



MEDIA KIT

(2010, 76 min.)

RainBowTown.org

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The Film

**In a country torn by war, over 100 orphaned
and abandoned children were left to die.
But one courageous woman wanted them to live.**



Other Synopsis Choices

(120-WORDS)

With war raging around her, she had to make a choice: to protect the orphaned children forced into her life or abandon them and go in search of her own family. With no money and no food, both choices seemed impossible. Rainbow Town is the staggering true story of Feeta Naimen and the children who call her Mother.

Fueled by an original soundtrack by the children and narrated by Ma Feeta, three of the children, and Liberian President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf, this documentary unearths the price of war, while illustrating the strength of the human spirit. Major problems constantly face Rainbow Town, but clinging to faith and each other, Ma Feeta and her children must find a way to overcome.

(275-WORDS)

As war raged, she had to make a choice; to protect the orphaned children forced into her life or abandon them and go in search of her own family.

Her name is Ma Feeta and today, she lives with 86 of the children at a rural West African farm called Rainbow Town.

Filmed in the upcountry of Liberia, Rainbow Town welcomes you into their lives, revealing how they survived one of Africa's bloodiest civil wars and how they cope as a family in its aftermath.

Narrated by Ma Feeta, three of the children -- Alice, Taylor, and Faith -- and Liberian President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf, the story unearths the price of war, while illustrating the strength of the human spirit.

Fueled by an original soundtrack by the children and an assortment of unscripted footage, interviews, songs and photographs, this documentary captures the extraordinary life of Rainbow Town.

Alice, 17, one of the oldest girls, tries desperately to educate herself in Liberia's substandard schooling system.

Taylor, 10, is wise for his age and although he dreams of leaving Liberia, explains he will always look after Rainbow Town.

Faith, 9, remembers her biological mother singing to her, and after losing her in wartime, decides to sing too.

Three times per day, all the children join together for prayer time, a blend of bellowing drums, spirited dance, and resonant song.

Above all else, Ma Feeta desires that her children have faith and education so that when she dies her effort will not go in vain.

Major problems face Rainbow Town, but clinging to faith and each other, Ma Feeta and her children must find a way to overcome.

The Characters



Ma Feeta Naimen: The Rainbow Town story starts with this strong-willed, courageous woman and her decision to take in and rear the Rainbow Town children. Her entire life is devoted to caring for her children and ensuring their needs are provided. She stresses that they go to school and exhibit moral character. Now in her mid-60's, she is a respected and well-known leader in her rural community, but suffers from poor health. She is also called "Mother Feeta" or simply "Mother."

Three children are followed in the documentary to represent the collective stories of all 46 children. They complement, substantiate, and bring to life Ma Feeta's story as well as share details from their own.



Faith Kolloh: Faith, 9, remembers her biological mother singing to her, and after losing her during wartime, decides she wants to be a singer. Gifted with a beautiful voice, Faith often leads songs at Rainbow Town. Her father is alive but unable to provide for her and her biological sister, Phebe.



Taylor Johnson: Taylor, 10, lost sight of his parents while walking in the war and has not seen them since. He loves to play the drum, hunt and fish, play soccer, cause mischief, and is a leader to the younger boys. He dreams of traveling outside Liberia but explains he will always return to look after Rainbow Town.



Alice Joseph: Alice, 17, is one of the oldest Rainbow Town girls and has vivid memories of the war. She considers Ma Feeta to be her real mother after losing her mother and being separated from her father when she was little. Alice works tirelessly to educate herself in Liberia's schooling system.



President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf: President Sirleaf is Liberia's current President and the first female head of state in Africa. She provides an authoritative voice and paints a broad picture of the current state of Liberia and how its children play a dynamic role in the future of the country.

Selected Quotes

FAITH

War that bad thing.

Rainbow Town, beautiful. Rainbow Town that area where people can eat, they drink, they sleep, they go to school, they play.

I want to be singing. Singing good to me.

In my own understanding, I say Rainbow Town means a place God has chose for His children.

Every day you take the drum you start beating it, then you begin to learn it small small.

I want to go in China, America, England, and also any country that God give me for me to go to. I would think about my people and I would learn something from that country that I go to, and then I come show it to the other people that be here.

TAYLOR

ALICE

We would walk from place to place. No resting for us. No sleeping. No food for us to eat. No water for us to drink. Civilians, soldiers, everyone was dying.

During the war, I was wishing for death to carry me because the pain that we were going through, it was not easy. It was more than death.

After my high school I pray that God carry me to university. It is only God who will provide because Mama Feeta is really trying her best.

I didn't want to take care of children because I didn't know how to take care of them. I was a market woman doing my business. I never knew that my life was going to change.

They said, "If you can't take the children, you will die." So, I has to agree to take the children, than to die.

We tied our clothes together from my own all the way to the last person's own. I be in front then they will follow me, and nobody will get missing.

People dying, children dying, body on the road...

Well my husband, he don't have the heart that I have. He said I should leave the children. He said, "If you do it you will not get anything out of it." I said, "Oh, there is pay. When I die I will receive my reward." He left and went and married to another woman again to make me two...

Education is the head. Education, to educate the children. I have taken this group of children. Maybe God wants me to take care of them, but education that when I die, my effort will not go in vain. I have suffered so much.

MAFEETA

The Soundtrack



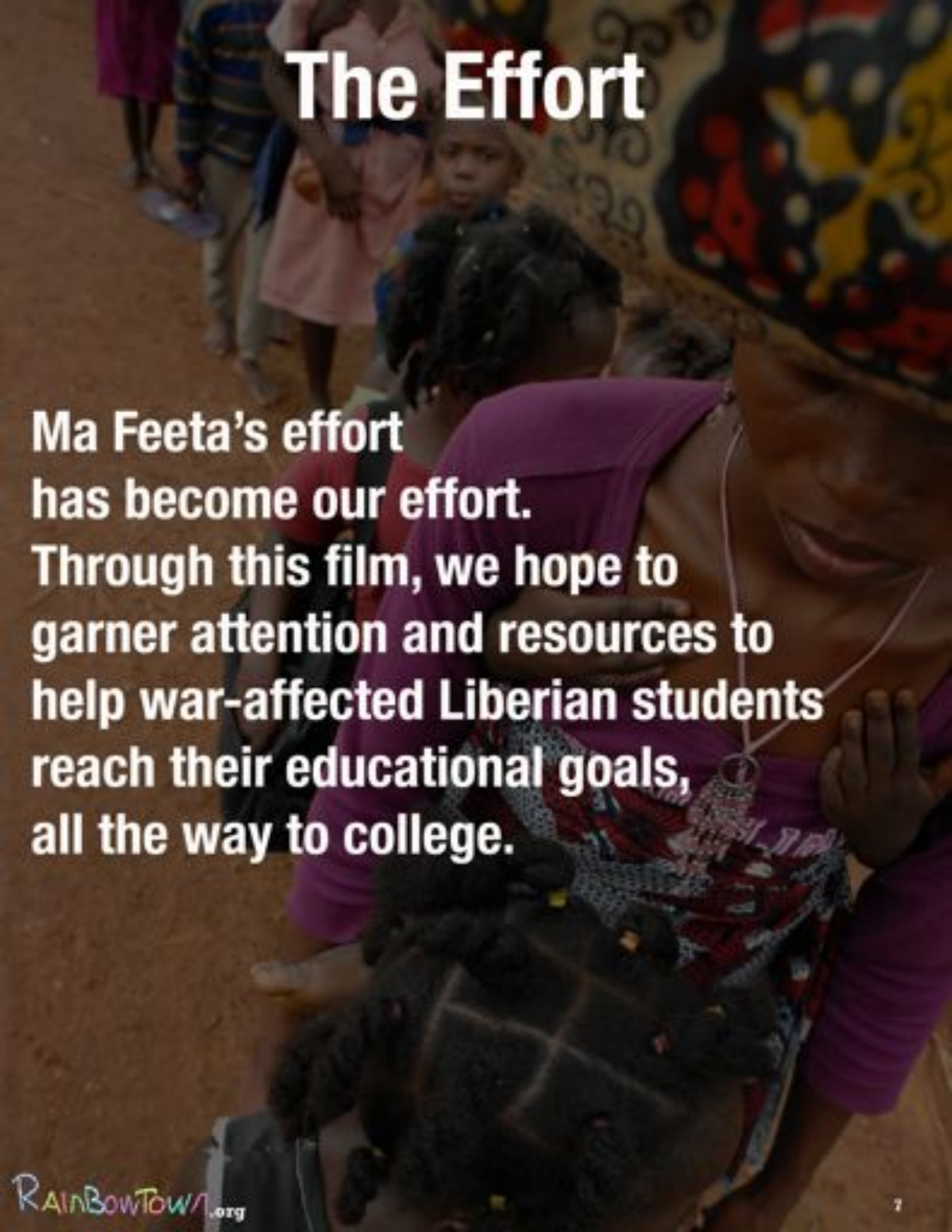
Music is the heartbeat of Rainbow Town.

The documentary features original songs and drumming by the children, welcoming viewers into Rainbow Town's heart and soul.

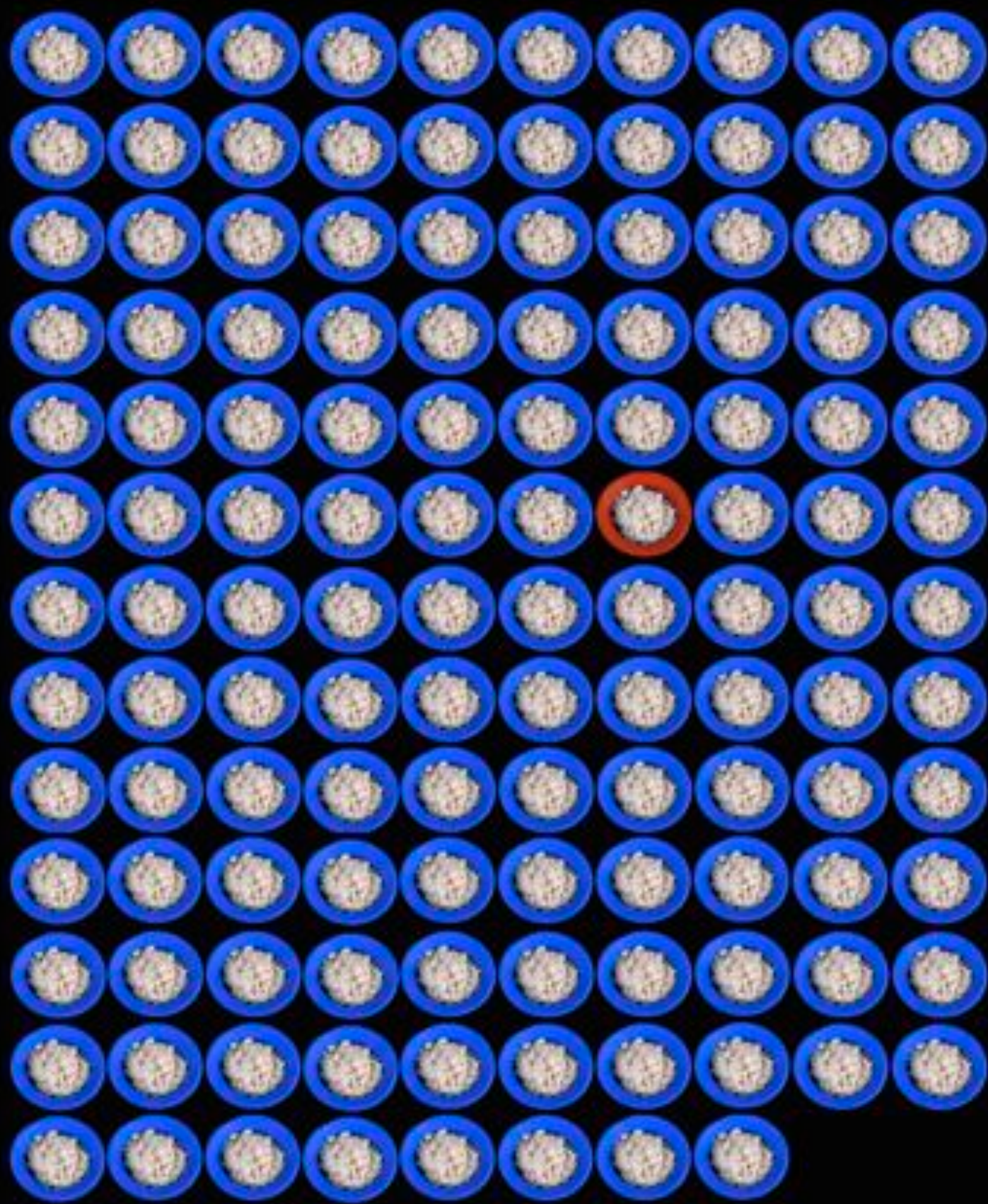
Music can be sampled online at:

RAINBOWTOWN.org

The Effort

A photograph of a woman in a purple top and patterned skirt holding a young child. In the background, other children are visible, some in school uniforms. The image is slightly blurred and has a dark overlay.

**Ma Feeta's effort
has become our effort.
Through this film, we hope to
garner attention and resources to
help war-affected Liberian students
reach their educational goals,
all the way to college.**



**There are 128 orphanages in Liberia according to UNICEF.
Rainbow Town is just one.**

**“Without education,
what kind of present
and what kind of future
are these children going to have?”**

- UNICEF Liberia Head of Child Protection, Fatuma Ibrahim



“Educational needs are so important.

We don't want to see children **just sitting around all day**
and not obtaining skills.

Those that become older ones, **what do we do with them?**

These are **issues** that need to be addressed.”

- President of Liberia, Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf



\$2,000 USD
pays for an entire
college education
for a Liberian student.

A typical U.S. student pays a total of \$57,000 USD for college.
It's over \$100,000 USD to go out-of-state,
and \$136,000 USD for private institutions.

Source: www.collegeboard.com.



“Children are **the future of our country.”**

- President of Liberia, Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf

The Artwork



The Rainbow Town children hand-painted a collection of over 500 original paintings. Rainbow Town Art is displayed at select film screenings and is exhibited as a show of its own. The sale of each art piece directly helps a war-affected Liberian student achieve his or her educational goals.

The artwork is available online at:

RAINBOWTOWN.org

The Artwork



**Each painting is as one-of-a-kind
as the child who made it.**

The artwork is available online at:

RAINBOWTOWN.org

Spotlight on Liberia



Flag of Liberia

Population: 3,441,790

Capital City: Monrovia (named after U.S. President James Monroe)

Independence: 26 July 1847
(from American Colonization Society)

Area: 111,369 sq. km, slightly larger than Tennessee

Language: English (official),
some 20 ethnic group languages

Life Expectancy: 41.84 years

Currency: Liberian dollar (LRD)

GDP per capita: \$500 USD

Unemployment rate: 83%

Source: CIA World Factbook and others.

"A nation indeed can come out of conflict and can become a success story."

- *President of Liberia, Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf*

Liberia is rebuilding from a 14-year civil crisis (1989-2003) that turned the once prosperous democratic nation into a "failed state."

"In terms of child protection....the question is, 'What makes some families be able to cope better than others and what happens to some that makes them not be able at all to care and support their children?'"

- *UNICEF Liberia Head of Child Protection, Fatuma Ibrahim*

Sixty percent of Liberia's population is under 20-years-old. Thus, the nation's future depends on the knowledge and skills of its youth. An estimated 188,000 Liberian children live in orphanages.

"...Education, that when I die, my effort will not go in vain."

- *Caregiver to 86 orphaned and abandoned children, Ma Feeta Naimen*

UNICEF maintains that an exit strategy entailing access to education must be put in place for older children after leaving orphanage care.



The Crew



Lauren Selmon Roberts: Director, Camera, Editor

A social documentarian who worked with Ma Feeta and her children in Liberia for two years prior to cameras rolling. With a background in broadcast journalism and a Master of Fine Arts degree, she merges news and fine art. This is her first full-length documentary.



Amy Elrod: Still Photographer

A professional photojournalist based in Kansas City, Missouri, who graduated with a visual communications degree from Ohio University and specializes in social documentary storytelling. Amy comes from a long line of photographers and still remembers the day she picked up her first manual camera. The rest is history.



Will Roberts: Sound

An artist from Miami, Florida, who stands out for more reasons than being 6'7" tall. Will specializes in audio production and 3D animation. He has a background in African studies and has created music for over 15 years. His sketchbook never leaves his side.



*The documentary was made possible by
funding from the SHINE Foundation.*



Director's Statement

When I left Rainbow Town in 2006, after working alongside Ma Feeta and the children for nearly two years, I wrote in bright red letters in my journal, "Rainbow Town, I promise to tell your story!"

Full of incredible faith, unwavering joy, and childlike bliss, Rainbow Town is a story of human survival and unquenchable hope.

I first met Ma Feeta and the children in 2004 when the war was just eight months gone. They were all squatting in an abandoned two-room structure near Monrovia, Liberia's capital city.

Imagine 100 people.

Now imagine 100 people living together in two rooms.

Despite their dire situation, Ma Feeta brought out deliciously sweet fried plantains on a silver plate as a gesture of welcome.

I was in Liberia interning for an international relief agency and was assigned to children's projects. Little did I know the Rainbow Town family would forever change the course of my life.

In 2007, I organized our crew and returned to capture the story. By this time, Ma Feeta and the children had moved upcountry to Rainbow Town, a 50-acre plot of land in rural Gbarnga.

Ma Feeta, who herself has not been educated, continually teaches her children to cherish faith, education, and hard work. As seen in the film, the children work tirelessly to sustain themselves, and desire to use their talents beyond Rainbow Town.

Our crew resolved to use this documentary as a tool to continue the work Ma Feeta started. Our goal is to raise money to ensure that orphaned, semi-orphaned, abandoned, and other war-affected Liberian students have an opportunity to achieve their educational goals.

There are 128 registered orphanages scattered around Liberia--the only former U.S. colony in Africa--which seven years post war, remains in disrepair.

Liberian President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf told me that a rejuvenation of Liberia relies on its youngest generation. She said, "Over 60 percent of our population is under 20-years-old...Children are the future of our country...We must ensure they have the means to be competitive, have skills to manage the country, and feel like the country belongs to them."

To date, less than ten films have been made about Liberia. Several of them cover Liberia's crisis but none focus on its children. Rainbow Town adds to the collection of materials available about the war in Liberia's critical period of reconstruction.

Through the film, photo exhibit, children's artwork, soundtrack, and website, I hope, as young Faith says in the film, people can, "Come see Rainbow Town, how it's beautiful."

I hope people will then go further and seek answers to questions raised by the Rainbow Town story. A critical question is, "Who, in the wake of war, is responsible for answering young people's cries for education and opportunity, once the shooting stops?"

It is my humble honor to share the story of Ma Feeta and the children of Rainbow Town with you.

They reveal a beauty in the ashes of war and demonstrate that amidst shortcoming and devastation, the human spirit can find ways to remain together, hopeful, and strong.



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