



# Correcting history: Mandatory education in Rwanda

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**Abstract:** The potential success of the Rwandan government's efforts to promote its vision of 'national reconciliation' is purportedly challenged by the 'mindset, bad behaviour, bad practices' of the general population of Rwanda.<sup>1</sup> As such, the education remit of the post-genocide reconciliation programme is an ambitious project that '...requires every citizen to change their mind completely'.<sup>2</sup> This article seeks to analyse how the Rwandan Patriotic Front government intends to 'correct' the mindsets and behaviours of the population at live-in education camps: ingando and itorero ry'igihugu. It also analyses the textbook, *Histoire du Rwanda: des origines à la fin du xxe siècle*, published by the National Unity and Reconciliation Commission in 2011. This article considers the ways in which a restrictive top-down pedagogy affects the potential for open discussion and critical analysis of issues relevant to the 1994 genocide, identity, and 'national reconciliation' at ingando and itorero ry'igihugu camps. It also provides a detailed analysis of the 'victor's narrative' of history as described in *Histoire du Rwanda*. This article concludes by considering the implications of the official reconciliation programme's education remit on political control in Rwanda.

**Keywords:** genocide, human rights, reconciliation, Rwandan Patriotic Front, 'victor's narrative'

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## 1. Introduction

An official policy dictating how 'national reconciliation'<sup>3</sup> would be pursued after the 1994 genocide was not formally adopted in Rwanda until 2007. The National Policy of Unity and Reconciliation (2007 Reconciliation Policy, hereafter), while relatively convoluted, outlines some of the stated commitments that shape the government-led National Unity and Reconciliation Programme.<sup>4</sup> These commitments include: fighting 'genocide ideology' and 'divisionism';<sup>5</sup>

1 NURC, 'Understanding Itorero Ry'igihugu' (Kigali: NURC, 2011a), 1

2 NURC, 'National Policy of Unity and Reconciliation' (Kigali: NURC, 2007), 1.

3 The term 'national reconciliation' appears in inverted commas to demonstrate the RPF's ownership of this complex term. The RPF's vision of 'national reconciliation' functions as both a theory and a practice guided by policy, legislation, and stated commitments made by the Rwandan government.

4 The official reconciliation effort in Rwanda does not have a formal name, as such. Instead, the National Unity and Reconciliation Commission (NURC) refers to it as a crosscutting programme that includes all projects with the stated mandate to promote unity and reconciliation. This article refers to it as the National Unity and Reconciliation Programme to indicate the connections between such government-led projects as gacaca, demobilisation and reintegration, civic education and, the Vision 2020 development programme as well as the stated mandates that guide them.

5 The terms 'genocide ideology' and 'divisionism', as well as 'good governance', and 'bad governance' discussed later in the article, appear in inverted commas to indicate that they are constructed by the Rwandan government.

prioritising citizenship and the common interests of all Rwandans over ethnicity, family relationships, and religious groups; respecting the law and human rights; healing moral wounds by revealing the truth and asking and giving pardon; and preventing the recurrence of genocide.<sup>6</sup> These stated commitments to promoting ‘national reconciliation’ appear in numerous government documents including the 2003 Constitution and Vision 2020 development plan. They are also repeated in official reconciliation discourse disseminated by the government during presidential speeches, radio programmes, and at genocide commemoration ceremonies.

The ‘national’ nature of the National Unity and Reconciliation Programme refers to the participation of the entire population in the programme. Official reconciliation discourse does not specifically refer to Hutu and Tutsi groups; instead it depicts ‘national reconciliation’ as a collective process that requires the action of *all Rwandans*. This process employs a theory shaped by a number of concepts constructed by the government to depict the rebuilding of relationships between individuals, groups, and the state after the 1994 genocide. These concepts include ‘horizontal’ reconciliation between citizens, and ‘vertical’ reconciliation between civilians and the government. Other relevant concepts include ‘genocide ideology’, ‘divisionism’, ethnicity, and unity. The Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF)’s vision of ‘national reconciliation’ is put into practice through the pursuit of justice at gacaca genocide courts which closed in June 2012, development programming, the de facto banning of ethnic identities from public discourse,<sup>7</sup> and mandatory civic education camps: *ingando* and *itorero ry’igihugu* (*itorero*, hereafter). The latter mechanisms facilitate the broadest goal of what can be understood as the National Unity and Reconciliation Programme’s education remit. As the 2007 Reconciliation Policy states,

Unity and reconciliation in Rwanda... It requires every citizen to change their mind completely; hence the country will have unity spread all over the nation, where Rwandans will be free and the country which is always eager to have a better future for every Rwandan.<sup>8</sup>

In its most general form, this remit seeks to create a single set of conclusions about Rwanda’s past, present, and future. This interpretation is informed by a singular narrative of Rwandan history referred to in this article as the ‘victor’s narrative’. The term ‘victor’ refers to the RPF’s role in creating and disseminating this particular version of events. Like the term ‘victor’s justice’ used by authors including Tiemessen (2004), Sarkin (2001), and Waldorf (2010) to describe RPF impunity at gacaca, the ‘victor’s narrative’ denies RPF involvement in human rights abuses and violations in Rwanda and DRC.<sup>9</sup> These allegations include: limiting the freedom of speech, press, and association; silencing journalists and political opponents through politically motivated accusations of ‘divisionism’ and ‘genocide ideology’; and contributing to conflict in DRC, such as the M23 rebellion. The ‘victor’s narrative’ emphasises pre-colonial unity, the detriments of ethnic identities, and the benefits of RPF-led programming. In the context of education camps and school classrooms, this narrative functions to limit critical analysis, bolster political support, and denounce criticism of the RPF regime.

## 2. History, unity, and identity at *ingando*

### *‘Home-grown’ education*

Dozens of teenagers dressed in Rwandan Defense Force (RDF) uniforms queued to share their views about ethnicity and national unity with their peers. A young woman stepped up to the microphone and stated that the ethnic terms of Hutu and Tutsi should be used to reflect social status as they had in pre-colonial Rwanda. She proposed using the term Hutu to represent those on the lower rungs of society and Tutsi to depict members of the upper classes. She reasoned

6 NURC, ‘National Policy’, 4–5.

7 A de facto ban was placed on the use of these terms in public discourse by the RPF government in a purported attempt to stamp out ‘genocide ideology’ and ‘divisionism’ in Rwanda. I use the term ‘de facto’ with reference to the ban because no law has been written explicitly banning the use of ethnic labels in government documents or public discourse. Instead, the use of these identifiers is discouraged by laws against ‘sectarianism’ and ‘genocide ideology’ as well as government rhetoric about the unity of all Rwandans. It is achieved in part by eliminating ethnicity from identity cards and regional quotas for schools as well as by manipulating the moral debate about identity in Rwanda.

8 NURC, ‘National Policy’, 2.

9 ‘Victor’s narrative’ also appears in C. Peter Erlinder’s article, ‘The U.N. Security Council Ad Hoc Rwanda Tribunal: International Justice, or Juridically-Constructed “Victor’s Impunity”?’ (2010), Faculty Scholarship. Paper 200. Erlinder uses the term to describe the RPF’s narrative of the 100 days of the 1994 genocide. I contend that the ‘victor’s narrative’ has a much wider gaze as it describes Rwandan history from the pre-colonial era to present-day.

that the class difference would inspire Hutu to work harder and rise 'to the top class like Tutsi'.<sup>10</sup> This participant was one of two hundred Rwandan teenagers attending a mandatory education camp called *ingando* at the Peace and Leadership Centre in northwestern Rwanda in June 2009.<sup>11</sup> The audience had just heard a lecture by RDF Captain Gerald Nyirimanzi<sup>12</sup> entitled 'Hutu and Tutsi Constructed Races of Ethnic Groups: the Root Causes of the Rwandan Conflict System'.

When the lecture was over, Nyirimanzi asked members of the audience to raise their hands if they were Hutu. When no hands were raised, he asked the same question of the Tutsi students and received the same response. Nyirimanzi then asked the group whether they thought the ethnic terms of Hutu and Tutsi should be officially reinstated in Rwanda. After a series of arguments for and against the reintroduction of the terms in public discourse, Nyirimanzi led the students to the conclusion that ethnic identities were among the root causes of conflict and genocide in the Great Lakes Region. He commended the RPF government for eliminating the terms and reminded the audience of the advantages of being unified by a single national identity, the *Banyarwanda*.<sup>13, 14</sup>

Former executive secretary of the National Unity and Reconciliation Commission (NURC), Fatuma Ndagiza, described *ingando* as '...nothing short of a revision to culture', during a presentation given by the NURC at the International Conference on Security and Lasting Peace in the Great Lakes Region in 2003.<sup>15</sup> This act of *revisiting culture* refers to the historical origin of *ingando*. Like Rwanda's *gacaca* genocide courts, *ingando*, supposedly reflects elements of a pre-colonial cultural institution that has been restored to promote the government's vision of 'national reconciliation'. The term 'ingando' is taken from the verb *Kugandika*, which describes the act of interrupting daily activities to reflect upon and find solutions to challenges facing the nation. These periods of coming together to contemplate and problem-solve are purported to have taken place in times of war, disaster, and national catastrophe.<sup>16</sup> Legal scholar, Chi Mgbako (2005) contradicts the NURC's description of the historical origin of *ingando*. She argues that while there is evidence of meetings between elders to address issues of interest to the community, there is no data to support the claim that the process was called 'ingando', making it an 'invented tradition'.<sup>17</sup> Mgbako contends that the term *ingando* most likely refers to a 'pre-war RPF creation' in which participants were taught pro-RPF ideology.<sup>18</sup>

In 1996, the transitional Government of National Unity (GNU)<sup>19</sup> began using *ingando* to support its efforts to reintegrate repatriated citizens who had fled to neighbouring countries prior to and during the 1994 genocide. In the years that followed, separate camps were established for groups including politicians, members of women's associations, students, and ex-combatants. The duration of these mandatory live-in camps ranged from several days to several months.<sup>20</sup> While the groups attending these camps were diverse, the overarching mandate of all *ingando* 'solidarity' camps remained the same: educate the population about unity and 'national reconciliation'; eradicate 'genocide ideology' and 'divisionism'; and teach Rwandan history.<sup>21</sup>

### *Educational Targets*

Rwandan history appears in the curricula of all forms of *ingando*, but receives the largest audience in lectures for students entering university.<sup>22</sup> History is featured as one of six major themes taught in lectures for this particular group of students.<sup>23</sup> The chapter or set of lectures entitled 'Rwandan History' is outlined below:

10 Notes taken by author while attending *ingando* (Ruhengeri: Peace and Leadership Centre, 3 June 2009).

11 The young people in attendance at this particular *ingando* camp were preparing to begin their university studies shortly after the conclusion of the mandatory six-week course.

12 Gerald Nyirimanzi is now a Major in the RDF.

13 The term *Banyarwanda* refers to the national identity of all Rwandans.

14 Notes taken by author while attending *ingando* (Rugengeri: Peace and Leadership Centre, 3 June 2009).

15 Fatuma Ndagiza, 'Community Sensitization: Case of "Ingando" in Rwanda' (Kigali: International Conference on Security and Lasting Peace in the Great Lakes Region Africa, 2003), 7.

16 *ibid.*

17 Chi Mgbako, 'Ingando Solidarity Camps: Reconciliation and Political Indoctrination in Post-Genocide Rwanda', in *Harvard Human Rights Journal* 18 (2005), 208.

18 *ibid.*

19 The GNU was formed as a transitional coalition government on 19 July 1994, fifteen days after the official end of the 1994 genocide. It remained in power until the 2003 elections in which the incumbent Paul Kagame was named President of the Republic.

20 Mgbako, 'Ingando Solidarity Camps', 209.

21 Sara Bawaya (Civic Education Acting Director of Syllabus Development and Training Program, NURC) in discussion with the author, 30 May 2009.

22 Lliberwax (Staff member at Mutobo Demobilization and Reintegration Centre) in discussion with the author, 28 June 2009; Penal Reform International, 'From Camp to Hill: the Reintegration of Released Prisoners' (2004), 17; Mgbako, 'Ingando Solidarity Camps', 217.

23 The full title of this document is 'A Summary of Lectures Used in Solidarity Camps and other Workshops in Six Lectures'. The other chapters include such titles as, 'Nation and Nationality', 'Human Rights and Conflict Management', 'Good Governance', 'Man and his Environment', and 'Economy and Social Welfare'. NURC, 'A Summary of Lectures Used in Solidarity Camps and other Workshops in Six

## CHAPTER 2: RWANDAN HISTORY

### General objective

After this chapter the trainees shall be able:

To show that unity existed in the Rwandan community and was later destroyed by the bad leadership which has led to conflict and genocide.

To show that Rwandans need to take the lead in providing solutions to problems caused/consequences of/ by the genocide.

### **Things to be discussed:**

The summary of the Rwandan history.....	41
Problems caused by ethnic groups in Rwanda and in the Great Lakes region.....	50
Rwandan citizenship and the nationality of Rwanda.....	59
Genocide in Rwanda and elsewhere.....	65
Trauma and counselling.....	74
Fighting against discrimination and genocide ideology in Rwanda and the Great Lakes region.....	81

Each lecture is accompanied by a set of goals or targets that seeks to bring students to a single understanding of Rwandan history, that of the 'victor's narrative'. Following the chapter above, students should be able 'to show that unity existed in the Rwandan community and was later destroyed by the bad leadership which has led to conflict and genocide'.<sup>24</sup> The singular nature of this narrative is reflected in other chapters of the ingando syllabus. It informs lectures about ethnicity as they describe 'the real state of ethnicity in Rwanda' and clarify '...the origin of the problems about ethnicity in [the] African Great Lakes Region'.<sup>25</sup>

This target-oriented pedagogy greatly restricts opportunities for critical analysis at ingando. This restriction directly contradicts the goal to promote objective analysis as outlined by Fatuma Ndangiza in 2003.<sup>26</sup>

For the youth, this program has acted to improve their capacity as potential leaders to undertake the necessary analyses of their role in society and be able to initiate change. The key objective being to engender attitude formation, crystallise and enhance the positive behavioural traits in the youth. This is evident in higher institutions of learning where students who have undergone this training (ingando) have proved more objective in handling diverse concerns at school.<sup>27</sup>

In the context of ingando, the absence of critical analysis of the 'victor's narrative' is legitimised by the camp's stated objective to 'correct all historical distortions that led to the disintegration of our society'.<sup>28</sup> The emphasis upon the social dangers of 'inaccurate' history justifies this paucity of differing conclusions. It also bolsters the government's image as the sole purveyor of *accurate* history. The restrictive target-oriented pedagogy ensures that ingando functions as a government-sponsored indoctrination camp that disseminates a singular narrative to a captive audience.<sup>29</sup>

### **3. Teaching Rwandan values at Itorero Ry'igihugu**

Like ingando and gacaca, itorero was purportedly founded in the pre-colonial era. According to the NURC, itorero offered cultural activities and educated students about integrity, problem solving, and national values prior to the

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Lectures' (Kigali: NURC, n.d.), 1.

24 *ibid.*

25 NURC, 'General and Specific Goals of Courses Designed for Authority Seminaries' (Kigali: NURC, 2003), 3–4.

26 Ndandiza, 'Community Sensitization', 9; Mgbako, 'Ingando Solidarity Camps', 217.

27 Ndangiza, 'Community Sensitization', 9.

28 *ibid.*, 18.

29 Mgbako (2005) makes a similar point regarding indoctrination at ingando. She refers to the RPF's attempts 'both to plant the seeds of reconciliation, and to disseminate pro-RPF ideology through political indoctrination' ('Ingando Solidarity Camps', 202). This article differs from Mgbako's analysis, as it does not examine whether ingando promotes 'true reconciliation' (*ibid.*, 223). Instead, it analyses the ways in which ingando teaches the government's particular vision of unity and 'national reconciliation', in order to legitimise state programming and bolster political support for the current RPF regime.

arrival of colonial rulers. These values included patriotism, defending the nation, and ‘fondness’ for Rwandan culture.<sup>30</sup> National leaders are said to have attended this programme where they came to understand how cultural values could benefit their work, outlook, and relationships with others.<sup>31</sup> Unlike other ‘home-grown’ initiatives, itorero was not lost during the colonial period. Instead, it was transformed into a type of cultural school that focused solely on dancing. The NURC describes a perceived correlation between changes to itorero’s mandate and the destruction of Rwandan society in 1994.

Colonization gradually suppressed **Itorero**. The **Itorero** that remained, as well as those created later differed from the traditional **Itorero** as they changed their mission and only focused on dancing. This situation impacted on relationships among Rwandans and the way the country was governed, discrimination and **genocide** ideology spread. As a consequence, Rwandan society was destroyed and many Rwandans fled the country to live in exile. The ultimate consequence of this was **the 1994 genocide** against Tutsi in which more than one-million people died and left a society of poor and disabled people as well as many refugees.<sup>32,33</sup>

President Kagame officially launched the post-genocide iteration of itorero as a mandatory live-in education camp on 16 November 2007.<sup>34</sup> This modern version of itorero is mandated to speed up ‘mindset change’ in order to meet the objectives of the Vision 2020 development programme.<sup>35</sup> As Alphonse Bakusi, former Director of the Civic Education Department at the NURC, explained, ‘we [the RPF] are revising moral values to promote social cohesion and development’.<sup>36</sup> At present, several obstacles are preventing the realisation of these goals.

Despite many achievements of building the Rwandan society after the **1994 genocide** against the Tutsi, there is still a problem with the mindset of Rwandans. Itorero ry’Igihugu is introduced to contribute to problem solving related to **mindset, bad behaviour, bad practices, through applying Rwandan cultural values**.<sup>37,38</sup>

The supposed solution to these mindset problems is education about unity, patriotism, and development goals outlined in Vision 2020, the Economic, Development, and Poverty Reduction Strategy (EDPRS), and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).<sup>39</sup> Itorero’s dual focus on cultural values and development priorities allows the government to build a nation informed by both its vision of the past and political and economic interests for the future.

The rhetorical act of *correcting* the bad mindsets, behaviours, and practices of the population facilitates the construction of *the people* within that nation. Marxist philosopher Etienne Balibar (1996) argues that in the context of nation building, the community or ‘people’ does not exist naturally and must instead be made to continually reproduce itself as a national community.<sup>40</sup> Itorero is a particularly effective mechanism for producing (and reproducing) the Rwandan community as it teaches the qualities or values that *ought* to define the population. These values, as chosen by the RPF, are associated with economic prosperity, social cohesion, and peace. Moreover, they purportedly characterise *all* Rwandans, as itorero and official reconciliation discourse more generally emphasise the common identity and shared culture of the Banyarwanda.

This capacity is created by the RPF’s ‘monopoly over knowledge production’, as described by Johan Pottier (2002).<sup>41</sup> The government has the capacity to restore values which may never have existed and/or promote those which represent its own interests. The most blatant example is the stated commitment to restore pre-colonial Rwandan values that discourage misusing public funds for private gain. Other examples include *ibigyiye*, a Kinyarwanda term that reflects hard work and pride. Bakusi argued that it is the RPF’s intention to promote development as a means to unite citizens in Rwanda.<sup>42</sup>

30 NURC, ‘Itorero Ry’igihugu: Policy Note and Strategic Plan’ (Kigali: NURC, 2009a), 12, <[http://www.nurc.gov.rw/fileadmin/templates/Documents/Policy\\_note\\_and\\_Strategic\\_Plan.pdf](http://www.nurc.gov.rw/fileadmin/templates/Documents/Policy_note_and_Strategic_Plan.pdf)>, accessed 10 June 2011.

31 NURC, ‘Understanding Itorero Ry’igihugu’, 1.

32 Bold words appear as quoted in original text.

33 *ibid.*

34 NURC, ‘Itorero Ry’igihugu: Policy Note’, 3.

35 *ibid.*

36 Alphonse Bakusi (Former Director of the Civic Education Department at the NURC), in discussion with the author, 23 July 2010.

37 Bold words appear as quoted in original text.

38 NURC, ‘Understanding Itorero’, 1.

39 NURC, ‘Itorero Ry’igihugu: its Objectives, Participants, Structures and Functioning’, (Kigali: NURC, 2011b), 2; NURC, ‘Reconciliation Work in Rwanda’, (Kigali: NURC, 2009b), 13.

40 Etienne Balibar, *The Nation Form: History and Ideology*, in *Becoming Nation: a Reader*, eds Eley, G., and Suny, R.G. (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1996), 138.

41 Johan Pottier, *Re-imagining Rwanda: Conflict, Survival and Disinformation in the late 20th Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2002), 19.

42 Bakusi, discussion with author, 23 July 2010.

Large numbers of participants or intore from different age groups, levels of education, and administrative positions receive government-sponsored lessons about culture and development.<sup>43</sup> These groups include young children, unmarried youth, and older adults at the village level as well as students, employers, NGOs, and leaders at the sector, district, and national level itorero camps.<sup>44</sup> Itorero camps follow similar schedules to those at ingando. They include structured time for physical exercise, lectures from teachers or mentors, debates, military training, and cultural events.<sup>45</sup> The Itorero Task Force was created in December 2008 to identify and mentor the intore who are identified by teachers as having a particularly strong grasp of the values and cultural taboos taught at itorero.<sup>46</sup> Every July, the intore deemed most and least ready to contribute to the promotion of ‘good governance’, patriotism, and heroism are singled out by the district level leaders of *intore*, the National Electoral Commission (NEC), and the committee coordinating the anti-corruption and injustice structures among others. The best intore or *indongozi* from different age groups and their mentors are publicly congratulated for their achievements.<sup>47</sup>

The NURC’s 2011 description of itorero outlines its stated commitment to fostering ‘analytical re-view [sic] of National **values** and their implication in National development’.<sup>48</sup> It is difficult to conclude, however, that critical or oppositional views about these values may be freely and publicly stated during these reviews.<sup>49</sup> This doubt stems in part from the powerful rhetorical devices used at itorero to describe Rwanda and its people. For instance, the depiction of Rwandan mindsets and behaviours as obstacles to peace and development undermines the critical capacities of individual intore. This message is compounded by the assertion that all Rwandans must change their minds completely, the *raison d’être* for ingando and itorero camps. The public identification of the best and worst performers at itorero with regard to embodying Rwandan values may also deter intore from criticising or questioning these customs or the narrative that informs them. The supposed association between cultural values and social cohesion in the pre-colonial era further limits critical analysis as it adds historical legitimacy to the values included in the itorero programme.

Open discussion and critical analysis are particularly important given the construction and propagation of cultural values and national identity at itorero. As Buckley-Zistel (2009) argues, ‘... “being Rwandan” means different things to different Rwandans, and this is not per se negative or threatening, but an expression of having experienced one of the most horrendous events in history’.<sup>50</sup> Itorero educates the population about its common history, culture, and vision for the future. The opportunity to critically analyse these constructions is neglected as the camps promote the ‘victor’s narrative’ and the RPF’s nation building agenda. The emphasis on the shared nature of this vision of the future legitimises the government’s depiction of the past and its leadership in the present. In so doing, it suppresses divergent historical narratives in which its members are responsible for crimes against civilians, as well as criticism of its programming, and human rights record.

#### 4. Rwandan history in the classroom

##### *Histoire du Rwanda: des origines à la fin du xxe siècle*

The history of the Rwandan nation and its people has been described in detail in the NURC’s (2011) *Histoire du Rwanda: des origines à la fin du xxe siècle*. This French-language textbook, produced in cooperation with the National University of Rwanda (NUR), includes seven chapters written by different authors. These chapters cover topics that range from 1000BC to the Presidential elections of 2003. The book’s authors tackle criticism of government programmes by human rights activists and writers in numerous places. They also clarify purported misinterpretations of Rwandan history by Western academics.<sup>51</sup> In so doing, they provide a definitive version of the ‘victor’s narrative’. Ultimately, the book is set to become a major part of the reconciliation programme’s education remit as it will be the

43 Between 2007 and 2009, 25,000 community leaders and 43,000 primary and secondary school teachers attended itorero (NURC, ‘Itorero Ry’igihugu: Policy Note’, p.13). As of July 2010, itorero had been expanded to include the mandatory participation 30,000 intore who had recently graduated high school (Bakusi, discussion with author, 23 July 2010).

44 NURC, ‘Itorero Ry’igihugu: Policy Note’.

45 *ibid.*, 7.

46 *ibid.*, 2.

47 *ibid.*, 4.

48 Bolded word appears as quoted in the text.

49 NURC, ‘Understanding Itorero’, 5.

50 Susanne Buckley-Zistel, ‘We Are Pretending Peace: Local Memory and the Absence of Social Transformation and Reconciliation in Rwanda’, in *After Genocide: Transitional Justice, Post- Conflict Reconstruction and Reconciliation in Rwanda and Beyond* (New York: Columbia UP, 2009), 131.

51 NURC, *Histoire du Rwanda: des origines à la fin du xxe siècle* (Kigali: NURC, 2011c).



first history book officially sanctioned for use in Rwandan public schools and government offices since the conclusion of the 1994 genocide.<sup>52</sup>

Sarah Bawaya, Acting Director of Syllabus Development and Training at the NURC explained that prior to the 1994 genocide, history had been taught with books written by colonial scholars. The GNU banned these books in 1994 as they were thought to promote 'divisionism' and 'genocide ideology'.<sup>53</sup> The lengthy duration of this ban was caused in part by the destruction of materials and human resources during the genocide. It was worsened by disagreement amongst citizens, academics, and government officials.<sup>54</sup> Part of this disagreement stemmed from concerns about the significance of different events leading up to and during the 1994 genocide as well as concerns about the promotion of 'divisionism' by teachers. Schweisfurth (2006) argues that for many, the participation of some teachers in the violence as well as the location of massacres in schools led to 'the total erosion of faith in the education system'.<sup>55</sup> The NURC sought to tackle these concerns by commissioning a new history book that would criticise the 'bad elements' of history that promote 'divisionism', and celebrate the positive social factors that promote unity.<sup>56,57</sup> More broadly, it states a commitment to educate the youth about the past.

Young people need to know the origins and causes of the deep divisions that have shaped recent relations between Rwandans. Otherwise, future generations will have a partial vision of the past, fueled by emotional or popular stories gleaned from parents, friends, newspapers, and other writing or simply from the street.<sup>58</sup>

### *The 'Bad Elements' of history*

*Histoire du Rwanda* describes the NURC's interpretation of the nation's origins in great detail. The pre-colonial era is depicted as a time of solidarity and social cohesion, an image that also appears in *ingando* and *itorero* syllabi. Peaceful coexistence between the nation's earliest clans is traced back as far as the 14<sup>th</sup> century at which time Rwanda was a 'small territorial entity' in the area now known as Gasabo district in Kigali Province.<sup>59</sup> Themes of cooperation and coexistence are echoed throughout the next chapter concerning the later pre-colonial period, written by historian Gamaliel Mbonimana. Mbonimana identifies patriotism and the desire to expand Rwanda's borders as common interests of the population during this period. He contends that the highly centralised nature of political control was exercised through institutions including the *ubuhake* cattle clientelist system.<sup>60</sup> Mbonimana describes *ubuhake* as a voluntary contract between the owner of the cattle and the individual seeking work. He defines *ubuletwa* as an arrangement in which the poorest civilians spent two days a week working the fields of wealthier landowners.<sup>61</sup>

Mbonimana's depiction of these systems conflicts with those offered by Nigel Eltringham (2004) and Gérard Prunier (1995) who describe *ubuhake* and *ubuletwa* in particular, as examples of the growing power of a minority of individuals who had elite Tutsi status.<sup>62</sup> More generally, *Histoire du Rwanda* rejects the notion of antagonistic identities during this period. Instead, these groups are described as having been deeply intertwined through inter-marriage and cooperation. 'In effect, neither Hutu nor Tutsi has the characteristics necessary to constitute two distinct ethnicities. They spoke the same language, shared the same religious beliefs, and lived together. Relationships between these groups were not sources of confrontation'.<sup>63</sup>

The colonial period of 1884 to 1962 is depicted in stark contrast to the pre-colonial era of peace, cooperation, and social cohesion. It is described as a period in which existing political structures were manipulated and ethnic identities were stratified, resulting in tension amongst the Hutu population shortly before independence. The colonisers purportedly considered the Hutu majority to be nothing more than servants, and the indigenous Twa minority as

52 Bawaya, discussion with author, 30 May 2009.

53 *ibid.*

54 IRDP, 2003, cited in Schweisfurth, 'Global and Cross-National Influences on Education in Post-Genocide Rwanda', *Oxford Review of Education* 32 (2006), 701; Freedman et al., *Confronting the Past in Rwandan Schools*, in *My Neighbor, My Enemy: Justice and Community in the Aftermath of Mass Atrocity*, eds. Stover, E., and Weinstein, H.M (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2004), 248.

55 Obura, cited in Schweisfurth, 'Global and Cross-National Influences on Education in Post-Genocide Rwanda', *Oxford Review of Education* 32 (2006), 700.

56 As of July 2012, this history book had still not been introduced in the classroom or government offices.

57 Bawaya, in discussion with author, 30 May 2009.

58 NURC, *Histoire du Rwanda*, 11.

59 *ibid.*, 85.

60 *ibid.*, 109.

61 *ibid.*, 127, 129.

62 Nigel Eltringham, *Accounting for the Horror: Post-Genocide Debates in Rwanda* (London: Pluto Press, 2004), 13; Gérard Prunier, *The Rwanda Crisis: 1959–1994: History of a Genocide* (London: Hurst & Company, 1995), 21.

63 NURC, *Histoire du Rwanda*, 172.

‘...devoid of any humanity’.<sup>64</sup> Paul Rutayisire, author of the chapter entitled ‘Rwanda under German and Belgian Colonial Rule’, contends that the systems of ubuhake and ubuletwa were misunderstood by colonial leaders and used to exploit the Hutu civilians towards the latter part of the colonial period.<sup>65</sup> Rutayisire refutes descriptions of Belgian and Tutsi pastoralist rule as a ‘double domination’ of Hutu civilians, as employed by Mahmood Mamdani (1996).<sup>66</sup> Instead, he firmly places the blame for growing anti-Tutsi sentiment upon colonial officials who sought to achieve the contradictory goals of protecting the weakest members of society while increasing the political control of the most powerful group in Rwanda, the Tutsi elite.<sup>67</sup>

The tide of political control began to turn as Rwanda neared independence.<sup>68</sup> Rutayisire’s depiction of the ‘Bahutu Manifesto’ of 1957 also conflicts with that of other authors. For instance, French political scientist, René Lemarchand (1970) describes the manifesto as having outlined the concerns of its Hutu authors about social, political, and economic injustices experienced by the Hutu majority. The authors of the manifesto recommended the active promotion of Hutu citizens to public office and increased access to education for the Hutu population more generally.<sup>69</sup> Rutayisire criticises the manifesto for misconstruing the relationship between the Hutu majority and Tutsi minority. He contends that the document exacerbated ethnic tension by focusing too narrowly on the exploitation of Hutu masses while ignoring the injustices experienced by *all* Rwandans at the hands of colonial leaders and Catholic missionaries.<sup>70</sup>

Unlike many authors including Mamdani (1996), Lemarchand (1970), and Pottier (2002), Rutayisire does not use the term ‘Social Revolution’ to describe the violent events of 1959. The term only appears in *Histoire du Rwanda* to condemn the rhetoric used by supporters of President Kayibanda’s Parmehutu to describe the ‘cohesive ideology’ of all Hutu. Rutayisire argues that while some Hutu intellectuals shared a sense of common ethnic identity, he rejects the notion presented by other authors that all Hutu felt oppressed.<sup>71</sup> This interpretation does not depict the authors of the ‘Bahutu Manifesto’ as having represented the views of other Hutu, nor does it highlight the growing anti-Tutsi sentiment associated with the monarchic system.<sup>72</sup>

The second ‘bad element’ of history described in *Histoire du Rwanda* is that of ‘bad governance’ in the run-up to the 1994 genocide. The regimes of the First and Second Republics, led by Grégoire Kayibanda and Juvénal Habyarimana respectively, are identified by Joseph Jyoni Wa Karega, author of Chapter 5, as having promoted the anti-Tutsi propaganda and ‘divisionism’ that fueled the 1994 genocide.<sup>73</sup> Jyoni Wa Karega describes a number of conflicts between civilians who became refugees after the 1963 ‘inyenzi invasion’.<sup>74, 75</sup> Jyoni Wa Karega emphasises the absence of justice for Tutsi deaths that occurred during this period and again in 1973.<sup>76</sup> He argues that the Kayibanda regime killed opposition politicians, both Hutu and Tutsi, concentrated political power into a small ‘mono-ethnic’ group, and put the first acts of the 1994 genocide into practice.<sup>77</sup>

The book also outlines how the monopolistic power of the state prospered throughout the Second Republic of Juvénal Habyarimana. Jyoni Wa Karega describes Habyarimana’s party, the Mouvement Révolutionnaire National pour le Développement (MRND) as ‘...the centre of all power, centralism took precedence over democracy...’.<sup>78</sup> Jyoni Wa Karega identifies many other examples of ‘bad governance’ throughout the Second Republic under Habyarimana’s leadership. These issues include: racketeering by members of Habyarimana’s government; the monopolisation of land by the rich; economic strife created by the Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) of the early 1990s; and isolation of poor civilians who faced significant social disparity.<sup>79</sup> Jyoni Wa Karega blames Habyarimana’s government for all social, political, and economic hardships experienced by Rwandans in the run-up to the 1994 genocide. He also describes Habyarimana’s failure to repatriate Rwandan refugees who had fled during earlier periods of violence.<sup>80</sup> He argues that,

Until 1990, the political class no longer considered refugees as Rwandan. The government prevented them from returning and destabilized them where they had sought refuge, Kigali wanted them to die in extreme

64 *ibid.*, 249.

65 *ibid.*, 298.

66 Mahmood Mamdani, ‘From Consent to Conquest as the Basis of State Formation: Reflections on Rwanda’, in *New Left Review* 1 (1996), 8.

67 NURC, *Histoire du Rwanda*, 298.

68 *ibid.*, 328.

69 René Lemarchand, *Rwanda and Burundi* (London: Pall Mall, 1970), 149.

70 NURC, *Histoire du Rwanda*, 368.

71 *ibid.*, 417.

72 Mamdani, ‘From Consent to Conquest’, 5.

73 NURC, *Histoire du Rwanda*, 427.

74 Inyenzi, the *Kinyarwanda* word for cockroach featured heavily in anti-Tutsi propaganda during the civil war and the 1994 genocide.

75 *ibid.*, 431.

76 *ibid.*, 453.

77 *ibid.*, 451.

78 *ibid.*, 459.

79 *ibid.*, 468–470.

80 *ibid.*, 472.



poverty and disappear completely. It is the protocol on refugees signed in 1993 under the Arusha negotiations that will reintegrate all the refugees and their rights.<sup>81</sup>

Jyoni Wa Karega's assertion that the Habyarimana regime actively prevented repatriation and wanted all Tutsi refugees to die in poverty contradicts the historical interpretations of multiple authors including Kuperman (2004) and Sibomana (1999).<sup>82</sup> These authors argue that Habyarimana attempted to repatriate Tutsi refugees living in Uganda in order to prevent the impending RPF invasion in 1990. Jyoni Wa Karega's interpretation of events justifies the RPF rebels' stated motivations for the invasion on 1 October 1990: eradicate anti-Tutsi racism; end the 'bad governance' of Habyarimana's regime; and fix the 'refugee problem' that Habyarimana's regime had allegedly ignored.<sup>83</sup>

These 'bad elements' of the past reached an apex during the 1994 genocide. Faustin Rutembesa, author of Chapter 6, depicts the 1994 genocide as a highly organised pre-planned massacre of the Tutsi population.<sup>84</sup> He explains the role of elite manipulation, particularly by members of MRND and CDR (Coalition pour la Défense de la République) parties and the military, in mobilising civilians to participate in the massacres, as well as the role of anti-Tutsi propaganda and 'genocide ideology'. Rutembesa also highlights the UN's refusal to use the term *genocide* to describe the massacres in 1994 and the role of France and Opération Turquoise in the continued violence.<sup>85</sup> Rutembesa describes the extreme violence of the period and repeatedly defines the roles of ethnicity, propaganda, 'genocide ideology', and 'bad governance' in this devastating period of Rwanda's history. He does not however, place any blame on the RPF for civilian deaths or acts of retaliation during the 1994 genocide, as discussed by authors including Kuperman (2004) and Des Forges (1999).<sup>86</sup>

#### *The 'Positive Elements' of unity and 'National Reconciliation'*

The 'bad elements' of Rwandan history outlined in *Histoire du Rwanda*: 'divisionism' institutionalised during the colonial period, 'genocide ideology', and 'bad governance' serve to highlight the disparity between Habyarimana's regime and the political interests of the RPF in the run-up to, during, and after the 1994 genocide. Jyoni Wa Karega identifies numerous differences between the two regimes including the RPF's interest in 'real power-sharing'.<sup>87, 88</sup> This stated goal is emphasised in the 'victor's narrative', but is contested by authors including Alan J. Kuperman (2004). Kuperman points instead to the RPF's interest in securing *significant* political control during the civil war and the 1994 genocide.<sup>89</sup> This interpretation is consistent with the RPF's creation of an executive presidency within the GNU in 1995. RPF activities during this period are explained multiple times in *Histoire du Rwanda*. For instance, Jyoni Wa Karega justifies the RPF's decision to break the ceasefire agreement with the MRND in February 1993.<sup>90</sup>

Faustin Rutembesa justifies the RPF's political and military maneuvers during the 1994 genocide. In particular, he highlights the success of RPF military tactics in ending the violence, restoring order, and saving the lives of tens of thousands of Tutsi civilians.<sup>91</sup> Rutembesa contends that the RPF began to battle against the negative forces of 'negationism' and 'revisionism' after it had secured the capital and ended the 1994 genocide. He contrasts the RPF's 'positive' steps towards peace with 'negative' acts of denial by those who supported the 1994 genocide.<sup>92</sup> Rutembesa states,

The negationist propaganda is based on multiple strategies and techniques: the denial of facts, changing the pattern and circumstances, blurring the details, mixing truth and lies, camouflaging, and misinterpreting and generalizing. Doing this creates false truths and is anti-historical.<sup>93</sup>

81 *ibid.*, 473.

82 Alan J. Kuperman, 'Provoking Genocide: A Revised History of the Rwandan Patriotic Front', in *Journal of Genocide Research* 6, no. 1 (2004); André Sibomana, *Hope for Rwanda: Conversations with Laure Guilbert and Hervé Deguine*. (London: Pluto Press, 1999).

83 *ibid.*, 477.

84 *ibid.*, 531.

85 *ibid.*, 546–548.

86 See Kuperman, 'Provoking Genocide'; Alison Des Forges, *Leave None to Tell the Story: Genocide in Rwanda* (London and New York: Human Rights Watch, 1999).

87 'Real power-sharing' is used here in reference to the 1993 Arusha Accords. Jyoni Wa Karega stipulates that the RPF rebels sought a power-sharing agreement that would restrict the political power of the MRND by preventing the President from maintaining "excessive power" (NURC, *Histoire du Rwanda*, 487). This political control would instead be spread amongst all parties except the CDR.

88 *ibid.*, 487.

89 Kuperman, 'Provoking Genocide', 69.

90 NURC, *Histoire du Rwanda*, 503.

91 *ibid.*, 570.

92 *ibid.*, 575–580.

93 *ibid.*, 576.

In spite of these challenges, Charles Kabwete Mulinda, author of Chapter 7, highlights and expands upon the purportedly ‘positive elements’ of unity and ‘national reconciliation’ after the 1994 genocide. He depicts these achievements as belonging to the programming created and implemented by the GNU. Mulinda describes the GNU’s approach to restoring national unity as having been shaped by the desire to teach the people of Rwanda how to live together peacefully.<sup>94</sup> He highlights the banning of ethnicity from identity cards and the creation of the NURC as great benefits to the official reconciliation process. He also extols the virtues of the GNU’s approach to unity and ‘national reconciliation’. One such virtue was the pursuit of maximal justice.<sup>95</sup> Mulinda justifies the initial arrests of 120,000 civilians in the years after the 1994 genocide as vital to preventing further injustice. He recognises the dearth of judicial infrastructure after the deaths and exile of magistrates during the 1994 genocide yet condemns criticism of the justice system by academics and human rights activists as ‘malevolent and irresponsible’.<sup>96</sup> He makes no reference to the ‘life-threatening overcrowding and appalling treatment’ of Rwandan prisoners after the 1994 genocide as identified by Human Rights Watch in 1995.<sup>97</sup>

Mulinda describes gacaca as a step towards restorative justice that includes the participation of the entire population. Gacaca courts, he argues, were expected to produce positive results including ‘truth about the genocide’, speedy trials, popular participation, an end to impunity, and a stronger sense of national unity.<sup>98</sup> Mulinda quashes criticism of the system, including that of ‘victor’s justice’ at gacaca, discussed earlier in this article. Mulinda contends that this perspective errs in its assumption that RPF members ought to be tried for crimes of vengeance committed by individual members in 1994. He argues, instead, that crimes of genocide committed by Hutu civilians cannot be compared with crimes against humanity allegedly committed by individual members of the RPF.<sup>99, 100</sup>

Other achievements in unity and ‘national reconciliation’ include the repatriation of 23,658 Rwandan citizens in 2000 and 2001 and the resettlement of refugees who returned to find their homes occupied or destroyed.<sup>101</sup> Mulinda describes the positive impact of the Fonds d’Assistance pour les Rescapés du Génocide (FARG) on access to primary, secondary, and university education for survivors. He also outlines the benefits of healthcare, *imidugudu*<sup>102</sup> resettlement programme, and support for repairing the homes of survivors. He does add however that many survivors continue to complain about housing problems, the absence of adequate aid, and access to scholarships.<sup>103</sup> Mulinda’s depiction of survivors’ concerns pales in comparison with those expressed by Mary Kayitesi-Blewitt (2006), founder of the Survivors Fund who highlights trauma, extreme poverty, in addition to chronic housing shortages.<sup>104</sup>

While rich in detail, *Histoire du Rwanda*’s historical analysis fails to draw conclusions that differ from the ‘victor’s narrative’ as repeated in government documents, speeches, and programmes. Rather it presents arguments that quash criticism from academics and activists, justify controversial actions by the RPF, and support government-sponsored messages. For instance, rather than question the potential relationship between ubuhake and ubuletwa and persistent inequity and inequality in the pre-colonial period, the clientelist systems are presented as highly beneficial voluntary contracts. This conclusion supports the assertion that unity and equality existed between all Rwandans during the pre-colonial era as described in the ingando syllabus discussed earlier in this article.

Several of the authors of *Histoire du Rwanda* provide plenty of detail about the supposed intentions of the RPF in the lead-up to the October 1990 invasion as well as during and after the 1994 genocide. They also describe RPF actions during these periods and the outcomes of conflicts between the rebels and government forces between 1990 and 1994. While there is a brief indication that some individual members of the RPF may have committed crimes against humanity during the 1994 genocide, no details or numbers related to these attacks are provided. There is no indication that punishment was meted down on these individuals.<sup>105</sup>

Similarly, the descriptions of the Kibeho tragedy and conflict in eastern Zaire (now DRC) do not include discussions of the crimes committed by members of the Rwandan Patriotic Army (RPA)<sup>106</sup> against civilians. Mulinda,

94 *ibid.*, 597.

95 Catherine Newbury and Hannah Baldwin (2000) use the term ‘maximal justice’ in conjunction with repression to describe the RPF’s approach to governance in the post-conflict context (2000, 243).

96 *ibid.*, 603.

97 Human Rights Watch, ‘Rwanda: the Crisis Continues’, *Situation Report* No. Vol. 7, No.1 (April 1995), 1, <<http://www.hrw.org/legacy/reports/1995/Rwanda.htm>>, accessed 11 May 2011.

98 NURC, *Histoire du Rwanda*, 605–606.

99 This document is the first to refer to RPF crimes in 1994 as crimes against humanity. They are more commonly referred to as individual crimes of vengeance.

100 *ibid.*, 604.

101 *ibid.*, 646.

102 Imidugudu refers to the subsidised resettlement scheme for survivors and citizens living in rural areas after the 1994 genocide.

103 *ibid.*, 648.

104 Mary Kayitesi-Blewitt, ‘Funding Development in Rwanda: The Survivors’ Perspective’, in *Development in Practice* 16 (2006), 320.

105 NURC, *Histoire du Rwanda*, 574.

106 The Rwandan Defense Force was formally known as the Rwandan Patriotic Army (RPA), the military wing of the RPF until 2002. The RDF is comprised of the Rwanda Army, Rwanda Air Forces, and Special Forces.

author of Chapter 7, justifies the RPA's entry into the Kibeho camp for internally displaced persons (IDPs) in 1995 as a concerted effort to close what had allegedly become 'the sanctuary of criminals'.<sup>107</sup> He clarifies that while the RPF sadly laments the deaths of 300 civilians, the much higher calculations of 4,000 to 8,000 deaths are grossly overestimated by 'critics of the Kigali regime and the RPF in particular'.<sup>108</sup> Amnesty International estimated in 1996 that upward of 'several thousand' IDPs were killed by the RPA at Kibeho.<sup>109</sup>

Mulinda justifies the RPF's role in the Second Congo War as one of '...vital interest to safety and survival, more obvious and intense than in neighbouring DRC. This justifies the role of Rwanda in this war, and by extension, the actual weight of other actors whose roles were often exaggerated'.<sup>110</sup> While Mulinda does discuss the RPF's role in toppling President Mobutu in 1997,<sup>111</sup> he does not provide evidence of any wrongdoing by the RPF. There is no reference to the alleged extraction or plunder of natural resources by the RPA. Similarly, he justifies the RPF's actions and commends the group's military achievements in increasing safety and security as well as facilitating the repatriation of 1.5 million Rwandans. 'If we had not attacked Zaire, the refugee issue would have remained insoluble forever'.<sup>112</sup> Unlike the 'Report of the Mapping Exercise' published by the UN in 2010 which documents human rights abuses committed in Zaire/DRC between 1993 and 2003, Mulinda makes no mention of crimes against humanity committed by the RPA during the war.<sup>113</sup>

The similarity between Mulinda's depiction of the RPF/RPA's actions in DRC and the 'victor's narrative' demonstrates the singular nature of the history curriculum described in *Histoire du Rwanda*. Freedman et al. (2008) discuss the difficulties of encouraging critical thinking with regard to the RPF's official historical narrative in the public school system in Rwanda. In their assessment of the intervention project on teaching history in Rwanda led by the University of California Berkeley Human Rights Center, they describe the tension between the RPF's education policy and the implementation of democratic styles of teaching that promote critical thinking and debate.<sup>114, 115</sup> This conflict originates in the education policy's stipulation that only the official historical narrative may be taught in schools. This restriction precludes analysis and impedes discussion about the government's depiction of events. For instance, it fails to address the continued use of ethnic labels in Rwandan society as well as persistent fear of ethnic violence.<sup>116</sup>

The NURC's foray into public school history lessons includes many of the major elements repeated in government-sponsored reconciliation discourse: the detriments of 'bad governance' and 'genocide ideology' and the benefits of RPF leadership, programming, and the restoration of social cohesion that allegedly thrived during the pre-colonial era. The RPF's assertion that there is only one *accurate* version of events creates difficulties in encouraging critical thinking and debate about national history in public schools in Rwanda. With *Histoire du Rwanda*, the history curriculum in public schools is dominated by the only official version of history available, that of the RPF.

## 5. Conclusion

Ingando and itorero camps form a major part of the education remit of the National Unity and Reconciliation Programme in post-genocide Rwanda. These camps teach Rwandans about their own shared history and vision of the future as constructed and disseminated by the government. The message of 'mass ignorance' works as a powerful rhetorical device that transforms both camps into mechanisms of indoctrination. At itorero in particular, this indoctrination seeks to build the Rwandan nation and people within it. The textbook, *Histoire du Rwanda: des origines à la fin du xxe siècle* provides a detailed description of the country's history from the pre-colonial era until the Presidential election of 2003. This book is shaped by a stated commitment to bring Rwandan history into the classroom for the first time since

107 *ibid*, 597.

108 *ibid*.

109 Amnesty International, 'Rwanda and Burundi: the Return Home: Rumours and Realities' (29 February 1996), 18, <<http://amnesty.org/en/library/info/AFR02/001/1996/en>>, accessed 14 May 2011.

110 NURC, *Histoire du Rwanda*, 630.

111 The RPF worked in cooperation with Alliances des Forces Démocratiques pour la Libération du Congo (AFDL) to topple Zairian President Mobutu. AFDL leader Laurent Désiré Kabila became the President of the newly renamed Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC).

112 Chief of Staff of the RPA as quoted in NURC, (2011c), 635.

113 UNHRC, 'DRC: Mapping Human Rights Violations 1993-2003' (2010), <<http://www.ohchr.org/en/Countries/AfricaRegion/Pages/RDCProjetMapping.aspx>>, accessed 23 March 2011.

114 The intervention project on teaching history in Rwanda arose from an expression of interest from the Rwandan Ministry of Education (MINEDUC) for help with creating materials for teaching Rwandan history at the secondary school level (Freedman et al, 2008, 664). The project involved collaboration between the University of California, Berkeley Human Rights Center; the National University of Rwanda (NUR); and the Rwandan National Curriculum Development Centre (NCDC) of MINEDUC, with support from American NGO Facing History and Ourselves (FHAO). The materials have yet to be introduced in secondary schools.

115 Freedman, S.W. et al., 'Teaching History after Identity-Based Conflicts: The Rwanda Experience', in *Comparative Education Review* 52 (2008), 664-665.

116 *ibid*; Mgbako, 'Ingando Solidarity Camps', 220; Returnee in discussion with the author, 7 April 2009.

1994. In so doing, it deliberately limits critical understandings of history and the actions of the RPF. As such, *ingando*, *itorero*, and *Histoire du Rwanda* meet the broadest goal of the education remit of the official reconciliation programme: to change the minds of all Rwandans by teaching the population about the government's vision of unity and 'national reconciliation'. These programmes also serve more complex social and political functions as they construct narrow conceptions of identity and unity in Rwanda, refute allegations of RPF human rights abuses, and bolster continued support for the current regime.