



- Rwanda -

# **Measuring Societal Healing in Post-Conflict Rwanda**

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# Outline

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# **Societal Healing and Participatory Governance for Sustainable Peace in Rwanda Program**



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# Societal Healing in Rwanda

- Two premises:
  1. If people were provided a safe space to heal their wounds and given opportunities to build trusting relationships with people of different backgrounds through solidarity and sharing in these safe spaces, then they would increase their tolerance of people of different backgrounds and experiences than their own.
  2. They would then be compelled to engage with others around them to build the same tolerance they had newly built. This would in turn reduce the likelihood of future conflicts

# How do you measure healing?

- Two methods:
  1. Personal assessment of healing
  2. An increase in relevant activities such as participation in the community, increased integration in society, etc.



“When this programme of healing arrived, I didn’t know that I have psychological wounds. We started learn about wounds, and I realized that what I was experiencing in my life are all psychological wounds.” Female, 20s

# Measuring Healing

Four key elements to measure change:

1. **Impact of Trauma:** The levels of trauma of the participants
2. **Trust:** How much participants trusted others in the groups
3. **Social Tolerance:** The social proximity of participants to people of other backgrounds in their communities, both those represented in their groups and those who were not
4. **Peace Activism and Community Participation:** How active participants were in promoting peace in their community

# Methodology



# Methodology

- Outcome Mapping- Because we were measuring changes in behavior, change in relationships, and changes in activities
  - Boundary partners: Community members and youth in the Spaces for Peace
- Log Frame- Because the project's theory of change stated that healing would lead to changes in behavior, a log frame was created with indicators of the program
  - The initial log frame had 104 indicators, each with the delineated categories of Love to see, Like to see, and Expect to see
- The M&E team documented and communicated the most significant change stories, best practices and lesson learned to ensure the culture of knowledge management and learning was integrated into the program cycle.



# 2017 Mid-Term Evaluation



# Monitoring and Evaluation Problems

- With the large number of descriptive progress markers, far more data was being collected than was being processed
- Data gathering was a resource-heavy endeavor and was taking up money and personnel for data that was not then being used
- Inconsistencies in the interpretation of qualitative data required the M&E officer to go back and re-analyze the data to determine how it should be coded

# M&E Problems, Continued

- The log frame was overly complex and blurring where the program was really having an impact
- The original program log frame was too thinly spread across a range of activities, outputs, and outcomes.
- There was insufficient differentiation between activities, processes, and progress



# Monitoring & Evaluation Solutions

- Reduce M&E's burden by:
  - Reducing the amount of data collected
  - Creating specific definitions of terms used in Outcome Mapping to standardize interpretation of qualitative data
  - Giving better specification of activities that should be considered milestones rather than something to be measured
  - Giving better specification of markers that are processes instead of progress, such as the training of peace agents
  - Hiring more M&E staff

# Lessons Learned about Monitoring & Evaluation

- Never Again Rwanda's monitoring and evaluation systems were under-supported in staffing and resources
- Adjustments will always be necessary when the ambition of the project outstrips the capabilities and resources of the organization

# Lessons Learned About the Program

- Some wounds are too deep to immediately be discussed in a group setting, especially a mixed group.
- Group therapy and one-on-one counseling go hand in hand



“Every Rwandan needs their own personal therapist.” NAR Staff Member

# Lessons Learned, Cont.

- Healing is a very long-term process, but the program resources were time-bound. In many cases, overcoming the psychological wounds will take a lifetime. This poses an ongoing challenge for any program dedicated to healing
- Projects trying to measure societal healing must accept that they will see incremental change rather than a complete transformation. However, incremental change is critical to the process

“Healing is not a one day event it is a journey... I cannot say that I have overcome my wound but I have learnt how to live with it.” A Space for Peace Member in Abanyamahoro

# Recommendations

- In real world situations, sometimes the well-being of people has to come before more robust methods
- Regular evaluations of the M&E instruments are critical
- Make sure you are adequately staffed!



# Results

- Participants emerged from the programme with higher self-esteem and less guilt and were more willing to have interactions with other groups across society.
- Suicide ideation decreased
- PTSD symptoms decreased from 4.2 to 2.7 (35% improvement)
- Psychological resilience moved from 6.9 to 8.6 out of 10 (24% improvement)
- Trust between participants and society improved by 57%
- The biggest improvement was seen among genocide perpetrators

I have learnt a lot from this space. I had lost the hope for my future, and I mistrusted Hutus. Sometimes I would argue with some of them and my scar would directly hurt me because I remember what they did to me. Makuza (a Peace Agent) brought me into this space. Since arriving here, things are changing. My self-esteem has increased and I have also started helping others in my community. I had a neighbour who had been depressed, so I started talking to her: luckily, my colleague from our space and I visited her recently and repaired her house. Before, she would run when she met a Hutu. But we visited her and she is now changing. Myself, I am no longer scared of meeting with Hutus – now I can tell my children not to discriminate people because those who committed genocide are no longer doing that.

Through our dialogue, I realized that all human beings are the same: even God hates sin, but not the sinners. I have now overcome my phobia. Before, I would never travel in the evening from my house to Kara centre – but nowadays I can go anywhere, at any time. I can say that what helped me most was the process of sharing our testimonies, which really healed my heart. I do have hope that our space will continue to be the source of change, because we have started to go beyond our space and to change other people in our community.

**Female, 69, Abanyamahoro Space for Peace**

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