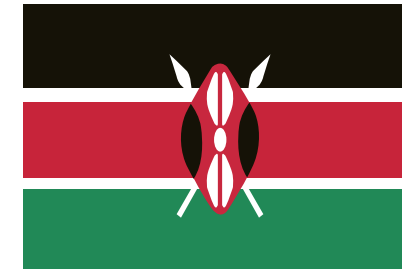




Photo: Tiffany Ivins

KENYA



REFUGEES BUILD PEACE WITH EDUCATION

By: Tiffany Zenith Ivins

Education is power. Refugees in Kenya know that education is a tool to build people and communities.

Over 85,000 refugees live in Kakuma Refugee Camp in Kenya. Women, men and children come from many countries in Africa—from Sudan, Somalia, Congo, Burundi and Rwanda. They come to find refuge in this small camp in the desert.



Natasha Ivins teaches a literacy class.

The camp was started by the United Nations (UN) in 1992. Leaders from different nations help build homes, bring water, and deliver food to refugees. Many people had to leave their home countries because of persecution and war. Fighting happens because of people's differences, including: cultural, religious, political, traditional and historical problems. War happens all over the world and among all peoples. Refugees can be white, black, or brown; they may

be Christian, Muslim, Jewish or non-religious. War destroys peace and divides communities.

Most of the people in Kakuma Refugee Camp are from Sudan. They learn skills that will help them to build their country. They learn to read and to write in mud schools. They do not have electricity or books. They listen with their ears and watch with their eyes. They study at night to make progress. This is the first time for many rural people to go to school. They meet

Refugees are happy to learn. They believe that knowledge will help them have power.

students from many other countries in the school. They share ideas and teach each other about life. They ask many questions: "Why is there war?" "Do people need guns to stop the fighting?" "What can we do to build peace?"

Civil war started in Sudan in 1983. Over two million people from Sudan are dead because of this war. The people of the north fight the people of the south. People compete for power, resources, and control. Sudan has a lot of petroleum in the south. People all over the world use petroleum for energy. It is a valuable resource.

The people of Sudan want war to end. They do not want the petroleum. They want peace for their children. They want to grow crops for their families. They want to educate the people. They want to build the nation with schools, roads and bridges.

Students work on literacy exercises.



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One Sudanese person said, “I am Rizig. I do not like to be a refugee. I want to live in my country. When I live in this camp, I do not see my mother. I do not see the maize grow tall. We do not have rivers of water. I do not know why there is war. I want to be a teacher. I will tell people that they must love and not hate. I will make peace.”

Refugees are happy to learn. They believe that knowledge will help them have power. If they can read and write, then they can build understanding between different groups. Knowledge will help them to make peace in their homes and in their families. Education will help people end war and make peace. *SW?*

KEY VOCABULARY FOR THIS ARTICLE

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Refuge: safe place
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Refugee: person forced to leave his or her country because of war or violence
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Refugee Camp: area where refugees go for safety, food, housing, and protection
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Civil War: fight between different groups in a country (tribes, politics, religion)
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United Nations: leaders from different countries who unite to help make peace.
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Persecution: hurting people emotionally or physically because of differences.
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