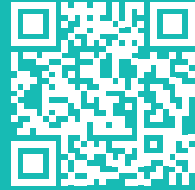


THE Refugee

MAGAZINE

Issue #14 | Kakuma Edition



SCAN QR CODE

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THE YOGI WITH A HUMANITARIAN
HEART

MIMI'S SOAP FACTORY;
STANDING TO BE COUNTED IN THE
FIGHT AGAINST COVID 19

DESIGNER SAM:
MASKING KAKUMA ONE AT A TIME



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EDITORIAL NOTE

This far the first quarter of the year 2020 has not turned out as we all might have wished, As other parts of the country grapples with the Covid 19 situation, Kakuma has not been spared either. Its vibrant night life has faded leaving, businesses deemed nonessential by the government are closed or closing. Classrooms sit empty. Streets are eerily quiet and football pitches unimagably clear.

Every effort is being put in place by the Government of Kenya (RAS), the County Government, the Sub County Government, United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) and all its partners to ensure the masses are well informed of the COVID-19 pandemic; causes, symptoms, prevention and even treatment.

Despite the challenges that the COVID-19 pandemic has brought with it, exerting unprecedented amount of pressure on the operation, humanitarian agencies in the Kakuma-Kalobeyei operation have come up with innovative ways to ensure beneficiaries continue receiving essential services including new and safer ways to deliver critical information to the masses, intensified use of radio to deliver classroom lessons to Secondary school students and Primary pupils, teleconferencing, and working remotely from homes amongst other novel ways that ensure safety and protection for all.

As the disease continues to hold the world in its firm grip, and we may seem to not know what is the safest way to protect ourselves, it is our responsibility to heed the advice from Medical experts and the government entrusted with responsibility to protect us. This is the only way we can help to slow the relentless march of the COVID-19 pandemic. It is upon each one of us to stop our uninformed assertions that COVID-19 is no big deal, that Covid 19 is not in Kakuma and that boiling a concoction of hot water, lemon and ginger is the silver bullet to the covid 19.

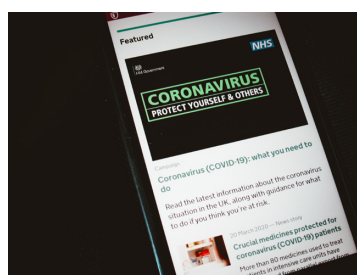
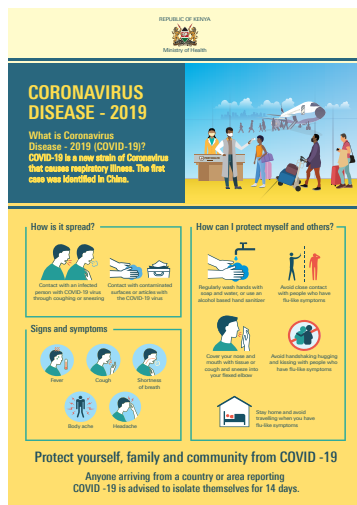
Stay safe. Stay at home. Wash Hands. Sanitize. Maintain Social distance!

#EveryActionCounts

From the Editor: Joseph Okello

THE TEAM

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THE YOGI

WITH A HUMANITARIAN HEART

By Santos Madhiu

As the sun rises from under the Eastern hills, she rises with it to teach her Yoga classes. She would always find three or four students already waiting for her with their mats spread out ready for their yoga classes..

Yoga in Kakuma?

“One day while we were at the Turkana cafeteria, a friend of mine introduced me to yoga classes. It was not a difficult decision to make, I was just ready to start something new and yoga was intriguing” Said Rita during our interview. Unfortunately, immediately after, her friend left for South Sudan. She did not give it up. After a couple of months attending yoga classes, she was introduced to Africa Yoga Project online to which she made her application to become a member, she was picked and there after she met her mentor, Lisa Oplinger.

Although there was no physical contact with her mentor, the two kept in touch where she was mentored and taken through the drills of yoga training. Rita would later receive an invitation to attend a two-week Yoga Training in the capital, Nairobi with the Africa Yoga Project - The aim of the project is to elevate, educate and create job opportunities not only within Africa but outside of Africa as well. “This was a once in a lifetime opportunity for me.” She said bursting in a joyful laughter. amidst a burst of laughter with laughter.

Upon finishing the training, Rita was given a 6 months’ probation where she would have 2 classes weekly at Angelina Jolie Girls’ Primary School and at Savic Centre. Acing this, she



Photo: Rita performing yoga

earned herself a position of teaching Yoga with Africa Yoga Project. Currently a year one yoga student, she is the only female teacher in the group of 7 yogis in the Kakuma camp working with the Africa Yoga Project.

Working as yoga trainer has provided Rita with a source of living and a means to pay her son’s school fee. Her services have been sought by individuals as well as organizations who see the benefit of her classes to some of their beneficiaries. Her Humanitarian works in the face of corona virus

Distributing food to the vulnerable

As the Corona virus pandemic broke out leaving most refugee families high and dry, especially those whose businesses had to close, Rita through her yoga organization-Africa Yoga Project and her group bought and distributed both food and non-food items to the vulnerable members of the refugee community. The distribution was done after the members did assessment in the community and identifying the most vulnerable members.

Some people despise yoga

“Some people who do not like yoga give several reasons; some say the poses are devilish and immoral. Some parents even stopped their children from attending our yoga classes because they did not approve of certain poses, they considered immoral,” said Alfred Ondera, one of Yoga Trainers.

“Yoga has different poses and none of them is close to any evil act. Yoga is a fitness exercise and good for health. It is also important for a healthy state of mind as it enhances relaxation and meditation. It is also important because job creation as it has created jobs for us.”

Rita is also a remedial teacher and refers to her work as activism intended to uplift the level of girls’ education among the refugee girls in the camp

On her future plans she says her dream is to one day open a fitness that is big enough to accommodate more people, “I would like to be a fitness exercise pioneer and mentor for my community.”



Photo: Rita distributing fooditems to a family during the Covid 19.

WHY I WRITE

By Sandra Mwang'ombe

I write not because I'm idle or
anything
Not because I'm full of words to say
or note down
I write because that's the only way I
can venture myself
Only way I can vent out my emotions
A way i know that stops me from
taking my own life
If I do not write, how else do you
expect me to survive?
I will take my own life
No, no please just let me write.

Instead of slitting my wrists to pour
out blood and end me
I reap out my heart to give hope to
the ones who need to survive
I bleed out to transfuse to others so i
can save lives
I rapture, I break, I die every second
that I write
But that doesn't mean I stop writing
I write because that's who I am

This is not just art
This is life
This is how I survive
I place my life, my emotions out
there to the world
Get judged, encouraged despised but
that's alright
Because if I don't write, then that
means choosing death over life

ON THE MOVE

By Kashara Juma Erick

It was never fair,
For those of us who were there,
But time heals all wounds,
And so we shall heal,

Better you will become tomorrow,
For you overcame the sorrow,
You know how to persevere,
In the hands of doom and despair,

Keep moving to keep your soul alive,
So that for long you shall survive,
Whether fast or slow do not give up,
Stay strong, be at the top,

Your strength is a measure of success,
An assurance of life's happiness,
So, keep your focus ahead,
And surely you shall win.

THE SILENCE

By Elliepoet

It takes guns and bullets to kill a body,
But it takes silence,
To kill an idea.
You will be silent when they come for
your brothers,
But, who will be left to defend you when
you are next?
Humanity is beyond borders,
You may not be able to raise a banner,
But you can raise a voice.
We should applaud their bravery to fight
for their freedom,
But we should mourn that they are
being killed,
As if a dead man can be a slave

CRY FOR PEACE

By Felix Omondi

In a football
Match in Atbara
A crowd chants
For a free state

In Omdurman, a
Musician sings
Of a country
Where bread is cheap

In Khartoum,
Artists paint the streets
A rainbow of blue, yellow and green

tasqut bas!
tasqut bas!
tasqut bas!

Protesters chant
Alaa Salah sings 'thawra'
A regime falls

The people demand
For the Blue Nile
To be the Nile again
Not a mass grave.

The people demand
To be treated as people
Not subjects
The people demand

HOW DID SOUTH SUDAN GO SOUTH?



By Monykuer Juach.

South Sudan celebrates its independence day every 9th July and 2019 was South Sudan's 8th independence day. To many South Sudanese in the refugee camp this did not provide anything to smile about or celebrate.

Everyone went about their businesses and activities like every normal day. The phenomenon was uncommon about the ever patriotic South Sudanese. I thought it they must have thought there is really nothing to celebrate so I asked a few people in my neighbourhood why there was a sudden indifference to the birth of our country? To which many shrug me off saying, "*Kalam Farik!*" Arabic for *nonsense*.

I took no offense. These must have been very deep feelings that it was not in my place to question.

Many have been forced out

Virtually all if not most of them them were forced out of the country they called home, lost loved ones to ethnic fueled conflicts and continue to lose hope that things will ever go back to normal.

Many of them have seen horrific atrocities. Some have become refugees repeated times and thousands others long to go back to a peaceful South Sudan, myself included. But how did South Sudan go South?

I left Kakuma refugee Camp for South Sudan in 2010, five years after the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) between Sudan People's Liberation Movement and the Government of Sudan.

CPA had brought relative peace to Sudan, the largest country in Africa.

The peace agreement gave South Sudanese a clause that they had a chance to decide their fate for the first time in the history of Sudan; to vote for a united Sudan or a separated Sudan.

Many, mainly refugees flocked backed home to vote in the referendum. A referendum that would eventually decide the fate of over 15 million South Sudanese in face of the world.

A year later; 9th July 2011, South Sudan became the newest independent country in the world after they overwhelmingly voted for cessation. South Sudan became a country with *one of their own* as a president, an army and many other freedoms and choices that came with a new nation.

We had so many hopes for our country when the flag was hoisted next to where South Sudanese freedom fighter, Dr. John Garang was buried. Men cried; Woman ululated. I saw some of the brightest smiles on the face of so many fellow South Sudanese. I had my moment of euphoria too.

I couldn't hold my tears back when the next woman standing next to me dropped hers. She was dressed in an African print dress with patches of South Sudanese flag. She held her right hand just about her heart as she struggled to sing the national anthem, looked to my side and said, "this is our day, the blood of the oppressed South Sudan is the reason we are here today. Rejoice for we are free at last and you are the future of this country"

I mumbled, thank you mama. I had my dreams for South Sudan too. I wanted to become a journalist. I also wanted to be a computer engineer. I wanted it all but the country had nothing.

Everyone was hopeful for a fresh start. We spoke of rebuilding.

But, barely three years later, the country was back to mass the chaos of the yester years.

I recall, it was past 9 pm in 2014. I was startled by the sounds of gunshots coming from the army barracks just 10 minutes' drive away from where I stayed. At first, I thought it was just some random drunk soldiers doing what they usually do when high on the local brews. Light sporadic gunshots are common in Juba, it is part of the life.

But these were not light. These were not sporadic. The gunshots were not stopping. 30 minutes later, the intensity of the gunshots increased now it was sounding like popcorn in a popcorn machine. Heavy artilleries later joined. It was a sound I never heard before. I was scared. I felt too close to the terror but that night too passed.

A refugee for the Second time

When in October 2015 I was arrested while out with friends in one of clubs in the township yet having committed no offense, I knew it was time to leave again, I boarded a bus and left the capital and right towards the Kenya-South Sudan border.

"Welcome to Kakuma Refugee Camp." said the officer at the reception center. I had become a refugee again.

My prayers is to one day walk freely across South Sudan and welcome home people from other nations,

REY BULAMBO: USING THEATRE ARTS FOR BEHAVIOUR CHANGE

By Okelloo Joseph

A world of opportunities to the youth in Kakuma in the arena of Theater in Education (TIE), Drama in Education (DIE) and Participatory Educational Theater and Arts for Development (PETAD) is all Rey Egide Bulambo has always dreamt of.

Rey Egide's exceptional determination to chart this course despite the numerous challenges he has faced as a refugee in Kakuma refugee camp is what has paved way for other newer groups to emerge staging playing plays within their communities and during community events.

A theatre in his own right, he goes through the drills himself like any other youth in the camp ensuring that he is up early in readiness for his thrilling stage play performance at a nearby food distribution center.

"Theatre is a powerful tool for change, information, awareness as well as entertainment." He quips.

Through Community Theatre engagements, Rey Egide and the groups he trains and works with have gotten numerous opportunities to take part in community events and plays thus aligning themselves with the themes and problems affecting their communities. This helps them identify the problem and create awareness for behaviour change.

Pioneers of theatre arts in Kakuma

Way before Rey Egide was Simon Bingo, who is one of the brains that nurtured the performance arts in Kakuma. Simon, now a founding member of Juba Film Festival in South Sudan grew up spending most of his afternoons either doing rehearsals or directing plays at Youth Centre One in Kakuma one.

When he finally got back to South Sudan, he chose to hold onto his passion in filmmaking later creating the trendsetting Juba Film Festival (JFF) in South Sudan, an annual events that already accepts Film entries from across the globe.

The JFF has created a good platform for South Sudanese upcoming filmmakers to tell and share their stories with the rest of the world or people at home. Young South Sudanese filmmakers from the camp have had a chance of submitting their films as part of competition in the Juba Film Festival with Uchieng Ukech, being the first South Sudanese from a refugee camp to ever receive an award from the festival. bringing home the award for Best Story nomination in the 2016 awards.

Theatre trainings in the camp

Rey Bulambo's theatre classes are filled with participants drawn from across the Kakuma and Kalobayei settlement. After completing the two weeks training, the graduands are usually set out for rigorous daily performances and practice sessions for at least 20 days consecutive.

During this period, the groups develop thematic contents and plays that aim

at addressing issues that affect their communities.

As experts of magnet theatre, the performances recreate real problems of the real world and seek the involvement of their audiences in the decoding the information passed in the particular scene of play. Several scenarios of different social issues are depicted in the plays and the audiences are asked to debate on the problem and offer possible solutions.

Importance of the Community Theatre

The community theatre sessions engages the community members to take part in the plays, and helps them identify the problem and to be intentional agents of change.

"These theatre performances have helped me learn different ways on how to address the different social issues faced by different communities," said Tony Gustave, a theatre performing artist from Kalobeyei.



Photo: Rey Egide performing theatre arts

MIMI'S SOAP FACTORY; STANDING TO BE COUNTED IN THE WAR AGAINST COVID 19

By Baluu Wol Makuach

With the entire world almost on its knees at the wake of the Coronavirus pandemic and uncertainties rife across the world from the most advanced of nations to the least civilized nations grappling to find the magic bullet to the crises, we have had stories of heroes who don't wear capes, and Mimi Deng stands tall amongst them.

Mimi William Deng is a form four student, she is supposed to be sitting for her final examinations this year, which means if everything had gone according to plan, she should have been at school learning, probably swotting under the hot tin sheets that roofs her Kakuma Refugee Secondary School. But things did not go according to plan for Mimi William Deng, so her plans had to change.

"Ever since learning was called off, I have been worried about the possibility of not sitting for my final examinations this year and I shudder at the thought of another full year in high school," she says

Having learnt how to make soap from her chemistry laboratory lessons, Mimi was bitten by a soap bug and being the one not to idle around, the COVID 19 situation that has kept students at home only provided her with an opportunity to put to good use her skills and the ample time at her disposal to good use.

"Instead of idling around the community, I decided I would do something meaningful that would not only benefit me but also the community that I come from and that

is how the idea to manufacture soap in our school library came about," Mimi says with a semi smile.

Not the kind to waste time on an idea, she picked her phone and called her teacher of Chemistry to share the idea and seek permission to use the laboratory for her manufacturing. With the permission of the school Headteacher, she would later join hands with her friend and classmate, Mike Dombolo and Juarwell Akech to forge a trio of production unit.

Despite having a team in place, they were not yet out of the woods with their plan as they lacked the capital to invest in the manufacturing products. Within a moment of quick thinking and some borrowing they three friends managed to buy the manufacturing ingredients from the local shops.

The manufacturing processes

First the 3 students set out to work by first marking the chemicals clearly on different containers to separate the acidic ingredients from the basic ingredients, the process then involves mixing the ingredients in right quantities under the teacher's supervision. To enhance the smell of the detergent, the students added some perfume into the ready detergent. "For packaging we reuse empty 1 litre plastic water bottles. We mostly bought the bottles from the street kids and clean them at lab." Said Mimi.

Feedback from the users

"We have received encouraging feedback from the community and there is a growing demand for our soap in the community especially now that Corona virus is here, and people are being encouraged to wash their hands with soap." Mimi says adding that, "we would like to grow our soap business beyond what it is right now. We would like to not only benefit ourselves and our families but that we support and offer a solution to our communities. We sell the soap at a cheap price to the customers and we distribute some for free to some of the households that cannot afford to buy because we understand the economic abilities of our customers and also because we want to be part of the fight against corona virus."

Given the challenges that the group faces with raising funds to effectively run the venture they hope that they get help to scale up their productions and marketing of their products. "If we got some help in buying the ingredients and finding market we would grow remarkably." Mimi says with great optimism in her voice.

As the world celebrates heroes in medical masks and the police and soldiers at the forefront of the battle against Coronavirus, Mimi is a true testimony to Andrea Randall's Heroes don't always wear capes, badges, or uniforms. Sometimes, they support those who do.



©FilmAid/Gabriel Bugoma



Photos: Mimi Deng at the school laboratory making soap.

A large black scorpion is shown from a top-down perspective on a sandy surface. Its two large pincers are raised and curved outwards. The scorpion's body is segmented and dark, with a long, segmented tail (metasoma) extending downwards. At the very tip of the tail, a small, reddish-brown insect is perched. A red rectangular box is overlaid on the upper left portion of the image, containing white text.

SCORPION KING:
HOW COMMUNITIES REMEDY
SCORPION STING

By Okello Joseph

Scorpion stings can be painful, but the vast majority of them are harmless. But there are some species of scorpions that, can inflict potentially fatal stings. And this is the basis for the dread about these terrific speedsters with rapid tails that harmer its venom into a threat on target at lightning speed.

Residents of Kakuma and its environs are familiar with tales of stealthy scorpion stings at night. It is not uncommon to find a family waiting for an ambulance by the roadside with a family member writhing in unbearable pain waiting. While others would walk themselves to the health facilities, the pain caused by the speedstars is not something to be written off lightly.

Scientifically, scorpions are invertebrates classified in the class Arachnid scientifically named *Pandinus Imperator*. They are classified together with spiders which equally have some venomous species as well.

Despite their eminent danger and venom, these animals rarely attack humans unless they feel threatened. Death incidents from the scorpion sting are very rare in this region.

Scorpions rapidly loose body moisture under the hot arid sun of Kakuma, so they are always looking for sheltered locations where they can camp out until nightfall. They may also wander into homes in search of food or safe resting spots and are known for hiding it the hinges of loosely-fitting doors and windows, roofs and seats. They crawl into spaces and into bedding under the cover of the dark.

Signs and symptoms of scorpion sting

Scorpion stings include intense pain, numbness and tingling around the area of sting, swelling of the tongue and difficulty in breathing. Among children, signs and symptoms include muscle twitching, unusual head, neck and eye movements, drooling, sweating, high blood pressure

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(hypertension) irregular heartbeat and inconsolable crying.

Most scorpion stings don't need medical treatment. But if symptoms are severe, you may need to receive care in a hospital. Scorpion antivenom may be given to children to prevent the development of symptoms. Adults with severe symptoms also may be given antivenom.

Home treatment of scorpion sting

Different communities have their own traditional ways of relieving the pain. Some communities use crushed prosopis leaves commonly referred to as *mathenge*. The leaves are crushed and applied on the area of the sting. The use of any ordinary toothpaste is common amongst certain populations and people report considerable reduction in the effect of the venom.

Other communities such as the Burundians are known for commonly applying strong salt solutions on the affected area. The salt solution is absorbed and rneutralizes the scorpion venom to calm the pain. This method is preferred as it is less painful. This is steadily being used by the different communities in Kakuma especially those neighbouring the Burundi communities.

The Nubians of Sudan are known for using burnt bones to ease the pain. A bone is burnt strongly and cut into small chunks with the bone marrow exposed. In the event of a scorpion attack, small cut marks are made around the area of the sting using a sharp razor. When blood starts to ooze out, the burnt bone is placed on the cut area with the marrow directly towards the cut. The bone marrow absorbs the venom out of stung the area.

Avoid drinking of water

In th event of an attack, avoid drinking water or fluids as these accelerate the rate of blood flow in the body and can easily spread the venom in the entire body, which may lead to malfunction of some tissues and organs. This can easily cause death. It is therefore advisable not to drink or take a bathuntil the pain recedes.

Other safety measure

To prevent scorpions from find ing comfort around where humans live homes need to be well lit and clean to keep the scorpion away. Holes and cracks on the walls should be filled and always wear closed shoes at night. As theses stealthy animals can sneak into the bedding, it is important to always check bedding before going to sleep.

It is also aimportant to always shake your shoes before putting them back.

Generally, most scorpion stings do not need medical treatment. But if symptoms are severe, you may need to receive proper care in a hospital.

Lifestyle and home remedies

If a scorpion stings you or your child, follow the suggestions below. Healthy adults may not need further treatment, and these tips can help keep children safe until they see a doctor:

- Clean the wound with mild soap and water.
- Apply a cool compress to the affected area. This may help reduce pain.
- Don't consume food or liquids if you're having difficulty swallowing.
- Take an over-the-counter pain reliever as needed. You might try ibuprofen (Motrin IB, Children's Motrin, others) to help ease discomfort.



JANVIER : KING OF MELODIES

By Gabriel Bugoma

You are most likely to catch him writing songs from his quiet compound in the heart of Kalobeyei. The silence and earphones on his ears tells you how focused he gets while weaves words into some of the best rhumba melodies coming from Kalobeyei. But there is more to this young talented Congolese rhumba artist and this writer delves into his story.

The 23 year old, Kashindi Mitima, better known by his artistic name January, was born in the Democratic Republic of Congo. At barely 11 years old, his father was gunned down in the violence and the political turmoils of the Congo. Being the sole breadwinner, his death made January's hopes for an education vanish due to financial instability in the family.

Due to constant struggles with school fee arrears, January was forced to drop out of school and stayed home helping his mother with garden work. He spent most of his free time listening to music from their small radio. "I liked listening to Fally Ipupa's songs. he had always been my role model." he said with pride.

January's love for music could first long time ago when he was still young. He would compose his own lyrics as music was playing whenever he was alone in his room.

The clashes and political unrests

caused a lot of families to flee the country. Thousands were displaced and sought refuge at the borders of the neighboring countries where there was safety. Many settled in Tanzania while others opted for Kenya, January was one of them.

He finally got his refugee status determined, he was approved and was settled in Dadaab Refugee Complex, a semi-arid town in Garissa, Kenya. "The first night was rough with hot and dry wind," January remembers. The weather conditions in Dadaab were very much different from that back in his home country. The temperatures would sometimes go the highs of up to 38 degrees Celsius during the day. But there was peace. There was safety.

While in the Dadaab camp, January trained as a barber and started working at one of the local barber shops. he would also do menial jobs as long as it brought food to the table. "Whenever I had no one to attend to at the barber shop, I would get into writing lyrics just to ease my mind." January confessed.

In 2016, a year after January settled in Dadaab complex, the government announced plans to the Dadaab Camp. A number of Somali refugees were voluntarily repatriated back to their home country while others were transferred to newly established Kalobeyei Settlement Scheme.

Performing in Kakuma's Got talent

Ever since arriving and settling in Kalobeyei, January has performed in different events within the camp. He represented Kalobeyei in a youth festival in the music category but never made it to the final. "Kakuma has a lot of talented artists and winning against them is not easy." January testified.

Two years later, during the Annual Kakuma's Got Talent season 4 call for artists came out, "this had to be it," January thought, putting all his might in the competition. "I write my own songs and I would wake up at night just to practice my verses." he says.

He aced the auditions and was selected as one of the artists from Kalobeyei. But there were other round so competitions that would bring other great artists from Kakuma and the host community as well. But this did not scare him, as he believed he had started the race and everything would eventually take its course.

January would go ahead and win in the overall competition, a feat he says he he couldn't have predicted, not in his wildest dreams. "I couldn't believe that I had actually won the music prize that came with a free studio recording chance of an album, a tablet and a cash reward for his talents.



©FilmAid/ Mark Muigai

Forms a band

He later recorded nikubembeleze, sugar and Brigitte. which are doing well in the camp if rhumba fans are to go by. He then formed the Fire Band music band to help some of the upcoming artist practice and put their talents into use. The band plays beats in Lingala, rhumba and bongo tunes.

Finding a star

During the 2018 finding a star project run by FilmAid International, Janvier again got selected alongside Young Courageous, a Kakuma host community artist to work with Kevin Wyre,

I have not made it out in the music industry but I believe in the process and would just urge other upcoming artists like meto respect their work and always appreciate their fans as they are the people they sing to.



Photos: Janvier in a Nairobi studio recording his music alongside Wyre during the FilmAid's Finding A Star Project

MASKING ONE AT A TIME; YOUNG DESIGNER SEWING REUSABLE MASKS **FOR FREE**

By Gabriel Bugoma

It is running beyond 4 months since the first case was reported in Africa and beyond 3 months since the first covid 19 case was reported in Kenya sending terror and worry across a continent that is already grappling with so many challenges and tropical diseases that it has not been able to eradicate.

When the government directed that every Kenyan and all residents should wear face masks, questions emerged from Kenyans across social economic divide whether the government would provide these masks to the people or at least subsidize the cost of the masks. The refugees in Kakuma decried their inability to purchase the masks at the expense of feeding their families

In comes Sam the designer

When he saw the plight of his fellow refugees and with a clear understanding their economic vulnerabilities, Samson Alex Malinda, famously known as Sam the Designer, a 23 year old refugee from Congo decided that he had to do something to help, "I felt bad when I watched what the world was going through and thought even harder how my gift in design would help so I decided to make masks and distribute for free," he said.

Using the fabric, he had bought for his tailoring shop, he started making masks. Although not sure how this decision would turn out, he had made

up his mind and there was no turning back. "To help is what the person's heart decides. If at all you want to help, never look at what the other person does," he said.

After he was done with the first batch of the mask, he simply walked to street and started distributing the mask to anyone who was passing by. "I was not sure if they were going to accept the masks. All I cared about however was that my heart was clear that I had done my part as a human being."

Word went around fast that he was distributing free masks leading to multitudes of people streaming to his shop for masks. His goodwill turned into a near nightmare as he could not sustain all these needs. He did not have the materials to sew enough masks for these people coming from far and wide, neither did he have any extra hands to help him out at the workshop. It had become a nightmare. "People started coming here in numbers almost everybody," says a young boy seated at the corner of the design shop. He helps Sam distribute the masks.

As his fame went wide, and his friends understanding he needed their help, they offered to help albeit just in the distribution of the masks as he keeps his feet on the sewing machine.

"I cannot produce the mask in numbers due to lack of materials," he laments.

This has made it hard for him to expand the distribution to places such as Kalobeyei, and other parts of Kakuma and can only hope that he gets help in order to make more masks and reach other vulnerable community members beyond his Kakuma 3 locality.

As the novel coronavirus continues to spread throughout the world, keeping people and businesses in our communities across this continent, just as it has the rest of the world, shuttered, the virus is clearly something to be feared by all of us. And it has become not only a global fight to come above it but and an individual fight to ensure we are accountable for our actions that would safeguard the people we care about.

Despite the World Health Organization's recommendations and governments' directives on hand washing, social distancing, using sanitizers, staying home and putting masks on, the general agreement is that these measures have been difficult to abide by given then communal nature of typical African set up of shared minimal resources, shared social activities and these measures can only hold for so long before this patience cracks.

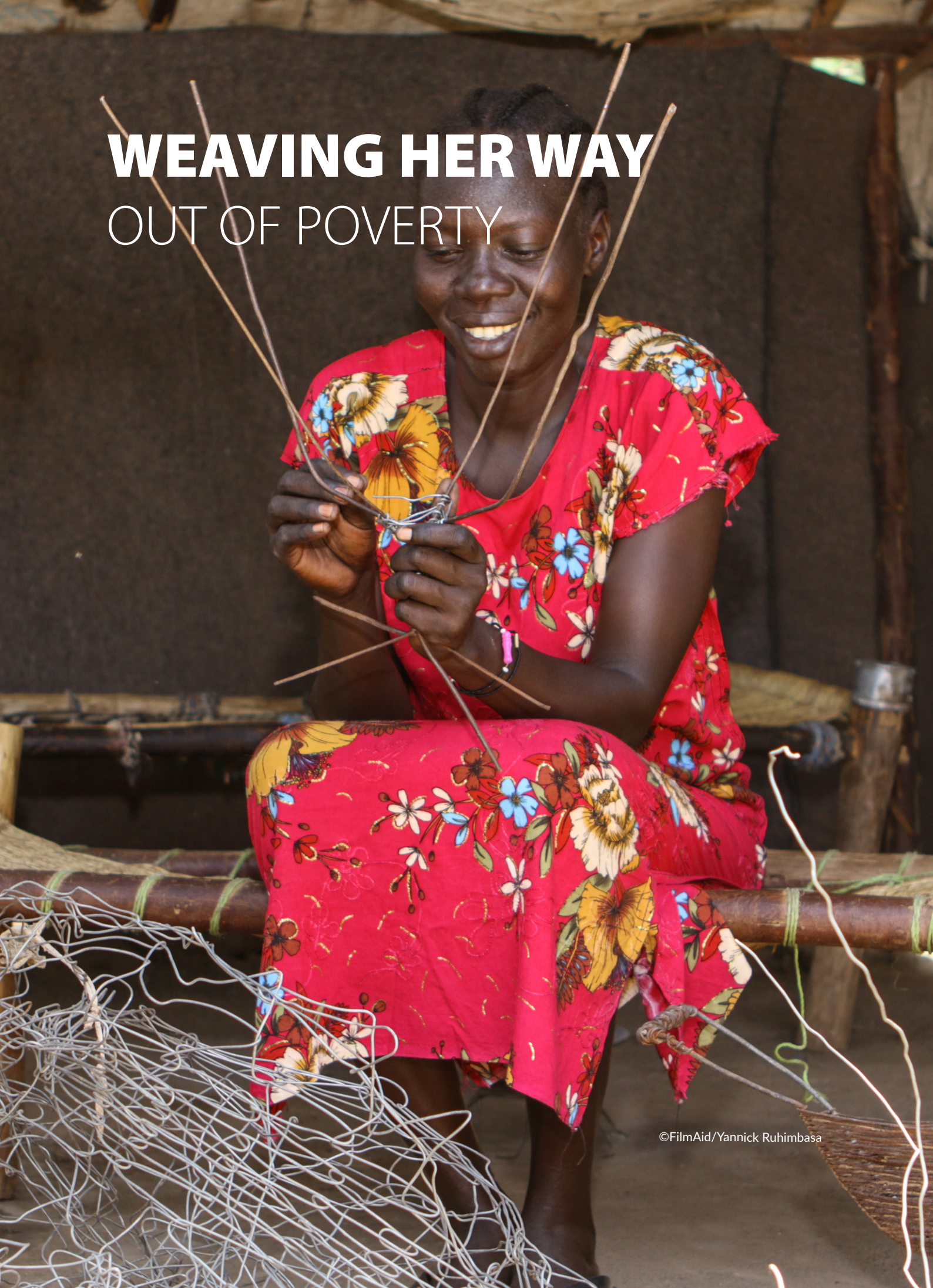


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To help is what a person's heart desires. If at all you want to help, never allow the challenges that come your way deter you.



WEAVING HER WAY OUT OF POVERTY



By Santos Madhiu

Many youth in Kakuma face numerous challenges that discourage them from going after their dreams but not Rehab Mark.

Rehab Mark, a 23 year old refugee from Sudan fled her home country in the aftermath of the political unrest that forced many to be internally displaced. She sat for her KCSE in 2018; this was four years after she had dropped out of school in form two. She was expectant and had to take care of her son who is currently counting months to his 5th birthday and attending baby classes at Turkwel pre- school in Hong Kong, Kakuma.

After completing her primary school education back in Sudan, Rehab fled under her uncle's cover and got refuge in Kenya. Her uncle then travelled back to Sudan to check on the rest of the family. He was murdered in cold blood shortly after arriving in his homeland and Rehab was left alone with hopelessness as a striking spike.

In 2014, Rehab conceived and was forced to drop out of school. Left with no option, her husband too dropped out in form three in order to support the family as Rehab was due with her child around that time. He mostly relied on farming and other menial jobs as a source of livelihood.

When the time finally came, Rehab gave birth to a bouncing baby boy. She walked home with a broad smile as the community members shook her hands with happiness. A celebration for the new member of the society became a spike in their minds as they faced financial upset. However, happiness is what they have for becoming parents.

Making traditional stoves using wires and strings, mostly debris from metal work or hardware, is a convention among the Nubians. Rehab's husband is among the expatriates who does

the molding but has no idea of the potential it possesses to generate income. Rehab observed this activity silently till she was able to get back on her feet.

Rehab collected wires and crafted her first stove. She cut and tied together 8 wires, folded the lower ones to form the base modified into stand and spread the upper ones into circular structure. These upper ones are then connected and hardened closely using strings to form rings and finally the stove. The main reason for hardening the wires closely with a string is to make the wires strong enough and leave holes for the ashes to escape. The holes are also meant for aeration for the total burning of the charcoal hence reducing the production of the laughing gas (carbon (II) oxide) that is produced when the charcoal is not totally burned.

Carbon monoxide is dangerous

The gas is dangerous to human beings due to its death reputation. The other advantage of these types of stoves is its ability to save energy and allow for enough heat that allows food to be cooked in a short time. The stoves are durable and can only rust if left in the open during rain or when constantly left to come into contact with water.

Rehab presented her first stove to her neighbours who showed interest in the product. Later orders for the stoves streamed in for Rehab. She used the money she had saved as a capital for buying the wires, each bunch costing Ksh 700. One bunch is able to make two stoves, one smaller and a bigger one. The big stove costs Ksh 500 while the small stove costs Ksh 250 each. Due to the high demand for the stoves she initially sold the stoves at almost twice her initial estimated selling price. Business

gradually picked up and sometimes she would receive orders as far as Kakuma 3.

Rehab later resumed her studies at Kakuma Refugee Secondary School and resuming from where she had left and completed her secondary studies in 2018. She is now concentrating on her stove moulding and farming where she grows finger lady and okra and sells them at the local Hong Kong market in Kakuma 1. .

Her husband chose to join Don Bosco Vocational Training Centre where he is pursuing Mechanical Engineering (Grade 1).

Rehab dreams of taking her son to a boarding school when he grows up. Whenever she is free, she helps the other girls with their school work and share her experiences with them as a way of advice and motivate them. She advises young girls to stick to their studies until they are done. To Rehab, anybody can always go back to school after having children.



Photo: Rehab Mark weaving

RISING ABOVE ALL ODDS



©FilmAid/Joseph Okello

Photo: Ali sitting on his wheelchair at home

By Baluu Wol Makuach.

At the age of 12, in the aftermath of the Sudan war, he falls sick. Unable to seek proper medical care, his destitute father opted to medicate him at home. However, this came a little too late as poliomyelitis had gotten the better of young Ali Suleiman Loja.

Unable to do what his peers could, Ali grew up a depressed child due to living his situation. He couldn't do what other children could.

"I am the odd one amongst them, even if I am older than them, what they see in me is a useless child," he would tell himself.

Ali was born into a family of three; a brother and a sister. His mother passed on living them behind at a young age. After the death of their mother, his father remarried, and they had to relocate. That marked the onset of his suffering as he always felt despised by his step brothers and sisters. "It was a difficult moment of my life but it only lasted for a period before I fled," Ali said.

Rising Above all the struggles

Despite all he went through, his desire to someday go to school never wavered. Back

home he had been hearing about Kadugli Primary School in Kakuma, "how could a school far north bear a similar name to his hometown?" he would wonder.

In 2012, at the height of the continued civil war, 19-year-old Ali fled his country crossing Kenya-South Sudan border and into Kakuma Refugee Camp.

"I could not trace my father and even my step family. I don't know where they were but I had to leave the country to be safe," Ali says.

Schooling in Kakuma

After his formal registration as an asylum seeker, he enrolled in standard seven at Kadugli primary school. The school he had always dreamt of while back at home, completing his secondary education five years later in 2017.

In spite of all that he has faced Ali has the conviction that he will one day go back home and provide his fair share of help in the medical practice back in his home country.

His dream is to enroll in medical school and working towards kicking polio out of his home country.

He is currently attending a medical training with the International Rescue Committee.

In spite of all that he has faced Ali has the conviction that he will one day go back home and provide his fair share of help in the medical practice back in his home country.



Photo: Ali walking back home from training

WASH YOUR HANDS





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