

# Yates & UNIFAT

**By: Roxanne Lo**

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Skimming today's headlines on Google News, there is coverage on China's tainted milk crisis and the U.S presidential election coming just around the corner, along with some other similar stories. What about the ongoing war that rages on in Uganda? What about the abducted child soldiers? Last Sunday, Billy Yates - the president of the Unified for UNIFAT Rollins chapter - held his first meeting, to raise money for the school and awareness about the situation in Uganda.

In the videos that were shown, smiles are displayed on every single face, and the students of UNIFAT sing and dance with confidence for the camera. When they are asked about the war and the rebel group known as Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) however, the smiles vanish. They remember the fear of being abducted from their families and their villages; they recall their siblings and friends getting captured. Once captured to join the army, the children are never to be heard of again.

Although a lot of organizations have been reaching out to the US government about the problems in this third-world country, our government has not been taking action. Hundreds of thousands of pleas are sent, and photocopied letters are received in response. "Thank you for voicing your concern, we are already taking certain measures to help with the crisis in Uganda." Yet there was horrible news from overseas last week: two classes of 5th and 6th grade students were abducted to join the LRA army. They are the invisible children. Invisible because no records of their age exist, invisible because their army denies their existence, invisible because they have lost their identity and are eventually forgotten. But not today; today, their stories will be told. They will be seen, heard and remembered.

The Sandspur: What are some methods Unified for UNIFAT used to raise awareness?

Billy Yates: We show audiences videos and photographs from our trip to Uganda as we tell them stories of our encounters with local Ugandans. We have also had information released through the press and stories published in newspaper.

TS: Has technology been effective? Why or why not?

BY: Technology has definitely been effective. Unified for UNIFAT now has a website ([www.unifiedforunifat.com](http://www.unifiedforunifat.com)) with videos and information such as upcoming events. Email is another efficient method of communication.

TS: What advice would you give to someone reading this who wishes to partake in this organization?

BY: Well, it would be nice to contact me to find out when the next meeting is, and actually attend meetings. If you want to learn something more on your own, you can do research. Some websites I would recommend are [www.invisiblechildren.com](http://www.invisiblechildren.com), [www.resolveuganda.org](http://www.resolveuganda.org) and obviously our organization's website.

TS: Do the efforts of celebrities really help alleviate the problems at hand or are they just seeking more publicity?

BY: Honestly, you can never tell what their true intentions are, but yes, celebrities have been really helpful by voicing their opinions and participating in every way they can.

TS: Anything you would like the Rollins community to know?

BY: I think every individual should find out what their passion is. Whether it is the Rollins campus, or the Winter Park community, or someplace like Uganda... students should just go for it. Go for your passion. Last but not least, sporadic dance party is a must!