



#### World Mental Day



October 10<sup>th</sup> marked World Mental Day. UNHCR & partners in Dadaab forming the mental health working group held activities that helped raise public awareness about mental health issues.

The awareness campaign was tailored to promote open discussions on illnesses as well as investments in prevention and treatment services. The theme for this year was "Mental Health & Older Adults"

The eventful day was culminated by fun activities and games in refugee camps as well as in Dadaab's Main Office compound as organized by Handicap International.

#### Interesting Fact

On any given working day, 170 UNHCR staff members are present in the operation, some at Dadaab Sub-Office, some at Alinjugur Field Office and others in refugee camps.

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#### Newly Elected Refugee Leaders take Over in Dadaab

In a Handover ceremony in Dadaab this September, the newly elected camp chairpersons and other elected leaders took over the leadership of their respective camps.

The elections that ended in August 29 saw the election of camp chairmen and chairladies for all the five camps as well as camp section leaders and block leaders in each camp.

All the newly elected camp chairladies and chairmen accompanied by their predecessors attended the ceremony that was held at the UNHCR Dadaab offices. The ceremony was also attended by officials from the Government of Kenya and Heads of Humanitarian Agencies working in Dadaab.

All the outgoing leaders were issued with recognition certificates in appreciation of their tireless services to their respective communities in camps. Speaking during the event, UNHCR's Head of Operations Ahmed Warsame congratulated and thanked both new leaders and outgoing leaders.

He particularly appreciated the good work by outgoing leaders who guided their communities over the past six years when Dadaab camps faced many challenges including refugee influx and cases of insecurity.

"I recognize all community leaders who lost their lives in the line of duty," he said. He also urged the outgoing leaders to give guidance and support to the new leaders until the next elections are held in two years.

The DRA representative Peter Lukingi offered the government's support to the new leaders and asked them to continue encouraging their constituents to maintain peace.

His sentiments were echoed by the central government of Kenya through its Deputy County Commissioner in Garissa County Bernard Ole Kipury who promised that his government will continue providing sufficient security in the camps.

Both outgoing and incoming refugee leaders who spoke during the event were upbeat that the current peaceful situation in the camps will prevail.

The elected leaders considered themselves an integral part of democratic history especially after having been involved in unprecedented democratic elections that involved over 160, 000 registered voters. ....*Continued in page 3*



Refugee leaders interactively learning about the role of radio in community communication with Internews Europe –Photo-UNHCR/A. Nasrullah.

#### Dadaab/Fafi Environmental Management Forum Held in October

UNHCR in collaboration with partners-Fafi Integrated Development Association (FAIDA) and Relief Reconstruction & Development Organization (RRDO) held a stakeholders' forum in Dadaab to discuss issues of environmental degradation. The two days workshop was attended by the Minister for Environment in Garissa County Hon. Salah Yakub, the World Food Programme (WFP), officials from the government's environmental authority NEMA and Kenya Forest Service as well as local community leaders.

Stakeholders had sought to discuss and agree on measures to mitigate environmental degradation caused by charcoal burning & waste disposal, rehabilitation of degraded areas, environmental protection & surveillance as well as partnership building.

#### Fresh Food Vouchers for Pregnant and Nursing Mothers in Dadaab

The World Food Programme (WFP) has introduced Fresh Food Vouchers for pregnant and nursing mothers in Dadaab refugee camp in northeastern Kenya.

Through this pilot project, mothers now receive vouchers to buy fresh food such as meat, fruit and vegetables, which are not part of the usual WFP food basket. The vouchers are distributed at Dadaab's health centers when women come in for regular checkups during and after pregnancy.

#### In other related news;

WFP's new food collection procedures which had been in a pilot phase since June 2013 went live on 1<sup>st</sup> October. The new procedures will apply mandatory fingerprint checks policy ("no match no food") at the food distribution points in the camps.



## A Blood Drive held in Dadaab for Westgate Tragedy Casualties



A blood donation at Dadaab's main agencies compound in October- Photo-UNHCR/E. Relations. Below; an internet photo of a volunteer on a UNHCR T-shirt helping a victim out of the Westgate shopping mall during the September terror attack.



Efforts to assist Westgate Mall terror attack victims were demonstrated in Dadaab in September when Kenya Red Cross Society (KRCS) organized a major blood drive.

The blood drive was carried out at KRCS's base camp in Ifo 2 as well as in Dadaab's Main Offices (DMO) where aid workers from UNHCR and other agencies operating in Dadaab joined the world and indeed Kenyans in offering support to the casualties of the unfortunate Westgate terror attack.

While donating blood, Mohammed Siyat, one of the nurses working for KRCS mentioned that he was shocked by events at the Westgate Mall and that he was so full of sympathy for hundreds of innocent victims.

"It is encouraging to have UNHCR and other agencies working here in Dadaab contributing to this noble cause."

The blood drive which officially began on Sunday 21st September 2013 in Nairobi after the Westgate mall attack brought together Kenyans and the international community to donate blood for casualties who for days remained in hospitals.

From the blood drive, Kenya Red Cross reported a massive 50 pints of blood as having been donated in Dadaab alone.

## Quote

*"While every refugee's story is different and their anguish personal, they all share a common thread of uncommon courage – the courage not only to survive, but to persevere and rebuild their shattered lives."*

**Antonio Guterres,  
UN High  
Commissioner for  
Refugees.**

## FilmAid International Marks Annual Film Festival in Dadaab

With a series of film events rolled out in the second week of August, FilmAid International-held a major community event in Ifo camp to commemorate this year's FilmAid Film Festival. The event was attended by a large audience of refugees, agency staff members and officials from the government of Kenya.

Video screening was done both in refugee camps and in Dadaab's Main Offices (DMO). Stories of courage, strife and human determination as told by refugee filmmakers in Dadaab were screened.

With a theme "The Right to tell our Stories", this year's festival-



showcased award-winning films and documentaries from refugee filmmakers studying through Filmmakers' Training Program sponsored by FilmAid International.

FilmAid has been partnering with UNHCR in awareness campaigns at camp level as well as capacity building activities in refugee camps mainly by training refugee youths on governance, leadership and film-making.



A community event held in Ifo camp by FilmAid to commemorate this year's Film Festival. Photo-UNHCR/E.Relations



A KRCS worker helping an elderly man in Dadaab-Photo-KRCS/A. Munir

## International Day of Older Persons Marked in Dadaab

The Kenya Red Cross Dadaab Refugee Operation in collaboration with UNHCR helped refugees mark the International Day for older persons by distributing blankets to elderly persons in Ifo 2 camp.

UNHCR led the distribution of these items in other camps. In total, 1,000 blankets and 200 mattresses were distributed to elderly refugees.

This was a special day for older persons or senior citizens all over the world. The day is celebrated to recognize the

contributions of older persons and to examine issues that affect their lives. The theme for this year was "The future we want: what older persons are saying."

This day was designed by the United Nations General Assembly on 14 December 1990 to be celebrated on 1st October every year.

*"The International Day of Older Persons is a global observance and not a public holiday"*



### UNHCR Offers a Vehicle to the New Kenyatta University Campus based in Dadaab

In August, UNHCR supported Kenyatta University (KU) campus in Dadaab with a UNHCR vehicle for education activities in refugee camps. In a handover ceremony held in Dadaab's Main Office, a Land Cruiser vehicle was handed over to them by UNHCR's Head of Operations in Dadaab Ahmed Warsame.

The vehicle was received by KU's Vice Chancellor Representative Dr. Nelson Karagu who was accompanied by the area member of parliament Hon. Mohammed Dahir.

Speaking during the event, the UNHCR's Head of Operations reiterated UNHCR's support towards projects that benefit both refugees and the host community.

He also offered his commitment and support to Kenyatta University officials who shall be working in Dadaab and thanked the host community for having donated land to house the campus. He was happy that KU has tertiary education programs that are tailored to benefit refugees.

While reading a statement from his

Vice Chancellor, Dr. Karagu said the vehicle will be used for institutional operations and will be under the custodianship of Windle Trust Kenya; one of UNHCR's implementing partners managing issues of secondary education and tertiary institutions in Dadaab. "The vehicle will be handy for our lecturers' mobility within Dadaab as well as transportation of education materials to the campus. We are glad that UNHCR and partners could chip in."

The campus was opened in October 2012 with the aim of offering Diploma and Degree courses to both the refugee community and the host community. Already, classes are underway for three Masters Degree courses.

The Member of Parliament for Dadaab was quite upbeat that with sustained support from partners, the university campus will soon be a fully fledged campus offering a wide array of courses for the benefit of all. "Kenyatta University has made

considerable efforts in bringing high education to our people in an area which has had no access to any higher learning institution for many years," he said.

The campus project is supported by the government of Canada through Toronto's York University. Officials from York University recently visited Dadaab to prepare curriculum and modalities for a teachers' training course to be offered in cooperation with KU.

The course is part of the Borderless Higher Education for Refugees project which brings together several universities, including York and KU. Students seeking diplomas in primary school education are being enrolled and classes will commence in September 2013.



UNHCR's Head of Operations in Dadaab handing over a UNHCR vehicle to be used by Kenyatta University Campus in Dadaab. Photo-UNHCR/E. Relations.

### Donations in October

#### Power Generator & Water Pump with Electric Cable

UNHCR donated a 25 KVA power generator and a water pump along with its electric cable to Garissa County's Ministry of Environment, Water and Natural Resources.

Local Administrators and representatives from Kulan community in Dadaab district where the water project will be established attended the handover ceremony held at UNHCR Dadaab Main Offices.

The items were donated at the request of members of the host community in Kulan who are keen to ensure sufficient supply of clean water in their locality.

Kulan center is located 44 km north east of Dadaab town.

#### Toyota Land Cruiser Ambulance

Elsewhere, UNHCR handed over a Toyota Land Cruiser ambulance to Garissa County's Ministry of Health in Fafi District.

The Ambulance will be used at the Alinjogur Health Centre.

This donation is aimed at boosting emergency services at the clinic which benefits refugees as well as the host community.

Officials from the Ministry of Health, Local County Administrators, community representatives and community elders were in attendance at the event.

### Elected Refugee Leaders Take Over in Dadaab

#### Continued from page1

.....Speaking passionately, one of the newly elected leaders from Dagahaley camp asked the Department of Refugee Affairs to resume and expedite the process of registering asylum seekers in order to smoothen the delivery of services by agencies in the camps.

This recognition exercise was shortly followed by a leaders training exercise held in October where again, UNHCR in collaboration with the Department of Refugee Affairs (DRA), the Kenya police and partner NGOs based in Dadaab conducted a three days leadership workshop for all refugee leaders.

The training involved newly elected camp chairpersons as well as other camp leaders including members of Food Advisory Committees (FACs) and Parents Teachers' Associations (PTAs).

Other leaders trained were the refugee Youth Umbrella Group, Community Policing & Protection Team (CPPT), Community Based Rehabilitation (CBR) representatives and non-Somali communities' representatives.

All leaders were interactively involved in the training, an exercise which was culminated with an award ceremony where UNHCR's Head of Operations issued certificates to all.

### CARE Dadaab Leads Agencies in Holding a Moment of Silence for its Kidnapped Worker

September 19<sup>th</sup> marked two years since James Gichuhi- a humanitarian aid worker working with CARE International was abducted from Hagadera camp while attending to his daily duties. In remembering the unfortunate incident, CARE Dadaab led other humanitarian aid workers in holding a moment of silence as they urged colleagues and aid workers in attendance to continue putting James in their thoughts and wish him well.

Abductions suspected to have been conducted by the Al-Shabaab terror group took place in Dadaab in 2011 and 2012 but all the aid workers abducted have been released except James Gichuhi. Two aid workers of Medecins Sans Frontieres (MSF) who were abducted in 2011 were released in July this year while four Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) workers abducted in June 2012 were rescued only one week after their kidnapping.

### New Radio Live Show Reenergizes Refugees

A new innovative radio live show known as Gargaar was recently established for refugees in Dadaab camps. Gargaar a Somali word for support is a daily broadcast from a studio based in Hagadera camp and wired live for two hours at Star FM between 8am and midday.

The program strictly addresses refugee issues. Star FM on which it plays is a huge network which covers an expansive region from Kakuma in North West Kenya, Nairobi and even up to Mogadishu in Somalia.

A baseline survey by Internews Europe which was conducted earlier this year confirms that radio is Dadaab's most relied upon source of information.

Up to 74% of refugees entirely rely on radio for information and this is one of the reasons why the program has been put in place.

Lifeline Energy, an organization that has in the recent past donated solar powered radio sets directly reaching up to 15,000 refugees in Dadaab reveals that even though radio ownership in camps is limited, refugees love to congregate wherever there is a radio to obtain information about childcare, nutrition, health, Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) and even news from Somalia.

25 years old Mohamed Bashir Sheikh who is a regular Gargaar listener and a resident of Hagadera camp underscores the significance of Gargaar program.

"Ever since I came to these camps in 1991, there has never been a refugee focused radio program, Gargaar is the first."

On a recent interview with the station's program manager, he said that Gargaar only runs for two hours a day but this time is usually enough to air interactive discussions mainly about security, livelihoods and education. It is even made more interactive with a text message platform they call 'Souktel'.

In Dagahaley camp, Bundid Saney likes to listen to the program daily with his friends. He likes discussions about youth projects and he occasionally gets involved by sending text messages to Souktel. Bundid thinks the program has been long overdue and now that they have it, it is as if God has finally sent to them a solution to the gap that has long existed in camps.

The program was instrumental during refugee leaders' elections in August for which it provided live coverage. The elections relied on a massive mass information

*"We usually listen to overall issues in the two FM stations based here in Dadaab but now this unique Gargaar live program in this station is not only interesting to listen to but also a good platform for us to openly discuss our own issues."*



A refugee communally listening to radio in Dadaab refugee camps-Photo-Internews Europe/ F. Sanbur

campaign which Gargaar helped to execute. Reporters at Gargaar studios narrated how election candidates daily trickled into their studio to articulate campaign issues.

Election officials from UNHCR and the Government's Department of Refugee Affairs also utilized the live program to make sure the refugee community was well informed about the importance of the exercise while at the same time informing them the modalities of the whole process. The studio manager said that even when polling in one of the camps appeared

to get out of hand, security officials and UNHCR's Head of Operations in Dadaab were quick to allay fears and control the situation through the live program.

Five days after the conclusion of elections, our External Relations team was lucky to meet in studio the newly elected camp chairlady and chairman for Kambioos camp. As they prepared for their interview, they shortly engaged us on what they plan to do for their people.

..... *Continued in page 5*

### TEDxMogadishu Streamed Live in Dadaab for the First Time

TEDxMogadishu, a self organized conference of TED (Technology, Entertainment & Design) conferences that bring together fascinating thinkers and doers to give the talk of their lives) returned this August. This time it was screened live in Dadaab to refugee journalists who were assembled by Internews Europe at our UNHCR offices.

This was the second time the live stream was being screened worldwide, the first having been held just when the Federal Government of Somalia had been formed in 2012. The whole essence of the live stream was to have real time discussions tailored towards inspiring Somali citizens within Somalia and outside Somalia to help rebuild their country.

In the live stream, 14 incredible voices mainly from the Diaspora were showcased having a lively discussion on ideas, innovations and traditions geared towards transforming Somalia.

Over twenty Somali journalists from the Dadaab refugee community actively participated in the discussion by watching the live stream, tweeting and commenting on TEDxMogadishu facebook page. Some of their tweets formed a significant part of the overall live discussion.

Dadaab complex hosts close to 400,000 Somali refugees some of whom have been in the camps since 1991 when the camps were established.

Peace has however continued to take hold in Somalia since 2012; children are playing in the streets and the beaches are now filled with weekend swimmers.

A parliament has been formed, constitution approved, and a new cabinet of ministers is leading Somalia back onto the international stage. This is the situation that the TEDxMogadishu team wishes to have sustained.



## A Congolese Refugee in Dadaab Determined to Show he is not Helpless



*Amani Kishonge in his compound management office at UNHCR-Photo-UNHCR/E.Relations*

Entrepreneur, French teacher, community development worker – Amani Kishonge Ruhimbana is proof that living in a refugee camp does not automatically mean an idle, helpless life.

"There is often a bad image created out there about refugee camps," said the refugee in his mid-20s who fled conflict in the Democratic Republic of Congo in 2007. "The usual general view by many outsiders is perhaps that a refugee camp is a densely populated place with a multitude of idle people not capable of making a living.

"Many fail to see the obvious fact that a refugee is just like any other person, only that their normal lives have been disrupted. A refugee could be anything from a doctor, a teacher to an entrepreneur, a journalist or even a farmer," said Ruhimbana, who now resides in Dadaab.

Dadaab is the world's largest concentration of refugees, a complex of camps in northeast Kenya some 80 km from Somalia. The 405,000 refugees and asylum seekers are mostly Somali.

*"What I would really love to do is to establish my own business first and then get a chance to further my studies even as I do these other jobs. I have people who depend on me you know."*

They are resilient; their activities in Dadaab camps showing that many refugees are determined to support their families. Ruhimbana himself is focused on showing the world that a refugee can make it too.

"Back in my country, I had just finished my Diploma in Commerce and my life was looking bright before hell broke loose. I had to flee. Members of my family were also forced to flee in different directions without a trace of one another... when I arrived in Kenya in 2007 I was settled in Kakuma refugee camp by UNHCR," he said.

"I had never been in a refugee camp before. When I found myself in one, I thought my dreams would crash within no time. I almost gave up my hope," said Ruhimbana. "I always believed that I have the capability to do anything I ever wanted but I almost doubted myself." Late in 2007 he was reunited with family members who had arrived in Kakuma and to focus on his

future, getting involved in income generating activities within Kakuma camp. "I got my first job as a French teacher in one of the primary schools in Kakuma. I also raised some money to establish a beauty parlour and a tailoring shop.

Whenever I was not in class teaching French, I was either designing clothes in my shop or attending to my customers at my barber shop," Ruhimbana said. The Lutheran World Federation (LWF), an NGO that operates in Kakuma, provided items for his salon.

"My salon was the best thing that ever happened to me in a camp. It did very well, especially because I had good partners, but it only did well for a short while.

My competitors from the host community were not happy," Ruhimbana said. "One evening a gang attacked me in my shop and took off with my working items. I was badly injured and I had to seek UNHCR's protection intervention. That is how I ended up being



*A refugee trader in Dadaab camps trading food stuff for a living-Photo-Internews Europe/M. Bashir.*

relocated from Kakuma to Dadaab refugee complex."

With savings Ruhimbana brought to Dadaab's Ifo camp, he immediately established a mobile phone charging shop and purchased a new tailoring machine to establish a clothing design shop. Dadaab was very different from Kakuma.

"Ifo camp was very populated. There were hundreds of refugees from Somalia being settled there every day. The conditions in Ifo were harsher than they were in Kakuma and there were many existing businesses all over town. It was hard to penetrate but I had to venture into something anyway," Ruhimbana said.

"Despite all the challenges, I settled down quickly and I made a lot of fiends and customers from different nationalities. People brought me their mobile phones to charge for them. Some even brought laptops, iPads and iPhones."

Again misfortune struck. He was planning to expand his business when a bomb exploded outside his shop in 2011. He joined the stampede from the site and when he returned he discovered he had been robbed.

"All the expensive electronics had been stolen. My designed clothes had also been stolen. The arrival of the police made things even worse because they randomly arrested all people found within the scene of the incident, including me."

Customers demanding compensation for their stolen items threatened him, and with no way to pay, he again sought UNHCR's protection. He was moved to a another camp within Dadaab from where he was recruited by UNHCR as a compound management assistant. The safety and small income have not halted Ruhimbana's desire to better his life. Among his activities is teaching French in the evenings.

"What I would really love to do is to establish my own business first and then get a chance to further my studies even as I do these other jobs. I have people who depend on me you know."

## A New Radio Live Show Reenergizes Dadaab Refugees

*Continued from page 4...* The chairlady said that she particularly wants to address the youth who were only recently settled in Kambioos camp from Somalia. She wished to urge them through Gargaar to make education their priority. The chairman for his part said that in his many years of community leadership, he has never before spoken to his constituents on radio.

The mere fact that the program is listened to far and beyond Dadaab camps seems to be another inspiring factor to the refugee community. At least according to Kambioos camp chairlady; they are now excited that their issues are being heard by the rest of the world.

Besides inspiring the community, Gargaar also seems to largely exist for what it literally means- "support". The program has so far offered job opportunities to more than a dozen trainee reporters from the refugee community.

*For any comments, send them to [kendapi@unhcr.org](mailto:kendapi@unhcr.org). Like us on facebook-UNHCR Dadaab & Alinjgur. The next issue of this Newsletter will be out in the next quarter- January 2014.*