

THE Refugee

MAGAZINE

Issue #18

| Dadaab | Kakuma Edition

NEW ROAD
OPENING UP KAKUMA

DADAAB STUDENTS
PROJECT HOPE WITH A FRAME OF MIND

SEEING
BEYOND THE
OBVIOUS

EDGING CLOSER
TO DREAMS OF BECOMING
A DOCTOR - FARDOWSA'S STORY

AGAINST ALL ODDS

FilmAid Kenya

Inform. Engage. Inspire.

14th ANNUAL FILMAID KENYA FILM FESTIVAL 2021

ONLINE EVENT



THE DATE: SEPT/18/21.
TIME: 1900 HOURS – 2200 HOURS EAT
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on Facebook & @FilmAid on Instagram



Inform Engage Inspire

Now in its 14th year, FilmAid Kenya's Annual Film Festival is a multi-day event that celebrates the work of young refugee and host community filmmakers through activities such as film screening sessions and dialogues within the refugee camps and host communities. The festival celebrates the creative self-expression and ambitious determination of young refugee and host community filmmakers demanding to tell their own stories and represent their communities.

The Channel: FilmAidFilmFestival Facebook
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Message from the Editor

Inform. Engage. Inspire.

It's that wonderful time of year again! FilmAid Kenya's presents its 14th Annual FilmAid Kenya Film Festival celebrating the individual and collective voice around the theme of Inform. Engage. Inspire. As FilmAid Kenya marks its 20th year jubilee this year, a number of brand building activities have been planned. The FilmAid brand will be relaunching as FilmAid Kenya with its new brand promise of Inform. Engage. Inspire. centred around the three core pillars of our work; Participatory Media Production & Dissemination, Skills & Social Development and Community Engagement.

To build awareness on our revamped brand promise, the FilmAid Kenya Film Festival (FAKFF) theme will be around stories that inform, engage and inspire communities, as stories are the catalyst for change as any one person's story can change the way we think — and in changing the way enough people think, it can change our world!

The refugee magazine highlights stories that inform on the impact of education in the camp, to personal stories that engage in addressing those barriers that hold us back, to stories that inspire action and resolve on the resilience of the human spirit in getting through a global pandemic world!

Enjoy your read.

Editor In Chief



FilmAid Kenya

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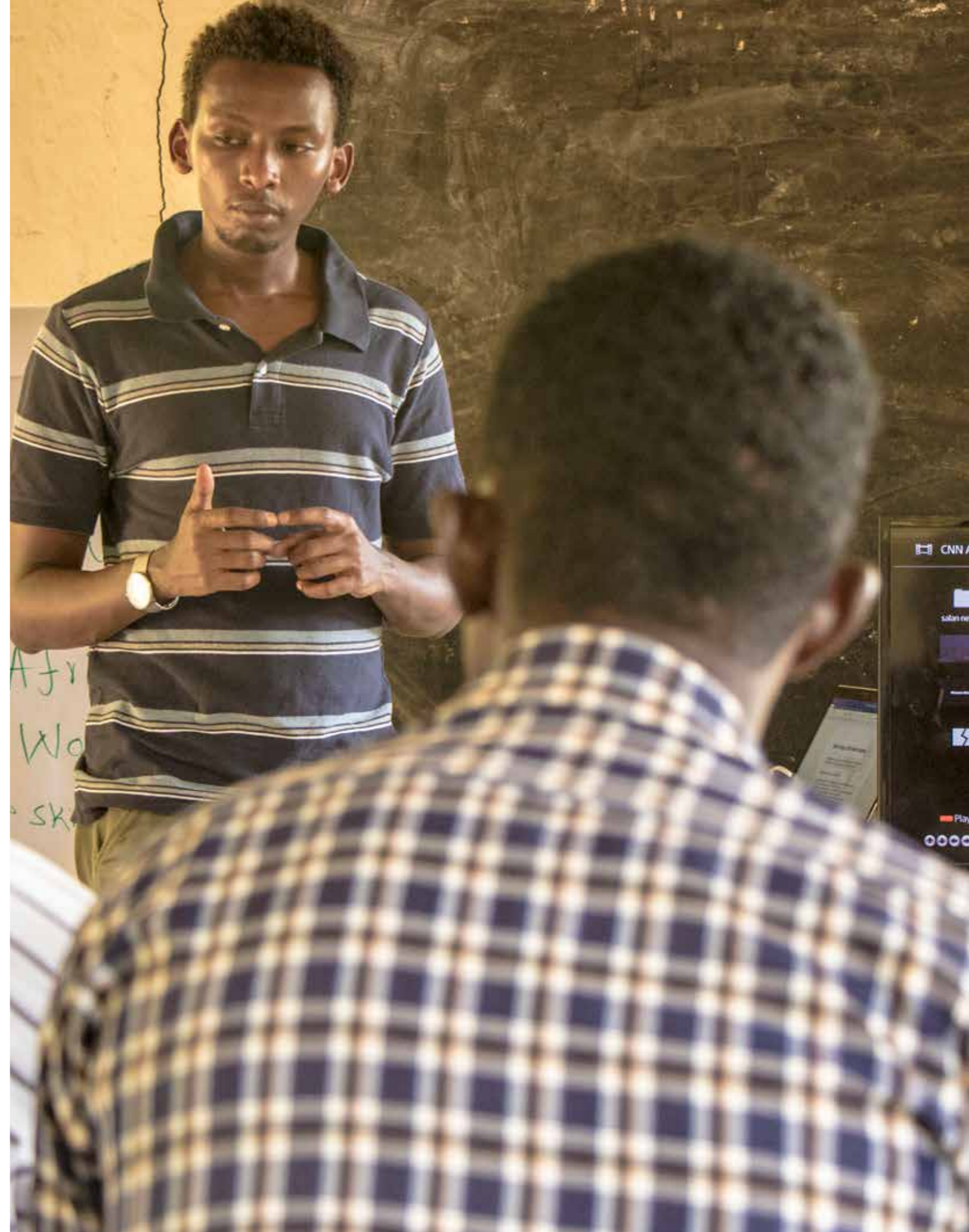
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DADAAB STUDENTS PROJECT HOPE WITH A FRAME OF MIND

Life for the refugee students looks hopeful not because of my training but because of their attitude in life and working towards a better future for themselves and their generations.

By Idriss Muktar

When we read of refugees, we often picture the desperate, destitute, and in dire need, but have you, for a moment thought, it's just a person pushed to the edge of their world? Through the Human Rights Center, UC Berkeley School of Law, I had the opportunity to spend my summer in the Dadaab refugee camp, one of the largest refugee complexes in the world. Although, I had been to Dadaab and Kakuma before, this time I was here to take more than a dozen students on a writing and broadcast journalism training, with emphasis on Television reporting.

I have never lived through war or experienced displacement, but I have come closer by understanding what my group of students went through. Most of them led brilliant lives in their respective countries but everything changed in a day, and for them, they had to choose to either sit back and die in their lands or seek refuge elsewhere. They chose the latter. The famous Somali poet, Warsan Shire said, "No one puts their children in a boat unless the water is safer than the land." These words represent the stories of all the men and women I met in Dadaab. It

couldn't be less true.

While I had set out to do a workshop on filmmaking, I realized, with the help of FilmAid Kenya's Director of strategy Magu Ngumo, that the students will benefit more from broadcast journalism. The students needed more support on broadcast media and story writing. Basically, a training on journalism. An enhanced way to tell their stories through words first before embarking on fictional movie making.

Although I had such a short time and having to condense what, I, had to learn in two years, the result was exemplary given the circumstances. Most of the students escaped war and famine in Somalia, South Sudan, Ethiopia, Burundi, and Congo. It was an incredible experience to see the outcome in such a short period, building confidence to report local stories and write gave me so much pride and Joy.

To be a journalist requires one to be inquisitive and eager to know more about one's environment and through this period, the students showed that, a quality that every journalist possesses.



To be a journalist requires one to be inquisitive and eager to know more about one's environment



Photo: Idriss demonstrating the use of a camera



Photo: Idriss on a one on one with the Media students in Hagadera

As challenging as our training might have been, having, Iqra Salah, a BBC Africa reporter talk to the students was the icing on the cake. The beam on their faces gave me so much pleasure and seeing the students confidently speak to Iqra and ask well-informed questions was evidence of what they want to do and how eager they are.

Practice makes perfect, I already saw what practice can do for the students, you will see it in the pieces to camera we filmed and I will share it in the final report. I hope that the students will take their filmmaking and news reporting training beyond the classroom.

I was hoping a couple of more reporters that the students had asked

for would come on board, however, time conflicts did not allow us to have them while I was still in Kenya but we are looking at a later date, where I can still have the students engage with their favorite reporters.

For those of us who had never in a single day had to worry about tomorrow is a privilege. To those who live in the camps, bullets and explosions had for long become a wake-up call that it doesn't sound right when they don't hear those sounds.

Life for the refugee students looks hopeful not because of my training but because of their attitude in life and working towards a better future for themselves and their generations. This training only offers them a chance to curate their stories as they

want it. I am reminded of an African proverb, "Until the lion learns how to write, every story will glorify the hunter."

This experience only makes me more grateful and appreciative of what life offers me.



Life for the refugee students looks hopeful not because of my training but because of their attitude in life and working towards a better future for themselves and their generations.

Idriss



Fardowsa Gedi with books donated by the European Union to support refugee children in the Dadaab refugee camps in Kenya. © UNHCR/Mohamed Maalim

EDGING CLOSER TO DREAMS OF BECOMING A DOCTOR – FARDOWSA’S STORY

By Mohamed Maalim

Seated in the middle of her class, 17-year-old Fardowsa Gedi tries to catch up with an ongoing lesson on her favourite subject mathematics.

In 2012, Fardowsa’s family fled the drought in Somalia and now lives in the Ifo camp, which is the oldest of the three refugee camps in the Dadaab Refugee Complex located in Garissa County in northeastern Kenya.

“I was only nine when we arrived in Kenya. We left our hometown Buale in Somalia because there was no food left for my family,” says Fardowsa.

The family came from the southern part of the country where people were starving.

“All the cattle died. Our country only had staple food supplies such as cornmeal or millet. What little was left was sold for high prices. Even the food reserves from food aid programs were running out and armed groups weren’t allowing food aid to be delivered for a long time,” says Gedi, Fardowsa’s father.

Between mid-2011 and mid-2012, drought caused a severe food crisis in Somalia and other countries in the region, which threatened the livelihood of some 9.5 million people. Many people from southern Somalia fled to neighbouring Kenya and Ethiopia.

Despite over 30 years of conflict and

displacement, many Somalis have been able to rebuild their lives and thrive in their new homes.

“Learning from her own experiences and challenges and foreseeing the developing role of women, my mother often talked to me about becoming a good person, a good partner, a good mother, but also about the importance of personal growth and accomplishment”, Fardowsa adds.

“My mother told me that if I really want to, I can become a doctor. She also told me that even the biggest dreams can come true.”

“She wants me to help people in our poor, remote community back home as a doctor”, she remarks.

On 15 March 2020, the Kenyan Government closed all schools and colleges nationwide as prevention against the spread of COVID-19. The closure of institutions not only affected learners and teachers, but it also brought numerous economic and social issues, including education exclusion, child protection, increase in teenage pregnancy, and sexual exploitation among other issues.

“The year 2020 was terrible for refugee children in Dadaab, as schools were closed almost the whole year. We anxiously waited for schools to reopen for children to continue with their studies,” says Mr. Aden Hassan, the headteacher of Friends Primary School in Ifo refugee camp. “We revised our notes as we

“My mother told me that if I really want to, I can become a doctor. She also told me that even the biggest dreams can come true.”

Fardowsa

waited for new instructions from the Ministry of Education. In the beginning, I thought the schools would open again quickly, as I found math difficult to study at home alone. Most topics were difficult to understand without the help of a teacher,” says Fardowsa.

With the support from our donors and partners such as the European Union, UNHCR, and education partners in Kenya adopted a remote and digital learning environment including live radio lessons and e-learning for refugees to continue to access education during the COVID-19 pandemic. The European Union is supporting refugee children in both Dadaab and Kakuma refugee camps and Kalobeyei Settlement with learning materials like textbooks and solar-powered lamps for them to study at home.

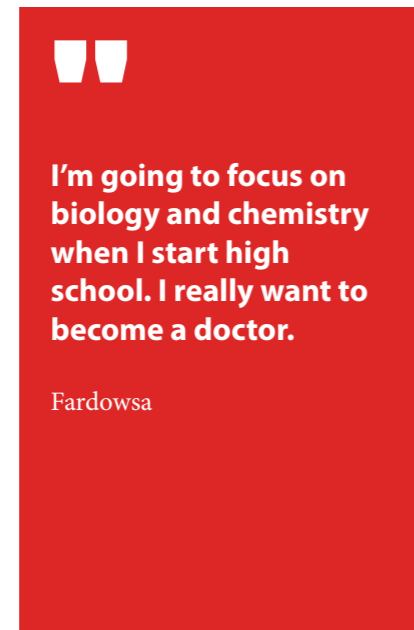
In 2020, UNHCR, education partners, and schoolteachers ensured that students did not miss lessons despite the school closure. “We joined WhatsApp groups where teachers were able to share learning materials and teach us virtually. We also got self-study revision textbooks”, says Fardowsa.

According to Dakane Ahmed Bare, UNHCR’s Education Officer in Dadaab, digital learning platforms such as Google Classrooms, social media platforms, and Community Learning Boards became efficient alternative teaching methods during the closure.

“Teachers prepared tailor-made teaching and digital learning materials for the different grades and ages. This was a success considering there were no physical classes during most of the year”, he adds.

Pursuing education remains a challenge for Fardowsa but she is not giving up her hopes and dreams.

“I’m going to focus on biology and chemistry when I start high school. I really want to become a doctor.” Despite the current circumstances, she is well aware of how important education is and she is determined to do her best to make her dreams come true.



I’m going to focus on biology and chemistry when I start high school. I really want to become a doctor.

Fardowsa



Photo: 12-year-old Stefanie Steven, a Class 5 pupil in Ifo refugee camp takes notes during a science lesson. © UNHCR/ Mohamed Maalim



Photo: Students receiving solar lamps donated by the European Union to help them study at night. © UNHCR/ Mohamed Maalim

POEM

WOMAN CRY

Please don't batter me make me better,
 I see you coming from the bar,
 Don't bar me, make me soar beyond Jupiter,
 I am a flower, a rose flower for that matter,
 Or a beautiful Lilly, I need sunshine and water,
 I need to grow bigger and healthier,
 I need your protection lover,
 I am a little girl, I need quality education for my future,
 Empower me to influence positively my Kenya and Africa,
 Don't defile me, oh please don't destroy my life!! It's so so precious,
 I am feeble and weak, Uncle don't advantage of this vulnerable yet awesome creature,
 Give me space to nurture my abilities and talents from the Maker,
 Take me in the classroom as well as co-curricular,
 I am Maria I am not good at law but I am a world-class runner,
 I am not good at biology but I am a great actor,
 I perform best in this classroom called a 'theatre',
 I am pregnant mother, take me to good healthcare,
 Don't prolong the labour, I don't want to get fistula,
 We are able women, we are great leaders,
 Empower us we are your mothers/sisters/daughters,
 We can be presidents like Her Excellency Sirleaf Johnson in Liberia,
 Her Excellency Suluhu Hassan in Tanzania,
 We are even deputy to the most powerful nation America,
 Congratulations to Harris Kamala,
 I can't convince you further,
 The days' women were confined within kitchen environment are over,
 It's a new era,
 Let's all arise and occupy our space...

*** s@m.

SEEING BEYOND THE OBVIOUS

[2021/July][Village 2/Kalobeyei][Main actor on standby on the set of the short student film production "Lost"] [Photo by: Rasha Al Jundi/FilmAid Kenya]

By: Rasha Al Jundi

The first time I visited Kenya, back in 2008, to attend a six-week academic course in humanitarian assistance, I fell in love with the country's vastness, lush landscapes, exotic coastline, and warm people. Little did I know at the time that 13 years later, I would be residing here and working for FilmAid Kenya as the Field Manager for the organisation's operations in Kakuma refugee camp and Kalobeyei integrated settlement.

I was thrilled to land the job shortly after arriving in Nairobi with my partner. Despite my 12 years of experience in the humanitarian/development field, I had never worked for an organisation whose core activities focus on the art of communicating with communities in protracted crises. I remember how anxious I was during the first few weeks on the job, as I was treading on new territory. While I was somehow relieved that I didn't have to deal with the technicalities of cash transfer programming, outpatient nutrition clinics, or the specifications of drilling boreholes; I knew that the critical role of communication with communities regarding those services- among many others- is going to be a memorable new challenge.

Indeed, FilmAid Kenya opened my eyes to the power, and at times, the dangers of communication. Humanitarian and development workers tend to mention the importance of communicating with and engaging affected communities in passive tones. Many focus on communication for visibility or donor reporting purposes. Due to several factors including underfunding, communication tends to be an 'add-on', an afterthought, rather than an integrated and cross-cutting aspect of programming. Yet, with FilmAid Kenya, it's the core order of business

daily. Communication: it's languages, channels, pathways, outcomes, target audiences... everything that the term "communication" holds in its meaning, is the bread and butter of FilmAid Kenya teams. The creativity of those team members, which I experienced and observed firsthand, is the sweet cherry on top.

When I started with FilmAid Kenya in December 2020, a new class of refugee students was being selected to enroll in the organisation's annual nine-month-long media entrepreneurship training program. I got to learn that this skills development program is one of FilmAid Kenya's signature interventions. To date, the program successfully contributed to transforming the lives of many participants, who currently make up the FilmAid Kenya alumni pool. While some went on to open their own production houses in Kakuma or pursue further higher education; others continue to work with FilmAid's creative and content teams.

By the time my mission as the Field Manager for Kakuma was coming to an end earlier this month, the training students (Class of 2021) had moved on to various filming locations around Kakuma and Kalobeyei to translate their creative storytelling theoretical sessions into practice. I had the pleasure to witness and document some of those creatives in action. Every day, for a week per film, each production crew would go out very early in the morning to create new visual material. They would stay out in the field for as long as it took to call it a wrap. Moving from one film set to another, the energy, the laughs, and the peer-to-peer support deeply inspired me. I used to rush through my daily schedule of calls, email correspondence, and endless paperwork to go out to the field and



Photo: From top- [Kakuma 1/on set of "April Fools Day" film][Film director (center) going through the next scene rehearsal with the main actors [2021/July][Kakuma 1/on set of "Wema" film] [Main actress on standby on the set of the short student film production "Wema"] [Photo by: Rasha Al Jundi/FilmAid Kenya]

see more from those sets. Students spend months learning and preparing for their turn to shine and translate their storytelling visions from paper to visual short films for the external general audience. With close guidance from the endlessly dedicated media trainer, Dennis Munene, crew members run around each film set to prep actors and locations; manage crowds; conduct rehearsals and execute actions called out by the respective film directors. If nothing else, FilmAid Kenya's media training intervention brings out the best in those young creatives. It also reveals new talents from among the community, personified in the actors and actresses who are recruited to play various roles in the student films.

What I documented through my camera lens was pure aptitude, focus, and skill from individuals who never made a film or acted before. I cannot wait to watch the final productions of those amazing creative young minds from Kakuma and Kalobeyei during the FilmAid Kenya Film Festival, which will be broadcasted online on September 18th.

Albeit short, my journey with FilmAid Kenya is not over. I am moving on to pursue my passion in photography for the next 10 months, and build my knowledge further in documentary photography and visual photojournalism at the International Center for Photography (ICP). With this personal investment in myself, I hope that one day, I will possess a shred of what I experienced while working for FilmAid Kenya: **creativity, passion, and seeing beyond the obvious.**



Photo: [2021/July][Village 2/Kalobeyei][Setting up a wide outdoor shot on top FilmAid Kenya's vehicle in Kalobeyei] [Photo by: Rasha Al Jundi/FilmAid Kenya]



Photo: [2021/July][Kakuma 1/on set of "Wema" film][Camera rolling][Photo by: Rasha Al Jundi/FilmAid Kenya]



Photo: [2021/July][Village 2/Kalobeyei][The crew moves in for close shots in Kalobeyei][Photo by: Rasha Al Jundi/FilmAid Kenya]

COVER STORY



Photo by Mercy Mwanzia

Students' Film 2021 - Dadaab

AGAINST ALL ODDS

Two young lovers separated by their community differences find a way to overcome all the obstacles that they face from their close family members in order to be together.

BTS JAH MEELA



*Photo: Behind the Scene - Student's Film Production - Jah meela
[Photo by: Dennis Munene]*

BTS HAMDHI



Photo: A teenage girl living with her visually impaired mum who depends on her gets exploited by a taxi driver in the pretext of love - but leaves her the moment she becomes pregnant. [Photo by: Mercy Mwanzia]

NEW ROAD OPENING UP KAKUMA

By Najila Khalifa

Kakuma Refugee Camp is home to about 170,000 refugees from different nationalities. Due to this large number of Refugees basic needs have been provided for them by the UNHCR. But many of these needs happened to be brought from far places.

Apart from the refugees in the Camp, Kakuma is also a place with intensified business activities. Kakuma Camp is home to over seven recognized markets and many small shops scattered in the Camp. Due to the many markets and the shops, roads need to be constructed well so that transportation is made easier.

For these services to find ways into the Camp, roads and other transports methods need to be in a favorable condition to ease the transportation of goods and the basic needs to the camp. But who's to be handed this difficult task? How will it be done? To answer all these questions, the World food Programme (WFP) took the work in hand and proved to be answerable to all the questions hanging in the air. They have already started the construction and they are now halfway from completion. The construction process commenced from Kakuma 1 zone 2 and Kakuma 4 respectively.

High above the ground, sand and gravels are added on the top, the road

With this construction process, transport will not only be easier but also cheaper. Emergency cases will now be solved.

Najila Khalifa
Kakuma.

is constructed to enhance its durability. This ascertains years of productivity. Where there is a river or small water channel bridge or over roads are made to channel the water so it will not destroy the road again. Trenches are also made to prevent waterlogging.

With this construction process, transport will not only be easier but also cheaper. Emergency cases will now be solved. Teachers and other staff from different organizations are transported on time to their respective places of work. If this construction is over and done in Kakuma Camp, then there will be no worry about any issues to deal with transportation.

Turkana County is a place that receives little to no rain annually. Although the rain received is little, it has had fatal

consequences for Kakuma Refugee Camp residents. Whenever it rains, the two rivers, river Tarach and river Lomunyenepus/ Nabek running across Kakuma break their banks, which has resulted in homes being swept away and even deaths. Over the last two years, in the Juba field within the Hong Kong area, one corner of the pitch has already been swept away by the river. Behind the football field, an elevated water tank near the Police Station was nearly being swept away.



Kakuma Road Photo by Gabriel Bugoma

YOUNG MOTHER WITH BIG DREAMS



Photo: Mercy taking a Picture during class practicals

Photo by: Mbarush

By Baobab Christian

I have a business which brings food to my table, but a business can collapse anytime, the media skills that I'm getting will never fade away but stick to my mind

Mercy.

18 years old Mercy Akiru is a young woman who wears many hats. She is a mother of a 5-month-old child, a businesswoman, and a student at the same time. She is the true definition of a real hustler.

Immediately after completing her secondary education, Mercy got married to her long-time boyfriend and they have been living together in Towakaeni, a small village in Kakuma. She sells clothes and shoes for her livelihoods, and to support her family.

Her husband, who is still in school, joined college early this year and depends on the support from her to

sustain his learning both financially and other responsibilities.

With her husband absent, and faced with the daunting responsibilities to take care of her home, Mercy decided to go back and stay with her parents to ease the pressure until her husband completes college and returns home.

This has enable her to pass some responsibilities to her siblings in looking after the child, while she gets some space to venture into other activities.

Given the opportunity, Mercy managed to join FilmAid Kenya's media mentorship training supported by UNICEF. She has since developed interest in acting.

Despite the challenges, Mercy has found hope to pursue her dream of becoming a journalist. Her decision to join the training gives her hopes to get a new skill that will help her in her life.

"I have a business which brings food to my table, but a business can collapse anytime, the media skills that I'm getting will never fade away but stick to my mind," States Mercy.

Her struggles to balance her responsibility and learning does not deter her from focusing on her future. She believes that those challenges make her stronger, which is why she keeps fighting. She does not regret her decision because she can provide for her baby and she just figured out that it is never too late to embrace her career dream.

GARANE'S JOURNEY AND HIS SELFLESS DESIRE



Photo: Garane with his daughter living with disability



Photo: Garane going through his study books

By Kamil Ahmed

He suffered a gunshot wound on his right hand that rendered him disabled while fleeing his home country of Somalia to escape the civil war that saw thousands of his people die and hundreds displaced.

Garane Abdullahi Ali was left with a scar at a bus station in Mogadishu when he was preparing to escape the war, something he lives to remember to this day.

A few minutes before the bus he was boarding left for Dadaab refugee camp, Garane stepped out of the vehicle to buy milk for his children, everyone was in high spirits. In a twinkle of a minute, the peaceful scene at the station was disrupted. Suddenly, the peaceful scene shattered in an instant - as it had turned into a war zone. Gunmen indiscriminately shot at innocent civilians.

It was a life-threatening scene as adrenaline was running high and the bus stage was ablaze with confusion.

Garane was disconnected from his family for a while trying to hide in a tight corner where he believed he was safe from the bullets.

Suddenly, a sharp pain ran through his right hand as he helplessly watched blood overflow...

Asha Salim, Garane's wife who was heavily pregnant at the time, helplessly saw her husband laying down and shouted for help. She decided to suspend their journey in order to take care of her husband but Garane refused and told her to not risk their lives too for saving him.

He was rushed to a nearby hospital in the capital Mogadishu to seek treatment. A day after his medication, the father of 5 was given the heart breaking news. He was informed that his hand had to be amputated for him to survive, something that broke his heart into pieces.

"I was heartbroken but I was not shocked about losing my hand since

I lived. I am lucky to be alive and I never thought I would be alive and get the support and help needed from the hospital," says Garane.

Three months after his surgery, Garane managed to migrate to Dadaab where he sought asylum as a refugee. While on his way, his wife gave birth to a bouncing baby boy whom they named Ahmed.

Every morning when Garane and his family woke in Dadaab, they were grateful they made it to the land of sanctuary although with breadwinner had lost an arm.

After several years, staying in the camp living with a disability and no job, Garane's wife gave birth to their 5 children, Unfortunately, the baby girl was born disabled. She was named Amina. She was born with a congenital disorder of movement, muscle tone, or posture. Her treatment and bills in the hospital that the father could not afford caused an

He and his children go to the same school apart from the disabled child - Amina who remains at his neighbour's home. He wakes up early in the morning around 3 am, prepares breakfast, sweeps the house, feeds the kids, fetches water, and goes to school before 7:00 am. Despite his old age and disability, Ali and his children rely on the World Food Programme (WFP) donated food which is not insufficient to cater to his family's needs.

"It was sad for us to lose the mother of my children. I had dreams and had set plans but again another disaster has come in. I now do everything for them everything and we go to the same school apart from Amina who I live with my neighbour during the day and they take care of her well," says Garane.

Garage believes that he can achieve his dreams towards the future just like anyone else but unfortunately, he's living in a community where physically handicapped people have traditionally been considered as a curse. He faced more challenges during his struggle but refused to beg.

argument and as fate would have it, it ended up with a divorce.

"The children needed food and I couldn't afford to buy it because of my disability. I cannot do things as I did before and that caused an endless argument between me and my wife ending up in a divorce," he regretted.

"She took the kids."

Back home, before losing his hand, Garane used to earn his daily bread by doing casual jobs like pulling wheelbarrows, fishing, driving, and mechanics that made him sustain his family.

Garane,40, believes that his life is not defined by his disability so he decided to go back to school. He enrolled

in Hagadera Adult school where he spent 5 years in lower primary education and in 2017 he was promoted to upper primary in central primary school where he now runs as a chairman of the Environmental Club and a member school prefect.

"If I could have had an education. I could do everything and earn a living even if I was blind, then I realized it's never too late to go to school," states Garane.

On Wednesday, December 25, 2019, was Garane's second nightmare after the death of his divorced wife. He was forced to take his children into custody and moved them to a tiny dark room where he has been living and opened a new chapter of his life.

"People assume that if you are physically disabled, you are also disabled in the mind. I want to erase that ideology from the minds of my community through sensitization, It is heartbreaking," he states.

The proud father of 5 has a deep sense of human dignity and has already set his career path. He would like to set up an organization that helps physically and mentally handicapped children across the continent.

"I have a paralyzed 8yr old who cannot go to school and I have lived with disability for eleven years, I know how it hurts and the circumstance that many of us are living with," he concludes.

IS IT AN OPPORTUNE MOMENT FOR YOUTH LEADERSHIP?



By Dominic Lotum Lokwawi

To lead a group of young people and impact them positively by providing sustainable solutions to their concerns is not a walk in the park. It takes utter dedication, unrelenting passion, tolerance, commitment and most importantly exhibiting exceptional leadership qualities just to mention but few. Youth unions or associations present a platform to experience Youthful demands in their raw and extreme form because this is the groundbreaking phase.

Depression as a result of harsh economic challenges is a common millennials phenomenon. Drug addiction, mental-related illnesses, and desperation for money due to

extreme poverty are associated with Youth. According to most people, this is a troubled group that has been historically sidelined from matters even those affecting them directly. This marginalization has led to their vulnerability to all forms of attacks; emotional and physical. Ironically, this is the most diverse, tolerant, well-educated, well-connected, and idealistic generation ever. They form the majority group of people in the electorate, workforce, and population in general. Enough people to effect any kind of change. They possess the unexplored potential of saving humanity from its problems. Youth are an invaluable resource to this world only that they haven't realized it yet. Who holds the key to this

pave the way for a paradigm shift towards youth Leadership.

Being born and raised in Turkana county-North west of Kenya placed me at the centre of the challenges an African Child faces. Talk of poverty, hunger, poor access to education, and lack of basic necessities the list is endless. These are the beautiful scars that have consequently shaped me to be a resilient being and a key champion of making things right where they seemed wrong.

Furthermore, being an undergraduate student of Economics at the University of Nairobi and my position in Youth Leadership has placed me strategically in addressing Youth challenges. I have always had a dream of being at the table of policy formulation, discussion, and implementation of the same policies. In a bid to voice out the plea of the unrepresented majority. I believe this is so for most people that are yearning for changes in society.

2020-2021 The Corona pandemic has presented great learning experience to us all. It dawned on us that the pandemic was the determinant. Not even well-established governments, religious institutions, and other existing independent unions could

figure out a way forward to ascertain our survival in the face of such adversity. The whole system was shut down. Confusion engulfed the whole world, What next? after all the pandemic has already 'factory reset' the World. Who do we entrust to build us a new foundation from the aftermath of the destruction caused by the Pandemic? It resembled a post-war zone. This was indeed a prophetic moment as far as leadership is concerned; a time of healing wounds, a moment of emancipation and restoration of hope that things are going to be right again.

The script about the Corona pandemic would not entirely carry a somber mood. Lest we forget that It also gave us a break, a healthy break to recollect ourselves and restructure a new birth of a golden age. An era that is inclusive in its approaches towards enhancing the overall well-being of all global citizens; young or old, liberal or conservative, modern or traditional, black or white.

If we (the youth) make good use of the technological digital advancements for economic liberation and learn to make the right choices, then this will be our gateway to infinity and immortality as a generation.

Let us write this beautiful script together.



Being born and raised in Turkana county-North west of Kenya placed me at the centre of the challenges an African Child faces.

Dominic



If we (the youth) make good use of the technological digital advancements for economic liberation and learn to make the right choices, then this will be our gateway to infinity and immortality as a generation.

Dominic



DADAAB: U.S. DONATES SANITARY PADS TO HELP KEEP GIRLS IN SCHOOL

By Mohamed Maalim

20-year-old Mano Hamdan remembers very little about life in Kismayo, Somalia. Her father passed away in 2006 and the family struggled financially, as her mother tried to make ends meet.

The death of her father, who was the family's only breadwinner, coupled with insecurity in Somalia forced the family of eight to flee in 2006 to Kenya.

Growing up, Mano and her four sisters couldn't always have access to sanitary pads.

"We tore our clothes into pieces and used them as sanitary pads. If we didn't have sanitary materials, we still used pieces torn from our clothing."

The lack of sanitary products for girls in Dadaab often resulted in schoolgirls missing classes during their menstrual period.

19-year-old Nimo Omar is a Somali refugee classmate of Mano and an aspiring Professor of Medicine. According to her, pads donated by UNHCR and partners do not last throughout the menstrual cycle.

"Due to lack of livelihood opportunities, families cannot afford to buy sanitary pads. Therefore, most girls are not even sure of how they are supposed to handle and manage their periods", she adds.

According to Martha Kow-Donkor, UNHCR's Community-Based

Protection Officer in Dadaab, culture, and religion also pose a barrier to menstrual health education since such education is not given at home.

"Girls rely on friends and peers for information, which may be distorted. There is, therefore, a need for accurate, age-appropriate, and quality sex education in schools"

These challenges faced by girl students do not only impact negatively their participation and performance in school but also take away their dignity, self-esteem, and self-confidence. Their major fear is possible leakage, which attracts teasing from male learners. To avoid this, girls may opt to miss school during their period.

"Some girls sleep in class and some will excuse themselves to use the bathroom more frequently, losing precious learning time in the process", she says. "Our teachers are not yet fully equipped to assist girls out of these problems", Windle International Kenya's Norah Kariba adds.

On August 2021, the US Government donated 100,000 pieces of sanitary pads to the UNHCR Dadaab office to be distributed to refugee girls in both primary and secondary schools in Dadaab to help keep girls in school.

as a result of the support from donors like the Government of the United States who have continuously donated sanitary items, girls' school attendance and performance has improved over the past few years.

Mano who is so attuned to feeling positive all the time, dreams of becoming a doctor and living with her family in Somalia.

"Once I complete my studies, I want to return to Somalia and educate girls on sanitary hygiene and hopefully make sanitary pads available for all young girls in Somalia", says Mano.



We tore our clothes into pieces and used them as sanitary pads. If we didn't have sanitary materials, we still used pieces torn from our clothing.

Hamdan



Mano Hamdan takes notes during a computer class. UNHCR/Mohamed Maalim

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