

**UNHCR DJIBOUTI
COMMUNITY SERVICES**

UNHCR Newsletter is a monthly magazine issued by the Community Services Section at UNHCR Djibouti.

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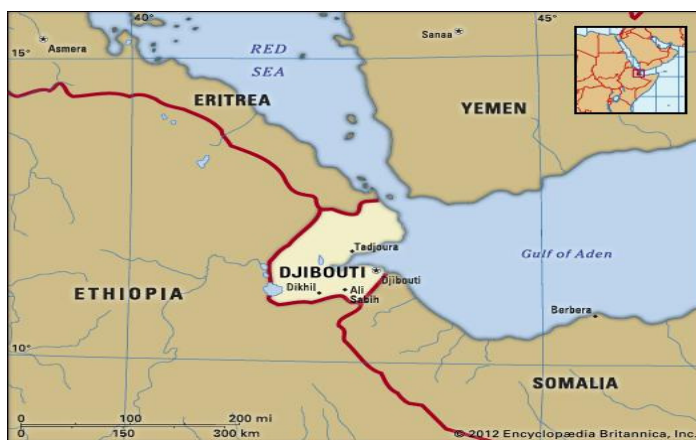
What's going on - An Introduction

The Republic of Djibouti is a small country located in the Horn of Africa.

Lying on the Gulf of Aden at the southern entrance of the Red Sea, it is bordered by Eritrea, Ethiopia and Somalia. The country's privileged position at the confluence of Africa and the Arabic Peninsula has made it the main route for mixed migratory movements towards Yemen and the Gulf countries.

Despite the harsh environment, the country's relative stability and peace have attracted a continuous flux of refugees from neighbouring countries, especially due to recurrent climatic constraints, generalized violence and/or political unrest.

Currently, Djibouti hosts 20,212 refugees and 3,774 asylum seekers (total population of concern is 23,986). The refugee population is 95.4% Somalis, 2.6% Ethiopians, 1.7% Eritreans and a small minority of nationals from other countries. 81.6% of the population is living in the camps (17 721 in Ali-Addeh and 1869 in Holl Holl), while the remaining 4,396 are urban refugees living in Djibouti-ville.



UNHCR is working in Djibouti to promote a favourable protection environment for refugees and asylum seekers. A great variety of activities are carried out daily in the camps and in the city, in close collaboration with refugees, partners organizations and the government of Djibouti. This magazine born from the desire to communicate *what's going on* everyday in this lively environment. Each month, a topic on refugees' life in Djibouti will be presented, accompanied by the stories of different actors involved.

In this way, we hope to bring in a deeper understanding of refugees' life in Djibouti and present their voices to the outside world.

Enjoy the reading!
The Community Services Team



Inside the camps - Ali Addeh's new tailors

Among the tents and the daily routine in Ali Addeh camp, there is a tent that draw the attention of the casual spectator. It's a large space, with a subtle, buzzing sound coming from it, but one can tell that something big is happening inside. If out of curiosity the casual spectator decides to enter, what will the tent disclose to his or her eyes? Three lines of sewing machine, perfectly managed by a group of women and girls. This is Ali Addeh tailoring workshop, where numerous, colourful clothes are created or repaired, and new tailors are formed.

The workshop is a project of Life International, which gathers 60 women from the different sections of the camp. Different ages are represented, but especially girls are participating. They are organized in 3 shifts of 20 tailors, each of whom works three hours for 3 days a week. Most of the girls arrive to the workshop with little or no experience in tailoring, and are taught through a peer-education, by other girls who already completed a tailoring course. Skills vary from the basic cutting of tissues to the most advanced clothes creation, without forgetting the sewing machine maintenance.

"I am enthusiastic of this project – says Habon, one of the teacher – the girls I am teaching to motivate me, and push me to keep improving. Being able to repair and produce clothes is an useful skill: you are able not only to make your own clothes, but also to help your family and friends, and maybe, in the future, to make a commercial activity out of it. My dream is to open a big shop, where people can buy or order any type of clothes."

While other teachers are previous students of the project, Habbon arrived at the Life International project after completing 5 months of vocational training in tailoring provided by IOM. At the beginning, she faced difficulties in using the big sewing machines of the course, but she was helped by the project supervisor and trainer, Mekonen.



Habon Houssein Iltireh



*"Tailoring saved my life" -
says the tailors trainer
Mekonen Kejela Gutema*

"Tailoring saved my life. I was a tailor in Ethiopia, and when I arrived here I started looking around for using this ability of mine. I worked in Ali Sabieh in a tissues shop, helping with the clients orders, and was able to save money to eventually buy my own sewing machine. Thanks to my job I have been able to sustain myself and my family, and I was later on called to train the girls in this project. I strongly believe in this activity: 60 people are learning now, this means we are providing them with skills, which is something they will always have with them, and that could make the difference. Some women we trained here have now opened their shops in the camp: they are earning from this skill, and they no longer need to pay a tailor for their needs. Also, at the end of the course, girls receive a certificate of completion, and I am sure this could help them in their future."



Life International workshop
in Ali Addeh

Tsigereda is one of the girls who started the project this year. She shows the clothes with pride. “At the beginning it was impossible for me even to repair clothes. Little by little I am learning to do many things, and I can also assemble and disassemble the sewing machine. I got the opportunity to have good teachers, and this pushes me to continue. I don’t know if I’ll open clothes shop in the future, but I’m sure I want to complete this course for my self, for the skills I’m acquiring and the opportunities it gives to me”.



Tsigereda Desbele

“ I want to complete this course for myself”



A student working inside the atelier of Life International

Activities: Livelihoods

“Work is the only thing that gives substance to life.”
Albert Einstein

Livelihood activities refer to all those strategies aimed at securing and/or improving a person’s basic necessities.

Anywhere in the world, livelihoods are of vital importance for households, as they allow people to contribute to their economic capital and improve their quality of life, such as their access to food, water, shelter and clothing. But for refugees, livelihoods are not only that: in the absence of viable economic opportunities, they also represent one of the main way to acquire knowledge, skills, social network, and other resources to meet individual or collective needs on a sustainable basis. Livelihoods empower refugees to secure their needs and self-reliance with dignity, representing the first step towards their naturalization.

In Ali Addeh and Holl Holl camps, UNHCR works towards these objectives in cooperation with the Lutheran World Federation (LWF), the Office’s main livelihoods implementing partner in Djibouti. A wide variety of activities, including livestock, cloth and food shops, bakery, restaurants, furniture production, tailoring, literacy lessons, and souvenir making have been organized with refugees and other partners such as Life International and JICA. IOM has supported this efforts by providing vocational training for youth in computer literacy, electricity, mechanics, and beauty salon among others.

My story - Hawa Youssuf Abdi



Hawa Youssuf Abdi

I was born in Hadado, Somalia, and I arrived in Djibouti in 2009, with part of my family.

We were settled in Ali Addeh camp, where I started the school. I have always being passionate about learning, and I continued my education up to the 8th grade, the last that Ali Addeh offered at that moment. When I finished that year, I looked around for opportunities to continue, but there was nothing for me in the camp and I couldn't join the Djiboutian schools. Therefore, I convinced my mother to invest part of her savings to send me to Ethiopia. We have some relatives in the Somali region, so my mother paid the transportation for me to reach them, and they host me while I continued the school there.

At first the Ethiopian teachers didn't want to accept me, but I insisted and eventually they let me join the school, on the condition that I repeated the 8th grade. I accepted with pleasure, as going to school was the only thing important to me. I loved particularly the biology lessons, as I would like to be a doctor in my future. The only sad thing was that I was very homesick, as I missed my mother and my family.

When holidays arrived, I took the opportunity to come back to Djibouti to visit my family, which in the meanwhile had been moved to Holl Holl camp.

When I arrived, I found out that my mother hypertension had worsened, and that she had frequent crisis. My other brother and two sister weren't able to help her, so I took the responsibility to stay in the camp to help supporting my family. After a while, I participated in LWF selection for new community services workers, and I was recruited! My job is to work in the community and for the community and I'm happy about it. I'm earning something to support my mother and my siblings and at the same time I'm trying to save some money for my dream: come back to school the soonest possible, and become a doctor.

Interview - Cooking for the morale

If it's lunch time and you're hungry in Ali Addeh, there's one place that immediately pop to you mind: the Ethiopian restaurant of Hawa. We headed there to discover something more about this lively activity and its owner.

Good morning Hawa! Can we ask you some questions for our magazine?

It's almost lunch time, and I have to cook, so be quick!

Ok! How did you start this activity?

From problems! Look around: you can spend your days staring at these mountains which surrounds us, and complain about you fate, but nothing will happen. Rather than keep disturbing my morale, I started working. I understood I had to do something, so I opened my restaurant

How did you do it?

At the beginning I was just preparing injera, out of my tent, and I could feed just three person at a time! I had three seats, and one client had to leave before another could come and sit! (*laugh*)

What happened then?

After selling this injera continuously, some people started saying to me: “We would buy also other food from you, why you don’t prepare it?”. So, little by little, and saving from my earnings, I started preparing pastas and rice, then lentils and meat dishes.

How did you build your restaurant?

This compound belongs to many people, and we are friend. So, when one of the woman living here was resettled in America, she decided to leave some of her things to me: her tent and the kitchen tools. From that, I created my restaurant, and now I can host much more than three people!

**How do you run this business?**

I find all my ingredients here, in Ali Addeh, thanks to the commerce and the fact that some people bring some food here from Ali Sabieh. I am the one in charge of cooking, and my husband is also managing the restaurant with me, but sometimes my neighbours pass by and help me preparing the food or washing the dishes. Also there is another young kid who helps us. His parents died and me and my husband took him with us. Some days, if no one comes and I cannot sell my food, I offer what I cooked to my neighbours and friends, and we eat together.

What’s your plan for this activity in the future?

Oh, I’d like to do many things, to improve the restaurant, make it bigger and beautiful, and to employ people. But most of all, I’ll tell you, this activity is good for me: sometimes I think about the sad things I have passed in life and I get very upset. This restaurant allows me to earn some money, but that’s not the main reason behind my efforts. I do it for my morale. When I’m working and I provide food to others, I don’t think about bad things.

**Hawa Ahmed Yosif**

*“ You can spend days
staring at the mountains
(...) nothing will
happen”*

*Neighbours helping in Hawa’s
kitchen*

The Community Services Unit focuses on:

- Education and Training
- Social Need Assessment
- Individual Case Management
- Groups with Special Needs
- SGBV
- Child Protection
- Community Organization



The Protection Section in Djibouti

Our Partners

Implementing Partners

APEF - Education, Community Services in Djibouti city

CARE - Medical support, WASH

LWF - Education, Livelihoods, Community Services in refugee camps

Ministry of Environment - Environment support

ONARS - Camp management, distributions

UNFD - SGBV

Operational Partners

CARITAS - Education

LIA - Women empowerment, IGAs, Education, Livelihoods

Life International - Livelihoods

REA - Materials for Education

UN Agencies

FAO - Microgardens

UNICEF - Education, Child Protection

WFP - Food distribution



UNHCR
The UN Refugee Agency