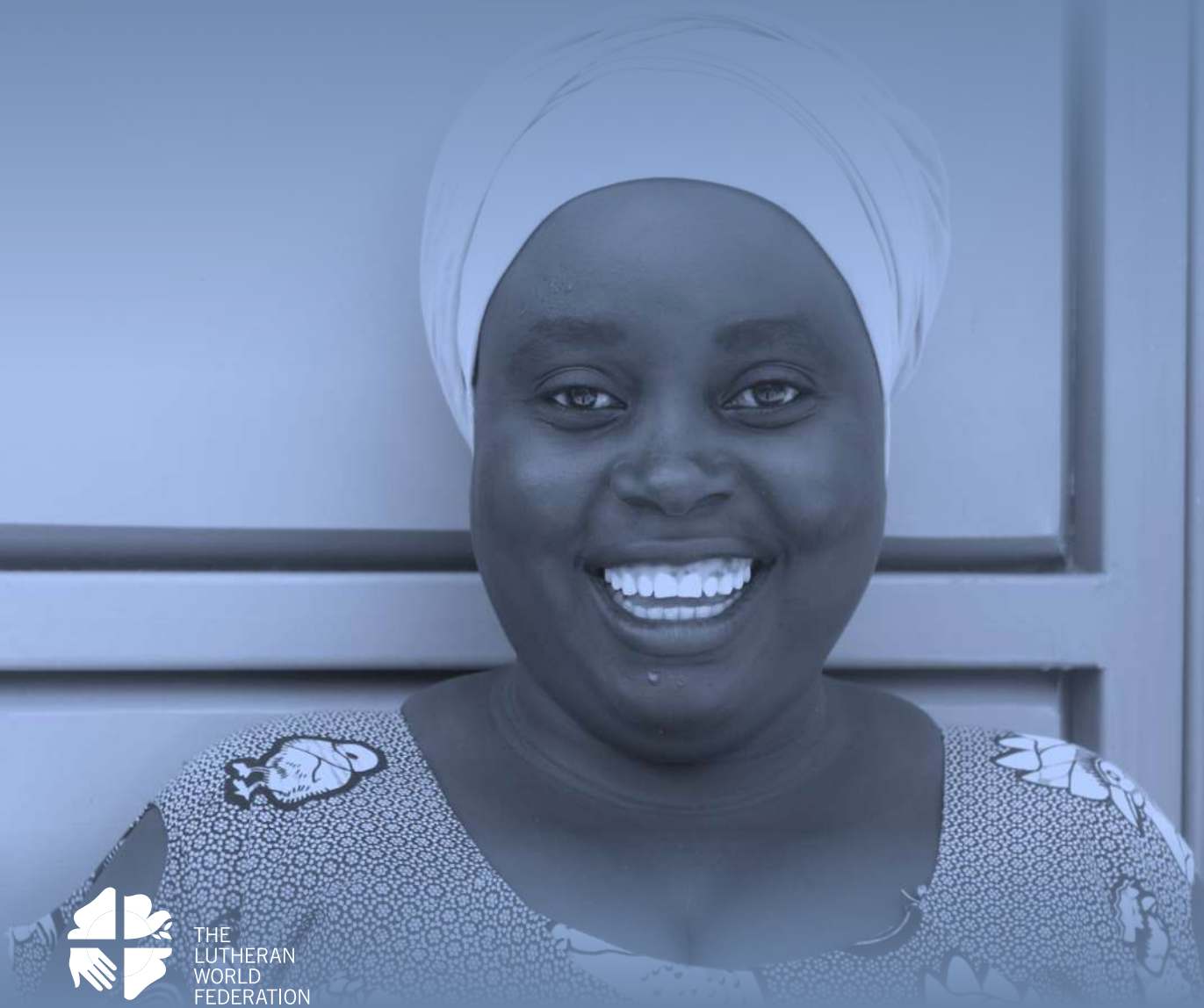


Poems by refugees

I am Hope



THE
LUTHERAN
WORLD
FEDERATION

World Service

actalliance

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NOT FOR SALE

Often when we collect testimonies from refugees, we focus on the ordeals they went through, their efforts to build a new life, their challenges and their hopes. In the few workshops that I facilitated with refugees living in Nairobi and Kakuma in May 2019, my intent was of a completely different nature: that individuals reach deep inside themselves and define who they are poetically, celebrating the gifts that they offer to their community.

In cultures where modesty is a tacit rule, daring to speak in "I am" is not an easy thing, but poetry allows it with its magic and delicate touch, which precisely marry our singularity to the universal. Naming our own qualities in front of a group of peers is a real process of empowerment, which also deepens the bond and respect in the group. These texts were crafted in just a few minutes, but their scope is timeless and revives ancient oral traditions of self-celebration present in many countries of Africa. This booklet is a compilation of the poems that were joyfully and spontaneously created by refugees on this occasion.

And these wonderful human beings offer a powerful message: "I am hope", and beyond: "I am light". In their poems, the image of light returns constantly with a radiant and obvious strength. Each of them, in their own way, works in dark places of violence, injustice or suffering. Each of them is an artisan of light, developing solidarity, peaceful coexistence, respect for human rights in an amazing patchwork setting of cultures and languages.

Perhaps by reading these lines you will slip into these multiple "I" and resonate in our common humanity. - *Ophélie Schnoebelen*

I am the morning sun

I am the morning sun.

I wonder:

What are my abilities?

Who am I?

What is society expecting of me?

I am an advocate,

My role is to enlighten part of the world
each morning for a period of 12 hours.

To avoid being unfair, I illuminate
another part of the world that was once in the dark.

I can change my environment,

I have the ability to turn black into light.

What the world expects from me is light.

I am the morning sun.

I wonder:

What are my abilities?

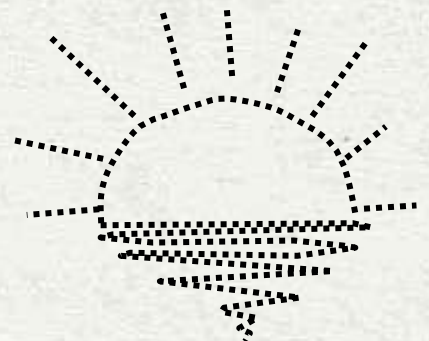
Who am I?

What is society expecting of me?

I enlighten all those who have just crossed the night.

Without injustice, I enlighten everyone.

Julien Tundwa



I am a woman of the world

I am a woman of the world.

I am the inspiration bringing women together in
decision- making.

I am a world changer.

Sahara Khalif Jamo



I am self-made

I am a dad and a mum.
I listen, raise and
look out to my community.

I provide accommodation
and food to the most needy
and vulnerable.

I guide, counsel and protect.

I do not condemn, I encourage
and give hope to my community.

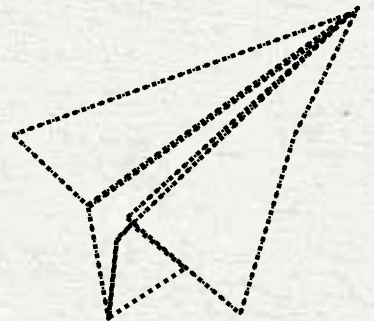
I am a self-reliant king.

I train and equip my community with
guidelines to self-reliance.

Because it is the way to go given the
little funding.

No one can destroy me, because I am self-made.

Remi Lutwama



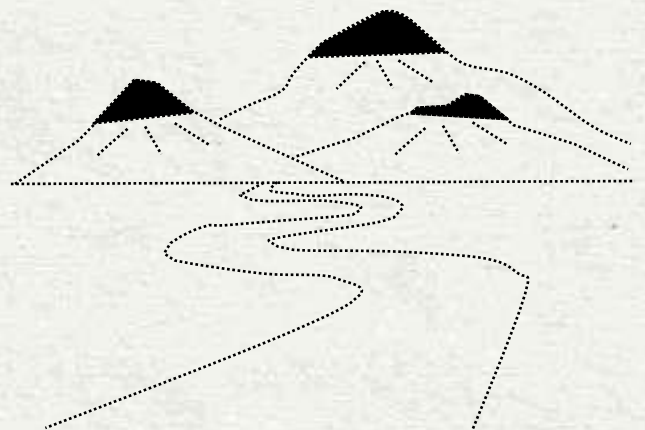
I am the lady from the Nile

I am the back lady from the Nile.

We were displaced and experienced misfortune.

We are all meant to live in harmony and embrace
each other.

Agnès Filberto



I am a bus

I consider myself a matatu,
a bus with no fuel.

I have a lot of passengers
in my bus.

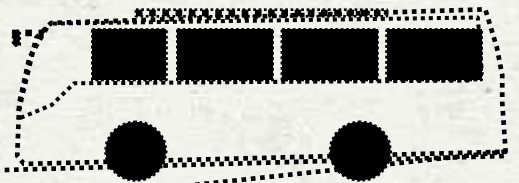
I am young and full of potential.

I have many people behind my back,
who are expecting something from me.

I have a big problem stopping me
from taking them where they want me
to take them.

As Kadana, we need a petrol station
for opportunities.

Boris Ngenga Chebeya

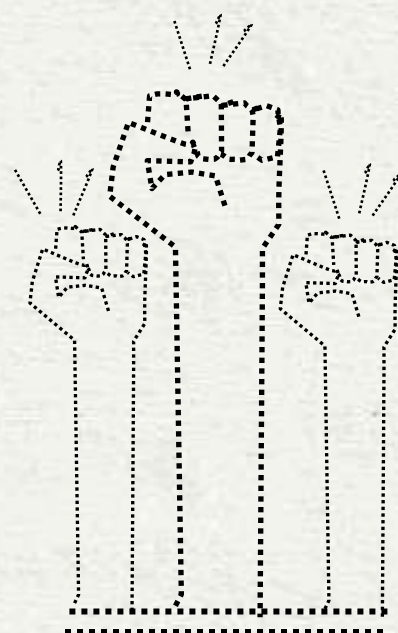


I am a human rights advocate

I am the courage to protect
vulnerable people.

I am a human rights advocate.
I am opening paths for refugees.

Dirirsa Kejela



I am the eagle

I am an eagle, I can see no matter
the situation.

I can go without security.

I rescue people out of danger and take them
to another level.

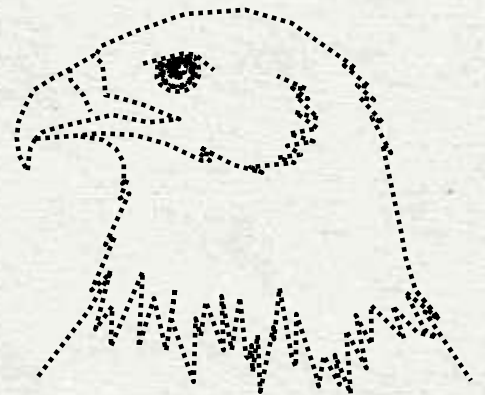
We are trained to see our future.

We are refugees, but found no space to
express ourselves as human beings.

We are advocating.

I am the eagle not giving up,
I speak up and raise up alone
when people are in danger.

James Birindwa Makanda



I am God's refuge

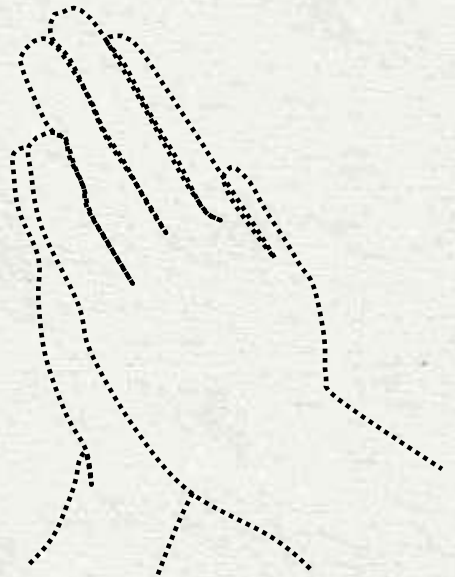
I am a pastor, a man of God.
I am preaching to the nations.

God started the human rights
in the garden.

Being a refugee is not the end of life
when you know your rights

I am God's refuge.

Bizimana Jean-Claude



I am a gazelle

I am a gazelle with beautiful skin
I am only at an eyesight of the enemy.

What can I do?

Rkwanga Godefrey



If you have peace, you can have anything

I am peace, hope for the hopeless. God can raise you anywhere.
Being a refugee does not mean you are dead.
If you have peace, you can have anything.

You can work and start a new life.
I am peace, but in my country, there was so much violence.
My husband and parents got killed.

I am peace.

Life is possible when you have peace.
You can live anywhere else.

I have lived 11 years here in Kenya and my children are grown-up.

I have helped many widows to make a living, even if now some
have left the country and forgotten about me.

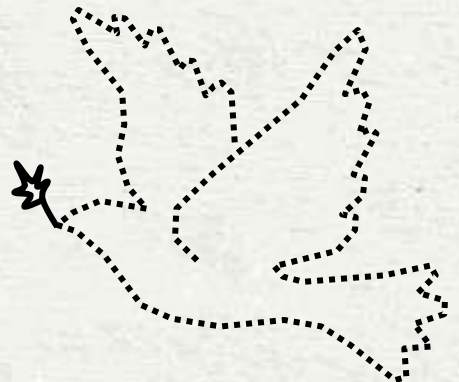
I help young women when they get married.

I am a counsellor; I help marriages so spouses come back together.

I am peace. I am hope.

Nzeyimana Gaudiose

Translated from the original poem that was in Swahili



I am the help

When I arrived, I did not know
I was to be the father of security,
which has given me a lot of hope.

I was trained to protect a block.
My comfort is that when I wear my uniform,
I am the help of the community.

When I pass, criminals run away
before I say a word.

I am the help of the community.

Seth Kalama

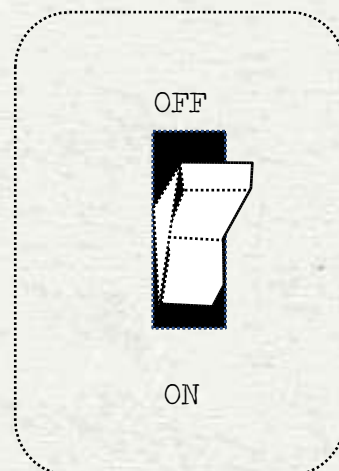


I am the light

I am the light of my hope,
I am curious and I want to learn.

I am joking and playing.
I want to protect my whole family.

Agnès

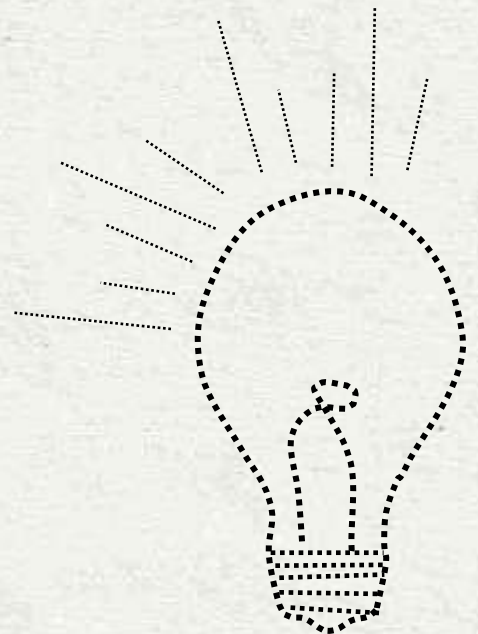


I am the light

I am the light that
shines in the night.

When there is darkness I appear,
and darkness disappears.

Ibrahim Ibiniyamin



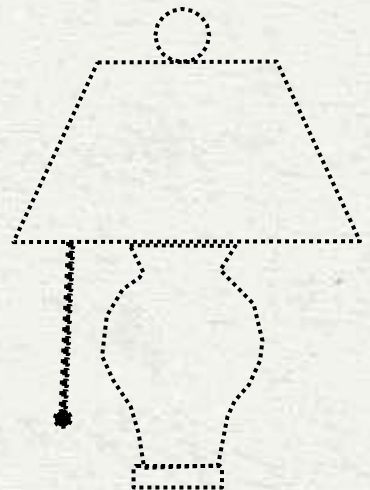
I am the lamp

I am the lamp in the community for the women.

I resolve issues related to water, people look for me.

I am a peace maker and a problem solver.

Jackline Irankunda



I am heaven

I am the heaven,
I am a peace maker,
I unite people.

I train them to be one people,
so there is no war or conflict
and people help each other.

I am an elder in my church,
I am a preacher.

I tell people to love each other.

I am heaven.

Thomas Riek



I am the unknown soldier

I am the child,
who has a message.
I wonder, I cry.

Do you know why ?
Every bomb has my name on it
but without my consent.

A civil war broke, why?
Because we need democracy and justice.

But what happened was that civilians were killed,
our girls were raped and our buildings destroyed.

Then we crossed the border and came to Kenya.
I believe the Kenyan people
are the best people in the world
because they have beautiful souls.

We are all brothers and sisters,
yet as refugees we are aliens for the system.

Therefore, I am the child,
I am the unknown soldier
who still tries to pass a message
but my message is yet to reach the world.

Said Abukar



I am a candle

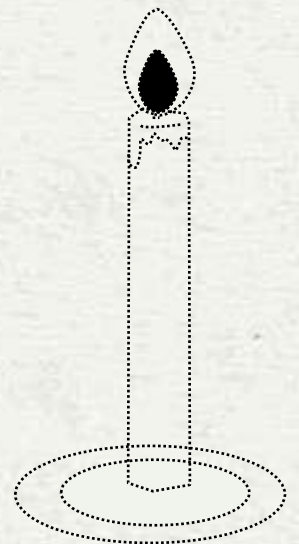
I am a candle.

I light people so they can pass
from darkness to the light.

I make sure their needs are fulfilled and
I do not care whether I can get finished.

I am a candle.

Edmond Baraka



I am the moon

I am the moon,
people say that my light is not hot
but I believe in myself.

My light will count
until the end of the world.

Daud Abass Kafi

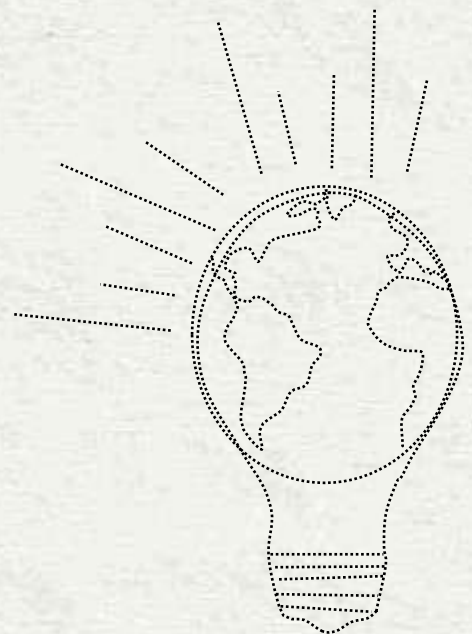


I am the light

I am the light of the world and the
mother of the shepherd.

I know my sheep and my sheep know me and
no one will take them out of my hand.

Elisabeth Issa



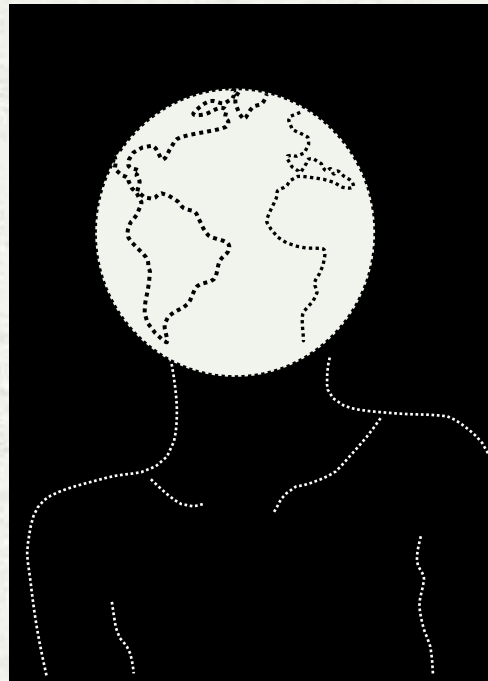
I am the world

I am the world like my name.
I do not forget anyone in the world.
I love everyone.

I am the world, everything is in me.

I keep the badness and the goodness,
the lightness and the darkness.

David Dunia



I am the light

I am the light of my family.

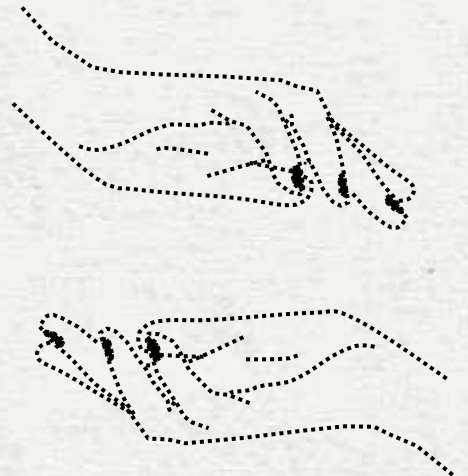
Even through valleys and mountains, I
remain standing still, like a woman.
Nothing will defeat me.

For God has created me without problem.

Even when there is a problem, I do not give up
because there is a reason why I am going
through this.

I remain the light.

Scovia

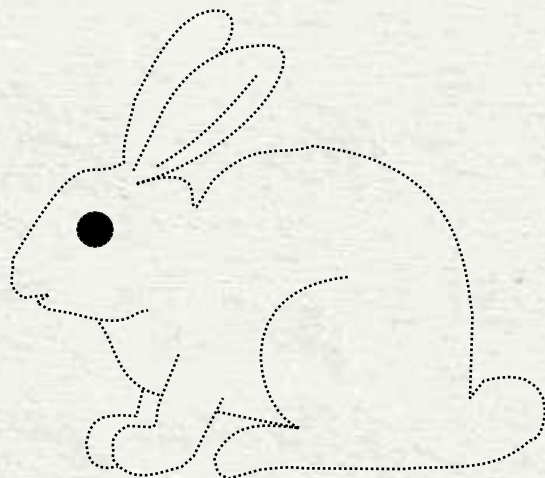


I am a rabbit

I am a rabbit looking for something
that will never be found,
but I will make sure to find it.

I am Jacqueline,
I was able to pass through.

Jaqueline



I am a saviour

I am a saviour,
I went through a lot.

I was always supported by my
Church.

I take care of my siblings.

Winnie

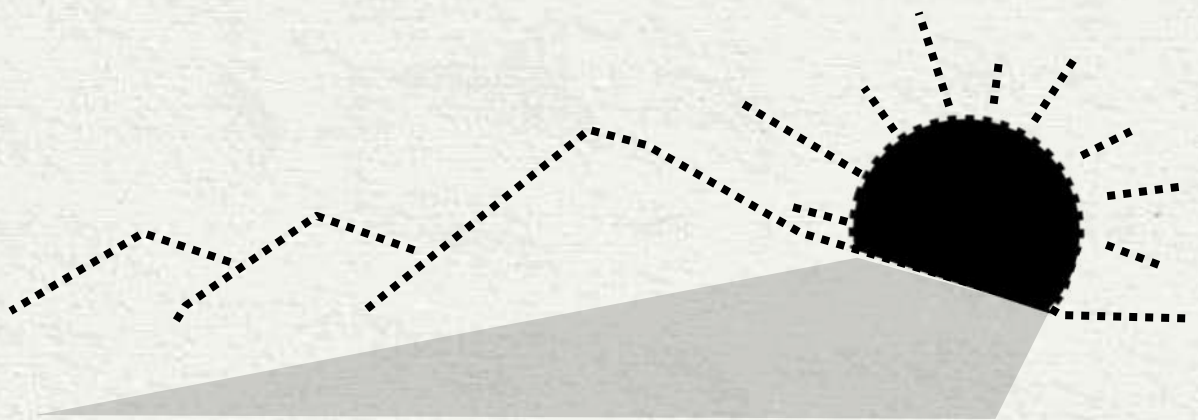


I am the shadow

I am the shadow that can protect many people.
When the sun sets, people come to me.

I am a peace maker.

Obang Omot



I am hope for my whole family.

Dalia

I am the father of the nations.

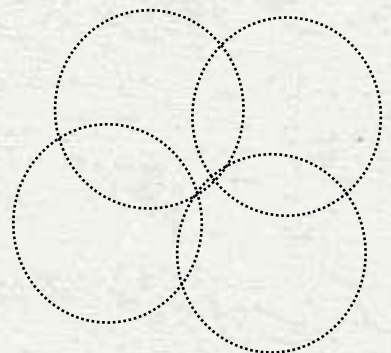
James Kujien

I am the health man,
I prevent diseases.

Simon Gatwech

I am the one giving care to everyone
and the whole of humanity.

Ngeria



Meet the writers from Kakuma Refugee Camp



Jackline Irankunda
KADANA Women
Representative
& Block leader



Simon Gatwech
Member of KADANA &
Block leader



Daud Abass Kafi
Member of KADANA



James Kujien
"Big Fire"
Member of KADANA



Sahara Khalif Jamo
Member of KADANA &
Community leader



Thomas Riek
Member of KADANA & Former
WASH team at (NRC)



Obang Omot
Member of KADANA



Edmond Baraka
Member of KADANA &
Community Mobilizer
-LWF



Ibrahim Ibiyamin
Kakuma KADANA Youth
Representative



Bizimana Jean-Claude
Member of KADANA &
LWF Incentive worker



Seth Kalama
Member of KADANA



David Dunia
National Secretary,
KADANA



Fahmo Hassan
Member of KADANA



Elizabeth Issa
Member of KADANA

Members of a young mothers' group
in Kakuma Refugee Camp



Jaqueline



Agnes



Winnie



Ngeria



Scovia



Dalia

Meet the Writers from Nairobi Metropolitan
(Urban Refugees)



Julien Tundwa
Member of KADANA



Nzeyimana Gaudiose
KADANA Women's
Representative



Dirirsa Kejela
Member of KADANA



Agnès Filberto
Member of KADANA
& the ARPMD



Saïd Abukar
National Chairperson
KADANA, A Paralegal &
Founder of Good Deeds
CBO



Boris Ngenga Chebeya
Member of KADANA &
Program Manager at
Refugee Impact



James Birindwa Makanda
Member of KADANA &
Director Africa2Africa
Mediation



Remi Lutwama
A member of KADANA & Director
Community Empowerment Self
Support Organisation

About KADANA UPR refugee association

Established in December 2018, this nascent yet vibrant organisation for refugees by refugees is motivated by a firm belief that the refugee community needs a platform to showcase their unique interplay between challenge and strength, dreams shattered and hope for a future restored.

KADANA was created by a group of refugees and asylum seekers trained on the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) Mechanism by the LWF. Its name derives from Kakuma, Dadaab and Nairobi, where its constituency stems from, and which are the locations that accommodate the majority of refugees and asylum seekers in Kenya.

The association aims to amplify the individual voices and participation of refugees in debates and decision-making platforms and this way enhance their access to services by government and other relevant institutions. KADANA envisions an environment that safeguards the enjoyment of human rights and socio-economic development of refugees and asylum seekers as well as peaceful coexistence with host communities.

“For us, KADANA can be our voice to reach decision-makers at national and international level. It is a dream of 25 years, something we have tried to do before but failed at because we were alone. Now we are connected with each other throughout the country. This network is like our new-born and we are very excited. All of us here are leaders or volunteers and have a lot of experience to share” - Said Abukar Chairperson, KADANA



About LWF World Service

LWF World Service is the humanitarian and development arm of the Lutheran World Federation (LWF), a global communion which unites 148 Christian churches in the Lutheran tradition in 99 countries worldwide. These churches have mandated World Service to assist those in need without discrimination.

As an international faith-based humanitarian organization, LWF World Service works in 25 countries in Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Middle East, serving more than 2.25 million people in need.

The LWF Kenya Djibouti Somalia Program works primarily with displacement affected communities (refugees, IDPs and host communities) in the three countries. The work of the program is motivated by the hope and resilience of the people it serves when seeing them improve their quality of life, individually and collectively.

This is done through supporting people to meet their basic needs and achieve their full potential in an environment that supports justice, peace, dignity, diversity and respect for everyone, refugees and host communities alike, and enables the people to claim their universal human rights.

Our partners



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