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SEARCH FOR COMMON GROUND

WOMEN'S PEACE CENTER ACTIVITIES IN BURUNDI

Award No. 623-G-00-99-00043-00

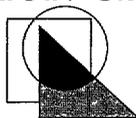
Final Report

July 15, 1998- April 30, 2000

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To Whom It May Concern:

We are pleased to present this final report for Award No. 623-G-00-99-00043-00. This report covers the activities of the Women's Peace Center from the beginning of the grant period, July 15, 1998 through two no-cost extensions, until April 30, 2000.

We trust you will be pleased with the activities of the Women's Peace Center, and are greatly appreciative of the support that you have given it. If you have any questions regarding the content of this report, please do not hesitate to contact me at +1 202 777 2212.

Sincerely,

Sally Chin
Angola-Burundi Projects Coordinator

I. Introduction

The following report covers the activities of Search for Common Ground's Women's Peace Center, Bujumbura, Burundi (USAID Grant no. 623-G-00-99-00043-00). In July 1998, Search for Common Ground received this grant from USAID to support the Women's Peace Center's activities in Burundi. Search for Common Ground was granted two no-cost extensions. The first extended the original end-date from July 15, 1999 to November 15, 1999. The second further extended the date to April 30, 2000. This document reports on the status and activities of the Women's Peace Center from July 15, 1998 until April 30, 2000. As will be seen through this report, the two extensions allowed the Women's Peace Center to achieve its goals, despite the obstacles presented by the increased instability in Burundi.

Search for Common Ground established the Women's Peace Center in January 1996, recognizing that Burundian women must be included as key players in the process of ethnic reconciliation and must have access to the tools necessary to fulfill that role. Sustained conflict has resulted in a disproportionate number of women who have been forced to play non-traditional roles as the heads of households and other positions of responsibility for which many are ill-prepared and unsupported. As women across the ethnic divide have had to struggle with the same hardships, addressing those needs is a natural means by which women can be brought together around common concerns and mutual interests. The Women's Peace Center was founded to assist women with this process, offering a safe space for women of all ethnicities to come and talk about their problems and providing technical skills to assist women with the process of rebuilding their lives and communities.

II. Political Context

By the end of this grant period, the peace-process in Burundi appears to be reinvigorated. This has followed, however, a period of time marked by a worsening security situation and increased government-rebel fighting. Throughout these events, Search for Common Ground's Women's Peace Center in Burundi has aimed to develop and strengthen individual and community efforts to sustain the peace process.

This aim has been manifest in the work the Center has undertaken to promote constructive, creative, and cooperative approaches that help resolve conflicts, reduce violence, and reconcile Burundians across ethnic divides. This aim has also been apparent in many of the specific activities that the Women's Peace Center has organized around the peace process itself, and in response to the increased insecurity that had gripped Bujumbura and Bujumbura Rurale during the last half of 1999.

III. Project Goals and Objectives

During the course of the grant, the goal of the Women's Peace Center has been to promote reconciliation among Hutus and Tutsis by facilitating dialogue and mutual understanding, fostering joint undertakings, and offering training in conflict resolution skills. To reach this goal, the Women's Center has adopted the following objectives:

- 1) Establish a cadre of women trainers trained in conflict resolution techniques;**
- 2) Provide a forum for Hutu and Tutsi women to meet to work on common goals;**
- 3) Provide support for local women's groups and women in displaced camps; and**
- 4) Organize roundtables to promote coordination and collaboration among women's groups.**

Over the course of the grant period, which included the two extensions, an additional objective was also adopted:

- 5) Facilitate events that maintain contact and encourage cooperation between Hutu and Tutsi citizens of the most divided districts of Bujumbura and Bujumbura Rurale.**

This additional objective became necessary due to the changing situation on the ground over the past year, particularly in and around Bujumbura. In order for the Women's Peace Center to pursue most effectively its overarching goal of ethnic reconciliation and conflict prevention, emphasis was placed on activities that built up links between Hutu and Tutsi districts that have been recently cut because of increased violence and fear.

IV. Project Accomplishments and Activities

Benefiting from the overall Burundi project evaluation done early on in the life of this grant (January, 1999), the Women's Center spent much of 1999 refocusing its activities on serving as a resource to nascent, and well-established, women's associations. The January, 1999 evaluation afforded the Women's Center the chance to reflect upon its achievements and work towards improvements. The evaluators concluded the following about the Women's Center:

"The Women's Peace Center continues to have an important role to play in mobilizing women as a powerful force for peace in Burundi. Since women have not traditionally been a part of mainstream political dialogue, there is a temptation to see work focusing on women as outside the mainstream, ancillary to the political processes. In fact the integration and empowerment of women's participation must be seen as an indispensable component of the peace process."

The Center has shifted from being not just a neutral site for meetings of Hutu and Tutsi women but also a source of training in conflict resolution, transparent association creation and management, a resource for funders to identify those associations that are active on the ground from those that are less so, and a mediation service for associations that request assistance in resolving internal differences.

Many positive changes and much exciting growth has taken place over the period of this grant. Late in the term of the grant, the Center made the significant shift from ex-patriate to local directorship, moving the Project closer to local ownership and increasing the national capacity to practice conflict resolution programs locally. In March, 2000, an official ceremony was held with representatives of women's associations from every zone of Bujumbura marking the departure of Carole von Tscharner, and the appointment of Spès Manirakiza as the new Director of the Center. The Center also opened its' first "antenna" -- a small office in the youth center of the district of Kamenge to service those associations in the north of the capital city of Bujumbura and surrounding areas, and has begun plans for the opening of additional antennas throughout the rest of Burundi.

Other important projects that have been undertaken by the Women's Peace Center include wind-up radio distributions, a micro-credit initiative, and the Legal Code trainings. These projects started with additional aid from the British Embassy in Kigali and the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation but drew upon the support of USAID. As things deteriorated in Burundi in mid to late 1999, Search was able to carry out crisis intervention initiatives through the launching of the youth project with minimal Women's Center funds. The Center also was able to undertake unifying projects such as a Peace March and music festival, projects which had become even more critical as the ethnic tensions became more heated.

The Women's Peace Center has already been able to take on board several recommendations made by the January, 1999 evaluation, and has made concrete steps towards implementing these recommendations. For example, the evaluation recommended "closer integration and shared identity should be fostered with the other SFCG program components". This greater collaboration between the Women's Center and Studio Ijambo, particularly in the last 18 months of the grant, has magnified both projects' impact. Areas of collaboration have included:

- 1) A wind-up radio distribution to women in need throughout Burundi. Each radio included a sticker of the Studio's programming schedule to boost listenership,
- 2) The two radio programs produced through the Studio (one on the Legal Code Project, the other called "Courage, Women!", covering stories of interest to Burundian women more generally),
- 3) The Sangwe music festival, which was jointly organized by the Women's Center and the Studio.

Another example concerns the evaluation's recommendation to take steps to make it clearer to the public the role of the Women's Peace Center. In order to increase the Burundian community's understanding of the purpose and goals of the Center, a slogan was developed late last year: in Kirundi, it is "Shigikirane Tubaneneza/Se soutenir pour mieux vivre ensemble." In

English, this translates as “To support one another in order to better live together.” This slogan has helped to differentiate the Center from a women’s rights organization. A competition was conducted in December, 1999 to find an appropriate logo to accompany the slogan, with selection and presentation conducted in March, 2000. A new brochure is being produced incorporating the logo and slogan.

Finally, as per the evaluator’s recommendations, the Women’s Center has continued to enhance staff skills as specialists in conflict resolution methodologies. This has occurred through the staff’s participation in various trainings in conflict resolution techniques.

In sum, assistance from USAID has allowed the Center to attain its goals in two ways: by providing fundamental and core support for the Center, and by helping the Center leverage additional funding, as noted throughout this report. Following is a description of the ways in which the Women’s Peace Center has been working over the past two years towards achieving its specifically stated objectives.

<p>Objective 1: Establish a cadre of women trainers trained in conflict resolution techniques</p>

The Women’s Center has been working in conjunction with several organizations in Burundi to develop a network of conflict resolution trainers whose services could be used throughout the country. By investing in the skills and capacities of the Women’s Peace Center staff and women’s associations, Search has aimed to provide a highly developed resource team for women’s groups, associations, communities and civil society throughout Burundi and the region in general. Two of the main long term projects that the Center has been a part of are the International Alert/UNIFEM/Search for Common Ground Training Series and the Conflict Resolution Training of Trainers Program.

International Alert/UNIFEM/Search for Common Ground Training Series

Mid-1996 saw the start of a cycle of workshops, stretching over several years, which were jointly sponsored and organized by UNIFEM, International Alert, and Search for Common Ground. These workshops have been very successful and have offered women throughout Burundi professional skills in conflict resolution for the first time. Hutu and Tutsi women from five provinces were trained as community trainers for peaceful conflict resolution. The trainings also worked to popularize the role that women can play in ethnic reconciliation.

Working from a program evaluation on how best to conduct community outreach, Search, UNIFEM, and International Alert determined that training five women in each quarter of

Bujumbura to conduct community workshops for each zone would be the most effective method for the capital. Follow-up trainings were then provided for trainers-to-be in the interior of the country. The trainees, who were identified by their communities as leaders, were trained in the basic principles of conflict resolution. By training women to train other women, the multiplier effect of a few trainings has been considerable.

Conflict Resolution Training of Trainers Program

In 1997-1998, the Center joined the Centre for Conflict Resolution in South Africa and Ligue Iteka to organize a Burundi Conflict Resolution Train the Trainers program that would complement the network developed through the IA/UNIFEM/SCG network described above. The program's goal has been to foster the growth of skilled conflict resolution trainers and facilitators in Burundian civil society so that they can initiate and sustain peace-making and peace-building efforts. As a result of this program, there are now a cadre of seven people (Women's Peace Center and Ligue Iteka staff) who have undergone a total of five weeks of training. The skills gained by the Women's Peace Center staff have allowed them to better manage their own communication and problem-solving as an ethnically mixed team; to give conflict resolution training to women's associations, equipping them with the necessary tools and understanding to work through the crises and problems that inevitably arise in an emerging grassroots movement; and to act as mediators for associations.

The train-the-trainers course ended with a two-day workshop on the traditional system of mediation in Burundi. During these two days, two Bashingantahe (traditional mediators) gave their testimonies and shared their wisdom. The Bashingantahe system is poorly understood by urban Burundians but very important for anyone wanting to work in the country's interior. Talking with the Bashingantahe gave the participants an ability to adapt the Western approach to mediation to the context in which they will train as well as the opportunity to better understand their own cultural heritage. At the end, the participants received diplomas for their completion of the six-month program and an oral and written evaluation was conducted.

As a critical part of its work, the Center continues to hold conflict resolution trainings for various associations and their communities, in both Bujumbura and the provinces. Most importantly, the trainings that are now being organized by the Center are more often than not facilitated and managed by women who have been trained by Women's Center staff, rather than by the staff themselves. As it is a goal of the Center to develop local capacity and interest in teaching new approaches to conflict, this has been an encouraging development. Over the period of this grant, the Center has held 16 conflict resolution trainings for various associations and community leaders.

The Women's Center staff itself also continues to increase its knowledge of conflict resolution techniques through additional training. For example, in April 2000, a training on conflict resolution was provided for all of the Women's Center staff by an outside trainer from CECI, a Canadian conflict resolution organization. The training focused on practical exercises for managing and expressing emotions.

Objective 2: Provide a forum for Hutu and Tutsi women to meet to work on common goals

"At the time it was founded, the Women's Peace Center provided THE ONLY safe haven and forum for Hutu and Tutsi women to meet and discuss shared concerns. It has fostered the rebirth and development of a range of women's associations, organizations, and fora that are becoming an increasingly strong force in society and in the peace process."

-January, 1999 Independent Evaluation

While other fora have developed since the inception of the Women's Peace Center, "neutral ground" is still hard to find in Bujumbura, and, according to the independent evaluation in January, 1999, the availability of the Center has a continuing significance to many women, associations, and organizations. On average, over the entire period of the grant, approximately 18 associations and 365 women used the Center monthly as a forum for roundtables, trainings, discussion groups, and information sessions on issues that affect Burundian women across ethnic, religious, and demographic lines.

Indicative of the Center's achievement in this area is the fact that in March 1999, the Minister of Social Action and Women's Condition convened a meeting at the Center to reconcile the two committees coordinating the participation of women in the official peace process taking place in Arusha. The mediation was successful and it showed that the Center is seen as a neutral venue, not only for women of the grassroots, but also for the highly politicized women of Burundi's elite classes. More and more, the Center is finding itself involved in mid-level discussions surrounding the current peace process, encouraging dialogue between differing associations.

In addition, thanks to the Women's Peace Center opening its first "antenna", or satellite office, in Kamenge, a northern suburb of Bujumbura and a focal point for some of the worst inter-ethnic violence during the crisis, the Center's regular roundtables and trainings now reach another several hundred women per month and numerous associations. As explained in further detail below, the success of this satellite office has reinforced our interest in opening small satellite offices throughout the country as soon as the security situation allows, as a means of reaching the broader population. In fact, by the last period of this grant, preparations to open up the first satellite office outside of Bujumbura, in Ngozi, were near completion. An office had been found, and a team of three staff members have been hired, including two co-directors (one Hutu and one Tutsi). The official opening took place in May, 2000.

In September, 1999, in an effort to bring the spirit of the work it is trying to do more generally in Burundi to the Women's Peace Center, the Center's Director held a private workshop for Center staff on ethnicity and the Burundian conflict. It was the first such workshop addressing so directly the ethnic conflict and how it has affected staff members. It was an extraordinary success. Staff members used the opportunity to get to know each other better and to discuss the sensitive issue of ethnic differences and the conflict more openly than they ever had before. In the last 5 months of the grant, the Center staff has gone through another series of workshops focusing on ethnic identity and the conflict there. The staff members have since become facilitators themselves for such workshops and are giving them upon request to associations and local groups.

Objective 3: Provide support for local women's groups and women in displaced camps

Throughout the life of the grant, the Center has been making extensive efforts to support women's associations. The women's associative movement has become an increasingly important force in Burundian society and in the peace process. Search for Common Ground has long seen the importance of providing assistance and support to this burgeoning section of civil society.

From the outset of its activities, the Center has also placed a special emphasis on initiatives which would reconcile internally displaced women and their former neighbors, and which would help them rebuild their lives in their old communities. The Center has initiated mutual visits between former neighbors and organized round-tables, discussions sessions, and workshops. These workshops engaged emerging associations of displaced women and provided them with information, resources, and training on how to create and structure associations. In addition to the regular activities which focus on the issues of displaced women, the Center also has provided support as the need arises. For example, in May, 1999, a group of over 600 displaced women asked the Center for help in obtaining free medical care as entitled by law. The Center organized a meeting with the UN Centre for Human Rights to head up the inquiry.

The main thrust of the Center's efforts at supporting associations include the organization of numerous trainings and roundtables (which are described in greater detail under Objective 3), as well as special activities geared at the nurturing and growth of women's associations.

Opening of a new antenna

In July, 1999, in order to better serve the women's associations of the northern district, the Women's Peace Center opened a small antenna in the northern suburbs of Bujumbura in Kamenge in collaboration with the Centre Jeunes Kamenge. The antenna, also known as the

Northern District Bureau des Associations, is run by a Search for Common Ground staff member. It provides the same services as the city-based Women's Peace Center, but with the advantage of being closer to its beneficiaries, thus allowing for better coordination of activities and partners in the northern suburbs. Since opening, the office has been overflowing with visitors, necessitating the assistance of an intern and several volunteers. An accountant has also been seconded by the Association Francaise des Volontaires du Progres (AFVP) to help the Bureau with small projects and micro-credit management. In terms of regular activities, the antenna organizes two round tables a week: the first one focuses on a topic of general interest and the second one is a training for associations geared toward their specific requests. As many as 250 representatives of associations attend each of these meetings and trainings each week. Recent roundtables held in the Northern District Bureau have been on conflict resolution, the situation of prisoners in Burundi, and the new Penal Procedures Code. In February, 2000, a round-table was facilitated by the Minister of Human Rights, Eugène Nindorera, on the problems encountered in the Northern District. In March, 2000, 382 members of associations based in Bujumbura's northern districts participated in three roundtables: one on AIDS, one entitled "How to Develop Viable Grassroots Projects", and one on malaria prevention.

In addition, the new office has already served as a meeting center for three organizations engaged in publishing separate journals on their activities in the Bujumbura Nord area, helping them to merge the three into one central journal providing a resource for civil society actors throughout the Bujumbura Nord region. The first edition of the journal, entitled "*Journal des Associations des Quartiers Nord*" which is being financed by the French Volunteers Agency, was published and distributed in October, 1999. It focuses on profiling the different associations that exist in the area and announcing upcoming activities open to them and to the public-at-large.

Providing "Common Ground" micro-credit

One of the main concerns of participants in the Women's Center has been the lack of funding for local initiatives. Although the Center staff have tried to provide the link between the association members and foreign funders, the long time tables and slow response have proven frustrating.

The Women's Peace Center has undertaken several initiatives to meet the need for micro-credit, in conjunction with the wider objectives of Search for Common Ground. The Center has launched a partnership with the Fond de Development Communal (FDC), a micro-credit provider. Through this collaboration, the Center has served as an intake point for micro-credit project proposals, selecting those with a reconciliation theme (those made by a multi-ethnic team or targeted at areas particularly divided by ethnic conflict) and then working with the FDC and those proposing the project to make it financially viable. Thirty women have received training from the FDC on how to identify serious proposals and what questions to ask of applicants.

In addition, the Women's Peace Center received \$4,000 in January, 2000 from the British Embassy in Kigali to provide micro-credit grants to women. With these funds, the Center has been able to build upon its work in this field and act as a conduit for the grants, ensuring that a "common ground" approach is integrated into the process. The program, as it is currently constituted, is designed to give small grants and loans to women's associations that need seed

money for local ventures. The Center staff have developed a set of criteria for selecting recipients:

- 1) What is the eventual profit-making potential of the venture?
- 2) What is the level of cross-ethnic participation?
- 3) To what extent does the venture address community conflicts?

This pilot project highlights the possibilities of integrating conflict resolution with economic development. As Search for Common Ground is not a development or a credit association, the hope is to partner with an appropriate development partner, passing on to them the project and the lessons learned. Six associations, two from the northern districts of Bujumbura and four from the south, were selected as the first recipients of British Embassy funds. It has been too early for the associations to begin showing profits, but with the exception of minor problems, the projects appear to be going well.

Supporting associations via radio

The Center has been able to increase the impact of its support for associations by utilizing the expertise and resources of Studio Ijambo. A renowned Burundian journalist was hired by the Center to produce radio programs aimed at providing information on the women's associative movement and to strengthen the network between those associations. Given the increased difficulty of travelling into the country's interior and accessing women in displacement camps, the use of radio also ensures that at least some of the Center's impact outside of Bujumbura can be maintained regardless of the security situation.

The first broadcasts of the Center's radio program targeting women's associations began in September 1999 and have met with extremely positive audience feedback. The program, entitled *Mukenyezi Nturambirwe* ("*Courage, Women!*") is produced in partnership with Studio Ijambo and is aired twice a week on the independent radio station, Radio Umwizero. The program covers both technical topics such as how to organize and manage an association, as well as provides glimpses into the workings of other associations around Burundi. Titles of recent programs include:

- Associations and micro-credit
- The role of the facilitator in association meetings
- Life in the association of handicapped people of Mutakura
- Searching for and consolidating peace within the women's associations
- Breaking prejudices: the displaced women of the association Twigarukire testify

No matter how relevant the Studio's radio programs are to women, however, the impact will always be minimal if the target audience does not have access to radios. Therefore, a second part of the equation has been to ensure that as many women as possible have access to wind-up radios. The Women's Peace Center received 450 wind-up (non-battery) radios from the British Embassy in Kigali. These radios have been distributed to women's associations and other target

recipients (prison inmates, hospital patients, members of handicapped institutions, displacement campsites, regroupment camps, etc.) where access to radios (and therefore reliable information) is severely limited or where batteries for existing radios are inaccessible or prohibitively expensive. Each radio is adorned with a sticker advertising Studio Ijambo with the new logo and a list of broadcasting times and frequencies. To ensure accountability, each recipient agency signed an agreement with the Center concerning the intended use of the radios and is subject to a regular evaluation by Center staff.

The reach, breadth and expertise of the Women's Peace Center greatly contributed to the effectiveness of the wind-up radio distribution. It was through the Center, and its knowledge of the communities that needed radios and could make the best use of the radios, that Search was able to best optimize its distribution.

Radio distribution was completed in Bujumbura in mid-December, 1999. A brief evaluations found that, unfortunately, several of the radios had broken down. Where it was determined that radios had broken down, arrangements were made with technicians who repaired them at low cost. The Center has also started running trainings that teach women how to fix the radios themselves. Due to security constraints, radio distribution to the interior has been proceeding more slowly than anticipated.

Institutionalizing knowledge

In order to consolidate the expertise of all of the Women's Peace Center's staff and to make this knowledge more widely accessible, the Center's staff is compiling a *Women's Peace Center Conflict Resolution Training Manual*, collecting all of the Center's trainings in one document. The handbook will consist of three modules: organization and management of an association; peaceful conflict resolution; and elaboration and management of an income-generating project. The French Volunteers Association has been collaborating on this project.

In an ongoing effort to professionalize the Center's support for local associations, three members of the Women's Peace Center staff have enrolled in personalized training courses to equip them with skills to better serve associations. The courses were developed based on an evaluation of the staff members' training needs. Additionally, one member of staff has been designated to centralize all relationships between local associations and funders, providing a much needed service to associations and funders alike.

<p>Objective 3: Organize roundtables to promote coordination and collaboration among women's groups</p>
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The Center has been extremely active over the duration of the grant in promoting collaboration between associations and building networks among them. One of the most effective ways of

doing this has been through the use of roundtables. The roundtable discussions have been one of the Center's most important activities, providing a much needed forum for increased access to information as well as a forum for Hutu and Tutsi women to work together. The weekly roundtables at the Center usually attract around 30 to 50 women from in and outside Bujumbura. Separate roundtables are also now taking place in the Northern District Bureau des Associations in Kamenge.

At the roundtables, facilitation and consensus building techniques are used to draw the women out, and to move the discussions forward from words to actions in order to achieve a sustainable impact. The Center provides follow-up activities, which are designed by the women themselves and are based on issues relevant to their daily lives. Many of the current projects conducted in support of the associations, such as the Legal Code and the micro-credit projects, found their origins in a roundtable discussion. Following are several examples of roundtables and other collaborative efforts that have been held at the Center:

- In partnership with the AFVP, the Center organized a program of training events to support the associations of the northern suburbs of Bujumbura. In February and March, 1999, eight trainings took place and representatives of over 40 associations attended. The trainings consisted of a presentation on the fundamental and operating principles of associations and a discussion on the goals and objectives of these emerging and inexperienced associations.
- In April, 1999, the Center held a two-day training for three associations that recently received funding for their project through our intermediary on sound funding management.
- In May, 1999, the Women's Peace Center organized nine information sessions on the Food for Work project. A representative of the program presented it to local associations and the Women's Center staff took the opportunity to discuss how to manage the project and possible conflicts when accessing food resources. Forty to sixty people attended each presentation, in the different zones of the Bujumbura municipality.
- In September, 1999, the Center organized a round-table bringing together Burundian women who had attended conferences and trainings in and around the Great Lakes region over the past year, in an attempt to better coordinate the follow-up action plans from those events. Participants decided to draft an Open Letter of Women's Associations calling for "positive solidarity" between Burundian women for peace and a rejection of all ethnic hate propaganda.
- In October, 1999, the Women's Peace Center seconded one staff member to help organize and gather support for a round table on the role of civil society in the peace process, organized by the Ministry of the Peace Process. Following the staff member's efforts, she was appointed to the organizing committee of that body's follow-up work on the subject.
- Also in October, 1999, the Center organized a follow-up training on good internal management practices for 11 partner associations who had already participated in one

training workshop, had implemented some of the advice given and had requested further guidance. In total, 150 people attended this advanced training.

The Legal Code: a Universal Concern

The issue of women's legal rights in Burundi first emerged during one of the Women's Peace Center's many roundtable discussions. In 1998, because of the importance of this issue, its *common ground* relevance, and the lack of information available about legal rights in Burundi, the Legal Code Project developed from a roundtable discussion topic into a full-fledged project. At the heart of the project has been a series of training workshops, held in Bujumbura and the provinces, bringing together women's groups around those aspects of the new legal code that affect all Burundian women, both Hutu and Tutsi alike. The project had been funded in part by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation in Kigali and UNDP, with general Women's Peace Center costs related to it covered by this USAID grant.

Using a simplified version of the family code, adapted so Burundi's pre-literate population can understand it, hundreds of trainers have conducted community workshops to inform the public and generate discussion about the legal code and its likely effects on Burundian society. The worsening security situation in late 1999 had caused temporary suspensions of activities in Ngozi and Gitega provinces; however, these were resumed in early 2000, and were finished by the end of the grant period. In addition, extra Legal Code training workshops were organized upon request for the associations of the northern suburbs and for the students of the Sunshine College, an institution for orphans and young victims of the war. Below are some success stories that have emerged from the legal code training already:

- During a workshop on marriage and divorce in Marangara (a commune in the Ngozi province), many people realized that they were not protected under law without a legal marriage. In the week following the training, 33 weddings were conducted in that commune. Amazingly, only 25 people attended the workshop, demonstrating the domino effect of the trainings.
- In Kinama, a zone in the capital, a woman used the information from a workshop to get her house back. Her husband had chased her out of her house five years ago, and after attending our training, she realized her rights and used them to get her house back.

In order to reach as wide an audience as possible, the Center organized a media campaign to accompany the workshops. In February, 2000, the Center launched the Legal Code's media campaign at a local school, which was attended by the national television station, RTNB, and was hosted by the Minister of Justice. This campaign consisted of short radio sketches on Radio Umwizero which illustrated the ten most common situations in which people are penalized for not knowing the law. These were complemented by ten posters depicting the same situations, which were hung in local administration offices and other highly trafficked venues.

Various agencies testify to the success of the Legal Code Project: the Minister of Justice expressed in writing his strong support of the Women's Peace Center in this area; the NGO Action Aid expressed their interest in conducting the same project in Ruyigi province; the Belgian Cooperation Agency has decided to use the Center's Legal Code Project as a model to inform the population of other important laws; and the Catholic Church has asked to use the Center's manual on the Legal Code for their "preparation for marriage" sessions.

The Legal Code workshops came to a close in March, 2000, with evaluations of the entire program to be completed in late spring.

Objective 5: Facilitate events that maintain contact and encourage cooperation between Hutu and Tutsi citizens of the most divided districts of Bujumbura and Bujumbura Rurale.

As stated earlier, the Center has needed to adapt its programming in reaction to the upsurge of ethnic violence and the increasing difficulties of every Burundian woman's life (with the sudden rise of basic goods prices, more rebel-government fighting, etc.). While on the one hand, this has unfortunately meant temporarily suspending activities in certain areas, it has also meant refocusing energies towards those activities which have been specifically aimed at uniting the Hutu and Tutsi citizens and furthering the goals of ethnic conflict prevention and reconciliation, during this time of strife.

Positive Solidarity

In particular, the Center has begun organizing one-day seminars on Positive Solidarity between women of different ethnic backgrounds. The title makes reference to the opposite concept of "negative solidarity", well known in Burundi, whereby people cover up the bad deeds of others who belong to their ethnic group. In addition to a workshop held in conjunction with the conflict resolution training in Gitega, positive solidarity workshops have been held in Ngozi, Bujumbura, and Bujumbura Nord, engaging participants to express cross-ethnic solidarity based on their common needs and problems. To date, the workshops have provided unique forums for women to talk with great honesty about the relevant issues and have sparked the decision by some to organize discussions around this same theme in their respective neighborhoods and associations.

On September 30, 1999, a unique exchange of humanitarian aid between Hutu and Tutsi women in a particularly volatile district of Bujumbura was facilitated by the Center. Studio Ijambo chose the event and the women who organized it to be the subject of the fourth episode of its *Courage, Women!* program, which highlights stories of courageous Hutus and Tutsis who saved each other during the crisis or have exhibited other brave displays of cross-ethnic solidarity. This radio show won the *Frequence: Paix 2000* competition for the program which most closely fitted

Search's agenda. In October, 1999, the two associations that organized the Solidarity Day met again at the Women's Peace Center to evaluate this first action and to plan further activities that could enhance solidarity in their districts and in other zones where women could be inspired to take similar initiatives. The discussion was followed by a celebration and dance party.

Several other Positive Solidarity days have been held since. One took place in Kinama in December, 1999, when Musaga associations came for a visit to exchange experiences and rekindle broken ties. Many of these women had not been back to Kinama since the 1993 crisis and the day was filled with dances and song. Another Positive Solidarity day was held in March, 2000, in conjunction with International Women's Day, where Hutu and Tutsi associations from all zones of the capital city visited one another and recounted stories concerning their efforts at reconciliation and peace-building. The Center facilitated the visit of a mostly Tutsi association for the handicapped of Mutakura district to the mostly Hutu association for the handicapped of Mubone district (on the outskirts of Bujumbura). The visit was completed with a gift exchange and the decision to "pair" their two districts. The Center also facilitated the visit of women's associations in Kamenge (primarily Hutu) to women's associations in Nyakabiga (mostly Tutsi). This was the first time that the inhabitants of Kamenge had made a public visit of more than 100 people to the district of Nyakabiga since January, 1994, when a *ville morte* was implemented by the extremists in each district.

On August 28, 1999, our partner organization in the northern suburbs, the Centre Jeunes Kamenge, organized a march for peace and reconstruction. Between 5,000 and 8,000 people walked through two Tutsi and two Hutu neighborhoods in the northern suburbs. The Women's Peace Center helped attract women's associations to the event in great numbers and the director addressed a few words to the crowd.

The Sangwe Festival

In January, 2000, in a move to bring together the Hutu and Tutsi populations in the name of peace, the Women's Peace Center and Studio Ijambo held a three-day music and peace event, called the Sangwe Festival. Sangwe is the Kirundian word for "welcome back". The Sangwe Festival brought together thousands of people – men, women and children - from all different walks of life. The first part of the Festival was a March for Peace, in which about 800 people, including many women belonging to associations linked to the Women's Center, marched through and around the city singing and carrying banners for peace. The second part of the Festival was a series of seven concerts in seven different venues over a four day period. Despite the many logistical and security challenges this event posed, the festival was a huge success.

The concerts gave Bujumbura a taste of all kinds of music; traditional Burundian musicians from the interior of the country, youth rock/rap groups from Bujumbura, and international Burundian stars from Rwanda, Canada and Belgium, as well as bands from Uganda and Congo. The main event at the Stadium, which consisted of musical acts, poetry readings, and plays about peace was broadcast live on Burundian radio on January 29, and was covered extensively over the next few days by Burundian television. Over 4,000 people attended the performance, including the

US, Rwandan and Ugandan Ambassadors and the Ministers of Law, Human Rights and Sport and Culture.

The positive impact of the Festival was felt in the way it gathered thousands of people together in an atmosphere of peace and reconciliation, Hutus and Tutsis, to listen to music from their shared cultural heritage. It allowed the population of the city to relax together and to forget, for a while, the problems and difficulties which divide the communities. In a nation as fractured as Burundi, the mere act of having both ethnic groups together for five hours without incident was radical enough. To have them dancing, singing and holding hands as they shared the enjoyment of music, poetry and theater was even more remarkable.

Youth Leader Project

Although projects aimed at bringing together youth leaders from throughout Bujumbura and Bujumbura Rurale and using the Center as a resource were not included in the original proposal, they were included in the second approved no-cost extension request.

The Center has pioneered the first cooperative project of 36 ethnically mixed youth leaders from throughout Bujumbura and Bujumbura Rurale. Each of the leaders played a prominent role in the violence perpetrated during the crisis and remains influential in each of their respective communities. The project has already helped some of the youth to confess, in front of one another, what they have done. It has also helped them to begin brainstorming on how they could come together to reverse the current trend toward violence that had gripped Bujumbura during the last 6 months of the grant period.

In addition to these dialogue sessions, the ethnically divided youth have come together through sport. In December, 1999, the first soccer tournament between an ethnically divided district took place. The tournament received a good deal of press coverage, including interviews on RTNB television with several of the players and Adrien Tuyaga, one of the founders of the youth association, JAMAA, with whom Search has been working on this project.

By the end of this grant period, the youth leaders project had advanced considerably in consolidation and planning. In March, 2000, a small office and yard attached to the JAMAA youth association office was acquired and rehabilitated by the youth working together. In addition, two part-time administrators have been engaged (one Hutu with links to the FNL and one Tutsi son of a Colonel) to help with the daily work and logistics of the project. The future plans for the project include holding a soccer tournament/weekend camp once every four months, issuing a new edition in the cartoon book series every six months, and holding an evening dialogue/roundtable focused on a video or event of interest once a month.

In April, 2000, a roundtable was held on the topic of a newly released Human Rights Watch (HRW) report calling for the trial and prosecution of those who participated in the violence during the crisis. The HRW reporter will be participating with the youth in the discussion, which will focus on how to reconcile the need for both Peace and Justice.

Other activities have included helping associations in the northern suburbs to convert a “no-man’s”-land-between Kinama and Cibitoke (two neighboring districts that have become increasingly divided along ethnic lines) into a public space for theater, soccer fields, meeting areas. Such efforts to bring together Hutus and Tutsis from ethnically divided districts for entertainment, sport, and cooperative project planning was essential during the last period of this grant, when divisions were increasing and lines of communication between ethnically unified areas were being severed.

Activities related to the peace process

In addition to the projects focusing on bridging the ethnic divide, the Center has been carrying out activities relating specifically to the peace process. In April, 2000, the Center worked with the Minister of the Peace Process, the Minister for Women’s Promotion, the Swedish Embassy in Nairobi, and the CAFOB network of Burundian women’s associations to organize a day of discussion and exchange on the contribution that Burundian women want to make to ensure the application of the peace accord that results from the Arusha talks. The main goal was to inform the 80 women participants on the principal points under discussion at Arusha. Also, in advance of Mandela’s visit to Burundi, the Northern District office organized a viewing of a documentary on Mandela’s life followed by discussions in which 212 members of various associations in the region participated.

V. Constraints to Action

The most serious constraint to action throughout the period of this grant has been the worsening security situation. From mid-1999 to beginning of 2000, work in the interior was suspended or severely limited. While work in some provinces has resumed, there are still large areas, particularly in the south and east of the country, in which Search for Common Ground cannot work. A cautious approach has been maintained, and work will only be able to continue in certain areas when things become more stable.

To deal with this constraint, the Women’s Peace Center has refocused some of its energies towards working with the divided districts of Bujumbura and Bujumbura Rurale, and through extending the timeline for activities in the interior. These shifts were made possible through the two extensions that were given to this grant. Increased security awareness and precautions have also had to be adopted.

Maintaining harmonious intra-office ethnic dynamics in the Women’s Peace Center, while challenging, is also part and parcel of Search’s overall work in Burundi. Improved leadership, organizational structures, and transparent internal regulations have all contributed to managing these dynamics. It has also been important for the staff to be able to discuss openly their own issues relating to ethnic identity and conflict, which has been possible through a series of voluntary workshops held at both the Women’s Peace Center and Studio Ijambo. It is recognized that these discussions and explorations are a work in progress, and this type of workshop will be continuing in the future.

A final constraint has concerned the problems associated with finding and maintaining ex-patriate staff. Because of the turnover that the Women's Peace Center had experienced in terms of ex-patriate staffing, much energy had been expended in maintaining continuity and clarity of vision. Now that the Center is under local directorship, it is hoped that these issues will be rectified.

VI. Future Directions

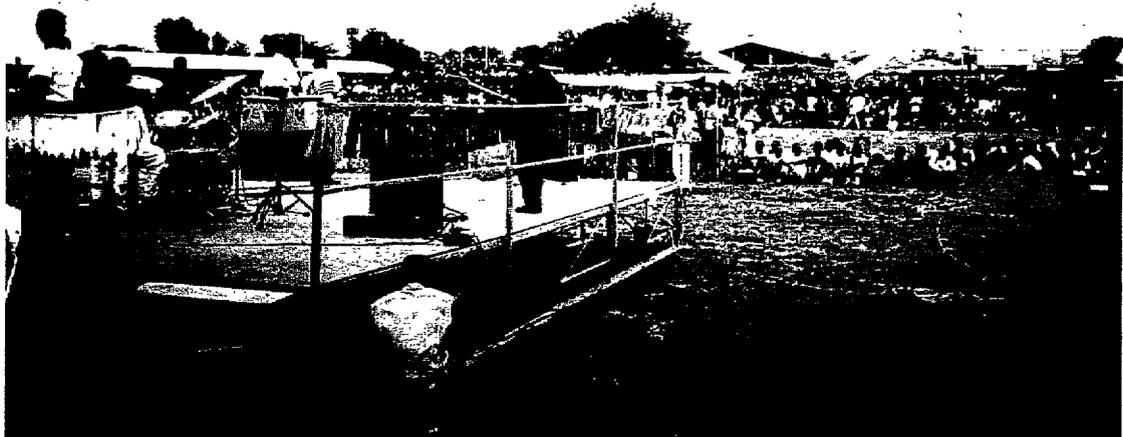
A continuing goal of the Women's Peace Center has been to make its services and activities available to more and more women outside of Bujumbura. Following the opening of "antenna" offices in the Northern District and in Ngozi, the Center is hoping to open several more antenna in the interior in the coming years. Possible locations include Ruyigi, Gitega, and Makamba, when the security situation permits.

The work in support of the associative movement that has been such a core part of the Center's activities will also continue and grow. Building upon past successes such as the Sangwe festival and women's focused radio programs, the Center will be looking for further opportunities for collaboration with Studio Ijambo.

Finally, the Women's Peace Center, in working towards its goal of empowering women to become peace-builders in Burundi, will continue to strengthen mid-level dialogue between associations around the peace process.



The Sangwe Festival
Bujumbura, Burundi
January 29, 2000





Radio distribution at the Women's Center
Bujumbura, Burundi



Radio distribution to local women's associations
Kayanza, Burundi

INKINGI Y'UBUNTU (Pillar of Humanity)

Name of the program: Inkingi y'ubuntu

Subject: The positive actions of women from Busoro and Musaga for peace.

Date of broadcast: October 6, 1999

Name of translator: Yves NDIMURUKUNDO

Language of origin: Kirundi

Producer: Christophe Nkurunziza.

Charles: Pillar of Humanity is a program produced by Studio Ijambo.

In this program, Studio Ijambo gives the floor to people who fight for good where many have let evil and irresponsibility reign.

Transition music

Today you are with Christophe Nkurunziza. I will talk to you today about 160 women, Hutus and Tutsis alike, from Busoro and Musaga. They went above the ethnic hatred and agreed to get together and seek peace.

Women singing peace songs.

It was on the 30th of August when these women began singing. At ten in the morning, under the rain with the sound of gunshots in the hills above, these women of all ethnic groups were not afraid to meet at Musaga and celebrate. Looking at them one would think that it was just for fun but there is a will behind it. It is the will to bring back peace among brothers even though the war tries to separate them. A woman named Ida Ntigwihisha from Musaga is a Tutsi member of the association Tugarukire Amahoro. We met her at Zone Musaga where they were meeting with their friends from Busoro in order to console the population of Busoro that had recently suffered from the attacks.

Ida: We came here to meet with the women of Busoro as representatives of our association Twishakira Amahoro (We want peace). It was named that way because it was our wish. This association was created during the crisis. We looked at the way some people were killing each other, but we did not want to take part of that, we wanted peace. That was why we chose the name. Our goals are to fight for peace and to keep it alive.

Christophe: Are there only Tutsis in your association?

Ida: We have Hutus, Tutsis and Twas that have suffered from the crisis but who want to make a difference. We want to find the strength to get out of this situation and to reconcile and live as before.

Christophe: What was your relation before the crisis?

Ida: In the past, Hutus, Tutsis and Twas lived in peace. But they were separated by the war and the killings.

Christophe: I see a lot of women from Busoro who have just lost their loved ones here. What is the purpose of this encounter?

Ida: What we want to show above all is the will to come together, to support one another and to reconstruct our zone in peace. To find solutions to our problems peacefully without arms while keeping in mind the responsibilities of the woman as a peacemaker.

Christophe: What happened in Busoro and when?

Ida: The population of Busoro has suffered the death of its people since the beginning of the crisis. We first met with them in 1996. Two months ago, they have again suffered from the attacks, their houses were destroyed and they were looted. So, we decided to give them our support and show them that we are with them and that we will not let them go.

Christophe: Do they come and visit you?

Ida: Yes, they visited us in 1997 and brought us baskets of things like we did today.

Christophe: A Hutu woman from Busoro, Janviere Nyandwi, although she's fled her home town believes firmly that Hutu and Tutsi women need to live together again as before - regardless of all the past sufferings.

Janviere: We suffer because we have fled our homes. We recently suffered the loss of our loved ones and our neighborhood was destroyed during the attacks.

Christophe: In the past, did the people of Busoro and Musaga live together?

Janviere: Before the war, we used to visit each other. We used to be united. But with the situation today and the insecurity on the roads, we stopped the visits. When this association was created, we became the first to open this road to Busoro and Musaga. We rekindled our relations and visited one another again. Now, the roads are much more secure.

Christophe: How are your relations with your neighbors from Musaga? Is there not any rancour between you?

Janviere: There is no rancour between us because if there was we wouldn't be visiting one another. For example, we are here at Musaga today when we did not dare to visit in the past. We have walked here from Busoro and we arrived safely.

Christophe: What do you women of Busoro and Musaga demand from each other?

Janviere: We ask for unity and to meet regularly in order to support one another and continue the quest for peace.

Christophe: Ngendagizwa is a Twa woman from Busoro. What is her relation with the other women? Let us listen to her:

Ngendagizwa: I live alone among the Hutus. My friends are my neighbors and they are here. It is they who support me.

Christophe: Why are you here at Musaga?

Ngendagizwa: We came for peace and we are members of the association.

Christophe: What do you do in the quest for peace?

Ngendagizwa: We meet together and plant the seeds for peace like we did in the past.

Christophe: Do you think that it will work?

Ngendagizwa: It will work if you all make it possible and give us a helping hand.

Christophe: How?

Ngendagizwa: Through authorities like you.

Christophe: Are there any obstacles to the quest for peace?

Ngendagizwa: There are obstacles since we are always fleeing from one place to another. That is why we are looking for peace so that we may stay in one place in total security, without any fear.

Christophe: But you do feel it is possible?

Ngendagizwa: It is possible. It will work. The authorities will help us.

Christophe: Peace must be sought by the Burundian citizens - men and women alike.

Ngendagizwa: We all must help out and unite for peace.

Transition music (Kidumu : Burundian artist).

Christophe: A women named Bigirimana from Busoro wishes that the Burundian women stick together through the good times as well as the bad.

Bigirimana: We came here to reunite with the people of Musaga and discuss how to find peace. They came to us in times of trouble and we will do the same for them.

Christophe: Having lost loved ones in this war, can you really cohabit as before?

Bigirimana: We will live together as before. We are not the ones who caused this war, it is the bad people who did. We want to live in peace. Even now, we go draw water together, we fetch wood together and share the good and bad times.

Christophe: What advice can you give people who do not think like you?

Bigirimana: What I can tell these people who do not want to follow us is that they must be bad people and therefore, we will not imitate them. We want peace and unity in Burundi.

Christophe: What peace-making actions do you undertake with the women of Musaga?

Bigirimana: We go together to the fields and to draw water from the streams. Since we have started this, I am able to go around Musaga in total security along with these women.

Christophe: When did you begin this?

Bigirimana: It has been two years now.

Christophe: Don't you ever feel bitterness or rancour towards the women of Musaga?

Bigirimana: Not at all. They are our friends. We work together. They are like sisters to us. It is only these evil people that come in between us.

Christophe: What have you come to do here at Musaga?

Bigirimana: We have come to meet with the women of Musaga to discuss peace.

Christophe: The head of the womens' association in Kinama also came to give her support to the Hutu and Tutsis women who want to bring back peace.

Woman: That is why we are here with you on this day, so that we may ask you to continue like this and to keep up the friendship and dialogue. Keep up the understanding and do not look at the size of your noses in judging yourselves. You know that this is what is bringing our country to its downfall and spilling our children's blood. What we would like to ask each and every woman here is that you keep united, to become friends and help each other in times of trouble.

Christophe: The chief of the association Tugarukire Amahoro (Let us bring back peace) explains why they came to give their support to their colleagues at Busoro.

Woman: We looked at it this way: if a woman like you is attacked today, it can be you next. If a neighbor's house is burnt and you do not help them, yours may be burnt

tomorrow and no one will come to your assistance. That is why we called this meeting, we met and discussed what we could do for our friends in Busoro. In brief, friends and sisters from Busoro, we are very close to each other, we have talked about a lot of things and we have never quarreled. Remember that we began our dialogue at the peak of the crisis. The road was full of thorns then but this road gave way to peace. Even today, our association is called «Twishakira Amahoro» (We want peace). We will continue to look for peace and we hope that it will be possible some day. We are together and we will go on supporting each other. If Busoro was attacked, it means that all of Kanyosha and Musaga was attacked too because you are our neighbors, we are together and like I said, if you do not put out the fire in your neighbor's house, you in turn will not get any assistance when you are in trouble.

Transition music

Christophe: Come Nderagakura is the chief of the Musaga zone. Looking at these women hug each other, he said that Burundians should not lose hope and that peace will soon come.

Come: Even though there is a war here, I think that even those who fight need peace. Peace is something very important.

Christophe: Women like to get together a lot. What positive actions do they carry out that we can praise above all?

Come: It is not only words and no action. Like they said, they would like to continue doing all their daily activities together and that they would like to make future plans together. They would like everything to be as before: to share their troubles and their joy together. That is their wish. They want to live together in peace.

Christophe: The people of Busoro have lost their loved ones as well as the people from Musaga. Do you think that they can easily forget what happened to them and live together as before?

Come: Yes, of course. When you have lost someone dear, your fervent wish is that it does not happen again. These women found the solution in getting together. By meeting one another, it is their way of avoiding any more deaths. These women of Musaga brought with them a lot of things to give to the women in Busoro. A lot of these women from Busoro are Hutu and those from Musaga are Tutsi and some Hutus. They have met because they want to console those who have lost their loved ones. In our custom then, it means that they wish that these tragedies may never happen again. That is why I think that they will do a lot of good things.

Christophe: Why don't the men in Busoro and Musaga meet to dialogue?

Come: I do not think that I have an answer to that. But we have asked these women to convince their husbands and their children to follow their example. I think then that there is no obstacle to their encounter but the hard thing is taking the first step forward. We thanked these women for taking the initiative and we hope that their husbands and children will follow their example. Everyone is thirsty for peace.

Christophe: Is peace possible in Burundi? Let us listen to a Tutsi woman from Musaga:

Woman: Peace is possible in Burundi. Nothing is impossible to a woman if she has a will. We went to Busoro without knowing if we would get home in one piece. We took the very roads that the killers take and the women of Busoro did the same when they came to visit us. We all understood then that nothing is impossible if one has the will to carry out good deeds. When we began these visits, our husband and children told us we were crazy. But we saw that everything is possible.

Christophe: A Hutu woman named Nyandwi from Busoro also insists that peace will come to Burundi sooner or later. ✓

Nyandwi: Yes it is possible because if people from Busoro and Musaga can visit one another, it means that peace is on the way. In the past, we could not visit a friend from Musaga and vice versa. That is why we believe that peace will come soon in our areas and it is on the way.

Charles: You were just listening to the program « Pillar of Humanity », a program produced by Studio Ijambo. Let us remind you that this program brings to you the role models in our society who choose to do something positive as opposed to negative. You can write to us and make suggestions or write to us about people who have fought for peace and justice either in your colline, your neighborhood or nearby area. You can write to us at Studio Ijambo, POBox 6180, Bujumbura or call us at 216332, 216334, 26335. We welcome your suggestions. See you next time.

MUKENYEZI NTURAMBIRWE !

Prix, Concours, Frequence ; Paix 2000 (Mai, 2000)

Nom du traducteur : Yves – Florent NDIRUKUNDO

Nom de l'émission : MUKENYEZI NTURAMBIRWE ! (Femme, ne te décourage point !)

Date de diffusion : 9 novembre 1999, Radio Umwizero

Nom du producteur : Spès MANIRAKIZA

Présentatrice : Ces chanteuses sont des femmes de Musaga et Busoro rassemblées au sein de l'Association « Twishakira Amahoro (Nous voulons la paix) ». Certaines sont tutsi, d'autres sont hutu et twa qui ont opté de demeurer ensemble et unies en ces temps où la guerre s'évertue à les séparer en groupes ethniques. Ce soir, elles vont nous raconter comment elles ont commencé ce projet, les voies qu'elles ont emprunté, les obstacles qu'elles ont rencontrés, leurs aspirations ainsi que leurs objectifs :

Ida : Je m'appelle Ida, j'habite à Musaga. J'ai pensé que les femmes pouvaient être le support, le mur capable d'obstruer ce vent de la division. J'ai donc pensé à organiser une rencontre avec les femmes qui ont quitté Musaga afin de les faire revenir parce qu'à une époque on bloquait souvent les rues et quand un hutu entrait dans Musaga, on le tuait et quand un tutsi se rendait à Busoro, il ne revenait jamais. Nous nous sommes posé la question de savoir à quoi les femmes pouvaient être utiles car la femme est souvent appelée « la mère de la paix » et on se demandait ce qu'il en était pendant ces moments. J'ai ainsi proposé qu'on forme un collectif visant à rétablir la réconciliation et nous nous sommes fixé l'objectif d'essayer de faire revenir ceux qui avaient fui Musaga vers Busoro et Bujumbura rural. Nous nous sommes penchées sur les moyens de les faire revenir. Nous n'avions aucune maison pour les recueillir mais nous avons cherché à les rassurer. Grâce à Dieu, nous nous sommes rencontrées autour des discussions, autour des travaux, nous leur avons rendu visite et nous les femmes, nous nous sommes remontées mutuellement le moral. Les femmes hutu, twa et tutsi ont transformé cette association en un foyer parce que pour celle qui a des problèmes, elle les expose à l'association, quand elle perd quelqu'un, c'est l'association qui l'assiste, quand elle organise une fête, ce sont les membres de l'association qui l'épaulent.

Spéciose : Je m'appelle MPAWENIMA Spéciose de Busoro. Nous avons partagé les mêmes opinions entre les hutu, les twa et les tutsi. Nous avons échangé nos idées, nous avons mis sur pied notre association et jusqu'à maintenant, il n'y a aucun problème entre nous, nous sommes toujours les mêmes depuis que nous avons commencé. Même si des fois les problèmes resurgissent et que certaines d'entre nous prennent la fuite, nous essayons de nous retrouver autour du travail ou dans des réunions afin d'échanger. Il n'y a pas de climat de suspicion au sein de notre association même quand nous fuyons, nos amies tutsi nous rendent visite sur les sites des déplacés. Elles viennent nous remonter le moral et nous montrons aux autres que nous avons un cœur plein d'amour que Dieu nous a donné.

Ngendazi : Je m'appelle Ngendazi. Moi, j'avais été heureuse de voir la route reliant Musaga et Busoro rouverte grâce aux femmes alors que les hommes avaient échoué. Nous avons sacrifié notre vie parce qu'une femme, traversant Busoro pour aller à Musaga, était traitée de folle et on considérait qu'elle ne reviendrait plus. Ce fut le même cas pour les femmes de Musaga, on les traitait de stupide, on nous traitait toutes de stupides. Grâce à Dieu, nos cœurs ont battu à l'unisson et c'est ainsi que les hommes de Busoro et Musaga ont enfin

emprunté notre chemin pour se réconcilier jusqu'à présent. S'il ne tenait qu'à nous les femmes, dans la mesure où nous sommes les plus exposées, je pense que les problèmes seraient déjà résolus mais nous n'avons pas assez de poids.

Léonie : Je m'appelle BARAKOMEZA Léonie, je suis originaire de Musaga mais j'habite actuellement à Kanyosha. Au mois de mars, nous nous sommes réunies autour des travaux mais nous avons pensé que cela n'était pas suffisant, nous avons décidé d'organiser des visites dans les quartiers de chacune d'entre nous. Nous les femmes de Musaga, nous avons mûri la question et nous l'avons exposé à cette association féminine. Elle a nous assisté à organiser ces visites au cours desquelles nous avons chanté et dansé. Les gens nous regardaient comme si nous étions un miracle, les gens qui nous voyaient croyaient que nous étions dérangées. Nous sommes retournées chez nous en toute sécurité. Peu de temps après, les femmes de Busoro; hutu et twa confondues, n'ont pas tardé à nous rendre la pareille. Elles sont venues vers le 25 du mois d'août. Elles nous ont apporté beaucoup de présents. Nous nous sommes rencontrées à la Zone, le Chef de Zone était présent ainsi que d'autres Chefs de Zones, nous avons invité beaucoup de personnes, nous avons chanté et dansé. Il y avait beaucoup de spectateurs ce jour-là. Par ailleurs, ils étaient très étonnés car ils se demandaient pour quelles raisons une telle fête avait lieu. Malheureusement comme vous le savez, l'insécurité est chronique, il y a quelques temps Busoro a encore connu une période dure. Nous nous sommes dit que même maintenant notre unité devait être sauvegardée, que nous n'allions pas abandonner les nôtres parce qu'elles traversaient des moments difficiles. Nous nous sommes réunies, nous avons discuté ensemble et nous avons décidé d'exposer notre problème à cette association qui nous a aidé à porter secours à nos amies de Busoro. Nous avons fait de notre mieux, elles ont pu avoir quelques articles pour tenir le coup mais ça n'était pas assez. Cependant comme ça venait du fond du cœur, comme c'était le fruit de l'unité, cette aide s'est révélée utile car un ami cher te donne ce qu'il possède même un simple bonjour est significatif. C'est ainsi que nous pensons que la paix que nous recherchons ne s'arrête pas ici dans nos zones, nous avons l'intention de l'étendre à d'autres associations afin de propager cette idée d'entraide mutuelle. La division nous a causé bien du tort, nous allons donc le crier haut et fort.

Yvonne : Je m'appelle Yvonne, depuis que le début de la guerre, nous les femmes sommes très vulnérables car lorsque nous perdons notre enfant ou notre mari, la situation devient dure. Il y a eu Ida et Yvonne qui nous ont fait signe à partir de Busoro. A cette époque, nul ne pouvait quitter Busoro sans passer par Kanyosha et vice versa. Nous avons donc passé et outre et avons répondu à l'invitation. En arrivant à Kamesa, des enfants ont crié : « attentions, les hutus sont entrain de traverser Kanyosha ». Mais nous étions effrayés car on nous disait qu'à Musaga, on avait creusé des tranchées pour nous y enterrer. Mais nous n'y avons pas fait attention. Par contre, nous avons eu des problèmes sur notre chemin de retour car partout où nous passions, les gens se demandaient ce que de vieilles femmes comme nous étions allées chercher à Musaga. Nous n'avons pas prêté attention à ce genre de discours, on laissait ces personnes parler. A partir de là, nous avons projeté de nous rencontrer autour d'un travail, c'est ainsi que nous sommes allés cultiver à Muha. Et nous passions par ici comme des animaux car il s'agissait de ne pas avoir froid aux yeux. Quand les hommes de Busoro ont vu ce que nous faisons, ils ont commencé à se rendre compte que leurs femmes étaient devenues plus malignes qu'eux. Un à un, petit à petit, ils ont commencé à réfléchir et tout ce qui se disait sur nous a changé et c'est ainsi que nous nous sommes réconciliés. Alors, elles nous ont rendu visite, et nous aussi nous leur avons rendu visite. La femme tutsi et la femme hutu sont devenues une. La femme tutsi pouvait se rendre chez une femme hutu sans aucun danger mais il subsistait quand même cette façon de surveiller la maison où se rendait cette femme tutsi et c'était le même cas pour une femme hutu qui venait ici.

Une autre femme : Nous habitons à Busoro et nous avons été invitées à adhérer à une association prônant la réconciliation. C'est ainsi que les femmes tutsi sont venues chez nous

à Busoro. Nous avons formé un collectif, elles sont venues chez nous et nous les avons accompagnées, elles ont traversé la rivière et nous sommes retournées chez nous. Quelques temps après, l'insécurité est revenue et nous avons dû fuir. Elles sont venues nous rendre visite et nous ont dit qu'il fallait que nous demeurions unies comme avant. Et quand une femme hutu reçoit quelque chose, elle donne une partie à la femme tutsi et vice versa. Une fois, on nous a brûlé nos habits mais elles nous en ont donné d'autres, maintenant nous sommes bien habillées.

Présentatrice : Que pensent d'elles ceux qui les voient maintenant ?

Une femme : Il n'y a pas de problèmes jusqu'à maintenant parce que les gens de Busoro ont été très convaincus. Même les hommes souhaiteraient adhérer à cette association, si c'était le contraire, nous ne pourrions pas traverser Kanyosha pour venir jusqu'ici. Mais au départ, ce n'était pas aussi évident mais actuellement, tout se passe très bien.

Une autre femme : Avant lorsqu'un homme tutsi voyait sa femme prendre le chemin de Busoro chez les hutus, il se demandait si elle n'avait pas l'intention de rendre leurs enfants orphelins. Une fois qu'elle arrivait à Busoro, les gens de là-bas se disaient qu'elle venait les espionner et que par conséquent ils pouvaient subir une attaque le soir. Et à Musaga, quand tu recevais la visite des hutus, on te disait que tu étais entrain de leur montrer où ils allaient passer le jour de leur prochaine attaque. Mais aujourd'hui, ils se sont rendu compte que tout ce qu'ils ont dit n'avait pas de fondement. Le chemin que nous empruntons n'était pas destiné à déstabiliser mais plutôt à entretenir des relations afin de faire revenir l'amour. Maintenant vous voyez que le fléau de la division nous a déjà quitté.

Présentatrice : Quels peuvent être les obstacles au projet de ces femmes ? Écoutons l'une des femmes de Busoro :

La femme de Busoro : Nous avons un champ à cultiver autour duquel se retrouvent les femmes tutsi de Musaga et les femmes hutu d'ailleurs. Depuis la résurgence de l'insécurité à Busoro, il est devenu impossible pour les femmes de Busoro de passer par le chemin de Kamesa là où se trouve notre champ. Mais on laisse les femmes tutsi y aller. Vous comprenez donc que cela constitue un obstacle dans la mesure où les femmes tutsi seront les seules à cultiver ce champ qui était pourtant notre terrain de rencontre et où nous récoltions toutes ensemble. Cela risque de causer des problèmes et c'est pour cela que nous demandons au chef de zone de nous ouvrir l'accès afin que nous puissions passer de nouveau par le chemin Kamesa comme à l'accoutumé. Ainsi, les membres pourront de nouveau se retrouver.

Présentatrice : Son amie de Musaga la complète en disant :

La femme de Musaga : Toutes les personnes sont égales, lorsque la femme tutsi bénéficie de cet accès, il devrait en être de même pour la femme hutu sinon ce sera là une façon de miner notre projet parce que pour l'une l'accès est libre et pour l'autre il est bloqué. Ceci est un obstacle et en réalité, s'ils estiment que cet endroit est dangereux, il ne faut que certaines y aient un accès et que d'autres soient bloquées.

Présentatrice : Quelles sont leurs doléances ?

Une femme : En bref, ce que nous demandons, c'est que toutes les femmes du Burundi, pas seulement celles de Musaga et de Busoro, restent soudées entre elles parce que nous avons un très grand impact sur l'éducation des enfants. Nous le demandons également aux hommes, parce qu'il n'appartient pas seulement aux femmes d'avoir cet idéal, et si les hommes ne sont pas animés du même idéal, nous n'aboutirions à rien.

Présentatrice : Une autre d'ajouter :

Autre femme : Si nous en sommes capables, si nous sommes soutenues et que le gouvernement s'implique, il ne serait pas nécessaire d'aller à l'étranger pour aller chercher notre paix. Nous pouvons chercher la paix comme nous l'avons fait en provoquant la réouverture des routes qu'on avait fermé pour les femmes hutu et tutsi, comme nous avons essayé d'adoucir les cœurs devenus de pierre à cause de la guerre. Dans notre association, il y a des personnes qui ont perdu les leurs, il y a encore d'autres qui continuent à perdre les leurs. La femme a donc plusieurs atouts : elle sait rester digne et elle cherche la paix autour d'elle, à partir même de son foyer.

Autre femme : Moi, je voudrais demander, à ces personnes envoyées pour organiser des réunions sur les collines soi-disant pour apporter la paix, de s'appuyer sur les membres de « Twishakira amahoro ». Nous avons à leur apprendre comment on cherche la paix. Il y a une femme qui a tantôt dit qu'elle ne croit pas que les femmes sont toujours actives. Elle a raison dans la mesure où il y a certains endroits où la femme a subi des épreuves extrêmement dures. Tenez, vous venez nous voir et vous nous donner un moyen de nous exprimer et d'autres femmes entendent nos voix mais il y a d'autres qui sont muselées et qu'on ne peut même pas représenter. Et si jamais vous vous mettez à parler en leur nom, vous exposez à des problèmes sérieux. Et il est difficile que la sécurité revienne dans ces endroits car les gens restent isolés et ont peur de s'exprimer craignant les représailles. Mais nous, nous avons fait la différence car nous avons osé et petit à petit ça a marché. Quand une femme devient veuve, elle fait face à de sérieux ennuis et quand bien même elle aurait un mari, ce dernier peut fuir en la laissant toute seule avec les enfants en cas d'attaque. Je vois souvent beaucoup de gens qui ont fui en abandonnant leurs femmes et leurs enfants et qui ne sont jamais retournés se rendre compte de leur situation. Alors si cela doit perdurer, je pense qu'elles doivent venir vers nous pour que nous recherchions la paix ensemble car même celui qui avait souhaité certains événements, ils ne se sont produits pour autant car certains croyaient pouvoir gouverner pour avoir décimé les tutsi ou les hutus mais cela s'est révélé impossible.

Présentatrice : Ces femmes informent sur leur contribution dans la recherche de la paix et sur ce que les autres peuvent leur donner comme contribution

Une femme : Nous souhaiterions étendre sur tout le Burundi ce genre de femmes. Nous souhaiterions donner le présent constitué du panier de la paix à toutes les Burundaises. Il est douloureux d'aller prêcher la paix alors que tout autour des jeunes filles, des femmes et des hommes perpètrent le génocide mais nous avons la conviction que l'ethnie des femmes qui veulent la paix ne sera jamais exterminée, c'est pour cela que nous devons la multiplier dans tout le Burundi.

Autre femme : Notre contribution devrait commencer au niveau de notre progéniture, nous devrions apprendre à nos enfants cette paix. Après leur avoir appris comment chercher la paix et la défendre, nous pouvons approcher les autres femmes sur d'autres collines et leur donner la leçon. J'ajouterais que leur contribution consisterait à nous emboîter le pas. Nous leur servirions d'exemple et ainsi elles ne catégoriseraient pas les gens en tant que hutu, tutsi ou twa mais verraient en eux de simples Burundais.

Autre femme : Notre contribution, ce serait d'abord qu'elles écoutent cette émission afin de comprendre notre idéologie. Quant à ceux qui peuvent nous donner des contributions, je pense que la paix n'est pas seulement une affaire des simples gens mais aussi des autorités car aussi longtemps que le petit peuple n'aura pas la paix, les autorités ne seront pas plus en sécurité. Notre contribution, c'est notre idéologie de recherche de paix et ceux qui voudraient contribuer pour nous, ils devraient nous compléter et s'appuyer sur nous quand ils vont à la recherche de la paix.

Présentatrice : Nous sommes ici avec deux messieurs et j'aimerais leur demander si l'action de ces femmes a un réel impact dans la recherche de la paix.

1^{er} Monsieur : Les femmes sont nos mères et par conséquent elles devaient être plus impliquées mais il semble qu'on les ait oubliées, surtout pour les femmes modestes qui ne sont pas informées et qui n'entendent parler que d'Arusha puis elles attendent en vain les retombées d'Arusha.

2^{ème} Monsieur : Ces femmes sont extraordinaires ; En fait, j'étais venu au marché et je me suis arrêté pour écouter ce qu'elles disaient. Et je me suis rendu compte que leur discours correspond bien à leurs actions. Elles sensibilisent leurs maris ainsi que leurs enfants et cela nous fait plaisir.

1^{er} Monsieur : Je suis leur fervent supporter car leur action peut avoir une envergure nationale. Partons de l'amont si vous le voulez bien, si les femmes haut-placés ne méprisaient pas les femmes du peuple et qu'elles se mettaient ensemble car vous avez déjà remarqué qu'au Burundi, les gens haut-placés méprisent les petites gens, et souvent les femmes haut-placées ne viennent jamais rencontrer les femmes du peuple alors qu'elles ont leur mot à dire. Elles devraient les approcher et discuter avec elles tous les jours. Vous savez, vous avez trop traîné à venir, essayez d'écouter ces femmes du peuple car elles ont quelque chose à dire et souvent les petites gens sont responsables de ce qui se passe dans le pays sous l'instigation des gens haut placés. Un simple civil ne peut agir, ne peut tuer son semblable, ne peut voler les vaches d'autrui sans le soutien d'une autorité. Les femmes haut placées devraient approcher les femmes du peuple et discuter. Cela donnerait des résultats.

Présentatrice : C'est la fin de notre émission, merci à tous nos auditeurs et à ceux qui nous accordé leur interview. Vous étiez en compagnie Spès MANIRAKIZA au micro et Hadidja KASSIM à la cabine technique.



L'objectif du Centre de Paix pour les Femmes
Faciliter le dialogue entre toutes les femmes pour
permettre aux Burundaises de jouer un rôle actif et
autonome au sein d'une société civile favorable à la
paix. Dans la poursuite de cet objectif, le Centre
cherche à :

Favoriser l'émergence d'un mouvement associatif
féminin au sein duquel une culture de tolérance, de
démocratie et de bonne gestion puisse se développer par :

- des formations en résolution pacifique des conflits, principes associatifs et bonne gestion des associations
- l'organisation de rencontres d'échanges et de discussion entre membres de différentes associations
- une émission de radio destinée aux associations féminines pour les informer et permettre une meilleure coordination et cohérence des différentes initiatives
- la mise sur pied d'un réseau national des associations féminines, notamment grâce à des antennes régionales du Centre et d'autres partenaires.
- un encadrement sur le terrain des associations et la facilitation de leurs rapports avec l'administration
- un rôle d'intermédiaire et de coordination entre les associations et les bailleurs de fonds et organisations de crédit de la place
- la création d'une base de données sur les associations afin de mieux cibler les interventions des bailleurs et partenaires
- la publication et distribution d'informations utiles aux associations

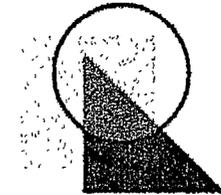
• la disponibilisation de locaux de réunion, de services de secrétariat et de conseil pour les associations, au Centre et dans ses antennes



Favoriser une plus grande autonomie des femmes par :

- une campagne de vulgarisation du Code Légal des Personnes et de la Famille, la promotion du dialogue autour de ses thèmes (mariage, divorce, filiation, succession, etc.) et la publication des recommandations données par la population.
- des journées de réflexion et d'informations sur différents sujets relatifs à la vie des femmes
- la médiatisation des expériences et accomplissements des femmes
- la promotion d'une solidarité positive entre les femmes, d'une meilleure compréhension de la notion de genre et d'un dialogue constructif entre hommes et femmes
- la promotion des échanges entre femmes à la base et intellectuelles, des campagnes et de la ville et avec les femmes du reste du monde

Search for **COMMON GROUND** **BURUNDI**



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But Universel de Search for Common Ground

Le but du programme de SCG au Burundi est de réduire les conflits ethniques, promouvoir la réconciliation de tous les Burundais à travers un dialogue sincère pour construire un avenir sur la base de leur terrain d'entente. SCG poursuit cet objectif à travers une approche à deux fourchons visant les domaines à grand impact comme la radio et les projets des femmes. A travers l'établissement et le fonctionnement du Studio Ijambo et le Centre de paix pour les Femmes. SCG est en train d'aider à instituer et populariser les mécanismes de réconciliation et l'établissement de la confiance à tous les niveaux de la société burundaise.



Le Studio Ijambo est né en pleine crise en 1995. Les équipes de journalistes de toutes les ethnies du Studio Ijambo produisent plus ou moins six heures de nouvelles, actualités, et des émissions culturelles chaque semaine.

L'objectif du Studio Ijambo est de faciliter le dialogue, une dynamique de paix et la réconciliation nationale à travers :

- La promotion d'un journalisme professionnel indépendant visant notamment à fournir de nouvelles fiables, équilibrées et diversifiées.
- La production et la diffusion de programmes radiophoniques à la Radio Nationale du Burundi et à la Radio Umwizero dont:
- Un feuilleton hebdomadaire intitulé "Umubanyi niwe muryango" qui retrace, durant la crise, les péripéties quotidiennes de deux familles, l'une hutu et l'autre tutsi, qui s'entraident et surmontent ensemble les différents problèmes.
- Une émission musicale didactique et de détente, "Sangwe", dans lequel les jeunes de tous horizons confondus se rassemblent, communiquent et partagent autour de la musique et de valeurs positives.
- Les magazines "Express" et "Amasanganzira" consacrés aux problèmes de société, de culture et de notre économie abordés sous un angle visant à désamorcer les conflits et susciter des approches

constructives. Ces magazines traitent également des questions clefs de l'heure tels que le processus de paix, la problématique de l'impunité ou de la réconciliation en mettant l'accent sur les points de convergence.



- Un documentaire "Inkingi y'Ubuntu" mettant en exergue les témoignages de solidarité positive durant la crise, les situations où la fraternité et la raison ont pris le dessus sur la peur, le recours à la violence et la haine, en vue de contribuer à la création de modèles positifs.
- Un documentaire "Au-delà des Faits" consacré aux grands dossiers de politique internationale qui s'appesantit sur les facteurs à l'origine des grands conflits, la problématique de ces mêmes conflits et les perspectives de sortie de ces mêmes conflits. "Au-delà des Faits" traite ainsi de l'expérience des pays sortis de graves crises conflictuelles ou de ceux impliqués dans des processus de paix.
- Un magazine "gira iyo uva n'iyu uja" consacré essentiellement à des thèmes en rapport avec les droits de l'homme pour promouvoir chez les burundais une culture de tolérance, de paix et des droits de l'homme.
- La plupart de ces programmes visent la participation active des forces de paix, acteurs et associations à la base impliqués dans la recherche d'une paix durable.



Horaire des Emissions du studio Ijambo

MUKENYEZI NTURAMBIRWE, mardi à 18h40, vendredi à 16h00, Sur Radio Umwizero

UKO BUKEYE UKO BWIJE, lundi à 18h40 et jeudi à 20h50 Sur Radio Umwizero

EXPRESS, mardi à 21h00 sur la 2ème chaîne de la Radio Nationale

SANGWE, mercredi à 14h00 sur la 1ère chaîne de la Radio Nationale

IJAMBO N'ITEKA, jeudi à 20h00 sur la 1ère chaîne de la Radio Nationale

GIRA IYO UVA N'IYO UJA, jeudi à 18h30 sur la 1ère chaîne de la Radio Nationale

AMASANGANZIRA, samedi à 10h00, sur la 1ère chaîne de la radio nationale

AUDELA LES FAITS, samedi à 7h20, Sur le 2ème chaîne de la Radio Nationale

INKINGI Y'UBUNTU, Radio Umwizero les mercredi à 18h40 et les samedi à 14h30'

