

Third edition |April - June 2024





"As a member of the RCSP we should renew our commitment to join our efforts in fighting the brewing trend of the genocide deniers of the genocide against the Tutsi."

CSOs and partners commemorate the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi

66

"As a member of the RCSP we should renew our commitment to join our efforts in fighting the brewing trend of the genocide deniers of the Genocide against the Tutsi."

Dr. Emmanuel Nzeyimana, Deputy Chairperson, RCSP



"We classify NGOs into three groups: service delivery organizations, research and advocacy-focused groups, and think tanks. Due to their unique roles, each category execute their budgets percentages differently."

Dr. Joseph Ryarasa Nkurunziza, Chairperson, RCSP



April - June 2024 | Issue 3 CHAIRPERSON'S STATEMENT



It is with great pleasure that I present the 3rd edition of our quarterly newsletter from the Rwanda Civil Society Platform (RCSP), covering the period from April to June 2024.

During this period, RCSP has been actively involved in raising awareness about the upcoming presidential and parliamentary elections, working closely with the government to ensure informed participation from all citizens.

Additionally, our civil society organizations and partners, together with our umbrella members, the Network of International NGOs in Rwanda (NINGO), and esteemed partners such as UNDP, Trocaire, and RGB, came together to commemorate the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi.

Our collaboration with the government has been particularly noteworthy, with frequent engagements ensuring that all stakeholders' perspectives contribute to key decisions. We are grateful to our colleagues in INGOs and Development Partners for their continuous steadfast partnership.

Dr. Joseph Ryarasa Nkurunziza Chairperson, Rwanda Civil Society Platform

FOREWORD OF THE EXECUTIVE SECRETARY

The Rwanda Civil Society Platform is delighted to present the third issue of our newsletter, marking a significant milestone in our journey. We are thrilled to continue our collaboration with our esteemed partners and members.

This newsletter serves as a crucial platform for sharing updates on our activities, highlighting news and events within Rwanda's civil society community, and providing insights into critical sectoral issues.

Your steadfast support and dedication are invaluable to us, and we look forward to further strengthening our partnership to advance the civil society sector in Rwanda.

We sincerely appreciate your ongoing commitment, and I am eager to embark on this collaborative journey of growth and progress with each and every one of you.

Angelique Kabeza

Executive Secretary, Rwanda Civil Society Platform

SPOTLIGHT

Commentary on X following the passed the draft law governing NGOs

We classify NGOs into three groups: service delivery organizations, research and advocacyfocused groups, and think tanks. Due to their unique roles, each category execute their budgets percentages differently. To effectively capture NGO activities, it is essential to enhance coordination between JADF and central government departments. NGOs share their action plans and budgets with the JADF at the district level on an annual basis.

Dr. Joseph Ryarasa Nkurunziza, Chairperson, Rwanda Civil Society Platform



CSOs and partners commemorate the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi

The Rwanda Civil Society Platform (RCSP), in collaboration with its member organisations and partners, includes the Network of International NGOs in Rwanda (NINGO), UNDP, Trocaire, and RGB commemorated the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi.



CSO members laid wreaths of flowers to pay respect to the victims of the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi

victims of the Genocide, to honor their memory. education initiatives. The event commenced with a solemn minute of at the mass grave.

tragic events and the heroic efforts that institutions in upholding the memory of Kwibuka. brought them to an end.

division, genocide ideology, and denial. **Dr.** towards reconciliation and unity. **Emmanuel Nzeyimana, Deputy Chairperson of** combating denial and genocide ideology.

On Wednesday, 23 June 2024, representatives of Godfrey Kayondo, Chairperson of NINGO, underscored all CSOs gathered at the Kigali Genocide civil society's dedication to eradicating hate and fostering Memorial, the resting place for over 250,000 communities of love and coexistence through peace

silence followed by the laying of a floral wreath The Rwanda Governance Board committed to making this commemoration an annual event, highlighting its importance in honoring the survivors and educating A symbolic flame of remembrance was lit, and future generations. **Dr. Félicien Usengumukiza, Deputy** participants received a guided tour of the **CEO of RGB**, expressed solidarity with the survivors and memorial to deepen their understanding of the emphasized the collective responsibility of individuals and

IBUKA, representing Genocide survivors, called upon all Speakers emphasized the crucial role of civil participants to advocate for justice and humanity, society in forging a future free from violence, ensuring that the lessons of history guide Rwanda

the Rwanda Civil Society Platform, reaffirmed In unity and reflection, these organizations and their their commitment to supporting Rwanda's partners pledged to continue supporting Rwanda's social and economic development while actively journey of healing, recognizing that remembrance is pivotal in shaping a peaceful and prosperous future for all.

IBUKA, representing Genocide survivors, called upon all participants to advocate for justice and humanity, ensuring that the lessons of history guide Rwanda towards reconciliation and unity.

RCSP and NWC trained parliamentary candidates

From June 18 to 19, 2024, approximately 100 women, including youth candidates and individuals with disabilities whose candidacies have been approved by the National Electoral Commission, convened for training in preparation for the upcoming parliamentary elections. This followed the consulatative meeting organized by the Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning.

The Rwanda Civil Society Platform partnered with the National Women Council to equip these aspiring candidates with comprehensive knowledge of the electoral process, ethics, and code of conduct. The training aimed to prepare them thoroughly, covering their roles from pre-election preparations to post-election responsibilities.

In the upcoming elections scheduled from July 15 to 18, 2024, Rwanda aims to elect 80 members of parliament, with 30% (24 seats) reserved for women–a testament to Rwanda's commitment to global leadership in gender equality.





"As civil society, our role in the upcoming elections is to empower candidates, especially women, youth, and persons with disabilities, equipping them with the necessary skills for successful campaigning, elections, and post-election engagement," remarked **Angelique Kabeza, Executive Secretary of RCSP**.

"After elections, life continues, and it is the responsibility of every candidate, regardless of the result, to collaborate with winners for the development of our country," emphasized **Jackline Kamanzi, Executive Secretary of the National Women Council**.

The training covered various topics essential for effective leadership, including the empowerment and success of women leaders amidst familial duties. Participants also gained insights into the electoral agenda, campaign strategies, and ethical guidelines. Discussions on gender equality, inclusion in politics, and leadership interdependence further enriched their <u>understanding of these critical issues</u>.

CSOs collaborated with the Government on the National Strategy for Transformation II

Rwanda is embarking on a transformative journey with the launch of the second generation of the National Strategy for Transformation (NSTII), spanning from fiscal years 2024/2025 to 2028/2029.

To ensure its effectiveness, the Rwandan government has initiated collaborative efforts with all stakeholders from the outset of its development. Since April 2024, the Rwanda Civil Society Platform (RCSP), a key government partner, has actively engaged in consultations with relevant government institutions to provide insights and inputs at this critical early stage.

RCSP initially participated in the Governance and Decentralization Sector Working Group, evaluating the achievements of NSTI over the past seven years and validating the Sector Strategic Plan (2024/2025 - 2028/2029).

At a Forward-Looking Joint Sector Review Meeting chaired by the Ministry of Local Governance on 28 May 2024, RCSP, representing its affiliates, contributed valuable insights focused on citizen empowerment, transparency, and fostering collaboration among civil society organizations (CSOs), the public sector, and the private sector as essential drivers for achieving NSTII goals.

RCSP further amplified its impact through media engagements, including a talk show hosted by Rwanda Television on June 6th, 2024. During this broadcast, civil society members brainstormed transformative strategies to address key challenges such as poverty alleviation and resilience, youth employment and job creation, and human capital development within the upcoming five-year NSTII.

Representatives from civil society emphasized their pivotal role in NSTI, citing achievements in education, health, nutrition, HIV prevention, and advocacy for laws protecting teenage mothers. They underscored their readiness to significantly contribute to NSTII, highlighting past investments, such as approximately \$70,000 allocated by CSOs in 2017 towards various social welfare initiatives in Rwanda.

Mukantabana, Chairperson of Reseau des Femmes, emphasized CSOs' commitment to collaborative efforts with government institutions in NSTII implementation, highlighting their ongoing participation in sector working groups and alignment with government priorities.

Allain Sano Mugenzi from Transparency International – Rwanda highlighted CSOs' contributions in promoting civic participation, conflict resolution, and fostering a culture of peace during NSTI. He reaffirmed their dedication to supporting government initiatives throughout NSTII implementation.

Participants in the talk show pledged to intensify advocacy efforts to address persistent gaps, particularly in the agricultural sector, demonstrating their unwavering commitment to Rwanda's socio-economic development through collaborative partnerships with government and other stakeholders.

Civil Society Engagement on Proposed Law Governing NGOs

Rwanda is currently considering a new draft law that merges existing regulations for national and international non-governmental organizations (NGOs), a move initiated by the government to streamline governance and improve operational efficiency. The draft legislation, presented to Parliament on April 18, 2024, by **Hon. Minister Judith Uwizeye of the President's Office**, aims to create a unified legal framework for all NGOs in the country.

Minister Uwizeye emphasized that consolidating these laws into a single statute would simplify compliance and enhance the effectiveness of NGOs in promoting national development and welfare.

In response, the Rwanda Civil Society Platform (RCSP) and its partner NGOs have actively engaged in discussions via media platforms to address concerns with certain provisions in the draft law. One contentious issue includes a clause limiting NGOs to allocating no more than 20% of their operational budgets to activities not directly benefiting their beneficiaries.

Minister Uwizeye clarified that this provision, already part of existing legislation, does not encompass staff salaries. She reassured NGOs that the intent is to ensure efficient use of funds without compromising essential operational capabilities.

Dr. Joseph Nkurunziza Ryarasa, Chairperson of RCSP, highlighted the diverse operational needs of NGOs, particularly those focused on research, advocacy, and human rights, where operational expenses may exceed the proposed limit due to the nature of their work.

The civil society's proposed adjustments include differentiated application of budgetary constraints based on the type of NGO activities, advocating for flexibility that aligns with operational realities.

Another contentious point involves the requirement for NGOs to submit action plans and financial reports for approval by districts and line ministries, raising concerns about potential interference and loss of autonomy.

While these issues are being deliberated by Parliament's Committee on Social Affairs, RCSP and its affiliates have conducted extensive media campaigns to voice their perspectives and recommendations. They remain hopeful that the parliamentary committee will consider their inputs before finalizing the bill.

"In its current state, the draft law poses challenges and potentially restricts civic engagement in Rwanda. We trust that the parliamentary committee will take these concerns into account," remarked Andrews Kananga, Executive Director of the Legal Aid Forum.

Despite the draft law's progress being halted due to the upcoming presidential and legislative elections, stakeholders remain committed to constructive dialogue and hope for amendments that will safeguard civic space and enhance NGO effectiveness in Rwanda.

CLADHO hosted a training on Child Rights situation analysis

Staff members from CLADHO and its member organizations participated in a comprehensive training on Child Rights Situation Analysis (CRSA) and Meaningful Participation in addressing barriers to child rights, this training was funded by Kinder Not Hilfe (KNH).



CLADHO and its member organizations participated in a comprehensive training on Child Rights Situation Analysis

The primary objective of the training was to familiarize participants with the CRSA process and its crucial connection to child rights-based programming. It aimed to equip attendees with the necessary knowledge, skills, and confidence to effectively plan and implement CRSA at the project level.

Emmanuel Safari, Executive Secretary of CLADHO, opened the training by reaffirming the universal and indivisible nature of human rights. He underscored that every individual, by virtue of their humanity, possesses inalienable rights that are interrelated and interdependent.

Throughout the sessions, **Evariste Murwanashyaka**, **Head of Programs at CLADHO**, guided participants in exploring the various types of rights–Development, Survival, Participation, and Protection–outlined in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). Emphasis was placed on how the CRSA process enables practitioners to examine the factors influencing the child rights landscape and utilize child rights-friendly tools to identify areas where children's rights are not fully realized.

Murwanashyaka commended the participants for dedicating their weekend to the training and encouraged them to remain engaged, particularly during upcoming fieldwork and participatory analyses. He emphasized the importance of their ongoing commitment to ensuring children's rights are respected and protected.

Overall, the training proved to be an invaluable opportunity for participants to deepen their understanding of child rights issues and enhance their capacity to contribute meaningfully to child-centered initiatives within their respective organizations.

NUDOR facilitates successful "Ring the Bell" campaign in Gicumbi District

On Friday, 31 May 2024, Gicumbi District witnessed a heartwarming display of community support during the "Ring the Bell" campaign organized by Caritas Byumba, a local partner of the National Union of Disabilities' Organizations in Rwanda (NUDOR). This initiative, part of the ongoing efforts to empower children with disabilities, saw local religious churches rally together and collect a remarkable three million Rwandan francs.

The funds raised during this campaign will directly benefit children with disabilities residing at the Izere Center in Nyamiyaga sector, under the auspices of Caritas Byumba. This center plays a crucial role in providing essential support and care to these children, ensuring they have access to education, healthcare, and other fundamental needs.

The "Ring the Bell" campaign, an annual initiative organized by NUDOR in collaboration with its partner organizations across Rwanda, aims to raise awareness and promote inclusivity for children with disabilities. This year, Caritas Byumba took charge of organizing the event in Gicumbi District, specifically at GS Nyinawimana, an inclusive school in Nyamiyaga sector.

Mr. Jean Paul Sekarema, the manager of the Child Empowerment Project under NUDOR, eloquently highlighted the campaign's significance, emphasizing the crucial role of community support in ensuring all children, regardless of ability, have equal access to education. His introduction set the tone for a poignant ceremony that included participants from diverse backgrounds: children with and without disabilities, educators, parents, local leaders, and education partners.



The success of the "Ring the Bell" campaign in Gicumbi District exemplifies the power of collective action in fostering an inclusive society

NUDOR and REB forge partnership to enhance education for children with disabilities

On 21 May 2024, a delegation from the National Union of Disability Organizations in Rwanda (NUDOR), led by Chairperson Mrs. Beth Nasiforo Mukarwego, met with Mr. Nelson Mbarushimana, Director General of the Rwanda Education Board (REB), in Kigali.

The discussions underscored the shared commitment of NUDOR and REB to inclusivity and equitable education

Secondly, the case of Gashayija Happy, a student with Cerebral Palsy at Sainte Trinite Technical School Ruhango district. in highlighted issues related to slow and inadequate writing during skills national examinations. Mr. Nelson pledged to collaborate with NESSA (National Examination and School Inspection Authority) to ensure fair assessment practices for students with disabilities, thereby addressing systemic challenges like these.



During the candid discussions, several pressing issues affecting persons with disabilities were raised and constructive steps were taken towards their resolution. Specifically, Mr. Nelson Mbarushimana committed to address the concerns. Firstly, in response to the case of Promise Manzi, a visually impaired student at GS Rwisirabo in Nyagatare district, who had lost his special needs teacher, the DG promptly intervened by instructing the school's head teacher to reinstate the necessary support for Promise and other similarly affected students.

Beyond these individual cases, the meeting concluded with a commitment to foster ongoing collaboration between NUDOR and REB. A pivotal outcome of this collaboration will be the development and signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU). This MoU aims to formalize and enhance the partnership between the two organizations, outlining specific strategies and actions to improve educational outcomes for children with disabilities across Rwanda.

This partnership represents a significant step towards creating a more inclusive educational environment where every child, regardless of ability, has the opportunity to thrive and succeed.



RCCDN celebrated Earth Day themed 'Planet Vs Plastic'

RCCDN organised a virtual meeting on Monday, 22 April 2024 with its members, in celebration of Earth Daythemed 'Planet vs Plastic.' The scourge of plastic pollution continues to cast a dark shadow over our planet, wreaking havoc on ecosystems, wildlife, and human health. Despite commendable efforts globally, the challenge persists, with Rwanda standing as both an emblem of progress and a microcosm of ongoing struggles.



The meeting aimed to achieve several key objectives. First and foremost, it sought to raise awareness among participants about the dire impacts of plastics on the environment. By fostering dialogue and sharing knowledge, the gathering intends to catalyse action towards a plastic-free future, not only in Rwanda but globally.

The objective of this virtual event was clearly to recognise the urgency of the issue, uniting stakeholders and concerned individuals in a collaborative effort to address the escalating crisis of plastic pollution. In 2008, Rwanda emerged as a pioneer, banning single-use plastics and embarking on a journey towards sustainability. Yet, the persistence of plastic bottles underscores the need for innovative solutions.

Following Earth Day, a virtual gathering focused on tackling a pressing global issue which is 'Plastic pollution'. Participants engaged in insightful discussions, examining the multifaceted nature of the problem and exploring potential solutions.

The conversation highlighted Rwanda's proactive measures in combating plastic pollution, particularly through initiatives like banning single-use plastics. However, challenges persist, especially in reducing plastic use in product packaging.

Despite the challenges, the virtual meeting showcased promising strategies in plastic waste management and circular economy practices. As the event concluded, there was a call for Rwandan youth to unite in their efforts to combat plastic pollution, highlighting their potential to make a positive impact on environmental sustainability.

HIV Ambassadors urge fellow youth to embrace preventive measures

On May 18, 2024, a one week community HIV prevention awareness campaign was concluded in Rwanda's eastern province. The campaign that RRP+ Youth Ambassadors featured in, with their educative testimonies, targeted youth in Ngatare and Gatsibo districts, Key and general populations.



According to the Rwanda Biomedical Center (RBC), young people aged 15-29 are at increased risk and account for a significant proportion of new HIV infections. Among other objectives, the campaign also aimed at facilitating Civil Society Organizations in raising awareness on HIV delivery and utilization especially among adolescents and youth.

In an interview with the press, Dr. Joyce Mireille, senior officer in charge HIV prevention methods at RBC advised people living with HIV to avoid self stigma, where they can as well get antiretroviral therapy from a health facility of their choice, instead of leaving their bodies to weaken; so that they stay healthier.

In his testimony, one of the RPP+ Youth Ambassadors addressed a large number of Youth in Muhura sector/Gatsibo district on how one can live beyond HIV and Stigma, as he reflected from his own personal experience.

"I was first frustrated after receiving my HIV test results, i became desperate, but with the mentorship i got under RRP+ i traversed this stage. I am now employed as a teacher and my future looks bright with hope to live a healthier life", said Jean Leonce Afazari.



Beyond HIV: Confronting the rise of NCDs among PLHIV

The Rwanda Network of People Living with HIV/AIDS/RRP+ recently conducted a 5-day follow up workshop for Community Monitors & Healthcare Professionals engaged in the Study for Health Determinants for Major Non-Communicable Diseases among People Living with HIV in Rwanda. This was in collaboration with the Rwanda Biomedical Centre (RBC), Rwanda NCD Alliance, Eritcus and UR-CMHS School of Nursing and Midwifery.



A trainer sharing tips on taking accurate BP measurements and keeping a log on readings

"Obviously, there are still challenges with people who don't take seriously the act of being examined, claiming they have not felt any sickness. There is need for intensive sensitization on NCDs so that they can be detected at an early stage in most people", said Nshimiyimana.

This was a patient mobilizer, assessment & follow up on the last 24th months of the data collection, aimed at having a comprehensive analysis on major NCDs & associated determinants in People Living with HIV, in order to generate the most informative NCDs country profile information.

Another workshop was conducted for Medical Doctors, Nurses, Data Managers & Social Workers engaged in the study for Health Determinants on Major Non-Communicable Diseases among People Living with HIV in Rwanda.

Healthcare Professionals helping to Overcome NCDs and empowering Patients

Educating and empowering patients is vital in the fight against NCDs. Mukarwego attends regular support from peer educators and Community Health workers, where she learns about healthy eating, exercise, and stress management. She says such sessions, are not only informative but also provide emotional support amidst her health challenges.

The fight against NCDs among PLHIV calls for concerted efforts from all sectors of society; Government's investment in healthcare infrastructure, access to affordable medications, and promoting public health campaigns are paramount.

Depression and anxiety of Adolescents and Young Adults Living with HIV/AIDS

With gentle calmness, during an interview with the press, 59-year-old Marie Goretti Nyirakamana speaks about her son living with HIV. Her eyes show strong emotions when she talks about the time she was diagnosed with HIV in 1988 and later on her son at the tender age of eight.

Nyirakamana's journey together with that of her son has been a battle not only against the virus but also against mental health challenges that often accompany it, especially with the son.

Recent findings from the assessment on depression and anxiety of Adolescents and Young Adults Living with HIV/AIDS. (AYLHIV) and continuity of HIV services in rehabilitation centers, conducted by RRP+ in collaboration with the Rwanda Biomedical Center (RBC), indicate some risk factors. These include the experience of sexual abuse, death of a family member, changing caregivers, bullied for being HIV + & insufficient feeding.

Unnoticed Struggle

Adolescents living with HIV face unique challenges that regularly remain hidden to public the notice. This stigma associated with HIV, together with navigating the turbulence of adolescence brings about a storm of psychological distress.

According to the assessment conducted, the level of anxiety among adolescents living with HIV was at 41.6% (3.1% with severe level, 12% moderate and 26.5% with mild anxiety.

Jean D'Amour Ndahimana, the lead consultant, emphasizes the importance of understanding the lived experiences of these adolescents. "Our findings indicate that adolescents living with HIV encounter mental health problems at a significantly level, as indicated through social stigma and isolation," Ndahimana explains. "Many of these young people feel disliked by their communities and even by their peers and others in rehabilitation centers need continuity of HIV services explored well."



Focus on the work of PROFEMMES TWESEHAMWE



PFTH received MPS from Zambia's Parliamentary Committee who are in Rwanda for a benchmarking visit on policies of GBV prevention &response. Discussions covered PFTH experience in GBV prevention through policy advocacy, capacity building of institutions &gender equality promotion.



A baseline validation workshop under VIBE project. The Workshop seeks to gather inputs from key stakeholders & find ways of implementing the findings as well as validate the conducted baseline which informs the project interventions toward creating dignified jobs for women and youth.

PICTORIAL



RCSP, its members and partners commemorated the 1994 Genocide Against the Tutsi





PICTORIAL



The National Commission for Human Rights organised a meeting for the General Assembly of the Consultative Forum to enhance the collaboration with Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) working in the areas of human rights promotion and protection.



RCSP and MINALOC hosted a productive consultation on the Governance and Decentralization SSP. CSOs provided valuable inputs focusing on citizen empowerment, transparency, and collaboration between CSOs, Public, and the private sector.

PICTORIAL



RCSP hosted a delegation from South Sudan, led by Dr. Augustino Ting Morter. Their visit was an opportunity to gain insights into the work of Rwanda Civil Society Platform, including our vision, mission, coordination structure, and government engagement.



DID YOU KNOW?



DID YOU KNOW?

RCSP MEMBER OGRANIZATIONS

IBUKA

Umbrella association of Genocide against the Tutsi survivor organisations.

NUDOR

Umbrella association of persons with disabilities' organisations that aims to strengthen the voice of the disability movement in Rwanda.

RRP+

Network of peope infected & affected by HIV that aims to help PLHIV gain the ability to improve their economic and social status.

CCOAIB

Umbrella of CSOs that promote inclusive citizen participation towards socio-economic development.

RENGOF

The forum of NGOs acting in protection and conservation of environment started after observing the gap in each individual capacity.

www.rcsprwanda.org	🖂 info@rcsprwanda.org	L +250788249742	💡 Remera, Kigali



RCSP MEMBER OGRANIZATIONS

PRO-FEMMES/TWESE HAMWE

An umbrella of civil society organizations aimed at advancing the status of women.

COALITION UMWANA KU ISONGA (CUI) The CUI aims to bring together Rwandan child rights organizations to advocate on child rights related issues.

RWANDA NGO FORUM.

A National Network of Local NGOs committed directly or indirectly to Fighting Against HIV/AIDS and Promoting Health in Rwanda.

RWANDA CLIMATE CHANGE DEVELOPMENT NETWORK (RCCDN) RCCDN is a national member-driven civil society network working on

RWANDA EDUCATION FOR ALL COALITION A platform that promotes effective quality and free education for all through the participation of Civil Society Organizations in Rwanda.

climate change and other development challenges.

DID YOU KNOW?



18



We extend our sincere gratitude to all our partners for their generous support towards our programmes, and activities. We look forward to continuing our fruitful collaboration.









Thank you for taking the time to read the third edition of our newsletter.

We look forward to sharing with you again the next edition.

vil Society Platform

www.rcsprwanda.org

in Rwanda Civil Society Platform

+250 788 249 742