

ESTHER'S STORY

Esther was captured by Boko Haram as a teenager and held for three years. She was given a choice: marry or become a slave. Esther chose slavery, but it made no difference. She was eventually forced to marry a Boko Haram fighter.

When the fighter was killed, she managed to escape. Seven months pregnant, she eventually managed to return to her village, but she was taunted and ostracized.

"They mocked me because I was pregnant," she said. Her own grandmother called her names. Heartbreakingly, when her baby was born, they refused to call her by her name, Rebecca. They called the little girl 'Boko', as if, somehow, Esther and her little girl were to blame.

Esther attended trauma counselling workshops run by Open Doors partners.

"I want people to know that women here need trauma help because of the things that have happened. And those with resources can give support, so that many more women may be helped.

"Before I came for the program, if my daughter was called 'Boko Haram baby' I fought with a lot of people and it hurt. But now, even if they call her that, I don't feel it because I know that's not who my baby is.

I know God loves me and I cannot describe all the good things He has done for me. God loves me so much, I think I am the one God loves most in the world... All I can say is, 'May God bless you and thank you so much.'"