

**PROJECT ASSESSMENT ON “STRENGTHENING THE
RULE OF LAW IN RWANDA : JUSTICE, PEACE AND
SECURITY FOR PEOPLE.”**

**WITH THE FOCUS ON HEALING AND SOCIAL
COHESION.**

PRISON FELLOWSHIP RWANDA

KIGALI, 24/9/2024

PROJECT ASSESSMENT ON “STRENGTHENING THE RULE OF LAW IN RWANDA : JUSTICE, PEACE AND SECURITY FOR PEOPLE.”

WITH THE FOCUS ON SOCIAL COHESION AND RECONCILIATION.

Findings from an assessment, 2023-2024



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Contact: Prison Fellowship Rwanda

P.O. Box, KIGALI, Rwanda, Website : www.pfrwanda.com, Email: info.pfrwanda@gmail.com

FOREWORD

Prison Fellowship Rwanda (PFR) is a non-governmental, faith-based organization that was established in 1995. As a member of Prison Fellowship International, PFR is committed to implementing contextualized and pacific interventions to address conflicts within the community. With nearly 30 years of experience, PFR stands as a prominent global peacebuilding organization, dedicated to laying the foundational elements of a culture of peace. Throughout its existence, PFR has actively worked with both prisoners and community members, facilitating engagement and fostering reconciliation activities.

The organization's key focus areas encompass psycho-social healing, peacebuilding, and reconciliation, along with initiatives in restorative justice, spiritual resilience, crime prevention, human rights promotion and legal aid, emergency response, and the promotion of socio-economic empowerment. PFR's efforts are particularly significant in the context of post-genocide Rwanda, addressing the repercussions of the 1994 genocide against the Tutsis and its aftermath.

The present assessment of Ubumwe guided Space Dialogue Project not only fills the gap on data but also paves a strong foundation for a comprehensive National Plan of Action to promote social cohesion and resilience in Rwandan population and coincides with the launch of Sustainable Development Goals through which the world leaders, including Rwanda, set specific commitment to promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels by 2030.

This assessment underscores the transformative potential of the guided dialogue space model in facilitating profound wound healing and social cohesion between genocide survivors, genocide inmates and their family members. The intervention exhibited a multi-faceted positive impact, enhancing psychological well-being, resilience, social cohesion between genocide survivors and former and current genocide inmates, their family members, fostering personal economic growth and social cohesion within the community. Notably, it also played a role in raising civic engagement, promoting gender equality and alleviating practical challenges, as family members of former genocide inmates reported feeling relieved and experienced increased ease in attending community meetings and health centers for child vaccinations.

This assessment provides a strong basis for developing and implementing effective conflict prevention and strategies, as well as promoting healing and social cohesion. It underscores the importance of expanding geographically the Ubumwe space guided dialogue, engaging younger participants, implementing individual therapy session. Prioritizing a gendered reintegration initiative and supervision, and initiating income-generating activities. Such strategies can contribute to more comprehensive and sustained healing, social cohesion and peace-building initiatives.

The success of the assessment was made possible by a number of organizations and individuals. The Prison Fellowship Rwanda (PFR) led the assessment which was financed by the International

United Nations for Development (UNDP). This report provide policy-makers, planners, researchers and analysts with information to the resilience and social cohesion model. We are confident that the data presented in this report provides a solid basis and will be actively applied in social healing and peacebuilding.

On behalf of the Prison Fellowship, I hereby share with you the results of assessment of the project on ‘Strengthening the rules of law in Rwanda: Justice, peace and security for people with the focus on healing and social cohesion.

Celestin NGARUKIYINKA

Executive Director

Acknowledgement

Prison Fellowship Rwanda wishes to acknowledge the efforts of several organizations and individuals who made significant contributions to the success of this assessment of the project on 'Strengthening the rules of law in Rwanda: Justice, peace and security for people with the focus on healing and social cohesion '.

Special appreciation is owed to the UNDP for their generous funding, enabling the execution of this research. Through their support, we were able to thoroughly evaluate the project's impact, derive crucial lessons, identify best practices, and offer recommendations. These findings will play a vital role in shaping future healing, reconciliation, and peacebuilding initiatives in Rwanda.

Prison Fellowship Rwanda expresses its sincere gratitude to the research team, led by Prof. Clémentine Kanazayire and Prof. Darius Gishoma, for their dedicated efforts in conducting this project assessment.

A heartfelt acknowledgment is also extended to the committed staff of Prison Fellowship Rwanda, whose unwavering support guided the consultants from the project's inception to its completion.

We would like to express our special thanks to local authorities for their assistance and contribution to the smooth implementation of the assessment. Special thanks go to the team leaders, field supervisors, enumerators and drivers, for their valuable time that made this survey possible.

Finally, we are grateful to the assessment respondents who generously gave their time to provide the information that forms the basis of this report.

To everyone involved, we extend our sincere thanks.

Celestin NGARUKIYINKA

Executive Director

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Key Terms and Definitions

Psychological well-being: Psychological well-being refers to leading a fulfilling life. It encompasses both positive feelings and effective functioning. Feeling good includes not just happiness and contentment, but also emotions like interest, engagement, confidence, and love. On the other hand, functioning effectively means developing one's potential, having control over one's life, pursuing meaningful goals, and enjoying positive relationships.

Resilience: Resilience encompasses the personal traits that allow individuals thrive in the face of adversity. Over the past two decades, research has shown that resilience is a multifaceted quality that can change depending on context, time, age, gender, and cultural background, as well as within individuals facing various life situations.

Social cohesion: Social cohesion refers to the degree of connection individuals feel within a community or group. It encompasses mutual tolerance, acceptance, understanding, and a sense of belonging. It consists of three key dimensions: social relations, identification with the geographical area, and a focus on the common good.

- The “**non-lethal coexistence**”: It is an intrapersonal component of reconciliation. It corresponded to statements that expressed the capacity not to harbor violent feelings when in the presence of the offenders; that is, the capacity to keep self-control.

1. Background

The genocide perpetrated against Tutsis, resulting in the tragic death of over one million individuals, inflicted profound harm on the Rwandan population. The individuals responsible for this tragedy had often close ties with the victims, being neighbors, friends, or even relatives (Banyanga J, Björkqvist K, Österman K, 2017, MINALOC, 2001). The impact reverberated notably among the survivors of the genocide, as well as the perpetrators and their families, leading to a profound disruption of unity and societal relationships (Rugema, Mogren, Ntaganira, & Krantz, 2015; Schaal, Weierstall, Dusingizemungu, and Elbert, 2012).

In response to this devastating legacy of the Genocide perpetrated against the Tutsis, the Rwandan government implemented various reconstruction policies, with reconciliation as a central pillar (Presidency of the Republic, 1995). Notable initiatives include Ingando (solidarity camps), genocide memory programs, the Genocide Survivors Assistance Fund (FARG), Itorero, and the Ndi Umunyarwanda (“I am Rwandan”) program, as well as the Gacaca courts.

Presumed genocide perpetrators were tried in both Gacaca courts and the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR). Established from 2002 to 2012, Gacaca court aimed to foster coexistence and healing within the nation. It allowed survivors to uncover the truth about their loved ones while enabling perpetrators to confess their crimes and seek forgiveness. Involvement in Gacaca had mixed effects on genocide survivors, leading to intensified negative emotions and post-traumatic stress, decreased trust in perpetrators' apologies, and a tendency to engage more with their own groups rather than across communities (Kanyangara et al., 2007; Rimé et al., 2011). For perpetrators, participation often resulted in heightened feelings of guilty (Kanyangara et al.; 2014). The Gacaca courts also left unresolved trauma for ex-prisoners and their families (Rutayisire and Richters, 2014).

These findings highlighted the ongoing need for interventions focused on healing, social cohesion, and reconciliation, even after legal processes have concluded. Additionally, outcomes of the proceedings included imprisonment, community service (*Travail d'Intérêt Général*, TIG), or release. Reintegrating the released perpetrators into society faced and still face challenges due to their feelings of disorientation, the fear of being labeled *genocidaires*, and psychological trauma. This underscores the necessity for supportive interventions. The approaches combining trauma healing and community trust-building have been crucial in addressing these complex issues (Lordos et al., 2021). Notably, Prison Fellowship Rwanda (PFR) has developed various models, including the 'reconciliation village model'.

Building on the success of previous projects promoting unity and reconciliation, Rwanda Prison Fellowship (PFR) implemented a UNDP-funded project titled “Strengthening the Rule of Law in Rwanda: Justice, Peace, and Security for the People”. This project was carried out in collaboration with various stakeholders including Ministry of National Unity and Civic Engagement (MIMUBUMWE), Ministry of Justice (MINIJUSTICE), Rwanda Investigation Board (RIB), Rwanda National Police (RNP), United Nations Development Programme

(UNDP) and Rwanda BAR Associations. However, the primary focus of the PFR project was on healing and social cohesion.

The PFR implemented from 2018 to 2023 the ‘*Ubumwe Guided Dialogue Space Project*’ in correctional services and communities. The Ubumwe Guided Space Dialogue model draws inspiration from dialogue-based interventions designed to foster social cohesion in fragile and conflict-affected environments. The Ubumwe Guided Space Dialogue project has been implemented in correctional services and communities across Rwamagana, Bugesera, Ngoma, Musanze, Rubavu, and Nyamagabe districts from 2018 to 2023, with the aim of promoting psychological wellbeing and fostering social cohesion among genocide survivors, genocide perpetrators, their family members and entire community. After 5 years, an evaluation was needed to assess the contribution of the project on healing and social cohesion among genocide survivors, former and current genocide inmates and their family members. This assessment was driven by need to generate credible information on the relevance, effectiveness, impact, and the sustainability of the implemented project and formulate critical lessons learned, good practices and recommendations to inform future healing, reconciliation, and peace building programming in Rwanda.

2. Keys Findings

2.1 Findings regarding the contribution of the project in enduring genocide wounds healing, reconciliation and social cohesion among the target population.

The evaluation revealed that the ubumwe guided dialogue space model implemented by PFR in this project yielded positive outcomes for genocide survivors, current and former genocide inmates, and their family participants. The quantitative findings showed that Ubumwe project contributed to the enhanced psychological well-being and raising self-esteem of participants. Testimonials from qualitative study revealed a notable decrease in somatic symptom scores, case of collective emotional crises during commemoration among genocide survivors who participated in the project. The genocide survivors and former inmates who actively engaged in the Ubumwe project exhibited dignity restoration, hope and resilience. Prayer and trust in God helped them to cope with the situations and to become resilient.

In terms of social cohesion, the findings qualitative showed that current and former genocide inmates recognized their moral responsibility. However, the quantitative findings indicated that the Ubumwe guided space dialogue project contributed to a reduction in individual guilt among current genocide inmates, while it exacerbated the individual guilt among former genocide inmates. This increase may be attributed to their confrontation with and contact with the victims within the community while for the current genocide inmate there is a distance. Former perpetrators in the testimonials revealed having undergone a transformation; they have acknowledged their wrongdoings and learned to live with feelings of shame and guilt. Although each participant manages these difficult emotions in their own unique way, they all recognize that such emotions are a part of life that must be addressed.

Acknowledging their responsibility as perpetrators has also reduced the animosity that family members of genocide inmates felt toward genocide survivors. This recognition has facilitated healing from the legacy of intergenerational hatred, anger, as they have communicated to their descendants that they were innocents and had been wrongfully accused by their enemies, the genocide survivors.

Some participants who benefited from the ubumwe guided space dialogue emphasized its impact on confession, truth-telling, and revealing the locations of the bodies of genocide victims. However, others expressed that some individuals remained adamant about not disclosing the whereabouts of their loved ones' bodies. For most of genocide survivors, revealing the locations of genocide victims' bodies was viewed as a crucial condition for achieving forgiveness.

The project helped the people to ask forgiveness and some of them have been forgiven and one current genocide inmate is still waiting for forgiveness. A gender issue has arisen concerning forgiveness and reintegration. Specifically, female genocide perpetrators are often anticipated to face negative reception from their descendants. A female former inmate shared her improved relationship with her child, but she emphasized the difficulties that female genocide inmates encounter during community reintegration after their release compare to male.

Moreover, the project fostered positive relationships and social cohesion between perpetrators and survivors. Some former genocide inmate, after participating in the ubumwe guided space dialogue, they payed back what they had destroyed during the genocide for reparation. The genocide survivors and former genocide inmate began to trust each other after engaging in the project, and they were supporting one another. Their relationship alliances have strengthened, as evidenced by giving a cow, a child in baptism or a daughter in marriage.

Despite granting forgiveness for damaged properties, few number of genocide survivors remain reluctant to foster relationships with former inmates. One survivor revealed that he meets and greets his neighbor former genocide inmate, and when the latter had a marriage, he contributed. However, they remain in a phase where they cannot visit each other's homes or invite one another over.

Another one emphasized on some act done during commemoration period that can even discourage the people who were willing to forgive. The strained dynamics persist, marked by disruptions during commemoration periods when former inmates deliberately cut the survivor's plantain trees, particularly on the date dedicated to remembering the loss of family members during the genocide.

Despite the direct benefit of the ubumwe guided space dialogue, the indirect benefits of this intervention include economic empowerment, gender equality, and women's empowerment, as well as positive intrafamily relationships. The former inmates experienced transformative journeys characterized by increased civic engagement and trust in the government. Their active participation in community initiatives, such as Umuganda, voting the leaders, candidacy in elections, and involvement in commemoration ceremonies of the genocide against the Tutsis. This demonstrated a tangible shift in their engagement with societal structures, including attending child vaccination events.

2.2 Findings regarding the contribution of the project on the rest of community members in the surrounding area

The project fostered positive relationships and social cohesion between perpetrators and survivors, contributing to a more cohesive community at large. There was also a noticeable change among community members who did not participate in the project; they testified to this transformation as well. They became more sensitive to their neighbors in terms of forgiveness and actively embraced this change. Additionally, some individuals who previously abused

alcohol and exhibited aggressive behavior that disturbed the community have stopped and begun initiating income-generating activities.

2.3 Findings regarding the lessons learned, good practices and what enables or impedes the sustainability of results.

The project was relevant and aligned seamlessly with Rwanda's national unity initiatives, supporting the government's mission for unity, social cohesion and sustainable peace. The project integrated traditional practices and emphasizing community ownership for effective reconciliation.

The project actively involved local communities in planning and execution, the project emphasizes comprehensive training programs, ensuring sustainable practices. The Guided dialogue spaces model was formed within neighborhoods, demonstrate genuine commitment without constant financial support.

The lessons learned were regarding the collaborative intervention strategies with established organizations and the inclusion of spiritual elements, such as prayers that proved instrumental. The guided dialogue space model when adjusted by including group counseling and prayer can contribute to individual healing. This dialogue has proven instrumental in fostering a transformative process within guided dialogue spaces. The acknowledgment of moral responsibility, confession of wrongdoings, and active pursuit of forgiveness by genocide perpetrators have emerged as key components of this process. This transformative journey not only contributes significantly to the rehabilitation of the perpetrators themselves but also plays a crucial role in relieving the burden of shame and guilt experienced by their family members.

The challenges of this project include geographical distance, time allocation, and the lack of a simplified training guide for the Sector leader and abatahira. Recommendations focus on strategic expansion, youth involvement, individual therapy, training guide for key informants at sector level, income-generating activities.

To enhance the effectiveness and sustainability of future programs aimed at healing and social cohesion in Rwanda, the following recommendations are proposed:

- **Explore the inclusion of young people** in the program. Involving the youth can contribute to the sustainability of peace-building initiatives by fostering a culture of tolerance and peace among the younger generation.
- **Introduce individual therapy** sessions to address the emotional impact of the dialogue space. Acknowledging that the project may open wounds, individual therapy can provide ongoing support.
- **Initiate Income-Generating Activities**
Foster sustainable community development by helping initiate income-generating activities. This can empower community members economically, creating a foundation for shared prosperity and strengthening social bonds.
- **Localized Intervention through Community Structures**

Participants faced significant challenges due to the geographical distance to the office where the PFR guided dialogue sessions were held. Exploring intervention strategies through local community structures, such as cells, villages, or even smaller units like "Isibo/Amasibo," coordinated by village leaders. Leveraging existing community structures fosters proximity, facilitating participation and horizontal communication within the community. This approach aligns with the common life of the community and encourages active engagement

- **To develop a standardized training guide** for the in-charge of social affairs or abatahira, who are responsible for independently teaching the lessons learned from the project. This guide will help to maintain consistency and quality in teaching and may lead to variations in implementation across different locations or facilitators.
- **Promote intergenerational dialogue** to facilitate understanding, social cohesion, and healing among different age groups. This communication involves meaningful exchanges between those directly affected by the genocide, including inmates and their children born after the events. It preserves collective memory, fosters empathy, and contributes to shared responsibility for healing and preventing future conflicts.
- **Initiate a gendered reintegration initiative** that consider the specific challenges faced by women who participated in the genocide and their reintegration. Develop social reintegration programs tailored to women released from prison, addressing stigmas and obstacles they encounter. A comprehensive and inclusive approach can break down barriers, promoting social cohesion within the community.

Although the assessment findings revealed that the Ubumwe guided dialogue space project implemented by PFR yielded positive outcomes for genocide survivors, current and former genocide inmates, and their family participants in terms of healing and social cohesion, there were some limitations. The limitation of the assessment was the absence of baseline evaluation. A baseline assessment would have provided a reference point for gauging changes over time. The lack of differentiation between case and control groups in psychosocial outcomes suggests potential crossover effects. Future research should incorporate baseline and long-term evaluations for a nuanced understanding of intervention impact.

In sum, the Ubumwe project, notably through guided dialogue space model, has not only responded effectively to the multifaceted challenges in post-genocide Rwanda but has demonstrated transformative potential. Lessons learned and recommendations form a robust framework for future interventions, guiding efforts towards sustained healing, reconciliation, and peace-building in societies grappling with the legacies of conflict.

1. Background

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inspiration from dialogue-based interventions designed to foster social cohesion in fragile and conflict-affected environments.

Studies on intergroup dialogue model

At its core, dialogue-based approach aims to enhance inter-group trust, cooperation, and inclusive identity through facilitated discussions that bridge societal divides (Yael Ben David et al., 2017; Rothman, 2014).

Participation in dialogue has been shown to challenge and break stereotypes (Griffin et al., 2012), promote critical self-reflection (Dessel, 2010), improve understanding of others' experiences (Griffin et al., 2012), and expand social connections and friendships (Griffin et al., 2012; Rodenborg & Huynh, 2006). Intergroup dialogues (IGD) have led to increased engagement, decreased avoidance, and significant shifts in colorblind racial attitudes, enhanced empathic perspective-taking, and improved intergroup relationships (Stephan & Finlay, 1999).

In both Asian and African contexts, intergroup dialogue has addressed ethno-religious tensions. For instance, research on interfaith dialogue in Indonesia highlights its role in fostering peace after conflicts, positioning it as a transformative tool and a preventative measure against future atrocities (Amanda Smith Byron, 2016). Similarly, a study in Kaduna, Nigeria, demonstrated that interfaith dialogue between Christian and Muslim leaders contributed to peace among youth and influenced sermon content in both churches and mosques (Iliya, 2022).

Additionally, a United Nations peacekeeping operation in Côte d'Ivoire, covering 107 departments from October 2011 to May 2016, found that facilitating local dialogue among groups with distinct communal identities can enhance intergroup coordination and reduce biases, thereby lowering the risk of communal conflict escalation (Hannah M. Smidt, 2020).

The Ubumwe Guided Space Dialogue model, an inspiration from Muller's 4-stage critical dialogic model

The Ubumwe Guided Space Dialogue model is an inspiration of Muller's four-stage critical dialogic model. This critical dialogic model was applied in 19 intergroup dialogues at a public university in the Southeastern United States. It has four stage: Group beginnings/forming and building, exploring differences and commonalities of experience, exploring and dialoging about hot topics, action planning & alliance building

The findings showed a significant impact of Muller's four-stage critical dialogic model in increasing empathic perspective taking and engagement and in decreasing avoidance, blindness to racial privilege and institutional discrimination. However, the transformations facilitated by IGD occur at the group level rather than the individual level. However, the model was mostly applied to the church and students and not in the post-genocide context where the genocide survivors, current and former genocide inmates and their family members have to meet for dialogue.

Consequently, the PFR initiated a Ubumwe Guided Space Dialogue model which has an intragroup dialogue in addition to intergroup dialogue. Intergroup dialogue enriched by incorporating peer group counseling and s active listening and spiritual approaches as a cross

cutting to deal with the emotional and psychological sufferings of the genocide survivors, genocide inmates and their family members.



Ubumwe guided dialogue healing



Guided forgiveness session



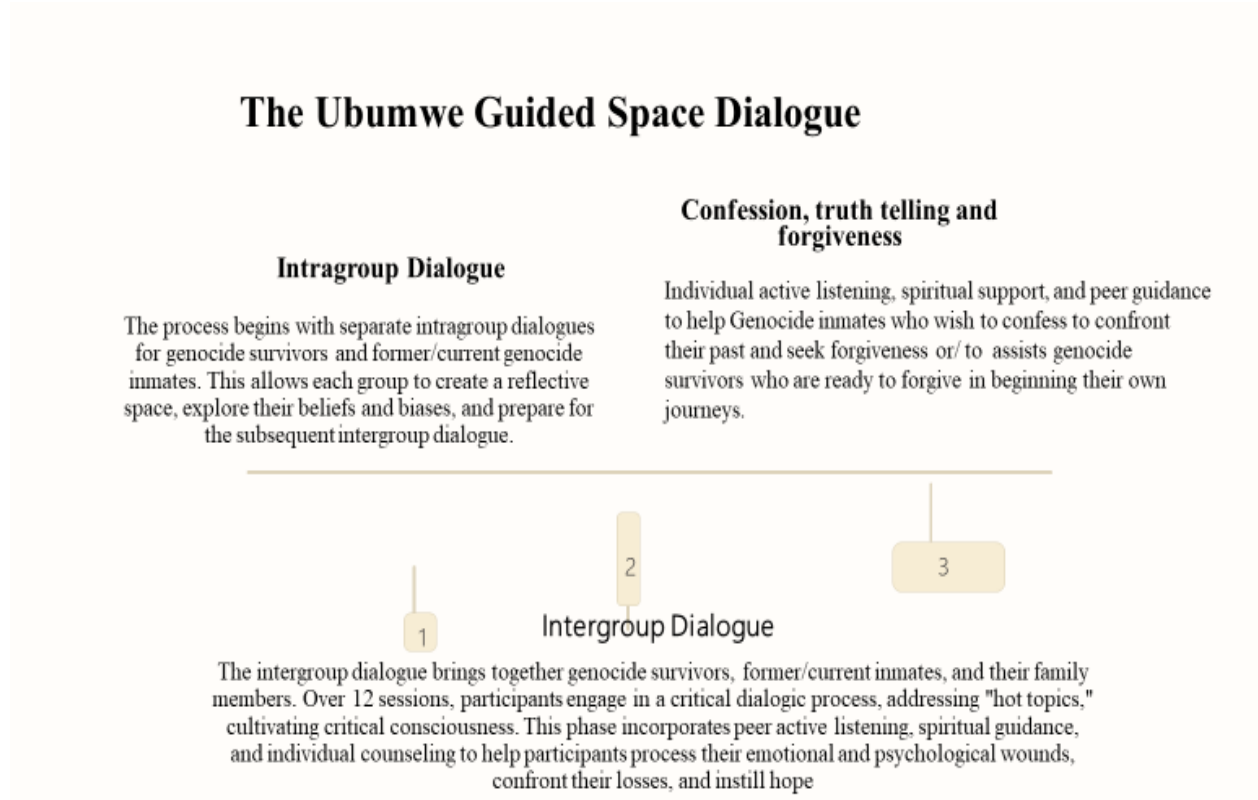
community events that brought together current genocide inmates, family members of inmates and genocide survivors



Ubumwe guided dialogue in Community

The Ubumwe Guided Space Dialogue

The Ubumwe Guided Space Dialogue project was structured into three phases.

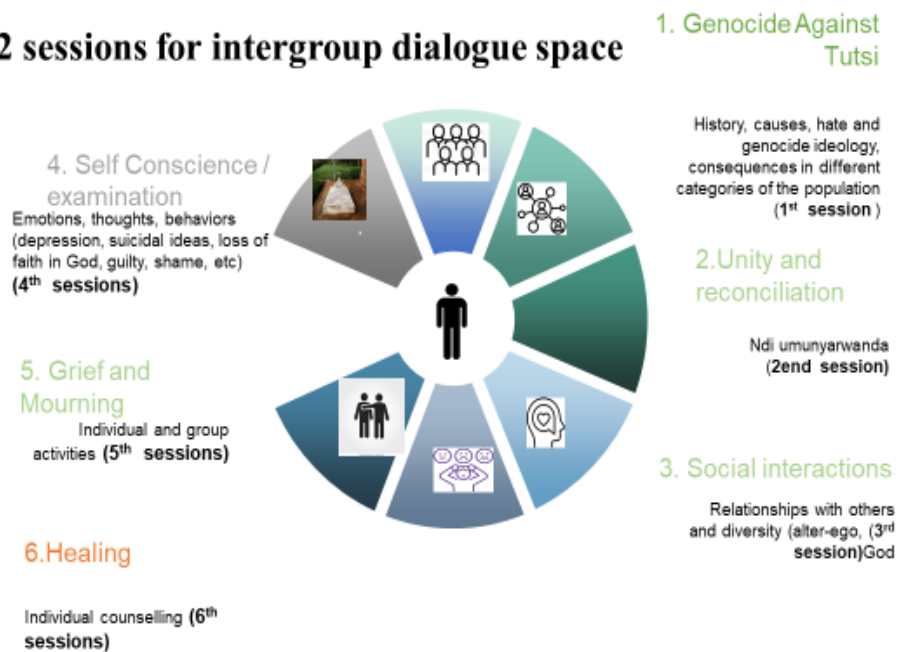


Phase one involves *separate intragroup dialogues* among genocide survivors, current and former inmates, and the family members of these inmates. This phase creates a reflective space where each group can explore their beliefs and biases, preparing them for the subsequent intergroup dialogue.

Phase two brings together in *intergroup dialogue* all participants: genocide survivors, former and current inmates, and their family members in a series of over 12 sessions. During this critical dialogue process, participants discuss "hot topics" and cultivate critical consciousness. The beneficiaries go through the 6 sessions in phase one and these sessions all described in the following schema.

3. The Ubumwe Guided Space Dialogue

Step 2: 12 sessions for intergroup dialogue space

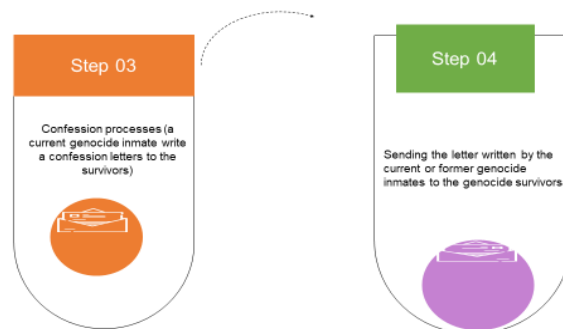


This phase incorporates peer active listening, spiritual guidance, and individual counseling to help participants process their emotional and psychological wounds, confront their losses, and instill hope. Current inmates also engage in similar activities, but within separate intragroup dialogue.

Phase three focuses on *preparation for confession, truth-telling, and forgiveness*. Genocide inmates who wish to confess receive individual active listening, spiritual support, and peer guidance to help them confront their past and seek forgiveness. At the same time, this support assists genocide survivors who are ready to forgive in beginning their own journeys. Once forgiveness is granted, it paves the way for redefining relationships and envisioning a shared future.

Confession truth telling and forgiveness phase

Confession, truth telling and forgiveness



Confession, truth telling and forgiveness



The Ubumwe Guided Space Dialogue project has been implemented in correctional services and communities across Rwamagana, Bugesera, Ngoma, Musanze, Rubavu, and Nyamagabe districts from 2018 to 2023, with the aim of promoting psychological wellbeing and fostering social cohesion among genocide survivors, genocide perpetrators, their family members and entire community. After 5 years, an evaluation was needed to assess the contribution of the project on healing and social cohesion among genocide survivors, former and current genocide inmates and their family members. It is in this line that this assessment project on has been performed.

3. Objective of the evaluation

3.1 General objective

This work intended to assess the relevance, effectiveness, impact, and the sustainability of the implemented project and formulate critical lessons learned, good practices and

recommendations to inform future healing, social cohesion; and peace building programming in Rwanda.

3.2 Specific objective

- To evaluate the contribution of the project in enduring genocide wounds healing, reconciliation and social cohesion among the target population.

- To assess the effects of the project on the rest of community members in the surrounding area who did not participate in this program (including other genocide inmates, their family members and genocide survivors).

- To document the lessons learned, good practices that Prison Fellowship Rwanda could integrate into future healing, social cohesion and peace programming in general and identify what enables or impedes the sustainability of results.

4. Methodology

- To respond to this objective, a mixed method was used. This assessment covered 3 districts: Ngoma, Nyamagabe, and Rubavu along with 2 Correctional Services: Ngoma for female inmates and Rubavu for male inmates.

4.1 Desk document review method

The desk review method was used. This involved a comprehensive examination of various documents related to the project, including research publications, policy and legal documents, and project reports. This method facilitated a deep understanding of the project's context and allowed for the triangulation of secondary data with primary data collected at both community and correctional services levels.

4.2 Quantitative approach

We started with the hypothesis that the Ubumwe guided space dialogue model would positively impact the relationships among genocide survivors, former and current inmates, leading to increased contact, enhanced empathy, trust, social cohesion, and the expansion of social connections and friendships. The Ubumwe guided dialogue space was also expected to promote the development of critical consciousness and moral responsibility among current and former inmates. As the guilty and negative moral image raised the genocide inmates would manifest positive attitudes such seeking forgiveness. For genocide survivors, the anticipation was that they would extend forgiveness, express a willingness to reconcile, and diminish stereotypes.

The dialogue aimed at fostering critical self-reflection, deepening understanding of artificial ethnic group differences, gaining insights into others' life experiences, fostering respect for diversity, and enhancing identification with Rwandese identity and perceptions of similarities.

While the transformations facilitated by InterGroup Dialogues are ideally intended to occur at the societal level rather than the individual level, our improved InterGroup guided Dialogues space incorporated a peer group counseling session. This session aimed to provide a platform for expressing suffering and emotions, thereby fostering psychological well-being, elevating self-esteem, instilling a sense of revalorization and wound healing.

By spill over effect, we expected also to have an impact in the surrounding community.

4.2.1 Trial design

The study used the randomized control trial approach to compare the population involved in the programme and those who were not involved. One arm served as a control (control). At the same time, the other passed through the Ubumwe guided dialogue space model. The design and report of this trial protocol didn't follow the Standard; the baseline was missing. The evaluation compared only the beneficiaries of Ubumwe project and the control group of people who didn't benefit from the guided dialogue space model intervention.

4.2.2 Population of the assessment

This specific assessment encompassed three districts: Ngoma, Nyamagabe, and Rubavu, along with two correctional services, namely Ngoma and Rubavu prisons. The quantitative evaluation involved various groups of respondents who were actively engaged in the project. Participants in this assessment were drawn from the four segments of the population, forming a representative group for quantitative analysis.

- Genocide survivors
- Current genocide inmates
- Former genocide inmates
- Family members of current and former genocide inmates

The table below displays the statistics of direct project participants since 2018.

4.2.3 The population of beneficiaries

District & Correctional Services	Number of genocide inmates (former and current)	Number of families of inmates	Number of genocide survivors
Ngoma Correctional Services	127		
Ngoma District		33	36
Rubavu District		72	72
Nyamagabe District		203	181
Rubavu Correctional services	120		
Sub/Total	247	308	289
General Total			844

4.2.4 Sampling for quantitative approach

To calculate the sample size for the general community population, genocide survivors, former-genocide inmates current genocide inmates, and their family members, the Yamane formula was used, a commonly employed method when the population is known. The sample size (n) represents the number of participants per sector.

N: Total population of beneficiaries in each sector (When the population is known)

e: margin of error (0.05)

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e^2)}$$

Table 1: Calculated sample size

SN	Type population	Calculated sample size
1	Genocide survivors	<p>N: Total population is</p> <p>289</p> <p>e: margin of error (0.05)</p> $n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e^2)} = \mathbf{167}$
2	Former and current genocide prisoners	<p>N: Total population is 247</p> <p>e: margin of error (0.05) $n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e^2)} = \mathbf{152}$</p>
3.	Family of prisoners	<p>N: Total population in each district (When the population is known): 308</p> <p>e: margin of error (0.05)</p> $n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e^2)} = \mathbf{174}$

For the control group, an equivalent number of individuals with similar characteristics were selected to ensuring a comparable representation of those who were not involved in the project.

4.2.5 Quantitative data collection

4.2.5.1 The instruments for collecting quantitative data.

The main instruments to be used in questionnaire design included demographic information data and other contextualized psychometric tools such as trust, social cohesion, resilience, empathy, inclusion identification, intra-reconciliation, self esteem, psychological well-being forgiveness and standardized psychometric tools such as personal guilty, collective guilty, shame, feelings of revenge and contact. The tool of rehumanization has been developed based on the existing literature developed by (Kelman, 1976) and the reliability was performed.

4.2.5.2 Data management for quantitative data

KOBO COLLECT was used to collect the data. The field teams composed with enumerators, supervisors and field manager securely uploaded data to a server on a nightly basis. Daily data cleaning procedures were implemented to monitor data quality. In case of any discrepancies, the data manager promptly informed supervisors and enumerators, facilitating on-site correction of information. This meticulous approach ensured the reliability and accuracy of the collected data throughout the assessment.

4.2.5.3 Quantitative data analysis

Descriptive and inferential analyses were conducted using the SPSS version 25 software. The analysis included a t-test to compare results between the group of genocide survivors/current and former genocide inmates and their family members who didn't benefit from the guided space dialogue and these who pass through the guided dialogue space. This statistical approach allowed for a comprehensive examination of the impact and significance of the project's effects on the assessed variables.

4.3 Qualitative study

A phenomenological approach was used in this study (Polit & Beck, 2004) to understanding and interpreting individuals' subjective experiences and perceptions of a guided space dialogue intervention. This approach emphasizes exploring the essence of lived experiences, focusing on how people make sense of and interpret the intervention and its contribution. In-depth interviews have been conducted with keys informants persons and focus groups discussions with the beneficiaries of the PFR project.

4.3.1 Study setting and participants for qualitative

The study has been conducted in the Ngoma, Nyamagabe, and Rubavu districts, as well as two correctional facilities, Ngoma and Rubavu prisons, where a guided space dialogue intervention was being implemented. The researcher used purposive sampling to select people over the age of 18 years (at the time of data collection) who were genocide survivors,

current and former perpetrators, as well as their family members. All participants were part of the Prison Fellowship Rwanda program, which received funding from the UNDP to carry out the guided space dialogue intervention in Rwanda. Additionally, community members residing in the neighborhoods where the project took place, who were not directly involved in the intervention, also participated in the study.

Table contains a description of the participants, who represent a small and heterogeneous sample.

Participants descriptions

Groups	Rubavu		Ngoma		Nyamagabe	
	age	sexe	age	sexe	age	sexe
A. Focus Group Discussion						
Genocide survivors						
1.	35	F	42	M	40	M
2.	65	F	53	M	59	F
3.	43	F	38	M	47	M
4.	35	F	47	M	52	M
5.	60	F	65	F	55	F
6.	42	M	44	F	51	F
7.	55	M	60	F	60	M
8.	40	M	46	F	49	F
	Rubavu		Ngoma		Nyamagabe	
	age	sexe	age	sexe	age	sexe
Former genocide inmates						
1.	56	M	59	M	49	m
2.	54	M	48	M	53	F
3.	55	M	53	M	50	F
4.	67	M	70	M	48	M

5.	58	M	68	F	52	M
6.	52	M	63	M	60	F
7.	57	M	54	F	58	M
8.	59	M	58	M	64	M
Current genocide inmates						
1.	49	M	64	F		-
2.	48	M	69	F		-
3.	59	M	79	F		-
4.	67	M	54	F		-
5.	70	M	62	F		-
6.	73	M	61	F		-
7.	60	M	56	F		-
8.	54	M	53	M		
Family members of genocide inmates						
1.	23	F	26	M	31	F
2.	25	M	30	F	20	F
3	28	F	20	M	34	m
4	34	M	34	F	29	M
5	45	M	45	F	45	M
6	40	F	40	M	38	F
7	42	F	29	M	45	F
8	48	M	48	F	50	F
Community members						
1.	45	M	39	M	38	M

2	69	F	59	M	62	F
3	57	M	47	F	37	M
4	52	M	52	F	42	F
5	62	M	49	M	52	F
6	49	F	62	M	49	M
7	56	F	46	F	57	M
8	40	F	55	F	43	F
B. Interview						
Key informants						
	Rubavu		Ngoma		Nyamagabe	
	age	sexe	age	sexe	age	sexe
1.	41	M	39	M	40	F
2.	48	M	43	M	48	M
3.	38	M	32	M	39	M
4.	29	M	45	F	47	F
5.	36	F	52	F	52	M

4.3.2 Data collection and materials

The data were collected per district. In the group sessions, participants shared their past experiences and histories before joining the project, their perceptions about guided space dialogue intervention and the contribution of the intervention on psychological well-being and social cohesion. Potential

The individual interviews were arranged at private locations chosen by the participants and lasted approximately 1 to 2 hours each. Focus group discussions i schedule ware used and the researcher probed for further information to clarify issues where necessary. The interviews were all conducted by the researcher in Kinyarwanda, the official language of Rwanda. The researcher is herself Rwandeseand, had previous experience in working with genocide survivors and genocide inmates.

The theme explored were (a) trauma; (b) social cohesion before joining the project; (c) perceptions regarding the guided space dialogue intervention; (d) Contribution of the

intervention to the participant's psychological trauma recovery and social cohesion. Sub-questions were: Does the guided space dialogue contribute to healing their wounds? How do the guided dialogue space contribute in healing children of both genocide survivors and former genocide perpetrators from transgenerational legacy? Does the guided space dialogue contribute in fostering social cohesion between genocide survivors and former genocide perpetrators? And within the surrounding community?

4.3.4 Data analysis

The data analysis involved transcribing the interviews verbatim, translating them into English, and then analyzing them using the seven stages of phenomenological analysis as delineated by Colaizzi (1978). An iterative analysis process was employed, through which fundamental thematic content was obtained.

The information gathered from the desk review, interviews, and Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) underwent a synthesis process aligned with the assessment objectives. Employing a line-by-line coding technique, interviews were systematically coded through an interactive process, resulting in the generation of initial codes. Subsequently, these initial codes were grouped, facilitating the consolidation of smaller codes into larger segments. This thematic analysis approach allowed for the conceptualization of themes, providing a structured and comprehensive understanding of the synthesized information in accordance with the Objective.

4.4 Ethical Considerations

In the guided space dialogue intervention, all information shared by participants was treated as confidential. Participation was voluntary, and individuals had the right to withdraw at any time. Only the district manager and two dialogue facilitators from each group had access to the demographic information collected, which they monitored to evaluate the program's impact. The intervention spanned 15 weeks, divided into six phases of the guided space dialogue intervention with each weekly session lasting three hours.

Confidentiality was established with participants creating rules during the first session, emphasizing privacy, active listening, and confidentiality as foundational principles for each subsequent session. Ethical approval from an institutional review board was not sought, as participants essentially established their own rules, obviating the need for such approval.

Before each session, the rules were reiterated verbally, and participants, dialogue facilitator, and the district manager reached agreements regarding the changes experienced as a result of the sessions. During the initial session, participants collectively developed a code of conduct emphasizing privacy, confidentiality, and active listening.

These rules complemented the seven recommended principles in guided space dialogue intervention, including democracy, responsibility, interest, participation, equality, learning by doing, and focusing on the present moment. Through these principles, participants were encouraged to contribute equally, engage in group dialogue, make decisions collectively, and foster mutual cooperation. As such, prior approval for the current study was obtained based on these established protocols.

4.5. Triangulation

Triangulation of the quantitative and qualitative data collected was a fundamental aspect of this evaluation. Throughout the process, data from documentary analysis, both quantitative and qualitative, were integrated at various stages. The emerging themes identified from the literature review and relevant documents played a pivotal role in shaping the design and components of both the qualitative and quantitative aspects of the evaluation. This comprehensive approach ensured a holistic and well-rounded understanding of the assessed project, combining the strengths of both quantitative and qualitative methodologies.

5. Presentation of results

The results presentation focuses on the following areas: description of participant characteristics, contribution of the project to the enduring healing of genocide wounds, reconciliation, and social cohesion among the target population, as well as the broader community, including other genocide inmates, their family members, and genocide survivors, relevance of the project, effectiveness of the project, sustainability of the implemented project, critical lessons learned and best practices identified, challenges encountered and recommendations to guide future healing, reconciliation, and peace-building programs in Rwanda.

5.1. Baseline findings

5.1.1 The beneficiaries of the project

The findings from desk review analysis showed that the beneficiaries of the project are distributed in the following way

	District & Prisons	No prisoners Participated	No families of prisoners	No of survivors
East	Bugesera	269	273	270
	Rwamagana	127	166	206
	Ngoma	136	133	136
	Gatsibo	67	67	97
	Kayonza	79	79	109
West	Rusizi	18	18	18
	Rubavu	72	72	72
North	Musanze	18	17	13
South	Huye	18	18	18

Nyamagabe	180	420	418
Sub/Total	984	1,263	1,357
General Total			3,604

Include the findings from ababeneficiries mu kiganiro cyakozwe muhura nabo bwa mbere mumaze kubahabwa na local authorities

5.1.2 Psychological well-being and social cohesion among PFR beneficiaries before the enrollment in the project

Abantu binjiye, bataremara icyaha, batarasaba imbabazi, bamwe bishinja, badashobora kuvugana, gusangira hari ibiganiro bagiranye nabo mbere yo kuba recruitment. Izo focus group zerekanye ibi nibi

5.13. Social cohesion within the community

5.2 End-line findings

The end-line findings include description of respondents characteristics and the impact of the project on psychological well-being and resilience, social cohesion among survivors and former/current inmates.

5.2.1. Sociodemographics characteristics of the respondents

Table 1 provides an overview of the sociodemographic characteristics of the respondents. The sample was stratified into three categories of village residents (former prisoners, current prisoners, and survivors), assigned to the control group (n=255, 44.7%) and the case group (n=315, 55.3%). Overall, there was a comparable number of female (n=295, 51.8%) and male (n=275, 48.2%) respondents in all categories, except for former prisoners, where female respondents were less represented (Table 1). In terms of marital status, the majority were married (58.4%, n=333), followed by widows/widowers (n=164, 28.8%). Additionally, the majority of respondents were either illiterate or had completed primary education, engaged in plantation-based livelihoods, identified as Christian, and fell into the second Ubudehe category in the current sample.

Table 2: Sociodemographic characteristics of the respondents

Categories of the village residents									
Ex-prisoner		Current Prisoners		Survivors		Total			
N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%		

1. Groups	Control	31	30.4%	84	51.2%	140	46.1%	255	44.7%
	Case	71	69.6%	80	48.8%	164	53.9%	315	55.3%
	Total	102	100.0%	164	100.0%	304	100.0%	570	100.0%
2. Gender	Male	97	95.1%	88	53.7%	110	36.2%	295	51.8%
	Female	5	4.9%	76	46.3%	194	63.8%	275	48.2%
	Total	102	100.0%	164	100.0%	304	100.0%	570	100.0%
3. Marital status	Single	2	2.0%	9	5.5%	34	11.2%	45	7.9%
	Married/cohabitation	94	92.2%	81	49.4%	158	52.0%	333	58.4%
	widow/widowers	5	4.9%	62	37.8%	97	31.9%	164	28.8%
	Separated/divorce	1	1.0%	12	7.3%	15	4.9%	28	4.9%
	Total	102	100.0%	164	100.0%	304	100.0%	570	100.0%
4. What is the source of the family income?	Cooperative	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
	Teacher	1	1.0%	1	0.6%	3	1.0%	5	0.9%
	Casual work	10	9.8%	9	5.5%	34	11.2%	53	9.3%
	NGOs	0	0.0%	1	0.6%	2	0.7%	3	0.5%
	Trader	0	0.0%	4	2.4%	16	5.3%	20	3.5%
	Large livestock	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%

	Small livestock	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	4	1.3%	4	0.7%
	Plantation	76	74.5%	77	47.0%	21 9	72.0%	372	65.3%
	Other	15	14.7%	64	39.0%	21	6.9%	100	17.5%
	Specify	0	0.0%	8	4.9%	5	1.6%	13	2.3%
	Total	10 2	100.0 %	16 4	100.0 %	30 4	100.0 %	570	100.0 %
5. Social categories	Category 1	3	2.9%	0	0.0%	15	5.0%	18	4.5%
	Category 2	57	55.9%	0	0.0%	18 2	60.3%	239	59.2%
	Category 3	35	34.3%	0	0.0%	10 0	33.1%	135	33.4%
	Category 4	7	6.9%	0	0.0%	5	1.7%	12	3.0%
	Total	10 2	100.0 %	0	0.0%	30 2	100.0 %	404	100.0 %
6. Education	Illiterate	33	32.4%	73	44.5%	42	13.8%	148	26.0%
	Not completed primary	26	25.5%	21	12.8%	69	22.7%	11 6	20.4%
	Completed primary	34	33.3%	50	30.5%	12 2	40.1%	20 6	36.1%
	Not completed O'L	2	2.0%	3	1.8%	9	3.0%	14	2.5%
	Completed O'L	2	2.0%	4	2.4%	12	3.9%	18	3.2%
	Not Completed secondary	0	0.0%	4	2.4%	12	3.9%	16	2.8%

	Completed secondary	2	2.0%	7	4.3%	32	10.5%	41	7.2%
	University	2	2.0%	1	0.6%	2	0.7%	5	0.9%
	VTC	1	1.0%	1	0.6%	4	1.3%	6	1.1%
	Total	10	100.0	16	100.0	30	100.0	57	100.0
		2	%	4	%	4	%	0	%
7. Religion of the participant	Christian	10	98.0%	162	98.8%	29	98.4%	56	98.4%
		0				9		1	
	Muslim	1	1.0%	2	1.2%	2	0.7%	5	0.9%
	No religion	1	1.0%	0	0.0%	3	1.0%	4	0.7%
	Total	10	100.0	164	100.0	30	100.0	57	100.0
		2	%		%	4	%	0	%
8. Do you receive any external support?	No	96	94.1%	157	95.7%	132	43.4%	38	67.5%
								5	
	Yes	6	5.9%	7	4.3%	172	56.6%	18	32.5%
								5	
	Total	102	100.0	16	100.0	30	100.0	57	100.0
			%	4	%	4	%	0	%
9. Number of Children.	0	10	9.80%	38	23.20%	31	10.20%	79	13.90%
	1-3	33	32.40%	52	31.80%	153	50.30%	238	41.70%
	4-6	46	77.50%	53	32.40%	100	32.90%	199	34.90%
	7-9	12	11.80%	17	10.40%	19	6.20%	48	8.40%
	Above 9	1	1.00%	3	1.80%	1	0.30%	5	1.10%

	Total	102	100.0	164	100.0	304	100.0	570	100.0
			%		%		%		%

Overall, number of female (n=295, 51.8%) and male (n=275, 48.2%) was a comparable in all categories, except for ex-prisoners, where female respondents were less represented. In terms of marital status, the majority were married (58.4%, n=333), followed by widows/widowers (n=164, 28.8%). Additionally, the majority of respondents were either illiterate or had completed primary education, engaged in plantation-based livelihoods, identified as Christian, and fell into the second Ubudehe category.

5.2.2 Contribution of Ubumwe space guided model to psychological healing and well-being and social cohesion among survivors and former/current inmates.

5.2.2.1 Psychological healing and well-being

The findings from quantitative and qualitative study revealed that the Ubumwe Guided Space dialogue model implemented by PFR yielded positive outcomes for genocide survivors, current and former genocide inmates in terms of psychological healing and well-being. It has significantly contributed to the enhanced psychological well-being of participants.

Independent test showed the significant difference between the people who benefited from the Ubumwe project and those who didn't. The project contributed significantly in enhancing resilience (t=-4.05, p<.001), non-lethal coexistence (t=-3.16, p<.001), psychological wellbeing (t=-4.93, p<.001), resilience t=-4.05, p=.001) and self-esteem (t=-1.227, p=0.222) among the current genocide inmate compare to the participants who were not enrolled in the project. For former genocide inmates, the project contributed also in raising self-esteem (t=-1.045, p=0.29) and psychological well-being (t=0.217, p=0.829).

Regarding the genocide survivors, compared with the control group, the individuals in the intervention group reported high scores on measures of self-esteem (t=-.598, p=.55), self-esteem (t=-.598, p=.55), psychological well-being (t=-0.39, p=0.69), resilience (t=-.967, p=.334) and non-lethal coexistence (t=-.015, p=.988)

	Group	N	Mean	SD	t	Df	P-value	Mean difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	Cohen's d	
current prisoners											
Resilience	Control	84	19.47	2.437	-4.05	162	<.001	-1.97381	-2.935	-1.013	.633
	Intervention	80	21.450	3.697							

	Intervention	80	26.50	1.84								
Non-lethal coexistence	Control	84	31.047	5.88	-3.16	162	.002	-2.265	-3.68	-.848	.493	
	Case	80	33.31	2.61								
Psychological wellbeing	Control	84	36.952	6.97	-4.93	162	<.001	-4.66012	-6.525	-2.79	.77	
	Case	80	41.61	4.887								
Self-esteem	Control	84	34.42	3.85	-1.23	162	.222	-.84643	-2.21	.516	.498	
	Intervention	80	35.27	4.94								
Former-prisoners												
IPC		140	27.3	7.19046	-0.015	302	.988	-.01272	-1.634	1.60841	0.224	Control
	Intervention	164	27.3841	7.13275								
Psychological wellbeing	Control	140	39.6271	5.05306	.392	302	.696	.22909	-.92237	1.38056	0.271	
	Intervention	164	39.8580	5.11242								
Self-esteem	Control	140	33.9071	2.76123	-.598	302	.550	-.21	-.895	.477	0.16	
	Intervention	164	34.1159	3.24349								
Genocide survivors												
Resilience	Control	140	19.83	2.57160	.967	302	.334	.299	-.3095	.90778	0.337	
		164	19.53	2.78336								
Non-lethal coexistence	Control	140	27.3	7.19046	-0.015	302	.988	-.01272	-1.634	1.60841	0.224	
	Intervention	164	27.3841	7.13275								
Psychological Wellbeing	Control	140	39.6271	5.05306	.392	302	.696	.22909	-.92237	1.38056	0.271	
	Intervention	164	39.8580	5.11242								

Self-esteem	Control	140	33.90 71	2.761 23	-.598	302	.550	-.21	-.895	.477	0.16
	Interven tion	164	34.115 9	3.243 49							

Findings from qualitative study corroborated the quantitative findings. Testimonials from qualitative study revealed a notable decrease in raising self-esteem, restore hope, foster resilience and contributed in emotional healing. The project has contributed also in raising the self

A current genocide inmate respondent for whom the guided space dialogue is extremely important – as, according to him, it has helped them to share their experience and to feel **relieved and emotionally healed**: *'You know, it is not easy to talk about my experiences. One day I was scared that I would become crazy by thinking about what I did every time. I was surprised to feel relieved when I discussed my experience in PFR dialogue space'* (male current genocide inmate, 70 years, from Rubavu)

Another female participant from Nyamagabe employed imagery that proves challenging to decipher, leaning heavily on intricate symbolism. What is discernible, however, is a profound psychological distress, an intense and intricate suffering that resonates within the depths of the individual's experience.

'You see people's hearts had abscess, genocide inmates and genocide survivors. The emotional healing program came and pressed on it and therefore we were, relieved able to go outside and interact each other'. I was healed that now I am taking care of children which was not the case before joining PFR project (female genocide survivor, 55 years, Nyamagabe)

Throughout the year, genocide survivors remember. However, the ceremonies and speeches during the mourning week re-open the wounds more than in other periods of the year and may also seriously be re-traumatized. Following participation in the PFR program, some survivors experienced a **decrease in collective traumatic** crises during commemoration ceremonies from April 7th to July 3rd

A genocide survivor from Nyamagabe noted: *'Before there was a lot of collective traumatic crises during commemoration period, but I liked that now there is less emotional breakdown because of the healing programme we went through.'* (male genocide survivor, 52 years, from Nyamagabe)

The somatic symptoms experienced by the participants disappeared after being involved in the guided dialogued space. A community member also mentioned that **psychosomatic symptoms** have been alleviated after joining the PFR project. They explained, *'There are times when people constantly complained of stomachache, unstoppable headaches, but because of the guided space dialogue, we realized they are well.'* (male community member, 37 years from Nyamagabe)

The guided space dialogue contributed also in **instilling hope, self-esteem and self-actualization, dignity**

'The emotional healing program took me from isolation, I self-accepted myself and became like everyone else. I experienced feelings of self-worth and valued. I could not go to genocide memorial site, but now I am able to attend functions of commemoration.' (family member of former genocide inmates from Ngoma)

Exposure to genocide also brought about a loss of hope for the future. One beneficiary from the project shared said, *"I have lost hope in the future. How could life have after losing everything, I felt that my life had lost its sense and wanted no more to live"* (female male current inmate, 69 years from Ngoma).

The loss of hope was not confined to genocide perpetrators; genocide survivors also grappled with this emotional challenge before joining the PFR program.

'For me, before the emotion healing came about were in deep darkness. We were in a bad place, without hope for the future, our hearts were unease, I could not do anything as whenever I would be about to do something I would ask myself, what I am working for? I did not have the courage to work things that can advance my lifestyle.' (a male genocide survivor, 60 years, from Nyamagabe)

Furthermore, the wife of a former genocide inmate underscored the pivotal role of the PFR dialogue space in instilling hope. She stated: *'Since we got counselors to converse with and they united us with our offendees and have conversation with us, we progressively returned to life. People more and so approach us. We received PFR training, we started working and having the projects in our life. Before our life had lost its sense. We were in life of hiding us from the survivors and authorities'* (former genocide inmate, from Rubavu)

Prayer and trust in God helped the beneficiaries of the project to cope with the difficult life and to become **resilient**.

'During and after the genocide I hated God and everyone. Later, after participating in Ubumwe project, I learnt from the Bible that if we trust in God he will help us to bear our burden and console us because he loves us. I prayed a lot and God helped me to cope with my situation. God is really my strength'. (Female family member of current inmate, 45 years, from Ngoma).

The prayer have been used also by some genocide survivors as a coping strategy: *'I despised God and everyone both during and after the genocide. Later, I discovered from the Bible that if we put our trust in God, he will comfort us and help us carry our burdens out of love for us. I prayed a lot, and God gave me the ability to handle cope with my problems'* (female genocide survivor, 43years, from Rubavu).

The ubumwe space guided dialogue contributed also **in restoring dignity** among the beneficiaries

I was not feeling well. With the loss of my self-esteem, dignity, I felt that I could not give an advice. None could accept an idea from a genocide perpetrator nor could engage a person like me.' (former inmate from Rubavu).

- *'Since we got counselors to converse with with us, we progressively returned to life. More People started to approach us. We received PFR training, we started working and having the*

projects in our life. Before our life had lost its sense. We were in life of hiding us from the survivors and authorities' (former genocide inmate, from Rubavu)

After the enrollement in the project, the participants **raised their self-control** among genocide inmates and genocide survivors when they meet each other.

'After having participated in emotional healing talks, it helped a lot because my negative emotions dissipated slowly. I felt myself, calm to the extent that even during the burial of our loved ones or commemoration if someone would say something negative I would get past it and let it go without violently reacting. Now I meet with those who killed my loved ones or who stole from us and we greet each other, I invite them in different big days' celebrations and they invite me too.' (survivor from Nyamagabe)

5.2.2.2 Social cohesion and reconciliation

5.2.2.2.1 Sentiments and emotions that play significant roles in the reconciliation and social cohesion process.

In the present study the Rwandan identification, Empathy, Individual guilty, Collective guilty. Shame, Revenge sentiments have been quantitatively and qualitatively assessed. The quantitative findings showed that the genocide survivors and former inmates who actively engaged in the Ubumwe project exhibited elevated levels of positive sentiments in the reconciliation and social cohesion process compared to their counterparts who did not participate. This suggests that the project played a vital role in nurturing emotional fortitude among this group.

Independent t-test showed a significant difference between the intervention and control group. The people who participated in the Ubumwe space guided dialogue showed significantly high scores among current inmates ($t=-2.25, p=.02$) and high score among former genocide inmate ($t=-0.217, p=0.828$) and genocide survivors $t=-1.03, p=.300$ on Rwandan identification. Regarding the individual guilty and collective guilty, the Ubumwe project contributed in reducing individual guilty ($t=.142, p=.991$), shame ($t=.371, p<.712$) and collective guilty ($t=1.426, p=.156$) among current genocide inmate while at contrary, the same project contributed in raising the individual guilt ($t=-1.64, p=0.828$), collective guilt ($t=-1.132, p=0.26$), shame ($t=.776, p<.439$).

In terms of empathy, the ubumwe space guided dialogue contributed in increasing significantly the empathy ($t=- 1.93, p=.04$) among genocide survivors and raising it also among former genocide inmates ($t=-0.053, p=0.958$).

	Group	N	Mean	SD	t	Df	P-value	Mean difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	Cohen's d
Current genocide inmates										

Rwandan identification	Control	84	25.72	2.49	-2.25	162	.026	-.77381	-.1452	-.09573	.350
	Intervention	80	26.50	1.84							
Individual Guilty	Control	84	9.07	4.631	.011	162	.991	.00893	-.153	1.55	.002
	Intervention	80	9.56	5.357							
Collective guilt	Control	84	21.40	3.18	1.426	162	.156	.75476	-.29	1.80	.223
	Intervention	80	9.56	5.357							
Shame	Control	31	16.7097	2.5455	0.371	100	0.712	0.18855	-.0820	1.197	0.08
	Intervention	80	16.45	2.50							
Former genocide inmates											
Identification	Control	31	26.45	2.608	-	100	0.39	-	-	1.27957	0.186
	Intervention	71	26.83	1.818	0.863			0.3880	0.503		
Empathy	Control	31	22.54	2.406	-0.053	100	0.958	-	-1.11	1.0539	0.011
		71	22.57	2.58				0.02908			
Individual guilty	Control	84	16.74	2.25	-2.67	162	.008	-2.37024	-4.122	-.61861	-.416
	Intervention										
Collective guilt	Control	31	20.5806	3.12809	-1.132	100	0.261	-0.78555	-2.163	0.59	0.244
	Intervention	71	21.3662	3.26558							
shame	Control	84	16.74	2.25	.776	162	.44	.28810	-.445	1.021	.121
	Intervention	80	16.45	2.50							
Genocide survivors											
Empathy	Control	140	17.4786	3.89330	-1.93	302	.04	-.795	-1.61	.01702	0.005
	Intervention	164	18.27	3.30890							
Identification	Control	140	26.1071	2.36186	1.037	302	.300	.259	-.23290	.75207	0.345
	Intervention	164	25.84	2.01							

The findings from qualitative data showed the similar findings. The same sentiments and emotions have been raised during the FGD with the participants. The former and current genocide inmates **recognized their moral responsibility which reduced also the hate sentiments and shame among their family members.** They confessed and told the truth about their responsibilities during the genocide perpetrated against the Tutsis but also where bodies of victims are buried.

Former perpetrators of genocide have undergone a transformation, they accepted **their own wrongdoings and learned to live with the feelings of shame and guilt.** While each participant manages difficult emotions in their own unique way, they all acknowledge that difficult emotions are a part of life and must be dealt with. An inmate shared, *'Participating in the space guided dialogue have raised my guilty and remorse sentiment. Shame is constantly present, but it is felt more acutely when we visit the memorial site and then go down to view the victims' bodies. You can't change the situation; you just have to accept it. I warn my kids to be cautious so they don't experience what I did by staying away bad politics.'* (male former inmate, 54 years, from Rubavu)

Despite **remorse and guilt persisting,** these emotions became motivators for some genocide inmates to seek forgiveness. *'Being in PFR programme raised their guilty. I have become aware of the atrocities we have perpetrated and realized the heaviness of our actions. I read numerous Bible texts and scriptures, to the point where I recognized that it was similar to looking in the mirror and then seeing the real me. I felt ashamed, guilty and embarrassed after that" The remorse motivated me to ask forgiveness.* (Current genocide inmate, 60 years, from Rubavu)

Recognizing their responsibility as genocide perpetrators has reduced also the **intergenerational legacy of hate and shame** sentiments.

Contrary to the former genocide inmate who were still having the guilty and shame sentiments, the shame and guilt of the children members have been removed after her father openly acknowledged his wrongdoing, sought forgiveness, and was graciously pardoned.

"Previously, I experienced isolation at school, with no one reaching out to me. I harbored anger stemming from my father's actions, which further fueled my resentment towards others. Persistently, I urged him to explain and clarify the deception he fell victim to. Fortunately, he became a part of the PFR Ubumwe project, where he openly acknowledged his wrongdoing, sought forgiveness, and was graciously pardoned. This transformative experience liberated me from the burden of shame. Now, as I walk, the weight of guilt that once consumed me has dissipated." (Female child of a former genocide inmate, 34 years, from Rubavu)

The family members of genocide inmates feel relieved from the hate they had towards the genocide survivors. They shared, *'We have found out the truth, because we no longer see those whose loved ones were killed and feel like they have treated unjustly our people by causing their imprisonment.'* (Family members of a former genocide inmate, 29 years, from Ngoma)

A descendent of a current genocide inmate experienced the anger and hate sentiments towards the survivors until his parent acknowledged having perpetrated the genocide the Tutsis.’

As I grew older, I began to unravel the historical context surrounding the genocide, an event that unfolded during my formative years. The introduction of Gacaca marked a pivotal moment, as I witnessed my father navigating through legal proceedings. Over time, the pieces of the puzzle fell into place, and I gradually comprehended the gravity of the situation. My parents, in an effort to shed light on my father's incarceration, revealed a distressing truth. Our neighbors had fabricated lies, falsely accusing him of being responsible for the murder of their parents. This revelation triggered a tumultuous mix of emotions within me—anger and sorrow intertwined, and hate towards survivors fueled by the injustice perpetrated against my family by those we once considered neighbors and friends. When my father acknowledged having perpetrated the genocide against the Tutsis, I felt relieved, I knew the truth and negative sentiments I had towards genocide survivors disappeared’ (male family member of current genocide inmate, 45 years old, from Nyamagabe)

After experience shame and guilty and remorse many participants decided to **confess and telling the truth** about their implication in genocide perpetrtaion

Former and current genocide inmates were encouraged to truthfully disclose every detail of the crimes they committed during the 1994 genocide against the Tutsi. Some participants who participated in guided space dialogue highlighted its impact. A community member from Nyamagabe shared: *‘What I know about this project is that it helped the offender each other to ask for forgiveness and to tell the truth.’*(femele community member, 62 years, from Nyamagabe)

Another one said: *I sought refuge in Congo and upon my return home in 1996, I faced arrest and imprisonment. When questioned by the prosecutor about accepting the charges, fear led me to deny the truth. Instead, I falsely claimed that a woman accused me due to a land dispute stemming from being neighbors. Although I was incarcerated in 1996, it wasn't until 2019 that I summoned the courage to reveal the truth. The act of confessing and seeking forgiveness requires great courage and prayers. It was only after participating in the healing program of PFR that I decided to genuinely ask for forgiveness from the depths of my heart.* (female, 65 years former inmate, form Rubavu)

A family member of a current genocide inmate expressed astonishment about the confession, saying, *‘I did not know that genocide perpetrator could be fearless enough to stand in front us and talk about the people they killed. They did it after participating in guided space dialogue’* (Family member of genocide inmate, 42 years, from Rubavu).

Some current and former genocide inmate revealed **where the bodies of the victims were hidden** after participating in the dialogue space. Some former and current genocide inmates courageously revealed the truth, providing detailed accounts of their crimes committed during the 1994 genocide against the Tutsi. In some cases, individuals even disclosed the locations where they had hidden the bodies of their victims.

A descendent of a former genocide inmate shared a transformative experience, stating:

‘We were embarrassed because of the people we offended, but the problem was that my father refused to ask forgiveness. I would try to ask him what he did, but he would conceal it. Later

on he returned to prison, but people would keep telling him that I was the one who reported him to go to prison, but it was because of people he had killed and buried at home. After participating in the program yes, the bodies of the victims of genocide were revealed, and my father told the truth and I knew the truth of what happened.' (female child of a former genocide inmate, 40 years from Rubavu)

A former genocide inmate spoke of his immediate willingness to share information upon release, saying: *'Right after my release from prison, I gave out information about the people I killed and the place where the killings happened, I gave out all the information I had.'* (male former genocide inmate from, 60 years, Nyamagabe).

However, it was acknowledged that not everyone was forthcoming with the truth. A genocide survivor mentioned. *'Another thing I liked is that some who were in the healing programme managed to give out information of the where about of the bodies of victims of genocide and during commemoration period I noticed that they participated in the the commemoration ceremonies'* (male genocide survivor, 42 years, from Ngoma district).

Another survivor emphasized that revealing the location of the genocide victims' bodies is a crucial condition for forgiveness. They said *'There are those who gave information and were able to find genocide victims bodies but there are others who are adamant to show us where the bodies of our loved ones are. We request that they can receive enough training, we are ready to forgive them, but on the condition they show us where are the corpses of loved.'* (female genocide survivor, 65 years from Ngoma)

5.2.2.2 Building intergroup relationship and social cohesion between genocide survivors and genocide inmates

Desk review

Include findings from desk review: report zigaragaza abemeye icyaha nyuma yo guca muri gahunda, abasabye imbabazi, abasuye ababiciye muri gereza. Imibare y'abaitabiriye iriya community event kugeza ubu. Abahanye inka, abageni, ababyaranye abana muri batisimu.

Moreover, Ubumwe space guided dialogue fostered positive relationships and social cohesion Independent t-test showed a significant difference between the intervention and control group. The people who participated in the Ubumwe space guided dialogue showed significantly high scores among current inmates ($t=-3.16$, $p<.001$), genocide survivors ($t=-2.81$, $p=.005$) on intergroup contact and high score on the same variable among former genocide inmate ($t=-.32$, $p=0.75$).

In terms of social cohesion Ubumwe project contributed in forsteering significantlty social cohesion among former genocide inmate ($t=2.3$, $p<.024$) and genocide survivors ($t=-2.41$, $p=.017$). The ubumwe space guided dialogue contributed in increasing themeasures of forgiveness ($t=-.138$, $p=.89$) and trust ($t=-.955$, $p=.341$) among genocide survivors

Group	N	Mean	SD	t	Df	P-value	Mean difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	Cohen's d
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Current genocide inmates											
Intergroup contact	Control	84	9.65	5.95	- 2.67	16 2	.00 8	- 2.370 24	- 4.1 22	- .6186 1	- .416
	Intervention	80	12.0 2	5.38							
Former genocide inmates											
Intergroup contact	Control	31	16.25 81	2.113	- 0.317	100	0.75 2	-0.14	- 0.989	0.716	0.068
	Intervention	71	16.39 44	1.945							
Social cohesion	Control	31	23.52 1	3.581	2.3	100	0.02 4	1.5756	0.216	2.93	0.495
	Intervention	71	25.09 6	1.955							
Genocide survivors											
Trust	Control	139	12.90	1.959	-0.955	301		-0.222	-0.678	.235	0.116
	Intervention	164	13.13	2.057			.341				
Forgiveness	Control	139	21.23 06	2.732 07	.138	301	.890	.043	- .5672	.6527	0.242
	Intervention	164	21.28 78	2.651 22					1		
Intergroup contact	Control										
	Intervention										
Social cohesion	Control	140	12.85 0	4.191 3	-2.81	302	.005	-1.247	-2.12	-3.758	0.504
	Intervention	164	14.09 76	3.532 8							

The qualitative results were similar to the quantitative results that showed the impact of the project in forsering social cohesion, forgivenessand intergroup relationship between genocide inmate and genocide survivors.

Participants mentioned that engaging in dialogue spaces has increased their resilience against social judgment. *'People lived in total isolation, but now they go out, they have achieved emotional relief, they meet with people who reported themselves, they confessed, accepted their guilt and asked for forgiveness.'* (key informant, 41 years, from Rubavu)

Though some genocide inmates asked for forgiveness most of them have been granted it and few of them are still waiting.

Certain current genocide inmates when interviewed, expressed *'I don't have fear regarding retaliation from my communities. I conveyed that my apology and request for forgiveness had been accepted by the families of the victims.* (current genocide inmates, 59 years, from Nyamagabe)

Another current genocide inmate mentioned, *"People from outside will have no negative reaction to me because I asked for forgiveness from all, and now many of them visit me in prison. I don't have any concerns about my release because I even wrote a letter to my family and all neighbors requesting forgiveness"* (male current genocide inmate, 59 years, from Rubavu)

Some female current genocide inmates were worry about their integration in the community

Individuals from the community would harbor negative sentiments towards me, as I sought forgiveness from everyone but I was not forgiven. I am apprehensive about my release. I wrote even a letter to my victims, seeking forgiveness" (male current genocide inmate, 73 years, from Rubavu)

Some female current genocide inmates are worry about they were be received by their children.

'I am not sure that I will be well received by my children and the neighbors. My children will reject me. (female current genocide inmates, 64 years from Ngoma)

A female former inmate from Ngoma , shared the improved relationship with her child in the following way but emphasized on the difficulties experienced by female genocide inmates in community reintegration after being released.

'I left my children at home with my husband during my sentence. Upon my return, I felt immense shame as a woman coming back from TIG. I attempted to earn a living by selling eggs and goats at the market, but unfortunately, people were hesitant to buy from me. Initially, my children rejected me. However, my relationship with my children improved after my involvement in the PFR Ubumwe project, with assistance from a survivor's family helping to mend the rift. However, I am not yet well integrated and accepted in the community as my men colleague (female current genocide inmate, 61 years, from Ngoma)

Some former genocide inmates, after Participating in the program, they decided **to pay reparations**. This was aimed at compensating for the damages caused by the convicts to property and crops during the genocide.

The PFR dialogue space has heightened awareness regarding the importance of reparation. A key informant highlighted the positive impact of the project, stating: *'This project helped us in this sector of Cyanika, we had so many trial cases of gacaca and those who were concerned did not understand the process and the trial cases were impossible to end. You could find that people refused to pay for the properties they had destroyed even though they had the means to pay back, or they would pay back badly because they misunderstood the process. But after the guided dialogue space the project, they started to pay back what they had destroyed during the genocide and even the victims whom they stole from started to forgot their dues because they*

were reconciliated and have understood well the talks.' (A male key informant, 47 years from Nyamagabe.)

The trust between between genocide survivors and former genocide inmates has been raised after participating in the PFR project even during the sensitive period of genocide commemoration.

After having participated in emotional healing session, it helped a lot because my negative emotions dissipated slowly, as the talk went on and we were trained I felt myself being calm to the extent that even during the burial of our loved ones or commemoration if someone would say something negative I would get past it and let it go. Now I meet with those who killed my loved ones or who stole from us and we greet each other, I invite them in different big days' celebrations and they invite me too.' (male genocide survivor, 47 years from Nyamagabe)

The space guided dialogue project contributed also in forstering **mutual support** between former genocide inmate, their family members and genocide survivors

Before I felt like I did not want to face others, I did not want my kids to meet with families of perpetrators of genocide, but now when you find yourself empty on salt, you go to ask your neighbor, our kids study together without a problem, they socialize and us parents we socialize.' (male genocide survivor, 55 years, from Rubavu)

Another participant said *"Now we live in harmony, we are neighbors, we give each other water and firewood, we visit each other at the hospital, honestly there is no problem.* (genocide survivor, 42 years from Ngoma)

A female genocide inmate currently serving time expressed her intention to send her children to assist neighbors who were genocide survivors and may not have children to help with household duties once she is released. *"I don't think there is anything bad regarding people from outside because I asked to be forgiven and they forgave me. If I find my victim's wife has no child, I can give her mine so that he can help her"*(female current genocide inmate, 62 years, from Ngoma)

Alliance and Relationship growth alliance have been also revealed by the beneficiaries of as the result of their participation in the space guided dialogue project.

In Rwandan culture, a cow is a symbol of making friendship, and one survivor received a cow from a former genocide inmate., *'After they came to train us and brought us together, we faced each other until they told us to hug each other and also our offenders kneeled down and asked for forgiveness, now we socialize and share with each to the extent that there is one who called me and gave me a cow.'* (femele genocide survivor, 60 years from Ngoma)

Diverse participants revealed that after being involved in the PFR program, they live in harmony.: *"Currently because of the dialogue from emotional healing project, we share, we give each other their children into marriage, now there is no problem.* (genocide survivor, 35 years, from Nyamagabe).

The beneficiaries also testified to giving children in baptism: *'Now we are united, we give each other our children into marriage, even in baptism we adopt each other, therefore one is*

godfather/godmother to the other without having a problem, we are truly one.' (Former genocide inmate, 68 years from Ngoma)

Even if majority of participants testified about the good relationship between genocide survivors and genocide inmates are still in the process and other reluctants in terms of relationship.

One genocide survivor made a stape but is not in good relationship with genocide inmate *'The way we live with them is like pretending because the trauma of genocide cannot be erased but because there is nothing we can do we have to be patient and live with them. Even when they invite me in their weeding, I receive the invitation and give weeding donation, but I do not attend the weeding.'* (female genocide survivor, 40 years, from Nyamagabe).

However, one genocide survivor expressed the negative relationships in the following words: *'Whatever we do, they are not satisfied. For instance I forgave them about properties, they arrived home and killed many, but during commemoration period they like to come and cut my plantains tree, in April on the date we go to commemorate my family. You can infer that they are some who are still after me, but whatever we do, they are not thankful.'*(genocide survivor, from Ngoma)

For one survivor the relationship between genocide survivor and genocide former inmates are not good *'We live together like hawks and chickens, they try to approach me but because of my conscience I do not feel like I need that. 'The way we live with them is like pretending because the trauma of genocide cannot be erased but because there is nothing we can do we have to be patient and live with them. They lie to us, they cannot tell us the location, there are people who are adamant and cannot tell you the location.'* (female genocide survivor, 65 years from Ngoma)

5.2.2.3 Indirect Benefit

5.2.2.3.1 Social cohesion within the community

The project fostered positive relationships and social cohesion between perpetrators and survivors, contributing to a more cohesive community at large

'I was not able to forgive the person who killed my family and my kids. But after seeing the good examples those who went through the training gave us and after being sensitized by them on the benefit of forgiving, I decided to forgive him. For instance, his wife is imprisoned, and I went to visit her. He invites me to his parties and I invite him as well. But it is not by my willpower, it is due to those who participated in the PFR project.'(community member from Nyamagabe).

- You can observe that social life has shifted, now people give milk each other, give each other's children into marriage, and are part of same groups (Nyamagbe Neighbor in the community)

5.2.2. 3.1 Contribution of guided space dialogue in Raising civic engagement and trust in government

The guided dialogue layed a crucial role in aiding individuals to overcome trauma, heal from emotional wounds, and dispel fears and suspicions that kept them confined at home. Following this recovery, participants reported heightened civic engagement and increased trust in the government. They began actively participating in community initiatives such as Umuganda,

taking part in the election of leaders, and engaging in various community meetings and other government meeting.

Some female participants reported feeling valued after participating in the project, which empowered them to compete in local leadership elections. One genocide survivor highlighted the impact of gender equality promotion in decision-making, stating: *'After participating in emotional healing program our wounds were healed and people were able to go to attend community meeting without any fear. We could go in Umuganda and contribute as other citizens but before we could not go anywhere, unable to attend any function.'* (femele genocide survivor from, 49 years Nyamagabe)

A woman whose husband is a current genocide inmate expressed a newfound sense of freedom for moving and attend the government programme after participating in the PFR project. Sharing, *'My husband was imprisoned, and I would ask him what he is in prison. He has been involved in PFR project, he accepted to tell the truth admitted his offense. At this point, I do able to attend the antenatal care service and to take my child to vaccination. which was not the case before* (wife of current genocide inmate, 42 years, from Rubavu).

After her husband participated in the program and admitted his offense, a family member of the former inmate from Ngoma gained the ability to attend meetings in her neighborhood.

'My dad and husband were imprisoned, and I would ask my dad what he is in prison for, and he told me the truth and accepted to show where bodies of victims of genocide were buried. But my husband told me that he was innocent. I am grateful to God that people were good to me after my husband participated in the program and admitted his offense. At this point, I do not skip any meeting, I attend them all, before I could not attend meetings in my neighborhood.' (femele family member of the former inmate from, 52 years, Ngoma)

5.2.2.3.2 Remembrance and commemoration

Before joining the PFR Ubumwe programme, there are also Rwandans who avoid recalling certain aspects of the past, particularly some former genocide inmates who prefer not to engage with media, such as radio broadcasts during the period of commemoration of the genocide perpetrated against the Tutsis nor attend the commemoration ceremonies. But after being involved in the programme they started attending those ceremonies.

For the family of an inmate, one sign of wound healing and valued self-concept is the attendance of commemoration ceremonies. A family member of a former genocide inmate from Ngoma expressed, *'The emotional healing program took me from isolation, I self-accepted myself and became like everyone else. I experienced feelings of self-worth and valued. I could not go to genocide memorial site, but now I am able to attend the ceremonies of genocide commemoration.'* (male family member of a former genocide inmate, 38 years from Ngoma)

Former inmates who were not involved in the PFR project struggle to comprehend the transformation of their peers who now attend genocide commemoration ceremonies. A former genocide inmate shared, *'Before I was afraid of those I offended, I was scared to meet with them or be in the same space as them, I took care of having nothing that could bring us together. When we are in commemoration period our colleagues who did not go in the talks of the project*

do not understand what we are doing because now we attend the genocide commemoration ceremonies. (former genocide inmate, 58 years, from Rubavu)

A female current prisoner said that; *I avoided listening the radio during the commemoration period. I believed that doing so would intensify their feelings of guilt and shame. However, after taking part in the PFR Ubumwe Programme, I found the strength to face and overcome these emotions. I am now able to listen the news related to the genocide during the commemoration on the radio.* (female current prisoner, 62 years, from Ngoma)

A female ex-prisoner from Ngoma, 54 years, seized the opportunity of neighborhood gatherings to connect with survivors, even though she often felt a sense of apprehension around them. In the past, many Hutus in the community hesitated to participate in mourning meetings, burdened by the fear and shame associated with the genocide perpetrated by their relatives.

5.2.2.3.1 Gender equality and women empowerment promotion

Some female participants reported feeling valued after participating in the project, which empowered them to participate and compete in local leadership elections. A key informant from Ngoma highlighted the impact of gender equality promotion in decision-making, stating: *'After participating in PFR project they have been elected. What emotional healing program helped us, you see people's hearts had abscess, emotional healing program came and instilled hope in our life, we were able to go in different levels of leadership, we could go in the voting of mediators, of women, you would open up that you could run for office or support others to do so, you accepted that they vote for you, but before we could not go anywhere, unable to attend any function even on your own body, you could not take care of yourself.* ('femele key informant, 40 years, from Ngoma)

A woman whose husband is a current genocide inmate expressed a newfound sense of freedom after participating in the PFR project. She became part of a women's cooperative for traditional basketry, sharing, *'My husband was imprisoned, and I would ask him what he is in prison. He has been involved in PFR project, he accepted to tell the truth admitted his offense. At this point, I do not skip any meeting and I feel relieved and people consider my ideas. I am now a secretary of a women cooperative for traditional basketry. We are no longer poor. I can now support my family, my children go to school and we have enough to eat.* (wife of a current genocide inmate, 45 years from Nyamagabe).

5.2.3 The relevance of the project

This assessment intends also to evaluate the relevance of PFR Ubumwe project, specifically the guided dialogue space model

According to some participants *'Their programme are good, everyone should learn from this guided space. We learn a lot and share our experiences and psychological sufferings* (female genocide survivor, 40 years from Nyamagabe)

Another participant said: *'The project allowed to continue connecting perpetrators and survivors.'* (male current genocide inmates, 70 years from Rubavu)

"Traumatism and self-isolation were prevalent problems in our district. PFR approached us, and we worked together to address those issues."(male key Informant, 43 from Nyamagabe)

The project came during the period it was really needed *"The project emerged when we needed it the most. With the release of many genocide inmates from prison, there was widespread fear and suspicion that strained relationships. It proved to be a real solution to the challenges in fostering unity among Rwandans."*(femele genocide survivor, 35 years from Rubavu)

After Gacaca, there were problems that were not about to end immediately. *'Upon going through the project of trauma healing, some understood the importance of apologizing for what they didn't do during Gacaca, some decided to make reparations for the destruction caused, while others indicated the locations where the bodies of genocide victims are buried.'* (key informant, 39 years from Ngoma)

5.2.4 The effectiveness of the project

We assessed the extent to which the project has delivered the planned outputs and outcomes.

The project did not unfold as initially planned due to the impact of the COVID crisis, necessitating a shift to online operations. The transition proved challenging, requiring specific devices and internet access. (PFR staff)

This has been also highlighted by one key informant *'At times, adhering to the planned fieldwork became impractical, and the follow-up and monitoring processes faced limitations. Despite these challenges, the project yielded tangible results.* (Male key informant, 48 years from Nyamagabe)

Several projects remained on hold, awaiting the resolution of the COVID situation to proceed with their launch." The activities have been implemented with a delay compare to they way they were planned (PFR staff)

5.2.5 The sustainability of the implemented project

According to some participants, PFR underscores their capacity to function and attain objectives without constant financial support and intervention from PFR.

The guided space dialogue are formed of individuals who reside in the same neighbourhood. Gathering them doesn't require money or other incentive. They beneficiaries can continue to meet without the project. As the local authority were involved, they can supervise. (female genocide inmate, 50 years from Nyamagabe)

Others discovered that *'the intervention was aligning with stable structures, such as Abatahira, Imboni z'ubumwe n'ubudaheranwa, and the In-Charge of Social Affairs at the Umurenge level. This collaborative approach was identified as instrumental in sustaining the initiated actions within these communities'* (male key informant, 40 years from Ngoma)

However other found that the sustainability would be assured if the project had initiated income generating activities.

Most of participants and family members said *'If there was larger groups for economic growth and a way to support them, it would be even better'*(female genocide survivor, 43 years from Rubavu)

For other there is a lacks of training manual to sustain the activities *'a traunung manul that describe the intervention "the guided dialogue space model" in detailed would help to continue to train people and sustain the activities of the project'*(key informant, 36 years from Nyamagabe)

5.2.6 Critical lessons learned and good practices

Several valuable lessons and best practices learned in the present project were gleaned.

" I found that implementing intervention strategies by aligning with stable structures, such as Abatahira, Imboni z'ubumwe n'ubudaheranwa, the In-Charge of Social Affairs at the Umurenge level is crucial. This collaborative approach was identified as contributory in sustaining the initiated actions within these communities instead to meet one group alone. ' (male key informant, 48 yaers from Rubavu)

Other participants appreciated bring together genocide survivors and genocide inmates *'I realize that the guided dialogue space, where genocide survivors and inmates came together, demonstrated a positive impact on fostering social cohesion and facilitating the process of seeking and granting forgiveness.'* (femele current genocide inmate, 56 years from Ngoma)

The prayers have helped also people in forstering resilience *'As a believer, the spiritual approach, particularly the incorporation of prayers and the word of God in the project, emerged as a significant factor in my lives. Prayers helped to finding meaning of my life and coping with the profound and painful situations I experienced'* (female current inmate, 69 years from Ngoma).

5.2.7 Challenges

The assessment also delved into the challenges faced by the Ubumwe Project, as revealed by the participants. The identified challenges include the considerable geographical distance, limited time allocated to guided dialogue spaces, insufficient follow-up and monitoring, the absence of a training manual, and a lack of income-generating activities.

The participants highlighted the insufficiency of training session and follow up.

'This project came adding on the other projects that came around here, the way all of them gave talks to people so that the journey towards unity and reconciliation can be achieved, but the ultimate challenge is little training. To say that you have trained someone once and return to assess what have been achieved without having had follow-ups because teaching should be constant, to even evaluate that the lessons stuck, you have to visit them often and ask how things are with what we have done together.' (genocide former inmates from, 58 years Nyamagabe).

A genocide survivor from Rubavu emphasized also to the insufficiency of follow up visits *'the project could visit us many times even after finishing receiving the talks.'*

For other participant *'There is no training guide for trainers so that we could not go on to teach the lessons as our own. This is very important for sustaining your activities'* (female Key informants, 47 from Ngoma).

One community member from Nyamagabe said about the long distance as a challenge: *'The challenge is that people come from afar to attend the training, the journey let's say from Kiyumba or Nyanzoga to go in Cyanika in the training, they come unhappy because they come from afar.'* (male community member from Nyamagabe, 49 years from Nyamagabe).

This has been also highlighted by a key informant from the same area: *"In brief the journey is long, if there was gathering by cell, without coming to the sector, it would be easier, the message would spread further, because people who doesn't attend would attend."* *'For instance, you find that there is a former inmate in old age who has the information, he is supposed to meet up with the person he offended so that they can talk about it, with his conscience and genocide ideology he developed in prison that need to be eliminated or erased in him, but he is unable to meet with others because the journey to get there is a challenge.'* male Key informants, 48 from Nyamagabe).

One current genocide inmate from Rubavu revealed a lack of income generating activity as challenge for the sustainable livelihood. *'Another challenge is that after making groups, holistic follow-ups were few. If they are in a group, they should have something that connect them, develop them economically. At this point they do not have something for economic development to connect them in the group even though this require a budget, it is a challenge that cause the impact to not last.'* (current genocide inmate, 49 years, from Rubavu)

5.2.8 Recommendations to inform future healing, reconciliation, and peace building programming in Rwanda

This assessment also delved into the challenges faced by the Ubumwe Project, and participants formulated recommendations for overcoming these challenges. The suggested strategies include expanding geographical reach, engaging youth in the project, implementing group therapy, providing ongoing teaching and supervision, and localizing the intervention.

The majority of participants recommended to expand the project to reach a maximum of people.

'The recomendation is that all Rwandans should go through the healing programme because people do have the same understanding, even my wife should attend them.' (current genocide inmate 67 years from Rubavu).

In expanding the project the released genocide inmate have to be the target.' *I think that those who are still in prison should also be considered and find ways they can return in the Rwandan family and help them live with others in harmony. The former inmates who received the lessons well live with us well without problems.* (Family member of current prisoner, 40 years from Ngoma)

The same idea is shared by genocide survivors, community members and former genocide inmate *'The recommendation we would formulated is that you could continue approaching former inmate who completed their time because those who participate in the talks are those who admitted their offenses and asked for forgiveness, but those who completed their time say that it does not concern them because they were punished and served their time in the correctional services so they cannot ask forgiveness. And you can find many times that these are the ones who discourage those who were released from prison after pleading guilty and asked forgiveness.'*(male genocide survivors, 60 years from Nyamagabe)

The same observation is shared by a community member from Rubavu district. *'There are those who serve their time till the end without reporting themselves. When this kind of person is released, he goes out without a plan to unite with those he offended, instead he tells his family or offspring that he was wrong accused, that he was unjustly imprisoned, saying that that particular family played a role in my going to prison. It is hate, because he committed the genocide but he hasn't admitted to the crime. Because though he completed his time in correctional services, he will not come in the society and be reintegrated and socialize with others. What we can request is that you could advocate for us so that even the former inmate can go on the journey of emotion or trauma healing because they also have emotional wounds but they have not participated in the project.'*(community member, from Rubavu)

'What I liked in this project is that you connected us with our offenders that they are comfortable around us as we are comfortable around them, but those who have not attended should also come and be trained as well. Individulas who have not be trained, they will remain with genocide ideology because if a child say I can cut as my father and his colleagues did and nothing happened to them, it is because the child has heard that from somewhere and so all those people should be given the training. (Former genocide inmate 62 years from Nyamagabe)

The second recommendation is regarding the youth inclusion in the project. *'I think that the healing programme should be constantly available and those who have not attended participate, even young people should be trained.'* (female current genocide inmate 61 years from Ngoma)

The concern of training the youth is shared by other participants. *"The life of thinking we are in is to advise those who are still young about the problems, the abomination that came upon this country, we advise them because those who understand it are ones who saw so that will not think of trying what happened to us all. We have to be one and be related to one another and avoid having conflicts and strive together for never again. The healing programme could reach also the young generation'*(Family member of former genocide inmate, 34 years from Rubavu)

Another point concerning the emphasis on training the youth on remembrance and commemoration. *'there are people we have who have not gone to the memorial site or cannot listen to the radio during commemoration period and they are still young, and they have not understood yet that commemoration concern them too, we request that they receive more teachings until they are healed.'*(genocide survivor from Ngoma)

One participant insisted on the intergeneration dialogue. *‘What I would ask is to connect us more with their children. I request for this training that it would be great if they would come with their parents.* (current genocide inmate, 70 years from Rubavu)

Another recommendation was regarding the continuous training. *‘The training should continue so that we can be taught in order to change and also others should be taught and receive training.’* (Female former genocide inmate, 53 years from Nyamagabe).

Income generating activities have been also recommended for sustained livelihoods. *If there wa larger groups for economic growth and a way to support them, it would be even better for project sustainability.* (male genocide survivor from, 47 years from Nyamagabe)

‘The support of PFR that was received by people who joined the project earlier would be best if those joining later received that support as well. Get house built for them, receive domestic animals, etc.’(female current genocide inmate 61 years from Ngoma)

Some participants testified that there was a need of a group therapy *‘ a group therapy for genocide survivors alone and genocide inmate alone is neede . It is like for some participants the project opens up wounds and some session are needed for continuing the healing process. ‘* (femele former genocide inmate, 60 years from Rubavu)

The session of one group group alone has been also recommended by other participants *‘Spome people were able to talk and to express their sufferings, but there were others who were not able to talk about it who even had more complex situation. If it was possible in these talks to take one category without mixing us, the survivors on their own and every one relieved themselves. You see that people who meet with the same issues open up and talk and free themselves because they feel that they have common issues and that they will listen. Even though we focus on ourselves as survivors, even the perpetrators also have trauma. If these talks will continue and keep training people and those who have not participated yet, you should take each category on its own and train them aside, survivors on their own and perpetrators on their own and bring us together in the talks after we have separately eased each other.* (male genocide survivor, 47 years from Ngoma)

The same group therapy has been requested also for the victims of rape. *‘Our request is that people who were raped and others who were contaminated with incurable diseases can be brought together and receive counselling once a month and if there is any other available support, it can be given to them as a group because there is no cure and they will live with the disease until death, and so be close to them day by day’.* (female genocide survivor, 51 years from Nyamagabe)

Some preparation and counseling before and during the commemoration period have been also recommended. *‘Another challenge is that they could come to train us during the commemoration period. There are people who still have trauma 100% but if you would train us before there could be some improvement. Because even other times, the trainings were done in the manner that they followed-up with those who attended the trauma haling programme because there are some who have not healed.)* (male current genocide inmate, 48 years from Rubavu)

The last recommendation has been formulated for addressing the challenge regarding the long distance to be traveled. *'Explore intervention strategies utilizing local community structures, such as cells, villages, or even smaller units like 'Isibo/Amasibo,' coordinated by village leaders for fostering proximity, facilitating participation, and encouraging horizontal communication within the community.'* (male Key informant, 43 years from Nyamagabe)

A female bring to the attention of the research to the plight of women who were involved in the perpetration of the genocide. *'A colleague shared her struggle, highlighting the societal challenges she faced upon release from correctional services, where people were reluctant to buy anything from her. The society is very harsh to women who were involved in the perpetration of the genocide and it is challenging for them to be reintegrated into society. The forgiveness process is particularly arduous for women compared to men.'* female current genocide inmate, 64 years from Ngoma)

6. Discussion

Following the 1994 Genocide Against the Tutsis in Rwanda, various initiatives have been undertaken to address its far-reaching consequences. Prison Fellowship Rwanda (PFR) has been a stalwart companion to both former and current genocide prisoners, their families, survivors, and the wider community, guiding them through the intricate path of restorative justice. Building on past successes, PFR is currently engaged in a collaborative effort with UNDP, MINIJUST, MINUBUMWE, and other partners to implement **'Ubumwe project'** on *"Strengthening the Rule of Law in Rwanda: Justice, Peace, and Security for the People. With the focus on social cohesion and reconciliation."* This project was being carried out in the prisons of Rwamagana, Bugesera, Ngoma, Musanze, Rubavu, and Nyamagabe, as well as in the communities within these districts, with a specific emphasis on fostering social cohesion and reconciliation.

The Ubumwe project used Guided Dialogue Space Model, an adapted version of intergroup dialogue model known in the peacebuilding field. The intergroup dialogue model assumes that change and cooperation are outcomes of dialogue. For promoting societal cohesion while upholding cultural integrity in post-conflict community and peacebuilding, Amanda E. Feller, Kelly K. Ryan, (2012) advocate for the consistent and widespread use of dialogue.

Several studies have demonstrated that engaging in intergroup dialogue can enhance relations among former adversaries. According to Amanda Smith Byron (2016), interfaith dialogue not only serves as a transformative tool post ethno-religious conflicts but also holds potential as a preventive measure against future atrocities, as evidenced by various studies. In Indonesia, the positive impact of interfaith dialogue was emphasized.

A study conducted in Kaduna, Nigeria, by Amos Iliya (2022) illustrated the effectiveness of interfaith dialogue in peacebuilding. This was evident in the improved relations between Christian and Muslim leaders, contributing significantly to a more peaceful state. Additionally, analyses conducted by Hannah M. Smidt (2020) provided robust evidence supporting the idea that UN peacekeeping operations effectively curtailed communal violence in Cote d'Ivoire through the organization of intergroup dialogues.

The model of intergroup dialogue that inspired the Ubumwe Guided Space Dialogue is the one used by Joel Timothy Muller's (2006) to investigate group climate and outcomes in 19 intergroup dialogues (IGD) centered around gender, race and ethnicity, religion and

spirituality, sexual orientation, or social class at a large public university in the Southeastern United States, involving undergraduates enrolled in a multicultural psychology course.

Muller (2017) emphasizes that the changes brought about by IGD aim for societal transformation rather than individual change, as seen in psychotherapy or counseling. Consequently, the Ubumwe guided space dialogue has been modified to incorporate additional steps and peer group counseling and spiritual session. This adjustment is intended to address the emotional and psychological distress experienced by genocide survivors, inmates, and their family members.

The Ubumwe project commenced in 2018 and with the overarching objective of creating a conducive environment for the healing of genocide inmates, their families, genocide survivors, and communities. As the project approaches the conclusion of its five-year duration, the imperative for an assessment has become evident.

This work intended to assess the relevance, effectiveness, impact, and the sustainability of the implemented project and formulate critical lessons learned, good practices and recommendations to inform future healing, reconciliation, and peace building programming in Rwanda.

To respond to these objectives, a mixed-method approach was employed. The assessment covered three districts: Ngoma, Nyamagabe, and Rubavu, as well as two correctional services: Ngoma for female inmates and Rubavu prisons for male. The quantitative evaluation involved various groups of respondents who were actively engaged in the project and those who were not involved. A group representing the four segments of the population in each district (genocide survivors, current and former genocide inmates and their family members) participated in a questionnaire-based survey. On the qualitative side, Focus Group Discussions were conducted in each district, involving genocide survivors, current and former genocide inmates, their family members and neighbors who were not involved in the project with each group consisting of ten participants to capture changes from their perspectives. Interviews were also conducted with key informants selected in each district based on their roles and responsibilities.

Ethical considerations were prioritized throughout the assessment, with participation being entirely voluntary, and each research participant voluntarily signed an informed consent form. Descriptive and inferential analyses were conducted using SPSS version 25 software, utilizing the t-test to compare results between the control group (those who didn't benefit from the project) and the intervention group (those who benefited from the project). In terms of qualitative analysis, a thematic analysis was employed, involving the systematic grouping and analysis of the main themes of the study. The information collected was then thoughtfully summarized, synthesized, and classified, taking into account the research objectives and various facets of the assessment.

The results of this evaluation are presented by following the objectives of the assessment.

6.1 The contribution of the project in promoting psychological well-being and resilience and social cohesion

The presentation of findings related to the **contribution of the project in promoting psychological well-being and resilience and social cohesion** are done in three parts. The first part delves into the contribution of project on promoting psychological well-being and

resilience, the second one in social cohesion between genocide survivors and genocide inmates and the third one is regarding the social cohesion within the community.

Concerning psychological well-being, participants prior to joining the project experienced a range of issues including shame, guilt, negative self-image, symptoms of depression, symptoms of PTSD, self-esteem challenges, alcohol abuse, psychosomatic experiences such as stomachaches and headaches, and economic hardship. The symptoms of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), distressing memories, flashbacks, and reviviscence related to traumatic events were common challenges faced by genocide survivors, while anger, sorrow, sadness, avoidance, fear, and hypervigilance were experienced by both group genocide survivors and genocide inmates before their involvement in the Ubumwe project. Various symptoms of depression, encompassing loss of hope, alcohol abuse, and aggressivity, were observed in both genocide survivors and inmates before their participation in the project.

These symptoms observed in the assessment including flashback and reviviscence, avoidance behaviors, insomnia, profound sorrow, and psychosomatic symptoms, are typical among individuals exposed to traumatic events (5th Edition, DSM-V-TR [APA, 2013] while somatic complaints, particularly pain, were reported in traumatized patients. (J. Siqveland, A. Hussain, J.C. Lindstrøm, T. Ruud, E. Hauff, 2017).

In addition, mental health problems have presented significant challenges for Rwanda since the 1994 genocide against the Tutsi, resulting in approximately one million lives lost and profound physical and psychological violence against survivors. A 2008 national survey revealed that PTSD affected 26.1% of the general population, with 22.7% experiencing major depressive episodes. Subsequent research, including the 2018 Rwanda National Mental Health survey, continued to highlight alarming rates of mental disorders, particularly among genocide survivors, with 53.3% of women and 48.8% of men affected. (Kayiteshonga et al., 2022). It is understandable to find some case of PTSD in the population of genocide survivors and genocide inmates.

The quantitative study's results indicate that the Ubumwe guided space dialogue has significantly contributed to enhancing the psychological well-being of its beneficiaries. Both current and former genocide inmates, as well as genocide survivors, demonstrated higher self-esteem compared to individuals who did not participate in the project. Specifically, the current genocide inmates and genocide survivors who were beneficiaries of the Ubumwe project exhibited greater psychological well-being, with increased resilience observed particularly among current genocide inmates.

The qualitative findings not only supported but also corroborated the quantitative results. Many participants shared their journeys of recovering from trauma, highlighting substantial improvements in emotional pain and the healing of psychological wounds after engaging in the guided dialogue space. Genocide survivors reported lower somatic symptom scores and a reduction in collective traumatic crises during commemoration periods, attributing these positive changes to their participation in the Ubumwe guided space dialogue. Participants who had previously complained of persistent stomachaches and headaches credited the guided space

dialogue model for their improved well-being, demonstrating its instrumental role in instilling hope.

Regarding resilience, the quantitative study revealed that current inmates who benefited from the intervention exhibited higher levels of resilience compared to their counterparts who were not involved in the Ubumwe project. Interestingly, the qualitative findings showcased a transformative journey for former perpetrators of genocide, illustrating their ability to manage emotions and bounce back from trauma, a dimension not fully captured in the quantitative study.

Recovery from trauma is explored through the lens of post-traumatic growth (PTG), a concept suggesting that survivors who meaningfully process their traumatic experiences may undergo positive psychological changes. This includes increased resilience and a heightened sense of personal strength (Tedeschi & Calhoun, 1996). In the context of the PFR project, the Ubumwe guided dialogue space model played a pivotal role in enabling participants to reflect on past behaviors, cultivate empathy for survivors, and devise strategies for atonement within a guided dialogue environment. Consequently, participants reported an enhanced sense of self-awareness and self-control.

The Ubumwe guided dialogue space served as a crucial platform for individuals to express and externalize their experiences, providing a sense of relief. From a psychological perspective, discussing challenging experiences is widely recognized as one of the healthiest ways to come to terms with them, though cultural beliefs about this process may vary (Hassan, 2001).

The qualitative findings underscored that prayers during the guided dialogue space emerged as a significant factor in helping individuals cope with challenging situations and fostering resilience, as reported by both current prisoners and survivors. According to Pfeifer and Waelti (1999) individuals who incorporated prayer as a coping mechanism were more likely to exhibit a higher level of psychological adjustment compared to those who did not. The utilization of religious practices as coping strategies not only provides emotional solace but also appears to contribute to a more positive and adaptive psychological response to traumatic experiences.

Qualitative findings highlighted the pivotal role played by the ubumwe guided space dialogue in assisting individuals to overcome trauma, heal emotional wounds, and dispel fears and suspicions that previously confined them at home. Subsequently, former genocide inmates and survivors reported increased civic engagement and heightened trust in the government. They actively participated in community initiatives, such as Umuganda, took part in the election of leaders, and engaged in various community and government meetings after being enrolled in the Ubumwe project.

In cases where women's husbands were involved in the PFR project and truthfully admitted their offenses, positive transformations were observed. These women no longer skip meetings, feel a sense of relief, and find that their ideas are more readily considered by others in the community meetings.

Turning to the remembrance and commemoration of the genocide against the Tutsis, prior to joining the PFR Ubumwe project, some Rwandans avoided recalling certain aspects of the past. This was especially true for former genocide inmates who refrained from engaging with media,

such as radio broadcasts, during the commemoration period. However, after participating in the program, there was a noticeable shift, with individuals actively attending commemoration ceremonies and engaging with the difficult aspects of their history.

Before engaging in the project, both former and current genocide inmates grappled with feelings of guilt and shame for their past actions. The presence of emotions like collective guilt, shame, remorse, or regret in response to reminders of crimes committed by ingroup members has been documented in various studies, even when these transgressions occurred in historically distant times (Brown & Čehajić, 2008; Doosje et al., 1998). Simultaneously, their family members experienced collective guilt and shame due to the wrongful deeds committed by their relatives. It's crucial to note that shame and guilt extend beyond interpersonal contexts and can also be triggered by the transgressions of others, especially when there exists a psychological bond, such as a shared group identity (Smith, 1993).

Being involved in Ubumwe project helped the current and former inmates to acknowledging their moral responsibility. The quantitative study revealed that participation in the Ubumwe guided space dialogue model raised individual and collective feelings of guilt among both current and former genocide inmates. It also induced a sense of shame among current genocide inmates, contributing to the rehumanization of both the genocide survivors and the former genocide inmates. The qualitative results supported these findings, indicating that former and current genocide inmates underwent a transformative process wherein they accepted their moral responsibilities and learned to live with feelings of shame and guilt. While these remorse and guilt emotions persisted, they became motivational factors for some genocide inmates seeking forgiveness.

Recognizing their responsibility also played a role in reducing the hate that family members of genocide inmates harbored towards the genocide survivors. One family member expressed that the hate sentiment has disappeared. While the sentiments of guilty and shame were raised among current and former genocide inmates, the shame and collective guilt experienced by the family members, including wives and children, diminished after their participation in the project. A study is needed to explore the mechanisms underlying the removal of vicarious collective guilty and shame experienced by the people who are linked by social identity by people who committed the genocide once the perpetrators confess and ask for forgiveness.

Regarding social cohesion, before participating in the PFR Ubumwe project, some participants revealed that there was either no or limited inherent connection between survivors of genocide and individuals who were former or current prisoners. In some cases, interactions between these two groups were characterized by fear and suspicion. A segment of genocide survivors and former inmates held negative sentiments towards each other, leading to attitudes ranging from animosity to outright conflict. For instance, there were instances of withholding essential resources, such as refusing to provide water to members of the genocide inmate group.

Participants noted a distinct lack of contact between genocide survivors and former/current genocide inmates before joining the PFR project. This limited contact extended to relationships between genocide survivors and the families of former and current genocide inmates. This lack

of connection wasn't exclusive to the genocide inmates; some survivors were hesitant to allow their children to interact with the family members of former genocide inmates. The fearful and suspicious interactions created an atmosphere charged with apprehension and mistrust. In these situations, individuals exhibited a heightened sense of caution, possibly stemming from past traumatic experiences or a lack of confidence in the intentions of those around them. In terms of intergroup relationships and social cohesion, both groups of genocide survivors and genocide inmates reported negative emotions such as retaliation and hatred sentiments.

The data revealed a significant distinction among genocide survivors engaging in the Ubumwe guided dialogue space concerning social cohesion. Current genocide inmates and survivors who benefited from the Ubumwe guided space dialogue model exhibited increased empathy. Additionally, social cohesion was fostered among former genocide inmates and survivors who benefited from the same intervention. The Genocide survivors involved in the project were more willing to forgive and showed fewer revenge sentiments compared to those who did not participate.

The findings from the assessment in terms of social cohesion are similar to those from study done by Amanda E. Feller and Kelly K. Ryan (2012) who advocate for the consistent and widespread use of dialogue to promote societal cohesion while preserving cultural integrity in post-conflict communities and peacebuilding. Regarding the empathy the quantitative results from this evaluation corroborated the results of study done by Muller identified where the intergroup dialogue predicted a significant increases in empathic perspective taking among participants.

The qualitative findings indicate that, according to former inmates involved in the project and community members, the Ubumwe guided space dialogue model has played a significant role in helping offenders to seek forgiveness and reveal the truth. Some former and current genocide inmates courageously disclosed the truth, providing detailed accounts of their crimes committed during the 1994 genocide against the Tutsi. In certain cases, individuals went as far as revealing the locations where they had hidden the bodies of their victims. For instance, a child of a former genocide inmate shared that her father, after participating in the dialogue space, accepted to disclose the locations where the bodies of victims were hidden, enabling her to learn the truth about what happened.

However, despite some former and current inmates choosing to tell the truth, there were instances where others lied and refused to disclose the location where they had buried their loved ones killed during the genocide against the Tutsis.

Concerning forgiveness and reparation, individuals who were formerly and currently incarcerated for genocide have reported positive outcomes after participating in dialogue spaces. They expressed that through these spaces, they openly confessed, acknowledged their guilt, and sought forgiveness. Interestingly, many did not experience fear of retaliation or negative reactions from their communities when they will be released. They shared that the families of the victims accepted their apologies and forgiveness requests.

In terms of reparations, some individuals initially resisted paying for the properties they had destroyed, either refusing outright or providing inadequate compensation due to a misunderstanding of the process. However, after engaging in guided dialogue spaces, there was a notable shift. Offenders began to willingly pay back what they had destroyed during the

genocide. Even victims who had experienced theft from these individuals started to overlook their dues as reconciliation took place, and a comprehensive understanding of the discussions emerged.

The Confession –apology-forgiveness evokes the Need-Based Model of Reconciliation. The Need-Based Model of Reconciliation emphasizes the central role of the apology-forgiveness cycle in the socio-emotional reconciliation process. This cycle is viewed as a form of social exchange wherein each party provides psychological resources that mitigate specific threats to their identity. Perpetrators, within this framework, can take several actions, including acknowledging their responsibilities, offering apologies, providing compensation or reparations, adopting positive attitudes towards the victim group, demonstrating empathy, recognizing victims' achievements and capacities, and seeking to build friendships with them.

The actions and attitudes facilitated by this model enable victims to reclaim a sense of power and self-control that may have been lost during the victimization period. Victims, as part of their healing process, have the option to forgive, accept compensation, and collaborate with perpetrators. The act of granting forgiveness is not only a personal choice for victims but also fulfills the perpetrators' need for social acceptance, contributing to the restoration of their positive moral image and facilitating their integration into the social community. Nadler, A., & Shnabel, N. (2008); Nadler, A., & Liviatan, I. (2006); Nadler, A., & Liviatan, I. (2004). Shnabel, N., Nadler, A., Canetti-Nisim, D., & Ullrich, J. (2008); Shnabel, N., Nadler, A., Ullrich, J., Dovidio, J. F., & Carmi, D. (2009). This dynamic helps explain positive outcomes observed, such as the increased acceptance of former genocide inmates into society after receiving forgiveness, leading to their active engagement in various developmental projects.

While there have been instances where individuals sought forgiveness and repaired the damage they caused, it is important to note that a minority of former and current genocide inmates faced challenges in being forgiven or well-received by their communities and family members. This situation is particularly poignant for certain female current genocide inmates who express concerns about how they will be received by their children, fearing rejection. Additionally, a male current prisoner, despite not being forgiven, harbors apprehension about his impending release. These examples highlight the complex and varied nature of reconciliation experiences, where not everyone is guaranteed forgiveness or a warm reception within their social circles.

The quantitative study on the Ubumwe project revealed a noteworthy increase in Rwandan identification and enhanced contact among both current and former genocide inmates and survivors. Qualitative findings shed light on the positive impact of the PFR program, indicating that participants, after engaging in dialogue spaces, experienced a harmonious coexistence. They spoke of shared activities, giving children in baptisms, and emphasized the newfound importance of mutual support and recognition of common interests. Instances of community members helping each other, children studying together without issues, and parents socializing were reported. Some former genocide inmates even demonstrated reconciliation by gifting cows to genocide survivors.

The improved relationship observed after participant in guided space dialogue confirmed the finding from other studies done on intergroup dialogue where this dialogues was associated with improved perspective-taking skills, better communication by understanding others' life experiences, and the expansion of social connections and friendships (Griffin et al., 2012; Rodenborg & Huynh, 2006). The positive relationships between genocide survivors and former

inmates extended to sensitive periods, such as genocide commemorations. Testimonies highlighted instances where survivors interacted with those who had caused harm to their families. Despite the painful history, individuals greeted each other, shared invitations to significant celebrations, and demonstrated a remarkable willingness to rebuild connections and foster understanding during these crucial times.

The assessment's conclusion are similar to findings from a study done Amos Iliya's in in Kaduna in Nigeria in 2022 which underscored the practical and tangible benefits of interfaith dialogue in promoting peace and harmony in diverse communities. He asserts that, the effectiveness of interfaith dialogue in peacebuilding was evident through enhanced relations between Christian and Muslim leaders, which, in turn, contributed to a more peaceful state. Notably, the impact of interfaith dialogue extended to fostering peace among the youth from various religious affiliations. The study also found that this dialogue influenced the content of sermons delivered in churches and mosques, underlining its broader positive influence on religious discourse and community relations. (Iliya, 2022).

Intergroup dialogues (IGD) have demonstrated also in previous studies their effectiveness in fostering positive outcomes, as evidenced by perceived increases in engagement and decreases in avoidance. Additionally, participants in IGD experience notable shifts in colorblind racial attitudes, improved empathic perspective-taking, and enhanced intergroup relationships, as highlighted by (Stephan & Finlay, 1999). The success of IGD is attributed to the establishment of interpersonal relationships through sustained communication within a safe environment, allowing for the exploration of differences and commonalities in social identities and experiences, as discussed by Zúñiga et al. , 2007).

While the majority of participants highlighted positive relationships between genocide survivors and inmates, it is crucial to acknowledge that some survivors are still in the process of reconciliation, and others remain reluctant. One survivor shared a personal journey, taking a step in the process by receiving invitations from former genocide inmates to events like weddings. Despite contributing to the wedding, this survivor did not attend, expressing an internal struggle and a reluctance to fully embrace the relationship. Living in close proximity with former inmates, attempts at connection are made, but personal conscience hinders a complete acceptance.

Another survivor conveyed a less optimistic experience, indicating that despite engaging in guided space dialogue, the relationship with former and current inmates remained strained. Forgiveness regarding the spoiled properties had been granted, but during commemoration periods, former inmates disrupted the survivor's peace by cutting his plantain trees, particularly on the date when the survivor commemorates the loss of family members during the genocide. This example underscores the complexities and challenges that persist in achieving full reconciliation for some survivors, even after participating in dialogue initiatives.

In terms of social cohesion within the community, the social cohesion encompasses both vertical and horizontal interactions among society members and social cohesiveness consist in is the binding force that unites individuals within a society, 'the glue that holds society together' as described by Lederach (1997) and Ho-Won (2005). In this assessment we assessed also the contribution of Ubumwe project in fostering the social cohesion within the community.

A contemporary and comprehensive understanding of social cohesion encompasses both vertical and horizontal interactions among society members. These interactions are

characterized by a set of attitudes and norms that include trust, a sense of belonging, willingness to participate, and assistance, along with their behavioral manifestations. (International Institute of Social Studies, 2013; Larsen, 2013; NURC, 2008:26). This assessment focused on the Social cohesion between genocide survivors and genocide inmates and the social cohesion within the community

Before the introduction of the Ubumwe project in the districts of Ngoma, Nyamagabe, and Rubavu, the lack of social cohesion wasn't confined solely to interactions between genocide survivors and former/current inmates; it permeated the entire community. There was limited and quasi no interactions between genocide inmates and genocide survivors. There was an issue of anger to the extent that you could observe that there was constant misunderstanding and difficult to live together.

The Ubumwe project played a crucial role in transforming social dynamics, fostering forgiveness, and promoting unity within the community. One individual shared a personal transformation, having learned about forgiveness from colleagues who had undergone the guided dialogue space. Witnessing positive examples from those who participated in the talks, this person forgave former genocide inmates and even visited his imprisoned wife, attributing the change not to his willpower but to the impact of the training.

Another community member highlighted the positive shifts in social life, noting increased interdependence, complementarity, and the emergence of marriage alliances between genocide survivors and former inmates. These examples underscore the transformative influence of the Ubumwe project in reshaping community relationships and promoting reconciliation.

Regarding the intra-family relationships, participating in the dialogue space has significantly contributed to improving relationships within families and between intimate partners. A family member of a genocide inmate shared that the family conflict disappeared after participating in Ubumwe project, they started communicating and *search and* sharing earning.

Engaging in the dialogue space has played a pivotal role in enhancing relationships within families and between intimate partners. A family member of a genocide inmate expressed that the family conflict vanished after participating in the Ubumwe project. As a result, they began to communicate effectively, actively search for common ground, and share their earnings, reflecting the positive impact of the project on fostering understanding and unity within the family.

A female former inmate from Rubavu shared that she had left her children at home with her husband during her sentence. Upon her return, she felt immense shame as a woman coming back from TIG. She attempted to earn a living by selling eggs and goats at the market, but unfortunately, people were hesitant to buy from her. Initially, her children rejected her. However, her relationship with them significantly improved after her involvement in Ubumwe project. The assistance from a survivor's family played a crucial role in mending the rift and fostering a positive transformation in her family dynamics.

The challenge posed by women who engage in acts of violence, including genocide, disrupts prevailing gender discourse within patriarchal societies due to their violation of societal and gender norms. Recognizing women as perpetrators of genocide is difficult within this context.

When forced to confront this reality, society tends to categorize them as either as *femmes fatales*, monstrous or victims (Dusty Miller in 2005; Adler, Reva N.; Loyle, Cyanne E.; and Globerman, Judith (2007).

This worry about the reintegration of female current and former genocide inmates has been evidenced in the previous studies. The findings from a study done in Rwanda for exploring the consequences of attributing blame to women for their participation in genocide and how these perceptions may impact the treatment of formerly incarcerated individuals. They suggest that gendered views of women who committed genocide may hinder their reentry and reintegration into society, shedding light on the challenges they face in overcoming societal biases and stereotypes. This analysis, conducted by H. Nyseth Nzitatira, K.S. Schell, and E. Sibomana in 2023, underscores the need for a more nuanced understanding of women's roles in conflicts and the potential barriers they encounter during the process of reintegration.

Rwanda's mental health landscape bears enduring scars from the genocide against the Tutsi, with its repercussions echoing through subsequent generations (Perroud et al, 2014). Before joining PFR the children and family members of former genocide inmates initially harbored hatred towards family members of genocide survivors, perceiving them as responsible for their family's unjust imprisonment. After joining the project, the guided dialogue spaces have played a crucial role in fostering intergenerational reconciliation. It brought both families of genocide survivors together with family of former genocide inmates leading to a profound transformation. The former inmates took the initiative to seek forgiveness, resulting in the establishment of positive relations, even among the children, marking a significant step towards intergenerational healing.

The act of extending forgiveness serves not only as a personal choice for victims but also meets the perpetrators' need for social acceptance, contributing to the restoration of their positive moral image and facilitating their integration into the social community. This dynamic helps elucidate positive outcomes observed, such as the increased acceptance of former genocide inmates into society after receiving forgiveness, leading to their active engagement in various developmental projects.

Participants take pride in discussing their achievements since joining the project. A former genocide inmate from Nyamagabe reflected on his transformed life through dialogue spaces, sharing. Starting from scratch, with no place to live and extreme poverty, constantly in a bad mood because of the needed to hide themselves, hindered their economic development. However, after joining the project, they began to go out and work, inspiring them to strive for socioeconomic improvement. They have planted a variety of trees and even acquired a cow, marking the graduation in terms of economic level.

In the realm of women's empowerment, certain female participants expressed a heightened sense of value after engaging in the project. This newfound empowerment enabled them to actively participate and compete in local leadership elections, ultimately securing leadership positions. Additionally, some women assumed roles as secretaries in a women's cooperative focused on traditional basketry. The impact of these initiatives is evident in the transformation of the economic status of women; they are no longer struggling with poverty. Instead, they can now effectively support their families, ensuring their children attend school, and have sufficient resources for nourishment. This showcases the tangible positive outcomes of the project in fostering women's empowerment and socioeconomic well-being.

In sum, regarding the contribution/ impact of this project, the results of this evaluation revealed that the guided dialogue space model implemented by PFR in this project yielded positive outcomes for genocide survivors, current and former genocide inmates, and their family participants. In summary, the assessment demonstrated the potential of the guided space dialogue model to enhance psychological well-being and resilience. Moreover, it fostered positive relationships and social cohesion between perpetrators and survivors, contributing to a more cohesive community at large. The indirect benefit of this intervention are also the economic empowerment, gender equality and women empowerment, positive intrafamily relationship and intergenerational reconciliation.

6.2. The relevance of the project

The relevance of this project lies in its alignment with Rwanda's national reconciliation initiatives and policies. It actively supports the government's mission to foster unity, reconciliation, and sustainable peace in the aftermath of the genocide. Additionally, the project seamlessly integrates with broader transitional justice efforts, recognizing the paramount importance of truth and reconciliation in the post-genocide context. This integration includes partnerships and collaborations with local authorities and the justice system, ensuring a comprehensive approach to healing (Rugema et al., 2015; Schaal et al., 2012).

A key aspect of the project is its cultural sensitivity, tailored to meet the specific needs and values of the Rwandan context. Recognizing the importance of traditional practices, such as *guhana inka*, *gusabana umunyu n'amazi*, and *gutabara uwagize ibyago*, the project acts as an indicator of its cultural adaptability. By emphasizing these values, the project actively encourages community ownership and the active participation of local communities in the reconciliation process.

The guided dialogue spaces are deliberately designed to be non-stigmatizing and inclusive, seamlessly integrating into existing strategies to promote psychological well-being, social cohesion, and resilience. Individuals are included regardless of their educational background, gender, age, religious affiliation, historical identity.... Moreover, as the project involves genocide survivors, the current and released genocide inmates, particular emphasis is placed on the rehabilitation and reintegration aspects. By showcasing how the project contributes to the rehabilitation of individuals and the rebuilding of their lives, it addresses the complex challenges associated with post-genocide recovery.

To bolster its relevance, the project draws on evidence and examples for similar initiatives in Rwanda and other post-conflict societies. By highlighting success stories that showcase the positive impact on psychological well-being, reconciliation, and social cohesion, the project underscores its potential to contribute meaningfully to the Rwandan context. This strategic approach effectively communicates the project's relevance, especially during the sensitive period when inmates from the genocide may be released.

6.3 Efficiency of the Project

We assessed the extent to which the project has delivered the planned outputs and outcomes. The evaluation of the project's effectiveness revealed that the original plan faced challenges due to the COVID-19 crisis, necessitating a shift to online operations. This transition posed difficulties, requiring specific devices and internet access, as mentioned by PFR staff. Despite these challenges, the project produced tangible results. However, certain activities were put on

hold, awaiting the resolution of the COVID situation, causing delays in their implementation compared to the initial plan.

6.4 The project sustainability

In terms of project sustainability, this initiative actively involves local communities and stakeholders in both the planning and execution phases. A key focus is placed on organizing guided dialogue spaces that address community concerns, ensuring that the local population is not only well-informed but also actively engaged in the project. The project also includes comprehensive training programs for stakeholders, local authorities, and community members, emphasizing sustainable practices and ethical standards. By actively involving local communities in monitoring efforts, the initiative fosters a sense of ownership and awareness regarding the project's impact.

The guided space dialogue are formed of individuals who reside in the same neighbourhood. They maintain ongoing interactions both after each group session and upon the conclusion of all group sessions. No meals or monetary incentives are provided, which implies that the participants who engage themselves in the project develop genuine desire to enhance their mental well-being and contribute to each other's healing, without the motivation of receiving material reward. As a result, the effectiveness of these guided dialogue spaces, initiated by PFR, underscores their capacity to function and attain objectives without constant financial support and intervention from PFR.

6.5. Critical lessons learned

Despite the observable changes among participants following their engagement in the PFR project, several valuable lessons and best practices were gleaned at the conclusion of the study. One pivotal lesson is the significance of implementing intervention strategies by aligning with stable structures, such as Abatahira, Imboni z'ubumwe n'ubudaheranwa, AVEGA, IBUKA, and the In-Charge of Social Affairs at the Umurenge level, alongside the Cell Economic Development Officer. This collaborative approach was identified as instrumental in sustaining the initiated actions within these communities.

Moreover, the guided dialogue space, where genocide survivors and inmates came together, demonstrated a positive impact on fostering social cohesion and facilitating the process of seeking and granting forgiveness. Additionally, the spiritual approach, particularly the incorporation of prayers, word of God emerged as a significant factor in the lives of the participants. Prayers provided a framework for finding meaning in life and coping with the profound and painful situations experienced by the individuals involved in the project.

Indeed, the assessment highlights a significant impact of the Ubumwe project: the removal of shame and guilt experienced by family members of genocide perpetrators through the process of confession and seeking forgiveness. The guided dialogue spaces facilitated by the project create an environment where perpetrators openly acknowledge their moral responsibility, confess their wrongdoings, and actively seek forgiveness. This transformative process not only contributes to the rehabilitation of the perpetrators but also alleviates the burden of shame and guilt carried by their family members.

6.6 Project gaps and challenges

The challenges faced during this project can be distilled into three key points: first, the geographical distance to the office where participants attended the PFR guided dialogue space; second, the insufficient time allocated for the guided dialogue space sessions; and third, the absence of a training manual for the refreshment component.

Participants faced challenges related to the distance between the office where the PFR guided dialogue space was conducted. Notably, individuals traveling from areas like Kiyumba or Nyanzoga to Cyanika found the journey to be long and cumbersome. The lengthy journey hindered accessibility and participation.

Participants highlighted that there was insufficient time allocated to the guided dialogue space. After forming groups, participants felt that holistic follow-ups were infrequent. Additionally, there was a lack of initiatives for economic development within the groups. The absence of consistent follow-ups and economic development opportunities within the groups could jeopardize the long-term impact of the project.

There is a lack of a training manual for individuals like the in-charge of social affairs or abatahira to use in teaching the lessons independently. The absence of a structured manual hinders independent teaching and may impact the overall consistency and quality of the project's implementation.

6.7 Recommendations

The recommendations were formulated to enrich future programs by addressing geographical considerations, ensuring continuous support, and fostering community-led initiatives for sustained healing, reconciliation, and peace-building in Rwanda.

- Expand Geographical Reach

Consider expanding the intervention areas to reach rural communities where there is a prevalence of individuals with genocide ideology. This broader reach would contribute to addressing the issue at its roots.

- Enhance Monitoring and Evaluation

Design a comprehensive monitoring template to facilitate continuous assessment, ensuring that healing, reconciliation, and peace-building efforts are not only effective in the short term but also sustainable in the long run. This systematic approach will help track progress and identify areas for improvement.

- Engage Young People

Explore the inclusion of young people in the program to ensure a more comprehensive approach. Involving the youth can contribute to the sustainability of peace-building initiatives by fostering a culture of tolerance and understanding among the younger generation.

- Implement Group Therapy

Introduce group therapy sessions to address the emotional impact of the dialogue space. Acknowledging that the project may open wounds, group therapy can provide ongoing support and create a safe space for participants to share and externalize their experiences and benefit from its curative factors.

- Provide Ongoing Training and Supervision

Establish a system for ongoing training and supervision for program beneficiaries. This will enhance the effectiveness of guided dialogue space sessions and ensure that participants receive continuous support throughout their healing journey.

- Initiate Income-Generating Activities

Foster sustainable community development by helping initiate income-generating activities. This can empower community members economically, creating a foundation for shared prosperity and strengthening social bonds.

- Localized Intervention through Community Structures

Explore intervention strategies through local community structures, such as cells, villages, or even smaller units like "Isibo/Amasibo," coordinated by village leaders. Leveraging existing community structures fosters proximity, facilitating participation and horizontal communication within the community. This approach aligns with the common life of the community and encourages active engagement.

- The intergenerational dialogue

Engaging in the intergenerational dialogue in the aftermath of a genocide is essential for promoting understanding, reconciliation, and healing among different age groups. This type of communication involves open and meaningful exchanges of perspectives between those who directly experienced the traumatic events, the genocide inmates and their children who were born after.

Through intergenerational dialogue, survivors of the genocide and genocide inmates can convey their experiences and provide historical context, offering younger generations a more profound understanding of the conflict's origins and impacts. This dialogue serves as a means of preserving collective memory, preventing the distortion or loss of critical historical lessons.

Moreover, intergenerational dialogue addresses the psychological and emotional scars carried by both survivors, guilty, shame and remorse held by the genocide inmates and the younger generation. It fosters empathy as younger individuals gain insights into the challenges faced by

their elders, promoting a sense of interconnectedness and shared responsibility for healing and preventing future conflicts.

Encouraging communication and mutual understanding, intergenerational dialogue helps break the cycle of silence and resentment that may persist after a genocide. It represents a crucial step toward building a more inclusive and united society, fostering sustained reconciliation, and preventing the perpetuation of intergenerational trauma.

Advocating for a gendered reintegration Initiative

Raising awareness about the situation of women who participated in the genocide and their reintegration. There is need of social reintegration programs specifically tailored to women released from prison, aimed at overcoming the stigmas and challenges they face when trying to reintegrate into society. By fostering a comprehensive and inclusive approach, the project can contribute to breaking down barriers that hinder their reintegration and promote reconciliation within the community.

Limitations of the study

The primary limitation of this study lies in the absence of baseline and long-term evaluations of the intervention effects. A baseline assessment would have provided a crucial reference point for gauging changes in participants' outcomes over time. Without this baseline data, it becomes challenging to determine how much change occurred because of the intervention versus pre-existing conditions or external factors. The lack of differentiation between the case and control groups in some psychosocial outcomes might be attributed to potential crossover and spill-over effects.

Crossover effects could imply that individuals in the control group experienced some degree of improvement in their psychosocial well-being due to unintended exposure or influence from the intervention. Additionally, the observed lack of distinction between the groups might suggest that individuals who have undergone the PFR intervention could indirectly act as agents of change within their families and communities, leading to broader spill-over effects. This underscores the complex interplay of influences and highlights the need for a more nuanced understanding of how interventions impact not only direct participants but also those in their immediate social environment.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this research underscores the transformative potential of the guided dialogue space model in facilitating profound wound healing and social cohesion between genocide inmates and survivors. The intervention exhibited a multi-faceted positive impact, enhancing psychological well-being, resilience, social cohesion between genocide survivors and former and current genocide inmates, fostering personal economic growth and social cohesion within the community. Notably, it also played a role in promoting gender equality and alleviating practical challenges, as family members of former genocide inmates reported feeling relieved

and experienced increased ease in attending community meetings and health centers for child vaccinations.

Beyond the direct participants, the broader community, even those who did not directly engage with the project, experienced indirect benefits. Sensitization by PFR program participants led some community members to embrace forgiveness, shifting social dynamics and fostering interdependence and complementarity within the community. The indirect benefit of this intervention are also the economic empowerment, gender equality and women empowerment, positive intrafamily relationship and intergenerational reconciliation

The study's lessons emphasize the value of the guided dialogue space in cultivating social cohesion and forgiveness, recognizing the importance of acknowledging and listening to the experiences of both survivors and individuals who have committed violent acts. This inclusive approach holds promise for dealing with the legacies of violence in post-genocide contexts and interpersonal dynamics.

Furthermore, the research highlights the significance of implementing interventions through stable community structures and integrating spiritual beliefs. The involvement of organizations like Abatahira, Imboni z'ubumwe n'ubudaheranwa, AVEGA, IBUKA, as well as collaboration with In-Charge of Social Affairs at the Umurenge level and Cell Economic Development Officers, played a crucial role in sustaining positive actions initiated within these communities. The spiritual dimension, particularly through prayers, provided participants with a valuable framework for finding meaning in life and coping with painful situations.

In light of these findings, it is recommended that future interventions consider expanding their geographical reach, engaging younger participants, implementing group therapy sessions, providing ongoing training, a gendered reintegration initiative and supervision, and initiating income-generating activities. Such strategies can contribute to more comprehensive and sustained healing, reconciliation, and peace-building initiatives.

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