

A Master's Thesis

entitled

Post Conflict Peace Building in Rwanda, the Effect on Youth

And the Development of Bright Future Generation, NGO

By

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Submitted to the Graduate Faculty as partial fulfillment of the requirements

For the Master of Arts Degree in Peace and Conflict Studies

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In the aftermath of its violent history, today's Rwanda has accomplished significant political, social, and economic progress to prevent another atrocity like the 1994 genocide against the Tutsi and moderate Hutu. As the survivors of the 1994 genocide work hard to move on from the traumas of the past, it is the sole responsibility of the new generation to break the cycle of victimization and build a stable foundation from the aftershock of its violent history. Many youth suffer from psychological distresses and difficult life conditions that prevent them from obtaining an appropriate education and maximizing their potential. Rwanda desperately needs a catalyst on its path to educational opportunity and economic stability. Mentoring programs meeting the needs of vulnerable youth can be this catalyst, yet they are minimal in quantity and severely underdeveloped. In October of 2012, I connected with a Rwandan Clinical Psychologist, Isaïe Mihigo. Harnessing our research, education, and experiences working with vulnerable youth in our respective countries, we co-founded "Bright Future Generation".

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List of Abbreviations

9-YBE- Nine-Year Basic Education

AERG- *Association des Etudiants et Eleves Rescapes du génocide*

ARC- American Refugee Committee

BFG- Bright Future Generation, NGO

COPORWA- *Communaute des Pottiers Rwandais*

DRC- Democratic Republic of the Congo

EICV3- The Integrated Household Living Conditions Survey

ETO- *Ecole Technique Officielle*

FAR – *Forces Armees Rwandaises*

FDLR- The Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda

GYC- Global Youth Connect

ICT- Information and Communication Technology

MDR- *Mouvement Democratique Rwandais*

MRND- *Mouvement Revolutionnaire Nationale pour le Development*

NCPD- National Council of Persons with Disabilities

NGO- Non-Governmental Organization

NUR- National University of Rwanda

NURC- National Unity and Reconciliation Commission

PTSD- Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder

PWD- Persons With Disabilities

RCHC- Rwandan Cultural Health Center

RDDC- Rebecca Davis Dance Company

RPF- Rwandan Patriotic Front

UN- United Nations

UNAMIR- United Nations Assistance Missions in Rwanda

UNHCR- United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights

UNICEF- United Nations Children's Fund

INTRODUCTION

In the aftermath of its violent history, today's Rwanda has accomplished significant political, social, and economic progress to prevent another atrocity like the 1994 genocide against the Tutsi and moderate Hutu. Nineteen years after the genocide, Rwanda was listed as the ninth fastest growing economy in the world, with a 7.8% projected Gross Domestic Product growth in 2013 (The Economist, 2013), "ranks 52 out of 185 on 'ease of doing business' and 8 on 'ease in starting a business.' ... Through safety, security, zero-tolerance for corruption, and a stated goal to eliminate foreign aid (currently about 40 percent of its budget), Rwanda has put itself on trajectory toward greater self-sufficiency" (Cristafulli & Redmond, 2013, para. 3). Rwanda's economic success would not have been possible without the audacious and creative thinking of its current leaders to adopt appropriate measures that ensure no more blood would be shed as a result of ethnic hatreds.

To encourage the success of its national development plan and with the wounds of the 100-day slaughter still fresh in the minds of the survivors, the Rwandan government announced on January 7, 2003 its plans to release an estimated 30-40,000 prisoners held on suspicion of involvement in the 1994 genocide against the Tutsi (Aslimwe, 2003; Los Angeles Times, 2003). Rwanda faced the daunting challenge of reintegrating the genocidal perpetrators back into their communities, delivering justice to the victims, ensuring the safety of both groups, and creating a culture of peace that would rebuild the nation from scratch (Larson & Houborg, 2007; Mgbako, 2005; Purdekova, 2008). This difficult process forces Rwanda to confront a deep historical narrative of politically imposed ethnic ideology that violently divided the very groups they are trying to bring

together. To promote unity, reconciliation, and peace, the Rwandan government established the National Unity and Reconciliation Commission (NURC) to help communities embrace post-conflict peace building initiatives by empowering individuals to take responsibility for the program's success (Government of Rwanda, 1999; Nantulya & Alexander, 2005). Additional measures included criminalizing genocidal ideology and replacing ethnic identity labels with a single national "Rwandan" identity. Together, these programs began to reintroduce order into a society decimated by ethnic violence.

However, despite the progress in developing a culture of unity, reconciliation, and peace to coincide with the national development campaign, Vision 2020 (Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning, 2000), Rwanda is still not where it wants to be. In accordance with Vision 2020, Rwanda hopes to tap into the vitality of its youth and unlock the nation's potential to become a model for other African countries. As the survivors of the 1994 genocide work hard to move on from the traumas of the past, it is the sole responsibility of the new generation to break the cycle of victimization and build a stable foundation from the aftershock of its violent history. Hindering youths'¹ ability to do so are "the hundreds of thousands of children who have been orphaned or otherwise left without parental care since 1994" (Human Rights Watch, 2003, p. 41), therefore leaving many to suffer from psychological distresses and difficult life conditions that prevent them from obtaining an appropriate education and maximizing their potential (Sommers & Ulvin, 2011; Sommers, 2012).

¹ Definition of 'youth', for the purposes of this project, will be consistent with the Rwandan definition, which defines youth as "any persons aged between 15 and 35" (Ministry of Youth, Culture and Sports, 2005, p. 8), although at times some government research will refer to youth between 14 to 35 years old.

In response to these difficult life conditions, youth have singled out education as the only avenue towards a brighter future (Pells, 2009; Sommers & Ulvin, 2011). The current Rwandan Government has made significant strides to increase free access to public education and build up a self-sufficient, knowledge based economy. The goal is to reduce dependency on foreign aid and, more importantly, to prevent another atrocity like the 1994 genocide against the Tutsi. Current educational statistics reveal an increase in primary and secondary education enrollment and a decrease in dropout rates (National Institute of Statistics of Rwanda, 2012; Ministry of Education, 2012; Kwizera, 2011). Nevertheless, Rwanda desperately needs a catalyst on its path to educational opportunity and economic stability. Mentoring programs meeting the needs of vulnerable youth can be this catalyst, yet they are minimal in quantity and severely underdeveloped.

There is currently a lack of trained personnel within communities, schools, and governmental and non-governmental organizations to address the psychological and psychosocial barriers preventing vulnerable youth from obtaining a basic education. With only six practicing clinical psychologists in the country (Musoni, 2012), Rwandan society needs individuals trained at the grassroots level to identify and respond to the mental health issues facing their communities (The New Times, 2013). In October of 2012, I connected with a Rwandan Clinical Psychologist, Isaïe Mihigo. Harnessing our research, education, and experiences working with vulnerable youth in our respective countries, we co-founded “Bright Future Generation”.

Bright Future Generation exists as a non-governmental, volunteer organization that partners with communities, schools, and governmental and non-governmental organizations to build a culture of mentoring with a focus on mental health through

workshops, research, and program development. Our partnerships will increase the confidence and proficiency of these organizations to respond to the unique problems of the vulnerable youth they serve. The vision of this organization is to help vulnerable youth establish the relationship between education, self-development, and the realization of their dreams using a multi-level approach to address the psychological and psychosocial barriers that decrease youths' access to an appropriate education.

Methodology

The current study is divided into three chapters and will use an integrative literature review approach to explore the political, economic and social circumstances that contributed to the 1994 genocide against the Tutsi, Rwanda's post-conflict peace building methods, and its effect on youth. Integrative literature reviews are "a specific review method that summarizes past empirical or theoretical literature to provide a more comprehensive understanding of a particular phenomenon or problem" (Whittemore & Knafl, 2005, p. 546). Additionally, integrative literature reviews reframe existing knowledge to introduce "new perspectives on key issues in the field" (Torraco, 2005, p. 1). The current study will draw upon the previous research of leaders in the fields of history, social psychology, peace studies, and current information on Rwanda such as online news articles, documentaries, and information retrieved from various governmental organizations. An interdisciplinary approach on post-conflict peace building in societies traumatized by genocide using a social psychological approach will challenge societies and individuals to explore the systematic, ideological, and psychosocial factors that contribute to its conflicts.

Theoretical Framework

In 1971, Phillip Zimbardo designed a 2-week study that would simulate a prison environment to explore the impact of situational forces on negative human behavior. There were twenty-four male participants between the ages of 18 and 30 and selected based on the results of a comprehensive background evaluation² to ensure “all research participants would be as normal as possible initially, healthy both physically and mentally, and without any history of involvement in drugs or crime or violence” (Zimbardo, 2004, p. 39).

Participants were randomly selected to either work in the prison as a “guard” or be detained as a “prisoner” throughout the two-week study. The social psychological constructs of a prison environment were created to establish the prison mindset. This included transforming the basement of Stanford University’s psychology department into a prison by “replacing corridor hall doors with prison bars to create prison cells, using windowless and clock-less cells that afforded no clues as to time of day” (Zimbardo, 2004, p. 39); providing all subjects with appropriate uniforms – “military-style uniforms and silver-reflecting sunglasses” (p. 40) for guards and smocks with ID numbers for prisoners; and “applying institutional rules that removed/substituted individual names with numbers (for prisoners) or titles for staff” (p. 39). Adding to the realistic nature of the scenario, ‘prisoners’ underwent a “real arrest by officers from the Palo Alto Police Department” (p. 39), were taken to the police station for booking then transported to the simulated prison.

² This included five psychological tests, a detailed personal history, and several in-depth interviews.

Known as the “Stanford Prison Experiment”, this study “had to be terminated after only six days because of the pathology we were witnessing” (Zimbardo, 2004, p. 40)³. Zimbardo (2004, 2007) observed “pacifistic young men... behaving sadistically in their role as guards, inflicting humiliation and pain and suffering on other young men who had the inferior status of prisoner” (Zimbardo, 2004, p. 40). Conversely, “many of the intelligent, healthy college students who were occupying the role of prisoner showed signs of ‘emotional breakdown’ so extreme that five of them had to be removed from the experiment within the first week” (p. 40). Zimbardo admits that he also fell into the role of ‘Prison Superintendent’ and became more concerned with protecting the security of his prison than “the needs of the young men entrusted to my care as a psychological researcher” (p. 40).

The Stanford Prison Experiment found that obedience to authority, dehumanization of the other, and moral disengagement are situational variables that reduce social accountability, “concerns for self-evaluation by the actor” (Zimbardo, 2004, p. 32), and “creating opportunities for diffusion of [personal] responsibility for negative outcomes” (p. 28). These findings debunk the myth that evil, or “intentionally behaving, or causing others to act, in ways that demean, dehumanize, destroy, or kill innocent people” (p. 22) is a result of inherent dispositions belonging to the individual. This motivates others to look beyond the person and into the situational circumstances that provoked the malevolent expressions of human behavior.

³ For a detailed timeline of the events that contributed to the abrupt end of the study, see: Zimbardo (2007) *The Lucifer effect: Understanding how good people turn evil*. New York: Random House Trade Paperback

Description of Chapters

The responsibility of Rwanda's political elites in disseminating genocidal ideology among its citizens has been well documented, with few studies giving recognition to the difficulties and successes of state institutions that bridge negative relationships between previous conflicting groups by promoting positive peace consciousness. Can state institutions that promote unity, reconciliation, and peace in post conflict societies facilitate the process of healing for victims, repair corroded relationships between victims and perpetrators, and prevent future conflicts?

Chapters 1 and 2 will explore this question by relating Rwanda's historical narrative with its post-conflict peace building methods using a systems approach to identify the political, economic, and social influence of state institutions such as the National Unity and Reconciliation Commission and community programs such as *itorero ry'igihugu* (community mentors), *ingando* re-education camps, and the *Gacaca* community court system that aspire to bridge negative relationships between groups previously engaged in conflict.

While a significant amount of research is available regarding Rwanda's history and post-conflict peace building initiatives, little has been said about the difficult life conditions and the psychological and psychosocial distresses affecting youth that decrease their access to a basic education. Chapter 3 seeks to piece together the harsh reality of the current generation and the pressure placed upon them to build a stable economic, social, and political foundation to avert future conflict while maintaining a culture of peace with minimal resources.

Section 1 of Chapter 3 will investigate the consequences of the 1994 genocide against the Tutsi on Rwandan youth and identify the difficult life conditions and psychological distresses that decrease youth's access to an education. Section 2 of Chapter 3 is an assessment of the existing psychosocial needs in Rwanda centered on the relevant literature that is consistent with my experiences as a participant in Global Youth Connects' 2012 Human Rights Delegation to Rwanda. This led to the development of a non-governmental organization, Bright Future Generation, which seeks to fill the current gaps in research and improve the psychosocial skills of communities, schools, and governmental and non-governmental organization.

The conclusion of this thesis will briefly call upon the need for cross-cultural dialogue and research. The prevalence of youth involved in school shootings in the United States is a phenomenon that has been consistently attributed to the perpetrators' underlying mental health issues and lax national gun laws (Yan, 2012; FoxNews, 2012; Hauser, 2007; Bryan, 2011; Albracht, 2012). Rwanda can identify its national traumas in relation to the 1994 genocide against the Tutsi, the root causes of which support Zimbardo's (2004, 2007) assertion that situational forces have the power to induce malevolent human behavior. There is a demand to learn from Rwanda's post-conflict peace building initiatives to promote positive peace consciousness from the national to the grassroots level to ensure the prevention of future conflicts in all societies around the world.

CHAPTER 1

The Historical Narrative and the Power of Situational Forces

At 8:30 p.m. on the night of April 6, 1994, the plane of President Habyarimana of Rwanda and President Cyprien Ntaryamira of Burundi was shot down as it was preparing to land in Kigali (United Nations, 1999). Hours following this tragic incident, the genocide against the Tutsi began. On the morning of April 7, 1994, massacres erupted throughout Rwanda against unarmed Tutsi civilians and targeted Hutu political oppositionists (Gourevitch, 1998; Human Rights Watch, 1994; Prunier, 1995; Kinzer, 2008). In 100 days, over 80 years of Hutu hatred against the Tutsi erupted into a full-fledged brutal genocide that claimed the lives of over 800,000 to 1,000,000⁴ innocent civilians. The horror of the 100-day massacre involves more than the sum of accumulated deaths in a short period of time. What is equally disturbing about this particular genocide is that despite the trained *Interahamwe* and Forces Armées Rwandaises (FAR), the genocide would not have been possible without the help of untrained, Hutu peasant farmers living in remote villages away from the capital.

The tragedy is that familiarity and friendship did not restrain the Hutus from killing their Tutsi neighbors. In addition to sharing the same language and culture, Hutu women cared for Tutsi children; weddings, birthdays, anniversaries, and deaths were observed; mixed soccer teams comprised of Hutu and Tutsi adults competed with one

⁴ The highly controversial research of Christian Davenport and Allan Stam challenges the number of accumulated deaths that occurred during the 100 days of the 1994 genocide against the Tutsi. They concluded three things about the nature of violence: not all killings were acts of genocide, and several forms of violence occurred as a result of political violence including acts of genocide, civil war, random violence, and revenge killings; the extremist Hutu government and the RPF committed crimes against humanity towards civilians; and “the majority of victims were likely Hutu and not Tutsi” (‘Project Summary’, n.d., www.genodynamics.com).

another in friendly tournaments. A kind heart did not benefit the killers or allow them to be remorseful for their actions. Fierce political ideology undermined valuable community connections and suspended feelings of trust through prevailing propagations that Hutus are living among enemies seeking to enslave and rebuke their value to Rwandan society. As one killer stated: “His features were indeed similar to those of the person I knew, but nothing firmly reminded me that I had lived beside him for a long time” (Hatzfeld, 2005, p. 24).

Historical narrations of the 1994 genocide against the Tutsi reveal the responsibility of political elites in creating an environment conducive to genocidal practices. Social psychological theories and principles compliment this finding to demonstrate the power leaders have in influencing everyday human behavior and forming tumultuous relationships between neighbors (Zimbardo, 2004 & 2007; Milgram, 1974). Situational forces have the ability to reduce “cues of social accountability” (Zimbardo, 2004, p. 32) and “concerns for self-evaluation ... by projecting responsibility outside the self and onto others” (p. 32). Moreover, “the situation is created in such a way that subjects act in accordance to paths made available to them, without thinking through the meaning or consequences of those actions” (p. 33). Systems outline the roles people are expected to play, and with that comes the responsibility to follow through with these responsibilities unconditionally. A genocidal perpetrator depends on the support systems that reinforce its soundness as an acceptable way of life, allowing the individual to be impenetrable to alternative realities (Zimbardo, 2007; Milgram, 1974).

Hutu peasant farmers became murderous instruments to carry out extremist political and social agendas for the Rwandan government, who presented pro-Hutu, anti-

Tutsi ideology as “an acceptable justification, or rationale, for engaging in the undesirable action” (Zimbardo, 2004, p. 28). Hiding behind political ideology only allowed the perpetrators to evade responsibility for their actions by attributing it to expected political and social practices. One perpetrator affirmed: “We heard no protests about our murders... The death of our president was the signal for the final chaos. But as with a harvest, the seed was planted before” (Hatzfeld, 2005, p. 56).

The powers of situational forces extend beyond the human capacity to commit genocide by exposing victims to traumatic situations in which “the person experienced, witnessed, or was confronted with an event or events that involved actual or threatened death or serious injury, or threat to the physical integrity of self or others” (American Psychiatric Association, 2000, p. 467). At the start of the genocide, innocent Tutsis and Hutu moderates had no one to turn to for protection. Places thought to provide safety and refuge, such as schools, churches, and hospitals, became places where people were brutally slaughtered (Prunier, 1995; Gourevitch, 1998; Kinzer, 2008). For the survivors, this contributed to the loss of faith in humanity to prevent these atrocities from occurring and the dissolution of trust in their fellow neighbors leading to enduring physical and psychological wounds.

The current chapter will explore the historical narrative to identify the social, economic, and political influence that created an environment conducive to genocidal practices and the individual psychological processes that motivated the killings. Root causes of the conflict arose when Belgian colonials transformed the economic identities of Hutu, Tutsi, and Twa into ethnic and social classifications. This resulted in Tutsi dominance over social, economic, and political life. As a consequence, the Hutu majority

initiated a violent revolution against the Tutsi, which led to a Hutu-dominated government that manipulated ethnic hatreds to gain support for their deteriorating power as a result of economic instability. Recognizing the historical narrative is essential to grasp how situational forces act as antecedents to genocidal behavior. The social, economic, and political influences leading up to the 1994 genocide against the Tutsi through the dissemination of a pro-Hutu ideology transformed the hearts and minds of innocent people to become killers through obedience to authority, dehumanization, and moral disengagement as a result of fear of the 'other' (Zimbardo, 2007; Hatzfeld, 2005)

Transformation of Economic Identities into Ethnic Identities

Rwanda is a small, mountainous east African state with a dense population historically comprised of three distinct economic groups: the Hutu, the Tutsi, and the Twa (Gourevitch, 1998; Prunier, 1995; Shyaka, 2005; CIA.gov. 2013). The Hutus constitute 84% of the population and are peasant farmers whose responsibility is to maintain the agricultural landscape. The Tutsis comprise 14% of the population and are cattle herders, a sign of wealth that granted them elite status within Rwandan society. The Twa made up the remaining 1%, lived as hunter-gatherers deep in the forests of Rwanda, and remained inactive in the background of her economic, social, and political structures. Despite these economic categories distinguishing each group from one another, Rwandans shared the community of language and culture, lived among one another within the same villages, intermarried, and conducted business together. Historians describe social relations between Hutus and Tutsis as a stable one in which each group accepted and respected their roles and lived without inter-group conflict (Gourevitch, 1998; Prunier, 1995; Shyaka, 2005).

Politically, Rwanda ruled with a single king, or *mwami*, who was viewed as a divine being with power widely regarded as sacred (Prunier, 1995). Under the king ruled three distinct chiefs: the chief of landholdings comprised of Hutus who oversaw agricultural production; the chief of men comprised mainly of Tutsis who recruited soldiers for the king's army; and the chief of pastures, also comprised of Tutsis who managed the control of cattle and the grazing lands. Each chief's general functions were to regulate the amount of work executed, maintain the land, and collect taxes from each household in the village. With the exception of the chief of landholdings, the majority of these positions are held by Tutsis (Prunier, 1995).

Economic identities remained unchanged until Belgian colonial rule began in 1918 when Rwanda was passed over from Germany due to the League of Nations Mandate after World War 1 (Prunier, 1995). A series of economic reforms altered the political and social structures of Rwandan society to address questions regarding the structure of the legal system, the privilege of the Tutsis, and the previous indirect rule of the Germans. Questioning the role of Tutsi in society became prominent when a man named Bishop Mgr. Classe's stated: "The greatest mistake this government could make would be to suppress the Mututsi caste ... We will have better, more active and more intelligent chiefs than the Batutsi ... *The government must work mainly with them* (emphasis in text)" (Prunier, 1995, p. 26). Classe furthered this to state that if the Hutus ruled, they would only bring anarchy and chaos (Gourevitch, 1998), thus leading to the elevation of economic, political, and social power of Tutsi in the colonial vision of the Belgians.

One of the initial changes the Belgians implemented was to combine all three of the chiefly positions into one and then replace all Hutu chiefs with Tutsi (Prunier, 1995). The implications of this shift in power meant Tutsis would have complete control over agricultural practices, an area where they were completely ignorant. Racial preferences for Tutsi are evidenced in the writings of Europeans, who accommodated the economic titles to capture the racial and physical distinctions of the two groups. Hutus were described as “generally short and thick set with a big head, jovial expression, a wide nose and enormous lips. They are extroverts who like to laugh and lead a simple life” (Prunier, 1995, p. 6). This brief description of a Hutu is largely outweighed by the consideration of a Tutsi:

The Mututsi of good race has nothing of the Negro, apart his color. He is usually very tall ... he is very thin, a characteristic which tends to be even more noticeable as he gets older. His features are very fine: a high brow, thin nose, and fine lips framing beautiful shining teeth. The Batutsi women are usually lighter-skinned than their husbands, very slender and pretty in their youth, although they tend to thicken with age. Gifted with a vivacious intelligence, the Tutsi displays a refinement of feelings, which is rare among primitive people. He is a natural born leader, capable of extreme self-control and of calculated goodwill (p.6)

It is important to note the colorful descriptions ascribed the Tutsi: ‘beautiful shining teeth’, ‘vivacious intelligence’, and ‘natural born leader’. To emphasize this preference, European scientists meticulously recorded physical measurements of the head, nose, height, weight, and body structures of each group, concluding, “the Tutsis had more ‘nobler’ features than the ‘bestial’ Hutus” (Gourevitch, 1998, pp. 55-56; Prunier, 1995)

The lack of a reliable historical narrative encouraged the Belgians to construct their own assumptions about the origins of Tutsi, which transformed each economic identity into ethnic categories that influenced their behavior towards each group.

European John Hanning Speke was a primary contributor through his unfounded writings

that inferred Tutsis were descendants of ancestors originating in southern Ethiopia. The colonizers rationalized that the fair skin color and economic power of Tutsi were unlike the 'genuine Negro' of African natives and possessed features similar to Europeans (Shyaka, 2005; Gourevitch, 1998). To further complete the social divisions between Hutus and Tutsis, the Belgians began issuing identity cards after conducting a census in 1933 (Gourevitch, 1998). Establishing the practice of identity cards furthered Tutsi superiority that made it easier to discriminate Hutus from Rwandan society.

Colonization of Rwanda also meant imposition of Christianity and the presence of churches (Prunier, 1995). Conversion to Christianity was slow in the early 1920's, but increased in 1927 as a result of political reforms. By 1932, the Christian churches had developed sufficient influence to be transformed into a primary social institution, providing strong moral authority through ownership of education. Only few Rwandans were able to obtain a decent education from the church because it had to be paid for and was not mandatory, which meant only the wealthy were granted this opportunity. Illiteracy remained high despite the valuable educational opportunities provided by the church. Tutsis were given priority in obtaining post-secondary education as well as priority in administrative and political jobs as a result of their social status and preference. Hutus were allowed to study theology, but only experienced difficulties and discrimination in obtaining employment. Denial of this opportunity left Hutus bitter and frustrated as they remained in their roles as peasant farmers (Prunier, 1995).

Additionally, the Belgians imposed a system of compulsory communal development labor called *umuganda* to build structures, roads, and plant trees and other crops (Prunier, 1995). Naturally, this work was monitored by Tutsi chiefs who used this

as an opportunity to exploit Hutus and impose taxes on them, but not without pressure from the Belgian leaders (Gourevitch, 1998). The directive given to Tutsis was explicit: “You whip the Hutu or we will whip you!” (p. 57). As Hutus continued to be excluded from the Rwandan economy with limited opportunity for advancement, they began to seethe with anger toward the Tutsi.

The 1959 Hutu Revolution

In March of 1957, the “Notes on the Social Aspect of Racial Native Problem in Rwanda”, aka “the Hutu Manifesto” argued for democracy and logically asserted that if Tutsi were foreigners, then Rwanda rightfully belonged to Hutus (Gourevitch, 1998; Prunier, 1995). Tutsis were defensive and refused to cede to the Hutu demand to pass over their power. A few months later, Gregoire Kayibanda created the Hutu Social Movement in support of the Hutu Manifesto, which transformed into the Rwandese Democratic Movement in October of 1959 (or Mouvement Democratique Rwandais (MDR). In May of 1958, “the court notables declared ... there could be no fraternity between Tutsi and Hutu” (Prunier, 1995, p. 47). This was the leading mentality that guided a shift in political, economic, and social dominance, fueling the violent Hutu Revolution in 1959 and establishing an ethnically divided government in 1961.

On November 1, 1959, sub Chief Dominique Mbonyumutwa, a Hutu political activist, was brutally beaten by a group of Tutsi political activists (Gourevitch, 1998). This is the first act of documented political violence between the groups as false news of his death spread throughout Rwanda. Outraged by the news, Hutus responded by targeting Tutsi authorities and began looting and burning their homes, leading to the first acts of large-scale murder. In response, Tutsis began fighting back, but without the

strong support once awarded to them by the Belgians (Prunier, 1995). Guy Logiest, Belgian's highest ranking official representative in Rwanda, watched the violence unfold, and instead of advocating for Tutsis to remain in power, he stood by and encouraged Hutus to destroy the social structure they helped establish (Gourevitch, 1998). Logiest soon became influential in supporting the revolution, stating the Belgians needed to "give the people back their dignity" (p. 60) which they wrongfully took away.

As a result, the Belgians were able to evade responsibility for the violence that erupted in Rwanda and were labeled as heroes for helping Hutus achieve their goals by encouraging them to rise against the Tutsi monopoly and break their hold on power (Kinzer, 2008). Throughout the violence, the process of transferring power began by firing the Tutsi chiefs and replacing them with Hutus (Gourevitch, 1998; Prunier, 1995). Around "three hundred people were murdered and 1,231 had been arrested by the Belgians (Prunier, 1995). By 1964, over a quarter million Tutsi fled Rwanda to neighboring Zaire, Burundi, and Uganda to escape the violence waged against them. In January 1961, Gregoire Kayibanda arranged a coup, declared Rwanda a republic and established a racial dictatorship favoring Hutus. Rwanda became a fully independent nation from Belgian rule in 1962.

From 1961 forward, the Kayibanda regime adopted the same methods of discrimination against Tutsi that the Belgians inflicted upon them (Gourevitch, 1998; Prunier, 1995). As Hutus monopolized on their power, they expelled Tutsi children from their schools and eliminated all Tutsis within the government and other prominent jobs. Few Tutsi exiles supported the new regime, while the majority organized to engage in a military confrontation to reclaim their homes. In December 1963, Tutsi exiles from

Burundi invaded the Bugesera region of Rwanda. Poor planning and a lack of military equipment further exacerbated the situation in which “the government used the occasion to launch a massive wave of repression in which an estimated 10,000 Tutsis were slaughtered between December 1963 and January 1965. All the surviving Tutsi politicians still living in Rwanda were executed” (Prunier, 1995, p. 56). Political attacks executed by the refugees only strengthened Kayibanda’s power and continued to fuel the Hutu revolution. The violence ceased by the end of 1964, and no further conquests by Tutsi exiles occurred.

The Habyarimana Regime and Rwanda Before the Genocide

President Gregoire Kayibanda’s Rwanda was described as a “land of virtue where prostitutes were punished, attendance at mass was high, and hard working peasants toiled on the land without asking too many questions” (Prunier, 1995, p. 59). Despite doing everything in his power to prevent Tutsi from participating in political, social, and economic activities, President Kayibanda’s success was short lived when economic instability in 1973 deteriorated public support for his leadership. In an effort to revive the spirit of the Hutu Revolution, he embarked on a violent campaign against Tutsis, expelling them from all businesses and schools to enforce a pro-Hutu racial quota in jobs and trigger a second mass exodus of Tutsi refugees to bordering countries while tens of thousands were being slaughtered (Prunier, 1995). On July 5, 1973, Major General Juvenal Habyarimana took over the government in a bloodless coup and declared himself the new president of Rwanda. He believed that ending the violence between Hutus and Tutsis was essential to promote economic development and stability.

Taking advantage of American and European financial donors, Habyarimana built up the Rwandan economy to be stronger than neighboring countries. Under the new regime, Tutsi were prevented from attaining positions of power in political and military roles, but lived unharmed as long as they remained in the fringes of society. The Mouvement Revolutionnaire Nationale pour le Developpement (MRND) was successful in stabilizing the Rwandan economy while strengthening medical care and increasing educational opportunities granted to Hutu children. Mortality rates dropped, violence diminished and prostitutes were arrested, demonstrating a moral authority in the region. However, all citizens were required to carry identification cards, stating their place of residence and ethnicity but were prevented from moving freely around the country or changing their address without permission of the local authorities.

The plight of Habyarimana's regime is similar to Kayibanda's in that economic instability caused by the crash of tea and coffee exports on the world market in 1986 weakened support for his rule as famine increased and resources became scarce (Gourevitch, 1998). By the late 1980's, foreign aid was exhausted and the country's budget was reduced by 40% (Gourevitch, 1998; Prunier, 1995). This increased taxation along with forced labor practices. The International Monetary Fund and the World Bank demanded Rwanda restructure their social, economic, and political practices to prevent further economic devastation. Political oppositionists to the Habyarimana regime sought help from Western donors who refused to extend financial support until the political arena opened up to multiple parties. This meant allowing Tutsi to participate in the economic system to increase the workforce. These pressures forced Habyarimana to comply with international demands as plans to sensitize Rwandans for democratization

were underway. Hutu extremists⁵ within his regime were angered that he would readily abandon the ideals of the 1959 revolution, and began protesting violently against these new policies. Yet the biggest threat to Rwandan racial politics was lurking in the background, as Tutsi refugees from Uganda planned a series of military attacks to fight for the right of exiles to return to their homes.

The Rwandan Patriotic Front

The 1959 Hutu Revolution brought on more challenges than success for Rwanda in relation to political and economic instability. Exile for Tutsi refugees only strengthened their attachment to their homeland rather than weakened it, a sentiment leading to the *inyenzi* (cockroach) raids from 1961-1966 (Kinzer, 2008). Refugees from Uganda, Burundi, Tanzania, and Zaire (currently the Democratic Republic of the Congo) ineffectively targeted police stations and government offices, behaving more like terrorists than determined guerrilla fighters. In response, President Kayibanda supported anti-Tutsi killings to ensure their repression within the country and pushed the guerrilla fighters back into exile, establishing the brutal ethnic politics that would define Rwanda in the years to come. As Tutsis understood what life was going to be like under Kayibanda's leadership, they reluctantly agreed to leave the new regime alone and attempted to rebuild their lives in places they could not call home.

On October 1, 1990 when the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF), led by Major General Fred Rwigyema and comprised of Tutsi refugees trained in the Ugandan military, declared war on the Habyarimana regime, "nobody in Rwanda ever imagined

⁵ One of the more prominent Hutu extremist groups, the *akazu*, comprised of members of Agathe Habyarimana's family and their close associates. Agathe was Habyarimana's wife. (Human Rights Watch, 1994b; Kinzer, 2008; Prunier, 1995; Gourevitch, 1998)

that these exiles would try to force their way back to their homeland” (Kinzer, 2008, p. 33). Motivated by anger at President Habyarimana for ignoring their cries to return to their homeland, the RPF crossed the border with the clear goal of taking over Kigali, the capital city. Immediately faced with Forces Armées Rwandaises (FAR), or the Rwandan Armed Forces, comprised of “5200 men supplied by the French with Panhard armored cars, heavy artillery, and Gazelle helicopters” (Prunier, 1995, p. 94), the RPF was prevented from reaching the capital. Within the first two days of battle, Major General Rwigyema became a casualty, quickly weakening the RPF (Prunier, 1995). Within days, Paul Kagame arrived in Rwanda to replace the fallen Commander and led the remaining RPF soldiers to safety in the Virunga Mountains. Senior RPF officers who had fought alongside him during the Ugandan war knew he had a full understanding of military intelligence, and was “a clear strategic thinker, a brave fighter, and a strict disciplinarian who demanded obedience and tolerated no excesses” (Kinzer, 2008, p. 79).

From this point on, Tutsi became Rwanda’s number one enemy as government officials used fear as a tool to assure Hutu peasants that Tutsi would dominate once again if they succeeded in penetrating Rwanda. On the eve of October 4, the Rwandan government staged an assault on Kigali to increase fears that Tutsi refugees were targeting Hutus. Although thousands of shots were fired throughout the night, not a single casualty was documented nor did any of the buildings appear harmed. In his deteriorating presidency, Habyarimana used this threat to avert attention from his failings and unified Hutus by rejuvenating past animosities and dissatisfactions (Gourevitch, 1998; Prunier, 1995; Kinzer, 2008). With the RPF no longer an immediate threat to Rwanda, village officials in Kibilira Gisenyi instructed Hutus on October 11, 1990, “that

their communal work consisted of fighting Tutsi neighbors, whom they've lived with" (Prunier, 1995, p. 84). Over the course of three days, the slaughter claimed the lives of 350 people, and forced thousands more to escape to bordering countries.

Moreover, the Rwandan government manipulated the RPF insurgency to instigate a massive wave of arrests of targeted enemies, such as political oppositionists and educated Tutsis. Massacres continued throughout Rwanda as Hutus murdered Tutsi and seized their land, cattle, and material goods otherwise denied them. The French supplied the Rwandan government with military equipment, guidance for democratization and unconditional support for Habyarimana's response to the RPF attack (Gourevitch, 1998; Prunier, 1995; Kinzer, 2008). The FAR opened recruitment for the army to reassure Rwandan citizens they were taking the attacks seriously, and saw an increase to 50,000 new recruits by 1992 (Prunier, 1995). The new recruits consisted of peasants with little to no education, which made training a strong force difficult.

Concurrently, the RPF gained strength as hundreds of Rwandan exiles left their lives behind to fight for the cause, and were

...not a guerilla force composed of society's castoffs. By one estimate, nearly all had attended primary school, half had graduated from secondary school, and 20 percent were university graduates. Scores were physicians. By early 1991, the RPF force had not only doubled in size, counting nearly five thousands fighters in its ranks, but also emerged as the best-educated guerrilla army in history (Kinzer, 2008, p. 83)

In addition, one of Habyarimana's old accomplices, Hutu Colonel Alexis Kanyarenwe, joined the RPF and was elected its chairman. Although the army was mainly comprised of Tutsi exiles, including youth who have never visited Rwanda, their ultimate goals were to include both Hutu and Tutsi sympathizers fighting against the injustices occurring in their homeland. Financing the army were affluent Tutsis and Rwandese businessmen

with a desire to see the RPF topple the Habyarimana regime. Short on ammunition, they continuously raided the Ugandan military supplies to stock up for future attacks.

On January 23, 1991, the RPF launched another assault in the Ruhengeri region in Rwanda (Gourevitch, 1998; Prunier, 1994; Kinzer, 2008). Containing a high security prison holding 1,000 inmates and political enemies, it was an ideal place for the RPF to instigate panic and strengthen their image as a force to be reckoned with. The prison guards were ordered to murder the inmates by top Hutu politicians for fear of providing information to the RPF. One guard refused to follow through with these orders, which resulted in the RPF releasing all of the prisoners and recruiting some men into the army. After “looting the prison, the bank, police stations, military outposts, and food warehouses” (Kinzer, 2008, p. 89), their presence generated a wave of panic among Rwandans which instigated additional massacres throughout Rwanda that lasted through March.

As sporadic fighting continued between the RPF and FAR, Rwanda recognized they were officially engaged in civil war (Gourevitch, 1998; Prunier, 1994; Kinzer, 2008). Local and state authorities continually fed into the fears of Hutu peasants, who encouraged massacres as a responsibility to fulfill their obligation to participate in forced labor. For Hutu peasants, murdering Tutsi meant obtaining land, cattle, and material goods otherwise denied to them. Burgomasters were permitted to refuse to participate if they considered it necessary. Further exacerbating the situation, “the government attributed the massacres to the ‘righteous anger of the people’ that spontaneously launched themselves at the Tutsi. The implication seems to be that these Tutsi richly deserved what they got since they all sympathized with the RPF” (Prunier, 1995, p. 139).

Cease Fires, Arms Distributions, and Events Leading up to the Genocide

As fighting continued between the RPF and FAR, foreign aid donors placed pressure on Habyarimana to end the conflict, allow the refugees to return home, and democratize Rwanda by giving the RPF positions in the new government, increasing tensions within his own regime. Although Habyarimana had no intention of opening up the political arena, Hutu extremists wanted to maintain the anti-Tutsi, revolutionary spirit the government was founded on. To move away from a strict Hutu dictatorship would threaten its preservation. Many felt that a new leader was necessary to uphold the ideals of the 1959 Revolution.

In January 1992, around 50,000 people protested against the MRND cabinet, and by April 7 of that year, a new cabinet was sworn in (Prunier, 1995). The Rwandan government was officially open for power sharing, in which “the new cabinet courageously went on the offense to try to redress some of the regimes most obvious injustices” (p. 145). For example, Agathe Uwilingiuimana, a Hutu moderate and newly appointed minister of education, “abolished the policy of equilibrium, which enabled the government to choose the ethnic origin of students and even in practice, within the Hutu community, the regional origin of candidates” (pp. 145-146). Changes like this infuriated Hutu extremists, leading to a direct increase of ethnic violence. Habyarimana further exacerbated tensions when he agreed to negotiate with the RPF to establish a cease-fire, grant them positions in the new government, and open Rwandan borders to allow refugees to return to their homes. The peace talks began in June 1992 at Arusha, Tanzania, where a cease-fire was immediately established (Gourevitch, 1998; Prunier, 1995; Kinzer, 2008).

Peace talks with the RPF paradoxically increased the violence in Rwanda (Gourevitch, 1998; Prunier, 1995; Kinzer, 2008) as incitements to engage in full-fledged genocide spread throughout the country⁶. Radio stations played music calling Hutu to kill the *inyenzi* (cockroaches) while magazines and daily newspapers were filled with anti-Tutsi propaganda. Sporadic massacres continued throughout the country as the MRND began recruiting individuals in an army called the *Interhamwe* and trained individuals to efficiently murder Tutsis (Gourevitch, 1998; Human Rights Watch, 1994a). It is within this tense climate that plans for genocide against the Tutsi increased, while plans to get rid of Habyarimana occurred simultaneously.

On August 4, 1993, the RPF and President Habyarimana signed the Arusha Peace Agreement, bringing the civil war in Rwanda to a temporary end. The terms of the arrangement were quite clear: the RPF was promised a position in the government, all refugees were allowed to return home, and no weapons were allowed to be distributed to militia within Rwanda or supplied to the RPF. Hutus were infuriated with Habyarimana's lack of willingness to uphold extremist ideologies by building peace with Tutsi RPF enemies seeking to takeover Rwanda (Gourevitch, 1998; Prunier, 1995).

A week before the Arusha Agreement was signed, Mr. Waly Bacre Ndiaye, the Special Rapporteur of the Commission on Human Rights, authored a report regarding serious human rights violations in Rwanda, and questioned whether it should be described as acts of genocide due to its emphasis on ethnic identity (United Nations,

⁶ The *akazu* rejected "seeking an accommodation with the rebels" (Kinzer, 2008, p. 98) and appealed to their supporters by using hatred and fear against Tutsis as political and social enemies. The waves of killings that occurred during the Arusha Peace Talks were used as a tool to distract the general population from focusing too much on the conflict occurring within the government.

1999). Ndiaye specifically wrote that the Tutsi population was being targeted based on identification of this ethnic group, and “recommended a series of steps to prevent further massacres and other abuses” (United Nations, 1999, pp. 6-7). Despite the seriousness of these allegations, “his report seems to have been largely ignored by the key actors within the United Nations system” (United Nations, 1999, p. 7).

On October 5, 1993, the United Nations established the United Nations Assistance Mission for Rwanda (United Nations, 1999), or UNAMIR, whose mandate was to “monitor the observance of the cease-fire agreement” (p. 8), provide security to the civilians of Rwanda, and to ensure that refugees are being repatriated back into Rwanda. Leading the new mission was General Romeo Dallaire of Canada. Dallaire sent the UN a ‘Rules of Engagement for UNAMIR’ that sought approval to allow “the mission to act, and even to use force, in response to crimes against humanity and other abuses” (p. 9). Regrettably, UN headquarters never sent a formal response to approve the request (United Nations, 1999).

Dallaire was effective in gathering information regarding human rights abuses and other related activities occurring in Rwanda. On January 11, 1994, he sent a message to the Military Advisor to the Secretary General stating that he was in contact with an informant who disclosed information regarding direct plans to commit genocide in Rwanda (United Nations, 1999). A top-level *Interahamwe*⁷ militia trainer, he informed Dallaire he trained about 17,000 men in camps for the FAR, and “stated that the Interahamwe was able to kill up to 1000 Tutsi in 20 minutes” (United Nations, 1999, p.

⁷ The *interahamwe* militia and death squad was trained specifically by the *akazu* to commit mass murder against the Tutsi to “explicitly and quite seriously ... resolve Rwanda’s conflict through a ‘final solution’ in which every Tutsi in the country would be killed or forced to flee” (Kinzer, 2008, p. 104).

20). In a few days, the informant would be clearing a weapons cache to be distributed to the newly trained militia. This was a severe violation of the Arusha Peace Agreement that UNAMIR was supposed to monitor. Alarmed at the news and respecting his responsibilities to oversee the cease-fire, Dallaire asked headquarters for permission to intervene militarily to prevent the distribution of weapons (United Nations, 1999). Headquarters suggested that Dallaire notify President Habyarimana of the breach and in return the President was to update Dallaire of the steps he will take to monitor and control the situation. Later that day, President Habyarimana and the National Secretary of the MRND met with Dallaire and denied that the government militia was involved in any such activities. The President did not follow up with Dallaire as promised.

During the first few months of 1994, Rwanda saw an increase in “violent demonstrations, grenade attacks, assassination attempts, political and ethnic killings, and information that militias are stockpiling weapons and distributing them to their supporters” (United Nations, 1999, p. 13). Despite UNAMIR presence, the *Interahamwe* and FAR knew they could get away with these activities due to mandate restrictions not to use force unless force was used against them. The situation climaxed when at 8:30 p.m. on the night of April 6, 1994, the plane of President Habyarimana of Rwanda and President Cyprien Ntaryamira of Burundi was shot down as it was preparing to land in Kigali (United Nations, 1999). Hours following this tragic incident, the genocide against the Tutsi began.

The Power of Situational Forces in the Creation of Perpetrators

“...at the beginning of the war there was no change in relations between Hutus and Tutsis. In 1994, the killings were provoked by the plane crash” (Lyons & Strauss, p. 73)

“I’ll tell you what I know. The plane crashed on April 6; it was a Wednesday. Thursday morning, extraordinary things were said in our sector. I was in the party administration in the sector, so I could observe the changes better than other peasants. Thursday there was a change. I consider it brutality, or ignorance ... that same day, the communal police canceled the market that was supposed to be held, and in the evening roadblocks were established. There were roadblocks in every sector, at the intersections. In the beginning, the objective was to prevent the enemy from entering. That is to say, we fell into the trap of saying ‘enemy,’ which later provoked killings” (p. 66)

“The killings reached our sector because of a businessman, in collaboration with the burgomaster. They are the ones who created divisions in the population. The businessman came and brought people who were like me, but in military uniform ... with local businessmen and the doctors at a hospital, they held a meeting to separate people. They said that the country was being taken over by the Tutsis and that the Hutus were finished. They said we had to defend ourselves” (p. 87)

Rwanda’s history of political and economic instability uncovers the power of situational forces that tore apart social relationships between Hutu and Tutsi. This is evidenced through the confessions of perpetrators not involved with the FAR, *interahamwe*, or other government trained militias. Most men were farmers, construction workers, husbands, fathers, and friends (Lyons & Strauss, 2006; Hatzfeld, 2005) who harnessed their machetes to viciously kill their Tutsi neighbors. Narratives of the events that occurred after Habyarimana’s death reveal that social relations between Hutus and Tutsis were pleasant, and divisionism between the two groups were largely economic and political. “Habyarimana was the parent of Rwanda. Habyarimana did nothing bad to Tutsis. He gave work to all the Tutsis who studied. No person in Rwanda thought, ‘I am Hutu. You are Tutsi.’ Habyarimana prevented all that. We intermarried.” (Lyons & Strauss, 2006, p. 81).

On the morning of April 7, 1994, judges, local authority figures, soldiers, and the *Interahamwe* militiamen went to each household to inform the men to collect their machetes and prepare to kill Tutsis without exception. The men were told the killings were retaliation for Tutsi's contribution in the president's death. When the civil war began in 1990 between the Rwandan government and the Rwandan Patriotic Front, the 'Tutsi threat' no longer referred to the previous economic and political control before the 1959 Hutu Revolution. The RPF insurgency presented a visible threat to national security. So when President Habyarimana's⁸ plane was shot down, citizens believed it was rational to accuse their Tutsi neighbors of being RPF supporters. Some killers confessed, "we knew full well what had to be done, and we set out doing it without flinching, because it seemed like the perfect solution" (Hatzfeld, 2005, p. 59).

From sunrise to sunset, the men spent their days in the fields hunting down Tutsis. At the end of the day, the women would help them loot the homes of the people they murdered. Familiarity and friendship did not restrain the Hutus from killing the people they knew. The graphic details of how ordinary peasant farmers converted to cold-blooded killers can only be expressed in the words of the perpetrators themselves:

"Many people did not know how to kill, but that was not a disadvantage, because there was *interahamwe* to guide them in their first steps ... they gave great advice on what paths to take and which blows to use, which techniques... they used their

⁸ On November 17, 2006, Judge Bruguiere of France accused former senior officers of the RPF, including Paul Kagame, of being responsible for President Habyarimana's death. In January of 2012, French Judges Marc Trevidic and Nathalie Poux released a report that investigated these claims and cleared those accused of any responsibility (Kanuma, 2012). Officially, it is currently unknown who is responsible for President Habyarimana's death, although it is consistently inferred that Agathe Habyarimana, Juvenal's wife, and members of the *akazu*, are the sole masterminds of the death that triggered the 1994 genocide against the Tutsi (Prunier, 1995; Gourevitch, 1998; Hatzfeld, 2005; Kinzer, 2008).

spare time to initiate those who seemed uneasy with this work of killing.”
(Hatzfeld, 2005, p. 36)

“To forget doubt, we had meanness and ruthlessness in killing, and a job to do and do well, that’s all” (p. 47)

“At the beginning we were too fired up to think. Later on we were too used to it ... they had already stopped being good neighbors of long standing ... they had become people to throw away ... they no longer were what they had been, and neither were we” (p. 47)

“I could not reveal my good heart. Anyone who hesitated to kill because of feelings of sadness absolutely had to watch his mouth, to say nothing about the reason for his reticence for fear of being accused of complicity” (p. 119)

“Our Tutsi neighbors, we knew they were guilty of no misdoing, but we thought all Tutsi at fault for our constant troubles. We no longer looked at them one by one; we no longer stopped to recognize them as they had been, not even as colleagues. They become a threat greater than all we had experienced together, more important than our way of seeing things in the community. That’s how we reasoned and how we killed at the time” (p. 121)

“Doing the same thing everyday meant we didn’t have to think about what we were doing ... our arms ruled our heads; in any case our heads no longer had their say” (p. 50)

“The Tutsis had accepted so many killings without ever protesting. They had waited for death or bad blows so often without raising their voices, that in a certain way we thought deep down they were fated to die, here and now, all together. We thought that since this job was meeting no opposition, it was because it really had to be done. That idea helped us not to think about the job” (p. 234)

“I considered them unimportant; at the time of those murders, I didn’t even notice the tiny thing that would change me into a killer” (p. 27)

“For me, it was strange to see the children drop without a sound. It was almost pleasantly easy” (p. 25)

“Man can get used to killing, if he kills on and on. He can even become a beast without noticing it. Some threatened one another when they had no more Tutsis under their machetes. In their faces, you could see the need to kill” (p. 49)

Perpetrator confessions illustrate the transformation from being inexperienced to showing no remorse for those they killed. For Hutus who felt uncomfortable using their machete to kill, the *interahamwe* demonstrated how to use it efficiently, which reinforced the murderous behavior. Zimbardo (2007) rationalizes that “most of us can undergo significant character transformations when we are caught up in the crucible of social forces” (p. 258). All of this led to some very demanding questions: At what point did people change their positive interactions with the other group and turn into cold-blooded killers? Did anybody ever stop to think about the meaning of his or her actions? And if so, did they ever stop to think it was wrong? One perpetrator stated: “When the genocide came from Kigali, taking us by surprise, I never flinched. I thought if the authorities opted for this choice, there is no reason to sidestep the issue” (Hatzfeld, 2005, p. 177). Zimbardo (2007) describes this as “administrative evil ... it exists beyond any one person once its policies are in place and its procedures take control” (p. 515).

Pre-Colonial Rwandan history describes political traditions as a “systematic, centralized, and unconditional obedience to authority” (Prunier, 1995, p. 141). High illiteracy rates required the general public to trust messages sent from their authority figures to govern their everyday activities – even leading to an environment conducive to genocidal practices. One perpetrator affirmed this by stating:

Authorities began to tell people that Tutsi are mean. I will tell you that Rwandans, we are like cows. When authorities say move to the left, we move to the left. The authorities made the population believe that the Tutsis would kill us. That is how the war started (Lyons & Strauss, 2006, p. 39).

This statement clearly demonstrates that obedience to authority was a contributing factor in motivating the killing and are consistent with Zimbardo’s (2004) assertion that situational influence has the ability to reduce “cues of social accountability” (p. 32) and

“concerns for self-evaluation ... by projecting responsibility outside of the self and onto others” (p. 32). Conversely, refusal to participate came with high costs: the men either had to pay a fine or their names were placed on a list to be sought by the *interahamwe* for non-participation. One perpetrator explains: “The *interahamwe* militia who were the leaders of others came to my place, carrying a list of persons who had not participated. They said, ‘You, you come with us.’ They said they would kill us if we refused. They had already started to kill Hutus who were called accomplices”. (Lyons & Straus, 2006, p. 50).

Obedience to authority appear to be a major contributing factor to the 1994 genocide against the Tutsi, but underlying social psychological principles are more elaborate. Individuals disassociate their wrongdoings through mechanisms of moral disengagement, which occurs when one separates from who they are as a moral being to accept the acts of indecency they are committing. Moral disengagement is a four-step cognitive process that allows individuals to maintain their sense of morality by selectively choosing “the need to suspend emotional response in an emergency or situation that demands invading the privacy of others” (Zimbardo, 2007, p. 272). First, people redefine their malevolent behavior as just and honorable, such as removing a threat from the larger society. Secondly, diffusing responsibility provides an opportunity for that individual to disconnect from the immorality of their behavior and evade the consequences of their actions. Third, when people feel cognitive dissonance, or an inconsistency in their thoughts or feelings about engaging in a certain behavior, they balance this out by either changing their thoughts to match their behavior, or vice versa.

And finally, people justify their actions through the belief that their victims deserve what happens to them. This process is supported through the reflection of one perpetrator:

Killing is very discouraging if you yourself must decide to do it, even to an animal. But if you must obey the orders of the authorities, if you have been properly prepared, if you feel yourself pushed and pulled, if you see that the killing will be total and without disastrous consequences for yourself, you feel soothed and reassured (Hatzfeld, 2005, pp. 48-49)

Anti-Tutsi propaganda serves as repetitive reminders that the Tutsi are enemies and ‘cockroaches’ that prevented the perpetrators from seeing the human qualities of their victims. Dehumanization is a process in which “the others are thought not to possess the same feelings, thoughts, values, and purposes in life ... any human qualities shared with us are diminished or erased from awareness” (Zimbardo, 2007, p. 272) and “breaks the bonds of the human connection by making other people threatening rather than inviting” (p. 295).

In Rwanda, this process took place over the course of forty years beginning with the 1959 Hutu Revolution. Throughout this time, Hutus were reminded that Tutsis once exerted great economic, political, and social power over them and would attain that power again through force if Hutus did not fight against them. By calling them *inyenzi* or ‘cockroaches,’ the human qualities of the Tutsi were taken away. “We no longer saw a human being when we turned up a Tutsi in the swamps. I mean a person like us, sharing similar thoughts and feelings. The hunt was savage, the hunters were savage, the prey was savage – savagery took over the mind” (Hatzfeld, 2005, p. 47). One perpetrator compared the process of killing a Tutsi to that of killing a goat:

Many Tutsi showed a dreadful fear of being killed, even before we started to hit them. They would stop their disturbing agitation. They would cower or stand stock-still. So this terror helped us strike them. It is more tempting to kill a

trembling and pleading goat than a spirited and frisky one, put it that way (Hatzfeld, 2005, pp. 37-38)

Deepening the dehumanization process was the use of agricultural metaphors to motivate the peasants: “killings were *umuganda* (collective work), chopping up men was ‘bush clearing’ and slaughtering women and children was ‘pulling out the roots of bad weeds’” (Prunier, 1995, p. 142; Hatzfeld, 2005). These commands helped the individual grasp the fundamental principles of the killings they were obligated to participate, as most of the perpetrators were farmers.

This also suggests that some individuals may have acted to gain material possessions, such as cows, radios, televisions, clothing, money, the tin roofs off their huts, and other expensive materialistic goods that the Tutsi possessed. Land was given priority to the person who murdered the owner, and then later negotiated with others in the community. Preparing and cooking meat was a luxury the Hutus were once denied, but it now became abundant. Some perpetrators admitted:

We didn’t care about what we accomplished in the marshes, only about what was important to us for our comfort (Hatzfeld, 2005, p. 83)

During the killings, passing neighbors dropped off more food than you could fit in your pot ... meat became common ... Hutus had always felt cheated of cattle because they didn’t know how to raise them. They said cows didn’t taste good, but it was from scarcity (p. 63)

The “Aphrodisiac of Power” (Zimbardo, 2007, p. 255) is a phenomenon in which “power itself becomes a goal for many because of all the resources at the disposal of the powerful” (p. 255). Hutus acquired a mass of wealth during the genocide that belonged to Tutsis and provided them with an opportunity to live a life they had never had before.

Were the killings motivated by the physical threat of Tutsis, which is consistent with the historical narrative or was murder used a means to acquire possessions denied

Hutu farmers as a result of poverty? Reactive aggression occurs when one hurts another individual in response to provocation or threats whereas instrumental aggression is utilized to hurt others for personal gain (Reeder, Kumar, Hesson-McInnis & Trafimow, 2002). The historical narrative is consistent with reactive aggression in which Hutus acted in response to a perceived threat. Some perpetrators described it as "...a war ... you go to work because there is something to gain, but when you went there, for some it was to protect themselves. For others, it was to eliminate their enemies. It was not like a job." (Lyons & Strauss, 2006, p. 64). Acquiring material goods was an added reward after a long day of searching and killing the Tutsi in which "abundance relieved us of our petty problems" (Hatzfeld, 2005, p. 87).

Understanding Evil and the Role of Bystanders

Evil can be defined as intentionally behaving, or causing others to act, in ways that demean, dehumanize, harm, destroy, or kill innocent people. This behaviorally focused definition makes the individual or group responsible for purposeful, motivated actions that have a range of negative consequences for other people (Zimbardo, 2007, p. 22)

The genocide in Rwanda outlines a staggering human truth that people may be reluctant to accept. Normal, everyday people have the ability to engage in murderous behavior if the situational forces allow them to act without consequence. There is the belief that despite all we know about inhumanity and the evil others have caused, we still hold firmly to the delusion that it could not happen to us. The Fundamental Attribution Error is "the tendency to explain observed behavior by reference to internal dispositional factors while ignoring or minimizing the impact of situational variables" (Zimbardo, 2004, p. 24). Zimbardo (2007) demystifies the tendency for individuals to attribute malevolent expressions of human behavior to individual characteristics by giving priority

to the responsibility of situational circumstances. He states: “You might well conclude that you would not do what the majority has done, that you would, of course, be the exception to the rule. That statistically unreasonable belief makes you even more vulnerable to the situational forces precisely because you underestimate their power as you overestimate yours” (p. 316)

Mindfulness of the events occurring around you and an ability to predict or comprehend how these events are going to unfold requires people to respond proactively to prevent atrocities from occurring. “Our usual take on evil focuses on violent, destructive actions, but *nonaction* can also become a form of evil, when assistance, dissent, and disobedience are needed” (Zimbardo, 2004, p. 42). Termed “The Evil of Inaction” (p. 42), individuals who possess the ability and resources to intervene in situations yet fail to respond appropriately to prevent atrocities from occurring are also responsible for the occurrence of those events. Bystanders can be members of society who are neither victims nor perpetrators within the conflict, or outside observers such as individuals, organizations, and nations (Staub, 1989). Perpetrators are motivated by the passivity of bystanders because it implies approval of their actions (Staub & Bar Tal, 2003).

During the genocide, Rwanda did not have a lack of bystanders unaware of the situation unfolding before their eyes. Rather, the international community, the local government, and un-participating civilians stood by as hundreds of thousands of individuals were murdered due to their ethnic identifications. What the bystanders lacked was not complete information or resources to intervene, but lack of compassion to stand up for what was right for the innocent. When UNAMIR left Rwanda in the early days of

the genocide, Hutus felt a sense of relief: “For the first time ever, we did not feel we were under the frowning supervision of whites” (Hatzfeld, 2005, p. 91). Hutus no longer feared the whites were going to give out consequences for their actions.

On the morning of April 7, 1994, many prominent politicians and civil servants called upon UNAMIR for protection of their lives (United Nations, 1999). However, their restrictive mandate prevented the troops from providing the necessary protection to Tutsis civilians and Hutu political moderates. One such instance was the case of acting Prime Minister, Agathe Uwilingiimana, who was taken to the United Nations Volunteer compound for protection. Around 10 a.m., Rwandan soldiers entered the compound, found the Prime Minister, brutally assaulted, raped, and then murdered her. The ten Belgian UNAMIR soldiers that were sent to protect her were transported to Camp Kigali by the *interahamwe* militia and were badly beaten and brutally murdered (United Nations, 1999)

Another example was the Ecole Technique Officielle (ETO) technical school⁹. *Interahamwe* militia waited patiently for Belgian UNAMIR soldiers to leave the school then escorted two thousand people to Nyanza hill, a place where the community left all their trash. To bring them to this hill meant they were garbage and deserved to be murdered there. If anybody moved or got out of line, they were killed on the spot¹⁰. A sign outside of the ETO titled “Genocide: Failure to Protect” describes the passive role of bystanders during the genocide in further detail:

⁹ This story was told to me during my visit to Rwanda. Nyanza was the first memorial Global Youth Connect visited.

¹⁰ A representative at the memorial site made the gruesome statement that by the time they were brought to this hill, “They were already dead in their hearts.”

On 7th April, 1994, 2,5000 people fled here to the Ecole Technique Officielle (ETO) for protection from the genocide that was engulfing Rwanda. This technical school housed 90 Belgian troops serving within the United Nations Assistance Mission for Rwanda (UNAMIR). The refugees had faith that respected international troops would protect them. In the following days militia killers surrounded the ETO. Inside, traumatized, desperate refugees found little support from UNAMIR. Many families were forced to camp outside in the open air.

On 10th April French troops escorted all Europeans away from the ETO to the airport. Following the murder by Government forces of ten Belgian Peacekeepers guarding the Prime Minister, the Belgian troops requested leave to withdraw. At 2pm on 11th April the UNAMIR force, without telling the refugees what was happening, departed. The *interahamwe* militia moved into the ETO immediately, and began to kill refugees even as the UNAMIR convoy was moving out of sight. Survivors were forced to march four kilometers southeast along the Nyanza road and were brutally murdered at a gravel pit.

The International Community offered hope of protection at the ETO, but betrayed the refugees with a disregard for humanity. As elsewhere in Rwanda, the international community and UN turned its back on genocide.

ETO has become a symbol of the failure of world leaders to protect and care for the lives of all those they are entrusted with. The international community closed their ears to the cries of the Rwandan people before the genocide and abandoned them during its most difficult hours during genocide. We hope the international community will not close its eyes in the process of rebuilding, but give hope to the survivors.

Never Again¹¹.

During the genocide, places though to provide safety and refuge, such as schools, churches, and hospitals, became places where people were brutally slaughtered. From April 14-19, 1994, ten thousand Tutsis took refuge at Nyamata church when a gang of *Interahamwe* militiamen and FAR soldiers attacked the compound (Kinzer, 2008). Infants were smashed against the wall, women were brutally raped, and anybody alive was hacked to death; no Tutsi women, children, or men were spared from the slaughter.

¹¹ I took a picture of this sign located outside the ETO.

“In a genocide, the killers track down everyone, in particular babies, girls, and women, because they represent the future” (Hatzfeld, 2005, p. 106).

One hundred days went by as large numbers of people lost their lives in places like the Nyamata church throughout the genocide, each death contributing to the loss of faith in humanity to prevent these atrocities from occurring. The powers of situational forces extend beyond the human capacity to commit genocide by exposing victims to situations in which “the person experienced, witnessed, or was confronted with an event or events that involved actual or threatened death or serious injury, or threat to the physical integrity of self or others” (American Psychiatric Association, 2000, p. 467). The direct or indirect exposure to traumatic situations can lead to psychiatric conditions such as Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, depression, and other anxiety disorders.

Consequently, in addition to creating an environment where people were exposed to violence and situations that impacted their psychological well being, the genocide devastated any trust that may have been built between neighbors, between the individual and their government, and the individual with the international community.

Many Tutsis no longer asked to be spared – that was how they greeted death among themselves. They had stopped hoping, they knew they had no chance for mercy and went off without a single prayer. They knew they were abandoned by everything, even by God (Hatzfeld, 2005, p. 143)

We find not one comradely impulse among teammates, not one gesture of compassion for helpless babies at the breast. No bond of friendship or love that survived from a church choir or an agricultural cooperative. No civil disobedience in a village, no rebellious adolescent in a gang of budding toughs. And not a single escape network, although it would have been easy to set one up ... no convoy, no links among the herders paths, no web of hiding places to allow the evacuation of survivors (p. 105)

The Rwandan Patriotic Front were the Tutsis' only hope for survival, as they made their way from Uganda to Kigali to stop the genocidal regime from continuing its violence.

CHAPTER 2

Post-Conflict Peace Building in Rwanda

As bodies piled up quickly alongside roads, homes, and spread through the villages, the RPF continued toward the capital to stop the murder of innocent civilians. On July 18, 1994, after months of fighting, the Rwandan Patriotic Front took control of Kigali, declared a cease-fire, and ended the genocide in progress (Prunier, 1995; Gourevtich, 1998; Kinzer, 2008). Reaching this victory had been difficult, but the true challenge lay in the days that followed. Paul Kagame described it as:

... the worst thing I have ever seen or experienced. More important and more challenging was knowing that we still have to deal with this. We had defeated the murderers, we had taken over, but now we had an equal or bigger challenge. Where do we start? How do we bring back some sense of life? What do we do about the effects created by so many dead? Something really fills up in your mind, like filling a glass until it starts overflowing (Kinzer, 2008, p. 181)

The streets of Kigali were littered with debris and human remains. Survivors were disoriented from shock to process not only the events but also the evidence of the dead decaying on display.

Rationally, most people expected Paul Kagame to take on the role of Rwanda's acting president. Rather, Kagame took on the role of vice-president and only advised the new president on ways to rebuild Rwanda. He elected a prominent Hutu, Pasteur Bizimungu, for that position and installed other Hutus as acting cabinet members. Primarily, the new leaders needed to establish some sense of security, and electing Hutus was a way to ensure outsiders that this was not an ethnic takeover but a necessary measure to ensure the end of the violence. More importantly, "security was paramount. Establishing some semblance of order and some basic structures of administration was very important" (Kinzer, 2008, p. 187)

With ten percent of the population murdered and another thirty percent having fled the country (Kinzer, 2008) with all of the nation's cash, material resources, and the educated and skilled workers, Kagame and the RPF had nothing to work with. After the RPF takeover, more than two million Hutus fled the country for fear of being held responsible for the murders (Kinzer, 2008; Gourevitch, 1998; Prunier, 1995). This mass exodus of Hutu refugees was what caught the international community's attention as they settled into camps funded and supplied by France and the United Nations. The people had believed that Hutus were the real victims of the genocide, and were pro-active in sending supplies such as tents, food, water, and medical equipment to the places they settled. Further complicating the situation was the fact that most FAR soldiers left Rwanda with their state issued weapons such as armored cars, air defense weapons and anti-tank guns to regroup in the camps, plan future attacks against Rwanda, and "finish their job of murdering Tutsis" (Gourevitch, 1998, p. 167)

During this time the RPF saw an increase in recruits of young men angered at the devastation and loss of their family members. Every citizen in Rwanda was affected by the genocide, and even though some committed revenge killings, they were surprisingly kept to a minimum¹²(Kinzer, 2008). The increase in RPF recruitment was essential, as cross-boarder raids became the norm throughout 1994 and 1995. "Sometimes [the insurgents] stormed into Tutsi homes and massacred people in their beds. They assassinated mayors and other local officials... they seized schools, forced students to

¹² However, on October 10, 1994, the Gersony report given to the UNCHR estimates that "from late April/May through July, more than 5,000, perhaps as many as 10,000 persons per month may have been killed" (p. 8) and accused the RPF of "systematic and sustained killing and persecution of their civilian Hutu populations" (p. 4) in various regions throughout Rwanda. Due to the highly controversial nature of these claims, this report will only be referenced in this footnote.

separate according to their group identity, and then slaughtered the Tutsi” (Kinzer, 2008, p. 193). By the end of 1995, it was estimated that the Rwandan government “was arresting seven hundred people each month, and that soldiers were killing five to ten civilians each day” (p. 193).

Hutus still living in Rwanda welcomed the insurgency because they feared that if the new government stayed in power, they would be arrested and punished for their participation in the genocide. This was not unreasonable, as the RPF was actively seeking out and arresting suspected *genocidaires*. By the end of 1996, the nation’s prisons were only equipped to hold 10,000 inmates, but “held 70,000. Ultimately the number reached 130,000” (Kinzer, 2008, p. 193). The Rwandan government predicted that over two million people participated in the genocide and agreed the nation’s prisons were unable to safely house all of those accused. Limited space within the prison’s prevented the inmates from sitting or lying down and “at one point ten [people] were dying every day from disease, hunger, gangrene, and suffocation” (p. 194). Furthermore, with a nation devastated by the genocide and all essential economic and social infrastructures destroyed, the government needed to find a way to move these able-bodied men out of the prisons and utilize their capacities to work towards national development.

Visions of a New Rwanda

“There were cries of ‘what should we do about the victims, people affected by the genocide directly?’ There were also cries of, ‘what do we do with these killers?’ They caused the genocide, yet these were the ones we had to work with, to integrate. We had to try to make the survivors, the victims, live together with the perpetrators in such a confused way, even (before) you were able to identify who was responsible for what – who is a victim, who is not, to what extent, who is responsible for what happened and to what extent – and really finding you had nowhere to start from. You had to create it ... Constantly, everyday I was

involved in meetings. I would hardly sleep ... it is work, it is moving, it is meeting, it is fighting, fighting everybody, even fighting my own people” Paul Kagame, President of Rwanda (Kinzer, 2008, p. 187)

By the end of 1995, the Rwandan government knew they did not have the resources to put all of their prisoners through trial using the traditional justice system (Kinzer, 2008; Shyaka, 2005). Rwanda needed to rebuild its society, become an economically self-sufficient nation and decrease its reliance on foreign aid. In order to do so, Rwandan officials had to address the genocide in an audacious and creative way. Over the next few years, Rwandan officials met with human rights activists and legal experts to discuss appropriate ways to handle the current issues facing their nation.

Between 1998 and 1999, officials from “the office of the President of the Republic organized at Village Urugwiro” (Shyaka, 2005, p. 35) met to reflect on the future of the country. The final product of those meetings were mechanisms for conflict resolution and peace building that would ensure the stability of the nation while simultaneously addressing the traumas of the 1994 genocide against the Tutsi. This resulted in the development of a new Constitution specific to Rwanda’s needs; Vision 2020, an economic development plan outlining where Rwanda wants to be by the year 2020; and the creation of the National Unity and Reconciliation Commission.

Promoting Peace Consciousness

Among the lessons we have learned is that in order to prevent future episodes of violence, it is important to intervene with forgiveness and reconciliation processes when the opportunity arises, and often this means during the aftermath of a violent conflict (Kalyajian & Paloutzian, 2010, p. 3).

According to Kalyajian & Paloutzian (2010), there are three types of peace building: episodic, negative, and positive, all of which is reflected through various stages of Rwanda’s history. Episodic peace building occurs when steps are “taken to manage

existing or potential conflict” (p. 4) and negative peace building occurs when measures are taken to ease the tensions between the two groups actively engaged in conflict. While the Arusha Peace Accords in 1993 and the cease-fire after the RPF takeover in July of 1994 are examples of episodic and negative peace building, the current Rwandan government committed itself to the long-term efforts of positive peace building to prevent future conflicts. Positive peace building occurs when “efforts to reduce structural violence, a proactive process that promotes more egalitarian social arrangements as well as individual and collective narratives that support the sustainable satisfaction of the basic needs for all people” (p. 5). For these “objectives to be achieved, there is a need for the conflicts to be resolved and the national identity to be recovered” (Shyaka, 2005, p. 35).

There are five themes that surround peace building that need to be addressed to ensure its sustainability (Kalyajian & Paloutzian, 2010). This includes addressing conflicting “feelings of revenge and hostility and the desire to forgive”(p.5); grappling with what forgiveness means; understanding that forgiveness is a multidimensional process; feelings, attitudes, and behaviors surrounding forgiveness; and intrapersonal (individual) and interpersonal (between two people) forgiveness. Yet the social psychological relationship between the victim and perpetrator and perceptions of those roles may hinder the process of reconciliation and forgiveness

Ultimately, the three peace-building tools, Vision 2020, the Constitution, and the development of the National Unity and Reconciliation Commission are means to promote peace consciousness among a deeply divided society. On a systematic and political level, after security has been attained, these measures became necessary to ensure that the nation’s citizens are dedicated to resiliency, self-sufficiency, unity, reconciliation, and the

prevention of future conflict. This is contrary to the historical evidence of systematic support on negative human behavior at the grassroots level that led to the 1994 genocide against the Tutsi. The challenge in promoting peace consciousness among Rwandans is its effectiveness in motivating positive behaviors – such as providing perpetrators with a second chance at citizenship; providing the space necessary for dialogue between the two groups, and opening up the possibility for reconciliation and forgiveness. Moreover, unity and reconciliation is not plausible if the Rwandan government does not address the economic inequality and instability that deepened ethnic hatreds between the previously conflicting groups.

Vision 2020

As Rwanda's history dictates, economic inequalities related to ethnic identities can be considered a significant factor in creating initial divisions between Hutu and Tutsi during the colonial period. Economic instability and inequality was carried on through the regimes of Presidents Kayibanda and Habyarimana, thereby affecting the political and social landscape of the nation. After the 1994 genocide against the Tutsi, "eighty percent of the population was plunged into poverty and vast tracts of land and livestock were destroyed... the already poorly developed productive infrastructure was completely destroyed and the nation was robbed of a generation of trained teachers, doctors, public servants and private entrepreneurs" (Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning, 2000, p. 8). This resulted in a severe shortage of professional personnel in all sectors, which is also affected by high illiteracy rates, malnutrition and the prevalence of major diseases such as HIV/AIDS and malaria. The post-conflict government knew they needed to build

Rwandan society on multiple-levels by responding to economic instability alongside other conflict resolution tools.

In the year 2000, the Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning (2000) drafted and implemented Vision 2020 as a means “to vanquish hunger and poverty” (p. 3) and “become a modern, strong, and united nation, proud of its fundamental values, politically stable and without discrimination among its citizens” (p. 3). In order to achieve these goals and become a middle-income country by the year 2020, the economy needs to attain an “annual per capita income of US \$900, a poverty rate of 30% (64% today) and an average life expectancy of 55 years (49 years today)” (Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning, 2000, p. 9). The government hopes to accomplish this by reducing the national debt from 100% to being economically self-reliant¹³; transform from an agricultural to a knowledge based economy; and create a productive middle class through entrepreneurship and education¹⁴.

Vision 2020 aims to be successful through the development of six pillars: good governance by a capable state; productive agriculture; building the private sector through entrepreneurship and competitiveness; human resource development “encompassing education, health, and ICT skills” (Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning, 2000, p.4); infrastructural development such as roads, transportation, energy and water

¹³ The national debt was at \$1.5 billion USDs in 2000 (Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning, 2000)

¹⁴ Vision 2020 only acknowledges the potential areas for economic growth and development, but is not a strategic plan for how they are going to accomplish these goals. For further information regarding specific strategies for economic growth and development, see: Government of Rwanda (2002) *National program for strengthening good governance for poverty reduction in Rwanda*. Kigali, Rwanda & Government of Rwanda (2011) *Economic development and poverty reduction strategy: A summary implementation report*. Kigali, Rwanda. Retrieved from: <http://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/scr/2011/cr11154.pdf>

supplies; and regional economic integration with the East African Community. Three crosscutting areas are also identified, such as gender equality, environmental protection, and investments in science and technology, specifically information and communication technology (ICT). Agriculture was identified as the primary challenge in that it “accounts for more than 90% of the labor force” (p. 7), in which land is too small for agricultural families to earn a decent living. Additionally, exports cannot be supported by coffee and tea alone, as it relies on fluctuations in the international market to be profitable. This is especially problematic because Rwanda is a landlocked country, making trade difficult and expensive as it depends on roadway transport channels.

While Vision 2020 addresses the issues of economic instability, it does not address the other contributing factors in the 1994 genocide as divisions based on ethnic identification and the delivery of genocidal ideology through the political and social structures. None of these initiatives can be achieved “without successful reconciliation, political stability, and security” (Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning, 2000, p. 8).

The New Constitution and its Criticisms

The second tool for conflict resolution and sustainable peace was the conception of a new constitution responding to Rwanda’s unique history and own expectations of where it hopes to be politically and socially. Historically, Rwanda’s state constitutions were adapted from foreign countries just to “fit the interests of the leaders of the time” (Shyaka, 2005, p. 36). The constitution was voted on in the referendum of May 26, 2003 and received 90% of the nation’s votes. While equitable power sharing and the rule of law aimed at improving social welfare are important, the essential elements of the document are the aspects that address genocidal ideology, identity-based divisionism,

promoting national unity, and the equality of all Rwandans, especially between men and women. The Constitution of the Republic of Rwanda is “conscious that peace and unity of Rwandans constitute the essential basis for national economic development and social progress” (Constitution of the Republic of Rwanda, 2003, p. 1) and provides citizenship to all those who were deprived of it between November 1959 and December 1994.

Additionally, the Constitution specifically states it aims to adhere to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (United Nations, 1948a) and the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide (United Nations, 1948b).

Article 9 of the Constitution “commits itself to conform to the following fundamental principles: fighting the ideology of genocide and all its manifestations; eradication of ethnic, regional, and other divisions and promotion of national unity” (Constitution of the Republic of Rwanda, 2003, p. 4). The constitution also states “the crime of genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes do not have a period of limitation. Revisionism, negationism and trivialization of genocide are punishable by the law” (Article 13). What the new constitution does is outline where they stand on the issue of genocide, and encourages individuals to think along the lines of a national ‘Rwandan’ identity instead of previously held ethnic identifications.

Criticisms of the new constitution focus heavily on the elimination of public ethnic identification as a means to forge reconciliation between conflicting groups. Clark (2010) argues: “In short, they are seeking to forge reconciliation through the creation of an artificial unity that relies upon the suppression of ethnic differences. This ‘ethnic amnesia’ in turn, means that any debate about the past is inevitably constrained. Yet unless the past is comprehensively addressed, it may once again rear its ugly head in the

future” (p. 141). In the wake of a genocide, where ethnic identification is a driving force, what are the real implications of imposing a single identity label? Given the dangers of ethnic divisions, can it create true unity and contribute to the process of healing for Rwanda?

Ethnicity in itself was not the contributing variable to the cause of the 1994 genocide against the Tutsi. Rather, it was society’s arbitrary assignments of power to ethnicity that fueled the conflict. Rwandan history dictates before colonials imposed ethnic identity in economic, political, and social life, Rwandans lived without internal conflicts in which there existed mutual respect between Hutu and Tutsi despite their seemingly unequal economic positions. Neither group was given special treatment due to its role, and it can be argued this inequality is a natural consequence of the way the system worked at the time. Historically, all men, both Hutu and Tutsi, were responsible for defending the kingdom when external threats were identified. Courage and bravery was awarded with cattle to Hutus without social obligation and was claimed as private property (Prunier, 1995). Politically, the king did not care that those who defended the nation were of a certain economic status, and utilized all of his able-bodied men to protect his nation.

C. Douglass Lummis (2010) asserts that economic equality can be expressed in one of two ways: as a kind of justice or fair treatment in which some people may be treated differently, or an indication that all people within the population possess common characteristics and are treated similarly. He states: “What is equal is not the people, but the rules of the game. In this sense it is a kind of economization of equality under the law. The difference is that the object of the game is precisely to produce inequality. The

idea is that the division of society is fair if it takes place under fair rules” (p. 44).

Therefore, consistent with Vision 2020, the new Constitution seeks to level the playing field by delivering the platform for individuals to advance economically regardless of their ethnic identifications. This eliminates politically imposed economic discrimination based on ethnic identity and treats everybody as a fellow Rwandan with the same rights and privileges to advance economically with the resources available if they so choose. As a means to promote economic equality, this is a drastic change compared to politicians’ historical manipulation of ethnic identity to exert control over the economic and social domains of Rwandan life. That does not eliminate economic or social inequality, but with no ethnic discriminations outlined in the new Constitution, it is fair to say that the conditions that may foster future conflict are neutralized under Rwandan rule of law.

The National Unity and Reconciliation Commission

The new Constitution is a demonstration of the political ability to acknowledge that everyone should have equality in obtaining certain levels of advancement regardless of how they identify themselves. However, the government did not intend to utilize this as the only means to prevent future conflicts, as unity and reconciliation are complex and complicated matters (Shyaka, 2005). In 1993, the Arusha peace agreement between the Government of Rwanda and the Rwandan Patriotic Front initially set the idea for a national unity and reconciliation commission¹⁵, which became more necessary after the 1994 genocide against the Tutsi. To address the specific issues related to the genocide, the National Unity and Reconciliation Commission (NURC) was adopted by the

¹⁵ Consistent with the historical narrative, political instability leading to the 1994 genocide against the Tutsi prevented its establishment after the Arusha Peace Agreement was signed.

Parliament in March of 1999 and established by law No. 03/99 of 12/03/99 (Government of Rwanda, 1999).

Comprised of three units, the Department of Civic Education, Department of Conflict Resolution, and the Department of Community Initiative Support, the NURC's main responsibility is to foster conditions where reconciliation and healing is possible and to use "all available means to mobilize and sensitize Rwandans for this task" (Government of Rwanda, 2003, art. 3 section 2). *The National Policy on Unity and Reconciliation* (as cited in National Unity and Reconciliation Commission, 2010¹⁶) defines unity and reconciliation as

A consensus practice of citizens who have common nationality, who share the same culture and have equal rights; citizens characterized by trust, tolerance, mutual respect, equality, complementary roles/interdependence, truth, and healing of one another's wounds inflicted by our history, with the objectives of laying a foundation for sustainable development (p. 18).

The processes of unity and reconciliation operates under the principle that the Rwandan national identity and national interests of economic stability and security are of primary importance compared to notions of ethnicity, gender, religion, and familial relations (National Unity and Reconciliation Commission, 2010). A national identity will aid in the combat against genocide ideology, divisionism and discrimination with an ultimate respect for human rights. Unity and reconciliation between citizens can be achieved when they work together "to heal one another's physical and psychological wounds while building future interpersonal trust based on truth telling, repentance and forgiveness" (as cited in National Unity and Reconciliation Commission, 2010, p. 18).

¹⁶ As cited in the *Rwanda Reconciliation Barometer*: Republic of Rwanda National Unity and Reconciliation Commission (2007). *The National Policy on Unity and Reconciliation*. Government of Rwanda. Kigali, Rwanda. Original source could not be located.

The National Unity and Reconciliation Commission is responsible for implementing a number of key community programs that complement its mission. One significant program is *itorero ry'igihugu*, a traditional civic educational forum which “promote[s] opportunities for development using Rwandan cultural values, identify taboos that inhibit the development of the country, fight violence and corruption, eradicate the culture of impunity, strengthen the culture of peace, tolerance, unity and reconciliation and eradicate the genocide ideology and all its roots” (National Unity and Reconciliation Commission, 2009, p. 8). The central goals of *itorero ry'igihugu* are to train community mentors to promote positive cultural values within Rwandan society that strengthen the foundation for sustainable peace and development; catalyze a change of the mindset and behavior in work and society; and promote a culture of patriotism through the recognition of Rwanda’s positive achievements and cultural traditions.

Itorero ry'igihugu is a traditional, home grown Rwandan cultural practice that existed prior to the colonial period and was a “channel through which the nation could convey messages to the people regarding national culture in areas such as language, patriotism, social relations, sports, dancing and songs, defense of the nation, etc.” (p. 4). *Intore*, or an individual who participated in *itorero ry'igihugu*, “were different from other people, especially in matters of expression and behaviors because they had the benefit of understanding the usefulness of friendly relations” (p. 4). Each group would contain between 40 and 100 participants that included all citizens who had the desire to participate regardless of economic status and level of education. After completing *itorero ry'igihugu*, the *intore* developed effective communication skills that allowed them to

explain and discuss difficult concepts to others as intelligent, polite individuals who maintain good relationships with others as community mentors.

As social and cultural traditions were gradually replaced with colonial customs, *itorero ry'igihugu* limited its focus to cultural dancing (National Unity and Reconciliation Commission, 2009). This negatively impacted social relationships at the community level as genocide ideology slowly spread throughout the nation as a result of the 1959 Hutu Revolution. Consequently, Rwandan citizens lost their attachment to traditional cultural values that promoted notions of “a fair and equal society” (p. 5). Reinstating the *itorero ry'igihugu* civic education center in the aftermath of the 1994 genocide against the Tutsi will complement the work of other current national organizations by “solving problems related to mindset, bad behavior, bad practices through [the application of] Rwandan cultural values... [and] aims at mentoring a Rwandan citizen to become a positive change maker” (p. 9).

Itorero ry'igihugu will be decentralized from the national level to mentor community leaders, teachers, and Executive Secretaries over a 45-day period; the *urugerero* level that mentors secondary school students before they enter university; and the *ingando* (village) level that will include “all *intore* from the village regardless of where they have been [previously] mentored” (p. 11). *Intores* enjoy the responsibility of being counselors at the community level to provide families with “daily help to achieve positive changes [to] people’s welfare” (p. 15). At the national, district, and sector level, *intores* are responsible for mentoring in specific categories¹⁷ and supervise *intores* working in levels below them. This process of mentorship helps citizens reconnect with

¹⁷ As stated previously, this includes discussing positive cultural values and traditions, and conditions that foster unity, reconciliation, and peace within communities.

a national identity by cultivating patriotism through the recognition of traditional cultural practices and positive achievements of Rwanda.

While *itorero ry'igihugu* fosters patriotism and acceptance of a national Rwandan identity, it does not address the complex issues regarding justice, unity, and reconciliation between the victims and perpetrators of the 1994 genocide against the Tutsi. The *ingando* re-education/solidarity camps and the *Gacaca* community court systems are other key community programs that help the NURC achieve this mission.

The Relationship Between the Victim and Perpetrator

As quickly as the relationships between the Hutu and Tutsi were torn apart, bringing both sides together to work towards the common goal of national development is not as simple. Research by Reeder, Kumar, Hesson-McInnis & Trafimow (2002) observed how outsiders perceived acts of aggression by rating the level of morality through perceived motives. More so, the researchers sought to understand the motive behind aggressive actions and what the person wanted to accomplish by harming another individual. They discovered that reactive aggression - or the result hurting others through provocation or threats- is utilized as a self-defense technique and was perceived as being morally acceptable, whereas instrumental aggression- used for personal gain – was rated low in terms of acceptable acts of behavior.

Relative to Rwanda's history, were Hutus engaging in reactive or instrumental aggression, or was it a mixture of both? Some Hutus acted under the belief that Tutsis were a threat to Rwandan economic, political, and social security, and believed to be responsible for Habyarimana's death. Other Hutus may have acted to gain material possessions – cows, houses, and other expensive materialistic goods that the Tutsi

acquired. The perceived and actual motives of a Hutu perpetrator may vary depending on the individual, but it is clear that on a systemic level the aggression was born because Hutu power felt threatened by the Tutsi presence. How victims understand the perceived motive of the perpetrator may help or hinder the process of healing through perceptions of long-term negative consequences.

Several studies (Baumeister, Stillwell & Wotman, 1990; Zechmeister & Romero, 2002; Shnabel & Nadler, 2008; Gollwitzer, Meder & Schmitt, 2011; Hall & Finchman, 2008; Ingersol-Dayton, Torges, & Krause, 2010; Rapske, Boon, Alibahai, & Kheong, 2010) document how victims and offenders perceive the situation that caused the transgression, the long-term negative consequences of the event, revenge seeking, and the role of forgiveness.

Long-Term Consequences of the Event

Victims perceived the incident¹⁸ in a longer time frame by recounting previous episodes prior to the offense, the offense itself, and after the event, which caused long-term, negative consequences (Baumeister, Stillwell, & Wotman, 1990; Zechmeister & Romero, 2002). This includes permanent damage to the relationship and an ongoing sense of loss, grievance, and suspension of personal control (Shnabel & Nadler, 2008). Motives of the offender were incomprehensible, arbitrary, incoherent, contradictory, or senseless. These perceptions contributed to enduring anger towards the perpetrator, potentially leading to psychological distress¹⁹.

¹⁸ These studies do not include the perceptions of victims and perpetrators in relation to the 1994 genocide against the Tutsi. Therefore, 'incident' will refer to the transgression that created the victim and perpetrator roles.

¹⁹ These studies have not provided in-depth details regarding the negative psychological effects of hanging onto the anger associated with the offense. It can only be inferred that

In contrast, offenders perceived their actions as an isolated incident, and did not indicate any negative, long-term consequences (Baumeister, Stillwell & Wotman, 1990; Zechmeister & Romero, 2002). Perpetrators portrayed their motives as impulsive, something out of their control, or due to external or mitigating causes; therefore, they rationalized their actions as legitimate given their situations. They viewed anger by the victim as an overreaction, excessive, and unjustified, and even accused them for provoking their behavior.

The Role of Forgiveness

Zechmeister & Romero (2002) observed how forgiveness influences the perception of negative, long-term consequences between victim and perpetrator accounts. Participants in their study were given a 28 Item Interpersonal Reactivity Index to test for dispositional empathy, hypothesizing that victims who rate high on this scale may be more prone to forgive the offender and that offenders may be more likely to forgive themselves for their actions.

Forgiveness, whether told from a victim or offender narrative, indicated that the incident was closed with no negative, long-term consequences. Victims who rated high in dispositional empathy perceived the perpetrator's motives as justified, claimed responsibility for contributing to the incident, did not indicate long-term negative consequences, and were more likely to portray the incident in a less severe way than their non-forgiving counterparts (Zechmeister & Romero, 2002). Additionally, victims were more likely to forgive "when victims empathize with the offender, through either taking the offender's perspective or feeling emotional concern for the victim" (Zechmeister &

psychological distresses are a contributing factor to the perceptions of long-term, negative consequences of the event on the victim.

Romero, 2002, p. 684). Empathy was also linked with a sense of similarity to the offender in that if people see themselves as capable of committing similar wrongdoings, it becomes easier to forgive the offender for their actions.

In contrast, victims who were unable to forgive the perpetrator for the offense stated they would be satisfied only “when the perpetrator knows why he or she has been, will be, or could be punished” (Gollwitzer, Meder, & Schmitt, 2011, p. 371). Many victims who seek out revenge do so as a means to deliver a message to the offender that ensures they are aware of their misdoings, understand the consequences that accompany their actions, and why they deserve to be punished.²⁰ Researchers suggest that “victims should be less likely to take revenge if they have reason to believe that the offender has learned his or lesson and will refrain from behaving unfairly again in the future” (Gollwitzer, Meder, & Schmitt, 2011, p. 373). Therefore, the negative consequences of harboring anger for the offender may contribute to the cycle of violence through acts of revenge if the proper structural processes – such as court proceedings leading to prison sentences – do not appropriately address these transgressions. However, it is not understood through these studies if the offenses were criminal or minor, social transgressions. This information is essential to understand whether these unforgiving victims need to learn non-violent conflict resolution skills or if they rely solely on the criminal justice system to dole out appropriate punishments.

Moreover, withholding forgiveness from an offender serves as a measure of protection from future victimization, freedom to continue reaping benefits by staying in a victimized role, allows the victim to stand firm in their convictions that the offender was

²⁰ The cited studies did not indicate whether that meant actively hurting the individual or if traditional justice measures delivered by a third party were satisfactory.

wrong, may prevent further conflict and confrontation with the offender, and reduces stress through acknowledgement and acceptance of their anger (Rapske, Boon, Alibahai, & Kheong, 2010, p. 1121-1122). Although these were viewed as positive consequences, the only disadvantage of withholding forgiveness was that grudges were psychologically ‘unhealthy’. “Holding a grudge caused undesirable changes in their character, elicited feelings of guilt or wrongdoing, made it more difficult to forgive in the future, backfired in the sense that it hurt them and not their offenders, and resulted in lost opportunities” (Rapske, Boon, Alibahai, & Kheong, 2010, p. 1125).

Offenders who scored high on dispositional empathy had a lower rate of self-forgiveness for their transgressions because they were able to empathize with their victims (Zechmeister & Romero, 2002). “When offenders experienced regret for their actions, it was associated with a lack of self-forgiveness rather than forgiveness” (Zechmeister & Romero, 2002, p. 682) that contributed to feelings of guilt, self-blame, and rumination of the event potentially leading to depression (Ingersol-Dayton, Torges, & Krause, 2010; Zechmeister & Romero, 2002; Hall & Finchman, 2008). This also contributed to damaged psychological resources in that perpetrators lose their sense of belongingness, social acceptance, and find it difficult to shed the negative image imposed upon them so they can be accepted back into their communities (Shnabel & Nadler, 2009). Distress and shame about oneself is another obstacle offenders face before self-forgiveness (Zechmeister & Romero, 2002), but it diminished when offenders were forgiven by the victim or an identified higher power, making it easier to extend compassion to the self (Hall & Finchman, 2008).

Self-forgiveness for their actions was “associated with less empathy for the victims and often was associated with righteous self-focus and victim blaming” (Zechmeister & Romero, 2002, p. 684). This contributed to indifference towards the needs or wishes of the victim, often leading to teasing and other mild forms of hurtful communication (Rapske, Boon, Alibahai, & Kheong, 2010). Further research is needed to understand the psychological processes that contribute to perpetrator self-forgiveness and its relationship to continued negative interactions with the victim.

These studies indicate that there is a unique, contrasting psychological relationship between perceptions of identifying as either victim or perpetrator, and provided the information necessary to understand how those relationships can be repaired and transformed into positive identifications of the self and other. Rwanda’s introduction of the *ingando* re-education camps reconstructed the negative images of the perpetrators by offering them an opportunity to become active members of society, thereby eliminating the structural negative image imposed upon them for their actions. Furthermore, the *Gacaca* community court system helps both victims and offenders reconcile by providing the platform necessary for open communication and allocation of responsibility for the crimes committed. Essentially, both of these programs demonstrate the systematic capabilities to influence positive human interactions, and the success of these programs relies heavily on individual ability to transform perceptions of the other.

Reintegration of Perpetrators -Ingando

Ingando re-education camps were initially developed at the creation of the National Unity and Reconciliation Commission in March 1999 as a tool to re-integrate ex-combatants who escaped to the Democratic Republic of the Congo, ex-soldiers of the

FAR, *genocidaires*, accused prisoners who participated in the genocide, prostitutes, and street children into Rwandan society (Thompson, 2011; Mgbako, 2005). The ultimate goals of *ingando* are to politically indoctrinate ex-combatants about the ways of the new government by focusing on the importance of accepting personal responsibility for their contribution to the conflict and emphasizing truth telling as the only way to receive forgiveness from those they have harmed. *Ingando* includes “lessons on unity and reconciliation, history classes that highlight the defects of the genocidal regime, and lessons on present government programs and policies that stress the ‘democratic’ elements of the current government” (Mgbako, 2005, p. 209). Typical time frame for *ingando* participation varies depending on the groups they are working with. Ex-armed groups attend *ingando* for two months, whereas others attend for as little as two weeks (Mgbako, 2005). Furthermore, ex-combatants are not allowed to return to their communities until they demonstrate thorough knowledge of Rwanda’s history and the root causes of the 1994 genocide against the Tutsi.

In the film *Ingando: When Enemies Return* (Larson & Houborg, 2007), ex-combatants stated they returned to Rwanda to commit to the rebuilding of the new country. They too have lost family members from the war and their time in exile in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Tired of fighting with the FDLR²¹, many ex-combatants didn’t expect to be welcomed back into Rwanda. The *ingando* camps are their only opportunity to their families and communities, and to transform their lives for the better. Those that have chosen to remain in the DRC hold onto the belief that there is

²¹ The Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda is a group of ex-combatants located in the Democratic Republic of the Congo seeking to stir up conflict with Rwanda, and has remained a threat to security within its borders (Karuhanga, 2013)

nowhere else to go, not because they want to maintain their extremist Hutu ideologies. FDLR leaders warned that if they returned to Rwanda, Tutsi extremists would kill them and they would be mistreated. However, the decision to stop fighting and help rebuild Rwanda was the motivation they needed to return to their homes.

Participation in the *ingando* camps revealed to the ex-combatants that they would be welcomed back to Rwanda with full rights and privileges, and without fear of discrimination (Larson & Houborg, 2007). The re-education camps help promote the process of reconciliation and educate ex-combatants about new government policies so that they can re-enter society with a full understanding of what is expected of them under the RPF leadership. They also receive valuable information on how to live together, and make peace with their neighbors with conflict resolution tools. *Ingando* re-education camps are meant to prepare the ex-combatant for a life of peace and harmony in Rwanda by replacing violent mentalities with peaceful ones. Furthermore, “many ex-combatants at Mutobo *ingando* expressed optimism regarding their futures and listed home support, education, and the freedom ‘to live as other Rwandans’ as their future hopes. *Ingando* leaders planted and nurtured this optimism” (Mgbako, 2005, p. 212).

“What about those that were killed? When do they come back?” one survivor stated (Larson & Houborg, 2007). In the aftermath of the genocide, many survivors are left without any surviving family members and struggle daily with the burdens of this loss. Survivors are confronted with the horror of their past when faced with the arrival of ex-combatants in their communities. As one survivor stated: “It is easy for them because they only lived as exiles. They still have families when they come back. They never experienced the consequences of the genocide”. Furthermore, survivors view the *ingando*

camps as a way to cover up the fact that the genocide happened and do not see it as an effective tool to promote reconciliation.

In contrast, the ex-combatants see it is a way to promote the values of unity and reconciliation, believes it is an obligation of every Rwandan to be reconciled, and are willing to keep the process going until harmony is achieved. There are two parts to society: the ones who killed, and the ones who were killed. The only way for reconciliation to be achieved is if Rwandans focus on the future and “avoid all ideology that caused us to kill each other without reason”. Although survivors acknowledge that the return of those who participated in the genocide is out of their control, there remain lingering feelings of mistrust and fear, which may make the process of reconciliation difficult for survivors.

Ingando: When Enemies Return (Larson & Houborg, 2007) is the only film that takes the perspective of the survivors and ex-combatants and the difficulties both groups face in their reintegration into society. All other literature regarding the *ingando* re-education camps takes the perspective of Western scholars such as Susan Thompson (2011) and Chi Mgbako (2005) who argue that the camps are “focused on the dissemination of pro-RPF ideology, a dangerous undertaking in a country in which political indoctrination and government-controlled information were essential in sparking and sustaining the genocide” (Mgbako, 2005, p. 202). Thompson (2011) asserts “instead of promoting unity and reconciliation, it teaches these men, the majority of whom are ethnic Hutu, to remain silent and not question the RPF’s visions for creating peace and security for all Rwandans” (p. 332). Mgbako (2005) states that this leaves them in “highly vulnerable positions, susceptible to attempts at political indoctrination” (p. 215).

Thompson stresses that this system of education silences any disagreement regarding the new government, which may “crystallize and create strong dissent in the future” (p. 332).

Another criticism of the *ingando* re-education camps focuses on the bitter reality that all Rwandans face: unemployment and the difficulties of returning to civilian life (Mgbako, 2005). Upon completion of *ingando*, ex-combatants are provided with World Bank financed government aid to jumpstart the rebuilding their lives in their respective communities. While this aid does not address problems of poverty and unemployment, it may be viewed as an incentive to “further encourage them to proclaim ‘allegiance’ to the government” (Mgbako, 2005, p. 215). While the ex-combatants are readily rewarded for putting down their weapons and dedicating themselves to the new government, the survivors have a difficult time receiving that financial cushion. The Fund for Assistance to Genocide Survivors (FARG) “is a quasi-governmental organization that caters to the health, education, and housing needs of impoverished survivors” (Mgbako, 2005, p. 216), and has an annual budget of \$10,000,000.00 USDs. Although survivors are not denied access to this money, most survivors are unaware that this money exists and only receive it when they actively seek it out. The unfairness in the distribution of government aid and how it is received by its beneficiaries can reasonably be seen as a systematic failure of the Rwandan government, which may be a hindrance to rebuilding trust between the survivors and the new government.

However, these criticisms fail to consider the alternative lives these ex-armed combatants would have had if these opportunities were not available. Whether they returned to Rwanda from living in the jungles of the Democratic Republic of the Congo or were prisoners released from the overcrowded prisons, none of them would have an

opportunity to continue their lives as free men had the Rwandan government not established the *ingando* re-education camps. Historically, these men lived in a world where all they were taught was fear and hatred of their fellow Tutsi neighbors. That politically induced fear transformed the hearts and minds of these men into cold-hearted killers whose only other options after the RPF takeover was to remain prisoners escaping the responsibility for their crimes.

Political indoctrination is a central feature of the *ingando* re-education camps to ensure participants' respect for the national values of unity, reconciliation, and peace. If the RPF led government is giving ex-combatants a second chance to live as free men, then they have every authority to dictate that their freedom is contingent upon their adherence to the laws of the new government. Compromising the freedom to dissent against the government is a reasonable restriction of their human rights as these men severely violated the human rights of their neighbors, which contributed to one of the worlds' most brutal genocides.

Ingando repairs the damaged psychological resources of belongingness, social acceptance, and the stigmatization of being a perpetrator from the national to the individual level. However, consequences of maintaining the negative image of the perpetrator can increase anger, mistrust, and fear, and decrease the possibility of healing for survivors. As stated previously, unforgiving victims who seek revenge do so only to deliver a message to the offender to ensure they are aware of their misdeeds and understand the natural consequences of their actions. Victims will be less likely to "take revenge if they have reason to believe that the offender has learned his or her lesson and will refrain from behaving unfairly again in the future" (Gollwitzer, Meder, & Schmitt,

2011, p. 373). The *Gacaca* community court system empowers communities to govern their own justice by providing a safe platform for the survivors to confront the perpetrators who have harmed them, thereby starting the process of healing and reconciliation.

Gacaca

During the Village Urugwiro meetings held between May 1998 and March 1999, President Pasteur Bizimungu reintroduced the traditional *Gacaca* community courts in response to the systematic hindrances of the traditional court system, and is “a means to bring forth the truth about what happened, and to create a climate propitious for coexistence in Rwanda” (Karekezi, Nshimiyimana, & Mutamba, 2004, p. 71). *Gacaca* is an informal justice system that relies upon voluntary participation of the community to “help expedite the prosecution of genocide suspects, to ease their reintegration into the community, and to encourage communities to confront their own involvement in the genocide” (Des Forges & Longman, 2004, p. 62). Regarded as a means to restore harmony within the community, *Gacaca* has been successful because it involves all Rwandans in the search for truth about the genocide, provides justice for the victims, allocates responsibility to individuals who participated, and creates an environment conducive to reconciliation (Karekezi, Nshimiyiman, & Mutamba, 2004). A testament to its success is that between June 2002 and June 2012, the *Gacaca* trials have tried more than 1.9 million cases, with only 25% of cases resulting in acquittal of suspected perpetrators (Musoni, 2012, June 18).

After the genocide, lack of trained personnel and material resources, financial difficulties, and loss of credibility contributed to the deterioration of the legal justice

system (Africa Rights, 2008). With an overwhelming number of accused perpetrators overflowing in the nation's prisons, it was essential to handle these cases in a timely manner to deliver justice to the survivors and establish the historical narrative.

Furthermore, no international traditional justice system was equipped to try the unique cases of genocide, in which "the enormous caseload and inadequate human and material resources meant that it would take many years for their legal status to be considered and regularized in accordance with the law" (Africa Rights, 2008, p. 21).

Moreover, the legal restrictions regarding testimony and age constrain the number of cases that can be submitted for trial, thereby leaving out essential information that contributes to the collective memory of the 1994 genocide against the Tutsi (Africa Rights, 2008). One survivor and *Gacaca* judge stated:

When you consider how the genocide unfolded, it was difficult for someone who was being hunted to closely follow the scenes of killing so that he can testify in a conventional tribunal where you are expected to speak only about what you saw and what happened in your physical presence. You can't say that you witnessed the incident if you were hiding in a bush or a house close to where the crime took place, because you were not actually there. The survivors who wanted to testify were forced to be on the move because they were being hunted. And because of this, they could not at the same time be present at the scene of the crime (Africa Rights, 2008, p. 23)

Citizens are familiar with their neighbors and are aware of who committed acts of genocide within their communities although they did not physically witness it. This information is essential but is not admissible as evidence under traditional court systems. Furthermore, a significant number of children or youth also experienced and witnessed crimes but were not allowed to testify about these crimes in court (Africa Rights, 2008). All of these restrictions led to the necessity of implementing the *Gacaca* court system.

After the Village Urugwiro meetings, Rwanda began an educational campaign regarding the use of *Gacaca* to elect judges beginning on October 4, 2001 (Karekezi, Nshimiyiman, & Mutamba, 2004). Judges were trained between May and April 2002, and 80 pilot trials began on June 19 of that year. By November 25, 2002, the program expanded to one sector in each of the 12 districts, then increasing to 600. It was fully expanded to the entire country in 2004. “Each *Gacaca* court functions at its own pace, but they all follow a set pattern” (Karekezi, Nshimiyiman, & Mutamba, 2004, p. 72). Phase one is an assembly of the community to determine what actually took place and who was responsible for participating in the crimes that ensued.

The second phase is a private meeting of the judges to classify the accused into one of four categories of crime. Crimes to be tried in *Gacaca* are ones committed between October 1, 1990 and December 31, 1994. Category 1 crimes are reserved for leaders, planners, organizers, and instigators of the genocide, in addition to well-known killers and rapists and are punished with life-long prison sentences (Human Rights Watch, 2011). Category 2 crimes are those that involved killing or injuring another with the intent to kill on the orders of an authority figure. Category 3 crimes are “those who killed or inflicted bodily harm without the intention to kill” (Human Rights Watch, 2011, p. 18). Punishments for category 2 and 3 crimes are met with lesser penal sanctions, such as time served in jail with the opportunity for release. And category 4 crimes are related to property damage or stolen items, and receive “no penal sanction but only the payment of restitution to the value of the damaged or looted property” (Africa Rights, 2008, p. 21).

Phase three begins when all of the necessary information is collected to begin the trials (Africa Rights, 2008; Karekezi, Nshimiyiman, & Mutamba, 2004). Those who fell

into category 1 are ineligible to be tried in the *Gacaca* court system, as they were seen as the ‘masterminds’ behind the 1994 genocide against the Tutsi, and required stricter, more formal justice²².

All members of the community are encouraged to attend each of the *Gacaca* trials and testify publicly about any information necessary to contribute to the understanding of the events that occurred within that community (Africa Rights, 2008; Karekezi, Nshimiyiman, & Mutamba, 2004; Human Rights Watch, 2011). These trials allowed the victims to confront the perpetrators to hear the truth of what really happened to their family members, friends, and other loved ones who were hurt or killed by their actions. At first, “the great majority of survivors were apprehensive when the system was first conceived, worried that it would enable perpetrators to elude appropriate punishment” (Africa Rights, 2008, p. 29). However, with time, survivors began to appreciate the system “especially as it enabled them to learn much more about the fate of their families, friends, and neighbors who were killed in 1994” (Africa Rights, 2008, p. 29).

For survivors, truth telling was more important than appropriating punishments or other forms of retribution (Africa Rights, 2008). Killers and other perpetrators did not enjoy impunity because individuals are confessing and testifying on their involvement to specific crimes. As one individual stated: “They are now aware that someone knows what they did and is ready to testify against them. They may even have been cleared by judges, but their conscience will continue to remind them of the wrong they did” (Africa Rights, 2008, pp. 29-30).

²² The International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR) was established for this purpose. More information regarding the ICTR can be found at: www.unicttr.org

In addition to testimonials given by the survivors, the perpetrators are given the opportunity to confess their crimes and claim responsibility for their actions (Africa Rights, 2008).

A large number of people confessed in *Gacaca*. And when they give a full confession, they lay everything out, saying whom they killed, who they buried. Sometimes they even gave the names of witnesses who saw them. That's why I believe that is difficult to escape the truth in *Gacaca* because, sooner or later, someone will cite your name amongst the people they saw committing the crime (p. 31).

This information also led to evidence regarding where certain corpses were buried, which allowed families to organize proper re-burials. *Gacaca* allows perpetrators to testify fully to their crimes and are "treated more leniently than those found to be lying, even if their crimes were more serious" (Kinzer, 2008, p. 261). Essentially, "truth telling has the potential to serve a crucial function for peace building in creating a space for a national conversation after which no one can say 'I don't know' or deny the realities of what took place" (Brouneus, 2010, pp. 408-409).

Although testimonials by the perpetrators in *Gacaca* is seen as beneficial to understanding the events of the genocide and allocates accountability, some individuals who do confess seek to elude personal responsibility by blaming the crimes on *Interahamwe* militia or other individuals who have left Rwanda (Africa Rights, 2008). As one witness stated:

We attend *Gacaca* to learn from those who know. But they don't tell us the truth. Instead, they transferred all the terrible crimes to the people who are still in exile, or those who have died. As survivors, we find this shocking. Even if we were in hiding during the genocide, we witnessed terrifying killings, which claimed the lives of our children, neighbors, and relatives. When those who are accused, by people who saw them participate in the killings, are stubborn in their denials, then to me they are making fun of the genocide because they are refusing to acknowledge the weight of the crimes they committed (p. 42)

Perpetrators also diffuse responsibility by blaming the system for encouraging their behavior. As one perpetrator stated: “I killed, yes, but I was also used as an instrument to get rid of people. I was not the machine who was controlling and leading the massacres. They were, and they are not here” (p. 44). Although assigning responsibility towards the genocidal government is a realistic approach, this denial of personal responsibility for their actions may hinder positive relationship building between the survivor and offender, especially if they need to co-exist within the same community.

Gacaca helps foster forgiveness and reconciliation between previously conflicting parties through truth-telling, personal responsibility, and the platform for survivors to confront those who harmed them during the 1994 genocide (Africa Rights, 2008; Kinzer, 2008; Brouneus, 2010). However, some issues regarding open communication means that discussions are not limited to individuals who are a part of a particular case. The public nature of the proceedings allows the whole community to be involved in the trials – even the perpetrators – one of its greatest strengths can also be a hindrance. Although most perpetrators confess openly to their crimes, when they return to their villages they may “terrify the survivors and keep them in a never-ending state of fear and humiliation” (Africa Rights, 2008, p. 52). Moreover, even if one perpetrator will take responsibility for their own participation, they may harass survivors for naming additional accomplices. This correlates significantly with the social psychological research that states offenders who have forgiven themselves tend to relate negatively to the victim.

Survivors also experience anxieties when confronting the offenders for their crimes. As one survivor stated: “They think it is a simple matter to go in front of the perpetrator to remind him what he did. But it’s very difficult” (Africa Rights, 2008, p.

36). One researcher examined the long-term, psychological impact of truth telling in relation to Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder or depression (Brouneus, 2010). Brouneus (2010) found that survivors who witnessed and confessed in *Gacaca* were more likely than non-witnesses to “report higher levels of depression and PTSD ... when controlling for important predictors for psychological ill health such as sex and cumulative trauma exposure” (p. 425). She also tested the hypothesis to explore the relationship between long-term exposure to *Gacaca* and a decrease in depressive or PTSD symptomology, and found that negative psychological effects persisted whether survivors were exposed to truth telling from the beginning pilot trials beginning in 2002 to those established afterwards. This suggests, “the *protraction* of the truth-telling process ... involves an ineffective, repetitive exposure to suffering, similar to what is known as *rumination*²³ in psychology” (p. 426).

Thus, while *Gacaca* has been successful in holding perpetrators accountable for committing acts of genocide within their communities, identifying the location of corpses and burial grounds, and adding to the narrative of the events that occurred in 1994, its negative effects on the survivors only contribute to the persistence of psychological trauma. Furthermore, there is a lack of information regarding how the survivors and perpetrators get along within their respected communities after the *Gacaca* trials. Further research is needed to monitor the long-term process of reconciliation as a result of these programs.

²³ “Rumination is the incessant, repetitive thinking about past trauma, which is frequently reported in individuals with PTSD and which has been found to be not only a strategy to cope with intrusive memories of trauma but also a trigger of such memories, resulting in a cyclical process” (Brouneus, 2010, p. 427).

Discussion

In the aftermath of the 1994 genocide against the Tutsi, the Rwandan government has made significant political, social, and economic changes to prevent another atrocity from occurring again. As Rwanda's history dictates, systematic forces were responsible in motivating negative human behavior at the interpersonal level, which led normal, everyday people to kill their neighbors. The current Rwandan government understood they needed to take appropriate measures to increase security within its borders while building a self-sufficient economy to decrease their dependency on foreign aid. Rwanda's three peace-building tools, Vision 2020, the new Constitution, and the National Unity and Reconciliation Commission are all efforts to promote positive peace consciousness on the systemic level and reduce the likelihood of future conflict. This meant re-integrating ex-genocidal perpetrators back into their communities through *ingando* and aiding in the process of justice and reconciliation through the *Gacaca* community court system.

These programs demonstrate success of the systemic efforts to decrease tensions between groups previously engaged in conflict and promote a culture of peace through a unifying identity. Whether individuals believe there is true unity and reconciliation between the groups is still a matter of debate, and only time will tell if these initiatives have the ability to prevent future conflicts. As Rwandan journalist Sam Nshimiyimana states in the documentary "Co-Exist" (Mazo, 2010):

If people force themselves to have a reconciliation that is not real, at least they are making an effort not to beat each other up ... At least with this reconciliation policy there is a certain amount of tolerance. Because without it, we could see some acts of revenge ... Reconciliation is like a state formula, a government formula, that the population has memorized, and that they repeat to everyone.

CHAPTER 3

Section 1

Rwandan Youth

In a population of over 11 million people with a median age of 18.8 years, persons between the ages of 0-24 constitute 61.8% of the populace (CIA.gov, 2013). The Ministry of Youth, Culture and Sports (2005) defines youth as “persons aged between 15 and 35” (p. 8)²⁴. The Integrated Household Living Conditions Survey, (or EICV3) (National Institute of Statistics of Rwanda, 2012), states the total number of youth between the ages of 14 and 35 is 4,159,000, and make up 39% of the total Rwandan population.

Expectations for youth are outlined in Rwanda’s *National Youth Policy* (Ministry of Youth, Culture and Sports, 2005) that states:

The youth represent a vivid force which is full of aspirations that are proper to that age group ... We know that the youth have plenty energy, ideals, vitality, great imagination and capacities for action, which make them a paramount human resources for development and important factor for social change, economic development and progress. Those capacities must be developed in order to thoroughly move from childhood to adulthood and be able to hold responsibilities and play determining roles in the society (p. 6)

The significant loss of family members and a decimated nation torn apart through ethnic violence has left youth with more reasons to continue the cycle of violence in the aftershock of the genocide. While the survivors of the 1994 genocide work hard to recover from the traumas of the past, it is the sole responsibility of the new generation to

²⁴ This differs significantly from the United Nations definition of the youth “as those persons between the ages of 15 and 25 years” (“What do we mean by ‘youth’, n.d., para. 5). For the purposes of this paper, the Rwandan definition of youth will be utilized.

break the cycle of victimization and build a stable economic foundation from the aftershock of their violent history.

Growing up in Rwandan society with a national agenda of unity, reconciliation, and peace provide youth with options other than violence to remain resilient when faced with adverse situations. On March 18, 1997, around 8pm, students and teachers at the Nyange Boarding school were preparing for their evening classes when militia men entered the school, seeking to stir up ethnic divisions and continue the genocide. “After killing a night guard at the school, the infiltrators – commonly known as *Abacengezi* – ordered the students to separate themselves according to their ethnicity” (Bucyensenge, 2013, para. 4), Hutus on one side, Tutsis on the other. Despite the fear of imminent death, the students refused to do as they asked. One girl bravely stood up and stated: “There are no Hutus or Tutsis here, we are Rwandans” (para. 23). “The infiltrators then shot indiscriminately at the students. Six of them... were killed immediately” (para. 9), while 20 others were wounded and left in critical condition.

This event is significant in that the youth persevered against ethnic violence and refused to see each other along those lines. Although the students knew each others’ identities and whose parents were involved in the 1994 genocide, they set aside those differences to stand up for the rights of their peers. As one survivor reflected in the end: “Our leaders always told us that unity was our strength,” Uwamahoro narrates. “Due to the education we were receiving at school, we entertained brotherly relations between us. We were not just friends, but rather it was as if we were relatives. The mood at the school was like that of a family” (para.38).

The tragedy at the Nyange Boarding School will always be remembered as the meaningful event that changed the mindset of the Rwandan people. The ability of Rwandan youth to show respect for their fellow peers demonstrates their commitment to prevent future conflict in relation to the ethnic hatred that resulted in the 1994 genocide against the Tutsi. Instead, Rwandan youth who grew up during the genocide or were born after 1994 face difficult life conditions that hinder their ability to live up to expectations as stated in Rwanda's *National Youth Policy* (2005). Their "present can only be understood in reference to the past. The past often features as the backdrop to their narrative, and past experiences similarly shape their outlook on the future" (Pells, 2009, pp. 339-340). In addition to post-traumatic stress, living without parents and proper guidance while fending for themselves in a world that is unresponsive to their plight are immediate consequences that extend beyond the genocide.

Post-Traumatic Stress and the Effects of Genocide on the Youth

Very few studies regarding post-traumatic stress within the Rwandan population have looked at the effects of the genocide on youth. Available research repeats the findings of the 1995 UNICEF National Trauma Survey (Neugebauer, Fisher, Turner, Yamabe, Sarsfield & Stehling-Ariza, 2009; Dyregrove, Gupta, Gjestad, & Mukanoheli, 2000), which found that out of the 1482 respondents, 96.1% of youth were victims of the threat of violence, 93.5% witnessed violence against others, 86.6% witnessed property destruction, and 34.3% experienced the death of a family member as a casualty of the genocide. Overall, the survey found that "54-62% of respondents met criteria for 'probable PTSD'" (Neugebauer, et al, 2009, p. 11).

This study demonstrates that exposure to acts of violence during the genocide extends beyond the adult victims and perpetrators, yet all that is known about the possible effects is that slightly more than half of the respondents are *at risk* for developing PTSD or display related symptoms. That says little about the current mental health of youth responsible for ensuring Rwanda's future success in economic and social development and the prevention of future conflict.

The biggest effect of the genocide on youth "is the hundreds of thousands of children who have been orphaned or otherwise left without parental care since 1994"

(Human Rights Watch, 2003, p. 41). A Human Rights Watch Report (2003)

documenting the consequences of the genocide on Rwandan youth states:

Genocide survivors who were orphaned in 1994 ... are among the most vulnerable children in the world: many witnessed unspeakable atrocities including the murder of family members and some narrowly escaped death themselves, leaving them deeply traumatized. Many of those who survived now live in misery, often lacking the means for education and basic health care. (p. 44)

Challenges that hinder youth's ability to get through daily life are the loss of one or both parents as a casualty of the genocide, imprisonment due to participating in the genocide, or loss of life as a result of major diseases such as HIV/AIDS, malaria, or malnutrition (Human Rights Watch, 2003; Pells, 2009). Households headed by children confront "daily challenges of feeding, sheltering, and clothing themselves; trying to attend school; or trying to earn a living ... [while] thousands of vulnerable children are exploited for their labor and property and denied the right to education" (Human Rights Watch, 2003, p. 41). Although the Rwandan government recognizes that unaccompanied children may have better lives with families, the alternative to state-run orphanages are susceptible to overcrowding, lack of trained workers, isolation from society and limited food resources.

These conditions are similar, if not worse, than those of children living on the streets to fend for themselves.

Although human rights workers and other non-governmental organizations work to reunite children with their extended families or place them in homes, they are generally exploited for their labor as domestic servants with no compensation (Human Rights Watch, 2003; Pells, 2009). “Due to limited resources, the foster children are often last in line to eat, get medical care, or be sent to school” (Human Rights Watch, 2003, p. 47). Many youth are only provided with a roof over their heads, and have to seek additional work to pay for their own food and support those who sheltered them.

To escape these difficult conditions, many youth leave these homes and migrate to the city in hopes of finding work. Also known as ‘street children’, or “‘*mayibobo*’ in Kinyarwanda, these children have been demonized and marginalized by urban society” (Human Rights Watch, 2003, p. 62). In their struggle to survive, children and youth are left to beg or engage in petty theft and are treated as a nuisance by the locals. Although there are centers in the city areas to house, feed, clothe, and educate the children, the local governments are hostile towards them and accuse these centers of attracting children to the streets to provide the care that their parents or caregivers can not afford to deliver. As a result, “the children commonly resort to drug use to cope with the hunger, cold, and difficulties of life in the streets – smoking marijuana, sniffing glue, and inhaling gas fumes” (Human Rights Watch, 2003, p. 62).

Additionally, female orphans and street children are more vulnerable to sexual and physical exploitation than their male counterparts (Human Rights Watch, 2003; Pells, 2009). In a testimonial collected by Pells (2009), “one girl recounted how she got

pregnant deliberately in the hopes that the man would marry and so support her and her siblings. Instead, the man abandoned her and the baby, thus adding to the number of children for whom the girl was responsible” (p. 342). Some women sell sexual favors to various men in hopes of earning enough money to feed their siblings or pay for their school fees so that they can attend school, but would deny the privilege of education for themselves.

Rwandan youth also face other, cultural challenges: the economic difficulties of reaching cultural perceptions of adulthood (Sommers & Ulvin, 2011). Strict governmental regulations, cultural norms, and difficult life conditions make the transition from youth to adulthood particularly difficult, especially for males. The golden ticket to adulthood is only obtained when male youth have earned enough money to build a home to support a future wife and children. Similarly, adulthood for women is achieved through child rearing. Adding to the strains to secure housing and get married, the legal age limit to wed is 21 years old, but by the ages of 24-25, cultural perceptions designate “a female youth in a rural area ... too old to marry” (Sommers & Ulvin, 2011, p. 3). A small time frame allotted to achieve cultural adulthood for both men and women significantly adds more pressure to earn enough money to purchase roofing tiles, resulting in rural males and some females abandoning school to work on farms for roughly 200 Rwandan Francs a day (or \$0.32 USDs). Furthermore, working at this rate for less than pennies a day makes it virtually impossible for male youths to afford tiles, and they may never purchase land to build a house within their lifetime.

Rwanda's National Education Statistics for the Youth

In response to these difficult life conditions, “youth single out education as the ‘only way out’” (Pells, 2009, p. 344). However, barriers to receiving an education are largely economic: “the inability to pay for secondary school fees, materials, and transport; the need to earn a living to support their family” (p. 344). Some youth tend to think practically about their situation in that “most ordinary Rwandans believe that they have no chance to make it to higher education and the social advancement that it represents” (Sommers & Ulvin, 2011, p. 6), thereby reducing the possibility of disappointment if they do not reach these goals. In addition to the difficult life conditions, economic hardships, and cultural challenges of reaching adulthood, the Rwandan government adopted policies emphasizing education as a means for social upward mobility but fails to address the social and economic barriers that children living on their own or on the streets confront.

The EICV3 report states that 62.2% of youth between the ages of 14-35 have either never attended school or have not yet completed primary school, 31.5% completed primary school, with a minimal 4.9% having completed post-primary, vocational, secondary, or higher education (National Institute of Statistics of Rwanda, 2012). These rates are significantly lower for youths living in rural areas, where 8.1% never attended school (compared to 4.7% of urban youth), 58.3% did not or have not yet completed primary school (compared to 37.2% of urban youth), 29.5% have completed primary school (compared to 41.6% of urban youth), and 2.9% have completed post-primary, secondary, or higher levels of education (compared to 14.5% of urban youth). Despite the profound differences in the highest levels of education achieved by urban and rural youth, the EICV3 reports that overall 80% of youth know how to read and write (88.4%

literacy for urban youth and 78.5% rural youth). Computer literacy rates vary; with only 7% of all Rwandan youth stating they are confident about their ability to use a computer. In urban areas, 18.7% state confidence in using a computer in contrast with only 4% of rural youth. These statistics reveal not only profound difference in education between urban and rural youth, but also demonstrates that Rwanda is not where it needs to be if they hope to achieve economic success through pathways of education, consistent with Vision 2020.

To address these issues, on February 3, 2009, the Rwandan government announced a nine-year basic education program (9-YBE) which is an effort to provide free and quality education for all youth living in Rwanda, thereby decreasing the drop-out rate in primary and secondary education. In 2010, Rwanda built over 3,000 classrooms, with another 2,936 fully equipped for student use (Kwizera, 2011). On April 12, 2011, a Rwandan news article states, “the primary school completion rate is at 76 percent” (Kwizera, 2011, para 1). In a testament to Rwanda’s dedication in improving their educational system and educational accessibility are the recent statistics published by the Ministry of Education in January 2012. The *Rwanda Education Statistics* documents the change in enrollment rates for primary, secondary, and post-secondary higher education from 2005 to 2011²⁵, and indicates an increase in the number of students who pass the required national exams to move forward in their education.

Primary education lasts six years and covers the ages of 7 to 12. In order to advance from each stage of education, students are required to pass the national examinations. In 2007, there were a total of 2,150,430 students enrolled in primary

²⁵ Dates of information vary depending on available statistics at the time of retrieval.

education, with only 31,037 teachers. Dropout rates at this time were 13.9%, with only 22.4% of students passing the required national exam. In 2011, student enrollment in primary education remained steady, with a total of 2,341,146 children but showed an increase in teachers to 40,299. Dropout rates decreased slightly to 11.4%, and in 2010, 82.6% of students passed the national exams.

Secondary education also lasts six years and covers the ages of 13 and 18. It is composed of lower secondary in the first three years and upper secondary in the remaining three. Secondary education statistics show a more profound enrollment increase, in which 266,518 were enrolled in 2007 compared to 486,437 students in 2011. The total number of teachers almost doubled in that time frame, with 12,103 in 2007 and 20,522 in 2011. Dropout rates for 2007 are unavailable, however 2008 saw a dropout rate of 9.6%, which decreased slightly to 7.4% in 2010. The number of students who passed the lower secondary national exams doubled from 36.8% in 2005 to 84.9% in 2010; upper secondary national exams also show a similar increase, with 64.7% in 2005 compared to 87.4% in 2010.

Higher education attendance rates are much lower, with no available information regarding dropout or success rates. With 31 total institutions, 17 public and 14 private, 73,674 students enrolled in higher education in 2011, nearly doubling from 37,149 students enrolled in 2006. An additional 11,315 students attended short term or longer vocational training. This totals 85,049 students enrolled in post-secondary education in 2011.

These numbers demonstrate that Rwanda's current education program is positively evolving with an increase in enrollment rates, qualified teachers, and the

number of students passing the national examinations with a slight decrease in dropout rates for both primary and secondary education. However, if the EICV3 (National Institute of Statistics of Rwanda, 2012) estimates that there are a total 4,159,000 youths between the ages of 14 and 35 living in Rwanda in 2011, with youths between the ages of 14 and 19 years old totaling 1.5 million, and only 486,437 students attended secondary educational institutions in 2011, then roughly one million youths in this age bracket are missing from the essential transitional schooling that will allow them to receive higher education training. This could possibly hinder Vision 2020s' goal of building a knowledge-based economy with the intention of decreasing reliance on foreign aid. Furthermore, if the additional youths between the ages of 20 and 35 make up the remaining 2,668,000 populations of Rwandan youth, and only 85,049 are enrolled in higher or vocational training in 2011, then information is missing for over 2.5 million youths. It is critical to see how many youths have completed vocational or higher education and how many are working in professions related to their field of study outside of the traditional agricultural occupations.

Economic statistics in the EICV3 state, "The overall employment rate for youth is 70.2%, and most of those who are not active are students (26.3%)" (National Institute of Statistics of Rwanda, 2012, p. 10), with 1% of all youth reported being completely unemployed. The median hours of work per week for youth is 28 hours. Further breakdowns of these statistics reveal chief positions youth hold. Many are unpaid family farm workers (38.3%), followed by waged non-farm work (21.4%), independent farmers (16.7%), waged farm work (11%), independent non-farm work (10.3%), and non-farm unpaid work (1.5%), totaling 2.9 million.

Although these numbers reveal that almost all youth are engaged in some form of work that is considered employment, there is still a total of 39.8%, or 1,162,558 unpaid youth. In 2011, the poverty line was 118,000 RWF per adult per year (or \$185.61 USDs). “Overall, 38.5% of young people live in households that are below this poverty line, which is slightly below the figure for all Rwandans of all ages at 44%” (p. 16). Extreme poverty is described as “people who cannot afford even to buy the minimum amount of food that they need to be healthy... the rate of extreme poverty for young people 14-35 years old is the same as for Rwandans of all ages, at 24%” (p. 17).

These numbers demonstrate where Rwandan youth are in terms of their level of education, enrollment in educational institutions, and overall employment rate. There are few to no current statistics in the EICV3 report regarding child headed households, orphans, or number of current street children in Rwanda. This information is essential to make the connection between the difficult life conditions facing youth today, the growth in the education sector and how it relates to the economic situation facing youth. Furthermore, additional research is needed in order to assess the success of Vision 2020 and the pressure it places on Rwandan youth to build a stable economic foundation from the aftershock of their violent history.

While these numbers appear promising and demonstrate a step in the right direction, my brief visit to Rwanda in August of 2012 revealed that there is still a lot of work that needs to be done for the nation’s youth in order to predict long-term stability of its current initiatives. The demands for appropriate services addressing the needs of Rwandan youth became evident during my time there and planted the seed for a non-profit organization titled “Bright Future Generation”.

Section 2

My Observations of Rwandan Youth

Alongside fifteen North American and fifteen Rwandan participants, the mission of Global Youth Connect is “Empowering youth to advance human rights and create a more just world”. Described as a learning and action community, plans for the delegation included workshops discussing human rights, followed by a three day trip to Kibuye in the Western Province, a volunteer placement with a local organization, a two-day homestay experience, and visits to memorials where acts of horrifying violence were committed during the genocide. Three significant site visits corresponded positively to the research and reality of the difficult life conditions Rwandan youth face today, while my volunteer placement with AERG revealed to me that mental health services addressing the needs of youth they serve are currently unmet.

Kiziba Refugee Camp

In the Western Province of Rwanda in the Karongi district, on the border of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, is a refugee camp home to roughly 18,000 Congolese who arrived in Rwanda in 1996 to flee from violent conflicts around the Lake Kivu region (Bucyensenge, 2012; UNHCR, 2010). Before our arrival to the camp on August 7, 2012, we discussed some of the issues currently facing the residents. One of my fellow delegates was a resident in the refugee camp, and discussed the educational and employment difficulties that people face within the camp. He stated that even if an individual obtains a degree in Rwanda and returns to the camp, there are no secure or available jobs. This is significantly hindered by the fact that refugees in the camp have not claimed citizenship status in the Democratic Republic of the Congo or Rwanda.

Although the Rwandan government is encouraging residents within the camp to claim permanent citizenship, the reality is that people identify as Congolese, not Rwandese, and asking them to do so is contrary how they choose to identify themselves. This background information was essential for us to understand the difficulties that the residents within the camp face, and it also pointed to the realities youth face.

Currently leading the camp projects was the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (UNHCR) and the American Refugee Committee (ARC). When we arrived, we were able to meet briefly with some of the camp managers who discussed with us their activities regarding access to safe water, sanitation, health, anti-gender based violence campaigns, and their educational system for the youth. We were told that every resident, no matter their age, receives 28 liters of safe drinking water per day. The staff also discussed their mission to follow through with Rwanda's anti-gender based violence campaign. Sensitization programs and focus group discussions encourage the whole community to take action in reporting and standing up against gender-based violence within their neighborhoods.

After the initial meeting, our delegation was divided into two groups to learn about the health care and education system. I chose to explore the camp's school facilities to understand how youth are receiving this essential tool that will provide them with a better life. The group started the tour at the camp's vocational training center, an alternative educational avenue that provides youth and some adults with skills in the domestic economy – sewing, tailoring, and cooking. The sewing machines and equipment used to stock these centers were donated from China; this is also true of the primary

school's computer room that has full access to the Internet and teaches students typing skills and Microsoft Office 2007 programs.

Currently, the camp's basic educational system only covers primary and lower secondary school – or 9 years of basic education as a result of limited land space and funding. Students who have passed the national examination are eligible to attend upper secondary school outside the camp. Classes are taught in both English and Kinyarwanda, and are eight hours a day. Students have the option to repeat a grade if they fail a course or do poorly in their classwork, but are not required to do so; as a result of limited funding, teachers are unable to stay behind to ensure that each student is thoroughly understanding the material and are confident enough to take the national exams. This impedes a student's faith in his or her ability to complete the appropriate schooling necessary because he is not grasping the material at hand. The greatest challenges the students face are lack of motivation and teacher encouragement.

Difficult life conditions youth face within the camp and their parents' inability to contribute to their school fees discourage youth from continuing their education. As a result, most never complete their primary or lower secondary education provided within the camps, and they select lifestyles that only increase the difficult life conditions and psychological hindrance to a brighter future. What youth choose to do after they drop out of school differs between males and females. Some women leave the camps to work as prostitutes or as domestic workers, only making 200 Rwandan Francs a day or less (or \$0.32 USDs). Most male youth will remain in the camps after they dropout, but form gangs and are the highest drug abusers, leading to an increase in crime and rape. Additionally, most children of primary school age group are logistically unable to attend

classes because the schools are over-capacity. This forces them to live in the camps as street children.

The issues of the educational system within the Kiziba refugee camp are not due to a lack of care. The schools are hindered in their ability to help youth succeed as a consequence of limited space, funding, and difficult life conditions facing all individuals residing at the camp. Prostitution, drugs, teen pregnancy, crime, and number of street children increase the chance of youth leaving the camp to search for opportunities outside. Most return only to discover that life on their own is far worse than what they had living in the camp.

The representatives from UNHCR informed us that they are doing everything in their power to gain access to more land and are seeking funding to build more schools and develop more programs to keep youth out of trouble. In addition to building sports programs and a new library, leaders of the camp are actively engaging in conversations with the local authorities to ensure they are meeting these needs. Additionally, donors are providing scholarships for females to attend school outside of the camps. For some this includes funds to attend a university. The downfalls to receiving these scholarships are that it excludes males. The directors are aware of this inequality, but they have to promote the principle of 'do no harm' - any donations that the camp receives cannot be refused, even if that means there is a gender imbalance in the allocation of those funds.

Leaders of the Kiziba refugee camp are cognizant of the issues in their educational system and the difficult life conditions the youth are facing. Hindering their ability to address these concerns are strongly related to funding. With adequate funding they can build the necessary schools to ensure that all children are receiving the basic

nine-year education as promoted by the Rwandan government. However, there are also larger, psychological hindrances that are not being addressed. This includes lack of motivation of youth or proper tutoring to ensure students are fully grasping the material they are learning within their classrooms in order to pass the national exams. An educational system that cannot address these greater issues may succeed in terms of its existence but could fail the students they are trying to educate by not providing the attention and care that is essential to their growth and development. Finally, if teachers are unable to help the students see the connection between education, self-development, and the realization of their dreams, they are doing them a disservice; teachers may lose faith in the students' ability to succeed, knowing the grim conditions that may await them whether or not they see themselves living life outside the camp.

Visit to the Potter Community in Mubuga

The day after our visit to the Kiziba refugee camp, we traveled to Mubuga to work with the Potter Community, also known as the Twa or historically marginalized people. Before we traveled out there, we had an opportunity to discuss the current issues facing this particular community with a representative and program delegate from COPORWA, or Communaute des Pottiers Rwandais, an advocacy group working with the Potter Community to obtain political recognition and be allocated the proper services and rights extended to other Rwandans. Also known as the 'forest people', they prefer to reside in the nation's forests without proper shelter, food, or clothing, and are isolated as active citizens from the Rwandan social, political, and economic landscape. After the genocide, the new government declared all of the forests national property, and has been working diligently to move the people out of there and integrate them into communities.

As hunter-gatherers, the Twa have little experience living in homes, and are quick to sell the tin roofs for money to support the needs of their family. Additional challenges facing the Potter community are related to ethnic identity, stigmatization, poverty, and lack of access to appropriate education for the children.

“Batwa” is an ethnic term that the group refuses to discard, despite political pressure to identify as Rwandans. The rationale for the explicit use of this term, although not politically recognized, is that until they receive and have access to the appropriate services awarded to all Rwandans, they will remain Batwa. As a historically marginalized people and non-participants of the genocide, they cannot be forced to integrate into society without receiving the tools and education necessary to do so. Their existence was not recognized before the genocide, but afterwards significant attention has been given to them with substantial pressure to be integrated into society. The stigmatization attached to their identity is related to their poverty level. They are considered dirty, uncivilized, and are taunted for their inability to be economically self-sufficient, despite producing beautiful pottery. Economic instability is also a reflection of an inability to grasp business practices as a means of sustainability. Thinking only about taking care of their immediate needs, Twa find it difficult to see how certain practices can be used to provide long-term stability.

The agenda was to participate in a special *umuganda*, or obligatory community work, to help clear away brush and land, which will prepare the foundations for future home construction. After our hard work, we listened in on their community meeting, which was spoken in Kinyarwanda, then shared drinks with them. The community members appeared to be excited and grateful that a group of young adults, both Rwandan

and North American, came to visit them and help them with this difficult task. Yet the primary goal of our work was to discuss the importance of education with the children in the community by actively engaging with them in group activities.

We were divided into four or five groups of five to six delegates each, and worked with thirty of the community children, although we were unsure of how many identified as belonging to the Potter community. Delegates sought to understand the challenges these children faced regarding their access to appropriate education, and how their perceptions of the value of education in their lives. The children mentioned various challenges that prevented them from succeeding in their studies: hunger, lack of school supplies, inability to pay for school fees, and social stigmatization. Children who identify with the Potter community are commonly bullied in school – children do not want to sit next them because they are considered ‘dirty’ even though they bathed before attending classes. Hunger was identified as another major barrier to going to school, as many families cannot afford to feed them. Additionally, many children are asked to leave school to look for jobs to supplement their family income, and struggle with a lack of motivation to go to school because their parents do not understand or support the long-term value of obtaining an education.

These children appeared between the ages of 3 and 10, and despite the difficult life conditions they are raised in, they acknowledged the value of receiving a basic education. When the children were asked about the importance of school, they answered: to expand your mind; to have a better life; to teach you to care about the environment; and to respect your parents. The economic and social disadvantages decreased children’s access to an appropriate education.

Rebecca Davis Dance Company and FIDESCO, Rwanda

The group also had an opportunity to visit a GYC alumna Rebecca Davis and learn about her work and partnership with FIDESCO with street children in Kigali, Rwanda. At the time, FIDESCO was home to around 60 males who were placed there by the Rwandan police (Rogers & Mutabazi-Uwamariya, 2012²⁶). The Rebecca Davis Dance Company (RDDC) seeks to “educate and impress social skills upon these youth, and they aim to fully reunite and reintegrate them into families and society as a whole” (para 1). There are four permanent Rwandan staff in addition to one psychologist who work directly with the children.

During our visit we had the opportunity to watch the staff and older male youth demonstrate the dances they have learned during their time there. Afterwards, they taught the delegation some of their moves and graciously answered a lot of our questions. We learned that

...There have been some cases where youths have successfully completed the RDDC program and been reunited with their families due to the efforts of FIDESCO, only to leave home due to dire circumstances, thus perpetuating the same cycle which these two organizations strive so hard to break (Rogers & Mutabazi-Uwamariya, 2012, para. 6).

Additionally, the RDDC is seeking to raise funds to pay for the youth’s school fees so they can continue to flourish after successful reintegration back into their communities.

One pressing question I needed to ask concerned additional training of the staff to address the negative behaviors some youth display as a result of the psychological and emotional impact of their difficult home and life conditions. I asked this question based on my experience working with children and youth through the Department of Mental

²⁶ This information was gathered from a blog post written by my peers during the delegation and is an accurate reflection of what we learned that day.

Health, Department of Children and Families, and Department of Youth Services in community and group home settings. As a direct care worker, my main responsibilities and training were in behavior modification, whereas the clinicians worked directly in helping youth understand the psychological problems they are facing. Most youth I have worked with face similar, although not equal, difficult life conditions as the youth served by RDDC and FIDESCO. So I identified the possible struggles that the staff members face to address maladaptive behaviors that may be a result of the psychological issues these youths face.

The staff members stated that they have received no additional training to recognize how the difficult life conditions facing the youth they serve affect their psychological and behavioral well being. They said that amidst the daily struggles they faced, they relied on patience, guidance, and the hope they have in each of the individuals they work with to learn through dance how to cope with the confusions of life. In this way, they are able to achieve their goals. Dance, they said,

...has a unique power to heal ... For young people who have experienced trauma and violence in their short lives, teaching dance is not only an engaging physical activity, but also has the power to provide young boys with the ability to express and share their stories or pain through an alternative medium. As an untraditional method for reconciliation and reintegration, dance has the capacity to provide young people with confidence and security, and teach them to relate to their fellow youth (Rogers & Mutabazi-Uwamariya, 2012, para. 3).

The therapeutic significance of dance and the fact that Rebecca Davis was a GYC alumna who returned to Rwanda to take action to address a significant social issue encouraged me to take action using my own skills, knowledge, and research. It was not until my volunteer placement with a student survivor association called AERG that my interdisciplinary interests could be channeled to a sustainable profession.

My Volunteer Placement with AERG

Participation in the delegation meant that all individuals were required to volunteer for a Rwandan non-governmental organization for three days. While I did not know much about *Association des Etudiants et Eleves Rescapes du Genocide*, or AERG, and the work that they do, I was aware that their main goal was to provide an artificial family environment for university students who were orphaned as a result of the 1994 genocide against the Tutsi. Within each of the 30 institutions, there are at least 15 ‘artificial families’, in which there are 30 ‘parents’, and totaling 900 parents to meet the needs of the 43,000 members they serve.

When I first met with Eugene and Omar, the volunteer leaders who we would be working with, I told them that I had 4+ years experience working with youth in various group home and community settings as a mentor to address their behavioral issues as a result of the psychological and social issues they faced. So on my first day of volunteer work, I was given the following tasks:

1. Research contemporary counseling services for genocide survivors and/or orphans,
2. Skills building for AERG counselors who will counsel AERG members, and
3. Research funding opportunities for these services.

Drafting a comprehensive plan for AERG was difficult given the lack of information or insight regarding the ‘artificial family’ structure, knowledge of the practices they already adopted to address the specific mental health issues facing their members, their needs in terms of addressing these specific issues, and how I could be of help in optimizing these existing services. Given the amount of insight and information I needed to draft such a

plan I would require more time to immerse myself in the AERG community. This was not an opportunity I had due to the limited amount of time I spent there. I asked Eugene and Omar if I could take the time to work on this project back at home, and promised to maintain communication through e-mail and Skype conversations. They agreed, stating that although they were determined to come up with solutions to their unique situation, they were aware that taking the time to address a long term problem was favorable when it came to drafting a long term solution.

Mental Health and the Need for Psychosocial Support Systems in Rwanda

On April 21, 2013, “a third year student at the National University of Rwanda (NUR) is under detention after he allegedly killed his mother, in an incident which local leaders and the Police have described as ‘rare and extremely shocking’” (Bucyensenge, 2013). Motive for the murder is unknown, however authorities allege that the 25-year old male was prevented from exerting control over his personal funds. An editorial in The New Times (2013), Rwanda’s daily news source, indicated that there is a need to increase the psychosocial support system within Rwandan society:

This is one of the many related cases that have been reported in the media over the last six months. Last week, a man hacked his wife and three-month-old baby before turning the machete on himself, but did not die. The media have been awash with such stories where people unleash violence on their loved ones – mostly close family members.

This is a trend that government should look into through reviewing the current social support systems in place. For instance, all work places should have a counselor. Universities and schools should have trained counselors as well. This should be mandatory.

This should be the same at the community level. Local leaders should try to avail counseling services and should have mechanisms of identifying people who need such support.

Government has invested a lot in building strong psychosocial support systems but this should be reviewed in light of the rampant cases of homicide coming up lately. The history of this country and the trauma that people went through following the 1994 genocide against the Tutsi cannot heal in 19 years. That is why psychosocial support to victims and perpetrators of the genocide and violence that came with it, need continuous support and reviewing.

There is need for more sensitization of the population to look out for people who need such support before they end up committing crimes associated with mental breakdown. Psychosocial support will help to prevent such incidents. (paras. 2-6)

The exposure to traumatic situations during the 1994 genocide against the Tutsi have led to the prevalence of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder and depression, and an increase in psychosocial issues. Rwandan society needs an effective mental health system responsive to the psychological and psychosocial needs of all its citizens. Current information reveals that there are only six clinical psychiatrists (Ministry of Health, 2012) actively working within the nation, with 1 mental health outpatient facility, 1 day treatment facility, 72 psychiatric beds in general hospitals, and 1 psychiatric hospital with 310 beds (World Health Organization, 2011). Additionally, “research in Rwanda has highlighted the magnitude of mental health problems. Around 29% of the general Rwandan population has been found to have post-traumatic stress disorder and 15% has depression” (Mukamana & Piddington, 2012). Rwanda’s current mental health policy (Ministry of Health, 2012) acknowledges they need to increase their capacity to effectively treat psychiatric conditions. This is especially important if Rwanda seeks to decrease the possibility for future conflict while increasing economic stability.

Building Rwanda’s mental health services requires more than just trained psychiatrists to address mental illness at the institutional level. Individuals can be trained at the grassroots level to identify and respond to mental health issues through trainings in trauma informed care. This is especially important as the effects of the 1994 genocide

against the Tutsi extend beyond the adult population, leaving hundreds of thousands of youth to survive against difficult life conditions that decrease their access to an appropriate education (Human Rights Watch, 2003; Pells, 2009). My personal research and experiences in Rwanda support the deficiency in appropriately trained personnel to address the psychological and psychosocial issues within communities. In October of 2012, I connected with a Rwandan Clinical Psychologist, Isaïe Mihigo. Harnessing our research, education, and experiences working with vulnerable youth in our respective countries, we co-founded “Bright Future Generation”.

Through our research and discussions with representatives actively working on the ground in Rwanda, Isaïe and I have learned that the capacities to address the psychological and psychosocial needs of the youth and adults are hindered by lack of training in mental health and skills building in mentorship. Another hindrance was expressed during a conversation I had with a representative of the Clinton Health Initiative²⁷, who stated that “mental health is just not sexy” because it is perceived to be immeasurable. Meaning, funders prioritize lending to an organization that provides medical care to individuals infected with diseases such as malaria or HIV/AIDS as opposed to training programs for mentorship in mental health. The difference is in the tangibility of results, such as the number of individuals who were treated for malaria. Others fail to see the long-term, negative consequences of leaving an entire society traumatized by the 1994 genocide against the Tutsi without appropriate psychological or psychosocial supports. Rwandan society is observing these consequences as an increase in homicidal activity; there may be other underlying social psychological issues that

²⁷ Interview on August 19, 2012 in Kigali, Rwanda

could lead to negative expressions of human behavior that are not adequately being addressed. In addition to the need for trained mentors to respond to the psychological and psychosocial issues, there is need for an increase of research to identify the specific psychosocial issues that various communities are facing and develop best practices for addressing these concerns.

The Role of Bright Future Generation

Bright Future Generation exists as a non-governmental, volunteer organization that partners with communities, schools, and governmental and non-governmental organizations to build a culture of mentoring with a focus on mental health through ‘train the trainer’ workshops, research, and program development. Our partnerships will increase the confidence and proficiency of these organizations to respond to the unique problems of the vulnerable youth they serve. The vision is to help vulnerable youth establish the relationship between education, self-development, and the realization of their dreams using a multi-level approach to address the psychological and psychosocial barriers that decrease youths’ access to an appropriate education.

In addition to working with vulnerable youth, Bright Future Generation seeks to increase psychosocial support systems within communities through workshops that focus on trauma informed care. In March and April of 2013, Isaïe led a four-part workshop at the National University of Rwanda associated with the Clinical Psychology department titled “The Impact of the Traumatic Event to Ourselves and to the Community Toward a Healed Life” (See Appendix A for full details of the goals of the workshop). This workshop covers four specific themes that include: the impact of the traumatic event to ourselves and others; sharing one’s life experience as a way of exploring/assessing

ourselves and others in the community; the journey of healing and facilitating the healing process in our communities, and; how we can help an individual experiencing symptoms of trauma during the commemoration period.

Additionally, Isaïe is currently involved in anti-begging campaign research led by the National Council of Persons with Disabilities (NCPD) in collaboration with Rwandan Cultural Health Center (RCHC). This research is guided by the belief that within Rwandan culture, “begging is considered as divergent from one’s dignity, [which] makes someone who begs to feel and be considered helpless and worthless in the society, hence decrease his self-esteem” (Nyirabugenimana, 2013, para. 1). The Rwandan government hopes to utilize this research to change the negative image of persons with disabilities inflicted upon them by the larger society and to change the PWDs own negative mindset of their conditions.

Additional projects Bright Future Generation seeks to undertake are:

1. AERG: Skills building training in mental health awareness for AERG counselors who will counsel its members. This requires further assessment of the ‘artificial family’ system to assess the current strengths, weaknesses, and gaps in their service delivery. Furthermore, additional research is needed to assess the prevalence of specific mental health issues and general psychological and psychosocial needs of AERG members.
2. Rwanda Red Cross: Increase volunteerism among youth. This also requires further assessment of their strengths, weaknesses, and gaps in their means to recruit and train youth as volunteers.

3. COPORWA: Research to identify the psychological and psychosocial barriers that decrease children and youths' access to an education. This research proposes to identify the unmet needs of the children, stigmatization and potential bullying within schools, and specific actions to address lack of parental support towards their children's education.

Research with the intent to publish is also a primary need and a goal that Bright Future Generation seeks to meet. Assessments will be made the first phase of BFG's service delivery to further understand the populations that communities, schools, governmental and non-governmental spheres serve. This will allow us to design trainings and aid in program development that are specific to the communities we partner with while deepening our understanding of the psychological and psychosocial needs of Rwandan society.

CONCLUSION

School Shootings and the Need for a Cross-Cultural Dialogue

April 20, 1999, two teenage boys named Eric Harris, 18, and Dylan Klebold, 17, entered Columbine High School, murdered 13 students, 1 teacher, injured 21 others before killing themselves in the town of Littleton, Colorado (Bryan, 2011).

April 16, 2007, Cho Seung-Hui, 23, murdered 32 people, and injured 15 others before killing himself at Virginia Polytechnic Institute (Hauser, 2007).

July 20, 2012, James Holmes, 24, opened fire in a movie theater at the midnight showing of “Batman: The Dark Knight Rises”, killing 12 people and injuring many others in the town of Aurora, Colorado (FoxNews, 2012).

And a few months later, on December 14, 2012, Adam Lanza, 20, entered Sandy Hook Elementary School, murdered 26 innocent people – 20 children, all under the ages of 10, along with 6 teachers in addition to killing his own mother, in Newtown, Connecticut (Yan, 2012).

In the aftermath of these atrocities, news reports revealed that these young men were consistently teased and bullied by their own peers. Emotionally, their need for social acceptance was unfulfilled, which forced them into isolation to seethe in their anger against those who psychologically harmed them. These shootings occurred as a means to seek revenge against those who harmed them, resulting in the deaths of innocent people and exposing hundreds, if not thousands, of others to traumatic situations that negatively impact their mental well-being.

To reiterate, research suggests that victims who were unable to forgive others for their transgressions are only satisfied “when the perpetrator knows why he or she has

been, will be, or could be punished” (Gollwitzer, Meder, & Schmitt, 2011, p. 371). Many victims who seek out revenge do so as a means to deliver a message to the offender to ensure they are aware of their misdeeds, understand the consequences that accompany their actions, and comprehend why they deserve be punished. Researchers suggest that “victims should be less likely to take revenge if they have reason to believe that the offender has learned his or her lesson and will refrain from behaving unfairly again in the future” (p. 373). This research suggests that harboring anger may result in acts of revenge if the offender is unaware of the consequences of their actions, thereby continuing the cycle of violence.

Fourteen years after the Columbine massacres, the United States is still unable to build a culture of peace and provide the psychosocial supports necessary to prevent or discourage these atrocities. The psychological and psychosocial issues of America’s youth have no connection to any large-scale, ideological agenda, yet the simple components of negative human interactions are the same. Children, youth, and adults create social environments that exclude and at times dehumanize others. Yet when those individuals act aggressively in response to the hostile environments others create, we find their actions incomprehensible and outright evil. Senseless acts of violence are rationalized with individual mental illness and lax national gun laws, which supports the statement:

We could never imagine being like *them*, doing their unthinkable dirty deeds, and do not admit them into our company they are so essentially different as to be unchangeable. This extreme position also means we forfeit the motivation to understand how they came to engage in what we view as evil behavior (Zimbardo, 2004, p. 27).

Matthew Albracht (2012) articulated a powerful statement in the aftermath of the Sandy Hook Elementary School Shooting:

Luckily, we have proven methods to prevent violence and engage in smart intervention in all sectors of society. We must invest in these areas – like peace building and conflict resolution programs, which are universally applicable modalities to help create a more peaceful culture and deal much more effectively with the kinds of violence we’ve seen recently. Psychological and emotional support resources should also be far more available for all ages in every community.

Every child should also be taught social and emotional learning skills in schools. We must teach our kids how to deal with conflict, how to interact with kids who are different, and how to be more accepting and get along in the world. In addition to creating a more peaceful environment - and potentially mitigating the lashing out by these alienated individuals committing such atrocities – these skills have been shown to correlate strongly with success and, most importantly, provide a more meaning-filled life experience. (paras. 14 & 15).

Rwanda can identify their traumas as genocide, or multiple acts of genocide, which occurred as a result of the dissemination of divisionism and hatred from the political elites down to the common people. Understanding this phenomenon, Rwanda’s post-conflict leaders took the initiative to promote a culture of peace by building solid political and national foundations to ensure its citizens take responsibility for unifying with previous enemies and work together towards a brighter future. Although Rwanda still faces many psychological and psychosocial challenges that could hinder its ability to be economically self-sufficient and avert future conflicts, the significant amount of progress its made over the course of nineteen years is admirable, and the lessons to be learned immeasurable. Cross-cultural dialogue with the intention of getting to the root of the psychological and psychosocial issues that face all societies around the world have the potential to promote peace consciousness and prevent future conflicts.

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[bin/texis/vtx/rwmain?page=topic&tocid=4565c2252&toid=459b75e21ef&publish](http://www.refworld.org/cgi-bin/texis/vtx/rwmain?page=topic&tocid=4565c2252&toid=459b75e21ef&publisher=&type=&coi=RWA&docid=46c5b1f52&skip=0)

[er=&type=&coi=RWA&docid=46c5b1f52&skip=0](http://www.refworld.org/cgi-bin/texis/vtx/rwmain?page=topic&tocid=4565c2252&toid=459b75e21ef&publisher=&type=&coi=RWA&docid=46c5b1f52&skip=0)

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APPENDIX A

OUTLINES OF THE WORKSHOP

“THE NEED OF UNDERSTANDING

THE IMPACT OF THE TRAUMATIC EVENT TO OURSELVES, OTHERS AND THE COMMUNITY TOWARD A HEALED LIFE”

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GENENERALITY

Psychological trauma is a type of damage to the psyche that occurs as a result of a severely distressing event. When that trauma leads to posttraumatic stress disorder, damage may involve physical changes inside the brain and to brain chemistry, which changes the person's response to future stress.

A traumatic event involves a single experience, or an enduring or repeating event or events, that completely overwhelm the individual's ability to cope or integrate the ideas and emotions involved with that experience. The sense of being overwhelmed can be delayed by weeks, years or even decades, as the person struggles to cope with the immediate circumstances. Psychological trauma can lead to serious long-term negative consequences that are often overlooked even by mental health professionals.

Trauma can be caused by a wide variety of events such as the genocide perpetrated against Tutsi in Rwanda, in April 1994. Psychological trauma may accompany physical trauma or exist independently of it. However, different people will react differently to similar events. One person may experience an event as traumatic while another person would not suffer trauma as a result of the same event. In other words, not all people who experience a potentially traumatic event will actually become

psychologically traumatized. This workshop will allow the participants to deeply assess the impact of the traumatic event, particularly “the genocide happened in Rwanda” to their lives, neighbors and community in which they are living so that they will be able to analyze and intervene in effective way not only during the commemoration period but also in daily life interventions. The participants will meet with professionals in this domain in safe place where they will experience the healing process and learn technical skills that are helpful in helping others who are in need.

WORKSHOP OUTLINE

Day One

Workshop One

THE IMPACT OF TRAUMATIC EVENT TO OURSELVES AND OTHERS

Key Objectives:

- To explore the different levels of trauma
- The cognitive-behavior changes among the survivors who have passed through traumatic event such as the genocide
- To differentiate the normal grief and chronic grief
- To understand how our individual and collective memories of the past influence our present identities and how we live and tell our lives.
- To explore how historically compounded grievances and deeply buried wounds may continue to hold us as individuals and future generations consciously and unconsciously to remain in the cycle of violence
- Contextualization in the case of Rwanda

Brief description of the workshop

This workshop will help us explore “who we are”, what shapes our identities, and how we can extend our identities to include “the others”. This will be an opportunity for the participants to understand others in the community who might express behaviors or beliefs related to their trauma. They may consider them as stranger but they will get broader understanding of how they may become the channels of healing process. They will be aware of how traumatic event can transform beliefs, emotions, and behaviors as they might be associated with painful memories and inherited experiences from the smallest individual tragedy or illness to community traumatic event, past or present.

Workshop Two

SHARING ONE’S LIFE EXPERIENCE AS ONE WAY OF EXPLORING/ASSESSING OURSELVES AND OTHERS IN COMMUNITY

Key Objectives:

- Feel heard and supported
- Know that feelings can differ from one to another
- Emotions can be expressed in different ways
- Be more aware of our obstacles and challenges during the sharing of our own life
- Group discussion/Interaction

Brief description of the workshop

This workshop will be the continuity of the workshop one. We will create an emotionally safe place where the participants will feel free /safe to share in small groups as well as in the large workshop group. It will require taking time and creating opportunities to reflect on the talks and discussions from the dialogue of facilitators who

might be more skilled in this domain. This workshop will help the participants to make one's self journey which will allow them to explore their inside so that they may be aware of the connection between the present and the past. Moreover, we have to recognize that the emotions and feelings may come up during the event for all the participants.

Day Two

Workshop Three

THE JOURNEY OF BEING HEALED AND FACILITATING HEALING PROCESS INTO OUR COMMUNITY

Key objectives:

- To learn how through compassion, and understanding of others and ourselves, the grievances may be transformed and released.
- To look at empathy and self-empathy and reflect on how it can help us when listening to the story of the 'other'.
- To encourage peace, harmony and understanding between peoples regardless of their ethnic origin or religion by beginning to take responsibility for ourselves.
- To create a community of peace that can help healing the wounds of conflicts.
- To support participants to work with their difficult emotions and see their situations from a different perspective
- To cultivate skills in how to counsel both victims and perpetrators in helping the participants face each other in order to deal with the painful issues of the past.

Brief description of the workshop

If the victims do not heal from their psychological wounds, they have a higher likelihood of becoming future perpetrators of crime. This workshop will allow the participants to be aware that the victims and offenders need a help for overcoming their anger, guilt and need for revenge through the process of transforming their unpleasant memories, and negative narratives and by generating new social capital that facilitates peace, unity and reconciliation in the midst of conflicts.

Workshop Four**HOW CAN WE HELP AN INDIVIDUAL EXPERIENCING TRAUMA DURING
COMMEMORATION PERIOD?**Key Objectives

- Be familiarized with some psychological techniques that can allow participants to approach the people who are in need.
- Creating a safe place
- To recognize an individual's role in creating an environment of trust
- To learn how to work with anger in a healing capacity
- To be able to retell one's story to create a "healing" narrative that reflects a deeper understanding of what actually happened
- Have more tools to transform our pain

Brief description

This workshop will be based on workshop three. After creating a safe place, the participants will be divided into small groups, where they will share their experiences and try to practice the acquired skills. During this stage, the facilitators will guide the

participants by responding to the different questions raised. Afterward, each group will present in front of large group the outcomes from this training, as facilitators will direct it. They will emphasize on their experience before the training and the feeling after it.

This will be an opportunity of hearing some testimonies about their feelings and how they are going to improve the way of helping the individuals who have passed through a traumatic past event.