

FEATURED INSIDE: GROUP OF REFUGEES DEVELOP ANDROID APP FOR REFUGEE LEARNERS | ALSO INSIDE: KAKUMA'S RONALDO

# THE Refugee

KAKUMA ED | ISSUE 10

MAGAZINE

I AM 97 YEARS OLD,  
THREE MORE YEARS  
AND I'LL BE

100

HABOBA

ALSO INSIDE:  
**DRESSING  
AFRICAN**  
A NEW COLUMN ON  
FASHION



**UNHCR**  
The UN Refugee Agency



Funding provided by The  
United States Government



Respecting hope. Changing lives.



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# FROM THE EDITORS

**D**uring a recent walk to our friend's place in Kakuma Three, after much chatting, laughing and eating, we sat down to watch a documentary of a Pakistani teenager Malala Yousafzai. The strong character she portrays is something very encouraging and her never give up attitude is unheard of. That was quite an inspirational one to watch especially with girls. The New African Media (NAM) is a group of youth who have similar dreams and goals as Malala. They want to bring change in students' lives by launching an android application which will prove to be the key in preparing students for their national examinations.

In our previous edition, we featured the "TOP BRAIN" which was about Margret Awak who emerged the best girl in KCPE in Kakuma and the larger Turkana District. We also captured the Kakuma's Got Talent event which was colourful and motivated youth to come out and showcase their talents. The edition was warmly received by humanitarians and the community at large, appreciated by all and we got positive feedback which is humbling.

In this issue we feature striking stories of people who don't know how to give up whatever the case and also how businesses still flourish in Kakuma as much as it's a refugee camp setting. Meet Mama Asha Adan popularly known as "Haboba" who at 97 years old is still strong and capable of doing all house chores by her own. The unending hope and belief she has despite her age is outstanding. We also feature the story of Libin Abdinasir, a Somali girl who has passion for football and will stop at nothing to make her dreams come true in the sport. These stories serve to encourage, motivate and inspire you, our readers. Now that's something to check out!

This month being Mother's Day, we celebrate all mothers wherever they are and acknowledge their sacrifices because we can't imagine life wherein they are not part of it. We should appreciate what they do for us however small it is as they are a blessing to each one of us. Happy and blessed mother's day to every mother out there.

We do hope that you'll enjoy reading this issue as much as you have been the previous ones. Have an inspiring May!

*Ayan Mohamud & Istarline Abdi*

FROM THE EDITOR'S  
**DESK**

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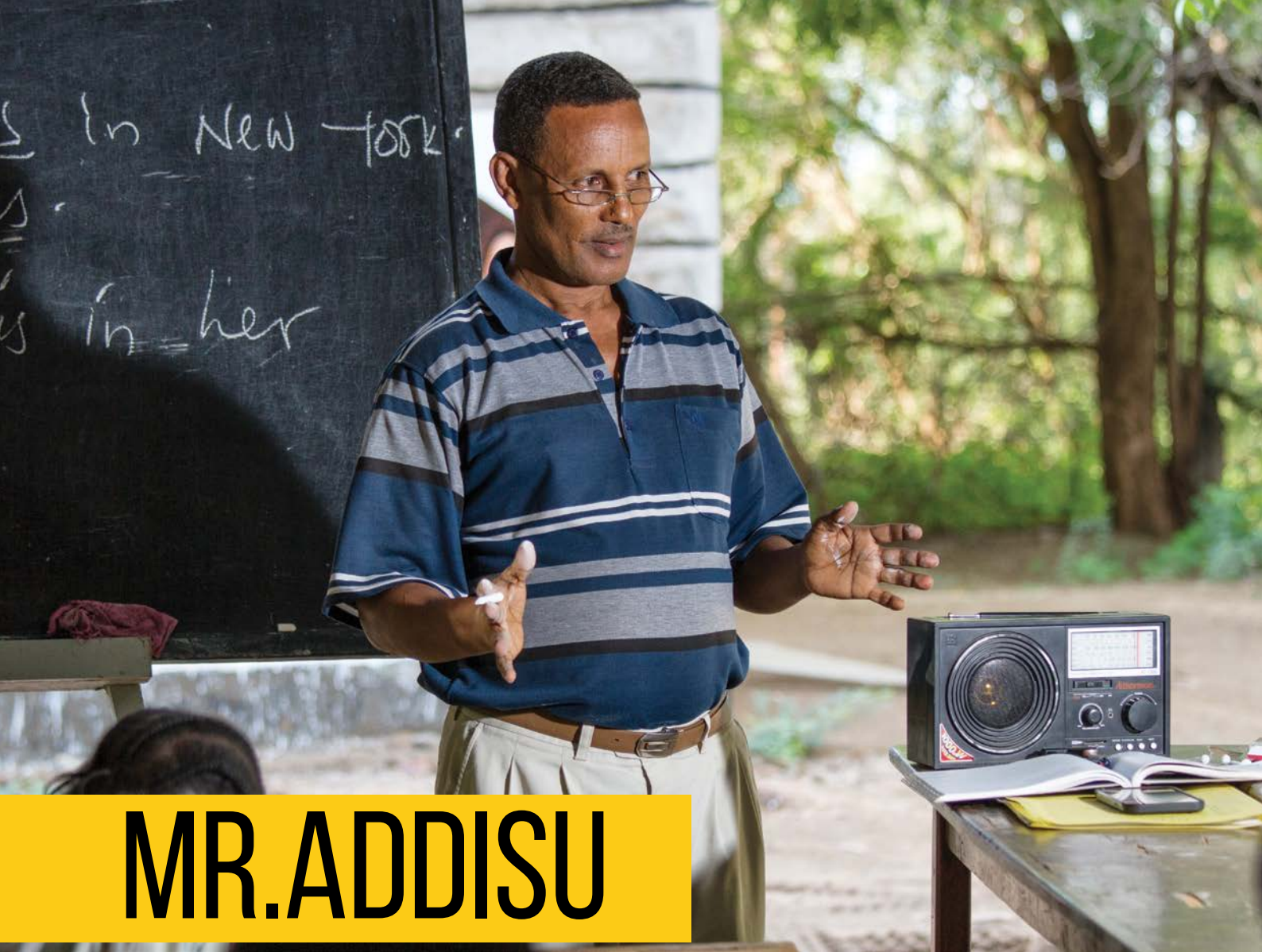
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# MR. ADDISU

MR. ADDISU IS PERHAPS ONE OF, IF NOT, THE BEST BRAINS IN THE CAMP. HE IS A REFUGEE SCHOLAR HOLDING A MASTERS DEGREE FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI AND A TEACHER LOVED BY MANY. HE TALKS TO ALOYCE MULINDA ABOUT HIS ACADEMIC LIFE

**E**ducation is one of the means displaced people use to recover from their loss of hope. However, marginalized refugees continue to face many obstacles in pursuit of education including language barriers, interruptions to the pursuit of formal education and lack of access to quality education but not anymore.

As with many other inspiring refugees story here in the camp Mr. Addisu Aznato Elena, a refugee scholar residing at the Kakuma Refugee Camp, was born in 1966 in his native motherland Ethiopia. He was later forced to flee his home when war broke out in 1993. Although leaving his entire family in Ethiopia was indeed a bitter experience for him, he was

able to overcome these obstacles and in his pursuit of education.

## ACADEMICS STRUGGLES

From nothing to something, Mr. Addisu quickly started to adapt to the harsh conditions at the camp. In 1999, the Jesuit Refugee Service's (JRS) selected him for their first sponsorship program in collaboration with the University of South Africa (UNISA). He pursued a degree in Public administration and Development administration. "There was indeed a very huge number of applicants for the JRS sponsorship program, but only 25 of us were selected from all over the camp. It was indeed a very huge privilege," says Addisu.

His hard earned educational journey did not end there; in 2000, he successfully secured another scholarship with Windle Trust Kenya to go to Daystar University in Nairobi. He graduated in 2003 with a Bachelors Degree in Community Development and Peace & Reconciliation.

In early 2004, Mr. Addisu managed to win over the hearts of two sponsorship firms and he was offered \$20,000 (approximately Ksh.2, 000,000) grant from one of the American based organization to continue with his masters education at Daystar University. He pursued a Masters Degree in Counseling and Phycology while the other sponsorship was from an academic organization based in Germany that wanted him to pursue a Masters Degree in Sociology and Disaster Management. "I had already gotten admission into the University of Nairobi (UON) and also from Daystar University, as well as the two scholarship sponsors to both universities. I could not do two programs at the same time so I had to choose one. I chose the University of Nairobi with the Germany sponsors and turned down the American grant," Addisu narrates smiling.

Accepting the German scholarship meant that Mr. Addisu was to do his Masters in Sociology and Disaster Management at the University of Nairobi where he graduated later in 2007.

#### LIFE OUTSIDE SCHOOL

For Mr. Addisu life after school was full of empty promises, as he struggled to get job in Nairobi. Although he had so many offers from prospective employers, he didn't have a work permit and missed out of these opportunities. "Daystar University attempted to hire me as a part-time lecturer, but the faculty later on changed their minds saying that I did not have the required two years teaching experience from a recognized institution," Addisu says with exhaustion.

His refugee status could allow him to continue living in the city. By then, he was a father of two twin daughters and he had gotten married in 2004. The Addisu family was advised to return to the camp immediately he finished his Masters in 2007 for resettlement purposes.

Immediately upon his arrival in the camp he started volunteering as a teacher and taught English to his fellow adult refugees and the host community. This was through a program with support from Windle Trust Kenya, which later had to be closed down due to shortage of funds. In 2011 he decided to come with his own community based educational program known as Alpha Language Study Center where he teaches his

fellow refugees from all walks of life the basics of English as a communicative language in the marginalized areas of the camp. "The program has no support and it is run by refugees for refugees, and we are based at MPC1 opposite UNHCR Field Post One," Addisu says proudly.

Alpha Language Study Center has up to date taught a thousand refugees and some have gone on to become successful professionals in different fields. The program only charges Ksh. 300 per student per month, money that goes towards running the institution and the payment of three other teachers.

Furthermore, Addisu urges his fellow refugees to keep on with their efforts in pursuing education because "the camp is said to be a home full of opportunities, but a lot of people tend to ignore them." "The refugee life is a challenging one, but there is one opportunity that people are giving a blind eye to here in Kakuma and that is education," says Mr. Addisu.

BELOW: ADDISU TEACHES AT ONE OF HIS ADULT CLASSES AT TURKANA CAFETERIA



**2004**  
BACHELORS DEGREE IN  
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND  
PEACE AND RECONCILIATION  
FROM DAYSTAR UNIVERSITY

---

**2007**  
MASTERS DEGREE IN SOCIOLOGY  
AND DISASTER MANAGEMENT  
FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF  
NAIROBI

*"Even at Daystar where I graduated first they attempted to call me back to teach part-time there but the faculty which is higher than the department refused saying I did not have two years teaching experience from a recognized institution because by then I was just a fresh graduate from Masters*



# TECHNOLOGY FOR CHANGE

GROUP TO LAUNCH ANDROID APPLICATION THAT WILL HELP PREPARE STUDENTS FOR THE NATIONAL EXAMINATIONS

BY LUUL AHMED AND ALOYCE B. MULINDA



**K**akuma Refugee Camp is now home to more than 190,000 refugees hailing from close to 15 countries in Africa. The camp located some 800KM from Nairobi has been in existence for the past 20 years. Life in

the camp has changed a lot, but for most it remains hard with each day posing a new challenge to the ever-growing population. The education sector has not been left out and once in a while the Kakuma Refugee Camp has hit the news headlines for producing top students in the country in both the KCSE and KCPE exams.

A quick glance at the camp, it is easy to fail to appreciate the great potential of the youth living in the camp. In 2012 the Government of Kenya promised free laptops to primary school children, a promise that is yet to be fulfilled. However, there are agencies that endeavor to better the provision of education within the camp. Some schools have computer laboratories that give students

early exposure to computers. Greenlight Secondary School may be considered the hub of ICT in Kakuma, because it is currently the only school in the camp that has access to Internet connection courtesy of the INS project.

To many, Kakuma Refugee Camp may not sound as the place where tech gurus might exist. The ever-increasing number of people in the camp with access to smart phones has forced a group of youth to try and find simple solutions to complex problems that affect them. There are many different groups sprouting in the camp to make use of technology to find solutions to daily life challenges and air out their views. A quick search of #Kakuma of either Facebook or Twitter will reveal to you the extent to which this necessary changes are taking place.

The Africa New Media Youth Group consists of five members who specialize in different areas of new media ranging from 3D design, HTML coding, and

***“Most learners in the camp cannot afford revision papers nor revision books that are usually sold exorbitantly. Books for me are a basic need***

JESSY

graphic design. The group started in 2015 after attending a one-week workshop on coding, and has dedicated its time and the little resources they have towards finding technological solutions to recurrent problems in the camp.

I met Jessy Inga at the Kakuma 3 library. She looked calm and well composed. Her headscarf hid the face behind a group that is set to transform how students prepare for exams in Kakuma. Jessy is the chair of the group. My curiosity sent me to look at what she is working on behind her laptop. To my surprise, she is in the middle of creating this 3D African village and she



PHOTOS (L-R) JESSY, MSAFIRI, HABIBA AND HYDROGEN WORK ON A PROJECT AT KAKUMA 3 LIBRARY

***In future, of course after learning robotics, I'd want to create a robot that I could send to collect ration for me***

learners in the camp cannot afford revision papers or revision books that are usually sold at exorbitant prices. Books for me are a basic need," she continues.

She then goes ahead to show me how the application works using her phone. The KCSE Prep App has a total of 14 tabs, each containing one of the 14 KCSE examinable subjects. In each subject, the learner has access to past KCSE revision papers with a hidden marking scheme which the learners access on a different tab. "Learners can choose to complete the questions on a piece of papers before clicking on the answers tab," says Hydrogen.

Yes, you read it right. Meet Hydrogen who is a young and creative middle-aged man from Congo. Hydrogen's dream is to study robotics, but before then, he has learnt HTML coding. Hydrogen's creativity comes out during our interview. "Most of my ideas comes from the problems that we face in the community as refugees," he says. He has a lot of projects in mind

takes her time to take me through a virtual tour of the image.

Jessy and her group are the brains behind KCSE Prep App, an android application for O-Level learners that will soon be downloadable from the Google playstore. The App contains a user-friendly interface and is intended for both teachers and learners. "We came up with the App so that we could offer a more portable and cheaper option for teachers and learners who want to pass their national examinations," says Jessy. "Most



1

THE NUMBER OF WEEKS IT TOOK FOR NAM MEMBERS TO LEARN BASIC CODING

including an intruder alert system that will help curb the rising cases of GBV. He envisions a home camera that will secretly record videos that will be used as evidence and also an alarm system

***"I attended a one week workshop that was organized by INS where I learnt basic coding***





PHOTOS (L-R) GIRL FOLLOWS FILMMAKING SESSION BY FILMAID. GIRL MODELS A 3D SCHOOL [BY ISTALINE ABDI]

***“Since then I have been learning more about coding through the Internet and I am also never afraid to ask someone with knowledge for help***

HYDROGEN

that will aid in calling for help. “I was given the name Hydrogen by my former school’s principal as a result of my love for physics and chemistry. He then requested my parents to register Hydrogen as my middle name,” says Hydrogen as we all break into laughter.

The soft-spoken young Congolese is optimistic that technology holds the key to solving some of their problems. When asked what their next project will be, he takes time to think then confidently replies, “we want to create an application that maps where the various services offered in the camp are so as to make it easy for people to know which services are available and where to go when need arises.” He concludes with a smile and glimmer of hope written on his face “in future, of course after learning robotics, I’d want to create a robot that I could send to collect ration for me.”

All along, Habiba, a young Somali lady, is busy coding a website. Habiba arrived in Kakuma in the year 2009 and joined class 6. She performed exceptionally well in her KCPE and then proceeded to high school. This is where she discovered her love for computers. She was amused at how computers worked and was always curious to find out how one could command a machine to do certain things. Unfortunately, she dropped out of school when she was in form 2. However, this did not kill her dreams and love for technology. “I attended a one week workshop that was organized by INS where I learnt

basic coding,” she says. “Since then I have been learning more about coding through the Internet and I am also never afraid to ask someone with knowledge for help,” she concludes. It is fascinating how she has mastered HTML language in a very short time. “If I was to be granted one wish, I’d wish for a chance to study coding at an advanced level,” says Habida. Habida and her friend Safari are confident that they are now ready to venture into the world of making websites for clients. In a group of 5 techno savvy refugees, only two of them have access to Personal Computers. “There are many youth out there with talents and solutions to different problems, but they lack support,” says Inga. “It took me time to save for this laptop that I am currently using, I would love a more powerful one because this one cannot render the quality of 3D art that I want,” she concludes.

Habida, Jessy, and Hydrogen are also passing their knowledge and skill to other refugees in the camp. The three were part of a one week boot camp at Morneau Shepelle for girls that culminated to the World ICT Day for Girls, a day marked every last Thursday of April each year. In the ICT boot camp, the 60 girls from Primary and Secondary Schools were taken through a week training covering HTML Coding, Robotics, and Photography and Filmmaking. By the end of the boot camp, the girls had made simple websites, made simple computer games, traffic lights and shot and edited a couple of photographs, which they displayed to those who came to mark the World ICT Day for girls.

The KSCE Prep App was to be launched on the 28th Day of April 2016, in line with the International Day for Girls in ICT. Once launched, the app will be made available to learners at a small fee and those who wish to pass their O-levels exams can buy and use it as a tool to achieve their goals.





# THRIVING IN TECHNOLOGY

IT IS HARD TO IMAGINE A WORLD WITHOUT TECHNOLOGY AND A REFUGEE CAMP WITH TECHNOLOGY. MEET MAHAD, A YOUNG SOMALI BUSINESS MAN WHO RUNS A MOBILE PHONE BUSINESS

BY ISTARLINE ABDI

It is evident that technology has become part of our daily lives, everything we do these days revolves around technology be it academics, work or social world. There are many people who have embraced technology and are doing very well.

A good example is Mark Zuckerberg, an American computer programmer, chairman, chief executive and co-founder of Facebook. He and his college roommates launched Facebook while in their dormitory rooms using computers. Facebook is currently the world's leading social media site making billions in profits annually. Computers have taken over the world not leaving behind the Kakuma Refugee Camp. The tale of brilliance is found in Kakuma 1, Somali Market Area.

In a place where business is booming lays Nurul Huda shop, which serves as a cyber café and an electronics shop. Mahad Omar is a computer expert who works at the shop. He is experienced and has been dealing with computers for over a decade now, but he started working at the shop from 2013. "I always loved handling computers and have a lot of passion for it which makes me happy to serve my

customers," Mahad says with a smile. He repairs computers and phones, does photocopying, lamination, printing and scanning. A part from those, he takes photographs and supplies wireless network as well.

At first he used wireless network only for his work, but now he supplies to other shops." I try my best to please my customers and satisfy their needs but it's never easy to please everyone," he further explains. There are a lot of challenges when it comes to the network and sometimes it's slow or just goes off without a warning, but some customers get very impatient," says Mahad.

At Nurul Huda there are many types of devices, which is quite astounding. To find new mobile phone models being sold at almost the same prices as the ones in Nairobi or Eldoret is simply amazing. The shop sells mobile phones, phone chargers, mobile covers, and adapters and also operates the M-Pesa service. Second hand devices like mobile phones, computers, I pads and tablets may also be found at the shop. "It's a challenge to sell second hand devices, because even though the price is low the clients still want to buy them at a

discount," he says.

On daily basis Mahad receives more than ten clients who use the internet. Most of his clients are the youth, who comes to use the Internet to open Facebook accounts, email accounts, Twitter, and Instagram. Not only does he deal with the youth, but also other clients who check their emails, and also check their resettlement process. He admits most of the money he makes is spent on paying bills and buying materials for the shop. Business is doing well, but the main challenge is power. People with small businesses in the camp are facing challenges in paying heavy amount of electricity bills, the bills are very high yet they work for few hours.

Besides his love for computers, Mahad is also a photographer and he loves taking photos and editing them. His story is one that proves there are hidden talents at the Kakuma Refugee Camp. Through empowerment, people like him will have a better life and a bright future. His advice for youth, "it's good to do things that you're good at even if your education background is not the best. Sometimes experience and talent become life savers."



*"I sell my cakes from as early as 6.00am in the morning. I have to walk around the community and sell before 9.00am"*

PHOTO: MAMA SHAMU HOLDS A FRESHLY BAKED CAKE

WOMEN IN BUSINESS >>

## MAMA SHAMU, A TAILOR DURING THE DAY AND A BAKER AT NIGHT

BY MICHAEL STEPHINE WATMON

"Habari ya mchana? Naomba nikuuzie keki," said a voice from behind. I tried to ignore, but the voice grew louder and I knew it was directed at me. I looked back and saw a lady adorning a headscarf. I thought to myself that the face looked familiar, but I just could not figure out where we had previously met. "Wauzaje keki?" I asked politely. "Nauza mia hamsini (I sell one at Ksh 150)," she replied. I did not have money on me then and couldn't stop my mouth from salivating. Then I remembered my driver, Rono, and asked him for one hundred and fifty shillings which he hesitantly gave out. On our way back I thought of the effort and skills that could have been put into making the cake as I took big bites from the cake.

Mama Shamu, as she is commonly known in the Nuer community, is a 42-year-old single mother of four. She fled from Burundi and came to Kakuma in 2011, crossing the border into Kenya with her four children. Life in the camp was not as easy as she thought it would be, but it was better than where she came from.

Niniruhazwe Dariam learnt the skill of weaving when she was only 17 years old back in her home country. She used to make sweaters, tablemats, and even woven dresses for a living back in her home country. "I learnt weaving because I wanted to have something that would help me earn a living," she says. "I also made tables and chairs from dried banana leaves which I sold to make ends meet," she adds. Mama Shamu owns a small stall in the heart of Ethiopia market where she makes and sells woven sweaters, shirts, dresses, hats and customized hand warmers for a living. Her neatly displayed merchandise is an attraction to her customers. From the display, it seems most of her customers are from the Ethiopian community as depicted by the colors blended on the clothes displayed in her shop.

In 2014, Mama Shamu lost her granddaughter. It was a painful occurrence for her and her daughters. A week or so later, her 12-year-old daughter vanished without a trace. "It felt like the world had stopped. I was still mourning the loss of my granddaughter when the unfortunate thing happened," she says with her voice



now trembling perhaps from the memory and pain that she felt. It's almost two years now since her daughter went missing and all she can do is pray for her wellbeing wherever she is and hope that they will one day meet.

"I felt the world was unfair and all I could think of was my child. I wanted to be alone and could not face anyone from the community," she remembers. "I had to look for something to keep myself busy and prevent me from thinking too much," says Mama Shamu. She then applied to join a bakery course offered by St. Clare in Kakuma town. The two-month training would unveil a talent that she did not know she had. The training kept her busy and she gave it her best. After graduation, Mama Shamu and a group of other women were given an oven that uses charcoal. One other oven was given to the host community by Swiss-Contact, an NGO working in Kakuma. "We were happy to receive the oven as a group, but since then some of the group members have opted out," she says. Although they share the oven as a group, every member runs their own businesses. The oven is used on a first come first serve basis.

"I prefer to use the oven at night after

closing my shop at the Ethiopian market and bake between 7.00pm to 12.00am," she says. She is lucky that the oven was put in her compound so she can have access to it at night and let other group members use the oven during the day. Mama Shamu makes an average of one bucket of cakes per day, which she sells to her customers. She has over the years established a loyal client base that buys her cakes regularly. On a good day she is able to sell all her cakes. "I sell my cakes from as early as 6.00am in the morning. I have to walk around the community and sell before 9.00am," she says.

The ever-hot Kakuma weather poses a challenge to her business and limits her production. To keep the cakes fresh and her customers satisfied with good quality products, she can only make cakes that she is able to sell in a day before they go stale. "Some customers do not pay me in good time while others feel that am charging too much for the cakes," she says. Mama Shamu explains that the ingredients she uses are costly and hence the price of the cakes pointing out that she makes a few shillings from the sale of one cake. Apart from the cakes that she makes and sells daily, Mama Shamu also accepts orders for special events. In a month,



PHOTO: MAMA SHAMU PREPARES TO BAKE

she gets an average of 3 special orders for birthday cakes, which she neatly decorates and delivers to the clients.

Niniruhazwe is soon opening a bakery shop in the Ethiopian market. She tells us that she has already gotten a shop that she will open in a week's time. This will enable her make more sales by having her products in a central place and also enable her business to be well known.

She calls out to women to join the very many training opportunities present in the camp and take charge of their future. "I want to gain from as much training as possible in order to have as many different skills as possible to better my chances of making it in life," she says. "I am currently attending an English class at the Turkana Cafeteria. I want to be able to reply to 'good morning' when someone greets me," she concludes. Mama Shamu admits that learning a new language at her age is much difficult, but she is determined to see the course through.

BELOW: A DISPLAY OF COLOURFUL CLOTHES AT MAMA SHAMUS STALL





# THE STORY OF PASSION

PHOTOGRAPHY BY: OTIENO SAMUEL  
LOCATION: KALEMCHUCH (OPP OGLE)

MEET 22 YEAR OLD FEMALE FOOTBALLER, AND FUTURE FILMMAKER WHO IS GOING THE EXTRA MILE TO MAKE HER DREAMS COME TRUE DESPITE THE MANY HUDDLES SET IN HER WAY IN A MALE DOMINATED SPORT.

# W

e live in a world where women and girls are facing numerous obstacles on their path to growth and development, be it physically, mentally, emotionally or academically. Our

cultures and traditions have over the past years seen women restricted from taking part in activities such as sports, which are believed to be for men. The Somali culture is no exception. However, there are those who are determined to make a difference and realize their potential in a world previously thought to be male dominated.

Meet 22 year old Libin Abdinasir, a young, determined and strong girl who will do anything to achieve her goals in life. She comes from a family of five. Her father passed away when she was very young and her mother was compelled to bring them up on her own. As early as at the age of seven, she

had already started playing football which has always been her passion as being in the field makes her happy and content. "My mother motivates me and encourages me to do what I desire because she was once a basketball player back in Somalia," Says Libin. Most of the time her elder brother and younger sister play football with her at home when she's not out in the field playing.

While at Angelina Jolie in 2013, her talent and charismatic moves were discovered. She was part of the school team, which went to the national levels in inter-school competitions. Through LWF sponsorship Libin and 19 other girls from different nationalities were taken to Nairobi for a week to train with the Mathare Youth Sports Association (MYSA). She was the only Somali girl in the group. While in Nairobi at the training she befriended the Kenya Women Football's coach who was impressed with her moves and advised her not to give up on football. "Her words proved to be a life changer for me, because I took my talent more seriously and worked harder and diligently towards my dreams," she says

*Her words proved to be a life changer for me because I took my talent more passionately and swore to work harder and better towards my dreams,*



confidently.

Being a footballer is not easy and requires determination and hard work. Libin practices 3 days a week, Saturdays, Wednesdays and Fridays at the livestock field near Clinic Four. Since she cannot find girls to train with, Libin trains with boys and that doesn't bother her because she feels more comfortable playing with them. "Football is part of me and I can't stay without it, playing with boys makes me more confident and gives me the chance to show everyone that girls can play well even better than some boys," she states. Libin has earned the title 'Ronaldo' from the football skills and passion that she possesses. Her most memorable match was when the refugee girls were playing against the host community girls and scored the winning goal. "My role model is Marta Vieira from Brazil; she is a footballer who plays for the Brazil National team, she inspires me a lot," Libin says with a smile.

Besides her passion for football, Libin loves writing a lot as well as reading. When she was in form two at Morneou Shapell Secondary School she wrote a book called 'HOME IN A REFUGEE CAMP', which unfortunately got burnt in her house when they lost everything in a fire that almost took their lives. "The book was a dream come true, I struggled months writing it but it was gone in a flash, but life goes on," she says. Her will makes her a fighter and not a quitter. She is also a film-training student at FilmAid international.

Every good thing comes with a challenge, because it is part of life, being a girl who is a footballer comes at a price. Some people in the community support my talent, but others think I am not fit to play a boy's game because they have the assumption that girls can't play football. The youth from the community support her a lot and encourage her to be better. "I want to be an international footballer, well known in the world and my dream is to open a



BELOW: LIBIN DRIBBLES A BALL DURING A TRAINING SESSION AT KALEMCHUCH, KAKUMA



girl's football academy," she says. "Many girls have the potential to play football, but they don't have professionals to train them or a proper place to practice. My dream is to see girls playing football with confidence and enjoying the game because it's what they want."

"Life is all about giving your very best, sacrificing and always fighting for what you want. I am sure with all this in mind girls will change the world," says Libin. "Gone are the days when girls were voiceless, it's up to every girl to decide what they want and go for it!" She added as we parted ways.

***Many girls have the potential to play football but don't have professionals to train them or a proper place to practice. My dream is to see girls playing football with confidence and enjoying the game because it's what they want.***



COVER STORY  
PHOTOGRAPHY BY ISTARLINE ABDI  
PHOTOGRAPHY ASST: AYAN MOHAMUD  
LOCATION: KAKUMA 3





# HABOBA

SHE IS PROBABLY THE STRONGEST 97 YEARS OLD YOU'LL MEET, MORE LIKE A TEENAGER OR SOMEWHERE IN HER EARLY 30S. HABOBA, AS SHE IS COMMONLY REFERRED TO, IS A MOTHER OF 10 AND A GRANDMOTHER. OUR REPORTER, **AYAN MOHAMUD**, SPENT SOME TIME WITH THE FUNNY AND JOYFUL HABOBA AS SHE REVEALED HER LIFE'S STORY TO US.

**W**n my routine visits to one of my closest friends in Kakuma Three, I meet probably one of the most surprising human beings I've ever seen. The way I got to see and talk to this person is simply by coincidence.

As my friends and I were amidst a conversation, voices full of life filled the air and it caught our attention. "Haboba!" "Haboba!" The voices got louder and drew closer, which pushed my curiosity to get a glimpse of what was happening. I peeped through the fence and what met my eyes was astonishing. An old woman, about 70 to 80 years, was washing utensils as she hummed quietly. The voices I heard were of her grandchildren as they played just a distance away from where she was going on with her duties. My desire of wanting to meet and talk to her led me to cross over into the mama's compound.

***I am 97 years old, three years more and I'll be 100***

The big smiles and greetings that I was offered as I enter the home was quite captivating. I sit with her and asked her what her name to kick-start our conversation. "My name is Asha Adam, but people here in the community prefer calling me 'Haboba,'" she says. I go on to ask her what the name means and why they call her that and she replies that the name stands for a grandmother in Arabic and they do that to show their

love for her. I asked her to tell me more about herself and her story is one full of courage and hard work, one that anyone anywhere would sit down and listen to for hours on end.

Mama Asha is originally from Darfur and has stayed in Kakuma for 11 years now; she fled war and still suffers from internal injuries she sustained back home. She grew up as a normal girl in the village looking after animals and managing the house chores, as other girls her age would. "I was married off at the age of 15, which was a norm in our community. I have never been to school, because during our time girls

were never sent to school," she narrates as I keenly listen to her. She is a mother to 10 children, five passed on while she was still back home. I hesitantly ask her about her age, because I somehow feel it is disrespectful to be asking that question. "I am 97 years old, three years more and I'll be 100!" She exclaimed with a smile on her face and showing off her now white long hair. I am stunned by her answer and I could not help but giggle.

The character she portrays is very interesting and engaging. She is quite humorous, loving, caring and most importantly humble. Her charismatic





*“Most of my community members are still surprised at me and they make jokes about what I do asking me to carry their jericans for them at times”*

PHOTO: HABOBA PREPARES COFFEE FOR HER GUESTS WITH HER GRAND CHILDREN [PHOTO BY ISTARLINE ABDI]

jokes make her end up nicknaming one of the accompanying photographers “Woiwoi” after he couldn’t understand a question she had asked in Arabic. Too funny, right? Haboba also speaks a bit of English, which she learnt when working at the Reception Centre (Kakuma) as a cook. Here Haboba tells us that she picked some English along the way and even goes ahead to show her knowledge of the queen’s language. “I know how to say ‘how are you,’ ‘bring that cup here,’ ‘go there,’ ‘bring water’ (sic),” she says as laughter now spills from her lungs. This leads to my next inquiry about how people see her in the community. “Most of my community members are still surprised by me and they make jokes about what I do asking me to carry their jericans for them at times,” she says jokingly.

Here in the camp she takes care of her six grandchildren, because the daughter-in-law attends school. Moved by this, I ask why she allowed her daughter-in-law to go to school and leave her with the task of attending to the kids. “I never got the opportunity to go to school, and because I consider her to be my own daughter I

would love to see my dreams and wishes come true through her,” Haboba tells me confidently. Now that wasn’t an answer I expected and it really touched me. To see a woman her age value education that much is something very encouraging and inspiring. “I wish every woman felt this way.” I tell myself.

One thing that amused me most was when Haboba told me how she managed her daily house chores all by herself from fetching water to washing utensils and clothes to cleaning the homestead and not forgetting cooking. “I am used to doing all that by myself and I feel sick if a day passes by without me doing any chore,” she says with a soft laugh. Mama Asha adds that she never feels right whenever the homestead is disorganized while the young ones just sit around not attending to them so she has no choice but to do it. “Nowadays children are too lazy to perform chores on time, this was never the case during our time,” she says irritated.

She puts it wisely, which was something I expected from the start. Next I am

compelled to ask her what the secret is behind her healthy body and physique, the food she takes and what she does to stay fit. “I have always taken my food along with milk instead of water and most of my food includes millet and sorghum,” she answers. It is these types of food that keep her healthy, because they are more natural as compared to processed food that is currently flooding the markets. Apart from that she says that doing the house chores is a form of an exercise for her, because sitting around doesn’t help her in any way.

Haboba’s face is one that glows with hope and as we near the end of our chat I ask what her aspirations in life are. “I’ve already lived much of my life and I expect nothing more other than a calm, nice life and to die peacefully,” she reiterates. The advice she has for grandmothers her age is that they should eat healthy food and move around to get some exercise instead of sitting at home doing nothing. Before I bid Mama Asha goodbye, I appreciate the time that she has taken to talk to me. This certainly proves to be one of the best interviews I have ever had!



# 100M CHAMP

## GRACE APULE IS PROBABLY THE FASTEST FEMALE IN KAKUMA REFUGEE CAMP. SHE TALKS TO AYAN MOHAMUD ON HER DREAMS OF TAKING PART IN THE OLYMPICS

It is rightly said that give a girl the chance to do what she desires and the result will always be astonishing. Whenever they are given an opportunity and the freedom to choose what they want to do along with a bit of encouragement, the best should be expected. Many girls at the Kakuma Refugee Camp do not realize their full potential. Not because they do not know what they can do, but simply because they are not allowed to in many cases. However, in the recently held athletics competition a good number of girls who participated in the event challenged the odds.

Grace Apule is one of the girls who not only participated in the races but also won it. With the passion, determination and resilience she portrays she has a bright future ahead. Her love for athletics led her to represent her school in many competitions and also compete in different races in the camp. "I always represented my school both in football and athletics

*Along with my dreams of one day participating in the Olympics, I also want to be a human rights activist*



and my name would be the first mentioned whenever there were inter-school competitions," she says amid shyness.

She has also participated in competitions organized by the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) and won most of them.

She emerged the best in the 100M women race with a record time (14.7) seconds and the second best in the 200M Category. "It was never easy as much as I had in mind that I could be one of the top performers of the day," she explains. She further elaborates that she believes this is her talent and it is something she was born to do and through this she'll go places.

Grace is a form one student at Kakuma Secondary School and it takes much effort to balance co-curricular activities and school, which limits her time for practice mostly. Due to this, she practices three days in a week weekly. Along with this come other challenges, which include lack of the right equipment for practice and a professional to train them, just to mention but a few. However, all these are only challenges for her and she believes that she can overcome them through her hard work, focus and dedication.

Grace says her motivation comes from her mother who has always been there for her through thick and thin. "My mother has always been my role model since childhood, she has guided me to pursue what I wanted to do and has never turned down my wishes," says Grace. I find this exciting and wanting to know more I ask her why her mother allowed her to do whatever she liked. Her reply again is interesting. She says that even though her mother is illiterate, she listens to her opinions and respects them a lot. This further encourages her more.

As we near the end of the interview I ask what she wants to be in future and if she has any advice for young girls who want to be athletes. "Along with my dreams of one day participating in the Olympics, I also want to be a human rights activist." She confidently says. Grace urges girls to come out of their comfort zones, realize their talents and work towards them because they are the ones who know best about their potential. They should train hard and most importantly believe in themselves. "Being a girl should not stop anyone from achieving their goals in life, rather it should boost one's confidence knowing that you'll be defying odds and showing the world that girls too can do anything they put in mind," she sums up smilingly.



## YOUTH AND ARTS

PHOTO: BETTER FOR LIFE GROUP PERFORMS AT KAKUMA'S GOT TALENT EVENT

# BETTER FOR LIFE

THERE ARE MANY THEATRE GROUPS PERFORMING DAILY IN KAKUMA REFUGEE CAMP, AMONG THEM, BETTER FOR LIFE GROUP AND WINNERS OF KAKUMA'S GOT TALENT SEASON 2, STANDS OUT. WIYIER LIM SPENT SOME TIME WITH THEM TO UNEARTH THE TALENTS BEHIND THE GROUP'S SUCCESS.

**A**s we started our interview with a group that could be considered the best comedy group in Kakuma, if we are to go with the judges' decision during last year's Kakuma's Got Talent competitions, I noticed a young man of Congolese origin sitting quit far away from me. "Please move closer," I told him hoping that he would respond to my invitation. "Hawezi songa karibu kwa sababu anaogopa kompyuta (he can't come near you, because he has a phobia for computers)," said Juma Bin Mafalme, one of the comedy group members as we all burst into laughter. With this, I set my laptop aside and assured him that the laptop I had was harmless.

Better for Life is a comedy group that emerged top at the Kakuma's Got Talent competition's season 2. The group comprises of 5 members, but on this day we meet only three of the group's members in an interview that would leave our ribs cracking. Mfalme (King) tells us that the group was part of the Alliance Theatre group. "The

Alliance group had many actors and not everyone had a chance to perform, and so we thought we could specialize in comedy and that's why we broke out," says Mafalme.

The group has participated in both seasons of Kakuma's Got Talent events and emerged winners in both. In 2015, the duo, Juma bin Mfalme and Ndagiye Dyigero left fans in stitches with their Bamba Chakula skit. "Its hard to make people laugh as people find different things funny," says Mfalme. "We take real life events and turn them into comedy and people find this to be funny because they depict real events," he added. Mfalme admits that there are issues that cannot be addressed directly because culture may not allow it, but they are easily tackled through comedy.

**We take real life events and turn them into comedy and people find this to be funny because they depict real events**



According to Ndagiye, the group is yet to start earning from their comic venture and in as much as this is demotivating, the group still forges on with hope for a better future. "Some of us have families to take care of and others are still in school. We need to buy some items that we could use during our performances, but we cannot afford them," says Ndagiye." Our parents always expect something every time we go out to perform. Most times they are disappointed when we return home, because most of the time what we get is a bottle of water and a soda from events organized by agencies," explains Mfalme.

We learn that both Mfalme and Uwezo are in primary school. This makes it hard for them to find enough time to practice since most of the time is devoted to education. I am not a funny guy and sometimes I find it hard to even make me laugh and so I got curious and wanted to know how they decide on what's funny and what's not. "There are words that we use knowing that people will find them funny," says Mfalme. "Words like 'kuna watu wawili ambao tunajua bamba chakula ikiingia wao husema hawajapata pin, hao ni Octopizzo na Clarrise Ntapmaka,'" he says.

The group is appreciative of the efforts put by agencies working in the camp towards supporting youth groups. "The rewards we get are okay, but we would like the agencies to improve on the gifts we get. Last year during the Kakuma's Got Talent event our group received some gifts among them were 2 pairs of safari boots. Our group has 7 members and sharing the gift amongst us was almost impossible," says Mfalme.

There is a lot of talent at the Kakuma Refugee Camp, which is yet to be explored. This is a call to all agencies that work directly or indirectly with the youth to come up with livelihood programmes aimed at promoting local talent and youth groups in equal measures. Better for Life group is just but a drop in the talent ocean.

The group is planning to hold comedy and theater shows across the camp and are calling out for all of you to come out in large numbers to support their worthy cause.



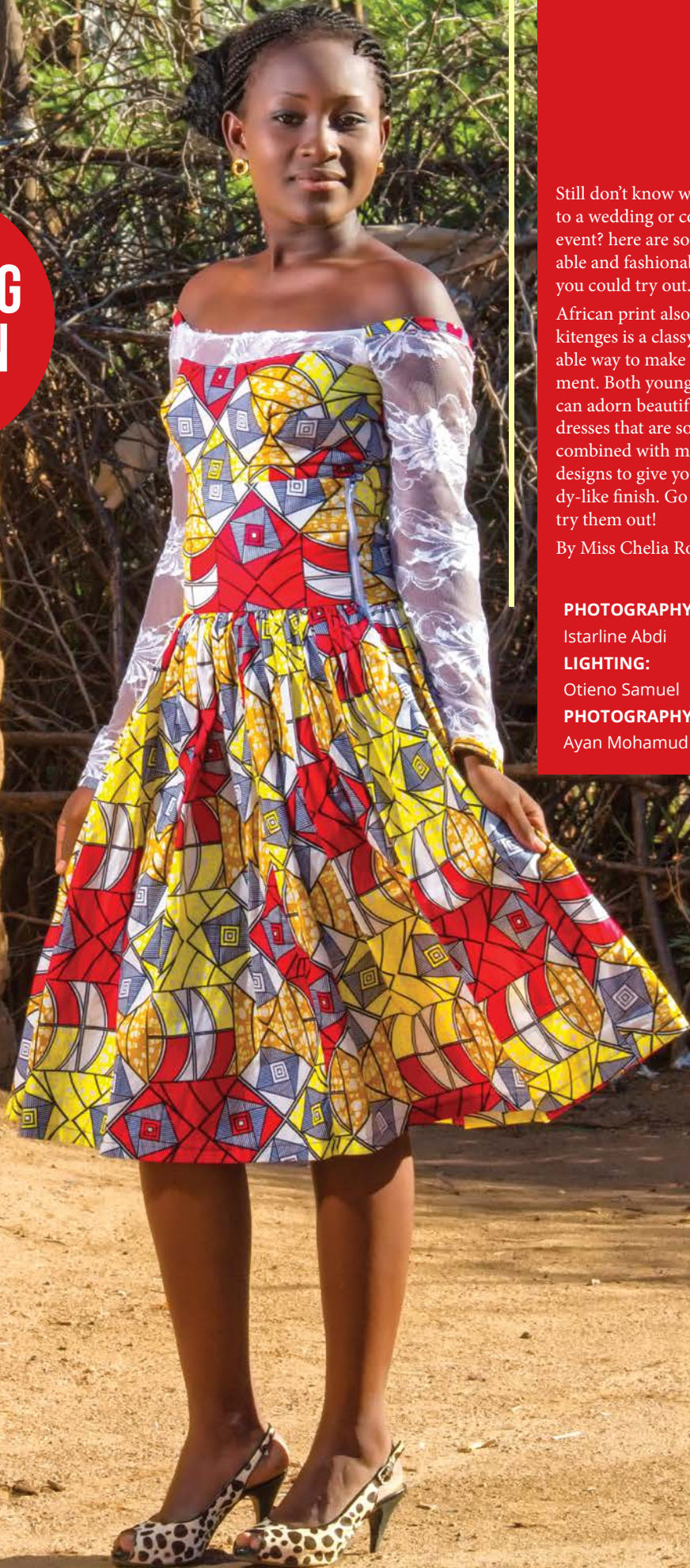
PHOTO: MFALME BIN MFALME DRIVES HIS 'CAR' AT KAKUMA'S GOT TALENT EVENT

**Some of us have families to take care of and others are still in school. We need to buy some items that we could use during our performances but can not afford them**





# DRESSING AFRICAN



Still don't know what to wear to a wedding or community event? here are some affordable and fashionable dresses you could try out.

African print also known as kitenges is a classy yet affordable way to make a statement. Both young and old can adorn beautifully made dresses that are sometimes combined with modern designs to give you that lady-like finish. Go ahead and try them out!

By Miss Chelia Rose

**PHOTOGRAPHY:**

Istarline Abdi

**LIGHTING:**

Otieno Samuel

**PHOTOGRAPHY ASST.**

Ayan Mohamud

MODEL: Marie Banza  
DRESS: Modern Woman  
Designer: Baba Brayen  
Price: Ksh 1,500

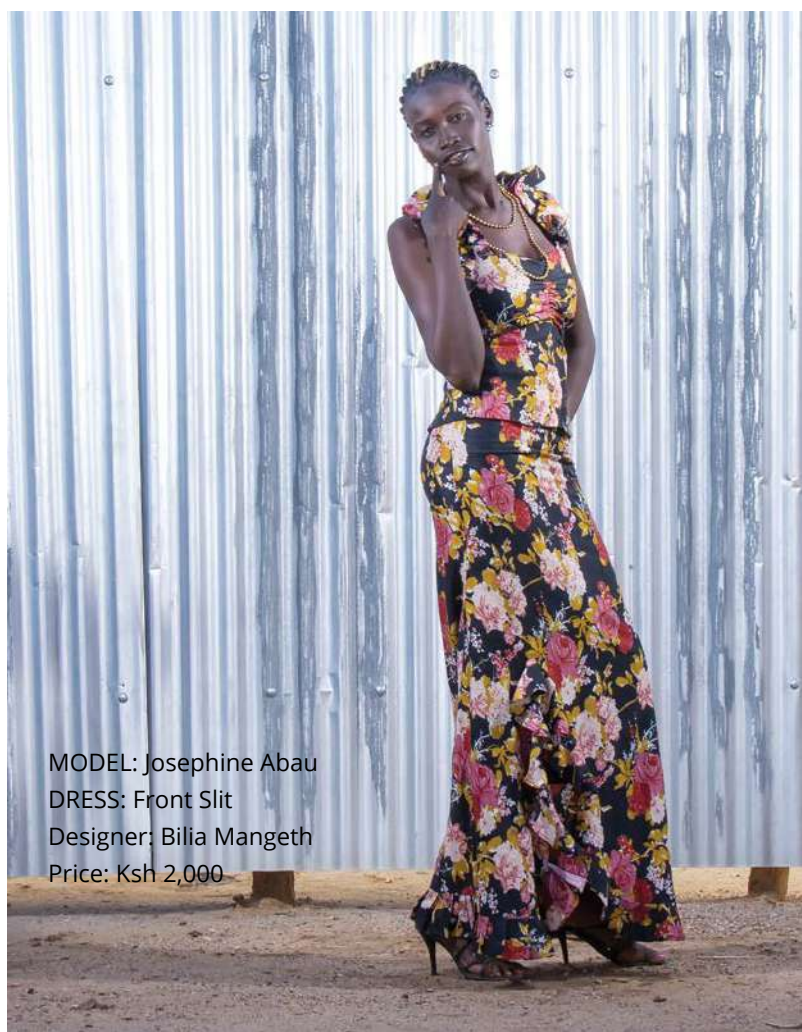




MODEL: Mariah Deng  
DRESS: Don't sit  
Designer: Bilia Mangeth  
Price: Ksh 1,000



MODEL: Sifa Kalenga  
DRESS: Mixed Kitenge  
Designer: Baba Brayan  
Price: Ksh 1,200



MODEL: Josephine Abau  
DRESS: Front Slit  
Designer: Bilia Mangeth  
Price: Ksh 2,000





## SOUTH SUDANESE REFUGEES CELEBRATE MACHAR'S RETURN

BY MUDADI SAIDI

Hope Primary School in Kakuma 4 was the venue for celebrations to mark Riek Machar's return to Juba and his swearing in as Africa's youngest country's Vice President under a unity government headed by H.E. Salvar Kiir. The celebrations saw South Sudanese refugees turn up in their hundreds to mark the auspicious day in songs and dances.

Riek Machar, commonly referred to by the world as the rebel chief, fled Juba in December 2013 after he was accused of plotting a coup attempt by the government. This was the first time that the leader was setting feet in Juba in a period of more than 2 years. Both leaders expressed optimism during the swearing in ceremony.

"We are happy that peace is finally coming back to our Country and that our leaders have united. I hope to go back to my home soon," said Mary Buk, a refugee from South Sudan. As refugees expressed hope of going back to their home country, many more are adamant saying that they are still watchful of the events in Juba before making up their minds. The event was attended by hundreds of refugees both from Kakuma refugee camp and Nairobi.

South Sudan has been in civil unrest since December 2013. The civil unrest has seen an unknown number of people killed and many others displaced.

## JOY AS 28 SOMALI REFUGEES VOLUNTARILY RETURN TO SOMALIA

BY AYAN MOHAMUD



PHOTO: SOMALI REFUGEES BOARD A UNHAS FLIGHT TO SOMALI

On Thursday 21st April 2016, UNHCR and the government of Kenya organized for the return of Somali refugees in Kakuma Refugee Camp back to Somalia. This was the first group of 28 people to leave Kakuma. The exercise, termed as VOLREP (Voluntary Repatriation), was done in collaboration with the Department of Refugee Affairs. The signing of the tripartite agreement between Kenya, Somalia and UNHCR in 2013 has initiated this process hence facilitates voluntary return of Somali refugees. There are some areas in Southern Central Somalia, which are deemed safe for return. These are Mogadishu, Kismayu, Beled Weyne, Baidoa, Afgooye among others.

We talked to some of the people on board the United Nations Humanitarian Air Service and their excitement knew no bounds. A lot of hope could be read on their faces. Sahra Ahmed, a mother of four who has stayed in the camp for nine years, was joyful about the fact that she was going back home. "I am very happy that I am going back to my country at last,

a place I left a long time ago, but I hope and pray that it shall be well," she happily says. Such was the case too for Mama Hawa Sheikh Adan, she was glad that her dream of one day going back home has come true. "I can't believe I'll be back in my home country in a few hours!" She says with much anxiety. "It was something I've been praying for all the time and I thank the Almighty for it." She adds.

Present dignitaries from UNHCR and the Government of Kenya also got time to say goodbye to the departing refugees. The District Commissioner urged them to make good use of whatever they've learnt during their time in Kakuma and also wished them a safe flight along with good luck.

On the other hand, the departing refugees had a lot to be thankful for. "I thank Kenya, UNHCR and all agencies in the camp for taking care of all my needs while I was in the camp." Sahra said. "Thank you Kenya and the Turkana community for welcoming us and taking us as your brothers and sisters and also to UNHCR for taking good care of us, it was quite an experience spending time here," mama Hawa concludes emotionally.

*"Thank you Kenya and the Turkana community for welcoming us and taking us as your brothers and sisters and also to UNHCR for taking good care of us, it was quite an experience spending time here"*



# HOPE IN SUFFERING

BY MARKO ABDURAHMAN

Being the chosen one is unpeaceful  
Being the chosen one means destruction  
of own

Being the chosen one means being furious  
sometimes

Being the chosen one means dancing with  
chance,

The chance of going back to nothing

Oh antelope among leopards

The leopard's faithful servant

Seek peace with the elephants' world  
union

Physically weak, but a strong union  
formed

Tortured! Seek and be with peaceful ones

Resting at the elephant's feet

Elephants receive the harmed to treat

Elephants seek out the starved to feed

Elephants know where the troubled can fit

Elephant rescues lives with slow but  
successful fights

Protection and equipment come with  
elephants

Nature and establishment come with  
elephants

Shaping the future comes with elephants

The solution to live as an antelope with  
leopards is through the elephants

Choose! The solution is with elephants.

# THE SELF

BY MARY ALUEL

I have come to realize the essence of this  
beautiful thing called life.

See I am no different from any other

My skin might be of a different shade but

My soul bears the same complexion.

That does not mean that I am not unique  
because I am.

Travel the world from planet to planet  
and you will find no one like me

No carbon copy nor print resembles that  
of my own

No one can refer to me as weak,  
vulnerable, full of fear or ashamed

Simply because they think I am ashamed  
of my skin

I allowed myself to be broken, used

I did not understand the true meaning of  
self-respect

Not because I gave out my pride but  
because of so much more

I robbed myself of my own happiness

I denied myself opportunities to be heard  
and to do the things that I loved

I denied myself the chance to be free

Not because I was committed to love but  
because I thought I was in love

I became a prisoner in my own skin  
Slowly I became hooked and feared to  
loose

I allowed myself to drown in a sea of  
empty words

Desperately clinging on empty promises

I became a stranger to my own self and  
hated the mirror

My future dim, my heart in pieces, I  
wanted to give up

My body on the ground and my heart  
beating

I fell into depression and lost my will  
Thoughts grew into words, and words to  
questions

Then I felt a hand so soft touch my  
shoulder

She was everything I needed and I  
learned how to love and embrace her

She taught me how to rise up again and  
carry on

She was no stranger because I knew she  
existed

I just did not reach out to her like she did  
to me



# THE STORY OF COURAGE

Are you a writer? The Refugee Magazine is looking for you. Get in-touch with us and we will help you grow your career. Send us an email through [therefugeemag@gmail.com](mailto:therefugeemag@gmail.com) or visit our FilmAid Office at NCKK Compound.



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