

Movie review on war dance in uganda

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War dance is a documentary that highlights the plight of children and families affected by the war in northern Uganda. The most affected group are the Acholi's who are currently still under the threat of war. It is rather unfortunate that various families were forced to flee their homes and are now in government guarded refugee camps. Some years back, bandits attacked their homes, killed their parents and took young men and women captive. Children were never spared in the abduction as many were also taken to the bushes to serve as child soldiers. The movie highlights some of the stigma that the children struggle with. Many of them had to watch their parents being killed helplessly while others were made to see heads of their killed parents. Children were also forced to kill without having to show remorse or pity. Despite the issues that the Acholi have had to go through, the government seems not to do much to enhance security in the north. People from the north are instead ridiculed and called all sorts of names. They are generalised as bandits and murderers and less considered as Ugandan citizens.

This is a breathtaking film that is full of sad tales of children who are trying hard to find meaning in a rather tough condition. They live in camps that are rather crowded with limited resources. Their only hope is in their tradition which reminds them of the fact that they once had a home and a complete family. Children, most of them orphaned by the wars live with deep scars and traumatic conditions. Just as they say, 'no one can know their story unless they tell it'. It is rather unfortunate that many of them live with untold stories of how they saw their parents and siblings being killed and harassed by the bandits who were heartless. It is difficult to imagine that people can

be so hurtles that they make innocent children to commit murder or expose them to images that are likely to haunt them the rest of their lives. Despite the fact that the camp is securely guarded by the government, there is fear that the bandits may attack again.

Amidst the hopeless situation at the camp, the children have no otherwise but to move on with their lives. Their hope is the education they receive which they believe will one day enable them mount to higher heights and enable them be a blessing to the Acholi community. From their tales, we realise that the only hope that keeps them going is that one day; they will succeed to bring pride to their community. Their determination is revealed in their school co-curricular activities where they perform dance and music.

Due to their economic conditions and the environment they live in, most of them have never been to the Ugandan capital. They may have probably have heard of the good things in the city and have always dreamt of going there. It is mainly for this purpose that their teachers encourage them to work hard in their cultural performance which is the only hope for them to go to Kampala.

It is the excitement that comes with being in the capital city that is mainly associated with the rich that motivates the children to work harder. They however recognize the fact that for them to make it in the national performance, it will be a miracle. This is associated with their impoverished living conditions that limit them from accessing the vital resources. They are also discriminated against because of the perception that people have against them. Even though they are victims of war, they are considered to be real warriors with the ability of killing. This was even observed when the

children were just about to perform at the national festivals. They were looked down upon by other children who branded them failures even before they performed.

I find 'war dance' to be one of the most touching stories told of the plight of children orphaned by the war. There is a lot that still needs to be done for the children to ensure a bright future for them. Most of them suffer psychological turmoil because of what they were made to see and experience. Such memories may be difficult to erase but with support, the children can live normal lives. The focus of the film was mainly on the dance and how it rejuvenates the children by helping them forget their predicament. What I however consider vital is psychological counselling that is vital in helping the children manage and overcome their condition. From the film, we realise that the children have not yet had an avenue where they can share their exact experiences and obtain psychological help. It is not just enough to cover up their predicament but to share it and know how they can accept and appreciate life afresh.

One important lesson I learned from watching the documentary are the things we take for granted on a daily basis. The human nature is fond of complaining and not appreciating some of the good things that come with life. We tend to ignore the fact that there are many people around us who are not craving for the pleasures of life but rather a peaceful environment. There are currently children born and living in camps who do not know what it means to have a home. The refugee camp has become their home and they have to rely on humanitarian aid. As we enjoy peace at our respective

areas, let us not take it for granted but also remember the Acholi's of Uganda who do not understand what the future holds for them.