



63 Peter Parley Rd.
Jamaica Plain, MA 02130
USA

Kamonyi District
Southern Province
P.O. Box 384
Kigali - Rwanda

www.ubuntucenterforpeace.org



Our Mission

In a world plagued by increasingly human-made and natural disasters, we aim to create healthier and more productive communities by healing people living with psychological trauma and other common mental disorders, improve their quality of life and enhance social healing in traumatized societies. We do it by empowering Community Healing Assistants to deliver movement therapy, collective narrative practice and rituals to healing groups that they form from their communities, which transition to long-term support groups to bring traumatized people back to health. We scale up through partnerships across Rwanda and beyond, with a particular focus on the African Great Lakes Region.

Tackling trauma and common mental health disorders through a community-based social healing model in Africa

Magnitude of the problem

Mental disorders—mainly depression and anxiety make up 14% of the global burden of diseases, predominantly in low and middle-income countries engulfing people into poverty, sexual and gender-based violence, poor child education, etc. In post-genocide Rwanda and other conflict-affected countries, the number of people suffering from mental health disorders is double the global average (20%) and fully half of genocide survivors suffer from trauma and mental health disorders. 1 With only 1 psychiatrist to serve 2 million people in an individualized and medicalized healthcare system, over 85% of those in need have no access to mental health services.



The Ubuntu Center for Peace Innovative and scalable solution to bridge the gap

Our mission is to **bring people living with trauma and other common mental disorders to a more flourishing life**. We do it through a cost-effective community-based social healing model, which integrates Breath-Body-Mind practices with collective narrative/storytelling and rituals. Healing practices are provided through Community Healing Assistants (CHAs) whom we recruit from their respective communities, train and supervise them to facilitate healing in therapeutic groups of 18-20 people each group, meeting weekly for 15 weeks. After the graduation, therapeutic groups transition to long-term support or self-help groups and create new activities including solidarity work, loan circles, cooperatives etc., which sustain the healing and resilience, leading to a more flourishing life.

To scale up our impact, we use evidence to advance policy dialogue and partner with the Ministry of Health and other institutions including churches so that our model can be layered into existing structures including the primary healthcare system, education and church structures.

Our Vision is of a healed society where individually and collectively healed citizens are empowered to responsibly build a sustainable society.

2 Strategic Goals: by June 2024, we want to:

-  Expand program activities to over 3 districts, reaching more than 36,000 patients as we refine the community-based social healing model and prove its effectiveness
-  Position our organization to achieve scale up

Progress to date

Health outcomes

CHAs trained: **232**

School Healing Assistants: **152**

Treated to date: **7500**

Depression reduced in **70%**

Anxiety reduced in **69%**

PTSD reduced in **55%**

Significantly improved physical health, psychological, relational and environmental quality of life

Socio-economic effects

Lost days due to health conditions reduced by a half

26.6% increased child school attendance

65% less domestic violence with

21% increase in consultation within families to solve issues

49% less conflicts with neighbors with eventual reconciliation

Testimonials from beneficiaries are heart-warming:

".... I was living in shame and in isolation at home, after I got raped by my own brother and had a baby. I was feeling hopeless with chronic headaches, epigastric pain with attacks of hiccups. I attempted suicide but in vain. Life was meaningless and I was unable to work.... After joining the healing group, I can now smile, I interact with others, I am healthy and happy... I no longer fear men and I forgave my brother" (Single mother, 27 years old, victim of rape).

".....We were in hell for seven years of fight and separation, but we are now in honey moon thanks to this program" (Reconciled Tom and his wife), ".... I was dead, but now I am alive" (Cecilia, genocide survivor).



Leadership

The program is executed by a team of six people in Rwanda including the Training and Community Outreach Manager, the Community Healing Assistants' Supervisor, Finance and Administrative Manager, Communications Advisor and a Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability and Learning (MEAL) Coordinator, all led by Dr Jean Bosco Niyonzima, co-founder and Executive Director, who is supported by a multi-talented and dedicated US and Rwandan Boards of Directors. Jean Bosco is a Rwanda Medical Doctor trained in General Medicine in Rwanda, with a Master of Art in Sustainable Development and a Diploma in Trauma Healing from SIT Graduate Institute, Vermont in the USA and a Master of Public Health from the University of Liverpool. He has over 12 years of leadership and management experience in international development and humanitarian contexts. He has worked in more than seven countries with various organisations including Partners In Health, Last Mile Health and Save the Children International.

