



THE
Refugee

MAGAZINE

Issue #17

| Dadaab | Kakuma Edition

FILMMAKER, AMINA, WINS
MASTERCARD SCHOLARSHIP TO
STUDY FILM

BEYOND GIRL CHILD
EMPOWERMENT; OFFERING REAL
SOLUTIONS

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Message from the Editor

It is an absolute pleasure to welcome you to our 17th Issue of The Refugee Magazine which is our second publication of 2021.

As we get inspired by the multitude of voices contained within our environment from Dadaab to Kakuma and even beyond, we strive to continually provide a platform that allows these voices to be read and 'heard' because we believe that each one of us has a story to tell.

As FilmAid Kenya, the publishers of the Refugee Magazine, we believe in the power of storytelling, and other than film for which we are undoubtedly known, The Refugee Magazine provides yet an alternative and convenient channel for sharing captivating stories that would ordinarily 'miss our ears and eyes.'

In this edition, we feature stories of resilience and triumph above all the odds. From the dreamers of Dadaab to the heroines of Kakuma, this edition weaves together narratives of humanity rising above the hurdles on its path.

I know we are going through an anxious and challenging time in the face of the Covid-19 pandemic but, I also know from the stories you share with us and the ones we experience with you that we are strong when we are united.

Thank you for taking the time to read this edition. We hope you enjoy this copy of The Refugee Magazine.

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Photo: Abdikadir Warsame

Photo : ©FilmAid Kenya/ Jimale

DADAAB'S WARSAME GOES AGAINST ALL ODDS TO PURSUE HIS ACADEMIC DREAMS IN CANADA

By Mohamed Jimale

Growing up in the rough, dry, and dusty Dadaab refugee complex, Warsame Abdikadir, 23, had felt like his whole life had been set against him in all manner of odds. The ninth born in a family of ten, he could hardly imagine that he would someday walk away from life in the camps to pursue his dreams.

Today, Warsame is preparing to head to Canada to pursue a degree in Medicine through a World University Services of Canada (WUSC) scholarship after attaining a mean grade of A- in the Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education (KCSE) in 2019. All the obstacles he had to overcome is not lost on him. "It took focus and determination to succeed," he says.

Warsame's family fled Somalia in 1991 to seek asylum in Kenya after the civil war broke out that year and which led to the collapse of the Somali government.

Born and raised in the Dadaab refugee camp, Warsame lost both his parents when he was only six years old and was under the care of his older brothers. "My parents died when I was six

years old. Being that young and disabled, I could hardly imagine how my life would turn out," he says. "But my brothers took care of me until this moment," he adds.

Emerging as the best student in the entire Dadaab refugee camp and the surrounding areas while living with a disability is not a small feat when you live in a refugee camp with numerous challenges. "I always give a message of encouragement to other people living with disability so that they do not get pulled down by the negativity and disparaging comments made by people," he says.

"I have lived a very positive life despite the challenges I come across daily and that was the advice from my mother before her passing away and her words have guided me to where I am today. From my experience, I can assure anybody with vision and dreams that with dedication and hard work, you can make your dreams come true," he adds.

In 2020, when schools were closed due to the Covid19 pandemic, learning was paralyzed for school-going children. "When the schools were closed, I volunteered to help the school-going children

in the camps. I used to provide private tutoring at home so that their education was not adversely affected, and I am very proud to say the students I coached did well in their final exams," he says.

Despite the usual challenges, refugees continue to enjoy various opportunities in education, vocational training, and scholarship opportunities within and outside Kenya to better their lives and that of their families.

Warsame's story is one of hope and inspiration to many other young people living with disabilities.



My parents died when I was six years old. Being that young and disabled, I could hardly imagine how my life would turn out.



Warsame

SOUTH SUDAN'S MAKETH ALIER DENG BECOMES THE 2020 KCSE CHAMPION OF TURKANA WEST

By Baluu Wol Makuach

Maketh Alier Deng topped the 2020 Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education (KCSE) exams in Kakuma refugee camp by scoring a mean grade of A - (Minus). It is only the second time since 2010 that another student in Kakuma attained this feat.

Maketh arrived in Kakuma from South Sudan in 2014 following the outbreak of the civil war that had left thousands of people dead. He started his education at Kadugli Primary School in class six in 2016 and sat for his Kenya Certificate of Primary Education (KCPE) exams two years later in 2018. He scored 318 marks out of a possible 500 marks with a D (Plain) in the Kiswahili subject. He had never heard of Kiswahili as a language before coming to Kakuma.

In his KCSE results, and following the hard work he had put in, Maketh scored B (plain) in Kiswahili emerging as the best candidate in Kakuma and the larger Turkana West Sub-County. "Life will not come to you straight, you have to walk through it," says Maketh.

As he is not a native Kiswahili speaker, many people assumed

that his good performance in Kiswahili was because he had studied outside Kakuma. These are claims he is quick to clarify saying that, "I studied here in the camp and finished my studies here. I have never traveled out of the camp for any reason."

"Don't let your past determine what will happen to you in the future, your undesired grades do not reflect what your future will be, what determines your grades in high school or even standing later in life. It is your hard work, commitment, and remaining clear in your vision," says Maketh.

George Nandi, a staffer for Windle International Education Unit commended the students' performance in the 2020 KCSE examination saying, "the fact that we have students attaining good grades means that the education partners are doing something right in the schools by providing students with the environment to overcome their barriers, to succeed where very few have had an opportunity to do so previously."

"In 2020 KCSE, across all seven secondary schools, we have over 54 secondary students, boys, and girls, who have attained University entry grades. Those

who have not qualified for direct University entry got grades that would allow them to join middle-level colleges and other technical colleges," George added.

Maketh's hobby is football. "As a student, you need to be involved in other extra-curricular activities because it refreshes and frees up your mind," he says.

Covid19 and learning

"During the Covid-19 outbreak, we did not stop education activities. Through in-depth consultations with partners and donors like UNHCR, UNICEF, and DFID, we agreed on an education continuity plan and took lessons to local FM stations. We also had teachers monitor lesson attendances across the camps. All our efforts resulted in improved performances," said George Nandi.

Despite Maketh's outstanding performance, the overall poor performance across schools in Kakuma was an indication that radio and online learning during the Covid-19 pandemic faced some challenges, which will hopefully be overcome as better learning practices are integrated to improve students' examination performance outcomes.



From left: Naomi Keth, Juarwel Akech Bior and Maketh Alier Deng

REFUGEE LED GROUP DIVE INTO THE FIGHT AGAINST COVID-19 IN KAKUMA

By Baluu Wol Makuach

Africa Initiative for Human Development (AIHD2) is a refugee-based organization created by refugees, led by refugees, and for refugees. It was founded in 2019 by Mr. Ebengo Honore, a refugee from Burundi and living in Kakuma refugee camp.

Mr Honore founded the organization after he graduated from Université de Genève online with a certificate in Applied Human Rights at Inzone Kakuma Hub and another certificate in Nonprofit Fundraising Essentials at Acumen Academy with the aim of training youth in digital skills to make them self-reliant.

The organization conducts training in digital citizenship and digital entrepreneurship, child rights awareness, Peace and Conflict Resolution as well as other freelancing opportunities available through the digital platform.

Most recently, AIHD2 expanded its activities to undertaking Covid-19 awareness campaigns following the need for a sensitized community on the risks and prevention measures. “We were compelled to get into

Covid-19 communication as it is something that continues to affect our communities,” says Mr. Honore.

“We have lined up activities to support the community members by encouraging regular handwashing and we are distributing hand washing kits,” says Mr. Emange Fulgence, the Project Coordinator. They have so far distributed fifteen, 210-liter water tanks and liquid hand washing soap.

Mr. Ebengo Honore, the founder and the CEO of AIHD2 founded the organization in 2019 after graduating from the University of Geneva having undertaken an online course in Human Rights at Inzone’s Kakuma Hub.

“We are a digital content organization, committed to serving our refugee community’s digital needs, but the Covid-19 pandemic outbreak gave us another challenge that we needed to tackle and now we are helping both refugees and host communities with hand washing kits,” said Mr. Honore

“We have conducted household awareness campaigns talking to people about how they can protect themselves and others. We also talk about how Covid-19 can be transmitted, and

prevention measures”, he adds.

AIHD2 is currently helping protect vulnerable refugees by installing handwashing facilities and ensuring access to essentials like soap, water, and general information about Covid-19.

Supporting businesses

Christina Maya, a Kalobeyi hotel owner and beneficiary of AIHD2’ said “I was under pressure from the authorities to close my hotel due to lack of a hand wash facility. I’m grateful that AIHD2 came to my rescue. You might see it as a rescue to myself but I’m not alone, even the public can also wash their hands here,” said Christina.

Paul Mwangi, a taxi driver, commenting on the move to install hand washing kits said, “it was a bit difficult at the beginning when we didn’t have the hand wash tank for the travelers. The police themselves could not allow us to work in that condition. We have not had any issues with authorities since the installation of the handwashing kit here.”



A man selling blocks of ice at the Dagahalley Market in Dadaab.

Photo by Abdirahman Ahmed

IT IS GETTING A LITTLE ICY; ICE MAKING IN DADAAB

By Abdirahman Ahmed Atow

Snow and ice may be an ordinary occurrence in Europe. Ice may even be something other parts of Kenya consider a common commodity. But in the refugee camps, it is not. It is so rare a commodity that when in late 2013 the ice-making machine arrived in Dagahaley for the first time, it seemed as if this was an invention.

As the ice business flourished,

more businesspeople machines brought ice-making machines to meet the now ever-growing demand for ice across the Dadaab refugee complex. Today one block of ice retails at three hundred Kenya shillings making it quite a good business in the camps.

“Pricing of ice is dependent on several factors, cost of electricity or fuel we use to generate power, transport cost and market demands. Whenever there is high demand during the hotter

months of the year, we increase prices. This is just how business works. We also increase prices during the holy month of Ramadan” says Shamsu Bashir, who is an ice seller.

With most residents of the Dadaab complex being Muslims, when they break their fast-during Ramadan they start with cold drinks hence shops and even homes buy plenty of ice to cool their drinks in readiness for the breaking of the fast.

FILMMAKER, AMINA, WINS MASTERCARD SCHOLARSHIP TO STUDY FILM

By The Refugee Magazine



I am passionate about telling stories for, with, and about women, especially women affected by violence and displacement.

Amina



Aminah Rwimo, 27, a Kakuma refugee from the Democratic Republic of Congo has won a Mastercard Scholarship to study film. The full scholarship will enable her to join the School of Communication, Cinematic & Creative Arts at the United States International University-Africa (USIU-A) in Nairobi to pursue a Bachelor's Degree in Cinematic Arts.

Amina is a 2015 FilmAid Kenya Media training alumnus, an award-winning filmmaker, a TEDx speaker, and co-Founder of Exile Key Films, a film production house based in Kakuma Refugee Camp.

"I'm passionate about telling stories for, with, and about women, especially women affected by violence and displacement. Having experienced the power film has had on my own life, I desire to use film to educate audiences about the diversity of human experience and the universal values that unite us as a society," she said.

As for her experience in film, Amina has been writing, directing, and making films since 2015 and has also collaborated with local and international film producers.

Elated about the scholarship, Amina said, "with this education, I will make movies for, by and about women—women who dare to dream, who raise their daughters to dream, and whose stories will inspire other little girls to work hard to achieve their dreams."

An award-winning director, Amina produced a moving, visual story about female gender mutilation titled *It Has Killed My Mother*. The 2017 film, she says, was inspired by her own experience.

The film won awards for Best Film, Best Script in Feature Film, and Best Actress at the Kenya Slum Film Festival in 2018. She was also recognized as the Best Emerging Filmmaker at the IOM Global Migration Film Festival in Geneva in 2018, and the FilmAid Kenya Film Festival in 2019.

Amina also won the Best Film in Governance Issues at The Lake Panfrican Film Festival in 2019 and Best Documentary at the InShort Film Festival in Nigeria for her documentary *Home Land*.

In addition to filmmaking, Amina has a keen interest in fashion and design, photography, and music. She is the Costume Designer and Art Director for all Exile Key Film productions.



Photo: Amina at Slum Festival Awards in Nairobi.



ENDING CHILD MARRIAGE



Almost **750 million** women and girls alive today were married before their 18th birthday.



By Dominic Lotum

For many decades, communities that practice child marriage, defined as a formal or informal union before the age of 18 years, have hidden behind cultural norms and practices.

In areas where child marriages are more prevalent, poverty has contributed to the practice where parents marry off their young girls in exchange for wealth in the form of dowry.

The practice of marrying off

underage girls has denied them the chance to enjoy their childhood and pursue their dreams and ambitions as all children should. In most if not all child marriage cases, the children do not get to realize their full potential.

According to recent studies by various gender-based organizations on child marriages the cases of child marriages would grow by more than 14% by 2030.

The fact is that child marriage is a cultural practice based on societies' traditional beliefs. To solve this problem, it's important that every effort is directed at changing these perceptions and the belief patterns of the society.

We should first teach communities and community elders about the detrimental effects of some of the old practices and make them understand that although some of the traditional practices are important as they make the

society have an identity and a way of doing things, they should not serve the interests of only one side of a community and that those that hinder anyone from living their life to the fullest of their potential should be done away with.

The Kenyan 2014 Marriage Act also provides a strong legal framework to protect children. It is therefore important that all available legal and governance frameworks are strengthened to take stern action against perpetrators.

Education of girls and girls' empowerment should be prioritized. By using the Government's ability to reach the most remote areas and investment from donors, we would be a step ahead in tackling the challenge.

Protecting the girl child from vices such as female genital mutilation and child marriage takes a collaborative effort from all stakeholders including the Government, donor organizations, private enterprises, philanthropy groups, and relevant partners.

FLOODS GRADUALLY EATING AWAY KAKUMA

By Najila Khalifa

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 Lomunyenyepus/ 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 is near being swept away.

In other places like Kakuma 1, zone 3, block 2, many houses have been swept away by the flowing water. Those who have lost their homes to the floods have had to be rehoused by the UNHCR. This has meant that they have to start resettling again which is a stressful and tedious process and causes suffering to most of the families as they have to begin their lives afresh in new areas.

The floods have not only affected homes but learning institutions like Napata Secondary School and Don Bosco 1 which have

not been spared either. In Napata Secondary School, some classrooms have been destroyed and the remaining ones are still at high risk of being swept away.

An outstanding technical institution preferred by many students due to its proximity and centrality to the four camps of Kakuma, Don Bosco now stares down the likelihood of being ravaged by the eroding riverbank right behind it. Don Bosco has produced some of the best technicians in Kakuma from carpenters to electricians and plumbers.

Kakuma Refugee Secondary School (KRSS) is similarly staring down the barrel of becoming a casualty of the 'angry' floods. It sits only a short distance away from the falling Lomunyenyepus/ Nabek riverbanks and one only wonders how many more it will leave destroyed in its wake.

To prevent some of the remaining institutions from getting swept away, measures like the building gabions, built at Bor Town Secondary School, must be undertaken.



BEYOND GIRL CHILD EMPOWERMENT; PROVIDING SOLUTIONS

Photo : ©FilmAid Kenya/ Bugoma

By Astrat Koricha

Kakuma and Kalobeyei jointly host over 200,000 refugees. Women and children comprise over 76% of this total refugee population.

Winnie Achola is a 24-year-old refugee from South Sudan who was forced to flee her home due to conflict. Achola now resides in Village 3 of the Kalobeyei Settlement. Kalobeyei hosts over 40,000 refugees from different countries of origin and was designed to integrate refugees with the host community.

When asked about safety in Kalobeyei, Winnie explained some of her concerns: “Here, days will pass without hearing a gunshot or a scream of a woman calling out for help. But as a woman, spending the night alone with my daughter is still scary,” she says.

When Achola first arrived in Kalobeyei, she imagined how stressful and traumatic life would be. “I remember it was still sparsely populated and always windy and very deserted like it never rained for centuries,” she said.

Without any support and no opportunities, Achola and her daughter felt unsafe and stressed. She also admits that building her life afresh was not easy. “I used to spend the night crying and couldn’t stop blaming the situation that brought us here,” she said.

However, Achola had strong aspirations to survive and raise her daughter. She found that the biggest challenge for women in Kalobeyei is poverty and sexual

violence.

Poverty and lack of income opportunities affect all refugees. Recent research in Kakuma and Kalobeyei, on self-reliance by the University of Oxford, indicates that refugees living in both the camp and the settlement are far from attaining self-reliance. The report concludes that despite it being a settlement, very few if any refugees living in Kalobeyei, can be characterized as self-reliant.

Living in Kalobeyei was especially hard for Achola as she could not find employment. “I decided to do something to support my daughter and me. One day I went to the local FM radio station and asked if I could volunteer,” she said.

A month later, she started volunteering at a local FM station. However, she only stayed in that job for three months as the distance between her home and the radio station was quite long and as she was not getting paid, she could not afford the transport to and from work. “I was walking 45 minutes from my village to the station, and it was

taking a toll on me,” she said.

While still a volunteer at the FM station, she had got the chance to meet her current employer. “It was a meeting, I stood up and presented my views on a given topic which they liked and opened the door for what I do today, developing content used to communicate with communities,” she says. “I have learned how to write radio drama scripts, done voiceovers,” she added.

With these valuable skills, she can now stand on her own feet. “I am so passionate about my work because I can provide for my daughter and be engaged productively,” Achola explained.

Achola recognizes that there are many girls in Kakuma and Kalobeyei, who are facing various issues, but they do not have any support systems or people to talk to. “So many girls face challenges, but they do not have anyone to turn to. Some of them have ended up committing suicide,” she said adding that, “there is a need for more programs to empower and engage the youth productively.”



Photo: Winnie Achola conducting an interview



Photo : ©FilmAid Kenya/ Jimale

JULES BOKONDE; PRO BOXER LIVING IN OBSCURITY IN DADAAB REFUGEE CAMP

By Mohamed Jimale

Even though Jules Bokonde, 30, is a renowned boxer back in his homeland, the Congo, he has lived a humble and quiet obscure life in the Dadaab Refugee camp.

The boxer has had a hard time convincing his friends in the camp about his past life of glory having won several boxing medals back in the Democratic Republic of Congo as well as in Nairobi where he lived as an urban refugee before being relocated to the Dadaab refugee camp.

Jules has lived in Hagadera camp in the Dadaab refugee complex since 2012, where he still trains out of love for the sport as a form of deviation from the routines of camp life.

He also started offering boxing training classes to refugee youth and others from the surrounding host community with the number of youth joining his boxing classes increasing with each passing day.

“When I first started the classes I had only two trainees, others used to watch us train but did not show actual interest in boxing. Over time many others have realized the importance of training and

joined,” he says.

Most youths in the camps do not continue their education past secondary school due to limited chances of securing university places and out of desperation for better opportunities, they have risked their lives to escape the confines of the camp.

To Hassan Abdi Omar, 26, a regular student in Jules’ boxing classes, frustrations in the camp almost drove him to want to flee to Europe in search of better opportunities. “I finished high school in 2018 and I am yet to get any employment opportunity,” he says.

I am idle in the blocks and on several occasions, I have unsuccessfully tried to escape from Dadaab to look for better

opportunities in Europe. Joining the boxing classes provided me with an opportunity to channel my frustration. I also took freelancing classes and now I make some money to meet my daily needs,” he said.

Despite the sport not having caught the attention of many and there being no structures to organize boxing competitions in the camp, Jules still hopes that there is a chance for him to one day pick himself up and fight competitively as he did before.

“I have always dreamt big and that motivates me every day that I will get a chance to spur at the highest level of the sport. In the future, I hope to represent refugees from Kakuma and Dadaab in the Olympic Games,” he said.



Photo: Jules Bokonde during one of his boxing training session.



Photo : ©FilmAid Kenya/ Jimale

Photo: Amina Bashow with her large family

THE FOSTER MOTHER; AMINA BASHOW

By Mohamed Jimale

If you have never been to a refugee camp, what comes to your mind when you hear about refugees? Desperation? Hunger? Or maybe Insecurity? Once you experience a refugee camp,

you realize that this is far from the reality as many refugees are showing the world that they can make a meaningful contribution in the places they live contrary to predominant narratives portraying them as perpetually dependent.

Amina Bashow's story is about a remarkable act of kindness from a mother of three who volunteers to raise and help five orphaned children in the camps.

A refugee herself, Amina had arrived in Dadaab refugee camp in 2010 after fleeing the conflict back in her home country, Somalia and was settled in the Hagadera camp.

In 2015, touched by the story of five young orphaned children,



I appeal to other mothers in Dadaab to help children in need of assistance. The fulfilment I get when they call me mother is unmeasurable. It motivates me to work even harder for them.

Amina



Photo : ©FilmAid Kenya/ Jimale

Amina volunteered to be a foster parent and shelter all the five children, besides her three children.

Having lost their father in Somalia and their mother thereafter, and being without any relatives in the camp, the children faced an uncertain future and this drew Amina's compassion towards them..

“They were very young when I took them in. The eldest was 11 years while the youngest was five months old and a physically disabled boy born without arms,” she explains.

“When the news of these children reached me, I decided to raise them just like my own children. I still depended on food rations for my family, and I was not sure how we would even make it given that the family had grown even larger”, she says.

“They were children and could not collect food rations as this required the biometric information of the household head



Photo : ©FilmAid Kenya/ Jimale

Top: Amina Bashow with her youngest foster son during our interview
Bottom: Amina Bashow

who was their late mother,” she added

To provide for her now large family, Amina started doing menial jobs like laundry at people's homes to supplement the monthly food rations she collected.

Six years since she took them in, she looks back with mixed feelings but happy at the strides the children have made. The youngest boy who was six months old is now six years old, while the eldest is nearing adulthood.

However, she says it would not have been easy for her if it were not for the help and assistance from agencies like Terre des Hommes and UNHCR whom she says have supported her efforts in providing foster care to the children.

“I appeal to other mothers in Dadaab to help children in need of assistance. The fulfillment I get when they call me a mother is unmeasurable. It motivates me to work even harder for them,” she said.

THE GROWING PLASTIC BAG WEAVING IN KAKUMA



Photo by Eduardo-Rodriguez-unsplash

By The Refugee magazine

The plastic bag weaving business seems to be gaining traction in Kakuma if the number of weavers emerging is anything to go by. While traveling from Kakuma to Kalobeyei, there is an amazingly large number of craftsmen and women in their stalls or groups of people busy weaving strands of colorful plastic into bags.

Karema Machumu is one of the very few handmade plastic baskets weavers in Kakuma. Seated in his stall situated along one of the busy streets heading to the distribution center three, he skillfully weaves strands of plastic into a tightly knit colorful green, blue and white basket.

He owns this stall but does most

of his jobs at his home where he has a sewing machine as well. Karema began plastic basket knitting after he underwent weaving training - one of the many skills development opportunities offered by humanitarian agencies in Kakuma.

After his training and unable to raise enough funds to start up his business, he sought a soft loan from which he used to venture into the business. He bought plastic bale wrapping strips to start weaving baskets. He would then engage some women to sell the finished baskets.

As the business continued to do well, he used his savings to set up a small shop from where he has continued to make baskets. "My skills and self-belief have

kept me in business," he said. "My only challenge is how to expand this business which requires a proper distribution plan which I do not have now," he added.

Speaking of his disability, he says it does not hinder him from fending for his family, urging other people living with a disability within the community to come forward and take advantage of the opportunities available to them to study and eke out a living.

"I would still like to undertake another craft course as it would enable me to diversify how I make my income and provide for my family," he said.

YOU CANNOT HIDE ART- MUDADI SAID

By Allan Kiprotich Cheruiyot

Mudadi Saidi is a seasoned visual artist based in the Kakuma refugee camp. Mudadi arrived in Kakuma in 2014 after he fled from conflict back in his home country, the Democratic Republic of Congo.

"Running from the war, I saw Kakuma as a land of peace, safety, and opportunities which I had to seize," Mudadi quips.

When the opportunities he sought weren't easy to come by, he knew he had to put his best foot forward towards his pursuits. He enrolled in the media training class offered by FilmAid Kenya.

As a creative and driven by his love for film, his inability to communicate in English did not hold him back. He began learning the English language by listening to English songs, reading books as well as listening to people converse and gradually gained the courage to speak in public.

About his mastery of fine arts, Mudadi says, "I had started painting long before I joined the film training but, I did not have

a breakthrough until I found a paying job to do artwork for an agency here in Kakuma."

Before his breakthrough, Mudadi had only used his art temporarily. He had painted his small room as a way of telling people about his artistic side. "You cannot hide art, it begs to be seen," he says.

In 2017, the success of his story THE PAINLESS BOY gave him a chance to learn more from renowned artist and cartoonist Victor Ndula through an art project conducted by FilmAid Kenya. Another milestone in his art journey was in 2020 when he participated in the Funding Futures Art competition; an online competition that ran across five African countries, and emerged the overall winner in the Art Category.

His passion for sharing his art and artistic skills saw him start up an art school. The art school, however, faced many financial hurdles that saw him temporarily put it on hold. He is currently revamping his house to use as his art school to train in murals, digital and visual art.



Photo: ©FilmAid Kenya/ Cheruiyot



My necklace
represents
beauty and pride.

Esther





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