

The Danish Refugee Council

Ethiopia Program



June Update 2011

World Refugee Day Celebrated

June 20 is marked as World Refugee Day under a theme: *One family forced to flee is too many*

DRC has taken part in organizing the colorful event held in Shedder camp along with UNHCR and other IPs. High – ranked government officials, religious leaders, and ambassadors attended the celebration.

DRC-assisted tailors produced 315 hand-bags that are used during the event.



On-going Community projects underway

Construction of ABE School in Af-as community is started, while a health post in Garab Harir community of Aw-bare Woreda is underway.

On the other hand, DRC together with the community handed over two ABE schools constructed in Baldera and Geedka Arada community to the line office of Aw-bare Woreda.

A New Community Project Launched

Labashag community members developed a community Action Plan (CAP), which is reviewed and endorsed by the Kebribeyah Woreda

administration. Accordingly, the community prioritized construction of ABE School. DRC, on its part, provided training on financial management to members of the community development committee members.

Progress in the WASH project

Excavation of three waste disposal pits for host communities in Aw-bare and Shedder is underway. In addition, beneficiary selection is done in collaboration with WASH committees and the local administration of all Kebeles in the surroundings of all the three refugee camps.

Updates

DRC-Ethiopia's Registration

DRC-Ethiopia has got a legal registration to work in Ethiopia as a humanitarian organization. Endorsed on the 20th June 2011 by the state's charity and societies' agency, this allows DRC to extend its operation in the country until June 2014.

Currently, the organization is working for Somali refugees and its hosting communities in three refugee camps in eastern Ethiopia.

New Country Director on board

DRC-Ethiopia welcomes Mr. Yann Dutertre as its country director. Mr. Yann, replacing the ex-country director Ms. Heather, assumed his position this month.

Mr. Yann is a well-experienced French man, who worked at high-ranked positions in humanitarian organizations including DRC.

“No displaced person must be without help when it comes to finding protection and durable solutions”

Collection of repayment from Micro-Loan Revolving Fund (MLRF) groups

Third round repayment is collected from MLRF groups in all the three camps. Meanwhile, in-kind grant for the fourth group is in due process.

Pasta making groups to open small restaurants

Fifteen beneficiaries organized in three groups are to open small restaurants in Kebribeyah. DRC assisted them with kitchen utensils and utilities. In the meantime, site for small restaurant is selected in Aw-bare in consultation with ARRA, and Refugee Central Committee.

Cost-share collection from Push-cart groups

Cost-share collection from push-cart beneficiaries is well progressing in Kebribeyah.

Photo of the Month

Invited guests celebrating June 20 at Shedder



Voice of the People

*DRC finds the voice of the people most essential when working all around the world to improve the conditions for refugees and IDPs in need of help. In November 2010 DRC staff **Anja Simonsen** met Omer Muktar Ali - a 24 year-old young man currently living as a refugee in Awbare refugee camp.*

In 2007 Omer decided to flee his home country Somalia due to political conflicts between the Transitional Federal Government and Islamist fundamentalist insurgents of Al Shabaab and Hizbul Islam causing hundreds of thousands of people to flee their country as well as the deaths of hundreds of thousands of people. Omer narrates his story.

“I lived in Mogadishu, Somalia, but I am originally from Lower Shabelle, the region where the majority of the people are farmers or agriculturalists. After moving to Mogadishu, my father worked as a bus driver for the US Embassy and my mother went to Southern Arabia. My mother was working from there to help us financially helping my brother and me to attend school”, Omer explains. “After my mother left, our family broke up because of disputes between my mother and father. My brother and I then went to live with our grandmother where we stayed during the civil war, which started in the early 1990s. My mother died in Southern Arabia 10 years ago because of long term illness.” By the death of Omer's mother, he not only faced the tragic loss of his mother. He was also forced to stop his education since he no longer had any financial support. “My father and I got separated in 2006 and finally on the 25th March 2007, I could not tolerate the clashes between the Islamic groups and the government any longer. I fled. I went through the Somali region and I ended up in Kebribeyah, Ethiopia. I travelled by road which is very dangerous. There are a lot of check points run by ruthless people. If they don't get money from

you, they will just kill you. First I wanted to go to Kenya but the travel was too far for me so I decided to go to Ethiopia.”

In Awbare, Omer fell in love with a woman also living as a refugee and they got married in 2008. They had a son together. “My most beloved person in the world is my two-year old son Muhammed Amin,” Omer tells me with a serious look on his face. He continues. “My wife and I got a divorce 4th January 2010. She was pushed to divorce me by her family because I am from a minority clan. I have not seen my son for 8 months since she left the camp with him.”

I ask Omer how it is to be a young person living in a refugee camp. “It is hard and difficult. We want to live as humanly as possible. Now I just wake up and go around. Things are not systematized. If we had a schedule when we got up every day, it would be good. I would like to get up and go to class and have subjects like science and sociology. Then in the afternoons, I would go to the computer and learn something. I wish for services like you get in the town for example internet services so you can be connected to the world, and gyms so you can get exercise.” These are some of the things that Omer wishes for – just like every other young guy in his age. I ask Omer what he wishes for the future. “I hope in the future that I will end up abroad, I don't know where, most probably in the United States of America. I would like to be an English teacher.”

DRC is an umbrella organization consisting of more than 30 members broadly representing civil society organizations in Denmark committed to the refugee cause.

DRC-Ethiopia, among the 26 country programs across the world, works for the well being of Somali refugee caseloads in eastern Ethiopia.

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