

HOPE REBORN

One woman can change anything.
Many women can change *everything*.

As a young girl, Claudine dreamed of becoming a doctor. Growing up in war-ravaged Congo, however, her dreams were snuffed out early. Although Claudine made it through grammar school — an unusual feat for girls — her education ended at the age of 12 when her father died. “As soon as Dad passed away I was abandoned, and nobody

cared about school,” she said. Claudine resorted to working in a tea plantation to help her ailing mother, and at 19, she married. But the country’s economic turmoil took a severe toll on her growing family: She and her five children often went hungry, and her husband became despondent. One night, he came home drunk, physically attacked her and the children, and forced them out of their home. Claudine moved in with relatives and worked on a farm to eke out a small living.

Last year, Claudine found **Women for Women International**, which matched her with a sponsor “sister.” She used money from her sister to feed and clothe her children and to send them to school. After completing a one-year education and job-skills program, she started a small business by purchasing crops from the market and selling them in her village. The program also gave her a strong support network of women. “We are like sisters,” she said. “We do

not forget the violence, but together, we are changing our lives, and the lives of our children. And with help, maybe even the future of our country.”

Women for Women International works with women such as Claudine in conflict and post-conflict countries, building a network of knowledgeable and economically empowered women who can lead their communities toward peace. Since its inception in 1993, the organization has aided more than 300,000 women and 1.6 million family members, and given more than \$24 million in direct aid and \$70 million in microloans. Through sponsorship, individuals can have a direct impact on women war survivors, moving the world one step closer to lasting social and economic change.

To make an investment in the future of a woman like Claudine for only \$30 a month, please visit WomenForWomen.org. ✎

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