



I Am Because We Are

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I Am Because We Are is the companion volume to the acclaimed forthcoming documentary film directed by Nathan Rissman and written and produced by Madonna. This book of images by award-winning photojournalist Kristen Ashburn—culled from her work in Malawi and Africa over the past seven years as well as from her specially commissioned photographs for the film—provides an intimate look at the lives of eight Malawian children featured in the film and reveals the harsh reality of the AIDS pandemic throughout southern Africa.

The title is derived from the concept of “Ubuntu,” an idea in African spirituality that states that all of humanity is connected, that we cannot be ourselves without community, that an individual’s well-being is dependent upon the well-being of others.

These heart-wrenching stories are a call to action. In Malawi, a country of 13 million people, over one million are orphans. Looking into the hearts and minds of children who have endured unimaginable suffering, the book provides an unflinching view of life at the center of the global AIDS crisis. This is not just a story about orphans in Malawi, but about global responsibility and human interconnectedness.

I Am Because We Are includes a foreword by Madonna, an afterword by Ashburn, excerpts from interviews with Malawian children, their biographies, and extended captions. Author proceeds from the sale of the book will be donated to the charitable organization Raising Malawi for their extensive work with orphans throughout Malawi.

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