



*Supporting Survivors of the Genocide against the Tutsi in Rwanda*

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**SURVIVORS FUND (SURF)  
STRATEGIC PLAN  
2024 - 2028**

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## Executive Summary

Survivors Fund (SURF) enables survivors of the genocide against the Tutsi and related vulnerable persons to access programmes of rehabilitation that empowers them to thrive and in so doing fosters their sustainable integration and development in Rwanda.

Survivors of the Genocide against the Tutsi in Rwanda continue to face innumerable challenges:

- **Trauma** as a consequence of the genocide and which negatively impacts mental health
- **Ill-health** particularly resulting from injuries sustained during the genocide
- **Poverty** particularly resulting from property destroyed and land taken in the genocide
- **Shelter** and lack of appropriate affordable, safe housing resulting from the genocide
- **Injustice**, particularly resulting from the lack of support enabling survivors to enforce their rights
- **Unemployment** which is acute among survivors and second-generation survivors
- **Insecurity** resulting from the continuing threat to the survivors, particularly from genocide denial
- **Aging** which particularly impacts widows and exacerbates all the above challenges
- **Indifference** to the situation and continuing needs of survivors over time

The work of Survivors Fund (SURF) addresses these challenges, through supporting genocide survivors, and related vulnerable persons, in Rwanda. We work with three principal partners:

[AVEGA Agahozo](#) - National Association of Widows of the Genocide

[AERG](#) - National Student's Association of Genocide Survivors

[GAERG](#) - National Survivor's Association of Graduate Students

This Strategic Plan is informed by these partners, and the survivors that they represent. It sets out a demanding but exciting agenda of support to our partners. It will deliver greater impact for those we are seeking to help. By balancing our programmes, advocacy work and capacity building with our fundraising, monitoring and evaluation we will increase our reach and build greater support for our work. The Strategic Plan will be continuously monitored to inform the future direction and development of Survivors Fund (SURF).

Our key themes and targets for 2024 - 2028 will be:

### Direct support for rehabilitation

- Secure sustainable livelihoods for survivors and related vulnerable persons through a focus on income generating activities, entrepreneurship and employment.
- Improve the well-being and resilience of survivors and related vulnerable groups through a focus on mental health provision, physical health information and commemoration.
- Reduce the vulnerability of survivors and related vulnerable persons through a focus on decent housing, food security, renewable energy sources and elderly care.

### Organisational support for regeneration

- Empower survivor organisations in Rwanda to advocate for justice and security for survivors and related vulnerable persons.
- Enable survivor organisations in Rwanda to be more sustainable over the long-term.

## 1. Introduction

### 1.1 Our Vision

A world where survivors are respected, integrated and empowered to thrive.

### 1.2 Our Mission

Survivors Fund (SURF) enables survivors of the genocide against the Tutsi and related vulnerable persons to access programmes of rehabilitation that empowers them to thrive and in so doing fosters their sustainable integration and development in Rwanda.

### 1.3 Our Guiding Principles

- SURF's commitment to survivors & related vulnerable persons is long term.
- SURF is independent in its response to the priorities of survivors & related vulnerable persons.
- SURF builds the capacity of survivor organisations as strong actors in Rwandan civil society.
- SURF supports sustainable activities that are integrated into mainstream planning.

### 1.4. Our Key Themes and Targets

#### Direct support for rehabilitation

- Secure sustainable livelihoods for survivors & related vulnerable persons.
- Improve the well-being and resilience of survivors & related vulnerable groups.
- Reduce the vulnerability of survivors & related vulnerable persons.

#### Organisational support for regeneration

- Empower survivor organisations to advocate for justice and security
- Enable survivor organisations to be more sustainable over the long term.

## 2. Organisational structure

SURF was founded by a group of survivors of the genocide and other Rwandans based in the UK (who lost their families and friends during this tragic event) and concerned British individuals. Although support to survivors of the genocide against the Tutsi dates back to 1995, SURF was formally established and registered in 1997 to advance education, relieve poverty and any physical, mental or emotional illness, disorder or disability among the survivors.

SURF provides support for a wide range of services to the survivors of the genocide against the Tutsi in Rwanda. Funded principally by institutional donors (foundations, trusts and development agencies) with additional income from a small core of individuals, SURF acts as a channel to assist local partner organisations in Rwanda working with survivors of the genocide against the Tutsi, and those related to them (principally second-generation survivors). It aims to most effectively deliver

hope, safety, and a decent standard of living for survivors through programmes led by local partner organisations. SURF also provides technical support and capacity building to them and supports advocacy to raise awareness and enforce the rights of survivors.

Survivors Fund (SURF) is a charitable company, registered in England and Wales with both the Charity Commission (1065705) and Companies House (04311565). This structure, which is used by many charities, allows us to have all the advantages of charitable status, and simultaneously to limit the trustees' liability through the company's 'limited' status. As such, Survivors Fund (SURF) has no share capital and therefore cannot be owned by anyone.

The charity is governed by its Memorandum and Articles of Association, dated 30 July 1997. SURF is headed by a Board of Trustees. For company-law purposes, the trustees are also the directors of Survivors Fund (SURF) Ltd. Day-to-day management of the organisation is led by the Chief Executive in Rwanda, with support from the UK Coordinator.

## **2.1. The SURF Strategic Plan**

This Strategic Plan accounts for the emerging changes affecting survivors of the genocide against the Tutsi in Rwanda, and the changing environment in which SURF works. The Plan builds on work carried out under the 2021-2023 Strategic Plan and sets out the aims, targets and actions for SURF and its partner's work; and forms the basis for our operational priorities. It explains how SURF intends to assist partners to achieve their own plans and priorities.

The Strategic Plan forms the basis of our implementation plan that describes how each area of work is being put into practice over the five-year period. The implementation plan will be monitored and evaluated during this period and be used as the basis for supervision and support to those responsible for carrying out operational tasks and inform the ongoing direction and development of SURF.

## **3. Factors affecting & influencing SURF's work**

SURF's work is principally affected by the context within which survivors are living in Rwanda, which in turn is influenced by financial, political, social and environmental factors. Since its establishment, SURF has always strived to align its work with that of the Government of Rwanda as well as the obligations of the State as set out in the Rwanda Constitution - and specifically Article 50 on the "Welfare of needy survivors of the genocide against Tutsi" which states that "The State, within the limits of its means and in accordance with the law, has the duty to undertake special actions aimed at the welfare of the needy survivors of the genocide against Tutsi."

### 3.1 Challenges resulting from genocide

Survivors of the genocide in Rwanda continue to face innumerable challenges today, including:

- **Trauma** as a consequence of the genocide and which negatively impacts mental health.
- **Ill-health** particularly resulting from injuries sustained during the genocide.
- **Poverty** particularly resulting from property destroyed and land taken in the genocide.
- **Shelter** and lack of appropriate affordable, safe housing resulting from the genocide.
- **Injustice**, particularly resulting from the lack of support enabling survivors to enforce their rights.
- **Unemployment** which is acute among survivors and second-generation survivors.
- **Insecurity** resulting from the continuing threat to the survivors, particularly from genocide denial.
- **Aging** which particularly impacts widows and exacerbates all the above challenges.
- **Indifference** to the situation and continuing needs of survivors over time.

### 3.2 Country overview

Small and landlocked, Rwanda is hilly and fertile with a population above 13 million people (2023) and annual population growth of 2.5%. It borders the far larger and richer Democratic Republic of Congo, and East African neighbours, Tanzania, Uganda, and Burundi.

In the lead up to its independence in 1962 through to the genocide against the Tutsi in 1994 there was systematic persecution and violence against the Tutsi (around 15% of the population) by the Hutu majority, which culminated in the killing of an estimated 1 million Tutsi between April and July 1994.

Subsequent to the genocide, under the leadership of President Paul Kagame, the country has undergone a radical transformation from a poor, unstable, post-conflict country into a thriving and stable one. This has included a unifying of the people under one common Rwandese identity.

But Rwanda's progress will stall without transformative changes that: create wealth and investment and invigorate the private sector, improve basic services, increase the accountability of the state to its people, and address potential causes of conflict and fragility, including regional instability.

However, Rwanda continues to make remarkable progress since 1994. Rwanda has moved up the Human Development Index (HDI) of Countries and as of the 2022 Report now ranks 165 out of 191 countries (Between Nigeria and Uganda). Poverty fell dramatically over this time and Rwanda's Gross National Income per capita has increased from \$796 in 2000 to \$1,959 in 2018. Growth has been pro-poor and inequality has reduced. Despite this, huge challenges remain. Despite poverty declining from 77% in 2001, it is still at around 49% in 2021. Inequality is reducing, but it is still high and it is constraining sustainable growth and poverty reduction.

Rwanda has guarded its political stability since the 1994 genocide against the Tutsi. Parliamentary elections in September 2018 saw women fill 61% of seats, the Rwandan Patriotic Front maintain an absolute majority, and two opposition parties, the Democratic Green Party of Rwanda and Social

Party, Imberakuri, win two seats each. President Paul Kagame was re-elected for a seven-year term in August 2018, after an amendment to the constitution allowed him to run for a third term.

Strong economic growth was accompanied by substantial improvements in living standards. Rwanda was one of two countries in Sub-Saharan Africa that achieved all the health Millennium Development Goals (MDGs): Under-five mortality declined sharply between 2000 and 2020 and the maternal mortality ratio also dropped, as did the total fertility rate (from an increase in access to modern contraception). A strong focus on homegrown policies and initiatives has contributed to significant improvement in access to services and human development indicators. Life expectancy at birth improved from 49 in 2000 to 70 in 2022.

*Implication for survivors and related vulnerable groups: Poverty rates particularly amongst the rural population of survivors remains high, especially in the Southern Province of Rwanda where the greatest proportion of survivors reside and poverty rates are highest. With many survivors living in rural areas many have not benefited as much from economic growth as those living in urban areas. Many are still entirely reliant on agriculture for subsistence and livelihoods and thus are vulnerable to climate change.*

### 3.3 Economy

The Rwandan economy has manifested impressive resilience and growth, propelled primarily by astute governmental policies and initiatives geared towards industrialization and infrastructural development. Since the 2000s, there has been a notable economic augmentation, significantly ameliorating the living standards of a broad segment of the population. The government, under President Paul Kagame, has articulated and pursued a vision of transforming Rwanda into the "Singapore of Africa," leveraging strategic policies and initiatives to drive economic development.

Agriculture remains a significant pillar of the Rwandan economy, contributing substantially to export earnings, despite the strides made in diversification and industrialization. In addition to agricultural output, tourism, minerals, coffee, and tea are pivotal contributors to Rwanda's foreign exchange. Even with its fecund ecosystems, meeting the food demand of the population poses a challenge, thus necessitating food imports.

Economic challenges, such as energy shortages and inadequate transportation linkages, linger, albeit amidst a backdrop of substantial economic recovery and growth since the devastating genocide of 1994. Post-genocide, the country has made remarkable progress, surpassing pre-1994 economic levels and achieving commendable strides in poverty reduction, women empowerment, and attracting investment.

The Rwandan government has adopted policies aimed at furthering social and economic development, notably through improvement in sectors like education and infrastructure, while also fostering an environment conducive to both domestic and foreign investment. The nation has garnered positive recognition for its business-friendly policies and transparency.

Rwanda's development vision is articulated through aspirations to attain Middle Income Country (MIC) status by 2035 and High-Income Country (HIC) status by 2050. The roadmap towards these ambitions includes the National Strategies for Transformation (NST1), following the Economic Development and Poverty Reduction Strategies – EDPRS (2008-12) and EDPRS-2 (2013-18), which underpinned economic and social advancements, including an average growth of 7.5% over the decade to 2018, per capita GDP growth of 5% annually.

The economy showed resilience despite a challenging economic environment in 2022. After a strong rebound in 2021 from the COVID-19 induced-contraction in the preceding year, the economy faced multiple challenges in 2022 – pandemic scars, headwinds from the war in Ukraine, climate-related shocks, and mounting inflationary pressures. Despite these challenges, real GDP grew by 8.2% in 2022.

*Implication for survivors and related vulnerable groups: The issue of youth unemployment is particularly acute for survivors (and second-generation survivors) due to the lack of contacts and collateral that they can access. Despite many survivors having had the opportunity to complete their secondary education through support from FARG, many do not have the skills to secure employment. Despite the focus on transitioning Rwanda from an agriculture-based to a knowledge-based economy, many of this group - as well as older widows - remain excluded from the job market and continue to rely on agriculture for their livelihoods.*

### **3.4 Civil and political rights**

In Rwanda, civil and political rights have experienced a multifaceted evolution, particularly in the context of the nation's recovery and reconstruction following the 1994 genocide. The government, under the leadership of President Paul Kagame and his party, the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF), has been recognized for successfully restoring stability, fostering economic development, and promoting gender equality, especially in political representation. The Rwandan Parliament, for instance, boasts one of the world's highest percentages of women representatives. However, criticisms regarding the status of civil and political rights in the country have persisted. Various international human rights organizations and some foreign governments have expressed concerns over restricted political space, suppression of dissent, and limitations on freedom of expression and assembly.

The Rwandan government often posits that strict governance and particular limitations on civil and political freedoms are requisite to maintaining the national stability and ethnic harmony that have underpinned its post-genocide recovery and development trajectory. There are stringent laws regarding what is considered divisive speech or actions, particularly those that might inflame ethnic tensions. Detractors, however, argue that these measures sometimes serve to stifle legitimate opposition, critique, and debate. Reports of harassment, arrest, or detainment of opposition figures, journalists, and human rights activists have intermittently emerged, reflecting ongoing tensions and challenges related to reconciling the imperatives of maintaining stability and ensuring a broad array of civil and political rights.



*Implication for survivors and related vulnerable groups: Local survivors organisations in Rwanda have historically had little success with advocacy, with a few notable exceptions (such as AVEGA's role in securing a new GBV Law in 2008). This challenge is exacerbated by the marginalisation of survivor's issues through the recent emphasis on the Government on vulnerable persons, amongst which survivors are just one of a number. Instead, there has been a particular focus on people with disabilities which over time are being targeted for more dedicated support.*

### **3.5 Education**

The education system in Rwanda has witnessed considerable transformation, especially following the devastating genocide in 1994. Efforts from the Rwandan government, coupled with international assistance, have sought to revitalize and restructure the education sector, aiming to enhance access, equality, and quality of education for all citizens. The Rwandan education system adheres to a structure that comprises pre-primary, primary, secondary, and tertiary education levels, along with vocational and technical training opportunities.

Pre-primary education in Rwanda caters to persons from four to six years, providing foundational learning experiences. Just 18 per cent of persons in Rwanda are enrolled in pre-primary education. There are too few pre-primary facilities, insufficient government budgeting for pre-primary education, and inadequately trained pre-primary educators.

Primary Education spans six years (P1 to P6) and typically accommodates persons from ages 7 to 12. The Rwandan government has placed a particular emphasis on ensuring universal access to primary education, with various strategies, including the introduction of the 12-Year Basic Education (12YBE) policy, to bolster enrolment and retention. In sub-Saharan Africa, Rwanda is one of the top-performing countries in education. 98 per cent of persons are enrolled in primary school, but only 71 per cent of persons complete their primary education. Classrooms are often too crowded, with an average of 62 students for every qualified teacher.

Secondary Education also falls under the ambit of the 12YBE policy, extending for six years and is divided into two cycles: lower secondary (Senior 1 to Senior 3) and upper secondary (Senior 4 to Senior 6). Various streams, such as sciences, arts, and vocational training, are offered, facilitating diverse pathways for learners based on their interests and capabilities.

Higher Education in Rwanda has seen significant expansion and diversification over the past decades. Institutions, both public and private, offer undergraduate, postgraduate, and doctoral programs across a myriad of disciplines. Furthermore, the establishment of institutions like the University of Rwanda, along with various private universities and colleges, has broadened opportunities for tertiary education within the country.

Vocational and Technical Education and Training (TVET) is prioritized within Rwanda as a means to equip individuals with practical skills and knowledge pertinent to the labor market. Various centers and institutions offer programs across levels, ranging from short courses to diploma and degree qualifications, in fields like agriculture, tourism, construction, and information technology.

Although there are relatively equal numbers of boys and girls in classrooms, girls are more likely to drop out of school. Boys also outperform girls in 26 of Rwanda's 30 districts. Girls are also significantly under-enrolled in technical, vocational and tertiary education.

Despite the strides made in enhancing education in Rwanda, challenges like resource constraints, disparities in access, and quality of education between urban and rural areas, and ensuring that education effectively translates into employability and socio-economic mobility persist. Nevertheless, with various policies, such as the Education Sector Strategic Plan, Rwanda continues to navigate toward ameliorating these challenges and fortifying its education system.

*Implication for survivors and related vulnerable groups: Survivors have benefited from access to schooling since the establishment of FARG in 1998. However, FARG has now been dissolved and second-generation survivors (in particular persons born to women survivors raped during the genocide) are not supported, despite requiring additional support to secure the same educational opportunities afforded to survivors. There is a particular need for more vocational training to enable school graduates to transition into employment.*

### 3.6 Health

The health sector in Rwanda has undergone significant transformation, particularly in the aftermath of the 1994 genocide. The country's health infrastructure and system were severely ravaged during the conflict, necessitating comprehensive rehabilitation and restructuring. The Rwandan government, with support from various international organizations and partners, has invested in rebuilding and fortifying the health sector, aiming to enhance accessibility, quality, and sustainability of healthcare services.

The healthcare system in Rwanda is organized across different levels, encompassing community, primary, secondary, and tertiary care. At the grassroots, community health workers (CHWs) play a pivotal role in providing basic health services, conducting health education, and facilitating access to higher levels of care. Health centers, district hospitals, and referral hospitals form the successive tiers of the system, each offering escalating levels of specialized care.

A notable feature of Rwanda's health system is its commitment to universal health coverage. The community-based health insurance scheme, commonly known as "Mutuelles de Santé," has been instrumental in amplifying access to healthcare services across the population. This scheme, alongside other insurance options, has significantly augmented healthcare utilization and attenuated financial barriers to access.

Since 2011 premiums have varied on a sliding scale according to wealth, with the poorest citizens entitled to free health insurance (through a Rwf 2,000 subsidy paid by government) and the wealthiest paying premiums of Rwf 7,000 per adult. As of 2019, around 90% of the population is covered by the scheme.

Over the past decades, Rwanda has registered notable improvements in various health indicators, such as reducing child mortality, enhancing maternal health, and mitigating the impact of communicable diseases like HIV/AIDS, malaria, and tuberculosis. Various national programs, supported by international partnerships, have targeted these health domains, implementing strategies to reduce incidence and enhance management.

Annual incidence of HIV among adults (defined as those aged 15-64 years) in Rwanda was 0.08%. This corresponds to approximately 5,400 new cases of HIV annually among adults in Rwanda. Prevalence of HIV among adults in Rwanda was 3.0%. Young women ages 15 to 24 are twice as likely to be infected with HIV as young men in the same age group. While stigma continues to be a problem for people living with HIV/AIDS, the situation is slowly improving due to good information sharing at all levels about HIV/AIDS.

Strengthening the health workforce has been a crucial component of Rwanda's health system development. Investments in education and training for various health professionals, alongside initiatives to enhance retention and optimize distribution, have been pivotal. Rwanda has also engaged in partnerships, such as the Human Resources for Health Program, aimed at bolstering the capacity of its health workforce.

Despite the significant advancements, challenges persist in Rwanda's health sector, such as ensuring equitable access to quality services across all regions, addressing non-communicable diseases, and sustaining healthcare financing. The government continues to navigate these challenges, exploring innovative approaches and partnerships to enhance the health system's resilience and responsiveness.

*Implication for survivors and related vulnerable groups: Access to healthcare for survivors has improved on a par with the rest of the wider population, in particular helped by several clinics run by SURF's local partner organisations to provide general community healthcare. However, there are still issues related to poorer survivors having difficulty to afford Mutuelles de Santé as well as the health challenges that many older survivors face today.*

### **3.7 Social Protection**

Rwanda has instituted a robust framework for social protection, spearheaded by strategic policies and programs that aim to assuage poverty and vulnerability across the populace. The Rwandan government has prioritized social protection as a pivotal component for sustainable development and poverty reduction. The National Social Protection Policy and the National Social Protection Strategy serve as overarching guides, delineating the principles, targets, and mechanisms for enhancing social welfare.

FARG, Fonds d'Appui aux Rescapés du Génocide (Genocide Survivors Support and Assistance Fund), was a parastatal organisation set up in 1998 to provide vulnerable genocide survivors with support in of education, health, shelter, social assistance and income generation. Since 2005 with the adoption of the National Social Protection Strategy, many of the areas of support previously delivered by FARG were channelled through other agencies. In 2021 FARG was formally dissolved, and fused into the Ministry of National Unity and Civic Engagement (MINIBUMWE).

The social protection system in Rwanda encompasses varied components, including social assistance, social insurance, and labour market interventions. Social assistance is predominantly targeted towards the most vulnerable and indigent segments of the population, including but not limited (like FARG) to vulnerable genocide survivors, providing support through various mechanisms, such as direct financial transfers, public works programs, and nutritional assistance.

Ubudehe, an indigenous practice embedded in Rwandan culture that translates to “community works for the community,” has been institutionalized to categorize households based on their socio-economic status, subsequently guiding the targeting of social support interventions. The Vision 2020 Umurenge Programme (VUP), is one of Rwanda's main social protection initiatives, aiming to enhance economic capacities of the impoverished, mainly through public works, direct support, and financial services, strategically directed towards the most destitute as identified through the Ubudehe categorization.

Rwanda's social insurance sphere encompasses schemes like the community-based health insurance (CBHI) or "Mutuelles de Santé," which aims to broaden access to healthcare services and attenuate financial barriers. Pension schemes and employment injury insurance also form part of the social insurance component, providing support and safeguard against income losses due to aging, disability, or occupational hazards.

Labor market interventions in Rwanda's social protection system aim to enhance employability, labour conditions, and income-generating capacities. Through various programs and initiatives, efforts are directed towards skills development, entrepreneurship enhancement, and the creation of conducive environments for decent work and economic activities.

While Rwanda's social protection system has witnessed significant advancements, challenges persist, including ensuring comprehensive coverage, adequacy of support, and sustainability of financing. The government, alongside various partners, continues to evolve and refine strategies, ensuring that social protection mechanisms are responsive to emerging socio-economic dynamics and vulnerabilities.

*Implication for survivors and related vulnerable groups: Despite social protection initially being set up to support survivors of the genocide, support is now mainstreamed to all vulnerable persons. This has resulted in survivors “falling through the net” and not always receiving the support that they need. There are multiple reasons for this ranging from not having anyone in their community to advocate for their rights to social protection and being wrongly categorised as not requiring*

*support. As there continues to be a focus on harmonising social protection support, there is a need to ensure that all vulnerable survivors in need of such support are identified and receive it.*

### **3.8 Trauma and Mental Health**

Rwanda's mental health context is deeply influenced by the 1994 genocide against the Tutsi, which had a profound impact on the psychological well-being of the population. The traumatic events significantly elevated the prevalence of mental health conditions such as post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), depression, and anxiety disorders among survivors and affected communities.

The Rwanda Mental Health Survey (RMHS 2018) conducted by the Rwanda Biomedical Centre (RBC) revealed the increased prevalence of various mental disorders within the general Rwandan population and within genocide survivors. Results from this survey indicated that:

- Major depressive episodes (MDD) occurred in 12% of the general population and 35% of Survivors of the Genocide against the Tutsi.
- Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) occurred in 3.6% of the general population and 27% of Survivors of the Genocide against the Tutsi.

Survivors and their families continue to present with considerable rates of posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and substantial depressive and anxiety symptoms. Studies evidence a strong association between health problems and psychosocial factors such as social integration. Posttraumatic stress reactions were especially elevated in adult survivors who had experienced a high number of traumatic events, had poor physical health and were lacking in social integration.

Recognizing the pervasive impact of these traumas, the Rwandan government, alongside international partners, including Survivors Fund (SURF), initiated various interventions aimed at addressing the mental health needs emerging from this dark chapter in the nation's history.

The Rwandan mental health system is integrated within the general healthcare framework, striving to make mental health services accessible across different levels of the health system. A notable feature is the decentralization of mental health services, with efforts to avail mental healthcare not just in specialized centers but also at district hospitals and health centers. Additionally, the community-based health care approach, which has been significant in other health domains in Rwanda, has also been utilized in mental health, engaging community health workers in raising awareness, conducting screenings, and facilitating access to care.

Rwanda's approach to mental health is guided by strategic policy frameworks, notably the National Mental Health Policy, which articulates the visions, strategies, and priorities for enhancing mental health in the country. The policy emphasizes aspects like strengthening service delivery, enhancing human resources for mental health, raising awareness and reducing stigma, and fostering research and monitoring in mental health.

While considerable strides have been made in Rwanda's mental health domain, challenges persist. These include ensuring widespread access to quality mental health services across all regions,

addressing stigma and misconceptions related to mental health, and securing adequate human and financial resources for mental health. Furthermore, enhancing the capacity to address diverse mental health needs, including those emerging from contemporary stressors and challenges, remains pivotal.

Looking forward, enhancing mental health in Rwanda remains an intricate and multidimensional endeavor. Continuous efforts to bolster the mental health system, amalgamate mental health into general health and socio-economic development, and adapt to emerging mental health needs will be crucial in navigating the future trajectory of mental health in the country.

*Implication for survivors and related vulnerable groups: Access to mental health support continues to be a critical need for survivors, and with specialist services so limited in Rwanda the burden to provide such treatment falls to local survivor's organisations. With so many other competing needs, it is unlikely in the years ahead that this situation will change, which particularly disadvantages survivors due to the crippling effects resulting from PTSD. That there is increasing evidence for the intergenerational inheritance of trauma, makes the need to not only sustain but extend mental health support to survivors and second-generation survivors even more vital.*

### 3.9 Justice

The justice system in Rwanda has navigated a complex and transformative journey, especially in the aftermath of the 1994 genocide against the Tutsi. The grave nature and extensive scale of the atrocities necessitated innovative and multifaceted approaches to justice, reconciliation, and accountability. Two significant mechanisms emerged: the UN International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR), mandated to try masterminds of the genocide at an international level, and the Gacaca courts at the national level, which were community-based justice systems derived from traditional Rwandan dispute resolution processes.

There are estimated to be over 20,000 people still in prisons in Rwanda for their role in the genocide, many of them due to be released from prison over the next four to five years. The organisers and leaders of the genocide were mostly sent for trial at the UN International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda in Arusha, which resulted in less than 100 prosecutions, and closed in 2015. Any appeals are now heard by the UN International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals.

Rwanda's legal system operates within a framework guided by the constitution, legal statutes, and international law obligations. The country has various institutions mandated with ensuring justice, including the judiciary, the National Public Prosecution Authority, the Rwanda Investigation Bureau, and the Rwanda Correctional Service, among others. The judiciary encompasses various courts, such as the Supreme Court, High Courts, and Primary Courts, each with defined jurisdictions and mandates.

Ensuring access to justice for all citizens has been a priority in Rwanda's justice sector. Various mechanisms, such as the provision of legal aid through different organizations and initiatives, have been instituted to enhance accessibility, particularly for the indigent and vulnerable. The Legal Aid

Forum, consisting of various organizations and entities providing legal aid (including Survivors Fund SURF), and the Maisons d'Accès à la Justice (MAJ), which are access to justice bureaus located across the country, are examples of structures enhancing legal accessibility.

Rwanda has placed a strong emphasis on restorative and reconciliation-oriented approaches to justice, particularly in addressing the repercussions of the genocide. The Gacaca courts, 12,000 of which operated from 2001 to 2012, aimed not only at accountability but also at fostering truth-telling, community participation, and ultimately reconciliation. Various programs and initiatives have also aimed at supporting survivors and facilitating reconciliatory processes within communities.

Over the years, the Rwandan justice sector has pursued various reforms and development initiatives aimed at enhancing the efficacy, transparency, and accessibility of the justice system. Investments in human resources, technology, and infrastructure, as well as legal and policy reforms, have been undertaken to bolster the sector. Nonetheless, challenges persist, such as ensuring comprehensive access to justice, addressing case backlogs, and continuously enhancing the quality and integrity of justice delivery.

Rwanda's journey in justice is also interlinked with dialogues on human rights and international justice. While the country has made significant strides in stability and development, dialogues around political space, freedom of expression, and other human rights domains form part of the complex tapestry of justice considerations. Rwanda is also actively engaged in international justice dialogues, considering its history and experiences.

*Implication for survivors and related vulnerable groups: Survivors are still fighting for justice for the genocide, in particular in the form of compensation still owed to them through awards made in gacaca trials which have not been honoured and enforced. Younger survivors still require support to enforce their right to property and land appropriated in the genocide. There are still a number of high-level genocidaires at large, including in the UK. The continued release of perpetrators of the genocide in Rwanda is resulting in insecurity for survivors.*

### **3.10 Climate change**

Rwanda is divided into four main climatic regions: eastern plains, central plateau, highlands, and regions around Lake Kivu along the western border. Rwanda enjoys a tropical climate with hilly topography stretching from east to west. The Rwandan territory is covered with diverse ecosystems which includes mountain rainforests, gallery forests, savannah woodland, wetlands and aquatic forests and agroecosystems. Approximately 52% of the country's total land area is arable and the total cultivated area equates to 66% of the national territory, with over 93,000 hectares of marshland under cultivation. With much small plot cultivation occurring on hills or mountain areas, increased runoff and landslides have been experienced, increasing the country's vulnerability to climate change impacts.

Despite the country's overall positive growth and development over the past 25 years, Rwanda is still highly vulnerable to impacts from climate change through its high dependence on rain-fed

agriculture, as well as need to improve its road networks, health sector and water resource management. In Rwanda, the high levels of poverty and low degree of development limits capacity of poor households and communities to manage climate risk, increasing their vulnerability to climate-related shocks.

The ND-GAIN Index ranks 182 countries using a score which calculates a country's vulnerability to climate change and other global challenges as well as their readiness to improve resilience. This Index aims to help businesses and the public sector better identify vulnerability and readiness in order to better prioritize investment for more efficient responses to global challenges. Due to a combination of political, geographic, and social factors, Rwanda is recognized as vulnerable to climate change impacts, ranked 124 out of 182 countries in the 2020 ND-GAIN Index. The more vulnerable a country is the lower their score, while the more ready a country is to improve its resilience the higher it will be.

Environmental commitments are guided by Rwanda's Green Growth and Climate Resilience Strategy (2011) (GGCRS) and its National Strategy for Transformation (NST 1) (2017-2024). Rwanda is committed to ensuring its future stability and prosperity through mainstreaming climate change into all sectors of the economy and achieve climate resilience and low carbon development. Priority adaptation interventions have been identified as the sustainable intensification of agriculture; agricultural diversity in local and export market; sustainable forestry, agroforestry and biomass energy; ecotourism conservation and payment of ecosystem services promotion in protected areas, integrated water resources management and planning; integrated approach to sustainable land use planning and management, disaster management; and climate data and projections.

*Implication for survivors and related vulnerable groups: The greatest issues facing survivors in respect to climate change relates to the challenges of developing sustainable livelihoods, many of which are based on agricultural farming which are very dependent on climatic factors. Also there has been significant risks to housing of survivors resulting from floods and mudslides. This also impacts on smallholdings of survivors as well.*

#### **4. SURF Partners**

SURF continues to build a meaningful and lasting positive effect to the lives of survivors of the genocide against the Tutsi in Rwanda. The continued attention, effort and success on behalf of the genocide survivors has been possible because of the commitment of individuals and partner organisations in Rwanda and UK who have supported our work.

The partners of Survivors Fund (SURF) currently include:

[AVEGA Agahozo](#) - National Association of Widows of the Genocide

[AERG](#) - National Student's Association of Genocide Survivors

[GAERG](#) - National Survivor's Association of Graduate Students



[Solace Ministries](#) - Christian Association of Survivors of the Genocide

[Uyisenga N'manzi](#) - Survivors' Association of HIV+ Orphan-headed Households

[IBUKA](#) - National Umbrella of Survivors' Organisations in Rwanda

[Kanyarwanda](#) - Association of Women Survivors of the Genocide and Sexual Violence

[Barakabaho Foundation](#) - Advocates for Orphans and Women Victims of Violence

[Dukundane Family](#) - Association of Genocide Survivors formerly in membership of AERG

All of SURF's work is supporting genocide survivors, and related vulnerable persons, in Rwanda. Our principal partners are:

**4.1.1 AVEGA - Agahozo** was established in 1995 by 50 widowed survivors, AVEGA - Agahozo is the acronym for the Association of Widows of the April Genocide. Agahozo describes a small, intimate, loving action. It means 'to wipe the tears'. It describes a life-decision, a resolution to pick up the pieces and begin again, a commitment to life. The charity provides a means of support and recovery, and promotes self-fulfilment and self-reliance through many programmes, ranging from social networking to job training and from home construction to peer counselling. AVEGA now has five centres across Rwanda and has a web site at [www.avega-agahozo.org](http://www.avega-agahozo.org).

**4.1.2 AERG** is an association of student survivors of genocide created in 1996 at the National University of Rwanda. AERG is now represented nationally at 26 Universities and institutes of higher learning and 272 secondary schools in Rwanda, with a total countrywide membership of 43,397. The national AERG coordination office is based in Kigali, which liaises with the AERG University and Secondary School AERG sections to connect and represent student survivors. It has a web site at <https://aerg.org.rw/>.

**4.13 GAERG** is a national organisation founded by Rwandan Graduates who are Genocide Survivors with a mission of creating a world in which the memory of genocide is preserved and that the genocide survivor community can support and sustain themselves. It strives to ensure a dignified preservation of the memory of the genocide, building capacity through education, socioeconomic development, and advocacy for beneficiaries. They empower members to be self-reliant through their various programs. It has a website at <https://gaerg.org.rw/>.

## 5. SURF Projects

The project that SURF is in a position to deliver is dependent on the funding available. However, there are a number of flagship projects which we will strive to sustain, and where possible expand over the period of the Strategic Plan through to 2027, mainly delivered by our three principal partner organisations, AVEGA, AERG and GAERG. These are:

### 5.1 Youth Economic Empowerment Project (YEEP)

The Youth Economic Empowerment Programme (YEEP) is a partnership between SURF and GAERG (National Survivor's Association of Graduate Students) to deliver entrepreneurship, work

readiness and vocational training, and access to finance and learning resources, to empower vulnerable youth - specifically survivors, and marginalised second-generation survivors, who dropped out of school - and enable them to develop secure livelihoods and sustainable incomes. In so doing, this will alleviate their poverty and improve their well-being and enable them to better independently support themselves and their households.

YEEP launched in July 2021, and is running for an initial three years through to June 2024, made possible through support from Clifford Chance. The key objective is to empower vulnerable young people in Rwanda through a programme of entrepreneurship, work readiness and vocational training, and access to finance, and in so doing to alleviate their poverty and improve their well-being. In so doing, the project will specifically address Target 2 of Sustainable Development Goal 1: “By 2030, reduce at least by half the proportion of all men, women and persons of all ages living in poverty,” and Target 4 of Global Goal 3: “promote mental health and well-being”.

We understand that young people have different ambitions for their professional life. Some wish to find training and capital to start a business, whilst others would prefer to find steady employment either through a job or a trade. YEEP seeks to help principally vulnerable and marginalised young people to navigate their pathway into work - whether that is entrepreneurship, employment or a vocation. We expect that at least 2,550 young people will be enrolled in and complete one of the four training components of the programme:

- Entrepreneurship training (pathway into self-employment)
- Work readiness training (pathway into employment)
- Internship training programme (pathway into employment)
- Vocational training (pathway into employment or self-employment)

## **5.2 Counselling Enhanced Reach Project (CERP III)**

SURF, in collaboration with its partners and with funding through the Clifford Chance Cornerstone Initiative provided access to phone-based counselling and supplementary support to vulnerable survivors of the genocide, and related vulnerable persons, from April 2021 through to October 2022. This led first to the COVID-19 Emergency Response Project (CERP), and then to the Counselling Extension Response Project (CERP II).

The need and demand for the counselling services made accessible through CERP II are greater than ever, in part due to the reduction in government funding for dedicated counselling services for survivors. The take-up and effectiveness of the helplines and peer counselling made possible by CERP II has proven to be more impactful than ever (significantly increasing since CERP) due to greater awareness of the support that is available and how to access it. The Counselling Enhanced Reach Project (CERP III) intends to realise the ambition and potential of the project to ensure that survivors can continue to access the counselling support that they require, through to the 30th Anniversary of the Genocide against the Tutsi, and then embed the model so that such support continues to be available beyond the end of Clifford Chance funding which is due to conclude at the end of 2024.

The project has four objectives:

- Enhance access to, and the reach of, mental health support
- Extend awareness of the availability of the helplines
- Expand delivery of mental health support and emergency assistance
- Embed monitoring and learning from the project

The mental health support is available and accessible to any vulnerable person, though vulnerable survivors in particular are targeted to be made aware of the service and support. We are continuing to prioritise for emergency assistance households headed by the most vulnerable survivors in the 3 Districts of Kigali City (Gasabo, Kicukiro and Nyarugenge), and then those in the Eastern and Southern Provinces (where the number of vulnerable survivors is greatest).

The project is delivered in partnership with SURF's local partner organisations in Rwanda including AVEGA Agahozo, AERG, GAERG and Ibuka.

### **5.3 Youth Entrepreneurship Training Programme (YETP) and GAERG Innovation Fund**

Skills, jobs and entrepreneurship are key to the well-being of survivors, and second-generation survivors, and also contribute to strengthening the Rwandan economy. SURF and AERG set up YETP with the support of INSPIRE!africa with the aim of providing valuable skills to vulnerable young people, and of reducing youth unemployment in Rwanda.

Survivors, and second-generation survivors, face more hurdles than most in education and competing in the job market. Those responsible for younger siblings, in orphan-headed households, have extra challenges without family to support them. With a strengthening knowledge-based economy Rwanda offers increasing opportunity, but competition for jobs and business creation remains fierce.

YETP now takes a multi-pronged approach to mitigating youth unemployment. There continues to be a focus on business workshops, internship linkages, and employment workshops. Rather than support new beneficiaries to access training, AERG and SURF have been supporting those graduates of YETP who despite great efforts and time, remain unable to find work and income through access to funding to scale up their ventures through loans.

In partnership with GAERG, SURF helped set up an Investment Trust Fund, dubbed G-Innovation Development Fund (GIDF). The Fund is a pool of investments aimed at assisting survivors, and second-generation survivors, to create and grow their businesses. The Fund invests in businesses at various stages, including seed stage, late stage and early stage.

Applicants benefit from capacity building before being given the capital to start their own businesses. The Fund is open-ended, meaning it is willing to attract investments from anyone. It has an independent board of trustees with a diverse array of experience.

#### **5.4 Community Counselling Initiative**

Through counselling for women victims of genocide rape, Survivors Fund (SURF) and Foundation Rwanda provide counselling in a well-structured peer support approach.

The project includes in-depth monitoring and evaluation, surveying the women before, during and after working in the counselling groups. This provides the ability to track the changes in their circumstances and monitor their wellness, whilst also providing feedback to ensure that the counselling groups are having a positive impact and are helpful to the women.

These women, who were previously marginalised, stigmatised and alone in their trauma, are able to build their confidence and self-esteem, increase their knowledge, enhance positive emotions and reduce shame. The counselling groups also helped to improve relationships with their persons and family. As part of the project, additional training and supervision is provided to the counsellors of AVEGA to enable them to more effectively deliver this support through a partnership with the Institute of Group Analysis (IGA).

#### **5.5 Livelihood and counselling support to persons born of rape**

Through funding from Foundation Rwanda, SURF is addressing the livelihood and counselling needs of young people conceived through rape during and under circumstances directly related to the 1994 genocide committed against Tutsi in Rwanda. The challenge for the affected mothers and persons is that FARG, the government body that assists vulnerable survivors of the genocide, has never considered these young people eligible for support because they were born after genocide and thus are not by definition survivors. However, they are recognised to be a particularly vulnerable and marginalised population.

Our Foundation Rwanda programme previously focused on educational support for this group, though that component of the programme concluded in 2020. As such, the focus has transitioned into enabling opportunities for the target group to develop livelihoods, principally through access to vocational training which then can lead to employment or self-employment. Counselling support is also provided through specially convened youth camps, which enables participants to develop relationships between each other and collectively provide support to deal with the unique psycho-social issues which they face.

#### **5.6 Legal and Counselling Helpline**

The helpline was established in partnership with AERG to fill the gap in support for survivors, and second-generation survivors, with legal and mental health challenges, so that they can access support regardless of where they are located. The project supports youth to resolve their legal cases, and provide counselling, through trained personnel and volunteers that operate it.

Since its establishment in 2013, the helpline has grown from a small pilot telephone-based service to an innovative, all-encompassing legal and counselling support service. By providing legal and counselling support services countrywide, the helpline has filled a necessary gap in support for vulnerable survivors, and second-generation survivors, with outstanding legal disputes or suffering from trauma.

This is one of the only free and accessible services for survivors, and second-generation survivors, incapable of affording to take their legal cases to court or lacking the confidence or ability to find someone to talk to about a mental health issue. In addition to providing telephone-based support, the helpline also has field staff who provide support to clients through legal education and orientation, advocacy and representation in court.

### **5.7 Youth Counselling and Entrepreneurship Programme**

Thousands of youthful survivors of the 1994 genocide are only now confronting the horror of seeing their families murdered. They struggle to make ends meet, alone and vulnerable, prone to depression and hopelessness. Through support from our partner Network for Africa we are working with AERG to train counsellors who in turn train local people to become counsellors. The counsellors are themselves survivors who have endured trauma, so they are familiar with the challenges faced by people with depression and other mental health issues.

Groups have been convened across Rwanda. The group members then select two from their ranks to become Peer Support Counsellors for their group. Once their training is complete, they begin convening the groups every two weeks. During these sessions they raise awareness about trauma, anxiety, insomnia and depression.

Each session lasts about two hours, and enables people to share their problems, finding a degree of immediately relief by realising they are no longer alone. Everyone knows what they say is confidential, and the group is based on trust. They are taught techniques helping them focus on the positive aspects of their life, to take pride in their achievements, build self-confidence and to change their future prospects. When counsellors identify survivors who need individual help, they do home visits. When a participant has problems beyond the counsellors' capability, they are referred to SURF's professional counsellors.

The programme now also includes an entrepreneurship which has been designed to build the confidence in and knowledge of income-generating activities through training and support, exposure to small, successful businesses and to provide a more rigorous understanding of all aspects of the business cycle.

The training takes place once a week over two months and covers topics such as support groups, savings, writing business proposals, how to work with financial institutions, market analysis, customer care, competition and marketing. After the training, the participants, with support from an Income Generating Officer, write their business plans in readiness for submission to Goshen Microfinance for consideration for a microloan.

## 5.8 Livestock and Hardship Support Programme

Through funding from the Good Gifts Catalogue, an initiative of the Charities Advisory Trust, SURF is continuing to extend support to thousands of widows and orphans that are beneficiaries of an ongoing livestock and hardship support program, enabling them to become more independent and self-sufficient.

SURF aims to alleviate the impact of poverty on vulnerable survivors by strengthening their families to alleviate extreme poverty. Funding from Good Gifts helps to provide subsistence and household needs, which in some cases can also evolve into small income generating projects, which enable survivors to take a more active role in determining their lives.

Many survivors have been supported, receiving livestock, agricultural materials, solar lights and cookers, meals for schoolpersons and much more. The support from Good Gifts has played a significant role in enabling us to empower vulnerable survivors and their dependents. The livelihoods programme has helped beneficiaries to improve their lives. For example, those that have received solar lights and clean cookstoves are making savings for their households as they are no longer spending on kerosene, as well as saving time used to collect firewood.

## 5.9 Reaching Rwanda

Sandhurst School has been running its ground-breaking Reaching Rwanda project in partnership with SURF since 2008. Pioneered by the Sandhurst School Deputy Head Samantha Hunt, who is also Chair of SURF, the Reaching Rwanda project has worked extensively in Rwanda by linking UK school students with survivors.

The project has three main aims:

- To inform students about the Rwandan genocide and of the continued plight of survivors of the genocide today
- To connect students with genocide survivors and enable them to become friends
- To enable students to become actively involved in improving the life chances of genocide survivors and to see the difference their efforts make

Devoted to improving education and livelihoods across Rwanda the project has in particular supported 'Ntarama Survivors Village' in Bugesera, Eastern Province. Support includes funding for school and university education, renovation and repair of dilapidated housing, provision of livestock and essential household items - as well as support for vocational training, and income-generating activities.

The project has also supported the construction of Philly's Place, a unique children's centre which offers free tuition in Kinyarwanda, English, maths and science, as well as weekly programmes in art, dance, music, sport, drama and clothes tailoring to approximately 600 local persons of all ages. The centre is open every week and is becoming an important community hub.

## 5.10 Other Projects

SURF continues to fund a number of legacy projects where historically we have provided support and there continues to be a need as determined by the local partner organisations. This includes support for survivors to access higher education where they require supplementary funding to that which is available from FARG (to afford accommodation, transport and scholastic materials), as well as for survivors and second-generation survivors to access education through provision of tuition fees where that is not available from FARG.

Many survivors lost their homes during the genocide. Though some received houses from government and NGOs after the genocide, many of these dwellings are now dilapidated and in dire need of renovation. As such, SURF supports the rehabilitation of such housing to ensure survivors have safe, secure and decent shelter.

Further support is provided around the commemoration of the genocide in April each year to enable local partner organisations to mark the anniversary through community events. This is extended as well to the documentation and recording of testimonies of survivors to ensure that their experience is recorded for posterity, and which can be used to raise awareness of the ongoing need for support for survivors.

An undercutting element of all of this work is building the capacity of the local partner organisations to more effectively deliver the projects, as well as to enable them to raise additional funding to support this work and other projects that they are independently pursuing, with the ultimate aim that they can be more self-sufficient and sustainable.

## 6. Strategic Plan

### 6.1 Overview

This Strategic Plan is informed by the SURF Strategic Plan 2021 - 2023 and our partner organisations, and the survivors they represent. It sets out a demanding but exciting agenda of support to our partners. It will deliver greater impact for those we are seeking to help. By balancing our programmes, advocacy work and capacity building with our fundraising, monitoring and evaluation we will increase our reach and build greater support for our work. The Strategic Plan will be continuously monitored to inform the direction and development of SURF.

Our key themes and targets for 2024 - 2028 will be:

#### **Direct support for rehabilitation**

- Secure sustainable livelihoods for survivors & related vulnerable persons.
- Improve the well-being and resilience of survivors & related vulnerable groups.
- Reduce the vulnerability of survivors & related vulnerable persons.

### **Organisational support for regeneration**

- Empower survivor organisations to advocate for justice and security.
- Enable survivor organisations to be more sustainable over the long term.

#### ***Definition of Related Vulnerable Persons:***

Survivors Fund (SURF) is led by its partner organisations in determining which vulnerable persons it prioritises in its work. Though many of the organisations were initially set up by and for survivors of the genocide against the Tutsi, they now provide support to an array of other related vulnerable persons.

Related Vulnerable Persons include, but are not restricted to:

- Persons born to women survivors raped during the genocide against the Tutsi
- Persons born to survivors of the genocide against the Tutsi (second-generation survivors)
- Persons infected and affected by HIV and AIDS
- Disabled and older persons living in survivor-headed households

#### **6.1.1 Direct support to rebuild lives**

- Secure sustainable livelihoods for survivors and related vulnerable persons
- Improve the well-being of survivors and related vulnerable groups
- Reduce the vulnerability of survivors and related vulnerable persons

**By 2028 we will secure sustainable livelihoods for survivors and related vulnerable persons through a focus on income generating activities, entrepreneurship and employment**

#### ***Targets:***

Over the next five years, we aim to:

- Increase the number of survivors and related vulnerable persons with secure, sustainable livelihoods
- Support access to entrepreneurship and employment programmes for survivors, second-generation survivors and persons born of genocide rape, through vocational training
- Enable more survivors, second-generation survivors, and related vulnerable persons to acquire training and access loans to pursue income-generating activities

#### ***Actions:***

We will:

- Strengthen the capacity of the partners to develop and deliver IGA programmes
- Research new opportunities and develop proposals with partners for IGAs
- Provide technical support and monitoring for income generating activities
- Extend our partnership with Foundation Rwanda to identify and pursue additional opportunities for vocational education and training for persons born of rape
- Support second-generation survivors and persons born of rape, to ensure they have better opportunities to transition into employment and take up more practical TVET opportunities



**By 2028 we will improve the well-being of survivors and related vulnerable persons through a focus on mental health provision, memorialisation and physical health education**

*Targets:*

Over the next five years, we aim to:

- Improve the well-being of more survivors and related vulnerable persons
- Secure greater access to counselling for survivors, and related vulnerable persons
- Ensure that survivors, and related vulnerable persons, can fully memorialise the genocide
- Increase uptake of physical activity by survivors, and related vulnerable persons

*Actions:*

We will:

- Identify and engage new partners to support essential services for survivors
- Research and educate on the sensitivities of delivering essential services to survivors
- Support and raise funds for effective and expansive mental health provision for survivors
- Sustain the Counselling Helplines and Community Counselling Initiative to ensure universal access to mental health support to any survivor and related vulnerable person in need
- Research and raise awareness of the challenges resulting from the intergenerational inheritance of trauma and models to address it, such as through youth counselling camps
- Support and publicise any books, films and projects which document the experience of survivors and related vulnerable persons
- Work with the Government of Rwanda and IBUKA to ensure the fit and proper burial of the remains of victims of the genocide, and the preservation of memorial sites
- Raise awareness of the importance of physical activity in improving health outcomes

**By 2028 we will reduce the vulnerability of survivors and related vulnerable persons through a focus on decent housing, food security and elderly care**

*Targets:*

Over the next five years, we aim to:

- Reduce the number of vulnerable survivors and related vulnerable persons in need
- Secure greater access to care of older survivors and related vulnerable older persons
- Increase the number of survivors and related vulnerable persons with decent housing
- Improve the food security of survivors and related vulnerable persons

*Actions:*

We will:

- Be flexible in our response to emerging vulnerabilities of survivor's groups
- Strive to raise and advocate for funding to build new homes, and renovate dilapidating housing for vulnerable survivors
- Develop new projects, and ensure that existing projects, include a focus on food security where possible, particularly through sustainable models such as kitchen gardens
- Provide and uphold the right of elderly survivors to hardship support, such as made possible through mobile cash transfers

- Ensure vulnerable survivors and related vulnerable persons can access essential household items, and where possible ensure they are sustainable (such as solar lights, clean cookstoves)

### **6.1.2 Organisational support for regeneration**

- Empower survivor organisations to advocate for justice and security.
- Enable survivor organisations to be more sustainable over the long term.

**By 2028 we will improve the enforcement of rights and legal representation of survivors and vulnerable groups in Rwanda**

#### *Targets:*

Over the next five years, we aim to:

- Ensure that more survivors and related vulnerable persons have access to legal representation
- Raise awareness of the need for justice for survivors and related vulnerable persons
- Mainstream rights of survivors and vulnerable groups into national development policies

#### *Actions:*

We will:

- Work with partner organisations to develop and secure funding for new legal programmes
- Support initiatives aimed at enforcing awards of compensation to survivors
- Support survivors and related vulnerable persons to bring legal cases
- Support survivors and related vulnerable persons to participate in Universal Jurisdiction cases
- Actively rebut and respond to genocide denial
- Develop partnerships with international organisations to advocate for the rights of survivors and related vulnerable persons in Rwanda
- Develop the capacity of partners to ensure that survivors and related vulnerable persons are fully included in the National Social Protection Strategy

**By 2028 we will enable survivor organisations to be more sustainable for the long term**

#### *Targets:*

Over the next five years, we aim to:

- Ensure that our key partners are generating more revenue
- Strengthen the capacity of SURF to deliver the support requested by partners
- Develop new partnerships in strategic areas to deliver financial security in the long term
- Support the organisational development of our local partner organisations

#### *Actions:*

We will:

- Develop strategies that ensure core funding to sustain SURF's support to partners
- Ensure effective governance of SURF, and strengthen the governance of our partners
- Train, develop and support the staff of SURF, and enable our partners to do so with their staff
- Support partners to develop and fundraise for institutional grants from international donors
- Support our partner survivor's organisations to identify and develop new partnerships

- Pilot new approaches to revenue generation in Rwanda, and support our partners to do so too
- Coordinate greater sector-wide participation of our partners and facilitate a strategic approach

## **7. Programme Delivery**

We will ensure the impact of our work by focusing on accountability to beneficiaries and donors. A priority is to continue to listen, respect and support the priorities of survivors. SURF will strongly advocate and fundraise for partners, and through our high-engagement approach we will support partners to deliver quality long-term programmes to highly vulnerable survivors' groups and other groups of vulnerable persons. Though our focus will remain on empowering and building the capacity of our partners to more effectively deliver programmes, as a last resort we will also deliver some programmes ourselves in those areas where our partners are unable to effectively do so.

We will do all we can to ensure SURF remains a dynamic organisation that is seen and acts as the most effective international charity supporting survivors of the genocide, and related vulnerable persons, in Rwanda.

## **8. Communications**

There is an increase in the profile of SURF's work around the world, especially in the UK, Rwanda and America. We will work to further strengthen our profile.

To strengthen our communications, we will:

- Highlight the challenges and rights of survivors and related vulnerable persons in Rwanda
- Promote the work and direction of SURF and our partners
- Show the difference we make, through our Annual Review
- Showcase our work through short films, and where appropriate media channels
- Through our website and social media, mobilise individuals to be long-term SURF supporters
- Vigorously implement and communicate the strategic aims and objectives in this strategic plan
- Actively use information technology for engaging our partners, supporters and the public

Use communications to build public awareness in the UK and beyond of the genocide, its long-term consequences and the plight of survivors and related vulnerable persons in Rwanda.

## **9. Development**

Development is about generating the greatest possible resources and applying them to make the biggest difference to survivors and other vulnerable groups in Rwanda. SURF's overall approach is to encourage greater mass participation, providing a funding vehicle for people to support our work. Also, we will aim to spread risk, and we will work to maintain our independence.

We will pursue any opportunities to develop our unrestricted funding through regular giving and continue to increase the efficiency of our fundraising operations. Ensuring synergies between our fundraising work and the rest of our programme agenda is critical.

In 2022, we generated income of over £700,000 and overall SURF plans to remain an organisation at that level, which is currently sufficient to continue to sustain our core operations and progress our core project activities.

Though enabling funds for partners, even if they are not channelled through SURF, is as critical if not more critical than SURF raising its own funding to the strategic plan.

As part of our fundraising work we will grow restricted income for our international work through managing our relations with key institutional funders, such as Clifford Chance, and aim to seek to secure new funders - those based in the UK, as well as those based internationally too.

## **10. Human Resources**

Survivors Fund (SURF) works as a small high performing team that focuses on inspiring quality and results oriented action. The model is based on maximising our human resources in Rwanda which are on the frontline supporting the delivery of the work, with a part-time resource in the UK.

People make SURF what it is and could become in the future; be they governance, staff, volunteers or supporters. We continue to strive for best practice in how we manage our human resources through non-salary benefits such as health insurance, maternity cover, paid holidays and severance all above the statutory minimum in Rwanda.

We will do more to improve the governance of the organisation and carry out annual reviews of performance. We will invest more in our staff in our Rwanda office to ensure we have high levels of professionalism and efficiency, united by making a difference to the lives of survivors and related vulnerable persons in Rwanda.

We will strive to reach greater communities and target groups to encourage them to engage with SURF. We will value all our staff and will reward people for the difference they are making in delivering our mission.

## **11. Finance and Risk Management**

We maintain close control of our finances and invest in financial systems that are robust and provide management information that improves our efficiency and effectiveness. We monitor and manage risk to identify and mitigate any issues as early as possible.

The financial framework will support the costed consolidated work plans of SURF UK & Rwanda. The accounts of our UK and Rwanda offices are consolidated, and each year we commission an external audit of our consolidated accounts. The approved accounts are filed on time to Companies House and the Charity Commission.

The risk register is regularly reviewed and when necessary updated. We ensure that there are rigorous procedures and policies in place, including on safeguarding, whistleblowing and anti-fraud.

## **12. Monitoring and Evaluation**

SURF actively monitors all projects and continues to practice an overall participatory programme review with our partners every year. The strategic plan is regularly reviewed, and the performance of the organisation assessed against the framework.

SURF ensures the external evaluation of all principal projects its supports, where funds are available, and publishes these externally on our website. Learnings from the evaluations are reviewed and where possible implemented to improve our future performance.

Performance monitoring highlights progress in implementing the five-year strategic plan. The CEO of SURF reports progress against our key targets at each meeting of the Board of Trustees. The SURF Annual Review also provides evidence of the difference we are making.

