

UNITED NATIONS
HIGH COMMISSIONER
FOR REFUGEES
Representation in Israel



האומות המאוחדות
הנציבות העליונה לפליטים
הנציגות בישראל

NATIONS UNIES
HAUT-COMMISSARIAT
POUR LES RÉFUGIÉS
Représentation en Israël

April 13, 2016

HCR-29

Dear Mr. Lomas,

I would like to thank you for sharing with us the update on the South Sudanese youth, previously asylum seekers who enjoyed protection in Israel, now being educated in Uganda. It is very touching to see, in the first film, these youth converse with each other in Hebrew and self-identify as Israeli. The account portrayed in the second film is equally extraordinary in its own way, depicting the South Sudanese students sharing their knowledge of Hebrew and Israeli culture with Ugandans who self-identify as Jews. Providing instruction ranging from prayer to dance, one can see the transfer of knowledge accompanied by emotional bonding between these two communities. One can imagine that the students, giving rather than receiving, learned and gained as much as the native Ugandan community. The multiple displacement and altered sense of home and personal identity must be rather disorienting for these youth, yet they reflect warmth, generosity and emotional intelligence.

We take the opportunity to wish you success in your collaborative project in California. Maintaining education for these youth and building on links with origin communities in Uganda will continue to change lives. It is equally important that links are maintained with the Israeli community, both the donors who have so generously assisted in this effort, as well as others who only learn about this diaspora through your outreach.

Your films serve to humanize the refugee issue and in this way promote understanding for current asylum-seekers who often face resistance from both authorities and host communities. Your projects also provide a window into the struggles and successes of these unaccompanied youths after departure from Israel where they enjoyed protection for most of their childhood. By creating understanding you enhance respect and the ongoing need for further support, easing life for many more than those depicted in the films.

Yours faithfully,

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