



2025 Annual Impact Report

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INTRODUCTION

Uganda is the largest refugee-hosting country in Africa and the 3rd largest in the world. Due to its open-door policy since the 1940s, Uganda has continued to host the highest number of refugees and asylum seekers from; South Sudan, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Somalia, Rwanda, Burundi, Sudan, and 27 other countries. As of August 2025, Uganda hosts around 1.93 million refugees, with numbers expected to reach 2 million by the end of the year¹.

Over 80% of refugees are women and children². A significant humanitarian funding crisis is threatening aid delivery, with emergency funding running out in September 2025, according to the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR)³.

Uganda policies are inclusive, but urban refugees and those in settlements like Nakivale face compounding challenges: interrupted education, high costs of living, hunger, and exposure to gender-based violence (GBV). Children struggle to concentrate and stay in school. Women lack income and safety. Emotional trauma remains unaddressed.

Education is a luxury among refugees:

- Less than 20% of refugee children in Uganda access secondary school.
 - Less than 10% reach higher education.
 - Refugee women face extreme poverty and high

rates of SGBV. Our programs restore dignity, build resilience, and create pathways for long-term self-reliance.

Current Context

The year 2025 was marked by an unprecedented contraction of humanitarian funding. Across Uganda, reductions and suspensions of assistance—particularly food aid and protection services—pushed many refugee families into extreme vulnerability. Children dropped out of school, households faced hunger, and protection risks increased, especially for women and children.

In this difficult context, Light For All (L4A) faced an overwhelming number of requests for support that far exceeded our limited resources. Yet, despite these constraints, L4A remained steadfast in its mission. Through our flagship programme, “No Child Left Behind,” we sustained the education of 23 refugee students, ensuring that displacement did not extinguish their right to learn, dream, and build a future.

With limited resources but clear strategic intent, L4A prioritized interventions where impact was both immediate and transformative:

- Strengthening women and youth as agents of change, fostering leadership and economic resilience within their communities.

- Supporting psychosocial healing for survivors of violence and trauma, restoring hope where it had been fractured.

- Expanding access to education, recognizing it as both protection and a pathway to self-reliance.

- Documenting serious human rights violations affecting refugees—particularly in Nakivale Refugee Settlement—to ensure that abuses are neither invisible nor ignored.

Because even in the harshest environments, one supported child, one empowered woman, one restored life sends a powerful message: Hope is still possible.

I. EDUCATION: RESTORING HOPE THROUGH LEARNING

Since its inception, education has remained the cornerstone of Light For All’s vision – grounded in the belief that education is not merely a service, but the most powerful pathway from displacement to dignity, self-reliance, and leadership.

In 2025, thanks to the steadfast generosity of our donors, 23 refugee children – 10 boys and 13 girls – from 13 highly vulnerable families were able to continue their formal education. At a time when shrinking humanitarian assistance forced many children across refugee settlements out of school, this support did more

¹<https://media.un.org/unifeed/en/asset/d343/d3433568>

²<https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/entities/publication/76f1025b-3aa7-5a28-8daa-e0602c2c1456>

³<https://media.un.org/unifeed/en/asset/d343/d3433568>

than keep classrooms within reach; it protected futures that might otherwise have been lost.

For several of these children, Light For All has been a constant presence in their lives since 2017, walking alongside them through years of uncertainty and upheaval. Their journeys are living proof that sustained investment changes not only individual trajectories, but entire family narratives.

One such story is that of Nduwamungu Berger Banach.

Supported by Light For All since 2017, Berger has successfully completed his university studies in Pharmaceutical Sciences at Mbarara University. He is currently undertaking his professional internship and is on track to qualify as a fully licensed pharmacist by July 2026.

His achievement is more than a personal milestone – it is a powerful testament to what long-term commitment makes possible. From a refugee child with limited prospects to a future healthcare professional poised to serve communities in need, Berger embodies the transformational ripple effect of education.

His journey reminds us that when we invest in one child, we help build the resilience, health, and prosperity of entire societies.

Sustaining Access, Protecting Dignity

Light For All covered full school fees for the academic year and provided essential scholastic materials, ensuring that every supported child could attend school with dignity,

Gender		Class			Location		
Male	Female	Primary	Senior	University	Wakiso	Kampala	Isingiro
12	12	12	11	1	5	8	11

confidence, and consistency.

These investments translated into tangible academic success:

- Five (5) pupils successfully passed the Primary Leaving Examinations (PLE), marking a critical transition from primary to secondary education.
- Three (3) students successfully completed their Uganda National Examinations Board (UNEBC) assessments, advancing to the next stage of their academic journey.
- One (1) student successfully completed his high school (A-level national examination)
- One (1) student completed university pharmaceutical studies

At a time when financial hardship forces many refugee children to abandon their education prematurely, these achievements represent far more than exam results – they signal resilience, perseverance, and the protective power of sustained support.

Impact achieved:

- 24 refugee children remained in or returned to school despite severe economic hardship, protecting their right to education at a time when many were at risk of dropping out.
- Protection risks were significantly reduced,

including exposure to child labor, early marriage, and exploitation – reinforcing education as a critical safeguarding mechanism.

- Motivation, attendance, and academic performance improved, with parents and teachers reporting stronger engagement, renewed confidence, and greater commitment to learning.

- Vulnerable families experienced meaningful relief, particularly single parents and caregivers facing chronic financial strain, allowing them to prioritize stability and their children’s long-term futures rather than immediate survival.



Armel Kabera and Brielle Darnell Mutore, S2 students sponsored by Light for all, at Zana High School at the start of the new academic year (February 2026)

Testimony – Nduwamungu Berger Banach

Pharmacy Graduate | Sponsored Student, Light For All Uganda

“ My name is Nduwamungu Berger Banach. I am a refugee from Burundi, currently living in Uganda, and a proud beneficiary of Light For All Uganda.

Light For All began sponsoring me in January 2018, when I was preparing to start my final year of O-level education. At that time, my family was facing severe hardship. Due to a series of tragic events, my father was no longer able to provide for us. My siblings and I had to pause our dreams, uncertain whether we would ever continue our education.

Then, by God’s grace, Light For All stepped in.

What was initially meant to be one year of support became nearly nine years of continuous sponsorship – carrying me through secondary school and all the way to university, where I successfully graduated with a degree in Pharmacy. Their support removed financial barriers that once felt impossible to overcome. Because of them, I was able to focus on my studies instead of worrying about survival – what to eat, what to wear, or whether I would be sent home for unpaid school fees.

But their impact went beyond financial assistance. Light For All restored my confidence, strengthened my dignity, and helped me believe in my own potential.



They taught me that circumstances do not define destiny.

Today, as a Pharmacy graduate, I aspire to give back to my community – not just a little, but abundantly. I carry forward the values they instilled in me: resilience, responsibility, and hope.

To Light For All and all your partners: thank you. Your generosity does not simply pay school fees – it transforms lives and builds future professionals and leaders who will uplift their communities.

Your investment creates long-term change, and its impact will continue multiplying in the lives of those you support.

May God bless you abundantly.

“Before this support, our children were often sent home from school due to unpaid fees. Today, their learning is stable and consistent.”

Testimony - Parent of 4 supported learners

“ As a parent supported by Light For All, I sincerely appreciate the assistance provided for

my children’s education. I also thank Light For All’s partners, as this work is not the effort of one person alone, but a collective commitment that makes real impact possible.

Before receiving this support, I had children who were not attending school. It is deeply painful for a parent to see a child eager to learn while lacking the financial means to support their education.

As a caregiver fulfilling both parental roles in the household, the support from Light For All has enabled our family to move forward. When children are educated, they gain knowledge and confidence, and they contribute positively to their families and communities.

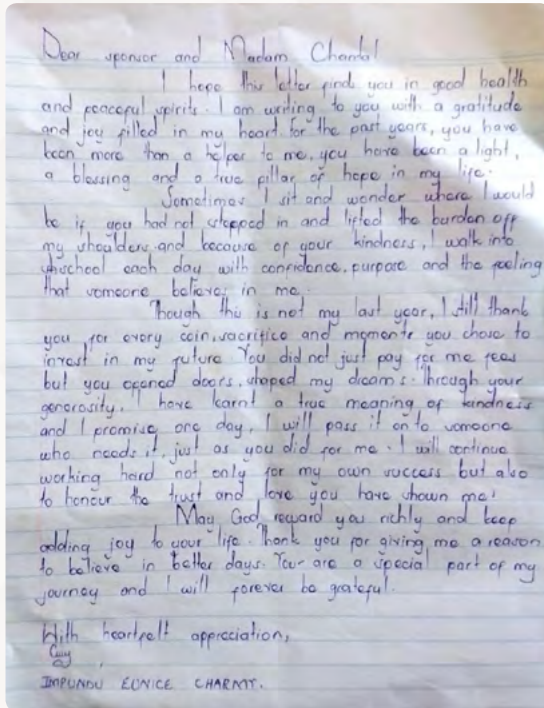
I am especially grateful because the children’s father has been ill for many years, making it impossible for me to manage alone. This support has eased a heavy burden.

I would also like to suggest organizing educational or mentoring activities during school holidays to help children remain engaged and motivated to learn.

In conclusion, I express my sincere gratitude to Light For All and its partners. When I reflect on how far my children have come, I clearly see progress. This achievement gives us hope for a brighter future—one that would not have been possible without education.

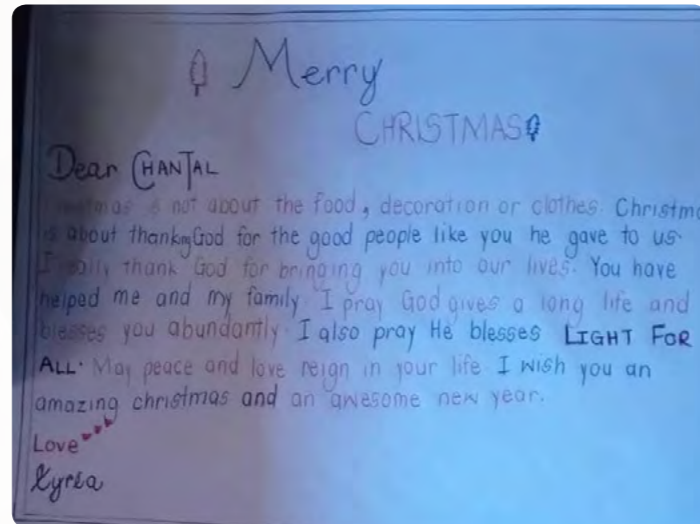
I encourage Light For All and its partners to continue this vital work. The impact of your support is real and lasting, and it will be visible both now and in the years to come.

May God bless you all.



Eunice Charmy's letter

A number of the children shared written messages expressing their sincere gratitude. Their words reflect the profound difference the generosity of our donors has made in their lives. These testimonies stand as a moving reminder that beyond statistics and figures, the support is restoring hope, dignity, and opportunity.



Lyrea's Christmas Message



II. EMPOWERING REFUGEE WOMEN LEADERS: BUILDING CHANGE FROM WITHIN

In 2025, Light For All organized two leadership and human rights workshops for refugee women leaders from Nakivale Refugee Settlement and Mbarara City. These workshops recognized refugee women not only as survivors of violence and hardship, but as key actors in prevention, mediation, and rights advocacy within their communities.



Mbarara, 19 - 20 March 2025 - Women refugee leaders attended a training on human rights and the international legal framework governing women's rights

Fifteen women leaders were trained on:

- Women's rights and human rights frameworks
- Gender equality and conflict prevention
- Women's participation in peacebuilding and decision-making
- Citizen engagement and advocacy strategies.

Impact achieved:

- 15 refugee women leaders strengthened with practical knowledge and advocacy skills
- A grassroots network of women human rights defenders established
- Increased confidence and collective voice to denounce violence and promote peaceful coexistence
- Sustained engagement through peer support and accompaniment beyond the workshops

These women now act as trusted reference points in their communities, supporting victims of violence, raising awareness on rights, and contributing to social cohesion.

III. YOUTH EMPOWERMENT: NURTURING ACTIVE CITIZENS AND FUTURE DEFENDERS

In a context marked by injustice, insecurity, and shrinking protection services, L4A reinforced its commitment to youth empowerment. Beyond supporting access to education, we intentionally invested in civic awareness, leadership, and participation among refugee children and youth aged 15-23, both in urban settings and refugee settlements.

Capacity Building on Rights, Safeguarding, and Active Citizenship

A major milestone in 2025 was a two-day youth workshop, organized in partnership with the Uganda Child Rights NGO Network (UCRNN). The training covered:

- Child safeguarding and protection mechanisms in Uganda
- Children's rights under national, African, and international frameworks
- Leadership development

- Civic engagement and active citizenship

Participants reported a strong increase in awareness of their rights and responsibilities, and a renewed sense of agency as contributors to community protection and social change.

Several expressed a desire to deepen their knowledge, particularly on safeguarding and leadership in practice—needs that L4A plans to address through a follow-up workshop in early 2026.



Maureen Orogot from the Uganda Child Rights NGO Network (UCRNN) engages participants on Ugandan child protection networks



Kampala, 15 May 2025 - 25 Burundian young refugees attended a workshop on human rights and child protection framework



"The Society Our Children Deserve to Grow Up In" – By Ikorineza Shammy

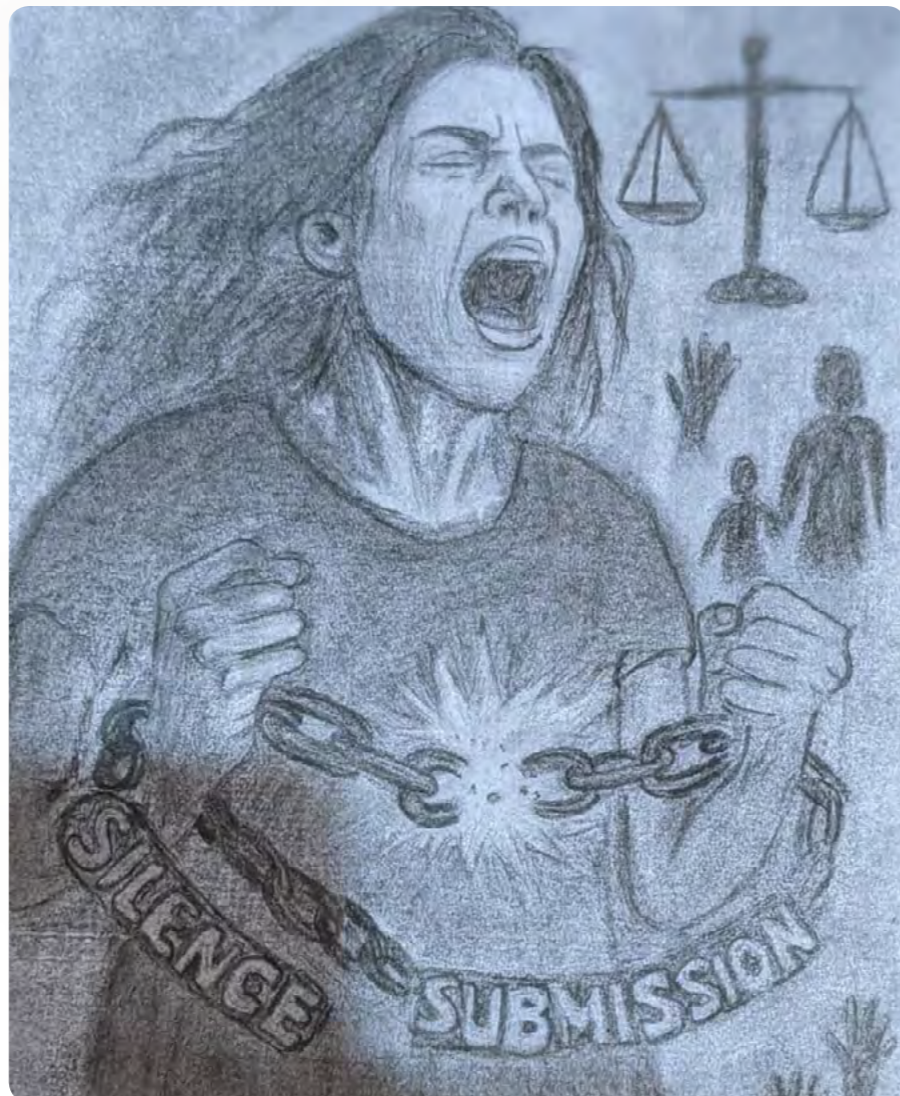
Using Art to Promote Justice and Participation

To ensure inclusive engagement—especially for youth facing mobility or access constraints—L4A launched an ongoing awareness campaign under the theme:

"Using Art to Promote Justice, Human Rights, and Civic Participation."

Through poetry, music, theatre, drawings, murals, and other forms of expression, children and youth shared their lived experiences, challenges, and aspirations. Art became a safe and accessible advocacy tool, sparking dialogue around justice, equality, child rights, women's rights, and peace.

The strongest artistic expressions will be showcased in a dedicated exhibition and shared through L4A's digital platforms as advocacy and awareness-raising tools.



"Shattering the chains of silence and submission, and all that holds women back." – By Ineza Annie Nettie

IV. PSYCHOSOCIAL WELLBEING: HEALING TRAUMA, RESTORING DIGNITY

Throughout 2025, Light For All prioritized psychosocial and psychological support for refugees affected by sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV), political violence, loss, and forced displacement.

In collaboration with trained counsellors and psychologists, L4A provided:

- Eight (8) individual counselling sessions
- Two (2) group well-being activities
- Three (3) psychological first aid for women, children, and families in acute distress

Survivors – including widows, single mothers, and children presented with severe trauma, anxiety, and PTSD, often compounded by poverty, isolation, and disrupted education. L4A's interventions created safe and confidential spaces for healing, helping survivors regain coping mechanisms and a sense of dignity.

In complex cases, such as the disappearance of Gloriose Akimana and the trauma experienced by her child, counselling was complemented by follow-up referrals and recommendations for access to justice.

This experience reaffirmed that recovery must be holistic, combining mental health support with livelihood opportunities, community-based well-being, and strong partnerships.

V. HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATION: DOCUMENTING VIOLATIONS, AMPLIFYING VOICES

In 2025, Light For All continued to monitor and document serious human rights violations affecting Burundian refugees, particularly in Nakivale Refugee Settlement and urban areas.

The grassroots women HRDs that were trained became monitors and supported this work.

Gender-Based and Domestic Violence

Gender-based violence remained one of the most recurrent violations documented, primarily affecting women and children. Cases revealed patterns of forced eviction, prolonged psychological abuse, death threats, and institutional inaction. These violations are deeply linked to economic insecurity, dependency, and weak protection mechanisms.

Documented cases show that GBV in refugee settings is structural rather than isolated, with devastating consequences on women's safety, mental health, and children's rights.

Violations of the Right to Life

The year was also marked by multiple killings of Burundian refugees, both in settlements and urban areas. These incidents—often unresolved—have heightened fear and insecurity within refugee



Mbarara, 20 March 2025 - After the workshop, refugee women leaders sent a message to the international community



communities and exposed gaps in protection and accountability mechanisms.

Violations of Children's Rights

Refugee children continued to face extreme risks, including exposure to domestic violence, school dropout, and, in one tragic case, the killing of an eight-year-old child in Nakivale. Such incidents underline the urgent need for strengthened child protection systems, especially in a context of shrinking humanitarian resources.

KEY CHALLENGES

- Demand far exceeding available resources. The number of out-of-school refugee children continues to rise sharply, forcing Light For All to make deeply difficult decisions about whom we can support – and whom we must place on waiting lists despite urgent need.

- Complex and severe psychological trauma. Many refugee women and children carry the invisible wounds of conflict, displacement, and violence. Addressing these needs requires sustained, specialized mental health and psychosocial care – capacities that remain beyond L4A's current resource envelope.

- Limited human and financial capacity. As community trust in Light For All grows, so too does the volume and complexity of requests for assistance. However, insufficient staffing and predictable funding constrain our ability to respond at the scale required.

- Deepening poverty amid shrinking humanitarian aid. With humanitarian assistance contracting globally, refugee households are facing extreme economic precarity. Families are

increasingly unable to meet even their most basic needs, heightening risks of school dropout, exploitation, negative coping mechanisms, and long-term dependency.

LOOKING AHEAD: MITIGATION AND STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

In response to growing needs and a rapidly evolving humanitarian landscape, Light For All is strengthening its operational resilience while positioning the organization for sustainable growth and greater impact.

Our forward strategy focuses on five key priorities:

- Scaling education support through diversified funding
We will intensify efforts to secure multi-year partnerships and broaden our donor base to ensure that more refugee children can access uninterrupted education – while reducing reliance on short-term

funding cycles.

- Building partnerships for specialized psychosocial care
Recognizing the depth of trauma affecting refugee communities, L4A will pursue strategic collaborations with professional mental health providers and protection actors to expand access to quality, sustained care.

- Investing in organizational capacity.
Strengthening human resources, systems, and governance structures will be critical to supporting responsible growth and enhancing our ability to deliver high-quality programmes at scale.

- Expanding economic empowerment for women and caregivers

By reinforcing livelihood initiatives, Light For All aims to address one of the root drivers of school dropout: household poverty. When caregivers gain financial stability, children are far more likely to remain in school.

- Deepening community-based protection mechanisms
L4A will continue to elevate local leadership – particularly among women and youth – to

strengthen early identification of risks and foster safer, more resilient communities.

CONCLUSION: A CALL FOR RENEWED SOLIDARITY

Despite constrained resources and an increasingly fragile humanitarian landscape, Light For All's work in 2025 affirms a critical truth: targeted, community-driven interventions can create lasting change.

Over the past year:

- Women stepped into leadership and strengthened community resilience.

- Youth found renewed confidence and platforms to be heard.

- Children returned to school, protecting not only their education but their futures.

- Survivors of violence began the difficult journey toward healing.

- Human rights violations were documented, ensuring that suffering did not remain invisible.

These achievements demonstrate what is possible when compassion is matched with commitment.

Yet the gap between needs and available support is widening. Without renewed and sustained investment in refugee response – particularly in education, protection, and mental health services – the risks facing displaced populations will intensify, with women and children bearing the heaviest burden.

This is a decisive moment.

Our achievements would not have been possible without the steadfast support of our donors and partners – [DefendDefenders](#), [Foundation HelpEducation](#), Kanguka and the Burundian diaspora across Africa, Europe, and North America – whose solidarity continues to sustain hope for refugee children and families.

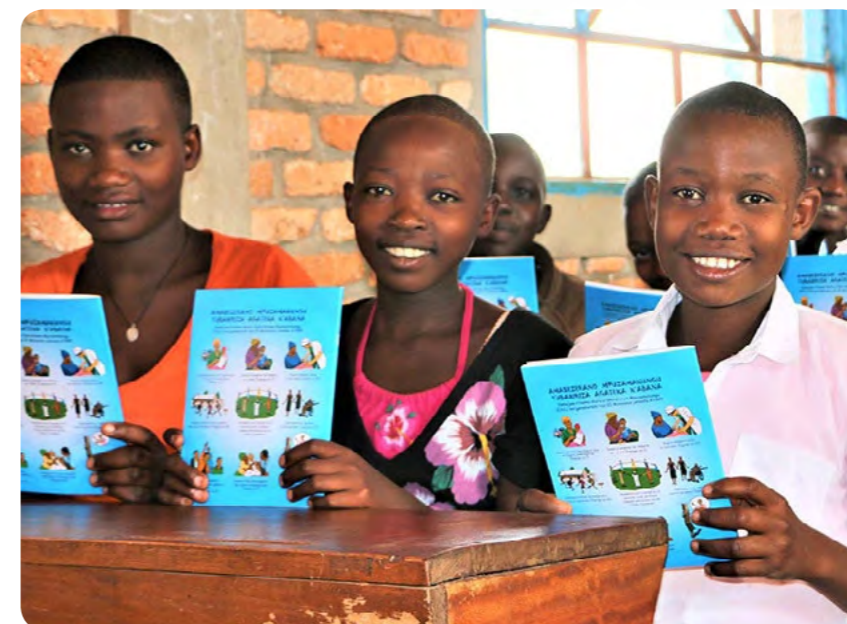
Yet the needs remain immense.

Light For All calls upon partners, donors, and decision-makers to stand in renewed solidarity with refugee communities. The cost of inaction is far greater than the cost of timely investment.

Investing today is not only a humanitarian imperative – it is a strategic choice to prevent irreversible harm, protect human potential, and foster more stable and resilient societies.

Together, we have the opportunity not merely to respond to crisis, but to shape futures defined by dignity, opportunity, and hope.

When we protect a child, empower a woman, or restore hope to a family, we are not only responding to crisis – we are safeguarding the future we all share. [Donate today and be part of that future.](#)



Light?

FOR ALL
THEY RISE, WE RISE



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