

Peace Insight

Never Again Rwanda Newsletter

About Never Again

A peace building and social justice organization that arose in response to the 1994 genocide perpetrated against Tutsis. Guided by a vision of a nation where citizens are agents of positive change and work together towards sustainable peace.

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Why the **Great Lakes Peacebuilding** programme at **NAR** is important

*never
again*

– Rwanda –



DISCUSSING HUMAN RIGHTS: one of the youth sharing their view on Human Rights in Rwanda

Focus
On **Human
Rights
Conference**

Using education as a tool to promote and protect human rights

By **Mucyo Teddy Gatali**
Nerver Again Rwanda

On December 12th 2016, Never Again Rwanda [NAR] joined the world in commemorating the International Human Rights Day and on this day it was noted how the government of Rwanda has made strides in the promotion and protection of Human Rights.

The UN General Assembly proclaimed 10th December as the 'Human Rights Day', to bring the attention 'of the people of the world' to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights as the common standard of

achievement for all nations.

The day is set aside for reflection on the progress made in the global struggle for justice, equality, non-discrimination and the respect of fundamental human rights of all people of the world.

Back in Rwanda it was a perfect opportunity to talk about the state of human rights in our country and more specifically the role the youth can play in promoting them. In Rwanda, the youth make up approximately 39 percent of the total population and they are the future generation for Rwanda as a country. This is why it is imperative for them to play a key role in the



EMPHASIS: Providence Umurungi, Head of International Justice and Judicial Co-operation Department in MINIJUST speaks at the conference as the guest of honor

Education is a tool that promotes human rights

From Page One

protection and promotion of human rights.

Since the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsis, Rwanda has made great strides in many different sectors. The economy has witnessed constant growth and poverty rates have significantly dropped. The country has recorded higher primary school enrollment rates and up to date, Rwanda has the highest number of women representation in Parliament.

All of these achievements are attributed to the policies, which are implemented by the government. Despite all these achievements, Rwanda still has a long way to go and this task is for the youth as leaders of tomorrow to take on.

For the youth to take on this enormous task, they need to be given platforms where they can share their ideas and find solutions to those challenges. NAR provides those platforms and the National Conference on Human Rights was one of them. The youth were able to interact with lawmakers, civil society, government of-

officials, media and other stakeholders, in order to share thoughts and come up with solutions together.

Some of the most pressing issues were gender-based violence, domestic abuse, school dropouts and the rights of the disabled. Various suggestions were given by the different stakeholders, but it all comes to education. Education as a tool of advocacy is the main way in which human rights can be protected and promoted. It is through educating the young people that they will know its primitive to beat a woman home.

how wrong it is to beat a woman, no matter what he has seen at home, that you stop him from continuing that harmful practice. It is only through education that people in the community can understand, that despite his/her physical or mental limitation, the person still have the same rights and them and deserves the same opportunities.

It is mostly through that education that those

issues can start to be tackled. It is everyone's responsibility be it stakeholders or the government, Civil Society Organizations, development partners and the media to educate the youth. Never Again Rwanda, through the Youth for Human Rights project, is doing its part educate young people about those rights, this is done through discussions with different youth across the country, training on human rights, human rights themed essay competitions, radio shows and of course the hosting of the National Conference on Human Rights.



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Youth is defined as the population aged 14-35

EMPHASIS: Laurent Nkongori, Commissioner in the National Commission for Human Rights speaks at the conference. **(Photo © Peter Ndahiro).**

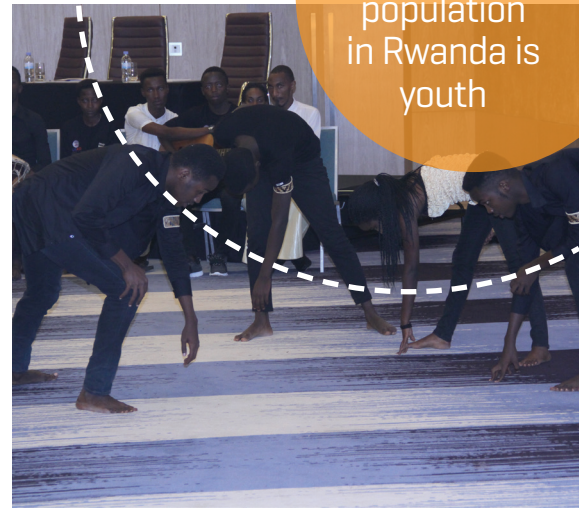


PREAMBLE: Dr. Joseph Nkurunziza delivers opening remarks [Above] while a youth participant contributes to the debate. **(Photo © NAR AV Team)**

International Human Rights Conference in pictures



50%
of the
population
in Rwanda is
youth



DAY ONE: [Left] Panel of discussion on understanding Human Rights .
[Above] Registration of youth participants for the International Conference on Human Rights.
[Below] Participatory Human Rights Theatre .
[Photo © Peter Ndahiro]

NAR youth using 'Citizen Journalism' to engage

By Mucyo Teddy Gatali
Never Again Rwanda

On June 29th 2016, Never Again Rwanda gathered 20 young writers, in Kigali, to have a discussion on 'The role that citizen journalism can play in protecting and promoting human rights'. The youth talked about how to use different platforms such as Twitter and Instagram to gather and report news and also to bring to attention the different issues in their communities.

The youth discussions on the role of citizen journalism centered on writing, critical analysis, reporting on human rights and to voice violations in their communities. During the discussions, the youth also agreed to use blogs and other social media platforms; Facebook, Twitter, Instagram to report on human rights issues from the perspectives of ordinary citizens.

The discussions centered mainly on: 'How 'Citizen Journalism' can influence decision makers and create change', 'How to develop compelling messages and

Dr Joseph R. Nkurunziza

2017 we continue with 'Peacebuilding'



While it's a known fact that peace is the mother of all constructive inventions, its attainment is still a necessity even where there is seemingly some semblance of peace. This is mainly because attaining peace avoids conflicts from escalating which leads to sustainable development.

Peacebuilding also helps create security and stability within our communities and throughout Rwanda at large. When there is conflict, life and property are destroyed, however through peacebuilding our lives and properties are safeguarded.

You can imagine how many organizations other than Never Again Rwanda (NAR) are already in place making the foundation for peace. Last year, here at NAR, as a credible research based civil society organization, we tirelessly worked our heads off to attain our objectives.

Despite the fact that this year will be a little more exciting we shall continue with our work of providing support to many of our projects which have already been running throughout last year including the 'Societal Healing' project, the creation of more 'Citizen Forums' and more 'Spaces for Peace' in order to create peaceful societies.

With the citizen forums we are unlocking fears. At NAR we have recognized the fact that

citizens are yearning for more platforms to air out their views. By last year we had already responded by establishing 10 Citizen Forums in 10 districts of the country that include Gasabo, Musanze, Karongi, Bugesera and Gicumbi among others.

The experiences of NAR from our different research findings indicate that revealing during the 'Spaces for Peace' dialogues promote healing. Our experts believe that the untold and unlocked wounds can contribute to future violence and long-term traumatic illnesses for generations thus necessity for continued effort.

Rwanda's youth make up to 60 percent of country's population. And since our foundation is the youth we shall continue to engage them using different tactics and platforms including the use of social media tools for social change.

Early this year we are excited to host yet another intake of our annual regional 'Peace Building Institute' which we are certain will attract youthful participants from the regional countries including Rwanda, Burundi, Kenya, Sudan, South Sudan, Tanzania, Uganda and DR Congo. PBI as we refer to it will be conducted between the 15th to 27th of February with the aim of building a global network of responsible leaders who are equipped to identify the signs of conflict (genocide in particular) and who have the ability and drive to take action to prevent it, contributing to having empowered citizens.

In this year we shall also host the 'International Conference on Innovations in Governance' whose aim is basically strengthening the dialogue between the citizens and decision makers.

This is our first edition of 'Peace Insight'. We have concentrated on highlighting a little more about the PBI and the human rights activities and we are hoping that you shall find this

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NAR's

'Peace Building Institute'

at a glance

PBI runs with the theme: **'What can Rwanda teach the world?'**

By Debby Karemera
Coordinator

Rwanda's horrific past, her recovery process and cross cultural exchange is the main focus of the Peacebuilding Institute under the theme "what can Rwanda teach the world". During the 1994 genocide perpetrated against the Tutsis youth were manipulated into committing crimes against humanity by taking part in the extermination of innocent lives. Today youth are considered as the largest population across the globe and are key contributors of social change.

The Peacebuilding Institute [PBI] was established by Never Again Rwanda as a bi-annual platform that brings together Rwandan, regional, international university students and young professionals to study Genocide and examine the reconstruction efforts in the post-genocide Rwanda. The Scope of this Institute stretches to analyze genocide as a subject, its causes, history and legacy and the realities that characterize the post genocide period to avoid future genocides, nurture behavior change as well as promote sustainable peace and development.

"I learned that Peacebuilding is a process



that starts from within, and forgiveness is a remedy that can heal nations, I hope that the world learns from Rwanda what I have learned" said a female participant from Sudan.

"I realized that everyone is concerned

with Peacebuilding. I plan to educate people about Rwanda's history and homegrown solutions and to critically analyze the decisions of our leaders" said a male participant from USA.

These are sample experiences shared by participants for the summer and regional Peacebuilding Institute; both quotes highlight a call for action based on Rwanda's experience. The Summer PBI brings together Rwandan and international university students and young professionals whereas the regional PBI brings together youth from across the region mainly; Rwanda, Uganda, Kenya, Burundi, DRC, Tanzania, South Sudan and Somalia.

During the program participants are engaged in a number of activities that promote critical thinking, self-reflection, and cross-cultural dialogue. For instance lectures/presentations from experts experienced in the fields of Genocide History and Prevention, transitional justice governance and development; site visits to various institutions, films and group discussions. Each of these activities presents a wide range of learning and sharing experiences.

"One of the things Rwanda can teach the world is unity and forgiveness" said a male participant from Tanzania



PBI participants borrow and implement some of Rwanda's initiatives

“it might not be possible to integrate the Gacaca court system in other post conflict countries, but we can learn and understand the importance of unity, local and restorative justice” said a female participant from Burundi.

“The interactive and cross-cultural exposure has instilled a strong character in me to overcome any challenge I come across” said a Rwandan male participant.

“Before participating in PBI I had negative thoughts about perpetrators I perceived them to be inhuman because of what they did, but the model on perpetrator behavior made me think otherwise and realize that people can change” said a Rwandan female participant.

As reflected above through the Peace-building Institute participants learn from Rwanda's experience and where possible borrow and implement some of Rwanda's initiatives in their respective countries whereas others develop individual growth and behavior change.

Since its inception in 2011 the Peace-building Institute has engaged around 170 youth and young professionals from Europe, South America, Asia, USA, Canada, Rwanda, Uganda, Tanzania, Democratic Republic of Congo, Burundi, Kenya, South Sudan, Sudan and Somalia. **PI**





Q&A

Understanding the Peace Building Institute

PeaceInsight's **Sonia Tona** interviewed Debby Karemera, PBI Coordinator.

Briefly tell us about Peace Building Institute (PBI)?

The Peacebuilding Institute is a two weeks bi-annual program that is conducted in two phases, June for international participants and in December/January for regional. It targets Rwandan, regional and international university students as well as young professionals. Under the main theme "What can Rwanda teach the world" selected participants study Genocide and examine the reconstruction efforts in the post-genocide Rwanda and draw lessons from our experience to shape the world towards sustainable peace.

What is its main objective?

Basing on Rwanda's experience youth in the past were manipulated into committing gen-

THE **BIG** QUESTION:

‘What can Rwanda teach the World?’

ocide crimes. At the time youth blindly obeyed which led to the extermination of more than one million lives. PBI aims at empowering young people with skills to prevent and overcome violence and negative ethnicity by creating awareness about the history and consequences of genocide.

When is PBI expected to take place this year?

This year’s regional PBI will take place from the 15th to the 27th of February 2017 while the international phase takes place from June-

Who are the people you expect to attend PBI and how were they selected?

This year particular emphasis will be placed on young professionals, participants will be selected based on the language proficiency since we use English, their experience in the field of Peacebuilding by demonstrating willingness to develop Peacebuilding initiatives or already engaging in Peacebuilding Initiatives as well as their educational background, those studying/have studied peace or social studies are considered eligible.

What do you expect to achieve after PBI is held?

We anticipate that participants



PBI aims at training youth from the region and around the world with the right skills and knowledge to be peace ambassadors in their respective communities



will have gained skills in genocide/conflict prevention and a good number to use knowledge and skills to improve existing projects in their communities or develop initiatives to address some conflicts in their respective communities.

What should people attending PBI look out for?

We believe in a holistic approach where we don’t only provide participants with information but receive feedback and engage in discussions on various concepts. In order to make participants experiences memorable we will integrate a wide



PBI ALUMNI IN A DISCUSSION: PBI communications team going through the day’s tasks

range of activities comprised sessions from experts in various fields of study in line with the course content, site visits, group work and presentations as well as documentary films to trigger discussions.

Have you tried tracking down the alumni of PBI? Tell us about some of them? What are they up to?

We follow up with PBI alumni on a semester basis through a follow-up questionnaire. Our most recent participants of the PBI that was conducted from 6th -18th of June 2016 established “build to heal” an organization

that will support individuals suffering from posttraumatic stress disorder. The organization was jointly formed by 2 male Rwandan participants and one female American participant.

Another female participant also an alumnus of the 2014 summer PBI by the names’ Kelly Christianson was inspired to volunteer for Peace Corps. She has been teaching English at Gahengeri Secondary school in Rwamagana for the past 2 years. Last year she invited us to conduct discussions on genocide history, peace & reconciliation which were preceded by a visit to the Kigali Memorial site. **PI**



Citizen Forums: Unlocking fears

Encouraging participatory dialogue



By **Bonny Mukombozi**

The writer is a Governance and Rights Program Coordinator with Never Again Rwanda.

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When you compare many post conflict developing countries, Rwanda's remarkable recovery shows connection between healing, unity and reconciliation.

Most news reports in the past focused on one thing: the 1994 Genocide against Tutsi. Its true, the Genocide left many devastating effects.

There was breakdown in the social fabric and peoples' hearts were wounded. There was also development of mistrust, fear and suspicion.

All these are a stark reminder of the most tragic episodes of a dark past. Yet, beyond the

troubled past, citizens have sought a common ground to participate freely in development in order to achieve the desired goals.

Meaningful citizen participation in policies and programs entails conducive environment.

Today, in the Rwandan context, this begins with freedom of expression and having space for dialogue on issues affecting their day today citizen lives

Never Again Rwanda (NAR) has recognized the fact that citizens are yearning for a platform to air their views, and has responded by establishing ten Citizen Forums in ten districts of the country. They are in Gasabo, Musanze, Karongi, Bugesera and Gicumbi. Others are

in Rwamagana, Huye, Nyabihu, Gasabo and Nyaruguru districts.

The Citizen Forums therefore make it possible for citizens to dialogue among themselves. The forums focus on shared needs, priorities and challenges within their communities.

They emphasize the importance of rekindling a sense of unity, and trust necessary to work together to transform community.

This is anchored on freedom of expression of views, opinions and criticisms.

“This is where we interact with leaders with purpose of seeking solutions to our challenges. Many citizens turn up to seek solutions to their problems, but we also engage into other development activities in our area,” said Vestine Mukandinda, a member of the Citizen Forum in Kibeho sector, Nyaruguru district.

The citizen forums feature discussions, participatory dialogue and draw common resolutions.

Citizens are also informed about their rights and their need to contribute to issues of governance. Enlightened citizens are now holding their local leaders accountable.

The forums have also helped to strengthen the capacity of citizens to questions where they see flaws.

This year, for instance citizen forums members expressed concern over the high rates of school dropouts in their community. In their discussions, they examined possible causes of school dropouts and devised various solutions.

They took the initiative to follow up and ensure that children who had previously dropped out of schools return back to their classrooms.

In Nyaruguru district, out of 412 children who had dropped out of school, 386 have so far been re-enrolled.

In Bugesera, Citizen Forum members met decision makers at the district and sector level and also met with the advisory council, to discuss their pressing concerns about the town master plan and local government taxes.

In Huye and Musanze districts members met and discussed key issues with decision makers.

“This is a platform for understanding better, the challenges we face as a community, and seek solutions without waiting for outsiders. We sit on a round table and through dialogue we realize that what affects one person has an effect to the whole community,” said Corneille Ndamage, a forum facilitator, from Bwishyura sector in Karongi District.



CITIZEN PARTICIPATION : [Above] Members of Citizen Forum in Bwishyura discussing their community priorities. [Below] Executive Secretary of Rutsata sector, Gicumbi district addressing members of Citizen Forum. On the right, is Bonnie Mukombozi Coordinator of Citizen Forum. [Photo © AV Team].

The impact has been recorded by improvement in the performance of the districts.

“This year’s performance of our district has motivated us, there has been great improvement in service delivery. Many plans were implemented, the performance is a reflection of our involvement; we thank the new leadership,” Deogratias Bimenyimana, a member of the forum in Gikomero, Gasabo district, mentioned during the last citizen forum.

Evidence from our NAR’s research ‘Governing for and with citizens: Lessons from post-genocide Rwanda 2016’, reveals that Rwandans understand the concept of citizen participation and what is expected of them in order for it to be effective.

NAR research also indicates that in a post-genocide Rwanda, it is important to understand what encourages citizens to participate.

How is participatory dialogue important to the Rwandan society?

Interviews with citizens reveal that effective participation cannot take place unless is restored, their access to information about government policies not restricted, their ideas given feedback by leaders, and a safe space to air out their ideas and interact is provided. **PI**

Peace Beyond Borders:

Why the Great Lakes Peacebuilding programme at NAR is important

Read full version of this article on our website: www.neveragainwanda.org

By Reverien Interayamahanga

The recent history of the Great Lakes region holds many instances of violent conflicts that left behind wholesale effects. Most of those conflicts originate from individual countries before spreading across the borders. The genocide committed against the Tutsi in Rwanda is undeniably an eloquent illustration of this reality. Despite their limitations, a great deal of effort has been progressively made to manage those conflicts both locally and nationally. From a regional perspective, not much seemed to have been done beside diplomatic and political arrangements. It is this gap that instilled in 2013 the establishment of a programme known as “Trans-Border Dialogue for Peace in the Great Lakes Region”.

The programme is based on the premise that domestic peace in each individual state in the region depends partly on the neighboring countries and that a sustainable path towards peace requires absolutely a joint undertaking between and including the people from the entire region. It is piloted by International Peacebuilding Alliance (Interpeace) and implemented by 6 partner organisations from Burundi, Democratic Republic of Congo and Rwanda. In the latter country, NAR implements this programme along with its other programs. Core pillars of the programme include participatory action research (PAR) dia-

logue, and advocacy.

PAR is applied with the premise that none else can be more knowledgeable of any community or national issue than those who experience or face it. In this regional programme, community members and civil stakeholders and decision-makers are provided with space to engage in the identification and analysis of what major challenges to peace and thus propose solutions. So far two pieces of PAR were conducted on Stereotypes and Identity Manipulation in the Great Lakes Region and Land, Population Movements and Identity Conflict in the Great Lakes Region.

The dialogue pillar consists mainly of five cross-border dialogue spaces for peace at the community level, four of which involve Rwandan participants. Since 2015, such spaces are operational in zones such as Rubavu-Goma, Kamembe-Bukavu, Bugarama-Cibitoke-Kamanyola and Bugesera-Kirundo. For each space, participants include 30 community members from both sides of respective borders.

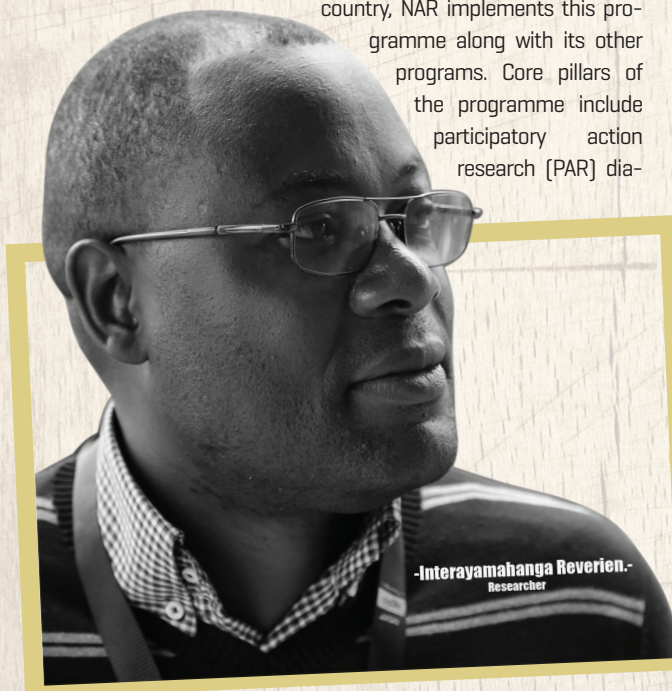
The dialogue processes enable community members, on permanent basis, to identify structure and harmonize their priorities as well as needs and express them through consultative mechanisms to local, national and regional authorities. They also provide opportunities and spaces for the discussion of key issues and conflict resolution in their own communities to reduce mistrust and strengthen inter-community linkages.

Both PAR and dialogue processes feed the advocacy pillar which endeavors to translate the recommendations or solutions that emerge from research and dialogue process into concrete actions at both programmatic and policy levels.

Overall, the Great Lakes Peacebuilding Programme is mostly proud of having contributed to a big extent to dispel mistrust, suspicion and identity stereotypes among community members from different sides of the borders. Such a change is increasingly being extended to their respective communities via targeted community outreach endeavors by members of these dialogue spaces.

As of now (February 2017), the programme is switching from a four year phase one which kicked off in 2013 to its second phase running up to 2020. **PI**

The writer is the coordinator of the program for more information please visit the NAR website www.neveragainwanda.org



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