



Sylvia Acan at the Stand Speak Rise Up! gala in 2019

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

SYLVIA ACAN

SURVIVOR, MEMBER OF THE SEMA NETWORK IN UGANDA, PRESIDENT OF GOLDEN WOMEN VISION UGANDA

It's more than 20 years since the terrorist notorious brutal rebels of the LRA stopped carrying out atrocities in northern Uganda but left the War/sgbv survivors with scars that can't be erased.

More than 20 years of the insurgency in northern Uganda has left terrible legacy of poverty and diseases but at least there is fair peace.

War/SGBV victims still face stigma in different communities. When some of them came back from captivity with their children born out of rape by the rebels, they faced difficulties in meeting the needs of these children as they are now growing few of them started schooling through the village savings of the soap factory project that was initiated by Stand Speak Rise Up! but the majority of WAR/sgbv survivors can't afford to pay them to go to school and scars of LRA, its brutality still felt in Uganda SGBV survivors were gang raped, Forced to serve as soldiers, porters baby sitters while in captivity.

The fact that you have been abducted will never be erased from one's life and **as a survivor myself I always feel strong and have hope to live again when I find myself helping and becoming a voice for the voiceless.**

I am inspired by the resilience and resourcefulness of the people of northern Uganda despite the worst condition they had over two decades. Talking about personal experience as a victim, the victims still decide on suicidal case related to stigma and discrimination because I still see the trauma are still increasing day by day simply because of being a victim of war/SGBV.

There's need to involve survivors in any engagement/meetings so that they can speak out and also support the survivors' organisations so that they can support fully their fellow SGBV survivors.

There is need for medical insurance for all the survivors who are sick because some of them had bullets in them which is becoming a poison to their bodies. While others need artificial limbs because they were hit by the land and foot mines during the war of the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA)

Also yearly we mobilize, invite people to attend the event on interfaith march for peace and justice as we request for peace to be prevailed on earth.

In this, I would like to sincerely thank Stand Speak Rise Up! with the initiative from Her Royal Highness the Grand Duchess of Luxembourg for the great kind heart that she has for the survivors of the conflict related SGBV survivors in Uganda.

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

We lost two lives from the members of Golden Women Vision Uganda during the covid-19 crisis, GBV was also at a rise and as a result of food/hunger but fortunately when I cried out on the phone to Her Royal Highness, I wrote to her that we (survivors) did not have what to eat, even a piece of soap had become very expensive of which the survivors still need life and we could not afford to buy even one yet we are to follow the standard operating procedures from the request made by the ministry of health and that is when you want to protect your life, meetings and for the rest. Life became very difficult as transport were also burned, limited number of people in a meeting so vulnerable as we (survivors) live were in danger.

The survivors of Golden Women Vision in Uganda would like to sincerely thank Stand Speak Rise Up!, Her Royal Highness, for saving our lives during the pandemic because vulnerable as we are, we thought we were not going to survive since getting food to feed on and soap for protection was a great challenge.

We were able to support the fellow vulnerable ones with food and saved thousands of lives through the soap project and donation of water canes.

Your Royal Highness, you mean a lot to me and the entire survivors community!!! you are my life, you saved many lives during the pandemic in Uganda you made me to live and shine again, you made me happy and forget about the misery about my parents now am remembered by my fellow survivors and the entire communities for the great support that you gave and more so, your encouraging words and commitment of supporting the survivors and their organisations in all this, have made me to have hope to live again. As survivors of the war/SGBV, many of us came back with the children born from rape while in captivity and communities.

Most of the war/SGBV survivors spent most of their lives in the jungle and came back with these children and they now face a lots of challenges because their mothers can't afford to pay them to go school and yet these are the children who might be our hero and great thinkers who might bring great development to our countries and as well help their mothers as they grow old while their mothers also need to be empowered so they keep on banging my door of office seeking for support.

I am so honoured and excited to speak about this as a survivor.