



Society for Humanitarian Solidarity (SHS)

Nansen Award Gives New Opportunities
To Refugee School Children



Introduction:

Society for Humanitarian Solidarity (SHS) is a nongovernmental organization dedicated to humanitarian work in Yemen. SHS provides protection and lifesaving assistance to refugees as well Yemenis in need without differentiation. Over the past 17 years the committed staff of SHS, often working in challenging and under hardship conditions, have assisted tens of thousands of refugees, asylum seekers and migrants that have arrived along the shores of Yemen. The work is crucial but carries great risk. In October 2009 an SHS colleague died performing his duty, saving the lives of desperate and exhausted refugees and migrants arriving at the coast. Nevertheless, SHS perseveres, covering hundreds of kilometres of the Gulf of Aden coastline to ensure that those who most need help and protection are able to receive it

In September 2011, António Guterres, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, announced SHS as the winner of the 2011 Nansen Refugee Award. This was a great honour for the colleagues of SHS who appreciate recognition of the enormous work and sacrifices they have made on behalf of refugees. SHS extends its sincere thanks to the High Commissioner and the Nansen Refugee Award Committee, and will continue to perform in the highest tradition to provide assistance to refugees whenever and wherever they are found.

The Nansen Refugee Award Prize

As a Nansen Award winner, SHS received a commemorative medal and a 100,000 US dollars monetary prize provided by the governments of Switzerland and Norway. Upon receiving the award SHS set out to address the needs of the growing refugee population in Yemen and consulted with the refugee community and UNHCR's Sub Office in Aden on how to best utilize the proceeds

Discussions held with the refugees on a project for the Nansen Refugee Award .



New Primary School in Kharaz Refugee Camp

Yemen hosts over 225,000 refugees and continues to receive an unprecedented influx of people fleeing from across the Arabian and Red Sea in search of safety, protection and economic opportunities. Kharaz Refugee Camp, in Lahj Governorate, has over 19,500 (predominately Somali) refugees and the camp population has been increasing.

There are some 3,700 students attending primary school in the camp, with an enrolment rate of 86 per cent. In cooperation with the refugee community and UNHCR, SHS decided to devote the proceeds of the Nansen Refugee Award towards the needs of the growing population in Kharaz camp. As such, SHS has built a second primary school in the camp to ensure that every child has access to education in order to reach their potential in life.

The new primary school has six classrooms accommodating 350 children, a room for teachers and bathrooms. The school reduces classroom overcrowding in the lower grades and shortens the distance many young children must walk, sometimes in temperatures of 45 degrees Celsius. .



Mr. Nasser Bajanoub(left)

Mr. Bashir Khan (right)

Finalizing project for the Nansen Refugee Award

Once the project was agreed upon, SHS immediately commenced with the aim of completing construction in time so the school could be used in the approaching school year. In July 2012 SHS finished building and furnished the school and all its classrooms, administration office, washrooms and the morning assembly yard.

The new Refugee Primary School



The opening ceremony was held on 18 July 2012 and was attended by representatives of UNHCR and Save the Children, as well as the parents and children.

Opening Ceremony



The start of the school year in the new Refugee Primary School

The school year will begin on 1 October and in the new Refugee Primary school some 350 students will attend classes. The pupils and their parents are all pleased by this great success of the new school.

Students in Kharaz camp



On behalf of the students SHS would like to express appreciation to UNHCR's office in Geneva and the Nansen Refugee Award Committee for the support and the prize which is providing a phenomenal benefit for refugees in Kharaz camp.

Testimonies

Mr. Bashir Khan, Head of UNHCR Sub-office Aden

Society for Humanitarian Solidarity (SHS) is a valued partner of UNHCR and since 1995 has been sharing in the crucial responsibilities of providing protection and lifesaving assistance to refugees and asylum seekers along the Arabian Sea coast line and throughout the south. SHS received the Nansen award in 2011 in recognition of their overwhelming contribution and dedication to the welfare of refugees. The new school that SHS has built with the Nansen Refugee Award prize is already providing a real benefit for both student and their families as it has helped to reduce overcrowding in the classrooms and has shortened the distance students have to travel to go to school. I applaud SHS for the great contribution they have made in improving the quality of education and in the lives of the refugees in the camp.



Mr. Jawad Al-Mouqbily, Save the Children Representative in Kharaz Refugee Camp

Having a school within the blocks of the Kharaz refugee camp was one of the strategic goals for improving school attendance. Save the Children, as a responsible partner of UNHCR's for the education sector in the camp believes that the new school built by SHS through the Nansen Award is a great investment for future of the children and the overall refugee community. Save the Children takes this opportunity to thank SHS and its management for utilizing the award in the right direction.



Sheikha Fatma, Refugees Tribal Leader

We would like to thank UNHCR for its continuous support of the refugees and thank SHS, the pioneer in providing humanitarian aid to the refugees, for its efforts on building and furnishing this primary school in the centre of the camp.

This has solved the problems of overcrowded classrooms and long distances to school that we and our children had faced.





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