

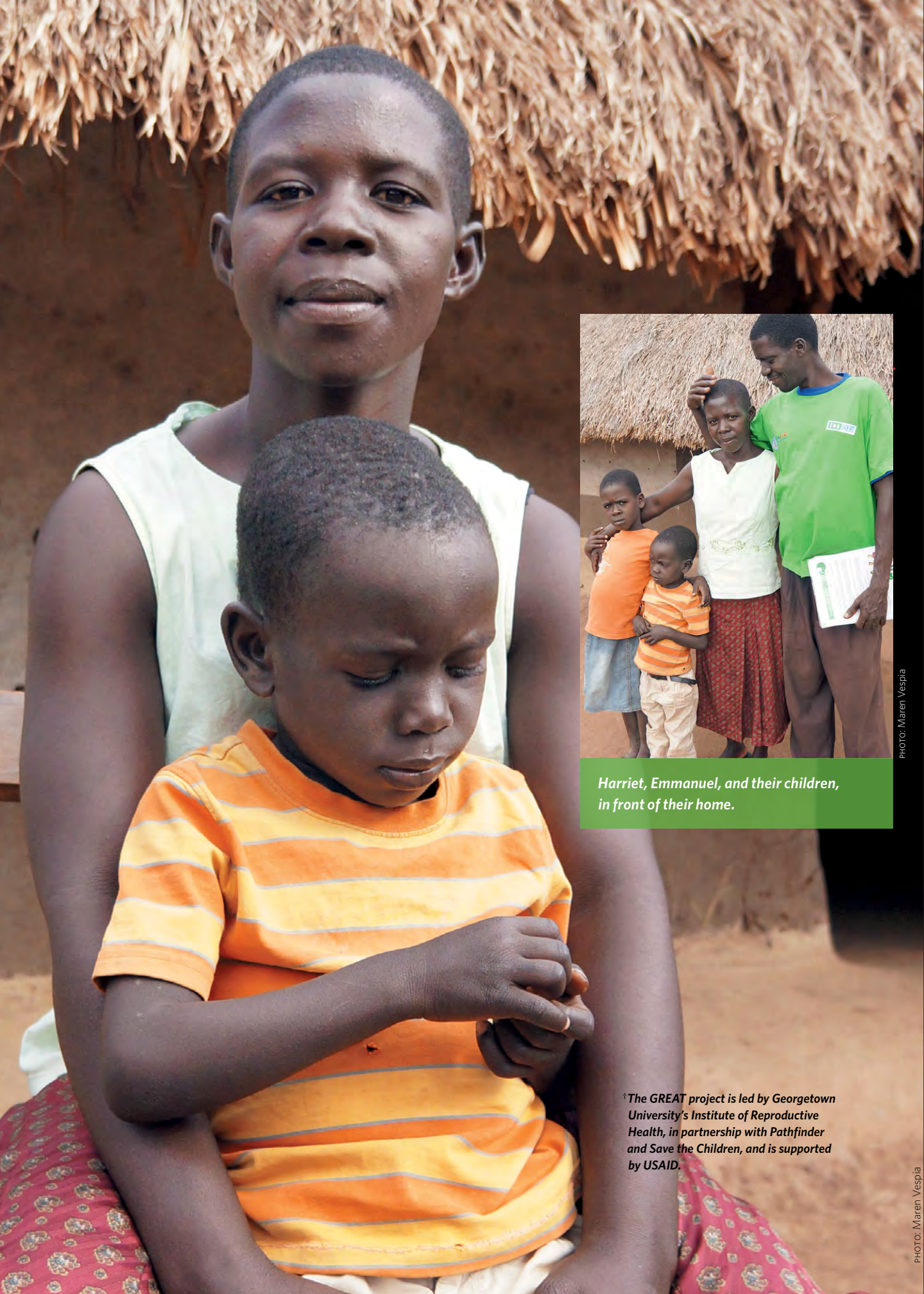
Pathways

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No More
Stolen
Futures

 **Pathfinder**
INTERNATIONAL

A GLOBAL LEADER IN SEXUAL
AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH



Harriet, Emmanuel, and their children, in front of their home.

†The GREAT project is led by Georgetown University's Institute of Reproductive Health, in partnership with Pathfinder and Save the Children, and is supported by USAID.

“We collected firewood. We carried weapons. For girls it was worse because...we were ‘girlfriends’ to many different officers...At the end it became, like, I don’t own my own body. It’s their body.”

— A FORMER UGANDAN CHILD SOLDIER in Amnesty International’s *Casualties of War: Women’s Bodies, Women’s Lives: Stop Crimes Against Women in Armed Conflict*

PHOTO: Linda Sutterfield



When a Girl is Robbed of Her Childhood What Happens to Her Future?

What if your daughter was born into Uganda’s 20-year civil war, thrust into a world of horrifying violence? She may have survived rape as a tactic of war, witnessed deaths of friends and loved ones, and watched her home burn to the ground at the hands of the rebel Lord’s Resistance Army. Between 1986 and 2006, more than 25,000 children were abducted from their villages, forced to serve as soldiers and sex slaves. If your daughter made it to the nearest camp for shelter, she still wasn’t safe. In the country’s largest camp, six out of every ten women reported sexual and gender-based violence (UNICEF 2005). Most survivors were girls between 13 and 17.

This Stops Now: One Girl’s Struggle to Take Her Power Back

When Harriet was 15, two life-changing things happened. The rebel Lord’s Resistance Army finally left Uganda, allowing families like hers to return to what was left of their homes. That same year, Harriet gave birth to her first child. Suddenly, she and her husband, Emmanuel, had to look to the future. But that seemed impossible.

Problems like alcohol abuse, joblessness, and domestic violence that ran rampant

at the camp followed Harriet and Emmanuel home. “It was chaos,” she says.

“Whenever I came back from the market, I would find my husband angry. If I was late and he was drinking, he would beat me.” Harriet says the beatings were frequent—about three times a week. She pleaded with her in-laws for help. “If they hadn’t intervened, he would have kicked me out of my house.”

Harriet had no power. Violence between husband and wife was widely accepted by young people in her community.*

Harriet had no control over her body. “We had child after child,” she says. She had no choice. The couple didn’t have information about contraception or know where to get it. By 21, Harriet was taking care of three children—two girls and a boy. Each child experienced a cycle of violence and powerlessness their parents could not break. Until Pathfinder helped them break it.

A Revolutionary Program You Have To See

In 2012 Pathfinder helped launch an innovative project for young people in northern Uganda. The GREAT (Gender Roles, Equality, and Transformation) project[†] helps young people like Harriet

and Emmanuel break free from violence, improve their sexual and reproductive health, and promote equal opportunities for girls and boys.

“When my husband and I joined GREAT, we learned so many things,” says Harriet. “About how to live healthy and peacefully.”

Now, twice a month, Harriet and Emmanuel meet with their close-knit group of about 30 young people to learn about their bodies and health. They discuss why all young people—no matter their gender—should be safe and free to follow their dreams.

How does it work? GREAT gives young people the opportunity to debate issues—the ways girls and boys interact, how they share power, and how it affects their daily lives. As a group, they talk, reflect, evolve their thinking, and have fun doing it. (Don’t take our word for it. Across these pages, you can see the groups in action!)

You may ask, “But doesn’t a 10-year-old girl have very different sexual and reproductive health needs than a 19-year-old mother?” Absolutely. We tailor our program accordingly. Girls entering puberty can flip through the GREAT storybook to discuss

* Research conducted by our partner, Georgetown University’s Institute of Reproductive Health, prior to implementing the program, revealed most young people believed physical violence was okay if it was used to “teach, discipline, or punish,” and done in a “controlled and proper manner”—i.e., when a person is told what they did wrong and asked to lie down to receive a beating so they don’t suffer additional harm from standing up while being beaten.



Every girl
deserves a
childhood.

**Will you stand with
Pathfinder to break
the cycle of violence,
early marriage, and
unintended pregnancy
that robs millions of
girls of their childhood
and future?**

the protagonist's changing body, while young parents like Harriet and Emmanuel can listen to GREAT's weekly radio drama. As a group, they use their GREAT Radio Discussion Guide to talk about the dramatic stories—about sex, contraception, relationships, and more.

All young people can play GREAT's life-sized board game. They answer questions like "Do you respect boys who do not use violence against girls?" and "How can someone prevent unintended pregnancy?" Every game ends in celebration. Players form a circle around the winner, who leads them in a traditional dance—a strong source of cultural pride that no war can ever take away from them.

"We've learned so many things, things we want others to learn!"

Today, at her home in Lira, Uganda, Harriet wants you to see how much her life has changed.

"Since we joined the project, my husband has been so supportive. We are happier as a family," she says, asking Emmanuel and her children to come stand beside her. "There is much less fighting and violence. We are finding peace in our home. And that has a lot to do with what we learned."

It's impossible not to notice Emmanuel's bright green t-shirt. Displayed across his back, in bold letters for everyone to see—"GREAT parents treat boys and girls equally. Do you?"

"I have changed a lot in the way I feel about my wife and the way we treat each other," Emmanuel says proudly.

Harriet happily offers proof—"Now, when I return from the market, I find he has already bathed the children and even prepared food for them. That never happened before. We are sharing chores and starting to make decisions together. And love comes from all of this. That is why I love GREAT. My home has changed. I feel like I have control over what happens to us now."

Harriet now controls her body too. "I chose to use family planning for my future," she says. Emmanuel agrees—"I learned from the project that it's not good for my wife's health to keep having child after child. I want her to be healthy."

Harriet smiles, pulling her daughter into a hug. "Today, I feel like a respected woman."

PHOTOS: Left, Maren Vespia, Right, Linda Suttentfield



PHOTO: Linda Suttentfield



PHOTO: Maren Vespia

▶ MUSIC VIDEO

"I do not discriminate!" Watch an uplifting music video, written and recorded by young girls and boys from the GREAT project in northern Uganda!

www.pathfinder.org/GreatSong



No More Child Brides!

“I was 13 when I got married,” says Ahlam, a brave woman who wants you to know her story. “I gave birth and got very sick.” She suffered high blood pressure and seizures.

Do you know girls under 15 are five times more likely to die giving birth than if they can wait until they are 20? Ahlam did not. She learned the effects of early marriage and childbearing the hard way.

So why would Ahlam repeat the same mistakes with a daughter of her own? **She wouldn't.**

“A man proposed to my daughter, Mayada, when she was 14,” Ahlam says. “He was 24. He had money and land. My husband approved of the marriage immediately, thinking it would make her have a good future.”

The man wanted to marry Mayada immediately. But he wasn't the only one making frequent visits to the family's home. Noora, an outreach worker trained by Pathfinder's FORSA project,* had a mission of her own.

“Noora came to my house to talk to me about health issues,” Ahlam says. “About the dangers of early marriage. But I couldn't listen.” Ahlam couldn't see another way. So Noora made it her mission to show her. Again and again, she visited the family's home.

“Eventually Noora convinced me to learn more.” Ahlam and her husband agreed—she would attend a six-day training to learn skills for life, business, and better health. That's when Ahlam saw something unforgettable.

It was a dramatic skit with four characters: a mother, daughter, father, and fiancé. It mirrored Ahlam's situation exactly. It was supposed to.

Noora designed it that way. Ahlam saw her family's struggle unfold before her eyes. *Father overjoyed with the marriage. Daughter wishing to stay in school.* Ahlam marveled as *the mother found her voice.*

She went straight home to talk to her husband.

“I told him, ‘We have to find a solution. Mayada can't get married so young. Yes, we are happy about the money he'll provide her. But what good is money to her if she's dead?’”

At first, he wouldn't budge. So for the first time in her life, Ahlam stood up to her husband. She was willing to give up everything.

“I said, ‘I will leave this house unless you put an end to this.’” Ahlam walked out the door. She stayed with her parents, showing her husband just how serious she was.

“I knew my husband might divorce me...Because in Upper Egypt, if a man gives another man his word, he can't go back on it. But I would rather that than see Mayada married now.”

Thankfully, that never happened. Ahlam convinced him. She convinced everyone. *Mayada will not get married to her fiancé until she turns 18.* And her mother will not stop there.

“If someone else wants to marry off their daughter,” Ahlam says, “if I see one of my neighbors, sisters, or cousins trying to marry off a daughter when she is young, I'll share the awareness I got. I'll tell them how I found people who saved me and gave me advice.”

Ahlam, whose name means “dreams” in Arabic, is making girls' dreams come true. “I only wish someone had talked to *my* mother when I was a girl.”

**The Fostering Opportunities in Rural Southern Areas project is led by Pathfinder and supported by USAID.*

PHOTO: Kareem Reda

NOT MY DAUGHTER

“Here, a girl's only destiny is marriage,” says Azhar Hamdy with her daughter, Shayma.

“She doesn't get rights and can't work like a man.”

With the help of an outreach worker named Um Marwan, this inspiring mother found the courage to change her daughter's destiny. She will not take Shayma out of school or force her to marry at 12.

Check out their full story at www.pathfinder.org/destiny



Dear Friends,

This is difficult. We need you to stand with us to make it better.

Women and girls everywhere face violence and fear of violence. Every day, they are forced to trade sex for food or school fees. Every day, they are beaten and abused.

Here are the facts: one out of every three women worldwide will be physically, sexually, or otherwise abused in her lifetime. In some countries, 70 percent of women suffer abuse.

You and I both know—this is a complete violation of women and girls' human rights. It is also a public health epidemic and a barrier to solving global challenges, such as extreme poverty, HIV and AIDS, and violent conflict.

No girl should have to go through what Malala Yousafzai did—a 15-year-old student from Pakistan, shot in the head by the Taliban because she dared to want an education. And what about the recent kidnapping of nearly 300 schoolgirls in Nigeria?

There is no excuse for this horrific violence. We must end it.

Urge your Senators and Representatives to pass the International Violence Against Women Act (IVAWA) to make ending this global scourge against women and girls a foreign policy priority for the United States. Congress should not delay.

This important legislation would support survivors, work to prevent violence, and bring perpetrators to justice. If signed into law, this bill would allow the US government to respond faster and more efficiently to the violence women face during humanitarian emergencies and conflicts. It would strengthen organizations overseas that bravely fight gender-based violence in their countries.

You might ask—but what about boys and men? IVAWA champions the key role men and boys have to play—as allies, not enemies. Engaging them is a key program area.



PHOTO: Sala Lewis

**PLEASE CONTACT
YOUR SENATORS AND
REPRESENTATIVES!**

Email, call, and write. Ask that they stand up for women and girls by co-sponsoring and passing the International Violence Against Women Act (S. 2307 and H.R. 3571).

We need all hands working together now. And that means you.

If you believe every person is equal in inherent worth and human rights, raise your voice. Help end violence against women and girls.

Thank you for answering the call.

In Solidarity,

Jonathan Rucks

Director of Advocacy and Public Policy

Leading the Way: Ronda's Fight for Girls' Futures

Ronda Stryker lives by a profoundly simple rule: "I want to see all people treated fairly."

It is a value that runs deep in her family's history and is part of her DNA. She has roots in the women's suffrage movement and will never forget her childhood, watching her family march for civil rights.

"I've just been lucky to be in a family like that," she says.

Now, Ronda leads the way for her generation. She is making her own mark by investing in girls' futures. She strongly believes in the power of education to give girls—and their families—a better, healthier life.



PHOTO: courtesy mlive.com

"When you educate a woman, you educate an entire family," says the mother of two girls.

It is why she gives to Pathfinder International.

Shortly after joining Pathfinder's Board of Directors, Ronda visited projects in Kenya and Tanzania in 2011. The experience deeply resonated with her passion for education.

Seeing the effort that went into reaching all family members left

her in awe, she says. She witnessed community health workers in action, sharing their knowledge with the most vulnerable of people—sex workers, women who survived abuse, and children affected by HIV & AIDS—so they too can make healthy decisions about their bodies.

"Pathfinder is working with the whole community to make positive changes," she says. "They go in there with these community workers to teach the mothers, fathers, the sons—*everybody*."

"When you educate a woman, you educate an entire family."

Ronda returned from Kenya and Tanzania knowing the lives of these women and their families are being transformed, because they know more about their sexual and reproductive health. She also returned as a proud supporter of Pathfinder. Her generosity means more girls will be given a chance—and more lives will be saved.

This is how Ronda takes her heartfelt belief that all people should be treated fairly and turns it into action, all while setting an example for her children.

"My grandmother modeled for my mother and my mother modeled for me," she says. "I hope I'm modeling philanthropy for my children."

There is no doubt that spirit will be alive and well in Ronda's family for yet another generation.

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COVER: A young girl from Lira, Uganda. In the schoolyard next to her grandfather's farm, groups of young people come together to take control of their health and futures. PHOTO: Linda Suttinfield