

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 Tutsis. Guided by a vision of a nation where citizens are agents of positive change and work together towards sustainable peace.

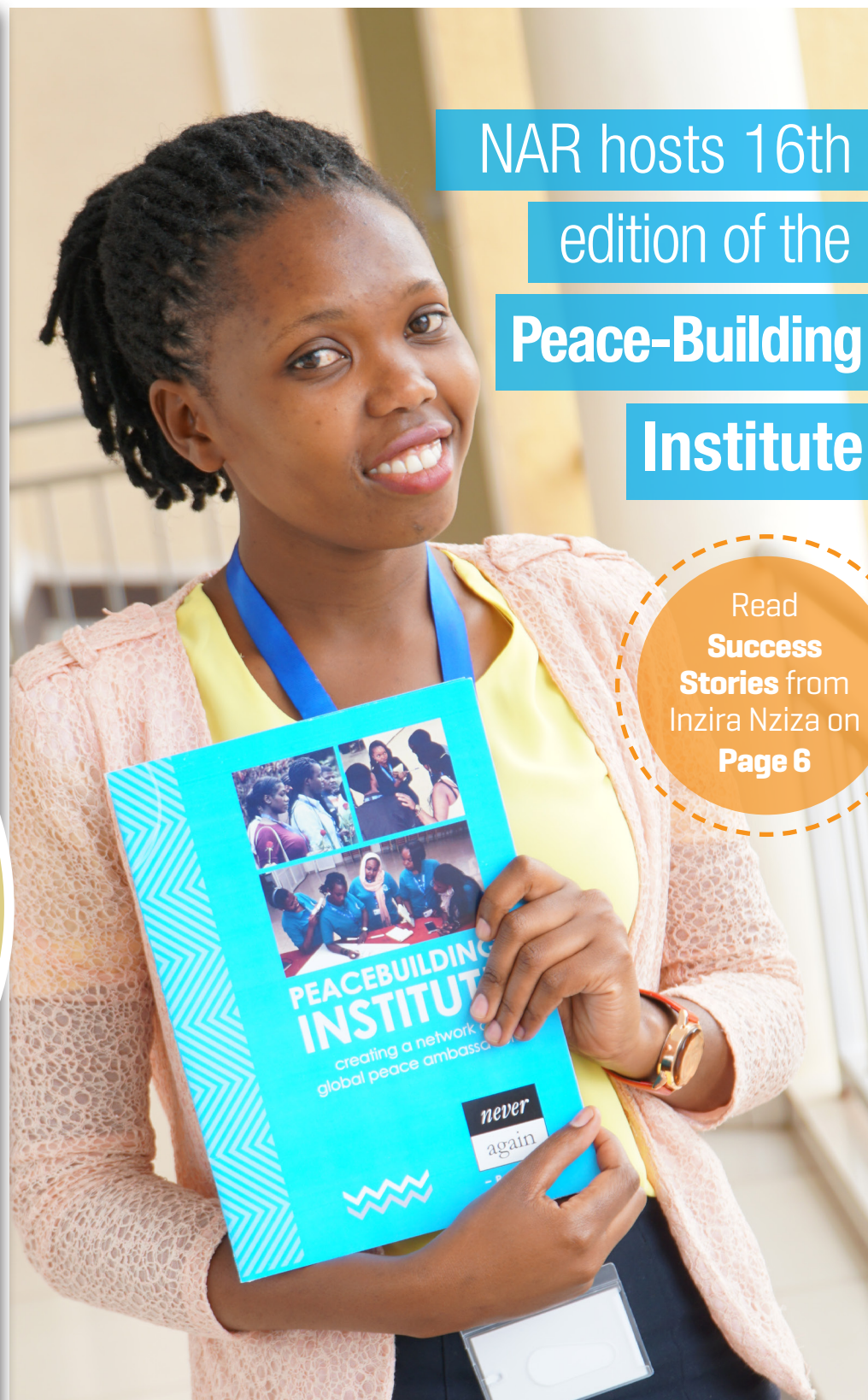
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— Rwanda —



NAR hosts 16th
edition of the
**Peace-Building
Institute**

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ANALYSIS:

'Growth of the PBI'

2018 Regional Peace-Building Institute participants pose for a photo at the Presidential Palace Museum in Nyanza, Rwanda.

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Disclaimer:

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NAR continues to churn out peace ambassadors

On the 26th of February 2018, Never Again Rwanda kicked off its largest and most far-reaching Regional Peace-Building Institute to date.

Since its inception in 2008, the Institute has graduated over 150 young peace builders from across the globe, giving them the necessary tools required to go back to their communities and initiate activities towards building peace within their environment.

The 2018 Regional PBI amassed 29 peace ambassadors from across the African continent. The Institute's initial reach extended to East African countries only, but thanks to a growing reputation as a peace building influence on the African continent, this year's Regional PBI featured its first participants from Nigeria, Cameroon, and Zimbabwe.

This growing influence across Africa works towards the PBI achieving one of its major objectives, which was also the theme of this year's Regional PBI, 'creating a network of global peace ambassadors'.

The first Zimbabwean to attend the Institute, Shereen Nhodza, said "the Regional PBI "was an eye-opener" for me, and that there is a "healing spirit more powerful than any darkness we may encounter".

Ayomiposi Ayodele from Nigeria, noted that he is "leaving PBI with a deeper understanding of the power of the media", and he pledged to begin using his new understanding of the media in relation to peace building, and in particular social media, "to stand as a watch dog."

As PBI continues to branch out its reach, we are reminded of the fact that no one can build peace alone. Peace building requires cooperation and ties that cross borders spanning continents, and as it continues to grow, it remains a shining example of that necessary cross border collaboration, as a means to the global peace we all desire.

This Regional PBI convened participants from 11 African countries to include: Rwanda, Uganda, Kenya, Tanzania, Burundi, DRC, Nigeria, Cameroon, Zimbabwe, Sudan, and South Sudan. **PI**



Peter Ndahiro is a Communications and Content Officer at Never Again Rwanda.

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PARTICIPANTS' VOICE:

What have you learnt from this years Regional Peace-Building Institute?

This year's network of Global Peace Ambassadors hailed from the most diverse range of African countries the program has seen so far. Peacelnsight's **Alexander Rijpma** talked to some of the participants to gain an understanding into what they have learnt from the Institute.



Lokii Lokwaar Elih, 23

Student - Protestant Institute of Arts and Social Sciences [PIASS]

South Sudan

Media is something that is current in civilization so I think I have to be cautious with it. I have to use it appropriately and also try to really analyse the various things that the media shows and not simply act on those things. I have learnt how to reassess the media and see that it should not be harmful, but of good.



Carol Njung'e, 24

AIESEC Global Exchange Program - Admissions Officer

Kenya

Umuganda is great and other African societies should adopt it. His excellency Paul Kagame said that, "we shall seek the strength within us to overcome our own challenges." As Kenyans, with the corruption aspect, we can use our own solutions or our own mechanisms.



Sawsan Musa Adam, 28

Lecturer - University of Khartoum

Sudan

The tools that we learnt about how to analyse conflicts. It's really applicable to the conflicts that we have in my region of South Sudan. That is the most practical thing that I can bring back to analyse. When you find you can analyse a conflict, that is often the first step to being able to resolve the conflict.

2018 PEACE-BUILDING INSTITUTE FACTS

The PBI is now in its
16th
Regional and International edition.

29
peace ambassadors from
across the African continent took
part in this year's Regional PBI.

Participants from
11
different African countries
took part in this year's
Regional PBI.

PEACEBUILDING:



The UNMISS delegation pay a learning visit to 'The Reconciliation Village' in Rweru, Bugesera, to share experiences on post-conflict resolution processes.

South Sudan UN mission draws inspiration from Rwandan experience on peacebuilding

Near the end of February, a group of UNMISS Civil Affairs participants came to Kigali for a learning visit in order to learn about the post-conflict process in Rwanda and to see if the peacebuilding approach used here could possibly be applied in South Sudan.

The week long visit comprised a series of meetings and activities which were organised on five themes to include: An introduction to Conflict Management, Justice and Reconciliation, Conflict Resolution Mechanisms, Land and Cattle conflict, and Reflections.

Some of the activities included an analysis on the differences and similarities between the Genocide against Tutsis in Rwanda, and the current conflict in South Sudan. There were also discussions about Gacaca courts, civil society, and the role of media, as well as a visit to the Reconciliation Village in Rweru, Bugesera, where Genocide Survivors and perpetrators live together in harmony after the events of the Genocide against Tutsis.

Under the conflict resolution mechanism theme, there was a presentation about 'Practical conflict resolution mechanisms



The UNMISS delegation pays a visit to the Mayor of Bugesera Emmanuel Nsanzumuhire, as he shares some details on the district's particular experiences during the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsis.

in post-genocide Rwanda', a documentary about 'international and national experts' views on reconciliation and social cohesion', and group discussions which involved conflict assessments and drawing community interventions based on what was learnt during the visit. The visit ended with their commitment to apply what they learnt from post-genocide Rwanda, back in their home country. **PI**



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PARTICIPANTS' VOICE:

What have you learnt from the Rwandan experience in terms of conflict resolution and peacebuilding?

PeaceInsight's **Peter Ndahiro** talked to some of the members of the UNMISS delegation in order to gain an understanding into some of the lessons learnt and how they will apply them to the South Sudanese context.



Benjamin Yuol

Civil Affairs Officer with United Nation Missioner in South Sudan

South Sudan

Inclusivity in the government, that the voices of opposition also need to be incorporated. At the end of the day, what they are supposed to do as opposition is to build the same country. This is essential, because at the end of the day you will find that what the opposition party wanted to do and what the government wanted to do is the same thing that they wanted to address at a different level.



Khalif Farah

Civil Affairs Officer with United Nation Missioner in South Sudan

Djibouti / Somalia

However bad the situation may seem to be in Southern Sudan, we can start small. When you start small, you can see the impact and others can borrow a leaf from there, particularly when managing rules and emotion. And also the need for expanding our outreach. How do we work more with some international NGO's who have a mandate that is different, such as affecting the psychosocial emotions.



Ajok Angok

Civil Affairs Officer with United Nation Missioner in South Sudan

South Sudan

I'm really fascinated by how, in Rwanda, you've taken the traditional values and modernized them in institutional structures. I don't know how, in civil affairs, we can explore, especially given the diversity in South Sudan, all these different cultures. But if there is something in common, then we can pick on that and then try to encourage institutionalization, modernize these traditional barriers.

SOUTH SUDANESE CONFLICT

Since December 2013, up to 300,000 people are estimated to have been killed in the conflict. Many of these deaths occurred in massacres such as that of Bentiu in 2014. Numerous ceasefires have been attempted over the course of the conflict, including a peace agreement signed in Ethiopia in August 2015. However, this didn't last for long, as the conflict flared back up again the following year of 2016.

SUCCESS STORIES

From the 'Inzira Nziza' project

Inzira Nziza, which is now empowering youth to be active citizens, is a two-year project with an overarching goal of contributing to the promotion of peaceful dialogue and democratic values through human rights based approaches.

Since the project's inception, there has been a number of success stories which highlight the program's positive impact so far.



Inzira Nziza participants being interviewed by local radio stations on their various succesful initiatives after the training sessions.

'Inzira Nziza' influences change in Save sector, as youth create positive initiatives

Never Again Rwanda through its 2-year project "Inzira Nziza" trained youth on human rights and democracy and most importantly, how they can play a pivotal role in the political processes of their communities and eventually their country. Upon the completion of the training, as young people went back to their societies, they started by identifying the daunting issues in their communities. Owing to what they had learnt during the training, they became keener on what happens in their communities, how it impacts the residents, and how they can contribute their efforts in providing solutions. In the case of Save sector, the youth realized the lack of latrines and kitchen gardens in some households, challenges they thought impeded the Government of Rwanda's efforts towards good sanitation and hygiene. So they committed to building ten latrines and two kitchen gardens for the vulnerable families in their sector.

This gesture didn't only improve the lives of the vulnerable families, rather also attracted the attention of local leaders - the National youth coordinator in Save sector, Balthazar Habiyaambere, said that before the 'Inzira Nziza' project and the training, youth were not aware of issues in human rights or even their role in the decision making processes, and to some extent they felt excluded from raising their voices.

A similar initiative scaled up to other five districts namely; Huye, Nyamagabe, Gisagara, Ngororero and Nyabihu, under a campaign dubbed 'Birandeba', loosely translated "it concerns me". In the 5 districts, the youth repaired dilapidated houses for vulnerable genocide survivors, constructed schools and built 100 latrines for vulnerable families. All this was geared towards understanding the issues affecting their communities and playing their part in solving them.

"I'm not just a stakeholder, but a planner and partner to the local leaders"

Iraguha Delphine, one of the beneficiaries of Inzira Nziza project, and a student at University of Rwanda, Huye campus shares what she learnt from a roundtable discussion. "I'm not a stakeholder but a planner and partner to the local leaders" Iraguha said. Before attending Never Again Rwanda's sessions, I had never been active in sharing my point of view and I was not interested in issues that matter to youth because I didn't believe that my ideas would have a positive impact in my community.

More so as a woman, I didn't think that I could comment or give any input on anything leaders said. However, after the discussions that we normally hold under Inzira Nziza project, I learnt that it is my right and duty to raise my voice to what I think should be done in my community because I am the zest of good change. The attitude of being shy and unconfident has to end. Now I represent my fellow young Rwandans and I'm ready to represent them!

 **The attitude of being shy and unconfident has to end. Now I represent my fellow young Rwandans and I'm ready to represent them!**

**- Delphine Iraguha
Inzira Nziza beneficiary, Huye**

Debby Karemera

Peace Education Unit Manager - NAR

Language as a peacebuilding tool



Pacebuilding is a long term process that requires collective efforts through development of initiatives to address root causes of conflict in order to reinforce post-conflict re-construction and restoration. Language is one of the initiatives that has been used not only as a means of Communications, but as a link between individuals and communities at large, it can be used as a means of giving, receiving and in some cases hiding information.

In his article 'The role of language in conflict and conflict resolution', Taylor [2014] explores the relationship between 'thought and talk', demonstrating that basic language has an intense effect in terms of community and individual perceptions which in turn shape language.

Drawing from experiences shared by officials from UNMISS civil affairs who attended a study visit under Peacebuilding Institute (PBI),

South Sudan has over 60 indigenous language's and when messages are transmitted into different local languages some of the information gets distorted.

Rwanda on the other hand has one native language which has served as a unifying factor in post genocide Rwanda. As narrated by a female participant who is a member of the peacebuilders' space for peace in Rulindo district; "before joining this group I was so bitter, I would use hurtful language

unknowingly which made everyone around me despise me. At that time, I didn't know I was wounded and that my actions were as a result of my wounds. Through my participation in this group I realized that all along I had been using wounding language and this affected those around me. I'm a changed person; I now know how to address my fellow youth using peaceful language".

According to the 2001 census, 'Kinyarwanda is spoken by 99% of the Rwandan population' which makes it a defining factor in terms of social and cultural identity, within and between groups as narrated by Alphonse a member of Rweru reconciliation village in Bugesera district. "During the 1994 genocide against the Tutsis we were stripped of our identity, being a Tutsis was considered a crime, I and my family had no sense of belonging, we were refugees without an identity. Today I feel proud to be called a Rwandan especially when I look back at how we suffered as a result of our identity 25 years ago".

Never Again Rwanda's dialogue approach has been a linking factor between individuals from diverse backgrounds considering the fact that Kinyarwanda is widely used as a means of Communications. In process, youth and community members have developed a sense of belonging, understanding, empathy and hope for the future.

"I realized that most of the group members identify with my wounds, we all went through similar sufferings and that's why I feel comfortable sharing my heavy wounds with the group. This group is the family I yearned to have"-female participant, Turuhurane space for peace.

Language can be a dividing but also a connecting and uniting factor among communities, based on the functionality of language as a tool of Communications and as an expression of identity, these two roles are of significant importance for peace to prevail. **PI**



NAR's Societal healing Influence

By Peter Ndahiro
Never Again Rwanda

Under the Societal Healing program, where safe spaces for peace have been created, close to 300 community members from diverse backgrounds have had a tremendous impact in their lives, whereby a majority of the participants have developed a deeper understanding of wounds and healing in the Rwandan society.

During their healing journey, pathways such as openness, solidarity, empathy, understanding, togetherness, tolerance, and peaceful co-existence have been established, which we believe will highly contribute to increased trust among group members. Furthermore, for some participants, these groups have become temporary families especially for those who lost their entire family. Participants testify to the fact that prior to their participation they used to live in isolation and they had developed hatred and anger towards families of ex-perpetrators.

OPINION:

Florence Batoni

Peacebuilding Team Leader - NAR

A personal Journey and reflection on societal wounds



I had lots of enthusiasm to do peacebuilding, but I had no clue of what healing the wounds in the Rwandan community meant but, honestly, the work that waited was complex and huge!

Two weeks after, my supervisor advised me with another colleague to visit a group of women who were victims of rape in Southern Province that were undergoing group therapy.

A group of about 30 women convened in a room that serves as the safe space in which women are supported by professional psychotherapists to share their personal sensitive past through group therapy to overcome their traumatic memories. These women narrated their stories, one by one, on how they were tortured and some of them raped publically during the Genocide against the Tutsis. I remember one of them mentioned how she was stripped naked and told to walk.

Through those traumatic testimonies one of

them got traumatized and started screaming and shouting they are coming, calling for rescue to protect her from killers. Emotionally, she was taken back to 1994 and in a very short time possible, majority of them broke into tears! I got so shocked to hear such traumatic stories and the level of brokenness. While, I had studied rape as a weapon of war, I had never had firsthand experience of how my people experienced this kind of atrocity. At this moment, helpless as I was, I had nothing much to offer other than running to buy tissues to wipe their tears and mine. At this moment, I didn't learn healing, but the need for healing.

The most important issue for me in this group was the role of a professional psychotherapist who took control of the traumatized woman and maintained the mood of the space until everything normalized. Interestingly, the woman who got traumatized and screamed for help is the same woman who led us in a closing prayer at the closing of the dialogue since prayer is their ritual for the group that starts and closes the dialogue.

One of the key lessons for me is that such people with profound traumatic memories should be supported in homogenous groups that share the same wounding. Also, these people, wounded in diverse ways, should be facilitated by professional psychotherapists who are able to control strong emotions, but most importantly these groups should be supported in safe and protected spaces. The question is what is a safe space? Where people meet and cry together? In my next article, I will discuss what a safe space is in relation to the experience of implementing societal healing program in post-genocide Rwanda and why trauma healing requires safe spaces. **P**

OP-ED ANALYSIS:



Why gender matters in peacebuilding

One may ask: Why does gender matter for Never Again Rwanda and Interpeace in their peacebuilding interventions? Why is it necessary to engage the media in this process? In fact, men and women have different experiences of violent conflicts, war and genocides, but both genders play a key role in the process of rebuilding the hard and soft infrastructures of life. In the particular case of Rwanda, the many cycles of violence and the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsis had different and specific impacts on men and women in general. As in many conflict contexts, rape was used as a weapon of war and in Rwanda; it was used as a strategy to exterminate an ethnic group – the Tutsis. Women were raped, but men got affected as victims and survivors of both marginalization and exclusion during the genocide. In the early stages of the genocide, men and boys (including male infants) were specifically targeted as representing the future enemy and future soldiers of the RPF,

while the interahamwe recruited them to later be the brutal killers.

In understanding specific experiences of men and women through violence and especially the Genocide, the intersectionality between gender and other identities is a key component in designing appropriate strategies and approaches for healing and participatory governance. Never again Rwanda and Interpeace believe that the two axes of the program, healing and participatory governance respectively, complement each other because a healed society has the potential to fully engage in the decision-making process. Furthermore, participatory governance draws on peacebuilding values and principles such as inclusiveness, diversity, respect for all and social justice.

In the last three years of experience enhancing citizen participation at the local level, through 10 districts, we have seen young mothers attend meetings with babies on their back,

“Following a series of sessions on gender organized by Never Again Rwanda, I started to look at the work that women do, but which is not valued

– Jean Claude Habimana
Volunteer Journalist, Radio Salus

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Female participants of the Regional PBI in 2017 deliberate during a group exercise on critical thinking.

with no facilities reserved for them to ensure their optimal participation while at the same time meeting their children's needs [care and breastfeeding]. This experience of women is equally rampant in other public spaces such as open days, trainings and meetings at the local level, in businesses, schools and churches. A participant in a workshop on persisting hindrances for women's participation in local governance, organized in March 2017 by Never Again Rwanda, recommended that budgets should consider the special needs of women, especially nursing mothers, with regard to attending meetings, workshops or trainings. Ideally, this should already be possible thanks to the Gender Responsive Budget Policy adopted by the Government in 2008. Unfortunately while the triple role of women is acknowledged, there are several persisting hindrances to their effective participation in the decision making process, most importantly their limited access to information, technology, inadequate capacity building, as well as their limited access to and control over resources.

Gender analysis helps to highlight specific needs and priorities for men and women to inform policies, programs and budgets. It also helps to remedy gender-based inequalities and to meet the needs of different populations. Still,



A group of women in Musanze, Rwanda, identify challenges affecting their local community.

the role of the media is central in expanding the necessary space, to engage decisions makers, civil society and citizens together, to discuss critical issues and suggest possible solutions. The media also helps to advocate the citizens' needs and priorities. The strategic focus on gender by Never Again Rwanda and Interpeace has given journalists like Habimana an enhanced purpose. Habimana states that he chose to advocate for vulnerable women from remote areas of the country, after finding that most of their rights are not upheld.

"I would like to see women and children participating in environment conservation, as well as to see their rights observed. When

women's rights are respected, their inclusion in the country's social economic development is also valued."

Never Again Rwanda and Interpeace recognize that gender integration and women's empowerment are integral to the advancement of peace, reconciliation and development. **PI**



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NAR'S PILLARS



Peacebuilding



Governance & Rights



Education



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Sustainable Livelihood

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