

## Community Counselling Initiative for Women with children born of rape

### Dining for Women - Project update July 2014



#### **Project background**

Foundation Rwanda works in partnership with Survivors Fund (SURF) and its partners (AVEGA, Kanyarwanda and Solace Ministries) to deliver support for women who were raped during the 1994 genocide against the Tutsi and who have children born of rape. The mothers asked for help around how to talk to their child about their history, the way they were born and who their father is. After consultation, a community counselling initiative was set up to bring together groups of women facing similar situations, to offer support and a safe space to discuss their own experiences and trauma and their relationship with their child. Facilitated by trained counsellors, the group sessions involve creating group boundaries and building trust, discussing trauma and how to prevent a traumatic crisis, how trauma is expressed in young people, responsibilities of being a parent, child rights, adolescence, resolving family conflict and how to discuss with their child born of rape about their histories.

This case study illustrates some of the challenges these women face:

*When the Genocide happened Beatrice (Not real name), now 39, was raped and forced to get married to a member of the Interahamwe. She gave birth to a child in exile in DRC. She managed to escape with her child and returned to her family. She had her child's birth registered and on the registration form she filled names of the child's grandfather. When Gacaca Courts started, this woman announced and accused the man who raped her and then he was imprisoned and he died whilst in prison. Now,*

*when the child asks his mother about his father, his mother does not know what to say because she has lied to him for a long time. She told his son that his father was killed during the genocide.”*

### **Project outline**

After a successful pilot programme, with support from Dining for Women, we have been able to extend the Community Counselling Initiative to 200 more Foundation Rwanda beneficiaries countrywide in partnership with Kanyarwanda. Ten groups have been set up with a total of 100 beneficiaries. The groups are facilitated by a counsellor, and assisted by a past beneficiary who has shown desire and skills to support others. The groups meet every two weeks and include a total of 12 sessions over a period of six months. The second phase of ten groups are currently being initiated to reach a further 100 women.

### **Beneficiaries**

100 women took part in the counselling groups aged between 31 and 60 years old with an average of 46 years. 8 groups took place in the Southern Province of Rwanda and 2 in the Eastern Province (these regions are where large numbers of beneficiaries live).

### **Evaluation**



A baseline evaluation questionnaire was administered at session 1 with questions looking at the women’s life satisfaction, hope for the future, thoughts about the past, trust in group members and community, relationship with their child and whether their child knew about their birth history. This questionnaire will be repeated at the end of the counselling sessions to assess any change over time as a result of the groups. A short questionnaire was administered at the half way point to

see if the groups are helpful to the women so that changes can be made accordingly. The first ten groups have now finished session 6 and completed the half way point evaluation questionnaires. They will soon finish the final session and results will be reported in due course.

### **Results**

#### **a) Life satisfaction**

The women were asked how they would rate their life at the present moment on a scale of 0 to 10 where 0 is the worst possible life one can imagine and 10 is the best. This gives a simple, subjective measure of life satisfaction.

At baseline, **the average rating for life satisfaction was 2.6 out of 10**. Interestingly, this is similar to the pilot group. The responses ranged from 0 to 8 but the most common response was 2 and more than half of the women (67.8%) rated it as 3 or below. At the half way point, after 6 sessions of the group counselling, **the average rating for life satisfaction had risen to 5.2 out of 10**. At this point responses ranged from 2 to 8 with the most common response being a 5 and only 7.4% of women continuing to rate their life as below a 3.

#### **b) Hope for the future**

The women were also asked to rate how much hope for the future they have on a scale of 0 to 10 where 0 is no hope at all and 10 is a lot of hope.

At baseline, **the average rating of hope for the future was 3.9 out of 10**. Here responses were quite varied ranging from 0 to 10. At the half way point, after 6 sessions of the group counselling, **the average rating for hope for the future had risen to 5.9 out of 10**. Responses ranged from 2 to 9.

#### **c) Helpfulness of the group**

At the halfway point, the women were also asked how helpful the group had been so far on a scale of 0 to 10 with 0 being not at all helpful and 10 being extremely helpful. **The average rating of group helpfulness was 6.8 out of 10** with 95.7% of women rating it as 5 or above.

NB: Results for the other questions evaluated will be presented in the next report after the end point questionnaires have been collected and analysed, as well as including data for the second round of counselling groups.

#### **Group differences**

There are currently ten counselling groups and results were analysed separately as well as on average. When looking at the evaluation results for individual groups, the pattern of improvement over time remains. With regards to life satisfaction the lowest average group rating at baseline was 0.3 and the highest 3.9. At the half way point the lowest was 4.1 and the highest 6.3.





Hope for the future at baseline ranged from 2.5 to 5.7 and at the half way point ranged from 4.9 to 6.7. Group helpfulness was fairly consistent, ranging from 6.1 to 7.4.

### **Counsellor reports and supervision**



A group supervision session took place for the counsellors at the halfway point. This enabled counsellors to share their experiences, present difficult cases, hear the progress and challenges of other groups and receive advice and support from each other.

The counsellors filled out a report form after every session of counselling. This records attendance numbers, topics discussed and challenges and benefits of the group. The counsellors reported that attendance was very high. Overall the feedback from counsellors was very positive saying that they could see the groups were beneficial, providing a forum for the women to be listened to, providing hope and creating a network of friendship. Counsellors reported that some women were beginning to visit each other in their homes.

The counsellors also reported some difficulties, which are often expected in counselling groups. This included some women finding it hard to open up and share their stories and to trust other group members. Other women found it hard to talk and became overwhelmed with emotion. It appears that a lot of time could be given to the women for discussing their own experiences and testimonies and it was sometimes hard to move the group on to other topics. The counsellors reported that some of the topics discussed (e.g. adolescence or family conflict) are big and more sessions were needed to fully explore these. Counsellors also reported how difficult their job is when the women face such ongoing poverty day to day.

### **Next steps**

The counselling groups are now in the process of meeting for a further 6 sessions and will soon be coming to an end. At the final session, the women will fill out another evaluation questionnaire to assess any changes over time, as well as give more detailed feedback on how the groups did or did not benefit them.



### **Workshops for Girls**

In addition to the Counselling groups for women, more direct support for some of the women's daughters has been provided during the school holidays. The main aim of this was to address issues around career guidance and considering their plans

post-education as well as sexual and reproductive health education and HIV prevention. Workshops in have been conducted with a total of 60 female students benefiting.

Initial evaluation data shows that the girls rated their life as an average of 4.7 out of 10. Responses were varied with the full range of 0 to 10 but the most common response was 4. This is slightly higher than their mothers' ratings but still considerably low with 65.5% of girls rating their life as 5 or below. With regard to hope for the future, the average rating was 7.7 out of 10 ranging from 5-10. This seems higher than the mothers' ratings.

The workshops for girls are a very important element of the programme because of the high rates of girls dropping out of school due to teenage pregnancy. After the workshops the youth expressed the need for them to meet more regularly and get more training in the areas of reproductive health and career guidance.

### Conclusion

The 10 counselling groups established so far are proving to be successful with group members reporting an increase in their life satisfaction and an increase in hope for the future. Despite the inevitable challenges of this work, the counsellors are seeing that the groups are important and beneficial. A further 10 groups are currently being set up to expand the work to even more of our beneficiaries.

In addition, the workshops for girls are proving very valuable and the girls are requesting more support and trainings on important topics such as career guidance and sexual health.



*"After being raped by my uncle, my family rejected me. My mother despised me and I felt despair due to my poor living conditions. When I was out in the community, I thought that everyone I met knew about my background, and because of this I felt very shameful. As such, I did my best not to encounter people because I thought that everyone hated me. But after I joined the counselling group, I have met other people with whom I share a similar experience and they have showed me love. Now I consider them as my family members because they are the only ones that I tell my problems and this is why I cannot miss the day of the group. This brings me peace." (Beneficiary – FR Community Counselling)*

# Foundation Rwanda Counselling Report Addendum

## **Funding Changes**

We did get funding from a family foundation –who prefer to be anonymous. The funding has helped to provide counselling to 60 Foundation Rwanda mothers from the Western Region the project was implemented by one of our partners AVEGA AGAHOZO.

Foundation Rwanda is currently experiencing financial difficulties for our education program, we have funding up to the end of the year but not certain about next year. In addition one of our main partners Kanyarwanda is also experiencing loss of funding from Medicale Mondale and they are likely to close in Dec if they do not get funding. We changed to implement work with one main organization Kanyarwada since they have the biggest membership of mothers victims of rape instead of working with 3 organizations as stated in the proposal. The management became easier and the impact can easily be seen.

## **Impact of DFW Grant**

The community counselling initiative is helping mothers to be able to disclose to their children the way they were conceived, previously they did not know how to go about it. It is also helping the children to receive better treatment from their mothers now that the mothers are being educated on issues regarding parenting. Furthermore there is increased self confidence among the women who have gone through the training this is attributed to the fact that they sit and share experience and realize that they are not alone or there are other women with worse experiences.

One of the mothers said “Before attending the counselling groups I did not think I was worth anything, I used to go to church dirty and poorly dressed like I was going to the garden but after attending the groups I am now a smart and clean woman ... some men are interested in me... (she laughs). Now I realise I have missed a lot of life and I cannot miss anymore”. She is now far more confident and positive about life.

**Survivors Fund**  
**Transaction Detail By Account**

January 1 through September 12, 2014

	A	B	C	D	E	F
1	Date		Num	Memo	Amount FRW	Amount USD
2	01/13/2014		36853284	[PV3916] PYT FOR ADMINISTRATION OF QUESTIONERS	119,000	197
3	02/20/2014		065790	[PV3985] PYT TRANSFER TO KANYARWANDA PARTNER ORGANIZATION -PERSONEL EXPENSES, PROGRAM SERVICES &SUPPLIES&TRANING	9,859,795	16,351
4	02/26/2014		36851751	[PV3995] PYT FOR TRANSPORT TO RILIMA TO VISIT COUNSELLING GROUPS	40,000	66
5	03/18/2014		36852329	[PV4025] PYT TO PROGRAM MANAGER TRAVEL TO NYANZA AND RUHANGO	55,000	91
6	03/26/2014		36851539	[PV4038] PYT FOR GIRL- CHILDREN 2 DAY CAMP AND NON PERSONNEL EXPENSES	1,260,000	2,090
7	03/26/2014		36851544	[PV4040] PYT TO TWAGIRIMANA JEAN BAPTISTE FOR TRANSLATION AND DATA INPUT	258,824	429
8	04/15/2014		36852832	[PV4060] PYT FOR MOTHERS CAMPS 2 DAYS IN NYANZA	1,330,000	2,206
9	04/15/2014		36852833	[PV4061] PYT TO NIYIBIZI MATHIAS FOR TRAINING GIRLS ON SEX EDUCATION	127,059	211
10	04/16/2014		36852836	[PV4061] PYT TO FOR TRANSPORT/PDM TO NYANZA&BUTARE	60,000	100
11	05/20/2014		36853637	[PV4110] PYT TO COUNSELOR FOR PDM/TRANSPORT TO VARIOUS GROUPS FOR COUNSELLING	28,000	46
12	05/27/2014		36853661	[PV4120] PYT TO COUNSELOR ALLOWANCES	45,000	75
13	05/27/2014		36853663	[PV4120] PYT TO COMMUNICATION TO COUNSELOR	20,000	33
14	05/29/2014		36853671	[PV4123] PYT COUNSELOR TRANSPORT/PDM TO RILIMA/NYAMATA	45,000	75
15	06/03/2014		36853810	[PV4129] PYT FOR COSTS FOR 3 DAYS MOTHERS CAMP	1,560,000	2,587
16	06/03/2014		36853811	[PV4129] PYT FOR COUNSELORS FOLLOW UP ON COUNSELLING	15,000	25

**Survivors Fund**  
**Transaction Detail By Account**

January 1 through September 12, 2014

	A	B	C	D	E	F
17	06/11/2014		36853841	[PV4143] PYT FOR COUNSELORS ALLOWANCES	264,706	439
18	06/12/2014		[PCV5829]	[PCV5829] PYT FOR TRANSPORT FOR COUNSELLING GROUPS VISITS	7,500	12
19	06/24/2014		36853883	[PV4161] PYT FOR COUNSELORS AND BENEFICIARIES TRANSPORT	920,000	1,526
20	06/30/2014		36853897	[PV4166] PYT FOR COUNSELLING RECODERS	143,500	238
21	06/30/2014		36853896	[PV4166] PYT TO COUNSELLOR ALLOWANCES FOR COUNSELLING SERVICES	83,500	138
22	07/07/2014		36857581	[PV4182] PYT TO EMILIEN FOR TRANSPORT/PDM A NUMBER OF PLACES TO FOLLOW UP COUNSELLING GROUPS	16,000	27
23	07/17/2014		36857604	[PV4196] PYT TO SAM FOR TRANSPORT/PDM TO A NUMBER OF PLACES FOR SAM AND EMILIENE	92,500	153
24	07/29/2014		36857649	[PV4211] PYT FOR MOTHERS 2 DAYS CAMP TRANSPORT AND MEALS	920,000	1,526
25	07/30/2014		36857652	[PV4213] PYT TO PROGRAM MANAGER FOR TRANSPORT TO NYANZA FOR COMMUNITY COUNSELLING SURPERVISSION	35,000	58
26	07/31/2014		[PCV4572]	[PCV4572] PYT FOR TRANSPORT TO COUNSELLOR	3,500	6
27	08/07/2014		36857694	[PV4227] PYT FOR MOTHERS TRANSPORT	262,500	28,705
28				Total up to 7th Aug 2014	<b>17,571,384</b>	<b>28,705</b>
29						
30				Please be advised that some payments are for activities beyond the reporting period		
31						
32						



**Survivors Fund**  
**Transaction Detail By Account**  
January 1 through September 12, 2014

	A	B	C	D	E	F
33						
34						