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*Association des
Etudiants et Elèves Rescapés
du Génocide*



Imbere Heza - Towards a Better Future

About AERG

Association des Etudiants et Elèves Rescapés du Génocide (AERG) was created on 20th October 1996 by twelve students of the National University of Rwanda.

It is an association made up of student survivors of the Rwandan genocide against the Tutsi. It is an organisation run by students, for students.

The main aim of AERG is to identify the problems faced by student survivors, and to try to find solutions for these problems. These problems include homelessness, lack of parental care, poverty, psychological trauma and unemployment.

AERG aims to act as an artificial family for student survivors who have suffered so much. Over the years, AERG has worked to provide shelter, support, education and to advocate for our members.

Dancing Troops



Inyambwa Culture Troop Performance

AERG runs dancing troops throughout its branches. The three most significant troops are located at the National University, Kigali Institute of Education, Umutara Polytechnique University. These are groups made up of AERG members who perform traditional Rwandan dance once a week at different events, such as weddings and ceremonies.

These performances not only help to raise money for the AERG sections, but also help the students to overcome their trauma together through dance and social gatherings.

One Dollar Campaign

In 2006 AERG initiated a project to construct a complex that could accommodate orphans with no-where to stay during the holidays.

The aim is to construct a complex made up of three hostel blocks, a dining hall, a multipurpose hall, a commercial building and sporting facilities. This complex will be located on 1.5 hectares of land in Kagugu cell, Kinyinya sector, Gasabo District, in the city of Kigali. It is hoped that this complex will provide a warm family atmosphere for 600 students.

In 2009 AERG launched the ONE DOLLAR CAMPAIGN. This campaign aims to collect enough money to construct this complex. The first phase of construction has begun, which will see the construction of the first hostel block and the dining hall. It is hoped that by December 2011 this first phase will be complete.



The main objectives of AERG are:

- To represent all student survivors of the Tutsi genocide
- To identify the academic and socio-economic problems faced by student survivors
- To encourage members to exchange material and moral support
- To fight against the ideology of genocide so that it may never happen again.
- To document the experiences of our members during the genocide
- To organize and participate in commemoration events

AERG has branches in 26 universities and 400 secondary schools. The membership of AERG numbers over 45,000.

“ AERG allows us to overcome our bad past
& take responsibility for helping each other ”



EDUCATION into EMPLOYMENT

The Education into employment (EIE) programme has been developed to help AERG members break into the job market. Many young people struggle to gain employment after graduation, as success in the job market is not just about academic qualifications, but also about knowing how to approach the world of work.

EIE has been developed based on the needs of members, as identified by them. EIE allows young people to gain confidence and to develop a vision.

The four main elements of EIE are:

- Mentoring Scheme*
- Student Magazine*
- English Club/Classes*
- IT Programme*



The first phase of this project, which has been completed, was to fence the farm and clear the land.

The next phase, which is currently in the development stage, is to raise 400 pure Boer goats on the land. It is expected that this project will become profitable after three years.

Our plans for the future of the farm include cultivating crops, raising beef cattle and pigs, and finally constructing a vocational training school.

It is hoped that this land will allow AERG to support itself financially, as well as provide opportunities to our members to develop agricultural skills.

In 2009, a 130-hectare piece of land was donated to AERG. In collaboration with the National Youth Council, Fond d'Assistance pour les Rescapés du Génocide (FARG) and the Survivors Fund (SURF), AERG is designing activities which will be undertaken on this land in order to generate sustainable income. This will help to assure AERG's financial viability.

This land is located in Nyagatare district in the Karangazi sector of Rwanda's Eastern Province.

Land Project



It is hoped that in the future EIE will be able to support entrepreneurs, and as such, support the job creators as well as the job seekers.

How can you help?

- *Become a mentor! You don't need any past experience in mentoring, just a university degree, at least three years professional experience and ability to communicate well in English*
- *Partner with us!*
- *Donate! Please see the back of this brochure.*

For more information please contact:

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AERG has set up 'artificial families' in secondary schools, universities and higher learning institutions. These families are made up of 10-20 students who lost relatives during the Rwandan genocide. These groups become pseudo-families for these students. The families choose a mother and a father who lead the group, and the rest of the members become 'children' of the family.

The families meet once a week, and during these meetings they discuss life, share problems and celebrate in each other's achievements and happiness. The families also organise activities together, and support each other's academic studies.

Within the artificial families, it is the role of the mother and father to ensure the wellbeing of their children. They make themselves available to the children to talk to at any time of the day or night, and try to support them through any problems that they might be facing. If they are unable to help with these problems they inform the section, who will then ensure that appropriate care is provided.



These artificial families are a strong solution to fighting the psychological consequences of the genocide.

By ensuring that students have a strong network of peers to turn to, AERG is offering hope to these students for the future.

Artificial Families

"I really feel that these are my brothers and sisters. We can tell each other anything and everything. I feel very comfortable with them. This is such a good feeling after many years of not having this support. We are orphans, but in my artificial family I truly feel like I have a father, mother and siblings again"

--Edward from the Urumuli Family AERG KIE

