Foundation Rwanda Women

800 women live in communities all over Rwanda

All of these women:
• were raped during the genocide
• have children born from rape
• have survived and shown amazing resilience
• continue to live with the trauma and stigma of rape

Foundation Rwanda forum of mothers
Need for Community Counseling

“The challenge that I have is that I am alone with my problems, I do not share with anyone what I go through. It’s me and my son. For me that it is the biggest challenge.”

Josette with her son Thomas
Why Community Counselling

• 19 years after the Rwanda genocide many of the young people born from rape do not know about the circumstances of their birth.

• The mothers asked Foundation Rwanda for help.... ‘How can I tell my child what happened? He is always asking me who his father is. He needs to know’. The mothers need counselling on how to inform the children.

• Some of the children are called names such as ‘child of bad memories’ or ‘little killer’.

• Some of these children have difficult relationships with their mothers.

• Some of these women and children are ostracized in society or within their own families.
The Program

- Four groups of 10 women
- Met with a trained counsellor every two weeks for six months (12 sessions)
- Learned and discussed:
  - Their own trauma and experiences
  - Trauma symptoms
  - The rights of a child
  - Responsibilities of parenting
  - Adolescence
  - The pros and cons of disclosure
Monitoring and Evaluation

• Record of attendance
• Session content and counselor feedback
• Beneficiary evaluations included reviewing:
  – Helpfulness of group
  – Perceived quality of life
  – Social support
  – Acceptance of being a parent
  – Relationship with child
  – Disclosure
• Field visits and reports

Foundation Rwanda counselor Emiliene conducting a session with Nyanza Group
### How Helpful Was the Group?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Session 6</th>
<th>Session 12</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>How helpful was the group?</strong></td>
<td>7/10</td>
<td>9/10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Women rated the groups as 7 out of 10 for helpfulness, increasing to 9 out of 10 by the final session.
Community Counseling

“We are happy to have this group. We finally have a place where we can share our experiences and emotions. Discussing in the group helps us to release our pain.”

Supervision groups with Dr. Jemma Hogwood and counselors from local partners
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Session 1</th>
<th>Session 6</th>
<th>Session 12</th>
<th>Movement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How would you rate</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>5.7</td>
<td>8.6</td>
<td>+5.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>your life?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
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- Women were asked to rate the quality of their lives on a scale of 1-10. There was a marked improvement in their rankings over the course of the sessions.
Quality of Life Impact

![Graph showing life rating impact over sessions.](image-url)
“The groups have given me hope for life.”
“We now have people who listen to us and understand our problems which heals our wounds.”

Donathile, a Foundation Rwanda mother, with one of her younger children
## Social Support

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Session 1</th>
<th>Session 12</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Many people</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>72.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One person</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>27.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No one</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>0%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

“I like the group because it took me out of my loneliness.”

Rwandan landscape
© Jonathan Torgovnik
**Acceptance of Being a Parent**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Session 1</th>
<th>Session 12</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very happy to be their parent</td>
<td>25.5%</td>
<td>72.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Happy to be their parent</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total % of women feeling confident</td>
<td>79.5%</td>
<td>97.5%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

“The groups helped take the shame away from the fact I gave birth to a child from rape and helped me accept my child.”
## Relationship with their Children

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Session 1</th>
<th>Session 12</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very good</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>51%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good</td>
<td>69%</td>
<td>41%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total % of women</td>
<td>87%</td>
<td>92%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>reporting positive</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>relationship</td>
<td></td>
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</table>

“The knowledge we get here will help us to live peacefully and understand our children’s behavior.”
To give the opportunity for girls born of rape
• To meet together
• To know that they are not the only one in this situation
• To explore through drama their hopes and wishes for the future
• To explore what it means to be a young person in Rwanda
• To have the opportunity to be open and honest about the challenges they face
• to have fun

Foundation Rwanda counselor Emilliene with Huye group
Disclosure Considerations

Foundation Rwanda takes a neutral stance on disclosure - individuals are given the opportunity to explore and consider it within the group context

- “Telling my child the way she was born gave me peace – now the relationship with her has improved as well as with other members of the family.”

- “After the training, I took the decision to tell my child how she was born so that she knows the real truth without getting it from others”
“I always thought that I was the only one suffering from having a child that was born out of rape but after our group discussion, I got to know that it is no longer my concern as an individual but our concern as a group. Sharing our experiences gave me more hope and strength.”