



Important Events in June

Dadaab Refugees call for PEACE



World Refugee Day – 20th June 2014



*World Refugee Day (20th June)

UNHCR and partners will lead the refugee community in Dadaab to commemorate World Refugee Day on 20th June. The global theme for this year is- **“One family torn apart by war is too many.”** The community has agreed to commemorate this day by conveying to the world, messages of peace through a campaign dubbed **“31 Days of Peace Messages”** which kicked off on 20th May. The community communication team is conveying these messages in camps as well as to local and international audiences through camp meetings, community radio and social media.

*World Environment Day (5th June)

Partners in Dadaab including NRC, DRC, RRDO, FaIDA and UNHCR continue to work together to raise more awareness on local environmental challenges. UNHCR is particularly encouraging sustainable use of energy in camps through distribution of solar lanterns, energy saving stoves and solar street lights. The use of this solar energy is expected to be of protection value to refugees and other persons of concern.

*Day of the African Child (16th June)

UNHCR shall be reaching out to communities in Dadaab to raise awareness on the continuing need for improved education for children.

Newsletter compiled by UNHCR External Relations Unit in Dadaab
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For information on human population displacement in the Horn of Africa, check our web portal
<http://data.unhcr.org/horn-of-africa/regional.php>

UNHCR Supports Security Operations in Dadaab with Four Vehicles

UNHCR handed-over four vehicles to the Administration Police operating in Dadaab camps. The four-wheel drive vehicles were officially handed-over in April to Mr. Henry K. Barmao, the North Eastern region Police Commander.

During the event, a UNHCR team led by the country Representative in Kenya Raouf Mazou and officials from the Administration Police reiterated their commitment to enhance cooperation towards providing more security to refugees and asylum seekers in camps.

This handover was one of a few other security support packages that UNHCR has extended to the government of Kenya in Dadaab. In January this year, UNHCR had supported the police with new reporting offices and accommodation

blocks in Dadaab town and in Kambioos camp. Increasing security incidences in Dadaab have affected the operation in the last few months.

In April, a convoy of vehicles carrying aid workers including from UNHCR was attacked by unknown gunmen outside the UNHCR Field Offices in Hagadera camp.

One of the two UNHCR workers targeted by the gunmen was shot and wounded.

The attackers left the other worker unharmed and desperately drove off with the vehicle which was later recovered by the police about 30km southeast of Dadaab. The incident was assessed to be an attempted kidnapping. The injured staff member is currently recuperating in Nairobi.



UNHCR's representative in Kenya Raouf Mazou handing over four vehicles to an Administrative police commander in Dadaab. ©UNHCR/A. Nasrullah

UNHCR's Support Helps End Sleepless Nights for Struggling Students at a Boarding School in Dadaab

Getting a good night's sleep was until recently almost impossible for 18-year-old Somali refugee Abdifatah, and this was affecting his studies and his marks.

A student at a secondary school in Hagadera, one of the camps in northern Kenya's sprawling Dadaab complex, Abdifatah used to share a bed in an overcrowded dormitory. "When I found the bed occupied by another student, I used to go back to look for a place where I could sleep. Sometimes I had to sleep on top of a locker or in the mosque. I even slept on the sand under a tree," he told UNHCR.

He was so tired during the day that he used to avoid classes. But his situation has changed considerably since the UN refugee agency opened a new dormitory building in early January to provide shelter for 80 of the neediest secondary school students, including refugees and locals.

Many of these students could not afford a place to stay and slept in the open. This had a negative effect on their studies and made them vulnerable to banditry, violence, insects and animal attacks.

Because of the discomfort, Abdifatah had been thinking of dropping out of school even before he finished primary school. His family had fled to Hagadera 16 years ago to escape the violence and suffering in Somalia. But his sister Amina encouraged him to stick at it, telling him that a full education would give him an advantage in life, wherever he was. He is now determined to complete his education.

"The stress of wondering where I will sleep at night is over," he said. "I am determined to achieve a lot, because my family is counting on me to be the main breadwinner and to lead them in the future. They are following my progress very closely," said Abdifatah.



18-year-old Somali refugee Abdifatah in his new dormitory hall built by UNHCR in Dadaab town. ©UNHCR/A. Nasrullah

His sister said he made the right decision and she expected him to do well, now that he has somewhere to stay. "My brother used to complain about his shelter at school, but he seems happy since moving to the new place and we are relieved as well. I am optimistic that he will complete his studies and go up to university," Amina said.

Abdifatah already has a career plan. "I want to become an ambassador," he says confidently. "Today, I am taking on responsibility in the dormitory, tomorrow I want to take responsibility for Somalia."

Staffs at the secondary school have also noticed a difference since the dormitory opened. "You can see this facility has boosted the morale of the students. They are working harder," said teacher Jackson Kamau Kiragu, who added: "You will be surprised to see how they have been conducting themselves since this dormitory was opened."

The dormitory was one of four facilities constructed by UNHCR and opened earlier this year to support refugees and the local community in Dadaab, whose camps now house more than 350,000 mainly Somali refugees. The other facilities include a town hall, new classrooms in a primary school and a health center.



NRC leading the refugee community in Hagadera in a massive cleaning exercise. ©NRC/Hagadera

NRC Involves Hagadera Camp Leaders in a Best Hygiene Practices Capacity Building Exercise

UNHCR's partner for Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) in Hagadera camp, the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) has rolled out capacity building training activities to refugee community representatives in Hagadera camp.

The training is aimed at empowering

them and to ultimately inspire the community with best hygiene practices. Trainees in this program who are also part of camp WASH committees have shown excitement with the program and are hopeful that skills they gather will help them inspire behavior change in their communities.

...Story continues in page 4

NRC Kicks Off Monthly Environment Clean-up Campaign in Hagadera camp

UNHCR's partner NRC has launched a monthly waste disposal campaign in Hagadera camp. The call-to-action clean-up exercise has already taken place twice, the most recent having taken place in mid-May. This is a campaign that involves different refugee groups in camps as well as sectorial camp based committees including market committees and the Water, Sanitation & Hygiene (WASH) committees.

NRC officials say that general domestic and commercial waste from market places in Hagadera camp has for months been piling up. "The campaign has so far been accepted and taken positively by the community," he adds.

In the last two clean-ups, different groups in camps supported the campaign with cleaning tools including rakes, shovels, hand gloves, garbage sacks, nose masks and wheelbarrows." They add. Their aim is to make Hagadera a model camp in matters of waste disposal with hope that residents in Hagadera and other camps can be inspired to take personal

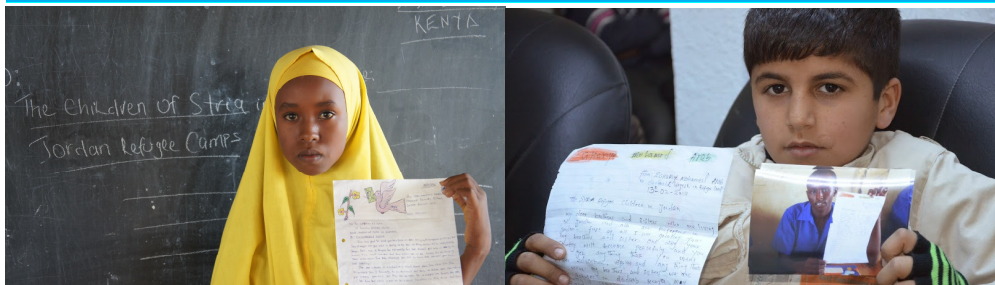
responsibility for their environments. "This is a pilot project expected to set pace for refugees as we sensitize them about their responsibility towards the environment," an NRC official said.

In the two clean-up exercises, the market was temporarily closed to encourage traders to attend the exercise. Participants went around camps to sensitize the community at household level.



The refugee community in Hagadera camp participating in an environment cleaning exercise organised by the Norwegian Refugee Council. ©NRC/Hagadera

Children in Dadaab Camps Write Letters of Hope to their Syrian Counterparts Displaced in Jordan



Hibo Mohamed Dubow (left) one of the children in Dadaab, displaying a letter she wrote to her Syrian counterparts in refugee camps across Jordan. ©CARE/ M.Muia

With a theme "From Dadaab to Syria with love," CARE recently facilitated children in Dadaab camps to come up with inspiring messages and pictures of hope and prayers on paper for Syrian children now refugees in Jordan.

This sought to have children in Dadaab camps who have been refugees for a longer time to encourage and show empathy to their Syrian counterparts in Jordan.

"I am 100% sure that if you practice perseverance, you will excel at the end. I tell you not to give up or loose hope because there is still so much good ahead of you." Hibo Mahamed Dubow, one of the children in Dadaab expressed in her letter.

"What do you think of people who have been refugees for about two decades now?" She added. The letters were delivered to Jordan and distributed in several refugee sites

within Amman where they were received by children and youths who could not believe that children somewhere 1000 miles away could think of them.

They immediately reciprocated by writing back to express their gratitude.

The idea was thought out by CARE Kenya, CARE International UK and CARE Jordan as a way to mark the 3rd anniversary of the Syrian conflict on March 15. A coalition of international nongovernmental organizations and civil society partners around the world had mobilised their members prior to the anniversary to show solidarity with displaced Syrians and to ask world leaders to be more responsive to the conflict in Syria.

NRC Involves Hagadera Camp Leaders in a Best Hygiene Practices Capacity Building Exercise

.....continued from page 2

“As a community leader, I am happy to lead my community towards achieving best hygiene practices,” says Hassan Abdullahi, a Somali refugee representing one of the sub sections in Hagadera camp where he has lived since 1992. He adds that the training has been long overdue.

“I have learned necessary hygiene practices that help prevent diseases like Cholera and typhoid but I now also know how to create public awareness in my community” says Hassan adding that he feels like he can now sensitize his people on hygiene issues from a point of knowledge.

It often requires concerted efforts from both project implementers like NRC and from the refugee community to overcome the challenges.

NRC has implemented projects in Dadaab since 2007 particularly in shelter, education, food security as well as water, sanitation and hygiene. In April 2012, it was particularly made responsible for all WASH activities in Hagadera camp.



Norwegian Refugee Council teaching refugee leaders in Hagadera camp best practices in hygiene and sanitation. ©NRC/Hagadera

LWF Helps Empower a Woman Living with Disability with Self Reliance Skills

Efforts by the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) have helped transform the life of a young Somali woman living in Dadaab camps. LWF which is a UNHCR's partner for education and matters concerning people with special needs is happy that 27 years old Nadifa Muse is making a living despite her paralysis.

Nadifa got paralyzed in her left lower limb 10 years ago while in Somalia when she was caught up in an unfortunate shooting incident. She says that this changed her life especially because most people in her community looked down upon her and even called her names.

“I often felt ashamed of myself such that I could not mingle freely with people. For some time, I was without hope and I didn't know what to do to make a living.” Says Nadifa.

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She first arrived in Dadaab camps in 2002 where she met her husband with whom they now have four children and living in Hagadera camp. With limited job opportunities in camps, she entirely relied upon food rations provided by UNHCR and other partners.

It was only in 2012 that she got a short volunteering opportunity with an aid agency in Dadaab. The opportunity however ended a few months later when the program in which she volunteered was wrapped up.

LWF which goes around camps identifying people with special needs found her in 2013 and offered her a job. That is when things started looking up for her. Nadifa now works as a

therapist, a job in which she assesses and diagnoses people living with physical disability. She also counsels and gives advice using her personal experience to people with physical challenges.

Through regular workshops held in camps by LWF, Nadifa is continually sharpening her counseling skills. “I am happy to have this job. It has really changed my life not just because it provides for my family but also because I use it to empower others.” She says.

The United Nations convention on the rights of persons with disability and the UN standard rules on equalization of opportunities emphasize the need to provide equal rights to persons with disabilities and especially employment opportunities.



Nadifa working in her office at LWF Rehabilitation center in Hagadera camp. ©LWF/J. Akinyi

A Radio Reporter Helps Attract Donations for a Granny in Ifo 2 Camp

Timiro Idow, a granny from Somalia living in Dadaab camps can now put a smile on her face, something that she could not afford a few weeks ago. The granny says that she has lived for many years but she has never felt as lucky as she has been feeling lately.

She was recently found stranded in the streets of Dadaab town which is ten kilometers away from Ifo 2 camp, one of the five camps in Dadaab where she lives. Town residents who found her alerted a community radio station based in Dadaab which promptly went to her aid.

“When she was brought to our attention, she was tired and scared. She could not even speak but later when we made her comfortable, she began lamenting that life back in the camps was getting too tough and she was not willing to go back unless she was given better food supplies and a good house,” the radio station told UNHCR.

Radio reporters who tried to counsel her were amazed that she had managed to walk all the way from Ifo 2 camp to Dadaab town. “She was obviously very determined,” explains Abdinasir, one of the radio reporters.

“I am now old. I have repeatedly urged my daughter to take me back to Somalia but she has not taken any action. At my age I need to be at home, not in camps where there is nothing.” She told Abdinasir.

Abdinasir then took the news about her on radio. Through radio announcements, Timiro’s daughter who had looked for her for two days finally traced her.

It took some time for Timiro to be convinced by her daughter to go back to Ifo 2. Even though she finally left, Abdinasir was burdened by what the granny had told him. He was left

wondering what he could do to help her. He immediately went on air to solicit support from his audience. He also published Timiro’s story on his radio website and shared it widely through social media platforms.

“Her story obviously went viral; the response has been overwhelming.” Says Abdinasir while explaining how his listeners from far and wide have been calling him seeking to support Timiro.

Well-wishers from within camps and elsewhere in Kenya as well as the UK and Canada have been sending money for her upkeep.

He says that he often seeks support for refugees with unique challenges through his radio show but this time, the support has been unimaginable.

A non-governmental organization based in Kenya’s capital city Nairobi donated to her 300 USD. It has undertaken to continue supplying Timiro with food and pocket money and is keen to supporting her for the rest of her life.

Timiro and her daughter who has six children have since been moved to a better shelter and are awaiting construction of their new house.

“UNHCR usually provides us with food and other relief items but it’s never sufficient. Very old people like my mother need special foods like milk powder, rice, dates,



Timiro Idow, a granny sitting outside her new shelter at Ifo 2 camp with her daughter and grandchildren. ©UNHCR/D.Mwancha

sugar, pasta and sorghum all of which have now been donated to my mother.” Says the granny’s daughter who has lived with her since 2011 when they together fled conflict and famine in Somalia.

She says she is divorced and she doesn’t have a job with which to fend for her mother and children but the donations coming through are helping her a great deal. “I am so happy that Abdinasir’s efforts have helped my mother: I can now concentrate more on raising my children,” she adds.

Abdinasir himself is a Kenyan from a town near Dadaab whose community has hosted refugees and peacefully coexisted with them for 23 years now.

He explains how he has lived and interacted with refugees for many years. “Whenever teachers in school asked me what I wanted to do in my adult life, I told them I wanted to help refugees,” he narrates.

Many years down the line, his new radio show known as ‘gargaar’, a Somali word for ‘support’ has literally offered him a platform to live his dream.

UNHCR often supports and utilizes his radio show that has listenership across Kenya to communicate to refugees.

I really get energized when I receive calls and text messages from refugees seeking to have their issues addressed through my show.”

Abdinasir says this while perusing through his mobile phone to share with UNHCR text messages he has lately received. “What makes me even happier is that issues raised on this show are hardly ever overlooked,” he adds.