

## **Girls' education gives a hope for a better future for Somali refugees: Advancing the education of Somali refugee girls in Ethiopia**

On 26 September 2012 UNHCR jointly with the Ethiopia's Administration for Refugee and Returnee Affairs and other partners organized a community event in Shedder refugee camp, north-east Ethiopia, to promote education, especially among refugee girls. This event was also meant to honor those refugee girls who passed successfully the national examination, scoring the highest marks. Some of them are dreaming about becoming medical doctors while other want to be information technologies specialists but all of them hope to pursue their studies and go to colleges and universities.

"Their academic progress can be considered as a great achievement, also they serve as a good example to others and we want to encourage more girls to continue studies", said Agnes Mukantwali, Head of the UNHCR sub-office in Jijiga, which covers three camps hosting more than 41,000 Somali refugees in Fafan zone of the Somali region of Ethiopia. "Girls' education is enormously important. Refugee girls have great potential and if educated, equipped with skills and knowledge, they can change the life of the entire community and not only in the refugee camps but also when they return to Somalia one day. These girls are the future of Somalia."

A popular Somali refugee music band, invited to perform at this event, have presented a special entertainment programme with the slogan: "Girls have the right to study, education should go first, early marriages deprive girls from the future opportunities!" At the end of the event UNHCR, jointly with ARRA and the camp's Refugee Committee distributed solar lanterns to girls. As there is no electricity in the camps, the life there fades away after 6pm. Refugee girls feel particularly affected as during daytime they are mostly involved in housework, cooking, taking care of their younger siblings and the only time to study is in the evening. Currently domestic work, numerous duties at home and early marriages are the main reasons for school drop out for Somali refugee girls. The new solar lanterns, provided in the framework of the UNHCR project "Advancing the education of Somali refugee girls in Ethiopia", supported by the United Nations Foundation, will enable the girls to study in the evening, read books, do homework and eventually continue their education.



A Somali refugee girl in Shedder camp in north-east Ethiopia is receiving a solar lantern from UNHCR and the Refugee Women's Committee. The new solar lanterns are provided to refugee students in three refugee camps in the north-east Ethiopia in the framework of the UNHCR project to advance education, supported by the United Nations Foundation. UNHCR/N. Prokopchuk



These Somali refugee girls from Awbarre camp in Fafan zone, East Ethiopia have successfully passed the national examination, scoring highest marks, which opened a door for them to high school. Some of them are dreaming about becoming medical doctors while other want to be information technologies specialists but all of them hope to pursue their studies and go to universities. UNHCR/N. Prokopchuk



One of the best refugee students receives a present, English-Somali dictionary, from Agnes Mukantwali, Head of the UNHCR sub-office in Jijiga, which covers three camps for more than 41,000 Somali refugees in Fafan zone, Somali region in east Ethiopia. UNHCR/N. Prokopchuk



The group of refugee girls from Shedder and Awbarre refugee camps in east Ethiopia, who successfully passed the national examination with the highest marks, at the community ceremony in Shedder camp. The Refugee Women's Committee, teachers, UNHCR and ARRA came to congratulate the students and encourage them to pursue their studies. UNHCR/N. Prokopchuk



Somali refugee girls in Shedder camp, East Ethiopia have just received solar lanterns funded by the United Nations Foundation. The lanterns will enable them to study and read in the evening, thus will prevent some of them from dropping out the school. UNHCR/ N. Prokopchuk



Popular refugee artists performing in Shedder camp, East Ethiopia at the community ceremony to promote girls' education. The man, known as the "Somali Mr. Bean" is singing a song calling on the community to stop and prevent early marriages, stressing that girls have the right to study. UNHCR/N. Prokopchuk