



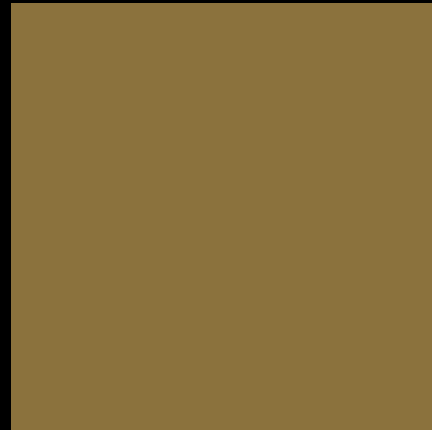
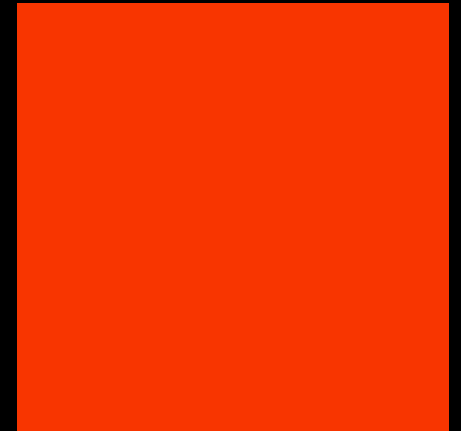
# Impact, Implementation, and Insights of Peace Education:

**Gendered Lessons**

from the M.A. in

Peace Studies & Conflict Transformation  
Program at the University of Rwanda

**WLE 2019 Presentation**



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Los Angeles, California (USA)  
**July 11, 2019**



# Why Rwanda and Why Me?

After extracting myself from a highly controlling, cult-like religious community in my early 20s, I wondered: **what DOES make a peaceful world?** What promotes acceptance and connections? . . .

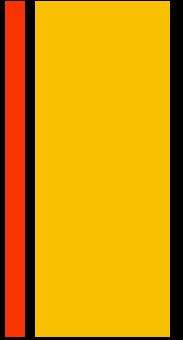
. . . and discovered that **peace and social justice education is a powerful tool** towards these ends. I studied and engaged in this field for the next 10 years . . .

. . . but was discouraged with peace education in the U.S. -- it remains marginalized and seen as impractical! And our country is NOT at peace. **What societies, if any, are doing peace education better?** . . .

. . . As I discovered (and later confirmed with my study), **Rwandan peace education deserves to be shared** because it is a nuanced, relevant, extraordinary approach to peace education that is a model of best practice.



# In a Nutshell...



This study documented the untold story of the groundbreaking **M.A. in Peace Studies and Conflict Transformation** program housed in the Centre for Conflict Management (CCM) at the University of Rwanda (UR) by gathering perspectives from leaders, faculty and alumni, as well as outside peacebuilders via open interviews and reflective field notes.

The primary goal of the study was to **highlight lessons** the fields of peace education and educational leadership can glean from Rwandan colleagues **typically on the outskirts** of the conversation about how peace education can contribute to **sustainable development, leadership training, & national stability.**



# How WLE Has Contributed

## WLE 2013 - Ghana

**Feedback** about how to bring a gendered lens to my interests in both peace education and African higher ed



## WLE 2017 - Brazil

**Brainstorming** together how to analyze recently-collected field data in a way that considers the influence of gender



## WLE 2019 - UK

**Praxis** after finishing my doctorate about not only how to see my study, but how to see myself and leverage my privilege



# My Ethical Anchors

At the root of all conflict are elements of **structural violence** (Galtung, 1969), which critical peace education seeks to confront and counter . . .

. . . including academic power structures that affect this study (Vanner, 2015). Thus, as a peace education researcher, I was **ethically bound** to conduct my study in a way that counters structural violence . . .

. . . so I embraced **decolonizing methodology** (Smith, 1999; Falcon, 2016; Pennington & Prater, 2016) in order to prioritize “social justice as both a process and a goal” (Bell, 2007) and reflected on my positionality often through the research process.



# Research Questions (RQs) Aligned with Participant Recommendations

## RQ1 (IMPACT - Intended & Actual):

How do University of Rwanda administrators, faculty and alumni associated with the M.A. in Peace Studies & Conflict Transformation **envision** the program's contribution to development of future leaders who will prioritize and be equipped to maintain peace and stability?

1a) How are these insider perspectives of the M.A. program different from those of leaders engaged in peacebuilding outside the M.A. program?

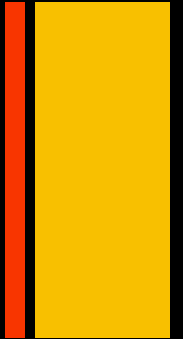


**Recommendation 1:**  
**Embrace constructive criticism as nurturing rather than threatening.**





# Research Questions (RQs) Aligned with Participant Recommendations



## RQ2 (IMPLEMENTATION):

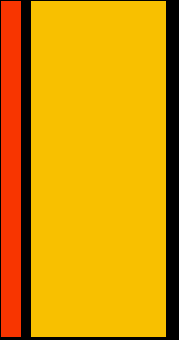
How are educational leaders and other stakeholders making **decisions** related to achieving program goals?

(i.e. What strategies are being employed? What constraints and tradeoffs do they face? What missions drove the program's evolution?)



**Recommendation 2:**  
**Diversify sources of funding and partnership.**



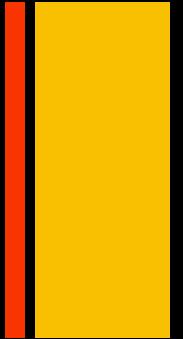


**“don’t fill me with what you are full of,  
thinking this is the only food that exists in  
the world . . . To what extent do you  
respect my understanding or [even] my  
self- understanding?” (CCM Faculty E,  
S.P.).**



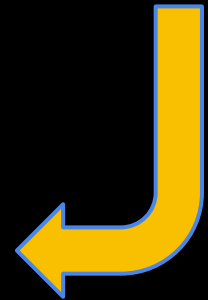


# Research Questions (RQs) Aligned with Participant Recommendations



## RQ3 (INSIGHTS):

What lessons can the M.A. program offer the fields of peace education and educational leadership?

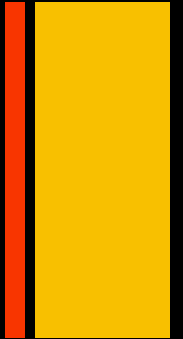


**Recommendation 3:**  
**Work towards coherent structures of  
communication and sharing.**



# Follow-Up Steps I Commit to Taking as a 'Pracademic'

- **Share final study** with all interviewees, leadership at the UR and with the Ministry of Education (MINEDUC) and the Ministry of Health (MOH) Ethics Committee
- **Distribute 4-page handout** as a shorthand reference for laypersons who might be interested in these findings at conferences or elsewhere.
- **Present at WLE** conference in Nottingham, UK in July 2019, and apply to present at 2019 UCEA, 2020 AERA, and 2020 PJSA conferences.
- **Re-apply for a Fulbright** to spearhead creation of an exchange program between the UR and an American HLI.
- **Embrace other continuation possibilities** such as a 2020 Avila Activist-in-Residence award alongside my Rwandan colleague, funding for extension of research from USIP, or other chances to publicize the M.A. program and the work of CCM



I look forward to hearing your feedback  
in order to ensure that the outcomes of my project  
are both academically rigorous and socially impactful.

Please reach out anytime: [sarahdoerrer@gmail.com](mailto:sarahdoerrer@gmail.com) or  
on Facebook / LinkedIn

Thank you, WLE sisters, for your support  
the past six years!



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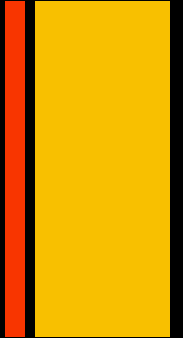
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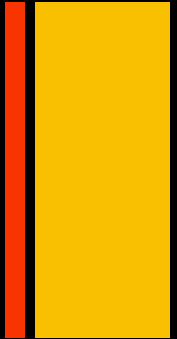
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