

PeaceInsight

Never Again Rwanda Newsletter

About Never Again

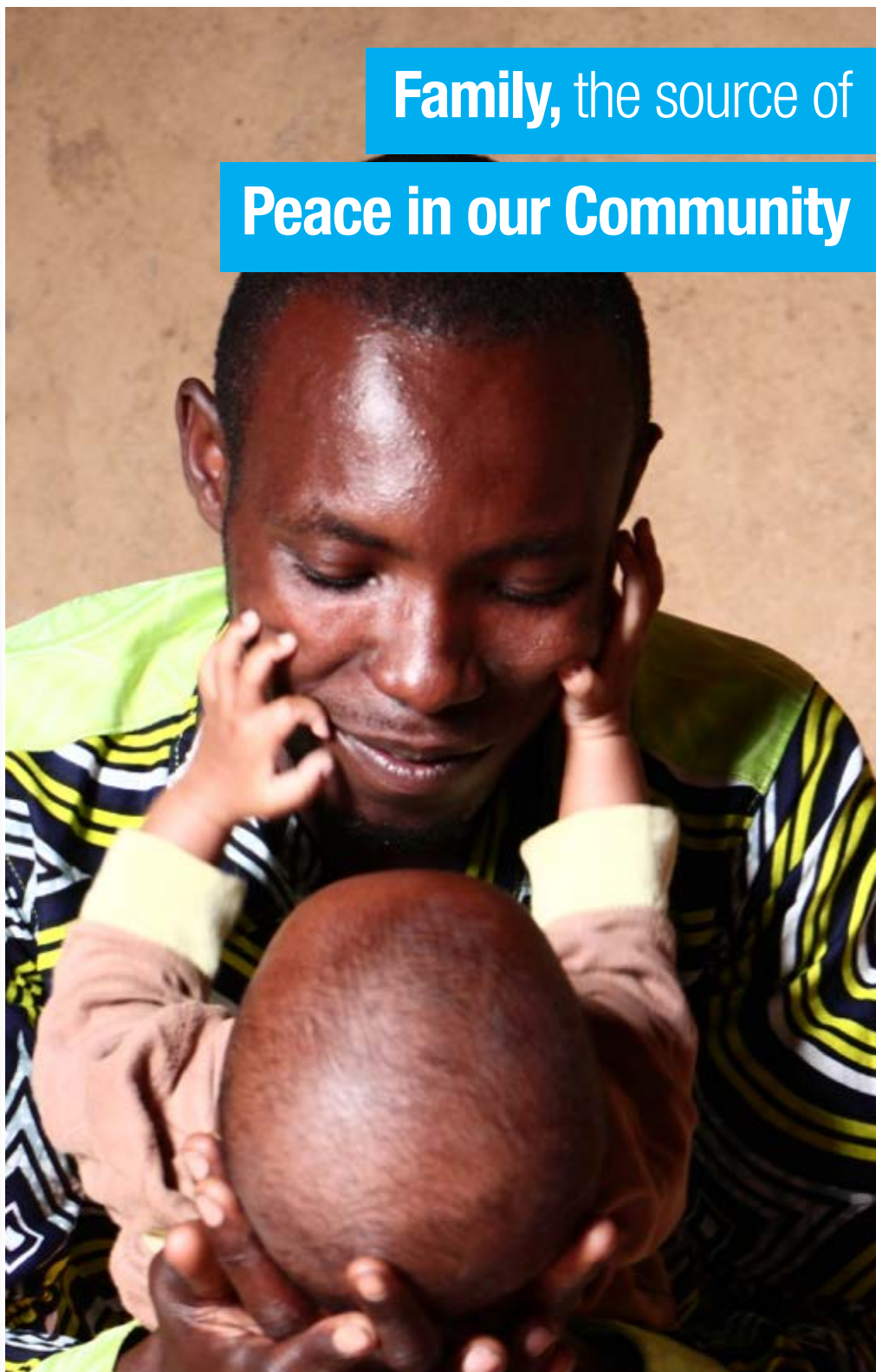
A peace building and social justice organization that arose in response to the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi. Guided by a vision of a nation where citizens are agents of positive change and work together towards sustainable peace.

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- 4 2018 Public Speaking:** 23 schools from the Southern Province engage in a dialogue on issues that hinder peace within the region.
- 8 Conference on Democracy:** NAR partner ADF hosts first conference on the 'Way Forward for Democracy in Africa'.

never
again

– Rwanda –

Family, the source of Peace in our Community



Family Success Story: Young father holds new born baby of family that used peaceful family unit to overcome PTSD after the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi.

FOREWORD:

Dr. Joseph Ryarasa Nkurunziza

Executive Director - NAR

'Welcome to our May 2018 Peace Insight'




Dear Partners and colleagues.

It's my sincere pleasure to welcome you to our fourth edition of our online newsletter "Peace Insight" this year. The month of May was very busy for Never Again Rwanda, from launching new projects, to organizing public speaking and the conference on the way forward to democracy in Africa.

Youth being at the center of NAR's activities, a public speaking and exchange was organized, presenting a viable platform for the youth especially secondary school students to share the issues that hinder peace in their families and communities, but also citing possible solutions to building peace in their societies. Talking about families doesn't only represent the ideal, seemingly perfect homes, it means the units in our societies that we belong to, where we have the audacity to be who we are and where we are nurtured to become the people we do. Therefore, having youth passionately talk about some of the challenges in the families and what they can do to change the story is a step towards NAR's

vision of empowering active citizens, especially the youth. Based on what youth had to say, it's my pleasure to announce that Never Again Rwanda is going to start a newsletter dubbed the "Youth Insight", where youth will share their experiences, challenges, opportunities and how they are meaningfully participating in the varied processes in the development of their communities, it will be by the youth and for the youth.

As the various parts of the continent marked Africa day, in collaboration with our partner African Democracy Forum, we organized the Democracy in Africa: The way forward conference, in discussions that aimed to delve deeper into the notion of democracy and what it means to Africa. It was agreed that the solutions for Africa are not as generic as what they may seem. It is not a one-size fits all solution, because of all the differences on the different parts of continent. And it is the responsibility of African thought leaders and influencers to make this reality known and consider context driven solutions in the democratization of their countries. During the conference, there was no "them" there was only "us", thus the onus is on all, whether they are the president of a country or a manual laborer – the blossoming of democracy rests with us all and we owe ourselves a prosperous future, a way forward.

And now, I invite you to read this edition, highlighting some of our monthly events and activities and lessons learnt. 



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Appreciation:

Never Again Rwanda would like to recognise our partners GIZ, USAID, Swedish Embassy, NED, NURC, Interpeace, European Union, and Ikiraro cy'iterambere in supporting our work.

Disclaimer:

The views expressed here are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect those of Never Again Rwanda or their partner organisations.

HIGHLIGHTS FROM MAY

1. Local Public Speaking & Exchange.

Never Again Rwanda in May, hosted the 7th edition of the local public speaking & exchange in Huye District.

2. Enhance Citizen Participation in Rwanda Project Launch.

The project that will be implemented in partnership with Interpeace, with the support from the European Union Rwanda, has five operating Districts: Gasabo, Nyagatare, Rutsiro, Huye and Musanze.

3. ADF Conference on 'Way Forward for Democracy in Africa'.

The conference aimed to deal with the impact, role and importance of democracy in Africa. Asking the question, what does democracy mean to Africa, and how do its people experience it on a daily basis?

Building Peace

Within Our Families



Mother and Father used security of family unit to overcome fears brought on by PTSD after the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi.



Father of two welcomes new member of peaceful family unit.

‘Peace starts from home’

This family of five from Huye, are an example of the necessity of peace within the family unit. After the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi, the lady and gentlemen pictured here before they met suffered from PTSD [Post-traumatic Stress Disorder]. After meeting each other in their local area, they formed a friendship which later turned into marriage. By consoling in one another, they were able to begin a journey towards healing from their wounds. They now have three children, and have attested to the fact that this family unit and its togetherness, have been a huge contributor to the healing of their wounds. As this family of five from Huye have shown, the peaceful stability of the family unit can turn hopelessness into optimism and security. **PI**



Mother of family overcame feelings of lack of trust to finally marry husband and form a loving family.

PEACEBUILDING:

2018 Local Public Speaking & Exchange

Never Again Rwanda hosted the 7th edition of the Local Public Speaking & Exchange in Huye District. The dialogue convened 105 participants including; secondary school students, teachers, and District officials among other partners.

Secondary School student makes a comment on one of the many expressive performances that took place during the 2018 Local Public Speaking & Exchange.

Despite efforts of the government and other partners, the impacts of conflicts like the 1994 genocide against the Tutsi, can breed a highly traumatic experience, especially among the young people. They may feel resentful and dream of revenge – plotting the conflicts of tomorrow and they would be at the risk of becoming a “lost generation.” This is the element that has prompted Never Again Rwanda to engage the youth in peace building activities through different ways like debate, dialogues, talent development among so many others.

Never Again Rwanda in May, hosted the 7th edition of the local public speaking & exchange in Huye District. The activity, supported by GIZ Rwanda convened 105 participants, to include; secondary school students, teachers, and District officials among other partners. The youth participants highlighted the issues hindering peace in their schools, families, and communities through their varied performances (songs, sketches, speeches and

poems).

The Public Speaking and Exchange aims to; provide youth with spaces to discuss issues hindering peace and suggest potential solutions, provide youth and teachers with critical thinking skills and apply them in their daily lives, develop empathy and reduce negative stereotypes as well as to empower youth to raise their voices in private and public forums. Each team wrote a speech and prepared a piece of art (song, sketch, and poem) under the theme: “Peace starts with me! How can I use my creativity to tackle the issues hindering Peace in our families, schools, and communities?”

In his welcoming remarks, the Head of Programs at Never Again Rwanda, Eric Mahoro, reiterated the fact that various channels have been frequently used in the past to manipulate youth to become actors in violent conflicts hence lauded dialogue spaces as a channel that can provide possible solutions against negative ideologies.



The Advisor of the Executive Committee at Huye district, Kagabo Joseph, urged youth to build peace in their respective schools and communities because it is everyone’s responsibility to champion for it, noting that “People who need peace are more than those who give it, so youth ought to cultivate a culture of building and giving peace in the country, and the benefits will be impeccable”.

As it was an open space, youth demonstrated issues that hinder peace in schools such as religion-based conflicts, interpersonal conflicts & financially related battles and some of the different solutions suggested included; creating platforms to discuss those issues, advancing their talents to tackle those issues, using the individual and collective efforts to face the real problems with creativity and creating respect of diversity within students from different backgrounds.

Shingiro Pacifique 18 year old, a student

“Family conflicts always affect family coexistence, but when we use our varied talents such as singing, and drawing, we can handle family conflicts, strengthen children fellowship but also nurture agents of change in our families.

- Inkunda Mahoro (Public Speaking Team)



Secondary School students from 23 schools formed various performance groups to share messages that promote values of peace amongst the youth.



Youth as a large segment of the population, are a driving force of the nation. We can be agents of peace using our talents and knowledge, introducing new innovations and creativity, but also to be at the front in assessing the root causes of the problems.

- Abanozahoro [Public Speaking Team]

at Mgr Felicien Mubigi TVET, said that peace starts within and it spreads to relationships within the society but believes that using social media and creating different spaces and groups to share stories might be a possible solution, while Umwali Rosine from Ecole Notre Dame de la Providence Karubanda called for everyone to strive to live without conflicts with a sense of kindness. "We must bear in mind that it is our responsibility to bring peace wherever we are while avoiding interpersonal conflicts, financial conflicts and also participating in charity work" Rosine said.

Imvano z'Amahoro & Imbutu z'amahoro emerged the two winners of the public speaking and exchange in 2018 and they will chose two students amongst the two teams to represent them in the regional event scheduled for August 2018. **PI**



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IMBUTO Z'AMAHORO

Speech on 'Peace within Families'

Peace starts from within; it's the gentleness of the heart that is generated by living in a peaceful environment. Peace starts with me, because I can't be able to offer what I don't have; I can uproot all cause of conflicts around me such as financial burdens, interpersonal conflicts, and conflicts based

We can all handle family conflicts by using our talents such as drawing and speeches, for example I can craft poems that can reinforce the relationship of my parents.

In our school, I can use my talent by writing short stories, skillful drawings, and share them with my school mates. For instance "Imbutu z'Amahoro" we selected the right words and drawings that we will use to sensitize peace in the environment around us.

PARTICIPANTS' VOICE:

Building Peace within Families

The month of May marked the International Day of Families, where the world took the opportunity to promote awareness of issues relating to families and to increase knowledge of the social, economic and demographic processes affecting them. Never Again Rwanda believes that peace starts at home, and therefore Peacelnsights's **Eric Birori**, talked to youth and leaders on how building peace within families can spread to the wider society.



Aslam Rurangangabo

“Everyone has the responsibility to protect and build the peace which is shown in our everyday activities such as community works and writing books. We should mobilize and motivate other youth who are not contributing towards peace building.”



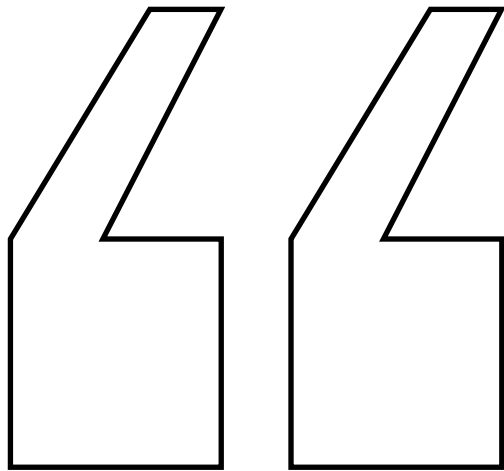
Amina Umuhoza

“The first thing that has the power to bring peace at home is to respect the fact that we are different in terms of thinking, performing and even how we express our opinions. When you clearly understand this scenario, bringing peace will be easy for you because you don't expect anyone to think or do, based on your wishes. Respect for diversity is the key.”



Mugabo Robert

“The world suffers due to the silence of good people and we pretend to be right while we are not. Let's work together to avoid anything that delays peace starting from our families and communities.”



Espérance Nyirasafari

Minister of Gender & Family Promotion

“Peaceful families are the true foundation of peace and development. The Rwandan family is very valuable and despite the fact that Rwanda had a horrific past we were still able to progress. Youth must think critically and refrain from being brainwashed into committing crimes and developing negative perceptions and stereotypes about issues related to mixed marriages.”



Dr. Eric Ndushabandi

Director | Institute of Research & Dialogue for Peace

“We are trying to build something that was destroyed, the 1994 genocide against the Tutsis not only destroyed human beings, it also destroyed the aspect of dignity and respect, if families are not respectful and parents are constantly fighting peace cannot prevail.”

The 2017 International Day of Peace was observed under the theme ‘Together for Peace: promoting the values of respect and dignity through peaceful families’.





Project Launch: Aiming to enhance citizen participation in Rwanda

Immaculee Mukakubito leads an open dialogue during the project launch on enhancing and reinforcing citizen participation in Rwanda.

“We need to work hand in hand with the responsible government institutions, in further enhancing additional skills set of our already performing local leaders, to do an even better job in engaging the citizens during the most critical decision-making phases.” - Dr. Joseph Ryarasa Nkurunzuz

This is an extract from the remarks that were made by the Executive Director, Dr. Joseph Ryarasa Nkurunzuz during the launch of the project entitled: “Enhancing and reinforcing Rwandan citizen participation in existing local government consultations processes and platforms”.

The project that will be implemented by Never Again Rwanda in partnership with Interpeace, with the support from the European Union Rwanda, has five operating Districts: Gasabo, Nyagatare, Rutsiro, Huye and Musanze. The project was designed within an effort to boost the functioning and enhance optimal utilization of public consultative processes

and platforms designed by the Government of Rwanda (GoR) to boost citizens’ input into local and national policy processes.

The head of the EU Delegation in Rwanda, Ambassador Nicola Bellomo noted that the project will contribute to the relentless efforts of leaders in Rwanda who champion for the concept of governance with and for citizens noting that “Development can’t happen in isolation, it needs synergies from different active actors to advance dialogues and push for citizen-centered governance”.

The Guest of Honor, Judith Kazaire, Head of Service Delivery, Good Governance, and JADF Department at Rwanda Governance Board, emphasized the existing gaps in civic participation but also on the existing political will to enhance governance and democratic principles. “This project conforms to the government agenda of citizen-centered governance, having leaders accountable and ensuring that governance principles are adhered to.” She said this as she officially opened the project launch event.

As the discussions on how to reinforce citizen participation kicked off; the vice Mayor of Social Affairs in Musanze District, Marie Claire Uwamariya, hailed the new project that will hinge on the experiences from Citizen Forums,

which increased awareness of the citizens in planning and implementation of the decision-making processes in Musanze. “Citizen Forums helped us to change the mindset of the people who were reluctant”.

The Director General of Rwanda Management Institute, Gasamagera Wellars was also among the participants who urged different actors to engage people to participate in the decision-making process but also at the same time build their capacities to understand governance issues. “There are citizens who don’t understand who a leader is or their responsibility. Sometimes we elect people who are not capable. We must urge people to participate but also build their capacities,” Gasamagera said

In his concluding remarks, Jean-Paul Mugiraneza, Eastern and Central Africa Regional Director of Interpeace commended the support of the European Union in Rwanda, the Rwanda Government, local leaders and CSO’s. “Citizen Participation is a mindset, but it is imperative to agree and disagree constructively and accept critical thinking, which ought to start from individual to the society”. He said

The project will directly work with community members, the media and local leaders. **PI**



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“This project conforms to the government agenda of citizen-centered governance, having leaders accountable and ensuring that governance principles are adhered to”
- Judith Kazaire
Rwanda Governance Board

By Peter Ndahiro

On the 24th and 25th of May, the African Democracy Forum in partnership with Never Again Rwanda, and supported by the National Endowment for Democracy (NED) hosted a two-day conference under the theme 'Democracy in Africa: A Way Forward', which brought together representatives of African governments, African Union Ambassadors and Civil Society actors among other experts in Democracy from across the continent. The conference aimed to deal with the impact, role and importance of democracy in Africa. Asking the question, what does democracy mean to Africa, and how do its people experience it on a daily basis?

In his opening remarks, the CEO of the Rwanda Governance Board, Prof. Anastase Shyaka focused on the need for more emphasis on strengthening the presence of democratic values in Africa. He referenced the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi, as a consequence of government acting under a false pretense of being democratic. "The preparation and commission of the genocide against the Tutsi in Rwanda, is entirely linked to the failures of democratic processes and the wrong footing of what was called a democracy" said Prof. Shyaka.

The 2-day event was broken down in panels that discussed various aspects that have a bearing on democracy; media, judicial organs, youth, civil society, political parties, access to information, terrorism, women and social media.

During the first panel on 'Defining a way forward for democracy in Africa', the Director of the Institute of Research and Dialogue for



Experts meet to forge a way forward for democracy in Africa

The conference on 'The Way Forward for Democracy in Africa' brought together representatives of African governments, African Union Ambassadors and Civil Society actors among other experts in Democracy from across the continent.

Peace (IRDP) Dr. Eric Ndushabandi, noted that democracy is a synergy of political might but centered on the people. "The consolidation of democracy begins with the people, but is highly dependent on the ability of leaders to institutionalize democratic practices in order for them to unfold in society." Dr. Pierre Flambeau, a Senator from Cameroon also highlighted that democracy is not only political will but also has different ingredients such as free and fair elections, rule of law, respect of human rights, accountability, and an independent judicial system.

During the second panel on 'Consolidating democracy in Africa - The role of the judiciary, state organs and political parties' Dr. Andre Mbata Mangu, Founder of the Institute for Democracy, Governance, Peace, and Development in Africa, noted an independent judicial system to be one of the key components for consolidating democracy. "It is essential for democratic consolidation that the judicial system shows independence vis-a-vis the ruling party".

Regarding the role of CSOs in democratization in Africa, the country representative for Rwanda and Burundi international Alert called on Civil Society organizations to reclaim their space on the continent if people are to be served as they ought to. "Civil society Organizations need to devise mechanisms on how to rise above and survive their shrinking space on the continent and push agenda of democratization". Dr. Joseph Ryarasa reiterated this in his remarks. "We shouldn't allow the space for civil society to shrink. Let's therefore work together with our governments, supporting each other to drive the conversation of democratization in Africa" he said.

Some of the key recommendations from the conference included the continental utilization of home-grown solutions, an increased emphasis on inclusive governance, a focus on transformative development instead of short-term, and an emphasis on taking into account the dimension of identity when trying to implement democratic practices in our African countries.

The conference served as a platform to show the differences of opinion on the continent, on what constitutes democracy, what works and what doesn't, whether imported ideas are best or home-grown solutions are better. Despite the differences, the participants unanimously agreed that democracy is important on the continent and that its paramount to have the conversation about democratization. **PI**



The first panel of the conference discussed 'Defining a way forward for democracy in Africa'. The panel consisted of Dr. Eric Ndushabandi, Dr. Sydney Mufamadi, and Mr. Brian Kagoro.



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In our next edition

May, 2018

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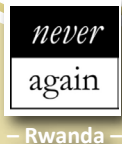
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2 Summer PBI 2018:
Participants from Rwanda, USA, DRC, Benin, and France, come together to learn about peacebuilding.

4 Spaces for Peace:
NAR begins phasing-out process for Spaces for Peace in different districts.

8 PBI Blog Posts:
Read from some of our participants on their journeys through the PBI.



Visit www.neveragainrwanda.org/peace-insight to find all editions of our monthly newsletter.