PeaceInsight

About Never Again Rwanda

A peace building and social justice organization that arose in response to the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi. Guided by a vision of a society that enjoys sustainable peace, development and social justice."

never again

- Rwanda -

info@neveragainrwanda.org

www.neveragainrwanda.org

Editorial Team

Foreword

This is the inaugural issue of "PeaceInsight" a multidisciplinary and intercultural peacebuilding journal, with articles that have ideas that will illuminate our joint path towards positive and lasting peace in our communities.

The aim of Peace Insight is twofold: first, to promote research on issues that relate to peacebuilding in Africa, a continent where transitions, divisions, growth and developments are often tangled with various existing and new forms of threat, inequalities, violence, viruses and destruction. Our second aim is to discuss and disseminate studies and research on different disciplines of religion, policy, climate change, governance, livelihood, culture and gender studies, and their connection to conflict management and peace building.

In this issue, we welcomed articles written by practitioners around the world, both within and outside Africa. Since COVID-19 has been racing around the entire world, some articles respond to the ongoing debate on whether the pandemic is a threat or a chance for peace. Other topics include but are not limited to: cooperation, gender and leadership, gender based violence, knowledge sharing and regional peacebuilding. This issue also features reconciliation and trauma healing, as the issue comes at a time when Rwanda is commemorating 100 days of the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi.

This journal is a publication of Never Again Rwanda.

Director of Pubilcation
Dr. Nkurunziza Joseph Ryarasa

COVID-19 A THREAT OR A CHANCE FOR PEACE

As 2019 ended, we eagerly welcomed 2020 with activities and plans to continue our work in various sectors, especially peacebuilding. No one thought about the interruption of coronavirus, paralyzing the entire world, just in the first quarter of the year.

Threat

The COVID-19 pandemic has turned our world upside down, challenging nations, organizations and individuals in ways we never imagined. As COVID-19 raged on, countries rapidly adopted measures to track the spread and virulence of the pandemic.

People had to learn to stay home and physically distance, actions that bore other issues like gender based violence, anxiety and mental distress. Countries had to restrict travel and close borders, which also affected the movement of peacekeepers and aid, potentially

intensifying conflicts. Additionally, due to the lockdown, businesses and organizations were severely affected in terms of dire impact on revenues, limited or no funding and huge impact on human resources among so many others.

Chance

Just like there have been challenges, there have also been unexpected benefits and opportunities. We often hear the old adage that in challenge there is opportunity. Although the world is still very much in the dark on the medical side and that makes it very hard to have faith, let us turn the spotlight to things that are hopeful for peace building, in the face of the present crisis.

On March 23, when the coronavirus was beginning to seize the world, António Guterres, the secretary-general

of the United Nations, issued a call for a global ceasefire[1]. His call was echoed by Pope Francis and others, in a bid to shelter the countries and territories that have been so weakened by violence and conflict, as they would be especially vulnerable to the pandemic. To general surprise, many armed groups around the world appeared to be listening and they downed their weapons[2]. The National Liberation Army (ELN) in Colombia, which has been trying to "liberate" the country for 50 or so years, declared a ceasefire on March 30. So did the New People's Army (NPA) in the Philippines, a communist guerrilla group that has been in the field since 1969. A faction of the Sudanese People's Liberation Army-North (itself a breakaway from the SPLA) also called a unilateral ceasefire. Although temporarily,

the people in those affected regions got a chance for peace. An opportunity that could lead to lasting peace, as the armed groups indicated that they were open to talks with the governments they were fighting. Hope for these affected regions will stay in the hands of the governments having the will to negotiate.

Additionally, although climate disruption could have approached a point of no return, it's key to note that the air has become cleaner, because there are fewer cars on the road and limited industrial activities due to the lockdowns. Emission-detecting satellite images have shown "huge declines in pollution[3]. There have been many links connecting climate change and peace. The 2019 Global Peace index (GPI) concludes that changes in climate and resource

availability tend to create or exacerbate tensions among affected populations[4]. The 2019 GPI also emphasized that, if we want a more peaceful world, tackling climate change has to be part of the equation. The air being cleaner today doesn't necessarily mean that we have conquered our struggle against global warming and climate change consequences, it means we have a chance for clean green transition after COVID-19. If the trend continues, the risks of conflict, displacements and instability that could have been caused by high exposure to climate hazards could, in the long run be eliminated.

Furthermore, as many peacebuilders were wondering how to convene, listen, dialogue, mediate, and empathize at a time when restrictions on physical connection were growing, a new energy to create digital

1   https://www.un.org/en/un-coronavirus-communications-team/fury-virus-illustrates-folly-war

2   https://www.economist.com/international/2020/05/05/how-covid-19-gave-peace-a-chance-and-nobody-took-it

3   https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/03/22/climate/coronavirus-usa-traffic.html

4   http://visionofhumanity.org/app/uploads/2019/06/GPI-2019-web003.pdf

initiatives was born. A group of alumni of our regional Peace Building Institute (PBI), having been fully equipped with the ideals and attitude of promoting peace in their societies, organized a platform to interact with each other about what young peace builders are doing in response to the situation in their different circumstances. They organized the conversation on the theme: ''Effects of COVID-19 on Peace building and the role young people can play in promoting peace and social cohesion.'' This is one of the many digital initiatives that peacebuilders globally adopted to counter fear, misinformation, stigma, mental distress and violence, which provides a chance to promote and spread the message of peace to more people than our individual programs and projects.

Therefore, the crisis has provided opportunities to advance peace, from ceasefires, local aid, cleaner air and community-led peace building initiatives, as well as the chance to work and reconnect as a global community. As peacebuilders globally work to adapt their programs and projects to integrate COVID-19 response, it is safe to say that the pandemic has heightened our understanding that we must work together. If countries unite on all fronts now as well as in the aftermath of the crisis, then peace has a chance.

By Dr. Nkurunziza Joseph Ryarasa
Public Health Practitioner and CSO Expert
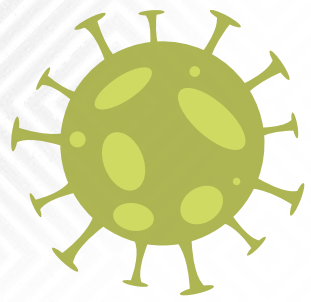
THE IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON CROSS-BORDER RELATIONS

Cross-border cooperation is necessary to accelerate integration, enhance prospects for a peaceful resolution of cross-border conflicts and transform border areas into zones of exchange, trade and cooperation. Cross-border cooperation is also a good ingredient in strengthening good-neighborly relationships between border populations, territorial communities and administrations, as well as other stakeholders within the jurisdiction of regional states.

Before the eruption of the COVID-19 pandemic in the region, there were dynamic movements of people and goods across borders, between the countries of the Great Lakes Region. The border between Rwanda and the DRC alone accounted for an average of 80,000 people crossing daily, making it the second busiest border worldwide, just behind the border between the US and Mexico. Border posts used to be often crowded with uninterrupted lines, and traders, mostly informal (where women make up over 85%), students, workers and tourists going back and forth. This interdependency of cross-border socio-economic exchanges made the main corner stone of cross-border relations and cooperation between the regional populations.

However, with the outburst of the first cases of COVID-19 in the region, cross-border exchanges are, today, totally paralyzed and border movements restricted, to curb the spread of Coronavirus across borders. The first case in Rwanda was registered on March 14, 2020, while in the DRC, the first case was announced by the National Institute for Biomedical Research (INRB) on March 10, in

Kinshasa, and other cases have continued to be documented in the two (North & South) Kivu Provinces, neighboring with Rwanda. In Burundi, the Minister of Health confirmed on Tuesday April 1, 2020 that two Burundians had tested positive for the virus.

Response measures were announced by the governments of the DRC, Burundi and Rwanda to curb the spread of COVID-19 pandemic, including temporary border closures and restriction of cross-border movements, with only trucks carrying goods being exempted. This has seriously impacted tens of thousands of the population, whose daily living was totally dependent on cross-border exchanges, leaving a lot of families with very limited survival options.

It is reported that cross-border restrictions have already resulted in a rise of tensions and stereotypes between border communities. The Congolese community members have claimed that Rwandans have exaggerated the situation of COVID-19 to deprive them of their sources of subsistence, while Rwandans have also accused Congolese of being too careless, which put their lives and the lives of their neighbors in imminent danger. Some cases of xenophobic sentiments were also recorded where Rwandans in some zones in South Kivu were wrongly accused by local populations of infiltrating their area to spread the "Rwandan Coronavirus".

It was also reported that some Congolese nationals who had permanent residence in Rubavu and Kamembe in Rwanda, but used to travel back and forth to Goma and Bukavu every day for their jobs and businesses, decided to leave for Congo after the Government of Rwanda announced a total lockdown. Some of them have reported that robbers have taken advantage of their absence and have stolen their property. They have blamed Rwandans for the theft, something that is staining the relations that were under fragile construction, thanks to different organizations in cross border peacebuilding. There are other Congolese

who stayed in Rwanda hoping that the lockdown was not going to last too long. As the lockdown got extended, and could not cross over to Congo, they risked losing their jobs. Thousands of Congolese requested their Government to repatriate them, in order to return to their respective jobs and businesses. There is also a number of Congolese residing in Rwanda, for whom the lockdown started while they were at work in the DRC, and on their return, were subjected to a 14 days quarantine, separated from their families, among them were mothers separated from their children.

These new situations in the cross-border context between the two countries added to an already fragile situation and may result in more issues affecting the peaceful coexistence between the populations of the region, if not effectively and timely addressed.

Never Again Rwanda, together with Interpeace and partner organisations in the DRC are now discussing a plan to regularly conduct analysis of the impact of COVID-19 on cross-border relations and regional cooperation, and engage in dialogue with relevant authorities, for appropriate measures to overcome negative effects on peace and the wellbeing of regional populations.
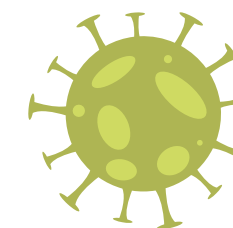
By Ernest Dukuzumuremyi,

with contributions from Paul N. Muhozi

Ernest Dukuzumuremyi is a cross-border peacebuilding practitioner and a research fellow

Paul N. Muhozi is a cross-border peacebuilding practitioner

THE **AGONY** OF **SOCIAL STIGMA** RELATED TO **COVID-19**

For starters, COVID-19 is here to stay and most likely at one point, all the people will get infected with the novel coronavirus unless a vaccine or a medicine that can cure the illness is developed. This means that sooner or later most of us will be individually affected by having our loved ones who have suffered the disease and recovered. Therefore, it's important to keep in mind that history will judge us.

In public health terms, social stigma is defined as the negative association between a person or group of people who share certain characteristics and a specific disease. In pandemic contexts or outbreaks like the COVID-19 times we are living in, social stigma may take different forms including stereotypes, labeling, discrimination, differential treatment, gossip, physical violence, denial of services, and /or loss of status as a result of a perceived link to COVID-19.

For instance, stigma occurs when individuals associate COVID-19 with race or nationality, even though not everyone in that race or from that country is specifically at risk for the

disease. Similarly, stigma can occur after a person has been released from COVID-19 quarantine even though they are not considered a risk for spreading the virus to others.

Many people around the world and in Rwanda have been stigmatized as a result of COVID-19. In Rwanda, instances of stigma have been reported especially among people who have been quarantined. In one instance, a formally quarantined person upon his return to the community, his neighbors operating retail stores were visually scared to sell him household commodities. Additionally, the whole family was a subject of gossip across the neighborhood.

Yet throughout history, research indicates numerous negative impacts emanating from stigma. According to the World Health Organization, stigmatization can lead to devastating and far-reaching impacts.

Firstly, research notes that stigma can lead to people hiding their illness so that they can avoid discrimination. Secondly, stigma leads to negative health-seeking behavior where people are most likely to seek healthcare late. Lastly, stigma can lead to a feeling of shame, hopelessness, and isolation.

Given the abhorrent nature of stigma and its devastating impact on the health system and people, it's imperative to deconstruct stigma. Experience and history teach us that the best way to do this is by educating the public on COVID-19 to dispel damaging stereotypes such as the stereotype that people cannot completely be healed from the disease since it has no cure and the belief that it might reappear at any time. Public sensitization about COVID-19 should aim to build people's trust in healthcare advice, encourage
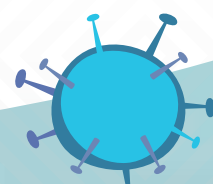
people to exhibit empathy towards those affected, enhance the understanding of COVID-19, and continue implementing ongoing mitigation measures that have so far proved effective.

Another important parameter is openness and transparency whereby our leaders should be open about their diagnosis of the disease to aid the normalization of COVID-19. When Phil Bongoley Lutaaya a prominent musician at the time in Uganda and Magic Johnson a basketball star in the United States of America came out and revealed his HIV positive status, it helped reduced stigma and the number of people seeking medical care for HIV/AIDS greatly increased.

Lastly, COVID-19 poses a serious health threat to the world at large and at such a time, the human family ought to come together and show empathy towards those affected while keeping in mind that anyone of us can fall victim to COVID-19. As the bible says in Mathew 7:12: "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you"

By David Kagoro Baguma

Public health expert
and senior researcher
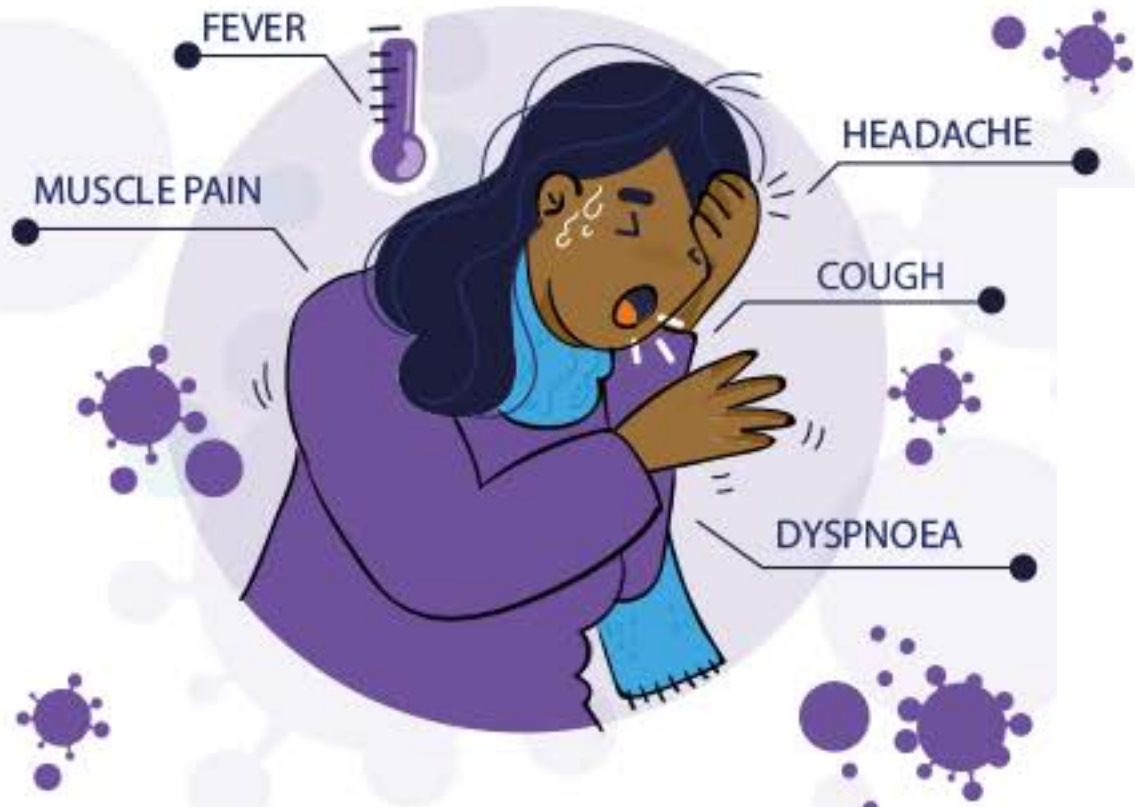
COVID-19 CRISIS EXPOSES HUMAN IGNORANCE; THE NEXT GENERATION OF CONFLICT

When the COVID-19 pandemic was first identified in Wuhan City in China in December 2019[5], this information seemed distant to different countries outside China despite the warnings by World Health Organization (WHO). That is probably another great error of our time. But the issue is not whether we had known or not that the virus is unstoppable. It is rather the human ignorance that turned the virus into a conflict source, because we saw it coming.

Facts about the crisis started to spread widely, educating the considered distant nations to protect themselves and their governments cautioning their citizens against the fast approaching enemy. However, this also stirred xenophobia and racism in many communities. In the city of New York in the United States of America, some Asian natives such as the Hong Kong born Eunice begun wearing masks according to the Atlantic.[6] Through their experience with the SARS outbreak in the 2003, masks symbolized solidarity with others and individual protection as reported by the same paper. However, this only raised discrimination against such people across the USA.

Similar xenophobic reports flooded the media across the world. Humans continued to expose own ignorance, failing to put efforts together to deal with a common problem. This pushed the United Nations to react against the behavior despite defiance by several states. For example, on the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination held on March 21, the UN special rapporteur on racism reminded us that;

" *crises like the coronavirus pandemic remind us that we are all connected and that our well-being is interdependent.*"[7]

However, this did not seem to teach a huge lesson.

5   https://www.who.int/news-room/detail/08-04-2020-who-timeline---covid-19

6   https://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2020/03/coronavirus-covid19-xenophobia-racism/607816/

7   https://www.aa.com.tr/en/latest-on-coronavirus-outbreak/un-expert-hits-out-at-covid-19-xenophobia/1776554

As if it was not enough, the fights turned against people who were suspected to be COVID-19 positive and even those who had recent travel history regardless of their countries of travel; stigma, blame, rejection to name a few. On one hand it was a justified fear due to the limited knowledge about the virus but on the other hand it is a demonstration of a lack of solidarity in unsafe situations. A new generation of conflict that keeps exposing the human nature. For example, in Kenya a man who was suspected to be Coronavirus positive was beaten to death in March 2020[8] as reported by the media.

Equally in Rwanda, the Government put in place measures to trace people who are at risk of contracting the virus, quarantining them and treating sick ones. This has reduced

the state of panic among the public and this is no surprise as the 2019 Citizen Report Card by the Rwanda Governance Board suggests more than 88% of Rwandans trust government institutions[9]. However, there are people and their families who experienced stigma as a result of being placed under quarantine or mere suspicion on their COVID-19 status as reported in their different testimonies of social media. In addition, messages and photos were circulated on social media expressing anger and fear against individuals who were alleged to have disobeyed the COVID-19 prevention guidelines.

With the current situation, even more severe future conflicts can be projected, based on the scarcity of resources. To illustrate the gravity of the concern, the International

Labor Organization projected an initial job loss estimated to around 25 million from a base level of 188 million in 2019.[10] This, paired with expected global economic recession, countries can only expect that the next generation of conflict, over scarce resources, is likely to occur probably in a much harsher form.

10 https://www.ilo.org/global/about-the-ilo/newsroom/news/ WCMS_738742/lang--en/index.htm

8 https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-8129791/Kenyan- man-beaten-death-mob-youths-suspected-having-coronavirus. html

9 http://rgb.rw/fileadmin/Citizen_Report_Card-all/CRC_2019_ Kinyarwanda.pdf

Hope remains

Despite the blame game and failure, countries and the international community have shown solidarity and mutual support during tough times. When the World Health Organization was being dropped by its main donor, claiming to demand accountability, countries committed to support it in order to bridge the gap, and one of them is Saudi Arabia which committed $10[11] million. Additionally, the African Union as well as individual African presidents condemned the trend, stating inappropriate timing to demand accountability.

For the case of Rwanda, just at the beginning of April 2020, the US Ambassador to Rwanda and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) Mission Director announced US$1 million assistance in response to the COVID 19 pandemic, almost one billion Rwandan francs on top of the U.S. government's existing support to Rwanda. [12]Despite the critics of US top leadership alleged hostility against global health efforts, that support is evidence of potential ongoing solidarity, at least with Rwanda.

In the same time, the World Bank supported Rwanda with $14.25 million to support its COVID-19 National Preparedness and Response Plan by financing critical interventions, such as prompt diagnosis of suspected coronavirus cases, contact tracing to minimize risk of transmission, risk assessments to identify hot spot areas, and screening travelers at ports of entry.[13] Although this emergency support may not end all the challenges anticipated during and after the crisis, it too, is an indication of mutual support.

In the same vein, adding to the major private sector actors like the Bank of Kigali which donated Rwf 282 Million to Government efforts to provide socio-economic relief to vulnerable households in Rwanda as stated in the Kigali Today press article14, Civil Society and individual well-wishers keep sending money and food donations to struggling families, to enable them to cope with food shortage that seems to grow along with the ongoing "Guma murugo" stay-at-home period.

11   https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/20200331-saudi-arabia-supports-who-with-10mn-fund-to-combat-covid-19/

12   https://rw.usembassy.gov/u-s-announces-us1-million-in-new-covid-19-aid-to-rwanda/

13   https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/press-release/2020/04/07/world-bank-group-supports-rwanda-covid-19-response

14   https://www.ktpress.rw/2020/04/bank-of-kigali-contributes-rwf-282m-supports-its-customers-during-covid-19-spread/

Despite all efforts, it is highly important to mitigate potential conflicts that are likely to emerge from the current crisis. The more people stay at home, the more challenging it gets with millions losing jobs every day. Peacebuilding actors should start imagining adaptive approaches that will work in the post-Covid period. Governments should also design post-crisis strategies that go beyond economic uplifting to integrate conflict management as they uphold national and international cooperation.

Since its beginning, the COVID-19 crisis has been a cruel test to governance across the world. Therefore governance-related responses should also begin adapting before it is too late.

A mark has been added to human history and life may never be the same again.

By Eric Mahoro

Expert on program management, governance and advocacy
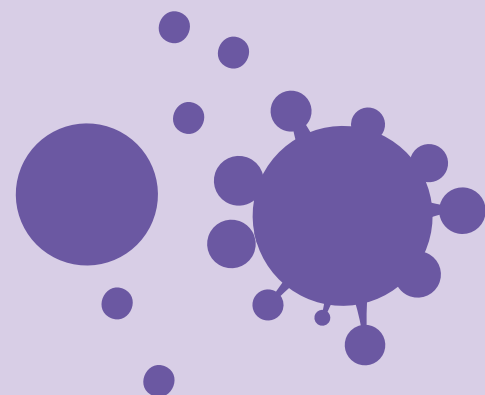
COOPERATION, THE GREATEST WEAPON AGAINST COVID-19

COVID-19 provides a once in a generation challenge to many governments across the globe. We have been challenged to assess our governance systems as death tolls continue to rise in correlation with poor strategic planning. What has become clear is that cooperation, both in the sense of national response and the assembly of global resources, is the greatest weapon against fighting a pandemic.

Some countries are plagued by the politics of division, struggling to form a joint stance as many find themselves detached and disenfranchised from the ruling government.

COVID-19 and its remarkable impact on our livelihood has highlighted both the good and bad, where united countries have proven formidable, and those afflicted with the politics of division have been left at a grieving standstill.

Successful cases of fighting the virus, have displayed national unity and a global cooperation that meant the severity of the virus was understood early on. Strong ties with international unions heralded a joint understanding that the outbreak constituted a Public Health Emergency of International Concern at the earliest stage, as deemed so by WHO (World Health Organization) on the 30th of January 2020. This kind of global cooperation is only possible with strong leadership.

Cooperation isn't possible without strong leadership. Heads of government dictate the direction of partnership and without strong belief from the population towards those at the helm, the likelihood is that the masses won't fall in line and therefore infections will continue to rise.

Singapore, a country that prides itself in its multiculturalism and diversity, has been
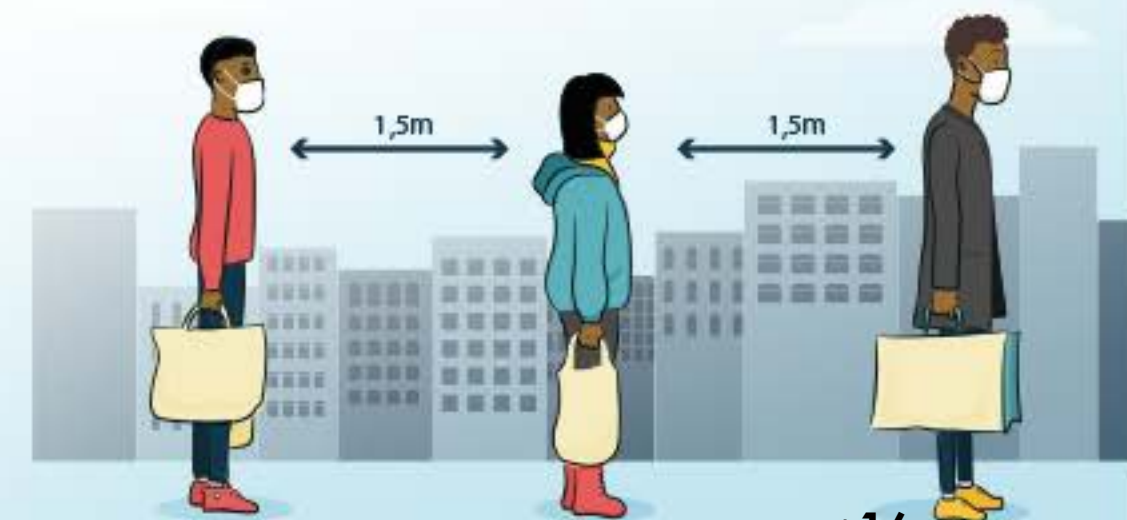
highlighted as one of the more successful cases in battling the virus. Its president, Halimah Yacob, called for greater sharing of knowledge and a coordinated, rapid global response as a critical antidote.

At the time of writing, Singapore has 879 cases of COVID-19 and just 3 deaths and its rate of recoveries has outpaced infections. According to Michael Merson, director of the SingHealth Duke-NUS Global Health Institute, leadership and faith in the administration has been key to this success.

" There's strong government leadership, but also trust in the government,"

said Merson, who used to run the World Health Organization's anti-AIDS program.

" Every time a case is identified there is a very strong action plan to identify contacts. It's also very good at promoting hand-washing and keeping people at a safe distance from one another."

Rwanda proves to be another example where strong leadership, national unity and a strong sense of global cooperation have produced 0 deaths from COVID-19 so far.

Posting on Twitter, President Kagame said that WHO Director-General Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus had the full confidence and support of Africa, showing solidarity with Dr. Tedros in the face of criticism from President Donald Trump.

The Rwandan government acted preemptively to enforce a strict nationwide lockdown in order to halt transmission. The government also announced that cabinet

ministers and top officials would donate their April salaries to the fight against the coronavirus epidemic, showing the harmony within the government as an institution.

These comparisons are stark in contrast to the situations in Europe, where actions have been taken too late and cooperation has been hindered due to divisive politics.

The United Kingdom, coming off the back of Brexit, cut political ties with the EU and formed a national stance that said 'we will be better off on our own'. Poetically, the UK currently faces a resource crisis and it has been alleged that the UK was given 'ample opportunity' to join an EU scheme on huge purchases of ventilators, laboratory supplies and personal protective equipment.

What was deemed to be a mistake in communication has now been claimed to be 'a political decision' by senior UK officials,

adding more weight to the idea that Britain's infatuation with isolating from the EU has deepened its Coronavirus crisis even further.

Just across the Atlantic Ocean, the United States has reached over 1 million COVID-19 cases. President Trump, who has centered his political ideology on nationalism, was late to appreciate the severity of the virus' global impact, which has resulted in the US having the most deaths globally due to COVID-19.

Nobel prize-winning economist Joseph Stiglitz in an interview with The Guardian said that Trump and the establishment's mismanagement had led the US to go into the crisis unprepared.

"We were unprepared but, even given the degree of unpreparedness, Trump's decision to make this about politics rather than about science has meant we have responded far more poorly."

As many politicians have found success in a style of nationalism that vilifies the outside world, COVID-19 has reminded us that some wars cannot be won with the military and political independence. What we are beginning to learn is that cooperation and unity both at home and abroad remains our greatest weapon against global crisis.

By Peter Ndahiro

Communications practitioner with a specific interest in digital content

CONSEQUENCES OF **GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE** ON *Peace*

Gender-based violence (GBV) can be defined as any harm or suffering perpetrated against a woman or girl, man or boy, that has a negative impact on the physical or mental health, development or identity of the person. At its core, GBV is a product of unequal gender dynamic, discrimination and patriarchal practices, and is a manifestation of unequal power between women and men. Although men and boys can also be subjected to GBV, women and girls are mostly affected by GBV – studies show that 1 in 3 women have been victims to gender-based violence,[1] perpetrated either by the family unit, the general community or by the state and its institutions.

Such violence can take various forms: Victims can suffer physical violence such as assault and battery, slavery and slave-like practices, and trafficking. They can also suffer sexual violence including rape, marital rape, sexual abuse and exploitation, forced prostitution and sexual harassment. Gender-based violence also can be psychological and emotional violence such as abuse, humiliation, and placing restrictions on liberty and movement. In some parts of the world, gender-based violence occurs through harmful traditional practices such as female genital mutilation (FGM), forced marriage, child marriage, infanticide, sex-selective abortion practices, and denial of education and economic opportunities for women and girls. These and other forms of GBV undermine the health, dignity, security and autonomy of victims while imposing a culture of silence.

GBV is therefore a violation of human rights, and wherever it occurs, it is a major obstacle for the achievement of sustainable peace and development and gender justice.[2] GBV is also a threat to democratic governance and economic growth since victims cannot fully participate in the development of their own society. It

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1   Batha, E, Wulfhorst, E (2020) UN: 3 months of lockdown could result in 15 million cases of domestic abuse worldwide [online] World Economic Forum

2   Care International (n.d) Intersections of violence against women and girls with state-building and peace-building: Lessons from Nepal, Sierra Leone and South Sudan [online] Care International.

is important to note that during conflict GBV often escalates, which stipulates the need to address it as a prerequisite to achieving sustainable peace.

Additionally, gender-based violence can undermine the long-term stability and security of states (even after they have transitioned out of violent conflict). In prevalent conflict situations, gender-based and sexual violence has been used as a weapon of war, seen during the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi. Including the aforementioned, there are a wide range of consequences of GBV on peace. A culture of violence against women undermines efforts to eradicate poverty and promote inclusive sustainable development. It is a barrier for achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable development, and the attainment of the sustainable development goals (SDGs), and their promise to "leave no one behind" cannot be fulfilled without putting an end to violence against women and girls.

A variety of frameworks have been implemented to protect women from GBV at national and international level in times of war and peace. Perhaps the most popular framework is the UN Security Council Resolution 1325 calling for women's rights to be at the center of conflict prevention and resolution initiatives. At a national level, in many countries including Rwanda, gender-based violence in its various forms is a crime punishable by law.[3] Harmful traditional practices such as FGM, sex-selective abortions and denial of opportunities to a specific gender are also outlawed in a number of countries but are still traditionally practiced in others, while others still struggle to enforce legislation.

Currently, the lockdown imposed by governments in response to the coronavirus pandemic is being projected to have a catastrophic impact on women and girls trapped at home with their abusers.[4] Cases of domestic violence have skyrocketed in countries such as South Africa and Kenya since the lockdown has been imposed. In addition to increasing the risk of intimate partner violence, the confinement is expected to worsen the socio-economic situation of many which exposes women and girls from less-privileged backgrounds to sexual exploitation by community members. Additionally, movement restrictions will challenge access to GBV services and contraception which means women and girls risk losing their ability to plan their families, and protect their bodies and health. Furthermore, the socio-economic consequences of COVID-19 as a result of a global recession will deepen poverty and put millions at risk of forced child marriage in order for families to 'alleviate' their financial pressures.

All of these factors contributing to Gender-based violence threaten peace at the state level by limiting the participation of women

3   Equality Now (2019) FGM and the law around the world [online] Equality Now.

4   Chukuweke, J (2020) The "shadow pandemic" of gender-based violence [online] Atlantic Council

in peace, development, economic and governance processes. When their participation is limited, a significant opportunity is lost to create new structures that can challenge inequalities and violence perpetrated by men and create societies free from gender-based violence. Prevention efforts such as the transformation of social norms by working with men and boys should address gender-based violence holistically and not just conflict-related gender violence. This approach recognizes that gender-based violence during conflict and post-conflict is inherently linked to the discriminatory and patriarchal contexts that pre-date the conflict and endure its aftermath.

Addressing gender-based violence should encompass the involvement of men and boys.[5] Men are the gatekeepers of current gender orders and are potential resisters of change. However, they can also be potential allies and agents of change in combatting gender-based violence. Men and boys are the majority perpetrators of gender-based violence but they are not born violent. Instead, they are socialized into masculine roles that promote aggressive behavior and societal standards of "what a man should be." Notably, systems surrounding and enabling GBV are internalized by women as well. Gender roles are not merely imposed upon women, they are also enforced and enacted by them, leading them to perpetuate violent notions of masculinity and the continuation of harmful traditional practices such as FGM. This limits the recognition of GBV in communities and households since individuals are socialized into normalizing and accepting certain forms of abuse and discrimination.

In order to ensure long-term peace and hinder gender-based violence, both men, women and community leaders must engage in inclusive programs and spaces that educate them with the aim to foster positive attitudes towards women and support them in rejecting gender-based violence and discrimination of any forms against women. This will safeguard societal development, economic growth, democratic governance and human rights as a gateway for achieving sustainable peace and the sustainable development goals mission to "leave no one behind."

5   IASC (2005) Guidelines for Gender-based Violence Interventions in Humanitarian Settings: Focusing on Prevention of and Response to Sexual Violence in Emergencies [online]

By Jessica Mbanda

Communications practitioner and feminist with an interest in peacebuilding

GENDER IDENTITY, POWER DYNAMICS AND THE ROLE OF WOMEN IN PEACEBUILDING

Gender identity is often described as one's personal notion of himself or herself as male or female, both or neither, whereas gender refers to societal constructed characteristics inclusive of customs, roles and relationships. These characteristics vary from society to society and in some societies, those who do not conform to those norms face stigma, stereotypes and social alienation.

Herbert Spencer in his social evolution theory noted that the society is moving from "simple to complex, homogenous to heterogeneous, simple to compound and from militant to industrial". Furthermore, this theory highlights that compound societies are also characterized by industrial structures, which demonstrate an advancement in division of labor in reference to various societies. He states that doubly compound societies are more united and are characterized by a particular political structure, religious hierarchy hence complexity in terms of labor division. Spencer's theory faced criticism whereby social thinkers claimed that this theory was inconsistent since some societies have not evolved and that being human is not only about struggle for existence since every society is characterised by qualities such as sympathy, kindness and love. Regardless of social thinker's criticisms Spencer's theory still served as a guiding principal for social evolution.

For the longest time, women were confined to domestic roles whereas, men were considered providers, however most countries have embraced championing for women empowerment through establishing laws that favor involvement of women in various spheres. Prior to the creation of resolution of 1325 by the Unity Nations Security Council (UNSCR) in 2000, it was noted that war dynamics were changing and women continued to be excluded from participation in peace processes yet women and girls are vastly impacted by conflict and war hence their critical role in peacebuilding efforts.

The resolution also affirmed that 'peace and security are more sustainable when women are involved in prevention of violent conflict, relief and participate in post conflict recovery efforts with the aim to foster durable peace[15].

Resolution 1325 paved the way for additional resolutions including UNSCR 1820 created in 2008 recognizing sexual violence as a weapon of war, UNSCR 1888 enacted in 2009 obligating protection of women and girls during armed conflict and UNSCR 1889 established in 2009 encouraging the participation of women in the both peace processes and decision making.

These resolutions have greatly contributed to the establishment of regional resolutions as well as tremendous achievements by various countries in terms of establishing laws that favor women as well as access to various opportunities. This shift backed by social evolution has led to an increase in cases of domestic violence.

Today's society is characterized by complexities in power dynamics whereby both men and women strive for equality. In some society's acceptance to share power between men and women has continued to cause a drift within the society hence affecting relationships as well as peace. Barriers to women's participation in peace processes continue to be affected by their minimal participation in designing and implementing of post-conflict resolution and peacebuilding activities, lack of financial support for women's organizations involved in peacebuilding and lack of attention regarding women's specific needs[16].

When collective efforts are essential, women, in particular possess traits such as empathy, courage and adaptability to situations, which are key traits in solving conflict. Women are key players in establishing long lasting sustainable peace most especially since they are many in numbers, they are primary caretakers of families hence their roles in advocating for peace. If shared, power can contribute to the greater good of a society and Women as well as men both have a role to play in peacebuilding. It requires collective efforts to sustain peace and this process should not exclude any gender.

15   What is UNSCR 1325?
An Explanation of the Landmark Resolution on Women, Peace and Security, retrieved from https://www.usip.org/gender_peacebuilding/about_UNSCR_1325

16   The Role of Women in Conflict Resolution and Peacebuilding, retrieved from https://gsdrc.org/document-library/the-role-of-women-in-conflict-resolution-and-peacebuilding/

By Debby Karemera

Peacebuilding practitioner and clinical psychologist

LEADERSHIP, GENDER AND PEACEBUILDING

In the face of the greatest global crisis in a century, communities across the globe are encountering an insurmountable number of issues. You've heard it before, we are only as safe as the most vulnerable in our society. COVID-19 has brought more attention to the inequities we have always known and too often ignored, shrouded in the shadows of bias, racism, and blind privilege. Without solidarity and a holistic, community-informed response, the pandemic will only accelerate the already disproportionate and unjust actions. In this great moment of social change, women leaders are uniquely positioned to succeed. Often leading with community lens, women often have higher levels of emotional intelligence and altruistic tendencies. This is not a new fight for women either; one hundred years after the women's suffrage movement, women are still fighting discrimination founded on the basis of sex. Thinking of the big picture, if women could have made the world a more equitable place alone, they would have done so already.

Globally, women continue to advocate for their right to leadership positions, equal pay, and fair treatment under the umbrella of patriarchy. Without recognition for this issue, patriarchal structures will continue to challenge peace and divide society into "us" versus "them," leaving us with a mess.

Women and girls who don't fit in a rigid definition of womanhood are often ridiculed with labels, stereotypes, and sexism. Expected to stay home, tend to children, and keep the home tidy. Women in certain parts of the world are tracked for success by age and childbearing capabilities. On the other hand, a male counterpart is immediately lauded for success as a young professional, even if it means time away from his family. Succumbing to these unrealistic social standards, this division leaves a community more vulnerable to conflict.

After the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi, Rwandan women stepped up to lead, as an estimated 70% of the population was comprised of women. United with a vision for social cohesion, Rwandan women

championed, cultivated, and encouraged a more peaceful future. Pioneers like Louise Mushikiwabo wrapped the community with heart and compassion defined by the need for solidarity in their community. To this day women hold a significant majority of leadership positions in civil society and government roles. For the last decade, Rwanda has topped charts setting the new status quo in Africa for female leadership and gender equity.

Even with the statistics at hand, there is still work to be done to fulfill true gender equity. Building community resilience requires that we continually revisit space to welcome women and girl's leadership as part of a larger system of transformation. Preaching equity and subsequently acting on our word requires each of us to examine how we uphold structures that favor persons of privileged identities. This is really the root of peacebuilding and social justice, constructing and harvesting space to uphold dignity and prosperity of all lives. Everyone can be a leader, but not everyone is provided the space to unleash their leadership potential.

Luckily, actors in civil society, non-profits, and other community-based organizations are laying forth the framework to strengthen the equal role and inclusion of women and girls. Beginning with the sourcing of safe spaces, such groups are inviting this leadership. When small groups coincide in self-reflection, critical thinking, and compassion, they can seed the roots to sustain systemic change. Changing patriarchal systems begins with a conversation. Making a stake for shared behavior change in small groups influences actions of greater communities over time, and this is precisely the type of leadership we need at a time like this.

Living and working in Rwanda for four years, Hannah feels privileged to have worked in spaces led by exemplary matriarchal figures, both at Never Again Rwanda and Peace Corps Rwanda. Today, Hannah works at Global Health Corps and dedicates her work to the next-generation of emerging female leaders.

By Hannah Wood

Peacebuilding practitioner and feminist

WHY KNOWLEDGE SHARING IS NOT YET A CULTURE AMONG CSOS IN RWANDA.

Although "knowledge management" entered popular usage in the late 1980s, it has been around for many decades[17]. Knowledge management (KM) is essentially about getting the right knowledge to the right person at the right time[18]. Knowledge sharing is one of key components of KM, which means the process by which knowledge is transferred

from one person to another, from individuals to groups, or from one group to another within or outside the organization[19].

In today's development perspective, knowledge management and sharing are among key ingredients of organizational performance, creditability and sustainability. Knowledge is the key resource that must be managed for organizations to succeed and remain competitive[20]. For a long time,

the relationship between knowledge management and performance has interested many researchers. So far, there is evidence that knowledge sharing is positively associated with innovation, creativity, efficiency, program quality and organizational performance.

Today, more and more organizations are coming to understand that in ignoring the importance of intangible assets (including knowledge) they run a mortal risk[21]. However, the culture of knowledge sharing and learning is still limited among Civil Society

17   http://www.economicsdiscussion.net/knowledge-management/knowledge-management/31917

18   http://www.knowledge-management-tools.net/

19   https://www.igi-global.com/dictionary/effects-extrinsic-rewards-knowledge-sharing/16453

20   https://www.researchgate.net/publication/328791839_The_importance_of_knowledge_management_on_innovation

21   Journal of Systemic Knowledge Management, April, 1998 http://www.tlainc.com/article8.htm

Organizations (CSOs) in Rwanda. They, however, put more focus on managing tangible assets including materials, equipment, financials, etc. rather than embracing an organizational management approach that equally values the intangible assets. Knowledge sharing can be internal or external. On one hand, internal knowledge sharing promotes communication among employees, quick and informed decisions and increases productivity. External knowledge sharing on the other hand, promotes collaboration between organizations, amplifies organizational learning and helps organizations to avoid duplication.

As of December 2018, the Rwanda Governance Board (RGB) counted 1,335 national NGOS and 173 International NGOs[22]. These CSOs have produced and are still producing knowledge such as program evaluations, research, case studies, assessments, audio-visual materials, etc, but when looking at how these materials are shared within organization (internally) or between organizations (externally), there is a huge gap. For example, in many cases, the findings from research, evaluation and insights from program implementation are only shared with donors for transparency and accountability. These findings are not shared with CSOs' employees to inform quality delivery and future programming, and they are particularly not shared with other CSOs for learning and avoiding duplications. Furthermore, some learning materials are not posted on CSOs websites; they remain however, in their shelves and laptops.

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22   http://rgb.rw/non-governmental-and-faith-based-organi-sations/non-goverment-organisations/

Experience shows that majority of CSOs in Rwanda do not have technical capacities and skills to extract insights and knowledge from program implementation and evaluation. The other mistake done by nearly all CSOs in Rwanda is the inability to capture the tacit knowledge of the employee leaving an organization.

Some CSOs have been trying to create spaces for knowledge sharing such as communities of practices, networking meetings, learning visits, etc. However, these efforts are still limited, fragmented, and project-based rather institutionalized.

Again, many CSOs in Rwanda are yet to establish strong Monitoring and Evaluation systems that encompass the knowledge management and sharing plan. The knowledge sharing requires going

beyond traditional M&E systems that produce reports and store information. For example, the Mapping of Healing Actors and Approaches conducted by Never Again Rwanda and Interpeace (2015)[23] revealed that many actors still lack M&E procedures to inform organizations' decision making. In addition, many actors including CSOs reported lack of experience and resources to conduct proper M&E activities. Furthermore, the same study reported lack of awareness among CSOs that M&E plans should be integrated into project design. To be well positioned, CSOs must have the capacity to extract and use knowledge from their information generated either from evaluations, research or lessons learnt from program implementation.

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23 *Never Again Rwanda and Interpeace. (2015). Societal Healing in Rwanda: A mapping of actors and approaches*

A number of factors may explain this problem. Firstly, knowledge sharing requires an organizational culture that values promotion, production, coding, and sharing of knowledge, something that is still missing. In addition, CSOs in Rwanda have limited capacity in terms of qualified staff, infrastructures and financial resources to establish and operationalize the knowledge management systems. According to the Civil Society Organizations Sustainability Index (CSOSI) (2019), CSOs' organizational capacity is still weak in regards to human and financial resources. CSOs continue to exhibit significant gaps in capacity for project design and evaluation, leadership and management, strategic planning, and knowledge management. Secondly, CSOs do not necessarily have the knowledge sharing motivation plan either in form of money or other means to encourage internal the knowledge sharing.

Thirdly, CSOs in Rwanda still view each other as competitors in terms of funding mobilization and programming rather than seeing each other as strategic or operational allies. Therefore, some CSOs view their knowledge as a competitive edge to conquer funding opportunities and visibility. This has resulted in poor programming, poor performance, duplication, limited innovation and creativity across interventions of CSOs. Fourthly, there is limited coordination of knowledge and good practice sharing efforts among them.

Finally, existing efforts to foster knowledge sharing among CSOs in Rwanda are donor-based rather than part of organizational culture, mission and values. While some CSOs started to organize different events to share knowledge with others in the same sector of intervention, something that has been appreciated by many CSOs

representatives; however these events are still ad hoc and activity-based.

Similarly, due to lack of coordination, the recommendations taken from these events are not implemented or followed up. For example in 2016 and 2017, Never Again Rwanda organized networking meetings with CSOs working in Peacebuilding as side events at the International day of peace. CSO representatives appreciated the efforts and recommended each CSO to organize similar events in the future, however, there was no similar event organized by these CSOs.

Also, on 30th March 2017, Never Again Rwanda held a reflection workshop with CSOs working in gender and governance to reflect on the theme entitled "Women's Participation in Local Governance: challenges and mitigation strategies". In this reflection meeting, Never Again Rwanda shared the findings from the research conducted in 2016 "Governing for and with Citizens". The meeting was highly appreciated by participants and they recommended similar events in future.

> " *I am so happy to be in this important meeting and I am sure issues concerning women participation in local government will be considered in the future planning and budgeting"* Male participant

Among the key resolutions of the meeting was to do a joint policy brief to be presented to the Ministry of Gender and Family (MIGEPROF), Ministry of Local Government (MINALOC) and Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning (MINECOFIN) ahead of 2017/2018 national planning and budgeting. However, this paper was not produced and no follow up was done by the established joint committee. This demonstrates lack of ownership, collaboration and coordination of knowledge sharing efforts among Rwandan CSOs.

To bridge the gap, CSOs in Rwanda are recommended to build an organizational knowledge culture that encourages and nurtures creative thinking, knowledge creation and sharing. In addition, CSOs are urged to establish knowledge management and sharing strategy beyond their traditional Monitoring and Evaluation systems. This means putting in place adequate resources and infrastructures to design and implement the strategy.

Furthermore, CSOs must map out and create a database of all organizations working in the same field to foster knowledge sharing, synergy and collaboration. While each CSO must institutionalize the values of knowledge sharing, there is a need for CSOs working in the same field to have a coordinated committee that can facilitate inter-CSOs consultations and knowledge sharing.

Likewise, there is a need to have an online portal that might help CSOs to share, retrieve and use knowledge generated by them from evaluation, research and field experience. Also, the mandate of Rwanda Governance Board should be not limited to registering International and National NGOs; it should go beyond and put in place guidelines for inter-CSO collaboration and learning. Without effective knowledge management and learning systems that foster the culture of knowledge sharing, Rwandan CSOs are far from being evidence-based decision makers and policy influencers. Finally, CSOs in Rwanda must learn from the government of Rwanda, which adopted the knowledge based economy both in Vision 2020 and 2050.

Making a mistake is not a crime, but repeating the same mistake because you did not learn from it is.

By Celestin Nsengiyumva

Expert in M&E and program management

HEALING THE SCARS OF GENOCIDE

A courageous journey

Genocide is a poisonous bush that grows not from two or three roots, but from a tangle of roots that has smouldered underground where no one notices, until the brutality bursts into flames, eliminating the soul of the perpetrators as they guiltlessly draw blood and commit wanton murder.

11th June 2019
Musanze District, Rwanda
Edward Gafeza 57
Valena Kayitesi 44

Between April and July 1994, Rwanda witnessed a frenzied 100 days of mass killings, rampant rape and numerous other horrific acts. An estimated more than one million people were slaughtered. The 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi was one of the defining events of the twentieth century. Victims, perpetrators and children born whilst the genocide raged are still coping with the trauma of the brutality that touched all citizens.

In the past quarter century, Rwanda has made remarkable progress in rebuilding the shattered lives from the ashes of the Genocide. Inspite of these significant achievements, communities across Rwanda are dealing with the social, psychological and economic impacts of the Genocide. Trauma today continues to be raw.

Never Again Rwanda in collaboration with Interpeace and the support from the Swedish International Development Cooperation, pioneered a unique holistic program to treat trauma which fosters social cohesion. The aim is to heal the invisible wounds etched deeply in haunted souls, and to create safe spaces for participants to learn what caused the Genocide, especially amongst the youth who grew up under a mantle of silence about that tarnished era.

The program has achieved a lot in reducing trauma, and revenge tendencies as well as anger, whilst building a positive psychological resilience that diminishes depression, creating social trust and tolerance.

Meet some of the beneficiaries of the 'Space' program. Their personal stories are an inspiration of what is possible to create: hope.

Edward and his wife Valena stand at their doorway with their youngest son. When the Genocide erupted, Edward and his wife escaped. Valena with her family sought refuge in the DR Congo. Edward was miraculously protected by a sympathetic Hutu neighbor. All of Edward's family were murdered. He recalled in an early escape he had hidden amongst corpses feigning death.

"I witnessed young girls being raped, butchered, you can never forget the terror, you can never forget what your eyes witnessed, Genocide is the most despicable crime, more than any other criminal action. The savagery is unimaginable" - Edward

For many years after the Genocide ended, Edward and Valena suffered depression; the

conflict had severely traumatized them. Through the 'Space' program where survivors and perpetrators share their sorrows and fears, they have learned that they weren't alone in their feelings and with shared experiences, healing began. There was a sense of community.

26th April 2019
Karongi, Rwanda
Florida Bankundiye 43
with daughter, 11

"*My husband was found guilty in a Gacaca Trial in 2008. Till this day he says he never killed anyone and refuses to ask for 'forgiveness'. There was circumstantial evidence; a Tutsi was killed in our house, he was hiding, Hutu militia followed him there and killed him. My husband was powerless to stop the slaughter. I will be faithful to him till he is released from jail. Sadly since the jail is over 3 hours from my home, I only see him once a year as I cannot afford the transport. I am very fortunate that my Tutsi neighbors, have been sympathetic and supportive, even providing housing for me and my children. Naturally, my greatest challenge is raising a family with no means of support. Poverty is our enemy. In the 'Space' programme the most important lesson I have learned is how to let go of fear and how to interact with all people, how to be open – when problems are shared, it is less a burden. I have developed a reputation of being a problem solver. One of the major issues people seek my help is domestic violence which is endemic in our community. I learned my counselling skills in the NAR programme, I emphasize the importance of working through problems with respect." – Florida*

"My family were cattle farmers. After returning to Rwanda when the war was over, we scaled down since my father had died. I think the Genocide was a product of hate because of what ethnicity we were born. The hate was flamed by teachings that said the Tutsi were inhuman and weren't good people. When you are young, you believe this idea which is passed down in schools and at home. Conflict creates trauma for all sides. Through the programme we learned how to understand the different perspectives of Hutu and Tutsi as they had been raised with preconceived notions. Only once you understand the evil methods of dividing a people, can you learn how to forgive and heal. As a nation we must live in harmony and not promote ethnicity separation." Aline

27th April 2019
Nyagatare, Rwanda
Aline Tumukunde, 21

20th April 2019
Gishamvu, Rwanda
Anita Dusabemariya 28,
daughter Rosine, 6

aunt attempted to kill her by shoving her down a toilet but failed as her arms would not fit through. This horror she retells as it is a lingering nightmare.

> " *During the Genocide my father was a brigadier in the Interahamwe, for his crimes he was incarcerated. Whilst in jail, as his daughter I was responsible for visiting and bringing food twice a week. I felt ashamed and angry for what crimes he had committed. He would never reveal to me the truth about his participation in the killings. He died two years ago. My great sadness is I never had a real family, and perhaps I would not have fallen pregnant with a man I didn't love, if my father was there to guide me. Now I have a family raising my daughter as a single Mom." Anita sells bananas for survival*

In a tiny hovel of a room of no more than 1.5 square meters, Anita, immaculately dressed in a matching outfit with her daughter, calmly retells her tragic family life story. She was only 6 months old when her mother left her father, abandoning her. They lived in a home shared with her father's mother and sister. As a young child, she was harshly treated by her grandmother and aunt. They beat her and deprived her of food that was provided by her father. When she was 3, her

"My images are intimate, about issues and citizens I deeply care about. I believe photographs may not be capable of doing the moral work for us, but they can trigger the process of social consciousness"

Carol Allen-Storey

An award-winning photojournalist specializing in chronicling humanitarian and social issues.

Never Again Rwanda
KG 268 St 9 Avenue Kigali
Nyarutarama, Kigali-Rwanda
+250 788386 688

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