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# Rehabilitation and Reintegration of Genocide Ex-Prisoners: Understanding the Correctional Role of Prisons in Rwanda

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**Rehabilitation and Reintegration of Genocide Ex-Prisoners: Understanding the  
Correctional Role of Prisons in Rwanda**

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Fall 2017

World Learning - SIT Study Abroad

Rwanda: Post-Genocide Restoration and Peacebuilding

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**List of Abbreviations**

CBS: Community-Based Sociotherapy

GER: Global Initiative for Environment and Reconciliation

ICTR: International Criminal Tribunal of Rwanda

NAR: Never Again Rwanda

NGO: Non-Governmental Organization

NURC: National Unity and Reconciliation Commission

PFR: Prison Fellowship Rwanda

RCS: Rwanda Correctional Service

RWF: Rwandan Francs

SIT: School for International Training

TIG: Travail d'Intérêt Général

### **Abstract**

After the Genocide Against the Tutsi in 1994, over 120,000 people were imprisoned in Rwanda for the perpetration of genocide. Twenty-three years after the Genocide, numerous genocide ex-prisoners have been released. Throughout their prison time and after their release, rehabilitation and reintegration programming has been available. This paper looks at the rehabilitation and reintegration programming available to genocide ex-prisoners, the success and challenges they currently face or have previously faced, and recommendations for reforms for the future prison/rehabilitation/reintegration process. This paper also examines the correctional role of prisons in Rwanda and how that contributes to successful reintegration. From interviewing genocide ex-prisoners, the Rwanda Correctional Service (RCS), and several organizations that work directly with genocide ex-prisoners, it is evident that there is rehabilitation and reintegration programming both inside and outside of prison focusing on but not limited to education, unity and reconciliation, forgiveness, and healing. There are also various successes and challenges that genocide ex-prisoners face, for example, intermarriage, storytelling, forgiveness, shame, guilt, and acceptance. In conclusion, Rwanda's genocide ex-prisoners have not recidivated, which conveys the message that the systems that are currently in place have assisted tremendously in successful reintegration. Although the challenges of genocide ex-prisoners presently outweigh the successes, there are favorable conditions available, proper programs in place, and recommendations being developed to make reintegration even more successful.

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## Table of Contents

<b>List of Abbreviations</b> .....	2
<b>Abstract</b> .....	3
<b>Acknowledgements</b> .....	4
<b>Chapter I: General Introduction and Background of the Study</b> .....	7
1.1. Background of the Study .....	7
1.2. Research Problem .....	8
1.3. Research Objectives .....	9
<b>Chapter II: Research Methodology</b>	
2.1. Scope of the Study .....	10
2.2. Data Collection Techniques .....	10
2.3. Ethical Values .....	11
2.4. Limitations of the Study .....	12
2.4.1 Limitations .....	12
2.4.2 Reliability and Credibility .....	13
<b>Chapter III: Literature Review and Definition of Key Concepts</b>	
3.1 Literature Review.....	14
3.1.1 Prison Systems in General and the Controversy Around Their Correctional Role .	15
3.1.2 The History of Rwanda’s Prison System and How It Was Affected by the Genocide .....	15
3.1.3 Reforms That Had to be Done After Genocide .....	16
3.1.4 The Necessity of Ensuring Rehabilitation and Reintegration of Genocide Ex- Prisoners, Especially in the Context of Rwanda .....	17
3.2 Definition of Key Concepts.....	18
<b>Chapter IV: Presentation, Analysis, and Interpretation of Data</b>	
4.1 Presentation of Findings .....	19
4.2 Data Analysis & Interpretation .....	20
4.2.1 Correctional Role of Prisons .....	20
4.2.2 Rehabilitation .....	23
4.2.2.1 Are Genocide Ex-Prisoners Being Rehabilitated? .....	23

- 4.2.2.2 Other Aspects That Contribute to Rehabilitation ..... 25
- 4.2.3 Reintegration ..... 26
  - 4.2.3.1 What is Successful Reintegration? ..... 26
  - 4.2.3.2 Is Reintegration Successful? ..... 27
  - 4.2.3.3 Successes, Achievements, and Challenges ..... 28
  - 4.2.3.4 Reforms/Recommendations ..... 31
- 4.3 Conclusion .....32
- 4.4.1 Recommendations for Further Research .....34
- Bibliography** .....36
- Appendices** .....38

## **Chapter I: General Introduction and Background of the Study**

### **1.1 Background of the Study**

On the night of April 6<sup>th</sup>, 1994, the Rwandan Genocide Against the Tutsi hit its pinnacle. The buildup of the Genocide included colonialism by the Belgians, a powerful and manipulative Rwandan government, and extremist propaganda. Everyday people were influenced by the government and various sources of media to exterminate every Tutsi and become perpetrators of genocide. Moreover, because everyday people were influenced, they took up everyday objects to commit this genocide, such as clubs, machetes, and sticks.

After the Genocide, over 120,000 people were imprisoned for the perpetration of genocide, whether that be planning, organizing, actual killing, raping, telling locations of people to kill, or being forced to kill (Hackett, 2015). Because over 120,000 people were accused of doing these acts, justice needed to be served. They were tried in homegrown Gacaca courts, the International Criminal Tribunal of Rwanda (ICTR), and some were eventually incarcerated, which added to Rwanda's already overcrowded prisons.

Twenty-three years after genocide, thousands of people have been released from prisons. Some were sentenced to Travail d'Intérêt Général (TIG) while others were released back to their families. Rather than being incarcerated in an actual prison for their entire sentence, those in TIG finish serving their sentences by doing community service – some live in TIG camps while others live in their own neighborhoods. Prisoners who participate in TIG must complete half of their sentence in prison along with other requirements. In addition to this alternative to sentencing, RCS is taking steps to ensure that the humane and social needs of prisoners are being met. In the form of rehabilitation, RCS has an office dedicated to the roles of churches in rehabilitation, entertainment support, and education – the Social Affairs and Human Rights Office (Some running departments of the prison, n.d.). They additionally have an office of corrections and an office of rehabilitation and reintegration (Departmental responsibilities/duties, n.d.).

Although RCS and other entities have rehabilitation/reintegration programming inside and outside of prisons, there has not been a study to gauge the success of this programming out of the studies I have looked at. Therefore, one may wonder if those who participate in these activities feel as though they have learned from these programs and have successfully reintegrated into their communities when they have been released.

## 1.2 Research Problem

Currently what genocide ex-prisoners in Rwanda want most is to be rehabilitated (Aggée, 2017). Many people in Rwandan prisons played a part in the 1994 Genocide and, furthermore, everyone in not only Rwandan prisons but Rwandan society has been affected by the Genocide in some way. When an event like genocide happens in a society, it is necessary for the society to be rehabilitated. If one is in prison when the outer community is being rehabilitated, there also need to be opportunities for prisoners to be rehabilitated as well, because they are, after all, members of society at large. Moreover, rehabilitation programming is very important in helping genocide ex-prisoners return to society in a successful manner. Therefore, is rehabilitation really what genocide ex-prisoners are getting when they are incarcerated? If they are truly being rehabilitated, certain techniques are being used for successful reintegration into society.

Many scholars and society members believe in alternatives to sentencing, such as community service or house arrest. Rwanda also participates in alternative sentencing with its TIG camps and neighborhood TIG, but have the genocide ex-prisoners who have participated in these alternative sentencing methods and/or prison itself been rehabilitated and successfully reintegrated back into their communities? If not, there may be other methods RCS can use to further ensure that Rwanda's genocide ex-prisoners are successfully rehabilitated and reintegrated into society. Furthermore, if extents are not taken to make sure Rwandan genocide ex-prisoners are rehabilitated and reintegrated, consequences could occur, such as retaliation, revenge, job insecurity, mental health issues, and isolation.

### 1.3 Research Objectives

1. Examine the rehabilitation programs implemented by RCS, its partners, and other organizations to ensure successful reintegration of genocide ex-prisoners/ex-tigists once they are back in communities.
2. Recognize the reintegration related achievements and challenges (if any) faced by genocide ex-prisoners/ex-tigists now in the communities.
3. Elaborate recommendations in regard to the rehabilitation and reintegration of genocide ex-prisoners/ex-tigists in Rwanda.

## **Chapter II: Research Methodology**

### **2.1 The Scope of the Study**

This study focuses on rehabilitation and reintegration of former prisoners in Rwanda – specifically prisoners who were perpetrators of the Genocide. I talked to RCS officials and other institutions and individuals, such as religious leaders and NGOs, to learn about their rehabilitation and reintegration programs. These organizations included the National Unity and Reconciliation Commission (NURC), Prison Fellowship Rwanda (PFR), Community-Based Sociotherapy (CBS), Never Again Rwanda (NAR), Global Initiatives for Environment and Reconciliation (GER), and the Justice and Peace Commission of Catholic Archdiocese Kigali. Furthermore, I interviewed nine ex-prisoners/ex-tigists in two different focus groups at SIT. These interviews and focus groups were held in Kigali city only due to limited time and resources.

### **2.2 Data Collection Techniques**

I interviewed a total of sixteen individuals – including seven one-on-one interviews and two focus groups. My advisor, Dr. Shyaka Aggée helped give me a starting point for my interviews, such as NURC, PFR, and RCS. SIT Rwanda's academic director, Celine Mukamurenzi, assisted me in finding ex-prisoners/ex-tigists and RCS staff to interview. When meeting with staff from NURC, they told me that they do not work directly with ex-prisoners of genocide but rather have partnerships with organizations that do. Therefore, they gave me the following list of their partners and organizations whom I could contact and/or look up: PFR, Justice and Peace Commission of Catholic Archdiocese Kigali, local authorities at the grassroots level, CBS, NAR, the Secret of Peace, and GER. I was able to get in contact with most of these NURC partners/organizations in which I conducted seven interviews (See above "The Scope of the Study" for who I was able to interview). I also held two focus groups with ex-prisoners and ex-tigists at SIT with a total of nine individuals. Three of my interviews/focus groups required

translators – all different translators. During these interviews and focus groups, I used snowball sampling by asking the interviewees who they knew that may be interested or have knowledge on my research topic.

### 2.3 Ethical Values

My research topic is very sensitive as it has the word “genocide” in the title and also requires genocide ex-prisoners to recall a time in which they may have gone through a plethora of emotions, such as guilt or shame, and may not have been accepted by the wider community. I made sure not to ask any specific questions about the Genocide; however, the topic itself makes one think of the past deeds and rehabilitation that may have helped one cope with past experiences. This is also a somewhat intrusive topic for genocide ex-prisoners because it makes them think about a hard time in their lives – times when they were in prison and the feelings of those times. Additionally, it was necessary during the interviews with genocide ex-prisoners for one to remember how they were and are treated by society including the challenges they face and have faced.

As for the translators of my study, I made sure to brief them on the study and allowed them to go through my interview questions with me before the interview or focus group to ensure that their translations from English to Kinyarwanda would be correct. For one of my focus groups with genocide ex-prisoners/ex-tigists, I needed a translator in which I used a staff member from SIT. This staff member may have met with the individuals in my focus group previously with other students, which could have hindered the way they responded to my interview questions.

Before my interviews and focus groups, I made sure to introduce myself and brief the interviewee(s) about my research topic. Along with this, I made sure to tell them that all names would remain anonymous, information would be confidential, and if they are not comfortable with answering the question, they can abstain and we can skip it.

## 2.4 Limitations of the study

### 2.4.1 Limitations

Some limitations of the study include timing, language, contacting and waiting to hear back, and being unable to visit prisons. For this small research project, I was allotted only one month to complete it. One month, being a short amount of time, was a bit difficult to get all the interviews, data, etc. I needed to conduct reliable research. If the study were longer and had more participants, it could be more reliable, and I may have been able to extrapolate the data to a larger population.

Additionally, I carefully chose this topic with the intention of doing a small research project; therefore, I was able to get the tailored results I wanted according to my three research objectives. Carefully choosing this topic made me narrow the topic to specifically genocide ex-prisoners rather than the entire former prisoner's population. However, the results would be much better if the research period were longer and if the sample were larger.

Language was also a limitation because for some interviews and focus groups, I needed a Kinyarwanda translator. Sometimes it was hard to tell if the interviewer's exact meaning of the question had been conveyed by the translator and, vice versa, the answers the translator relays back to the interviewer in English.

Because this study was conducted over a very short period of time, there was little time to waste in doing the research. However, it took some time to schedule interviews, contact individuals, and hear back from them. So, once again, the timing was a constraint.

Also, as I am an undergraduate and not an expert in this area of rehabilitation and reintegration of former prisoners, I was not able to visit prisons or TIG camps. There were some organizations that I was not able to meet with as they were out of the country or were not answering my calls or emails, so this limited the amount of opinions I could have gotten for the research.

#### *2.4.2 Reliability and Credibility*

Because I am an undergraduate, my research is not as credible as, say, someone with a Masters or Ph.D. The sample size was very small so it may not be very credible, although I did talk to many different organizations and individuals, including the two of the most important in my research: RCS and genocide ex-prisoners. I was additionally not allowed to go to prisons as I am not an expert in the area, which could have hindered by reliability and credibility. What makes research reliable is that the resources used are unbiased. This includes interviews and secondary sources. I made sure these aspects of my research were as reliable as possible by including perspectives ranging from actual genocide ex-prisoners to those who work or have worked directly with genocide ex-prisoners. This created a well-rounded data pool I was able to interview and from which I gained information.

### **Chap III: Literature Review and Definition of Key Concepts**

#### 3.1 Literature Review

##### *3.1.1 Prison Systems in General and the Controversy Around Their Correctional Role*

Prisons are in place for many reasons – to segregate criminals from regular society members, to educate, to prevent reoffending, and, most often, to correct. At this time, many prisons are no longer called “prisons.” Instead, they are called “correctional facilities.” On the one hand, some people believe prisons are keeping the general population safe and that prisons are rehabilitating those who inhabit it. On the other hand, many people also believe that although prisons are meant to correct, they actually foster violence and, furthermore, make criminals more violent. There is also evidence that prisons are capitalist industries that profit off of their inmates, especially in the private prisons industry (Davis, 1998).

The correctional role of prisons differs internationally. However, in general, having terms like “correctional facility” implies that the facility corrects. In some situations, this is not the case. Because prisons are places that keep criminals confined, it is likely and proven in some cases that criminality increases by being surrounded by other criminals. Therefore, instead of correcting, prisons are allowing for more violence and criminal activity (Cullen, Jonson, & Nagin, 2011). With a name like “corrections,” this means that an offender came into prison by doing an inappropriate activity which was punished by giving them prison time and, in prison, they should be “corrected” of their past criminal mistake and look toward the future to not make that error again. Yet, recidivism is very common in several countries, which implies that prisons who have correctional roles or titles are not actually completing their job of corrections.

##### *3.1.2 The History of Rwanda’s Prison System and How It Was Affected by the Genocide*

Before 1994, prisons in Rwanda were overcrowded and understaffed. People were put in prisons for reasons of looting, murder, and burglary, to name a few. Immediately after the genocide, perpetrators were thrown in already overcrowded prisons making them extremely overcrowded. For example, in the central prison in Kigali, 8,000 inmates lived in a prison with a capacity of 500. In prisons in 1995, people were falling ill, starving, and there was no judicial

system in place; therefore, people were not being tried and were never actually charged with committing a crime (Clark, 2010; Lorch, 1995; National Unity and Reconciliation Commission, 2015). Eventually Gacaca courts were formed and ICTR began as well, but in the meantime, people were suffering in prisons. One doctor from Doctors Without Borders stated that this was a paradox because he was treating murderers yet they were in prison currently suffering from these aforementioned issues (Lorch, 1995). Because of overcrowding and other inhumane conditions, disease was running rampant through prisons, and several people were dying a day (Clark, 2010; Lorch, 1995). Once the judicial system was in place, conditions were getting better. Also, to help with overcrowding, NGOs were upstanders against the genocide jails in Rwanda and asked the government to improve conditions. More prisons and detention facilities in Rwanda were built as well (Clark, 2010).

Additionally, in 2003, the Rwandan government decided that if *génocidaires* asked for forgiveness, the government would reconsider their sentence (Bagnetto, 2014). In 2007, the death penalty in Rwanda was abolished. This allowed people's sentences to change – some getting life in prison instead of being executed. Although prison conditions have been improving since the Genocide, and most perpetrators have been released, Rwanda still currently has a large prison population - “the world's seventh-highest per capita prison population” (Dreisenger, 2016, p. 29).

RCS has gone through many name changes throughout its history. In 2006, its name changed to National Prisons Service and later on, its name changed to Rwanda Correctional Service by merging the National Prisons Service with the Executive Secretariat of National Committee of Community Services as an alternative penalty to imprisonment (National Unity and Reconciliation Commission, 2015). The name RCS has remained until this day. With the word “correctional” now in the title, there is an implication that the institutions where people who have been convicted of crimes are sent is meant to correct them and refrain them from recidivating (Prisons improve professionalism, 2011). Additionally, RCS now has departments which deal with corrections and rehabilitation and reintegration. The duties of these departments fall in line with the “correctional” role RCS has in place. For example, in the office of corrections, some of the duties include providing health/hygiene products, counseling, and

reeducation programs in prisons and TIG. In the office of rehabilitation and reintegration, some duties include providing programs on civic education, good governance, sensitization, anti-corruption, nationalism, and unity and reconciliation. Additionally, and most importantly, this office “ensure[s] smooth Rehabilitation and Reintegration of Prisoners into society after serving their prison sentence to evade recidivism” (Departmental duties, n.d.). These duties of RCS staff, if implemented correctly and followed, can assist in making correctional facilities actually correctional. These duties deal with human rights of prisoners, treating them as humans, which can in turn correct.

### *3.1.3 Reforms That Had to be Done After Genocide*

Many reforms were done following genocide. Instead of solely punishing those who committed genocide, Rwanda’s government incorporated the value of forgiveness among its prisoners. Because so many people were convicted of perpetrating genocide, the justice system was under a huge amount of pressure. The ICTR was put in place to bring people to justice; however, this legal process would have taken hundreds of years to complete – meaning people who perpetrated genocide or were victims of genocide could die out in the meantime. To speed up the legal process, Rwanda began planning to incorporate a homegrown solution to this issue in 1996 - which became the Gacaca courts. In 2000, the Gacaca courts began, and in 2012, they ended. While the judicial system was taking its toll, those who were convicted were punished and sentenced. These sentences included prison time or TIG (Bikesha, 2017).

TIG is community service as an alternate sentence to being imprisoned. One must confess to perpetrating genocide, plead guilty, show remorse, and be in Category 2 of Gacaca courts, meaning they killed by following instructions. According to RCS, TIG camps are said to benefit the country because prisoners do community service – such as road or house construction and planting crops. In addition, they receive civic education which teaches them unity and reconciliation, history of Rwanda, to fight against genocide ideology, among many other lessons (TIG, a benefit to the country, n.d.). Neighborhood TIG is very similar; however, neighborhood tigungs can live in their communities rather than at a TIG camp (Institute of Legal Practice and Development, 2013). TIG has also said to have reduced prison overcrowding by 53

percent. Additionally, work done by tigtists has given Rwanda's economy close to 42 billion RWF (Kabanda, 2016).

Some things that were incorporated into the Rwandan prison system after the genocide were peacebuilding workshops, vocational training, and reconciliation villages where *génocidaires* would live alongside their victims and their victims' families. Additionally, civil society partnered with RCS for correctional reform - i.e. improving confinement provisions and vocational training. NGOs also incorporated prison work into their activities (Hackett, 2015). In 2003, ingando, or national solidarity camps, began in which some prisoners were released from prison and sent to camps to do work surrounding education, teamwork exercises, and rebuilding homes of genocide victims. Ingando was formed from a traditional Rwandan practice in which elders retreated from their homes to converse and share ideas (HomeGrown approaches, n.d.; Ingando, n.d.). Additionally, in these camps, there was much more space compared to prisons, there were football fields to play matches, and there were higher quality meals (Clark, 2010). Ingando was not only used for prisoners but it was also used for high school graduates, ex-combatants, and government officials as a way to be a team gathering space (Ingando, n.d.).

The Rwandan criminal justice system had some reforms during the early 2000s. These included that Rwandan government reconsidered some sentences in which people forgave their crimes. This began in 2003. Additionally, the death penalty in Rwanda was abolished in 2007. This also set a precedent to the worldview of the death penalty.

#### *3.1.4 The Necessity of Ensuring Rehabilitation and Reintegration of Genocide Ex-Prisoners, Especially in the Context of Rwanda*

As a country that has been through genocide in recent years, it is urgently important that Rwanda is successful in rehabilitating and reintegrating its genocide ex-prisoners. To this day, perpetrators and survivors are living side by side. This is mostly in part because of the government's powerful motive to be unified and reconcile (Lorch, 1995). This is additionally because Rwanda is a small, land-locked country which does not have much land to waste. While the outer community is embodying the government's idea of unity and reconciliation, it is

important that those who are incarcerated are receiving similar unity and reconciliation education, which ties into rehabilitation. On the one hand, if genocide ex-prisoners are not rehabilitated and reintegrated successfully, retaliation, revenge, job insecurity, mental health issues, isolation and others could occur. On the other hand, if genocide ex-prisoners are rehabilitated and reintegrated successfully, society as a whole will be safer and more comfortable for all of its inhabitants no matter if they have been to prison or not.

### 3.2 Definition of Key Concepts

Gacaca courts: Homegrown restorative justice judicial system based on traditional Rwandan conflict resolution practices. In Gacaca (literally meaning “on the grass”) courts, everyday people served as judges as most judges fled or were murdered during the genocide. Judges were selected based on integrity.

Ingando: Civic education practice that assisted with reintegration of women, youth, prisoners, ex-armed forces, students, and local leaders

Rehabilitation: To make one feel that they are still human beings like other people (kubumvisha ko muri abantu nk’abandi)

Reintegration: Reentry of prisoners into society following incarceration

TIG: Travail d’Intérêt Général; community service as an alternative to sentencing

## Chap. IV: Presentation, Analysis, and Interpretation of Data

### 4.1 Presentation of Findings

Throughout this research and in talking to many individuals, numerous themes came up. These themes revolve around the topics of this paper: the correctional role of prisons, rehabilitation, and reintegration. These three topics formed three categories in which the data was interpreted. Inside these categories are themes to further explain the data.

Firstly, in the correctional role of prisons category, the themes include the following:

<b>Rehabilitative mechanisms / trainings</b>	Sensitization	TIG	Rights	<b>Recidivism rate</b>
<b>Rehabilitation meaning correction</b>	Community-building	Religious healing	Visitation	<b>RCS name change</b>
<b>Unity and reconciliation</b>	Prison reforms	<b>Mental preparation</b>	Motivation	<b>Making better citizens / people</b>
<b>Punitive vs restorative / rehabilitative</b>	<b>Psychological healing</b>	Freedom	Compassion	<b>Education</b>

Secondly, in the rehabilitation category, the following themes arose:

TIG	Gacaca	Pre- and post-release rehabilitation	<b>Mental health training / support groups</b>	<b>Reconciliation villages</b>
<b>Forgiveness</b>	<b>Educational programming / training</b>	<b>Speaking with victims</b>	<b>Religious healing / programming</b>	<b>Reconciliation training</b>
<b>Good governance</b>	Umuganda	Feeling of releasement in one's heart	Community effort	Rehabilitation meaning correction

Thirdly, in the reintegration category, the themes include the following:

<b>Two-sided (victims and perpetrators)</b>	<b>Good governance</b>	Educational programming	Welcoming into the community	<b>Recommendations / reforms</b>
<b>Successes</b>	Imbalance of support	<b>Speaking with victims</b>	Government programs	Living peacefully
<b>Challenges</b>	Value of peace	Confession of crimes	<b>Community sharing</b>	Villages
<b>Definition of successful reintegration</b>	<b>Financial reintegration</b>	Apologies	Inclusion	Unity and reconciliation

In the three categories, there were overlapping themes which applied to the correctional role of prisons, rehabilitation, and/or reintegration. Although many themes are listed above, the most significant ones (bold themes) are elaborated on below.

## 4.2 Data Analysis & Interpretation

### 4.2.1 Correctional Role of Prisons

In this section, I will focus on the significant themes in this category which include RCS name change, rehabilitation meaning correction, rehabilitative mechanisms/trainings, education, recidivism rate, unity and reconciliation, punitive vs restorative/rehabilitative, making better citizens/people, psychological healing, and mental preparation.

RCS changed its name from the National Prisons Service to Rwanda Correctional Service in recent years. With “correctional” now in the title, it is implied that prisons in Rwanda have a correctional role. To check to see if their title reflects reality, RCS and other organizations that work with prisoners were asked if they believe prisons in Rwanda to correct. Officials from RCS said that they believe prisons to correct because they give time to inmates to think about what they have done, not to redo the same crime. Sometimes people do not make mistakes of their own making and they find themselves in prison. Furthermore, prison is where some of them learn about the mistakes they have made and tend to be corrected. RCS believes their role in

correction is to make inmates, or people who have been condemned by the law, better citizens/better persons and not to go back to the mistake, crime, or anything that was the basis of them being in prison. On the other hand, organizations, such as PFR, GER, and the Justice and Peace Commission have similar views to RCS in that they believe prisons in Rwanda to correct because they do a good job of rehabilitating prisoners and keeping those who have been released from recidivating.

Additionally, prisons and the court system in Rwanda used to be punitive, but now they are focusing on restoration and rehabilitation. For RCS, this means that they want to put emphasis on correction rather than punishment. Now people do not come to prison to be punished, they come to prison to be corrected. Although being sentenced to serve prison time is a form of punishment, RCS sees prison sentences as rehabilitative, and they stress that prison time corrects inmates. This may seem controversial because they have said they turned away from retributive measures, but the rehabilitative processes and programs they have in place have emphasized the change from retribution to restoration and rehabilitation. RCS staff look at inmates not as criminals but rather as human beings. The treatment inmates receive assists in the success of prisons as facilities that correct. Yes, there are rehabilitative programs in place in prisons that play a part in correcting, but what also contributes to the success of prisons as correctional institutions in Rwanda is the humane treatment inmates are receiving from prison staff.

In the case of Rwanda, there are and were many people in prison for committing genocide crimes. Because such a large amount of society was imprisoned for partaking in genocide, there became a need for prisons to take on a rehabilitative role (See “Rehabilitation” section below for more details). Unlike many other countries, Rwanda has a need for rehabilitation. The reasoning behind this includes ridding Rwanda of genocide ideology and healing society’s psychological wounds, according to PFR. In prisons, rehabilitation *means* correction to RCS. If one is rehabilitated, they are corrected. This can be supported by RCS’s six percent recidivism rate of the general population and zero percent recidivism rate of genocide ex-prisoners.

PFR believes prisons are rehabilitative because Rwanda's case is different from other countries. Thousands of people were imprisoned from perpetrating genocide and everyone in Rwandan society was affected. Moreover, there was no way for Rwanda to not have rehabilitative prisons. If prisons in Rwanda did not have this rehabilitative role, it is possible that those who are or were released could avenge. PFR believes it is a must to rehabilitate as it fosters peace in the country now or in the future. Rwanda's government has been promoting unity and reconciliation along with other organizations that take on this mission, such as NURC who works with organizations that work directly with genocide ex-prisoners. Because many people who committed genocide were influenced by the former government of Rwanda to participate in genocide, their mindsets needed to be changed inside prisons. To reflect the new government and to get rid of genocide ideology, unity and reconciliation educational programming is provided in prisons and TIG. Not only is this reeducation programming available, but there is also formal and informal education, which includes vocational training. These skills are extremely important in the use of corrections because they give inmates skills they can use on the outside. Moreover, when they are released, they can use these skills to acquire a job and make money to be financially stable. Financial stability is lucrative in the reintegration process. Many genocide ex-prisoners face financial issues when they are released because while in prison, their family members had to make payments/reparations for the crime their family member committed. This also can lead to psychological issues, which RCS is trying to tackle. There are psychological resources in prisons, such as therapy and counseling. Inmates also do reconciliation training in prisons in which they are trained about life on the outside.

In Rwandan society, most common crimes are committed by people who have not had the opportunity to go to school. RCS believes the government has put everything in place for them to have that opportunity and that common crimes will be diminished because of education. RCS also provides education inside of prisons, such as literacy classes and vocational training. Especially in their Nyagatare prison, which is specifically for minors, inmates are able to continue their education and complete the national exam.

To explain how prisons correct, there is evidence that genocide ex-prisoners are being corrected and, therefore, rehabilitated. In prisons, many who committed genocide crimes

accept their responsibilities and confess to the crimes they committed. To help with this process, they are encouraged to write forgiveness letters to victims of genocide and meet with survivors. This helps in rehabilitation of the self and of society.

Although there are organizations that believe prisons are rehabilitative, there is still work to be done on the grassroots and district levels. This will, furthermore, assist the reintegration process of genocide ex-prisoners if the grassroots level of society – including victims, survivors, families, youth, etc. – plays a role.

#### *4.2.2 Rehabilitation*

##### **4.2.2.1 Are Genocide Ex-Prisoners Being Rehabilitated?**

According to several organizations, yes. The evidence that this is happening is occurring both in and outside prisons. For example, on the inside prisoners who committed genocide are writing forgiveness letters to their victims, and outside there are reconciliation villages where perpetrators and survivors live together side by side. These are only two examples, but below more can be found.

##### **Rehabilitation Programs**

In answering my first objective of examining the rehabilitation programs available to ex-prisoners/ex-tigists with regards to successful reintegration, interviews with RCS, organizations, and ex-prisoners/ex-tigists were held. In examining these programs, there are two categories: rehabilitation inside prison and rehabilitation outside of prison, specifically for genocide ex-prisoners. Some definitions of rehabilitation state that one is rehabilitated once out of prison; however, other definitions state that rehabilitation can indeed occur inside prison. Therefore, these two categories have been created.

##### **1. Programs Available in Prisons**

In the first category, rehabilitation inside prisons, there are several organizations that contribute to the rehabilitative programming available in prisons. Out of the organizations I was

able to meet with, RCS, PFR, Justice and Peace Commission of Catholic Archdiocese Kigali, and CBS provide in-prison programming revolving around rehabilitation. From speaking with RCS, ex-prisoners/ex-tigists, and other organizations, it is evident that RCS provides optional vocational training inside prisons in which inmates can acquire skills of construction, carpentry, basket weaving, sewing, tailoring, mechanics, and more. They also provide reeducation courses in prisons and TIG that address unity and reconciliation. These reeducation courses are extremely important in eliminating genocide ideology, which is one of the root motives of why many people initially ended up in prison. There is formal and informal education of vocational training, literacy classes, and spiritual programming.

Other organizations besides RCS also contribute to rehabilitation programming in prisons. PFR has many programs in prisons but the major ones include Project Ubumwe (Unity) and the Prison Outreach Program in which they encourage prisoners write letters of forgiveness, bring survivors to prisoners, preach the Gospel, and teach reconciliation. The Justice and Peace Commission and religious entities provide programming inside prisons to baptize, do charity work, teach about preaching, preach, teach Christianity, and promote writing letters to genocide survivors. Additionally, if families do not have food to bring to their members who are in prison, the Church will help them find food to bring. Groups also advocate to open cases so prisoners can go to court and help them get lawyers. CBS provides group sociotherapy sessions in the Muhanga Prison in which stages of therapy are discussed: safety, trust, care, respect, new life orientation, and memories. An important part of these sessions is forgiveness. CBS believes one must forgive to be truly reintegrated. This includes asking forgiveness from yourself and the family of survivors/victims.

## 2. Programs Available Outside of Prisons

In the second category, rehabilitation outside prisons, there are once again several organizations which contribute. Out of the organizations I was able to meet with, these include NAR, CBS, Justice and Peace Commission of Catholic Archdiocese Kigali, GER, and PFR.

NAR hosts psychosocial support groups, which include many different society members, including genocide ex-prisoners. In these support groups, there is safe space to freely talk about

difficult subjects, such as past traumatic experiences and emotions. This starts positive healing, promotes coexistence, and contributes to unity and reconciliation.

CBS also provides group sociotherapy sessions which consist of fifteen people and two sociotherapists. The sessions, or “healing journeys,” last for 15 weeks. In these sessions, there are different phases of therapy. The stages include safety, trust, care, respect, new life orientation, and memories. The first two stages are the hardest for individuals but once these stages have been passed, the following stages are easier. New life orientation teaches good decision making. The memories stage includes not forgetting where one comes from in order not to repeat the past.

Representatives from the Justice and Peace Commission mentioned activities the Church does outside of prisons, such as training and church services. This training is six months long in which genocide ex-prisoners are trained on how to be good people and how to change not only internally but also willingly. During the fifth month, survivors come in.

GER provides peacebuilding and reconciliation dialogues between community members including survivors and perpetrators of genocide. Because peacebuilding is two-sided (victims and perpetrators), GER finds it important to include all perspectives in these dialogues.

PFR’s rehabilitation programs outside of prison include the Reconciliation Program, which is not necessarily a program for genocide ex-prisoners but it affects them in a social way because it allows them to live next to their neighbors who are genocide survivors. PFR builds houses/villages for genocide ex-prisoners, survivors, and families to promote reconciliation.

This list is not exhaustive of all the organizations that do rehabilitative work for genocide ex-prisoners outside of prison. (See “Limitations” on page 12 for more details.) Organizations I was able to meet with include CBS, PFR, Justice and Peace Commission, NAR, RCS, and GER.

#### **4.2.2.2 Other Aspects That Contribute to Rehabilitation**

Rehabilitation is making one feel human again. Specifically, for genocide ex-prisoners in Rwanda to acquire this, there are critical pieces that must be in play. These include forgiveness, community effort, and good governance to name a few. In meeting with organizations that work directly with genocide ex-prisoners and in meeting with genocide ex-prisoners

themselves, it is evident that rehabilitation is taking place both inside and outside of prisons. However, there are aspects of rehabilitation that fall in the middle and occur both on the inside and on the outside. Forgiveness is imperative in rehabilitation. In the case of those who committed genocide crimes, forgiveness can be given during Gacaca, during prison time (through letters and meeting with survivors), and outside in society. Forgiveness is also two-sided – one must forgive oneself and forgive the person or persons they wronged. Additionally, there is community effort. Because the Genocide affected everyone in Rwandan society, rehabilitation of the community is necessary, and, furthermore, the entire community must be involved and reconciled. Good governance also plays a role because the current government has set good ground to educate, unify, and reconcile the Rwandan community. Many who were put in prison for genocide crimes were influenced by the government at the time, the Habyirimana regime. Now through Kagame's presidency, it has been necessary to unify and reconcile the community after such a detrimental time.

#### *4.2.3 Reintegration*

##### **4.2.3.1 What is Successful Reintegration?**

I asked most interviewees to define what successful reintegration means to them. Several answers were acquired, including the following:

- From genocide ex-prisoners
  - Forgiveness from both sides – survivors and perpetrators
  - Community sharing (food, activities, ideas, etc.)
  - No exclusion of community members
  - Government balancing the pain of victims
  - Mental preparation
  - Associations open to everyone (not specific to solely victims or solely perpetrators)
- From RCS
  - Starts with successful rehabilitation

- Emanates from rehabilitation programs in prisons
- Happy families
- Ask for repentance/reconciliation while in prison
- From organizations
  - Political will – not to get revenge
  - Forgiveness from both sides – survivors and perpetrators
  - Forgiveness of yourself
  - Community helping with reintegration
    - Society working together as a whole entity
  - Depends on goals one has set
  - Coming back to one's senses
  - Recognizing what one did
  - Repenting
  - Accepting that one has done wrong
  - Being able to go back to one's community
  - Coming to good terms with the person they have offended
- From religious leaders
  - Changing image from bad to good
  - Community effort

#### **4.2.3.2 Is Reintegration Successful?**

According to nine genocide ex-prisoners, the feelings of being successfully reintegrated into society are between 80 and 100 percent. This tells us that what Rwanda is doing (personally, communally, and nationally) to reconcile, rehabilitate, and reintegrate has been working.

However, this sample size is extremely small given that over 120,000 people were imprisoned for genocide related crimes, and I only interviewed nine individuals. Remarkably, this falls in line with the NURC's report on social reintegration of genocide ex-prisoners which states that 80.7 percent of genocide ex-prisoners felt they reintegrated successfully into society (NURC REPORT). Although my sample was extremely small compared to the NURC's report, which had 625 participants who were genocide ex-prisoners, we both attained similar results.

#### **4.2.3.3 Successes, Achievements, and Challenges**

The second objective of successes and challenges that genocide ex-prisoners have gone through can be found below.

##### **Successes/Achievements**

- From ex-prisoners
  - Forgiving victims
  - Asking for forgiveness
  - Confessing crime
  - Joining cooperatives and different organizations
  - Intermarriage
- From RCS
  - No genocide ex-prisoners have recidivated
  - Most families are happy
  - Reintegration programs in society are well-received
- From organizations
  - Reintegration is successful because people are living together.
  - Telling stories is healing.
  - There are good policies and programs set up by the government and at the grassroots level.
  - Psychosocial support groups
  - Cooperatives
  - Government programs
    - *Ubudehe*: program where they give money to districts or sectors (mainly sectors) where they sit together and decide what to do, i.e. project on giving water to population or buying goats
    - *Girinka*: give cows to anybody regardless of what they committed/if in prison or not
- From religious leaders

- Intermarriage
- Asking for forgiveness
  - Letter-writing
  - Verbal forgiveness
- Genocide ex-prisoners help the government and families by showing where victims were buried.
- Training from the church to be good people
  - Change internally and willingly
  - 6-month training (5<sup>th</sup> month, survivors come in)
- Church organizations are helping with reintegration
- Government's motto of unity and reconciliation
  - Bad government in the past told people to kill
  - Is Rwanda reconciled? Rwanda is said to be 97% reconciled but is this true? Furthermore, how is this measured?

### Challenges

- From ex-prisoners
  - Struggling for survival
  - Different life conditions
  - If imprisoned for more than six months:
    - Cannot vote
    - Cannot be a public servant
  - For those who did not confess and apologize, they do not feel welcomed in the society.
    - Even though they are outside, society does not know them and government does not recognize them as good Rwandese/nationals.
  - Some said they had no challenges.
    - They feel okay because the society knows that they personally recognized what they did and apologized.
  - Challenges are the consequences from what one has done.

- From RCS
  - Lack of job opportunities
  - Social stigma within the community
- From orgs
  - Accountability between ex-prisoners and community
  - Difficulty healing psychological wounds
  - Ex-prisoners educating youth
  - Conflict within families
    - Power dynamics within the home have been altered.
      - Some women become heads of households.
    - Family paying reparations for what their family member did while family member is imprisoned.
  - Discrimination in the community
  - Labelled as “killers” or “criminals”
  - Low understanding imbalance (educated on the outside but what about the inside?)
  - Trauma
  - Shame
  - Few spaces available to tell painful stories
  - Social cohesion (how well society gets along together)
  - Trust building
  - Fear
  - Guilt
  - Acceptance by society members
  - Living in close proximity with victims/survivors
  - Do not know how victims/survivors will receive them if they try to ask for forgiveness
  - Being seen as unhuman
  - Community preparation before perpetrators are released

- Psychological preparation of perpetrators
- Difficulty paying reparations
- Imbalance of support
  - Support for victims vs support for perpetrators
- From religious leaders
  - Psychological changes in prison
    - New cultures and behaviors in prison
    - “Changing into homosexuals” - Some believe one is born homosexual while many in religious Christian organizations believe that homosexuality is something one changes to during life possibly because of the media, surroundings, and, in this case, prison.
  - Perception of outer society
  - Finding forgiveness for yourself as the one who committed the genocide crime
  - Finding relationship with God

#### **4.2.3.4 Reforms/Recommendations**

To answer my third objective of reforms that need to be made to ensure successful reintegration, I asked the question “What reforms need to be seen regarding the prison, rehabilitation, and reintegration system in Rwanda to ensure successful reintegration?” Unfortunately, with the way my question was worded, reforms that need to be made at the prison level, at the rehabilitation level, and at the reintegration level were all grouped into one. Therefore, there was no specific way to differentiate between the three levels.

Some suggestions of reforms and recommendations that need to be made regarding the prison/rehabilitation/reintegration process of genocide ex-prisoners and making it more successful is to continue economical activities that build trust i.e. cooperatives and to have more free spaces to have dialogue to tell difficult stories. GER stated that this dialogue needs to involve different stakeholders and people to support reintegration. Furthermore, some believe reintegration firstly needs to be a concern to society before reintegration can even be successful because reintegration is two-sided. And, as a whole, it is a societal issue, not just the

genocide ex-prisoner his or herself. It was also stated by the Justice and Peace Commission that more prisons should be built to rid Rwandan prisons of overcrowding. It was also recommended that there should also be an assessment to check if human rights are being violated in prisons. RCS mentioned that their process of rehabilitation and reintegration only starts and ends at the gate. Because of this, it implies that it is the duty of other organizations to continue the rehabilitation and reintegration process once genocide ex-prisoners have been released.

Some genocide ex-prisoners suggested that the broader Rwandan community needs to know the importance of successful reintegration of genocide ex-prisoners. Some reforms they mentioned were to come into sectors and teach ex-genocide prisoners, train/coach/talk to them, create some projects that put people together to make the projects successful and to help everyone grow. This will make everyone work together and share ideas on how to achieve a better life. Societal sharing can help foster equality within society as it lets people contribute their ideas in a respectful way.

#### 4.3 Conclusion

My research focused on the success or lack thereof of rehabilitation in Rwandan prisons according to genocide ex-prisoners, authority figures in prisons, religious leaders, and leaders of organizations. I examined to what extent genocide ex-prisoners have successfully reintegrated back into society. Included in this is reeducation of TIG convicts to assess how successful this type of alternative sentence to prison is in rehabilitating prisoners who have perpetrated genocide and assisting them with successful reintegration back into their communities.

Prisons in Rwanda have taken on a rehabilitative role, which RCS believes to explain its change in name to include the word “correctional.” The data I received has helped me come to the following conclusions. Right now it seems as though the challenges outweigh the successes of genocide ex-prisoners. Therefore, this means that reconciliation still needs to be worked on. Furthermore, genocide ex-prisoners I spoke to feel between 80 to 100 percent successful in their reintegration back into the community while a little over 80 percent of the 625 genocide ex-prisoners that NURC spoke with feel successfully reintegrated. This speaks volumes and tells

us that the systems Rwanda currently has in place for reintegration of genocide ex-prisoners is working and doing its job. Additionally, with a zero percent recidivism rate of genocide ex-prisoners, it is evident that Rwandan society has done its job to reeducate, unify, and reconcile its genocide ex-prisoners so they do not go back to a lifestyle of crime.

One thing that a couple organizations I spoke to talked about is the labelling of genocide ex-prisoners as “killers” or “criminals.” This can be detrimental to one’s recovery process because it can be internalized. This can be backed by the labelling theory, which states that if you are called a deviant, you will engage in deviant behavior. RCS has turned this around by not calling those who inhabit prisons criminals. Instead, they are treated as humans and treated with respect. However, there is still an issue when genocide ex-prisoners are released into society in which they face these labels. In prisons, they were taught how to combat this labelling in their education and unity and reconciliation courses. In my interviews with genocide ex-prisoners, one participant stated that although genocide ex-prisoners cannot vote or be public servants if they have served for more than six months, this does not matter if there is security and if they are able to be together with others. This suggests that the hospitality of the broader community is particularly important in the rehabilitation and reintegration process. Likewise, being labelled as a member of society rather than a criminal contributes to this as well.

To answer some initial questions I had when doing this research (Do prisons in Rwanda correct? Do genocide ex-prisoners feel as though they have been rehabilitated and have successfully reintegrated into society?), I have come up with the answers after doing this research – yes. With an extremely low recidivism rate of zero percent for genocide ex-prisoners and around six percent for the general population, it is evident that the correctional role Rwandan prisons contain is assisting in keeping people who have previously been in prison out of prison. My findings have taught me that although Rwandan society has taken huge strides in rehabilitating and reintegrating its genocide ex-prisoners, there is still work that needs to be done. One day, let us hope that the successes will outweigh the challenges and society will be even more reconciled.

#### 4.4 Recommendations for Further Research

If this research were to be continued, I recommend allotting more time to complete the research as one month is a short amount. I also recommend elaborating on the implementation of the reforms being done inside and outside prisons to ensure successful rehabilitation and reintegration of genocide ex-prisoners. Another recommendation is to examine community's perception of the role of prisons in genocide ex-prisoners' rehabilitation and reintegration process. Included in this is examining community's perception of genocide ex-prisoners in their communities – are they contributing? Do they feel welcome? Is the community showing forgiveness and acceptance to the genocide ex-prisoner and vice versa? This is something that could be observed in communities. Furthermore, it would be important to interview tigists themselves and those who train tigists. Additionally, it would be important to speak with local community leaders at the sector level because they have a better idea of what is going on in the communities that they lead. Has there been any initiative to start formal reintegration mechanisms at family and community levels? Another recommendation is to evaluate success of programming both inside and outside of prisons in terms of rehabilitation and reintegration.

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## Appendices

### Interview Questions

#### Genocide Ex-Prisoners/Ex-Tigists

1. What programs were available to you in prison regarding rehabilitation? What do these programs look like? i.e. mental health services, educational programming, vocational training, etc.
2. What programs have been available to you outside of prison regarding rehabilitation? What do these programs look like?
3. How have these programs helped you in the future/right now?
4. When were you released from prison?
5. Do you feel as though you reintegrated into society? What helped you reintegrate? i.e. family, community members, community activities, freedom, etc.
6. What did it feel like when you were released from prison / TIG?
7. On a scale of 1-10 (with 1 being the least and 10 being the most), how successful do you feel about your integration into the community after incarceration?
8. Have you participated in rehabilitative / reentry services outside of prison? i.e. vocational training, education, health services, etc.
9. Do you ever have the urge to reoffend? Why or why not?
10. Another way to phrase #9 as it may not be appropriate: How do you feel about the sentence you served? Was it helpful in your recovery? If yes, how?
11. How would you define successful reintegration into society?
12. What are some challenges that you or other genocide ex-prisoners you know of currently face today regarding reintegration?
13. Are prisons in Rwanda rehabilitative? Why or why not?
14. Do you think RCS and other institutions assist with rehabilitating and reintegrating prisoners/ex-prisoners of genocide?
15. What recommendations do you have for RCS or other institutions to assist with successful reintegration?

16. Do you feel as though TIG helped you with successful reintegration into society once you are released?
17. Which organizations have contributed to successful reintegration? Ex. NGOs, governmental institutions, etc.
18. What do you think has been the most helpful in your reintegration back into the community? Ex. Family, NGOs, talking with victims/survivors, etc.
19. What kind of educational programming contributed to successful reintegration?
20. Do you have any recommendations of who I should interview for this research?

### RCS Staff

1. What role does RCS play in correcting those who are incarcerated?
2. Do you think prisons correct?
3. On a more narrow scale, do you believe prisons in Rwanda to correct?
4. When did RCS change its name? What did it used to be called? Why was the name changed?
5. What programs are available to prisoners regarding rehabilitation?
6. How many perpetrators of genocide have been released from prison?
7. What is the recidivism rate (rate of reoffending) in Rwanda?
8. Are there any reentry organizations in Rwanda that you know of? i.e. organizations revolving around vocational training, education, health services, etc. for formerly incarcerated individuals
9. When TIG camps are closed in 2021, do you know of any similar alternatives to sentencing that will be put in its place?
10. How would you define successful reintegration into society?
11. What are some challenges that genocide ex-prisoners are currently face today regarding reintegration?
12. Are prisons in Rwanda rehabilitative? Why or why not?
13. What kind of vocational skills can be gained in prisons?
14. How common is vocational training in prison?

15. Do you know of post-release programs for genocide ex-prisoners in Rwanda? If so, what do they look like?
16. The NURC's report on social reintegration of ex-genocide prisoners in 2015 states that vocational training is the most important in successful reintegration according to their qualitative data. Do you agree or disagree with this?
17. What reforms need to be seen regarding the prison, rehabilitation, and reintegration system in Rwanda to ensure successful reintegration?
18. Do you have any recommendations of who I should interview for this research?

RCS Partner Institutions / Faith Organizations / Other Institutions or Organizations

1. Do you offer rehabilitation or peacebuilding programming in prisons? If so, what do they look like?
2. What rehabilitative programs do you know of that are offered in prisons?
3. On a scale of 1-10 (with 1 being the least and 10 being the most), how successful do you feel these programs are in assisting prisoners with everyday life and eventually their release?
4. Is there evidence that genocide ex-prisoners in Rwanda are being rehabilitated?
5. Do you know of post-release programs or reentry organizations for genocide ex-prisoners in Rwanda? i.e. organizations revolving around vocational training, education, health services, etc. for formerly incarcerated individuals If so, what do they look like?
6. How would you define successful reintegration into society? List at least three ways.
7. What are some challenges that genocide ex-prisoners are currently face today regarding reintegration?
8. Are prisons in Rwanda rehabilitative? Why or why not?
9. What kind of vocational skills can be gained in prisons?
10. Report done by NURC says vocational training is most important in successful reintegration. Do you agree or disagree?
11. Another way of stating 10: What do you believe to be the most important thing in ensuring successful reintegration?

12. What reforms need to be seen regarding the prison, rehabilitation, and reintegration system in Rwanda to ensure successful reintegration?
13. Do you have any recommendations of who I should interview for this research?