



Can Anyone Blame Her?

"I don't want to go home!"

Yositina was thankful that the operation was behind her. The surgeon had repaired her diseased leg and expected her to make a full recovery. For the first time in her life, she was lying on an actual mattress with clean sheets and a pillow – but she was afraid to go home.

Why would a 16-year-old girl be afraid to go home?

- Her dad is married to six women. (Polygamy is legal in Uganda.)
- Her mom – just her mom – has 12 children. Yositina is number 8.
- Their home is a primitive hut made of mud and sticks. The only bed she had ever slept on was a disgusting mat that had been nibbled by the rats that drop by during the night.
- She had attended only 3 grades of primary school because her parents needed her to carry water, gather firewood, work in the garden, and take care of the younger children.
- Before the surgery that Ourganda arranged and paid for, her mother tried to force her to visit a witch doctor who most likely would have burned her or cut her.
- Her younger sister was only 15, but already had two children from the man she had no choice but to marry.
- The only reason Yositina had not been compelled to marry someone who didn't love her was she had been crippled. Now that her leg was healing, she knew what was next – and she was terrified.

You can see why for ten years, Yositina struggled with depression. Year after year, she gritted her teeth, did as she was told, and bravely survived. Her friends never saw her smile.

Ourganda's mission is to ignite hope. When the details of Yositina's story reached our Inbox, we felt compelled to intervene. We connected with Annah, Frank, Vincent and the rest of our team. "We can't protect every young woman in her situation," we explained what everyone already knew, "but we can help Yositina. Stay close to her right now and ask her these questions:"

- Where would you feel safe?
- What do you need right now?
- How else can we help you?
- What do you wish were different a year from now? Ten years from now?

She feels safe with her aunt, so our team arranged for her to live with her aunt. She needed a bed so we bought her a mattress, sheets, blankets, and a pillow. Annah took her to the market and bought her a new dress, underwear and shoes. Yositina eventually wants to work as a beautician so our team is in the process of contacting salons in Bundibugyo and setting her up as an apprentice.

In the meantime, we offered to enfold her into our medical team. She is not medically trained, but she can set up chairs, entertain children while their mothers see the nurse, and help the team pack the vans. As soon as her leg is healed, she will join our team as they ride to the village in the morning. She will receive a lunch allowance along with our employees, and our team members will adopt her as their little sister and put their arms around her and make sure she knows she is loved.



And Yositina smiled! For the first time in ten years, Yositina smiled.

Today, she has hope in her heart. We are doing everything we can do make sure this precious young woman can determine her own future. She deserves to live beyond survival. She deserves to know that someone loves her and will protect her. She deserves to dream and plan and live for a happy and successful future.

Someday, Ourganda will rescue every young person who is trapped in despair. But for now, we help as many as we can. And you can partner with us. Please let us know how you would like to help. Choose between a one-time gift or (even better) a monthly donation. Every dollar you give empowers our team to ignite hope in one more heart.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you!