QPN Burundi
Transitional Justice Model
Quaker Peace Network Burundi
INTRODUCTION

Burundi has experienced a politico-ethnic conflict that has lasted over half a century. It has undergone deep divisions over this long period which prevented its development and even created a lot of uncertainties for its inhabitants and that of their descendants (Wiegandt, 2010, 9).

The said conflict is rooted first in the traditional practices of the time of the monarchy, then during the colonial politics of "divide and rule" and finally in the various cyclical vengeance that occurred since the eve of the national independence (Arusha Peace Agreement, 2000, 15) and throughout the period called "Era of coups d'Etat" from 1966 to 1993 (Mukuri, 2013, 5). It extends to three time periods: pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial, but in a progressive manner.

From October 13, 1961 to October 21, 1993, the Burundian conflict became gradually more complicated, leading to inter-ethnic massacres between Hutu and Tutsi who before identified themselves as brothers and sisters. The interests around which the conflict revolved generated heterogeneity of stories and speeches of the Burundian people about the history of their country and more specifically those of violence during the post-colonial period1. From a group or an individual to another, the historical truths differ2. Thus the years 1965, 1972, 1988, 1991, 1993 are known to be the dark period while those backing the Human Rights violations during these periods remain unknown and unpunished.

It is since the civil war of 1993 that the Quakers of Burundi broke the silence and committed themselves, initiating significant actions to repair the Burundian social fabric.

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Quakers, or members of the Evangelical Friends Church, were active in the work of peacebuilding from the beginning of their existence in the 17th century. The categorical refusal of the first Quakers to carry weapons has rooted the tradition of pacifism within the church that sees itself as a historic peace church. Equality and non-violence being the central values of their faith, the Quakers are engaged in all aspects of peace work through their associated organizations (www.quaker.org).

In 2001, about forty organizations affiliated with the Quaker movement gathered under the Quaker Peace Network Africa (QPN) framework to strengthen and coordinate their efforts in consolidating the Rule of law, promotion of good governance and community reconstruction. Within that same year, thirteen national and international organizations in this movement, Quaker and non-Quaker, began to take action in synergy under the name QPN Burundi.
QPN Burundi is coordinated through a monthly consultation meeting involving representatives of thirteen member organizations. The international organizations are: AFSC and MCC.

The national organizations are: The Peace Committee of Kibimba, School of Peace of Magarama, MIPAREC, THARS, HROC, FWA, PAV, SOCPADEV, GVFEFD, UMUGANI Group and EEABU (Kwibuka and Kibimba).

The existence of these different organizations in Burundi has led to the introduction of QPN Burundi, which has a direct link with other QPN Africa movements and has a well-defined structure. QPN Africa has been involved since 1993 in seeking a peaceful, prosperous, united and reconciled society in Burundi. To achieve their vision, a synergy of these organizations was initiated in 2001.

AFSC: American Friends Service Committee
MCC: Mennonite Central Committee
MIPAREC: Ministry for Peace and Reconciliation under the Cross
THARS: Trauma Healing and Reconciliation Services
FWA: Friends Women’s Association
PAV: Projet d’Alternatives à la Violence
SOCPADEV: Solidarité Chrétienne pour la Paix et le Développement
GVFEFD: Groupe de Volontaires en Faveur des Enfants et des Femmes en Difficulté
EEABU: Eglise Evangélique des Amis du Burundi
The tradition of electoral process observation began in this same year with the observation of the Presidential election in Rwanda. Thereafter, QPN Africa participated in election observation in Burundi (2005), in DR Congo (2006) and in Kenya (2007). Since 2010, QPN Africa has practiced the system of election monitoring, which means to be present in all three phases of the electoral process: before the elections, especially in the area of voters’ registration, during elections with observation and after the elections, especially in the area of electoral disputes. This occurred in Burundi (2010) and in Kenya (2013).

After analysis of achievements registered by QPN in the areas of elections, reconciliation, trauma healing, community recovery, advocacy and lobbying and sustainable development, QPN was inspired by the interventions of other actors in the field of Transitional Justice like the United Nations among others.

To complement the existing models, and according to the needs of the Burundian context, QPN has designed a model of Transitional Justice that it hopes will contribute more to the process of effective national reconciliation.

QPN believes that the legitimate mechanisms in the Burundian context would be based on five pillars which are: accountability, truth, positive relations, leadership development and community empowerment.
1. Accountability

This principle is understood by QPN as a commitment made by the perpetrators, or presumed perpetrators, of actions that brought prejudice to third parties to accept, to recognize and to reveal to the victims and the community their involvement in the crimes committed in order to create a peaceful environment favorable for forgiveness and reconciliation.

**Accountability has indeed the allowing advantages:**

- The clarification of the actions by the presumed perpetrators themselves;
- The moral reparation of the prejudice suffered (result of compassion);
- The facilitation of a favorable environment for forgiveness and reconciliation;
- The psycho-social reintegration of victims and perpetrators.

**The involvement of QPN Burundi in the accountability process will be facilitated through the following activities:**

- Sensitization of community leaders on the importance of the process and the protection of the truth holders (victims, witnesses, perpetrators);
- Training of victims, witnesses, perpetrators in technical alternatives to violence;
- The integration of Traditional Justice approaches in the management and prevention of conflicts, for example in the work of peace committees;
- The implementation of healing programs that could better accompany this process of accountability;
- The reparation of the prejudice suffered by the victims (in the absence of appropriate compensation due to insolvency of the perpetrators and supporting symbolic reparation).
2. The truth

Since national independence, the historical truth differs from one social group to another or from an individual to another. Each ethnic group sees itself as victim and accuses the other of being responsible for all the pains incurred especially for the events of 1972 and 1993.

QPN therefore encourages institutions to promote a framework and a culture where every Burundian will feel ready to share his/her past experience, avoiding generalization as much as possible.

In relation to culture, Burundians need to revisit the proverbs and the expressions that constitute barriers to the needed truth by acknowledging that truth heals the pains caused by hatred, lies and war; that truth is a source of justice and forgiveness, building the basis of good relations and sustainable peace. Truth is also essential to social, economic and political development.

The role of QPN Burundi in the search of the truth would be to:

- Encourage offenders and presumed perpetrators to tell the truth and the community to accept them in order to facilitate reconciliation;

- Advocate for the protection of victims, witnesses and presumed perpetrators;

- Promote social and economic reintegration of perpetrators and victims;

- Raise awareness and advocate with decision makers to create appropriate frameworks for women and children to testify safely on their past experiences.
3. Positive Relations

The establishment of an environment that enables exchange where everyone feels considered and valued, brings something positive for national peacebuilding.

To achieve positive relations, Burundians must agree to:

- Recognize the value of others;
- Be willing to cooperate and tell the truth;
- Understand and forgive one another;
- Promote good relations through the establishment of community structures such as peace committees and youth clubs.

It should be noted that positive relations support:

- Security and peace;
- Good initiatives, progress and community development;
- Effective education and intellectual training.

The role of QPN Burundi to promote positive relations would be to:

- Promote the creation and mentorship of peace committees;
- Train and inform community leaders on peaceful conflict resolution;
- Disseminate the approach of peaceful resolution of conflict at the national level;
- Make QPN Burundi a national forum for sustainable peace;
4. Leadership development

This principle is understood as the encouragement and the guidance of a visionary who has the skills and confidence to mentor others in order to respond to the needs of a community – nation. A good leader should have a number of values: readiness to serve (helpful), responsibility (responsible), flexibility (flexible), accessibility (accessible), humility (humble) and accountability (accountable).

To facilitate this process, the role of QPN Burundi in leadership development will be to:

- Strengthen the capacity of leaders through training and follow-up sessions;
- Raise awareness of the population on the concept of leadership with a top down approach;
- Promote leadership emerging from an early age;
- Encourage the spirit of competitiveness in all sectors;
- Promote a sense of responsibility, integrity, ownership and sustainability;
- Encourage a culture of self-dependency;
- Promote good governance within the family, professional and institutional areas;
- Encourage visionary and innovative spirit especially in decision-making and in succession policies within the family, professional and institutional levels;
- Raise awareness to people about their rights and duties;
- Raise awareness among institutions to protect the rights of the people.
5. Community empowerment

This is understood as the capacity building of a community to be able to express itself, be responsible and defend and advocate for its interests. A community where its members are able to work together, respond to their socio-economic needs, heal of the wounds of the past, choose their leaders independently and ask them to be accountable.

The role of QPN Burundi in empowering the community will be to:

5.1. At the social level
- Promote an education that encourages the contribution of people of all ages in building peace;
- Organize sessions of healing and ritual commemoration;
- Advocate for the creation of a center of memorialization;
- Advocate for a day of remembrance for the victims;
- Encourage community dialogue to improve social cohesion.

5.2. At the economic level
- Initiate activities of small loans and social solidarity; and undertake professional training activities;
- Raise awareness among communities for a responsible management of the environment.

5.3. At the political level
- Promote civic and citizenship education;
- Raise awareness among local leaders and civil society organizations at the base for their participation in decision making in a transparent, inclusive and productive manner;
- Promote a culture that values the democratic rights of every Burundian.
CONCLUSION

The undeniable relevance of Transitional Justice, precisely in the following aspects: Accountability, Truth, Positive Relations, Leadership Development and Community empowerment, which is being presented by the Burundi Quaker Peace Network, comes from the fact that it gives a preventive and therapeutic character for victims, and at the same time for the executing bodies and the entire population.

Transitional Justice accompanied by appropriate measures, as described in this model, will come to heal the wounds of the victims and prepare a reassured future with regards to the non-recurrence of past violations and would break the culture of violence and revenge, in which the country has been stuck in a cyclical manner for years.

Note: This model does not replace other existing but could complement other efforts for an effective national reconciliation in Burundi.
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