

About Never Again Rwanda

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

DUFATANYE

NEWSLETTER 2ND EDITION 2023

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“...I now see the importance of ensuring that the rights and dignity of individuals are upheld while maintaining order,”



Foreword

Esteemed Partners and Readers, Murakaza Neza!



We supported women's right to equality and equity, to gain elected office and become leaders in their communities through trainings, and facilitated participation spaces such as the Women Inspire Forums among other initiatives.

Welcome to the second edition of our newsletter "Dufatanye". It provides an insight into some of the many ways in which Never Again Rwanda supports work at both national and community level to turn the aims of the National Strategy for Transformation (NST1) into results for citizens, while working closely with local leaders and a wide range of partners to advance Rwanda's development agenda.

We continued to take bold steps towards strengthened social cohesion, increased efforts in youth engagement and gender equality and inclusion. We also made more strides in policy analysis and advocacy and increased CSOs' capacity, in a bid to effectively serve the communities and step-up efforts to fast-track the implementation of the NST1 and accelerate the realization of Agenda 2050.

Among notable achievements over the last quarter was the national stakeholders meeting discussing the findings of the research titled "**Understanding Youth Participation in Local Governance Processes for Decision-Making in Rwanda: Opportunities and Gaps**".

The study aimed to understand the factors impacting youth participation in local governance processes that shape decision-making for development and propose actionable recommendations. Research-based evidence on development issues is central to NAR's work. By gathering and presenting such data, we are not only improving our own service delivery, but more importantly influencing the formulation and evaluation of policies which enhance our public legitimacy.

We sought to strengthen the participation of youth CSOs in local decision-making through capacity building, dialogue, and networking opportunities for CSO members and government stakeholders. The ultimate goal is to ensure a meaningful and structured collaboration between youth, CSOs and governmental authorities at the local level for more inclusive governance processes.

We supported women's right to equality and equity, to gain elected office and become leaders in their

communities through trainings, and facilitated participation spaces such as the Women Inspire Forums among other initiatives. Empowering individuals like Uwamurera Christine in Huye District whose election success was backed by NAR's training, illustrates the dividends of building leadership.

We harnessed the influence of radio as an important and widespread medium which can easily reach underprivileged and marginalized communities around the country and created the long-running radio drama series "Uburenganzira Bwacu" (Our Rights). The series is an empowering tool raising awareness and advocating for human rights and inclusive government policies and programs. This and the interface media dialogue between citizens and local leaders provided platforms for increased transparency, accountability, and citizen engagement.

At the end of this quarter, NAR hosted our **12th Annual National Youth Conference on Commemoration Policy and Practices of the 1994 Genocide Against the Tutsi**.

It provided an opportunity for our staff, various stakeholders, and more than 200 young people to remember the victims of the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi. The event increased the awareness of the need for youth to take a central role in peacebuilding initiatives in Rwanda and the Great Lakes Region.

I will conclude with the reminder that a cohesive society includes attending to the emotional well-being of its citizens. As a peacebuilding organization, we have contributed to this by opening the NAR Wellness Center in Kigali, offering psychosocial support to Rwandans seeking to heal from trauma and maintain their mental health. For residents of other districts, we have Community Resource People (CRPs) trained by our psychotherapist, who manage NAR's Safe Spaces for Peace.

We thank you for your valued support and wish you a good read!

TRAUMA HEALING FOR A PEACEFUL NATION

BUILDING A PEACEFUL NATION REQUIRES BALANCED AND PEACEFUL MINDS.

The Rwanda Mental Health Survey (RMHS) conducted in 2018 showed that the prevalence of mental disorders in Rwanda is higher than the global average and is particularly elevated among genocide survivors. Approximately 25% of Rwandans live with posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD), and one in six suffer from depression. The COVID-19 pandemic further exacerbated the situation.

To address this problem, NAR opened a Wellness Center, with

trauma, its characteristics and treatments through interactive exercises designed to encourage introspection and healing.

Since its launch, the center has received over 100 clients, with many being referred by former clients, while others learned about the center through NAR's social media platforms. Therapy is provided to clients dealing with trauma, depression, anxiety, eating disorders, addictions and more.

on their journey towards a better understanding of themselves, keeping them informed about the process and choices available for their treatment.

Psychological problems can lead to self-isolation, confusion and sometimes leave one without hope for a solution. They can also cause fear or embarrassment.

The Rwanda Mental Health Survey indicated that while 61.7% of Rwandans were aware of mental health services offered, only 5.3% make use of these services. This may be due to the stigma and costs associated with seeking help. Our outreach strategies for the Wellness Center are centered around breaking the stigma and our services are provided free of charge.

We educate people on the importance of therapy and encourage all to come for a first meeting. Our mission is to relieve some of these burdens through listening to the client with a supportive and non-judgmental attitude.

"Through therapy, we have seen a change in the language these clients now speak. They can articulate their needs, appreciate life, and say they no longer feel alone. We teach our clients how to break through their habitual ways of thinking, seeing, and acting to develop inner resilience. We train through deep listening and compassionate communication, and respond to challenges with freedom and fearlessness," says Leocadia.



the aim of contributing to the mental wellness of the Rwandan population by delivering free psychosocial support and services.

The Wellness Center held a trauma awareness training for staff. Our staff were educated, empowered, and provided with tools to address possible trauma within staff members and those we serve through our programs. The Wellness Center's in-house psychotherapist, Leocadia Kabibi Nkusi, introduced participants to the topic of

As a psychotherapist, Leocadia believes it is imperative to empower people who come to the center to reflect on their issues rather than reacting unconsciously. While working with clients, Leocadia collaborates with them to find a plan on how they can improve their lives. While taking a holistic approach towards mental wellness, engaging in conversations about self-love, self-development, nutrition, exercise, healthy relationships, and mindful living, the center supports clients

For More Information

Read more about the Wellness Center and Leocadia's take on mental health, click the link: <https://bit.ly/45AF9cv>.

The Wellness Center is open from 9 AM to 5 PM on weekdays. Clients can book appointments online through:

<https://wellness.neveragainrwanda.org>

TRANSFORMING LIVES OF WOMEN IN RURAL AREAS



Traditionally local governance in rural areas has been spearheaded by men while women spend more time tending to the children and household which means that their needs are often not prioritized. To bridge this gap, NAR continues to co-facilitate the Women Inspire Forums in all project districts to instill confidence among young girls and women to take active roles in local governance processes. In total, in the last quarter, 8 Women Inspire Forum sessions were organized reaching a total of 170 women and girls. During these sessions, women continued to dialogue on key priorities, analyzing issues affecting them and their communities, and collectively proposed recommendations to address some of these challenges. With limited access to finance being one of the most pressing challenges, these spaces not only provide a community for women to dialogue but often lead to the development of income-generating activities.

UMURIMA W'IKIZERE - FIELD OF HOPE

Sylvie Nahimana from Nkotsi Sector, Musanze District who attended the Women Inspire Forum, was inspired to create Umurima w'lkizere, a group designed to share the knowledge gained and improve the lives of women in her community.

The group's purpose is to bring members together so they can discuss and find solutions to persistent issues that affect women in their community such as poor sanitation, gender-based violence, low self-esteem, access to finance and malnutrition.

Through crafting, these women are generating income which increases their economic standing in their households and is a steppingstone towards resolving family conflicts.



“Before being a part of Umurima w'lkizere, I was lonely and didn't attend any forums because I believed they were reserved for men. As rural women we are expected to stay at home and do chores. Today I am aware of my rights and the vision of my country. I can speak in public, advocating for issues that affect my community.”
Nyiranteguye Laurence



EMPOWERING YOUTH TO PARTICIPATE IN THE PROMOTION OF THEIR RIGHTS

WORKING WITH THE MEDIA TO RAISE AWARENESS AND CREATE DIALOGUE BETWEEN CITIZENS AND LEADERS.

Harnessing the power of the media to reach a larger audience, NAR organized media interface dialogues bringing together citizens and local authorities to dialogue on community governance issues.

Dialogue provides the foundation for collective actions, whether it is at a community or national level. Connecting different parties and providing them with a platform for two-way communication promotes mutual understanding and alignment. These dialogues provided spaces for citizens to openly voice their priorities and challenges as well as human rights issues. They also served as efficient platforms for local authorities to provide citizens with feedback on how some government programs such as social protection, have been implemented. Citizens and local authorities discussed the district priorities to be included in the next planning and budgeting phase which were documented by journalists in attendance and discussed on several radio shows.

NAR also provided technical support to district authorities to organize inclusive consultations and feedback sessions to collect citizen priorities in response to the Planning and Budgeting Call Circular (PBCC).

NAR kept educating citizens including of young people, women and vulnerable categories on their rights, roles, and responsibilities as active citizens. Our weekly media program "Uburenganzira Bwacu" serial radio drama continued to raise awareness on human rights and shared information on government policies, programs, and services. Based on the feedback, citizens and local leaders appreciated the serial media drama as an educative tool. Young people and women welcomed the initiative and testified to its relevance in educating them on their rights, financial and digital literacy, national policy instruments, and government plans and policies. NAR has screened over 13 episodes reaching approximately 1,800 citizens. It is aired every Thursday at 20:15 pm on Radio Rwanda.

Some youth leaders who listened to the serial drama, expressed interest in establishing independent initiatives at community level to educate young people on their rights and policy issues. Some organized outreach campaigns in schools and communities to increase awareness on government policies and programs.

NAR has been bridging the gap between local leaders and youth by training youth leaders and creating space for advocacy. We started by training youth leaders in human rights, critical thinking, and civic participation for increased awareness of their rights and policy issues. Every year we provide a refresher training aimed at polishing their knowledge and skills.

In this quarter, NAR conducted a refresher training for 196 youth leaders from Rusizi, Huye, Nyanza and Ngororero districts. We added entrepreneurship and financial literacy to contribute to job creation as youth unemployment has been one of the most recurrent issues. NAR continued building the capacities and confidence of its boundary partners especially youth, for increased citizen participation. We do this through the quarterly roundtable discussions between youth local leaders and CSOs.

The quarterly youth roundtables are facilitated across 8 districts providing space for dialogue between youth, youth leaders, marginalized groups, CSOs and local leaders to discuss youth priorities and challenges.



This space also provides opportunity for youth and local leaders to reflect on government policies and programs of high interest to youth, such as child labor, limited access to finance for start-ups, high price of food, lack of electricity, gender-based violence, family conflicts and more.



CHANTAL KANAGIRE'S STORY - BREAKING STEREOTYPES

In Rwanda, it is not common for young girls to join security forces such as DASSO because some cultural norms limit girls' participation in certain occupations, under the belief that they are reserved for their male counterparts.

Chantal Kanagire, a 21-year-old young woman from Mbazi Sector in Huye, who joined the security organ District Administration Security Support Organ (DASSO) broke that stereotype after actively participating in NAR's various activities around youth engagement.

She emphasized that she did not join the force for financial gain but was motivated by the respect that comes with making a valuable contribution in preventing crimes and monitoring Irondo, or night patrols, and tackling crime in her community.

Realizing that cases of family conflicts were always mentioned during many citizens' assemblies, Chantal thought of ways she could help. She recognized that

she had the knowledge gained from NAR trainings on how to critically solve key community issues but lacked the authority to reinforce it. Joining DASSO gave her the authority she needed.

After the training, she educated her fellow citizens about the causes of conflicts, their effects on relationships and how they could be solved peacefully in collaboration with local leaders. "I have seen a decrease in the number of family conflict cases which were previously reported in my community meetings. I now see the importance of ensuring that the rights and dignity of individuals are upheld while maintaining order," she said.

Through community-oriented programs and initiatives, DASSO aims to raise awareness about crime prevention, encourages reporting of suspicious activities, and promotes a culture of active participation in maintaining security. The reforms also emphasize the importance of transparency, accountability, and respect for human rights in all security operations, ensuring that the rights and dignity of individuals are upheld while maintaining law and order.

In addition to her work with DASSO, using the entrepreneurship skills gained during NAR's training, Chantal saved money and intends to start a business that will help her attain financial freedom in the near future.

CITIZEN FORUMS ADVOCACY IMPACT AT GRASSROOTS LEVEL

NAR continued to hold our monthly citizen forums at sector level across several districts. One of the main purposes of the Citizen Forums is to effectively communicate issues from the community and propose solutions to local leaders as part of advocacy efforts for positive change.

Issues such as increased cost of food, service delivery, child labor, corruption and school dropouts



among others were collectively discussed and raised to cell and sector authorities. .

Citizen Forums are regarded as legitimate and reliable spaces for constructive dialogue. As a result of effective collaboration

and advocacy efforts, they have been successful in influencing decisions and prompting actions by local authorities, particularly at the sector level. The forums are inclusive, incorporating voices from all historical and socio-economic backgrounds.

EMPOWERING YOUTH TO COMBAT GENOCIDE IDEOLOGY IN RWANDA AND THE GREAT LAKES REGION.

Rwanda has legislation in place to outlaw hate speech and genocide ideology, as a tool to reconcile Rwandans and prevent a similar tragedy. With the increased popularity of social media, and its ability to transcend borders, young people are becoming more exposed to platforms that spread hate speech but can use these same platforms to help to promote peace. This was emphasized in the 12th National Youth Conference on the Commemoration of the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi hosted by Never Again Rwanda and other partners through the support of the Embassy of Sweden in Rwanda. This conference which took place at the Kigali Genocide Memorial on 27 April, was attended by close to 300 participants, mostly young people, donors, and Government representatives. It provided a platform for people to come together under the theme: Strategies to Combat Genocide Ideology in Rwanda and the Great Lakes region, where experts in the field held discussions on the topic. Martina Fors, Head of Development Cooperation at the Swedish Embassy, stated that the fight against genocide ideology requires unrelenting commitment and continued efforts from all stakeholders. NAR used social media to engage followers and reached more than 175 thousand people.



Twese Hamwe – Kwibuka29 - A Documentary on Combating Genocide Ideology in Rwanda and the Great Lakes region <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ihqPIWEB3TQ>

"The conference gave me a great opportunity to exchange ideas with fellow youth from different parts of the country, about our commitment to overcoming indifference and building a peaceful nation. Learning from various initiatives to combat genocide ideology and promote peace, I pledged to always be a peace ambassador. I will not tolerate genocide ideology or hate speech in my community."

Kamanda Ange, Medical Student from University of Rwanda – Huye Campus-

CREATING GLOBAL PEACEBUILDERS

NAR believes in the potential of young people to create a more peaceful world. This June, the Peacebuilding Institute (PBI) welcomed its 21st cohort for a two-week workshop organized for 23 passionate young professionals and students from diverse backgrounds, hailing from different countries. With the support of the Swedish Embassy in Rwanda, Never Again Rwanda (NAR) has hosted several international peacebuilding workshops for aspiring peacebuilders across the globe.

After two weeks of thought-provoking sessions on various aspects of peacebuilding, enlightening speakers, and poignant site visits across Rwanda, the peacebuilders left the PBI Workshop having a deeper understanding of and respect for their roles in establishing and maintaining peace in their communities as current and future peacebuilders.



"As a South Sudanese refugee, I have personally witnessed the devastating consequences of conflict and the horrors of genocide. I have endured the pain and loss that accompany such atrocities. However, this workshop has infused me with a newfound hope and belief in the power of reconciliation and peacebuilding." 2023 PBI Alumni

For more information visit: <https://pbirwanda.org/pb-workshop-post-event-june-2023/>

CONTRIBUTING TO THE INCREASE OF EFFECTIVE GOVERNANCE AMONG MINISTRIES AND OTHER GOVERNMENT INSTITUTIONS



Following the gaps highlighted in the Auditor General's report and findings of a research on inclusive governance by NAR and Rwanda Management Institute (RMI), NAR and RMI partnered to train national policy and decision makers in participatory approaches.

The training held on 13 February 2023, aimed at capacity strengthening for central government managers in performance-based governance to increase their responsiveness and inclusive consultations with citizens and Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) in policy making, national planning and budgeting processes.

This intensive program focused on leadership, planning, Monitoring & Evaluation, results-based management, evidence-based governance and Public Finance Management (PFM). We designed modules to equip participants with skills and knowledge to respond to the concerns of citizens. Participants included Director

Generals, Division managers, Directors of Planning/or M&E Specialists, officers from several ministries, LODA, RGB, and Rwanda Cooperative Agency.

Knowing that inclusive governance is a process that requires all actors at different levels to produce results that meet the needs of society while making the best use of limited resources at their disposal; NAR continues to invest in capacity building for all its stakeholders for effective planning, coordination, accountability, and transparency. We believe that this sort of partnership will create frameworks and strategies that directly impact the citizens' wellbeing through quick and quality service delivery.

RESEARCH-BASED EVIDENCE ON DEVELOPMENT ISSUES

At the start of the year, in partnership with the European Union in Rwanda, NAR held a national stakeholders' meetings on mainstreaming youth participation & inclusion into local decision-making. The objective of these sessions was to share results of a research conducted by NAR in November 2022 titled Understanding Youth Participation in Local Governance Processes for Decision-Making in Rwanda: Opportunities and Gaps.

A total of 1065 youth participated in the survey from 14 districts through qualitative and quantitative research including 25 informant interviews, 15 focus groups with 120 participants and desk research. Participants were between the ages of 16-30.

The first session was a consultative roundtable that attracted participation from youth representatives, Government institutions, research institutions,

academia, and district officers in charge of youth, sports, and culture from the 14 districts where the research was undertaken. The second session was with development partners and donors who have interest in the governance field and who have a particular interest in working with youth. The third session convened civil society organizations who work with youth in both capacity building and other sectors that aim at increasing youth participation in decision-making processes.

"This research proved that young people are aware of issues affecting their inclusion in decision making processes which are mainly centered around social, political and cultural issues. It is high time that we stopped viewing our young people as not mature enough and start cultivating their promise and potential. Today as we discuss opportunities and gaps

in youth participation in Rwanda, let us all resolve to invest in and protect our most valuable resource and give young men and women a fair and full stake in our society and its successes." Dr. Nkurunziza Joseph Ryarasa, Executive Director of NAR

The research showed that 86% of youth are aware of at least one citizen participation channel with 65% preferring Umuganda over, Inteko y'abaturage (50.6%), followed by the National Youth Council (NYC) meetings (33.5%) and Imihigo and Planning and Budgeting meetings. Attendance at Umuganda was at a high of 93.3%, with one of the main reasons being that young people felt more at ease, that the atmosphere was less formal than other meetings.

"In Umuganda the atmosphere is more jovial, you meet your mates, and you can catch up,

and joke around. On the contrary, during meetings, you cannot freely interact.” (FGDs with ordinary youth, Mbazi Sector, Huye District)

Even when in attendance, 66.6% of youth have not actively participated for various reasons including cultural barriers and negative attitudes of local leaders towards the youth.

Ms. Michela Tomasella, the Head of Cooperation at the European Union (EU) Delegation to Rwanda, who was in attendance, re-iterated how fundamental youth participation is and commended Rwanda on showing a strong will to involve youth. She also highlighted the need to empower youth with capacities and skills in technology as the world is more and more focused on digital transformation.

Representatives of local CSOs emphasized the need for more financial support for youth inclusion.

Another topic that CSOs deemed vital was inclusion. A representative of UWEZO, a national organization for young people with disabilities, highlighted the lagging gaps in inclusive participation and challenges they face every time they share their opinion in local governance.

“It is still hard to get someone in these participation structures who can use sign language. How are we going to participate if the people don't make the effort of learning sign language or including an interpreter?”

Participants agreed that CSOs should work collaboratively to address the gaps identified by the research, proposing that this should be done through setting specific attainable and sustainable goals for the increase in youth participation.

Some of the recommendations were that the Government should increase fiscal support for youth activities at the sub-district level. There is also a need to



create more entertaining, creative, and youth-friendly activities within existing channels, and to consider timing, as currently most meetings are held when youth are either in schools or in their respective jobs. Local government and Civil Society Organizations also need to raise awareness on decision-making processes and assist in training youth to think critically and build the confidence necessary to assert their opinions publicly. This goes hand in hand with strengthening youth leadership structures through mentorship and training.

Participants endorsed the research with an agreement that CSOs should complement the Government and hold them accountable when it comes to issues involving the youth. It was also suggested that CSOs should create more spaces to educate and empower youth, so they feel they can add valuable contributions in finding needed solutions for sustainable development.

The research is available on the NAR website.

UPCOMING EVENTS!

The International Day of Youth

International Youth Day is an annual event celebrated globally by youth, governments, and supporting organizations, established by the United Nations General Assembly through resolution 54/120, on 17th December 1999, following the recommendation made by the World Conference of Ministers Responsible for Youth (Lisbon, 8-12 August 1998).

On August 12, 2023, Never Again Rwanda will join the world to celebrate the international youth day. More than 200 youths will convene in Kigali, and it will be a great opportunity to showcase the development of our youth clubs. Thirty of them will exhibit their handcrafted products.

Stay in contact with our social media handles for more information about this event.



- Rwanda -

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