

## Education means of escape from refugee camp

Story by Rob Rombouts

Photo by Blackbird Photography



For **Abdikarim Hussein Osman** (Abdi), education wasn't just something he wanted to do -- it was something he had to do.

For Abdi, education was his pathway out of the refugee camp where he spent his childhood.

Abdi was born in Somalia in 1990. Fleeing the civil war that broke out in 1991, Abdi's family ended up in a refugee camp in Kenya. Abdi excelled in primary and secondary school, where he discovered the [World University Service of Canada](#) (WUSC) program. Supported by university students across Canada, WUSC gives scholarships to international students, allowing them to attend Canadian universities.

One of Abdi's teachers received a scholarship from the group and Abdi made it his goal to qualify for WUSC funding, too. This meant passing a strenuous English language test. It also meant having to teach himself chemistry.

But he persevered and is now in the second year of Laurier's four-year health studies program. He has plans to apply for a Masters in Epidemiology and wants to take his knowledge, both academic and personal, to work with the World Health Organization or the Canadian government to help address the needs of people living in refugee camps.

Abdi's move to Canada has not been without challenges, but he found a lot of help from the Brantford community, including Brantford Laurier students, the [YMCA Immigrant Settlement Services](#) and the [Brantford Mosque](#). Abdi's drive for education has led him to a new country, away from his family and the world he grew up in, but it has given him a goal in life.

"I am committed to education. It's what keeps my life going," said Abdi. "It's the only way to be a good person; it will change my life and the lives of others."

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*Education Works Alliance is a community group dedicated to building prosperity through training, education and lifelong learning. The group's mandate is to raise the education, literacy and skill levels of Grand Erie residents, in order to broaden opportunities for employments and economic development. For more information visit [www.educationworks.ca](http://www.educationworks.ca)*