



Giving hope to Rohingya refugees

INSIDE:

- Tim Ung's remarkable refugee journey
- Cate Blanchett reports from South Sudan
- Refugees prepare for a harsh winter
- New start for Syrian earthquake survivors

Life-saving aid in the Horn of Africa

In a region dealing with compounding crises, your generosity is going a long way for single mothers like Diyaró Baluga and her children.

At home in Somalia, Diyaró kept livestock but the drought killed almost all her cows. She sold her last four animals to pay for transport so her family could reach Dadaab refugee camp in Kenya.

“I lost my livestock to the drought,” says Diyaró. “But I am glad that I haven’t lost my children to hunger.”

The Horn of Africa has endured six consecutive seasons without adequate rain. Displacement continues to climb as millions from Ethiopia, Kenya and Somalia struggle to survive with scarce water, rising hunger and ongoing conflict.

With your support, UNHCR is reaching as many people as possible with life-saving aid. In Dadaab, new arrivals like Diyaró are provided with shelter, clean drinking water and cash assistance so they can purchase food and medicine. UNHCR is also supporting host communities across the region by rehabilitating boreholes, providing generators for water pumps, and trucking in water. ■

» YOUR GIFTS ARE PROVIDING:



Emergency shelter, survival kits and clothing



Cash assistance to purchase food and other essentials



Malnutrition screening and healthcare



Drinking water, latrines and hygiene campaigns



Mobile counselling teams delivering psychological first aid



> Diyaró Baluga and her son in Kenya’s Dadaab refugee camp.

© UNHCR/Mohamed Aden Maalimay



© UNHCR/Diana Zeyneb Alhindawi

Providing safe homes for Ukrainian families

▲ L-R: Olena, Bohdana and Andrii outside their home in Borodyanka in Ukraine’s Kyiv region.

When war broke out in Ukraine, 10-year-old Bohdana and her parents fled their home and sought safety in Poland.

While there, they received word that a neighbour’s house had burned down during intense fighting in the Kyiv region. They feared the worst for their own home. But when Bohdana’s father, Andrii, returned home, he was relieved to find the house damaged but still standing.

“At least there was hope for living here in the future,” Andrii says. “But everything was riddled with bullet holes and shrapnel. The wind was blowing through the house. The walls were shot through.”

UNHCR helped the family replace the doors and windows and fix the damaged roof and walls. Now Bohdana, a promising young musician, can practise piano safely at home – something that brings her peace.

“I am very happy that I can play,” she says. “When I hear some sad news on the TV, I play the piano and it calms me down.”

With your support, UNHCR has helped to repair 13,000 houses across Ukraine. With the opportunity to move back home safely, families can start rebuilding their lives and their communities. ■

» WITH YOUR HELP, UNHCR HAS ASSISTED:



6 MILLION PEOPLE in Ukraine since the war began



148,000 PEOPLE with shelter or housing support



2,900 PEOPLE affected by the Kakhovka Dam disaster



THE DIFFERENCE YOU MADE

Minara, a mother of two, is among the lucky few growing her own vegetables in Cox's Bazar, thanks to your generous support.

Giving hope to Rohingya refugees

YOU'RE HELPING REFUGEES PROVIDE FOR THEIR FAMILIES IN COX'S BAZAR, BANGLADESH

Your generous donations to our Rohingya Appeal are helping refugees feed their families and become more self-sufficient.

With space at a premium in the congested camps, Rohingya refugees are learning to grow food on their rooftops or on small patches of arable land.

This has been of vital importance in the wake of ration cuts, which have left refugees with just \$12 per month for food – or 40 cents per day.

Minara, a mother of two, is growing vegetables such as bitter melon, pumpkin and chilli. With this support, she doesn't have to depend solely on food vouchers.

"The cuts in food aid have affected everyone," Minara says. "I can at least supplement with the few vegetables that I grow here to feed my family. Others are not so lucky."

In the next camp over, 150 women are working at a jute factory supported by UNHCR. Most of these women are widowed or divorced and are now the heads of their families. They work four-hour shifts sewing products used in the camp and earn a stipend that helps them buy food and other essentials.

Bennu*, 32, is one of the factory workers. She lost contact with her husband when she fled Myanmar in 2017 with her parents and two young children. She gave birth to her third child after arriving in Cox's Bazar.

Bennu says the stipend means she can occasionally afford fish and sandals for her children.

"I have to take care of my children and provide for them. With the rations, we didn't get clothes or anything else, and even the food was not enough. I used to worry all the time about how I would feed my children."

While this work means women are more independent, they face another challenge: social stigma. Bennu says she ignores conventions about women working outside the home, for the sake of her family.

"What will I do if I listen to other people?" she says. "I can pay for things for my children, so that's what matters to me the most." ■

» WITH YOUR SUPPORT,
UNHCR IS PROVIDING:



THERAPEUTIC FOOD
for malnourished children



HYGIENE KITS with
sanitary pads, soap
and toothbrushes



**DISASTER RELIEF
KITS** with sleeping mats,
tarpaulins and aqua tabs



**EMERGENCY
RESPONSE TRAINING**
to help Rohingya
volunteers conduct
evacuations and
flood rescues



SKILLS TRAINING
to help refugees earn an
income in Cox's Bazar

Salim leads emergency response

Mohammed Salim Khan has been training emergency response volunteers in Cox's Bazar for five years. In this role, he teaches refugees how to deal with fires and floods. Salim is also a photographer, capturing the lives of his fellow Rohingya and striving to raise awareness of their plight. Here, he generously shares his story and a selection of photographs.

My name is Salim and I live in Cox's Bazar with almost one million other Rohingya people. We live here with few resources and are surviving with the limited food and items that humanitarian agencies are able to provide. Since we are living our lives in this way, when a fire happens then everything we have is gone. Fire and flood prevention is really important for us.

Firefighters and photographers in the camps are the most at danger as they are covering these emergencies on the frontline every time they happen. If a fire breaks out in one shelter, it will spread to the next 10 shelters. For example, earlier this year in Camp 11 around 3,000 shelters burned down. Refugees are then homeless and have to live with neighbours until repairs can be done.

I have been working as a trainer for five years. I have trained volunteers in 33 camps in firefighting and flood prevention. Tools are provided by UNHCR, including throw bags with rope for floods. Some site management volunteers use three-wheeler fire trucks with hoses and pumps, but more training, equipment, helmets and safety gear are needed.

Rohingya refugee photographers are also trying to show more about their lives through exhibitions in different places. A group of us shared our work in an exhibition on the theme of Rohingya women's empowerment. We also contribute to UNHCR's social media. Our hope is to share the reality about our refugee life. As a refugee this is hard to do with limited tools, but we have been doing our level best to continue showing our experience. ■



© Mohammed Karim



A community leader trained by Salim walks through Cox's Bazar.



© Mohammed Salim Khan



Fire drill training for volunteers.



© Mohammed Salim Khan

Ali Al-Ahmad, Zahida and their four children walk along the Guadalquivir River in Seville, southern Spain.

© UNHCR/Marc Revilla

Syrian earthquake survivors start over in Spain

Six months after losing everything in the devastating earthquakes that hit Syria and Türkiye, Ali Al-Ahmad's family is building a new life in Seville, Spain.

Ali was at home when the quakes struck early in the morning on 6 February. It had been 10 years since Ali, his wife, Zahida, and their four children fled Aleppo in Syria and found safety in Gaziantep, south-eastern Türkiye.

“In an instant, it was all gone,” says Ali. “It was terrifying. You felt like you could die at any moment. The building was shaking, people were screaming, but somehow I managed to gather the children and get them out.”

The quakes killed more than 55,000 people and left millions homeless in the middle of a harsh winter. Ali and his family huddled together in a tent for warmth. They had very little food.

Then, good news arrived over the phone.

“[UNHCR] told me that we had been selected for resettlement in Spain,” says Ali. “I looked around me. I saw my children and my wife. We had lost everything again, but there was hope for the future. To have someone reach out to you in that

situation and want to help you – it’s an incredible feeling.”

One month after the earthquakes, Ali and his family arrived in Spain on an emergency resettlement flight for earthquake-affected refugees.

Ali and his family are now living in a refugee reception centre and the children have started school. Although they have better prospects, they still face challenges.

“One of my sons still has nightmares and often wakes up screaming in the middle of the night,” says Ali.

Dedicated staff at the reception centre are providing psychological support and helping the family integrate into Spanish society. Ali is determined to learn Spanish and find a job so he can move his family into an apartment.

“Even though I’m getting old, I still have the heart and mind of a young man,” he says. “I’m determined to build here, to work and educate my children. I want to focus on my dreams and make them happen.” ■

“I looked around me. I saw my children and my wife. We had lost everything again, but there was hope for the future. To have someone reach out to you in that situation and want to help you – it’s an incredible feeling.”

» YOUR DONATIONS TO OUR SYRIA-TÜRKIYE EARTHQUAKE APPEAL HELPED PROVIDE:



2.9 million core relief items in Türkiye, including tents, sleeping bags and hygiene kits



183,650 people in Syria with survival essentials such as blankets, solar lamps and winter jackets



10,000 tents for earthquake survivors in north-west Syria



Cate Blanchett visits Renk transit centre, where refugees are seeking protection after fleeing violent clashes in Sudan.

> Nyauke, Kuoli and Naya travelled in the back of a truck for three days to escape Sudan.



© UNHCR/Hector Perez

Cate Blanchett speaks out on Sudan crisis

ACTOR AND UNHCR GOODWILL AMBASSADOR CATE BLANCHETT HAS APPEALED FOR URGENT ASSISTANCE AFTER MEETING WITH REFUGEES FLEEING CONFLICT IN SUDAN.

Cate recently travelled to South Sudan, where UNHCR teams are meeting new arrivals, assessing their needs and distributing emergency supplies such as sleeping mats, blankets and soap.

“It’s difficult to explain in words the scope and scale of the crisis here,” says Cate. “Thousands of people continue to arrive as conflict forces them to literally run for their lives. They are mostly women and children. They’ve witnessed unimaginable violence and they arrive with next to nothing.”

Conflict broke out between the Sudanese Armed Forces and the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces

in April. Since then, thousands have been killed and many more injured. Over five million people have been forced to flee, with most refugees seeking protection in Egypt, Chad or South Sudan.

The situation inside Sudan is dire. Communities are suffering from malnutrition and battling a measles outbreak. With healthcare facilities under attack and medical supplies running out, many more lives are at risk.

“Humanitarian needs are soaring,” says Cate. “Your support will provide life-saving relief. Please show compassion for displaced families who desperately need our help right now.”

“It’s difficult to explain in words the scope and scale of the crisis here. Thousands of people continue to arrive as conflict forces them to literally run for their lives.”

With your support, UNHCR can provide shelter and protection for families fleeing the conflict. We can also transport refugees to safer areas, reunite families and provide emergency cash assistance. ■

Visit unrefugees.org.au/sudanaid to donate or find out more.

Tim's run for refugees

Tim Ung and his family escaped war-torn Cambodia over 40 years ago. In August, he ran his second City2Surf, achieving a personal best time and raising over \$3,000 for refugees.

What was the situation for you and your family in Cambodia before you left?

The five-year civil war in Cambodia ended in April 1975 when Pol Pot's Khmer Rouge took power. Soon afterwards, the new regime sent residents of all the towns and cities to work in the countryside. I had just turned 13.

By the time the regime collapsed in January 1979, an estimated 1.5 million Cambodians (out of a population of seven million) had died. I lost my father, many brothers and numerous relatives.

Can you tell us about your journey to Australia?

My family first fled to Thailand. Unfortunately, Thai authorities could not cope with this sudden influx of refugees and decided to take drastic action. In June 1979, an estimated 45,000 refugees were rounded up, trucked across the country, and pushed back into live minefields in Cambodia. A bomb detonated about 10 metres from my family. We were shielded from harm only by other unfortunate victims. Thousands are estimated to have perished in the minefields.



© Australia for UNHCR



© Australia for UNHCR



Tim Ung celebrates at the City2Surf finish line.



Runners at the 2023 City2Surf.

After this incident, the United Nations, UNHCR and other humanitarian organisations reached an agreement with Thailand to provide safe havens for Cambodian refugees. Many camps were then set up along the border to house hundreds of thousands of refugees that continued to flee war and starvation in Cambodia. In January 1980, my family made our second attempt and successfully reached the safety of a refugee camp. We lived there for 10 months, surviving solely on food and water provided by UNHCR.

After our application for resettlement was approved, we were moved from the refugee camp to a holding centre. Then in December 1980 we travelled to Australia on an airplane. We didn't have a cent to our name.

What was it like resettling in Australia?

I worked in a factory for a few years and attended TAFE in the evenings. In 1986

I was able to secure a place at university and I graduated with an engineering degree in 1991. It was extremely difficult to study at such a high academic level with my limited knowledge of English. It was far from smooth sailing living in a new country, but I was able to reap the benefits of my hard work. Australia has given me many opportunities to improve my life.

When did you start running? What do you love about it?

I have always been involved in many sports but running was not on the list. I couldn't even run 100 metres without stopping. The COVID-19 lockdown changed all that. I needed to maintain my fitness and running was one of the few activities allowed outdoors. I progressed from short runs to five kilometres and then longer runs. Running has now become a wonderful way to improve my health and fitness.

I had heard of the City2Surf race for a long time but never thought I would be one of the participants. But now I love the festival-like atmosphere of big running events. There is no need to worry about the traffic, all I have to do is concentrate on running.

Why did you choose to fundraise for refugees?

I have been there. I was a refugee. I know our suffering all too well. I choose to support UNHCR because I want to give something back in return for the assistance that I received in the past. And this way I can also help others.

Why do you think Australians should support this cause?

For humanity. As Australians, we are in a position to assist people in time of hardship. Refugees are supposed to be protected by the 1951 Refugee Convention, yet many have been denied this protection. Our fair go culture should remind all Australians that those who seek our support and protection deserve to have their stories heard and assessed fairly.

Is there anything else you'd like supporters to know?

I would like to express one thousand heartfelt thanks to all supporters and donors. Every dollar raised will make a difference to someone's life. ■

In January 1980, my family made our second attempt and successfully reached the safety of a refugee camp. We lived there for 10 months, surviving solely on food and water provided by UNHCR.

**Feel inspired and ready to fundraise for refugees?
Visit teamunhcr.org.au to get started.**

In the community



© Supplied

▲ Uni travelled by kick scooter from Melbourne to Cairns.

» UNI'S RIDE FOR REFUGEES

Uni, a young Japanese traveller, has raised almost \$8,000 for refugees by riding a kick scooter all the way from Melbourne to Cairns while wearing a traditional Japanese kasa and carrying nothing but a backpack.

Uni started his trip in January and completed his 3,000km adventure in late May. He overcame several challenges along the way, including running out of water and becoming stranded by floods.

For Uni, the memorable stops far outweighed the hardships. He was grateful to the strangers who opened their homes to him and the connections he made, despite the language barrier.

"The most memorable place [was] Seymour [in Victoria]. It was the first time someone invited me to stay at their house," he said.

"I couldn't have any conversation with him because I didn't know any English. But we somehow built a connection. I didn't know any words to express my appreciation when I left his place. I could only say 'remember forever' but he started crying and so did I."

In Port Macquarie on the NSW North Coast, Uni met a Ukrainian family that had fled the war.

"I was inspired to raise funds for Australia for UNHCR when the family told me that they had no choice but to leave the country because of the war," said Uni.

"Their father was shot and is in the hospital, and I actually talked to him on a video call, and it really made me think. I learned about what it is like to be forced to flee your home. It was absolutely heartbreaking to hear."

Has Uni's adventure inspired you? Find out more about fundraising for refugees at teamunhcr.org.au ■

» SPOTLIGHT ON SPORTS THIS WORLD REFUGEE DAY

At our annual World Refugee Day lunch in June, 400 guests came together to honour refugees in Australia and around the world. The event raised vital funds to give refugees sporting equipment and facilities.

Keynote speakers included Olympic track athlete Bendere Oboya and her father, Opamo. Bendere came to Australia from Ethiopia as a young child and represented Australia at the Tokyo Olympics, competing in both the women's 400 metres and the women's 4 x 400 metre relay. Opamo spent five years in an Ethiopian gaol as a political prisoner and sought refuge in Australia to give his family a better life.

Guests also heard from Anyier Yuol, winner of the 2023 Australia for UNHCR – SBS Les Murray Award for Refugee Recognition.

Anyier was born in a refugee camp in Kenya and came to Australia at the age of 10. She excelled at football and represented Australia at the FIFA Football for Hope Festival in 2010. Anyier has also launched a beauty pageant for African-Australian women, started a charity providing education opportunities for marginalised people both in Australia and in refugee camps overseas, and is undertaking a PhD on bride price practices.

"I'm working to contribute to change one step at a time," said Anyier. ■

▼ Bendere Oboya and Anyier Yuol at our World Refugee Day event.



© Australia for UNHCR

»» FIFA WOMEN'S WORLD CUP

The 2023 FIFA Women's World Cup provided no shortage of exhilarating and unifying moments on the field. But there were game-changing moments off the field, too.

When the whistle blew at the start of the Colombia-Jamaica match, eight young Afghan footballers were watching from the stands.

FIFA invited children from refugee backgrounds to attend the match in Melbourne – the city they now call home. The young athletes are members of the Hope Australia Soccer Academy (HASA), a unique not-for-profit sports program run by former professional footballers from Brazil. It focuses on developing both football and life skills through mentoring.

"I've never been at a Women's World Cup before, so I was very impressed," said 15-year-old Farida. "Girls need to support each other."

Before the match, the HASA athletes enjoyed an all-access tour of the stadium. Generous sponsors also surprised the athletes with new tracksuits, which they proudly wore throughout the match.

"I'm inspired to play professional soccer in the future," said Nabi, 13, after the game. "I'm very inspired too as I want to play in the World Cup one day," added Jamil, 13. ■



Young refugee footballers at Melbourne Rectangular Stadium ahead of a Women's World Cup match.



Apsaras Arts Dance Company performs *Agathi: Refugee*.

»» DANCING FOR REFUGEES

In September, Apsaras Arts Dance Company performed *Agathi: Refugee* at NIDA Theatres to fundraise for UNHCR's life-changing work.

Through music, poetry and classical Indian dance, *Agathi* painted an intimate portrait of the lives and struggles of refugees. The production drew from Artistic Director Aravinth Kumarasamy's personal experiences as a Tamil refugee, as well as from poetry written by refugee children.

The Singaporean company used the Australian premiere of *Agathi* to fundraise for UNHCR's Primary Impact program, which aims to enrol 120,000 out-of-school refugee children in primary education in 14 countries. Primary Impact targets at-risk children including girls, children with disabilities, and children vulnerable to early marriage and child labour.

"*Refugee* is relevant to many parts of our world today, where many people are forced to be refugees," said Mr Kumarasamy. "Since its premiere in 2017, it was my desire to present this work in support of UNHCR and its work in aiding refugee children around the world." ■



Angela and Sam visit Australia for UNHCR's stall after completing the City2Surf.

»» CITY2SURF

More than 100 people joined Team UNHCR in this year's City2Surf race, raising over \$20,000 to provide refugees in crisis situations with shelter and protection.

Angela Moles and her 13-year-old son, Sam Bonser, have participated in the Sydney race for six years, combining their love of running with fundraising for refugees.

"The first time we ran, I had to hold Sam's hand most of the way," said Angela. "Now I can't keep up with him at all! We had a blast running it again this year."

Sam said he loves the sense of achievement he gets from a good training session. This year, he achieved a personal best time.

According to Angela, the race was also an opportunity to teach Sam about fundraising for important causes.

"I gave Sam a shortlist of three charities, explained a bit about each and let him choose," she said.

Sam ultimately chose to fundraise for Australia for UNHCR because he wanted to help refugee children.

"I found out that so many children were living in terrible conditions in refugee camps and I really wanted to help them," he said. "I just want to make life better for them." ■

Displaced families face another dangerous winter

REFUGEES AND DISPLACED PEOPLE WILL NEED EVEN GREATER SUPPORT WITH TEMPERATURES SET TO DROP WELL BELOW FREEZING IN THE NORTHERN HEMISPHERE.

Millions of people who've fled conflict or persecution in Ukraine, Afghanistan and across the Middle East are bracing for a dangerous winter ahead.

After months or years of displacement, many families have nothing left and are living in flimsy shelters or damaged homes. Soon, they will face difficult choices between food or warmth.

In Afghanistan, winter temperatures can plunge as low as minus 25 degrees Celsius, leaving many families exposed to the elements.

Shaima* lives in Bamyán province, which is the highest region in Afghanistan and also one of the coldest. People living there are used to harsh winters, but the most recent was the coldest in more than a decade.

For Shaima, it was particularly difficult because her family's carpet business was affected by the country's financial crisis following the Taliban takeover. Like many in the region, her family struggled to afford food or fuel to heat the home.

The situation is similar in parts of the Middle East, where many displaced Syrians and Iraqis will have to contend with extreme cold and snowstorms once again. Meanwhile, in Ukraine, many families are living in damaged homes or in buildings with disrupted energy, heating and water services – ill-suited to protect them from the biting cold.

Last winter, Olha fled her home in Dnipro with her eight-month-old son and travelled to neighbouring Poland. She'd given birth shortly after the war began and had initially been determined to remain behind in Ukraine with her husband.

"Life was getting harder and harder to bear," Olha says. "When winter arrived, it was especially hard. There was no heating or electricity in my city. The elevator was not working and I lived on the sixth floor. It is impossible to live in such conditions with a small child."

With your support, UNHCR can provide families with winter essentials such as warm clothing, thermal blankets and gas cylinders. Your donation can also provide winter cash assistance, helping the most vulnerable refugees purchase essentials such as food, medicine and heating. ■

Visit unrefugees.org.au/winterprep to donate or find out more.



“ When winter arrived, it was especially hard. There was no heating or electricity in my city. The elevator was not working and I lived on the sixth floor. It is impossible to live in such conditions with a small child. ”

– Olha, Ukrainian refugee



© UNHCR/Anna Liminowicz

▲
Olha, 27, left for Poland with her young son after winter became too difficult to bear in Ukraine.

◀
Shaima*, 66, with her two grandchildren in her small house in Afghanistan's Bamyán province.



© UNHCR/Julian Busch

» HOW UNHCR IS HELPING

UNHCR helps displaced families meet their most urgent needs during the coldest months of the year. Your generous donations provide warm winter clothing, thermal blankets, home repairs, solar panels and lamps, gas cylinders and cash assistance to cover other essential winter needs.



Winter survival kits for Afghan families, which include blankets, plastic tarpaulins, a gas cooker, jerry-cans, kitchenware, soap and sanitary products.



Winter cash assistance to help Syrian refugee families buy food, fuel and medicine.

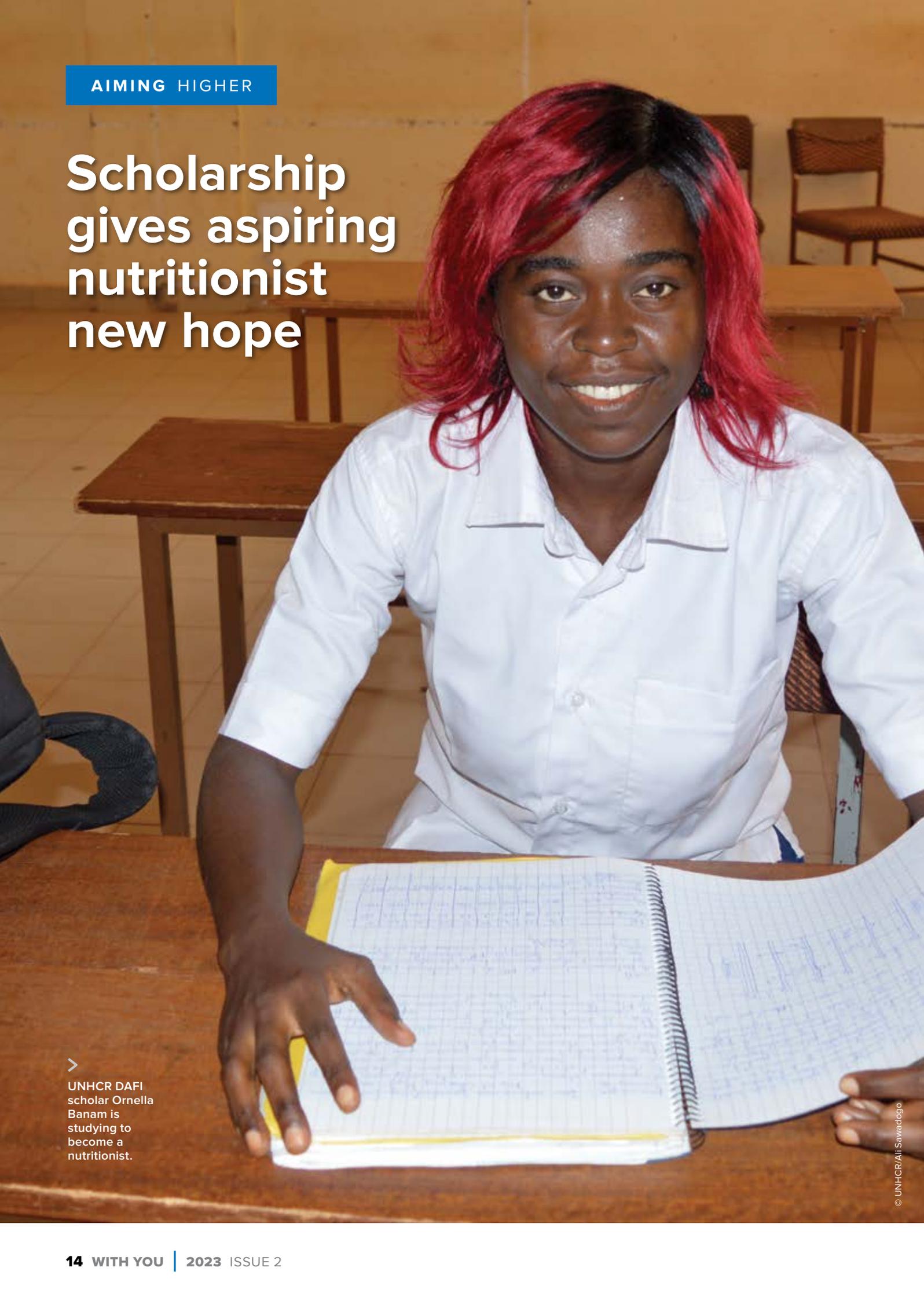


Home insulation assistance in Ukraine to protect families from wind, rain and snow.

*Name changed for protection reasons.

AIMING HIGHER

Scholarship gives aspiring nutritionist new hope



> UNHCR DAFI scholar Ornella Banam is studying to become a nutritionist.

© UNHCR/Alì Sawadogo

“

I saw my dream shattered, but thanks to this opportunity, I am newly optimistic.”

– UNHCR DAFI SCHOLAR
ORNELLA BANAM



ORNELLA BANAM, 30, IS DRIVEN BY A DESIRE TO HELP MALNOURISHED CHILDREN AROUND THE WORLD.

It's a cause that's close to her heart after growing up in a country where food is often in short supply.

Ornella fled her home country, Central African Republic, in 2014 after surviving a rebel assault at her local church.

She started a new life in Burkina Faso, where she was able to continue studying a nutrition degree. But when her father died two years later, she could no longer afford the fees and had to drop out of college.

Ornella was only able to return to higher education in 2021 with the support of a DAFI (Albert Einstein German Academic Refugee Initiative) scholarship provided by UNHCR. Unfortunately, there are far more applicants than scholarships available. Ornella was one of just 2,800 new students accepted from 16,000 applicants.

“This scholarship gave me back the hope I had lost five years earlier,” says Ornella. “I saw my dream shattered, but thanks to this opportunity, I am newly optimistic.”

“Malnutrition is the leading cause of infant mortality in the world, particularly in my country. I want to care for children suffering from malnutrition around the world.”

With the DAFI scholarship covering her tuition fees, rent and living expenses, Ornella is once again able to devote herself to her studies.

Students like Ornella are also receiving support directly from donors around the world – including Australians such as Dr Meredith Doig OAM.

◀ Dr Meredith Doig OAM mentored a refugee student using the Connecting Worlds app.

Dr Doig understands the life-changing impact higher education has on young women like Ornella.

Together with 10 other Australians, Dr Doig recently participated in a pilot program, mentoring a female refugee scholar for three months using the innovative Connecting Worlds app. The participants all donated \$4,950, which is enough to support a DAFI scholar for one year.

The Connecting Worlds app allows refugees and mentors to exchange messages and photos. With this connection, they can discuss ideas and share insight into their lives.

Dr Doig was matched with Mariam, a Syrian refugee and law student who lives with her mother and younger brother in Jordan.

“Mariam wanted to know what she could do to improve her CV as she aimed to pursue a career in international human rights law,” says Dr Doig.

“I suggested she get involved in extra-curricular activities wherever possible and look for ways to demonstrate her contribution. Employers are always looking for initiative.”

“It's been great to have that personal relationship with a young woman receiving support from UNHCR to succeed.”

For many displaced people, the costs associated with higher education are an insurmountable obstacle to achieving their goals.

Through the Aiming Higher initiative, UNHCR is providing more scholarships to empower refugees to earn a bachelor's degree and build better futures. ■

To learn more about mentoring refugees through Connecting Worlds, please contact Aylin Salt on (02) 9276 6871 or email ASalt@unrefugees.org.au

Sarah Nielsen as a child, with her father.



GIFTS IN WILLS

Sarah Nielsen on her father's life and legacy

John Nielsen was a farmer, teacher and conservationist who felt a strong responsibility to help others who were less fortunate. His daughter, Sarah, shares the story of her father's remarkable life and why he chose to support refugees with a gift in his Will.

My father, John, lived in Creightons Creek outside Euroa in country Victoria, where he had bought his farm in 1969.

He grew up in Melbourne and studied biology and science at Melbourne Uni in the 1960s and trained as a teacher. Alongside farming, which was a very unreliable income, he taught science at Euroa High School for many years.

He was passionate about the natural environment and about creating and preserving habitat for native animals. He planted thousands of trees after careful research about what species would be best to encourage and maintain optimal habitats for local birds and mammals.

He was an avid naturalist and birdwatcher, and read extensively on the topics of plants, birds and reptiles. His knowledge of Australian wildlife was vast.

I think Dad was very aware of how fortunate he was to live in Australia. To have been born in a prosperous and beautiful country, with excellent education, healthcare and a stable democratic government.

As kids, he taught us the importance of gratitude, hard

work and, probably above all else, caring for the environment. He was conscious of his privilege and, at the same time, aware that many others are not so fortunate.

I think this was the basis for his extraordinary charitable giving throughout his life, but particularly in the large bequests left in his Will.

He left bequests to a number of charities close to his heart, including, of course, Australia for UNHCR.

I am sure that Dad felt that we have a responsibility to support and help refugees who often are fleeing war, famine and the most awful and tragic circumstances of their birth country.

It could be us, he would say, but we are lucky that it's not. And we have to help them. ■

How do you want to be remembered? You can ensure your values live on by leaving a gift in your Will, like John. For more information, please contact our Planned Giving Manager, Aylin Salt, on (02) 9276 6871 or ASalt@unrefugees.org.au



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