TWESSE FOR PEACE
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Project goals
Twese for peace was aimed to teach peace building skills and entrepreneurship skills to university students and high school students in Bujumbura, Burundi. Twese means “everyone” in Kirundi which is the national language of Burundi alongside with French. Burundi has gone through series of ethnic based civil war, genocide and political instability which have deeply affected the economy and the social well-being of the country. As a result, the majority of Burundians live under the poverty line. Our main goal was to select students from various high schools and universities in Burundi and turn them into peace minded entrepreneurs through entrepreneurship and peace building training.

From July 30th to August 4th, Twese for peace workshops took place at Karera Beach Hotel which is located 15 minutes away from the Bujumbura where all our participants were from.

Recruitment
We created a Google form which we posted on all the school’s Facebook pages and all the groups that attracted young people aging between 17 and 23 and attending high school or university. We focused on this age group as it is the age when students are finishing high school or joining university and also getting ready for the professional world. The questionnaire was aimed to identify the kind of applicants we are getting and fit in with our project goal. Apart from asking basic information like age, date of birth, they school attended, school level and where they live, we also asked them questions that could give us a sense of their personality. We asked them to describe themselves, their ambitions, their dreams, the social issues they have seen
in their communities and how they would change it, a description of a perfect community and their role in such an environment. We also asked them to tell us why they were interested in attending the Twese for peace summer camp, the extracurricular activities they were doing in their respective schools and what business they would set up if they were given money to do so. The application form went live on June 20th 2013 and was due July 21st at 11:59PM.

From a pool of 43 applicants, we selected 21 students to attend the workshops among which 13 were male and 8 female. 11 participants came from 5 universities located all over the city and 10 came from 6 high schools also located in all the corners of the city. The selection process allowed us to have a diverse group of students that have different experiences in life but come from different ethnic backgrounds.

**Project implementation**

Our project was divided on two axes: entrepreneurship and conflict resolution. We focused on these two areas because they work hand in hand and together will contribute to a better Burundi. We have also worked with other Burundians to implement our programs. Armel Nibasumba taught about entrepreneurship while Betty Kobia developed the conflict resolution curriculum.

In the entrepreneurship workshops, participants learned how to generate an entrepreneurial idea (the importance of knowing yourself, your passions, your community and networking to generation a great idea); how to plan for your future actions (marketing plan and operation plan development, usage of accounting and fund finding for a business) and how to implement an entrepreneurial idea (idea sharing, taking actions & overcoming obstacles, growing a business and responsible leadership). In the peace building workshops, participants learnt about the
importance of community and what an ideal community means, the importance of community, tolerance, community building, pillars of peace, steps to conflict resolution. After the workshops, participants engaged in discussion and debate sessions where they would get the opportunity to use what they have learnt into action. A day at Twese for peace summer program started with games then an entrepreneurship-related workshop which was be followed by a discussion session and a peace building workshop. After lunch, we had another peace building workshop and a break out session. We always took a bus that drove us to the bus park in town.

Loic-Davy Kaze, senior high school student at the African Leadership Academy in Johannesburg South Africa and Julio Maniratunga, a senior at Northeastern University and African leadership academy alum, were helped design and teach the curriculum for the entrepreneurship workshops. Marlyne Hakizimana, senior high school student at the Pearson College united word college in Vancouver Canada, was in charge of creating games and activities that would allow the participants to relax and establish a safe space where participants could share about their opinions about ethnicities in Burundi. Jean-Claude Nkundwa, Masters’ student at Eastern Mennonite University in Virginia, led discussions about the history of peace in Burundi, the exploration of ethnicities in Burundi and the youth’s role in the future elections in 2015.

We invited Vanessa Ishimwe, a 23 years old successful entrepreneur on Thursday august 1st to talk about how she started her business and what the obstacles she faced to get where she is right now. This was aimed to give a live example to the participants that it is possible to turn your entrepreneurial idea into action in Burundi.
With the safe space created throughout the workshops, participants were able to open up more about their ethnicity and what it means in Burundi although this is usually a taboo. This was very essential to the success of our project as we wanted people to explore the meaning of ethnicities and how to use pacific communication to turn it into a force that consolidates peace instead of weakening it.

With our participants learning how to create their business, we had a business idea competition the last day of the workshops where participants took turns to showcase their business ideas to a jury composed of Armel Nibasumba, Loic-Davy Kaze and Julio Maniratunga. The participants came up with great business ideas which not only showed that they mastered the problem identification model where you use your community as your inspiration and the problems in the community as opportunities to solve the problems and make money out of it but also mastered the “elevator speech” models and business plan skills. Here is the ranking:

1. **Kelly Grace Nahigombeye**: Making jewelry (bracelets and necklaces) using used plastic bags and beads.

2. **Akbar Seleman**: selectronics: using waste products to make generators

3. **Frank Nijimbere**: E-shop Burundi: first Burundian online shop website where people can find Burundian products and any other commodities.

4. **Alain-Michel Bizimana**: mobile food trucks that could serve fresh Burundian food to university students for lunch.

5. **Pierre Muco Nduwayezu**: Kinindo resource center: a resource center in his suburb where young people would learn computer skills, life skills and play sports.
At the closing ceremonies, the president of the federal chamber of commerce and industry and the director of the credit department in Banque de Commerce de Bujumbura spoke about the importance of having peace minded young entrepreneurs in Burundi.

Since the workshops, the have started chapters at their high schools and universities. They have assembled a group of students to whom they are sharing the skills they have learnt in the Twese for peace summer workshops.

Wherever a country’s youth is right now is also where the country is going next. We have been able to establish a network of friends who are willing to work together to inspire the next generation of decision makers and business people in Burundi but also young entrepreneurs with a leadership mindset for local and global impact. We would like to thank from the bottom of our hearts the Middlebury Center for Social Entrepreneurship and the Clinton Global Initiative University for all the financial support and guidance that they have provided towards the success of this project and empowering a group of dreamers and innovators. Today we stand straight knowing that there is a new generation in the making in Burundi, a generation that values diversity and not ethnicity, a generation that supports cohabitation, social change and sustainable development. Twese for peace summer workshop is the initial stage of an ongoing innovative social change movement that will hopefully touch all the corners of Burundi and Africa.