



2005

Winternewsletter

getinvolved

Through FilmAid, you can get involved in helping to bring information and entertainment to the world's most vulnerable people. Take action today. Make a donation by visiting our website at www.filmaid.org. Visit FilmAid's website regularly to learn about new ways you can make a difference.

Join FilmAid's Producer's Circle

A gift of \$1,000 or more will put you in the Producer's Circle, a special community of friends who have made a significant commitment to advance the work of FilmAid. Your generosity at this level will make a difference in thousands of lives every day.

Make a Gift of Stock

You may also transfer appreciated stock or securities to FilmAid. For information on donating stocks to FilmAid, please call Michelle Chaplin at 212.529.1088.

Please take the time today to make a gift that allows the power of film to reach even more of the world's most vulnerable people.

To mail your donation, contact us at:

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Thank you!



An evening screening in Kakuma Camp, Kenya

"I am crying because it is the first time someone has come to show me a film of any kind."
-Yolanda Nahimana, at a recent FilmAid screening for disabled refugees

Dear Friends,

Yolanda's words express far better than I can exactly what your support of FilmAid makes possible, day in and day out, for tens of thousands of the world's most vulnerable men, women and children. Yolanda was among the 51 disabled refugees who recently attended a FilmAid screening in Nduta refugee camp in western Tanzania. The film she saw, *Leaving the Shadow of War*, addresses landmines and other dangers in war-torn areas. As she shared in her own words, the experience of attending this screening affected Yolanda deeply: She felt remembered and valued because FilmAid had brought this film to her and at the same time she learned how to protect herself from landmines.

Yolanda's experience is, happily, not unique—at FilmAid screenings, tens of thousands of refugees and other displaced people gather together to learn, to share, to feel remembered and to be transported from the hopelessness and desperation they feel every other moment of the day.

Your support has helped FilmAid grow to reach record audience totals—over 1 million—in 2005. You will read in the following articles how we are helping young people in the camps find their voice and tell their own stories through film; how we are helping more women and girls than ever before learn to protect themselves from violence and abuse; and how we are helping prepare those who are facing the long journey home after living for decades in refugee camps—all through the power of film.

All of us here at FilmAid and the men, women and children for whom our programs have become a lifeline, extend our deepest gratitude for your unstinting commitment to bringing the power of film to the world's refugees and displaced. We ask that you take the time today to renew and strengthen your dedication to this mission.

We look forward to sharing news of our ongoing programs, our plans for expansion, and the impact that together we are having around the world.

Best wishes for a healthy and happy New Year,

Elizabeth Thorne Silkes
Executive Director

The Long Road Home



William Dau, Sudanese refugee in Kakuma Camp, Kenya

“When I was ten, my grandfather brought a seedling and told me to plant it in the garden near the house. It was like a blessing for me. He told me, ‘You’ll grow here.’ I have to go see whether that tree is alive or not.”

—William Dau, Sudanese refugee

During his thirty years, William Dau has experienced the worst of humanity and yet he has not lost hope. Three years after his grandfather gave him the seedling to plant, William was one of hundreds of boys sent to a military training camp in Ethiopia by the Sudan People’s Liberation Army (SPLA). In Ethiopia, William’s classes consisted of fight training, gun operation, ambushing the enemy, and other practical lessons of warfare. At age thirteen, William became one of the estimated 300,000 child soldiers recruited for battle in the world today.

But William is anything but a grim statistic. His is a story of survival and self-reliance, of dignity and determination while struggling to stay alive. He is now on staff with FilmAid as an Outreach Unit Supervisor at the Kakuma refugee camp in Kenya.

In 1992, along with other child soldiers, William was released to the care of UNICEF and taken to the Kakuma refugee camp. Within ten years, William had completed his primary and secondary education. William applied and was hired as FilmAid’s Daytime Screening

Assistant in Kakuma this past February after returning from a year in college in Nairobi and was recently promoted to his current position.

As the Outreach Unit Supervisor, William and his team help to stimulate dialogue among camp residents on important issues, including HIV/AIDS prevention, conflict resolution, and self-empowerment. William explains, “That is what we do when we facilitate after a screening, when we help communicate messages from the film to [the refugees]. This is what we try to help them understand: that they are very powerful, strong people who can solve their problems.”

William brings his abiding belief in the power of knowledge wed with a desire to create positive change to his work. When audience members come together to watch a film, they remember not only the information imparted, but also gain the experience of communion with strangers. In the camp, FilmAid is helping people cultivate what William calls a “heart of forgiveness,” allowing residents to feel that “this is my brother, or my fellow refugee, even if from another community.” After FilmAid screenings on conflict resolution, for example, William has seen increased cooperation and the forming of committees, such as a youth and security committee to solve common problems.

The US State Department recently named FilmAid as one of several coordinating agencies in Kakuma Camp for the Southern

Refugee Voices

“People have lived here for years, just under these trees, and they forget there is the rest of the world outside. Films remind them. So we thank the donors who support FilmAid.”

Rev. Abel Siboniyo, Burundian refugee

Sudanese repatriation process. William is hopeful that he can soon return home. FilmAid staff and volunteers are implementing a program of screenings and workshops to help prepare Southern Sudanese refugees for their transition out of the camp and back home to rebuild their communities. The support of FilmAid’s widening circle of friends and partners is integral to developing and implementing effective programs such as this one, helping prepare the way home for tens of thousands of Sudanese refugees over the coming years.

From child soldier to college student to community leader, William Dau has lived a remarkable life. While he does not yet know if that seedling he planted twenty years ago is now a tree, William remains hopeful. In no small measure, FilmAid’s supporters have helped nourish the seeds of hope for William and so many others around the world who have been displaced. On their behalf, all of us at FilmAid extend our most heartfelt appreciation.



Setting up a FilmAid screening in Kakuma Camp, Kenya

Finding Their Voice, Shaping Their World

These heartfelt messages of compassion and empathy were filmed by the young people of FilmAid's Participatory Video Project (PVP) Club in the Kakuma Refugee camp when they learned of the tragedy resulting from the Indian Ocean tsunami:

"I am a refugee, so I have nothing I can give to them. But what I can tell them is to develop hope, be hopeful, because they still have a chance to live in this world. I pray for them every day."

-Idi Akichu Noor, Somali refugee

"I know you're suffering a lot because as a refugee we've been through different conflicts. We can understand what's going on, but you have to keep in mind that when God closes one window he opens another one for you. We are keeping you in our prayers and we hope you'll heal through time."

-Patrick A. Oola, Sudanese refugee

These African refugees know firsthand the complex mix of emotions brought on by forced displacement. And so, they turned to film to deliver messages of hope and solidarity.

Through their involvement with FilmAid, the young people living in the camps have come to know and understand the unique power of film to communicate ideas and emotions. Their young lives have been scarred by loss: of their homes, families, friends; of security and control. With a video camera in their hand, they begin to experience freedom. The telling of their stories becomes



FilmAid staff member Pius John teaches refugee youth to use a camera during a participatory program in Tanzania.

a life changing moment. As Anne Itoo, a 20 year old PVP Club graduate from Sudan remarked, "I learned how to view my own ideas without being scared."

Your support allows FilmAid to offer this program that provides young people with hope and practical experience that is theirs forever. FilmAid currently offers Participatory Video Programs in Kakuma refugee camp in Kenya and Nduta camp in Tanzania, offering one of the very few opportunities for refugee youth to engage in critical thinking, creative expression and community building.

As Eric Bokuru, a PVP Club graduate and now a FilmAid staff member explains, "...It was the first time I touched the equipment and camera. And I felt so good. I feel fine when I'm with the camera, when I'm shooting, directing, acting."

The impact of the PVP Club extends far beyond the individual participants. While in the club, the young people work together to craft and produce their videos. Often these videos center on important issues in their lives and communities, such as HIV/AIDS prevention, domestic violence, and girls' education. Their videos are then shown as part of FilmAid's screenings in the camps reaching tens of thousands of residents at a time. Because these messages are created by the refugees themselves, FilmAid has found that audience members receive the information in these videos openly and enthusiastically—in fact they are some of the most popular films shown!

Requests for this program are increasing and FilmAid is struggling to meet the growing demand. Over 800 young people applied for the 12 program openings in Kibondo's Participatory Video Program. Your continued support allows FilmAid to maintain this vital program and provide more young people with this therapeutic and skills-building experience. But perhaps the most compelling reason for your renewed support is offered by Hussein Adan Hassan, a Somali refugee and PVP Club participant: "We ask donors to give more money to FilmAid so that we can share films with the rest of the world."

"It was the first time I touched the equipment and camera. And I felt so good."

Eric Bokuru, Burundian refugee



Refugee Voices

"I feel one hundred percent happy because I know ... I heal more than five thousand people ... because I make them smile at least once ... I enjoy it so much, especially at the end of the screening."

Janvier Muhongeriki, Burundian refugee and FilmAid staff member in Kakuma Camp, Kenya



Children awaiting one of FilmAid's first screenings in a refugee camp in Macedonia.

“Many of us here don't have parents and these films are good for us because they teach us, who have no mothers and fathers. We need programs like this in school with the discussions afterward. We need FilmAid to guide us, to give us life skills and counseling.”

Nzeyimama Leonidas, refugee in Nduta Camp, Tanzania

Mama Film: Using Film to Help Women and Girls

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) estimates that women and girls make up at least 50% of the world's refugee population. Because of discrimination, women and girls are particularly vulnerable to violence and other forms of intimidation, especially when they become refugees.

In Kakuma Camp, Constance Okot Lamont, a refugee from Sudan, worked as an Arabic interpreter for FilmAid until her recent resettlement to Australia. “Mama Film” as she came to be known, was an unofficial ambassador for FilmAid, reaching out to women and girls to encourage their participation in our programs. Mama Film sees that FilmAid has a positive effect on women and girls by providing a unique space for dialogue about women's rights and health.

“...[in the films] you see a mother and she speaks openly to her daughter about sex; she has to talk about [these issues]...When other women see this at a screening, they will take it and they will use it.”



Women and children attend a daytime screening in Kakuma Camp, Kenya

“.. [in the films] you see a mother and she speaks openly to her daughter about sex; she has to talk about [these issues]... When other women see this at a screening, they will take it and they will use it.”

Constance Okot Lamont, Sudanese-Equatoria refugee

The need for accurate information and frank discussion has become even more important recently. With highly-publicized incidents of sexual assault on the part of UN peacekeepers and other relief workers, agencies working with displaced populations are placing an increased focus on preventing sexual exploitation and abuse. And they are turning to FilmAid for help.

In response to the demand, FilmAid provides screenings designed especially for women and girls. Made possible thanks to the generosity and commitment of our supporters, these screenings are offered exclusively to women and girls and are followed by a facilitated discussion of the film. During this open dialogue, audience members are able to share their own experiences and relate them to the characters in

the film. It is a rare opportunity for the women and girls to share fears, hopes and dreams, and to learn from each other – all sparked by the stories they see on the screen.

FilmAid's programs deal with rape and sexual assault, domestic violence, inheritance issues and girls' right to an education, among other topics. In order to build broad community support for this program, FilmAid has included male community leaders in the design and implementation of these screenings.

In addition, FilmAid has initiated several men-only programs to provide a space for the men to watch films that portray positive examples of men relating to women as well as to discuss their concerns and receive support.

Mama Film notes, “...For our men, it is something that we have to bring them to slowly by slowly! It is not something they can change at once.”

With the help of FilmAid's programs, Mama Film is enthusiastic about the potential for achieving equality between men and women. Among the youth, she says, “everywhere I go they greet me...every child is running after me, asking me: ‘Where is the film? Where is the film?’”

Although she's been resettled to Australia, Mama Film's spirit still lives in Kakuma Camp. FilmAid's supporters are honoring her legacy by helping us meet the demands of refugees hungry for entertainment and education. And these demands are increasing as more and more learn of FilmAid's effective programs, particularly those targeting women and girls. We are counting on you and other loyal friends to help us extend the benefits of film to even more people in need during the coming year.