Research-led Peace Education as Crisis Prevention:

Insights from Rwanda

Final report June 2022

Acknowledgements

Executive Summary

In 2015 Rwanda adopted a ground-breaking Competence-Based Curriculum. Peace and Values Education (PVE) was incorporated in this curriculum as a cross-cutting issue 'mainstreamed' across different subjects.[1] This approach is consistent with a broader trend that has seen the centring of education as a conflict prevention strategy.[2] The pedagogical potential in peace education is widely and increasingly recognised.[3] In an ideal form, peace education seeks to redress direct, structural and cultural forms of violence by equipping learners with "knowledge, skills, attitudes, behaviours, and worldviews that promote the culture of peace."[4] In practice, peace education inevitably encounters many of the underlying struggles, tensions, contestations and divisions that fuelled the direct violence.[5] Understanding how PVE can engage with this socially sensitive material and whether humanities and social science research can support this teaching is key to determining whether peace education can fashion novel ways for young people to cope with violent conflict and be an active part of conflict prevention.

This report summarises the findings of a 22-month empirical project assessing the PVE initiatives in Rwanda and their relevance for approaches to peace education in the Central African Republic (CAR). It presents the following key findings and recommendations.

Key Findings

› Peace and Values Education in Rwanda operates across a vast array of formal, non-formal and informal educational settings with teaching content being developed and delivered in government, NGO, faith-based and informal settings.

› In Rwanda there is a common recognition among PVE educators, learners, school leaders, family members, carers and policymakers that they encounter sensitivities around history, identity and varied experiences of harm in their teaching of PVE.

› Rwandan schools' indirect approaches to PVE though its delivery as a cross-cutting issue taught across different subjects enables educators to focus on building shared values including empathy, critical thinking, respect for pluralism and personal and shared responsibility.

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1   Rwanda Education Board (2015). Competence-Based curriculum: Curriculum Framework, Pre-Primary to Upper Secondary (Kigali) https://reb.rw/fileadmin/competence_based_curriculum/index0.html. Accessed 5 May 2022.

2   For example, the building of cultures of peace among the youth was explicitly included in the 2021 United Nations Strategy for Peace nsolidation, Conflict Prevention and Conflict Resolution in the Great Lakes Region https://ungreatlakes.unmissions.org/sites/default/files/s_2020_1168_e.pdf. Accessed 5 May 2022.

3   Galtung, Johan (2018), 'Form and Content of Peace Education' in Bajaj, Monisha (eds), *Encyclopedia of Peace Education* (Information Age Publishing, 2008).

4   Bajaj, Monisha (2015), 'Pedagogies of resistance and critical peace education praxis' *Journal of Peace Education,* 12:2, 154-166.

5   Paulson, Julia, Nelson A. Abiti, Julian Bermeo Osorio, Carlos Arturo Charria Hernandez, Duong Keo, Peter Manning, Lizzi O. Milligan, Kate Moles, Catriona Pennell, Sangar Salih, Kelsey Shanks (2020), 'Education as a site of memory: Developing a research agenda' *International Studies in the Sociology of Education,* 29:4, 429-451.

Recommendations

› Peace and Values Education should start by recognising individual and collective woundedness.

› There is a continued need to build safe, democratic and inclusive forums that bridge informal family and peer-based discussions of sensitive social issues with the teaching in formal and non-formal peace educational settings.

› Locally-embedded social science and humanities research can usefully inform the development of peace education teaching materials.

› Collaborative conversations among PVE educators, learners, carers, school leaders and policymakers in Rwanda and the Central African Republic can enable new thinking on synergies and differences in approaches to PVE.

1. Introduction

In the scholarly literature on politics and social order in post-genocide Rwanda, the typical contextual entry point is to offer a brief summary of the events leading up to and following the 1994 genocide against the Tutsi, referring to the core texts on how violence was enacted followed by an account of social order under the current ruling party, the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF).[6] We approach the contextualising of this peace education research from a different starting point.

First, we contextualise the research methodologically, situating our research collaboration within current Rwandan-led work on post-conflict reconstruction in the country and decolonial literatures. We then argue that this decolonial starting point prompts a more specific contextual focus that begins with a recognition of the existence of personal and social wounds and the need for healing when researching and practising peace education in Rwanda.

Second, through a detailed mapping of available PVE materials in Rwanda, coupled with interviews, focus groups and classroom observations, we place Rwanda's formal PVE intervention within the larger landscape of peace education interventions in the country. We show how peace education materials are developed, read and used in hugely heterogeneous settings, with a wide variety of actors who have diverse relationships to the state.

Third, we show that despite this variety of interventions, PVE participants, learners, parents, teachers, civil society and faith-based practitioners and government officials were all profoundly aware of a shared set of sensitivities around history, identity and shifts in temporal experiences of harm they encountered when engaging in PVE.

Finally, this wide recognition of the difficulties of engaging with these sensitivities helps to explain how, in schools, we found teachers exercising a strong preference towards indirect approaches to peace education which were focused on building shared values. Our empirical material shows that research-informed teaching materials can be usefully orientated to content on sensitive issues while enhancing this indirect values-based focus.

Overall, we show how PVE currently offers a vehicle for pursuing and embedding a more inclusive teaching pedagogy in Rwanda. However, there remains a need for the continued building of safe, democratic and inclusive forums that bridge informal family-based discussions of sensitive social issues with teaching in formal and non-formal educational settings. Enabling these inclusive forums offers the opportunity to recognise and respond to individual and collective wounds and the potential for social healing and repair. This provides the basis for ongoing regional knowledge exchange with similar peace education initiatives in CAR and the wider Great Lakes region.

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6   See, for example, Straus, Scott, *The Order of Genocide: Race, Power, and War in Rwanda* (Cornell University Press 2006); Straus, Scott and Waldorf, Lars (eds.), *Remaking Rwanda: State Building and Human Rights after Mass Atrocity* (University of Wisconsin, 2011); Fujii, Lee Ann, *Killing Neighbors: Webs of Violence in Rwanda* (Cornell University Press 2009) and McDoom, Omar S, *The Path to Genocide in Rwanda: Security, Opportunity, and Authority in an Ethnocratic State* (Cambridge University Press, 2021).

2. Methodology

'Research-led Peace Education as Crisis Prevention' is a collaborative project that ran from March 2020 until December 2021. Our research was informed by a methodological commitment to decolonise research on peace education in Rwanda. As Sebelo Ndlovu-Gatsheni writes, decoloniality is, in part, an explicit epistemic endeavour:

> "At the core of decoloniality is the agenda of shifting the geography and biography of knowledge, bringing identity into epistemology – who generates knowledge and from where?"[7]

This epistemic focus challenges how knowledge is conceived and shared, along with what and whose knowledge is valid.[8] Shifts in the geography and biography of who generates and validates knowledge on peace education holds the potential to bring about changes in the orientation of both research and practice in this area. Recent work by Rwandan scholars on post-conflict reconstruction – through the Aegis Trust's Research, Policy and Higher Education programme, in which all of the project authors have been involved[9] – provided the necessary entry point to this project. Read together, this work shows the need to focus on inter-family and inter-generational legacies of conflicts,[10] the importance of being aware of shifts in dynamics in families[11] and changes to citizen relations with the state.[12] Within this body of Rwandan-led work, education emerges as a site for encountering both inter-family and inter-generational legacies of conflicts.[13] Building from this decolonial starting point, this project addressed three key questions:

7   Ndlovu-Gatsheni, Sabelo. 2015. 'Decoloniality As The Future of Africa', *History Compass* 13/10 (2015): 485–496.

8   Burgis-Kasthala, Michelle and Schwobel-Patel, Christine. 2022. 'Against coloniality in the international law curriculum: examining decoloniality', *The Law Teacher* 57, 1- 22: 3.

9   For an accessible summary of this collaboration see Ndahina, Felix, Mosely, Jason, Palmer, Nicola, Clark, Phil and Shenge, Sandra. (2022), 'Rwandan researchers are finally being centred in scholarship about their country' The Conversation https://theconversation.com/rwandan-researchers-are-finally-being-centred-in-scholarship-about-their-own-country-183142?utm_term=Autofeed&utm_medium=Social&utm_source=Twitter#Echobox=1653506447 Accessed 31 May 2022.

10 Uwizeye, Glorieuse et al.(2021), 'Double Jeopardy: Young adult mental and physical health outcomes following conception via genocidal rape during the 1994 genocide against the Tutsi in Rwanda', *Social Science & Medicine* 278, 113938; Sarabwe, Emmanuel, Richters, Annemiek and Vysma, Marianne, 'Marital conflict in the aftermath of genocide in Rwanda: an explorative study within the context of community based sociotherapy' Intervention (2018) 16 (1) 14 and Benda, Richard M., 'Promising Generations: From Intergenerational guilt to Ndi Umunyarwanda', in Grayson, Hannah and Hitchcott, Nicki (eds), *Rwanda Since 1994: Stories of Change* (Liverpool University Press, 2019).

11   Kagaba, Mediatrice (2015), 'Women's experiences of gender equality laws in rural Rwanda: the case of Kamonyi District', *Journal of Eastern African Studies* 9:4, 574-592.

12 Nzahabwanayo, Sylvestre (2018), 'Identification and Critique of the Values Education Notion Informing the Itorero Training Program for High School Leavers in Post-genocide Rwanda', *Interchange* 49, 111–132.

13 Basabose, Jean de Dieu & Habyarimana, Heli (2019), 'Peace Education in Rwandan Secondary Schools: Coping With Contradictory Messages', *Journal of Peacebuilding & Development* 14:2, 138-149 and Buhigiro, Jean Leonard & Wassermann, Johan (2017), 'Revealing Professional Development 'Needs through Drawings: The Case of Rwandan History Teachers Having to Teach the Genocide against the Tutsi', Yearbook of the International Society of History Didactics 38, 151-174.

1. What are understood to be the areas of social and political sensitivity, both past and present, in the teaching of peace education in Rwanda?

2. What are the mechanisms for engaging with this sensitive content?

3. What role can social science and humanities research play in supporting this teaching?

The empirical work to answer these core questions was conducted through four reflexively informed research phases.

Phase 1

To launch the project, as a research team, we mapped the actors involved in peace education in Rwanda. We collected and described the teaching materials currently being used in formal, non-formal and informal educational settings and produced a set of discussion papers published under the title 'The Landscape of Peace Education in Rwanda'. These working papers provided the basis for three reflexive workshops where Rwandan PVE participants engaged with their own positioning in relation to the design and teaching of peace education. This project ran through the period of the global Covid 19 pandemic. For reasons of public health, all of the workshops took place on-line and we enabled wide participation through providing internet credit for mobile devices. The school-based research occurred during a period that the schools were open in Rwanda.

Phase 2

On 20 September 2020, we hosted the first reflexive workshop with 30 participants from five key groups, including high school teachers, high school learners, government policymakers, civil society actors and Rwandan academics working in peace education. Through breakout sessions and public discussions, participants were invited to reflect on their own and their institutions' understanding of peace education, the role of research within it and where areas of sensitivity exist. Following the first reflexive review workshop, the research team identified 16 participants from the workshop groups with whom we conducted follow-up interviews from September 2020 to January 2021. These workshop discussions and interviews were transcribed and form part of the empirical material underpinning the key findings of this report.

Phase 3

From June and July 2021, the research team undertook a period of school-based empirical work. Based on purposive sampling accounting for Rwanda's geographic diversity and different experiences during the 1990-1994 civil war and the 1994 genocide against the Tutsi, we worked in three provinces and the City of Kigali. Ten schools were selected in four districts (Burera, Karongi, Bugesera and Gasabo) and we conducted nine classroom observations and 21 focus group discussions with learners, teachers and parents involved with the schools. Throughout the data collection in Phases 2 and 3, we engaged in a collaborative coding process in which all team members read and individually coded the transcribed workshop, interviews and focus group materials. In line with the potential reconstructive aims of decolonial thinking, we theorised from

the empirical data rather than starting with existing theories to set the terms of the analysis. An inductive process was used to analyze and to summarize the empirical material. Each researcher read and coded the empirical material independently, then shared their findings with the wider team who then collectively compared, revised and categorised them. We then agreed on themes together and drafted the structure of the argument as laid out below. Based on this material and our previous research, we developed draft model lesson plans for use in Rwandan high schools.

Phase 4

On 5 November 2021, we hosted the second reflexive workshop. This event reconvened the participants involved in the first workshop. The research team presented two draft papers of the overall research findings and incorporated feedback from participants. In breakout sessions, the workshop participants discussed the model lesson plans developed by the research team, offering feedback and revisions. On 10 December 2021, we hosted the final workshop entitled, 'Comparative Conversations on Peace Education'. This event brought together international and regional experts on peace education and peace education partners in the Central African Republic, opening up a sustained South-South conversation on the synergies and differences in experiences of conflict, woundedness and approaches to peace education. What follows is a brief summary of the four key research findings that emerged from this iterative and reflexive research process.

3. Woundedness

As is often repeated through songs, poems and speeches during the commemoration of the 1994 genocide against the Tutsi, 'Rwanda warakomeretse' – Rwanda has been deeply wounded. Our research shows that PVE should start by recognising individual and collective woundedness.

The concept of 'wounds' was consistently mentioned and closely linked with peace and values education across all the participant groups in this study. The concept of the 'wound' was used broadly to refer to the emotional and relational effects of the genocide. These wounds include not only those directly inflicted by the genocide against the Tutsi but also other wounds caused by experiences of conflicts and violence across Rwandan history. The participants in this study recognized diverse wounds across different segments of the society. Specific attention was drawn to the wounds of the survivors of genocide which one participant described as 'critical'. Children born of genocidal rape were described as carrying 'special' wounds. One interviewee from a faith-based organisation noted a geographical difference in wounds among different communities:

> "the North (Gisenyi) where the war continued after the genocide, they have their own perception of events and wounds that are not found in other places. The East (Bugesera) which saw around 80% Tutsi killed during the genocide...."[14]

Our participants understood themselves as situated within this wounded space. As one teacher articulated:

> "You can't really escape the history because we live in it and we have lived in it, but that is also a challenge that I meet of not having enough information about certain topics even though we have lived through it."[15]

Participants across different groups were deeply aware of this woundedness. Teachers articulated how they tried to adjust their teaching in response to this recognition. One of them stated:

> "There are still people who live with trauma. When you have not prepared how to help learners who can be traumatized or someone who can assist you and you find that what was intended to be a teaching activity becomes a disruptive form of teaching."[16]

The prevalence of unexpressed wounds has been recently highlighted by the Rwanda Reconciliation Barometer published by the previously-termed National Unity and Reconciliation Commission (NURC) in 2020. It found that 26.9% of Rwandans perceive unhealed wounds caused by the genocide and divisive ideology as a threat to sustainable peace, unity and reconciliation. The

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14 Interview with Faith-based PVE practitioner-Rabagirana Ministries, 5 January 2021, conducted online by Glorieuse Uwizeye. Full interview on file 'Interviews with Key People'.

15 Focus Group Discussion with teachers, Burera District, 9 June 2021, conducted by Jean Leonard Buhigiro. Full Focus Group Discussion on file 'Data transcription. FGD Teachers/Research Project PE in Schools'.

16 Focus Group Discussion with teachers, Burera District, 10 June 2021, conducted by Jean Leonard Buhigiro. Full Focus Group Discussion on file 'Data transcription. FGD Teachers/Research Project PE in Schools'.

study recommended the creation of safe spaces to allow free expression of historical trauma and wounds. The NURC urged:

> "Actors involved in peacebuilding, both public institutions and CSOs [civil society organisations], should create safe spaces (secure places) for dialogue and listening sessions in small groups. These spaces should be well structured to ensure that people feel safe and comfortable to share their suffering".[17]

Across the different experiences of woundedness, our materials showed a strong articulation for the need to treat the wounds (*kuvura ibikomere*) as a prerequisite for healing (*gukira*) and sustainable peace. Some peace education and socio-therapeutic interventions in Rwandan communities focus on the mutual healing (*mvura nkuvure*) of these wounds of history. Starting with a recognition of woundedness when engaging in PVE establishes it as more than a pedagogic tool; it also carries the potential for facilitating healing. Woundedness is the first step in locating these educational endeavours in their social context and is consistent with Elelwani Ramugondo's idea that a decolonial approach, in this instance in peace education, can and should be understood as 'healing work'.[18]

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17 NURC. 2020.Rwanda Reconciliation Barometer, p 174.

18 Ramugondo, Elelwani. 2018. 'Healing work: intersections for decoloniality', *World Federation of Occupational Therapists Bulletin*, 74:2, 83–91: 84.

4. Peace and Values Education in Rwanda operates across formal, non-formal and informal educational settings

Peace education content is found in formal, non-formal and informal educational settings.[19] Schools, churches, families and learning centres, non-governmental organisations, clinics, playgrounds, markets and workplaces are all sites of learning.[20] To account for this important diversity, we mapped the actors and teaching materials used across government, state and private educational settings, NGOs and faith-based initiatives and within informal settings in Rwanda. To begin, we describe the breadth of these initiatives then show the relationships among these different sites of learning. This description draws attention to the important distinction among formal educational learning of schools, training colleges and universities; non-formal learning, which is structured but is not provided by an education or training institution; and, informal learning, which emerges from daily activities related to work, family or leisure. Recognising this diversity highlights the different sites of pedagogical power in Rwanda.

As noted, the major peace education intervention in the formal basic educational setting has been the roll out of PVE as a cross-cutting issue now taught across different subjects in the national Competence-Based curriculum in all government schools across the country.[21] This has been overseen by the Rwanda Basic Education Board (REB) in collaboration with civil society partners such as the Aegis Trust. In addition, government programs and policies – domestically billed as home-grown initiatives – offer a wide range of government-led non-formal educational interventions. These include the *Abunzi* (mediation committees), *Ubudehe* (local collective action/socio-economic categorisation), *Itorero ry'Igihugu* (civic education programme), *Girinka* (one cow per family in poverty), *Umuganura* (harvest day), Umuganda (community work), *Inteko z'Abaturage* (Citizens forum), *Ndi Umunyarwanda* (I am Rwandan) and *Abarinzi b'Igihango* (guardians of the Covenant). One of the outcomes of this diversity of government-led interventions is that a wide variety of teahing materials have been developed. In addition to materials developed by REB, other actors such as NURC have issued their own manuals and guidelines on themes encompassing unity, reconciliation and peace values.[22] Under NURC's guidelines, primary, secondary and vocational schools are instructed to share weekly *Ndi Umunyarwanda* messages with students and to periodically report on activities undertaken.[23]

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19 Akudolu, Lilian-Rita (2010) 'The Formal, Non-Formal and Informal Continuum in Peace Education Curriculum' A Paper Presented at the 8th Biennial Conference on Developing Peace Education Curriculum for Nigeria, 18-23.

20 Harris, Ian M. and Morrison, Mary Lee, *Peace Education*` 2013).

21 Rwanda Education Board (2015). Competence-Based curriculum: Curriculum Framework, Pre-Primary to Upper Secondary (Kigali) https://reb.rw/fileadmin/competence_based_curriculum/index0.html. Accessed 5 May 2022.

22 NURC. (2017a). Ibiganirompaka ku Muco w'amahoro, Ubumwe n'ubwiyunge mu Mashuri Abanza, Ayisumbuye n'ay'imyuga (Debates on the Culture of Peace, Unity and Reconciliation in Primary, Secondary and Vocational Schools). Kigali and NURC and Ibiganirompaka ku Muco w'amahoro, Ubumwe n'ubwiyunge mu Mashuri Makuru na Kaminuza (Debates on the Culture of Peace, Unity & Reconciliation in Higher Institutions of Learning). Kigali.

23 NURC, Ubutumwa bwa Ndi Umunyarwanda Butangwa mu Mashuri Abanza, Ayisumbuye n'ay'imyuga, https://www.nurc.gov.rw/fileadmin/Documents/Others/Ubutumwa_NDU_Amashuri.pdf. Accessed 31 May 2022.

In an effort to further coordinate these initiatives, from July 2021, Rwandan authorities established a new Ministry of National Unity and Civic Engagement (MINUBUMWE) whose functions were later defined by a Prime Ministerial Order.[24] This new ministry brings together three previously very influential institutions — the National Unity and Reconciliation Commission (NURC), the National Itorero Commission (NIC), the National Commission for the Fight Against Genocide (CNLG) and the Fund for Support and Assistance to the Neediest Survivors of the Genocide against the Tutsi (FARG) — with the aim of increased coordination of pedagogical interventions. While this shows a move towards increased centralisation, the landscape of peace education remains surprisingly diverse.

These government interventions are informed and supplemented by the strong involvement of faith-based organisations in the education sector. Several Christian religious institutions, including the African Evangelistic Enterprise (AEE), the Christian Action for Reconciliation and Social Assistance (CARSA) and Wellspring Academy, are involved in peace education activities in schools. These organisations have developed PVE materials that are rolled out in both formal educational settings, notably schools run or supported by these organisations, and within non-formal teaching settings including after school clubs and Sunday schools.

These faith-based interventions then overlap with an even wider range of non-governmental actors involved in PVE, albeit seldom with a full geographical reach across the country. For example, the Association Modeste et Innocent (AMI) founded in Butare has mainly operated in four districts of Southern Province (Huye, Nyanza, Nyaruguru, Gisagara), while in contrast the radio soap opera "Musekeweya (a new dawn)" run by La Benevolencija is broadcast across the country. Some civil society organisations use materials developed by other actors or apply verbatim internationally designed materials in areas of peace education and conflict management, sometimes with no or limited adaptation to the Rwandan context. However, other organisations have successfully adapted materials to the local context. Examples include uses of methods adapted from the Alternatives to Violence Project (AVP) rendered in the local context as *Gukemura amakimbirane udateje andi* (resolving conflicts without causing others) or local uses of sociotherapy under the name *ibiganiro mvuramibanire* (social restorative dialogues) or *mvura nkuvure*.[25]

Among the participants we interviewed working in this wider public sphere of non-formal peace education, some saw themselves as collaborating directly with government-led initiatives. As one NGO practitioner noted:

> "In the context of Rwanda having strategic advocacy meetings is important, because we rely on constructive engagement [with the government] when it comes to policy change in Rwanda. It has been working".[26]

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24 On the creation and attributions of MINUBUMWE, see respectively: Republic of Rwanda/Office of the Prime Minister, Cabinet communique July 14th, 2021 and; Prime Minister's Order No 021/03 of 21/10/2021 determining mission, responsibilities, and organisational structure of the Ministry of National Unity and Civic Engagement, OGRR n° Special of 21/10/2021. "Ubumwe" is the Kinyarwanda word for "Unity".

25 https://cbsrwanda.org/about/ Accessed 31 May 2022.

26 Interview with NGO- PVE practitioner- Never Again Rwanda, 14 December 2020, conducted by Sylvestre Nzahabwanayo. Full interview on file 'Interviews with Key People'.

Others saw themselves as offering a different orientation. As one participant noted in reflecting on their mediation practices, which they saw as part of peace education:

> "Transformative mediation is different from mediation practised by the Government. Mediators in the Government framework are like judges. They listen to both parties in conflict, and then make a resolution. For us, the difference lies where the concerned persons in conflict are the ones to make their own decision." [27]

In contrast to these non-formal interventions, the informal educational setting had a much more ambiguous relationship with both government- and civil society-driven education. Participants in this study routinely recognised family and peer groups as crucial sites of peace education but they were deeply uncertain about the relationship between this informal learning and the formal and non-formal educational interventions. Participants described what they saw as a tension between the public sphere, informed by the official curricula, and the learning that prevailed in private spaces. As one participant noted:

> "The main challenge in peace education in Rwanda is that what is taught in the public is different from what is taught in the families. For example, what students are taught in schools is different from what parents in homes teach their children. If we take an example of ethnicity or *Ndi Umunyarwanda* and what happened in Rwanda, yes, we do not talk about ethnicity in public but at home we talk about it. So the way this subject is talked about privately and in public is different and it could limit the culture of peace in Rwanda."[28]

In the words of another practitioner interviewee, quoting a young Rwandan:

> "When we are at home, there is what we are taught, when we go to school, we are slightly taught different things, we are told we are one, there is no problem, no Hutus no Tutsis in the community. And then when we listen to the radio, we hear different messages from politicians, we are confused."[29]

Practitioners working in PVE explain it in the following terms:

> "Some people will tell you that you know for the youth they are fine, they don't have those issues of ethnicity and when we talk to them it is different. When we spoke to the youth they developed a coded language they use when discussing these sensitive subjects. So, this is critically challenging in peace education."[30]

It is notable that some of the non-formal interventions in Rwanda are already aimed at bridging

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27 Interview with NGO- PVE practitioner- Friends' Peace House-Urugo rw'Amahoro, 9 December 2020, conducted by Heli Habyarimana. Full interview on file 'Interviews with Key People'.

28 Interview with NGO- PVE practitioner- RWAMREC, 3 February 2021, conducted online by Médiatrice Kagaba. Full interview on file 'Interviews with Key People'.

29 Interview with NGO- PVE practitioner- Never Again Rwanda, 14 December 2020, conducted by Sylvestre Nzahabwanayo. Full interview on file 'Interviews with Key People'.

30 Interview with NGO- PVE practitioner- Never Again Rwanda, 14 December 2020, conducted by Sylvestre Nzahabwanayo. Full interview on file 'Interviews with Key People'.

these public and private spheres. Our mapping process drew attention to 'National Women's Council' (NWC) committees that work at the community level to raise public awareness around gender, cultural and political ideologies, injustice, abuses, threats and inequalities both in homes and communities. In addition, the *Umugoroba w'ababyeyi* or 'Parents' Evening Forum' offer families a space to discuss disputes including cases of violence, and where best practices are shared between parents and carers. These forums focus on current violence, a common area of sensitivity discussed in the next section. More broadly, these bridging spaces offer valuable sites to address a range of sensitive areas of teaching content. What is key to recognise is the diversity of pedagogical interventions aimed at peace building in Rwanda. There are divergences and synergies between government-led and civil society initiatives and the learning in the informal settings of families and peer groups. In Rwanda, peace education is an on-going dialogue in which the content, methodology and the teaching settings are both negotiated and subject to change.

5. Common Recognition of Sensitive Teaching Content

While the diversity of approaches to, and sites of, peace education is notable, a strongly shared recognition emerged among our study participants regarding the struggles and points of contestation in the substantive orientation of this teaching. Three central tensions emerged from our material, relating to (1) the interpretation and teaching of Rwandan history, (2) renegotiations of identities and belonging, and (3) the temporality of peace education in looking at past violence and dealing with current violence.

5.1) The interpretation and teaching of Rwandan history

In discussing the challenges facing peace education, the participants in our study recognized that teachers encounter challenges in teaching some parts of Rwandan history because of various interpretations of that history and their own positioning in relation to those accounts. The Rwandan government is committed to promoting an inclusive discourse of citizenship, chiefly anchored in Rwandanness at the expense of potentially divisive ethnic affiliations. In this context the challenge resides in striking the balance between remaining faithful to historical facts and not compromising the Rwandanness philosophy of *Ndi umunyarwanda*. In the classroom one of our teacher participants offered the following reflection:

> "Actually, the largest portion of the Rwandan history is based on ethnicity and it being the main cause of what happened. Yes, there was bad governance but that too was based on ethnicity, so talking about that topic becomes very hard because you are not even sure about the audience that you have. So, this is one of the subjects that one doesn't go in details about because maybe I have wrong or had insufficient information or maybe I am not informed or maybe I will say something that is offensive because the students have different backgrounds. For example, a student's parent is in jail, they may be defensive because they believe that they were treated unfairly."[31]

To return to the recognition of woundedness, some teachers are reluctant to teach aspects of Rwandan history because of their own positioning and that of their students. This finding echoes Jean Leonard Buhigiro's previous work which found that

> "the teaching of the genocide against the Tutsi is not an easy task because the teacher has to be careful not only in the choice of the methodology but also in selecting words to be used in a history class and taking into consideration the Rwandan socio-political context".[32]

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31 Focus Group Discussion with teachers, Burera District, 9 June 2021, conducted by Sylvestre Nzahabwanayo. Full Focus Group Discussion on file 'Data transcription.FGD Teachers/Research Project PE in Schools'.

32 Buhigiro, Jean Leonard. 2020. 'Understanding the complexity of teaching the genocide against the Tutsi through a career life story', *Yesterday & Today*, 24, 28-54.

Some teachers referred to the value of the teaching training and guidance they had received in navigating this difficult terrain:

"Nageraga ku mateka y'u Rwanda nkabisimbuka (I used to skip the chapter on the History of Rwanda), but after training, I have got better ways to teach it. We openly discuss with students for them to know the truth and build together a peaceful country *(ngo twese twubake igihugu cy'amahoro*)."[33]

"Using the knowledge I got from trainings and materials, I took them through the topic and students openly talked about ethnicities and how they should not be causes of divisions, and the lesson was successful".[34]

Among the parents involved in the focus group discussions, there was similarly an articulation of their struggles with their own role as educators. As one parent stated,

"But you will find that in the discussions they are giving at the end of the day the kid approaches and asks, 'We heard about the killings that happened in the Genocide, can you tell us more about what was happening? How was it? Did someone really pick up a machete and murder their neighbour? How is that possible, did it really happen?' You find that the child doesn't really understand it……We find that even for us the parents we think that it was extreme killings but because we weren't here in the depth of it, so, you cannot really answer the question the child ask you because you too feel overwhelmed."[35]

The common recognition of these struggles across high school teachers, learners, parents, carers, civil society participants and Rwandan academics working in peace education shows the importance of developing teaching materials that support all of these stakeholders in addressing this topic. It is a key site where social science and humanities research can help to inform peace education initiatives. In addition, as noted in the final section, indirect teaching tools focused on critical thinking may offer valuable opportunities for creative engagement with the teaching of Rwandan history.

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33 Focus Group Discussion with teachers, Bugesera District, 2 June 2021, conducted by Heli Habyarimana. Full Focus Group Discussion on file 'Data transcription. FGD Teachers/Research Project PE in Schools'.

34 Focus Group Discussion with teachers, Karongi District, 26 May 2021, conducted by Heli Habyarimana. Full Focus Group Discussion on file 'Data transcription. FGD Teachers/Research Project PE in Schools'.

35 Focus Group Discussion with Parents-Teachers Association (PTA), Burera District, 9 June 2021, conducted by Sylvestre Nzahabwanayo. Full Focus Group Discussion on file 'Data transcription. FGD Teachers/Research Project PE in Schools'.

5.2) Renegotiations of identities and belonging

Within the empirical data, PVE practitioners linked the challenges of teaching on contentious points of Rwandan history with issues around the use and connection to different identities:

> "The other thing is about the use of certain concepts, and some of the teachers were hesitating to use them. When you have history modules and people in charge of teaching them are afraid to use some concepts in those modules, this is also a challenge. [...] First, when it comes to talking about ethnicity, let me say it well, as we are in the research framework. When it comes to using these concepts Hutu and Tutsi, teachers are afraid to use them. Second, some concepts are frequently used during the genocide commemoration period...There is some fear of using certain words because they may be considered as genocide ideology. So, people rather avoid their use."[36]

In the classroom some learners found it difficult to square narratives on discarding Hutu, Tutsi and Twa "ethnic" identities with frequent references to the 'genocide against the Tutsi.' As one practitioner recounted:

> "One of the sensitive topics is this concept of genocide and its consequences. But it is also about ethnicity. For example, young people in any session we have had with government institutions, this one question always comes up: if you say that we don't have Tutsi and Hutu in Rwanda, and we still have the "Genocide against Tutsi" in our constitution, how do you connect that?"[37]

As noted above, these questions of re-negotiating identity and belonging in Rwanda today also emerged in discussions of how learning in private settings differs from that in public spaces. Recognising the shared difficulties in these discussions across participants' groups highlights the importance of teaching materials that are focused on enabling family engagement with formal learning settings and peace education content.

5.3) The temporality of peace education in looking at past violence and in dealing with current violence

The bridging of public and private learning spaces was similarly significant with regard to temporal experiences of violence. PVE practitioners expressed a strong concern about current experiences of violence, often discussed in terms of the notion of 'family conflict' and the role of PVE. In the classroom settings, one teacher articulated the issue in the following terms:

> "Family conflicts are negatively affecting children. We always discuss with some children who have such problems, and we try to counsel them, but it is very difficult. They are

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36 Interview with PVE practitioner- National ITORERO Commission, 16 December 2020, conducted by Sylvestre Nzahabwanayo. Full interview on file 'Interviews with Key People'.

37 Interview with NGO PVE Practitioner-Christian Action for Reconciliation and Social Assistance (CARSA), 3 February 2021, conducted online by Glorieuse Uwizeye. Full interview on file 'Interviews with Key People'.

visibly affected, and this has negative implications for their integration at school and performance."[38]

"The kids we educate have where they come from and we also don't know about the education that they have received individually from their parents. They can leave a home of conflicts, they can endure assault and in this case if we understand that they will not have peace in class and might need to have some sort of revenge due to the wounds they have and this kind of behaviour will disrupt the peace among them and their classmates."[39]

The reflections of these teachers underscore the issue of whether peace education should restrict itself to genocide and other ethnic identity-related problems or consider other issues that profoundly affect the lives of Rwandans and strain the social fabric of communities. Some of these issues, such as family conflicts, remain localised. In addition, however, as argued by post-colonial thinkers and in line with decolonial knowledge generation, there is a need for peace education to go beyond the localised, immediate origin of apparent forms of violence and social injustices to interrogate the contribution of the world order in creating and sustaining unequal economic and political power distributions that underpin this violence.[40] This offers another site where social science and humanities research can directly inform the development of PVE materials and acknowledge current factors such as social media use especially among the youth, regional dimensions of conflicts, pandemics and climate change and its causes and consequences.

Our research shows a clear role for humanities and social science research in supporting learning on topics that are socially and politically sensitive. However, as noted earlier, this material needs to be informed by a deep recognition of woundedness. In the final section we look at how, within the schools in this study, indirect approaches to PVE have enabled educators to focus on building shared values.

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38 Focus Group Discussion with teachers, Gasabo District, 17 June 2021, conducted by Heli Habyarimana. Full Focus Group Discussion on file 'Data transcription. FGD Teachers/Research Project PE in Schools'.

39 Focus Group Discussion with teachers, Burera District, 10 June 2021, conducted by Sylvestre Nzahabwanayo. Full Focus Group Discussion on file 'Data transcription. FGD Teachers/Research Project PE in Schools'.

40 Zembylas, M. (2018). 'Con-/divergences between postcolonial and critical peace education: Towards pedagogies of decolonization in peace education', *Journal of Peace Education*, *15*(1), 1-23.

6. Indirect approaches to PVE have enabled educators to focus on building shared values

Bal-Tal and Rosen argue that indirect peace education does not directly address the conflict. Instead, it concerns itself either with very general themes relevant to peace or with an array of skills, values and attitudes such as nonviolence, empathy, human rights, and conflict resolution.[41] Within our school-based research, there was strong support for indirect approaches to PVE that enable educators to focus on building share values and fostering cultures of peace. Within these schools, peace education emerges strongly as a vehicle for pursuing and embedding a more inclusive pedagogy.

In one of the schools we visited, the classroom had a slogan "In peace and love" that the students often repeated during parts of the lesson. The teacher explained that the slogan instilled among the students the knowledge and practice of peace in the classroom and beyond. The students used it as a leitmotiv; a means to reenergise the class and to promote cohesion in the classroom. In a second school, at the beginning of the lesson, the teacher took one or two minutes to remind the students of some PVE principles and values to be developed in the lesson, including collaboration, supporting one another, being strong and learning in peace. He then continued with the lesson objectives to be attained.

Throughout the study, it was observed that teachers emphasised the use of group work, discussion sessions and debates to build critical thinking, collaboration, mutual care and respect, and responsibility. Teachers noted that group discussions enable individual learners' growth through their contribution with ideas, comments, questions and answers shared among the group members. In this approach, as one teacher explained, "every child's growth or individual student's development depends on the whole class". More specifically, PVE was found to support efforts to move away from corporal punishment. One teacher repeated a Kinyarwanda proverb '*Inkoni ivuna igufa ntivura ingeso*' (a stick breaks a bone, but never changes a character). This supports established research that advocates the abolition of corporal punishment globally. Peace education offers one route to help in embedding this practice.[42]

In terms of the substantive content of the peace and values teaching across high school subjects, learners offered a range of examples. One group of students reported that the content of "symbiosis" or interdependence between living organisms in Biology informs PVE. In addition to being taught how creatures relate to one another, the students were also taught about empathy, collaboration and mutual respect while promoting positive attitudes towards environmental protection. In another class on creative arts and literature, students had to sit, discuss and co-develop a story line, identify themselves as characters then perform these stories as a team. Students suggested that this activity highlighted the ways in which their diversity constitutes a source of richness. In

41 Bar-Tal, Daniel and Rosen, Yigal. 2009. 'Peace Education in Societies Involved in Intractable Conflicts: Direct and Indirect Models', *Review of Educational Research* 79: 557-575: 563.

42 Gershoof, Elizabeth. 2017. 'School corporal punishment in global perspective: prevalence, outcomes, and efforts at intervention' *Psychology, Health and Medicine* 22: 224 – 239.

addition, teachers connected the objective of this lesson to values of empathy, caring for others and responsibility. During the conclusion of the lesson of Descriptive Statistics, the teacher summarised the content in the following way:

> "This lesson may provide you with information that may help you to know the socio-economic conditions of your people; if you are a leader, it may help you to know the living standard of your people." (*isomo riratwereka uko wabona amakuru atuma ushobora gufasha abaturage bawe igihe uri umuyobozi; ryagufasha kumenya uburyo abaturage bawe babayeho*)

Showing some of the potential to engage with wider structural issues that underpin violence, teachers also cited examples of initiatives to support financially vulnerable people and assist learners with financial, social or behavioural difficulties. Consider the following evidence from one school: "We have a 'peace basket' which is basically a way of helping our fellow classmates or friends who have lost a family relative". These solidarity practices were understood as an opportunity for the school to emulate the culture of peace being taught in different subjects while allowing the school to promote the culture of peace and to extend peace education it to learners' families and the community at large. Across the school-based research, values centred on social solidarity, empathy and critical thinking were drawn on to enable indirect approaches to peace education.

Conclusion

We began this report with a recognition of woundedness and a commitment to decolonise the research and practice of peace and values education in Rwanda and within central Africa more broadly. This recognition of woundedness must be read together with our participants' strongly shared identification of ongoing sensitivities around history, identity and current violence and teachers' preference towards more indirect PVE teaching and learning inside schools.

In Rwanda, peace education is a critical site highlighting a wide and diverse communal commitment to reforging social bonds after mass violence. Humanities and social science research has, and can, contribute to learning on these sensitive social issues. A focus on shared values and indirect approaches to PVE highlights the wider ways through which PVE offers a vehicle for pursuing and embedding a more inclusive pedagogy in schools and universities. This provides the necessary starting point for South to South and regional engagements with PVE learning between Rwanda, the Central African Republic and further afield.

About this Report

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