

Bridges to Peace

Foundations of Healing and Resilience

Interpeace Rwanda journal

Issue 1



Interpeace
INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION
FOR PEACEBUILDING



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About Interpeace



Interpeace is an international organisation that strives to prevent violence and build lasting peace. We have 30 years of experience working in Africa, the Middle East, Asia, Europe, and Latin America. Interpeace builds trust as the glue that brings societies back together and works to have solutions designed and led locally, from the grass-roots communities to the most senior decision-making levels.

Interpeace programme in Rwanda aims to contribute to the consolidation of a cohesive, resilient, and inclusive Rwandan society that is able to overcome the wounds of the past and peacefully manage conflicts and diversity. It also supports collaborative and inclusive livelihood initiatives and promotes evidence-based and citizen-centred policies through partnerships with various government institutions. This programme, which was informed by a pilot conducted through the support of the European Union (EU), is co-implemented with our partners HAGURUKA, Dignity in Detention (DIDE), and Prison Fellowship Rwanda (PFR) with funding from the Swedish International Development Agency (Sida).

Country Representative's Introduction



Welcome to the inaugural edition of *Bridges to Peace: Foundations of Healing and Resilience*, a journal dedicated to exploring the transformative work of Interpeace and our partners in Rwanda. In this first issue, we embark on a journey to unravel the core values and impactful initiatives that define our mission of fostering peace, resilience, and social cohesion.

At Interpeace Rwanda, we believe in the power of collaborative effort and community-driven solutions to address our society's deep-seated challenges. This publication serves as a cornerstone for understanding our approach, offering insights into our programs, methodologies, and the profound impact we strive to achieve.

As you delve into these pages, you will encounter a blend of empirical research, personal stories, and expert analysis that showcases our commitment to creating positive change. Each section is crafted to provide not only a comprehensive understanding of our interventions but also to inspire reflection and engagement.

We aim to lay a solid foundation for future editions of this journal, each focusing on different themes and continuing our exploration of the diverse facets of peacebuilding and resilience. We invite you to join us on this journey as we collectively work towards a more peaceful, inclusive, and resilient future.

Thank you for your interest and support. We look forward to your feedback and to sharing our ongoing progress with you in the issues to come.

Warm regards,

Frank Kayitare
Country Representative
Interpeace Rwanda

The Wounds that Remain: Rwanda's Ongoing Struggle with Mental Health and Psychosocial Challenges



Historical Trauma and Present-Day Challenges

The 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi left deep and lasting scars on Rwanda, leaving not only physical wounds but also damaging the nation's social and psychological fabric. The erosion of trust among neighbours and communities has resulted in enduring mental health challenges, also affecting social cohesion. The psychological aftermath of the genocide has manifested in significant mental health issues that continue to shape Rwanda's present and future.

Quantifying the Mental Health Impact

Three decades after the genocide, mental health issues remain pervasive. The Rwanda Mental Health Survey (2018) indicates that 20.49% of the population experiences mental health difficulties, a rate that is double the global average. This is compounded by findings from a 2020 meta analysis, which estimates that 37% of the genocide survivors suffer from post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). These statistics underscore the profound and ongoing impact of the genocide on the mental well-being of Rwandans.

The Impact of Prisoner Reintegration and Intergenerational Trauma

The reintegration of a significant number of prisoners convicted of the most serious genocide-related crimes over the next five years adds another layer of complexity.¹ The fear and anxiety surrounding this reintegration heighten tensions as survivors must grapple with the presence of their tormentors in their communities. This situation exacerbates existing mental health challenges, making reconciliation and community efforts rebuilding more difficult.

Furthermore, intergenerational trauma has begun to emerge as a critical issue. Descendants of both survivors and perpetrators inherit the psychological burdens of their parents, facing increased risks of mental health and other health-related problems and dysfunctional behaviours. Research highlights that this generation often experiences chronic sorrow, distrust, and impaired family dynamics, illustrating the deep-rooted impact of historical trauma on subsequent generations.

Current Trends and Societal Implications

Recent trends among Rwanda's youth, including rising drug use and teenage pregnancies, continue to challenge the country's social cohesion and resilience efforts. Interpeace's societal healing programme addresses two primary issues: many parents, still grappling with their own psychological scars, struggle to provide effective support and guidance. Additionally, a persistent reluctance to openly discuss past traumas leaves children feeling confused and insecure, fueling a cycle of trauma that complicates both individual recovery and societal progress. By promoting social, economic, and civic participation, Interpeace's approach extends beyond mental health to support Rwanda's broader reconciliation and resilience agendas, further consolidating social cohesion and long-term peace.

Evaluating Efforts and Systemic Barriers

Despite progress made by the government and civil society in advancing societal healing, social cohesion, and economic empowerment, significant barriers remain. The social stigma surrounding mental health continues to prevent many individuals from seeking support. Systemic challenges—including a shortage of mental health professionals, insufficient funding, and inadequate service coverage—further impede efforts to address the mental health crisis.

Toward Comprehensive Solutions

The intersection of mental health challenges with broader societal issues such as poverty and education highlight the need for multi-faceted solutions. Addressing these interconnected issues is essential for Rwanda to build a cohesive society capable of overcoming its painful past and fostering long-term peace and resilience.

Overview of Protocols

Since October 2020, Interpeace, with funding from the European Union (EU) and the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida), has embarked on contributing to Rwanda's transformative journey through a programme titled "*Reinforcing Community Capacity for Social Cohesion and Reconciliation through Societal Trauma Healing*". In close partnership with government and non-governmental stakeholders, this programme aims to tackle some of the deepest wounds left by the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi.

To lay the groundwork, the program conducted an extensive baseline survey and community mapping exercise. This in-depth, mixed-methods research sought to understand the current challenges and identify potential interventions across three key areas: mental health, social cohesion, and prisoner rehabilitation and reintegration. From this research, a series of interventional protocols were developed, each tested to ensure their effectiveness in addressing these complex issues.

¹ Interpeace. "Rehabilitation and Reintegration of Prisoners in Rwanda as Part of Trauma Healing." *Interpeace*, September 2022. <https://www.interpeace.org/2022/09/rehabilitation-and-reintegration-of-prisoners-in-rwanda-as-part-of-trauma-healing/>.

Mental Health Interventions

Community Screening Protocol

The Community Screening Protocol serves as a critical component in the early identification of not only mental health needs but also issues related to social relations, family disengagement, and livelihood limitations within communities. This protocol employs standardised tools to ensure a systematic and inclusive approach, enabling the detection of at-risk individuals who may otherwise remain underserved. The analytical significance of this protocol lies in its capacity to create a comprehensive picture of community needs, facilitating targeted, need-based and equitable interventions while orienting participants to their respective healing spaces.

Resilience-Oriented Therapy Protocol

Following identification, individuals are guided through the Resilience-Oriented Therapy Protocol. This approach is designed to address a spectrum of mental health issues, including anxiety, depression, substance abuse, and feelings of alienation. The protocol's adaptability ensures that therapeutic interventions are customised to individual needs, promoting healthy coping strategies and psychological resilience. The analytical value of this protocol is evident in its capacity to address diverse mental health challenges through a flexible and responsive framework.



Resilience-Oriented Therapy Protocol

Socioemotional Skills Curriculum

To complement these therapeutic efforts, the Socioemotional Skills Curriculum is integrated into community education. This curriculum equips participants with emotional regulation and interpersonal skills, as well as conflict resolution abilities needed to maintain mental well-being. By fostering these skills, we aim to reduce the likelihood of mental health deterioration and strengthen the community's overall resilience.



Social Cohesion Interventions

Multi-Family Healing Spaces Protocol

Social cohesion is the glue that holds communities together. The Multi-Family Healing Spaces Protocol uses an approach that creates safe environments where families can engage in collective healing. These intergenerational dialogues build trust, deepen mutual understanding, and enable families and communities to come together to solve common problems.



Multi-Family Healing Spaces Protocol

Adaptations on the Sociotherapy Protocol

Recognising Rwandan communities' unique cultural and social dynamics, Interpeace locally contextualised the sociotherapy methods that were initiated by several local organizations and have been in use in Rwanda for more than 20 years.

Prisoners' Psychosocial Rehabilitation and Reintegration Roadmap Protocol

Reintegrating prisoners into society is critical for social stability. The Rehabilitation and Reintegration Roadmap Protocol offers a comprehensive plan that includes vocational training, mental health support, and community engagement. This roadmap is designed to help former prisoners transition smoothly from incarceration to community life, reducing the risk of recidivism and fostering a more harmonious society.

Sustainable Livelihoods Interventions

Collaborative Livelihoods Protocol

Affording basic needs is a cornerstone of sustainable community healing. The Collaborative Livelihood Protocol empowers participants to create locally owned initiatives, providing not only sustainable livelihoods but also ongoing spaces for dialogue and support. This protocol offers training, financial backing, and market access, enabling communities to build resilient economic systems that support long-term well-being.



Collaborative Livelihoods Protocol

Randomised Control Trials

Interpeace initiated Randomised Controlled Trials (RCTs) to test the effectiveness of our interventions. Participants were randomly assigned to either intervention or control groups, and their progress was meticulously tracked and compared. This rigorous evaluation allows us to measure the true impact of our protocols, providing a solid foundation for future efforts.

Broader Implications

These intervention frameworks offer a holistic approach to addressing the intertwined challenges of mental health, social cohesion, and sustainable livelihoods in Rwanda. By integrating these elements, the program supports individual and community resilience, social harmony, and long-term stability. The analysis of these protocols highlights their effectiveness and provides a foundation for continued improvement and adaptation.



Resilience-Oriented Therapy: A Promising Approach to Addressing Mental Health Challenges in Rwanda

Evaluating Resilience-Oriented Therapy (ROT)

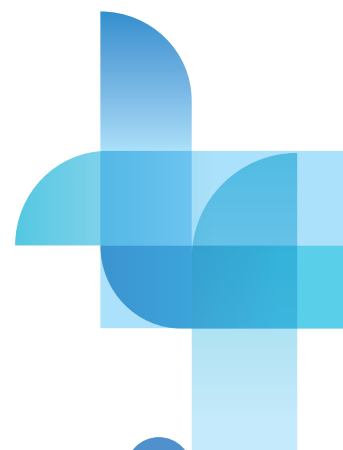
Resilience-Oriented Therapy (ROT) has emerged as a promising intervention designed to address Rwanda's mental health crisis. ROT is a group-based therapy that offers a scalable solution to improve accessibility and effectiveness in mental healthcare. This approach aligns with Rwanda's need for affordable, widespread mental health interventions.

The State of Mental Resilience

Under the Social Transformation pillar of the National Strategy for Transformation (NST1), Rwanda has allocated 7.2% of its national budget to healthcare, focusing on quality improvement and disease prevention. However, the mental health sector is under-resourced, with only 352 mental health professionals serving a population of over 12 million. This discrepancy underscores the urgent need for innovative approaches like ROT.

Impact of ROT: Preliminary Findings and Mechanisms

A baseline study by Interpeace and local partners across six districts highlighted trauma-related mental health issues exacerbated by the anticipated release of genocide prisoners. ROT, developed as part of the *"Reinforcing Community Capacity for Social Cohesion through Societal Trauma Healing in Rwanda"* programme, targets emotion regulation, behavioural self-management, and identity development. Preliminary results from a Randomized Clinical Trial (RCT) across five districts suggest ROT is effective in reducing anxiety and depression, with qualitative feedback indicating improvements in alcohol abuse among participants.



Why ROT works



Cost-Effectiveness:

ROT's group-based format allows for the simultaneous treatment of multiple individuals by a limited number of professionals, maximising resource use and extending the reach of mental health services.



Community and Peer Support:

ROT leverages Rwanda's communal culture by fostering solidarity and reducing stigma through shared experiences, which enhances therapeutic outcomes.



Addressing Stigma:

The therapy normalises mental health discussions, breaking down barriers to seeking help and encouraging broader community acceptance.



Cultural Relevance:

Conducted in Kinyarwanda and incorporating local practices, ROT aligns with Rwandan cultural values, which enhances its acceptability and effectiveness.

Challenges and Strategic Considerations

To optimise ROT's effectiveness, several critical factors must be addressed:

Training and Capacity Building:

Expanding training programs for mental health professionals and involving community health workers in facilitation roles are essential for scaling up ROT.

Infrastructure and Resources:

Investment in appropriate facilities and resources is needed to support effective therapy sessions.

Monitoring and Evaluation:

Implementing robust mechanisms for assessing therapy outcomes is crucial for guiding continuous improvements and ensuring the therapy's effectiveness.

Prospects and Strategic Insights

Resilience-Oriented Therapy represents a culturally sensitive and scalable solution to Rwanda's mental health challenges. By utilising collective healing and peer support, ROT has the potential to enhance mental health care accessibility and effectiveness significantly. As Rwanda progresses under the National Strategy for Transformation (NST2), prioritising mental health and supporting innovative approaches like ROT will be essential for fostering a resilient and thriving nation. Future research and policy adjustments should focus on expanding ROT's reach, improving training and infrastructure, and continuously evaluating its impact to ensure sustained progress.





Healing Together: The Transformative Power of Multifamily Therapy

Beyond Individual Healing

Mental health challenges do not impact individuals in isolation but reverberate through entire family systems. Traditional therapy models often focus solely on either the individual or the family as a single unit. Multifamily Therapy takes a broader approach by integrating multiple nuclear families into a shared therapeutic journey. This collective setting facilitates shared learning, mutual support, and collaborative problem-solving, offering a comprehensive method to address family dynamics and mental health challenges.

What is Multifamily Therapy?

Multifamily Therapy or Multifamily Healing Spaces (MFHS) is a structured intervention involving 4-7 families participating in a series of 30 sessions. This group-based approach allows for discussing common issues, exchanging emotional support, and exploring new behaviours to enhance communication within and between families.

MFHS draw on theories such as Social Constructionism, Narrative Therapy, Family Resilience Theory, Bowen Theory, Structural Therapy, and Strategic Therapy. These theoretical foundations help address the intricate dynamics of family interactions and foster collective healing (Nichols, 2012; Walsch, 2003).

A Context of Collective Healing

In the aftermath of the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi, Rwandan society experienced profound disruptions in family and community cohesion, which are crucial for survival and growth. MFHS is introduced as a response to these disruptions, aiming to restore collective healing and rebuild trust among families, preventing further transmission of genocide legacies to the next generations. This group-based therapeutic model is particularly relevant in the context of post-genocide recovery, where collective trauma and societal fragmentation demand innovative approaches to mental health and community support.

MFHS' Goals for Rwandan Families



Supporting Parental Resilience:

MFHS assist parents in managing emotional and physical challenges, thus reinforcing their capacity to cope with past trauma. It addresses the intergenerational transmission of trauma and hostility by fostering resilience and adaptive coping strategies among parents.

Fostering Family Responsibility:

MFHS encourage families to examine and take responsibility for their roles in resolving family issues. MFHS promote open, respectful dialogue and collective problem-solving by identifying and modifying communication patterns that contribute to ongoing struggles.

Empowering Youth:

The therapy encourages youth to honour their family history while carving out their own identities. It promotes critical thinking and resilience, helping young people navigate family pressures with greater autonomy and self-awareness.

Healing Shared Wounds:

Families reflect on their collective experiences, working together to repair relationships and build community cohesion. MFHS align with Rwandan human dignity and peacebuilding values, focusing on nonviolent conflict resolution and fostering a sense of shared responsibility.

Looking Ahead

Multifamily Therapy represents a promising approach to addressing mental health challenges within family systems. By leveraging the collective strength of the community and enhancing communication, MFHS helps reduce stigma and empower families. Despite the promise, challenges still need to be solved in refining and adapting this approach to meet diverse needs. Ongoing research and practice are crucial to optimising MFT's effectiveness and broadening its application to strengthen mental health interventions in various contexts.

Multifamily testimonial

Before joining Multifamily Spaces, Nduwumuremyi Eugenie, a 45-year-old woman, spent 12 years engulfed in conflict with her husband. The Gender-Based Violence they experienced began to surface after a decade of marriage. Initially, their lives seemed stable; Eugene's husband held a respectable position at the district level while she operated a successful business supplying food to nearby schools. However, as their income grew, so did her husband's infidelity, leading him to divert substantial portions of his earnings to extramarital affairs.

Eugenie and her husband struggled to find common ground in parenting and household responsibilities. Their relationship deteriorated to the point where they rarely communicated, shared meals, or experienced peaceful moments together. Their constant conflicts drew attention from their community, branding them as disruptors of the neighbourhood's peace and security.



Eugene fought tirelessly for her husband to fulfil his responsibilities, shouldering the burden of managing their home alone while he neglected their family.

In 2022, her husband served a year-long detention due to gender-based violence, intensifying the animosity between them. However, upon his release, community facilitators reached out to them, urging them to participate in Multifamily Healing sessions. Reluctantly, they attended alongside their youngest child.

The therapy sessions, particularly focusing on the "tree of life" concept, became a turning point for Eugenie and her husband. Through open dialogue, Eugenie recognised her own shortcomings, such as her silent resentment and sometimes consuming all the food before her husband's return. The Multifamily sessions acted as a healing balm, fostering reconciliation and harmony between them.

"Since completing the therapy, my husband and I have rebuilt our relationship, sharing responsibilities and embracing a newfound sense of love and understanding. Our transformed dynamic hasn't escaped the notice of our neighbours, who now view us as a model of harmony. Through Multifamily Therapy, I've grown personally, empowering me to assist others in navigating their own conflicts, showcasing the ripple effect of positive change."

– Eugenie.



Co-Live: Building Bridges through Collaborative Livelihoods

Healing Through Collaboration

The Genocide against the Tutsi left deep scars on Rwandan society, eroding trust and complicating socio-economic engagements crucial for rebuilding lives. The Co-Live initiative addresses these challenges by promoting resilience through collaborative economic activities involving former genocide perpetrators, survivors, and other vulnerable groups. This initiative aims to replace trauma-driven identities with those grounded in productive collaboration and skills development.

The Vision of Co-Live

Co-Live seeks to address socio-economic hardships by fostering collaborative economic initiatives. Its objectives include enhancing livelihood conditions, fostering mutual understanding for a peaceful future, and transforming trauma-driven identities into ones based on individual contributions and skills.

A Multi-Faceted Approach

The Co-Live initiative integrates peacebuilding with livelihood promotion, leveraging their shared focus on resilience and holistic development. This approach addresses humanitarian, development, and peacebuilding needs by combining efforts to rebuild trust and enhance economic stability.

Transforming Lives Through Community-Based Enterprises

Co-Live guides participants through post-mental health and psychotherapy sessions towards establishing community-based enterprises. This phase emphasises trust-building among diverse groups and aims to bolster economic resilience. Community screenings revealed significant challenges such as food insecurity, reduced purchasing power, and environmental hazards exacerbated by inflation and rising essential costs.

Market Analysis

A comprehensive market analysis was conducted to identify viable micro-business opportunities and assess participant needs. This analysis highlighted the importance of social solidarity and capital through income-generating activities for post-conflict recovery. Key findings included business skills gaps, sustainability issues, and market opportunities across 25 sectors, tailored to local needs and aimed at enhancing socio-economic well-being and social cohesion in five districts.

Empowering Through Training

Training workshops were offered to 150 graduates from community healing spaces, focusing on collaborative skills, community support, shared responsibilities, inclusivity, conflict resolution, and resource management. These workshops aimed to equip participants with the skills necessary for successful collaboration and enterprise management.

Transformative Impact of Co-Live

1 Revitalised Livelihoods: Co-Live invigorates local economies by diversifying livelihood opportunities and addressing resource-related conflicts. This approach boosts income and assets and fosters a sense of belonging and well-being among participants.

2 Strengthened Collaborative Networks: The program enhances dispute resolution and cooperation mechanisms, building trust and improving relationships. This collaborative focus lays the groundwork for lasting peace and mutual understanding.

3 Empowered Communities: By promoting cooperative ventures and shared activities, Co-Live bridges divides between groups, facilitating reconciliation and enhancing social cohesion. This collective approach leads to more impactful and inclusive projects.

4 Enhanced Social Safety Nets: Co-Live improves social protection access, fostering community trust and cooperation. It helps maintain incomes, safeguard assets, and reduce feelings of injustice, contributing to stability and self-confidence.

Financial Inclusion and Growth: Through mi-

5 cro-credit and community savings groups, Co-Live supports economic development by providing financial resources and technical training. This backing fosters sustainable growth and financial inclusion.

6 Influential Policy Advocacy: The program advocates for policies that address regulatory, infrastructural, and environmental challenges, contributing to a supportive environment for sustainable livelihoods and social dialogue.

7 Strengthened Relationships and Governance: Co-Live promotes effective relationships and governance within communities and institutions. Emphasising good governance and equitable decision-making supports a more responsive and fair society.

Co-Live testimonials

“Learning how to write a business proposal transformed my approach. I now confidently draft business plans and help my group members. I’m excited to use these skills to mentor fellow villagers.”

A participant from Kibumbwe Sector, Nyamagabe District

The training shifted my perspective. I now actively seek input from all group members, resulting in more impactful projects.”

A participant from Kigombe Cell, Musanze District

GENDER

Socially-constructed roles, behaviours, expressions and identities of girls, women, boys, men and gender-diverse people.



SEX

Biological attributes of humans and animals, including physical features, chromosomes.



Integrating Gender and Inclusion into Our Approach

Interpeace prioritises gender and inclusion as critical elements of its peacebuilding efforts. By assessing partners' gender policies, investing in capacity building, and incorporating gender considerations into research and programming, we aim to address gender-based violence, promote gender equality, and foster positive masculinity. Collaborating with the Gender Monitoring Office (GMO) and the Ministry of Family and Gender Promotion (MIGEPROF) strengthens these initiatives, ensuring all voices are heard and contributing to a more equitable and peaceful society.

Informed by an inception phase, Interpeace and its partners (Haguruka, DIDE, and PFR) conducted a gender analysis across five districts, shaping strategies to mainstream gender throughout all approaches. This analysis deepened the understanding of gendered conflict dynamics, forming the foundation for effective strategies to counter violence and promote peace.

Ongoing assessments, reflection, and feedback sessions enhance in-house capacities, informing both staff training and program strategies. Field support visits ensure community dialogue facilitators (CDFs) maintain high standards, with a focus on gender-sensitive facilitation. Monitoring tools assess key factors like gender-balanced group facilitation, venue selection, and dialogue tim-

ing. CDFs are selected to ensure gender balance, and all facilitators are trained to engage male and female participants effectively. Quarterly feedback sessions further refine strategies and lead to the development of new approaches.

A gender tracker monitors and evaluates gender mainstreaming efforts, identifying gaps and informing both immediate and long-term programming. Key resources include the Multi-Family Healing Spaces protocol, designed to foster family cohesion, address intergenerational trauma, and tackle gender-based violence (GBV). These family therapy sessions improve communication and dialogue between parents and children, promoting healthier family dynamics. Complementary modules focus on positive parenting and strengthening family relationships.

Partnerships with government and non-governmental organisations like GMO and MIGEPROF have provided platforms for disseminating baseline findings and program materials, expanding the impact of these gender-focused initiatives.

Global evidence highlights the link between societal constructs of masculinity and deviant behaviour among men. Social expectations of dominance and emotional suppression often contribute to harmful behaviours like GBV. In response, the program developed resources aimed at

promoting gender equality among boys and young men, challenging harmful stereotypes, combating drug abuse, and preventing GBV.

To support the holistic rehabilitation and reintegration of inmates, Interpeace partnered with the Rwanda Correctional Service (RCS) to develop a standardised curriculum used in all correctional facilities. A gender-transformative manual was also introduced, engaging young men in dis-

cussions around positive masculinities, GBV prevention, and reintegration into society.

Lastly, gender considerations are integrated into the program's monitoring and evaluation frameworks. Gender-disaggregated data is collected and analysed, ensuring a gender lens is applied to assess the impact of interventions and inform future programming.

Generating Evidence for Impact

At Interpeace, research is integral to our peacebuilding strategies, driving evidence-based interventions tailored to community needs. In Rwanda, where the impacts of the Genocide against the Tutsi are still felt, our research focuses on understanding resilience and healing dynamics to shape effective policies and programs for a more inclusive future.

Community Resilience Assessment Framework (CRAF)

To strengthen resilience in Rwanda, Interpeace, in partnership with the Ministry of National Unity and Civic Engagement (MINUBUMWE), conducted a pivotal study on community resilience post-genocide. Titled *"A Community-Based Participatory Framework for the Assessment of Resilience in Rwanda,"* this study evaluated resilience across individual, household, community, and institutional levels using 38 indicators and a sample of 7,481 individuals. Unlike previous research, this study provides district-level insights and considers socio-historical factors like genocide survivor status and demobilised soldiers.

Key objectives include developing resilience indicators for future research and policy, establishing a baseline for resilience, and offering actionable recommendations for bolstering resilience. The findings are expected to guide MINUBUMWE's strategies and contribute to broader peacebuilding efforts, addressing ongoing societal challenges and strengthening national resilience.

Exploring Intergenerational Legacies and Risky Behaviours Among Post-Genocide Youth in Rwanda

Interpeace's study, *"Exploring Intergenerational Legacies, Their Transmission Process, and Effects on Engagement in Risky Behaviours among Post-Genocide Youth in Rwanda,"* examines how trauma and guilt from the Genocide are transmitted across generations and influence risky behaviours among youth. High rates of PTSD and mental health disorders persist among survivors and their descendants, while children of perpetrators face unique challenges affecting their development and opportunities.

The study aims to:

- ◆ Understand parent-child communication about the genocide.
- ◆ Explore the impact of this communication on trauma transmission.
- ◆ Examine the link between intergenerational legacies and risky behaviours.

The research will inform interventions and policies designed to enhance resilience and address the specific needs of affected youth, contributing to broader peacebuilding and healing efforts.

Exploring Psychosocial Factors and Effects of Adolescent Pregnancies in Rwanda

In response to the rising number of young mothers facing dropout and mental health issues, Interpeace, with support from the Embassy of France, is studying adolescent

pregnancies across five Rwandan districts: Nyagatare, Musanze, Rubavu, Gasabo, and Gisagara. Using 2022 data from MIGEPROF and the Gender Monitoring Office (GMO), this research seeks to identify psychosocial factors affecting adolescent pregnancies and propose a holistic support model for young mothers.

The study addresses a critical public health concern, aiming to:

- ◆ Identify key psychosocial factors and their impacts.
- ◆ Evaluate current support systems.

- ◆ Develop evidence-based strategies to reduce adolescent pregnancies.

The study's rationale is rooted in the need to develop effective interventions and policies that can mitigate the adverse consequences associated with early childbearing. This effort aligns with Rwanda's ongoing endeavours to address socio-economic disparities and historical trauma, enhancing societal resilience and equity. Understanding the dynamics at play can empower one of the most vulnerable segments of the population, facilitating broader societal improvements and fostering a supportive environment for young mothers and their children.

Insights from our Key Collaborators



"The work of Interpeace is having a profound and positive impact on the community. I commend its comprehensive approach to societal healing and its commitment to collaborating with all stakeholders, including empowering local organisations to ensure the sustainability of its initiatives after its direct involvement ends. One of Interpeace's key strengths is its emphasis on understanding the local context through extensive research before designing any interventions. This approach is why its initiatives are making a significant difference in Rwanda, as they are evidence-based, contextually informed, and blend both cultural and international practices. My recommendation is to maintain the valuable work Interpeace is doing but place greater emphasis on ensuring the long-term sustainability of its interventions. This could be achieved by partnering more closely with universities and relevant government institutions to institutionalise the tools and approaches developed."

Prof. Eugene Rutembesa, a Lecturer of Clinical Psychology at the University of Rwanda

"The collaboration between PFR, Interpeace and other partners in this programme is viewed as a critical component in Rwanda's ongoing reconciliation efforts. Many stakeholders, including government bodies, civil society, and local communities, see this partnership as a driving force behind Rwanda's unique model of societal healing."

Celestin Ngaruyinka, Executive Director of Prison Fellowship Rwanda





"Interpeace brought diverse expertise and internationally recognised approaches, enabling our staff to apply these methods effectively within our local context ."

Ninette Umurerwa, National Executive Secretary of Haguruka

"The programme has developed new tools and modules and has contributed to new policy propositions in different areas of peacebuilding, community resilience and prisoner rehabilitation and reintegration. This partnership has strengthened our organisation's capacity in developing advocacy strategies for societal healing and peacebuilding at the national level ."

Odette Mukansoro, Executive Director of DIDE



"We highly recognise the work of Interpeace, especially its community-based interventions, which have had a remarkable impact on the community. In particular, Resilience-Oriented Therapy is an innovative approach compared to the one-on-one method we have been using. We have observed considerable progress since its implementation. In the community, people are now more motivated to seek professional help at the early stages of their mental health issues. They have found healing and solace, and we hope to scale this therapy across the country. It is a community-based intervention that we deeply appreciate, as it has also enhanced the overall quality of care."

Dr. Jean Damascene Iyamuremye, Director of Psychiatric Care at the Rwanda Biomedical Centre.





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In partnership with the United Nations