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Marcus Grohmann

Theory and Practice of Reconciliation in Rwanda

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MARCUS GROHMANN

THEORY AND PRACTICE OF
RECONCILIATION IN RWANDA

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ABSTRACT

During recent years, scholars working on the peacebuilding process in Rwanda have often tended to single out specific aspects, for instance judicial responses to the genocide. Little research has been done, however, on the diversity of approaches that constitute the “reconciliation landscape” in Rwanda today. Basing itself on data from field research in 2006, this paper seeks to shed some light on the many programmes carried out in Rwanda related to reconciliation work. Emphasis is put on two case studies. While establishing a theoretical framework of the reconciliation process in the first part of the paper, the following chapters attempt to explain how this relates to the practice of reconciliation in the Rwandan context. The data collected suggest that in the face of political constraints, the Rwandan government must in part rely on civil society actors for the achievement of their goals of “unity and reconciliation”. The multitude of initiatives from actors with a wide range of motivations and approaches should be seen as complementary, while some may have to make up for the shortcomings and constraints of others.

Bayreuth, January 2009

Marcus Grohmann

AUTHOR

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GLOSSARY

AEE	African Evangelistic Enterprises
AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
AVEGA	Association des Veuves du Génocide Agahozo
CARSA	Christian Action for Reconciliation and Social Assistance
CEJP	Commission Episcopale de Justice et Paix
CPR	Council of Protestant Churches in Rwanda
CHH	Child Headed Households
DRC	Democratic Republic of the Congo
<i>gacaca</i>	Semi-traditional courts that judge genocide related crimes
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
IBUKA	Organisation of Rwandan genocide survivors, lit. “remember”
<i>imidugudu</i>	Kinyarwanda for “villages”
<i>ingando</i>	Kinyarwanda for “workshops” or “solidarity camps”
<i>interahamwe</i>	Kinyarwanda for “those who fight together” – Hutu militia responsible for a great part of the killings committed during the genocide
IRIN	Integrated Regional Information Networks
NGO	non-governmental organisation
<i>nkundabana</i>	Kinyarwanda for “I love children”
NURC	National Unity and Reconciliation Commission
ONG	organisation non-gouvernementale
PDW	Personal Development Workshops
RPF	Rwandan Patriotic Front
SURF	Survivors Fund
TIG	Travaux d’Intérêt Général
<i>ubwiyunge</i>	Kinyarwanda for “reconciliation”
UK	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland

The following abbreviations refer to the type of data collected during my field trip to Rwanda in 2006. A list of the data can be found in the appendix.

Con/*	Talks given at a conference of AEE
GrD/*	Group discussions
IC/*	Informal conversations
M/*	Meetings
POb/*	Participant observations
SSI/*	Semi-structured interviews

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THEORY AND PRACTICE OF RECONCILIATION IN RWANDA¹

Marcus Grohmann

INTRODUCTION

All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men's sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation.

The Bible, 2 Corinthians 5:18-19a

Following the 1994 genocide, the newly established Rwandan government adopted a policy of “National Unity and Reconciliation”. In the wake of the war the government started to build a “new society”, the “new Rwanda” with an emphasis on “Rwandanness” as opposed to the ethnic division that had ruled national politics ever since the colonial times.² Indeed the pursuit of reconciliation and unity – a quest, which also served to keep political opponents at bay (particularly by means of accusing people of “divisionism” and “genocidal ideologies”)³ and to strengthen control of power of the ruling elite⁴ – was to prevent the recurrence of violence. Over the last decade the government has introduced a number of measures directed dispose at achieving these two broad goals of unity and reconciliation.

¹ Almost in its entirety this paper was presented as a dissertation in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the degree of Bachelor of Arts in “Applied African Studies – Culture and Society of Africa” at the University of Bayreuth in September 2007. I particularly owe thanks to Professor Dieter Neubert and Professor Anna-Maria Brandstetter whose critique and comments were encouraging and very helpful. I also want to thank all the Rwandans and Europeans working in Rwanda who helped me in my research. Last but far from least I would like to thank Emma Laverack and Tessa Butler. It is due to them and their proofreading that the level of English of this paper was raised considerably.

² Buckley-Zistel (2006a) offers a brilliant study of how the political discourse changed after the genocide and in what way it differs (and indeed does not differ) from policies of the former republics.

³ Brandstetter (2005) or Reporters without Borders (2007).

⁴ Reyntjens (2004).

They seemed so important, whether for the actual reason of attaining sustainable peace or for situating oneself clearly on the moral high ground in face of criticism and Western self-blame, that they even found their way into the officially adopted title of the Rwandan government – the “Government of Unity and Reconciliation”. However, when looking at the “reconciliation landscape” of Rwanda it becomes evident that government programmes make up only a portion of the activities going on in the country. Caused by the very policies of the government, no NGO, church, or institution can shirk its duties and refrain from being somehow involved “in reconciliation”. Such is the pressure that even survivor organisations like AVEGA cannot but state that they too are supporting and assimilating themselves in the process of unity and reconciliation.⁵ Hence when talking about “national reconciliation” in Rwanda, one must highlight all those large and small scale initiatives the “National Unity and Reconciliation Commission” is struggling to keep track of, let alone coordinate. This paper will also help to give a more general impression of the variety of initiatives and actors involved in the process of reconciliation.

The purpose of this paper is to offer a concept of reconciliation that will help us to better understand the process of reconciliation that Rwanda is undertaking at the moment. Reconciliation refers to a very broad range of issues, activities and ideas. In the first chapter we will try a conceptual approach to reconciliation, look at how it is understood in the Rwandan context and elaborate on factors contributing to reconciliation. The second chapter will provide us with information on the current situation in the country and give an introduction to two types of programmes that are related to reconciliation work, namely governmental and non-governmental projects. In chapter three there will be a comparison of two case studies that I have researched during a field trip to Rwanda in 2006. I selected them because of their different approaches that are both promising to be very successful in their own way. The focus will be on the diverse methods, ambitions and (intended) outcomes. Drawing on the concept of reconciliation we will establish in chapter one, I will argue in chapter four that reconciliation is a process of transformation that has multifaceted approaches and does not follow one singular line. Far from contradicting each other, the many initiatives should be seen as complementary, with the government sometimes having to rely on civil society actors. This view will be supported by my findings on government policies and the two case studies. However, in this conclusion I will also point out elements hindering or impeding reconciliation, as not everything operating under the heading “reconciliation” is actually and wholly beneficial to the process.

A significant part of this paper is based on data collected during an eleven-week field trip to Rwanda in 2006. The research methods I applied were to a large extent semi-structured interviews as well as informal conversations. During the interviews I would jot down the

⁵ See interview with a member of staff of AVEGA-East (SSI/11).

important points, usually recording in writing later that day what had been said shortly before. Informal conversations were also recorded in writing, normally just after the encounters had taken place. In both cases conversations were held either in French or in English or I had somebody translating for me from Kinyarwanda into French or English.

In addition to these one-to-one conversations I used group discussions on two occasions, during which I took notes and audio-recorded the contributions as well as their translation by facilitators also. Furthermore, I used participant observations several times, during which I was able to take notes and always having had somebody translating for me.

Finally, I managed to gather important data from talks given at a regional conference on “Healing and Reconciliation” as well as from a number of meetings with staff and researchers from the organisations I did the two case studies on.

A list of all the data collected can be found in the appendix.

1. RECONCILIATION – THE FRAMEWORK

In recent years, reconciliation has become one of the buzzwords of the international peace-building community. Its understanding by theorists and practitioners and its meanings vary greatly from one culture to another. In this section I will first of all deal with some of the most prevalent conceptions of reconciliation after which I will challenge some of the term's misconceptions. The chapter will be concluded by an overview of instruments or elements that are widely acknowledged to be beneficial to reconciliation. We will thus establish a frame of reference, which will allow us to further assess the process of reconciliation in Rwanda.

1.1. CONCEPTS OF RECONCILIATION

The term to “reconcile” is derived from the Latin *re-*, meaning ‘back’ (also expressing intensive force) and *conciliare*, to ‘bring together’⁶. In its usage in a social context, reconciliation refers to relationships, etymologically indicating a situation *after* a conflict⁷ or disagreement, or the overcoming of them. How does this translate into practice? Some important questions to be considered are: When and where is reconciliation applied and why? Who is involved? What is it aiming at? What does it look like, and what are the issues at stake?

It is evident that reconciliation nowadays often figures among the central strategies for peace-building in post-conflict societies.⁸ However, reconciliation is not an instrument to be structurally applied like the (re-)building of institutions but is essentially about relationships (Lederach 1997: 23). Whereas “[p]olitics is a process to deal with the *issues* that have divided us in the past”, “[r]econciliation is a parallel process that redesigns the *relationship* between us” (Bloomfield 2003a: 12). This analysis will be further explored in the course of this chapter. Relationships are defined by a complex set of conditions, experiences and worldviews, which makes it necessary to look at the context for reconciliation before we examine who is concerned by reconciliation and then turn to an ontological consideration of the term.

⁶ The New Oxford Dictionary of English (1998).

⁷ The meaning of conflict is frequently blurred since it can describe the mere existence of disputes or their violent settlements. In this paper we shall therefore qualify conflict as “violent” if this is the case and continue to use the term “conflict” for disputes. “Post-conflict” however generally indicates a state after violent conflict (Haugerudbraaten (1998)).

⁸ For a detailed analysis of contemporary peace-building strategies, see Paris (2006).

For the purposes of this paper we shall consider the reconciliation that takes place in the aftermath of violent conflict. The context of this therefore varies significantly according to the respective cases.⁹ What all conflict and post-conflict situations do have in common though is an innate complexity that renders one-dimensional approaches in the quest for reconciliation futile right from the start. I will briefly present a number of the diverse dimensions that are of relevance when considering different possible approaches to the problem of reconciliation.

Every conflict has got a history which often is multi-layered. The degree, nature and scale of violence that occurred between the disputing parties are of relevance to the post-conflict situation as is the depth of the divisions in the respective society. Furthermore, it needs to be considered how a peace settlement is brought about and what the period of transition is or was like. An open conflict that has come to an end by an agreed ceasefire will offer different opportunities and challenges than a war with a military victor. Similarly, the initial responses of the newly established authorities have an impact on the situation, whether the new government has tried to stabilise the fragile peace or whether it has acted retributively against the losing side of the conflict. A post-conflict situation may also vary according to who the actors and stakeholders of the conflict were. This may be a certain number of ethnic groups of one country, or it may be different countries or “the International Community” – all this needs to be taken into account when reconciliation is debated. Also influencing peace-consolidation is the way in which the disputing parties lay geographically – whether they inhabit separated parts of a country or live in mixed communities. Finally, the customary methods of resolving conflicts in a given culture may be beneficial or detrimental to a process of reconciliation. As Bloomfield (2003b: 46) points out: “Some societies embody a natural urge to forgive the injustices inflicted on them in the past; others display a strong aversion to letting bygones be bygones.” He further emphasises the value of “home-grown” strategies of reconciliation, as imported schemes have often proved to be culturally inappropriate (Bloomfield 2003b: 46 et seq.)

All this is not to say that one element simplifies reconciliation and the other complicates it – each of them is of interest per se since different approaches and strategies will be required in order to solve the particular problems faced.

Who does the question of reconciliation concern? In the case of Northern Ireland the issues at stake are of both political and personal reconciliation, i.e. the reconciliation between individuals and groups of people. Where politics are concerned, a more technical definition of the term reconciliation can indeed be applied, when formerly hostile parties work together in a more or less constructive way. However, even politicians are human

⁹ This and the following paragraph are based on Bloomfield (2003b).

beings and are likely to have suffered from the conflicts of the past, which is in turn highly likely to influence their professional behaviour as well. One should therefore not exclude the notion of “inter-personal reconciliation” from the political sphere.

Where “national reconciliation” is concerned, we shall speak both of reconciliation between formerly antagonistic entities, political players and/or communities and between individuals or between individuals and adversary groups. It becomes evident that “reconciliation” covers and concerns a wide range of relationships. The following chapter will try to shed some light on the Rwandan situation, where a clear-cut definition of the reconciliation process seems hard to find.

Having established that the conditions for any attempted reconciliation are likely to be complex we will now focus our attention on finding a definition of the concept of reconciliation itself. Scholarly research and theoretical concepts of reconciliation look back on a relatively young history and have only recently entered the political debate. The establishment of the South-African “Truth and Reconciliation Commission” significantly helped for it to be widely acknowledged that reconciliation is a relevant factor in coming to terms with a history of injustices. Much of what is written on reconciliation draws heavily on elements from the Christian faith. But in all of the major religious systems are elements to be found that support the healing of broken relationships and allow people to live together in acceptance, forgiveness and/or mercy (Petersen 2001: 3). And as Molenaar points out, “the stress for reconciliation has always been one of the main common characteristics of [...] traditional African systems of justice” (Lambourne 2001: 314).¹⁰

Definitions of reconciliation range from the highly theological and ambitious descriptions of Archbishop Desmond Tutu (1999) to the very secular that are trying to carefully edge the conditions of a state that is sometimes not much more than that of a “negative peace”.¹¹ Trudy Govier finds this understanding of reconciliation common in the case of an evoked “national reconciliation”: “In the wake of civil conflict, groups are sometimes described as ‘reconciled’ simply because they have stopped killing each other and advocating murder and – however reluctantly – accepted that these others will remain on the scene and will have to be tolerated somehow” (Govier 2002: 142). As she expounds, this kind of relationship relies on a minimum of trust and does not require forgiveness. The focus here is on a certain state of relationship which is being aimed at.

¹⁰ Quoted in Molenaar (2005: 31).

¹¹ John Galtung distinguished „negative peace“ (as a state of absence of personal violence) from “positive peace” (as a state of absence of structural violence) with the latter coming close to a state where the potential for future conflict is removed (Galtung (1969) and also Pankhurst (1999)).

Kriesberg (2001: 48) offers a similar definition, the focus of which, however, is more on the interaction between the people concerned: "Reconciliation refers to the process by which parties that have experienced an oppressive relationship or a destructive conflict with each other move to attain or to restore a relationship that they believe to be minimally acceptable." I want to highlight three elements of this definition: Firstly, reconciliation here is not described as a state or goal but as a process. It is not a sole matter of decision; it is about the rebuilding of trust, which requires time, and gradual changes that need not follow a linear progression (Bloomfield 2003a: 19). This process may even take generations, for it involves different constitutive elements, which can rarely be put into practice all at the same time (Rigby 2001: 183). Thus it can be described as "an over-arching process which includes the search for truth, justice, forgiveness, healing and so on" (Bloomfield 2003a: 12).

Secondly, reconciliation is mutual. While I can decide to forgive somebody without his knowledge or consent, I cannot be reconciled if the other does not agree. Both these points are supported by Gubin et al. (2005: 301) for whom reconciliation is a "mutual acceptance by members of a formerly hostile group of each other". This "includes positive attitudes" as well as "positive actions".

And thirdly, reconciliation here is portrayed as a situation that is minimally acceptable to the people concerned. Since Kriesberg had already mentioned the notion of process, this minimally acceptable relationship appears to be the end of this process, and thus signifies an objective one should strive for in reconciliation. However, if reconciliation is a process, this implies that there are different stages to it. Govier with non-violent coexistence presented one of the low-level approaches whereas Tutu for his part pursued an emotionally rich and highly spiritual form, which Govier described as "maximal reconciliation" (Govier 2002: 143 et seq.). Of course there are various steps in between and attaining one could eventually lead to reaching the next. And yet, Kriesberg's definition still raises the question: Why do people pursue reconciliation at all? Certainly, people need to find a way to structure their social lives and to continue to live together with their former enemies. And to this end, Kriesberg's definition would be well suited. However, I suggest that in the case of Rwanda, minimally acceptable relationships risk not to be enough. They would not pose that big an obstacle to renewed outbreaks of conflicts or even violence in the case of returning instigation against "the other". Antoine Rutayisire, the team leader of "African Evangelistic Enterprises" (AEE) in Rwanda, puts it this way: "Sometimes people confuse peaceful coexistence with reconciliation. But we can live together 'peacefully' and still hate each other. This is not reconciliation and will eventually lead to an explosion" (Gordon

2004: 150¹²). Therefore I argue that reconciliation has no value in itself. Its objective – in the case of Rwanda – should be that the potential for the absorption, fostering and execution of extremist politics be destroyed in order to prevent future outbreaks of violence. This could simply be described as sustainable peace and is thus an integral part of peacebuilding. But to achieve this, a much higher level of reconciliation is necessary. Bloomfield (2003a: 13) speaks of a “deep process” that needs to take place – a process that touches on one’s attitudes, aspirations, emotions and possibly beliefs. I argue that it is this process that has the potential to provide healing for individuals and societies. Although such a “profound change” is certainly ambitious, examples from my fieldwork show that it is nevertheless possible. The complexity of processes of reconciliation for people and communities can be better understood if one thinks of reconciliation as “transformation” – of their attitudes, traumata, relationships and sometimes of their spirituality as well.

Notwithstanding the pertinent remarks made with regard to the definition of reconciliation, I would like to add elements of another conceptual approach that was developed by John Paul Lederach (Lederach 1997). It emphasises the understanding of reconciliation as a “social space”, which is applicable to a substantial part of the reconciliation efforts undertaken in Rwanda. This concept is based on three main assumptions: A) “*relationship* is the basis of both the conflict and its long-term solution” (Lederach 1997: 26) and is therefore also the key element for an understanding of the system of conflict (Wheatley 1992)¹³; B) reconciliation is about encounters where people are free to express themselves and to acknowledge pain (Wheatley 1992)¹⁴; C) drawing on the biblical picture that reads: “Truth and mercy have met together; peace and justice have kissed” (Psalm 85: 10), Lederach goes on to define the *place* where this happens as reconciliation. Thus, reconciliation is both a focus – a *process* of encounter, as already established – and a locus, i.e. a *point* of encounter, a social space, where people and things come together (Lederach 1997: 27 et seqq.). Reconciliation is described to be characterised by paradoxes. It is about the coming to terms with a painful past and finding ways for a peaceful, interdependent future. It provides space for an encounter of truth and mercy, and addresses both justice and peace. In this way, reconciliation is about a reorientation towards the future which is undertaken together (Lederach 1997: 31).

As we established, there are various conceptions of the actual meaning of reconciliation. Nonetheless, I have tried to distinguish some key elements on which there seems to be an agreement and at the same time, which seemed to be important and relevant to my work.

¹² Translation by myself. The original reads: “*Manchmal verwechseln die Leute friedliche Koexistenz mit Versöhnung. Aber wir können ‚friedlich‘ zusammenleben und uns trotzdem hassen. Das ist keine Versöhnung und wird schließlich zu einer Explosion führen.*”

¹³ Quoted in Lederach (1997: 26).

¹⁴ Quoted in Lederach (1997: 26).

Those which I regard as important for this study are: Reconciliation is both a process and a goal; reconciliation is mutual and a comprehensive phenomenon that I will call “transformation”; finally, reconciliation can be seen as a locus, a place of encounter, where relationships are restored.

Still, there are some common misconceptions of reconciliation which I would like to point out in the next paragraph.

1.2. WHAT RECONCILIATION IS NOT

According to James Musoni, the Rwandan Minister of Finance, about 75% of the population have now reconciled and live in harmony, with the rest of the population still pursuing killings and harassments (Bayingana 2007). While it may be true that the security situation in Rwanda has improved for many, it would be incorrect to equate that with successful reconciliation. First of all, this reading negates the understanding of reconciliation as a long-term process. And surely, as many research results indicate, including my own, reconciliation for many has not yet become tangible as unresolved conflicts, felt injustices and misgivings persist.¹⁵

For some, reconciliation may be equalled to mercy and undue amnesty. While these are or can be an integral part of any reconciliation process, reconciliation *does not* by definition exclude justice. It may indeed sometimes be perceived as such by victims who are urged to reconcile. But bearing in mind that at this stage we are still theorising, such practical problems do not take the concept of reconciliation ad absurdum, but rather, they point towards the need for a proper application of the theory. Moreover, they allude to a danger: As Huyse (2003: 22) points out, politics of reconciliation may be appropriated by people who precisely do not want things to change.

On the other hand, reconciliation is not the sole pursuit of justice either. Quite obviously, when a society moves from war to peace and comes to terms with its past, justice is an important element. However, justice as retributive justice has a certain potential to preserve divisions. Justice that is perceived as being restorative, though, is likely to contribute to a reconciliation of society (Brandner 2003: 11/18).

For others, reconciliation implies forgetting the past, be it consciously or unconsciously; this is a very real issue for many. Especially when reconciliation is not explained and publicly debated – for people, who are not given the tools to reconcile, to consciously eclipse

¹⁵ Brandstetter (2005), Buckley-Zistel (2004a; 2004b) and Richters et al. (2005).

memories might be the only way to move on and to carry on living together in a community with former enemies. Buckley-Zistel (2006b) calls this phenomenon “chosen amnesia”. While this may simply be considered a way of moving on and thus finding a way of living together again, it certainly contradicts the healing dimension of reconciliation. Healing comes about through actively engaging with the past and healing is one of the cornerstones of successful, i.e. sustainable reconciliation. As Bloomfield (2003a: 15) puts it – “[t]he past must be addressed in order to reach the future. Reconciliation is the means to do that.”

Finally, time is not enough to heal the wound of the past. Huyse (2003: 31) demonstrates how in the cases of South Africa or Latin America there was a great need for investigation into the injustices of the past, once this examination had become possible. If individual and social traumas are not properly addressed and dealt with, violence is likely to return. Indeed, the very case of Rwanda confirms this point: The invading Rwandan Patriotic Front in the early 1990s was made up partly of the second generation of Tutsi refugees that had been driven out of the country in the wake of independence (Prunier 1995). Therefore it is “unwise to believe that the mere passage of time will ultimately produce reconciliation” (Huyse 2003: 31).

1.3. WHAT LEADS TO RECONCILIATION AND IS OF OTHER INFLUENCE?

We shall now turn to the factors that promote reconciliation. In the last paragraphs we defined reconciliation as both an ultimate goal and a process. Thus we shall subdivide the factors in (1) conditions that generate a positive environment for an eventual state of reconciliation and (2) elements that immediately contribute to the process.

CONDITIONS GENERATING A POSITIVE ENVIRONMENT FOR RECONCILIATION

Rigby (2001: 186-8) expounds on some essential aspects of a fertile “breeding ground” for reconciliation. First of all there needs to be peace in the sense of a minimum amount of physical security. This peaceful coexistence and the building of reliable institutions that can then deal efficiently with past injustices as well as with future conflicts figure among the most urgent tasks in a post-conflict situation (Theissen 2004: 234; Paris 2006). Any conflicts that need to be resolved can only be addressed in “a context where the peace is considered to be resilient enough to withstand efforts to uncover the pains of the past” (Rigby 2001: 186). To this end it is important that the rulers gain the trust of their people. “Good governance” that deserves the term due to its integrity can go a long way in guiding a soci-

ety towards a common and peaceful future, whereas political institutions with limited acceptance may enhance the chances for the recurrence of violence rather than diminishing them (Engel and Mehler 2000). In the aftermath of violent conflict, any tangible improvement of the situation may contribute to “strengthen confidence in the peace process and the legal system” (Theissen 2004: 433).

Equally important seems to be the willingness of the hostile groups to accept a shared future (Rigby 2001:186). Until this is the case, any reconciliation attempt must fail. A shared future in this sense goes beyond a mere coexistence in a certain locality. As we established earlier, reconciliation is about relationships and mutuality, hence the condition of willingness. A shared future implies encounters and communication between the people which can be considered one of the most basic yet essential conditions for any reconciliation.

Quite clearly, the quest for truth and justice plays a major role both for the victims of conflict and for a post-conflict society as a whole. As collective truth is always a matter of negotiation, there must be room for public debate. Both the people and the media should be able to voice their side of the argument. Education would certainly be favourable to this political participation. Callaghan (2003: 28-9) draws attention to the fact that the “[d]enial of access to basic education has been used to maintain political, economic and social imbalances and injustice, to separate and subjugate, to engender prejudice and to fuel the animosity and antagonism upon which violent conflict is based.” Therefore, as she goes on to argue, there should be an emphasis on an education that is aiming at rebuilding relationships and teaching issues of respect, equality and pluralism.

Especially in the African and Rwandan context, poverty is perhaps not the decisive but certainly a favourable factor to conflict. The scarcity of natural resources puts pressure on the population whose livelihood depends on agriculture, and therefore increases the likelihood for conflict to occur. Poverty reduction programmes and diversification in the economic sector – if made accessible to many – could ease the tensions and diminish the risk of violence. The resolution of the question of land property rights is equally of importance in this respect, which is very true also in the case of Rwanda as we shall see.

There is also a debate concerning the proper “timing” of reconciliation initiatives. When should reconciliation efforts be undertaken? Obviously reconciliation becomes an option when there have been disagreements or (violent) conflicts and people are looking for ways to continue life with each other. Huyse (2003: 44) writes about the numerous difficulties societies face in the immediate aftermath of a conflict. Reconciliation, so he explains, would therefore be considered as rather inappropriate, at least in a sense that goes beyond securing the fragile “negative peace”. On a general level there are certainly inhibitions and obstacles that prevent reconciliation being pushed for too quickly. However, as some examples from practitioners show, these problems need not impede the attempts for

healing and more positive relationship building. In Rwanda a number of individuals started their reconciliation initiatives straight after the genocide, partly against the advice and the will of the churches, which had traditionally occupied the space for reconciliation. Consequently, these initiatives were turned into larger scale programmes that have become influential players in the reconciliation work in the country (Gordon 2004).

Rigby (2001) highlights that for any kind of reconciliation processes that are to become of national relevance in the end, all strata of society need to be involved. He speaks of a “culture” of reconciliation and forgiveness, of justice and truth, that needs to accrue from the cultures of violence and impunity. This new culture would mean that the elements mentioned be internalised by the respective society, so that the basic conditions for the “[restoration of] the fabric of community” (Lederach 2001: 200) are met.

ELEMENTS THAT IMMEDIATELY CONTRIBUTE TO THE PROCESS

Having established that comprehensive reconciliation between formerly hostile groups and individuals requires a transformation of their relationships and attitudes, the question now is how this change is going to be realised. In this section I shall stick largely to a concept proposed by Pearlman and Staub (2002) that emphasises the healing aspect of reconciliation. This concept in turn comprises many elements which would positively affect the process of reconciliation.

For many, “healing” is seen as an integral part of the reconciliation process. Pearlman and Staub present it as “a cycle in which progress in one realm fosters progress in the other. Ultimately, processes of healing and reconciliation contribute to the prevention of future violence” (see also Hamber (2003) and Staub and Pearlman (2001)). Attention should be paid to the fact that it is not only the “obvious victims”, e.g. genocide survivors that are in need of healing, but that the perpetrators are concerned as well. As Staub and Pearlman explain, “[p]erpetrators must heal from the wounds they have inflicted on themselves, as they harmed others” (Staub and Pearlman 1998 and Staub 1999). We will now look at the concept of healing which is considered favourable to reconciliation.

Pearlman and Staub’s concept is subdivided into four categories; healing could thus be realised by the elements of *respect*, *information*, *connection* and *hope*. I will highlight each one individually, pointing out some facets that are subsumed under each heading.

Respect involves four components – acknowledgement, justice, atonement and forgiveness. Acknowledgement is about accepting what has happened and expressing emotions, including grief, rage or despair (Pearlman and Staub 2002). It thus involves cognitive as well as affective aspects (Gubin et al. 2005: 305). Healing is promoted by the atonement of the perpetrators. This may include confessions but also actions that prove their sincerity.

Brandner (2003: 25) highlights the “ongoing interaction of apology and forgiveness” that will ensue, when people are willing to confess. Healing is thus advanced as people embark on forgiving their tormentors. Forgiveness is about giving up one's right to revenge, is in fact contradictory to justice. Quite obviously, there are dangers as well, as forgiveness does increase one's vulnerability. And yet, “research with individuals has shown that in some situations, forgiving benefits those who were harmed. [...] It lifts the burden of anger and the desire of revenge. Conversely, people who do not forgive their transgressors have more psychological difficulties” (Staub and Pearlman 2001: 207). Pearlman and Staub (2002) emphasise that some healing needs to have taken place before forgiveness can become an issue. They conclude that “forgiving both arises from and contributes to healing.” It is considered crucial that forgiveness is accorded to “members of the perpetrator group who neither perpetrated nor planned violence. [...] Without that, accepting the other and seeing the possibility of a peaceful future in which the two groups live in harmony do not seem possible” (Gubin et al. 2005: 301-2). Finally, justice is supportive of healing as well. The assurance that justice has been done is a form of respect. This may happen through legal courts or for example reparations that would give tangible proof to victims that their suffering is recognised, even though reparations may sometimes merely be a matter of symbolic gestures (Theissen 2004: 229-30).

The second of Pearlman and Staub's categories, is *information*. Central to this is the understanding of the roots of conflict. The knowledge of what happened and why it happened will help people to come to terms with the past. Pearlman and Staub (2002) are aware of the fact that both perpetrator and victim may have an interest in denying what happened. However, they point out that healing becomes impossible if people deny the very existence of their injuries. In the case of severe violence in the past, it may also be helpful to understand the root causes of the events. “Coming to see and understand the influences that led to the perpetrators' actions [...] and to the bystanders' passivity, can also lead survivors of violence to be more open to reconciliation with the perpetrator group” (Gubin et al. 2005: 304).

One must bear in mind, though, that in social science specific root causes which can be regarded as having inevitably produced a conflict can rarely be singled out. One would rather refer to “processes” and “dynamics” which precede conflicts. However, since those developments are naturally difficult to understand and can be regarded from a variety of perspectives, it may not be suitable for immediate victims of conflict to try to make sense of those processes. Pearlman and Staub (2002) as well as Gubin et al. (2005) do certainly not speak of the correct understanding of the root causes that led to the events but rather of an understanding that appears to be plausible to the people who have suffered violence. As far as the resolution of conflicts is concerned, however, it is only in times of (renewed) tensions that this understanding of the conflict history can prove to be conducive for lasting peace.

The third category of the concept of healing is about *connection* – both with oneself and others. Pearlman and Staub (2002) stress the importance of allowing oneself to express emotions and of sharing them with others. I would like to include at this point, the role of dialogue projects, as described by Ropers (2004). In the “human-relations dialogue” connection is taken a step further as communication is not limited to a homogenous group (e.g. of victims) but takes place *between* the formerly hostile groups: “The objectives are mutual acknowledgement of the person and increased respect by each party for the other” (Ropers 2004: 257). Learning to be emphatic will certainly contribute to the “participants’ skills in interacting constructively with one another” (Ropers 2004: 260). Furthermore, Ropers mentions the potential for reconciliation that is to be found in dialogue projects, when they eventually turn into common activity initiatives (Ropers 2004: 261). Theissen alludes to this as well, describing grassroots initiatives that may help to build trust and mutual understanding in addressing the needs of all parties involved in a conflict. He highlights the importance of building “identities that cross former conflict lines” in order to mitigate the risk of reviving the cleavages of the past (Ropers 2004: 430).

Lastly, the restoration of *hope* is also regarded as crucial. This is closely related to finding a meaning in the suffering, and “[d]eveloping or rebuilding a spiritual life is essential to healing” (Pearlman and Staub 2002). Generally, this may mean finding a new vision for the future, a new commitment or a renewed relationship with God. Pearlman and Staub include in this the rejection of the desire to define oneself primarily as victim or perpetrator, without denying the past.

The question of how trauma (or post-traumatic stress disorder, put in medical terms) can be overcome is crucial to the reconciliation process in post-conflict societies: “If traumas are not recognized and tactfully approached, there is nothing to reconcile” (quote from a trauma therapist in Richters et al. 2005). However, the question is *how* trauma can be effectively tackled in cases where traumatisation is not restricted to individuals. “Collective trauma seems logically to require healing at the community level” (Gubin et al. 2005: 303). We will see in a later chapter how these approaches are put into practice in Rwanda.

2. RECONCILIATION IN RWANDA

2.1. THE CONTEXT FOR RECONCILIATION IN RWANDA

What becomes obvious from the experience of life in Rwanda is that the context for reconciliation is very complex. There are more or less clear political guidelines concerning reconciliation activities and the handling of ethnicity. On the ground, however, the reality is less straightforward. We will first consider etymologically what is understood by “*ubwiyunge*” (Kinyarwanda: reconciliation) and then look at the various aspects of public and private life that constitute the historical, political and social context for reconciliation in Rwanda.

THE RWANDAN TERM “UBWIYUNGE”¹⁶

The Kinyarwanda term for reconciliation is *ubwiyunge*, which has its origin in the verb *kunga*. *Kunga* means to join two pieces that have come apart or to medically treat e.g. a fractured bone. According to Ngendahayo (2008), the term *kunga* was then (already before the genocide) increasingly used in order to refer to the restoration of relationships between families or individuals – “it came to be integrated in Rwandan socio-systems of every day life as a way a process/action to repair the broken relationship between two families [...] or individuals” (Ngendahayo 2007a). In the case of a quarrel over a plot of land one could say, for instance, *arabunga* – he is reconciling them. In this case *kunga* has a notion of passivity with at least some of the reconciliation effort coming from the outside.

After the war and genocide the Rwandan government as well as the churches initiated a resurgence of “*ubwiyunge*” in the public sphere. It entered official discourse with the goal to reunite the people, to repair and bring back the broken relationships between Hutu and Tutsi. Thus *ubwiyunge* is nowadays associated with a sociable life, friendship, connectedness, good neighbourliness, common understanding, mutual respect, etc... .

The literal meaning of the noun *ubwiyunge* – “bringing together” – could be an indication towards the Rwandan understanding of reconciliation work as an activity or a concept, which in this way would point strongly to either some degree of togetherness in everyday life or indeed to places or times when people meet deliberately. The emphasis in reconciliation, at any rate, would be on doing things or being together, without necessarily implicating the many aspects of the scholarly understanding of reconciliation.

¹⁶ Explanations on the term „*ubwiyunge*“ given by Emmanuel Ngendahayo (2007a; 2008) and a Rwandan woman living in Germany (SSI/34).

HISTORICAL, POLITICAL AND SOCIAL CONTEXT FOR RECONCILIATION IN RWANDA

Modern Rwandan history has been clearly shaped by debates on ethnicity (see Chrétien 1999; Eltringham 2004; Prunier 1995). However, it is not the unchanging nature of the ethnic groups that influences politics but, as Newbury and Newbury (1995: 8-9) point out, “the political relevance of ethnic identities is shaped by political context. It is politics that makes ethnicity important (or, indeed, unimportant), not ethnicity which invariably defines politics.”¹⁷ The post-genocide Rwandan government also acknowledged this fact. Today its interpretation of history is that Hutu, Tutsi and Twa did indeed exist in pre-colonial times but as a kind of social class rather than exclusive ethnic categories (NURC 2000)¹⁸. According to the government it is only “[d]uring colonial times [that] they became ethnic identities, polarised and politicised over time. Bad governance and divisive politics led to genocide, therefore today the answer must be good governance and inclusive politics” (Buckley-Zistel 2006a: 103).¹⁹ In advocating “Rwandanness” and banning all ethnic references from the public debate, the government tries to create unity and form a new collective identity (Buckley-Zistel 2006a: 102). The need for new “cross-cutting” identities – across formerly antagonistic factions – after internal conflicts is widely acknowledged (cf. Paris 2006: 195). But the top-down approach of the Rwandan government negates the daily reality of its people. Their (recent) history and therefore today’s situation has been shaped by the very conflict between ethnic groups and ethnic consciousness might even have been enhanced through the genocide (Buckley-Zistel 2006a: 112). Ethnic identities are silently kept alive and people continue to talk about “the other” in secret (IC/7). The government of “unity and reconciliation” seems to radically promote the former while neglecting the latter. “Rwanda does not have a national, public space where [the many lingering tensions between the different groups] can be addressed” (Buckley-Zistel 2006a: 112). Therefore – I shall argue – the government must rely on civil society actors that are able and willing to take up the role of mediators between the former parties of the conflict.²⁰ This, however, is complicated, since the Rwandan government is quick to denounce everybody as “divisionist” who employs ethnic references in public. Brandstetter (2005: 141 et seq.) on the

¹⁷ Quoted in Buckley-Zistel 2006a: 104.

¹⁸ Quoted in Buckley-Zistel 2006a: 110.

¹⁹ In an interview at their headquarters it became clear that IBUKA also support this reading of Rwandan history (SSI/29).

²⁰ In Rwanda one’s ethnic belonging is defined by the father. However, in the course of my research I came across a number of people who challenged this feature of the patrilineal culture recognising the fact of its construction by society. In the aftermath of the genocide however, many people feel victimised simply *because* they are/were seen as Hutu or *because* they are/were seen as Tutsi by “the other”. One can therefore speak of visible or knowable boundaries, taking into account the self-ascribed identities of the people.

one hand finds the government motivation – to destroy any ideology that led to genocide – understandable. But she does point out its inherent danger of thus having an instrument capable of very easily silencing critics or opposition of any kind.

Another way of creating unity is to shift the blame for the ethnic conflict and genocide onto others: “External parties – the pre-genocide government and elites – are blamed for causing divisions and unleashing violence. This strategy of scapegoating works to render ordinary Rwandans collectively innocent” (Buckley-Zistel 2006b: 140). But it’s not only former politicians who are blamed for being at the origin of ethnic division in the country (Penal Reform International 2004), but also particularly the colonisers. This interpretation of the past, in addition to the emphasis on “Rwandanness”, does harbour some dangers. These politics might prove to be counterproductive: The constructed collective identity may be too weak to hold out inevitable times of trouble and tensions if people are not prepared to deal constructively with effectively existent differences (Buckley-Zistel 2006a: 113).

National commemorations of the genocide as well as the establishment of many memorial sites have become an important feature of life in Rwanda (see Brandstetter 2005) but their reception is rather ambiguous. While people agree that memory is necessary for the prevention of future violence (Richters et al. 2005: 210), people not only continue to experience severe re-traumatisation (Richters et al. 2005: 210) but the fact that to date only recognised victims of genocide are remembered causes controversies. “[W]hile some prefer exclusively to recall the genocide of the Tutsi, others insist that all suffering needs recognition” (Buckley-Zistel 2006b: 138). Co-organising the commemorations and making for considerable political agents are the survivor organisations IBUKA and AVEGA among others.²¹ They offer substantial support to survivors, be it in terms of material or of medical aid, and they also train people in defending their rights publicly, e.g. in the genocide tribunals *gacaca*. However, the slogan “No peace without justice”²² indicates that reconciliation does not feature high on their priority list. A view supported in a number of my conversations (see e.g. IC/11; IC/18; IC/19) is that with their rigorous – though comprehensible – pursuit of justice IBUKA/AVEGA sometimes become obstacles for reconciliation. And yet, the survivor organisations could actually be key players in the process of reconciliation. As one of my interviewees puts it: “Reconciliation doesn’t need to start with the victims. However, they have a key role in the process [...]. The perpetrators are indebted to the victims. Those can now decide whether they drop this debt or keep it. That’s why organisations like AVEGA or IBUKA are accorded a key role in the process of reconciliation” (SSI/28).

²¹ IBUKA means „remember“ in Kinyarwanda and is the umbrella organisation of the genocide survivors. AVEGA is the association of genocide widows.

²² Taken from leaflet with general information on AVEGA.

How are ethnic cleavages dealt with at the local, public level? Buckley-Zistel argues that simply they are not.²³ With her introduction of the term *chosen amnesia* she describes the way people remember not only the immediate origins of genocide but also the many conflicts of the past, describing it as “less a mental failure than a conscious strategy to cope with living in proximity to ‘killers’ or ‘traitors’” (2006b: 132). Memory is always about interpreting the past. The way it is done in a society affects its cohesion and relationships. Buckley-Zistel contrasts chosen amnesia with chosen trauma. Whereas the latter produces a collective (victim) identity that is clearly opposed to those of the ones who caused the trauma, chosen amnesia has the exact opposite effect. People refrain from recalling collective experiences, thus “preventing the interpretation of a shared, group-specific past and the production of a ‘we-feeling’”. Chosen amnesia does not introduce a sense of closure, nor is it productive of a bounded identity, but rather it allows for more flexible inclusion and exclusion into collective identities” (Buckley-Zistel 2004: 7). The result of this way of (not) remembering the past is “pretending peace” (Buckley-Zistel 2004: 12): The fact that most Rwandans are found in peaceful coexistence today does not mean that past antagonisms are no longer important. The calm can, rather, be explained by this “deliberate, social coping mechanism [that helps] to deal with the disruptive experiences of the past” (Buckley-Zistel 2004: 12) and is called *chosen amnesia*. In rural Rwanda, people depend on each other in everyday life – be it in the caring for the sick or the cultivation of fields. To express grievances of long ago would upset the social balance. Therefore, people “are concerned instead with continuing daily life in the community” (Buckley-Zistel 2004: 12). What is interesting though is that Joseph Nyamutera, responsible for AEE’s reconciliation department at that time (see chapter 3.2. for AEE’s reconciliation programme), uses the same rationale to advocate reconciliation and ultimately for the expression of past grievances: Precisely because people so depend on each other they would need reconciliation (SSI/26).

This daily life is, for many, still marked by severe economic difficulties. Despite the fact that large investments are being made in infrastructure, a new international airport or the development of a regional data centre for information technology (Schmundt 2006), the reality for people on the hills is often different. Families of both survivors and perpetrators feel neglected by the government; compensation and educational support are marginal. A high rate of HIV-infection among survivors contributes to the mental suffering ensuing from rape and abuse during the past years (Buckley-Zistel 2004: 9), which is partly still going on today (IC/13). Although ethnicity is hardly mentioned in public, in personal conversations people do mention unfair treatment on ethnic grounds in (local) politics and

²³ The „*gacaca* tribunals“ may be considered as a forum where those antagonisms can be addressed. However, instead of constructively solving the lingering tensions between people, in many cases the trials only help to exacerbate them (see also Brandstetter 2005: 142; Buckley-Zistel 2004: 10; Human Rights Watch 2007; Richters et al. 2005: 212).

education (IC/13; IC/15). Freedom of speech is very limited due to the above mentioned reasons. And in some cases entire communities are still subject to enormous cleavages along ethnic lines (IC/11).

As we can see, the surrounding conditions for a process of reconciliation are less than favourable. However, it is not just the difficult situation of the individual that poses problems. Of equally great importance to the national process of reconciliation are the regional differences in the country that mark people's attitudes towards each other, the government or towards other groups. Whereas in some areas almost the entire Tutsi population was extinguished and returning refugees or survivors did not dare resettle in these places (SSI/17), in other places Hutu and Tutsi suffered alike.

Arguably the most important issue, however, is about the actions taken by the RPF against Hutu refugees in former Zaire²⁴ and the population of the former district of Byumba in the north of the country, which was occupied and controlled by the RPF during the years preceding the genocide. While it remains rather unclear what exactly happened during the years of occupation and the period of the genocide,²⁵ some of my interview partners spoke of abuses suffered by the (primarily Hutu) population of Byumba at the hands of members of the RPF which could indeed pose a serious problem to reconciliation on a national level. The government finds itself in an impasse since any acknowledgement of organised action against parts of the Byumba population would be grist for the mill of the supporters of a "double-genocide"-thesis.²⁶ The problem is not being ignored, though. AEE, who are putting on "Healing and Reconciliation Seminars" all around the country, are repeatedly invited to hold these seminars for *gacaca* judges in areas where the tribunals face great antagonisms and rejection, as in Byumba, also. What is evident therefore is that the problem does receive attention. For the reason of its political sensitivity, though, the issue might be hard to address in the practice of reconciliation. And yet, it appears to be a crucial one.

²⁴ According to the former UN High Commissioner for Refugees, Sadako Ogata, many of the *génocidaires* fled to Zaire and were tracked down by the RPF. Since the killers often hid in refugee camps thousands of people died in the attacks on the camps by the RPF (Ogata 2005).

²⁵ Data provided by African Rights and Human Rights Watch still offers only poor documentation on the number, the nature and the impact of war crimes committed by members of the RPF in the district of Byumba. In addition to the well-known displacement of hundreds of thousands of people, my interviewees reported rapes and killings that were committed on a large scale (IC/5, IC/13, SSI/25). However, one must bear in mind that this discussion is a highly contested area and part of the political debates. For this reason it may be difficult to ascertain the scale of crimes committed, also taking into account that there are hardly any independent sources available, either.

²⁶ Molenaar (2005: 90) highlights the fact that a number of people support the thesis of a "double-genocide", meaning a genocide against the Hutu population that purportedly took place after the genocide against the Tutsi. However, as Molenaar points out, such claims are dismissed by serious sources.

Lastly I want to look at the nature of the cleavages in today's Rwanda. Negated or deconstructed in public discourse by the government, "the Rwandan problem" is often portrayed as a single conflict between *the* Hutu and *the* Tutsi. The reality, though, features a number of cleavages, often intermingled and hard to grasp. The relationship between survivors and perpetrators of the genocide constitutes only one of its many dimensions. The struggle for power in (pre-)colonial times was not just on an ethnic basis but also had a regional dimension to it, with the (predominantly Hutu) chiefdoms of the north opposing the subjugation by the Tutsi kings of the South (Chrétien 1999). These regional power struggles continued during the post-colonial decades. With the coming to power of the RPF and the return of the "old-case-load"-refugees (people that had fled the country before the genocide) new conflicts emerged. Nowadays the government and other strategic posts are occupied by the formerly RPF-elite which is anglophone as opposed to the long-established francophone Rwandese (Brandstetter 2004: 141). The question of language alone provides for serious debates in the country (Gahindiro 2007). Relationships between returnees and survivors are sometimes characterised by mistrust with the former being suspicious of the survival of the latter whom they had believed dead or collaborating (Brandstetter 2004: 147). Their respective situations vary greatly as well – survivors trying to come to terms with what has happened and returnees perhaps empathising with them yet occupied with different matters, such as rebuilding a prosperous life (Buckley-Zistel 2006b: 146). But even among the various groups of returnees there are tensions – for them having lived in Burundi, Zaire, Tanzania or Uganda provided for very different experiences, receptions by the nationals, integration or not in the local societies, and hopes, fears and motivations for returning to Rwanda (IC/7; IC/8). Many groups in Rwanda have their particular interests and needs, from which one of my interview partners has drawn the conclusion that reconciliation in Rwanda really concerned the reconciliation of *all* of these different people (IC/6).

The following, final point bears close resemblance to the goal the Rwandan government pleads for – the unity of the country. While unity as such is not negative, the question is by what means unity is or could be achieved. In the following subsections we will gain a rough overview of what is currently being done in Rwanda to achieve unity and reconciliation before turning to two more in-depth case studies.

2.2. OVERVIEW OVER STATE-RUN PROGRAMMES

The following paragraphs give a very rough presentation of programmes organised by the Rwandan state. It is my objective to mention what is being done without offering an in-depth analysis and detailed critical assessments of the undertakings. I will thus resort to the emic perception of the organisers as well as to information given by some non-Rwandan sources, highlighting but a few critical issues.

THE NATIONAL UNITY AND RECONCILIATION COMMISSION

For a number of years now reconciliation activities have been organised and coordinated by the *National Unity and Reconciliation Commission*. This commission sees itself as a platform for discussion and debates on national issues and has a strong emphasis on education and peace building by means of seminars, discussions, workshops and trainings (NURC website).

THE INGANDO²⁷

One of the tools of the NURC are the *ingando* – Kinyarwanda for workshops or “solidarity camps” – which often go on for several weeks or months. *Ingando* are organised for people from different parts of the society, such as ex-combatants, traders, survivors, prisoners, and so forth. Before entering university, students also have to attend educative classes in *ingando* (IC/3; IC/16). Topics covered include an “analysis of Rwanda’s problems; history of Rwanda; political and socioeconomic issues in Rwanda and Africa, rights, obligations and duties and leadership”. *Ingando* play an important role in that they teach people about Rwandan history and its conflicts and are furthermore beneficial to the process of reconciliation. They reach out to all people irrespective of their affiliation or history and try to address the causes of conflicts. Penal Reform International however, having done in-depth case studies on *ingando* for released prisoners, criticise the content of those lessons. Being in line with the government stance on Rwandan history, they are said to present simplistic versions of it. Neglecting its complex reality – and indeed of every part of human history – it is concluded that “[t]he colonizers instituted ethnic groups and categorised Rwandans accordingly [...]” and that “a simple analysis of Rwandan history shows that the colonizers were at the origin of ethnic dissension” (Penal Reform International 2004: 28, italics removed). Equally problematic for a constructive contribution to open debate that takes the historic realities of the society into account is the presentation of facts that led to the genocide. Much blame is laid on pre-genocidal governments and indeed the Hutu (Penal Reform International 2004: 35 et. sqq.), thus avoiding the addressing of individual responsibilities. This in turn may be detrimental to the process of reconciliation as the confession of guilt, as we established in chapter 1.4., is central to both the rule of justice and the rule of reconciliation between individuals and groups.

²⁷ This paragraph is mainly based on the information supplied on the NURC website. Any additional information will be indicated.

THE GACACA TRIBUNALS

The *gacaca* courts were seen as the Rwandan answer to the legacy of the genocide (Borland 2002). Community-based courts, which had their origins in the Rwandan tradition were supposed to strike a balance between restorative and retributive justice (Brandner 2003: 76). They were thought to bring about reconciliation (Molenaar 2005: 67). The fact that the (lay) judges are part of the community and the accused are given incentives for their confessions (upon which the victims should grant them forgiveness), show indeed the potential for the constructive resolution of conflicts. However, since their introduction, many problems have arisen: *gacaca* are considered to be one-sided, judging only genocide related crimes which by definition excludes crimes committed by RPF-soldiers. Often neither victims nor perpetrators are satisfied with the verdicts, and the courts are very much prone to manipulation (see Penal Reform International 2004: 55). There are also many instances whereby witnesses were intimidated or even killed (Human Rights Watch 2007). It remains to be seen in what way the *gacaca* will effectively contribute to the process of reconciliation. The risks are that existing cleavages will be deepened further.

THE TIG – COMMUNITY SERVICE

A programme directed at compensating victims is the *Travaux d'Intérêt Général (TIG)*. Instead of having to spend the entire sentence in prison, the convicted can choose to do community service half of the time. They construct roads, build houses for survivors or terraces on the hills (Semanyenzi 2007). Not only do the potential 55,000 workers (IRIN 2006) make for a substantial labour force but the *TIG* are intended to restore some of what was destroyed during the genocide and have therefore the potential to positively influence the process of reconciliation. During the camps people also receive lectures on topics similar to what is taught in the other *ingando*. As for the workers, these labour camps are more than an interesting or useful activity – during the months or years they spend doing *TIG* they acquire useful knowledge to later work in a new profession (SSI/12). In this way the *TIG* also offer hope and a perspective to the convicted and have thus, combined with their restorative aspects, much potential for furthering reconciliation in the country.

THE IMIDUGUDU – A VILLAGISATION PROJECT

Yet another element of the government's quest for reconciliation are the *imidugudu*²⁸. This contested project was conceived soon after the genocide and seeks to resettle people in artificial villages (Buckley-Zistel 2006a: 111), who up to this time had been living in houses scattered across the hills.

Those primarily concerned were the returning refugees who had fled the country prior to and during the 1994 genocide as well as old-case-load refugees, also returning in great numbers after the war. Since they, upon their return, often found their former land occupied by other people (often by Tutsi refugees who had returned already soon after the end of the genocide) the government chose to implement a programme that had been on the minds of RPF leaders for a number of years (Human Rights Watch 2001:1) and had been discussed in the Rwandan government as early as in the 1970s and 1980s (Hilhorst and van Leeuwen 1999²⁹). As a means of taking pressure from the agricultural sector (Hoyweghen 1999) and of further developing the rural areas (through increased agricultural efficiency, the creation of non-agricultural jobs, a centralised and therefore better supply with water and energy as well as better access to schools and dispensaries (Graafen 2000)), it was now also promoted as being the solution to the housing crisis due to the massive influx of refugees as of 1996 (Human Rights Watch 2001:1). Another argument used was the allegedly increased security in villages as compared to scattered settlements. Especially the elderly, widows and people living in areas then prone to attacks of intruding *interahamwe* were motivated to move to *imidugudu* following this reasoning (Human Rights Watch 2001: 24f.).

In addition to the resettlement of returnees in newly created village sites, pressure was put on parts of the still residing village population to also move to the *imidugudu*, which was sometimes met by reluctance, dissatisfaction and even opposition (Human Rights Watch 2001).

Although it was certainly not at the forefront of the government's motivations, one of the aims in regrouping people in villages, according to an official of a sector administration unit (SSI/3), is the promotion of reconciliation. As people from different groups are made to live in close proximity, it is expected that they find ways to constructively deal with conflicts and live in peace. To my knowledge, though, there is no study yet that examines the actual impact of the *imidugudu* on reconciliation.

²⁸ Kinyarwanda for "villages".

²⁹ Quoted in Graafen (2004: 122).

TRAUMA COUNSELLING

Finally, the government has also recognised the need to address the trauma that is widely prevalent in Rwandan society. According to Gérard, a local doctor from the Huye district, there are training programmes lasting several weeks for medical staff. However, staff shortages coupled with time constraints mean that psychological problems are not adequately taken care of (SSI/21). Only counselling is offered, which for many people who are not familiar with the trauma concept is like a consultation: “Many people believe that trauma is like malaria. People come to me for treatment a few times, and that is it” (trauma counsellor, quoted in Richters et al. (2005: 214)). Findings by a European socio-therapist suggest that trauma-counselling practices that were developed in Europe or America are culturally inappropriate. She goes on to suggest that group-based approaches would be more suitable, except that a society in which most of the people are at least occasionally affected by trauma could not have the resources to treat trauma by individual counselling (SSI/13).

2.3. OVERVIEW OVER NON-GOVERNMENTAL INITIATIVES

In order to describe what is happening on the part of non-governmental initiatives I would like to highlight four categories of help: Humanitarian NGOs, trauma counselling programmes, survivor organisations and local initiatives. IBUKA/AVEGA could also figure in this list as they too are actors in the reconciliation process, but we have already briefly considered them in an earlier section.

HUMANITARIAN NGOS

The NURC, in an attempt to keep track of all the reconciliation initiatives going on around the country, keeps a list of several hundred, often local NGOs and churches who are involved in reconciliation (SSI/33). In order to give an idea of the wide range of projects I want to look at four different approaches.

Care International, in the former province of Gitarama, between 2003 and 2006 ran a project called “*Nkundabana*” (Kinyarwanda: I love children). The purpose of the project was to find new “parents” for child headed households (CHH) of which there are more than 100.000 in Rwanda. The CHH in Gitarama province were divided up into groups of five CHH who then chose one new parent each; the parents received legal and practical training and were ordered to visit the children on a regular basis. Moreover, entire communities got involved. More than 1,000 houses were constructed for the 2,600 CHH with the material

and labour coming from the people themselves. According to an employee of Care International, the support of the children helped to foster unity in the communities as communication was promoted and people developed a common purpose, a spirit of collaboration (SSI/5).

Solace Ministries are an NGO supporting traumatised genocide survivors, particularly widows and orphans. Started upon the initiative of a number of Rwandans soon after the genocide, the organisation chose to support the needy in “comforting” them. Through trauma healing through Christian counselling, support for education, housing, HIV/AIDS-treatment, income-generating projects and so forth people regain their dignity and develop a new vision for the future. Having started the initiative without external funding, the NGO has today grown to serve thousands of people, to contribute significantly to the healing of their wounds and traumata and in this way to support the process of reconciliation (brochure of *Solace Ministries*, SSI/30).

The *Commission Episcopale “Justice et Paix”* is part of a worldwide programme set up and run by the Catholic Church. In Rwanda its focus is on peace building and reconciliation at different levels of the society. On the local level weekly meetings include bible teaching, prayers, discussion and training on topics as diverse as human rights, healing or justice and peace. People participate in various ministries like caring for the widows or evangelisation. *Justice et Paix* is a programme which reaches out to all the communities of the country and people are made to deal continually with issues relating to peace and reconciliation (brochure of CEJP; SSI/4; SSI/9).

World Vision Rwanda follows a more scientific approach in the quest for reconciliation. In “Personal Development Workshops” (PDW), a therapy programme developed by the Rwandan psychologist Simon Gasibirege, participants learn how to deal with trauma, their emotions and to address the issue of reconciliation. In three workshops lasting several days each, spread over a period of several months, people receive teaching by trained facilitators. The PDW are said to contribute significantly to the inner and spiritual healing of the people which in turn also has positive effects on their attitude towards reconciliation and for instance towards *gacaca* (SSI/1; GrD/1).

TRAUMA COUNSELLING

Richters et al. (2005: 214) remarked that most of the trauma-counselling organisations operating in Rwanda are based in Kigali with only few individuals working in other parts of the country. The facilitators of such programmes were often trained abroad or by international NGOs working in Rwanda. Notwithstanding the problems of the western-style trauma counselling in Rwanda already addressed above, there is a considerable number of initiatives often run by Rwandans, who work through various approaches themselves.

Richters et al. (2005: 215) also mention traditional ways of finding healing and consolation, i.e. for instance the building of “a small house on the spot where their dead loved are re-buried”. They then raise the question in what way – if at all – traditional forms of healing should be incorporated in counselling or therapy programmes. After further research they went on to develop a sociotherapy programme adapted to the local culture. We will study this more in depth in the next chapter.

SURVIVOR ORGANISATIONS

We have already looked briefly at IBUKA and AVEGA. Other actors who influence the reconciliation process include international organisations like SURF or the Aegis trust. SURF (*Survivors Fund*) is a UK-based organisation that offers support to Rwandan genocide survivors in terms of material aid and advocacy. They also support education on genocide-related issues as well as supporting the commemorations taking place in Rwanda.

The Aegis trust also supports education and commemorations, having for instance been entrusted with the establishment of the Kigali Memorial Centre at Gisozi and the Murambi Genocide Prevention Centre.

Both organisations are close to IBUKA, obviously defending the cause of the survivors of the genocide. It remains to be seen, however, in what way they will be influential or supportive to the process of reconciliation. Their motivation to support survivors is understandable and justified. What is critical, though, is the one-sided approach, which risks hindering other reconciliation efforts undertaken. The sole pursuit of justice may lead to a dead end as far as reconciliation is concerned. Where the interests of only one party are put forward – however well they may be justified – reconciliation will not become a reality.³⁰

LOCAL INITIATIVES

A European missionary working for a Rwandan church, spoke in an interview exemplarily of a nearby parish where reconciliation had become a reality. Just eighteen months before all had seemed rather hopeless, with the church being almost empty and with no hope for reconciliation and an improvement of the situation between the people. But now the con-

³⁰ In an email from the director of SURF, dating from 28th February 2006, it became clear that reconciliation is often considered as a concept of people who haven't experienced genocide themselves and would exclude any kind of justice.

gregation had established a scheme of self-help groups with regular financial contributions from its members. The widows ministry involved more than 40 such groups, making it possible for everybody to buy health insurance. The entire community takes part in mutual help schemes, people open up, start to marry again and the Sunday services are always packed. She explained that this would prove that things can indeed change and that local initiatives have the potential to bear much fruit (IC/13).

3. CASE STUDIES

3.1. SOCIOTHERAPY³¹

The sociotherapy programme was launched in Rwanda in 2005 in an effort to deal with the widespread trauma and ruptured social ties. Introduced in the UK in the aftermath of the First World War and further developed in the Netherlands in the 1970s, sociotherapy is now being applied in various countries. Its singularity lies in its participatory approach, as it is *not* a therapy with (medical) therapists but a primary health care approach, using lay people as *facilitators* in the “therapy” groups.

A pilot project was started in September 2005 upon the initiative of the Anglican Church of Byumba. Unable to cope with the many cases of trauma in the diocese, which were further aggravated through the *gacaca* courts, the church had asked for help from Cora Dekker, who had been practising sociotherapy with refugees in the Netherlands. Since then, several cycles of 15 weeks have been run. Owing to the positive results, the programme is currently being reviewed and has in 2008 expanded to Nyamata/South of Kigali and to Nyangezi/DRC.

Sociotherapy does not explicitly aim for reconciliation. According to Cora Dekker and Emmanuel Ngendahayo, the project coordinators, sociotherapy tries to bring people together, to restore their feelings of dignity and integrity, to reduce social and psychosocial stress and to give psychosocial assistance to the participants of the *gacaca* hearings. The Anglican Church recognises the many weaknesses of *gacaca* but holds the position that *gacaca* should be supported. Therefore *gacaca* should be accompanied by another approach – where people’s participation is voluntary and where they experience dignity, safety and trust.

³¹ This section is based on a number of meetings and interviews with sociotherapy staff, participant observations and group-discussions with sociotherapy participants, as well as the report of a national workshop on sociotherapy (M/2; M/5; M/6; SSI/2; SSI/13; SSI/14; GrD/2; IC/1; IC/4; POB/1; POB/2; POB/3).

As we have noted earlier on, healing and reconciliation are often closely linked. The objectives of sociotherapy are likely to contribute to the healing of the individual as well as to the healing of relationships. As one of the sociotherapists put it, the goal of sociotherapy is “social healing”. He referred to the restoration and healing of social ties, not specifically targeting genocide related problems but *including* them among others. It is therefore not surprising, that even though there may be a different or at least a broader paramount goal, sociotherapy has the potential to contribute to reconciliation. This is the reason why I regarded sociotherapy as worthy of inclusion as a case study in this paper.

THE COURSE OF EVENTS

At the beginning 32 persons were chosen to act as facilitators in the group therapy. Among them were different categories of people; pastors, teachers, state officials or social service workers. No specific religious affiliation was required, only graduation from secondary school. Those 32 received training from Cora Dekker from September until November 2005. After that, the 32 facilitators went on to choose and train 72 others, the criterion being at least three years of secondary school education. In total there were now 104 facilitators who worked with the groups.

In accordance with the local authorities, the first cycle of sociotherapy started in January 2006 with 45 groups and was finished by May. Group participants were chosen by the facilitators and included all kinds of marginalized people, like widows, orphans, traumatised students, ex-prisoners,... . In one group there could not be *génocidaires* and survivors with direct links though. Sociotherapy groups comprise around ten members and two facilitators each, meeting once a week over a period of fifteen weeks. In this way, there were more than 450 beneficiaries per cycle.

After the end of the first cycle of sociotherapy no further group meetings were planned. However, most of the groups decided to continue and to keep on meeting, mostly on a monthly basis. Some facilitators even decided to further accompany them voluntarily. In several cases, these groups have turned into saving- and sometimes into income-generating associations.

After the first cycle, two more followed until the end of 2006, leading up to a national conference co-hosted by MINISANTE, the Ministry of Health, in January 2007.

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE PROGRAMME

As opposed to trauma counselling, sociotherapy functions through group work and interaction. The sociotherapists have the role of facilitators whose task it is to involve the participants. Right from the outset – i.e. from the training of the facilitators – the principles of participation and ownership were emphasised. In the course of the training, the facilitators themselves played a significant role in developing an approach of sociotherapy in the Rwandan context. Equality, democratic decision-making and responsibility were tested and applied in a number of group activities. Learning by doing was one of the slogans that allowed the facilitators to acquire the capacity to pass on this practical experience to the participants in the sociotherapy groups.

As sociotherapy targets people who are discouraged and have suffered material and personal as well as spiritual and moral losses, two of their main shortcomings are an atmosphere of trust and safety. Sociotherapy tries to address this deficiency first of all in bringing people together who share a similar kind of suffering. It thus creates a space of encounter for those people. Aided by the facilitators they then learn to discuss their problems in an atmosphere of safety and trust. This kind of open communication, sometimes involving one's intimate problems, is relatively uncommon in Rwanda. However, as sociotherapy shows, people value both sharing their difficulties as well as the opportunity to socialise. They then go on to help and assist each other – often in the form of advice and sometimes even in taking practical steps. The important role of each participant in sociotherapy is underlined by the fact that sometimes the facilitators are not from the same communes and are therefore not as familiar with the particular problems as the participants.

The weekly sessions are held in various places – in buildings belonging to the local administration or churches or simply under a tree on the lawn. Typically the meetings begin with a prayer after which the participants are given the opportunity to exchange their news from the past week. There then follows a discussion on the topic of the day, related to the current phase. A sociotherapy cycle of fifteen weeks follows a pattern of six “phases”. In addition to *safety* and *trust*, which constitute the first two, there are *care*, *respect*, *new rules* and *memory of emotions*. These phases, their teaching contents as well as their sequential order were established together with the facilitators-to-be during the training sessions. Often people are given “homework” during sociotherapy, which could be the meditation on one of these terms or concepts. The discussion is often combined with an elaboration on the topic by the facilitators and with them sharing their own experiences with the participants. This section then gives way to a general discussion of the current problems of the participants. People share and give advice to each other, being assisted or guided by the facilitators. Usually this takes up a large part of the time. Finally, the facilitators conclude the session and each participant gets the opportunity to share what he or she learned.

Prayers and sometimes a song follow and the whole session usually lasts roughly two hours in total.

In talking about problems, sociotherapy tends to focus on the here-and-now situation rather than on the terrible memories of the past, as is the case in trauma counselling (Richters et al. 2005: 215). The past, however, will not be ignored, if people bring it up voluntarily. The goal is to increase “safety and trust within a group, which should contribute to social cohesion and finding meaning in life again. The therapy makes use of daily events in participants’ lives in order to achieve awareness raising, enhancement and re-socialisation with respect to social and personal functioning” (Richters et al. 2005: 215). By the means of the six phases mentioned, people are given a framework that should help them to deal with their everyday situations and to re-integrate in society and social life. In response to the specific problems that arise – and in an interactive process – one tries to find specific solutions. Hence, sociotherapy is a rather neutral approach and even in the topics discussed during the six phases it does not presuppose situations, relationships or even conflicts that are likely to be problematic (we will return to this point when studying the case of AEE’s seminars). This is interesting for two reasons: First, ethnicity is popularly believed to be at the root of the Rwandan conflict and could therefore be assumed to be relevant to the problems of the individual as well. In sociotherapy ethnic conflict as a topic was not deemed necessary to be included in the programme (M/5). The second reason is that the persons responsible for the programme are nevertheless extremely careful in their official discourse when it comes to the issue of ethnicity (see e.g. M/5; SSI/16). There seems to be a discrepancy between the importance given to the issue within the programme and the attention paid in official discourse. However, as I was told in a discussion on the topic, ethnicity was not excluded per se nor was it problematic to talk about the issue if problems were brought up that were related to ethnicity (M/6). And we must also bear in mind the particular situation of the Byumba region, where my research was done. Perhaps for the people there the ethnic issue is not as much at the forefront of problems experienced in everyday life as it may be for people in other areas. It would be worth, though, looking into the cogency of ethnic awareness and ethnic tension in the various parts of the country, bearing in mind, that there could be political constraints for such kind of research.

According to Emmanuel Ngendahayo, sociotherapy is not seen as a spiritual approach to trauma and suffering. Although initiated by and now working under the auspices of the Anglican Church, sociotherapy does not require participants to be church members, since it seeks to serve society as a whole. Only some of the participants are affiliated with the Anglican Church while some are Muslims. As we have noted, even the facilitators come from various denominations, although all happen to be Christians. Attention was only paid to their education and to the diversity of their social backgrounds in order to have a wide range of milieus and professions represented among them (SSI/14).

During the sessions, which are themselves often begun and ended with prayers, the facilitators sometimes draw on biblical examples. In a society like the Rwandan, where the large majority belongs to a Christian church, this is well received and people welcome this kind of illustration, as it is familiar to them, even though not every single person is a Christian.

ACHIEVEMENTS

Since sociotherapy was introduced just a short while ago, only little has been published as to the exact impact on the psychological well-being of the people and the social functioning of the communities concerned. Therefore I will try to portray the achievements that were presented to me and compare them with my own findings.

When first introduced to the programme, I encountered astonishment and enthusiasm on the part of the coordinators at its resounding success. It seemed the success was somewhat unexpected. I would like to take one of the “success stories” that was presented to me as an example for the “miracles” that are said to be happening in the course of sociotherapy.

A short while after the genocide a man in M. sold his property and squandered the money. Having been lent a small plot of land by his nephew, he later refused to vacate it. Quarrels were followed by serious arguments between their families and an enmity ensued. Finally the nephew resorted to violence and tried to kill his uncle with a machete, but he escaped. They then continued to live in close proximity but hostility prevailed for years, their respective wives even tried to poison the other's husband. The nephew then took part in sociotherapy and started to change his attitude. He understood that for him it was necessary to forgive and to take the first step towards his uncle. Little by little they approached each other, asking for water (which in Rwanda is a typical sign for a trustful relationship) and finally reconciling over some beer. Reportedly the town population would not believe what happened but apparently peace prevailed due to the change in the nephew that had its origin in sociotherapy (IC/4).

In a number of cases sociotherapy staff spoke of the impact of the programme on the life on the hills. Non-participants seem to notice the change brought about in the lives of the participants and now try to take part in sociotherapy as well, knowing that there are no financial incentives.

Early research confirms that the programme is understood and appreciated in Byumba so far. It helps people to cooperate and to interact in a post-conflict community. In this way, social systems are empowered and a contribution is made to grassroots reconciliation. Through its multiplying nature many beneficiaries are reached. Additionally, indications are given about people in need of further non-verbal or trauma counselling therapy (Ngendahayo 2007b: 8).

Talking to sociotherapy participants and taking part in the sessions, I could make out that there were indeed changes and transformations. Many said that before sociotherapy they had been isolated, lonely and downhearted. Through the programme they not only became encouraged and more confident but were now also better integrated in society. People were helped both by the lessons they received and by the company, the discussions and the advice given by the others. Observing these discussions, what struck me most was the way people changed their attitudes towards problems they might have had. It is not so much that people came up with intelligent solutions for problems; rather they learned to accept the situations they had been struggling with for so long. Thus they learned humility which helped to do away with some worries and to get new perspectives and more positive attitudes to life. Through the teachings and the discussions, a better understanding for social processes and conflicts was promoted which in turn had an impact on the relationships people have with other members of the communities. Both the newly found confidence of the participants as well as the interested regards of the outsiders were further boosted by visible achievements such as helping each other to build houses or creating savings associations.

CRITICAL ASSESSMENT

It is worth asking what the reasons are for the apparent success of sociotherapy. Cultural attitudes towards openly discussing one's problems are somewhat hesitant in Rwanda; often there is a lack of trust. However, after war and genocide *everyone* is affected by suffering, so that silence due to a fear of marginalisation should not exist. One possible explanation could be that people lack both the atmosphere of trust and the guidance in opening up in the presence of others. Sociotherapy now offers just that – and in this way it may be seen as a “place of encounter”, as described by Lederach. Trained facilitators help people talk and over the period of 15 weeks it is possible to build relationships of trust with the other participants. (Self-)isolation, according to Cora Dekker, is very common in post-conflict situations (SSI/13). Sociotherapy seems to meet the need for companionship where people regain trust, acceptance and experience affection and care (Pearlman and Staub 2002). This strengthens people such that they not only enhance their own capacities for dealing with life but that they influence others as well.

One could certainly raise the point whether just basically trained laypeople who serve as facilitators are really able to provide psychological support for traumatised people. In a recently published article offering some reflections on the first two and a half years of sociotherapy in Rwanda, Richters et al. (2008) draw attention both to the impact of the programme on local communities as well as to the shortcomings and challenges. While the many positive reactions and visible changes in people's lives appear to confirm the validity of the method of working with laypeople in such a sensitive setting, the limitations of this approach are also recognised: sociotherapy "cannot handle serious psychiatric problems, and may even provoke a request for individual trauma counselling or psychiatric treatment that (as yet) cannot be met. However, sociotherapy can provide the social hammock in which individual care could be embedded. The optimal situation would be a differentiated offer of care. Yet even if it cannot be done as it should be done, one should do what is possible within the given circumstances" (Richters et al. 2008: 114).

Sociotherapy is presented as a kind of "Christian *Gacaca*" (SSI/13). Although there are similarities, such as gathering people together and attempting to bring about peace, there are of course many differences. If seen as complementary to the *gacaca* though, sociotherapy indeed seems to positively support the process and the people involved. One strength in this respect would be that the programme is not only concerned with the cause of the survivors but takes into account the problems of all marginalised people, irrespective of the "categories" they fall into. As underlined by Staub and Pearlman (1998), not only "victims of genocide" need to heal. In sociotherapy no one is privileged or disadvantaged, which might help those who feel their needs neglected or ignored in *gacaca*.

Certainly, the issue of ethnicity faces many political constraints in the public debate. It may therefore seem surprising that it is still not impossible to address ethnic conflict, as we shall see in the next case study. Sociotherapy leaders were surprised to learn about the frankness with which other initiatives talk about it. I have already drawn attention to the specific situation of the Byumba region, in which an explanation can possibly be found for the fact that ethnicity does not feature in the programme. And yet the question is, whether or not the nature of the ethnic conflict in Rwanda is serious enough to tackle the issue directly. One must raise the point that if the problem is not addressed explicitly, is there a risk for the underlying ethnic resentments to resurge in times of crises?

As we have seen, sociotherapy is indeed likely to contribute to the healing of both the individual and his social relations. But in chapter one, we noted as well that an important ingredient for sustainable transformation in a post-conflict environment is information, i.e. dealing with the origins of conflict and suffering. I do not want to challenge either the positive effects of sociotherapy or its approach of leaving the past out unless people bring it up themselves. However, as far as the potential for conflict resolution is concerned, I would find it sensible to more explicitly address and then discuss the participants' understanding of the roots of past conflict. It is indeed important to move on and to rebuild relationships

with others – but if formerly existing antagonisms are not resolved the newly found peace may prove to be fragile.

3.2. HEALING AND RECONCILIATION SEMINARS CONDUCTED BY AEE

African Evangelistic Enterprises (AEE) is an interdenominational Christian organisation, the target of which is the evangelisation of urban Africa. One of the three core areas in the Rwandan branch of AEE is reconciliation. The “peace and reconciliation programme” was founded in 1991 and, taking into account the changed needs of the population, changed its name to “programme of inner healing and reconciliation” after the genocide (Umuraza 2006: 29). Right after the genocide Christian leaders from different denominations and ethnic groups met to discuss possible measures after an 85% Christian country had seen such horrific events. It became clear to them that it was the church that would have to promote forgiveness and reconciliation, but at first the church itself would have to be healed.³² The leaders at the time began to experience healing and forgiveness for themselves, thus allowing them to pass on this transformational experience to others (Lloyd and Bresser 1998: 7).

AEE’s reconciliation work at the time of field research comprised several areas, namely youth work, music, radio broadcasts, prison ministry, “top leaders’ prayer breakfast” and “Healing and Reconciliation Seminars”. It is those seminars that I was able to do research on. The programme of the seminars was developed in collaboration with Dr Rhiannon Lloyd, a former medical and psychiatric doctor from Wales who had long been involved in cross-cultural and reconciliation work (see website of Le Rucher).

To AEE it was of concern to avoid a top-down approach and to train local teams instead (Umuraza 2006: 30). The idea was to thus reach out to the whole of the population using church structures. By means of a snowball system, former participants were meant to train others to also become actively involved in this kind of work. Seventeen of those teams were trained, comprising five to ten people each. Most of them are now working in specific geographical areas, spread out over the whole of the country. Three teams are targeting particular categories of people. This is the case for instance for Christian Action for Reconciliation and Social Assistance (CARSA), who are focussing on youth and who I was able to join for some seminars. The teams are allowed to work in all directions, for example in

³² Christian churches in Rwanda faced a big challenge: Many leaders had themselves instigated or supported genocide and the ethnic divide had not stopped at the congregations. See for example McCullum (1995) or Bizimana (2001).

doing seminars and conferences, invited for instance by schools or government representatives (SSI/26).

One sub-section of AEE's reconciliation department holds "Healing and Reconciliation seminars" for *gacaca* judges. AEE are invited by the government to areas where the *gacaca* face particular resilience. By means of the seminars AEE invite people involved in the hearings to consider their own experiences, hoping that this will sensitise them regarding the needs of the participants and enable them to, themselves, better understand issues of conflict, healing and forgiveness (SSI/27).

CARSA today has three full-time staff; all of whom have been volunteers for the last couple of years. CARSA receive occasional funding from AEE, for instance for seminar expenses like accommodation or transport. The main focus of their work is on youth and the region of Bugesera which had suffered greatly during the genocide. Meanwhile several self-help groups were established there with members of all categories, like survivors or ex-prisoners. Currently they are not beneficiaries of any other humanitarian organisation. CARSA now regularly hold the said seminars with members of these groups as well as with youth at schools (M/4).

OBJECTIVES

The Healing and Reconciliation Seminar "seeks to bring healing and wholeness to communities suffering from ethnic bitterness and hatred. [People] from differing ethnic and church backgrounds are invited to encounter God and one another on an emotional level. In this safe environment, they are encouraged to experience healing and are able to develop new perspectives and attitudes."³³

AEE therefore clearly addresses ethnic conflict and aims for a deep healing of both individuals and broken relationships. The seminars are regarded as an important starting point for a transformation of the Rwandan society in the long term.

³³ Quoted from the Le Rucher website, one of the supporting organisations of AEE (http://www.lerucher.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=38&Itemid=53).

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE PROGRAMME³⁴

Seminars usually last two or three days at a grassroots level. People meet during the day and stay at home overnight. In the case of the seminars I attended, a simple lunch was provided and allowances were given to a few individuals who could not afford the travel costs. Papers and pencils were also distributed; attendance varied between 40 and 60. One of the seminars in Bugesera was attended by both survivors and released prisoners, some of whom had killed members of the others' families.

Since the seminars are "healing" seminars, it was presupposed that all of the participants had suffered in one way or another. Right at the beginning people were to introduce their neighbour to the group, having shared with him a particular grief they had experienced. This immediately created a sense of community and solidarity and was the basis for the trust that began to develop among the participants.

The content of the seminar was structured around the metaphoric reconstruction of the house that symbolised our wounded heart (see figure 1). The foundation was seen as "understanding God's heart", the walls as the "healing of wounds", the beam representing "repentance and forgiveness" and all being concluded by reconciliation. Jesus was said to be the mason, an indication of the biblical grounding of the seminar contents. Before the "rebuilding" started, the facilitators elaborated on wounds and suffering. Mostly in interaction with the participants it was established that all Rwandans had suffered – including Hutu and Twa – and were thus in need of healing. It was determined what kind of losses Rwandans had suffered, tangible and intangible.

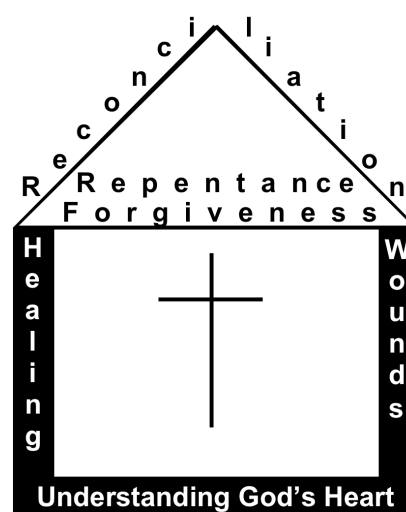


Fig.1: Reconstructing our wounded heart.

What followed next was a session on what the organisers regard as being the roots of (ethnic) conflict, focussing on Rwanda. The reasoning went that just like a tree, a country or a culture produces certain kinds of fruits – good fruits and bad fruits. These fruits are determined by the roots which exist at different levels. Roots of conflict would therefore be e.g.

³⁴ The information on the content of the seminars was drawn from two seminars that I took part in with CARSA in Bugesera Region (POb/4; POB/5), a seminar for *gacaca* judges held by AEE (POb/7) as well as from the AEE manual "Healing the Wounds of Ethnic Conflict" (Lloyd and Bresser (1998)).

the “sinful human nature”, the “history of the continent”, the “country’s history” followed by “ethnic groups” and “personal experiences”.

The seminar leaders spent a long time with the section on “ethnic groups” that were portrayed as the central point in the country’s problems. First of all it was established together with the participants that despite the lack of scientific justification ethnic groups de facto exist in Rwanda today, at least in the minds of people. However, their mere existence was not regarded as a problem but rather the prejudices and resulting actions. Thus in a workshop the participants were encouraged to collect all sorts of prejudices that one could hold against the three “tribes” of Rwanda. At first people were somewhat reticent, showing that they were startled by this kind of talk in public. However, they soon opened up and with increasing frankness came up with stereotypes people hold against the others. Through talking about them overtly, it became obvious to the people that most of the stereotypes had no reasonable grounding, were rather to be seen as being related to individuals and had often been used as means of agitation and contempt. The session was concluded with the urge to break these cycles of prejudices and take measures to do away with fuelling hatred and disrespect.

Talking about these issues had probably already stirred up old wound in people, but was taken a step further by talk on the “personal experiences” that influenced our actions and therefore the “fruits” of our society. There was teaching on mourning and bereavement and people were reminded that in order to find healing, they had to follow three steps: accepting their pains, sharing them with others and expressing their emotions. With these sharp and for many difficult words people were released at the end of the first day.

On the second day the teaching returned to the house that was to be rebuilt. In talks the seminar leaders elaborated on the question what God feels about our suffering. By means of passages from the bible it was shown that God’s heart is aching in the face of all the misery and that Jesus came to comfort the mourning. People gathered information on Jesus’ life and realised that he had known many of the terrible experiences they themselves had had to go through.

As a next step people were asked to write down or draw all the things that had hurt them in the past. Then people gathered in groups of four where they shared their experiences with each other. Often one could find both perpetrators and survivors in the same group. Back in the audience, each group mentioned one exceptionally terrible experience which was then written on the blackboard. The seminar leaders elaborated on Jesus being able to bear and to heal all those sufferings, drawing on the biblical passage of Isaiah 53: 4-5: “He has borne our grieves and carried our sorrows, [...] and by his stripes we are healed.” A large wooden cross was put in the middle and the people were asked to come forward, if they wished, to nail their papers on the cross and thus symbolically hand all their pain over to Jesus. This very emotional exercise took place while people were singing and praying. Once everybody had finished the cross was carried outside, where the participants formed

a circle around it and one of the leaders took down the papers from the cross and burned them. With the biblical promise that God will give us “beauty instead of ashes” (Isaiah 61: 3) the day was concluded.

When people returned for the third day, many people were eager to tell the others that something had changed for them. With various examples many testified that for them healing had finally begun.

The topic of the third day was forgiveness and reconciliation. In interaction with each other participants and leaders talked about issues of forgiveness (e.g. the conditions for forgiveness, the beneficiaries of forgiveness, the consequences of forgiveness withheld, ...). In doing so the participants were shown that forgiveness is necessary both for the individual to free himself and/or the other from a burden and for society to break the circles of revenge and violence. People were then given the opportunity to ask for forgiveness and to grant it, which people were often eager to do but which nonetheless was a delicate issue. It could happen, as in several cases, that forgiveness was withheld where repentance was obviously incomplete or where the victims simply were not ready to take this step. It is worth mentioning that although people were encouraged to forgive none were forced to do so. Proving to be very powerful was when a person “stood in the gap”, meaning that he asked for forgiveness on behalf of others. So e.g. one of the seminar leaders, a Hutu himself, apologised for what Hutu had done during the genocide, or a Tutsi asked for forgiveness for all the contempt and arrogance that the Hutu had been treated with. On this occasion I myself could contribute as well as I apologised for the role Europeans had played in older and younger Rwandan history. Each time some of the offended reacted amazed and astonished and often confessed that it is only by this apology on behalf of another that they were enabled to let go their hatred. In this way the three-day seminar was brought to an end.

ACHIEVEMENTS

The testimony of Simon Mugisha³⁵ is typical of many that are given in follow-up meetings of seminars held by AEE. He used to be full of mistrust and hatred against all Tutsi, especially soldiers, and it was only through the seminar that he was able to let go of these feelings when a former Tutsi soldier apologised to him. He now looks forward with a newly found hope.

³⁵ Participant of a Healing and Reconciliation seminar organised by CARSA; see Appendix for full testimony.

Isaac, who had murdered several people during the genocide, also experienced a deep transformation. He was forgiven by others, an experience that changed his life. Now he has become an ambassador for reconciliation, working especially with people still in prison and dedicating all of his life to the survivors (Con/1).

Besides individual experiences of healing, reconciliation and indeed transformation, AEE had reached out to an estimated 8,000 people by 2006 (Con/6). Since many of them belong to the “critical mass” or opinion leaders (SSI/26) it is hoped that their experience will have an impact on other levels of society as well.

CRITICAL ASSESSMENT

Speaking about the success of the seminars, a staff member of AEE stated that “[t]he message that we give to the people is not a technique but a personal experience. We have discovered that it is not the seminar that brings about healing but that it is Jesus” (Con/2³⁶). For us it is impossible to prove the validity of this claim. What we can do, though, is to look at the methods, contents and outcomes of the seminars, bearing in mind that traumatic experiences as well as healing may have a spiritual dimension to many people (Pearlman and Staub 2002). It may be worth noting that it is not only Christians who are counted among the beneficiaries of the seminars but that they are open to everyone. In some cases even Muslims have benefited greatly, with the main problems being interdenominational rather than interreligious though (SSI/26).

It is striking that a large part of AEE’s teaching is on the very issue of ethnic identity. As we have noted talk on ethnicity is all but banned from the Rwandan public. It is therefore all the more astounding that AEE not only hold many of these seminars openly but are even supported and invited by the government. One suspicion was that this was possibly due to the influence of Antoine Rutayisire, vice-president of the NURC, who also is the team leader of AEE in Rwanda (IC/20). However, in an interview he clarified that this was certainly not the reason. According to him many Rwandans “live in fear of shadows. [...] If you use the names of the ethnic groups in order to bring people together and enable them to better live together the government has nothing against that” (SSI/31).

It is remarkable though that people became willing to openly talk about their personal pains, also related to ethnic conflict. As it was already said, the situations of the regions of Byumba and Bugesera experienced a different history before and during the genocide. And

³⁶ Translation by myself. The original reads: “*Le message que nous donnons aux gens n’est pas une technique mais une expérience personnelle. Nous avons découvert que ce n’est pas le séminaire qui guérit mais c’est Jésus.*”

yet for people from Bugesera it obviously was a great relief to be able to talk about these issues openly. This contributed to a better understanding of the roots of conflict, an element which is also strongly supported both by Pearlman and Staub (2002) and Gubin et al. (2005: 298). It is certainly justified to call into question the approach of presupposing conflicts or problems. However, the reaction and collaboration of the participants seems to prove the effectiveness of this method, not knowing of course if or in what way the participants themselves would have brought up these issues.

What vitally helped the exchange was the creation of an atmosphere of trust that encouraged people to open up, to confess and to share their sufferings. People talked and listened to each other, which – according to a staff member of CARSA – is very rare in everyday life (M/4). In this way “connection” became a reality as postulated by Pearlman and Staub (2002).

Furthermore, a voice was given to all participants. Thus people were made to see the grief and the sorrow of “the other” which in turn produced empathy. As we have noted, Ropers (2004) had made this out to be a strength of dialogue projects that increases the chance of reconciliation. As Staub and Pearlman (1998) had already accentuated, it became clear that healing was of concern to all – even to perpetrators of the genocide.

Acknowledgement of wounds from the past – partly in writing and drawing exercises –, atonement by the perpetrators and forgiveness (Pearlman and Staub 2002) were as much part of the seminars as the substitutional forgiveness of “members of the perpetrator group who neither perpetrated nor planned violence” (Gubin et al. 2005: 301).

Finally, the “restoration of hope” (Pearlman and Staub 2002) was central to the seminars, as this is essentially what healing is about. Pearlman and Staub also lauded the “rebuilding [of] a spiritual life” (Pearlman and Staub 2002). However, AEE took this a step further. They not only helped people “to bear such pain” (Pearlman and Staub 2002) but with the workshop of the cross helped them see that they could discharge this pain onto somebody else. This may be considered to be one of the “symbolic forms of healing” proposed by Hamber (2003: 85 et seq.) but it can be assumed that for people firmly believing in it this actually offers perceptible relief and gives way to “constructive fulfillment of needs” (Pearlman and Staub 2002).

With all the positive aspects of the programme, the question is, though, how big an impact it will have on the Rwandan society in the long term. Even though the transformative effect may be substantial and sustainable in some cases, this need not change the countries political future. Another issue at stake is – as for many other similar approaches – the motivation for people to attend the sessions. If it is food or monetary incentives that make people take part their sincerity in following the seminars may be impaired. The techniques used

are also prone to critique – “standing in the gap” to ask for forgiveness on behalf of others may sometimes be frowned upon (see e.g. IC/20).

However, with individuals being healed and transformed, this may indeed positively influence the *gacaca* trials, if the changes which occurred prove to be lasting. It is then that repentance and forgiveness accorded will be put to the test. Concerning forgiveness during the seminars, one must bear in mind though, that healing takes time and – as Pearlman and Staub (2002) had emphasised – some healing needs to have taken place before forgiveness becomes an option. If people feel pressurised to forgive this may exacerbate their wounds. Therefore a great deal of sensitivity is required on behalf of the seminar leaders, especially since a number belonging to the perpetrator group were apparently eager to ask for forgiveness before the seminar had even started. It may be that this poses a challenge to the attitudes on forgiveness in general. As it can be seen in many *gacaca* sessions as well, often people want to ask for forgiveness in order to relieve or rid *themselves* of their deeds and debts, ignoring consciously or unconsciously that this is as little their right as it is the duty of the victims to forgive them.

Another question remaining is whether the seminar helps to actually resolve specific existing problems – as is the case for instance in the sociotherapy approach – or if the method is so general and focussed on “the ethnic conflict” that the perhaps more complex reality of the people’s lives risks to be ignored. This would need to be studied in more depth, as well as possible long-term changes occurring in the lives of the participants, in terms of attitudes and behaviours towards “the other”.

4. CONCLUSION

In chapter 1.1. it was shown that post-conflict situations are likely to be characterised by an innate complexity and in chapter 2.1. we saw that this is indeed a reality in the case of Rwanda. Therefore, it may not be surprising that there are such a great number of reconciliation initiatives that often appear to be independent and rather uncoordinated. The one common denominator seems to be missing, as many projects have different conceptions of what reconciliation is and with their work address but a few of the many issues at stake. However, precisely this may be the very character of “reconciliation work”: A multitude of methods and ideas that does not follow one singular line while all the initiatives are working for change and a transformation of the current state. Reconciliation in Rwanda takes place in a complex environment by a multifaceted set of actors; one could therefore speak of reconciliation as an attempted “healing of society”, a transformation which comes about through the interaction of a great number of differing stakeholders.

Susanne Buckley-Zistel (2006a: 112) holds that “the Rwandan government is trying to fabricate a unity without reconciliation”, since “[r]econciliation would imply addressing the many lingering tensions between the different groups.” We have seen that for the government it is difficult if not impossible to address certain issues or to come up with pertinent solutions for certain problems. Therefore it has to instead rely on non-governmental initiatives. Interestingly enough there are government representatives who acknowledge that *gacaca* alone could not solve the existing problems and that it requires help (M/3). Furthermore, the “hot issue” of ethnicity is not spoken about, although everybody is well-acquainted with the relevant debate. But when there are promising NGO initiatives, for the state officials there are indeed ways of assuring a less rigorous application of the existing guidelines on the handling of ethnicity which the government itself sometimes seems to be captive of. This is not only the case of the AEE seminars but also of the Byumba region, when the sociotherapy project was first introduced to the authorities (SSI/16)³⁷. Certainly, as a former member of staff of a SOS Childrens’ Village put it, “[t]he NGOs integrate in national politics. They have to act according to the general terms of unity and reconciliation” (IC/6)³⁸. However, it is recognised by most stakeholders, that there is no single recipe for reconciliation in Rwanda but that the many initiatives should be seen as complementary (see also SSI/3), with all their different shortcomings and strengths.

I strongly support this view, which is also verified for example by the relationship between the two projects I researched as case studies on the one hand and the state programme “*gacaca* tribunals” on the other hand. Bloomfield, as we have seen, insisted upon the taking into account of customary methods of resolving conflicts. It is interesting now to see that on the one hand officials acknowledge the need for help in *gacaca*, while on the other hand both sociotherapy and AEE support the tribunals. Even though the *gacaca* may only represent a pseudo-traditional way of administering justice, they are nevertheless perceived as originating from Rwandan culture. Both AEE and the sociotherapy programme seem to value this approach, whilst also trying to make up for its shortcomings at the same time. AEE’s reasoning for their work in respect to *gacaca* reads: “If you preach forgiveness to people whose wounds are still bleeding, you put a spear into their wounds. At first, people need to experience healing before forgiveness and reconciliation can become possible” (Con/5³⁹). The transformation they go through during and after the seminars may then

³⁷ When one of the initiators of sociotherapy talked to the regions prefect, she tried to explain to him that in sociotherapy issues might be raised that are politically delicate. The official answered: “I’ll leave this to you. You are the professional” (SSI/16).

³⁸ Translation by myself. The original reads: “*Les ONG s’intègrent dans la politique nationale. Elles doivent suivre les grandes lignes de l’unité et la réconciliation.*”

³⁹ Translation by myself. The original reads: „*Wenn man Leuten Vergebung predigt, deren Wunden noch bluten, stößt man einen Speer in ihre Wunden. Leute müssen zuerst Heilung erfahren bevor Vergebung und Versöhnung möglich werden können.*“

reduce the weaknesses of *gacaca* and help to render the tribunals more effective and less damaging.

Returning to the issue of trauma, we have now seen a number of initiatives trying to tackle this problem. Gubin et al. (2005: 303) had argued, that “[c]ollective trauma logically seems to require healing at the community level.” From what we have learned of the two case studies, we can hold that sociotherapy and the AEE seminars (as well as a number of other initiatives) follow this line and try to bring healing in a community setting. This approach may also come close to the Rwandan word “*ubwiyunge*” and therefore to the Rwandan understanding of reconciliation since it also implies a strong notion of togetherness. However, despite their similarities, AEE and the sociotherapy programme use different approaches: Whereas the sociotherapy programme seems to identify specific problems and tries to find specific solutions for them, AEE appear to identify general problems (if not *the* general problem) and try to identify and eradicate their causes. The former offers a framework for self-help, without necessarily addressing the actual causes, while the latter offers a clear-cut concept of how to solve the problems identified. On the one hand, “all constructive conflict work must address the root causes that fuel conflict” (Berghof Research Center⁴⁰). On the other hand, this approach is less participative, forcing a certain interpretation of the problems upon the beneficiaries.

Having looked at various programmes directed at achieving national reconciliation, it has become clear that there are some aspects which risk impeding or hindering reconciliation. When it comes to government initiatives like the annual commemorations and the *gacaca* tribunals, clearly not everybody feels provided for to the same degree. Even though the motivation behind these measures may be understandable, it is likely that they risk posing obstacles to the reconciliation process, if the needs of some are not taken into account. This may also be the case for the survivor organisations, who evidently serve only people classified as “survivors” of the genocide and who sometimes tend to monopolise victimhood.

NGO initiatives like AEE, the sociotherapy programme, churches or other humanitarian NGOs serve here as a kind of catalyser, assisting all people irrespective of their particular background and acknowledging that victims and perpetrators alike have suffered. As mentioned already, this behaviour is certainly beneficial to and characteristic of the overall reconciliation process. However, there is also another side to this: One could argue that the Rwandan government are constructing security and stability in the country to the detri-

⁴⁰ Berghof Handbook for Conflict Transformation

(http://www.berghof-handbook.net/std_page.php?LANG=e&id=41&parent=3, visited 11/09/2007).

ment of those Hutu who also have suffered. They are neglected by the state and in the various therapies they learn how to deal with a situation which they cannot change and how to forgive and live a life of humility. This is, of course, good for the victims but it is also good for the state, which, owing to the therapies, does not have to deal with the anger and the protest of those who have experienced injustice.

Reconciliation rests a complex and ambiguous issue. However, this should not discourage from the search for pertinent strategies to achieve reconciliation, nor should one be satisfied with just some and not all of the many dimensions of the reconciliation context being addressed. The case of Rwanda can provide us with a better understanding of processes of reconciliation and their many aspects. It was shown that reconciliation initiatives need not stay low-level approaches but that deep healing and the re-establishment of relationships are indeed possible. Cooperation and the acknowledgment of the strengths and contributions of the other, which may compensate for one's own weaknesses, will help in this process, and "[j]ust as healing is dependent on the collective and political context, so too can individual and community healing strategies bolster national attempts to re-establish society" (Hamber, 2003: 80).

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APPENDIX

- (1) CARSA-Document with a testimony of seminar participant**
- (2) List of fieldwork data**

(1) CARSA-DOCUMENT WITH A TESTIMONY OF SEMINAR PARTICIPANT

TESTIMONIES

My name is Mugisha, Simon*, I am 28 old. In 1994 when the genocide started, I was in the 6th form of primary school.

In June 1994, my whole family and I were displaced to the south of the country (Gikongoro), we lived in Kibeho camp for 2 years. In 1996 soldiers surrounded the camp and started to open fire at every one in the camp. I ran and survived. My dad and other relatives died there. I had no choice, I returned home. When I got home, I found every thing looted. Since then, I hated and couldn't trust any Tutsi, especially the soldiers.

But now I feel changed and better after sharing and bringing my pains on the cross of Jesus Christ! I also forgive all the soldiers because of Anastase* who stood in the gap, on behalf of all soldiers. Actually, it is my first time to hear and see some one who was a soldier recognizing my pains, asking forgiveness and sympathizing with me.

I discovered God's plan and I am now sure of his love for me.

Note: Anastase* is one of CARSA's facilitators, he has been R.P.F soldier from 1992 to 2001. After going through a healing workshop in 3 years ago, he joined CARSA. He is now committed to work with us as a volunteer. He is from Bugesera.

** names changed*

Testimony 1.doc – received per email 12/12/2006 from CARSA executive secretary.

(2) LIST OF FIELDWORK DATA

Group Discussions

Code	Who	Date
GrD/1	participants of one of World Vision's PDW seminars; evaluation of the PDW workshops	18/08/2006
GrD/2	sociotherapy groups of released prisoners	03/10/2006

Informal Conversations

Code	Personal Information	Date
IC/1	Anglican pastor in the Byumba diocese	20/07/2006
IC/2	Youth Development Officer in a local Anglican Church	21/07/2006
IC/3	25-year-old secondary school student	21/07/2006
IC/4	Anglican pastor in the Byumba diocese	22/07/2006
IC/5	Anglican pastor in the Byumba diocese	23/07/2006
IC/6	former member of staff of an SOS childrens' village	31/07/2006
IC/7	member of staff of a local AEE branch	01/08/2006
IC/8	former member of staff of an SOS childrens' village	02/08/2006
IC/9	Anglican pastor in the Byumba diocese together with a member of staff of a local AEE branch	04/08/2006
IC/10	director of a local NGO, business man	08/08/2006
IC/11	director of a local NGO, business man	10/08/2006
IC/12	director of a local NGO, business man	13/08/2006
IC/13	missionary working in Rwanda	20/08/2006
IC/14	student in psychology at Butare University	21/08/2006
IC/15	student in psychology at Butare University	28/08/2006
IC/16	Anglican pastor in the Byumba diocese	28/08/2006
IC/17	the leading team of CARSA (three people), Kigali	08/09/2006
IC/18	the leading team of CARSA (three people), Kigali	10/09/2006
IC/19	Anglican pastor in the Byumba diocese	12/09/2006
IC/20	member of staff of a local AEE branch	16/09/2006

Talks given at "Regional Healing and Reconciliation Forum" of AEE

Code	Personal Information	Date
Con/1	<i>Génocidaire</i>	29/08/2006
Con/2	member of staff of AEE, Kigali	29/08/2006
Con/3	old-case-load refugee; former participant of AEE's reconciliation seminars	29/08/2006
Con/4	Hutu, not involved in genocide; former participant of AEE's reconciliation seminars	29/08/2006
Con/5	n.a.	30/08/2006
Con/6	member of staff of the NURC	31/08/2006

Semi-structured Interviews

Code	Personal Information	Date
SSI/1	members of staff of World Vision, ADP Rebero	24/07/2006
SSI/2	member of staff of the sociotherapy project	24/07/2006
SSI/3	officer for social affairs in a sector unit in the district of Gicumbi	26/07/2006
SSI/4	coordinator of the "Commission Episcopale de Justice et Paix" in a Catholic Church	31/07/2006
SSI/5	CARE International staff, Gitarama	01/08/2006
SSI/6	Catholic priest, Gitarama	02/08/2006
SSI/7	member of staff at the "Commission Episcopale de Justice et Paix" in Kigali	03/08/2006
SSI/8	World Vision staff in Kigali	03/08/2006
SSI/9	woman in charge of the local initiative of "Justice et Paix" in a village near Gitarama	04/08/2006
SSI/10	General Secretary of the TIG, Kigali	07/08/2006
SSI/11	member of staff of AVEGA-East in Rwamagana	08/08/2006
SSI/12	person responsible for TIG camp in Mugina	14/08/2006
SSI/13	foreign leader of the sociotherapy project	14/08/2006
SSI/14	Anglican Pastor in the Byumba diocese	14/08/2006
SSI/15	Executive Director of local Christian NGO, Kigali	17/08/2006
SSI/16	one of the initiators of the sociotherapy project	20/08/2006
SSI/17	survivor of Murambi massacre	24/08/2006
SSI/18	survivor of Murambi massacre	24/08/2006
SSI/19	youngster, met at Anglican Church in Gikongoro	24/08/2006
SSI/20	anthropologist; French Professor in psychology; Butare University; Rwandan	25/08/2006
SSI/21	physician in a village near Butare	28/08/2006
SSI/22	member of staff at the Council of Protestant Churches in Rwanda (CPR), Kigali	01/09/2006
SSI/23	member of staff of AEE, Kigali	04/09/2006
SSI/24	member of staff of CARSA, Kigali	04/09/2006
SSI/25	member of staff of a local NGO concerned with reconciliation	07/09/2006
SSI/26	member of staff of AEE, Kigali	13/09/2006
SSI/27	member of staff of AEE, Kigali	13/09/2006
SSI/28	leader of a small local NGO involved in children's welfare in the Byumba diocese	14/09/2006
SSI/29	member of staff of IBUKA, Kigali	15/09/2006
SSI/30	member of staff of Solace Ministries	22/09/2006
SSI/31	member of staff of the NURC	25/09/2006
SSI/32	Sociotherapist	03/10/2006
SSI/33	three members of staff of the NURC	06/10/2006
SSI/34	Rwandan woman living in Germany	June 2007

Meetings

Code	Who	What	Date
M/1	two members of staff of sociotherapy	introduction to sociotherapy and to fieldwork in Rwanda	21/07/2006
M/2	foreign sociotherapist and sociotherapy groups in Muhura	follow-up meeting	16/08/2006
M/3	foreign sociotherapist, sociotherapy staff from Byumba and local authorities of a sector unit in Gicumbi district	presentation and discussion of the sociotherapy approach	19/08/2006
M/4	two members of staff of CARSA, Kigali	introduction to CARSA	05/09/2006
M/5	sociotherapy leaders	discussion on the different approaches of the sociotherapy project and AEE	15/09/2006
M/6	sociotherapy leaders and a local church leader	discussion on the different approaches of the sociotherapy project and AEE	22/09/2006

Participant Observations

Code	What	Date
POb/1	weekly sociotherapy group meeting of released prisoners	25/07/2006
POb/2	weekly sociotherapy group meeting of widows	28/07/2006
POb/3	weekly sociotherapy group meeting of various people	28/07/2006
POb/4	Healing and Reconciliation seminar for survivors and perpetrators of the genocide, conducted by CARSA	06-08/09/2006
POb/5	Healing and Reconciliation seminar for children survivors of the genocide, conducted by CARSA	09-10/09/2006
POb/6	<i>gacaca</i> hearing, Byumba	14/09/2006
POb/7	Healing and Reconciliation seminar for <i>gacaca</i> judges, conducted by AEE	18-19/09/2006