

I AM A



Creating a brighter future for Somalia  
[www.IAmAStar.org](http://www.IAmAStar.org)

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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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# New Somalia Famine Relief Campaign, I AM A STAR, Redefines ‘Star Power’ with Fresh, Creative Approach

## Groundbreaking DIY Platform Gives Everyone a Chance to Shine for Somalia; Thousands Around the World Take Action at IAMASTAR.org

Minneapolis, Minn. (October 13, 2011)—People around the globe are leading an innovative effort to meet the Famine in Somalia head-on with a groundswell of powerful action. **“I AM A STAR” is a new collaborative platform that brings together Somali Diaspora communities from around the globe, aid workers on the ground in Somalia, and people across the world.**

“I AM A STAR addresses Famine relief in a fresh and uplifting way,” said Daniel Wordsworth, President of the American Refugee Committee. “It’s rooted in the Somali Diaspora community’s leadership and passion for change and the American Refugee Committee’s experience and expertise—and it makes room for the solidarity and creativity of motivated people everywhere.”

A number of **Somali artists are leading as creative partners** in developing I AM A STAR, including:

- fashion designers Ayaan and Idyl Mohallim from [Mataano](#);
- musicians Siham and Iman Hashi from the band [Sweet Rush](#);
- [Chef Roble Ali](#), a chef who will be featured on “Roble and Co.,” a new show which will air on Bravo network; and
- [Poet Nation](#), a Minnesota based Somali art and culture hub that engages youth from around the world.

The **“do-it-yourself” (DIY) campaign inspires people to get involved** at the local level, in any way they choose, to help provide Famine relief and shine a light on Somali culture and people. I AM A STAR is a message of solidarity and of human potential—and **people from around the world are already stepping forward to “Be a Star” for Somalia**, including:

- Kids from suburban Minneapolis who raised funds for Famine relief by painting rocks from their backyard and selling them;
- A Somali-American doctor from San Diego who recently spent 3 weeks volunteering in a hospital in Mogadishu;
- A Somali-American student in Columbus, Ohio, who organized a bake sale at her school to support Famine relief;
- A group of Somali-American students from Minnesota that hosted car washes and other fundraising activities and raised \$11,000 to support Somali relief efforts;
- A group of college students who organized “Run to Unite”, a 5K Run/Walk which will take place on October 16;

- Congolese refugees living in a refugee camp in Rwanda who are painting an “I AM A STAR” mural in the camp; and
- Employees at a global money wiring service with offices in 500 locations around the world—from Dubai to Kenya to Somalia to the U.S.—who are wearing I AM A STAR T-shirts to support the campaign.

Leading technology, innovation, and grassroots mobilizing groups designed the I AM A STAR platform to unite, inspire, and empower people from around the globe:

- [IDEO](#), the global innovation and design firm, designed the campaign;
- [Pivotal Labs](#), the software company which designed Twitter, provided digital development along with Heroku;
- [Music for Relief](#), which has organized musicians and their fans worldwide to support international humanitarian causes, is providing support; and
- [4Real](#), which works to make change around the world and airs a series on the National Geographic Channel, is helping tell the story of the campaign.

I AM A STAR serves as a springboard for inspiration and action. **Unlike traditional campaigns, I AM A STAR is starting a conversation that will be owned and directed by participants** through:

- An interactive [website \(www.IAMASTAR.org\)](http://www.IAMASTAR.org), which provides a collaborative platform for people to come up with their own ways to shine and offers dozens of suggestions for how anyone can “Be A Star for Somalia”— from Tweeting or blogging, to organizing a car wash, bake sale or flash mob, to lobbying world leaders or volunteering. The site offers resources to learn about the crisis in Somalia and the impact of relief efforts;
- A [video](#), which features members of the Somali Diaspora and others who have taken action to help Somalia—as well as footage of relief efforts led by ARC in Mogadishu;
- [Social networking](#), which connects people in a learning and sharing community and serves as a platform to take action to both support and be inspired by people from around the world; and
- Events such as cook-offs, educational forums, and car washes which bring people together in places such as Denmark, Dubai, and the United States to support people in Somalia who are struggling to survive.

The I AM A STAR campaign is building on the momentum of the many young members of the Somali Diaspora who have taken action. **Already, their work has been highlighted by Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton. U2’s Bono has also drawn attention to the campaign.** Word of I AM A STAR is spreading via social media, with blue stars popping up as profile pictures, and “I AM A STAR” emblazoned on Facebook walls and Twitter feeds.

The campaign’s STAR imagery draws on the flag of Somalia—a single white star of unity on a field of blue. Members of the Somali Diaspora and everyday citizens from around the world are featured throughout the campaign, each holding a sign with a blue star and proclaiming, “I am a star!”

**The number of people affected by the Famine in Somalia is staggering, and I AM A STAR connects people to the impact of relief efforts on the ground.** Relief teams from the American Refugee Committee are assisting people in Mogadishu and other parts of Somalia, providing clean water, latrines, health care, and other life-saving support. ARC is also supporting Benadir Mother and Child Hospital in Mogadishu—the situation there is dire. On average, staff receives 150 to 200 sick children each day. And every day, they see children die of preventable causes. The I AM A STAR website features firsthand-perspective videos from aid workers who have been on the ground recently providing relief.

I AM A STAR also highlights the culture of Somalia—a nation of poets, artists, mothers, fathers, children, innovators, farmers, businesspeople...human beings. A set of short videos feature members of the Somali Diaspora, who have family in Somalia, sharing their cultural traditions and hopes for the future of Somalia.

I AM A STAR is working to create a vibrant community of action, and to inspire other people to join in taking action for Somalia. The magnitude of the Famine crisis requires everyone to give their best and demands our action and our creativity. While visitors to the site are primarily encouraged to participate in the movement, they can also make a donation to the Somalia relief effort.

To join in the campaign, visit [www.IAmAStar.org](http://www.IAmAStar.org). Check out the video and see how you can participate.

**ABOUT THE AMERICAN REFUGEE COMMITTEE:**

American Refugee Committee programs are built from the ground up. We work with people at the most vulnerable points in their lives, when they have lost everything to war or disaster. They let us know what they need most, and we work together to develop ways to help them get it. Our programs are as diverse as the people we serve, but they all work together for the same goal: to help people take back control of their lives. We have worked with refugees around the world for more than 30 years, and we help nearly 2.5 million people a year. We are partnering with the Somali Diaspora community to strengthen community in the U.S. while addressing the humanitarian crisis in Somalia. We are based in Minneapolis, MN. To learn more, visit [www.ARCrelief.org](http://www.ARCrelief.org).

## CREATIVE PARTNERS INVOLVED IN “I AM A STAR” CAMPAIGN:

- [Mataano](#)—Somali-American fashion designers Ayaan and Idyl Mohallim, who were recently featured on *Oprah*.
- [Sweet Rush](#)—first female Somalis to be signed to a major U.S. record label.
- [IDEO](#)—award-winning global design firm that takes a human-centered, design-based approach to helping organizations in the public and private sectors innovate and grow.
- [Music for Relief](#)—grassroots effort comprised of musicians, music industry professionals, and fans who work together to create positive change, support disaster relief, and reduce global warming.
- [4REAL](#)—connects people, projects and tools to make change real around the world; the series airs on National Geographic Channel.
- [Abdi Roble](#)—renowned Somali-American photographer who documented the lives of the Somali Diaspora around the world through the Somali Documentary Project.
- [Chef Roble Ali](#)—New York-based Somali-American chef who will be featured on “Roble and Co.”, a new show which will air on Bravo network.
- [Poet Nation](#)—Somali art and culture hub that engages youth from around the world through poetry, music, and story-telling.

## COMMUNITY ADVISORS:

- Internally Displaced Somalis Advisory Council—A group of Somali professionals that has counseled the American Refugee Committee on its efforts to build community in the U.S. and in Somalia.
- [Step UP For Somalia](#)—Canada-based group which organized a four-day walk for Famine relief; the walk began an international movement of support for Somalia.
- [Somali Student Association/University of Minnesota](#)—Student group which connects Somali students and intellectuals, encourages high school students to seek higher education, and promotes Somali culture.
- [Hope to End Hunger](#)—A group of Somali-American students who organized fundraisers to support Famine relief.

## SUPPORT:

- Website/digital development: [Pivotal Labs](#) (the software firm that designed Twitter) and Heroku.



## PHOTOGRAPHS



College students organized “Run to Unite”—a 5K Run/Walk to raise funds for Somalia Famine relief.



These kids gathered, painted, and sold rocks door-to-door to raise funds for Famine relief.

## PHOTOGRAPHS



Inspired by the Canada-based group Step UP for Somalia, people around the world participated in Walks for Famine relief.



Somali-American students raised funds by washing cars and hosting bake sales to help—and raised more than \$11,000.

## PHOTOGRAPHS



These women organized a Famine relief dinner for Somalia.



Dr Ismail—a Somali-American doctor—volunteered in a children’s hospital in Mogadishu, Somalia.

# I AM A ★

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BE A STAR: **RIGHT NOW** WITH YOUR FRIENDS IN A BIG WAY

## ORGANIZE A TEA PARTY

# 196

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I WANT TO DO THIS

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[IAmAStar.org](http://IAmAStar.org)

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Disaster Relief · Minneapolis, Minnesota

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**I Am a Star for Somalia**

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