

THE Refugee

MAGAZINE

ISSUE #15 | DADAAB EDITION

COW DUNG FOR CASH

Meet a Young Man who Makes
Cash from Selling Animal Waste

ABDISAMAD MOHAMED

A Young Computer Whiz Who
Develops Software Solutions In
The Camps

ILHAN OMAR

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Letter From the Editor

There are some reasons to look forward to 2019 that are sure to make you feel excited. While the atmosphere between January to March is always a little morose: In Dadaab, the Earth would have adopted another sun, hotter than itself, as the rays shine from a cloudless sky.

On January 3, 2019, while the rest of the world was waking up to the new year, Ms Omar was sworn in as Minnesota's 5th congressional district representative in the US Congress. She won the seat during the November 2018 US midterm elections.

Kenya is a big part of Ms Omar's story. Between 1991 and 1995, Utange Camp in Mombasa was her home as her parents sought a safe haven in the face of clashes that broke out in her native country, Somalia.

When residents of Dadaab Refugee Camp received the news of her success, we sought for their reactions. It was evident the Somali refugees who knew about her success were walking on air. With great anticipation they wished her well through social media posts and through the interviews carried out for this Edition of The Refugee Magazine.

In this issue, we feature UNHCR Special Envoy for the Horn of Africa, Ambassador Mohamed Affey, who was in Dadaab to meet Refugee youth and pass a message of hope and encouragement.

We also highlight compelling stories about how Dadaab Residents find innovative ways to face their circumstances. From a computer whiz building apps to solve school problems, to great entrepreneurs and ingenious storytellers.

These stories remind us of the ingenuity and great potential that refugees have to offer in our midst.

Enjoy Your Read.

Eric Sande

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The Refugee Magazine



Ambassador Mohamed Affey
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REFUGEES IN DADAAB HOPE FOR BETTER TIMES AS ILHAN OMAR IS ELECTED TO US CONGRESS



©FilmAid/Salan

By Abdikadir Mohamed Aden

Ilhan Omar victory sparked reactions in Dadaab. Many refugees sent their warm wishes through social media, while others invited her to pay the camp a second visit and experience the current refugees situation

As American citizens voted in the midterm elections on Tuesday 6 November 2018, the candidature of Somali-American Ilhan Omar in Minnesota's 5th District was a source of great excitement and anticipation for the many Somali refugees living in Daadab who knew the Democratic Party contestant.

Her subsequent election as the first Somali-American in US Congress is historic and has been hailed as a

great achievement for the Somali and immigrant community in the United States.

The victory sparked a number of reactions in Dadaab. While many refugees sent their warm wishes through social media, others invited her to pay the camp a second visit after she made a courtesy call in 2011 to help victims of famine in her homeland and experience the current refugees situation.

Bilay Mohamed Jama, 49, former Hagadera Camp chairwoman has placed high hopes on Ilhan's leadership, based on the congresswoman-elect's track record as a legislator. Bilay believes Ilhan will use her voice to represent refugees across the world.

"It is a victory to all Somali people, especially Somali refugees who live in Dadaab camps" says Bilay Mohamed. "I would request that she spends some nights in the camps and experiences first hand the current Dadaab refugee situation. This will be a motivation to all refugees as they stay hoping for change." says Bilay.

Born in the Somali capital, Mogadishu, Ilhan Omar's family left the capital to the inland town of Baidoa. At the age of eight, she and her family fled the war zone and spent four years at Utange refugee camp in Mombasa, Kenya. In 1997, her family was resettled to the United States, in the Cedar-Riverside neighborhood of Minneapolis.

Ilhan's interest in politics began at the tender age of 14, when she took on the role of an interpreter for her grandfather during local DFL (Democratic Farmer Labor Party) caucuses. Watching members of her community come together to advocate for change at the grassroots sparked an interest in the teenager. This was the beginning of her political career.

Ilhan's victory is a symbolic game changer at a time when the doors of opportunity for the refugees are dwindling.

She has been a coalition builder ever since.

As a student at Edison High School in Minneapolis, Ilhan became a student leader. She later worked as a community educator at the University of Minnesota while remaining a devoted progressive activist in the DFL party. Through her advocacy work, Ilhan has advanced a number of important issues, including support for working families, educational access, environmental protection, and racial equity.

In 2016, Ilhan became the first Somali-American, Muslim legislator in the United States. With the help of her committed campaign team, the voter turnout increased by 37%. She was elected to the Minnesota House of Representatives in District 60B where she has lived for the past 20 years, and where she and her husband Ahmed are raising their three children.

Moulid Hujale, a humanitarian journalist, believes that Ilhan's victory is a symbolic game changer at a time when doors of opportunity for the refugee are dwindling.

"Ilhan is a living example of what refugees can achieve if given the opportunity. Now that she is in the US Congress, she not only represents Minnesota's 5th District but the millions of people who are forced to flee their homes in search of safety and better life. She stands to prove that investing in refugees is an advantage, not a burden."

Rahmo Abdi Bare, a 19-year-old journalism and filmmaking student living in Dadaab refugee camp, is fascinated by Ilhan Omar, who has become her mentor. Rahmo has ambitions of becoming a fearless journalist with a focus on refugee issues, which she intends to build from her own experiences. "As a young woman pursuing journalism in Dadaab camp, Ilhan's story is an encouragement for me and for the many girls living here. I believe we can make our dreams come true if we

face the world with courage and hard work," says Rahmo. "As a journalist, I want to use journalism as a tool to advocate for the rights of refugee and girls and present their plights to the world so as to create for them a safe environment to live in dignity."

Like Bilay and Rahmo, Hagadera youth chairman Hassan Osman Mohamed, 27, believes Ilhan Omar's win bodes well for refugees everywhere. "Ilhan's win gives refugees hope of inclusiveness to the countries they have resettled in. She represents all refugees as she was once amongst them, she knows and feels more about their lives and situations," he says.

Mohamed looks up to her and hopes she can use her influence to rebuild their home country, Somalia, and contribute to finding a lasting solution leading to peace and stability.

Rashida Tlaib and Ilhan Omar, the first two Muslim women elected to serve in Congress, made history in November 2018. Tlaib, who ran unopposed after securing the Democratic nomination in August, won in Michigan's 13th Congressional District, and Omar, who faced Republican Jennifer Zielinki, won in Minnesota's 5th Congressional District. Congress is the legislative, or lawmaking branch of US national government. It shares power with the president and the Supreme Court.

Last year, hundreds of Somali refugees in Kenya who were just days from being resettled to the US were told they could not travel after Donald Trump issued an executive order banning migrants from seven Muslim-majority countries for three months. For many in Dadaab, the US refugee resettlement programme was their principal hope of a better future. Since its creation in 1980, the programme led to hundreds of thousands of refugees from around the world being admitted to the US. Since Trump's election, a more stringent vetting and review process has led to a dramatic drop in refugees reaching the US.

PREGNANCY GAP SHOULD BE AT LEAST ONE YEAR - RESEARCHERS

By BBC

Mothers should wait at least one year between giving birth and getting pregnant again to reduce health risks to mother and baby, a new study says.

However researchers also say that they need not wait as long as the 18 months recommended in the current World Health Organization guidelines.

Small gaps between pregnancies risk premature births, smaller babies and infant and mother mortality.

Researchers hope that these findings will be reassuring for older women. Senior study author Dr Wendy Norman said it was "encouraging news" for women over 35 who were planning their families.

"Older mothers for the first time have excellent evidence to guide the spacing of their children," she said.

"Achieving that optimal one-year interval should be doable for many women and is clearly worthwhile to reduce complication risks."

This study is based on nearly 150,000 births in Canada, by University of British Columbia (UBC) and the Harvard TH Chan School of Public Health is published in JAMA Internal Medicine.

The study found that 12-to-18 months was the ideal length of time between giving birth and becoming pregnant again.

The researchers also found:

- There were risks to the mother only for women over the age of 35, while risks to the infant were found for all women, but were greatest for those aged between 20 and 34
- Women over 35 who conceived six months after a previous birth had a 1.2% risk of maternal mortality or harm (12 cases per 1,000 pregnancies)
- Waiting 18 months between pregnancies reduced the risk to 0.5% (five cases per 1,000)
- Younger women who got pregnant six months after a previous birth had an 8.5% risk (85 cases per 1,000) of premature labour. This dropped to 3.7% (37 per 1,000) if they waited 18 months between pregnancies.

The study's lead author, Laura Schummers, said: "We found increased risks to both mother and infant when pregnancies are closely spaced, including for women older than 35.

"The findings for older women are particularly important, as older women tend to more closely space their pregnancies and often do so intentionally."

The study looked at only one population of women - in Canada, meaning it is unclear how

applicable this would be worldwide.

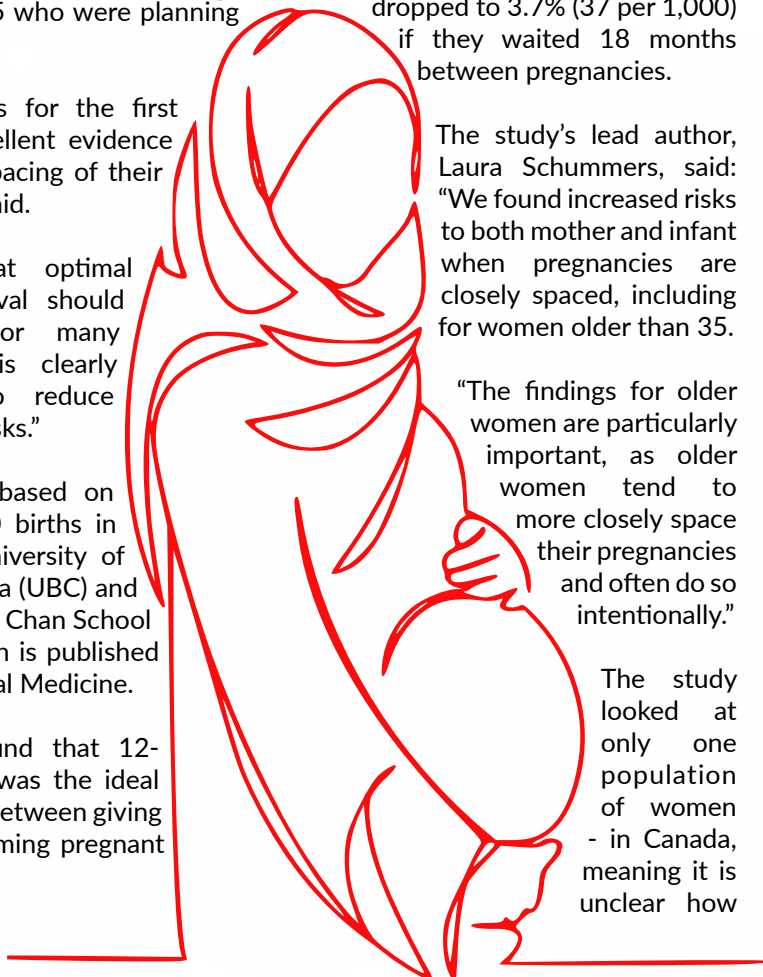
Researcher Dr. Sonia Hernandez-Diaz said the findings suggested different risks for each age group.

"Short pregnancy spacing might reflect unplanned pregnancies, particularly among young women. Whether the elevated risks are due to our bodies not having time to recover if we conceive soon after delivering or to factors associated with unplanned pregnancies, like inadequate prenatal care, the recommendation might be the same: improve access to postpartum contraception, or abstain from unprotected sexual intercourse with a male partner following a birth."

Mandy Forrester, from the Royal College of Midwives, said the study was "useful research and builds on previous research on birth spacing".

"Ultimately, it will be a woman's choice, whatever age they are, about how long they leave between their pregnancies. What is important is that they are aware of the evidence around birth spacing and that they make their choice armed with the right information. Health professionals will always support a woman in her choice, which will be about what is right for them and their pregnancy. She said women needed access to contraceptive advice to allow them to space their births, if that was their choice, but said in specialist family planning service provision in the UK was "patchy, with GPs frequently offering only oral contraception".

"Specialist services should be available for all women."





Maryam Dahir, Media Student Poses for a Photo outside the class in Hagadera

UNHCR SPECIAL ENVOY MOTIVATES YOUTH IN DADAAB



By Assadullah Nasrullah
Associate External Relations Officer
UNHCR Sub Office Dadaab, Kenya

26-year-old Sadik Ibrahim a refugee from Somalia shares youth's challenges and needs with Ambassador Mohamed Affey during his visit to Ifo camp of Dadaab. © UNHCR/A.Nasrullah

Ambassador Affey meets Somali refugee youth, to encourage and give them hope of a better future. ..

In his passionate drive to advocate for quality higher education for Somali refugees, UNHCR Special Envoy for the Horn of Africa, Ambassador Mohamed Affey, visited Dadaab Refugee Camps on the 9th and 10th October 2018. During this visit, he met with refugee youth who have completed secondary school, but have had no access to higher education.

In his interactions with the young men and women, Ambassador Affey listened to their aspirations, dreams, challenges and needs. He encouraged them to remain positive And use their time in the camp to

engage in self-education as they aim for a brighter future.

"The day you become educated is the day that you will take care of yourself and your community. You will forget the pain of being a refugee," explained Ambassador Affey encouragingly. .

He urged the refugees in Dadaab refugee camp to take advantage of the facilities that UNHCR and partner agencies have provided. He also reiterated the importance of advocacy to address key barriers to higher education for large number of Somali refugee students in Dadaab.

"We are here in Dadaab to advocate work to the international community and our partners for continued support to refugee education in Dadaab so that many more can get an opportunity to go to school, to transit from high school to university, and to the job market around the world as responsible members of the global community," the ambassador said.

Ambassador Affey appealed to the international community, private sector, Somali civil society, Somali business people, Somali government and NGO partners to scale up their support to create additional higher education scholarships for Somali



Ambassador Mohamed Affey listens to a youth refugee during his visit to Ifo camp of Dadaab. © UNHCR/A.Nasrullah.

refugees. He observed that education is a key driver in finding durable solutions for refugees in protracted refugee situations.

Sadik Ibrahim, a 26-year-old refugee from Somalia is one of the young refugees who completed his secondary education in 2016 and dreams of going to University.

“I am currently involved in voluntary community mobilization work. I also volunteer as a teacher in one of the primary schools,” says Sadik.

“My dream is to be a politician and for that I want to study Business and Commerce so that I can understand how an office works.”

Having waited for two years for an opportunity to join university, Sadik

has not given up. “I still have hope for change. The situation today does not determine my destiny,” he adds.

The youth in Dadaab remain expectant that the advocacy efforts by the Special Envoy will increase the number of scholarships programmes for higher education.

“This is the first time I am meeting with an Ambassador. I hope scholarships for refugees will somehow increase and I will have a chance to study,” an elated Sadik said.

In the past three years, more than 3,260 refugee students have completed secondary school in Dadaab refugee camp with dreams of pursuing higher education. However, due to lack of access to higher education opportunities, many of

these graduates live in the camps with limited opportunities. According to the UNHCR global report on education, Turn the Tide, only 1% of refugees have access to higher education following high school.

Dadaab refugee camp has a population of 208,000 refugees and asylum seekers, and consists of three camps: Hagadera, Ifo, and Dagahaley. 96 per cent of the refugees living here are from Somalia. 104,331 of the total camp population are school-going children aged 3-17 years, constituting half of the population. Only 63,892 of the total children are enrolled in school. Among this number, only 9,036 are enrolled at secondary schools inside the camps.

GENETIC DISORDER RUINS GIRL'S EDUCATION

By Abdirahman Ahmed Atow

Hawo's skin condition has brought her unwanted attention at home and at school. The stigma and discrimination she faced has forced her into choices she would not have made under different circumstances.

Hawo Aden Mursal, 18, was born with Albinism, a genetic disorder that causes her skin, hair, and eyes to have no color. She is one of nearly twenty thousand people living in Kenya affected by the disorder, according to World Health Organization health statistics.

Unwilling to accept his child's albinism, Hawo's father abandoned her and separated from her mother, Miss Fartun. Before he decided to leave the family her father called Hawo a bad omen and expressed that he did not want to be associated with her upbringing. Her mother took all that in her stride, and chose to care for her daughter alone.

In a strange twist of fate, Hawo's father was resettled in the USA by UNHCR. He was among thousands of refugees in Dadaab offered with this opportunity before the immigration ban was imposed by the Trump administration, restricting the resettlement of refugees from five predominantly Muslim countries. However, even a change in his fortunes did not soften Hawo's father's heart. According to Miss Fartun, Hawo's father has forgotten about them.



Hawo sat outside her home in Dagahaley camp . © FilmAid/shire

"Though he is now in the United States of America, he doesn't send us any money to care for her," she says.

Hawo's skin condition has given her unwanted attention at home and at school. The stigma and discrimination she has faced has forced her into choices she would not have made under different circumstances.

"She is the centre of attention at home and many people cannot stop staring at her when she is doing her daily chores," says Fartun.

"At school, her classmates used to tease her and abuse her. Some threw stones at her on her way home. Together with the teachers we tried to ensure that she was always accompanied to school, however it was too late. Hawo had made up her mind to stop learning and stay home," she adds.

Before dropping out of school, stigma from her fellow schoolmates was on the rise. She was unable to concentrate in class since no one wanted to sit next to her because they thought that her condition was contagious. The situation stole her courage, making it difficult for her to speak where there are groups of people.

Apart from her problems at home and in the community, Hawo has to deal with the harsh weather conditions in the camp. She cannot expose her skin to Dadaab's scorching sun for long hours. The unfriendly hot weather in the camp is harmful to people like her making simple tasks like fetching water for the family impossible.

Hawo's story was the subject of a feature film by FilmAid's media students, which was screened to global international audience during FilmAid Film Festival in September 2018.

"During our filming of Hawo's story, she was constantly shying away, but when we finished shooting her interview aided by her mother, she started talking freely and joyfully as crowds gathered on their fence," said Moulid Hujale former Dadaab media student and co-founder of The Refugee magazine. Despite all the challenges, ranging from the inability to express herself to her social isolation, Hawo's mother and new stepfather are always supportive and try to ensure that Hawo lives a comfortable life. Hawo enjoys spending time with her young brothers and sisters at the homestead.



Hawa playing with her young brother outside their homestead

FINDING HOPE IN A NEW PLACE



Idriss Muktar conducting training in Hagadera Camp © FilmAid/Salan

Idriss a freelance Journalist in Nairobi was in Dadaab by a need and passion to share his skills and experience with the camp's young and talented journalists, he candidly narrates his ordeal...

By Idriss Muktar

To an outsider, Dadaab is a patch of metal sheets and dirty dusty lanes flanked by vendors selling fruits and milk by the roadside. However, to the thousands of people living in this once largest refugee complex in the world, it's a solace away from the scourge and tribulations they have endured in their home countries.

I am brought to Dadaab by a need and passion to share my skills and experience with the camps' young and talented journalists, most of who are leading double lives to ensure a bread for their families, and in class to fight for their dreams and capture the miniatures of this noble profession in a matter of hours.

Most of the students were born

in the camp. By virtue of birth, they should at least be Kenyan citizens but due to stringent government policies they are not. Inside this camp, even birth doesn't grant you the universal right to citizenship.

A walk or drive through the camps almost feels like an abyss of chaos, emanating from the scorching heat. As you speak to the people, you experience a rollercoaster of emotion.

Fatuma Ahmed is a 19-year-old young woman, dark and slender, her cheekbones pop out whenever she smiles, her white set of teeth beam bright. She is warm and welcoming though her story is the opposite. The story that brought her and her family of six to Dadaab is one of devastation and desperation. Mogadishu was fairly

"peaceful" she says. When they left, the country was in pieces, broken and fallen to the ground. The system had failed, basic rights such as education were nowhere to be found. Only religious teachings were in abundance.

Through the rough terrain, the dusty and rocky roads they made the decision to seek solace on the other side of their world - Dadaab - the camp that will become home and provide them that which they missed.

They spent a total of 27 days on the road aboard trucks and taxis. Taxis which normally carry four passengers carried had 12 people instead, bundled against each other in the tiny space of a Toyota probox. No one had the pleasure to dismiss this means of transport, "We didn't care, we wanted



Idriss and students from Hagadera during a group photo outside the class © FilmAid/Salan

to get to Dadaab and finally attend school,” Fatuma says.

Eventually they made it to Dadaab in one piece, but, just like Fatuma, there are thousands of others with similar stories, some of which are even worse. I couldn’t fathom the kind of life that she was forced into. My teenage years were filled with decisions of whether to play or read, join my friends for a weekend escapade, or lock myself into a room and watch movies punching popcorn or pizza. I didn’t think about the weather being too hot because just a kilometer, or less, just a kilometer away was the national swimming

pool where my friends and I went to cool down and have fun swimming.

During my time in Dadaab, I asked myself: if not war and famine, what brings so many young people to this place? To people like me, brought up in urban centers, alienated from their cultures and traditions, Dadaab is just like it has been portrayed in Media - chaotic, a piece of hell, where people scramble to live through another day. However, as the plane lands and we hop into a SUV waiting by the airstrip, it’s a turn around culture shock. I am proved wrong. My first camp to visit is Hagadera, a place beaming with activities. Women in heavy Buibuis sat in corner shops counting thousand

Kenyan shilling notes as old men in street cafes sip black tea strolling their beards.

Education, I realize, brings a lot of the young people here, and evidently, it is a tool to win over a country’s heart. To many Somalis of my generation, education was, and still is, the way out of the dusty villages we were born into, and the attendant back breaking labor. I cannot emphasize enough how schooling has had a great impact on our lifestyle, from that of our nomadic ancestors to a new, modern world, a world that did not even exist in our ancestor’s imaginations.

POULTRY BUSINESS BOOMS IN DADAAB CAMPS



Abshiro at her poultry farm in Hagadera Camp

By Mohamed Jimale

Abshiro came to the camps with no source of income but she is now a force to reckon with as she talks about her booming chicken business.

Abshiro Mohamed Aden, 45, is a Somali refugee and mother of ten children who has lived in Dadaab refugee camp for the past eight years. In 2011, Abshiro fled from Mogadishu, the city she had lived in since her childhood, seeking refuge from drought and military intervention against extremist groups fighting in Somalia.

At the time of her arrival, she had no source of income and depended on food rations provided by World Food Program (WFP). “When I first came to Dadaab, everything was new to us, life was so difficult. We even thought of going back to Somalia due to the unwelcoming environment in the camps but we decided to stay since we were in search of a peaceful environment which we had found in

Dadaab,” says Abshiro.

To supplement the food rations from WFP and make a little more income, Abshiro decided to set up a poultry business; a unique venture within the Somali community that has since changed her life. She runs the only poultry business in Hagadera refugee camp and has a market that has already spread over the entire camp.

“There are fewer opportunities to earn an extra coin in the camp. This makes us refugees more dependent on foreign aid. Because of this, I decided to start my own business,” says Abshiro.

“When I looked at the market, all business ideas were already filled. There was a lot of competition so I

thought of a unique venture that needed less money.” Poultry farming came to mind and I started with seven chickens only.”

“Initially, people were laughing at me when they saw me rearing chickens at home. They thought that poultry

“
The poultry business not only helps me financially but also balances our diet at home.
”

farming would not succeed in a refugee camp, but I was determined. Now here I am doing well in the business,” she explains.

As Abshir's poultry business grew, she started supplying chickens and eggs to big hotels, supermarkets and to NGOs based in the camp. She transformed the poultry into a booming business attracting more customers daily.

“People come to my home and place of business in the market to buy chicken meat and eggs regularly. I have also started supplying eggs to wedding parties where I make good money,” says Abshir.

With the income from her business, Abshir is now able to better support her family. “My husband is now 75 years old and cannot afford to take care of the family so it's my responsibility to make ends meet by working hard.”

“The poultry business not only helps me financially but also balances our diet at home. We are now able to add meat to our diets and that is a plus to my family,” Abshir says with a smile.

Before Abshir went into the poultry business, she was unable to take care of her children's needs and had to strive hard to ensure nobody took advantage of their situation.

“I could not afford to buy them school uniforms, books, or pens. This really worries me as I feared some boys would take advantage of my daughters by offering things they needed that I could not afford. This could have ended up with them becoming pregnant, a common scenario that I have witnessed in the camp,” says Abshir.

A short distance from her business is a small hotel that depends on Abshir's poultry for chicken and eggs supply. Twenty-four-year-old Rahmo who runs the hotel moved to Kenya in 2002 from Somalia following the drought and famine that hit her country.



©FilmAid/Jamale

Abshir holding a bucket carrying one of her chickens

“When I saw the high demand of chicken meat in the market I set up this small hotel and it really worked for me, the only problem was the availability of the chicken supply, but now with Abshir's poultry everything is okay,” she says.

Despite the development she has made, Abshir is facing some challenges. Her knowledge in rearing chicken is limited and she sometimes wakes up to find her birds have died from an unknown condition, making her count losses in her business.

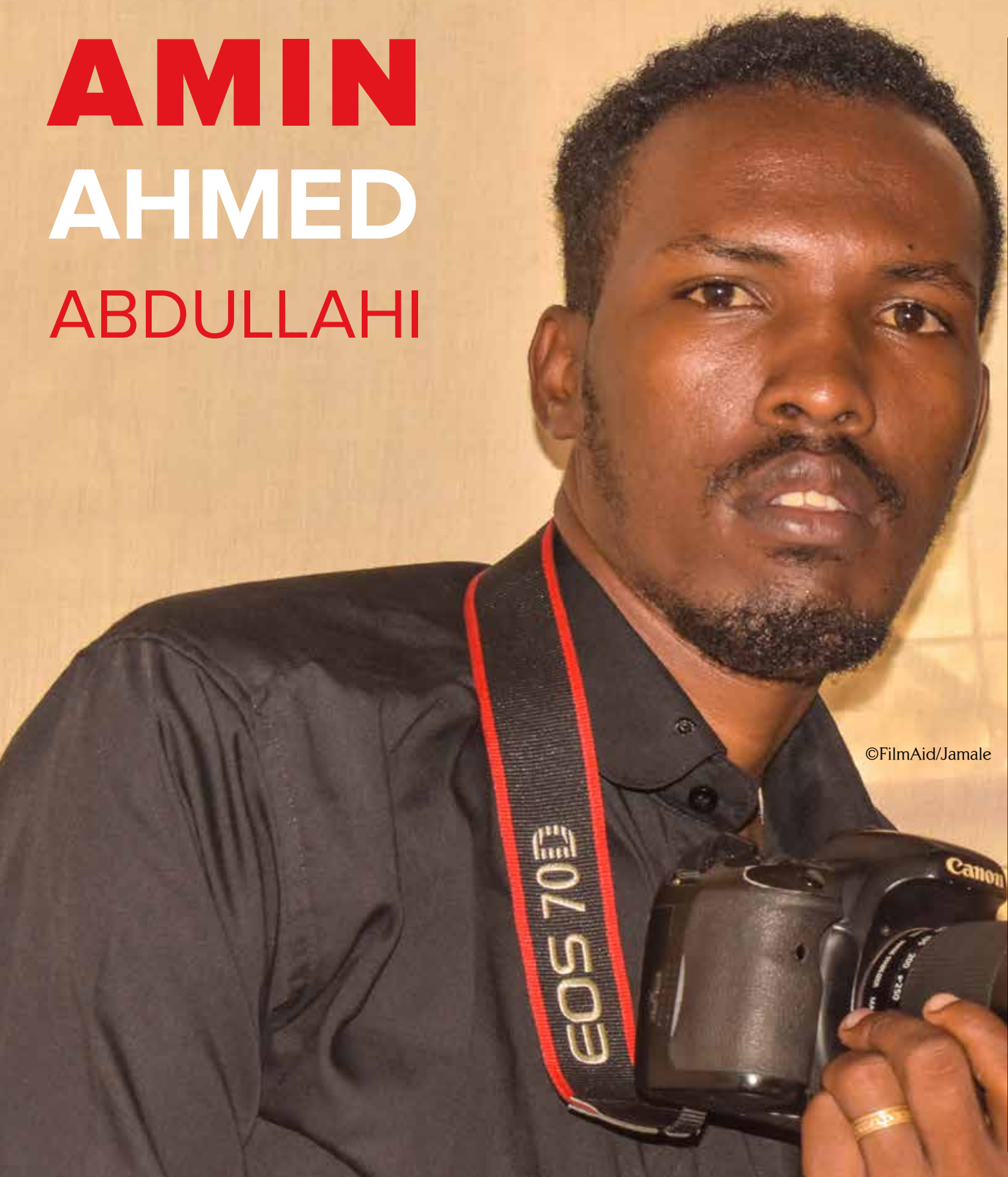
“I don't have any kind of training in

poultry farming, this is having a negative impact on my business. Sometimes chicken die and eggs get spoilt without me knowing the reason.”

In Dadaab refugee camp many women are left to fend for their families, A number are single mothers or divorcees, while others are neglected by their husbands. Abshir is one of the few examples in the camps demonstrating that women can venture into business, succeed and support their families.

INSPIRATION

AMIN AHMED ABDULLAHI



©FilmAid/Jamale

FROM NOTHING TO SOMETHING

By Amin Ahmed

Despite being in class for 13 months Amin has already developed professional goals and is realizing the fruits of his dreams. He now works as a field reporter in Dadaab camps for Kalsan TV, a Somali television based in UK.

When Amin Ahmed Abdullahi, aged 25, arrived in Dadaab camps in January 2009, he did not know what trajectory his life would take nine years later.

His journey to Dadaab camps was made on foot over unforgiving terrain. Frightened and hungry, many like him escaping violence and persecution walked for months to reach safety.

"We encountered difficulties as we walked for four consecutive weeks to reach the Somali border. We stayed in the border town of Hargeisa for five days before boarding a vehicle to Dadaab. We left everything we had behind and ran for our lives in fear of the Ethiopian military and paramilitary forces," he narrates.

Amin was born in Ethiopia's Ogaden region in 1992. His family were pastoralists and depended on animal products for survival. Their life was like that of any other low-income Ogadenian, until 2007, when Ethiopia's campaign of military crackdown against Ogaden National Liberation Front begun. Accounts of torture and sexual abuse at the hands of Ethiopian forces started to reach his family causing them to flee their homes.

Upon arrival at Dadaab, Amin and his family were registered by UNHCR in

January 22, 2009 as asylum seekers.

"Life in the camps was unforgiving in the early days. Everything was new to us; we had no shelter, no latrines and we solely depended on food aid provided by WFP which was not enough for our survival," he says.

Amin joined Iftin Primary school in 2010. Upon completion, he joined Hagadera secondary school to pursue his secondary education in 2014. It was while in high school that he began thinking about a career in journalism.

"Throughout my years in secondary, I dreamt and believed in the power of information. I joined the school's writers' club where I wrote news articles around the camp and read them at the weekly school assembly. My dream was to become a professional multimedia journalist."

"I used to listen radio, watched TV, read magazines and would sometimes pretend to be reading news in a radio station. Amused, my family would laugh at me," he says.

Just when Amin's hopes that he would one day become a journalist seemed like a distant dream, he came upon a FilmAid International advertisement encouraging application for film and media training program in September 2017.

"When I saw the advert on the noticeboard I felt that it was an opportunity I couldn't let go," he says. "I rushed home, got copies of my certificates and applied. I prayed hard that FilmAid would consider me for the training as there were limited chances compared to the high number of secondary school graduates. I made the shortlist, went for interviews and with God's grace

and my hard work, I was selected.

"I cannot express how elated I was when I got the opportunity to learn journalism and filmmaking through FilmAid's media training program," he says as he smiles with joy.

"You cannot imagine how happy I was when Mr Eric Sande introduced journalism to us."

Despite being in class for 13 months, Amin has already developed professional goals and is realizing the fruits of his dreams. He now works as a field reporter in Dadaab refugee camp for Kalsan TV, a Somali television based in UK. This new status has been well received by his family, friends and the larger refugee community.

"I couldn't hold back my tears the first day I saw myself on TV reporting the crises in Dadaab refugee camps," he adds.

Amin now co-owns a studio in Hagadera main market where he films marriage ceremonies, events, sports testimonials, and provide photography and graphic designs for private institutions. He also blogs about humanitarian stories, mainly focusing on refugee crises.

"I want to thank FilmAid for the support they have given me in achieving my dream as a journalist."

Despite many youth not realizing the importance of the media and film training program, Amin's story serves as a motivation to many. He is now the bread winner for his family and they fully depend on what he ekes out of his professional activities.

COW DUNG FOR CASH

By Abdirahman Ahmed Atow

Ali dropped out of school to take care of his siblings. He spends his time in the bush collecting the animal waste to deliver to his ready market within the camp for cash.



Ali, collecting Cow dung in the field

Dagahaley camp in Dadaab is characterized by an abundance of animal farming activities. Following famine and conflict in Somalia, many pastoralists made their way to the camps with their animals. This has led to farming becoming a major source of their livelihood.

Many families make an extra shilling from their herds of cattle, sheep and goats, in addition to what is offered by humanitarian organizations working with refugees.

From their livestock, some have discovered new business opportunities, besides the selling of the usual milk and meat. Traditional makeshift Somali thatched houses plastered with cow dung have now become synonymous with the camp. Residents now avoid the hassle of fetching the commodity themselves and opt to buy directly from herdsmen. Young boys and women have also taken advantage of this and are now collecting and selling the cow dung for home construction.

Ali Ismail, a 12 year-old boy, spends his time in the bush collecting the animal waste to deliver to his ready market within the camp. He has faced humiliation from fellow teens and community members for taking up the dirty job, however this has not distracted him.

“On our way to the bush, While our animals graze, our mothers carry wheelbarrows and sacks to collect the cow dung,” says Ali. “Sometimes the opportunity of getting enough cow dung for the day is limited so we occasionally follow other herdsmen for miles seeking for the cash cow dung. We later sell it to people who are setting up structures in the Camp.”

Ali dropped out of school to take care of his siblings. “I am currently in dilemma of whether to go to school or to work. I have to comply with my mother who normally tells me to work,” he says.

Over the years, drought and disease have caused a reduction of cow dung produced. This has heavily affected the income earned.

“Other than the decrease in the production of cow dung, most residents nowadays are building houses made of iron sheets which has greatly affected our work,” says Aisho, a 56 year old a business woman who earns a living by plastering houses with cow dung. Aisho is one among the many women who earn their income this way.

The business of plastering houses with mud in Dagahaley is mostly done by single women. In Somali community, it is the traditionally the responsibility of women to build the homes where they

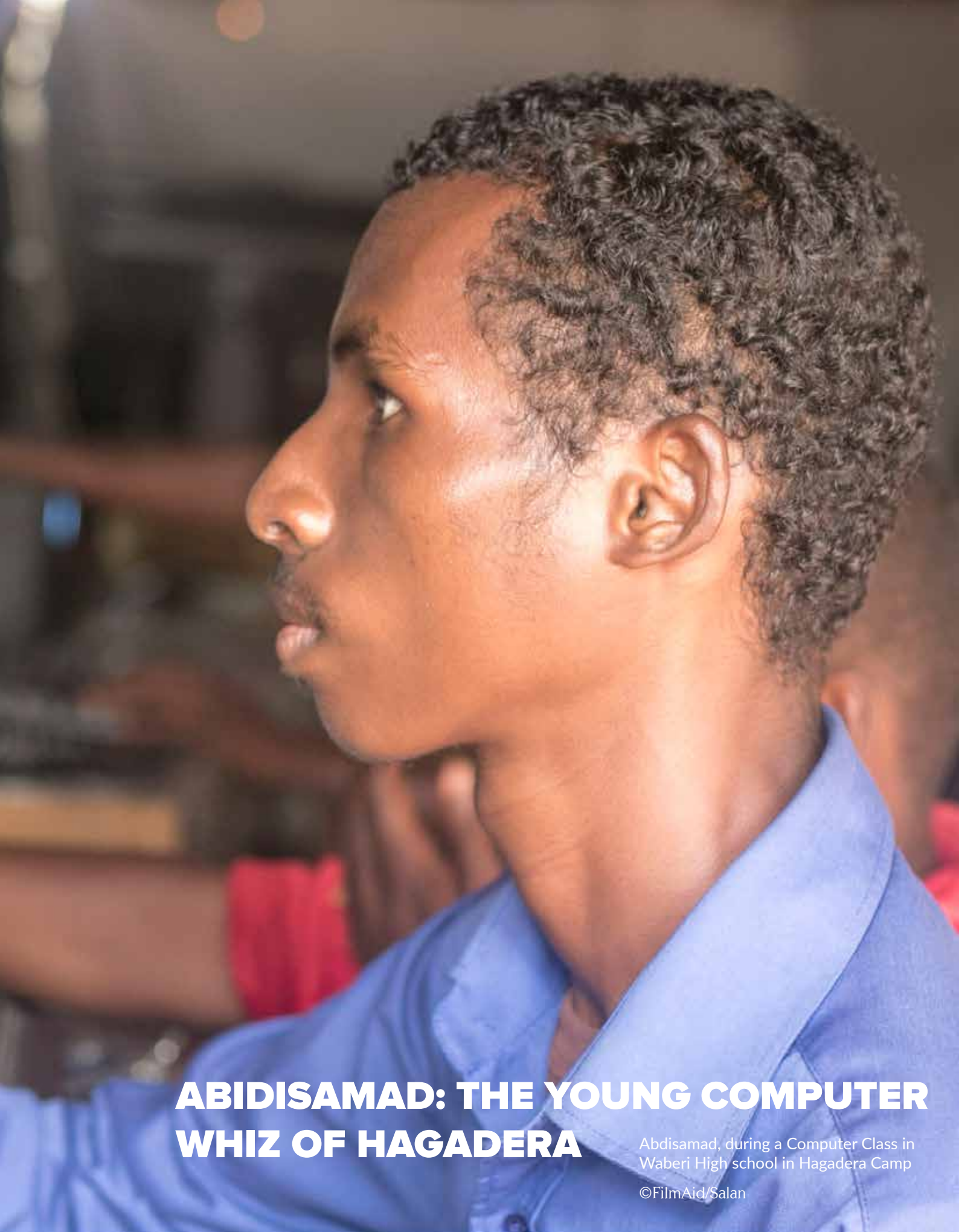
will live.

Although Ali and Aisho's work is improving their livelihoods and helping in conserving the environment, not many jobless refugees in Dadaab have developed an interest in cow dung business due to the poor remuneration.

“We earn about 1000 shillings (approximately 10 dollars) per household. After paying the people we work with we go home with 300 shillings from each house, says Aisho. “We may go for weeks without any work to do. Since it is not a daily job we are forced to supplement with other jobs.”

Most children doing this job end the day feeling fatigued which leads to them missing out on school. They are trapped in the vicious cycle of having to fend for the family and assist their mothers in animal care taking.

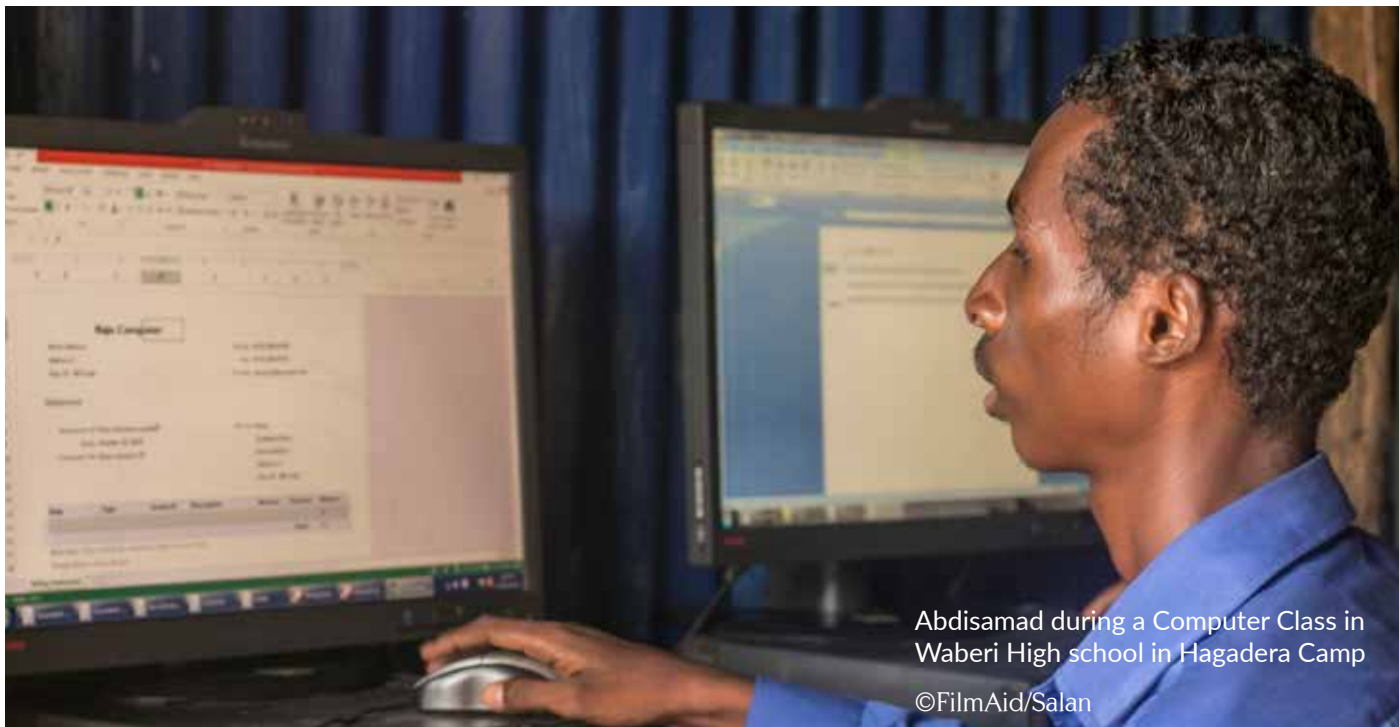
The World Food Programme (WFP) and its implementing partner, World Vision, a humanitarian organization working in Dadaab refugee camp, distributes monthly food rations to refugees in Dagahaley on a monthly basis. Refugees report that the dry food provided is simply not enough forcing them to find other sources of income to support their families.



ABIDISAMAD: THE YOUNG COMPUTER WHIZ OF HAGADERA

Abdisamad, during a Computer Class in
Waberi High school in Hagadera Camp

©FilmAid/Salan



Abdisamad during a Computer Class in Waberi High school in Hagadera Camp

©FilmAid/Salan

20-year-old Abdisamad Mohamed is a budding software engineer already familiar with some of the software development applications. He has developed school management software and has his own social media platform with more than 10 thousand users.

By Mohamed Jamale

Dadaab refugee camp is home to more than two hundred thousand refugees, mainly from Somalia. For many it is the only home they know.

With only a few opportunities available, many refugee youth believe that life is better abroad, outside the camp, and that they must find their way to other lands for sanctuary.

Abdisamad Mohamed Jama, a form three student from Waberi secondary school in Hagadera, located in Dadaab refugee camp, has a different story to tell.

Born in Somalia's lower Juba, Kismayu area, Abdisamad arrived in Dadaab camp in 2010 after drought and famine hit his hometown and robbed them from their livelihoods.

Despite the hardships, Abdisamad

believes that free education offered by humanitarian organizations and the modern technology being adopted in the camps can break barriers and allow young refugees to develop into professionals, if only they worked hard in class. For him, software development has become a source of great success.

The 20-year-old budding software engineer is already familiar with software development applications. To date, he has developed a school management software and his own social media platform with more than 10 thousand users. Currently, Abdisamad is working on his fourth software application for managing school results.

His portfolio can be found online on www.nizzc.com

"I started learning computer in 2012 and have loved computers since my childhood. I have always wanted to develop myself as professional software engineer. I therefore worked hard to realise my dreams and that is why I choose computer studies when I joined high school."

His hard work and determination has not escaped the attention of his teachers.

"Abdisamad is a hardworking student, most of his computer knowledge is self-taught and he is far ahead of what we teach in school. In form three, we only teach flowcharts meaning that he is extraordinary in computers," says Mohamed Abdullahi, a computer teacher in Waberi secondary school.

"I am thrilled to have a student like

Abdisamad in the school, he is focused as he spends more time in the computer lab working on new computer software. He has already developed an application that the school uses to calculate and grade exam scores, which makes work easy for the teachers during exams period,” says John Kinyanjui, Waberi secondary school head teacher.

“Sometimes it only takes one person to change your life. One who is there for you, encourages you, believes in you. For me the one person who is always with me and whom I could not do anything without is my computer teacher Mr. Mohamed Abdullahi. I owe a lot to him and one day I will recognize him for what he did for me,” states Abdisamad.

It has not always been smooth sailing for Abdisamad. He has faced numerous challenges in his journey towards his dream and sometimes he contemplates abandoning his interest in software development.

“Most of the time I need internet to practice computer software and in the camps there is no internet. We only depend on cell phone data bundles which is so hard to get. For me, it’s even worse because my family has no other income sources other than the food rations provided by world food program,” says Abdisamad.

Despite the challenges, Abdisamad is determined to work with the little resources at his disposal and reach greater heights.

“I know where I want to be and I am determined to make it,” he says.

Abdisamad hopes to become a successful software engineer like Bill Gates, who inspires him to work hard. He burns the midnight oil to learn more about computer aided graphic software which helps him work on his user interfaces and online applications. He has honed his skills by working on several website development and projects for



Abdisamad stands at his home in Hagadera Camp

©FilmAid/Salan

individuals and institutions.

“My message to the youth is to work hard because it pays. We are the future of our country and if we want to compete with the world, we must embrace technology. We should be the Bill Gates for Somalia,” says Abdisamad.

He is now an inspiration to many young ambitious youth in Dadaab but

shares that he still has a long way to go.

Over the past two decades, besides having access to durable solutions such as resettlement and repatriation, individual talent has been a great way for refugees to gain recognition, helping many succeed and travel to places beyond the camp.

11TH ANNUAL FILMAID FILM FESTIVAL - NAIROBI



Dadaab Media Students with their mentor Moulid Hujale holding their awards and trophies during FilmAid Film Festival held in Nairobi in September 2018



1

Aroji Otieno, FilmAid's Creative and Content Director giving an opening remark at the festival's gala event in Nairobi.



2

Ahmed Abdulahi, a FilmAid media student receives an award for best non fictional film from Mr. Raouf Mazou - UNHCR during the FilmAid Filmfestival



3

PRM Representative Ketura Brown and FilmAid Executive Director Keefe Murren pose for a photo with the Dadaab students winning team

11TH ANNUAL FILMAID FILM FESTIVAL - DADAAB



Rahmo Abdi Bare, FilmAid Media Student in Dadaab, receives her certificate during the 11th annual FilmAid film festival in Dadaab



1

Ahmed Abdullahi and Rahmo Bare, representing the students, give speeches during the FilmFestival in Dadaab.



2

PET group in Dagahaley perform a Somali dance during FAFF Event.



3

Students in Hagadera high school attending to FAFF Screening



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