



Springnewsletter

getinvolved

Every day FilmAid International is touching the hearts and minds of thousands of refugees and other vulnerable people through the power of film. For the men, women and children living in the refugee camps in East Africa where we work, FilmAid is a salve against hopelessness and isolation, and a source for vital lifesaving information.

As the numbers of people forced from their homes throughout the world continue to grow, there is even greater need for FilmAid's programs across the globe. Your generous support will allow us to continue our work in East Africa and expand our programs to reach even more people who are in desperate need.

You can support our programs by donating online through our "How Can You Help?" link:

www.filmaidinternational.org/help.htm

or by mailing your donation to us at:

FilmAid International
24 East 23rd Street, 3rd floor
New York, NY, 10010

For further information about making a gift to FilmAid please contact us at:

1.212.529.1088

or email us at:
info@filmaidinternational.org

Learn more about our programs or subscribe to FilmAid newsletters online at:
www.filmaidinternational.org

Thank you!



welcome

In a dusty field half a world away, the children point excitedly at the larger than life action illuminating the darkness of the night. Men and women shout words of warning, encouragement, and approval at the characters whose stories are projected before them. The real life sounds accompanying these films are the voices of tens of thousands who have staked out a patch of earth in this field in northwestern Kenya. For a few magical hours, they are not "displaced persons." This night, they have become a joyful audience. This is the power of film.

All of us at FilmAid International are privileged to have a hand in this transformation. During the past year, we have provided record numbers of people with the life affirming experience of being part of a community joined together and lifted up through film. Attendances totaled more than eight hundred thousand people last year. Without the support of our friends and donors, the power of film could not touch so many lives so profoundly.

As critical as entertainment is to people mired in the desperate reality of loss, FilmAid offers so much more. Our programs in the refugee camps of Kenya and Tanzania provide employment, skills development, psychosocial relief and life saving information on such topics as HIV/AIDS, sexual and gender based violence, and conflict resolution.

With the number of refugees and displaced people exceeding 34 million throughout the world, every one of us has a stake in ensuring that those currently displaced do not remain dispossessed. Thanks to the commitment of our growing circle of supporters, FilmAid is helping to build strong and stable communities. If you have not already done so, we hope you too will choose to join us now in unleashing the power of film.

Special Screenings

The power of film was in evidence recently at the Kanembwa Camp, Kibondo, Tanzania on World AIDS Day. The United Nations estimates that more than 25 million Africans are infected with HIV, the virus that causes AIDS. In recognition of the devastation being wrought by this pandemic, particularly on those who have been uprooted by war and civil strife, FilmAid was proud to partner with Stop SIDA (a local HIV/AIDS awareness program), the UN High Commissioner for Refugees and Tanganyika Christian Refugee Service to host the world premier of 'Love During the Time of AIDS'. Despite heavy rains, nearly 2,100 people packed into the local church to learn about HIV/AIDS prevention.

"Nowadays women have their rights and a say about HIV/AIDS so this film ('Love During the Time of AIDS') can also help to prevent the transmission of HIV/AIDS..."

—Justine Nibogora, refugee,
Mtendeli, Tanzania.

In Tanzania alone, FilmAid screenings held from October to December, 2004 reached audiences totaling:

94,299 on HIV/AIDS
95,806 on health issues
27,868 on sexual and gender based violence
27,961 on human rights
3,792 on peace and conflict-resolution
58,563 on environmental concerns
72,914 on family entertainment
72,918 on gender and equality

FilmAid Collaborates

USING THE POWER OF FILM TO FIGHT SEXUAL AND GENDER BASED VIOLENCE

During times of conflict women and girls are especially vulnerable to violence in the home and community. For those living in refugee camps, the dangers are often more extreme. In recognition of this reality, FilmAid recently extended its successful collaboration with SAEU (South African Extension Unit), IRC (International Rescue Committee) and UNHCR in Tanzania to educate and engage women and men in refugee camps on this issue through films, workshops, and other events during the annual 16 Days of Activism to Eliminate Violence Against Women.

Community Leaders Discuss FilmAid

FilmAid's Executive Director, Liz Silkes, recently returned from a visit to the field where she and FilmAid's Program Director Natalia Tapies met with the Mtendeli Advisory Committee in Tanzania (a committee of refugee leaders who guide FilmAid's programming in the community) to thank them for their commitment to FilmAid and to hear feedback from them regarding the programs.

Ms. Silkes also met with Reverend Abel Siboniyo (pictured) to discuss the year ahead for FilmAid. Rev. Siboniyo, a refugee himself, is a well-respected religious leader in Mtendeli. Known for his vision and compassion, he has been one of FilmAid's most influential supporters from its inception. He spoke recently with FilmAid's Program Officer in Kibondo, Ken Bayona, about how he sees FilmAid's role in the camps.

We see FilmAid playing a big role in educating the public on issues concerning HIV and AIDS during evening screenings. People have not been getting the chance to see those suffering from HIV/AIDS. FilmAid brought this to them by showing documentaries of those living with HIV. Unlike before, people are starting to take care of those who have the disease. Church leaders are now helping people in the community living with HIV because of what they see on the big screen.

FilmAid has helped to empower women on their rights, which before was not done on a large scale. The film Neria [about a woman's



Rev. Abel Siboniyo & Liz Silkes, Kibondo, Tanzania 2004

fight against traditional inheritance customs] has helped a lot. FilmAid plays a big role in our community raising awareness on issues related to rape and abuse in the camps.

There is a decrease in mental problems especially amongst the youth. In the past there was no mental stimulation, but now with FilmAid here things have changed. We had nothing to do and people were having trauma and problems. FilmAid brought something to do. This is a big improvement in peoples' lives.

The most important achievement this year would be for FilmAid to cross borders and go into Burundi. There are a lot of people in the rural areas that need FilmAid in Burundi and Rwanda as there are a lot of psychotrauma problems.

—Rev. Abel Siboniyo, Mtendeli, Tanzania.



PSEA Launch, Kenya, February 2005

"Refugees and internally displaced people, especially women and children, are often highly vulnerable to HIV infection during an emergency situation."

—Dr. Ulf Kristoffersson, director of UNAIDS Office on AIDS, Security and Humanitarian Response
(UNAIDS Press Release 1/28/2005)

FilmAid Works Against Sexual Exploitation and Abuse

True to our values of inclusion and community participation, FilmAid International is lending our expertise to a joint project with IRC, CARE Kenya and UNHCR focused on preventing sexual exploitation and abuse (PSEA) in refugee camps in Kenya. Through this project people in the camps are writing, acting, editing, and distributing a series of short films intended to increase refugees' awareness of their right to be free from sexual exploitation and abuse. FilmAid has appointed a Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA) Project Manager from Kenya, Charles Otieno, and we would like to take this opportunity to welcome him to the FilmAid team.

FilmAid Changing Lives

Solomon Tilahun, an Ethiopian refugee who was living in Kakuma Camp, Kenya worked with FilmAid since 2001. He started as a Video Operator and then was promoted to Assistant Projectionist. He also learned how to film and when he found out he was to resettle in Australia, he decided “to go to school and study filming”.

Solomon found himself living in Kakuma after he fled in Ethiopia in 1991. He tells his story:

My father used to be an elected chairperson in my hometown during Mengistu's regime. When the new government took over, my family became targets. We were beaten and harassed and the authorities killed my father and took my elder brother. We still don't know where he is.

When FilmAid came to the camp I decided to explore this new world because exposure to so many new things can change your life. I learned a million things. When I documented the visit of the Vice President from Kenya and Home Affairs Minister, and the UNHCR High Commissioner in the camp, it was my biggest moment in my life.

I also learned a lot that I can't quantify. I



FilmAid Program Director Natalia Tapies, Solomon Tilahun & Tayech Alemu, Kenya, February 2005

learned leadership. Showing the technical crew how to set up for the screenings was very challenging.

HIV/AIDS awareness is the most challenging subject in the camp and FilmAid is the first program using a big screen to reach people. The screenings deal with many aspects of life relating to how we are living in this camp. Conflict resolution and how we resolve our differences is very important. It doesn't matter where you are, you have to have a freedom to live in peace. Life as a refugee has been very difficult. I must go back to school and get one or two degrees. I wish to be involved in the film industry this is my dream. I hope I will make it.

Exploring New Programs

With disasters born of nature and of conflict continuing to threaten the safety of hundreds of thousands around the globe, FilmAid will need to rely even more on the support of our friends as we work to meet the critical needs of so many people through the power of film.

Southern Sudan

Recently described by Refugees International as ‘the worst place in the world to be born...in education, literacy and child malnutrition it ranks at the bottom of the world’, Southern Sudan is in the midst of a repatriation process ushered in by the signing of the Sudan peace accord in January 2005. In recognition of the great need currently in Southern Sudan, FilmAid is conducting an assessment to determine the feasibility of bringing our programs to this region.

Southeast Asia

Relief efforts are still under way in the aftermath of the Indian Ocean tsunami disaster. Despite the outpouring of international aid, more than half a million people are homeless and continue to face the threat of hunger and disease. FilmAid is currently assessing the opportunities for programs in Indonesia and Sri Lanka once emergency needs are met. In the meantime our participatory video club in Kakuma, Kenya (a group of refugee youth FilmAid trained in video production) has completed a short video expressing their solidarity with and support of Tsunami-affected communities. The video will soon be featured on www.filmaidinternational.org — check our website often for the latest updates on this and other FilmAid programs.

On the Move in NYC

AND SPECIAL THANKS

On February 1st FilmAid's headquarters relocated to 24 East 23rd Street, 3rd Floor, New York, NY, 10010.

Our new contact details can be found at www.filmaidinternational.org.

FilmAid would like to extend our deep appreciation to Allan Rosenfield, Ron Waldman and Josh Ruxin at Columbia University's Center for Global Health and Economic Development for their generous and ongoing support of FilmAid.

We would also like to thank Church World Service (CWS), Tanganyika Christian Refugee Service and Lutheran World Federation (TCRS/LWF) for their invaluable support to our programs in the field.

Special thanks to Madeline and Steve Anbinder for their most generous gift in support of our Kenya program. Also thanks to Bob Brigham and Nancy and Ron Proesel of Vidicon for their generous contribution of two new projectors for the field.

Stellar Oscar Night
TRIBECA GRAND HOTEL, NYC

Stellar Network's first annual Oscar Party was held on Sunday, February 27th at the Tribeca Grand Hotel Screening Room. The proceeds from the benefit were donated to FilmAid. Stellar is a vibrant membership-based community of emerging and established film, theater and television professionals in New York and the UK. Our thanks to Abaete fashion house for their fabulous dress which was auctioned that night, to HBO for the array of prizes donated and to Stellar for making it all possible and for choosing FilmAid as the beneficiary. For more details on Stellar or Abaete please visit:

www.stellarnetwork.com
&
www.abaete.com

“It taught that what is needed is to be patient and have solidarity in fighting for peace, especially in our great lakes countries where there is no peace. So myself I have been taught that if everyone could be like Mandela, the whole of Africa could have peace.”

—James Nyandwi, Nduta Camp, Tanzania
after a screening of “Mandela”

Using the power of film to promote health, strengthen communities, and enrich lives

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“Film improves life; it is like a teacher, a guide to the right path...we see a film and learn that there are other ways to deal with problems.”



Denib Damte Deneke, Ethiopian refugee, Kakuma camp, Kenya referring to the impact FilmAid has on their lives.