

About Never Again Rwanda

A peacebuilding 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 3RD EDITION 2023



"I can speak in public without struggling to express myself."

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"Dusangire Amateka - Let's Share History"

is a joint initiative of the Center for Conflict Management of the University of Rwanda and Never Again Rwanda

Foreword

Esteemed Partners and Readers, Murakaza Neza!



We have dedicated ourselves to empowering and nurturing the young generation in Rwanda, ensuring they have the necessary tools and opportunities to become active citizens and leaders who contribute to peace, governance, social protection, and human rights.

Muraho!

Welcome to the third edition of our newsletter for 2023! We are excited to present to you the latest updates, achievements, and initiatives, implemented under our 5 pillars: peacebuilding, governance and human rights, research, youth engagement and strategic partnerships.

When Never Again Rwanda was initially founded, the primary purpose was to foster peacebuilding particularly among young people. In this reporting period we hosted 2 Peacebuilding Institute (PBI) workshops, an initiative started since 2011, where we promote dialogue and understanding of Rwanda's transformation, to help mold young minds into global peacekeepers. For the first time ever, we created a similar peacebuilding workshop for French speakers, in collaboration with the Center for Conflict Management at the University of Rwanda. The feedback has been resoundingly positive, resulting in plans for a second cohort in 2024.

At NAR, we firmly believe that the youth are the driving force for positive change and sustainable development in any society. With this in mind, we have dedicated ourselves to empowering and nurturing the young generation in Rwanda, ensuring they have the necessary tools and opportunities to become active citizens and leaders who contribute to peace, governance, social protection, and human rights. Our celebrations of International Democracy Day, International Day of Peace and the International Youth Day, were all events with young people as the central focus, in an effort to empower and provide them with opportunities to use their voices to promote positive change.

We still have a long way to go in strengthening democracy, promoting inclusive governance, and ensuring social protection for all citizens. Through our various programs and projects, we aim to address these challenges and contribute to the resilience and well-being of the Rwandan society.

By encouraging citizen participation and providing opportunities where citizens can engage with their local leaders and play active roles in government processes, we are creating that bridge. The quarterly youth roundtable discussions like the one held in Kayonza on the '*Role of Youth Policy in Addressing School Dropouts in the Community*', where young people collaborated to come up with suggestions on how local government can help them overcome their challenges, is one such example.

We also work closely with local authorities to strengthen governance structures and ensure transparency and accountability at all levels. In this newsletter, Dr. Anicet Kibiriga, the Mayor of Rusizi District shares the role that NAR has played in his community.

Social protection is another crucial element of our work. We believe that every individual, especially the most vulnerable, should have access to basic social services, such as healthcare, education, and economic opportunities. We embarked on this mission by training 84 Governance Fellows to provide capacity building to parasocial workers and collect quality data at the cell and district level to facilitate service delivery and provide detailed feedback for local leaders to inform social protection policies.

By sharing these stories, we hope to ignite inspiration, awareness, and collaboration among our readers, partners, and supporters. Together, we can continue to make a positive impact on the lives of young people and contribute to the building of a just and peaceful Rwanda.

Have an enjoyable read!

Dr. Joseph Ryarasa Nkurunziza
Executive Director, Never Again Rwanda

PROMOTING PEACE

Peacebuilding is not merely the absence of conflict, but a proactive and holistic process aimed at preventing the recurrence of violence and addressing the underlying causes of disputes. It involves fostering sustainable relationships, strengthening governance structures, promoting social justice, and creating an environment conducive to cooperation and mutual understanding.

In August, the 22nd Peacebuilding Institute (PBI) workshop took place in Kigali. For two weeks, individuals from the East and Horn of Africa gathered in Kigali for the Regional PBI Workshop, to learn about peacebuilding, and its immense importance in promoting and preserving global tranquility. By creating a platform for cross-cultural learning, the young peacebuilders were able to share exchanges and interact with one another.

The workshop provided the setting for the breakdown of stereotypes, dispelling misconceptions, and nurturing empathy. This exposure cultivated an appreciation for the

richness of diversity and reinforced the notion that despite differences, the shared pursuit of peace binds humanity together.

During the workshop, they were encouraged to exchange ideas and interact with the session facilitators and with each other, to share differing opinions and build a tolerance for differing viewpoints, which were great ways to encourage the practice of diplomacy versus confrontation.

"The ability to learn from experienced mentors and network with fellow peacebuilders has raised my confidence in making a lasting impact. With the tools acquired from PBI, I am now equipped to lead my community toward a more harmonious and empowered future, especially in the realm of women's empowerment," says Diang, a peacebuilder from South Sudan.

PBI workshops have been held since 2011. Through the years, the aim has been to grow and develop future leaders by providing them with opportunities to immerse themselves in the principles of peacebuilding and become changemakers who play a role in shaping future policies. Although this workshop had a regional focus, the international workshop targets young peacebuilders from all parts of the world.



BUILDING PEACE EN FRANÇAIS: COLLABORATING WITH ACADEMIA



Similar to the Peacebuilding Institute (PBI), the academic seminar "Dusangire Amateka - "Let's Share History" a collaborative endeavor between the Center for Conflict Management at the University of Rwanda and Never Again Rwanda, with the support of the Ministry of Europe and Foreign Affairs of the French Republic. The program is offered in French and its objective is to support the transmission of knowledge and international research on the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi.

The first seminar took place from the 14th - 25th August and offered participants a unique opportunity to deepen their understanding of this tragic event, to study its causes, consequences and implications, while developing their research and academic writing skills. In addition, it offered participants the opportunity to have their work published in the international digital library 'La Contemporaine'.

The "Dusangire Amateka - Let's Share History" seminar constituted the first phase of a larger project which will be followed by a second phase next year in 2024. The ambition of this project is to provide participants with in-depth documentation on key issues related to the genocide in the form of an annotated bibliography. In addition, the project aims to publish a critical review of genocide studies in the French language, thus contributing to research and the dissemination of knowledge on this crucial subject.

FOR US BY US: CELEBRATING DEMOCRACY DAY



Joining in the celebrations for International Democracy Day, this year we collaborated with African Leadership University (ALU) to bring the theme of 'Empowering the Next Generation' to the center stage.

The small gathering which was held at ALU premises brought together students, aspiring leaders, and enthusiasts of African history and politics to discuss what it will take for Africans to hand over democracy to the upcoming generations.

During his opening remarks, Executive Director of Never Again Rwanda (NAR), Dr. Nkurunziza Joseph Ryarasa commiserated with the youth, mentioning that oftentimes they are shunned from leadership as there is a misguided belief that they do not belong there. He encouraged the youth to take the front seat in leadership and increase their interest in politics, as they are the leaders of today and tomorrow.

"Young people are often discouraged from engaging in politics, as it is presumed to be reserved for older generations. It's time for you, the youth to take the lead today," said Dr. Nkurunziza.

Following the opening remarks, several TED Talk style of presentations were made by youth from diverse backgrounds. Lekumok Kisiongon Laizer, shared his experience with the practice of democracy, in his community, as a member of the marginalized population of the Maasai in Kenya. Grace Kawala shared her experience as a Person With Disabilities (PWD) and the issues that she and others have faced while pursuing positions of leadership, including discrimination and stigma faced by People With Disabilities (PWDs) in politics. Finally, Alice Kanyana an avid feminist and a promoter of gender equality, shared the hinderances faced by young women and their participation in democratic processes.



A panel discussed what democracy means to and for young Africans. Among them, Gatete Nyiringabo, a lawyer and political analyst challenged the encouraged youth to understand the origins of democracy and stressed the importance of adapting it to the African context, making it 'for us, by us'.

QUARTERLY YOUTH ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION: ADDRESSING SCHOOL DROPOUTS THROUGH POLICY



One of the most effective ways to empower young people is to ensure that their voices are heard and if possible amplified. Our quarterly roundtables held across the country bring youth together to discuss issues that are relevant to them and together suggest solutions that can be escalated to local authorities, making them active participants in the government process.

On 20 September, NAR's Kayonza office held a Youth Roundtable Discussion on the topic: 'The Role of Youth Policy in Addressing School Dropouts in the Community' with 40 participants including individuals from vulnerable groups, and the Acting Director of Education. They discussed possible strategies to empower young individuals and prevent their early departure from the education system.

During the roundtable, participants engaged in lively discussions and exchanged ideas on various aspects related to school dropouts. Key areas of focus included the factors contributing to high dropout rates, the consequences of this issue on individuals and communities, and the potential interventions that the national youth policy could offer to mitigate this problem. Some of these factors include poverty, lack of parental support, inadequate access to quality education, early marriages, teenage pregnancies, and limited career guidance. The importance of youth policy in addressing school dropouts emerged as a predominant theme throughout the discussions. Participants highlighted that a strong youth policy framework, backed by effective implementation strategies could play a pivotal role in providing equal opportunities for all young individuals. It was also emphasized that

youth policies should prioritize creating an inclusive and supportive educational environment, addressing socio-economic barriers, and promoting relevant life skills.

The roundtable discussion emphasized the significance of early intervention and prevention strategies, such as community-based mentoring programs, awareness campaigns, and targeted support for at-risk youth. Participants stressed the need for collaboration between education institutions, local authorities, and community organizations to ensure a holistic approach to tackling school dropout rates. Overall, the youth roundtable in Kayonza proved to be an important space for dialogue and collaboration towards addressing the issue of school dropouts.

GOVERNANCE FELLOWS TRAINED TO ENHANCE SOCIAL PROTECTION DELIVERY



NAR has been actively implementing a social protection project titled 'Improving the Quality of Social Protection Delivery in Rwanda' with the support of GIZ Rwanda. The project aims at enhancing the effectiveness of government social protection policies and services for the most vulnerable members of our society. As part of this initiative, In collaboration with the district, NAR strengthened the implementation of social protection programs by training and deploying 'Governance Fellows' at the cell and sector levels.

These Fellows will play a crucial role in collecting and reporting quality data on social protection services, as well as providing capacity building and technical guidance to parasocial workers. The collected data will

support district authorities and policymakers by informing them of gaps, challenges and good practices that will be used to enhance the effective delivery and monitoring of social protection services and programs.

The capacity-building training sessions of 84 Fellows were held on 27 and 28 September in Musanze, culminating in the closing ceremony on the 29th where the Governance Fellows were introduced to local leaders. All 68 cells of the district will each be assigned a Governance Fellow.

OPENING THE LINES OF COMMUNICATION BETWEEN CITIZENS AND LOCAL LEADERS

A cornerstone of the functionality of a cohesive society is two-way communication between its citizens and its leaders. NAR under the DKI program supported by USAID co-facilitated 8 feedback sessions between local leaders and citizens at district level in this period.

This one-day event gathered 100 participants, including local officials, local council members, representatives of civil society organizations (CSOs), representatives from vulnerable groups at the cell, sector, and district levels, as well as private sector representatives. The purpose of the event was to provide a platform for district feedback on government policies, plans, programs, and budgets. Furthermore, the event had a particular focus on assessing the achievements of Imihigo from July 2022 to June 2023 and exploring the newly established citizen priorities for district Imihigo from July 2023 to June 2024. These sessions provided an opportunity for participants to gain insights into the Imihigo process and the local prioritization procedures.

Several leaders shared that the use of magnetic theatre initiated by the youth groups trained by NAR, performed at community dialogues add excitement to the meetings. Citizens are entertained and better prepared for active listening and constructive dialogues.

"MOVING FORWARD TOGETHER" INTERVIEW WITH DR ANICET KIBIRIGA, MAYOR OF RUSIZI DISTRICT



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Thanks to Never Again Rwanda's efforts, young people have gained essential leadership skills such as planning, decision-making, and effective communication...

Rusizi District is among the operational districts of Never Again Rwanda, where we implement various programs, including the Dufatanye Kwiubakira Igihugu (DKI) activities with the support of USAID Rwanda. The partnership between Rusizi District and Never Again Rwanda has resulted in significant positive change, empowering youth, fostering collaboration between

leaders and locals, and providing consistent support for vital initiatives.

Dr. Kibiriga Anicet, the Mayor of Rusizi District, recently sat down for an interview to discuss the positive impact that Never Again Rwanda has brought to Rusizi District. In his interview, Dr. Kibiriga expressed appreciation to Never Again Rwanda for their engagement in Rusizi District. One of the most notable achievements resulting from this partnership has been the empowerment of youth and increased awareness of human security issues.

"Thanks to Never Again Rwanda's efforts, young people have gained essential leadership skills such as planning, decision-making, and effective communication. The involvement of NAR has demonstrated their impactful assistance in improving the livelihoods of the people and establishing a closer connection

between the district and its citizens," Dr. Kibiriga stated.

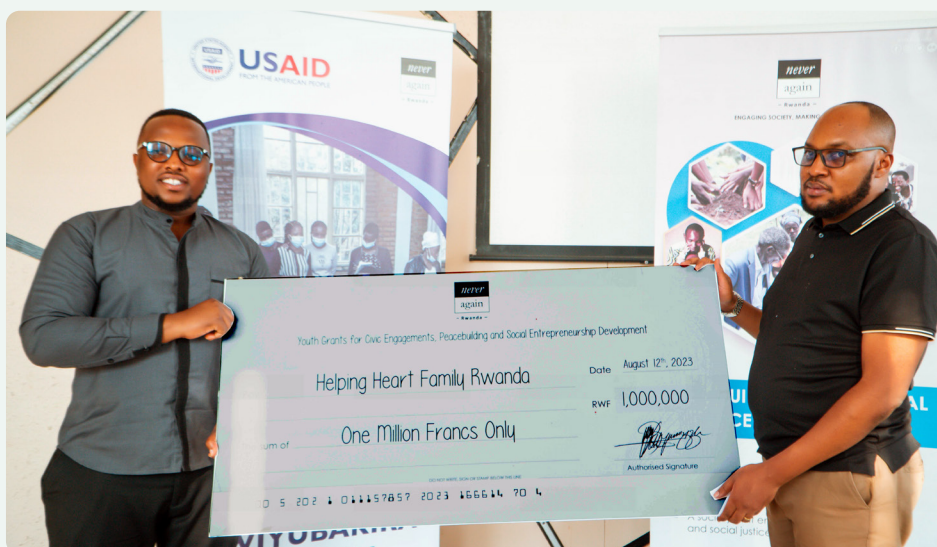
He highlighted their significant role in family planning and emphasized the need for comprehensive awareness campaigns and ongoing efforts to encourage family planning practices.

The mayor expressed deep appreciation for Never Again Rwanda's support in government programs, particularly the new project on social protection that aims to alleviate poverty. Understanding the importance of continued investment in youth development, Dr. Kibiriga stressed the need for Never Again Rwanda's ongoing support in empowering young people and enhancing their capacities and entrepreneurial skills. He expressed immense gratitude for the partnership and expressed hope for its continuation for the betterment of the district.

CREATING A LAUNCHING PAD FOR YOUTH-LED ORGANIZATIONS

One of the recurring challenges brought up by the youth in Rwanda is limited access to funding and limited education on financial literacy and management when starting initiatives. Earlier in the year, NAR put out a call for application for funding support for youth-led organizations. After an arduous and detailed process, the 26 winning organizations were chosen to be awarded 1 million Rwandan Francs each. In addition to the financial support, NAR provided management training to ensure sustainability of their projects

Under the DKI program and the youth engagement pillar, NAR organized a three-day training for the leaders of the organizations on project design, implementation, financial literacy, social entrepreneurship, and confidence-building. The training, which was held in Kigali from 17 – 19 July brought together youth leaders from Huye, Gisagara, Nyamagabe,



Ngororero, Rusizi, Rubavu, Nyanza, Musanze, Burera, Nyagatare, Kayanza, Kicukiro and Nyagatare districts.

The purpose of the training was to impart youth leaders with the skills and necessary knowledge in project design, implementation, and financial literacy and to build

their confidence to take lead in social, political, and economic aspects of society. Additionally, the training aimed to increase the capacity of the youth to design and implement initiatives that promote human rights, democracy, and critical thinking.

EMBRACING PEACE: A DAY TO REMEMBER

The International Day of Peace is celebrated across the world on 21 September each year. This year, Never Again Rwanda in collaboration with Ministry of Unity and Civic Engagement (MINUBUMWE), Ministry of Youth (MINIYOUTH) and other partners organized a youth-parliamentary exchange that brought together over 600 young people, under the theme: *'Strengthening Unity and Resilience for Sustainable Peace and Development.'*

Upon arriving at the parliament, a 'Peace Tree' that had been planted during last year's International Day of Peace celebration was watered. Special guests, including our Executive Director Dr. Ryarasa Nkurunziza Joseph, the Permanent Secretary of MINUBUMWE, Munezero Clarisse, and the Speaker of Parliament, Donatille Mukabalisa, conducted the watering ceremony.

The event officially begun with the opening remarks from, where

Munezero who urged the youth to continue the journey to preserve the peace that the Government of Rwanda has worked tirelessly to restore, and to make it their responsibility to promote peace across all communities.

Peace Day celebrations also featured a speech from the UN Resident Coordinator, Ozonnia Ojielo who encouraged the youth to cultivate peace within themselves and to promote and preserve it within their communities, referring to them as the *"bedrock of our future."*

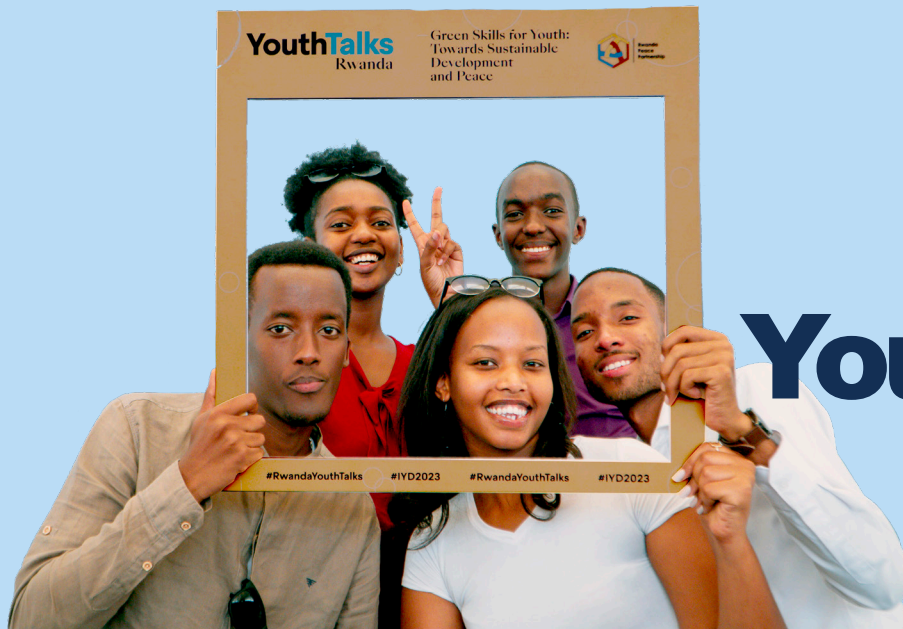




Entertainment for the day included patriotic songs and special songs on peace sung by Muvunyi Samuel, from Sauti Arts Rwanda.

A panel discussion consisting of Hon. Julianne Uwacu, Executive Director in Charge of National Unity and Community Resilience, Colbert Rulinda, Executive Director of Rwanda We Want, and Debby Karemera, Strategic and Technical Advisor at NAR, discussed the topic: *'The Role of Youth in Promoting Unity and Resilience: Challenges and Strategies'*.

As the event wrapped up, there was an unspoken renewed commitment to spreading peace. Participants left with a challenge, to take small but meaningful steps towards making our world a more peaceful place, whether on an individual level by addressing issues that affect the person or on a communal level by using advocacy for change, there was a deep understanding that we all have a role to play.



FIRST EVER YouthTalks

HOSTED BY
**RWANDA PEACE
PARTNERSHIP**

In line with the celebration of International Youth Day, the Rwanda Peace Partnership (RPP), a collaboration between Interpeace, Aegis Trust and Never Again Rwanda (NAR) organized the first ever Rwanda YouthTalks, hosted on 11th August. The event included youth from across Rwanda to discuss the theme: **'Green Skills for Youth towards Sustainable Development and Peace'**.

Young people from diverse backgrounds, ranging from students and entrepreneurs to activists and mental health advocates, gathered at the Kigali Genocide Memorial. The diversity in participants provided the perfect setting for learning and sharing experiences to lead to creative solutions for pressing environmental concerns and a greener economy.

In a storytelling format, 5 young speakers spoke around the concept of green skills including Vania Odelice Ineza, a fashion entrepreneur, Noel Nizeyimana, a green entrepreneur, Florence Twambazimana, a young businesswoman, Rulinda Kwizera, a junior researcher in mental health, and Andersonne Adolatha Uwineza, a multi-talented artiste.

The Rwanda YouthTalks also provided a space for young innovators to showcase their sustainable projects and initiatives through an exhibition which featured various eco-friendly products ranging from health, beauty, fashion, and decorations. From eco-friendly startups to community-driven conservation efforts, these endeavors demonstrated the immense potential of young minds to drive positive change in their communities.

This was the first YouthTalks to be held in Rwanda. In its 10 year history, the global PeaceTalks initiative has featured more than 200 speakers from over 50 countries, including the former U.N. Secretary General.

"Rwanda is blessed with a rich tapestry of natural beauty, and it is our duty to safeguard it. We must equip ourselves with the knowledge and skills needed to build a sustainable future. Our journey towards lasting peace requires unity and knowledge sharing, and by sharing our experiences, challenges, and successes we create a platform for growth," said Larissa Umulinga, from Our Past Initiative.

ADDRESSING THE MENTAL HEALTH OF YOUNG PEOPLE IN THE REGION



Photos courtesy of Interpeace

The Rwanda Mental Health Survey revealed that mental health conditions in Rwanda's youth range between 10.2%-20%. There are large numbers of psychological disorders that go unreported, therefore the true number is likely to be significantly higher and is consistently listed by young people in roundtable discussions, as one of their primary concerns. There is an urgent need to join forces to provide mental health support specifically catered to the youth.

On 6 September, the Youth Innovation Lab for Peace program (YouthLab), a joint initiative between Never Again Rwanda and Interpeace hosted the Amani Youth Expo and Summit for an open discussion and to raise awareness around mental health issues among young people in the region.

Participants shared their personal stories during interactive sessions and panel discussions that involved active audience participation. Furthermore, mental health experts and youth advocates provided practical advice on how to cope with mental health challenges.

A theatrical performance, poetry readings, and moving musical performances elicited an enthusiastic response from the young audience. Additionally, comedy was employed in a creative manner to uplift the atmosphere and promote the normalization of seeking help, thereby breaking the stigma surrounding mental disorders.

The Expo also highlighted youth-led initiatives dedicated to advocating for mental health.

The Youth Lab Project seeks to empower young people from the Great Lakes region (Rwanda, Burundi, DRC and Uganda) with skills and knowledge that enables them to effectively play a role in governance, peacebuilding, and development processes at the local, national, and regional levels.

This project is implemented by partner organizations of Interpeace. (Pole Institute of the DRC, Never Again Rwanda (NAR) of Rwanda, Centre for Alert and Conflict Prevention (CENAP) of Burundi, and Action Pour la Paix et la Concorde (APC) of the Democratic

Empowering Women to take Leadership Roles



Recognizing the importance of creating a platform for women to build their confidence through regular discussions, where their voices matter, we continued to conduct our Women Inspire Forums under the DKI program in Nyanza, Musanze, Nyagatare, Huye and Burera districts. They have proven to be vital in enhancing women's participation in government programs.

In Huye the sessions were attended by 37 women including the Local Coordinator of National Women Council, a Gender Expert, and women from DKI sectors of operation in Huye district, to discuss the progress made by the female participants during the past two years.

The impact has been an increase in confidence, that has led to women participating in and leading community assemblies, sharing their opinions, ideas and advocating for various issues. Claire Dukuzimana from Mukura sector was elected Umwunzi (mediator) and Uwineza Sylvie was elected Umudugudu Leader in her village. They are both examples of the great impact this project has had on the lives of women. Women Inspire forum sessions were organized on a quarterly basis reaching a total of 480 women and girls in all districts.





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I can speak in public without struggling to express myself.”

Jemimah



Jemimah Mukawiringiye is a 53-year-old mother and secretary of the Women's Council from Karubamba Cell in Rukara sector Kayonza District – something she credits to the training opportunities offered by Never Again Rwanda. Through the Dufatanye Kwiubakira Igihugu program, Jemimah gained knowledge in the functioning of government bodies and was trained on how to address issues in her community.

According to Jemimah, the training on human rights and critical thinking skills also transformed her approach to addressing family conflicts, as she now possesses the knowledge to help effectively. By actively listening to the parties involved and providing guidance, she successfully resolves numerous incidents. The additional benefit received from training was increased confidence which enables her to speak up and challenge gender norms.

“Never Again Rwanda has provided me with the motivation and tools to become more confident. Now, I can speak in public without struggling to express myself,” says Jemima.

Also a member of the Women Inspire Forum, Jemimah witnessed the continuous empowerment of women in the Rukara sector. *“The Women Inspire Forum has been instrumental in empowering us as women in the Rukara sector.*

We have formed groups where we support each other, and if someone needs financial assistance, they can approach the group for a loan.” The impact of the forums go beyond solely encouraging financial independence and into community outreach. Jemimah and her fellow Women Inspire Forum members also initiate activities that uplift the community.

“One activity we initiated focused on identifying the number of school dropouts. After receiving training, we conducted awareness programs within the village, encouraging these children to return to school. As a result, 17 out of 20 children successfully returned. I would like to express my gratitude to Never Again Rwanda for creating these forums in Rukara, they are essential in supporting our development as women,” she said.

**UPCOMING
CAMPAIGN!**

The 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence

This international campaign is led by civil society and takes place each year starting from 25 November, the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, and ends on 10 December, Human Rights Day, indicating that violence against women is the most pervasive breach of human rights worldwide. According to the latest U.N. statistics, one in three women have been subjected to violence in their lifetimes.

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



Join us on our mission:



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