




# *wholehearted*

Encountering Joy Becoming Free

*“Our dream is that one day this place of deep brokenness, would be a place where God is lifted up and glorified. Where joy sings louder than pain, where hope brings life to every heart. We dream of roads that lead girls out of exploitation and into lasting freedom. We dream of shackles falling and girls rising to become leaders in their communities, loving mothers to their children, and ones who bring change to the darkness they once endured.”*



*When you hear the words ‘South Sudan’, what comes to mind?*

It is easy to think of a place associated with problems, difficulties and hardship and this is especially true for the vulnerable women of South Sudan. But perhaps least noticed are the many young women and girls that are sexually exploited or trafficked. The stories we hear from young girls living in the brothels in Juba are harrowing.

Stories of becoming orphaned at a young age through war and poverty. Tales of violence by relatives and forced marriages to abusive men. Youth who, in trying to escape one set of horrors, find themselves in a new city vulnerable to exploitation and rape and struggling with disease and hunger.

*...In their attempts to find freedom,  
the chains grow...*

For many, the safest path, the only option seemingly, is to join other girls in a brothel, to sell themselves to multiple men every day in the hopes of surviving.

The family ties are further severed as some risk death if their families were to find out what they do to survive. The poverty is stark, most unable to afford even basic necessities. The abuse they endure has new faces but does the same damage to body and spirit with violence and degradation heaped on them from buyers, other women and corrupt authorities.

*In a country where women have very little value, . . .*

it’s hard to imagine any real avenue of escape for them. Turning to alcohol or drugs to survive their harsh day to day realities, they are left with addiction problems, no marketable skills, minimal education, little to no self worth and no other options.



Imagine . . .

being 13 years old, still a child yet about to be forced into marriage to a much older man you barely know. You've heard stories about his temper and you are terrified. You run away from the village you have never left before and end up in the city with no work prospects, nowhere to live and no way of surviving. You sell discarded bottles to get food. You are forced to sleep on the street where men do whatever they wish with you. They don't even care that you're still a child.

Every day as darkness falls, fear takes over. So when you meet a girl who describes a group of others like you and invites you to join them you take the offer and move to the brothel. Surrounded by others you are less alone, but now to survive, you sell yourself to several men a day.

At first it seems preferable to life as a slave to an older man, or being exploited on the street with nothing in return. But soon the violence you endure increases. Fights with drunk women cause wounds that don't heal. Police demand the use of your body under threat. Buyers hurl insults as they exploit you. Disease comes, making you weaker and weaker, but medical care is far away and expensive. Even if you had the means, all hope is gone. There is little will to live another day. After all, maybe this is God's punishment, exactly what you deserve.



*Each girl we meet has a unique story of what led her to the brothel and what keeps her there. But the end result is the same - deep deep pain and a desperate need for hope, healing, change and transformation.*

## What can WE do about it? . . .

Wholehearted believes that restoration and freedom is possible. We offer a holistic approach taking into account the physical, social, spiritual and psychological needs of these women and girls. We offer vocational training, skills training, counselling, trauma care, discipleship and basic medical care. Our dream is that one day this place of deep brokenness, would be a place where God is lifted up and glorified. Where joy sings louder than pain, where hope brings life to every heart. We dream of roads that lead girls out of exploitation and into lasting freedom. We dream of shackles falling and girls rising to become leaders in their communities, loving mothers to their children, and ones who bring change to the darkness they once endured.



But we can't do this on our own! The rehabilitation of just one of these girls takes a large investment. Your support can provide love and friendship through our team, training in vocational and life skills, and trauma healing and discipleship. You may not be able to be here physically, but you can help some of these girls enter into a new life of wholeness in Christ through supporting Wholehearted. If you would like to support this ministry, here's how you can!

You can give directly via our ACROSS Kenya bank account: Stanbic Bank; West Yat Business Centre, Airport Rd;  
Account Name: ACROSS; Account Number: 0200000139873; Currency USD; Swift Code: SBICKENX

Please make sure that you put "WHOLEHEARTED" in the payment reference!

Or you can contact us at: [wholehearted@across-ssd.org](mailto:wholehearted@across-ssd.org) for further help. Thanks so much for your support!



*'Wholehearted' is an affiliated ministry under the department of Transformation Leadership Church and Community Engagement (TLCCE) of ACROSS South Sudan.*

*Photos on page 1 and 3 taken by Amy van Oudenaren, Photo on page 2 by LuAnne Cadd, Mission Aviation Fellowship (MAF)*