Healing the Wounds of War: Victim Assistance in Post-conflict Burundi

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These weapons contribute to the communication and transportation cycles for supervisors, therein providing CEDAC’s peer-support workers and beneficiaries with mobile phones. In July 2012, IBUKA expanded its program from 25 to 65 peer-support workers with technical assistance from CISR. Since 2010, CISR has hosted five peer-support training workshops in Rwanda, including a training of trainers and a peer-support training for Rwandan psychologists and counselors. Participants engaged in role-play and problem-solving exercises, as well as peer-support practice sessions. They were taught specific techniques of peer counseling, such as active listening and interpretation. All training materials were in Rwanda’s native language, Kinyarwanda. In addition to listening and questioning skills, the peer-support workers received technical guidance on monitoring and evaluating participants’ progress.

“This support has been enormously useful for us to provide high-quality psychosocial services,” said Janvier Forongo, executive secretary of IBUKA. “With CISR’s assistance, IBUKA is rapidly becoming one of the foremost trauma survivor support programs in Africa. The profound level of damage inflicted by the genocide requires expertise in trauma rehabilitation, and we thank CISR for helping us respond effectively.”

The Stavros Niarchos Foundation funded the trainings, providing a US$100,000 grant to CISR to focus specifically on East Africa. Of the total grant, $33,000 funded peer-support training in Rwanda and $72,000 funded peer-support programs in Uganda and Burundi. The remaining $5,000 of the grant bought the 200 mobile phones donated to IBUKA.

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