymore. A woman who was the girls' neighbor gave her accommodation and took her to hospital to nurse her injuries which were still fresh, especially the right

hand which was badly injured.

The woman later took her to UNHCR in Nairobi and they brought her to Kakuma. They took her to reception for two weeks and then given shelter under a tent in Kakuma 2. "Life wasn't easy for me but I had to cope up with it," says Izere. The place she called home was destroyed because the tent was old. A woman whom they had socialized while in reception came to her rescue and gave her shelter in Kakuma 3. Her passion for education didn't allow her to stay idle and therefore she took up a job as a cooker for the new arrivals to get money to buy school materials for herself. She worked for two months with an incentive of 3500 shillings per month. She used to give 2000 shillings to the woman she was living with because she used to ask for it. She saved the remaining to buy books and pens for school.

She stopped working to join school, which the woman she was living with did not approve of, and got angry with her because she didn't get the support she was used to hence chasing her away from her home. She joined school in form two and studied for a year. She could not get along with the system because she was not used to it as she had studied in French back in her homeland. She decided to go back to class eight as she was told she could not sit for the KCSE without KCPE certificate. "English and Kiswahili was the main problem for me but my dreams and goals were bigger than that," she confidently tells me. She moved to an abandoned house where the owner had died and people were scared to live in it. Though she was mostly scared, she had no other option but to live there as she had no other place to go.

Due to her hard work and much dedication, Izere scored 296 marks and fortunately bagged the scholarship. "I didn't imagine this happening but was thankful to God that it did," she says amid happiness. She joined high school and though life wasn't that much smooth she had to persevere and always give her best. She fell sick most of the time and was even admitted in the hospital for two weeks at one time. She continued with school and spent most of the time there as it was a boarding school. Her scholarship period got over while she was in form three but fortunately she got the Windle Trust Kenya scholarship for the fourth year and she completed high school well. She is glad to have found in school.

"I would like to study well in future and be a girls' rights activist so that I get to help girls who have passed through the same and at the same time do my best to avoid any girl's future to be tampered with," she confidently concludes.



ARE YOU SAFE?

DO ALL STUDENTS FEEL SAFE AT SCHOOL? WHAT KNOWLEDGE DO THEY HAVE ABOUT SGBV? OUR EDITOR UKECH DANIEL VISITED KAKUMA SECONDARY AND THIS IS WHAT HE FOUND OUT

Sixteen Days of Activism against Gender-based Violence has always taken place to actively advocate against violence. It is an important occasion bringing attention to issues of sexual, physical and psychological violence as well as cultures of violence. Normally, each year runs its own theme to commemorate the occasion. This year's theme being, 'making education safe for all.'

This theme has within it different subjects and topics to address. It focuses mainly on cases of gender-based violence occurring at school and on the journey to-and-from school. For that reason, I took the liberty to discuss the theme with some students at Kakuma Refugee Secondary School.

"Girls are not the only victims of gender-based violence, also boys are victims of such violence, but girls remain the most affected." Said Andrew Achilo, one of the students. Girls in particular are at risk in schools with flawed or under-resourced justice systems, where the culture of impunity can often protect perpetrators and conceal the violence that takes place. Boys on the other hand suffer from corporal punishment. Some teachers believe that corporal punishment is the best way to discipline children especially boys. This perception is wrong and it should be changed as it instills fear into the students, which in turn may hinder them from interacting with teachers freely.

There are many forms of gender-based violence that occur

in schools. This may include, staff-to-pupil, staff-to-staff or pupil-to-pupil violence and harassments. "It is very hard to know that there are GBV cases in schools. That doesn't mean that there are no such cases. It is just because the victims find it hard to report them for various reasons. Some of the reasons may be the fear of losing trust from their fellow friends, fear of ruining their reputation, and they might have been threatened not to report." Said Mohamed Warsame. "These students should always be encouraged to report the cases and they should also be informed that their cases are always confidential and will be handled safely."

Schools are places where pupils should feel safe, supported and nurtured rather than face the risk of violence particularly from teachers or school administrators who are obligated to provide them with care. Teachers are legal guardians of the children in their care and therefore have a duty to protect them from harm. This breach of trust and abuse of power is tremendously harmful and has a negative ripple effect to the health, education and the future wellbeing of not only pupils themselves, but also to the entire community. "All students should be able to achieve their dreams and ambitions and prepare for their adult life. This cannot be achieved if the school

environment is not safe for them." Said John Deng.

Far too often, school-related gender-based violence is preventing a lot of students, especially girls, from exercising their right to a safe and inclusive education of good quality. "Education is critical in transforming the lives of young people." Said Deng. The right to education is a fundamental human right and paves the way for other rights. The right to education is also a development goal connected to the elimination of poverty.

Despite the uphill battle to ensure safe education for all, we should also celebrate the positive change that is happening and the increasing global trend of combating violence in schools in particular. "The teachers and guardians have always tried their best to tackle this issue and they have achieved various successes in their efforts". Said Achilo. The agencies in the camp have also had an impact in the fight against gender-based violence as well. This is evident on seeing the increasing number of students in schools and other educational settings. We should all take the forefront in fighting against gender-based violence and make our schools safe for pupils. We should not give up in doing so. If the fight against gender-based violence dies

A Survivor's letter to me : A LETTER TO MY FATHER AND BROTHER

Dear Dad, Bro

As a young girl child growing up in Africa I always thought I was safe beside my dad and brothers. I would look up to you, hold your hands and whenever anyone would threaten me, I'd run to you. It felt amazing growing up until you turned against me.

A long time ago you married me off. I have never understood why you did it, why you would give me away to a stranger against my will. He was 35 years and I was underage, innocent and had no choice. Mum, bro, you could have protected me? Couldn't you?

I stayed with the man for two months and during this two months I faced a lifetime of problems. I was too young to take it so I ran away. I was two months pregnant by then, a child carrying a child with no hope for a better future.

9 gruelling months passed. No child should go through what I

went through. I did not understand what was going on in my body and I was neither prepared nor was my body ready for what I was going through.

I delivered a cute baby girl and I vowed to protect her with my life from people like you. She quickly became my reason for living and erased the pain I had gone through.

With all that you still wanted to come back for me. No! I was not going to let you take me through hell again so I ran to the police for protection.

Sadly, I lost my angel after two weeks. I felt like the world was coming to an end. Since then I have found a way to make it. I have dreams, dreams of making the world a better place for me and girls like me. I am lucky to be in school and I thank the UNHCR for the help they have extended to me and other girls and boys who are in the hands of greed.



COVER PHOTO: A portrait of Patience | Marti Corn

Patience

PATIENCE, 13 YEAR OLD SOUTH SUDANESE IS NOT AN ORDINARY GIRL. HER ELOQUENCE AND STRONG DETERMINATION TO MAKE IT IN LIFE DESPITE HER PHYSICAL CONDITION IS OUTSTANDING AND WORTH EMULATING.

I am one of those people who don't like it when a story starts with facts and figures; maybe because I am not that good with numbers and probably, other journalists are not that good with numbers too. Patience, a young South Sudanese girl living in Kakuma 4, New Arrival Area, is a soft spoken and energetic young girl in her early teen. I must admit at this point that I met her through a friend of mine who is also a Journalist and described her, as "the girl with the big will." At first I thought that finding her would prove difficult as I only had her name that was sent to me through a text on my phone.

I set on a mission to find Patience with my first stop being Hope Primary, her school. Surprisingly, everyone in her school knows her and one of her friends offered to take my team and I to her home as she had not reported to school on this particular day. We found her asleep at her home in Kakuma 4, a few hundred meters from Hope Primary School. Her face blossomed when she saw her friends and classmates bring visitors to her home. She struggled to walk out of her one roomed home. She looked like she was in pain and had to support herself with every step she took towards the door.

It is at this point that it hit me that Patience, only 13 years of age, was physically challenged. This made me even more interested to find out more about her. After exchanging pleasantries, she offered me a seat outside her house. I was astonished by her eloquence and fluency in

"I was the reading champion back in Uganda, nobody, not even the male students, could challenge me in reading and I wish we could have such competitions here in the camp"

English. Her English was too good for a Class Six student. "I started my schooling in Uganda," she says.

Patience came to Kakuma in 2014 with her mother and siblings from Uganda where they had lived for quite some time. She is the eldest child in her family. She lost her father who was the sole provider a few years back. This made their life even harder. At the Kakuma Refugee Camp, Patience and her family were received well by UNHCR and given a place to stay. She was admitted to Hope Primary School where she joined Class 5 and quickly rose to being the best girl in her class.

"I accepted my condition when I was still young. It is a condition that I believe I was born with and since there was nothing much I could do about it, I decided to concentrate on making my life better," she says.

The 15 year old is 'stuck between two dreams' as she came to admit. A part of her wants to become a doctor so that she could help more people who are like her while the other part wants to become a journalist. As a journalist, I try to encourage her to join my profession over medicine.

Education in the camp did not give her a smooth start. She would walk to school in the morning and back. However, a month or two after joining Hope Primary School she was taken to Nairobi for a surgery that would change her life. After the surgery on her feet, she could not walk to school and had to be confined to a wheel chair for sometime. This was the most difficult time for her, as she could not do anything for herself. Her best friend Rebecca was there to help her. She would push her to any place that she wanted and they even studied together after school. This was challenging especially considering that the newly built school had no ramps and the wheel chair had to be carried for her to access her class and other places in her school. She admits that education was much better in Uganda as the pupils could all speak in English and hence made



PHOTO: A portrait of Patience. Below; Patience poses with a friend

learning faster and enjoyable.

Patience's mother, Martha 30, joins us from the market and welcomes us to her house. She describes life taking care of Patience as challenging especially when she was still a toddler. However, she admits that she is proud of the daughter.

"I was the reading champion back in Uganda," says Patience with a proud look on her face. "Nobody, not even the male students could challenge me in reading and I wish we could have such competitions here in the camp," she adds.

Patience's main challenge is staying at home while other people are in school, because of her condition. She knows the importance of education and has developed a thirst for knowledge. She is lucky that her schoolmates understand and appreciate her. Patience is grateful to the teachers who have supported her and treated her like other kids. "I feel safe at school and I am always looking forward to another day at school," she adds.

Patience's feet are in pain and she is finding it hard to walk, but this does not keep her from dreaming of a better future after completing education. "Disability is all in the mind, you may be physically disabled but strong in the mind and that's what you need to succeed," says Patience.





WHY SAFE EDUCATION IS IMPORTANT FOR ALL

BY UKECH DANIEL

PHOTO: Women and a FilmAid's GBV Video Based Workshop IMarti Corn

Most of us come from societies that are guided by the philosophy that, “women should not be educated.” Hence, there are a scores of illiterate women in the society today. This notion is based on our traditional beliefs and girls are often left out when it comes to education matters.

However, girls at the Kakuma Refugee Camp have found an almost perfect way of tilting these matters to the right perspective. Their academic prosperity, which has been ignored for a long time, has been a resounding alarm on peoples’ minds. It is amazing to see girls flourishing in the current academic climate. Secondary schools at the Kakuma Refugee Camp are increasingly becoming feminized, due to the rapid increase in the number of students joining form one.

With the ability to conquer all odds, most girls have found it hard to face the challenges that always arise after joining secondary school. Unlike their male counterparts, they are mostly affected by teenage pregnancies, early marriages and the allures of what is referred to as ‘the western civilization charm.’ However, they have not let these setbacks halt their paths to success. Despite all those

challenges, they have embarked with strategies, including putting up activities that give them momentum to move forward. These activities engage their time positively and they take to books to strengthen their love affair with education in general.

Girls have always been encouraged to go to school. Though they have sometimes been reluctant; the education uptake amongst girls during the past two years have been astonishing. Their response was mainly in terms of their national examinations performances. They have managed to outdo the boys on many occasions. This shows how much they have been longing to quench their academic thirst. They have, without doubt, been resolute when it comes to education.

Regardless of our gender and traditional beliefs, we are all entitled to good education. We should not discriminate others for we don’t know what the future holds for them. Somebody once said that educate a man and you would have only educated only one person, but educate a woman then you would have educated a whole community. So let us take our girls to school, let them enjoy the fruits of education.



16 DAYS OF ACTIVISM LAUNCHED IN KAKUMA

THE LAUNCH

25th November – 10th December every year are days set aside to mark the 16 Days of Activism against sexual gender based violence. This year, the global theme is 'From Peace in the Home to Peace in the world with a special focus to Making Education Safe for All.

The 16 Days was launched in Kakuma 4 with all agencies operating in Kakuma and the Government represented. The day which began with a procession from Kakuma four heading to Hope Primary School saw thousands of Kakuma Refugees and the host community united with one voice.

Kakuma Refugee camp is home to 189,000 refugees according to the UNHCR website. These refugees, from close to 15 different nationalities and cultures, face a lot of challenges in the camp. Over the years, the humanitarian agencies have been working closely with the community to fight SGBV. Most African communities culture see the male species as superior and most of the times if not all the female species are oppressed.

The number of SGBV cases have been steadily decreasing over the years as the number of girls in schools increase.

In this years launch, speakers called for equal opportunities for all regardless of physical abilities, age, or gender.



WORLD AIDS DAY

On 1st December, the International Rescue Committee led Kakuma Refugees and the Host Community in marking the World Aids Day. The event that was held at Napata Grounds saw hundreds of people from different communities join together to have their voices heard. This years theme of the day was 'Getting to Zero' – zero HIV and AIDs related deaths and new infections.

The crowds were entertained by different cultural groups including the Congolese Music band and acrobats. People living with HIV and AIDS were also present and some gave heart-moving stories of their lives.

The IRC also had a mobile testing unit where humanitarian workers and community members got to voluntary test themselves.

SGBV DEBATE BY FAI & RCK

On the 2nd day of December 2015, FilmAid International and the Refugee Consortium of Kenya (RCK) held an open debate at Clinic Four basketball court. This notion 'Educating Boys is better than educating girls' generated a heated debate between the youth boys and girls and between community leaders from various sections of the camp. The proposers of the motion were defeated in the debate as the opposers, made up of both male and female, gave out stronger reasons why girl education is also important.

Speaking at the event, Sixtus Odumbe – Outreach Officer for FilmAid International stressed on the importance of making education safe for all (boys and girls) pointing out that educating a girl is educating the world.



16 DAYS KAKUMA MARATHON

The International Rescue Committee and the Kakuma SGBV Working Group organized a marathon competition to mark the 16 Days of Activism against SGBV. The marathon saw athletes both from the humanitarian agencies, host and refugee community compete in a race that started at Lokado offices, through Kakuma Town to end at Kalemchuch Peace Center. The competition was followed by an award ceremony at The Kalemchuch Peace Centre. David Kelio and John Taban took the first and second position respectively in the men's race while Regina Nakuro and Wema Maureen took the first and second price respectively in the 4.3 Km race.

WORLD DISABILITY DAY

International Day of People with Disability (IDPwD) is a United Nations sanctioned day that aims to promote an understanding of people with disability and encourage support for their dignity, rights and well-being. The IDPwD is marked every 3rd December and this year Handicap International in collaboration with different agencies working in Kakuma held a special event to mark the day. The event that was planned to take place at Napata grounds was moved to Lushiano Hall due to heavy rains that poured on Thursday morning. However, residents of Kakuma Refugee camp embraced the rains to record huge turnout at the event.





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