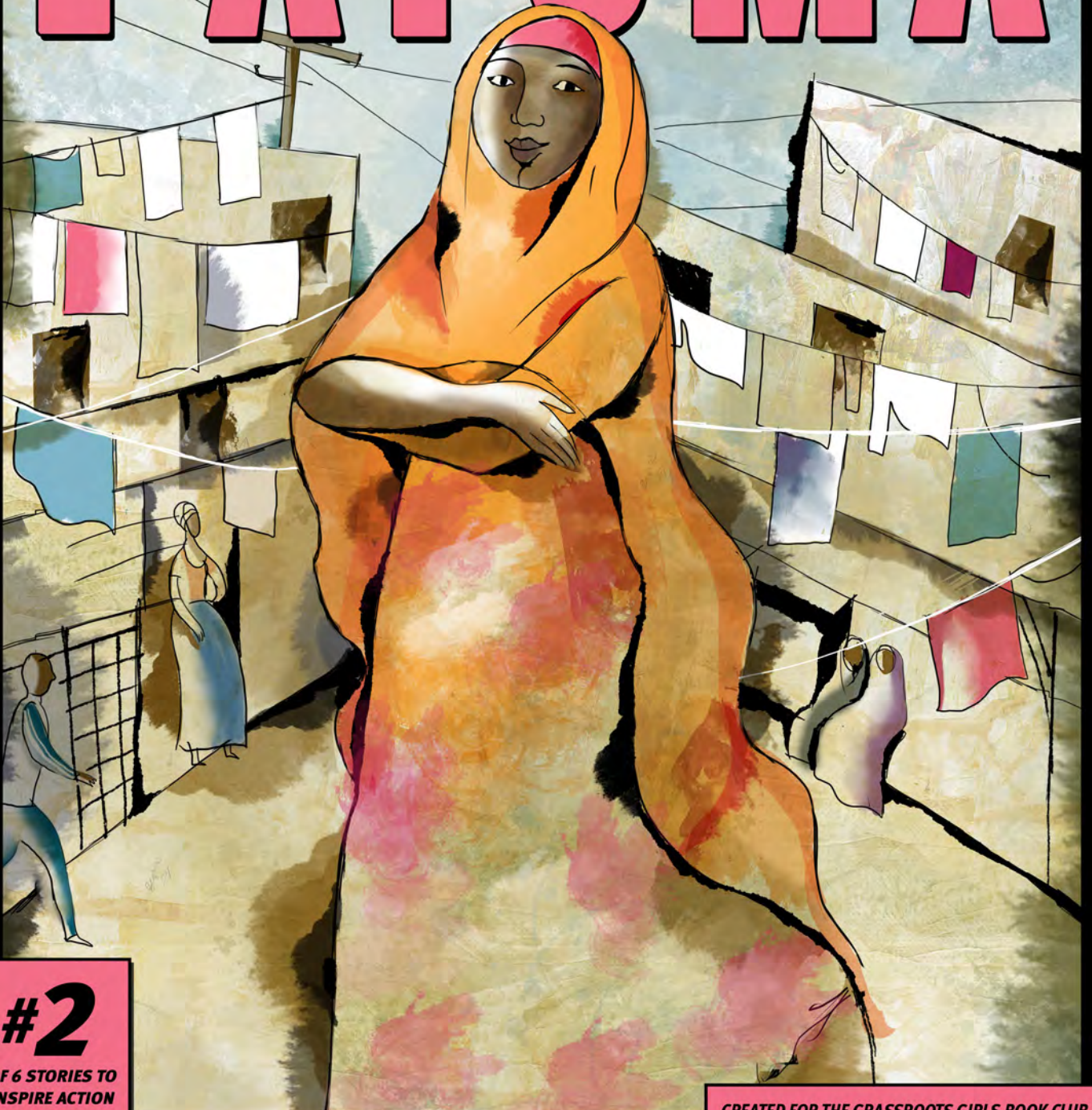


A TRUE STORY OF GIRL POWER IN KENYA

FATUMA



#2

OF 6 STORIES TO
INSPIRE ACTION
FOR GIRLS

CREATED FOR THE GRASSROOTS GIRLS BOOK CLUB



FATUMA

CREATED BY
FATUMA ADEN OSMAN
AND
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MEGAN SHANK



INTRODUCTION

This graphic novella was made with Fatuma Aden Osman in June 2013 at the Nairobi, Kenya-based offices of Heshima Kenya. Fatuma, now 20 years old, shares her journey from her childhood in a small village in Somalia to her adolescence in the capital Mogadishu, where she worked as a maid for her extended family while dreaming of attending school. After finding herself in the middle of a firefight between the terrorist organization al-Shabaab and the Somali government forces in a Mogadishu market, Fatuma became one of 600,000 refugees to flee to Kenya. Girl refugees who arrive in Kenya alone are at great risk of being exploited, assaulted, forced into marriage and often cannot get access to schools, hospitals or employment. Fatuma overcame immense obstacles as an unaccompanied girl refugee with the help of the grassroots organization Heshima Kenya.

Heshima Kenya specializes in finding and protecting unaccompanied and separated refugee children and youth, especially girls, living in Nairobi, Kenya. Heshima's Girl Empowerment Project provides refugee girls with basic education, life skills trainings on topics like health and leadership, job training and a chance to earn

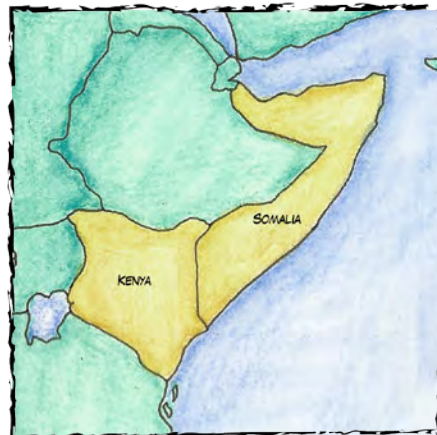
their own income and become financially independent. Fatuma is sharing her story to show that girl power is spreading at the grassroots level worldwide: With the right support, girls can transform their lives and make lasting change in their communities.

Fatuma's story is part of the Grassroots Girls Book Club graphic novella series that depict the true stories of six incredible girls. Each girl co-authored her own story, which was then illustrated by a talented emerging female artist. These graphic novellas aim to show that positive change is happening for girls, and to also raise awareness for the many girls who still need urgent support from organizations like Heshima Kenya. Fatuma's hope is that her story will inspire you to discuss the issues facing girls globally and learn more about the grassroots organizations that are changing girls' lives for the better. At the end of this graphic novella is a discussion guide to dig deeper into the issues Fatuma faced, followed by a glossary with local language translations and explanations of important terms and concepts. Explore how you can take action with your friends and classmates online at grassrootsgirls.tumblr.com to help make the world better for girls everywhere.

Heshima Kenya is supported through the Grassroots Girls Initiative by the American Jewish World Service (AJWS), the leading Jewish organization working to promote human rights and end poverty in the developing world. AJWS advances the rights of women, girls and LGBTI people; promotes recovery from conflict, disasters and oppression; and defends access to food, land and livelihoods.

The Grassroots Girls Initiative is a partnership of six funders that believe grassroots organizations are uniquely qualified to create and implement effective, organic solutions for the most underserved girls in the communities where they work. Grassroots Girls Initiative partners are: American Jewish World Service, EMpower—the Emerging Markets Foundation, Firelight Foundation, Mama Cash, The Global Fund for Children and The Global Fund for Women.

Discover other stories made with girls in Poland, Malawi, the Dominican Republic, Colombia and India at grassrootsgirls.tumblr.com.



EVERY DAY MY HALF-BROTHERS AND SISTER WENT TO MADRASAH SCHOOL TO LEARN THE KORAN. IN MY VILLAGE, GIRLS WEREN'T ALLOWED TO ATTEND SCHOOL FOR ACADEMICS, BUT MOST WERE ALLOWED TO GO TO MADRASAH SCHOOL. I WASN'T.





EVERY DAY I TOOK THE GOATS TO GRAZE. MY MOTHER LEFT AFTER I WAS BORN AND MY STEPMOTHER ALWAYS TREATED ME LIKE AN OUTSIDER AND A BURDEN. WHAT I KNOW IS WHAT MY HALF-BROTHER ABDI TOLD ME: MY STEPMOTHER, THE FIRST WIFE, WAS JEALOUS OF MY MOTHER, THE SECOND WIFE. MY MOTHER WAS 16 WHEN SHE GAVE BIRTH TO ME. MY STEPMOTHER SPREAD RUMORS THAT MY MOTHER WAS HAVING AN AFFAIR AND I WASN'T MY FATHER'S CHILD. MY MOTHER WAS YOUNG AND AFRAID AND RAN AWAY. EVERY DAY I MISSED HER BECAUSE NO ONE IN MY HOUSE LOVED ME. ONLY MY BROTHER ABDI WAS KIND TO ME, BUT HE WAS FAR AWAY IN MOGADISHU.



I AM **TIRED** OF YOU!
YOU ARE A **BASTARD!**
YOU WILL BE A **SLUT** LIKE YOUR MOTHER!



LISTEN TO YOUR STEPMOTHER, FATUMA.

MY FATHER WAS OLD AND DIDN'T BOTHER WITH HOUSEHOLD MATTERS.
I WAS **ALONE.**



I AM SO HUNGRY. THERE WAS NO BREAKFAST FOR ME THIS MORNING.

GO HOME, CHILD, AND EAT SOME LUNCH. I WILL WATCH YOUR GOATS.



MAHADSANID! (THANK YOU!)



WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE?

I CAME TO EAT. I'VE HAD NOTHING TODAY.



YOU **STUPID** GIRL. YOU'VE LEFT THE GOATS ALONE. THEY WILL WANDER OFF!

BUT THE NEIGHBOR LADY IS WITH THEM.



GO BACK TO THE GOATS!
DON'T COME BACK UNTIL IT GETS DARK.



HERE CHILD, DRINK THIS GOAT MILK. IT WILL HELP EASE YOUR HUNGER.

GOB!

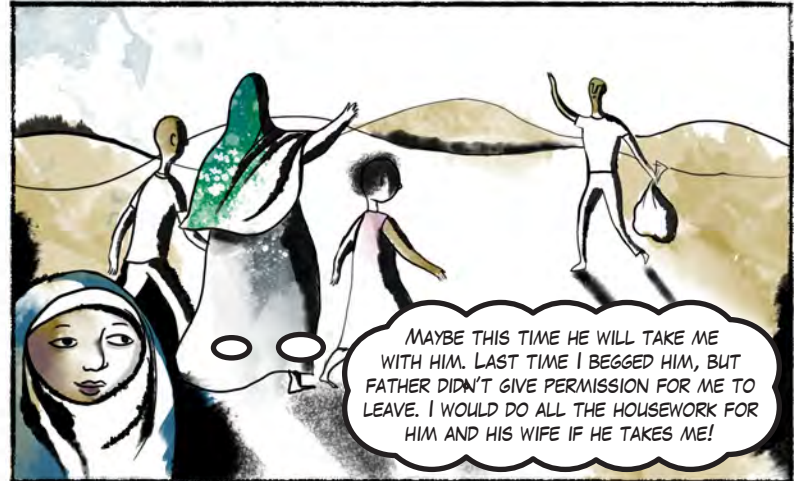


WHATEVER I DO, EVEN IF I STAY ALL DAY WITH THE GOATS, MY STEPMOTHER BEATS ME. I MIGHT AS WELL PLAY!



MY BIG BROTHER IS COMING FOR A VISIT. NOW THAT HE IS A BIG MAN WORKING AS A MECHANIC IN MOGADISHU MAYBE HE WILL BRING US SOME TREATS. BUT PROBABLY NOTHING FOR YOU.

OH, ABDI IS COMING! FINALLY I WILL HAVE SOMEONE TO CONFIDE IN.



MAYBE THIS TIME HE WILL TAKE ME WITH HIM. LAST TIME I BEGGED HIM, BUT FATHER DIDN'T GIVE PERMISSION FOR ME TO LEAVE. I WOULD DO ALL THE HOUSEWORK FOR HIM AND HIS WIFE IF HE TAKES ME!



BROTHER, PLEASE TAKE ME WITH YOU. THE BEATINGS ARE WORSE NOW. I CAN'T LIVE HERE ANYMORE.



FATHER, LET HER COME. FATUMA WILL BE A GREAT HELP TO MY WIFE IN CARING FOR OUR TWO CHILDREN.

HMMM.



FATUMA, I HAVE SOMETHING TO TELL YOU.

TOMORROW YOU START YOUR NEW LIFE IN MOGADISHU!





CHILDREN, THIS IS MY SISTER FATUMA. SHE IS HERE TO HELP US. YOU WILL TREAT HER WITH RESPECT AND LOVE HER LIKE A SISTER.

IS KA WARRAN. (HELLO.)



HERE ARE THE POTS FOR COOKING. YOU WILL NEED TO MAKE ALL THE MEALS BECAUSE I GO TO SELL MIRRA DURING THE DAY. ALSO THERE IS SWEEPING, BUYING FOOD AT THE MARKET AND WALKING THE CHILDREN HOME AFTER SCHOOL.



I DIDN'T MIND DOING ALL THE CHORES. SOMETIMES ABDI'S WIFE WOULD YELL AT ME FOR NOT CLEANING WELL ENOUGH, BUT SHE NEVER HIT ME. THAT WAS A BIG IMPROVEMENT.



HOW WAS YOUR DAY, FATUMA?

FINALLY SOMEONE IS ASKING ME ABOUT MY DAY!



NOW THAT YOU'RE MORE USED TO CITY LIFE I THINK IT'S TIME YOU GET AN EDUCATION. I'VE ARRANGED WITH THE SCHOOL FOR YOU TO START TODAY.

QURAAQ: A SOMALI BREAKFAST BREAD



I DIDN'T KNOW I WOULD BE WITH THE LITTLE ONES. LEARNING THE ALPHABET AT 12 YEARS OLD IS SO EMBARRASSING!



LOOK AT HER. SHE'S NOT EVEN WEARING A HEADSCARF.

SHE MUST BE FROM THE VILLAGE. I BET HER LEGS ARE DIRTY, TOO.

SHE'S ILLITERATE. I SAW THE CHILDREN'S TEACHER ASK HER TO WRITE HER NAME, BUT SHE DIDN'T KNOW HOW.



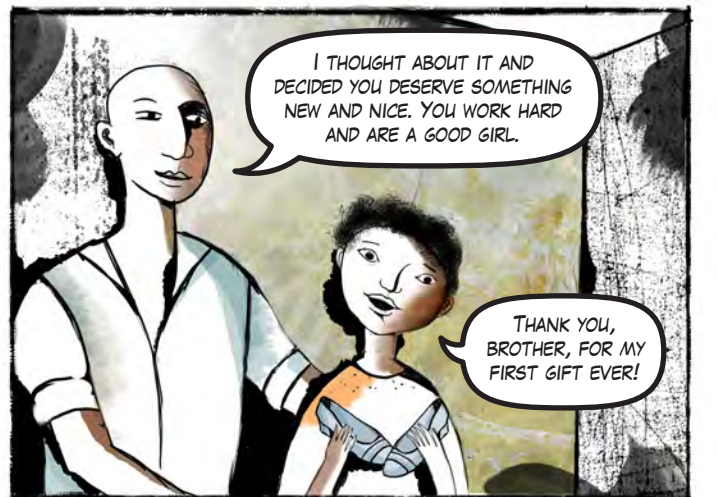
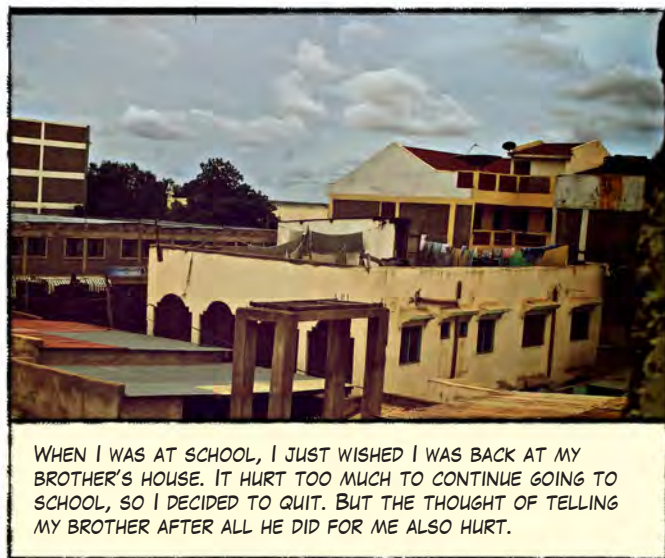
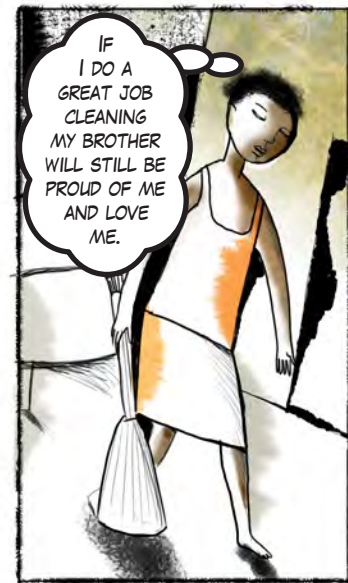
IN THE VILLAGE I DIDN'T THINK ABOUT ALWAYS WEARING MY HEADSCARF. BUT IN THE CITY EVERYONE THINKS IT'S IMPROPER FOR A GIRL MY AGE NOT TO COVER HER HEAD.



HOW WAS YOUR FIRST DAY OF SCHOOL?

NOT GOOD.

WELL LET'S GO HOME AND PLAY SOME FOOTBALL. THAT ALWAYS CHEERS YOU UP!

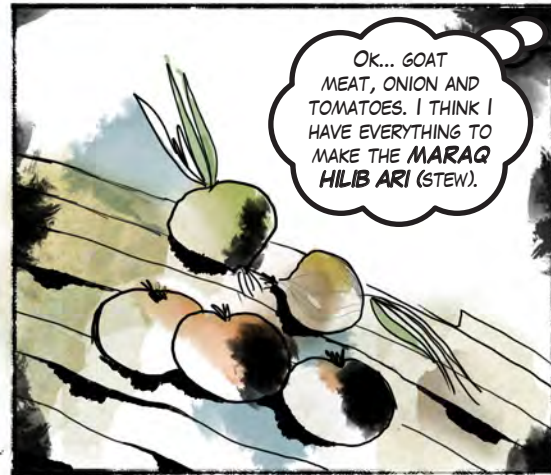




AFTER I STOPPED GOING TO SCHOOL I SPENT EACH DAY CLEANING, COOKING AND PLAYING WITH ABDI'S CHILDREN.



OH! IT'S ALMOST DINNER TIME AND I HAVEN'T EVEN BEEN TO THE MARKET. I'LL HAVE TO HURRY.



OK... GOAT MEAT, ONION AND TOMATOES. I THINK I HAVE EVERYTHING TO MAKE THE MARAQ HILB ARI (STEW).



ALL OF A SUDDEN A BIG COMMOTION STARTED.



HEY! WHAT'S HAPPENING?

BOOM!

EVEN THOUGH EVERYONE WAS RUNNING AWAY FROM THE NOISE I RAN TOWARD IT. I'VE ALWAYS BEEN A CURIOUS SORT OF GIRL THAT WAY.



SUDDENLY I FELL BACKWARD WITH MY GROCERIES FLYING ABOVE ME.



THEN EVERYTHING WENT DARK.

AL-SHABAAB, OR "THE YOUTH," IS A TERRORIST ORGANIZATION IN SOMALIA. AL-SHABAAB USES VIOLENCE TO ENFORCE THEIR STRICT INTERPRETATION OF **SHARIA LAW**, THE MORAL CODE AND RELIGIOUS LAW OF ISLAM. THEY WANT TO STOP CERTAIN TYPES OF ENTERTAINMENT, SUCH AS MOVIES AND MUSIC, SMOKING, THE SHAVING OF BEARDS AND MANY OTHER ACTIVITIES THEY SAY ARE "UN-ISLAMIC."

THE GROUP IS KNOWN TO BEHEAD THOSE WHO EMBRACE CHRISTIANITY OR WESTERN IDEALS. AL-SHABAAB MEMBERS HAVE PLACED BEHEADED CORPSES NEXT TO BIBLES AND CRUCIFIXES IN NEIGHBORHOODS TO SCARE PEOPLE.

IN 2008, THE SAME YEAR FATUMA WAS SHOT AT THE MARKET, AL-SHABAAB MEMBERS BURIED A YOUNG GIRL ACCUSED OF ADULTERY UP TO HER NECK IN THE FIELD OF A SOCCER STADIUM PACKED WITH SPECTATORS. SHE WAS THEN STONED TO DEATH. HER FAMILY REPORTED THAT SHE WAS ONLY 13 YEARS OLD AND HAD IN FACT BEEN GANG-RAPED.

THE TRANSITIONAL FEDERAL GOVERNMENT OF SOMALIA IS FIGHTING AGAINST AL-SHABAAB, BUT YEARS OF VIOLENT DESTRUCTION CAUSED BY BOMBINGS, ARTILLERY SHELLING AND OPEN FIREFIGHTS HAS LEFT MOGADISHU IN RUIN.





OH, YOU'RE FINALLY AWAKE.

DO YOU REMEMBER ME? I'M YOUR BROTHER'S NEIGHBOR, FARHIYA. I'VE BEEN COMING EVERY DAY TO VISIT MY ILL FATHER, SO I TOLD YOUR BROTHER I WOULD CHECK IN ON YOU.

WHERE IS MY BROTHER?

HE WAS HERE YESTERDAY WITH THE CHILDREN. THEY LOVE YOU VERY MUCH. THE DOCTOR TOLD YOUR BROTHER THAT HE WILL NOT OPERATE ON YOU UNTIL YOUR BROTHER BRINGS MONEY. SO YOUR BROTHER WENT TO LOOK FOR SOME.

BUT... BUT, WHAT HAPPENED TO ME?



LATER THEY TOLD ME THAT I WAS SHOT IN THE SHOULDER BY AL-SHABAAB. I WAS UNCONSCIOUS FOR THREE DAYS. THE DOCTORS TOOK THE BULLET OUT, BUT THERE WAS STILL SO MUCH PAIN AND DAMAGE TO THE NERVES IN MY ARM AND HAND.

BROTHER, YOU'RE HERE!

YES, FATUMA I AM HERE. I FOUND A LITTLE MONEY TO PAY THE HOSPITAL BILL, BUT THE DOCTOR IS DEMANDING MORE SO I MUST GO AND ASK TO BORROW SOME. DON'T WORRY, I WILL TAKE CARE OF YOU.

WHERE IS THIS BLOOD COMING FROM? MY ARM IS BANDAGED. WHAT IS HAPPENING?



I GOT MY FIRST PERIOD THAT DAY. RIGHT THERE IN THE HOSPITAL BED. I DIDN'T KNOW WHAT IT WAS, SO I ASKED THE WOMAN NEXT TO ME. THERE WERE NO SANITARY PADS AROUND, SO SHE GAVE ME SOME FABRIC AND TOLD ME TO PUT IT BETWEEN MY LEGS. IT REALLY HIT ME THAT I NEED A MOTHER TO SHOW ME THESE THINGS, BUT AGAIN I FOUND MYSELF ALONE IN THIS WORLD.

FARHIYA, HAVE YOU SEEN MY BROTHER? IT'S BEEN FIVE DAYS.

HE IS GONE, FATUMA. NO ONE CAN FIND HIM. HIS WIFE TOOK THE CHILDREN AND FLED.

THE FIGHTING IS GETTING SO BAD IN THE CITY. EVERYONE IS TRYING TO ESCAPE. I'M GOING TO MY HUSBAND IN KENYA. WILL YOU COME WITH ME?

BOOM!

THERE IS NO ONE LEFT FOR YOU HERE. YOU'RE NOT SAFE. THE DOCTORS DON'T KNOW HOW TO FIX YOUR ARM. WE CAN FIND A BETTER HOSPITAL IN NAIROBI. ESCAPE WITH ME WHILE WE STILL HAVE A CHANCE!

BAM!

OH... I, UM, OK.

THAT WAS THE WORST DECISION OF MY LIFE. I HATE THAT DECISION. EVEN TODAY I DON'T KNOW WHERE MY BROTHER IS. I SHOULD HAVE WAITED FOR HIM. HE IS THE ONLY PERSON WHO EVER LOVED ME.



THE STREETS WERE IN CHAOS. EVERYONE WAS FLEEING THE VIOLENCE ERUPTING THROUGHOUT THE CITY.



WE MAY HAVE TO WAIT FOR SOME TIME. ALL THE BUSES ARE FULL. IS YOUR ARM OK?



FINALLY WE GOT A BUS. THE PAIN WAS SO BAD IN MY ARM THAT I VOMITED AND PASSED OUT.



AFTER THREE DAYS, WE ARRIVED IN THE BORDER TOWN. BUT WE COULDN'T GET ACROSS TO KENYA BECAUSE WE DIDN'T HAVE ID.



JUST WAIT HERE. I WILL SEE IF WE CAN BRIBE SOMEONE TO TAKE US ACROSS AT NIGHT.

WHY AM I GOING TO NAIROBI? THERE IS NO ONE THERE WAITING FOR ME. WHAT IF THE PEOPLE ARE SCARY?



YOU CAN GO IN THAT TRUCK. ALL THE OTHER PASSENGERS ARE KENYAN, SO IT SHOULD BE OK.

BUT YOU MUST SIT IN THE MIDDLE, AND YOU TWO NEED TO STAY QUIET. DON'T SPEAK ONE WORD TO ANYONE. IF YOU OPEN YOUR MOUTH THEY WILL KNOW YOU ARE NOT KENYAN BECAUSE YOU DON'T SPEAK SWAHILI. THE OTHER PASSENGERS WILL THROW YOU OUT. OR WORSE, THEY WILL RAPE YOU.



FARHIYA AND I GOT IN THE TRUCK. IT WAS VERY CROWDED.



THE PAIN! HE IS SQUISHING MY ARM. IT HURTS, BUT THAT MAN SAID NOT TO SAY ANYTHING OR I COULD BE RAPED! KEEP QUIET. KEEP QUIET.

IN 2008, FATUMA BECAME ONE OF 600,000 REFUGEES FROM SOMALIA, SUDAN, ETHIOPIA AND THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO WHO COME TO KENYA TO ESCAPE THE SAME THING: VIOLENT CONFLICT. LIFE FOR A REFUGEE IS CHAOTIC AND CONFUSING, BUT FOR AN UNACCOMPANIED GIRL, A GIRL ALONE, IT'S TERRIFYING.



THERE ARE SO MANY PEOPLE COMING TO KENYA THAT THE REFUGEE CAMPS ARE TOO CROWDED AND CANNOT PROVIDE SECURITY OR ENOUGH BASIC RESOURCES LIKE CLEAN WATER, FOOD, HEALTH SERVICES AND BASIC EDUCATION. IN THE CAMPS, GIRLS ON THEIR OWN ARE IN GREATER DANGER AND EXPERIENCE A LOT OF VIOLENCE AND RAPE.

MORE AND MORE REFUGEES ARE LEAVING THE CAMPS TO MOVE TO NAIROBI. OTHERS NEVER GO TO THE CAMPS, DECIDING INSTEAD TO FLEE DIRECTLY TO NAIROBI FROM THE BORDER, LIKE FATUMA. AS IN THE CAMPS, REFUGEE GIRLS AND YOUNG WOMEN IN THE CITY FACE THE HIGHEST RISKS OF EXPLOITATION, ASSAULT, FORCED MARRIAGE AND ABUSE. MANY GIRLS BECOME UNPAID SERVANTS FOR URBAN HOUSEHOLDS. WITH NO FAMILY OR FRIENDS TO SUPPORT GIRLS THEY DON'T KNOW HOW TO ACCESS SCHOOLS, GET MEDICAL ATTENTION OR FIND SHELTERS TO LIVE. REFUGEE GIRLS COPE WITH EXTREME POVERTY, THE PHYSICAL AND EMOTIONAL SCARS FROM WAR AND, IN MANY CASES, ABUSE FROM EARLIER IN THEIR LIVES.

★ Nairobi



WELCOME MY WIFE!
MY GIRLS AND I WERE SO
NERVOUS WAITING FOR YOU,
BUT YOU'RE HERE SAFE.

WHEN WE ARRIVED IN NAIROBI FARHIYA'S HUSBAND AND
HIS DAUGHTERS FROM A PREVIOUS MARRIAGE WERE
WAITING FOR HER. NO ONE WAS WAITING FOR ME.



WHY ISN'T THAT
GIRL HELPING?

YEAH, I THINK SHE IS
USING HER ARM AS AN EXCUSE
TO MAKE US SERVE HER.

GIRLS,
FATUMA HAS
BEEN THROUGH
A GREAT ORDEAL
AND HER ARM
ISN'T RIGHT. IT
IS OUR DUTY TO
HELP HER.



THE PAIN IN MY ARM WAS GETTING WORSE.
THE BULLET DAMAGED THE NERVES IN MY
HAND, FREEZING MY FINGERS IN A CURLED
POSITION. MY HAND WAS USELESS.



WHY AREN'T YOU
GOING TO SCHOOL LIKE THE
OTHER TWO GIRLS?

I DON'T HAVE ANY ID TO REGISTER.
I WAS TOLD THAT IF THE POLICE FIND ME
THEY WILL SEND ME BACK TO SOMALIA.

BECAUSE FARHIYA'S STEP-DAUGHTERS DIDN'T LIKE
HAVING ME AROUND I WOULD OFTEN SIT OUTSIDE
THE APARTMENT. SOMETIMES THE OLD NEIGHBOR
LADY WOULD TALK TO ME.



DIDN'T ANYONE TELL YOU THAT
REFUGEES HAVE RIGHTS TOO?

NO...
I HAVE
RIGHTS?

YES. YOU NEED TO GO
TO THE INTERNATIONAL
REFUGEE AGENCY. THEY
WILL HELP YOU GET A
REFUGEE ID CARD. YOU'RE
LUCKY TO STAY WITH THIS
FAMILY. THE SITUATION
IS VERY BAD FOR THE
GIRLS WHO ARE
ALONE IN THE
REFUGEE
CAMPS.

I TOLD FARHIYA WHAT THE NEIGHBOR LADY SAID. TOGETHER WE WENT TO SEE ABOUT OUR RIGHTS.



OK, THEY SAID WE HAVE TO WAIT IN THIS LINE, PUT
OUR NAME ON THEIR LIST AND WAIT FOR AN APPOINTMENT.

HOW LONG
DOES THAT TAKE,
FARHIYA?

MAYBE SIX MONTHS.

OH...



EVEN AFTER ALL
THESE WEEKS, SHE'S
STILL NOT HELPING.

YEAH, I'M GETTING TIRED
OF DOING EVERYTHING FOR HER.
LET'S TALK TO FATHER.

IT'S HER OR US!



PLEASE LET MY APPOINTMENT
COME SOON. PLEASE, PLEASE, PLEASE!
I DON'T KNOW HOW MUCH LONGER I WILL
BE ABLE TO STAY WITH FARHIYA.



AFTER THREE MONTHS I GOT MY APPOINTMENT. USUALLY IT TAKES
LONGER, BUT BECAUSE OF MY ARM THEY PUT ME HIGHER ON THE LIST.



HOW
CAN WE
HELP
YOU?

I HAVE ONGOING PAIN IN MY ARM.
I NEED SURGERY TO FIX IT. AND I'D LIKE
TO GO TO
SCHOOL.



OK, WELL FIRST THING
FIRST. HERE IS A VOUCHER TO GO TO
A GERMAN ORGANIZATION. THEY WILL HELP
WITH YOUR MEDICAL ISSUES. IT WILL TAKE
ABOUT A MONTH TO GET AN APPOINTMENT
WITH THEM, SO GO RIGHT AWAY. AFTER YOU
GET TREATMENT, COME BACK AND WE'LL
TALK ABOUT SCHOOL.



THE GERMAN ORGANIZATION GAVE ME THIS VOUCHER FOR THE KENYATTA HOSPITAL. BUT HOW CAN I GO THERE? I DON'T KNOW WHERE IT IS AND I DON'T SPEAK ANY SWAHILI.

DON'T WORRY, MY HUSBAND WILL TAKE YOU.



THIS GIRL HAS A REFUGEE VOUCHER TO GET SURGERY ON HER ARM.

OH, THE DOCTOR'S NOT IN TODAY. COME BACK TOMORROW.



WE CAME BACK EVERY WEEK, BUT THE DOCTOR WAS ALWAYS BUSY OR NOT THERE. THEY ALWAYS SAID, "COME BACK NEXT WEEK." EVENTUALLY MY VOUCHER EXPIRED AND THEY TOLD ME NOT TO COME ANYMORE.



HOW WILL I GET SURGERY FOR MY ARM? I AM STILL GETTING TERRIBLE HEADACHES FROM THE PAIN.

I THINK THE GERMAN ORGANIZATION HAS A BRANCH CLOSE TO US. GO THERE AND GET A NEW VOUCHER.



NO, YOU HAVE TO GO TO THE MAIN OFFICE IN WESTLAND TO GET THAT VOUCHER. WE CAN'T HELP YOU HERE.

BUT I DON'T KNOW WHERE WESTLAND IS...



I CAN'T DO ANYTHING FOR MYSELF WITHOUT SPEAKING SWAHILI. IF I KNEW THE LANGUAGE I COULD FIND THE GERMAN OFFICE IN WESTLAND. OR I COULD EVEN JUST BE ABLE TO BUY SOME NECESSITIES AT THE KIOSK. EVERYTHING IS SO STRANGE TO ME HERE.



FATUMA, YOU'VE BEEN WITH US FOR MORE THAN A YEAR NOW. IT'S TIME YOU LOOKED FOR SOMEWHERE ELSE TO LIVE. THERE ISN'T ENOUGH SPACE FOR ALL OF US.

OH...



THE INTERNATIONAL REFUGEE AGENCY GAVE ME A LIST OF SCHOOLS, BUT THEY ALL REQUIRE A REGISTRATION FEE, TUITION MONEY AND MONEY FOR SCHOOL UNIFORMS. SOON I WON'T EVEN HAVE A PLACE TO LIVE, NO WAY CAN I AFFORD SCHOOL! NOW I'M REALLY ALONE... I'M SO TIRED. I WANT TO GIVE UP.



IT'S BEEN SO LONG, BUT NOTHING HAS CHANGED. MY ARM STILL HURTS EVERY DAY, AND I'M NOT EVEN IN SCHOOL. NOW I NEED TO FIND SOMEWHERE ELSE TO LIVE.

HMMM. I THINK I KNOW A SOCIAL WORKER WHO MIGHT BE ABLE TO HELP YOU. LET'S GO SEE HER NOW.



ONCE AGAIN THE OLD NEIGHBOR LADY TRIED TO HELP ME.



THIS GIRL NEEDS HELP IMMEDIATELY. DO YOU KNOW ANYONE WHO CAN HELP HER?

I THINK I DO. THERE IS ONE ORGANIZATION HERE IN NAIROBI THAT FOCUSES ON HELPING ADOLESCENT GIRL REFUGEES. LET'S GIVE THEM A CALL.



IS THIS HESHIMA KENYA? YES, OK. I HAVE A GIRL HERE FROM SOMALIA AND SHE NEEDS HOUSING AND AN EDUCATION. CAN YOUR ORGANIZATION HELP? GREAT! I WILL SEND HER OVER.



I DIDN'T HAVE ANY BIG EXPECTATIONS. NOTHING HAD WORKED OUT FOR ME YET, BUT I WENT TO THE APPOINTMENT ANYWAY.



HESHIMA KENYA IS FOR GIRLS LIKE YOU WHO CAME TO KENYA ALONE. THROUGH THE GIRL EMPOWERMENT PROJECT, WE OFFER CLASSES IN ENGLISH, SWAHILI AND MATH MONDAY TO THURSDAY. THEN ON FRIDAY WE HAVE A LIFE SKILLS CLASS WHERE YOU WILL LEARN ABOUT HEALTH AND DO SOME LIVELIHOODS TRAINING. WE ALSO HAVE A SAFE HOUSE WITH 40 BEDS JUST FOR GIRLS.

MESELECH TEZERA, HESHIMA WELFARE OFFICER

FOR THE FIRST TIME SINCE ARRIVING IN KENYA I FELT HOPEFUL...



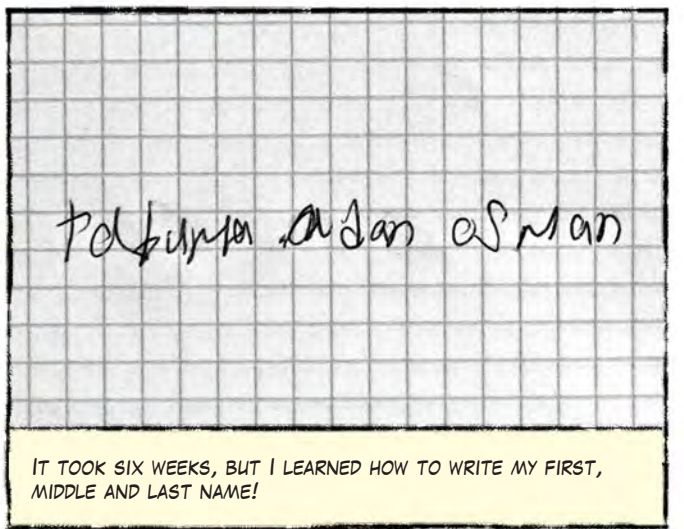
WELCOME FATUMA. WE ARE HAPPY TO HAVE YOU IN OUR CLASS.

I HOPE I DON'T GET TEASED LIKE THE LAST TIME I TRIED SCHOOL. I MUST PAY ATTENTION THIS TIME. IT'S NOW OR NEVER FOR A GIRL MY AGE!



DON'T BE NERVOUS. I DON'T KNOW HOW TO WRITE MY NAME EITHER. NONE OF THE GIRLS IN THIS CLASS BEFORE, SO WE ALL HAVE THE SAME CHALLENGES YOU DO.

PHEW!



IT TOOK SIX WEEKS, BUT I LEARNED HOW TO WRITE MY FIRST, MIDDLE AND LAST NAME!



I AM SO HAPPY HERE. I EVEN REMEMBER THAT I LOVE TO PLAY FOOTBALL AND LAUGH.

HESHIMA HAS TAKEN AWAY MANY WORRIES. I DON'T FEEL SO TIRED AND OLD ANYMORE. HERE WE CAN LET GO AND HAVE FUN!

I NEED TO REMIND MYSELF TO GET SERIOUS AND WORK HARD IN SCHOOL TOO. I'M SO PROUD I CAN WRITE MY NAME, BUT THERE IS SO MUCH MORE TO LEARN!



OH FATUMA, I AM SAD YOU ARE LEAVING. I KNOW YOU HAVE NO ONE HERE, AND I WAS THE ONE WHO BROUGHT YOU TO THIS COUNTRY. I AM SO WORRIED ABOUT YOUR SAFETY.

YOU DID NOTHING WRONG, AND IT'S NOT RIGHT TO ASK YOUR HUSBAND TO CHOOSE BETWEEN ME AND HIS CHILDREN. HESHIMA WILL TAKE REALLY GOOD CARE OF ME. DON'T WORRY FARHIYA, I'M FINALLY GETTING AN OPPORTUNITY TO CHANGE MY LIFE.



WELCOME TO HESHIMA'S SAFE HOUSE FOR GIRLS FATUMA!



LET US HELP YOU, FATUMA. I KNOW YOUR HAND HAS BEEN HURTING A LOT LATELY.



I'LL HELP YOU, FATUMA!

YOU GIRLS ARE ALL SO KIND! I FEEL MORE AT HOME THAN I EVER HAVE IN MY LIFE.



THE PAIN IS SO INTENSE TODAY! THE DOCTOR STARTED PHYSICAL THERAPY ON MY HAND, BUT NOW IT FEELS WORSE THAN EVER!

DON'T WORRY, WE'LL STAY UP WITH YOU ALL NIGHT MASSAGING YOUR HAND.

YOU NEVER HAVE TO BE ALONE IN PAIN AGAIN. WE'RE HERE FOR YOU!



ARE YOU ALMOST READY FATUMA? YOU'RE GOING TO LOVE CULTURAL DAY AT HESHIMA. IT'S THE BEST!



WE'RE GOING TO SHOW YOU OUR TRADITIONAL CONGOLESE DANCE. WATCH CLOSELY BECAUSE YOU'RE GOING TO DANCE IT WITH US!



TO SHARE OUR ETHIOPIAN CULTURE WITH YOU, WE'RE GOING TO LEARN A FEW AMHARIC PHRASES.

"TEMASTLIGN" MEANS "HOW ARE YOU?"



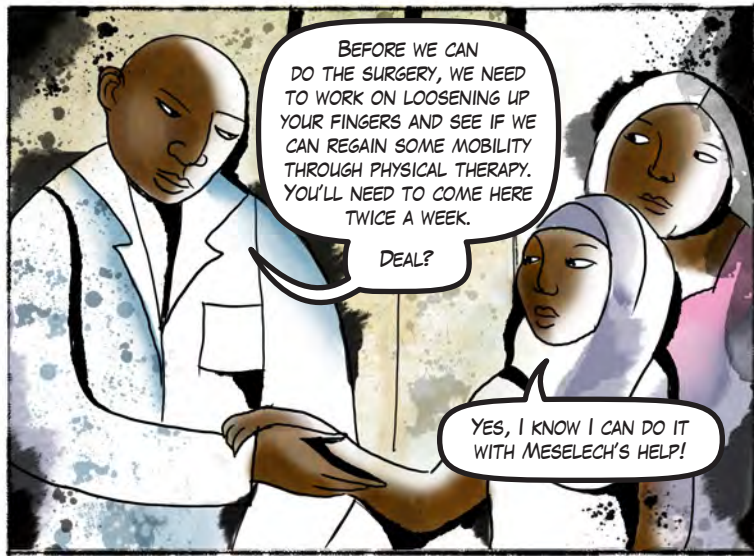
I LOVE TRYING ALL THESE FOODS FROM CONGO, ETHIOPIA AND KENYA! BUT I CAN'T GET USED TO THIS KENYAN UGALI (PORRIDGE)...

HEE HEE. MOST OF HAD TROUBLE ADJUSTING TO THE UGALI, BUT AFTER SOME TIME WE KIND OF LIKE IT! HERE, TRY SOME DORO WAT (STEW). IT'S MY FAVORITE ETHIOPIAN DISH.

PLEASE PASS SOME MORE INJERA (FLATBREAD). IT TASTES LIKE HOME TO ME!

OH, I MISS MY MOTHER'S CHIKWANGA (CASSAVA), BUT THIS IS PRETTY GOOD TOO.

I LOVE LEARNING ABOUT MY FELLOW AFRICAN GIRLS!



BEFORE WE CAN DO THE SURGERY, WE NEED TO WORK ON LOOSENING UP YOUR FINGERS AND SEE IF WE CAN REGAIN SOME MOBILITY THROUGH PHYSICAL THERAPY. YOU'LL NEED TO COME HERE TWICE A WEEK.

DEAL?

YES, I KNOW I CAN DO IT WITH MESELECH'S HELP!



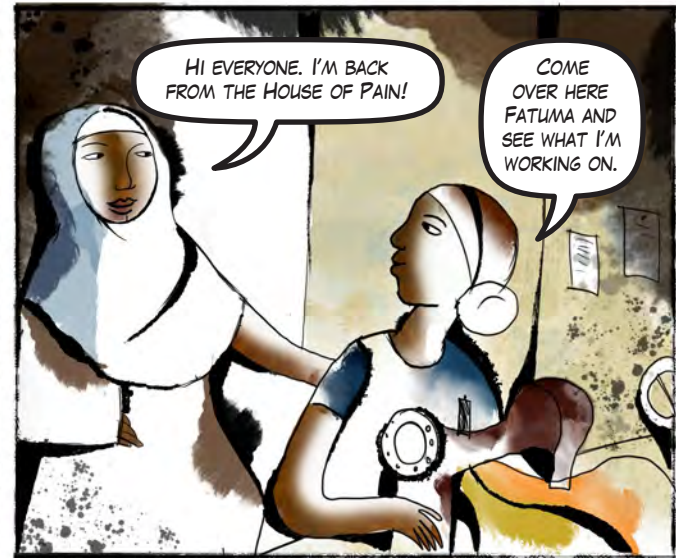
OWWWW!

I DIDN'T KNOW PHYSICAL THERAPY WOULD BE SUCH A HOUSE OF PAIN!



NOW FATUMA DON'T FORGET TO DO YOUR HAND EXERCISES. THE DOCTOR IS PUTTING PRESSURE ON ME WHEN YOU DON'T DO THEM!

OK, MESELECH. I'LL DO IT.



HI EVERYONE. I'M BACK FROM THE HOUSE OF PAIN!

COME OVER HERE FATUMA AND SEE WHAT I'M WORKING ON.



HESHIMA KENYA

HUJAMBO (HELLO), FATUMA. I'M SO IMPRESSED WITH YOUR PROGRESS! IN JUST OVER TWO YEARS YOUR SWAHILI IS VERY GOOD AND YOUR ENGLISH IS RAPIDLY PROGRESSING. NOW IS A GOOD TIME TO TALK ABOUT YOUR FUTURE AND HOW YOU CAN BE FINANCIALLY INDEPENDENT. WHAT DO YOU WANT TO DO?

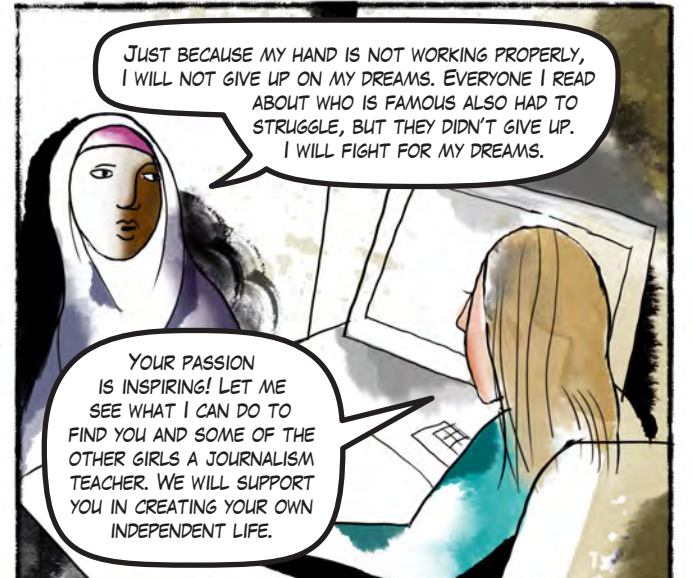
WELL, I NEED TO BE A JOURNALIST.

ANNE SWEENEY, HESHIMA CO-EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



YOU NEED TO BE?

YES! IT IS IMPORTANT TO TELL THE WORLD WHAT IS HAPPENING TO US REFUGEE GIRLS. IF NOBODY TALKS ABOUT IT, THEN NOBODY CAN HELP US.



JUST BECAUSE MY HAND IS NOT WORKING PROPERLY, I WILL NOT GIVE UP ON MY DREAMS. EVERYONE I READ ABOUT WHO IS FAMOUS ALSO HAD TO STRUGGLE, BUT THEY DIDN'T GIVE UP. I WILL FIGHT FOR MY DREAMS.

YOUR PASSION IS INSPIRING! LET ME SEE WHAT I CAN DO TO FIND YOU AND SOME OF THE OTHER GIRLS A JOURNALISM TEACHER. WE WILL SUPPORT YOU IN CREATING YOUR OWN INDEPENDENT LIFE.



AT HESHIMA, IF GIRLS SHOW DEDICATION TO THEIR STUDIES THEY ARE INVITED TO JOIN THE MAISHA COLLECTIVE. THEY GO THROUGH A SEVEN-MONTH TRAINING IN TAILORING, BAG STITCHING AND DYE TECHNIQUE.



HESHIMA SELLS SCARVES AND BAGS ON ETSY.COM AND OTHER PLACES TO HELP GIRLS EARN THEIR OWN INCOME AND EXPERIENCE FINANCIAL INDEPENDENCE. WE ALL CAME TO KENYA ALONE SO WE'VE GOT TO LEARN HOW TO MAKE A LIVING.



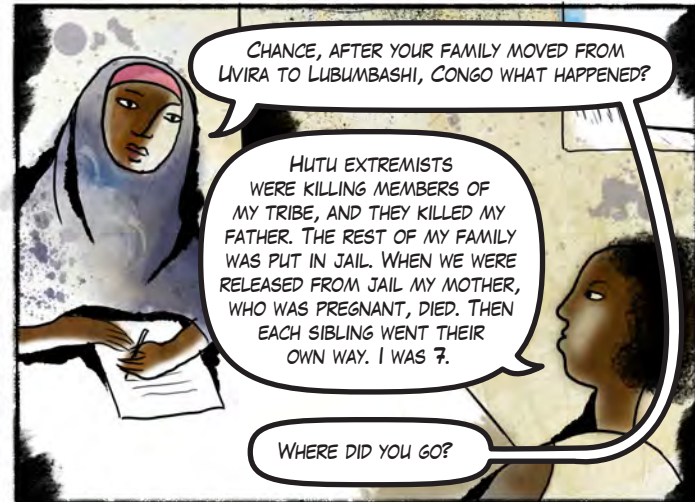
BUT BECAUSE OF MY HAND, I COULDN'T PARTICIPATE.



I TRIED THE BIG AID ORGANIZATIONS, LIKE THE INTERNATIONAL REFUGEE AGENCY, BUT THEY ARE TRYING TO HELP SO MANY PEOPLE THAT GIRLS LIKE ME WITH NO ADVOCATES JUST GET LOST. BUT HESHIMA IS A SMALLER GROUP, SO THEY CAN PROVIDE EACH OF US WITH INDIVIDUALIZED HELP. WE ARE NOT JUST REFUGEES, WE ARE GIRLS WITH HOPES AND DREAMS. WHEN YOU ARE ALONE YOU HAVE NO LIFE AT ALL AND DIE OF DEPRESSION THINKING OF YOUR PAST. BUT ONCE YOU GET SOMEONE WHO IS WILLING TO DO EVEN A LITTLE BIT AND STAND WITH YOU, THEN YOU CAN HAVE DREAMS.



NOW THAT WE HAVE GONE OVER THE BASICS OF INTERVIEWING, THE BEST WAY TO REALLY LEARN IS TO PRACTICE. SO, FOR THE REST OF TODAY, PLEASE INTERVIEW EACH OTHER. ALL OF YOU HAVE EXTREMELY POWERFUL STORIES, SO LET'S START TELLING THEM!



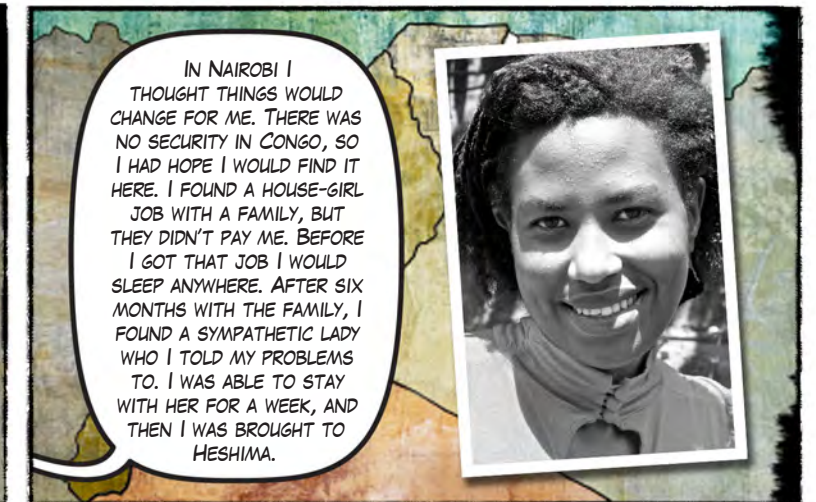
CHANCE, AFTER YOUR FAMILY MOVED FROM LIVIRA TO LUBUMBASHI, CONGO WHAT HAPPENED?

HUTU EXTREMISTS WERE KILLING MEMBERS OF MY TRIBE, AND THEY KILLED MY FATHER. THE REST OF MY FAMILY WAS PUT IN JAIL. WHEN WE WERE RELEASED FROM JAIL MY MOTHER, WHO WAS PREGNANT, DIED. THEN EACH SIBLING WENT THEIR OWN WAY. I WAS 7.

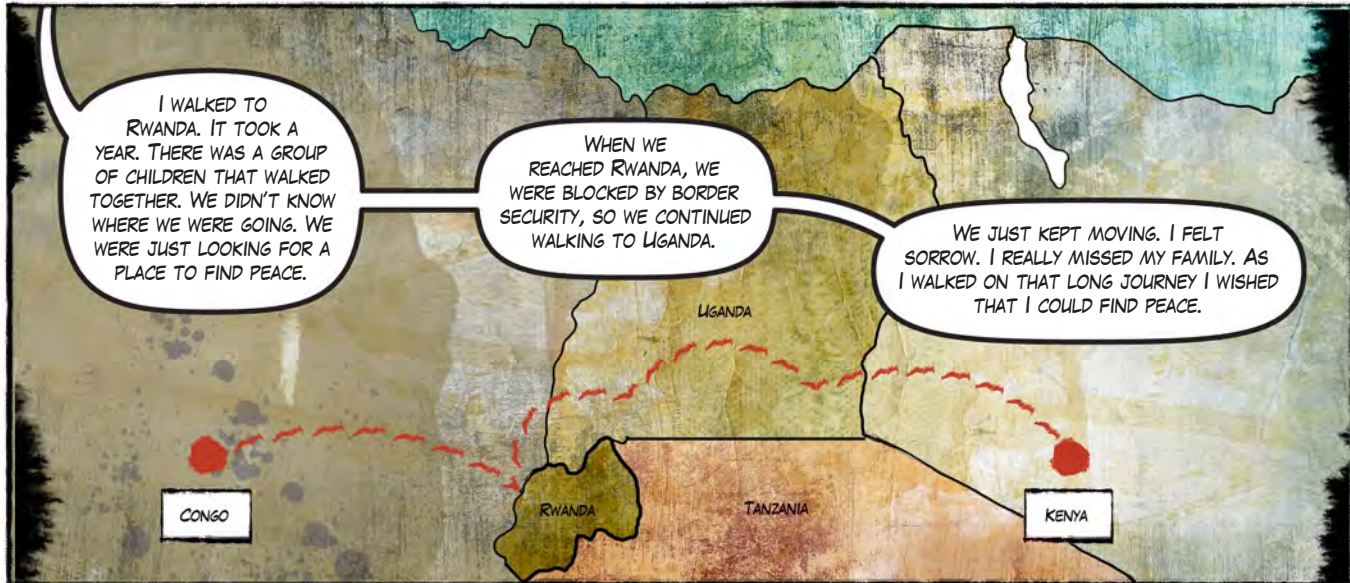
WHERE DID YOU GO?



HOW DID YOU COME TO HESHIMA?



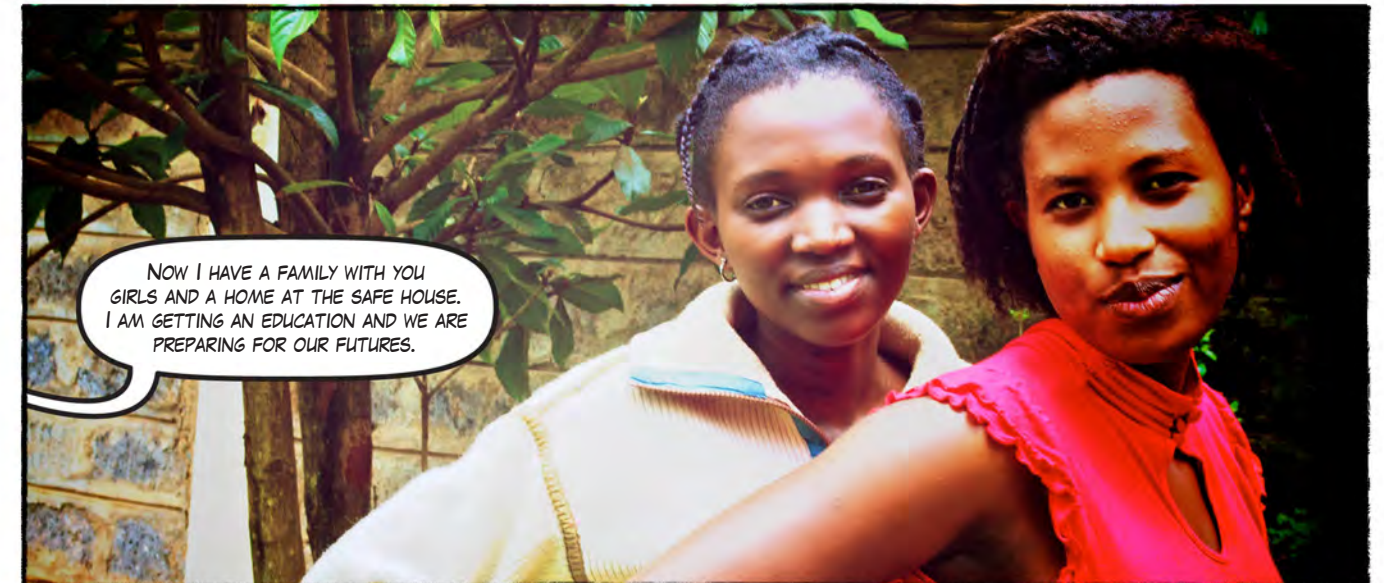
IN NAIROBI I THOUGHT THINGS WOULD CHANGE FOR ME. THERE WAS NO SECURITY IN CONGO, SO I HAD HOPE I WOULD FIND IT HERE. I FOUND A HOUSE-GIRL JOB WITH A FAMILY, BUT THEY DIDN'T PAY ME. BEFORE I GOT THAT JOB I WOULD SLEEP ANYWHERE. AFTER SIX MONTHS WITH THE FAMILY, I FOUND A SYMPATHETIC LADY WHO I TOLD MY PROBLEMS TO. I WAS ABLE TO STAY WITH HER FOR A WEEK, AND THEN I WAS BROUGHT TO HESHIMA.



I WALKED TO RWANDA. IT TOOK A YEAR. THERE WAS A GROUP OF CHILDREN THAT WALKED TOGETHER. WE DIDN'T KNOW WHERE WE WERE GOING. WE WERE JUST LOOKING FOR A PLACE TO FIND PEACE.

WHEN WE REACHED RWANDA, WE WERE BLOCKED BY BORDER SECURITY, SO WE CONTINUED WALKING TO UGANDA.

WE JUST KEPT MOVING. I FELT SORROW. I REALLY MISSED MY FAMILY. AS I WALKED ON THAT LONG JOURNEY I WISHED THAT I COULD FIND PEACE.



NOW I HAVE A FAMILY WITH YOU GIRLS AND A HOME AT THE SAFE HOUSE. I AM GETTING AN EDUCATION AND WE ARE PREPARING FOR OUR FUTURES.



WHAT HAPPENED IN UGANDA?



OUR JOURNEY DIDN'T END IN UGANDA. THERE AT THE REFUGEE CAMP WE SAW THE HUTU TRIBE THAT IS AGAINST MY TRIBE, THE BANYAMULENGE. WE FEARED THAT TRIBE, SO WE LEFT AND CAME TO NAIROBI. BY THAT TIME, I WAS 17.



NOW FATUMA, HOW HAS YOUR LIFE CHANGED SINCE COMING TO HESHIMA?



HESHIMA HAS GIVEN ME HOPE FOR MY FUTURE AND THE EDUCATION NECESSARY TO MOVE FORWARD. WHEN I WAS IN SOMALIA I NEVER THOUGHT OF THE FUTURE OR WHAT I COULD DO. MY WHOLE THINKING WAS THAT I WOULD SOMEDAY GET MARRIED AND HAVE KIDS. NOW I SEE POSSIBILITIES FOR INDEPENDENCE AND A LIFE I CHOOSE.



WE CAN'T STAY AT HESHIMA'S SAFE HOUSE FOREVER. THERE ARE SO MANY REFUGEE GIRLS WHO NEED THE BEDS THAT THOSE OF US OLDER THAN 18 ARE ENCOURAGED TO BECOME INDEPENDENT. WITH HESHIMA'S HELP I GOT AN APARTMENT THAT I SHARE WITH TWO OTHER AWESOME GIRLS.



DO YOU HAVE BASKETBALL PRACTICE TODAY?
 YEAH, BUT I'LL BE BACK IN TWO HOURS. SHOULD WE WATCH A MOVIE TONIGHT?
 OH YEAH. I THINK THERE'S A BOLLYWOOD MOVIE ON. I LOVE THE WAY THEY DANCE! I DON'T HAVE A SHIFT AT THE HOSPITAL TODAY, SO I'LL START DINNER.



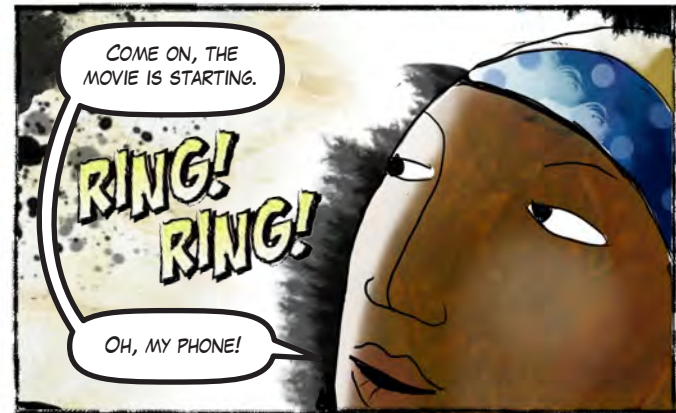
DINNER'S ALMOST READY. WHAT ARE YOU DOING, FATUMA?
 JUST CHECKING MY FACEBOOK. I POSTED A STORY ABOUT ONE OF MY FRIENDS AT HESHIMA, AND I'VE BEEN GETTING COMMENTS FROM GIRLS IN THE U.S. AND EUROPE!



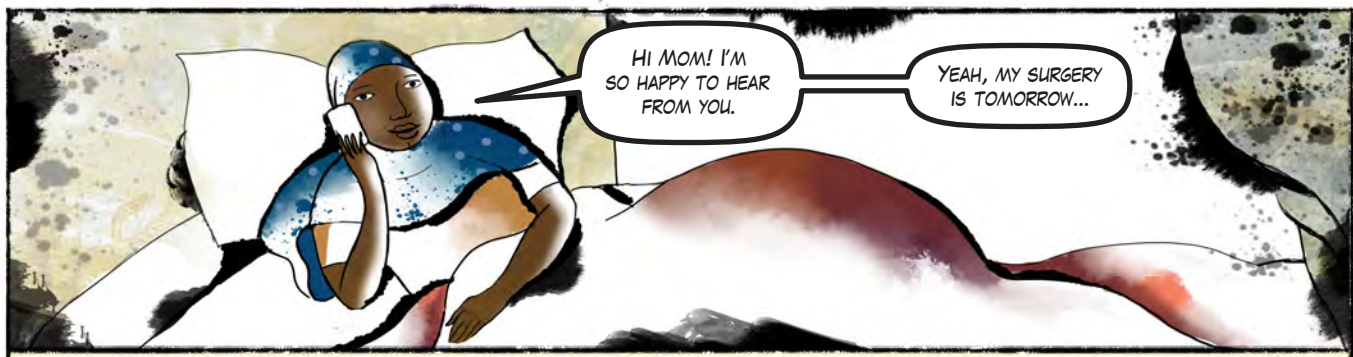
ARE YOU NERVOUS FOR YOUR SURGERY TOMORROW?
 NERVOUS, BUT MOSTLY EXCITED. MY HAND HAS BEEN FROZEN LIKE THIS FOR YEARS NOW. MY LIFE HAS TOTALLY CHANGED, SO IT'S TIME FOR MY HAND TO CATCH UP!



HESHIMA KNOWS HOW IMPORTANT MY HAND IS TO ME, SO THEY FOUND THE MONEY TO PAY FOR MY SURGERY.
 WHAT A RELIEF!

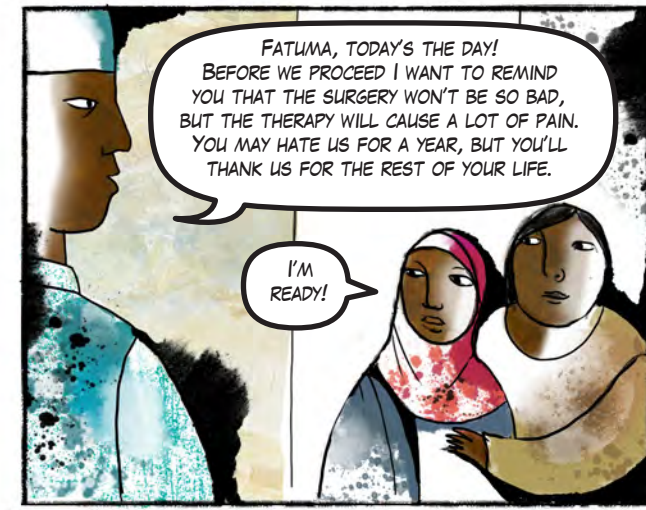


COME ON, THE MOVIE IS STARTING.
RING! RING!
 OH, MY PHONE!

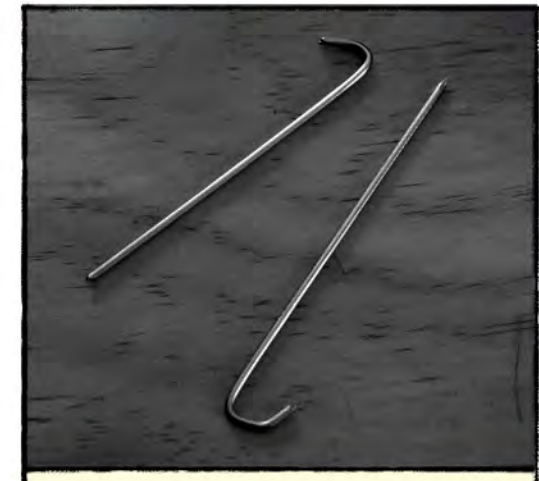


HI MOM! I'M SO HAPPY TO HEAR FROM YOU.
 YEAH, MY SURGERY IS TOMORROW...

SOME PEOPLE IN THE SOMALI COMMUNITY KNEW MY FAMILY NAME AND WERE ABLE TO HELP ME FIND MY MOM'S MOBILE NUMBER. SHE IS STILL IN SOMALIA, BUT I GET TO TALK TO HER NOW. **IMAGINE:** IT WASN'T UNTIL I CAME TO NAIROBI THAT I FOUND HER. MY MOM AND I ARE MAKING PLANS TO BE RELUNITED. BUT FIRST THE FIGHTING BETWEEN AL-SHABAAB AND THE GOVERNMENT IN SOMALIA NEEDS TO STOP SO I CAN SAFELY RETURN TO MY COUNTRY.



FATUMA, TODAY'S THE DAY! BEFORE WE PROCEED I WANT TO REMIND YOU THAT THE SURGERY WON'T BE SO BAD, BUT THE THERAPY WILL CAUSE A LOT OF PAIN. YOU MAY HATE US FOR A YEAR, BUT YOU'LL THANK US FOR THE REST OF YOUR LIFE.
 I'M READY!



AFTER TWO YEARS OF PHYSICAL THERAPY AND WAITING I FINALLY GOT MY SURGERY! THE DOCTOR PUT THESE PINS IN MY HAND TO HELP STRAIGHTEN MY FINGERS.



ONCE THE PINS COME OUT, REMEMBER YOUR COMMITMENT TO THE DOCTOR: THERAPY TWICE A WEEK.
 OH, THAT HOUSE OF PAIN! YES, OF COURSE I WILL GO, WITH YOUR HELP MESELECH!



THERE WAS A LOT OF NERVE DAMAGE TO MY HAND, SO IT WILL NEVER BE LIKE BEFORE, BUT IT HAS GOTTEN BETTER. I HAVE BETTER MOBILITY NOW AND AM USING IT MORE EVERY DAY.



AS MY HAND HEALS I'M THINKING A LOT ABOUT HOW I CAN HELP THE GIRLS IN MY COMMUNITY. I PARTICIPATED IN HESHIMA'S PEER EDUCATOR PROGRAM, AND NOW I'M TRYING TO EMPOWER MY NEIGHBORS BY SHARING MY KNOWLEDGE OF REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH, HIV AND HUMAN RIGHTS.



TODAY I WILL TALK ABOUT HIV. WHAT DO YOU KNOW ABOUT THIS?

DON'T ONLY SEX WORKERS GET THAT?

AND THEY CAN PASS IT TO ANYONE STANDING CLOSE, SO WE HAVE TO ISOLATE THEM.

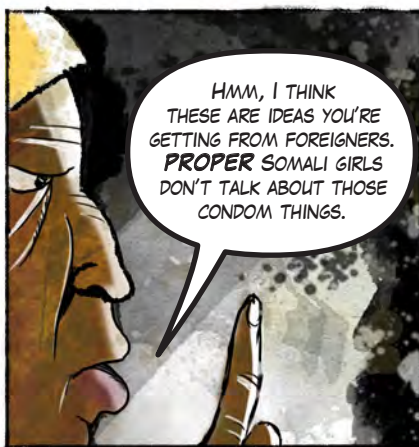


WELL, THAT'S A COMMON MISCONCEPTION IN OUR COMMUNITY. ACTUALLY HIV IS IN PART PASSED THROUGH UNPROTECTED SEXUAL CONTACT, THAT'S WHY, UM, WELL, THAT'S WHY...

JUST SAY "CONDOM" FATUMA! DON'T BE SO EMBARRASSED. YOU HAVE TO BE A STRONG, CONFIDENT LEADER FOR THE OTHER GIRLS IN THE COMMUNITY.



A CONDOM, YES, A CONDOM IS IMPORTANT IN STOPPING THE SPREAD OF HIV.



HMM, I THINK THESE ARE IDEAS YOU'RE GETTING FROM FOREIGNERS. PROPER SOMALI GIRLS DON'T TALK ABOUT THOSE CONDOM THINGS.

IT'S NOT ALWAYS EASY TO TRAIN OTHERS. A LOT OF THE WOMEN DON'T LISTEN, BUT I AM TRYING TO BE A GOOD LEADER SO I AM WORKING ON BEING VERY PATIENT.



**KNOCK!
KNOCK!**

AT THE TRAINING THEY MAY NOT ASK QUESTIONS, BUT THEN ONE DAY THEY REMEMBER WHAT I SAID AND ONE GIRL WILL TELL ANOTHER GIRL.



I HEARD YOU KNOW ABOUT HUMAN RIGHTS AND REFUGEE RIGHTS. CAN YOU ANSWER SOME QUESTIONS I HAVE?

YES!

BUT FOR ME, THE MOST IMPORTANT WAY TO HELP IS TO TELL THE STORIES AROUND ME AND HOPE THAT THE WORLD LISTENS. HESHIMA FOUND A CANADIAN ORGANIZATION TO COME TRAIN US IN PHOTOGRAPHY. THEY EVEN GAVE US CAMERAS, BUT I HAVE TO LEAVE MINE AT HESHIMA BECAUSE THERE ARE TOO MANY VIOLENT ROBBERIES IN MY NEIGHBORHOOD.



FOR ONE ASSIGNMENT I TOOK PHOTOS OF A WOMAN WHO LIVES ON THE STREETS. I CAPTURED HOW SHE COOKS FOR HER CHILDREN AND HOW SHE DEALS WITH THE MUD WHEN IT RAINS. THE ORGANIZATION LIKED THE PHOTOS SO MUCH THEY POSTED THEM ON THEIR WEBSITE!



IF I COULD BE AN INTERNATIONAL PHOTOJOURNALIST REPORTING ON STREET PEOPLE, REFUGEES AND THOSE WHO ARE SUFFERING I COULD INFORM AND ENACT CHANGE. I'VE LIVED THESE REALITIES AND KNOW THAT SUFFERING EXISTS, BUT NOT EVERYONE DOES. IF MY STORIES AND PHOTOS ARE PUBLISHED, MY HOPE IS THAT PEOPLE FEEL COMPASSION AND PITCH IN TO HELP.

MY EYES WERE CLOSED, BUT NOW I CAN SEE SO MANY POSSIBILITIES FOR GIRLS THAT I NEVER REALIZED EXISTED. AND FOR ALL THE GIRLS OUT THERE WHO ARE ONLY SLEEPING AND WAKING, I WISH THEY COULD SEE WHAT I SEE. NO MATTER HOW HARD THE UPS AND DOWNS OF LIFE ARE, DON'T GIVE UP. WORK TOWARD YOUR GOAL. I WON'T GIVE UP. I KNOW THAT BEHIND MANY SUCCESSES THERE ARE SAD STORIES, SO I TOO JUST HAVE TO KEEP GOING. EVEN IF YOU ARE NOT THERE YET, IT IS NICE TO BE ON YOUR WAY.



READ, DISCUSS, ACT

This is Fatuma's story, but there are many other girls lost in the refugee crisis and needing immediate assistance. Grab some friends, get your school and after-school clubs interested or go to www.grassrootsgirls.tumblr.com to discuss the issues below, learn more and get involved. After reading Fatuma's story we hope you're feeling inspired and fired up to take action for girls everywhere!



WHY WE LOVE GRASSROOTS ORGANIZATIONS

CONSIDER: Marginalized by cultural practices, poverty and discrimination, girls are often outside the reach of larger development projects led by governments and international aid agencies. Grassroots organizations are smaller and created by the community to address specific problems. Grassroots organizations are familiar with local language, culture and the challenges that shape girls' lives. That makes them uniquely equipped to address girls' urgent needs and create spot-on solutions. They also stay put to offer girls support for the long run.

ASK: How did Heshima Kenya respond to the specific needs of unaccompanied refugee girls in Nairobi?

DISCUSS: What was different about the way the large international refugee agency tried to help Fatuma from the way that Heshima Kenya helped Fatuma?

WHY WE LOVE GIRL POWER

CONSIDER: Bands in the 1990s like Bikini Kill and the Spice Girls made the phrase "girl power" popular, but we're not talking about pop culture. Girl power means that all girls everywhere are empowered to take control of their lives. We know that if a girl stays in school, has access to health services and is given an opportunity to earn a good wage, she will marry later, have fewer and healthier children and earn an income that she'll invest back into her family and community. That's amazing! But girls are still facing exploitation and injustice. Girls in poverty, navigating

the tricky years of adolescence, face additional challenges like child marriage, early pregnancy and violence.

ASK: How did Fatuma use girl power to transform her life and help her friends?

DISCUSS: What problem in your community can you confront with girl power to create a positive solution?

WHY WE LOVE THE GIRL EMPOWERMENT PROJECT (GEP)

CONSIDER: Refugees have immediate needs for food, housing and security. Large aid agencies work really hard to get these basic necessities to refugees in Kenya, but as Fatuma said, "We are not just refugees, we are girls with hopes and dreams." Heshima Kenya recognizes that girls need individualized attention, access to education and livelihood classes and opportunities to learn about their human rights and to cultivate leadership skills. By providing programs for the girl's whole self, Heshima Kenya is empowering refugee girls to take charge of their own lives. Girls learn the skills they need to become financially independent and also to become community leaders to help other girls. Beyond providing for each girl's basic needs, Heshima Kenya supports each unique girl in creating a bright future for herself.

ASK: How did Heshima Kenya address Fatuma's unique needs? In what ways did Fatuma benefit from participating in Heshima Kenya's programs? If Fatuma had never found Heshima, what do you think her life would look like now?

DISCUSS: What are ways you can help girls caught in the refugee crisis in Kenya?

Interested in Heshima Kenya's work? Connect with this grassroots organization at www.heshimakenya.org or www.facebook.com/HeshimaKenya.

Heshima Kenya is supported by the American Jewish World Service. Discover how the American Jewish World Service works to realize human rights and end poverty in the developing world at www.ajws.org.

Curious about the situation of girls globally? www.girleffect.org is bursting with videos, stats, stories and more. Dig into "The Girl Declaration" to learn the five goals and seven principles that can create a better future for girls and end poverty for the world: www.girleffect.org/2015-beyond/the-declaration/

FATUMA CHALLENGES YOU!

Fatuma brought her story to you by making this graphic novella, and now she wants you to do the same. Go digital, use a comic book app on your tablet or fill your notebook; use photos or illustrate your own life. To get you going: What problems are girls in your community facing? How are you dealing with these challenges? Are there any organizations in your community helping girls tackle these challenges? What are you doing to spread girl power in your community and beyond? Every girl has a story and deserves to be heard. What's yours?

Submit your graphic novella to share with other girls at grassrootsgirls.tumblr.com

GLOSSARY

AL-SHABAAB: Translated as “The Youth,” al-Shabaab is an al-Qaeda-linked militant group and U.S.-designated Foreign Terrorist Organization fighting for a fundamentalist Islamic state in Somalia.

CHIKWANGA: Made from cassava, cooked and stored in banana leaves.

DORO WAT: Spicy Ethiopian chicken stew

HIJAB: A veil that covers the head and chest, worn by a Muslim female beyond the age of puberty in the presence of adult males.

HUJAMBO: (Swahili) hello

INJERA: A yeast-risen flatbread traditionally made out of teff flour with a unique, slightly spongy texture. It is a national dish in Ethiopia.

IS KA WARRAN: Hello

MADRASAH: A building or group of buildings used for teaching Islamic theology.

MAGACAYGU WAA...: My name is...

MAHADSANID: Thank you

MAISHA COLLECTIVE: A peer-driven initiative that fosters leadership and business management skills through the design and production of unique hand-dyed scarves and textiles. In managing the collective, girls gain life-long business and marketing skills that develop their confidence and prepare them for future independence. The power of purchase inspires their journey to support, empower and ultimately protect other young refugee women. One hundred percent of the proceeds are reinvested into Heshima Kenya’s programs and the savings of Maisha Collective members. Browse their fabulous work here: <http://www.etsy.com/shop/HeshimaKenya>

MARAQ HILIB ARI: A traditional Somali recipe for a stew of goat meat and vegetables.

MIRRA: An evergreen shrub native to tropical East Africa, having dark green leaves that are chewed fresh for their stimulating effects.

SECOND WIFE: The laws of most African countries with significant numbers of Muslims allow polygamy, with different conditions. Somali laws have slowly

changed from broadly allowing polygamy to the Somalia court now requiring permission and proof a man’s first wife is infertile.

SHARIA LAW: The moral code and religious law of Islam. Sharia deals with many topics addressed by secular law, including crime, politics and economics, as well as personal matters such as sexual intercourse, hygiene, diet, prayer and fasting. Though interpretations of sharia vary between cultures, in its strictest definition it is considered the infallible law of God—as opposed to the human interpretation of the laws.

UGALI: A dish of cornmeal cooked with water to a porridge-like consistency commonly eaten in Kenya.

