

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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– Rwanda –



OPENING REMARKS: Jenny Ohlsson, Ambassador of Sweden in Rwanda gives her opening remarks during the conference

International Conference on Healing and Social Cohesion

By **Anders Mosbakk Danielsen**
Never Again Rwanda

The International Conference on Healing and Social Cohesion was a conference organized by Never Again Rwanda (NAR) and Interpeace and funded by the Swedish Embassy in Rwanda. The conference took place between 11-12th of November at the Marriott Hotel in Kigali, Rwanda. The theme of the conference was "Understanding Reconciliation Experiences in Post-Genocide and Extreme Violence Societies." The conference was well attended by both local and international participants; the participants were

mainly scholars, researchers, practitioners and policy makers in the fields of healing and reconciliation. The US, Germany, Sweden, The Democratic Republic of Congo, Burundi, Somalia, and Rwanda were but a few of the countries represented at the conference.

Healing; a critical issue in Post-conflict Societies

The conference highlighted the importance on healing and social cohesion in post conflict societies. Renée Larivière, the Deputy-Director General at Interpeace, stated that, "healing is a core and fundamental piece of peacebuilding."

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ENPHASIS: Dr. Therese Seibert during her presentation on DAY ONE

Picking experiences on healing and social cohesion

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To create reconciliation in post-conflict situations, healing should be prioritized in society. Jenny Ohlsson, the Ambassador Designate from Sweden, remarked said, "recognising that there is a wound is the first step towards resolving the issue." In essence that coming together within a society must precede the post-conflict healing process.

By bringing together participants from all around the globe, one creates awareness for the continued need of healing in societies which have experienced extreme violence. Simultaneously, there is an acknowledgement that there is no easy fix, no quick solution to fast-track the healing process.

Prof. Therese Seibert stated in her presentation that, "healing is a process which is not counted in years, but rather in decades or even generations." Therefore, it is important not to try and rush the process, but rather focus on getting it right. Healing is an emotionally-charged and sensitive subject, where a light touch may work better than trying to force results.

Working together

A common theme throughout the conference was the importance of working together, to share experiences and learn from one another. There are a lot of different approaches and ways of intervention which can be taken to

promote societal healing. By learning from one another, there is a possibility to create more effective and cost-efficient solutions. Rather than having to start from scratch all over again, lessons can be learned and modified to apply to other situations once new post-conflict societies emerge.

As Dr. Jean Bosco Mukeshimana put it, "I am convinced that we are all eager to learn and exchange about the practices of healing and restoration of social fabric after extreme violence in various parts of the world and discover how this can inform and enrich our work in our respective contexts."

Dr. Joseph Ryarasa, the Country Director of Never Again Rwanda, seeking to dispel the notion of an exclusively non-governmental approach, underlined that healing is not something which can be undertaken by civil society alone. He stressed that there is a need for collaboration in order to increase the effectiveness; that "civil society organizations can't create peace alone, but have to work in collaboration with the government."

Sharing experiences

One of the most interesting segments was when representatives from various societal healing/reconciliation NGO's shared their experiences within the field of healing in their respective countries.

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The Somali representative brought forth the importance of incorporating traditions and history into the approach to healing and reconciliation, and to use homegrown solutions which fit into the particular socio-political situation at hand.

Being able to use traditional institution

Hearing stories like these teaches us how contextually based healing is; that initiatives cannot be directly copied from one situation to another. While this is true to some extent the lessons behind can be used such as: Homegrown solutions being more practical, government state institutions being actively involved, learning to adapt to traditions, and history, and to use already existing facilities which carry with it trust in the societies affected by violence. **PI**

About the writer

Anders Mosbakk Danielsen is a 25 year old Norwegian student at Copenhagen University pursuing a Master's degree in African studies. He did his Bachelor's degree on International Politics at Aberystwyth University in Wales. He has been earlier been volunteering with Afrika kontakt, in Denmark working on a youth empowerment project in Somaliland. He is currently doing an Internship with the peacebuilding department at NAR. His scholarly interest lies in peacebuilding, youth empowerment and human rights.

Participatory theater and healing

By Ernest Dukuzumuremyi
Never Again Rwanda

Dr Joseph R. Nkurunziza

Welcome to our new issue of PeaceInsight

Peace is beyond the lack of war and violence. Peace can be a combination of bodily and family peace. Peace has to prevail in the minds of the citizens. It can also be a combination of local and national peace. Accordingly, true peace must begin with basic human rights and also needs to surround us in the form of safety and security. Peace can also be best achieved through the right communication in order to attain mutual trust and respect for those we are communicating to.

In Rwanda the government has put in place home grown solutions like Gacaca and the 'Ndi Umunyarwanda' program to foster reconciliation and assist in the peace process by creating, encouraging and even enforcing moral and ethical standards. At Never Again Rwanda [NAR] our task as peace actors is to promote human rights, ethnic and religious tolerance and peaceful social cohesion within the Rwandan society.

It's against this background that NAR chooses to utilize all forms of media [including the digital space] as one of the approaches to transform stakeholders into peace ambassadors. We appreciate that media's impact on the escalation of conflict is widely recognized, perhaps never more perniciously than the hate it fed into the 1994 genocide against the Tutsi in Rwanda.

We believe that if the media is capable of amplifying divisions, it also has the potential to play a significant role in peacebuilding.

We introduce our monthly e-newsletter that we rebranded PeaceInsight. We present it with a new look and a new feel. The purpose of this newsletter is to support and encourage each other in our pursuits to transform and promote peace. The other objective is to connect with



all stakeholders including government policy makers and build confidence while facilitating and breaking diplomatic deadlocks that usually hinder the right climate that is conducive for peace.

In this December 2016- January 2017 issue we particularly focus on the 'International Conference on Healing and Social Cohesion' that we recently hosted in Kigali. We also focus on debunking the whole concept of 'Societal Healing'.

In the advent of digital technology, while PeaceInsight is bound to grow with an anticipated social media presence we would like you to get involved in different ways by telling us your stories. We would be happy to publish them on our website www.neveragainrwanda.org. If you like to be added to our newsletter mailing list, please contact us here.

*The writer is the Country Director
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In recent years, arts-based approaches to the transformation of conflict have gained increased attention and prominence, from across a range of disciplines. Individual artists, cultural groups and peacebuilders now engage the arts for the positive transformation of societal conflict.

The visual arts, theatre, and music, dance, are used to support communities in campaigns to create opportunities for building peace.

By engaging with such participatory tools the use of culture becomes an integral element of Never Again Rwanda's program of peacebuilding.

Through the 'Voice of Peace Forum', a NAR-affiliated youth club for peace, based at the University of Rwanda - Huye Campus, we organized a youth dialogue forum through participatory theatre on 19th of November 2016. The theme of the day was, "Cultural Diversity, Stereotypes and Identity Conflict in the Great Lakes Region: A Youth Perspective".

International Conference on Healing and Social Cohesion in pictures



DAY ONE: (Above) Igihe.com team of journalists at their editing suite during the conference. The conference was streaming live on the Internet. (Immediate Right) Florence Batoni, Peace Building Coordinator, NAR presenting 'approaches to healing' (Photography David Kezio-Musoke)



Delegates visit the Kigali Genocide memorial



Learning lessons from Rwanda

On the 8th of November 2016 the international delegates that had arrived in Kigali, to attend the International Conference On Healing And Social Cohesion, also visited the Kigali Genocide Memorial Centre as part of the activities to learn from Rwanda's peace efforts.

[Photography Copain Fabrice Beinaime]





DAY TWO: Dr Aggee Shyaka Mugabe, listens attentively

Conference attracted over 100 delegates

Never Again Rwanda (NAR) in partnership with Interpeace hosted an International Conference on Healing and Social Cohesion on November 10-11, 2016 in Kigali, Rwanda. The conference brought together scholars, researchers, practitioners and policy makers in the field of healing and reconciliation.

The purpose of this international conference was to provide a platform to exchange on healing and reconciliation practices based on experiences from various countries that suffered from genocide and extreme violence.

The conference attracted over 100 delegates from across the region, Europe and the United States of America who came together to learn and share experiences on healing.





to Graeme Simpson during the session of justice framework. (Photos Never Again Rwanda)

In Rwanda survivors have seen little coming from those responsible for genocide acts. The execution of Gacaca reparation orders, which had raised new expectations ... remained unfruitful

Dr Aggee Shyaka Mugabe



REMARKS: Dr. Darius Gishoma presenting his paper on genocide and violence



SHARING A LIGHT MOMENT : Delegates during the lunch break



How AV materials are positively influencing the wounded



By Peter Ndahiro
Never Again Rwanda

Working in the creation of A/V [Audio Visual] materials requires a lot of observation. In this particular field, this means listening to personal testimonies from the wounded, whether it be a group of kids at a high school in Kigali, or a group of mothers at a community centre in Rwamaga-

n a . One of the critical elements of the healing process is getting people to open up, those who can't reveal the pain that still lies within their heart will find it extremely difficult to overcome the nightmares that they went through. There are many techniques that are used to get people to become open, but from my observation behind the camera, it's remarkable to me how the use of A/V materials can overcome that challenge.

With documentaries in particular, many people arrive at these peace dialogues and discussions, there behaviour is skiddish, they are uncomfortable and understandably so, many of these people carry stories that they wouldn't tell to their best friend nevermind a group of complete strangers and a camera guy. That's where the documentary comes

in, one like 'A Nation to Heal', showing people the different wounds that people face today in our society. When people see others revealing there scars and dark truths, it has that knock on effect. Once the documentary is over, sure people can be emotional, take some time to absorb what they have heard. When hands are raised, discussion is starting, people are beginning to feel free, much more open, this is where the healing process can really begin. If there had been no film and we just sat with a camera telling these people that we wanted to record, the results wouldnt be as genuine or cleansing. Not only do these citizens see that their neighbours are also suffering from wounds, but they also get a glimpse into the enormous effort that NAR puts into these healing activities, telling them that we are serious about what we do, reaffirming the legitimacy of this safe space where we can all share our experiences.

Observing from behind the camera, I have testimony that the use of A/V materials has had an enormously positive influence on the work of healing that NAR has been doing. Sometimes we limit the use of film to jovial entertainment, but from what I have seen it can and has been doing so much more. **PI**

ON CAMERA: Peter Ndahiro in action recently

What they said



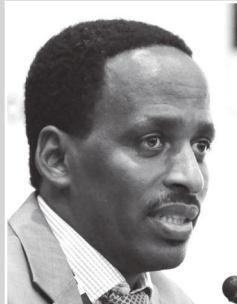
Prof. Serban Ionescu
Psychiatrist and Clinical Psychologist

Conceived as a process, the individual resilience is typically defined as a successful adaptation to adversity or characterise the resilience that can occur when an entire war, genocide, apartheid) or by collective forms of adversity (such as famine, extreme poverty or epidemics).



Dr. Therese Seibert
Professor of Sociology

Survivors and offsprings demonstrate greater psychological vulnerabilities and sub-clinical, psychological issues than comparisons throughout the life. Rwanda genocide survivors often live where the killing occured and close to neighbors who participated in killing.



Dr. Aggee Shyaka Mugaba
Center for Conflict Management

Genocide perpetrators and beneficiaries of the apartheid do not participate in financing reconciliation programs and yet these programs have promoted reconciliation between different groups.



Alice Urusaro Karekezi
Co-Founder, Center for Conflict Management (NUR)

Rwanda as well as many other countries are struggling to rebuild societies that have been torn apart by popularly perpetrated violence, where people turn on others they knew personally. Studies always assume a connection between healing and social cohesion.

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Home grown solutions are helping Rwanda with healing

By David Kezio-Musoke
Editor, *PeaceInsight Newsletter*

The sharing of experiences and best practices manifested during the conference of more than 100 delegates from Rwanda, Uganda, Kenya, Central African Republic, South Sudan, Belgium, US, and Germany meeting in Kigali for a two-day deliberation on strengthening psychiatric initiatives.

The meeting was organized by Never Again Rwanda in collaboration with Interpeace organization under the auspices of Swedish embassy in Rwanda.

During his presentation, Dr. Alfred Ndahiro, the presidential media adviser and author of various books on Rwanda reconciliation and genocide talked about Rwanda's choice of putting home-grown traditional solutions in the employ to build foundations of long-lasting reconciliation platforms.

Reports from the National Commission for the Fight Against Genocide [CNLG] indicate that Rwandans have united at 92.5% though genocide wounds remain a great challenge of unity and reconciliation.

Dr. Ndahiro recalled 15 examples including 15 Gacaca courts, Abunzi [community me-



HOME GROWN SOLUTIONS: Dr. Alfred Ndahiro presenting a paper on home grown solutions

diators) and Girinka among other initiatives extracted from Rwanda's history and moral values in addressing the consequences of the 1994 genocide against the Tutsi and rebuilding the country in general.

He said that based on four pillars of the government which are; justice, citizens' welfare, good governance and economic development, Rwanda managed to seek

own solutions which also contributed in psychological wounds healing and reconciliation as they are all-inclusive. Dr Ndahiro said that Gacaca courts helped to solve genocide cases within a short period and grant justice to genocide survivors while uniting Rwandans.

"Over a 10 year period, more than 12,000 Gacaca courts solved 1.9 million genocide

Social cohesion requires time in post-genocide

By Gilbert Cyiza
Imburi-Online

The Executive Secretary of the National Commission for Unity and Reconciliation, Fidele Ndayisaba said that 'Healing and Social Cohesion' can not be so fast. This requires sufficient time to build a lasting peace.

Ndayisaba spoke at the opening of the International Conference on Healing and Social cohesion in Kigali, involving several participants from Uganda, Kenya, South Sudan, the Central African Republic, Belgium, the United States, and Germany.

"After the effects of the 1994 genocide against the Tutsi of Rwanda, the countries of the world must unite to fight against the genocide ideology," said Ndayisaba.

Despite this, he asked the experts frank coordination in the battle of healing and social cohesion for genocide survivors.

Currently the "barometer of reconciliation in Rwanda" shows that Rwandans were reconciled to 92.5%. And the good relationship on it is at 96%. But nevertheless stresses on unity and reconciliation and healing and social cohesion are at the level

4.6%, while in 2010 they were 11.5%.

The purpose of the conference was to provide a platform to deliberate on issues of healing and reconciliation practices based on the experiences of countries that have suffered genocide and extreme violence.

Eric Mahoro, program director in Never Again Rwanda, meanwhile, reported that in countries that have experienced severe problems of conflict, reconciliation connects with healing the heart, as reconciliation is established from the good relationship between the population. **PI**

After the effects of the 1994 genocide against the Tutsi of Rwanda, the countries of the world must unite to fight against the genocide ideology

Fidele Ndayisaba



David
Kezio-Musoke

Engaging 10,000 on social media

While the debate on social media is still open, as of today 70% of respondents somewhat or strongly agree that the Internet creates a basis for new forms of social cohesion.

Evidently during the 'International Conference on Healing and Social cohesion' Never Again Rwanda invited not more than a paltry 100 delegates. However with the use of different outlay tactics over 100,000 participants were reached out on social media platforms.

For the two days running 10,000 streamed the proceeding live off on IgiheTV.com's YouTube channel while over 9,000 unique addresses were engaged on each day of the conference through twitter.



My personal lessons from the international conference on healing and social cohesion

By **Susan Rujema**
Never Again Rwanda

I was eight years old and living in Kenya when the genocide against Tutsis occurred in 1994. I remember the media showing images and videos of mostly women and children fleeing their homes. I was like "That is my father's country." As a family, we never talked about it. It was our way of dealing with the pain. Months later, my paternal grandparents returned home with thousands of other Rwandans to settle and rebuild the nation. For a few of us who remained in Kenya, returning was never an option or so we thought. In war, there is never a winner, only losers from both sides of the divide due to the lives lost and property destroyed. The only thing war leaves behind is a wounded population in need of healing.

Never Again Rwanda organized a conference on healing and social cohesion on the 10th and 11th of November 2016. Participants were drawn from different countries across the globe including Rwanda, Cyprus, Kenya, Somalia, Burundi, Democratic Republic of Congo, South Africa, Central African Republic, Switzerland, Sweden, Belgium, United States of America and Britain. These participants shared the experiences from their home countries so as to learn from each other, understand their past and apply the solutions to their own context.

I talked to one of the participants from Kenya who got a chance to visit the genocide memorial site in Gisozi. She told me "It is the saddest

place on earth and I do not intend to feel that pain again." I have never visited the site, but her description made me understand how at times it can be difficult to relive some moments. Such is an example of what war can create and is a reason why everyone should work towards maintaining peace because the repercussions of war are horrible. Healing is a journey and each one gets to walk their path alone. The best we can do as a society is support them emotionally, psychologically and mentally to ease their burden.

Is it possible to attain sustainable peace where citizens are able to resolve their conflicts amicably? I believe it is possible because to me, peace is an effective weapon against violence. Our lives are each an unwritten page so we need to make sure that we are the ones holding the pen to guarantee that the future generations read the right stories. We ought to ensure that the path to peace is as simple as possible even though we know that it may be complicated at times.

Our role as humans is to provide clarity in the midst of the confusion through acceptance of diversity and understanding of each other. All human beings share the same needs and one of the most important needs is peace. Humanity needs peace to be able to meet their basic needs and that is why some governments invest a lot of resources in security so as to create a stable environment. **PI**

READ FULL VERSION OF THIS ARTICLE:
www.neveragainrwanda.org



Your guide to understanding the ‘Societal Healing’ program

This is an extract about Never Again Rwanda (NAR)’s societal healing program. In this extract NAR’s Program’s Director **Eric Mahoro** also answers related questions on how the program is being implemented. Full extract can be read on NAR website

www.neveragainrwanda.org

The ‘Societal Healing Program’.

This is a four-year program that aims at enabling Rwandans from diverse backgrounds, and youth, in particular, to openly discuss sensitive topics, to settle differences through dialogue, and to cooperate to implement activities that will contribute to a shared vision for the future. The program is facilitated by a partnership between NAR and ‘Interpeace’ and funded by the Embassy of Sweden in Rwanda.

How NAR is implementing this program?

NAR conducted a mapping of 45 organizations involved in societal healing and reconciliation initiatives, to understand the lessons, challenges and approaches used. The findings of the research highlighted four recommended strategies for healing wounded groups.

Lessons learned from implementation

People need safe spaces for healing and psychosocial support facilitated through dialogue for people to listen to each and share experiences. Healing is a long term process and not linear. People heal at different levels. While some may take a short time to recover, others might take a long time, and some may not heal for a lifetime.

The relation with the ‘International Conference on Healing and Social Cohesion’

The program’s mapping report findings highlighted the lack of a network for sharing

experiences and information among healing actors. Lessons learned show areas that were found relevant to the healing process such as reparations, resilience, intergenerational trauma, memory and healing, justice and rape among others. NAR in a partnership with ‘Interpeace’ organised the international conference to bring international experts to discuss and share some of these complexities.

What is NAR’s recommendation to increase healing interventions in Rwandan?

Establishment of a convergence of healing mentors and mental health professionals to explore how healing issues can be addressed in safe spaces could be referred to mental health institutions and establishment of a network for healing practitioners for exchange and sharing. Establish a working relationship between relevant organizations NURC, Mental health department in MINISANTE and CNLG to establish how government approaches could be integrated with approaches from civil society.

Challenges facing these healing interventions?

The mapping of actors and initiatives highlighted a lack of healing awareness and misconceptions of healing and other disciplines, a lack of robust M&E mechanisms to track the impact of healing initiatives and a lack of a forum/network of healing actors to exchange experiences. **PI**

'Societal healing' transforming members into peace agents

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

By David Kezio-Musoke
Never Again Rwanda

When some Genocide perpetrators committed themselves to asking for forgiveness, they didn't know that the gesture would give them a more positive feeling towards humanity. When some survivors committed to unity they didn't know they would get a sense of belonging from their traumatic wounds.

"I took the time to reflect on my past, and I have realized that there's hope that I will heal from my wounds," said a male, former genocide perpetrator from Karongi.

"I came to realize that when people are not united, they lack respect for each other and this is one of the sources of conflict and a hindrance towards development," said a female Genocide survivor from Abasangirangendo, Gishamvu.

These two quotes are from participants that were speaking, telling stories and learning from each other's experi-

ences through the many conversations that take place during the 'Space for Peace' dialogues.

'Spaces for Peace' dialogues are 'safe spaces' created for youth and community members to discuss their sensitive traumatic past and ignite the process of healing which would eventually contribute to social healing.

In these 'Safe spaces' individuals such as these quoted, feel comforted, valued and safe to open up and share personal and sensitive stories and are facilitated by a local peace-building organization called Never Again Rwanda (NAR), through psychosocial support.

The dialogues are part of NAR's 'Societal Healing and participatory governance for peace Program' of which since its implementation in January 2015 a total of 15 groups have been established in 13 districts that include Gasabo, Nyarugenge, Huye, Gisagara, Muhanga, Gicumbi, Musanze, Rulindo, Nyabihu, Rubavu, Karongi, Ngoma and Nyagatare.

The experiences of NAR from its different research findings indicate that revealing during these dialogues is healing. NAR healing experts that have been interviewed believe that the untold and unlocked wounds can contribute to future violence and long-term traumatic illnesses for generations.

However it's from within these dialogues that you will hear such small emotional stories and reflections from different conversations. During the 'Space for Peace' meetings different youthful Rwandans and community members including perpetrators and survivors, meet and some of their stories heal the wounded.

Here are two other quotes! "I used to live in isolation. I would stay at home for days without talking to anyone because for me any sounds were noise to my ears. After attending three space sessions I started feeling better, my wounds haven't healed, but I have learned how to cope," said a survivor from Turuhurane, Muhanga.

Some survivors, living in post-genocide Rwanda, mostly those that were young and women too, still suffer different kinds of wounds related to Post Traumatic Stress Disorder [PTSD].

A report referred to as the Rwanda Reconciliation Barometer [RRB] of 2015 reveals that post-Genocide wounds of some 4.6 percent of respondents interviewed have not healed fully which might be a challenge to the reconciliation process. **PI**

Read the full article about 'Spaces for Peace' on the NAR website: www.neveragainrwanda.org



Spaces For Peace:

Participants during one of the sessions of 'Spaces For Peace'