

The importance of education in rebuilding survivors and their children born of rape

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« The majority of victims of sexual violence cannot afford to provide their children with an education »

It is more than 20 years since the brutal terrorist group the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) stopped committing atrocities in northern Uganda. Yet the scars left by these crimes remain on survivors, and these cannot be erased.

There is a need to support survivors of sexual violence. They need to be involved in every project so that they can speak out and, in turn, fully support their survivor sisters. Medical care must be provided. Some victims have also been shot, the effects of which continues to poison their bodies. Others need artificial limbs because they were blown up by mines during the LRA war.

The survivors of Golden Women Vision in Uganda would like to sincerely thank Her Royal Highness and Stand Speak Rise Up! for saving our lives during the pandemic. Being vulnerable as we are, we thought we would not survive. Even finding food and soap to protect ourselves was a big challenge. We lost two of the members of Golden Women Vision in Uganda during Covid-19. I explained to Her Royal Highness on the phone with great emotion that

we had no food, and that even a piece of soap had become very expensive. Thanks to Her, the Stand Speak Rise Up! soap project and the donation of water cans, we were able to help other vulnerable people and we saved thousands of lives.

I see from my experience as a survivor that victims of war and sexual violence are still stigmatised in different communities. Most survivors of war and sexual violence spent most of their lives in the jungle. When some of them returned from captivity with their children born of rebel rape, they found it difficult to meet the needs of these children. A few have started school thanks to the savings the village has made as part of the Stand Speak Rise Up! soap factory project. However, **the majority of victims of sexual violence cannot afford to provide their children with an education.**

Yet these are the children who could be our heroes and great thinkers. They could bring great development to our countries and help their mothers to grow old in the best possible conditions.



HRH the Grand Duchess with survivors during the Stand Speak Rise Up! forum in 2019