

## TG Foundation Screening "Seeds of Hope" at the Universal Peace Federation - UK

Robin Marsh  
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The Seeds of Hope documentary was a painful account of human rights crimes by the victims of rape in the eastern region of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). The Masika centre is a place of healing and hope for those victims. Masika, who herself is a rape survivor, supports 80 children and many women to make a new start and guides the women to support their families through agriculture. It is by her efforts that many women have found a way to have life after rape, abandonment by their family and sometimes bringing up the children of those rapes.



Tatiana Giraud, the founder of the TG Foundation, that supports several clinics in eastern Congo and cares for the education of 100 children, organised the evening with the support of Mothers of Congo and Universal Peace Federation UK. Funds raised are to support the Masika Centre and the work of TG Foundation.

Charlotte Simon, Founder of Mothers of Congo, explained the context of the documentary with the invasion of DRC by Rwanda and Uganda. Many of the Rwandan soldiers later were integrated into the army of the DRC during the peace negotiations. Proxy militia forces supported by those nations had dominated large swathes of the eastern Congo to dominate mineral extraction and trade.

Chillingly there were candid interviews with the soldiers who rape women. Their motivation and experience was explored alongside the heartfelt expressions of anguish by the women at the Masika centre. The documentary also focussed on the need for the women to do work to support their families. They sowed 'seeds of hope' to care for their families and prove that rape was not the end of their lives.



It was this work that forced them to leave their homes and go into the fields where they were attacked. Now as a group the Masika Centre women worked in the fields to recover their dignity and care for their children.

The documentary examined the impunity of rapists because of poor judicial governance. Specific human rights crimes of mass rape of a community were included. The harrowing details were shared by some of the victims.



During a Question and Answer session the Documentary Director, Fiona Lloyd Davies, shared how impressed she was by Masika and the women there who were overcoming great challenges for the sake of their children. She discussed the impunity of these human rights crimes and the weakness of justice to hold well known rapists to account. She said the bravery of the prosecutors and human rights activists had brought a small number of convictions but it is a movement in the right direction. She was disappointed in the long term result of the End Sexual Violence in Conflict Global Summit guided by William Hague and Angelina Jolie because the process of bringing human rights criminal actions to court with well prepared cases is still under funded and insufficiently supported by experienced investigators.

Robin Marsh commented that the complicity of western companies and governments in exploiting DRC should be counteracted by an alliance of civil society groups to help those human rights activists in the region. A campaign to strengthen weak EU proposals on the sourcing of conflict minerals is under way he added.

It was appropriate that this documentary was shown during the United Nations week to prevent violence against women. Sadly it was mentioned that the largest UN force in the world MONUSCO is mainly based in eastern DRC and had been ineffective in protecting the human rights of citizens in general and specifically women in the region.

The most hopeful comments were by the women who were making a new start guided by Masika. Fiona Lloyd Davies shared it that visiting the Congo was a breath of fresh air for her. She added, 'Every time I go it makes me realise what is important in life.'