



Healing Our Communities: Promoting Social Cohesion in Rwanda USAID #AID-696-F-16-00002

FINAL REPORT
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INTRODUCTION

Healing Our Communities: Promoting Social Cohesion in Rwanda was carried out by a partnership of Karuna Center for Peacebuilding, Aegis Trust, Healing and Rebuilding Our Communities, and Institute of Research for Dialogue and Peace.

This “People to People” reconciliation activity was funded through USAID’s Conflict Mitigation and Reconciliation Programs and Activities (Global Reconciliation Fund). The original period of performance was July 14, 2016 through July 13, 2018. USAID generously offered a cost extension for a third year, with some activities modifications, and subsequently granted a no-cost extension, bringing the project closing date to October 31, 2019.

The project was active in Western, Southern, Northern, and Eastern provinces. It took place in 16 communities within Nyamasheke, Karongi, Rubavu, Gisagara, Gakenke, Gicumbi, Kirehe, and Bugesera Districts.

The project took a multifaceted approach to community-level reconciliation. At core, it aimed to prepare community members to serve as healing and reconciliation resources for their communities ongoing. A central premise was that, while each separate activity is valuable, it is *the combination* that makes the intervention most powerful. The experience of participating in complementary activities, carried out over an extended period of time, deepens participant bonds and the ability to trust one another. Participants carry the insights of one activity into another; understanding the suffering of another, through a trauma healing workshop, can make a participant a more empathetic participant in a dialogue, for example. In an iterative process, participants become more willing to admit wrongs, ask for and grant forgiveness, see themselves as part of each other again, and take collective action.

Initially, the main modalities were:

- Biweekly Dialogue Clubs composed of perpetrators, survivors, bystanders, and returnees, and led by community members trained to serve as facilitators
- Trauma healing workshops and select community members prepared as peer counselors, called Healing Companions
- Youth trained to form and lead Youth Clubs that acted to foster social cohesion through community service helping diverse community members, including those now disadvantaged as a legacy of the genocide against the Tutsi, as well as events the youth organized directly advocating cohesion
- Listening sessions in which community members brought local concerns about social cohesion to Cell, Sector, District, and national officials
- These activities were complemented by various media products and raising and distributing livestock to benefit vulnerable community members.

In the project’s third year, emphasis shifted to include:

- Working with youth at risk for recruitment into violent extremism; activities aimed to reduce the attractiveness of antisocial activities and increase the sense of belonging in, and responsibility to, the communities that might be harmed by extremists
- Sharing the project’s reconciliation experiences and insights with a greater segment of society through radio and a documentary film

This change in emphasis brought a change in objectives as well as activities. The monitoring and evaluation approach was adjusted to correspond to the different outcomes expected. For these reasons, Year 1-2 and Year 3 are often discussed separately in this report.

The theories of change and objectives were:

	Year 1-2	Year 3
<i>Theories of Change</i>	<p>If Rwandan communities are empowered to safely address the trauma and grievances left in the wake of the genocide through open dialogue and collaborative activities,</p> <p>then Rwanda’s reconciliation process can deepen, building a society that is more resilient in the face of future social tensions and political or economic challenges.</p>	<p>If Rwandan communities are empowered to safely handle the trauma and grievances after the genocide through open dialogue and collaborative activities,</p> <p>then Rwanda’s reconciliation process can deepen, building a society that is more resilient even when there are tensions and political or economic challenges.</p>

	Year 1-2	Year 3
<i>Objectives</i>	<p>To create effective, sustainable mechanisms for community members to address obstacles to social cohesion through community dialogues and joint projects</p> <p>To establish scalable community-based approaches to trauma healing for genocide survivors and those who were not targeted during the genocide</p> <p>To expand the role of youth in promoting social cohesion through volunteer projects and strategic social media/mobile phone activities</p> <p>To create opportunities for grassroots communities to inform government officials of the barriers and opportunities for greater social cohesion</p>	<p>To expand effective, sustainable mechanisms for community members to address obstacles to social cohesion through community dialogues and joint projects</p> <p>To strengthen scalable community-based approaches to trauma healing for genocide survivors and those who were not targeted during the genocide</p> <p>To expand the role of youth in promoting social cohesion through the integration of at-risk youth in Youth Clubs and volunteer projects</p> <p>To create opportunities for grassroots communities to inform government officials of the barriers and opportunities for greater social cohesion</p> <p>To expand awareness of effective reconciliation approaches through the dissemination of project activities on the radio and television in the 8 target Districts and nationally</p>

SUMMARY OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS

We recovered our dignity and self-reliance

Healing Companion
Gicumbi District

I had a clear hate to Hutu people. I come from Bugesera and there, my family was exterminated and my grand-godfather contributed to that. He raped my mother under my eyes before killing her!

I am really thankful to the dialogue facilitator who identified me and invited me to belong to this group. I couldn't imagine myself chatting and sharing with these people this way.

Dialogue Club member

Gisagara District

The key accomplishments of the Healing Our Communities project took the form of personal and family transformations as well as the numbers of people reached.

Youth: Approximately 1,400 youth had key roles in social cohesion activities, which included 225 youth at risk for recruitment into violent extremism. The youth carried out at least 408 projects that helped vulnerable people, contributed to community development, and/or advocated for social cohesion through discussions, sports events and the arts.

These projects and the youth's interactions demonstrated observable changes in attitudes and behavior, as did survey data.

- **Openness across differences:** Key youth reported a greater willingness to trust and help people unlike them and a much greater openness to others' points of view.
- **Connection to community:** These youth recognized their own ability to take responsibility for contributing to community life, and some newly understood that the genocide is not just adults' issue, but is part of the youth's lives as well. The youth projects wove a strong fabric of social cohesion. Not only did the youth experience working as a team by volunteering alongside other young people, they also created a greater sense of community overall by providing something positive for their neighbors.

Local officials began calling on the program's youth to contribute. In Kirehe, officials routinely ask for Youth Champions' opinions during Sector meetings; in Nyamasheke, an at-risk youth was invited to serve on the Elections Committee; and in Gisagara, officials asked the Youth Club to help build the village office, for example.

- ***Ability to contribute to community:*** Youth emerged with not just desire, but greater *ability* to contribute to community. Through the projects, they gained experience in collaborating, building, and organizing, and they learned to produce documents, manage finances, design business plans, and act as entrepreneurs. They became more confident in speaking with adults, offering their opinions in intergenerational forums and appropriately engaging adults who held differing views.
- ***Relieving personal suffering:*** These youth reported markedly fewer symptoms of trauma and depression—better sleep, ability to concentrate, and less fear and anger, for example.

These changes are especially meaningful for youth at risk for recruitment into violent extremism. When such youth feel no affinity with their communities and feel no obligation to keep the communities safe, do not have hope or purpose, have limited means to sustain themselves, and have only the camaraderie of criminals, this heightens the risk of being attracted into violent extremism. Unresolved trauma exposure also can heighten the risk, as it leads some to impulsivity, quick anger and violence, suspicion, disconnection from others, and inability to picture and move toward the future. In the Healing Our Communities project, many at-risk youth have told stories of reconciling with their families, overcoming community members' fear and convincing them for the first time that the youth's change is real, newly joining in community activities they had avoided, and newly feeling a sense of belonging.

Trauma healing: In the trauma healing intervention, at least 2,288 people learned about trauma and ways to support people, whether their suffering stems from the losses of survivors or the guilt and shame of some perpetrators, bystanders, and their families.

For many, the trauma healing experiences were transformative. Some reported that physical ailments and nightmares had resolved after plaguing the person for decades. Some overcame isolation to rejoin other community members. Data showed substantial improvement in levels of anxiety, fear, anger, sadness, sleeplessness, and powerlessness. Some found themselves able to forgive perpetrators or their families—either internally, for peace of mind; or during the workshop itself; or by seeking out those persons in the weeks and months after the workshops.

A key outcome is that the project established a cadre of peer counselors (“Healing Companions”) to serve the communities ongoing. They emerged with a greater ability to support families in pain, facilitate discussions where reconciliation is a goal, mediate conflicts, and conduct trainings and otherwise multiply the impact so that other community members can also heal and reconcile.

Dialogue: There were accomplishments both from biweekly Dialogue Clubs—where 720 people participated for at least one year--and intergenerational dialogues. It was an accomplishment that groups of perpetrators, bystanders, survivors, returnees, and rescuers could sit together and, over time, discuss increasingly deep and serious topics such as locating bodies of genocide victims that have not been buried; unpaid, Gacaca-ordered restitution; and youth intermarriage. Participants expressly commented about overcoming their fear of being together and learning to trust each other again.

This is largely due to another accomplishment, the establishment of facilitators in each project community. The Dialogue Clubs running at project end, which bring together members from different Sectors, are self-managing and have made concrete plans to continue.

Additionally, clubs from all years have emerged with an identity as community problem-solvers. They not only support the seeking and granting of forgiveness among members of the club, they facilitate those conversations among families in the community, guide conversations to locate unburied bodies, and mediate other types of conflict. The Gicumbi Dialogue Club has reunited 30 couples, for example. The clubs actively search for people who may be open to their help. Government officials in several Districts comment that their jobs are made easier by having the Dialogue Clubs and Healing Companions as a conflict management resource, which community members now approach in the first instance, instead of the government.

From the synergy: The different arms of the project leverage each other and make possible even greater gains. This powerful combination led to:

- Survivors have forgiven their families' killers and perpetrators have genuinely asked for forgiveness from their hearts
- Former prisoners who had been living apart from community since their release have been newly reintegrated into community
- Perpetrators have helped families locate bodies, which have now been buried in dignity
- Criminal and drug-abusing youth have been reconciled with their families
- Survivors, perpetrators, bystanders and others are able to sit in discussion and take collective action
- Youth, Healing Companions, and Dialogue Facilitators all show measurable improvement in trust, willingness to help and integrate with members of other genocide experience groups, openness to others' views, and a reduction in psychological suffering.
- Local officials call on the structures that the project put in place to solve community problems

The above-described outcomes were accomplished as a product of the following activities.

Objective 1: To create and expand effective, sustainable mechanisms for community members to address obstacles to social cohesion through community dialogues and joint projects

The primary modality for this objective was the creation of Dialogue Clubs in the 16 communities. After the full project team conducted a listening assessment in the target communities to learn about local concerns and dynamics, project organization IRDP recruited a man and a woman in each community to serve as facilitators, providing them multiple training sessions totaling six days. Staff recruited 30 community members in each location to sit as Dialogue Club members and the members elected club leadership. IRDP sought gender balance when constructing the clubs, as well as diversity in genocide experience.

The clubs met semi-monthly in Year 1-2, and discussions included topics such as coexistence during Commemoration periods, the experience of persons born to one ethnic group but living among another group,¹ and the impact on family when members are imprisoned for a genocide crime. Sub-groups of the clubs sought out perpetrators and survivors to support them in reconciliation if desired, and the sub-groups reported on their interactions to the full clubs.

In Year 3, the project team strengthened the existing facilitators' skills and formed new Dialogue Clubs where new participants from the two communities in each District gathered for cross-community discussion.

Prisoners do face serious trauma, you have no idea. I committed genocide and spent years in prisons before I came back in my village. But seriously, from the time I got released I had never felt peace in me. Those against whom I committed crimes, I live with them; I am with them in this Dialogue Club.

This initiative broke the wall that used to separate us, connection went through and I feel as if I am a different person.

*Dialogue Club member
Gisagara District*

IRDP selected the 16 strongest facilitators for more specialized training jointly led by IRDP and Karuna Center. This training built on lessons from previous years and facilitators' own priorities for improvement. The training combined Participatory Action Research and Reflective Structured Dialogue, focusing on building a dialogue based on self-reflection and actively listening to the reflections of other participants. Trainees participated in a case study dialogue on a topic they had offered, practicing conflict management as well as dialogue facilitation skills. They committed to new action plans and goals for the upcoming year. IRDP and Karuna Center held another refresher training where facilitators took turns leading mock-dialogues while others gave

¹ For example, the offspring of a woman killed in the genocide and raised in a family or community mainly composed of perpetrators.

feedback. There was structured time for facilitators to share their experiences and difficult issues with one another as well.

Throughout the three years, IRDP supported the facilitators through periodic co-facilitation in the field, and phone and in-person consultations; Karuna Center joined in providing this support during Year 3.

I realized that I had not genuinely forgiven, but after dialogue and trainings, I forgave from the bottom of my heart.

Dialogue Club member
Nyamasheke District

In the Year 3 Dialogue Clubs, the communities alternated in hosting the biweekly dialogues, and the cross-Sector structure created bonds and understanding across communities. Dialogue Club members confessed crimes, listened, asked forgiveness, sought truth, and reconciled. Topics of discussion included: “bitter truth,” genocide ideology and its impact in Rwandan society, bodies of the victims of the genocide who are not yet found, reimbursement of

property stolen or destroyed during the genocide, and the differences in relationships during the commemoration period as compared with other times.

Relevant sections of the Performance Management Plan

		Planned	Actual
Year 1-2 1.1	Number of communities in which assessment is conducted	16	16
Year 1-2 1.2 & 1.3	Number of Dialogue Facilitators identified and trained	32	32
Year 3 1.1	Number of returning Dialogue Facilitators in refresher trainings	16	16
Year 1-2 1.4	Number of dialogues co-facilitated by project staff and trainees	128	84
Year 1-2 1.6	Number of dialogues run by community Dialogue Facilitators	416	344
Year 3 1.2	Number of dialogues run by community Dialogue Facilitators	144	144

To assist in the social cohesion of the Dialogue Clubs, each club was also encouraged to undertake some type of joint activity. Most clubs chose to purchase and rear livestock as a way to generate income and provide the livestock’s offspring to needy community members. In addition, and on the independent initiative of Dialogue Clubs, micro-finance was instituted where each member paid a small regular fee to a club fund that was used to assist community members in need when problems arose.

Relevant sections of the Performance Management Plan

		Planned	Actual
Year 1-2 1.7	Number of projects run for community benefit and cohesion	16	16
Year 3 1.3	Number of projects run for community benefit and cohesion	8	16 ²

Twubakane Days were an important collaborative element of the project, which brought together Youth Champions, Dialogue Club members, and Healing Companions. The Executive Secretaries of Cells and Sectors, heads of police, other local leaders, and members of IBUKA and the National Unity and Reconciliation Commission were frequent guests. These meetings were jointly led by Aegis Trust and IRDP.

Groups of 150 to 250 gathered, sometimes within one community and sometimes bringing two Cells together, and discussed specific issues that hinder peace in their communities. These included the role of youth in commemoration; mistrust between people who committed the genocide and the survivors; the effects of parents’ genocide-related wounds and shame on their children; methods to bring about unity and reconciliation; the status of reconciliation in that community; envisioning a peaceful future and means to create it; carrying out Gacaca court judgments about looted property; undiscovered bodies of genocide victims; parents’ involvement when youth are choosing a spouse, especially if perpetrators’ and survivors’ families are involved; and the estrangement and reintegration into community of at-risk youth. A frequent topic was the need for adults to tell the truth about the 1994 genocide against the Tutsi. This arose out of youth’s deep desire for elders to speak more openly about the genocide and their personal role in it.

Twubakane Days offered an opportunity for youth and older generations to break down the barriers to communication, leading to more fruitful dialogue; exchange of ideas; and

² Since this year’s clubs were populated by two separate communities, each managed its own local project.

opportunities to share experiences of trauma, fear, and forgiveness. Over time, youth were visibly more confident in offering their thoughts.

Relevant sections of the Performance Management Plan

		Planned	Actual
Year 1-2 1.8	Number of intergenerational dialogues held	48	45
Year 3 1.4	Number of intergenerational dialogues held	32	32

Objective 2: To establish and strengthen scalable community-based approaches to trauma healing for genocide survivors and those who were not targeted during the genocide

Healing and Rebuilding Our Communities (“HROC”) led this activity, which both established four peer counselors as a resource in each of the 16 project communities, and raised community awareness of trauma and its effects.

HROC selected these peer counselors, known as Healing Companions, and gave them 12 days of training across six separate sessions in Years 1 and 2. The Healing Companion teams were often gender-balanced and showed a range of ages and genocide experiences. The more remarkable teams had a perpetrator and a survivor working as a pair to serve their communities.

We healed from our wounds and are now healing others.

project participant
Nyamasheke District

HROC maintained contact with the Healing Companions throughout the project, supporting them as they carried forward their new insights to family and neighbors. The Healing Companions provided listening, validation, and advice to those who were suffering; helped people resolve conflicts; and supported genocide survivors, perpetrators, and their families in conversations of acknowledgement, apology, and sometimes forgiveness.

The project continued to strengthen the Healing Companions in Year 3. Karuna Center conducted an assessment for Healing Companions to identify their confidence levels and their priorities for skills improvement. HROC designed follow-up trainings responsive to this assessment. The Healing Companions came together for three, three-day sessions, which both supported the Healing Companions in managing their own painful experiences and prepared them with

additional skills to support others, and provided opportunities for peer to peer learning and to re-energize and restore the learners. Content areas included “Loss, Grief and Mourning,” “Stages of Trauma, Healing from Trauma, and Anger,” and “Characteristics of a Good HROC Facilitator.”

HROC also sought to enhance Healing Companions’ ability to lead trauma workshops for their communities; HROC selected those who showed the most aptitude, drawn from each project community, to participate in a three-day workshop in training methodology and to learn the trauma healing curriculum more fully.

HROC and Karuna Center initiated a program of support to Healing Companions in the field. This occurred every one to two months, and the program relied on HROC’s network of volunteer facilitators with 10 or more years’ experience to each informally lead in a geographic area. These leaders alternated with HROC staff in meeting with the Healing Companions one-on-one or in small groups. These support sessions helped the Healing Companions strengthen community trust in them, think through difficult issues, debrief with one another about their experiences, and receive personal support for emotional pain that had surfaced during the work.

The Healing Companions remain a community resource after project end. Each community team meets at regular intervals—most of them monthly—to plan service activities and exchange experiences, and each has pledged to continue. Some have plans to travel to other Sectors to share their knowledge. Some are mobilizing their communities to learn about trauma and its effects, offering to lead the workshops freely and encouraging the same spirit of volunteerism among the potential students.

Relevant sections of the Performance Management Plan

		Planned	Actual
Year 1-2 2.3	Number of community members trained as Healing Companions (peer support)	64	64
Year 3 2.1	Number of refresher trainings for Healing Companions	3	3

Workshops have already touched a significant number of people in the project sites. HROC, often accompanied by the Healing Companions taught 65 community workshops. These brought together survivors, perpetrators, bystanders, and others to understand the lingering effects of the genocide, recognize the suffering of others, and learn ways to cope and heal. About one-quarter of the workshops were tailored to youth, many of whom struggle with stigma, loss, and intergenerational trauma. These workshops were offered to youth at risk for recruitment into

violent extremism, as unresolved trauma can lead to aggression, heightened suspicion of community members, isolation, impulsivity, and other features that may make trauma-affected youth more vulnerable to recruitment efforts. Additionally, in response to a request in Gisagara, HROC designed a workshop to address the specific needs of youth whose birth was the result of rape during the genocide.

Many participants reported that these three-day sessions were transformative. During or after workshops, some sought and gave forgiveness, and others found relief from physical ailments and intrusive thoughts that had plagued them for decades.

Relevant sections of the Performance Management Plan

		Planned	Actual
Year 1-2 2.1	Number of participants recruited for trauma healing workshops	512	528
Year 1-2 2.2 and Year 3 2.3	Number of community trauma healing workshops held	48	49
Year 3 2.2	Number of trauma healing workshops for youth held	16	16
Year 1-2 2.5	Number of trauma workshops led by Healing Companions	48	48

To enhance the ongoing dialogues, HROC educated each Year 1-2 Dialogue Club in one-day sessions about trauma and its effects, and the clubs used the knowledge to inform their deliberations. Additionally, HROC formed a network of support for the trauma healing participants by sensitizing and engaging the broader community: at the conclusion of each project year, HROC gathered a large group of community members to hear about the trauma healing work that had been done and the impacts the participants felt, and to enlist the communities in supporting, rather than stigmatizing, those who had sought this help.

Relevant sections of the Performance Management Plan

		Planned	Actual
Year 1-2 2.4	Number of trauma info sessions held with Dialogue Clubs	16	16
Year 1-2 2.6 Year 3 2.4	Number of community celebrations of trauma program participants	32	32

Objective 3: To expand the role of youth in promoting social cohesion through the integration of at-risk youth in Youth Clubs and volunteer projects, and through strategic social media/mobile phone activities

Each year of the project, Aegis Trust guided youth to organize and to promote social cohesion through direct messaging and service to community members across differences. At the core of these activities were gender-balanced groups, approximately eight youth in each, who stepped into leadership as “Youth Champions.”

Each cadre received five to six days of training, which led the youth through discussions on leadership, genocide history, peace practices, continuum of violence, continuum of benevolence, public speaking, and group facilitation. The purposes were to empower them to become leaders and to equip them with skills to be engaged allies in their communities by solving problems hindering peace. The team supported participants with project management training, such as proposal writing and budgeting, and the youth began planning for peacebuilding projects that would put their new insights into practice and promote social cohesion in their communities.

Aegis guided the Youth Champions to gather other youth for Peace Clubs that put the projects into action. Some clubs met weekly; others organized at the times activities were planned. Clubs had a gender mix and 20 to 30 members was a common size, though some had membership up to 60 people. Aegis supported their activities through small grants, phone and in-person follow-up, and connecting them to other Youth Champions/ Ambassadors who could advise them on project ideas and management.

Many clubs have pledged to continue to be active after the project ends. Bugesera youth have already helped form new clubs in neighboring Sectors, and a Rubavu club opened clubs in primary and high schools and intends to continue to open more.

Relevant sections of the Performance Management Plan

		Planned	Actual
Year 1-2 3.1 Year 3 3.2	Number of Youth Champions trained	128	125
Year 1-2 3.4	Number of youth exchanges	4	4

In Year 3, the project placed greater emphasis on outreach and transformation of youth at risk for recruitment into violent extremism. Aegis worked with them to develop more pro-social behavior, a sense of belonging in community and responsibility to it, and feelings of purpose and agency, all antidotes to drivers of violent extremism.

Among the Youth Champions, 30 were at-risk youth—those who had come from prison or Iwawa, were living on the streets, engaged in crimes such as robbery and drug abuse, and/or were estranged from their families and communities.

After preparing as Youth Champions, many emerged with great enthusiasm for the possibility of redeeming themselves and providing that opportunity for other marginalized youth. The at-risk Youth Champions recruited other at-risk youth to form their Youth Clubs, and ultimately at least 225 at-risk youth were engaged. The clubs worked hard to overcome community prejudice about them and to prove themselves worthy, especially by giving back to vulnerable community members. Ultimately, a substantial number of the at-risk youth reported reconciling with their families, receiving more trust from neighbors, being given responsibility by local officials, ceasing drug abuse, overcoming a sense of shame and isolation, and finding a new sense of belonging.

Before this project, I was not considering myself as human being, I had isolated myself because of my wrong doing and the society had rejected me.

I am now the youth club leader ... and now I found a wife I am married!

At-risk youth
Kirehe District

Where these youth have been rejected previously, they now commonly participate in community events. At Twubakane Days and in local listening sessions, local officials, and beneficiaries of the youth's good works, have given testimony to the youth's transformation. By the end of the project, the team heard from the at-risk youth at Twubakane Days. They gave testimonies about the changes they have made, and their fears, shame, and social isolation. But they also gave their ideas about effectively promoting mutual understanding across generations, creating opportunities for the generations to meet and interact, and finding solutions to problems hindering peace and social cohesion. Despite challenges, the two generations went on to discuss freely and were able to interact with one another around youth-related issues.

Relevant sections of the Performance Management Plan

		Planned	Actual
Year 3 3.1	Number of new at-risk Youth Champions trained and integrated into Youth Clubs	32	30
Year 3 3.4	Number of additional at-risk youth involved in project activities	168	195
Year 3 3.7	Percentage of adult program participants who see at-risk youth as contributors to their community	80%	80% ³

As reflected in the data below, the Youth Clubs engaged in exponentially more projects than anticipated – more than 400 in total. In diverse teams, the Youth Clubs conducted service projects for vulnerable people in their communities. They built or rehabilitated houses, built kitchen gardens, made construction materials, built latrines, provided pigs and pigsties, repaired a bridge, performed compound cleaning and bush clearing to get rid of mosquitoes, cleared and excavated roads, helped with farming, advocated to correct widows’ Ubudehe classification, gathered funds for medical care and food, provided cleaning in homes and memorials, and taught young mothers to sew. They reared rabbits, pigs, chickens, or goats to donate to impoverished families. Some reached out to other youth who take or sell drugs to encourage a change in behavior.

In addition to small grants in the project, the youth supported this activity with their own funds, fundraising from others in community, rearing small livestock for profit, or running small businesses such as a bicycle taxi service and donating the proceeds to the club.

To help support themselves, many club members now have one of the animals the clubs were rearing, and at least five clubs formed a savings club that is routinely distributed to members to help each other improve their *own* standards of living.

Youth, too, spread their knowledge and commitment to other youth and their communities. They created skits on youth who died in the genocide, post-genocide reconstruction, and encouraging honest discussion, and performed it in multiple sites. Similarly, they organized a tournament about preventing violence, and another about drug abuse and the fight against genocide ideology, which featured theatre and songs. They gave talks and held vigils during commemoration week; wrote and presented poetry about reconciliation; talked about peacebuilding during weekly Inteko z’abaturatione (community problem-solving meetings); met to discuss conflict analysis and resolution; offered their services to surrounding villages to present

³ The project team is unable to update the baseline data as the data collection methods were not consistent between baseline and endpoint.

peace-related events; and hosted football tournaments where they talked about peace. Some youth supported community members through resolving conflicts, and a Bugesera club brought together a survivor’s family and a perpetrator’s family to facilitate reconciliation.

Relevant sections of the Performance Management Plan

		Planned	Actual
Year 1-2 3.2 Year 3 3.3	Number of youth projects run for community benefit and cohesion	64	408

Aegis Trust employed multiple media for youth participants to express stories of acceptance and reconciliation. Much of the activity centered on short films and recorded stories accessed through mobile phone technology.

Through a series of workshops and practical application, Aegis Trust staff taught 52 youth about filmmaking. Instruction took place in workshops and in the communities, and included sensitizing participants to peacebuilding skills and approaches, using film to capture and tell a story with a peacebuilding lens, and shooting and editing video footage. As participants began shooting their own stories, Aegis Trust staff provided feedback and guidance regarding the participants’ story ideas and means to capture them effectively. Ultimately, the youth completed 16 short videos which have been shown in communities and are posted on youtube. Please see the Bibliography for links to the films.

Stories were also produced for listening in audio format. Aegis Trust trained youth to collect community stories and to edit archived material into compelling stories, which were recorded, edited, and prepared for distribution. Initially, Aegis Trust formed Listening Clubs in each of the 16 communities to hear the stories together on individual phones or through bluetooth speakers. Aegis prepared a discussion guide for each story and trained Youth Champions to lead discussion about them. The clubs were intergenerational, with six youth and six adults gathering to listen and discuss. Club members also vouched for the stories and encouraged others to listen when these became more widely accessible. The stories were also distributed to teachers for use in 12 secondary schools.

The centerpiece of the audio program was making the stories available to callers through an Interactive Voice Response system. The stories were hosted on a specialized platform and accessed under contract with three mobile phone carriers. Different versions of the stories were

tailored to youth, teachers, and parents. After this program was advertised on nine radio stations, callers used a short code to listen to stories and give feedback. In less than five months, the system fielded 87,782 calls, and 13,178 people used the feedback feature.

Relevant sections of the Performance Management Plan

		Planned	Actual
Year 1-2 3.3	Number of youth trained in video editing	32	52
Year 1-2 3.5	Number of youth trained in creating IVR stories	16	16
Year 1-2 3.6	Number of IVR stories distributed	10	2

Objective 4: To create opportunities for grassroots communities to inform government officials of the barriers and opportunities for greater social cohesion

The Dialogue Clubs, in addition to their biweekly discussions and their work supporting reconciliation between perpetrators’ and survivors’ families, advocated to government officials about community views on reconciliation. In the initial years, representatives of the Dialogue Clubs met with Sector officials three times per year. Often, the Executive Secretary would ask that sessions be scheduled at a time he or she could attend, and would be accompanied by other Sector and Cell level officials. In the third year, the representatives met with District level officials, often including the Mayor or Vice Mayor, and civil society.

The Dialogue Club representatives would present a summary of key findings of various topics discussed in internal dialogue sessions, giving a summary of work accomplished and allowing the officials and civil society to formulate feedback, recommendations, and points for discussion.

The Dialogue Club representatives would also present community-identified barriers to social cohesion. Topics have included observed differences in social cohesion in the period 1959-1994 and the post-genocide period, difficulties enforcing property-related Gacaca judgments, strategies for eradicating genocide ideology, intergenerational differences, an assessment of the status of reconciliation as they see it, and their views on the effectiveness of Commemoration week and its impact on reconciliation. Often, the clubs would make concrete requests such as looking into the release of restitution funds paid into local government but not reaching the

intended beneficiaries, assistance with creating or visiting memorial sites, or investigating allegations of poor actions in a particular government office. Over time, the community participants visibly became more confident in their presentations, and some Dialogue Facilitators took over from IRDP staff the role of facilitating the gathering.

Officials would participate very actively by acknowledging the requests, providing opinions, and informing the participants about the law, policy, or practice, so as to address conflicts arising out of misunderstanding. By the end of the project, it was common for government officials to express a belief that, by proactively addressing community problems, the Dialogue Clubs were a helpful adjunct to government and made these officials’ work easier. Some have asked Dialogue Club participants and Healing Companions to start new activity in neighboring Sectors, and have pledged to facilitate that.

Similarly, the program convened a National Listening Session at the close of each project year. There, Youth Champions, Dialogue Facilitators, and Healing Companions from every project community gathered to exchange experiences and ideas, and to prepare to meet national officials. They shared with national policy makers, faith-based groups, and other civil society what they have learned from their experiences in the program, including successes and challenges in promoting social cohesion in their communities and the specific factors that led to each. There were both presentations and facilitated table discussions where officials joined community members in a World Café format. Official participants have included the Executive Secretary and other representatives of the National Unity and Reconciliation Commission and members of Parliament; the Ministries of Local Government, Justice, Health, and Gender; Rwanda Governance Board; National Youth Council; Commission Nationale de Lutte Contre le Génocide; and a range of civil society representatives.

Relevant sections of the Performance Management Plan

		Planned	Actual
Year 1-2 and 3 4.1	Number of meetings between participants and local government officials	80	80
Year 1-2 and 3 4.2	Number of listening sessions with national-government officials, civil society, and INGOs	3	3

Objective 5: To expand awareness of effective reconciliation approaches through the dissemination of project activities on the radio and television in the 8 target Districts and nationally

In the third year, the project team created media products to share the project insights and stories with a wider audience throughout Rwanda.

Documentary

The “Healing Our Community” documentary is a powerful product of the Year 3 work. The film is a 30-minute, professionally produced piece that illustrates the project’s philosophy and activities, and some transformations that resulted.

Aegis Trust was the lead partner in producing the film, which involved interviewing and selecting featured participants, composing a story outline, obtaining a film shooting permit, putting the film shooting and editing out to bid, and guiding all aspects of filming and post-production. Youth from project communities, who were trained in photography and film production and made short films during the project’s first two years, assisted in the filming.

The film features these three stories:

- Nyamasheke District: a youth participant who works to understand his father, a genocidaire who returned from prison, and the effects that history has on the youth’s identity and interactions in his community;
- Gakenke District: a Dialogue Club facilitator whose pain caused her to refuse her daughter’s wish to marry into the family of a perpetrator, and the woman’s transformed views since that time; and
- Bugesera District: a man whose great genocide losses left him unable to be around people—indeed, he would bike long distances rather than share transport with others—and the relief he gained from coming to understand trauma and its effects through the trauma healing program.

The film was publicized on Facebook, Twitter, and Rwanda TV advertising, and aired on Rwanda TV on three Saturday nights. It was also presented at a monthly talk that IRDP organizes; in a community forum near Karuna Center’s US offices; and at this project’s National Listening

Session. Youth and other project participants have plans to show it in their communities. It will be posted on the Aegis Trust and Karuna Center youtube channels for long-term viewing.

Radio

IRDP and Aegis Trust shared responsibility for planning and carrying out a series of radio shows that would raise awareness of reconciliation, trauma healing, and community engagement work happening in project communities. The shows were designed to emphasize a feeling of social cohesion. As issues were raised, listeners were challenged to consider how those could be solved and what they themselves could do to promote social cohesion in their communities.

The first program centered on the difficulties associated with unpaid genocide-related restitution, as it had been discussed in nearly all project sites during intergenerational dialogues and in Dialogue Clubs. In those discussions, Aegis Trust recorded some of the participants testifying about personal experiences, including the prevalence of strong emotions and the solutions that were reached. Some people noted they had become willing to forgive the debt in exchange for an apology and a request for forgiveness, especially where the perpetrator's family was unable to pay. These recorded stories provided listeners with concrete examples of real life conflict transformation.

In the second program, 11 Youth Champions gathered with national officials to explore the question "Does Genocide Ideology Exist Among Youth?" They led a spirited discussion with a range of views, including some who thought that ideology was on the rise because of greater access to internet information. The youth shared their experiences, gave their opinions on how genocide ideology is present in their communities, and urged institutions to instill long-term unity measures.

The third show focused on the bodies of genocide victims not yet found and the desire to bury them in dignity. This was a frequent topic in intergenerational dialogues in the project communities, so there were field experiences and stories to share. The show aired during a prime slot on Sunday morning that usually airs a well known program "Kubaza Bitera Kumenya," and the air date coincided with the burial in dignity of 19,500 victims in Nyanza – Kicukiro. There was strong audience engagement through calls and SMS messages.

Two more shows centered on youth, showcasing Youth Clubs' activities that contribute to social cohesion, and one show highlighting the at-risk youth, their challenges, the work to overcome those challenges and build trust, and the transformation and acceptance some have experienced.

Additionally, there was a show in which discussants considered how genocide prisoners contribute to social cohesion and reconciliation after they return to their communities. The show examined potential differences between perpetrators who went through TIG and those who were convicted and did not plead guilty.

Programs aired on Radio Rwanda and Flash FM. Guests included the Executive Secretary of the National Unity and Reconciliation Commission; the Vice President of IBUKA Association; and representatives of the CNLG, Ministry of Local Government, Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Youth, National Youth Council, National Rehabilitation Service, and Prison Fellowship. Listeners engaged through phone calls, SMS messages, and Facebook posts.

Relevant sections of the Performance Management Plan

		Planned	Actual
Year 3 5.1	Documentary film produced	1	1
Year 3 5.2	Number of media stories disseminated with USG support to facilitate the advancement of reconciliation or peace processes (1.6.1-14):		
	a) number of radio programs broadcast	6	6
	b) number of documentary screenings in target Districts	16	0
	c) number of documentary screenings on national TV	3	3

Sustainability: The Healing Our Communities project team also considers the project’s sustainability to be a key accomplishment. Please see the Sustainability section below for further detail.

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

The project team tailored its monitoring and evaluation approach to the different phases of the project and their differing goals.

In Years 1 and 2, the key emphases of the activities were to:

- provide transformative experiences to core participants (Youth Champions, Healing Companions, and Dialogue Facilitators and Club Members)
- prepare the core participants to serve as resources for their communities
- deliver service that assists other community members with healing and supports them to move closer to social cohesion
- embed those human resources and structures in communities as a resource for the future

The Performance Management Plan, therefore, measured the numbers of these core participants identified and trained; the amounts of service they delivered while supported by project staff and independently; the events that cascaded the benefits out to the greater community; the events where different arms of the project were combined to leverage each other and multiply the benefit; and the opportunities for project participants to make use of government channels to communicate social cohesion successes, concerns, and requests to officials. Please see the attached Performance Management Plan - July 2016 through June 2018 for greater detail.

Concurrently, researchers from the University of Massachusetts-Amherst and New York University conducted quantitative measurement of attitude change among the core participants. Drawing on validated measures from the literature on intergroup conflict and reconciliation, the researchers constructed surveys in consultation with Rwandan staff of the project organizations to ensure the questions were relatable and relevant in the context and communicated the concepts as intended. The surveys were translated into Kinyarwanda and back-translated by a second person. Rwandan data collectors received in-depth briefing on the survey tool and each question's meaning and purpose, as well as on the project itself. They administered the surveys aloud, one on one with core participants.

The surveys measured concepts such as trust; willingness to help others; openness to other points of view; willingness to interact with people from a different genocide experience group (survivors' willingness to interact with perpetrators, bystanders, or returnees, for example); willingness to integrate; and attitudes or behaviors associated with depression, anxiety, or trauma.

- Improvement was demonstrated in *every* domain
- Improvement was sustained in *every* domain
- The increase in trust toward perpetrators and bystanders, and the willingness to integrate with them, were particularly striking

For greater detail, please see Final Report of Results: USAID Rwanda Project, January 2019, provided as an annex to this report.

In Year 3, the project's core purposes were to:

- Strengthen the skills of the adult core participants who serve the communities as Healing Companions and Dialogue Facilitators
- Disseminate to more Rwandans the project's lessons about social cohesion
- Create a transformative experience for youth at risk for recruitment into violent extremism

The Performance Management Plan, therefore, measured the numbers of activities, or number of core participants in activities, designed to increase their skills (refresher workshops, mentoring opportunities, additional practice); number of activities that the core participants sustained from the first phase of the project; number of media products created and number of opportunities for the general public to access them; perceptions of at-risk youth and others about at-risk youth's place in community; and number of activities designed to improve a sense of mutual responsibility between at-risk youth and community members. Please see the attached Performance Management Plan: Year 3 for greater detail.

Concurrently, the project team sought to measure the beliefs and attitudes of the Healing Companions, Dialogue Facilitators, and Youth Champions, including those drawn from at-risk youth.

As in the project's first phase, a survey instrument was designed in collaboration with Rwandans, Rwandan data collectors were briefed in depth about the tool, and they administered the survey in Kinyarwanda aloud, one on one with the core participants.

Youth surveys centered on these key areas:

- psychological well-being
- connection to and influence of community
- experiences with isolation or connection
- level of trust in others
- collaboration with other youth
- feeling of agency and responsibility
- understanding of effects of genocide

At baseline, responses on a number of indicators suggested participant bias. At endpoint, then, youth were asked retrospective questions (for example, "a year ago, how did you feel about X") as well as their current beliefs. These yielded much more variability in responses, suggesting more forthrightness. The comparison, then, demonstrated substantial improvement in youth's ability to concentrate, ability to sleep, level of fear or anxiety, satisfaction with life, and a sense that they have the power to affect what happens to them. Similarly, youth showed strong gains in indicators of feeling connected to others and in the belief that they can contribute positively to their communities. On some indicators, ordinary and at-risk youth progressed at a similar rate; in others, at-risk youth showed much greater positive change.

Finally, Healing Companions and Dialogue Facilitators were asked their views on whether at-risk youth can contribute positively to communities. The baseline positive response was high, and

inched up to 100% at endpoint (when including all answers in agreement). However, a number of “Agree” responses shifted to “Somewhat Agree”; the significance of this, if any, is unknown. Additionally, fewer Healing Compassions reported feeling compassion for youth at the end of the year than at the beginning, and both adult groups reported feeling less at ease in their roles when they are helping youth. The reasons for these results are unknown and they are contrary to testimonies adults gave about youth during intergenerational dialogues and listening sessions.⁴

The Healing Companions and Dialogue Facilitators dominantly were surveyed about their skills in those roles. The analysis details the types of skills and core participants’ views on their growth. The Healing Companion group saw growth in their ability to listen and to lead trainings; the Dialogue Facilitator group reported the most improvement in the ability to set the space, guide the discussion, and manage conflict. With other skills, the Dialogue Facilitators remained steady but the Healing Companions assessed their growth less positively at the endpoint than at the beginning of Year 3. It is unknown whether this reflects greater humility in the face of real world challenges, a belief that much skill was already gained in the first two years and the third year increased skill incrementally, self-doubt accompanying their own internal struggle with healing, different understandings of the survey questions, or other reasons.

Additionally, the M&E team measured potential change in the adult core participants’ attitudes toward members of the different genocide experience groups, both the compassion they feel for members of those groups, and the confidence that the Healing Companions and Dialogue Facilitators feel about helping those groups. The Healing Companions’ report of their comfort in assisting declined with almost every genocide experience group. Dialogue Facilitators’ confidence also declined with several groups, but increased as to bystanders. These answers may be consistent with the skills self-assessment above; that is, the greater the understanding of the complexities of helping others, the more one is aware of one’s abilities and limits. It is worth noting that most shifts were from “Comfortable” to “Somewhat Comfortable”—so, still in the positive range—which may reflect that nuance.

Feelings of compassion largely stayed steady from Year 2 through Year 3. Though Healing Companions reported a dip in compassion toward youth, contrary to interactions staff observed and statements they made in public gatherings, the Dialogue Facilitators continued to grow substantially in their compassion toward perpetrators and bystanders. Finally, by the end of the project, these core groups also expressed greater optimism that relations between groups in Rwanda will improve. For greater detail, please see Healing Our Communities Year 3 M&E Report, provided as an annex to this report.

⁴ The project team intended to also draw on Dialogue Club qualitative responses, but the data were not usable.

The project team also collected extensive testimonies and success stories. For detail, please see those documents attached as annexes to this report.

UNEXPECTED PROGRESS

The project experienced unexpected, positive progress in several respects.

The trauma healing activities became widely known throughout the project communities and adjacent Cells and the demand was far beyond the original project design. This was not surprising, in that meeting a need for safely experiencing deep emotions is widely needed after genocide, and can only be accomplished in small, intimate groups. There is an inherent tension between the transformative value of deep work and addressing needs on a wide scale. However, unexpectedly, HROC was able to meet a very specific need that was most helpful. A project community in Gisagara District has a concentration of youth who were born as a result of rape during the genocide. They asked that HROC provide a workshop tailored to their situation; through a combination of savings, volunteerism, and expertise, HROC was able to add that workshop and provide significant support to those who participated.

When youth produced videos about social cohesion and reconciliation, this was another area of unexpected progress. Aegis Trust initially planned to train 16 youth in basic photography, filming, and film editing skills to be able to create short videos. Aegis incrementally added youth so that 52 participated in that program. Aegis expanded and rented equipment, gave additional training in Kigali and hands-on support in the field, and youth teams ultimately contributed to 16 very moving videos, far more than planned. A team of eight youth also supported the professionals who filmed the Healing Our Communities documentary, gaining additional exposure.

Every year, the Youth Champions and Youth Clubs far outstripped expectations in their enthusiasm to provide service to the vulnerable, contribute to the community, lead programs extolling peace and unity, and host activities to bring diverse people together. The 16 Youth Clubs in the first phase of the project were funded to produce one project each, and in Aegis's experience, the clubs could be expected to generate a handful of projects each. Instead, the youth took very seriously the program's encouragement for them to become active, contributing citizens, and they created 271 projects in this phase alone. Similarly, the 32 clubs created in the project's third year exceeded expectations and carried out at least 137 projects.

Dialogue Clubs also expanded beyond their original mandate. Many created a role for themselves as a resource for families or neighbors in conflict, families who needed help seeking forgiveness for genocide acts, and families seeking to uncover bodies that were never buried. Club members

sought out these opportunities to help, and plan to continue to do so, in service of healing community wounds.

For unexpected progress that was negative, please see the Results Not Achieved section immediately following.

RESULTS NOT ACHIEVED

Of the 44 indicators in the Performance Management Plans, only 4 (9%) fell significantly short of planned results.⁵

In the first instance, the number of Interactive Voice Response stories produced and distributed was fewer than planned. This occurred for several reasons. The IVR activity relied in part on the government and companies outside the project, which presented substantial complications. A regulator must issue a “short code” and that process unexpectedly took more than four months. An online platform was also required to host the activity. The project team put out a request for bids and the received proposals were insufficient for the project’s purposes, making a second bidding process necessary. Once the platform was operational, there were intermittent technical difficulties. Each of these factors introduced delays, shortening the time available to produce the stories. Aegis Trust adapted, and distributed two stories through several channels, as will be described in the Problems and Responses section below.

Two additional results not achieved relate to the frequency of Dialogue Club meetings in the first two years. Organizational challenges and staff turnover caused delays and reduced the total number of meetings and the ability to co-facilitate on the intended schedule. All Dialogue Club activities took place in all communities, but the total number of sessions was less than the target in that first project phase. These issues were remedied in Year 3 and the full plan was delivered.

Finally, the documentary was produced and seen on national television, in private meetings, and is available on youtube. It was not, however, shown in the project communities as planned because production began later than expected and the film was not complete in time to be shown there. Plans have been made to fulfill this expectation after project end, without cost to the project, and are described in the Problems and Responses section immediately following.

⁵ Another six items missed their targets minimally, generally by 5% or less.

PROBLEMS AND RESPONSES

When the Interactive Voice Response system was delayed, Aegis Trust adapted by forming Listening Clubs so that people in each of the 16 project communities could hear the stories together on bluetooth speakers. Aegis prepared a discussion guide for each story and trained Youth Champions to lead discussion about them. The stories were also distributed to teachers for use in 12 secondary schools. Once the IVR platform was available, marketing allowed Aegis Trust to make extensive use of the stories that were produced.

As for the communities having the opportunity to see the project documentary, the project gave a copy of the film on DVD to a youth-Healing Companion-Dialogue Facilitator team from each community. Aegis Trust has given community members advice about accessing the means to project the film and several Youth Clubs have solidified plans to show it publicly.

In addition to the above-described issues, the amount of training and guidance required for several participant groups to make use of new information and effectively serve their communities was not anticipated by some organizations. Healing Companions, basic trauma workshop participants, Dialogue Facilitators, film and photography students, and at-risk youth needed more support than was initially delivered. Project teams scheduled additional trainings and added field visits to provide the needed support.

Additionally, for projects designed and led by youth and by the Dialogue Clubs, it was difficult for the groups to write clear proposals and to report on the money spent, likely unfamiliar activities for them. These contributed delays to those community projects. In response, Aegis Trust and IRDP staff devised templates and devoted training and mentoring time in the field, in a refresher training, and in the initial training for subsequent cadres.

LESSONS LEARNED

In conversations with IRDP and Dialogue Facilitators, it stood out that the majority of Dialogue Clubs in the project achieved a surprising depth, richness, and honesty. Upon reflection, the team attributes this to several factors. First, the project team learned that acknowledging one's own trauma was of great benefit to openly engaging in dialogue. The overlap of trauma healing workshop and Dialogue Club participants was a likely contributor to this. The project team shifted to accommodate this in 2017, recruiting at least one Dialogue Club member or facilitator in many locations to participate in trauma workshops, so they could deepen their understanding, bring attention to their own healing, introduce those principles into Dialogue Club operations, provide

support for club members, and foster empathy within the club. Indeed, the benefits of crossover were acknowledged in both arms of the project, with Dialogue Clubs appreciating the trauma information sessions they attended in Year 1, and Healing Companions expressing a desire for conflict transformation skill training.

Dialogue Club members also wanted to address their own conflicts before reaching out to broader community conflicts, and the project team found this approach worked well. For example, in one particular community, the project team witnessed five families internally reconciling with the support of family members who were engaged in Dialogue Clubs.

With youth, an additional lesson learned was that, where trauma healing workshops were available to youth, the team saw a palpable reduction in stigma around transgenerational trauma. Where some might expect the need for trauma healing to be concentrated in those who experienced the genocide, the team found the youth very interested. As a complement to programs providing missing information about the genocide, these workshops help youth identify the undercurrents of emotions they feel, but have difficulty recognizing when parents are hesitant to speak openly about their activities during the genocide and the resulting trauma.

Twubakane Days proved to be an excellent forum for surfacing this much-needed information and for honest discourse between the generations. It also was an excellent mechanism for creating synergy between the arms of the project and greater relationships between participants, drawing greater numbers of community members into reconciliation-related discussions, and leveraging the project for greater impact. The use of Twubakane Days was greatly expanded during the project for these reasons.

The experience with Interactive Voice Response suggests it has much greater promise. In less than five months, the two stories generated almost 90,000 calls. With a stream of stories, enhanced community education in the use of the system, and analysis of the multiple data points the system provides, the system has the potential to generate widespread engagement in content increasingly tailored to community needs.

In terms of monitoring and evaluation, it was effective to employ retrospective questions at the endpoint to counteract the effects of participant bias during baseline surveys. The team hypothesized this, but it was gratifying to obtain varied responses with indicia of reliability. Based on this lesson, the team intends to use retrospective questions in similar situations in the future.

The monitoring and evaluation team also collected endpoint data near the end of activities, as is typical. However, after analysis, the team members found themselves wishing for an opportunity

to ask follow up questions of the respondents to clarify some of the apparent trends in the data and to understand some meanings behind some responses. With the project concluded, this was not practical. A lesson learned, therefore, is to collect endpoint data earlier—perhaps 90 days before activities end, in a multiyear project—to allow time for such follow up.

SUSTAINABILITY

In each project location, Youth Clubs and Dialogue Clubs continue to rear small livestock to benefit vulnerable members of the community. They, and the Healing Companions, have each committed to continuing their activities. Some have savings clubs or joint income-earning activity to fund that. Some have traveled, or have plans to travel, to neighboring Cells to share their knowledge and set up clubs there as well.

The final round of Twubakane Days (intergenerational dialogue) in each community illuminated the thoughtful plans for project sustainability in all of the eight Districts in which the project was active. For all arms of the program, the sense of responsibility and desire to continue seemed very real, and no one expressed funds as an obstacle. Furthermore, there was a powerful sense of pride in the participants' accomplishments and their role and visibility as community leaders was very palpable.

Gicumbi:

In Gicumbi, both youth and Dialogue Clubs have committed to continuing to meet once a week; the Dialogue Club would like to integrate more youth into its operations for the cross-generational exchange and to encourage youth to learn dialogic techniques to use when they communicate with peers. The youth are planning to frequently show the videos of reconciliation that they created, both within their own communities and in new places. Youth also created peace clubs for younger children that meets every Sunday; there, they created and performed sketches about problems in their community. They found that community members listened with interest when they saw what children had observed as problems.

Healing Companions also have an action plan for the next 12 months. One Healing Companion testified, "I am ready to hold a training on trauma healing. I don't have money to give you but I have knowledge that I can share with you. When we put our efforts together with other Healing Companions and call you to come for at least the basic workshop, please come and help us appeal to others."

Bugesera:

Youth in Bugesera District have pledged to continue their activities and have already demonstrated this commitment by initiating peace clubs and youth activities in their communities. They have plans to show the "Healing Our Communities" documentary both within

and outside their communities and also expect to continue conducting Twubakane Days every three months. In preparation for this, they have already chosen the discussion theme for the next round.

Healing Companions and Dialogue Club members in Bugesera have committed to continuing to meet monthly with one another and are collaborating with youth for the plans to continue Twubakane Days. In addition, they will continue their service project of rearing goats to distribute to people outside the club and facilitating talks at local community gatherings, and they have plans to organize a campaign against drugs.

Gisagara:

In Gisagara, Youth Club members will also continue to meet weekly and Dialogue Clubs and Healing Companions will meet monthly. Dialogue Club members have agreed to give a monthly contribution to their “basket fund,” which will allow their clubs to continue meeting regularly and to contribute to community members in need.

Gakenke:

Youth Clubs from all three years of the project plan to continue meeting in Gakenke. Furthermore, Rushashi Sector won the “annual reconciliation prize” this past year and as a result, the Executive Secretary of the Sector approached project participants to see how these activities can be brought to all Cells of this Sector.

Kirehe:

Dialogue Club members prefer to meet weekly going forward. Healing Companions will continue to meet monthly, and they have testified that they will continue to work on their own trauma so as to better support others.

Karongi:

Healing Companions in Karongi will continue their activities by meeting every other month to share updates, plan future activities, and discuss ways of training others. They also aim to provide active community support during the annual Commemoration of the Genocide Against the Tutsi period.

Dialogue Club members’ sustainability plans include starting a savings fund to continue the club’s activities and to continue to clean public genocide memorials.

Nyamasheke:

Healing Companions will continue their activities by meeting once a month and providing additional training to community members.

Dialogue Club members will similarly meet once a month and are open to meeting more frequently if that feels helpful to members. They are also committed to expanding Dialogue Clubs in other communities with the help of local leaders who pledged to assist this.

Rubavu:

Healing Companions have committed to continuing their activities by meeting once a month and, as in Nyamasheke, are open to increasing this per demand of the participants.

Dialogue Club members also aim to meet monthly and have decided to rotate the meeting venue between each member's family home. In this way, they hope to create greater social cohesion among Dialogue Club members.

CONCLUSION

The Healing Our Communities project team is grateful for having had the opportunity to work side-by-side with these communities and to witness the steps many people took toward healing and reconciliation. The team expresses thanks to USAID for making this possible, and respectfully submits this report.

Annexes

Performance Management Plan Years 1 and 2

Performance Management Plan Year 3

Final Report of Results: USAID Rwanda Project (Years 1 and 2)

Healing Our Communities Year 3 M&E Report

Testimonies

Success Stories

Bibliography of Products, Tools, Reports, and Studies

Healing Our Communities: Promoting Social Cohesion in Rwanda
USAID #AID-696-F-16-00002
Performance Management Plan – July 2016 through June 2018

Objectives	Indicators	Baseline	Planned vs Actual	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	Q6	Q7	Q8
	1.5 Project Launch Ceremony conducted	0	Planned	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
			Actual	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
To create effective, sustainable mechanisms for community members to address obstacles to social cohesion through community dialogues and joint projects	1.1 Number of communities in which assessment is conducted	0	Planned	8	8	8	8	16	16	16	16
			Actual	8	16	16	16	16	16	16	16
	1.2 Number of Dialogue Facilitators identified	0	Planned	16	16	16	16	32	32	32	32
			Actual	16	16	16	16	32	32	32	32
	1.3 Number of Dialogue Facilitators trained	0	Planned	0	16	16	16	16	32	32	32
			Actual	0	16	16	16	32	32	32	32
	1.4 Number of dialogues co-facilitated by project staff and trainees	0	Planned	0	32	64	64	64	96	128	128
			Actual	0	12	24	36	36	44	68	84

	1.6 Number of dialogues run by community Dialogue Facilitators	0	Planned	0	0	16	64	128	224	320	416
			Actual	0	0	58	80	144	192	288	344 ¹
	1.7 Number of projects run for community benefit and cohesion	0	Planned	0	2	8	8	8	10	16	16
			Actual	0	0	0	7	8	8	12	16
	1.8 Number of intergenerational dialogues held	0	Planned	0	8	16	24	24	32	40	48
			Actual	0	0	8	24	24	24	32	45
To establish scalable community-based approaches to trauma healing for genocide survivors and those who were not targeted during the genocide	2.1 Number of participants recruited for trauma healing workshops	0	Planned	128	256	256	256	384	512	512	512
			Actual	96	256	256	256	384	448	512	528
	2.2 Number of community trauma healing workshops held	0	Planned	12	16	16	16	24	28	32	32
			Actual	0	8	16	16	24	28	32	33
	2.3 Number of community members trained as Healing Companions (peer support)	0	Planned	0	16	16	16	32	64	64	64
			Actual	0	0	15	32	32	64	64	64
	2.4 Number of trauma info sessions held with Dialogue Clubs	0	Planned	0	3	6	8	8	8	12	16
			Actual	0	0	0	8	8	8	8	16

¹ May be updated before Oct. 31, 2019

	2.5 Number of trauma workshops led by Healing Companions	0	Planned	0	0	0	24	24	24	24	48
			Actual	0	0	3	24	24	24	28	48
	2.7 Number of community celebrations of trauma program participants	0	Planned	0	0	8	8	8	8	8	16
			Actual	0	0	0	1	8	8	8	16
To expand the role of youth in promoting social cohesion through volunteer projects and strategic social media/mobile phone activities	3.1 Number of Youth Champions trained	0	Planned	0	32	32	32	32	64	64	64
			Actual	0	32	32	32	64	64	64	64
	3.2 Number of youth projects run for community benefit and cohesion	0	Planned	0	2	8	8	8	10	16	16
			Actual	0	0	25	62	62	66	193	271
	3.3 Number of youth trained in video editing	0	Planned	0	16	16	16	16	32	32	32
			Actual	0	20	20	20	52	52	52	52
	3.4 Number of youth exchanges	0	Planned	0	0	1	2	2	2	3	4
			Actual	0	0	1	1	2	2	3	4
	3.5 Number of youth trained in creating IVR stories	0	Planned	0	0	16	16	16	16	16	16
			Actual	0	16	16	16	16	16	16	16

	3.5 Number of IVR stories distributed	0	Planned	0	0	0	5	5	5	5	10
			Actual	0	0	0	0	2	2	2	2
To create opportunities for grassroots communities to inform government officials of the barriers and opportunities for greater social cohesion	4.1 Number of meetings between participants and local government officials	0	Planned	0	8	16	24	24	40	56	72
			Actual	0	0	8	24	24	32	64	72
	4.2 Number of listening sessions with national-government officials, civil society, and INGOs	0	Planned	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	2
			Actual	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	2

Healing Our Communities: Promoting Social Cohesion in Rwanda - USAID #AID-696-F-16-00002
Performance Management Plan: Year Three (Extension Year)

Objectives	Indicators	Baseline	Planned vs Actual	Q9	Q10	Q11	Q12	Extension
1. Expand effective, sustainable mechanisms for community members to address obstacles to social cohesion through community dialogues and joint projects	1.1 Number of returning Dialogue Facilitators in refresher trainings	0	Planned	16	16	16	16	16
			Actual	16	16	16	16	16
	1.2 Number of Dialogue Club meetings	0	Planned	16	48	96	144	144
			Actual	0	44	91	134	144
	1.3 Number of projects run for community benefit and cohesion	0	Planned	0	4	8	8	8
			Actual	0	0	16	16	16
	1.4 Number of intergenerational Twubakane Days held	0	Planned	0	16	16	32	32
			Actual	0	16	16	27	32
	1.5 Number of people participating in USG-supported events, trainings, or activities designed to build mass support for peace and reconciliation (1.6.2-14)	0	Planned	625	1735	2760	6330	6330
			Actual	142	1021	2156	3319	7849
2. Strengthen scalable community-based approaches to trauma healing for genocide survivors and those who were not targeted during the genocide	2.1 Number of refresher trainings for Healing Companions	0	Planned	1	2	3	3	3
			Actual	1	1	2	3	3
	2.2 Number of trauma healing workshops for youth held	0	Planned	0	8	16	16	16
			Actual	0	16	16	16	16
	2.3 Number of trauma healing workshops for general community held	0	Planned	8	12	16	16	16
			Actual	0	0	8	16	16
	2.4 Number of community celebrations held	0	Planned	0	0	2	16	16
			Actual	0	0	0	0	16
3. Expand the role of youth in promoting social cohesion through the integration of at-risk youth into Youth Clubs and volunteer projects	3.1 Number of new at-risk Youth Champions trained and integrated into Youth Clubs	0	Planned	32	32	32	32	32
			Actual	30	30	30	30	30

	3.2 Total number of new Youth Champions trained and integrated into Youth Clubs	0	Planned	64	64	64	64	64	64
			Actual	61	61	61	61	61	61
	3.3 Number of youth projects run for community benefit and cohesion	0	Planned	0	16	32	48	48	48
			Actual	0	23	133	133	133	137
	3.4 Number of additional at-risk youth involved in project activities	0	Planned	0	64	128	168	168	168
			Actual	0	164	195	195	195	195
	3.5 Number of new Youth Champions who see themselves as contributors to their community	TBD in initial survey	Planned	TBD	TBD	TBD	55	55	55
			Actual	51	51	51	51	51	52 ¹
	3.6 Number of new Youth Champions who report who report feelings of hope for their future	TBD in initial survey	Planned	TBD	TBD	TBD	55	55	55
			Actual	54	54	54	54	54	50 ²
	3.7 Percentage of adult program participants who see at-risk youth as contributors to their community	TBD in initial survey	Planned	TBD	TBD	TBD	80%	80%	80%
			Actual	80%	80%	80%	80%	80%	80% ³
4. Create opportunities for grassroots communities to inform government officials of the barriers and opportunities for greater social cohesion	4.1 Number of listening sessions with local government officials	0	Planned	0	2	5	8	8	8
			Actual	0	0	5	8	8	8
	4.2 Listening session held with participants, INGOs, and national level government officials	0	Planned	0	0	0	1	1	1
			Actual	0	0	0	0	0	1

¹ Fewer than 55 surveys were administered, so it is unknown whether the absolute number target could have been reached after surveying the entire cadre. There is indication that the target was met or exceeded when viewing the data in terms of percentages. At baseline, 91% of those surveyed answered this question positively (51 of 56 surveys). At endpoint, 52 of 53 surveyed youth gave positive answers, a 98% positive rate. Thus, there was a 7% increase in positive responses.

² Again, absolute number results are affected by fewer surveys being administered. In percentage terms, there was a decline but it was only 2% (baseline showed 54 of 56 surveys with positive answers (96%) while endpoint showed 50 of 53 surveys with positive responses (94%). The reasons are unknown.

³ There were issues with data collection so a final measure of this indicator is not available.

5. Expand awareness of effective reconciliation approaches through the dissemination of project activities on the radio and television in the 8 target districts and nationally	5.1 Documentary film produced	0	Planned	0	0	1	1	1	
			Actual	0	0	0	1	1	
	5.2 Number of media stories disseminated with USG support to facilitate the advancement of reconciliation or peace processes (1.6.1-14):	0	Planned	a) 0	2	4	6	6	
	a) number of radio programs broadcast		b) 0	0	0	16	16		
	b) number of documentary screenings in target districts		c) 0	0	1	3	3		
c) number of documentary screenings on national TV	Actual		a) 0	2	4	6	6		
	b) 0		0	0	0	0			
	c) 0	0	0	0	0	3			

Final Report of Results USAID Rwanda Project

Submitted to:
Karuna Center for Peacebuilding

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The Karuna Center project integrates programs on community dialogue, trauma-healing, and problem-solving through collaborative activities with the aim of increasing social cohesion, promoting reconciliation, and building population's resilience to future social tensions. The intervention was implemented in 16 communities spread across Rwanda, where intergroup tensions are high. To examine whether the different intervention programs met their goals, we collected data from program participants before and after program implementation. To assess the potential of the programs to effect change, we examined a variety of outcomes that tap into the programs' objectives and theory of change, including those that focus on enhancing social cohesion, healing from trauma, encouraging open dialogues and communication, and contributing more generally to reconciliation.

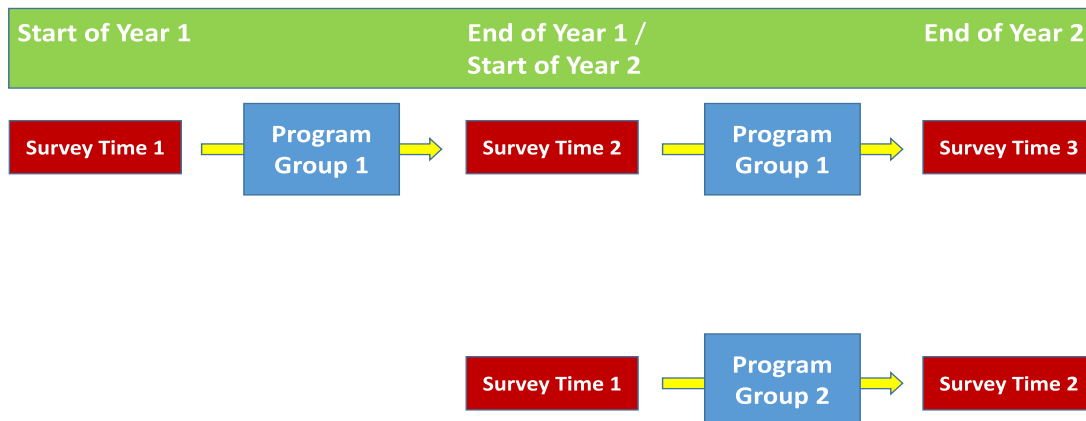
We outline our predictions here:

- 1) If the programs increased social cohesion, then we expected program participants to report greater social trust generally, as well as toward specific outgroups along the Rwandan social divides, following their participation in the programs. Participants should also be more likely to perceive that other people in Rwanda are willing to help others following their participation in the programs.
- 2) In line with the goal of fostering open dialogue, we expected program participants to be more likely to express openness toward different points of view and perspectives, and increased willingness to communicate with other groups in Rwanda, following their participation in the programs.
- 3) If the programs effectively address healing from trauma, then we expect that program participants would report lower levels of psychological suffering, such as depressive symptoms, following their participation in the programs.
- 4) Lastly, consistent with the goal of promoting reconciliation and social cohesion, we expected program participants to show greater willingness to integrate with other groups along the various social divides in Rwanda, as well as higher perceived commitment to the reconciliation process for all groups, following their participation in the programs.

Assessment Procedures and Data Collection Schedule

Data were collected from program participants via face-to-face interviews. An enumerator read the survey questions aloud to each participant and provided participants with pictorial representations of scoring scales with which they could indicate their response to each survey question. This methodology was used to ensure that all participants, regardless of their education status or literacy levels, would be able to respond to all questions similarly.

To examine the programs' effectiveness in fostering the desired outcomes we analyzed surveys collected from program participants before and after their participation in each of three programs implemented as part of this project (**Dialogue Facilitators, Healing Companions, Youth Champions**). Among those participants who took part in the intervention programs during Year 1 of the project, we analyzed surveys across three time points: (1) at the start of Year 1 prior to their participation in the program; (2) at the end of Year 1, following their participation in the program; and (3) at the end of the Year 2, long after their participation in the program had ended. Among those participants who took part in the intervention programs during Year 2 of the project, we analyzed surveys across two time points: (1) at the start of Year 2 prior to their participation in the program; and (2) at the end of Year 2, following their participation in the program. A summary of the data collection schedule for program participants from Year 1 (Program Group 1) and Year 2 (Program Group 2) is depicted below:



Program Participants and Analytic Strategy

We aimed to collect survey responses from as many program participants as possible. Based on the surveys received, we were able to identify and match responses from 150 individuals who completed surveys before participation (“pre-survey”) and many months after their participation (“post-survey”) in one of the three programs of this intervention: **Dialogue Facilitators** (32 individuals), **Healing Companions** (64 individuals), and **Youth Champions** (54 individuals). Surveys were collected from program participants in each of the eight districts in which programs were implemented, including those in the Western Province (Nyamasheke District, Karongi District, Rubayu District), Southern Province (Gisagara District), Northern Province (Gakenke District, Gicumbi District), and Eastern Province (Kirehe District, Bugesera District).

For program participants from Year 1, pre-survey responses were collected between November 2016 and February 2017, and post-survey responses were collected between August and September of 2017. For program participants from Year 2, pre-survey responses were collected between October 2017 and February 2018, and post-survey responses were collected between April and May of 2018. Numbers of program participants who completed pre-surveys and post-surveys from each year are summarized below.

Program Group		Pre-Survey Responses	Post-Survey Responses
Dialogue Facilitators	Program Year 1	17	14
	Program Year 2	15	15
	Total	32	29
Healing Companions	Program Year 1	33	27
	Program Year 2	31	28
	Total	64	55
Youth Champions	Program Year 1	20	13
	Program Year 2	34	32
	Total	54	45

To examine the effects of program participation, we conducted three primary sets of analyses. First, we combined responses from Year 1 and Year 2 program participants, to examine general trends in responses before and after their participation in each of the three programs. Second, using only data from Year 1 participants, we compared survey responses across three time points – before program participation in Year 1, soon after program participation in Year 1, and after continued participation in the program at the end of Year 2 – to test whether any observable effects of the programs were sustained over the long term. Third, we conducted more specialized analyses for survivors of the genocide who comprised slightly more than half (52%) of the adult participants who took part in one of the adult-centered programs (Dialogue Facilitators or Healing Companions), in order to investigate how program participation may have affected their feelings toward distinct groups in Rwanda. Additionally, we compared pre-survey responses of survivors who participated in one of the programs to a broader community sample of survivors who did not participate in any of the programs, to explore whether baseline responses of participating survivors may represent sentiments expressed by survivors in the general population.

Assessment Indicators

The survey included two sets of assessment indicators. One set assessed participants’ perceptions of Rwandans in general without reference to specific outgroups (named “General Indicators”). A second set (named “Outgroup Indicators”) examined participants’ attitudes and perceptions in relation to each of the following groups in Rwanda: Survivors, Perpetrators, Bystanders, Rescuers, and Returnees. All assessment indicators are reported in the table below, as well as described in the reporting of results.

General Indicators		
Measure	Item Wording	Assessed Objective
Trust in others	<i>Most people in Rwanda can be trusted</i>	Social cohesion
Perceived willingness to help others	<i>People are generally willing to help each other in Rwanda</i>	Social cohesion
Openness to other points of view	<i>If people have different points of view to give, they should be able to express those views</i>	Open dialogue and communication
Personal suffering	<p><i>Think about how you have been feeling lately, for the last few weeks:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. How much have you suddenly felt fearful, anxious, or angry, and you don't know why? 2. How much have you lost sleep over worry? 3. How much have you felt like you couldn't overcome your difficulties? 4. How much have you been feeling unhappy or depressed? 	Trauma healing
<p>Outgroup Indicators <i>(Each question was asked separately in relation to each of the following groups: survivors, perpetrators, bystanders, rescuers, returnees)</i></p>		
Trust	<p><i>To what extent do you feel you can trust most people who are:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) Survivors b) Rescuers c) Perpetrators d) Bystanders e) Returnees 	Social cohesion
Willingness to communicate with different groups	<p><i>How much are you:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. willing to share personal experiences of the conflict with them 2. willing to listen to [their] experiences of the conflict in Rwanda 3. able to have serious and open discussions about the conflict with them. 	Open dialogue and communication
Willingness for integration	<p><i>How willing are you to:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. ask a favor of them; 2. have them as a close friend; 3. join an association or cooperative with them; 4. join a church with them; 5. participate in celebrations and parties with them; 6. work with them; 7. marry them or have a close relative marry them; 8. leave their child, or the child of a family member, in their care; 9. assist them with money; 	Social cohesion and reconciliation

	10. receive monetary support from them; 11. borrow a tool or use a service from them; 12. lend a tool or give a service to them.	
Perceived commitment to reconciliation	<i>How much do you believe that people from this group are committed to working toward reconciliation in Rwanda?</i>	Social cohesion and reconciliation

Overall Trends Across Participants in Different Programs

The following analyses summarize overall trends observed over time for participants in each of the three programs.

Trust in Others

First, we examined the degree to which respondents agreed with the item “*Most people in Rwanda can be trusted.*” This item was scored on a scale ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 6 (Strongly Agree), so that higher scores would correspond with greater levels of trust.

Program Group	Mean Score – Pre-Survey	Mean Score – Post-Survey	Significance Test
Dialogue Facilitators	3.86	5.38	$t = -5.71, p < .001$
Healing Companions	4.19	5.64	$t = -10.46, p < .001$
Youth Champions	4.82	5.32	$t = -2.48, p < .05$

Participants in all three programs reported significantly higher mean levels of trust in the post-surveys than in the pre-surveys. These results strongly suggest that participants’ belief that “*most Rwandans can be trusted*” grew higher over the course of their participation in the program. While the mean difference between pre- and post-scores was statistically significant in all cases, it is worthwhile noting that the mean difference was somewhat less pronounced among participants in the Youth Champions program, who generally reported greater trust in the initial pre-surveys than did participants in the Dialogue Facilitators and Healing Companions programs.

Additionally, higher trust scores were reported in the post-survey than in the pre-survey by 21 of 29 participants in the Dialogue Facilitators program (72.4%), by 45 of 55 participants in the Healing Companions program (81.8%), and by 22 of 45 participants in the Youth Champions program (48.9%).

Willingness to Help Others

Next, we examined the degree to which respondents agreed with the item “*People are generally willing to help each other in Rwanda.*” This item was scored on a scale ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 6 (Strongly Agree), so that higher scores would correspond with greater beliefs that people are willing to help others.

Program Group	Mean Score – Pre-Survey	Mean Score – Post-Survey	Significance Test
Dialogue Facilitators	4.28	5.59	$t = -5.07, p < .001$
Healing Companions	4.34	5.72	$t = -7.60, p < .001$
Youth Champions	4.89	5.67	$t = -6.82, p < .001$

Participants in all three programs reported significantly stronger beliefs that Rwandans are willing to help others in the post-surveys than in the pre-surveys. These results strongly suggest that participants' belief that "*people are generally willing to help each other in Rwanda*" grew higher over the course of their participation in the program. While the mean difference between pre- and post-scores was statistically significant in all cases, it should be noted that participants in the Youth Champions program generally reported a stronger belief that Rwandans are willing to help each other in the pre-surveys, relative to the initial beliefs reported by participants in the Dialogue Facilitators and Healing Companions programs.

Stronger beliefs that Rwandans are willing to help others were reported in the post-survey than in the pre-survey by 21 of 30 participants in the Dialogue Facilitators program (70.0%), by 43 of 55 participants in the Healing Companions program (78.2%), and by 28 of 45 participants in the Youth Champions program (62.2%).

Openness to Other Points of View

We also examined the degree to which respondents agreed with the notion that "*If people have different points of view to give, they should be able to express those views.*" This item was scored on a scale ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 6 (Strongly Agree), so that higher scores would correspond with greater openness to other points of view.

Program Group	Mean Score – Pre-Survey	Mean Score – Post-Survey	Significance Test
Dialogue Facilitators	5.55	6.00	$t = -2.10, p < .05$
Healing Companions	5.51	5.96	$t = -3.59, p < .001$
Youth Champions	5.00	6.00	$t = -3.96, p < .001$

Participants in all three programs reported significantly greater openness to other points of view in the post-surveys than in the pre-surveys. While participants' initial scores on this item were generally high – suggesting a general openness to different points of view in the pre-surveys – participants' belief that people should be able to express different points of view appeared to grow stronger over the course of their participation in the program.

Given that pre-survey scores were already quite high (with means at or above 5.0 on the 6-point scale), relatively few participants in each program showed further openness to different points of view beyond what was demonstrated in their pre-surveys. Nonetheless, even greater openness to other points of view was reported in the post-survey than in the pre-survey by 5 of 29 participants in the Dialogue Facilitators program (17.2%), by 17 of 55 participants in the Healing Companions program (32.7%), and by 18 of 45 participants in the Youth Champions program (40.0%).

Personal Suffering

We then examined how program participants responded to four questions relevant to personal suffering, following this introductory statement: *Think about how you have been feeling lately, for the last few weeks.* Specifically, participants were asked to respond to four items that assessed personal suffering in terms of symptoms typically associated with anxiety and depression: "*How much have you suddenly felt fearful, anxious, or angry, and you don't know why?*", "*How much have you lost sleep over worry?*", "*How much have you felt like you couldn't overcome your difficulties?*" and "*How much have you been feeling unhappy or depressed?*"

These items were scored on a scale ranging from 1 (Not at All) to 5 (Very Much), such that higher scores would indicate greater levels of personal suffering. Internal consistency for this four-item scale was sufficiently high (Cronbach $\alpha = .79$), based on a test of scale reliability using the pooled responses of participants across the three programs.

Program Group	Mean Score – Pre-Survey	Mean Score – Post-Survey	Significance Test
Dialogue Facilitators	2.40	1.22	$t = 6.68, p < .001$
Healing Companions	2.80	1.43	$t = 8.19, p < .001$
Youth Champions	2.86	1.09	$t = 12.65, p < .001$

Complementing the findings for trust and willingness to help others, participants in all three programs reported significantly lower levels of personal suffering in the post-surveys than in the pre-surveys. These results suggest that, for participants in each of the three programs, reported symptoms associated with personal suffering tended to lessen over the course of participation in the program.

Additionally, lower levels of personal suffering were reported in the post-survey than in the pre-survey by 22 of 29 participants in the Dialogue Facilitators program (75.9%), by 44 of 55 participants in the Healing Companions program (80.0%), and by 39 of 45 participants in the Youth Champions program (86.7%).

Examining Trends Across Program Participants Over the Long Term

As noted above, pre-survey responses were collected from Year 1 program participants between November 2016 and February 2017, and their post-survey responses were collected soon after the program ended, between August and September of 2017. Additionally, between April and May 2018, we were able to collect responses from a small sample of 55 individuals who participated in Year 1 programs (14 Dialogue Facilitators, 27 Healing Companions, 14 Youth Champions); collecting responses from these individuals long after their program participation began allows us to test for the continuity and longevity of the trends noted above.

The table below compares mean scores for these 55 participants across three waves of assessment: before program participation (Nov 2016 – Feb 2017), soon after program participation (Aug – Sept 2017) and long after their participation in the program began (April – May 2018). Means in the same row with different subscripts indicate that the means were statistically different from each other at the .05 level of significance; means in the same row with the same subscript did not significantly differ from each other at the .05 level of significance.

Year 1 Participants	Mean Score – Pre-Survey (Nov 2016 – Feb 2017)	Mean Score – Post-Survey (Aug – Sept 2017)	Mean Score – Long-Term (April – May 2018)
Trust	4.39 _a	5.71 _b	5.14 _c
Willingness to Help Others	4.39 _a	5.65 _b	5.96 _c
Openness to Other Points of View	5.62 _a	5.96 _b	6.00 _b
Personal Suffering	2.73 _a	1.31 _b	1.18 _b

Trust. As compared to trust scores prior to participation, program participants were more likely to agree that “*Most people in Rwanda can be trusted*” after participation in the program. Although trust scores decreased somewhat between the post-survey assessment and the long-term assessments, mean scores on trust assessed in the long-term assessment remained significantly higher than trust scores assessed prior to program participation.

Willingness to Help Others. Relative to scores prior to participation, program participants reported being more likely to believe that “*People are generally willing to help each other in Rwanda*” after participation in the program, and this greater belief in Rwandans’ willingness to help others was sustained in the long term.

Openness to Other Points of View. Relative to scores prior to participation, participants tended to be more likely to believe that “*If people have different points of view to give, they should be able to express those views*” following their participation in the program; this tendency to be open to other points of view was sustained in the long term.

Personal Suffering. As compared to scores on the personal suffering measure prior to participation, participants reported fewer symptoms associated with personal suffering (*suddenly feeling fearful, anxious or angry, losing sleep over worry, feeling unable to overcome difficulties, feeling unhappy or depressed*) following their participation in the program. Lower levels of symptoms associated with personal suffering continued to be sustained in the long term.

Examining Trends Among Survivors in Relation to Other Social Groups

Other items in the surveys asked participants to indicate how they feel about five different social groups in Rwanda: survivors, perpetrators, bystanders, rescuers, and returnees. Slightly over half of the adult participants (50 individuals) who took part in one of the adult-centered programs (Dialogue Facilitators or Healing Companions) were identified as survivors of the Rwandan genocide. We therefore conducted additional analyses for this group of survivors, pooling data from those who participated either in Year 1 or Year 2 of the program, to investigate how program participation may have affected their feelings toward distinct groups in Rwanda.

Trust in Specific Groups

Along with the general trust item described above, a series of questions asked participants the extent to which they feel they “*can trust most people who*” (a) are survivors of the genocide in Rwanda; (b) who were perpetrators of the genocide in Rwanda; (c) who were bystanders during the genocide in Rwanda; (d) who were rescuers during the genocide in Rwanda; and (e) who were returnees after the genocide in Rwanda. Mean scores on these items assessed among survivors before and after program participation are provided below.

Trust in	Mean Score – Pre-Survey	Mean Score – Post-Survey	Significance Test
Perpetrators	3.44	5.33	$t = -7.60, p < .001$
Bystanders	3.89	5.50	$t = -5.92, p < .001$
Rescuers	5.53	5.88	$t = -1.73, p = .09$
Returnees	5.33	5.75	$t = -2.17, p < .05$
Survivors	5.31	5.82	$t = -3.01, p < .01$

Overall, results from the pre-survey suggest that survivors were generally less likely to trust perpetrators and bystanders than they were to trust rescuers, returnees, and other survivors prior to program participation. Comparisons of pre-survey and post-survey trust scores suggest that survivors' feelings of trust grew toward each group over the course of their participation in the program, with the possible exception of feelings of trust toward rescuers (which were already quite high prior to program participation).

Willingness to Communicate About the Conflict

Three additional items asked participants to indicate how willing they were to communicate about the conflict with people from the five different groups. Participants were asked to report how much they are “willing to share personal experiences of the conflict with them” as well as how much they feel they are “really willing to listen to [their] experiences of the conflict in Rwanda” and “able to have serious and open discussions about the conflict with them.” These three items were repeated in reference to each of the five groups (survivors, perpetrators, bystanders, rescuers, returnees) and they were scored on a scale ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 6 (Strongly Agree), so that higher scores would correspond with greater willingness to communicate about the conflict with the group in question. Among survivors, internal consistency for this three-item scale was sufficiently high in reference to perpetrators ($\alpha = .84$), bystanders ($\alpha = .85$), rescuers ($\alpha = .91$), and returnees ($\alpha = .97$), as well as in reference to other survivors, ($\alpha = .69$).

Willingness to Communicate with	Mean Score – Pre-Survey	Mean Score – Post-Survey	Significance Test
Perpetrators	4.16	5.60	$t = -5.68, p < .001$
Bystanders	4.60	5.80	$t = -5.15, p < .001$
Rescuers	5.66	5.94	$t = -2.22, p < .05$
Returnees	5.64	5.92	$t = -2.06, p < .05$
Survivors	5.88	5.99	$t = -2.20, p < .05$

Paralleling findings for trust, results from the pre-survey suggest that survivors were generally less willing to communicate about the conflict with perpetrators and bystanders, as compared to with rescuers, returnees, and other survivors. Nonetheless, survivors grew more willing to communicate about the conflict with all groups following their participation in the program than they were prior to participation.

Willingness for Social Integration

A set of 12 items asked participants to indicate how willing they were to interact with people from each of the five different groups across a wide variety of domains, including their willingness to: ask a favor of them; have them as a close friend; join an association or cooperative with them; join a church with them; participate in celebrations and parties with them; work with them; marry them or have a close relative marry them; leave their child, or the child of a family member, in their care; assist them with money; receive monetary support from them; borrow a tool or use a service from them; or lend a tool or give a service to them. These 12 items were repeated in reference to each of the five groups (survivors, perpetrators, bystanders, rescuers, returnees) and they were scored on a scale ranging from 1 (Not at All) to 5 (Very Much), so that higher scores would indicate greater willingness for social integration with the group in question. Among survivors, internal consistency for this 12-item scale was quite high in

reference to perpetrators ($\alpha = .95$), bystanders ($\alpha = .97$), rescuers ($\alpha = .99$), and returnees ($\alpha = .96$), as well as in reference to other survivors, ($\alpha = .90$).

Willingness for Integration with	Mean Score – Pre-Survey	Mean Score – Post-Survey	Significance Test
Perpetrators	3.95	4.76	$t = -5.42, p < .001$
Bystanders	3.99	4.88	$t = -5.77, p < .001$
Rescuers	4.88	4.99	$t = -1.93, p = .06$
Returnees	4.75	4.95	$t = -3.10, p < .01$
Survivors	4.83	5.00	$t = -3.46, p < .001$

In line with the trends reported above, results from the pre-survey suggest that survivors were generally less willing to integrate with perpetrators and bystanders relative to their willingness to integrate with rescuers, returnees, and other survivors. Nonetheless, survivors grew more willing to become socially integrated with all groups following their participation in the program than they were prior to participation.

Perceived Readiness for Reconciliation by Different Groups

A separate set of items asked participants to indicate how much they believed people from each of the five different groups are “*committed to working toward reconciliation in Rwanda.*” This item was scored on a scale ranging from 1 (Not at All) to 5 (Very Much), so that higher scores would indicate greater readiness for reconciliation among members of the group in question.

Perceived Readiness for Reconciliation among	Mean Score – Pre-Survey	Mean Score – Post-Survey	Significance Test
Perpetrators	4.28	4.91	$t = -3.93, p < .001$
Bystanders	4.48	4.95	$t = -2.96, p < .01$
Rescuers	4.93	5.00	$t = -1.78, p = .08$
Returnees	4.88	4.98	$t = -1.67, p = .10$
Survivors	4.75	4.95	$t = -2.15, p < .05$

Similar to the findings for trust, prior to program participation, survivors were generally less likely to believe that perpetrators and bystanders were truly committed to working toward reconciliation relative to what they believed about rescuers, returnees, and other survivors. However, comparisons of pre-survey and post-survey scores suggest that survivors’ beliefs in other groups’ commitment to working toward reconciliation grew over the course of their participation in the program; this trend was somewhat weaker in relation to rescuers and returnees, yet it should be noted that survivors’ beliefs about rescuers’ and returnees’ commitment to reconciliation were already quite high prior to program participation.

As final, supplementary analyses, we compared pre-survey responses of the 50 survivors who participated in one of the programs to a broader community sample of 198 survivors who did not participate in any of the programs. Non-participating survivors were invited to complete surveys at informational meetings held in each of the project sites, as part of broader efforts to recruit program participants. These final analyses were conducted to consider the degree to which responses of survivors who chose to participate in one of the programs may or may not represent the sentiments of the broader population of survivors in Rwanda. If the pre-survey responses of

participating survivors were considerably different from those of non-participating survivors, this would suggest that there were certain characteristics of survivors who chose to participate that distinguished them from the broader survivor population; however, if the pre-survey responses of participating survivors are generally similar to those of survivors who did not participate in any of the programs, this can enhance our confidence that sentiments expressed by participating survivors are likely representative of those held by other survivors in Rwanda. Mean scores for participating survivors and non-participating survivors are summarized in the table below.

Trust in	Mean Score – Pre-Survey Participating Survivors¹	Mean Score – Community Non-Participating Survivors	Significance Test
Perpetrators	3.36	3.36	$t = .01, ns$
Bystanders	3.76	3.71	$t = -.16, ns$
Rescuers	5.56	5.60	$t = .20, ns$
Returnees	5.31	5.46	$t = .89, ns$
Survivors	5.32	5.29	$t = -.16, ns$
Willingness to Communicate with			Significance Test
Perpetrators	4.13	4.45	$t = 1.44, ns$
Bystanders	4.50	4.65	$t = .62, ns$
Rescuers	5.58	5.74	$t = 1.24, ns$
Returnees	5.65	5.64	$t = -.11, ns$
Survivors	5.89	5.67	$t = -2.09, p < .05$
Willingness for Integration With			Significance Test
Perpetrators	3.90	3.88	$t = -.17, ns$
Bystanders	3.90	3.97	$t = .42, ns$
Rescuers	4.78	4.81	$t = .28, ns$
Returnees	4.75	4.75	$t = .06, ns$
Survivors	4.83	4.76	$t = -.89, ns$
Perceived Readiness for Reconciliation among			Significance Test
Perpetrators	4.25	4.27	$t = .13, ns$
Bystanders	4.42	4.45	$t = .25, ns$
Rescuers	4.90	4.90	$t = .10, ns$
Returnees	4.87	4.81	$t = -.73, ns$
Survivors	4.76	4.88	$t = 1.70, ns$

Results show that, in nearly all cases, there were no significant differences in initial survey responses among survivors who participated in one of the programs and survivors in the community sample who did not participate in any of the programs. Only one significant difference emerged between these groups: survivors who chose to participate in one of the programs reported being generally more willing to communicate with other survivors about the

¹ The reader should note that the mean estimates for survivors' pre-survey responses reported here may differ slightly from the mean estimates for survivors' pre-survey responses reported previously because of slight differences in the numbers of cases available for statistical analysis in reference to each comparison.

conflict relative to survivors who chose not to participate in any of the programs. Importantly, comparisons between participating survivors and non-participating survivors yielded no significant differences in their initial feelings of trust toward, willingness to communicate with, or willingness to integrate with perpetrators and bystanders. These groups of survivors also reported similar perceptions of readiness for reconciliation among perpetrators and bystanders. Taken together, results from the supplementary analyses suggest that survivors who chose to participate in one of the programs held initial attitudes that were generally similar to those who did not choose to participate the programs, rather than seeming to represent a distinct subset of survivors in Rwanda.

Summary and Conclusion

To sum up, the results of this research show positive effects of program participation across almost all assessment indicators. Following participation in the programs (compared to pre-program scores), participants across the three different programs showed (1) greater willingness for social cohesion and reconciliation as assessed through social trust, perceptions of people's willingness to help others, as well as survivors' willingness to socially integrate with other groups and perceiving greater commitment to reconciliation among those groups; (2) greater openness to dialogue as assessed through openness to different perspectives and willingness to communicate openly with members of different outgroups; and (3) greater trauma healing as assessed by an index of psychological suffering. Importantly, these effects were sustained over time among Year 1 program participants, who were surveyed long after their participation at the end of Year 2. Moreover, supplemental analyses with survivors show encouraging trends toward greater social trust toward, and greater willingness to communicate and integrate with, each of the other specified groups.

Healing Our Communities Year 3 M&E Report

October 2019

Su Flickinger
M&E Consultant

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Background

As part of the efforts to build a peaceful and resilient nation, Karuna Center for Peacebuilding (USA based organization), in partnership with AEGIS Trust/Rwanda, Healing and Rebuilding Our Communities (HROC – Rwanda) and Institute of Research and Dialogue for Peace (IRDP) worked together for three years in Rwandan communities with youth and adults. Using a combination of trauma healing, dialogue, joint problem solving and volunteer projects, the project sought to address some of the divisions within 16 communities.

Healing Our Communities project focused this past year on youth, particularly youth identified as at-risk, while continuing the work with healing companions and dialogue club facilitators. While youth had been part of the project for the first two years, more deliberate effort was made this year to include a group of at-risk youth in a new group of youth champions. “At-risk” was defined as those who had been in rehabilitation centers or prisons or were considered to be delinquents in their communities.

For more detail regarding the work with the youth, refer to the Aegis HOC Annual Report of 2019. That report includes explanation of the youth clubs, examples of the activities, and quotes from the youth regarding the effect the project has had on their lives. This evaluation and that report both point to the positive impact this project had on the youth and their communities as well as the importance of continuing and expanding these efforts.

Method

Through a combination of surveys and discussions, information was gathered from both youth and adult participants in the program to gain a picture of the current attitudes and perspectives of those involved.

Youth Survey: The survey focused on seven key areas of change:

- Psychological well-being
- Connection to and influence of community
- Experiences with isolation/connection
- Level of trust in others
- Collaboration with other youth
- Feeling of agency and responsibility
- Understanding of effects of genocide

Healing Companions & Facilitators Survey:

The survey for the Healing Companions and Dialogue Club Facilitators, focused on:

- perspective of at-risk youth
- skills as a Healing Companion or Facilitator
- sense of hope for the future
- how they see themselves using their skills

Dialogue Club Discussions: A few questions were asked of the adults in eight Dialogue Clubs, focused on their perspective on at-risk youth. Notes were taken by the facilitator.

Both youth and Healing Companions/Facilitators also completed these surveys at the beginning of this third year. Those results are referred to throughout this report.

Both surveys were conducted by enumerators

Method, cont.

For the youth, several questions in this final survey asked them to also look back a year ago and respond with how they saw themselves then. The decision to do this was based on two factors. One was that all the women in the at-risk group and a few men did not complete the initial survey and so there was no comparison data from which to see what change might have occurred.

The second factor was that the responses from that initial survey were overwhelmingly positive, indicating that, for most of the youth, little change was necessary in order for them to have stable, comfortable relationships and lives.

The project staff suspected that the youth were often giving what they considered to be “appropriate” or “expected” responses, rather than say what they really thought at that time. By asking the youth to think about both now and then, the staff hoped for more accurate responses.

This retrospective approach offered insight, both to the youth themselves and to the project, into changes that took place in their attitudes and perspectives.

Participants – Healing Companions, Facilitators, and Dialogue Clubs

Survey -

68 adults: 52 Healing Companions

16 Dialogue Club Facilitators.

All have been part of the project for two years and some have participated for three years.

Six Facilitators and 12 Healing Companions who had completed the survey at the beginning of the year, did not complete this final one.

Dialogue Club Discussions -

Around 200 adults (~ 25 each) from eight Dialogue Clubs. Facilitators for these discussions came from Institute of Research and Dialogue for Peace (IRDP) staff.

Participants - Youth

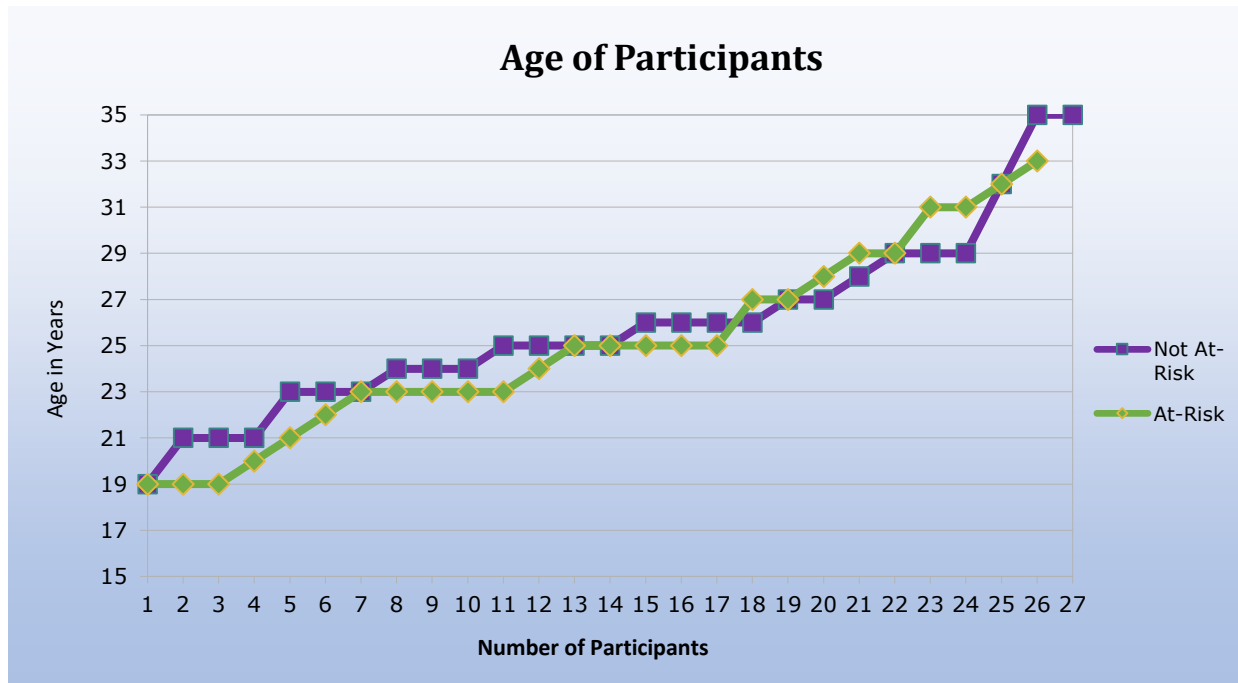
Demographics

53 youth: 27 identified as not-at-risk and 26 as at-risk. All new to the project this past year.



Age:

- Not-at-risk group 19-35 years
- At-risk group 19-35 years



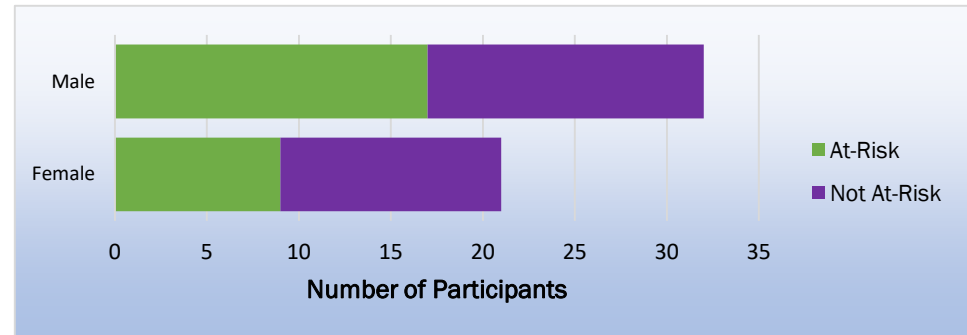
Participants - Youth

Demographics



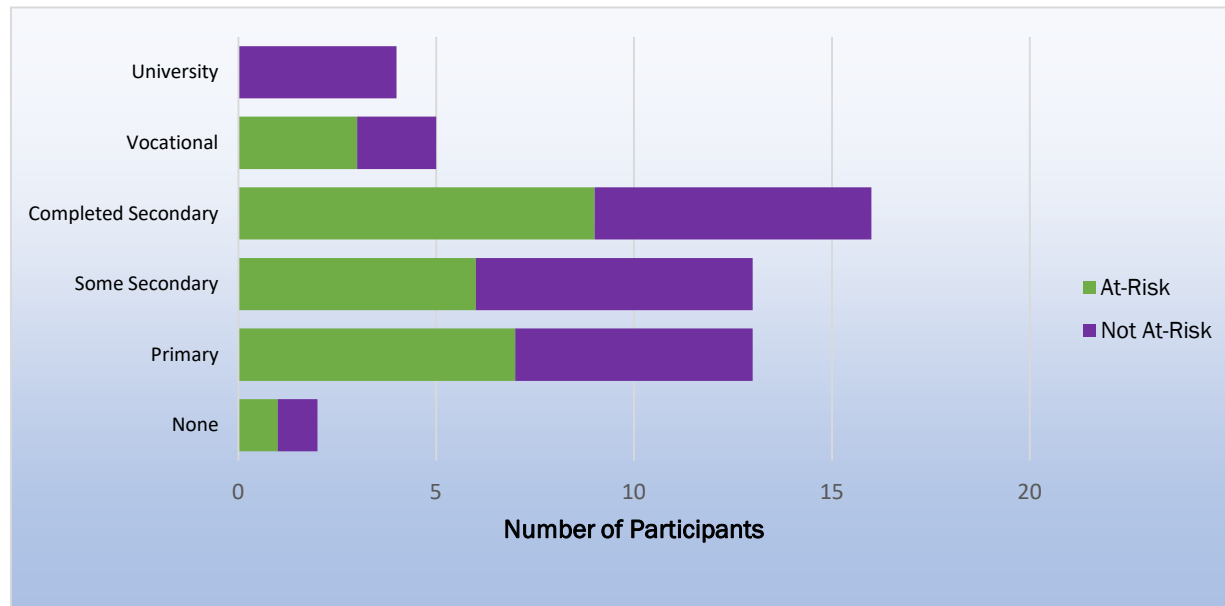
Gender:

- Not-at-risk group: 12 women and 15 men
- At-risk group: 9 women and 17 men



Education:

- Not-at-risk group: ranged from no education to university
- At-risk group: ranged from no education to some vocational training

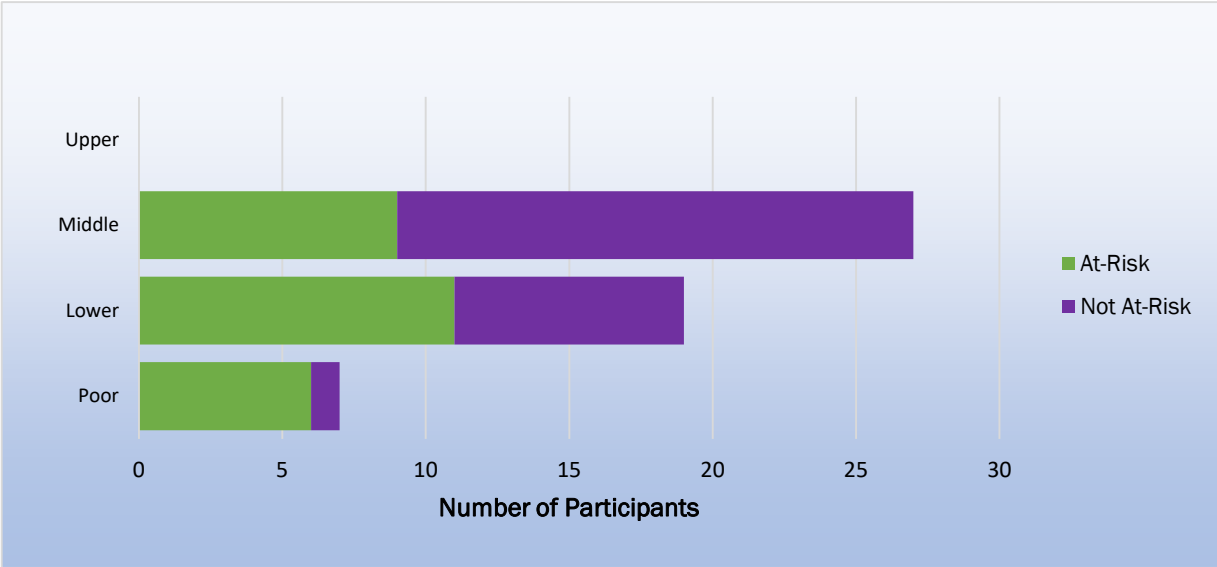


Participants - Youth



Socioeconomic Class:

- Not-at-risk group: two-thirds were from middle class
 - At-risk group: two-thirds were from lower class or poor
- None of the participants from either group identified as upper class









Youth - Survey

Questions in the survey explored:

Key areas of change

Project staff identified seven key areas of change for the youth:

-  Psychological well-being
-  Connection to and influence of the community
-  Experiences with isolation and connection
-  Level of trust in others
-  Collaboration with other youth
-  Feeling of agency and responsibility
- Understanding effects of genocide

Project activities

For the end-of-project survey, participants were also asked about their reactions to the various project activities.

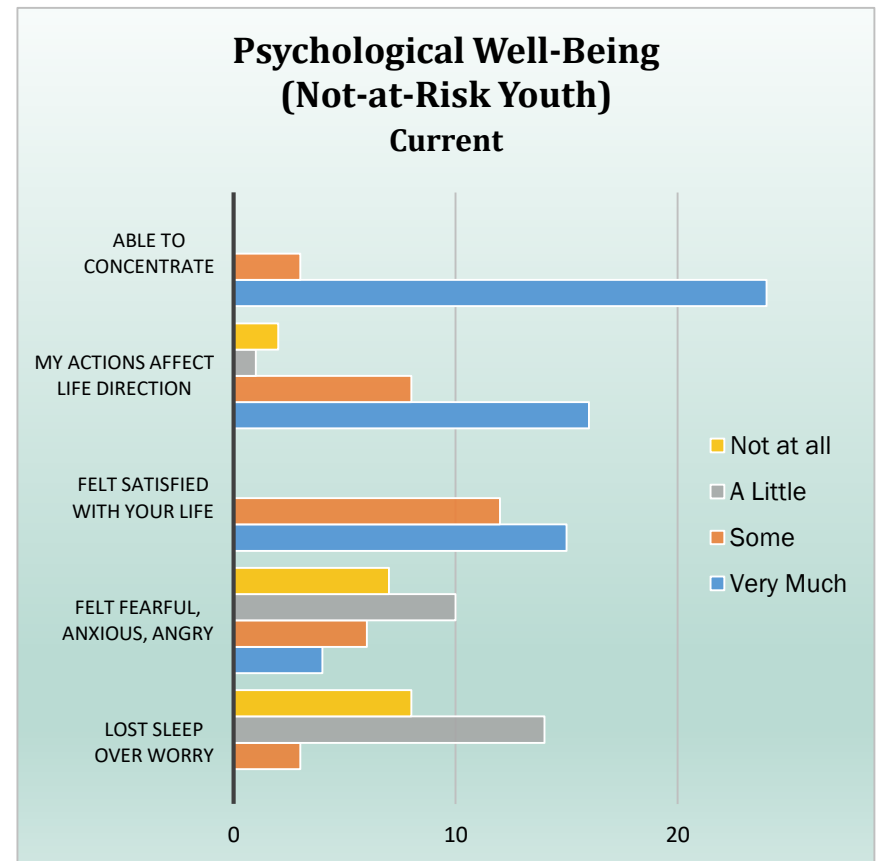
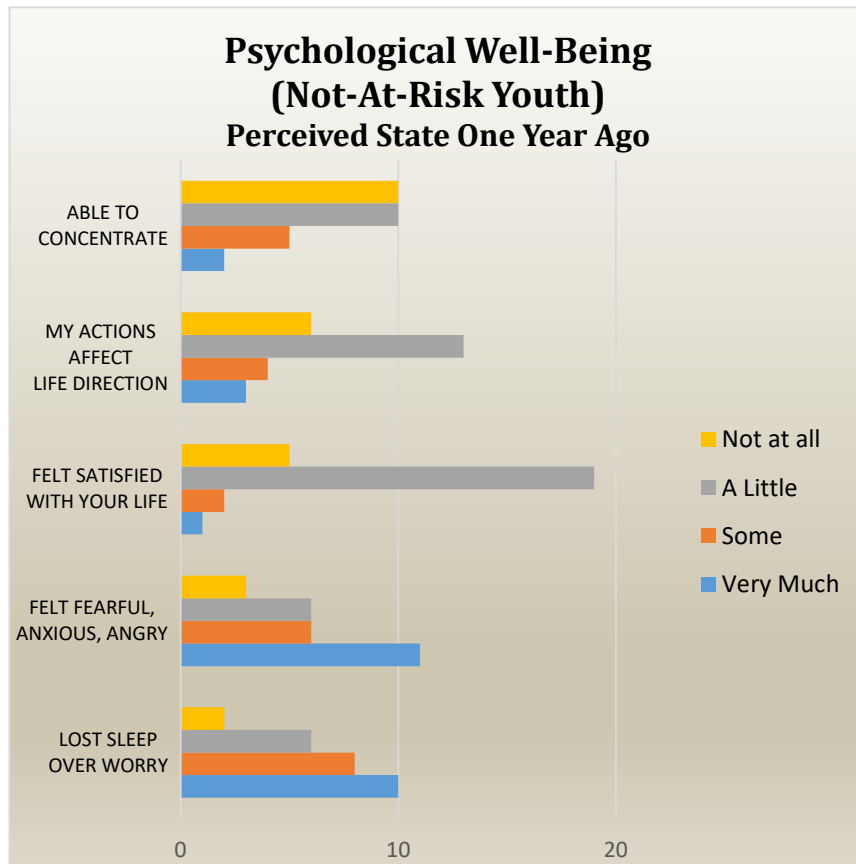
Youth

Youth were asked questions that focused on how they were coping with life emotionally/psychologically.

Not-at-Risk Youth (27)

Retrospective

Current



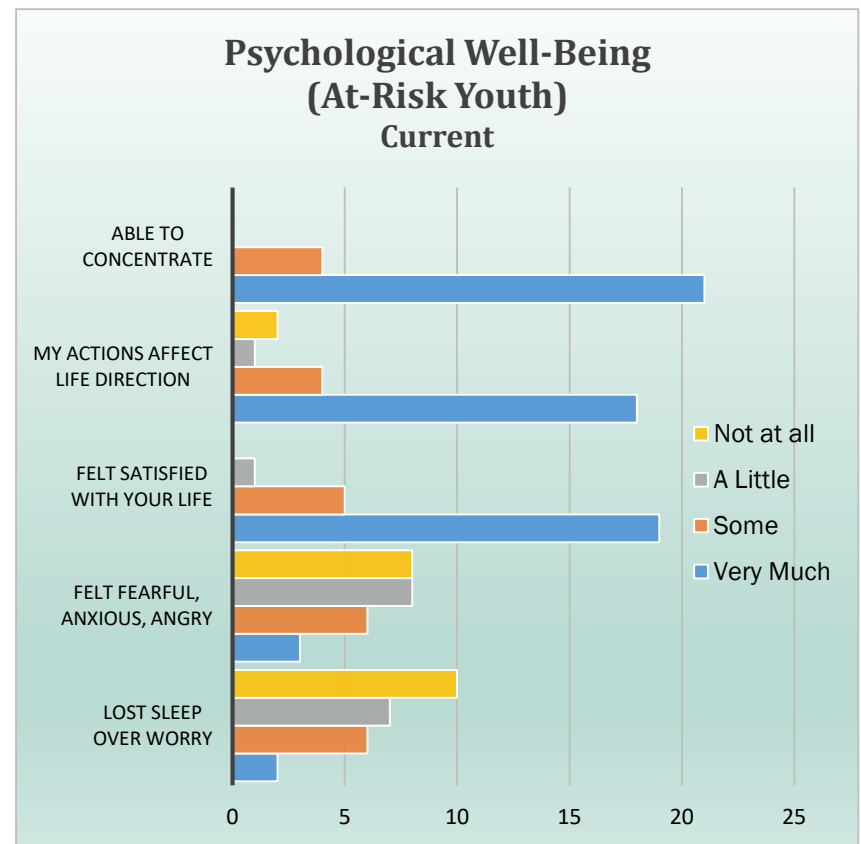
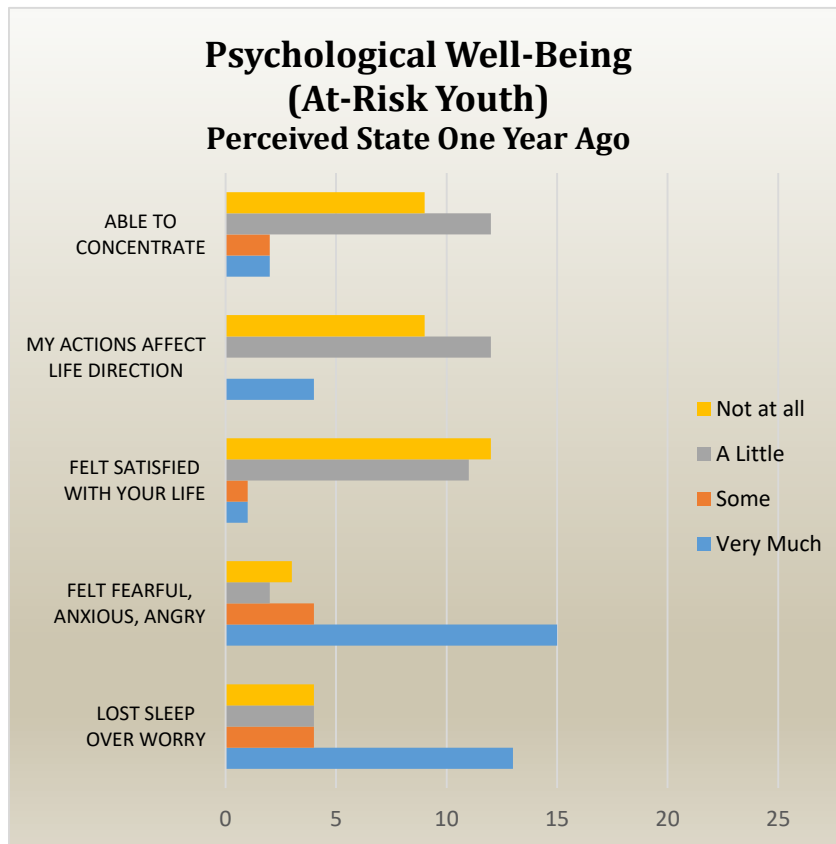
section 02

Youth

At-Risk Youth (26)

Retrospective

Current



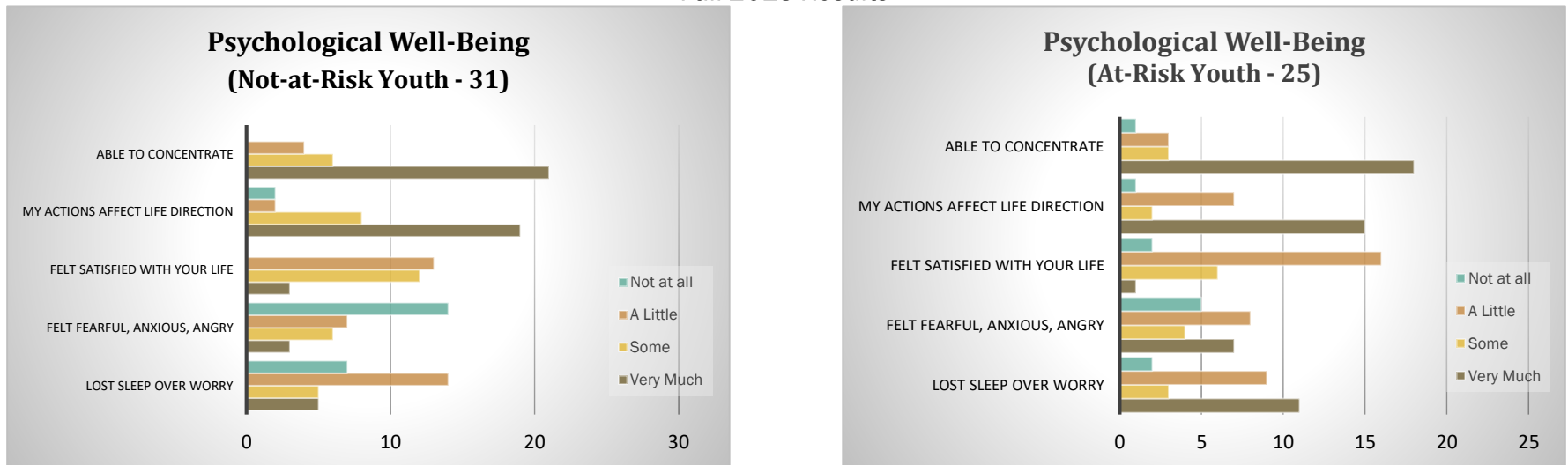
section 02

Youth

Beginning of project year to end comparison

For both groups, their original responses from Fall 2018 were similar to their responses about their current state. Their retrospective view indicates that they were having a more difficult time than they originally expressed.

Fall 2018 Results



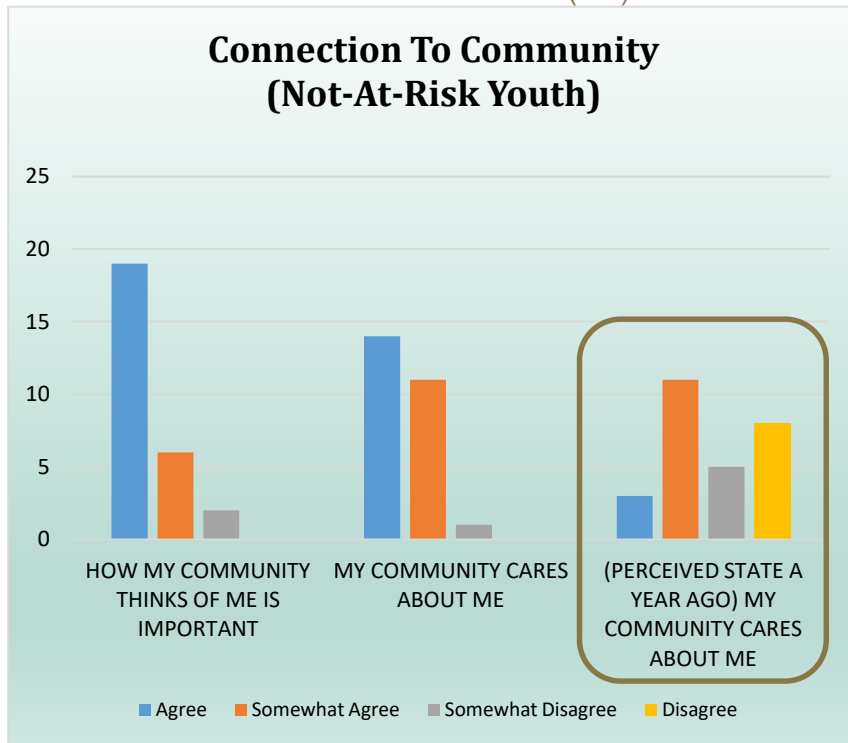
Analysis

Both groups of youth indicate a distinct difference between how they feel now and how they thought of themselves one year ago. Most of the youth see their ability to concentrate, level of satisfaction with life, and sense that they can affect what happens to them as having improved over the past year. Their level of fear or anxiety has diminished and they report sleeping better than they were a year ago. A few still report having difficulty in some of these areas, an indication that more or different effort is necessary to fully address what is happening in their lives.

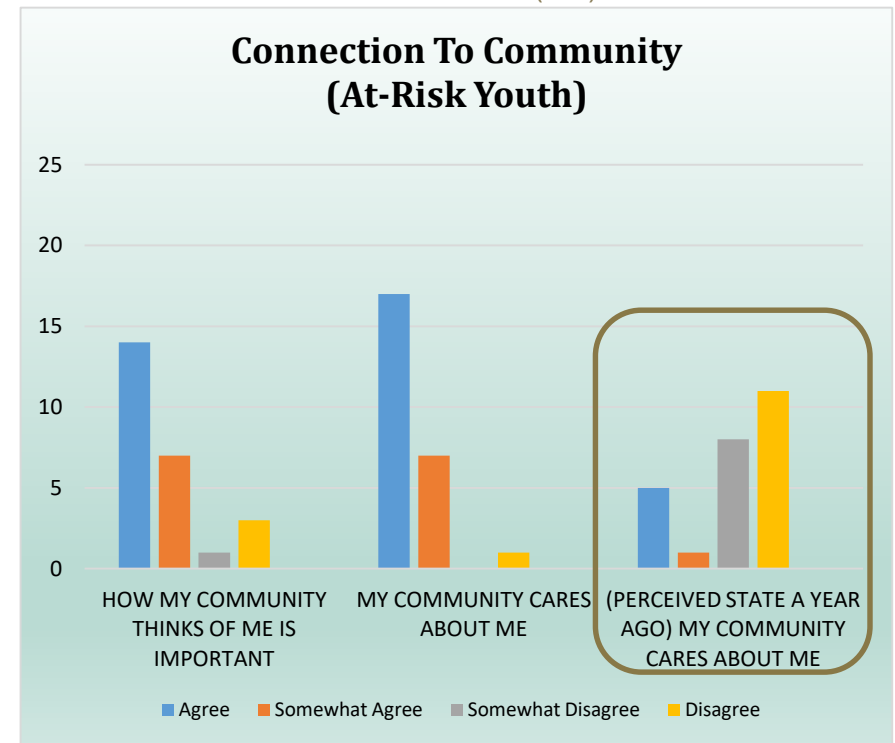
Youth

To explore how the youth saw their connection to their community, the questions probed into whether they cared about how the community viewed them and whether they thought the community cared about them.

Not-at-Risk Youth (27)



At-Risk Youth (26)

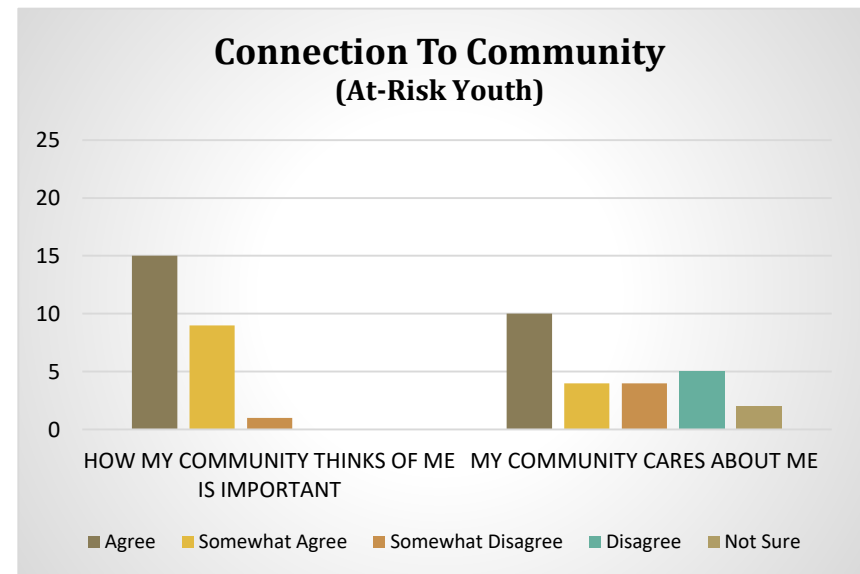
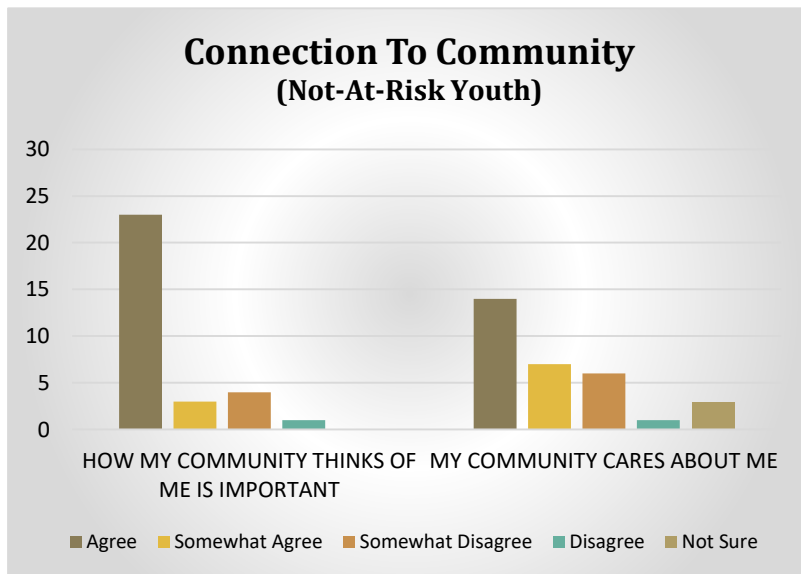


Youth

Beginning of project year to end comparison

Youth from both groups indicated both at the beginning of the year and now that how the community thinks of them is important. Both groups had more positive reactions a year ago regarding whether the community cared about them than how they now look back at that time.

Fall 2018 Results



Analysis

This data shows clearly that for both the not-at-risk and at-risk youth, their connection to the community is important. Both groups also indicate that their perception of whether the community cares about them has shifted, from a year ago, toward a firmer belief that it does care. This perhaps is at least partly due to the work the youth have done within the communities. As they have been more involved and become known, more people care about them as individuals.

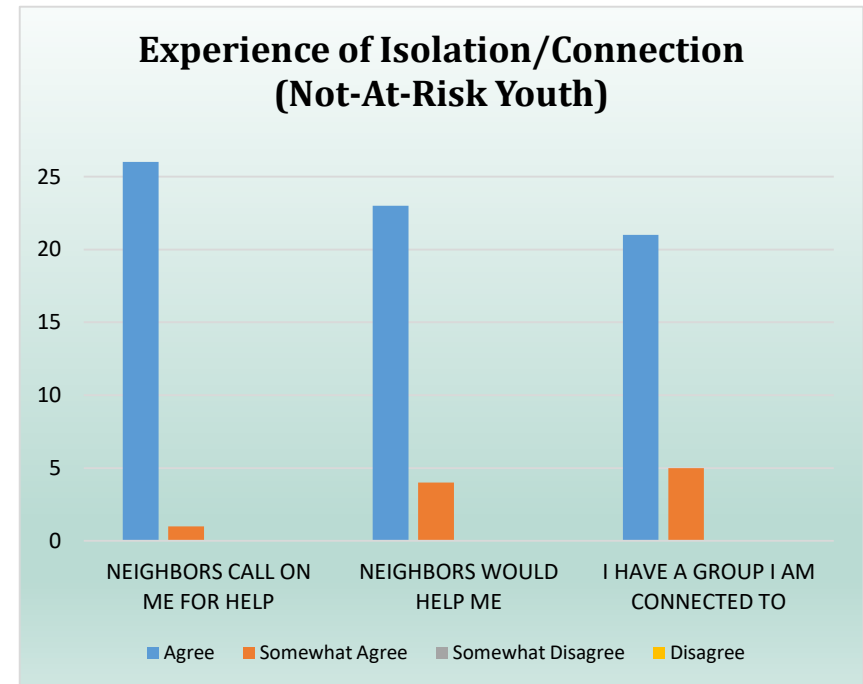
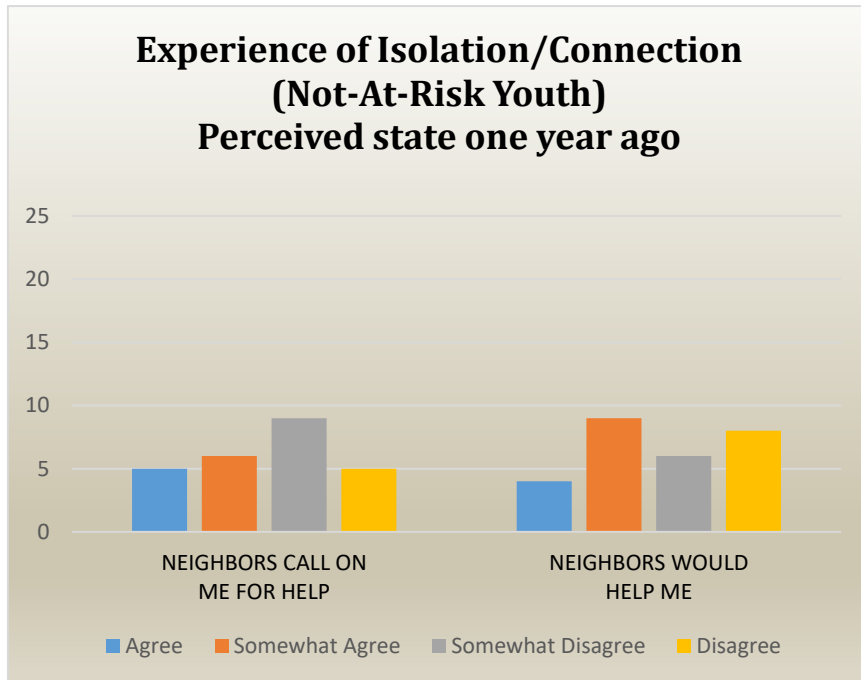
Recommendation

These results point to areas for consideration for the communities moving forward and is important information to share with the community facilitators and healing companions as well as the local partner organizations. Youth care about the community's opinion, so continuing to find ways for the community to express need for and appreciation of the youth could be an important means of keeping the youth connected.

Youth

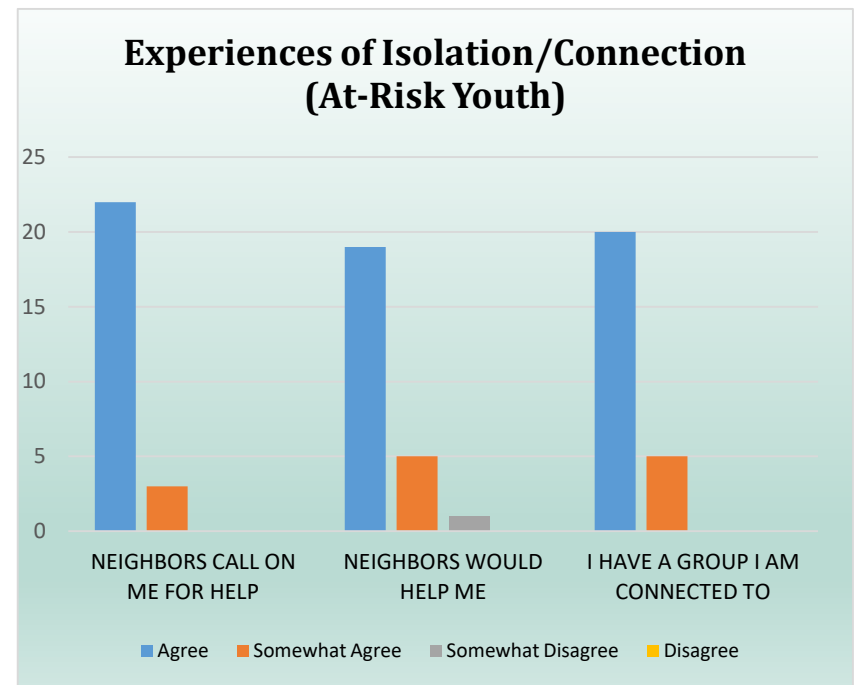
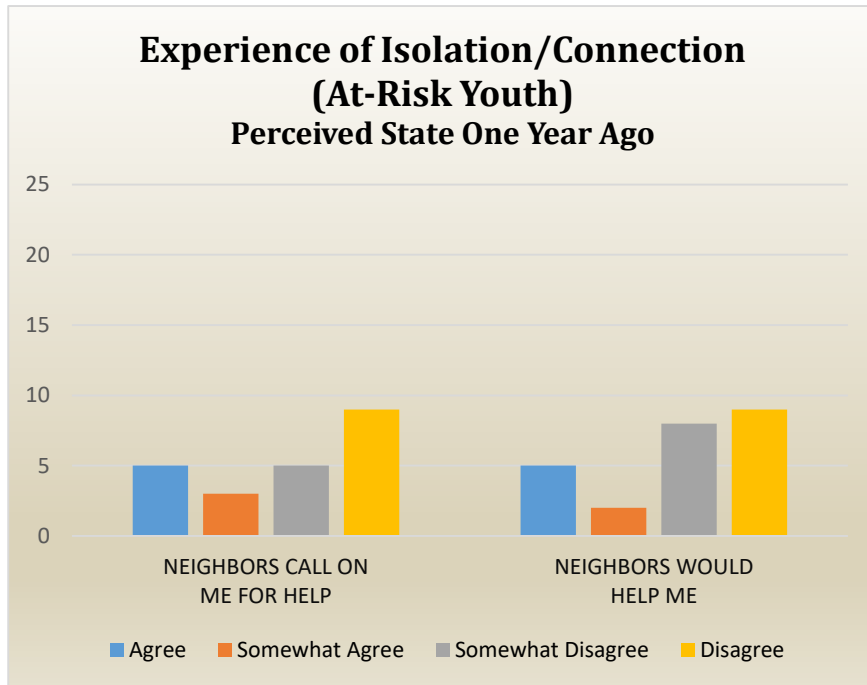
How isolated or connected the youth felt was explored through asking them about helping or being helped as well as whether each of them was part of a group. If they did have a group, they were asked to give a brief description of it.

Not-at-Risk Youth (27)



Youth

At-Risk Youth (26)



In an open-ended question, youth were asked to describe/identify the group they felt connected to:

Building peace – 11 NAR, 5 AR

Savings group – 5 NAR, 3 AR

Peace and Income – 2 NAR, 6 AR

Income related – 6 NAR, 1 AR

Help each other – 5 AR

Sport, Socialize – 2 AR

Youth group – 1 NAR

Singing/praying – 1 NAR

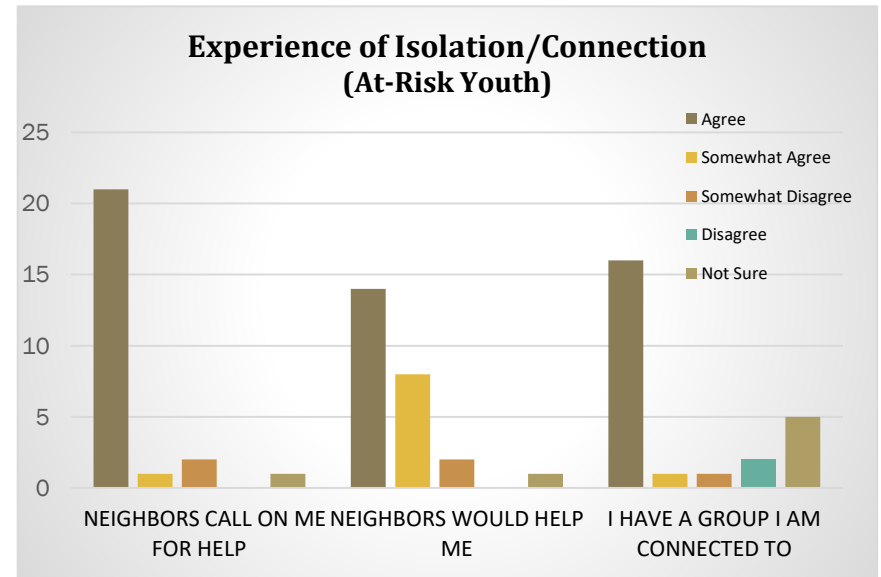
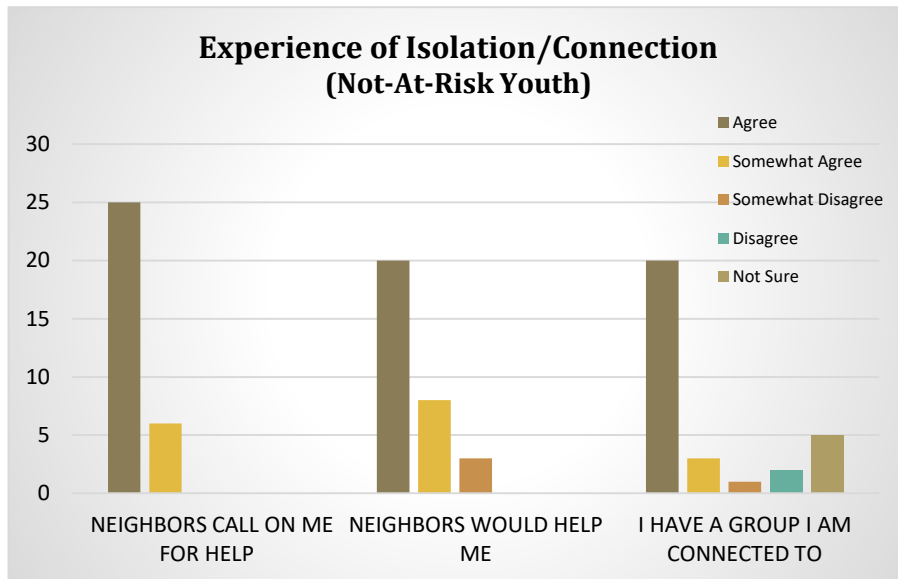
section 02

Youth

Beginning of project year to end comparison

While both groups had initially indicated a year ago that they would be asked for help and would themselves ask for help, their responses now looking back a year show a bigger change in that perception. Now, they expressed far more doubt about whether they would have been willing to ask for help or whether neighbors would have asked them. Most of the youth in both groups have had groups they are part of and a number of those groups have stayed the same all year.

Fall 2018 Results



Fall 2018 – In an open-ended question, youth were asked to describe/identify the group they felt connected to:

Savings group – 7 NAR, 6 AR	Youth group – 4 NAR, 5 AR	Building peace – 6 NAR
Income related – 5 AR	Fight against alcohol/drugs – 2 NAR, 1 AR	
Singing/praying – 2 NAR	Sport, Socialize – 1 each NAR	

Youth

 Experiences of isolation and connection

ANALYSIS

A change has taken place in terms of the youths' view of what they were experiencing a year ago and what they are experiencing now in terms of being connected. Both groups expressed doubt about whether they would ask for or be asked for help before this project began and now most see it as very possible. That kind of interaction is one indication that both groups of youth have begun to find ways to be part of their communities.

Recommendation

As with the previous area, Connection to the Community, the interaction the youth had with other youth and with community members through projects, work, and discussions resulted in a stronger sense of belonging.

The more connected people are to those around them, and perhaps particularly to those from different groups, the more likely they are to be part of strengthening the community's resilience and cohesiveness.

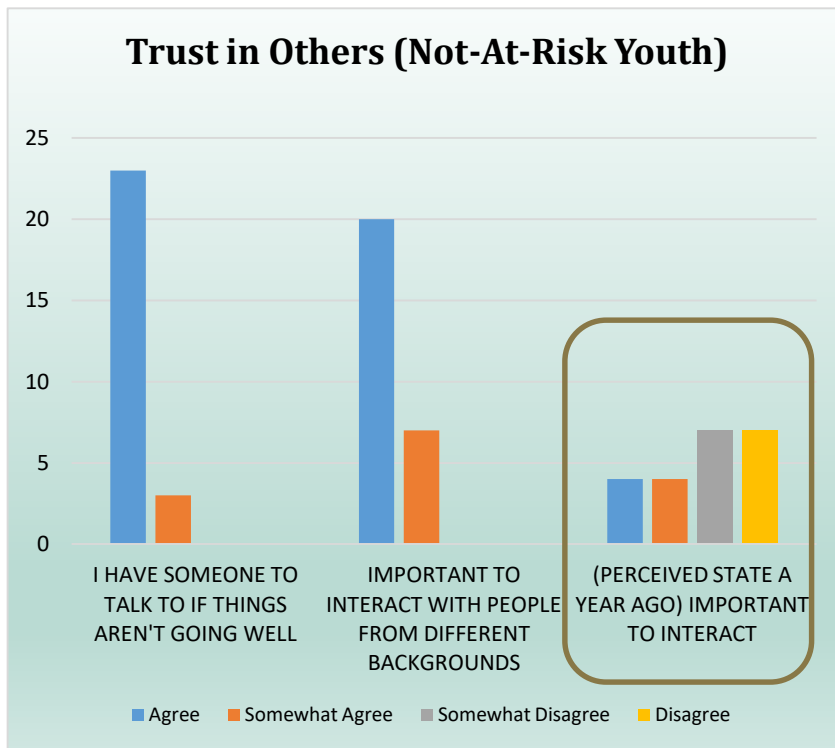
This information should be shared with community leaders, the community facilitators and healing companions as well as the local partner organizations.

Youth

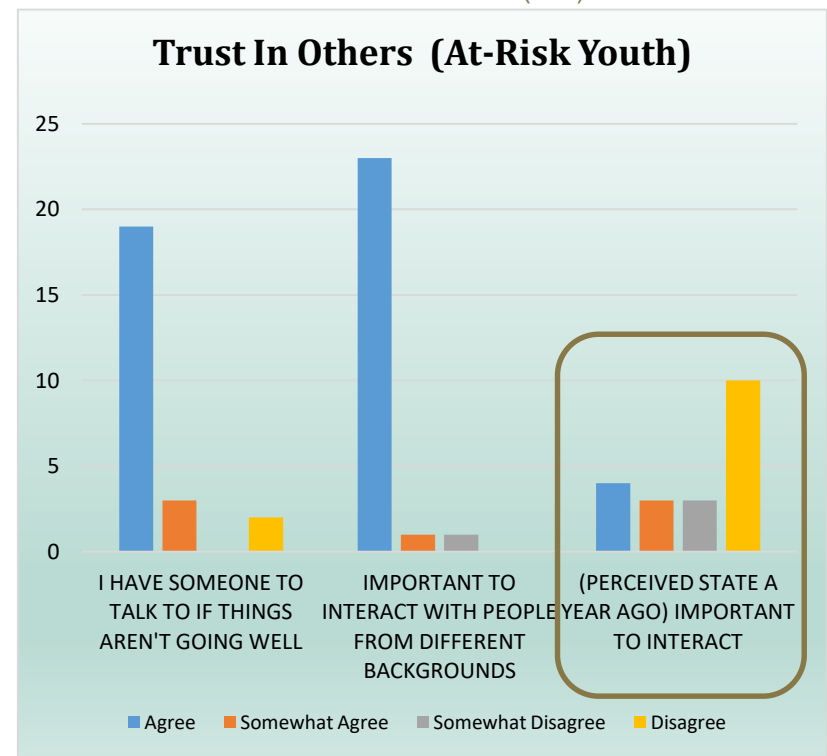


To look at the participants' level of trust, they were asked about having someone to talk with and whether it was important to interact with those from different groups.

Not-at-Risk Youth (27)



At-Risk Youth (26)



section 02

Youth

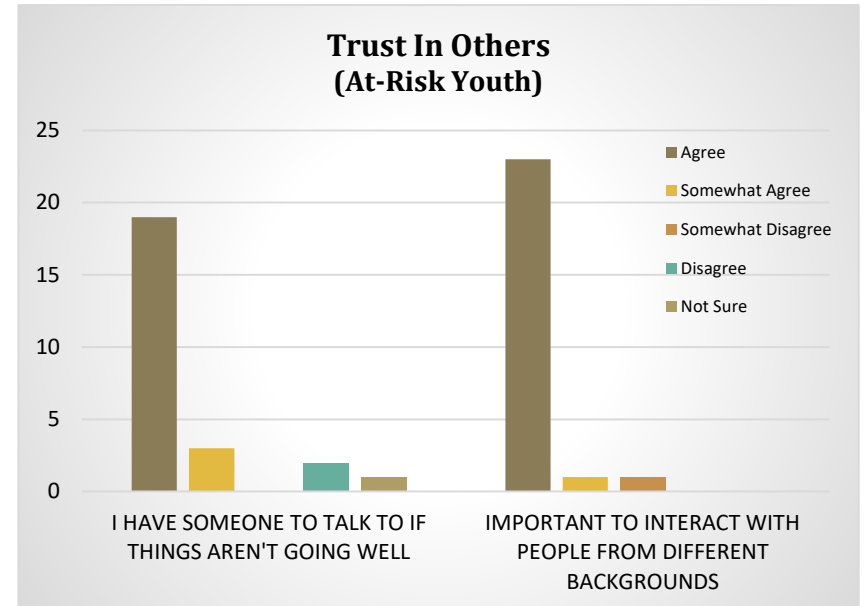
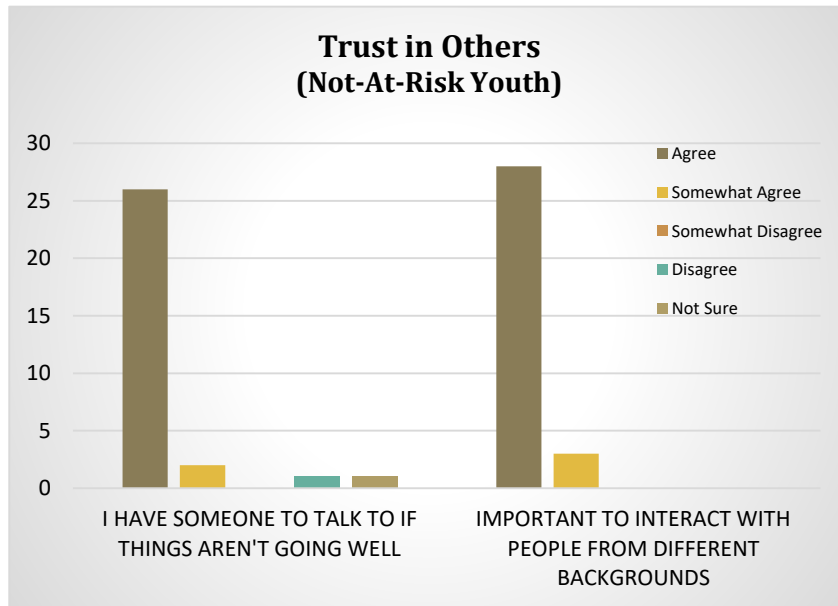


Trust in others

Beginning of project year to end comparison

Most of the youth have someone they can talk with and that doesn't seem to have changed over the course of the year. Looking at their responses to the retrospective question, their ideas about whether interacting with those from different backgrounds has gone through some change. Now, most indicate that that kind of interaction is important.

Fall 2018 Results



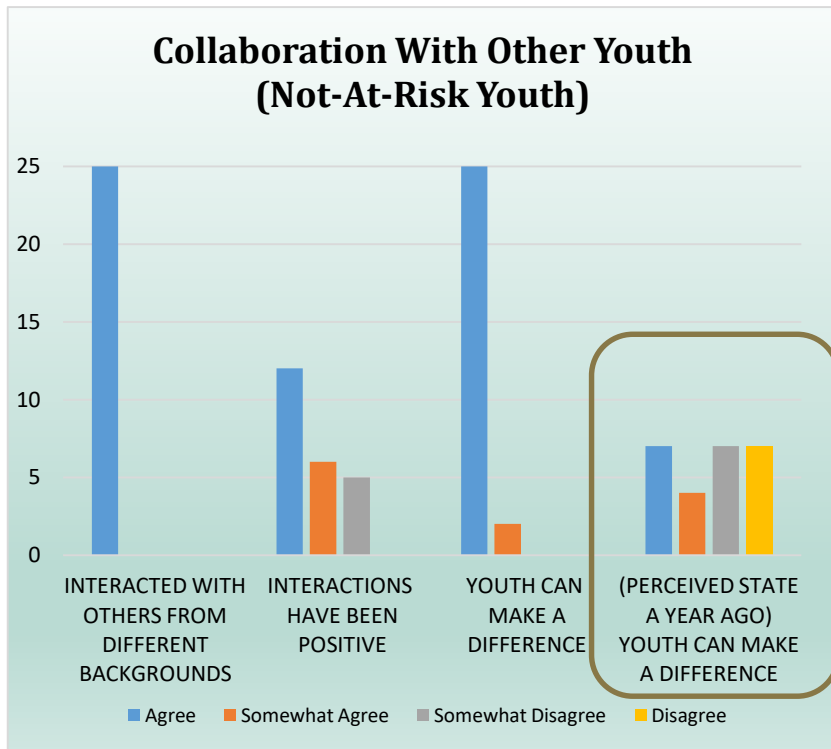
Analysis

There are a number of ways of exploring trust and these questions offer just one view of it. They do indicate that both groups of made some shifts in their thinking regarding how they viewed interacting with people from other backgrounds. That change can open up opportunities for them to develop broader connections that then hold out hope for more resiliency when tensions arise.

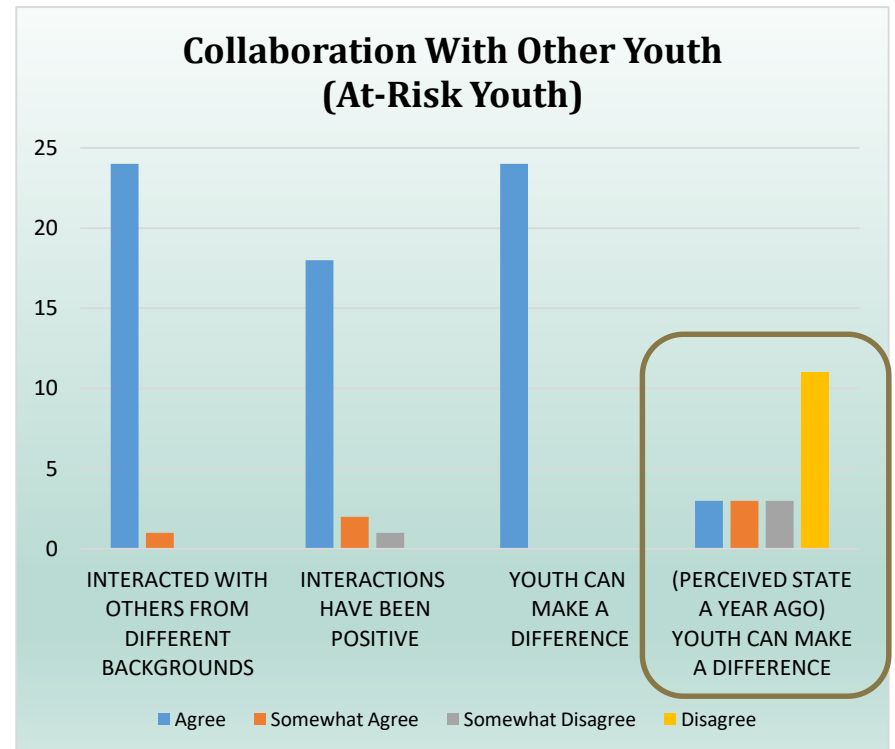
Youth

Collaboration with others was explored through questions about interaction and about whether they thought youth can make a difference in their communities.

Not-at-Risk Youth (27)



At-Risk Youth (26)



Youth

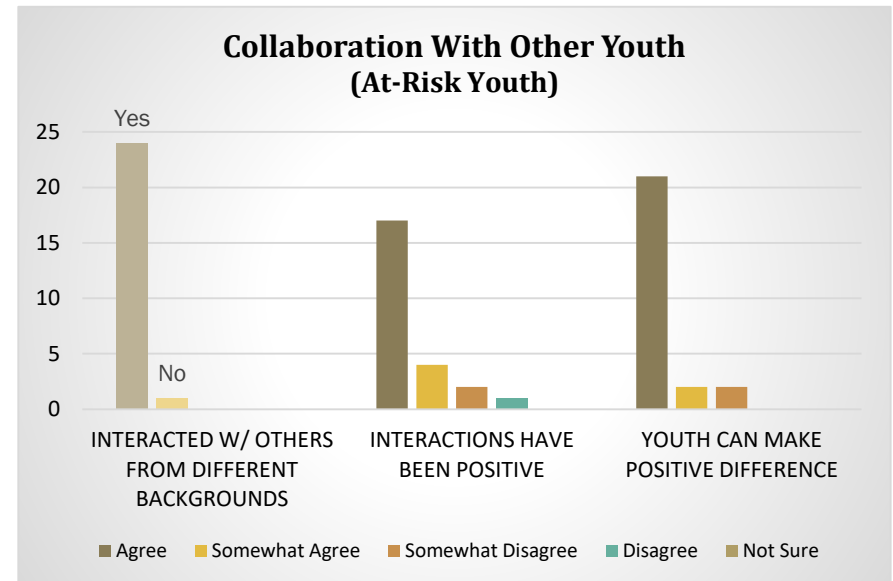
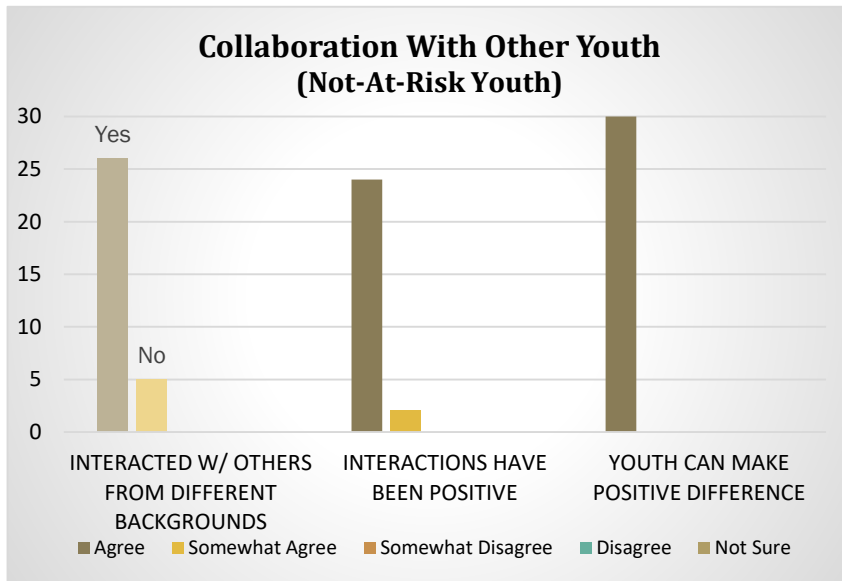


Collaboration with other youth

Beginning of project year to end comparison

There was not much of a change for either group regarding whether they have interacted with other groups and whether those interactions were positive. Looking at the retrospective question about whether youth can make a difference shows a definite change over the past year for youth in both groups.

Fall 2018 Results



Analysis

The participants' change of attitude about whether youth can make a difference highlights the importance of enabling youth to find ways to work within their community and to work with other youth. Many of the youth were involved in projects of helping others, being part of income-generating efforts, and being part of discussions about what was happening in their communities. The Aegis HOC Annual Report describes many of these activities. Those experiences emphasize for youth the power of being involved.

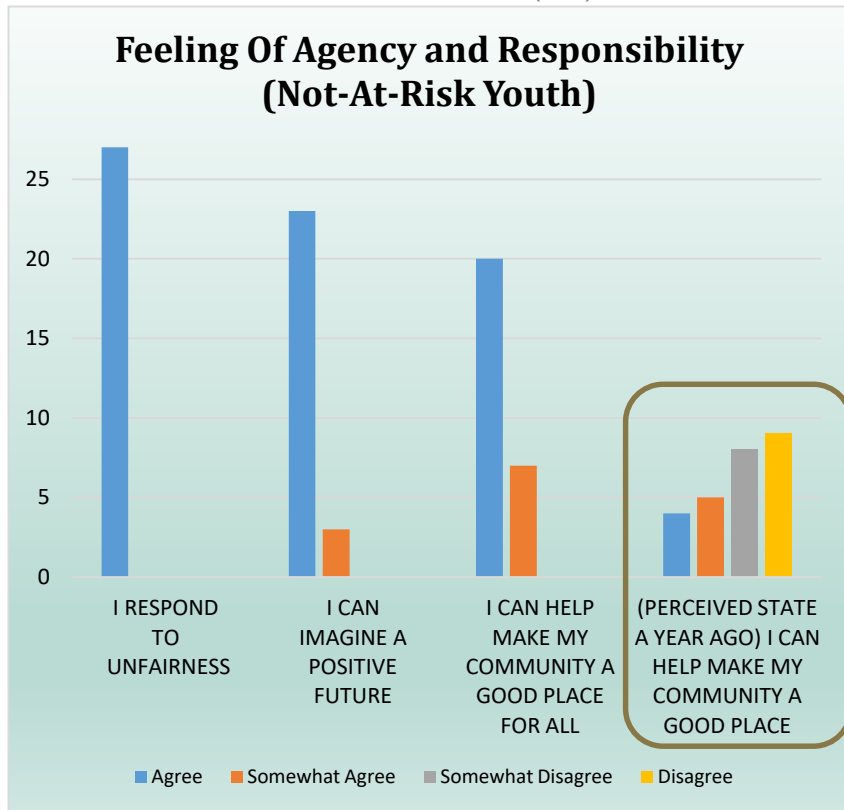
Youth



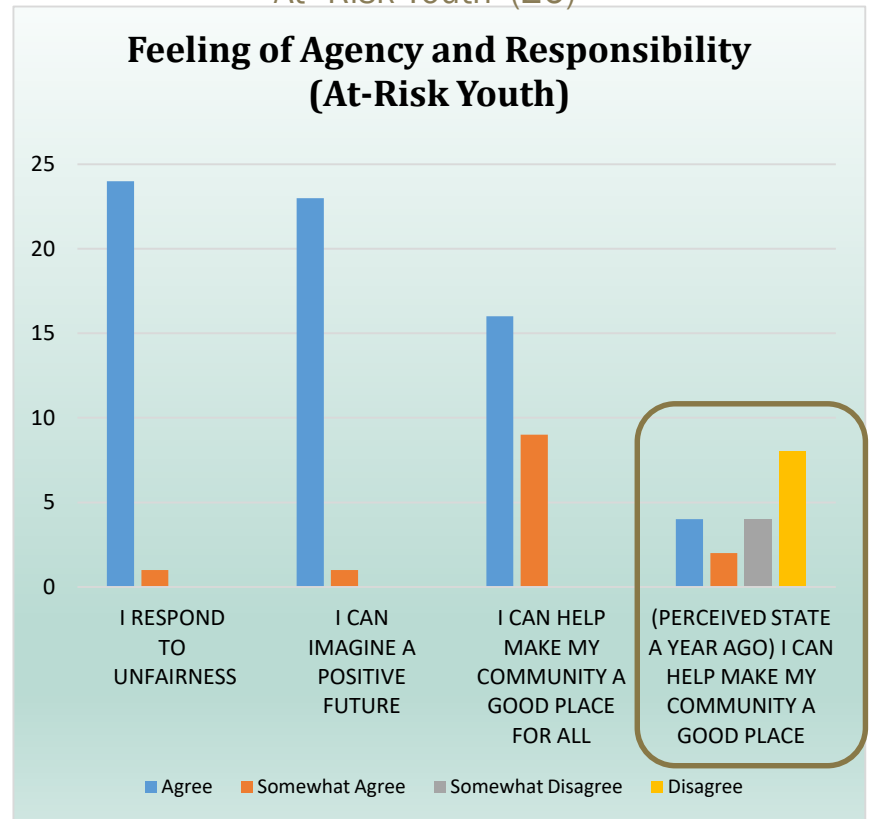
Feeling of agency and responsibility

The questions regarding agency and responsibility focused on how the youth saw themselves acting and whether they thought they could make a difference.

Not-at-Risk Youth (27)



At-Risk Youth (26)



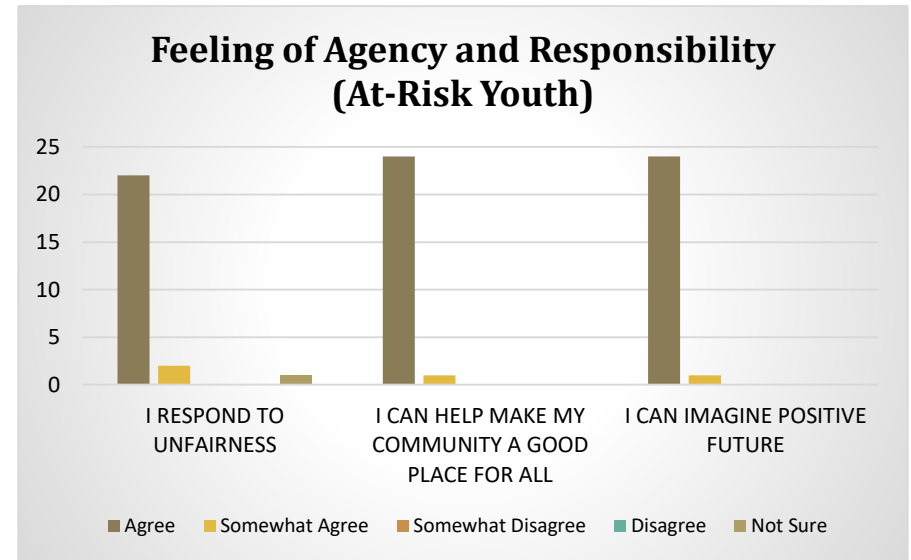
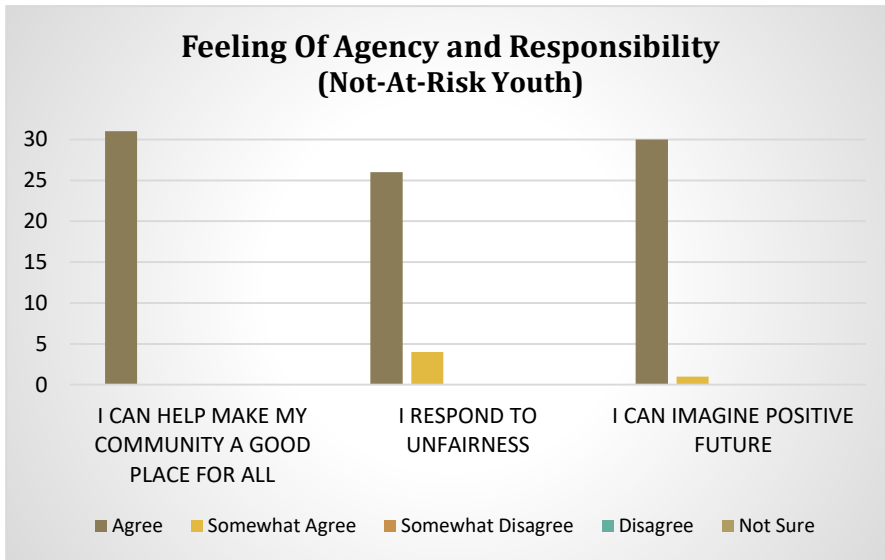
section 02



Beginning of project year to end comparison

The questions about responses to unfairness and the view of the future did not show much change from the beginning of the project year to the end. Both groups believe they respond to unfairness when they see it and both have a positive view of the future. Their views on being part of creating a good community did undergo a shift, based on their retrospective answers. Both groups saw themselves less likely to think they could be part of creating a good community before the project and both groups indicated a shift in that area.

Fall 2018 Results



Analysis

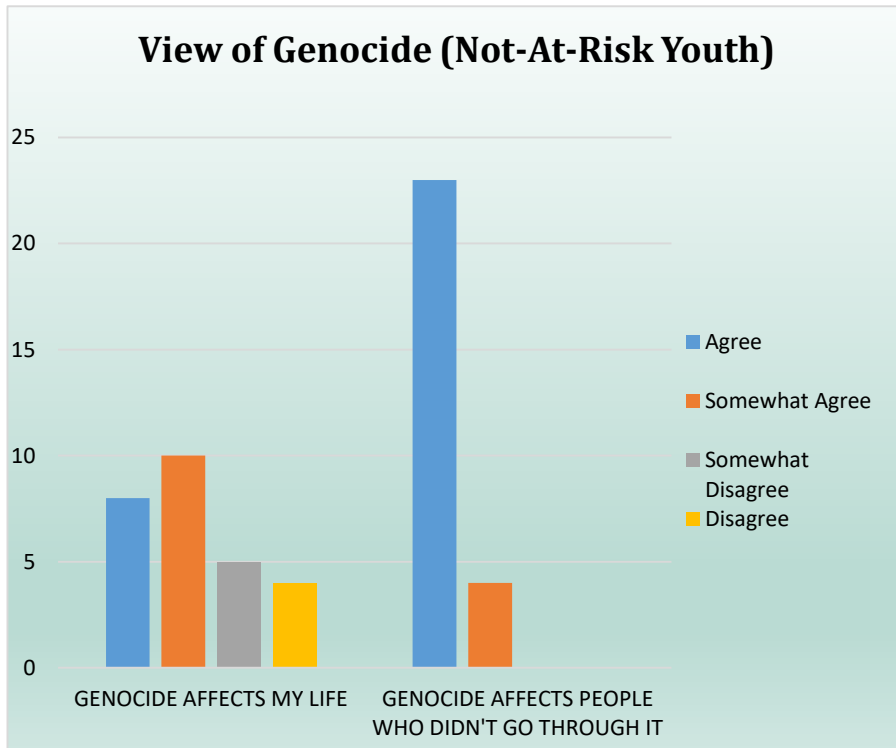
Often at the basis of people's willingness to act is whether they believe they can make a difference or contribute in some way. Many of the youth had opportunity during the year to work on projects that showed them that they could, in fact, be part of making a difference, at least to individuals within the community if not on large scale.

Youth

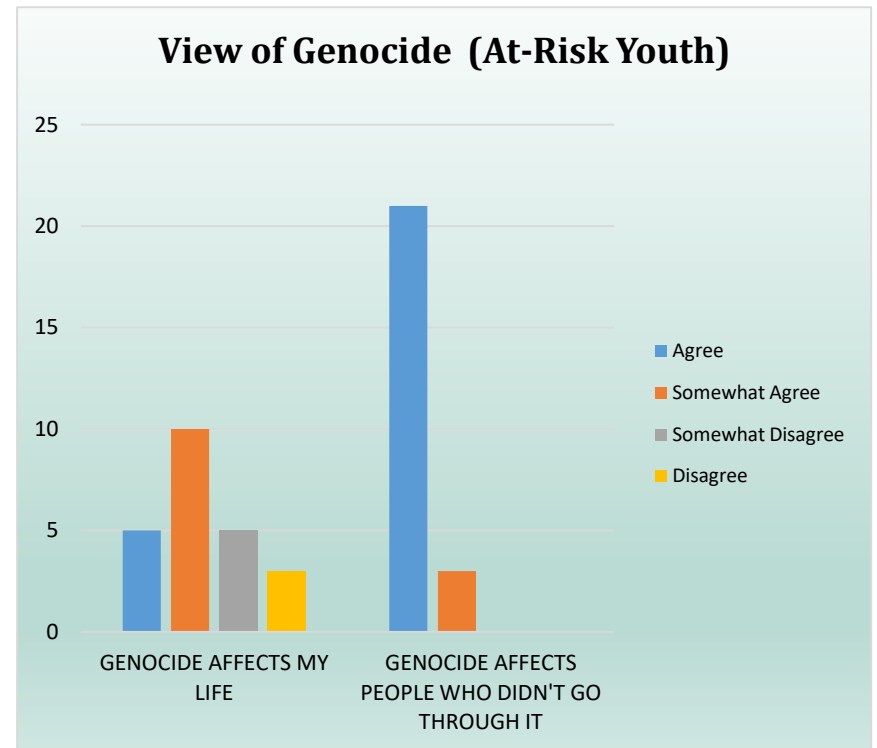
Understanding effects of genocide

The final area of change identified by the staff was looking at youth's understanding of the genocide affects themselves as well as others.

Not-at-Risk Youth (27)



At-Risk Youth (26)



section 02

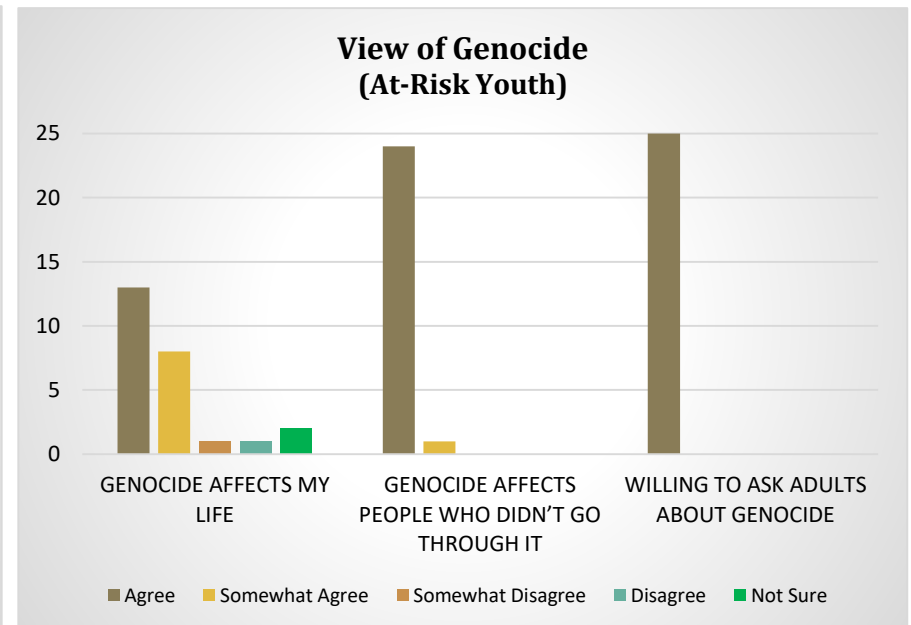
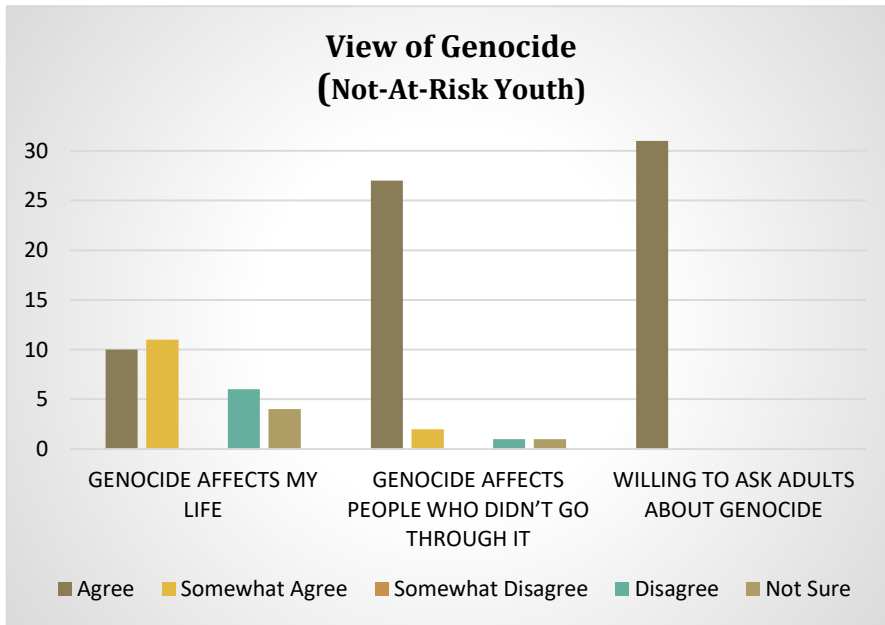
Youth

Understanding effects of genocide

Beginning of project year to end comparison

This area did not show very much change in either group. At both the beginning and end of year, the youth thought that the genocide affected people who didn't go through it. The youth also were unsure at both beginning and end about whether the genocide affected their own lives.

Fall 2018 Results



Analysis

The youths' uncertainty about whether/how the genocide has affected their own lives is an area that seems worth exploring more. Looking at the data doesn't seem to point toward particular age groups for whom that is the case. Understanding how that event affects all of the people, themselves included, is an important step in determining how to create changes within their lives and community.

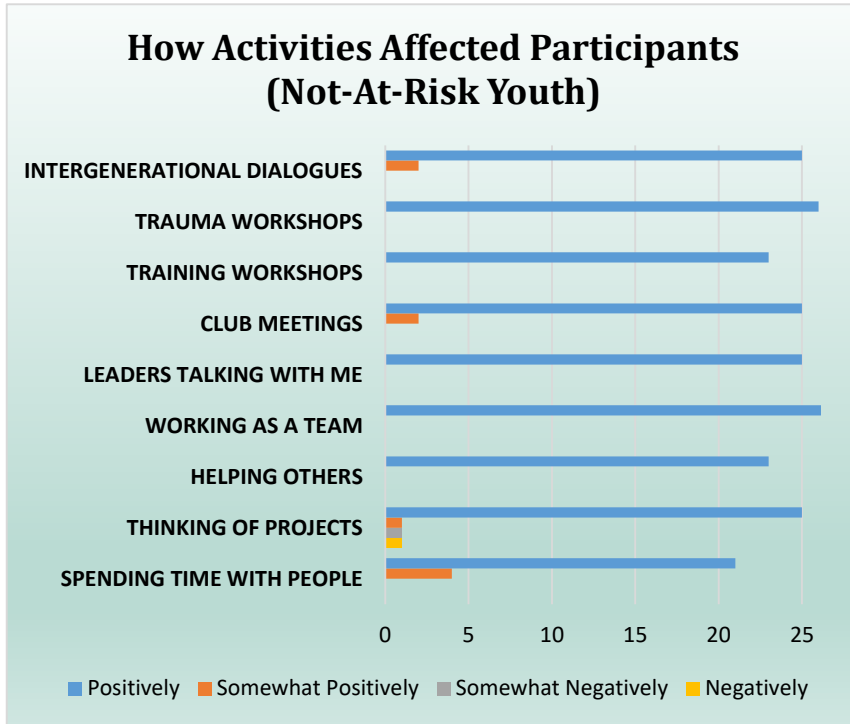
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Youth

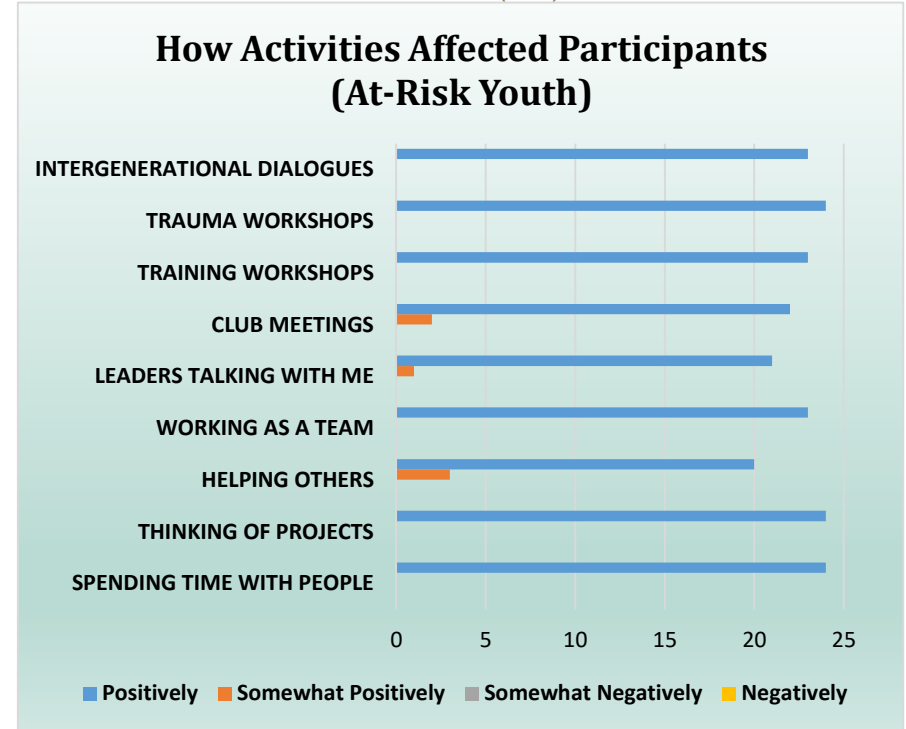
Response to Project Activities

Project staff were interested in hearing from the youth reactions to the different activities that were a regular part of the year.

Not-at-Risk Youth (27)



At-Risk Youth (26)



Analysis

The youth clearly valued all of the activities that were regular features of the project. The only one that had any response below “somewhat agree” was on Thinking of Projects – likely an activity few of them had done previously.

Healing Companions & Facilitators - Survey

Key areas of change

Project staff identified four areas to monitor for the adults:

View of at-risk youth

View of the future

Skills as a Healing Companion or Facilitator

View of different groups with whom they worked

The Healing Companions and Facilitators were also asked about changes they have seen during the past year.

Participants

68 adults completed the survey -

52 Healing Companions

16 Dialogue Club Facilitators.

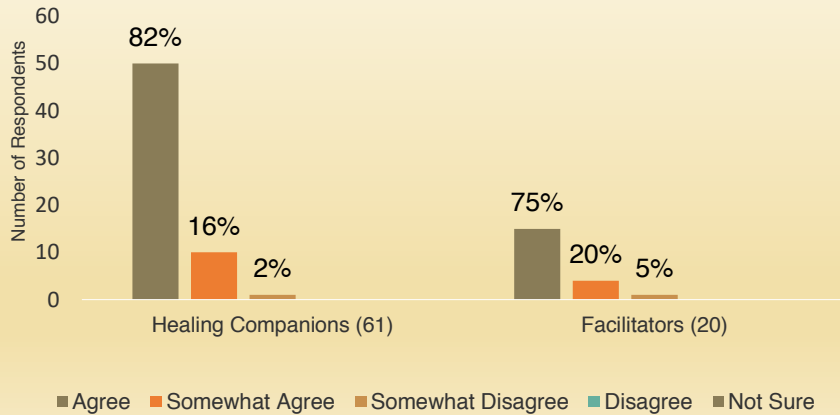
All have been part of the project for all three years.

Healing Companions & Facilitators - Survey

The Healing Companions and Facilitators were asked about their view of at-risk youth.

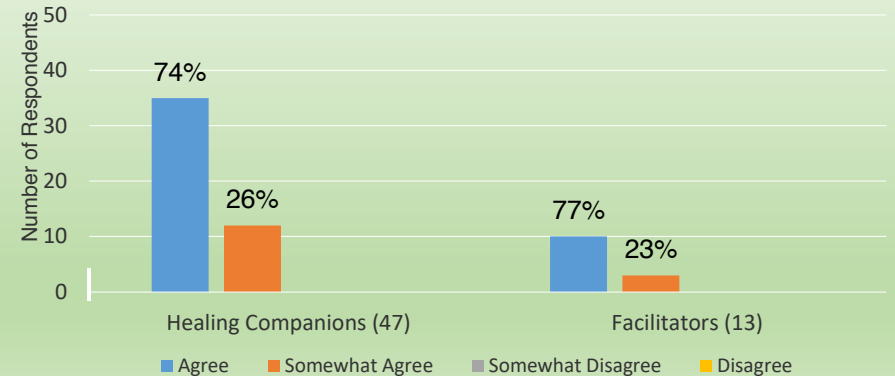
Fall 2018 Results

Youth who have been in trouble in the past can be positive contributors to my community.



Fall 2019 Results

Youth who have been in trouble in the past can be positive contributors to my community.



Analysis

While still having a positive view of youth overall, the percentage of Healing Companions who chose Agree dropped from the beginning of the year. More information would be needed to determine what their thoughts are about at-risk youth and what would need to happen for them to continue to see those youth as positive contributors.

Recommendation

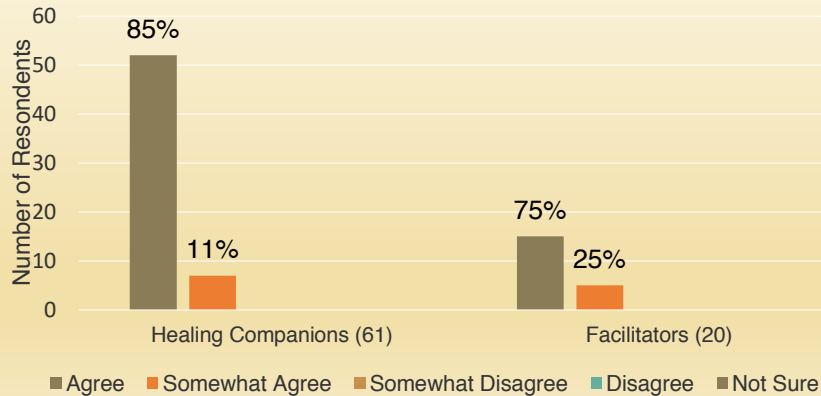
The Healing Companions and Facilitators now have leadership roles within their communities. How they view and interact with youth can offer encouragement and guidance to the rest of the community regarding how youth are seen and treated. Encouraging them to explore their own attitudes about youth is an important step in shifting overall attitudes toward youth.

Healing Companions & Facilitators - Survey

View of the future

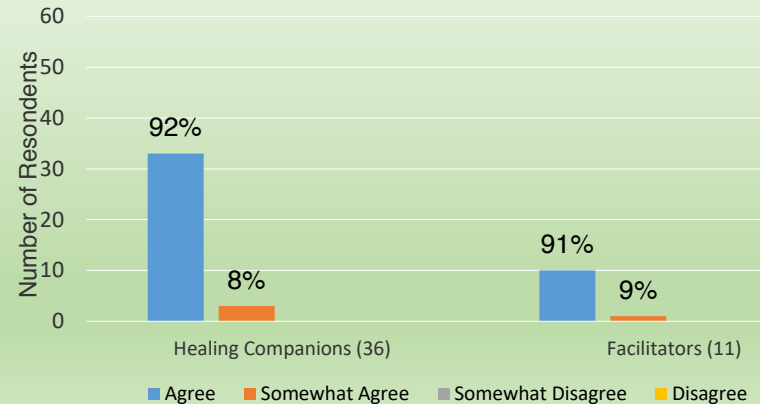
Fall 2018 Results

I am hopeful that relations between groups in Rwanda will improve.



Fall 2019 Results

I am hopeful that relations between groups in Rwanda will improve.



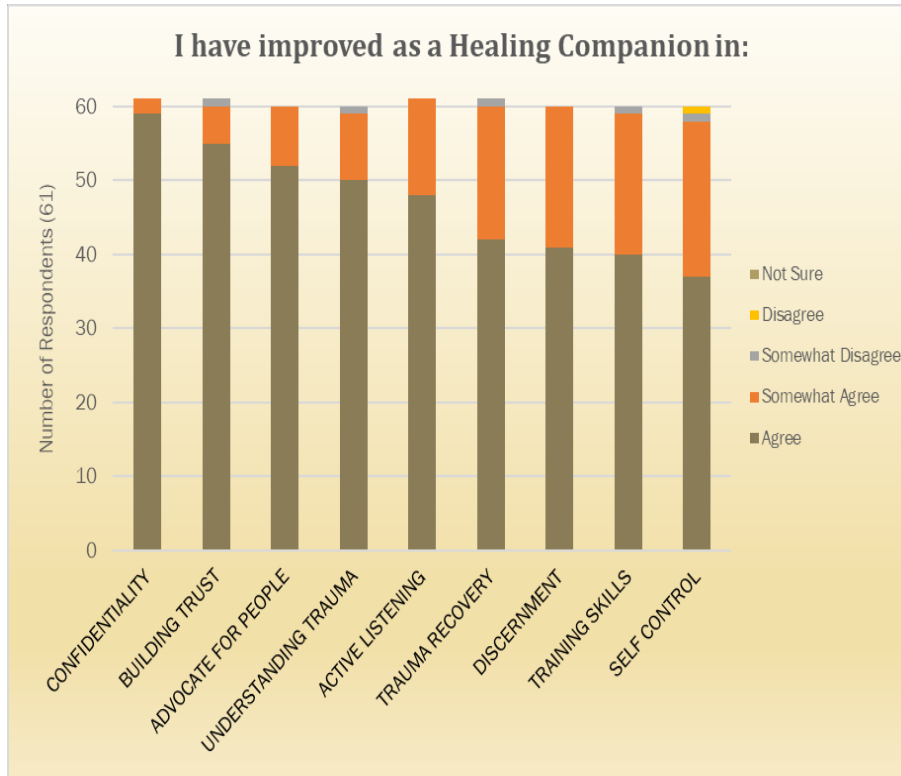
Analysis

Both Healing Companions and Facilitators expressed optimism regarding relations among the various groups in Rwanda. Given that they have now spent three years working in different capacities with individuals from each of the groups, their perspective is very encouraging.

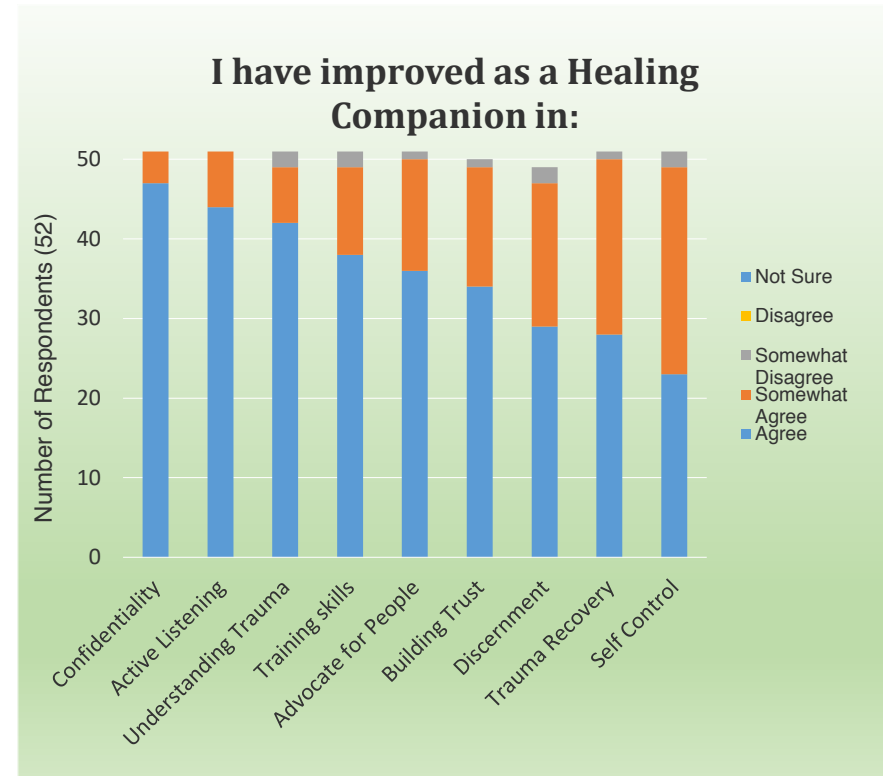
Healing Companions - Survey

Improving on Skills

Fall 2018 Results



Fall 2019 Results



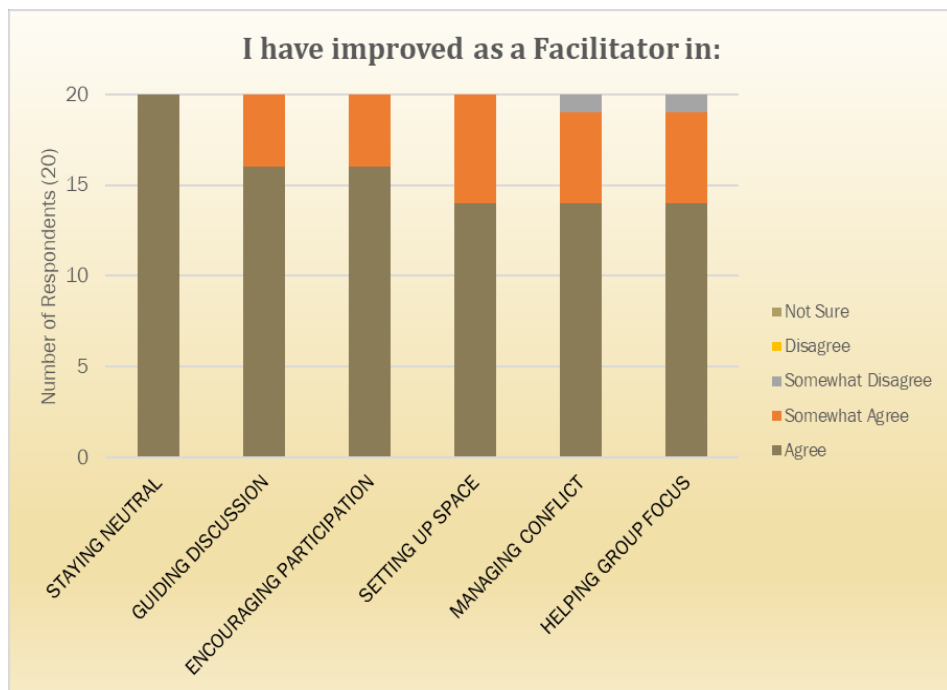
Analysis

The Healing Companions generally felt that their skills were improving each year. Self-control and discernment seem to be consistently skills that they are the least sure about, while others, like building trust, could be ones they made more improvement in during the previous years and so did not see themselves as improving as much during this past year.

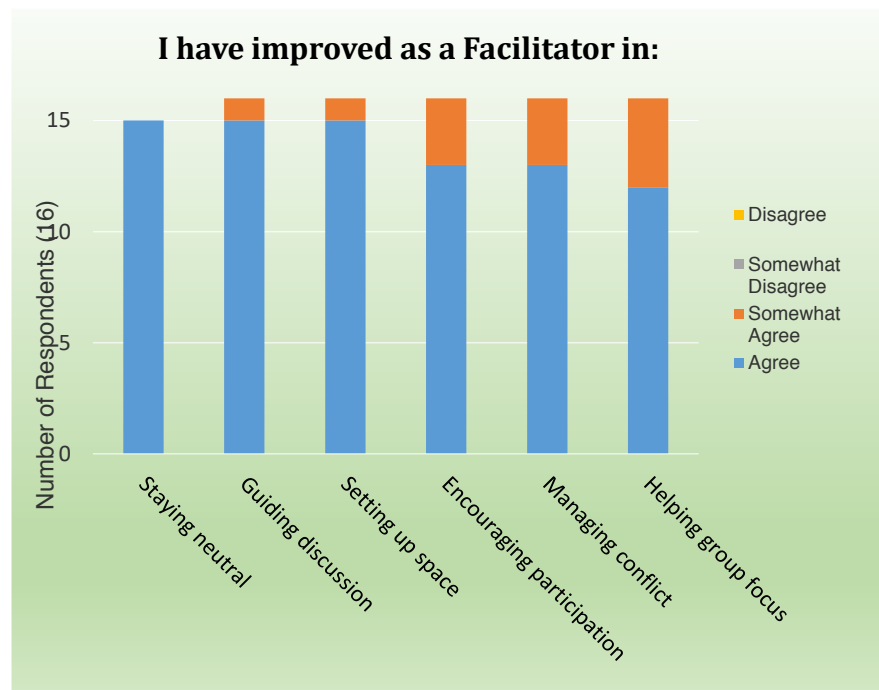
Facilitators – Survey

Improving on Skills

Fall 2018 Results



Fall 2019 Results



Analysis

The Facilitators also saw themselves as having continued to improve in many of the skills. Keeping groups focused on the topic along with managing conflict have consistently been the ones they seem less likely to agree they have made progress.

Healing Companions & Facilitators

Continuing to Use Skills

The Healing Companions and Facilitators were asked whether they thought they would continue to use their skills after the project concluded, and if so, how they might do that. Everyone from both groups agreed/somewhat agreed that they would continue.

The Healing Companions offered several ideas about how they would use the skills they had developed. Among the mostly commonly mentioned were:

- Active Listening
- Training others in the skills they had learned
- Continuing to work on trauma healing, particularly during the genocide commemorations
- Doing advocacy work for those who needed additional help

Listen to all who have trauma, I will know how to help; I will also do some advocacy for the cases above my capacity

As the one who has skills, I am able to know the symptoms of trauma and I will be helping; I will try with others putting some people together and train them on trauma healing; I will be listening to those who need my help

I will try as much as I can so that I will not be source of trauma to anyone because I know what it is; I will be helping in trauma healing during genocide commemoration

Healing Companions & Facilitators

Continuing to use Skills

Facilitators want to continue holding dialogues with people in their communities. Dialogues are seen as a path to resolving conflict between people.

A few facilitators want to expand the number of dialogue clubs that are available so more people can be part of this effort.

Building trust and listening to others were identified as ongoing work they would continue to offer.

Facilitating those who want to ask for forgiveness to approach survivors. I will be close to those who have conflict among themselves [and] continue building peace through dialogue. I am also a healing companion and I will combine those skills of facilitation and healing; I will always encourage my community members in our different Government meetings the way of conflict resolution through dialogue.

I will never be discouraged because the skills I got are a privilege and needed by many people, my relatives and the community. I will encourage others to create more dialogue clubs in other communities.

I will be visiting my neighbors who have conflicts and help them. I will be volunteering to facilitate in regular community meetings. I will work closely with youth.

Recommendation

Encourage the Healing Companions and Facilitators to stay in touch with each other. This could help form a network or community of practice that would offer support, ideas, and encouragement as both these groups continue to work in their communities.

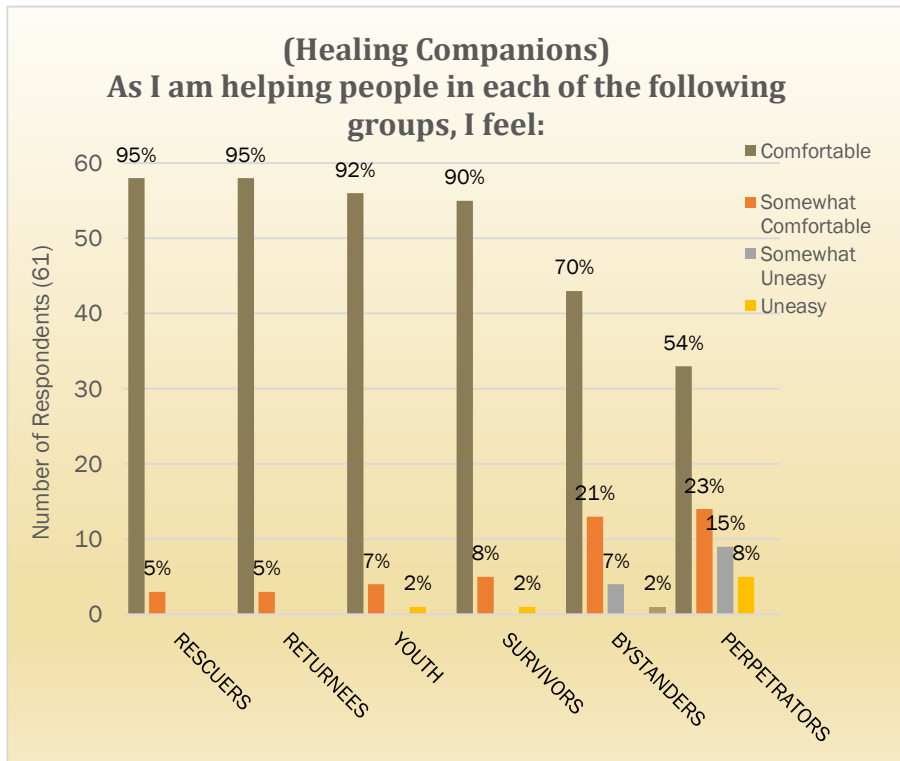
Healing Companions – Survey

View of different groups - Helping

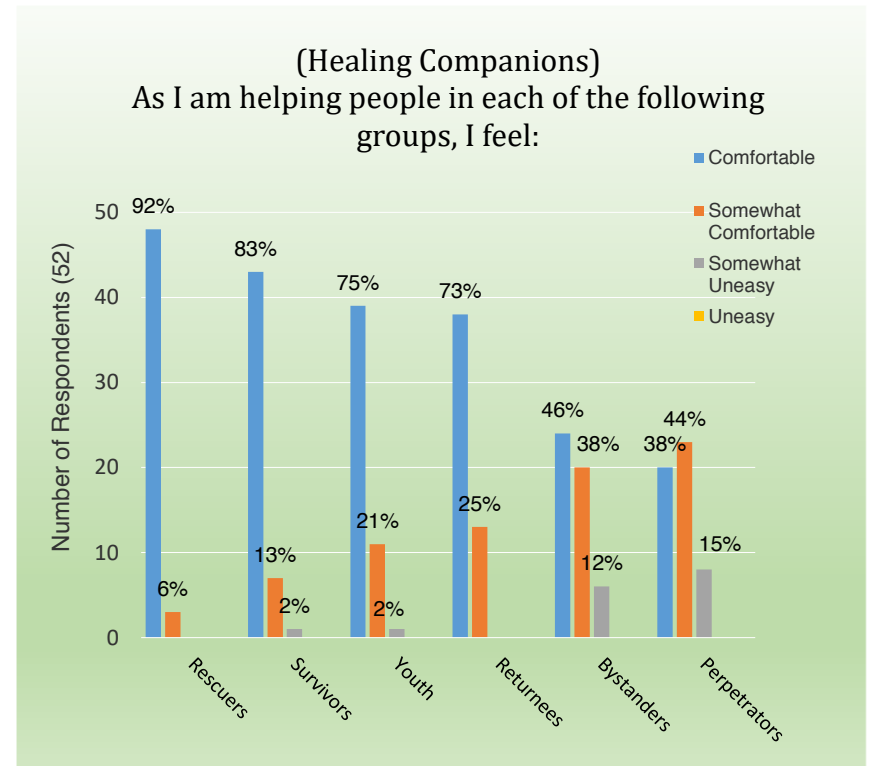
Analysis

For the questions about compassion for and helping different groups (next four pages), both the Healing Companions and the Facilitators said they were comfortable with and felt compassion for all the groups though that comfort level dropped when they considered bystanders and perpetrators. While that overall pattern did not change much over the past year, participants reported slightly lower levels of comfort with each group in the final evaluation.

Fall 2018 Results



Fall 2019 Results

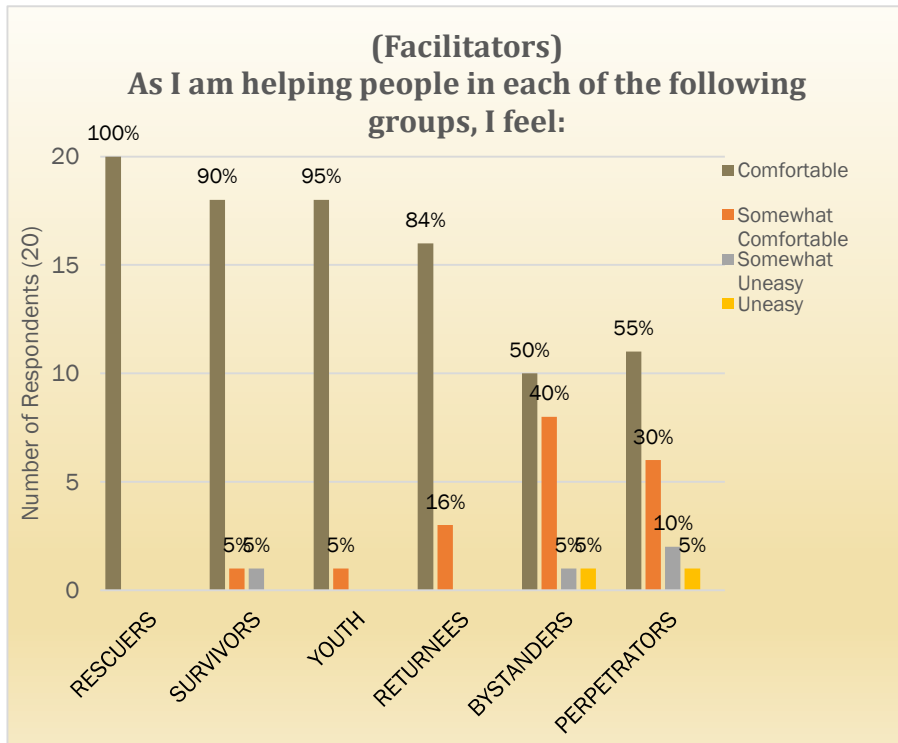


section 03

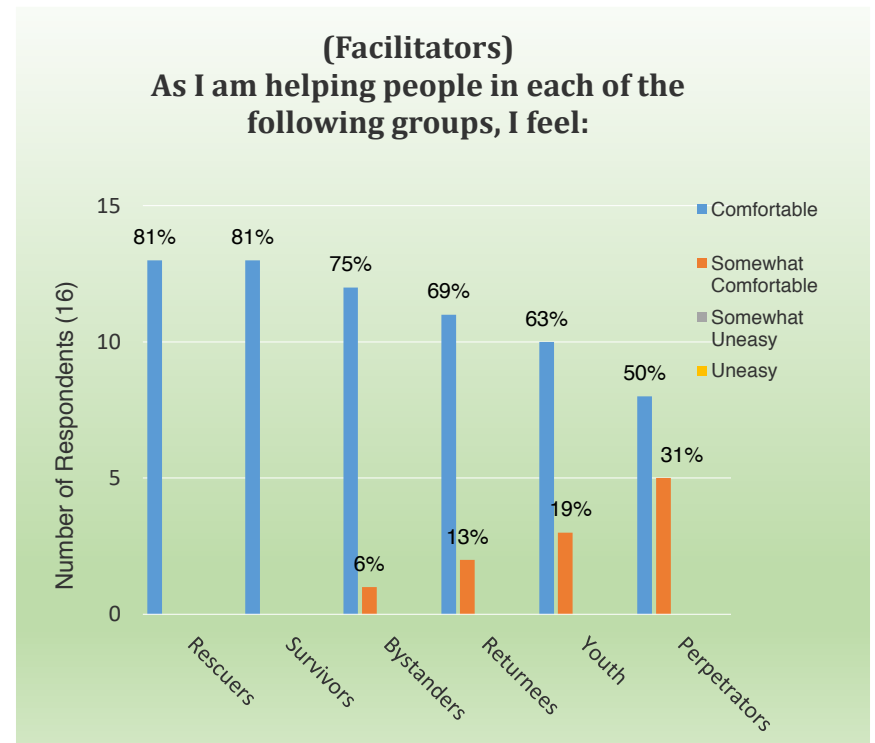
Facilitators - Survey

View of different groups - Helping

Fall 2018 Results



Fall 2019 Results

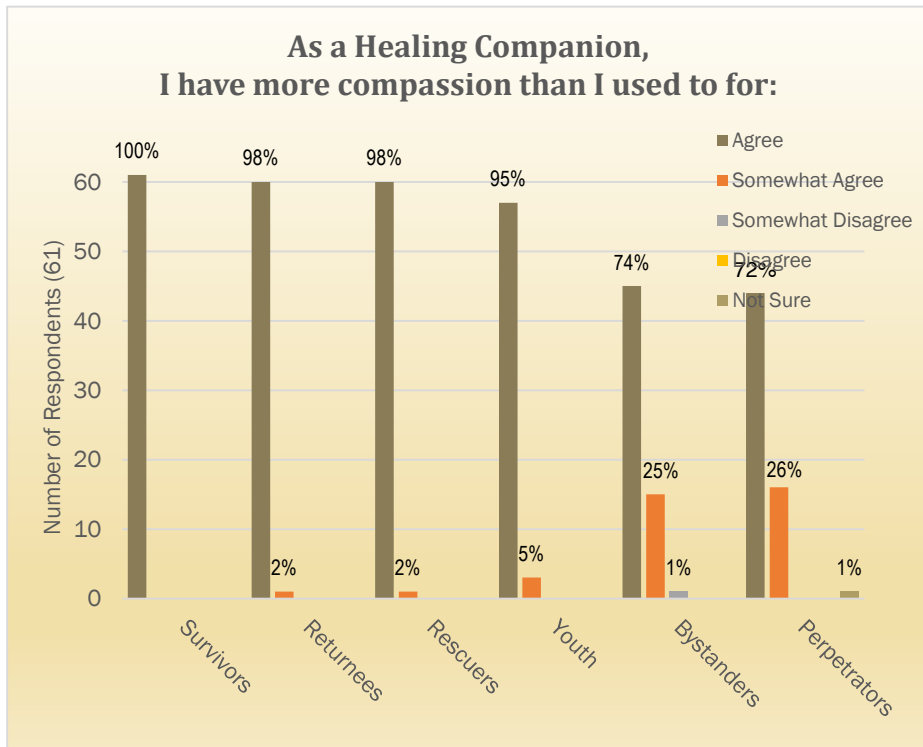


section 03

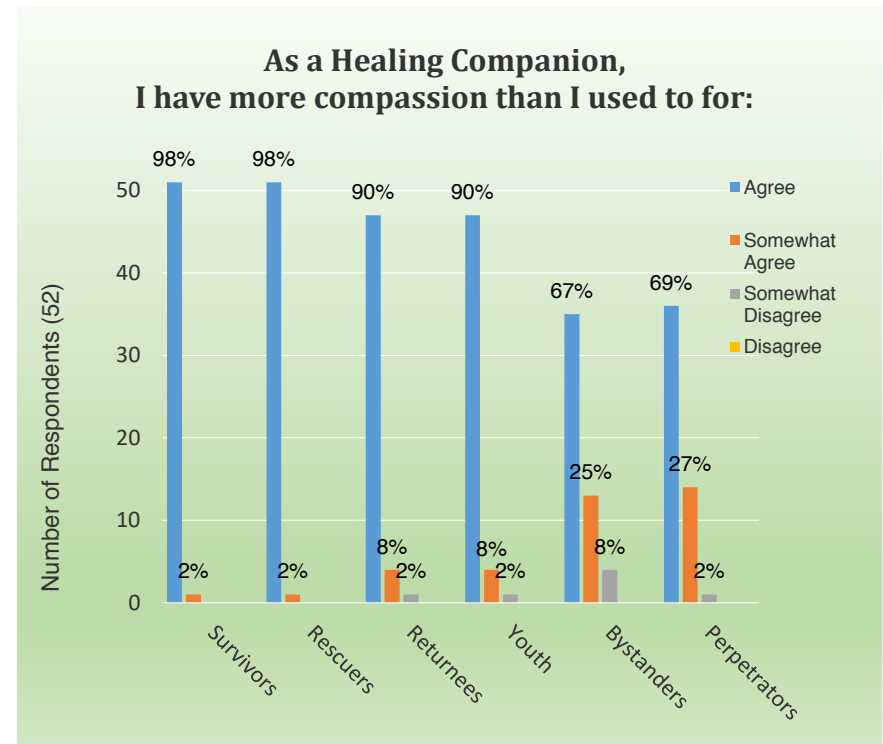
Healing Companions – Survey

View of different groups - Compassion

Fall 2018 Results



Fall 2019 Results

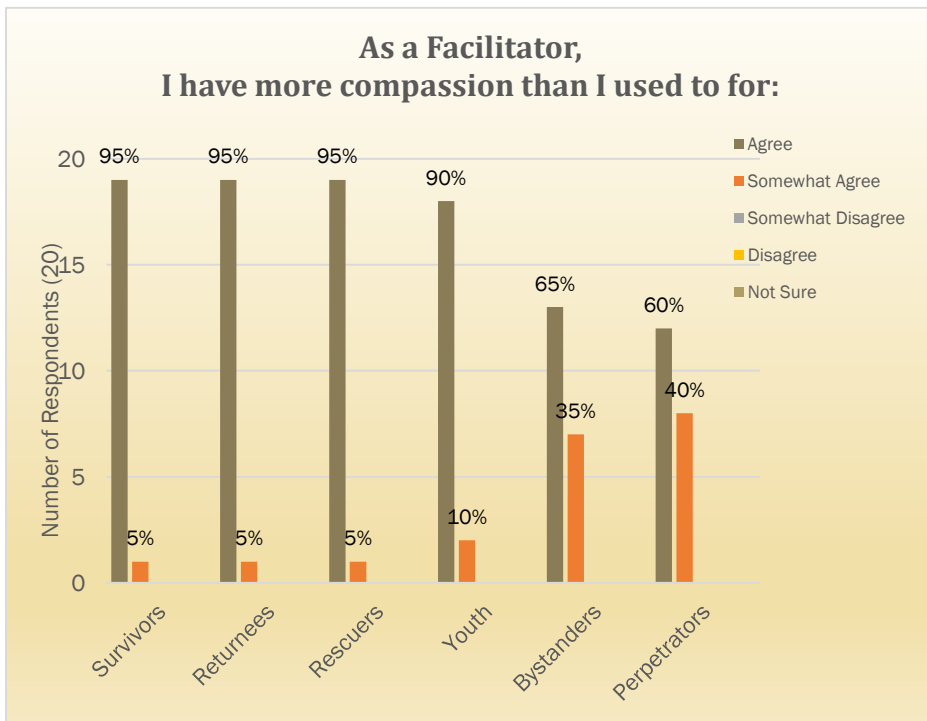


section 03

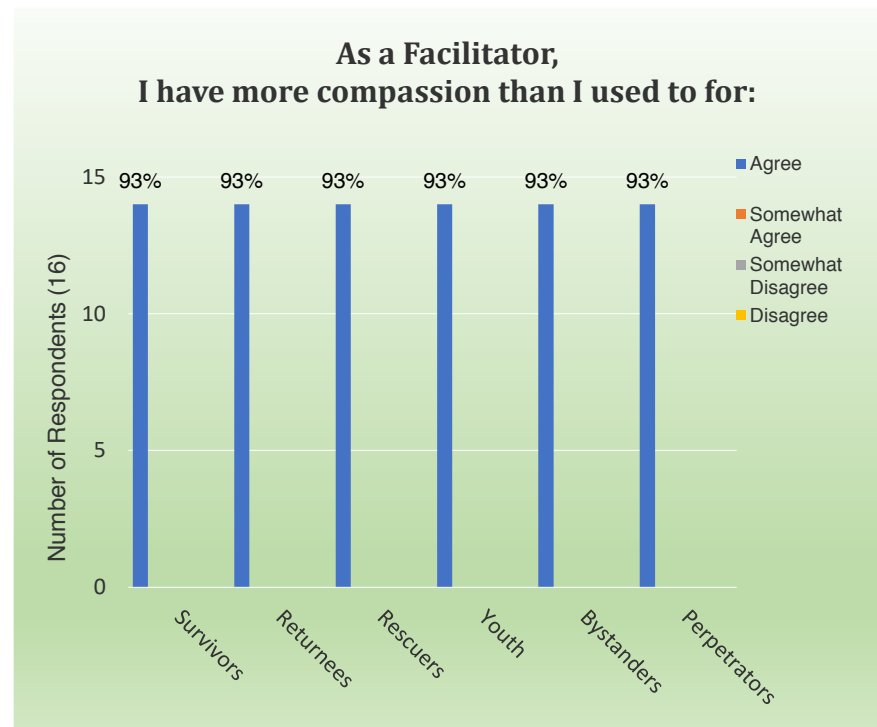
Facilitators – Survey

View of different groups - Compassion

Fall 2018 Results



Fall 2019 Results



Recommendation

The willingness of the Healing companions and Facilitators to work with all different groups is a positive step toward stable communities. Encouraging them to continue working on their own attitudes will help them be aware of how they feel about/react to the people with whom they are working. The more they are conscious of biases and emotions, the better they will be at working with others to address similar biases and emotions.

Healing Companions & Facilitators – Survey

Changes seen over the past year

Perpetrators here said the truth about what they did during genocide and asked for forgiveness, survivors also forgave them

Those who completed the survey were asked to identify changes that they have seen over the past year. Some of the participants focused on their own personal changes, highlighting skills they had obtained, self-acceptance and self-confidence.

The program strengthened unity and reconciliation and trauma recovery even if it is not obtained at 100/100

Increased “I am Rwandan” instead of seeing each other in different groups

Other changes mentioned by both Healing Companions and Facilitators were:

- Increased trust between people
- Increased unity and reconciliation
- More forgiveness, both in asking for it and in giving it
- Healing from trauma

I see change in terms of healing the inner wounds even if it is a journey but there is bigger change

Good relationship among people coming from different backgrounds, increased trust

section 03

Conclusion and Recommendations

Youth

While this third year of the project was focused on working with youth, particularly at-risk youth, there does not seem to be much difference between at-risk and not-at-risk youth, at least in terms of the survey results. Perhaps the context of Rwanda, given the trauma the country went through, is affecting all youth similarly. A question to consider is whether it is worth differentiating youth based on this factor. Risk of stigmatizing them or setting them apart is a potential danger to consider. Perhaps the focus should rather be on all youth, finding ways to increase their connection to and contribution to their communities.

Recommendations

- *Connection to the Community:* Youth care about the community's opinion, so continuing to find ways for the community to express need for and appreciation of the youth could be an important means of keeping the youth connected. These results point to areas for consideration for the communities moving forward and is important information to share with the community facilitators and healing companions as well as the local partner organizations.
- *Isolation and Connection:* As with the previous area, Connection to the Community, the interaction the youth had with other youth and with community members through projects, work, and discussions resulted in a stronger sense of belonging. The more connected people are to those around them, and perhaps particularly to those from different groups, the more likely they are to be part of strengthening the community's resilience and cohesiveness. This information should be shared with community leaders, the community facilitators and healing companions as well as the local partner organizations.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Healing Companions & Facilitators

Recommendations

- The Healing Companions and Facilitators now have leadership roles within their communities. How they view and interact with youth can offer encouragement and guidance to the rest of the community regarding how youth are seen and treated. Encouraging them to explore their own attitudes about youth is an important step in shifting overall attitudes toward youth.
- Encourage the Healing Companions and Facilitators to stay in touch with each other. This could help form a network or community of practice that would offer support, ideas, and encouragement as both these groups continue to work in their communities.
- The willingness of the Healing companions and Facilitators to work with all different groups is a positive step toward stable communities. Encouraging them to continue working on their own attitudes will help them be aware of how they feel about/react to the people with whom they are working. The more they are conscious of biases and emotions, the better they will be at working with others to address similar biases and emotions

Healing Our Communities project

USAID #AID-696-F-16-00002

Testimonies

Youth Activities

Youth at risk video testimony (young man in Kirehe): :

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1yM7X8YkJcbPKK0UVABlCHHOxmx_bDmYu/view?usp=sharing

I am a member of the club called “Amahoro iwacu,” Peace in Our Community. My life was improved thanks to Aegis, I was trained, and then afterward I created the club. For me, because of my background, I couldn’t believe that I could recruit club members and they would actually trust me. I was in prison for 6 years.

I was trained on how to approach people, talk to people, relate with them, I learnt how to help, volunteerism. I created the club, I am now a married man, I thank God. I could not believe that there will be someone who will accept me because of my background. I was not considering myself as human being but almost an animal. But because of the good training and the help of the project, I have a goat and very soon I will be giving to others goat manure for fertilizing their land.

Youth at risk video testimony (young woman in Kirehe):

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1zAuyiK2ycpVDDk8C9gmwrQtAUMiSDmrG/view?usp=sharing>

I was a shy girl, I was not used to speak and when I spoke, I used to speak badly and I could even fight! At home, even my Mum could not tell me anything that could change my thoughts

I joined the club, but before I was trained in a group of at-risk youth, I was among those who abuse drugs. We discussed and exchanged among youth and we could listen to each other. We realized that our inner wounds were not the same. After the discussions, they trained us and I was happy, the training really helped me. I had early pregnancy and I know many of my age who had the same problem. I decided to go and approach those young girls who got early pregnancies. Some resisted but finally joined us, I also recruited boys in the club and we built confidence and trust. We would say, “If you want a beautiful fiancée come to our club!”

In summary, what I learn from the youth club, I became humble and confident.

Youth 3 (club member) was united with her parents through the program activities. The members said that they will continue to follow up in this family because both her parents are known drunkards.

Youth 4: She used to be ashamed about her parents, since her father was a genocide perpetrator. Her cousins when they were having even a small dispute, they would say that she is like her father ... And did not used to speak. Now she is no longer ashamed of her parents.

Youth 5: I was a drug addict before; I went through rehabilitation and stopped consuming drugs. Even though I had stopped it, the community was still considering me as a delinquent. After joining this club, I regained trust and love from my family and the community at large. I was so impressed when the local authorities called me to prepare and coordinate elections that were going to take place.

Youth 6: This youth club gave me a place where I can release what I have been holding in myself for a long time. I was living alone with my child and in case I had problems, I would go and drink too much alcohol and drugs. But today, I have got friends in this youth club, I feel free to tell them my problems and they give good advice.

Youth 7: I was a drug addict, and I used to be involved in different activities of violence. Now my life has changed, I turned into a peacebuilder.

Youth 8: I used to live alone. I had a feeling that no one can appreciate my company because of the bad behaviors and a stereotype I had set. Many people thought that I had a mental problem. After joining the youth club, I found friends.

Youth 9: I was a drug addict and a thief. Even my parents had stopped trusting me because I stole many properties from them and sold them. I joined the youth club and my fellow youth encouraged me to change. I started changing; now my parents can even send me to the market and I buy what they told me to buy. That shows me that they have now started trusting me.

Youth 10: I started consuming drugs at the age of 13. I dropped out of school and left my family and went to live in Kigali as a street kid. I had no job; the only way I used to survive was to steal from people. I was caught and punished many times but when I was released, I returned to my usual way of living. I was taken to IWAWA rehabilitation center and spent there a year. I left there and went back to live with my family but still the family and the community were not considering me as a nice person. After founding this youth club and starting to do peacebuilding activities in the community, people are convinced that I changed and we are able to live together.

Youth 11: I was a drunkard and a drug addict, I got pregnant at an early age and it was so difficult for me to accept it. I started living lonely and yet I had so many problems that I couldn't solve myself. It became worse; I augmented the amount of alcohol and drugs I took. I was approached by a member and he convinced me to join the youth club. I was able to open up and release what I kept in for myself for a long time. This youth club made me free from drugs and alcohol and I also helped them to do so because many of them had the same problems.

Youth 12: I have been living alone because my mother died when I was still young and my father is imprisoned. I got pregnant and it was so difficult for me, due to the extreme poverty and the way I had no family to help me. I didn't care about what is happening to others. I only cared about my life and the one of my child. I joined the youth club and the club came to help me cultivate and they also brought me some food. From that time, I started realizing that I should care about other people's life.

Youth 13: I was the kind of person whom people would see and they hold tight what they have. I even flew to Uganda and left my mother. I did not finish my studies just because of the terrible habits I had. All those things I passed through make me regret, not only because of what I did but also for the time lost. I was desperate and I thought my life can't get better. I was called to attend trainings at Aegis Trust. I learnt a lot and together with my colleagues, we took the initiative to bring together young people whom we have similar problems to form a club. Today, we live with our families in harmony, people see us doing peacebuilding activities and they trust us.

Youth 14: I was a well-known thief in this community. I would steal people's property while they watched but they could not do anything to me because they knew that I can even beat them hard. Every day people came to tell my mother things I stole from them and they would force her to pay them back. My mother would pay some of them but because of low standards there were things she was unable to pay. Today, no one is scared of me; they know well that I am no longer doing harm to anyone. Through this youth club, I had the energy of changing habits and becoming a better person whom people can count on and trust.

Youth 15: was a drug addict and a prostitute. At the age of 19, she got pregnant, she was unable to accept what happened to her therefore she started living alone and feeling depressed. She had conflicts with her family, so she did not have anyone to help her to take care of the child she gave birth to. She joined the youth club Abakunda Amahoro and they therefore started opening up by the help of the discussions conducted in the youth club. Today, she is living together well with her family and the society at large, she has freed herself from consuming drugs and she is now a farmer.

Youth 16: is a young lady who has been imprisoned because of the deviant behaviors she had and the activities hindering peace she was involved in. After joining the youth club, she was able to free herself from drug abuse and bad habits.

Youth 17, participant in Amahoro Iwacu, Gicumbi youth club: Since I was a kid, I went through very many problems. I grew up with no hopes for the future. I dropped out of school very many times, I have been taken to prison transits and I lived my whole life in conflicts with local authorities because of bad behaviors. I joined this youth club in December last year, and they convinced me to return to school, I had only left one year and this year I am completing my high school. I also feel so good to live without having any conflict with anyone.

Youth 18, participant in Amahoro Iwacu, Kirehe youth club: I am so grateful to this youth club. Before joining the club, I didn't know that I can be with people and feel comfortable because of what I went

through in life. I was a prostitute before and even after changing, the community was still judging me. When I joined the youth club, I found there people that we share problems and I felt free to talk about myself. I also participated in the trauma healing training organized by HROC and it helped me a lot to feel relieved.

Youth 19, youth champion in Amahoro Iwacu, Gicumbi youth club: I used to be a dangerous person. I was a drug seller in Gicumbi district. I met a person who is among the founders of the club and we became friends. He advised me to join their youth club in order to be a peacebuilder. The advice and the activities of the youth club changed me completely. I am no longer a drug dealer not even a consumer. I also learnt activities such as building houses, making bricks because we do it to help vulnerable people and therefore started doing it as a job.

Youth 20, participant in Abakunda Amahoro, Gakenke youth club: The youth club ABAKUNDA AMAHORO helped me to reconcile with my family especially my parents. In the past years, I was a prostitute. I had conflicts with my family because of the bad behaviors I had. After some time, I changed but no one could believe or trust me. I felt after joining the youth club, the community witnessed my genuine change because of the good actions of the youth club.

Youth 21: A genocide survivor youth from Abakunda Amahoro – Nyamasheke, said that participating in the activities together with other club members helps him forget the traumatic memories and gain strength. It has helped him gradually heal. He developed compassion and has also been able to help another friend of his, with a similar problem of trauma, start the process of recovering. He brought in that friend and now they live together in the same house.

Youth 22, a participant from Rubavu: I am very grateful for this amazing opportunity and experience; in these 2 days I have learnt a lot of things and I am ready to go back to my community to teach my fellow youth. I think it is very important for us young people to understand that we have a big role in healing our communities and bringing solutions to all our problems.

Dialogue Clubs

DC 1: One genocide perpetrator from Bugesera District took the floor and spoke about his involvement in the genocide and confessed that he killed people at former Commune Gashora. After telling his story, he knelt down in the middle of the entire circle of dialogue club members while he was crying and sought for everyone's forgiveness. He testified to continue the journey by seeking forgiveness from all survivors in the community. There was a deep silence, thereafter, people started talking----some responses were captured: "From today onwards, I would like you to be my true friend because of the truth you have told us. There are so many hypocrites that are hindering our reconciliation because they cannot tell the truth as you did. I have always been perceiving him as a killer because I knew he killed people, but I now see him as a human being because of his confession today. I forgive you." said by a returnee lady from exile who returned back to Rwanda after the genocide. A second genocide survivor in the group said, "If all people were like him, the world would be a paradise."

DC 2 confessed for his participation in genocide and requested forgiveness from DC members. He took the opportunity to request the help of all participants to connect him with all relatives of people he killed. On 8th March, DC members planned to have a reconciliation gathering with a member of Year 3 who is a convicted genocide perpetrator on the one side, and a genocide survivor living in Ramiro Cell and not part of IRDP DC members.

The story starts from the Year 3 DC when following series of dialogue sessions between members. One voiced his decision and wishes to meet a genocide survivor whose brother's family was decimated with active participation of himself. The action took 3 steps: preliminary acceptance; preparing the event; the event itself.

When he decided to make the step and seek forgiveness to other members, the DC congratulated him. He sought them to help him by firstly talking to one member because he believed she could not talk to him. Two DC members paid a preliminary visit to her and introduced his wish to come seek for forgiveness. This meeting ended with an approval by the concerned survivor. A date was fixed to Friday, 8th of March 2019. The team decided to accompany him to her home.

Given the importance that was given to the event, all DC members decide to help their fellow member in two ways: going with him and contributing to find something to bring to her. It was decided to put together some money, and also avail some crops such as beans, sorghum, rice, fruits, etc. The two were collected and availed on the day.

The delegation reached the destination with all the presents mentioned above. Chairs were disposed behind the house, in the compound, near the kitchen. Already a good number of people, her friends and family, were seated to those chairs and welcomed the special visitors. A local leader, Executive Secretary of the Cell (Akagali) was present and was the first to take floor. In his remarks he talked of the necessity and importance of unity and reconciliation as a government priority for sustainable peace and development. A DC member and facilitator spoke on behalf of the team explaining the DC functioning and the decision to come to this family as well that of the other DC members to support him.

For his speech, the former perpetrator sought to do it while on his knees. The audience said that if that is what he wanted, he could do it that way. He went on his knees and made his speech. I can't say he was talkative, rather very brief. He thanked the family for having the time for him despite his wrongdoing against it. He mentioned that he had been part of the group that took lives of the victims (the brother, his wife, and his children). He regretted for having spent so many years outside jail without approaching the family and ask for forgiveness. "I take this opportunity to ask for forgiveness to you, the rest of your family and all people here present."

The response from his victim was longer, but in a nutshell she said: "Thanks for having done this, I have forgiven everybody including those I do not know, for you who is kneeled here, my forgiveness goes to you too. My concern however is, I never buried my beloved in dignity, and you and your accomplices

knew where they were buried you kept quiet.” He responded: “When I came from prison (2003), I asked Mr ...X... About those bodies, he told me that they were taken to a memorial while I was in jail (unfortunately that Mr.. X... passed away recently).”

DC 3: Another testimony from a victim was about a letter from a prisoner who killed his family, asking for forgiveness. He stated: “I know my sentence is for life, but I have a heavy burden for what I did! Can you please forgive me and relieve me from this traumatic situation?” The victim shared with the group the way he has been touched by that letter and how he decided to go to the prison to forgive his perpetrator. Till now, both continue to chat amicably.

DC 4: In Karongi District, after a long dialogue on bitter truth among the community, one DC member advanced the step to ask for forgiveness to his colleague within the club, whose family members have been killed by him. Other DC members helped in reconciliation process.

DC 5: Another perpetrator killed a member’s husband and children and she remained alone. After being joined in the club they reconciled. She became the mother in baptism of his daughter. He usually says “Because I have killed her family, I give mine to her, my family became hers.”

DC 6: Two members of the Mbogo Dialogue Club—a bystander and a survivor, who is also a Healing Companion—had been in longstanding conflict that would sometimes escalate to calling the police as the survivor feared the bystander. They could not trust each other enough to walk together. After participating in biweekly dialogue clubs, the bystander felt remorse and asked for forgiveness from his heart, which was granted. They have come to invite each other for drinks and family ceremonies, and when the survivor needs an escort late at night, she calls this bystander to accompany her.

DC 7: The intergenerational dialogue in Bugesera District occurred on 10th April, 2018 where they discussed about “mistrust between people who committed the genocide and the survivors.” They were 220 people young and old. During this event they talked about the causes of mistrust among the citizens in Bugesera district, one of the biggest issues was that survivors do not know where their beloved were thrown. As they discussed, two ex-prisoners felt that they should contribute to unity and reconciliation, by showing where nine bodies of Tutsi killed in 1994 had been thrown. This shocked everyone who was in the room since no one expected this to happen. The nine bodies were exhumed and were given a decent burial on 11th April 2018.

DC 8: At Rubimba in Kirehe District, we received testimony from a member of a Dialogue club who is also a Healing Companion. After receiving the 3-day training on basic trauma healing, she was chosen to go to Musanze for an advanced training which afterwards allows her to train basic trauma healing workshop in her community.

She made a personal healing process of her inner wounds- among them there was a conflict and a hatred she had against a man who is among the persons who killed her father and who is still a close neighbor to her.

And up to that time he did not ask for forgiveness. HROC assisted her in the follow-up of her personal healing and she was able to forgive because she said it was a heavy burden for her.

During the dialogue session February 14, 2017 on the usual Dialogue Club meeting day, a perpetrator and his wife were in that gathering, a member wanted to tell him in front of people that she had forgiven him from the bottom of her heart. Even if he had not yet asked for forgiveness, she took the path of forgiveness. She got up and hugged him and his wife as a sign of reconciliation, she told him, "I forgive you, we are neighbors do not pass by side do not hide when you see me passing as you did before."

He thanked her for her forgiveness and said that he is happy about it. After four months he and his wife went to her to ask her for forgiveness of what he did 23 years ago that he regretted. The two have reconciled and are living in peace now.

DC 9: The members of the Rubimba dialogue club reconciled a genocide survivor with the sons of a bystander. These young people accused her of having a child with their father and they developed hatred against her by saying why this survivor entered in their family. They used to tell her hurtful words, and in addition to that they killed her pig. The neighbors have testified that the young men are the ones who did that. The Dialogue club members sent a delegation of people who assisted the two families in the process of reconciliation peacefully. The young men accepted what they did asked for forgiveness and buy another pig and gave it to her. The families reconciled are not members of the club but have benefited from dialogue club peacebuilding actions.

DC 10 and DC 11: Rubimba Dialogue club assisted in reconciliation of a couple from Murehe cell, a cell that is near Rubimba. The couple were separated and their children were left to themselves and suffered a lot. Some members of DC were delegated to encourage the couple to have dialogue between them, and DC members facilitated their dialogue. The couple now reconciled, live together and recently they were able to go together to visit their child who was newly married and had not been able to do this cultural duty before.

DC 12: Discussions and other initiatives in our Dialogue Club took me from a desperate context to a more hopeful one. I spent 5 years in prison for genocide related crimes I committed. Once out, I couldn't attend the annual commemoration with other Rwandans in my community or elsewhere. One day, in the DC meeting we decided that the team would go to the genocide memorial nearby for cleaning activities and I had to go with other DC members. It is during this action that I felt real compassion and how unhuman my crimes were. From then on, I see humanity in every person I live with.

DC 13: Before I knew about this HOC initiative, there used to be a kind of "rock" into my heart. Since I joined, I clearly changed to the extent that the community saw in me someone who can serve all the community members and voted me to be a Head of Village.

DC 14: is among the suspect ones among the killers of another participant's family and continues harassing another member. He is also suspected to kill someone's cow in July 2016. They could not greet

each other, they were enemies. Since the time they started dialogues in clubs, DC members both started understanding the importance of the dialogue and living in peace .

They both said that they had no peace 6 months ago, both talked and since that time. He has peace at home no longer are stones thrown on his house during the night as it was before. The DC members said that from this results, they expect more from him to even open up and talk about the truth of what happened during genocide especially about the death of one of the participants' family members but they are very happy of the progress.

DC 15 and 16: a bystander has been always in conflict with a genocide survivor who is now a healing companion. Both are members of Mbogo Dialogue club. Before joining the DC they couldn't talk, he has been always telling another participant very hurtful words, and she had presented her case to the police station around and every one was aware of that conflict.

He asked her for forgiveness, and he said that it is coming from his heart, that he hurt her so much that he feels bad for what he did. Both are now living in peace. Before they could not walk together in the street she said that she was afraid of him, now they both testify that they invite each other for drinks, for different family ceremonies.

She testified that, when she is returning back home very late and she is alone, she actually call him to accompany her to her home

DC 17 and DC 18: are both members of Mbogo Dialogue club. They have always had incessant conflicts, because of jealousy. TH 4 was always going to accuse TH 5 to the authorities that he does not give taxes, he works when everyone has been asked to close, and many other false accusations so that he has problems and can close his shop.

This developed a lot of hatred between the two young men so that TH 5 could not give anything TH 4 wanted to buy in his shop, he told him "go buy elsewhere I do not want your money."

When they began the dialogue sessions in the club, they began to think about their hatred that it served them nothing and that it began to go to their members of their extended families. They began the path of reconciliation and dialogue club members assisted them in this journey . Now they live in peace and begin to live as before and are happy to testify to everyone that it is good to avoid conflicts.

Testimonies from Muyange DC members: Facilitators and Committee members said that a common thing they observed after dialogue in clubs , community members from different background are now closer than before. Intermarriage between genocide survivors and the children from the family of perpetrators were not well perceived, it could happen between children who loved each other but parents or family members of two families were not happy about but now, they saw how happy family members were. They really supported the marriages.

Another thing mentioned was about perpetrators who this time in April 2017 during National mourning period gave testimonies and explained everything they know about genocide and its plan and how was executed; those same people had never done this before training and dialogue in clubs.

Trauma Healing (TH)

TH 1: a survivor whose kids and family were killed during the genocide in 1994. She is part of Mbogo Dialogue club with many others such as former perpetrators, bystanders and rescuers.

TH 2 : During the second co-facilitation of basic trauma healing workshop, TH 2 (who was involved in Genocide killings and was in prison and released) asked forgiveness that he confirmed that it came from the bottom of his heart. After being trained in trauma and its symptoms, and the widow of another participant. He was crying, kneeling on the floor because he was locked up in his own prison after being released from prison in Cyangugu where everyone knew he was liberated but lived terrible moments of hatred, suspicion and guilt.

During the second co-facilitation in Muyange, he asked for forgiveness coming from the bottom of his heart. He asked forgiveness to two other members. The two genocide survivors whom TH 2 killed their family members told him and the assembly that they forgave him from their hearts , they mentioned that they had forgiven him because the Government has forgiven them already , it was just for the sake of giving forgiveness because TH 2 had also asked for forgiveness for the sake of going out of the prison like many others.

He told everyone who was there that pastors and priests taught him but they did not touch his heart, only this training in trauma was able to pierce to his heart. He testified that he felt like a new person.

TH 3: In Gicumbi, Genocide started in 1990; people had been refugees since that year. For me personally there are some families I wouldn't like to meet even in the road but now i enjoy spending time with them.

TH 4: I have been privileged to be trained by HROC and IRDP. I call them my Doctors because they healed me. I was first trained to be a Dialogue club member by that time I was trying to be open but it wasn't complete. Afterwards I was trained by healing companions about Trauma healing and by that time that's when I felt totally healed. The combination of the two drove me to give forgiveness to a person who killed my family. That person had asked for forgiveness to me before and I refused to forgive him. Now I feel my heart is at peace and I can proclaim peace since I have it in me.

TH 5 and TH 6: TH 5 and TH 6 are both healing companions trained from HROC workshops TH 5 was in prison for 9 years for genocide crimes. For this case he had agreed to have participated in the death of two children of TH 6. From the time he was out of prison, he and TH 6 did not speak to each other, they greet each other only because they are neighbors, but not more. They feared each other. After the first three days of the basic trauma healing training, he confessed that he had hatred towards her, and that

he did not feel well while next to her. He said that he wanted to ask her forgiveness from the bottom of his heart. After workshop he understood his role in the death of her children during Genocide and that was from the way he thinks about what he went through as a person. And that he will really show her that he has completely changed and her after having forgiven him both have had inner peace. She said that when she was ill the person nearest to her was he, and he brought her to eat, which was not the case before. She told us that even if he brought food to her before, she could not eat this food for fear of poison and the same for him. He could not welcome anything coming from her. The two testified that they became closer to each other when they were chosen as healing companions. The two say that "Now they work together in harmony and when they train together, they walk together, this only is a living testimony, they do not need to say the many words."

Testimonies from Anonymous Healing Companions:

"I have learned my new ways of facilitating a Hroc basic workshop, I learned how to answer questions to the participants."

"I know how to lead the loss, grief and mourning lesson, as it has been a challenge to me previously thanks to the facilitators and co-facilitators who make it easy."

"I really enjoyed the review of some of the topics that were hard to facilitate, such as Stages of Trauma, Healing from Trauma, and Anger."

"I really appreciated everything done here, I will go back home with a big package including the characteristics of a good HROC facilitator. I know how to use the HROC methodology while facilitating."

"I got to understand what trauma is deeply, and other skills related to it, such healing from grief."

She witnessed a rape of her niece she was raising during the genocide, she experienced terrible things beyond what people can imagine, she witnessed how she spent years having conflicts with neighbors until she reached a level of beating an old man whom they share plot boundaries which is a taboo but she said "No more conflict with any person in my neighborhood I learned the constructive ways to handle my anger caused by all I have experienced during the genocide."

"I have been in my community for long and felt myself nothing but after the training we did, the testimonies of my community members witnessing how I have helped them to heal changed me completely."

"I learned that all my people were killed and I wanted to take revenge. I looked for 5 days permission "ikibari" we were about 10 soldiers who planned to revenge. It was known and people plotted to kill me before I could implement my darkish plan, where came from in Muganza, Butare, my plan were interrupted, I hate everybody and I kept that rage in my heart, After 23 years I hadn't joined any group because I didn't want to sit with any person, or to shake hands, I was using a bicycle for all that period, I lied to the person during survey but it kept judging me, She was like an angel but during the training a

widow broke my heart, I was resurrected I learned that there are people caring for me, I attempted to commit suicide many times but this , never neglect this training, you can be saved but also you can save other. I thank all but special thanks to my beloved wife.”

“ HROC treated us and we became healers, HROC repaired people heart, we learned to open up our windows, we planted tree of trust and we are feeding it by the tips they’ve given us.”

“ I was burdened “nari nduhijwe,” with tearful emotions, the trust walk transformed me and opened my heart, I used to be in hospital many times but since I received training my kids can eat, I am no longer doing the same, I used to go the grave to visit mine, but after I’ve been healed everyone is at peace.”

A survivor who is a Healing Companion in Rubimba lives very near one of the men who killed her father in the genocide. The woman carried hatred for him, and the man has avoided making any contact with her for years. In the course of preparing to be a Healing Companion, the survivor reflected and found that, for her own healing, she wanted to forgive the man. She felt it was important, whether he sought the forgiveness or not; it was necessary for her peace of mind. She invited the man and his wife to the Dialogue Club, and there the survivor offered the man forgiveness. This lifted her burden, and the families had further to go. Some four months later, the man acknowledged his wrongs and sincerely asked forgiveness, deepening their connection and ability to move forward as neighbors.

When the Muyange Healing Companions and HROC co-facilitated a trauma workshop, one of the participants had a breakthrough. This man had been imprisoned for killings carried out during the genocide. Since his release, he said he has felt imprisoned by guilt and others’ hatred and suspicion directed at him. He had experienced government forgiveness and talks by religious leaders, but none gave him relief. He cried and fell to his knees in the workshop, asking forgiveness of two surviving family members. When it was granted, he said he felt like a new person.



USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

Success Story: USAID Program “*Healing Our Communities: Promoting Social Cohesion in Rwanda*” Provides Space for Healing and Forgiveness

HROC trains and mentors community Healing Companions.

IRDP trains and mentors Dialogue Facilitators and community Dialogue Clubs.

Aegis Trust trains and mentors Youth Champions and community Youth Clubs.



“Dialogue Club members felt freed to speak openly with no pressure and no fear.”



With support from USAID, the *Healing Our Communities* project is building community-level resources that are transforming relationships between neighbors who continue to be affected and divided by the legacy of genocide. Project partners include Karuna Center for Peacebuilding; Healing & Rebuilding Our Communities HROC; the Institute for Research & Dialogue for Peace (IRDP); and Aegis Trust.

Dialogue Clubs, which involve 16 project communities and have met biweekly for three years, are a space for profound change. In communities, conflicts can arise around property theft, violence, and other crimes committed before and during the genocide. Dialogue Club sessions provide the time and opportunity for survivors, perpetrators, and bystanders to resolve these disputes peacefully.

In summer 2019, the Bugesera district Dialogue Club experienced firsthand the power of forgiveness. Under the strong lead of community facilitators Rutagengwa and Violette, this club had been talking about the theme of *gusasa inzobe*, or *bitter truth*. During one session, Gahigi, a genocide perpetrator, was moved to speak and took the floor to address his involvement in the genocide. After confessing that he had killed at the former Gashora Commune, Gahigi knelt down in the middle of the dialogue circle, weeping and seeking forgiveness in the blossoming silence of his community.

The silence broke. “Gahigi, from today onwards, I would like you to be my true friend because of the truth you have shared,” said a fellow discussant, a woman survivor who had returned to Rwanda post-genocide. Other participants began to respond openly to Gahigi, with one genocide survivor even saying, “If all people were like Gahigi, the world would be a paradise.” With the amount of response, the group decided it would be effective to extend this and future dialogue sessions to three hours, showing the community’s interest in truly engaging this difficult work.

The dialogue and healing taking place in the Bugesera club has set an example and inspired reactions globally. When Karuna Center’s dialogue coach, Seth Karamage, shared this story, responses of touched readers came from around the world; a Karuna Center colleague in Nepal remarked that such community-level dialogue would help with healing after the country’s civil war ended in 2006.



USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

Success Story: USAID Program “Healing Our Communities: Promoting Social Cohesion in Rwanda” Evokes Powerful Response from Rwandan Officials

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“How can I heal when there is no memorial to recognize the victims of Genocide in this village?”

With support from USAID, the Healing Our Communities project has built community-level resources that are transforming relationships between neighbors who continue to be affected and divided by the legacy of genocide in Rwanda. Project partners include Karuna Center for Peacebuilding, Healing & Rebuilding Our Communities (HROC), Institute for Research & Dialogue for Peace (IRDP); and Aegis Trust.

To engage local and national government officials, the Healing Our Communities project has hosted sector- and district-level Listening Sessions in 8 districts, as well as annual National Listening Sessions; the culminating session took place on September 19th, 2019 in Kigali. These sessions provide an opportunity for representatives of each Healing Our Communities activity arm to share with government officials their experiences participating in the program, including successes and challenges in promoting social cohesion. Officials listen actively and then provide feedback and offer support.

It is especially rewarding to witness government officials taking action to address participants’ key concerns. After a day spent together at the National Listening Session, a dialogue facilitator from Kirehe stood up. Her throat caught and she began to tear up as she explained to officials that all the bodies from her community were burned, including her entire family, leaving behind no remains to mourn. Fellow dialogue club facilitators and healing companions moved to support this woman and she summoned the strength to continue. “How can I heal when there is no memorial to recognize the victims of genocide in this village?” she asked. Touched by her testimony, a representative from the National Unity and Reconciliation Commission stood to answer. She promised that following the event, she would bring the matter to her colleagues and they would address the situation.

Other such stories abound in the district-level sessions. In 2018-2019, community members often spoke about the lack of local community memorials and missing victim remains, and how detrimental these are for healing. When this topic arose in Gicumbi, a district where many citizens were displaced to Kigali during the genocide, the district administration responded positively: they pledged to avail two buses for visiting the Kigali Genocide Memorial. In Nyamasheke District, the district mayor committed to helping the youth and dialogue clubs continue. He committed to looking into all necessary means to facilitate the dialogue club members creating more clubs in all sectors of the district. In Karongi District, National Unity and Reconciliation Commission representatives visited project communities; dialogue club members met them to share experiences and approaches, and to advocate for scaling up the clubs in other communities there as well.

When the work that happens in community dialogue clubs and trauma healing sessions is supported by government officials, it not only validates the concerns and grievances of participants, but it sets in motion broader efforts to promote healing nationwide.



USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

Success Story: USAID Program “Healing Our Communities: Promoting Social Cohesion in Rwanda” Empowers At-Risk Youth

HROC trains and mentors community Healing Companions.

IRDP trains and mentors Dialogue Facilitators and community Dialogue Clubs.

Aegis Trust trains and mentors Youth Champions and community Youth Clubs.



“After finding this youth club and starting to do peacebuilding activities in the community, people are convinced that I am changed and we are able to live together.”



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During year 3 of the program, there was increased outreach to youth at-risk for recruitment into violent extremism. The project develops more pro-social behavior and a sense of belonging, hope, and agency in community, all protective factors against the pull of violent extremism. The youth champions were educated in public service, social cohesion, advocacy, and trauma healing, and they participated in intergenerational dialogue. With these experiences, the at-risk youth went on to become youth champions in their own communities, leading peace clubs and facilitating community service projects to promote greater youth involvement with their communities and with promoting reconciliation. During follow up in May 2019 in Gisagara district, the project team was especially impressed to see the number of youth speaking openly about their drug abuse and quest for sobriety. One youth champion’s testimony in particular stood out.

Jean Baptiste Ndayishimiye was 13 when he became involved with drugs, leaving his family and living as a street kid in Kigali. He made his living and sustained his drug addiction through stealing, spending several years in a cycle of punishment, rehabilitation, and abuse. Eventually, Jean Baptiste returned to his family but he felt disowned and mistrusted by the entire community.

After becoming a youth champion and taking a leadership role in Gisagara’s youth club, where participants gather weekly to build homes and latrines for community members in need, Jean Baptiste testified to being a changed person. “After finding this youth club and starting to do peacebuilding activities in the community, people are convinced that I am changed and we are able to live together.” Jean Baptiste now reports that he has rebuilt trust with his parents and neighbors and that community members often call him for help with odd jobs as he has become known as someone who takes initiative in the village and is always willing to lend a hand. Occasionally, neighbors are able to offer compensation for his assistance, helping Jean Baptiste support himself financially.

Jean Baptiste’s is one of many stories of successful youth transformation and his journey to abandoning drugs and seeking opportunities for community engagement is echoed in many testimonies the Healing Our Communities project received.

Healing Our Communities project

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Bibliography of Products, Tools, Reports, and Studies

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Healing Our Communities Year 3 M&E Report

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Documentary

Healing Our Communities 30-minute documentary

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We Are All Rwandans

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Radio Shows

Ikiganiro: *Reimbursement of properties and goods destroyed during the genocide*

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Training Materials

Youth:

Youth Champions Training Schedule

Rwanda Peace Education Booklet E

Youth Champions Film Photography Agenda (2 sessions)

Agenda Youth Film and Photography Training_HOC

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Trauma Healing:

HROC Basic Manual

Adult Basic Trauma Workshops Agenda

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Healing Companions- Refreshers

ToT Healing Companions Workshops Agenda

Dialogue:

The Dialogue Clubs Facilitators Refreshers

Facilitation Training for Year 2

Facilitation Skill PDF

DC Facilitators Training IRDP- Karuna

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