

CHAPTER

13 Women and Leadership in Rwanda, Emerging Transformation: The Spiritual, Social, and Political Dimensions of Transmuting Suffering

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The year 2014 marked Rwanda's 20th anniversary commemoration of the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi during which close to one million people were killed and an estimated 500,000 women and girls were raped in over 100 days. While the violence was brutal for all, women and girls were particularly targeted (Gervais, Ubalijoro, & Nyirabega, 2009). In contrast to these gruesome statistics, Rwanda today has the highest rate of women parliamentarians in the world. What is behind 20 years of women's leadership during a period of national reconstruction after deep collective and individual trauma? How can one move forward after being subjected to such collective trauma? How does society move forward? What

kind of leadership toward a healthy society could one hope for in the aftermath of the Rwandan genocide?

In traditional Rwandan spirituality, feminine wisdom is embodied, deeply connected to emotions and to the nurturing and care a mother holds for her children. For a woman to stand in this wisdom, she must connect to her feeling self. As Donna Kate Rushin wrote in her 1981 poem, *The Bridge Poem* (Rushin, 2015), each woman's journey is to be the space that links our fears, weaknesses to our inner feminine power. Only when we hold these polarities are we able to own our true self and be of service to the world.

As Rwandan women leaders have worked to face the depths of their own pain, suffering, and victimhood, they have created spaces for their fellow Rwandans to do likewise with courage, inquisitiveness, compassion, and passion. Central to both this inner work and work with others has been bringing to light what was scapegoated and repressed as a healing force for those who have been oppressed. As Arthur Colman and Éliane Ubali-joro (2012, p. 135) wrote, "If we identify scapegoating as the collective analogy to ignoring the shadow in the individual, then bringing the scapegoating process to the surface is a powerful way to heal society." This chapter will explore how women in Rwanda have worked at healing society as a way to tend to their own wounds.

We explore the role of women's leadership in catalyzing and influencing collective action in reshaping post-genocide Rwanda through stories of individual women leaders, and the collective action of women leaders organizing to enact change together. It would not be possible to capture the breadth of Rwandan women's agency over the last 20 years in one chapter, and instead, this chapter seeks to convey through selected stories the essence and spirit of the collective action of women in Rwanda to help heal a nation. Among the countless leaders that have redefined the role of women and girls in post-genocide Rwanda, we have chosen stories that are also deeply personal for us (all three of the authors have spent time in Rwanda and two are of Rwandan origin) so that this chapter might continue our bond with these women and contribute to our own healing. Concepts of posttraumatic growth, feminine wisdom, and continuing bonds to Rwandan spirituality will guide this exploration. In this chapter we narrate representative leadership stories of women in Rwanda in relation to our own personal journeys of emerging posttraumatic growth in the context of continuing communal bonds and a sense of self that is embedded in a legacy of struggle and collective healing. The following two sections are

written in first person singular in this co-authored chapter. Through our *individual* and *collective* voices we explore the dual nature of voice, both deeply existential and personal (the “feeling self”) and collective, linked to the feminine wisdom in Rwandan spirituality.

Holding onto the Legacy of Rwanda’s Women Peace Builders

by ÉLIANE UBALIJORO

Louise Mushikiwabo, Rwanda’s current minister of foreign affairs, was working in Washington, DC in 1994 when her brother, a prominent opposition leader, his Canadian wife, and their two teenage children were murdered during the genocide. In her memoir, [Mushikiwabo \(2006\)](#) traces the roots of the genocide from colonial times to the events that led her home after so much loss. Her analysis shows how eugenics was introduced as a tool to divide and rule when Rwanda became part of German East Africa in 1884. The same policies continued through Belgium protectorate, to the formative years of Rwanda’s independence from 1962 to 1994 in ways that shifted power but reinforced ethnic division and tensions ([Langford, 2005](#)). Through colonialism, racial and ethnic identities were politicized in divisive ways that furthered the colonizer’s end and continue to shape Rwanda’s contemporary politics. In 1925, Rwanda became the small administrative section of Ruanda-Urundi, attached to Belgian Congo. In 1931, the institutional reduction of complex pre-colonial Rwandan society by the implementation of mandatory identification cards of citizens over the age of 16 stating ethnicity politicized identity in an unprecedented way ([Mamdani, 2000, 2001, 2002](#)). In her memoir, Mushikiwabo takes us into Rwanda’s past as she pieces together her own family history and honors the lives of the loved ones she lost.

In the last 20 years, I have drawn strength from a legacy of Rwandan women leaders like Mushikiwabo, some born in Rwanda, some born in exile, a diverse group of women whose lives and work express a creative compassion that embraces all Rwandans, a commitment to community even at the risk of one’s own life, and a profound courage to see and create opportunities

for individual and collective healing in the face of devastatingly deep trauma. Two of these women are Agathe Uwilingiyimana and Aloysia Inyumba. Uwilingiyimana and Inyumba represent the two sides of Rwandan women working to bridge the politicized identity divide that has been Rwanda's legacy for nearly a century: Rwandan women who grew up in Rwanda (like Uwilingiyimana) and those (like Inyumba) who grew up in exile moving together toward the unity of a people split through colonization.

On April 7, 2014, I stood in the Amahoro Stadium in Kigali as the 20th commemoration of the genocide took place. In the preceding three days, I had attended the Kigali International Forum on Genocide under the theme "After Genocide: Examining Legacy, Taking Responsibility." During the forum, I remember sitting and listening to a recounting of how Agathe Uwilingiyimana, Rwanda's first and to date only female prime minister, was raped with a Fanta bottle before being killed with her husband. She was killed to prevent her from speaking on national radio after the plane carrying then President Juvenal Habyarimana was shot down and all aboard were killed. Her intended message never reached Rwandans and the radio was taken over by the Interahamwe extremists and used to spread hate speech. I had met with her the year before in 1993. She had been in Montreal and I had given her a letter for my father. Two decades later as I listened again to the brutal details of how her life had ended, I was struck by how vivid I held the memory of meeting her and the hope she seeded in me for Rwanda's healing.

During her tenure as prime minister, Uwilingiyimana worked tirelessly to lead a transitional government that would bring peace to Rwanda following three years of civil war. Prior to becoming prime minister, she was Rwanda's first female minister of education. In this position, she provided educational scholarships based on merit, eliminating a quota system based on ethnicity. Throughout her career she faced political pressure and oppression, but as a visionary and transformative leader she challenged divisionary extremists and strove to establish a fair and just society, in which all citizens shared equal rights. For her commitments, Uwilingiyimana was regularly targeted by the genocide propaganda, often portrayed in cartoons as a whore in bed with other moderate politicians, many of whom would also be executed during the genocide (Maier, 2012–2013).

After assassinating Uwilingiyimana, extremists used national radio to divide the country, spreading messages of fear, dehumanizing and inciting hatred toward all Tutsis and political

moderates as enemies of the State that required elimination. Agathe Uwilingiyimana's legacy lives on through the work Rwandans have been doing over the last 20 years to heal and rebuild a deeply traumatized nation. Agathe was one of the first people killed in the 1994 genocide because of her belief in national unity and equal rights to all Rwandans. Her work continues to be honored through *The Agathe Innovative Award Competition* initiated by the Forum for African Women Educationalists (FAWE) to support educational and income-generating projects to improve the prospects of African girls. As a founding member of FAWE, she would be proud of the partnership the organization formed 20 years after her death with the MasterCard Foundation. The goal of the partnership is to educate 1,200 Rwandan girls to prepare them for careers in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math through a \$17.4 million initiative for Rwanda and Ethiopia. Part of remembering Uwilingiyimana is holding the brutality of her last hours and the years of slander she endured as she worked so diligently for peace. Yet the deeper truth of her life is not what was done to her, but the legacy of her leadership and work for peace. I likewise remember a simple conversation with her in my city of adoption, an inner place I carry that holds her quiet, diligent, focused energy. In her presence, I could feel her dedication for peace, the overwhelming details that she patiently tackled and carried on her shoulders that needed to be tended to in her political work. She embodied a combination of focused energy, humility, grace, and perseverance that I could easily imagine flowing with others to vision, bridge, communicate, and act on the changes that Rwanda needed to embrace to bring peace.

I hold in me the memory of meeting Uwilingiyimana, of giving her a letter for my father. This simple encounter, the sharing of time and space, the passing on of a letter, reminds me that I hold in me memories of this vibrant leader alongside knowledge of her horrific death. In me, the light of who she was will continue to shine as a testament of the essence of the peacemaker who believed in a whole undivided Rwandan people. Carrying the wholeness of the murdered ones in inner places has been an essential opportunity to hold the trauma in an embodied way where polarities coexist. In my body, I hold memories of those lost. I hold images of hope, building anew, destruction, and horror. In my heart, I cry for the suffering that was inflicted, I rage for dehumanization that was perpetrated. I touch the resilient passionate energy of those who have and continue to

work to bridge conflict, transmute suffering and I connect to the beauty, terror, vibrancy, and fragility of life. Identifying language that allows growth and validates the reality that deep trauma isn't something that we recover from but a struggle with highly perplexing situations aligns with [Richard G. Tedeschi and Lawrence G. Calhoun's \(2007\)](#) notion of "posttraumatic growth" as well as [Howarth's \(2000\)](#) exploration of "continuing bonds." Rwandan women leaders in the last 20 years have anchored themselves in corporeal memory of loved ones to grow personal strength and the capacity to relate with others while nurturing "new possibilities, spiritual change, and appreciation of life" ([Splevins, Cohen, Bowley, & Joseph, 2010](#), p. 266). Whether nurtured by memory of those lost or a dream of a better tomorrow, Rwandan women continue to move through the trauma of rape, physical mutilation, dehumanization, and the horror of the murder of loved ones.

A crucial dimension of healing in post-genocide Rwanda has been the return to the country of many Rwandan women who grew up in exile. These women have been pioneers in Rwanda's transformation over the last 20 years in all sectors of Rwanda's socio-politic-economic life. One woman who symbolically represents this new feminine energy in Rwanda is Aloysia Inyumba. When I first met her, I was struck by her commitment to the children of Rwanda. Inyumba was born in Uganda in 1964 after her father had been killed in Rwanda and her family fled a wave of ethnic massacres. As a young girl in a refugee camp, her dream was always to return to her homeland, a dream she realized in the leadership role she later took in the Rwanda Patriotic Front (RPF) working to allow the return of all Rwandan refugees. Inyumba was the first Minister of Family, Gender, and Social Affairs after the genocide. At the time, Rwanda's population was composed 70% by women. Hundreds of thousands of children had been orphaned. In 2007, she was nominated as one of the 21 women leaders of the 21st century in honor of her tireless efforts to empower and support vulnerable women and orphans. Inyumba never lost hope that she could be an agent in the rebuilding and reshaping of her country since her childhood. After her own journey back to Rwanda, she encouraged other women in the diaspora to return home while also encouraging Rwandans to adopt genocide orphans. Sadly, she passed away in 2012. Messages from political, community, and religious leaders as well as celebrities were written in remembrance of her efforts to rebuild Rwanda and her capacity to inspire compassion. Her

journey through exile to Rwanda represents the journey of many Rwandan women leaders who came to Rwanda as adults to become local change makers in a land that had been inaccessible before 1994. Inyumba represents the dream of the returnee enacted, an important part of Rwanda's journey toward healing.

Tikkun Halev/Tikkun Olam: Creating the Conditions for Posttraumatic Growth

by JACQUELINE UWIZEYIMANA BAGWIZA
with ÉLIANE UBALIJORO

I (Jacqueline) lived and studied for over four years (2008–2013) in the Agahozo Shalom Youth Village (ASYV) in Rwanda founded by Ann Heyman, an American woman of Jewish faith born in South Africa. ASYV is a residential community located in the eastern province of Rwanda for youth who were orphaned during the 1994 Genocide and after. The ASYV community includes 32 family settings, each comprised of a family mother, big brother or big sister, and 16 sisters or brothers. In August 2013, I moved to Canada as a MasterCard Foundation Scholar at McGill University. Before studying at Agahozo, the first 18 years of my life held one constant: deep insecurity. Heyman modeled ASYV after a youth village called “Yamen Orde” that was built in Israel in the 1950s for the Jewish orphans of the holocaust. Based on the Yamen Orde experience, she believed that transformational healing for Rwandan youth could occur as long as they were given the opportunity to ground their hope in the future. Orphans at ASYV have the space to strive for academic excellence while grieving with dignity, without pity or judgment.

ASYV's philosophy is grounded in the Jewish principles of Tikkun Halev (“repairing the heart”) and Tikkun Olam (“repairing the world”). This philosophy was introduced to us in our first two years at ASYV. In our communal life, hope for a better future and dream making were central in our discussions. Arts and sports reinforced this in an embodied way by enlivening spirit and nourishing the desire to live a purposeful life. We started expressing our dreams and aspirations for the future we want and articulating our past experiences in a safe, contained way. I started painting when I arrived in ASYV, because I realized that it was the only thing that I could do to create my own

happiness while expressing my inner self and explain to others the future I wanted to live. These activities helped me understand the process of self-discovery and self-healing that I was opening to. Painting changed me. It gave my life meaning and value as I started envisioning my future life in painting and putting on canvas the parts of me I could not articulate in words. Tikkun Halev enabled me to feel agency: to touch the creativity and curiosity in me that had grown dormant when my life was all about survival. To my surprise, two of my paintings were auctioned in an ASYV fundraiser in 2012 for \$300,000 in a lot with paintings from two other students. As we all developed the urge to communicate what was in our hearts through art and sports, we were able to contribute in different ways to our village's sustainability and in the process become change makers for our own community. In this way "repairing our hearts" contributed to "repairing the world."

We learned Tikkun Olam by engaging in acts of kindness for others that reinforced our agency in creating a more just world. Ann used to tell us that our life is like a line made of past, present, and future, and when this line breaks in the past, there is a need for someone to help mend it in the present so that hope for the future can re-emerge from solid ground. Many of us had no memories of our parents, with no or little knowledge of our family lineage, and this broken line was mended by the community Ann created for us. She consistently told us that starting the village was only the beginning and the only thing she could do, but the big task of Tikkun Halev, of repairing hearts, was ours to take part in for life. Tikkun Olam activities every week consisted in community service in the neighboring areas around the village. These acts include repairing the destroyed houses or the kitchens of widows, cultivating land for them, buying mattresses or other furniture for them, helping in the health center, and teaching English in primary schools. The experience of Tikkun Olam sparked the realization that many people lived with far more suffering and poverty than we had known. Tikkun Olam projects made us put aside what we saw as our problems to see how we can be of service to the world. Every semester, we would fundraise within the village to buy materials we would need for the Tikkun Olam projects of the year.

Through communal support, we were able to share our personal experiences within our 32 families, which contributed to the process of self-healing. The communal learning experience opened our minds and hearts in ways that continues to create

opportunities for us to discover and develop our talents. During an interview, Ann stated “the kids could have not done any better without a feeling of a meaningful connection and belongingness to a group of people whom they share the same experience” (<http://www.asyv.org/>). After her untimely death in January 2014, Ann was honored in Rwanda and mourned by ASYV students and alumni in the same way a loving mother is remembered. After four years in ASYV, my class graduated, and we all left the village for university. We could write e-mails to our grandmother Ann, as we called her. When I got my scholarship to McGill University, she sent me an e-mail congratulating me and promising me that she would visit as much as she could. She was very proud of me, and I could feel her joy as if she were my blood parent. Ann made sure we knew that even though we had left the village, she still cared about us and we would always be part of the ASYV family. She passed away three weeks before she had planned to come visit me for the first time at McGill University.

ASYV could not have been a success without the commitment, love, and passion of Sifa Nsengimana, the first Rwandan woman that Ann met when she was working to establish the village. Sifa was an advocate and human rights activist. She had been a voice for the voiceless, especially for those who suffered during the atrocities committed in Darfur, Sudan in 2006. As a Rwandan woman who grew up in exile in the Democratic Republic of Congo, Sifa’s childhood experience was in a foreign country. Her experience seeded responsibility and desire to fight against injustice. At an early age, she realized that facing injustice of any kind required her to cultivate exceptional courage and determination. She shared with us the inspiring story of her own struggle with growing up in exile and how she overcame these tribulations. Nancy Adler (2007, p. 426) asserts that “courage transforms wisdom, which is knowledge of what is true and right, into a meaningful action.” Sifa’s early dream and involvement in human rights activism was rooted in a desire to lead toward sustainable health beyond her family’s and her own early wounding from living in exile. Sifa became the first director of ASYV, where she mentored many of us. Her embodied transmutation of her own suffering through positive action was a source of feminine wisdom grounded in Rwandan spirituality for all the youth she inspired at ASYV. Ann’s and Sifa’s vision was always to help us find our way, by maximizing our full potential. Sadly, Sifa died in a car accident in late 2012 just a month before our

graduation. Both Sifa and Ann are remembered as authentic leaders and mother figures able to help a younger generation dream and pursue the direction of their dreams. They both worked to bring out our “salient innate capabilities” (Ayman, 1993) and our “hidden talents and potentials.”

Before we were taken in by ASYV, we were all orphans, many living on the street or in equally hopeless situations. Our courage came from the ASYV mothers who opened our eyes, hearts, and minds in order to see the world differently by transforming our grief into courage. My family mother, Mama Any, told us one day “each one of you holds your beloved ones inside of yourself, and because of that you should always strive to contribute to the greater good so their legacies can be expanded through your lived life.” As Mama Any encouraged students to hold deceased ones in inner worlds, she was teaching us to transmute our suffering. By making our loved ones part of our outward social realities through honoring their legacies, we cultivated a healing spiritual connection to them. This practice of altering and continuing the connection to lost ones has been described in new models of grief research as a very effective way to cope with loss while adapting to change in an integrated way. This social validation of past trauma and present life allowed new dimensions and possibilities to be strived for that did not sever the connection to the deceased (see Howarth, 2000; Klass, Silverman, & Nickman, 1996). ASYV students could believe that success would not only bring happiness but would build on the positive legacy of lost ones and a nation’s healing, thus deepening the Tikkun Halev and Tikkun Olam practices.

Mama Any was more than an advisor or motivator to us; she created a space where mouthing “mama” allowed an embodied loving response where emptiness and darkness had been. Before ASYV, I had never called anyone “mama.” In my first few weeks in the village, I kept by myself, sitting quietly in the corner of our house because I never liked being where other people were chatting. Mama Any would be moving all around checking on everyone. One day she found me in my corner and then came to me and told me a Rwandan proverb that translates “holding on to sorrow won’t kill you but it will nurture darkness in your heart; you are so beautiful when you smile so go and join others.” I discovered that I looked beautiful when I smiled. The idea that I might be beautiful had never occurred to me.

One day during a family time, Mama Any told us “you have lost your family and relatives but you have us today. You are

my daughters and I love you all as much as I love my Nicole” (her only surviving daughter out of five children). Even though we have lost our beloved ones, we still have our own life and future. She would encourage us to create our own happiness as a practice to live strong vibrant lives. She would sit us down and talk to us about how she survived hardships and brutal losses during the genocide. We were too young to have any memories but her memories gave me a space to trust in her, in life. And my fondness for her grew. Mama Any encouraged us to own the destiny of our lives and let people know that we are living a purposeful life. She would say “aho kubabara, ni mugire umujinya mwiza” which literally means “instead of being sad, have good anger,” with the understanding that your sadness will only attract pity from others, whereas “good” anger will allow you to work through your suffering and succeed in your mission of honoring the legacy of your lost families. This preference for “good anger” over what would be bad or destructive action or sadness is grounded in Rwandan spirituality. This traditional wisdom for societal healing enables action and vulnerability to coexist, instead of allowing numbing or anger to take over and open a door to impulsive aggression. The many words of encouragement and motivation we got from Mama Any resonated to me with what [Tedeschi and Calhoun \(2004, 2007\)](#) call “posttraumatic growth.” With the family mothers’ support, we learned to use our grief to accelerate positively our desire of making a step forward and owning our destiny, present and past. Tikkun Halev and Tikkun Olam also favored transmuting suffering by ensuring as much as possible all our energy was used toward good deeds and right action for the world and our own selves. New memories of positive empowered action fueled by good anger of past trauma created new inner spaces for youth at ASYV.

This “permanent embodiment of grief” allowed us to transmute our suffering and to mourn without shame ([Pendleton, 2009](#), p. 334). What stays in the shadows can be scapegoated and humiliated. The communal and spiritual dimensions of “repairing the heart” and “repairing the world” made space for contained vulnerability and compassion. This brought light to the broken heart spaces, sweeping away shame. I remember on the night of the 18th commemoration of the Genocide in 2012, Grand-mère Augusta (the eldest of the village mothers so we honored her by calling her Grandmother in French) telling us “don’t live in sadness and grief in your heart but rather have courage and motivation which will enable you to accomplish your loved ones’ unfinished tasks. Avoid

any anger that may restore hate but rather make decisions toward progress, and your progress will be an inspiring example to others.” Though that night was for mourning, we gained strength by encouraging each other and reminding each other that we have a lot to accomplish in the short time of our lives. Mama Augusta’s words told us that our beloved ones left an unfinished mission, and we are responsible to take it to completion for them and for our success will always be a great honor to them. We began to clothe the nakedness of our hearts, raw from hopelessness and disappointment, in humanity with the love of the women leaders of ASYV.

Transmuting Suffering and Inequality into Hope and Opportunity

Connecting with the embodied emotions of anger, rage, and sadness has been critical to Rwandan women’s journey of post-traumatic growth. The Latin origin of emotion, *emovere*, means to stir or agitate. Emotions as energy in motion can be used for good or evil. What type of action will this stirring produce? Touching anger without taking it to aggression has encouraged a connection that can be cultivated in the present and honors the deceased loved ones. The traditional wisdom in the concept of “good anger” allows “reinforcement for the emotions, thoughts and spirit” felt by the bereaved (Bagalishya, 2000, p. 341). It also incites behavior that supports growth while letting go of blame and retribution. Traditional proverbs in Rwanda convey symbolic representations that encourage emotional literacy and reflection for growth. Growing up with the gift of Rwandan elders, benefiting from these sayings was passed on as spiritual food, in the same way as actual nourishment is essential to physical growth and thriving. Drawing on the ancient tradition of using proverbs to pass on wisdom, family mothers at ASYV reconnect youth who lost their parents and other loved ones with the collective wisdom that has been part of Rwanda’s spiritual fabric for centuries. Such reconnection promotes social harmony and is in line with the intent of Tikkun Halev/Tikkun Olam, of repairing hearts and the world. Ann Heyman’s intention of mending the pain of Rwanda’s youth was grounded in her Jewish faith and skillfully aligned with the collective wisdom of Rwandan proverbs used by ASYV mothers to bridge the fractured

past of the youth with indigenous imagery to repair hearts and Rwandan society more broadly.

Women leaders in Rwanda have worked to heal their own trauma in ways that have helped transform society. Rwandan women have actively lobbied after 1994 for gender justice through new legislation on inheritance, on the matrimonial regime, and on the punishment of acts of violence committed against women and children to increase women's agency tremendously. The recently established National Gender Policy, for example, is mainstreaming gender into local policies, programs, and government budgets (Gervais & Ubalijoro, 2013, p. 67). Prior to 1994, women and girls could not inherit property or open a bank account without the authorization of a male family member. Women in Rwanda are constructing their own worlds, inner and outer, bringing "their own meaning for those worlds and their own self-identity within those worlds" (Giddens as cited in Howarth, 2000, p. 130). All of the women described earlier are transmuting their own suffering without disconnecting from their grief through contributing their skills and life experience toward the work of building societal and planetary health.

Finding a Sense of the Self Through Drumming as a Collective Healing Activity

Change fundamentally involves modifying behavior through culture. Rwandan women are working through culture to vision new ways of being. Drumming in Rwanda is a sacred form of music. Ingoma Nshya broke with Rwanda's long held tradition of drumming being reserved to men by creating Rwanda's first women drumming troupe. Ingoma Nshya deeply embodies a communal transmutation of suffering for posttraumatic growth and builds on traditional feminine wisdom of continuing bonds and the use of "good anger" in a novel way for Rwandan women. Many of the women of Ingoma Nshya are genocide orphans, survivors, and widows from all sides of the conflict. Ingoma Nshya has created a new space for women to gather, transform their suffering, and bring forward their dreams into sweet success. They have toured around the world and have also created a social venture in the South of Rwanda where

the National University is located producing and selling ice cream from local produce. Through this social venture in partnership with Jennie Dundas and Alexis Miesen from Brooklyn's Blue Marble Organic Ice Cream Shop, the women of Ingoma Nshya have been able to include non-women drummers into a joint venture that helps fund the organization, contributes to transformation of local agricultural produce, and creates additional nonagricultural jobs for women locally. This transnational connection of women was ignited following a meeting between Kiki Katese, founder of Ingoma Nshya and Dundas where both committed to working together to arouse joy and catalyze new economic opportunities for women in Rwanda.¹

All the women leaders described continue to "bring hope to seemingly hopeless situations, not because rational analysis allows them to conclude that evil can or will be superseded, but rather, because it is human to have hope" (Adler, 2008, p. 10).

This spirit of transmuting suffering is present in each case. The capacity to cultivate creative endeavors has been central to Rwandan women's journey to help heal the country away from divisive policies. The Rwandan women leaders and the organizations that have been described are glimpses of the collective efforts grounded in the feminine to move away from the divisive policies that tore their country apart over a century and embody remembrance and move forward in new ways to promote a healthy world.

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¹The adventure of Ingoma Nshya's ice cream shop creation and the healing work that is being birthed have been captured in the documentary film *Sweet Dreams* (<http://www.sweetdreamsrwanda.com/film/>).

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