

AFRICAN VOICES

A NEWSLETTER ON DEMOCRACY AND GOVERNANCE IN AFRICA

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Female Genital Mutilation from a Human Rights Perspective *USAID Working Group Focuses on Prevention and Awareness*

by the USAID Working Group on FGM

The ordeal of Fauziya Kasinga, who was granted asylum in a precedent-setting decision by the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service rather than return to Togo where she feared being forcibly subjected to female genital mutilation, or FGM, brought widespread attention to the issue in the United States and elsewhere. FGM, also termed female circumcision, collectively refers to several traditional practices that involve cutting and partial removal of sexual organs. The centuries-old practice can cause severe harm to girls and women throughout their lives, at times resulting in death.

FGM remains an extremely complex and culturally sensitive, and involves a broad spectrum of issues such as maternal and child health, population, and human rights, and USAID is taking a multisectoral approach to its prevention. As part of its efforts to eliminate the practice of FGM, USAID is collecting data on its prevalence through several demographic and health surveys and situation analyses of family planning/reproductive health service delivery (see table on page 5). The Agency is also working to empower women to undertake actions that will halt the practice of FGM.

Prevalence of FGM

The World Health Organization estimated in 1994 that between 85 and 115 million girls and women have been subjected to FGM worldwide. Approximately two million girls per year, primarily from Western and Eastern Africa, are at risk. Most commonly, young girls between the ages of four and 12 are subjected to FGM.¹

The prevalence of FGM varies according to education, social class, and level of urbanization, with the highest prevalence rates in rural communities with limited exposure to formal education and information networks. Although FGM is not a requirement of any religion, many traditions dictate that women be “circumcised” for acceptance into their communities. Entire families of girls refusing to submit to this tradition may be severely ostracized.

Studies conducted in Kenya and Nigeria in the late 1980s and early 1990s indicate that FGM is still prevalent. Approximately 90 percent of women over 14 who were interviewed for the Kenya study had been circumcised, while the Nigeria

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Center for Women Promotes Conflict Resolution in Burundi

by Rebecca Jennings and Sandra Melone

Each week since it opened in January 1996 nearly 200 women visit the Center for Women in Bujumbura, Burundi, to rebuild their communities with their colleagues and counterparts from the other ethnic group. The Center for Women was established by Search for Common Ground (SCG) with USAID funding, and in collaboration with local Burundian women. The Center recognizes that Burundian women—both Hutu and Tutsi—share common concerns, making them prime candidates for developing efforts towards ethnic reconciliation.

The goal of the Center for Women, the only one of its kind in Burundi, is to promote ethnic reconciliation by facilitating dialogue and mutual understanding, fostering joint undertakings, and by offering training in conflict resolution skills. The Center serves as a model for ethnic reconciliation as it promotes dialogue and cooperation between Hutu and Tutsi women against the backdrop of common issues such as health, education, families, and legal rights.

The Center is working with approximately 40 women’s organizations throughout Burundi that are promoting peaceful reconciliation. It has been instrumental in teaching these organizations how to bring Hutu and Tutsi women in their provinces together for dialogue, shared activities, and reconstructing their neighborhoods. The Center’s programs include:

Conflict Resolution Training

In cooperation with International Alert and the United

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Former President of Benin Visits Washington, DC

Soglo praises the role of civil society and the international community in the democratization process

“In Benin, we . . . accomplished an exceptional task in exceptional circumstances,” said the former president of Benin, Nicéphore Soglo, in remarks he made while visiting USAID headquarters in Washington D.C. on July 8, 1997. Soglo was in Washington to present a draft of his paper, “The Challenge of Democratization and Economic Reform in Africa: The Case of Benin,” which was funded under USAID’s Equity and Growth through Economic Research (EA-GER) project.

Soglo’s paper analyzes the democratic transition that Benin has been engaged in for several years as well as the progress it has made since embarking on an ambitious economic reform program that has led to some of the highest economic growth rates in sub-Saharan Africa.

In summarizing his paper, Soglo said that the democratic and economic miracle of Benin makes sense only by examining its progress in the context of its history and culture. Benin, he said, was born during the time of slavery, and its emergence as a country was linked to its people’s need to defend themselves against this institution.

Soglo said that during and after the European scramble for Africa of the 1870s and 1880s, the French pattern of colonization systematically destroyed the social evolution of the region and ruined any chance Benin had of surviving economically after it won independence nearly one century later. This led to the cycle of coup attempts and chronic instability that have characterized Benin’s politics from independence in 1961 until the National Conference of 1991, and also explained the economy’s continued reliance on the export of raw materials and forest products.

Soglo discussed the evolution of political parties in Benin, the events that culminated in the Marxist-oriented coup of 1972, the nationalization of industries that followed, and the

country’s economic decline. As conditions worsened, Soglo said, Benin became unable to pay its civil servants, students were going on strike, work camps were set up, and political dissent

Benin is an example of how democratic and economic reform can occur at the same time, and history will prove that this process is inevitable in Africa.

—Nicéphore Soglo

was regularly countered with torture and imprisonment.

Given these conditions, Soglo said the government had no choice but to allow the National Conference to take place in 1991. He said that other factors contributed to this decision, however, including the French government, which was concerned about losing influence in Africa, the international lending institutions, which had made democratization a condition for releasing balance of payments support, and the Beninois elite classes, which were demanding democratic reforms.

Soglo praised the role that civil society played in democratizing Benin, particularly religious groups. Working under pressure—from both the government and “those who wanted a civil war”—conference delegates appointed Soglo the head of the government for a transition period, but gave most executive functions to the prime minister.

The transitional government immediately undertook an economic recovery program that tried to ensure regional and ethnic balance. Soglo said that the new government, with the support of the National Assembly and the international community, consolidated the banking system, embarked on a privatization effort, and adopted a con-

stitution that opted for the presidential system.

Soglo said that he had made many mistakes politically, “mainly because I am not an expert in politics.” He added that Benin is an example of how democratic and economic reform can occur at the same time, and history will prove that this process is inevitable in Africa.

Soglo closed by noting his optimism for Africa’s future. “If you have a team that is motivated, and is supported externally and internally, you can go from three percent growth to more than six percent in three years and maintain it.”

Dana Ott of USAID’s Africa Bureau Information Center contributed to this article.

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USAID Seminars Catalyze Local Development Project in Mali

City of Sikasso begins work on \$2 million asphaltting project

In 1993 and 1994 USAID's Mission in Mali, in collaboration with Mali's Ministry of Territorial Administration, organized a series of municipal management training seminars on the mobilization of local financial resources. The seminars succeeded in mobilizing officials in the city of Sikasso, for shortly afterward, citizens at all levels of Sikassan society began planning a large asphaltting project, the full \$2 million cost of which will be funded with locally-raised revenue.

The seminars were funded by USAID's Human Resources Development Assistance (HRDA) project, which supports Mali's decentralization process. One of the seminars was held in Sikasso Commune, and was attended by 60 locally-elected town representatives, administrative officials, and others involved in managing the town's resources. The U.S. ambassador to Mali, Donald Gelber, encouraged those attending to take responsibility for the development of Sikasso, noting that development opportunities arise from democracy, and that activities underpinned by democratic processes from top to bottom are more likely to succeed.

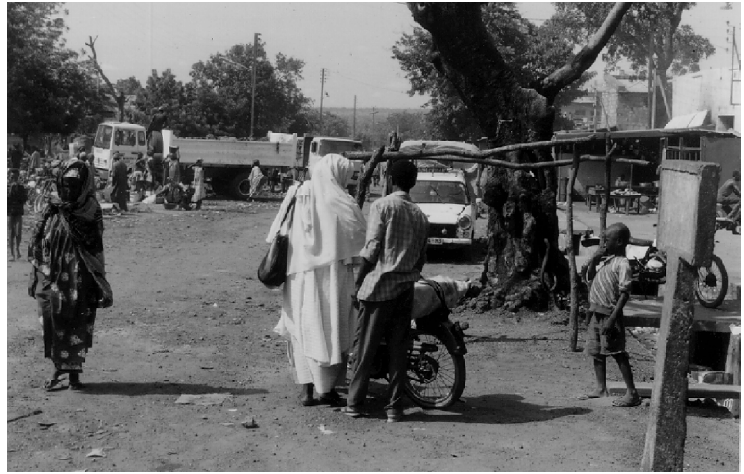
Sikasso, with a population of 80,000, is Mali's third largest city. Located in the center of the country's most fertile region, it serves as a connecting hub between Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire, and Dakar, Senegal, via Bamako, Mali's capital. While the citizens of Sikasso had been discussing paving their main roads since 1993, it was the USAID seminars that catalyzed the launching of the project, which is the first of its kind in Mali to have been initiated by the local population and financed by locally-raised fees and taxes.

Implicit in USAID decentralization activities are the assumptions that access to political decision-making is fundamental to democracy and that local governments are closer to the people, more responsive to local needs, and more

effective in encouraging citizen participation in decision-making.

This project is an important success for Sikasso's decentralization efforts, because it showed that municipal authorities could organize themselves to raise a substantial amount of money on their own. Overall tax revenues have increased by 400 percent through additional taxes, including the establishment of a toll on the international road that passes around Sikasso. Authorities also improved the collection of revenue by tax collectors, ensured that merchants contributed their share, and succeeded in getting the military to pay its road tolls. In addition, civil servants and Sikasso citizens, both within and outside the city, played a substantial role in raising revenue.

The goal of the asphaltting project is to pave nine miles of town streets at a total cost of about \$2 million. To date the city has raised and disbursed about \$180,000. Work was launched in January 1997, beginning with gutter improvements and grading on one of the town's largest streets, Odehoud Boulevard. While activities have temporarily stopped due to the rainy season, a contract has been awarded for the asphaltting of the street. Streets have been redesigned with two 25-foot wide lanes, which will be paved with a three-and-a-half inch thick layer of asphalt. Project plans also call for traffic lights and in-



Odehoud Boulevard is visible on the left. On the right is one of the two gutters that have been cleared and repaired in preparation for asphaltting.

terchanges at several intersections.

This effort is also an important success for Mali's decentralization efforts. The Malian government has been focusing on decentralizing since 1991—as a matter of survival rather than due to prodding by USAID or other donors—and most Malians now talk knowledgeably about this new idea of government. The Malian daily newspaper *l'Essor* wrote a laudatory article on the launching of the project, holding it up as an example for the rest of the country. Sikasso's mayor, one of the major forces behind the project, agrees with this assessment. In opening ceremonies marked by folk celebrations and attended by many local citizens and visiting dignitaries, Mayor Mamadou Koné thanked the town's residents for becoming involved and making the asphaltting activity possible. Koné added that the level of citizen involvement in this activity bodes well for other decentralization efforts in Mali.

Sekou Sidibé of USAID/Mali and Hal Lippman of USAID's Center for Development Information and Evaluation contributed to this report.

—John Engels

Female Genital Mutilation from a Human Rights Perspective

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study indicated a prevalence range of 15 to 90 percent. In some parts of West Africa secret societies perform ritual circumcision as a part of female initiation rites. A recent report from Sierra Leone claimed that at least 600 young girls at a camp for displaced people outside of Freetown were subjected to FGM during such a ceremony. One hundred of the girls, who were between the ages of eight and 15, were reported to have suffered severe complications.

Complications resulting from FGM include hemorrhaging, shock during the procedure that can result in death, infection, urine retention with accompanying complications, permanent damage to the urethra or anus, serious negative psychological and social complications, and depending on the form of FGM, obstructed labor and delivery, jeopardizing the safety of both mother and child.

International Law²

In addition to having potentially serious health consequences, the practice of FGM seriously violates women's human rights. Women's rights and health are protected under major human rights treaties, including the *International Bill of Human Rights*, which includes the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, the *International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights*, and the *International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights*. The *Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment* may also be applicable to FGM.

In 1990, the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women adopted *General Recommendation No. 14, Female Circumcision*, which noted "with grave concern that there are continuing cultural, traditional and economic pressures that help to perpetuate harmful practices, such as female circumcision."

Article 2 of the *Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women* explicitly states that "Violence against women shall be understood to encompass, but not be limited to . . . physical, sexual, and psychological violence occurring in the family, including battering, sexual abuse of female children in the household, dowry-related violence, marital rape, female genital mutilation, and other traditional practices harmful to women."

Critical to prevention efforts are public awareness campaigns designed to underscore the harmful effects of FGM.

Governments worldwide also recognize that FGM violates the rights of children, as stated in Article 24(3) of the 1990 United Nations *Convention on the Rights of the Child*: "State Parties shall take all effective and appropriate measures with a view to abolishing traditional practices prejudicial to the health of children."

International Outcry

In May 1993 the 46th World Health Assembly adopted a resolution, sponsored by a group of African countries, which highlighted the importance of eliminating harmful traditional practices, including FGM. Other international conferences have also condemned the practice. The Programme of Action of the 1994 United Nations International Conference of Population and Development in Cairo urged all governments to "prohibit female genital mutilation wherever it exists and to give vigorous support to efforts among non-governmental and community organizations and religious institutions to eliminate such practices." The Platform for Action from the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing, China (1995), mentions the practice a total of

nine times in sections pertaining to health, violence, the girl child, negative cultural practices, and discrimination against women.

Legal Intervention

International commitments applicable to FGM are already in place in many countries through the ratification of the treaties mentioned above. Although supporting legislation for criminal punishment of such practices might be effective tools for preventing FGM, in countries where large majorities believe in and adhere to these traditional practices, legal sanctions incriminating providers might prove counterproductive. For example, when a presidential decree in Kenya prohibited FGM, several hundred young girls were immediately circumcised as a result. Anecdotal evidence indicates that girls in many countries are being circumcised at increasingly younger ages in response to fears that the practice will become illegal in their communities.

Twenty-one countries in sub-Saharan Africa have published policies opposing FGM. Sudan, Ghana, and Burkina Faso have legislation that legally prohibits the practice; Guinea and the Central African Republic also have enacted laws that may be interpreted to address FGM. Yet to date, these laws and policies have not yet been proved effective in curtailing the practice.

Although laws that criminalize FGM may result in backlash, drive the practice underground, or ultimately increase its severity, some form of litigation may prove useful in combating the practice. For example, designing a civil code of recourse that would enable the complainant to bring suit against those who would attempt circumcision may be a promising (albeit untried) method. Such activities could pave the way for clear policy declarations by states parties and professional bodies.

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Strategies for Intervention

Critical to prevention efforts are public awareness campaigns designed to underscore the harmful effects of FGM. Private counseling of clients and parents could assist such an effort. Because FGM is perpetuated by the entire community, everyone must be involved in eradication efforts through public education campaigns. Other efforts addressing key factors in the practice, such as alternative initiation rites and alternative economic opportunities for circumcisors, also show promise.

USAID's Approach

USAID is committed to halting the practice of FGM. Because FGM is a gender-based, sociocultural, health, and human rights issue, any interventions require a multisectoral approach. FGM is a problem that involves entire communities, including men, women, girls, boys, grandparents, midwives, traditional birth attendants, doctors, nurses, and religious and community leaders. Prevention efforts must be appropriate to each target group and be culturally sensitive. For example, programs to change the attitudes of mothers and daughters may need to involve males to be effective.

The cornerstone of USAID's approach to this issue is to empower women from host countries to undertake actions that will halt the practice of FGM. The Agency remains committed to the principles of participatory development, and such an approach becomes even more pivotal when addressing an issue as sensitive as FGM. By helping women to work within their own communities and political structures for change, USAID will ensure that sustainable changes in attitudes and practices will be achieved in a culturally appropriate manner.

USAID's Actions To Date

Issues involving FGM relate to two of USAID's main goals: stabilizing global population and protecting human health; and building democracy. Dur-

ing fiscal years 1994 and 1995 USAID committed \$1.5 million towards the eradication of FGM. An Agency-wide FGM Task Force established in 1994 meets regularly to ensure attention to FGM and to plan and implement USAID support in this area. Activities include:

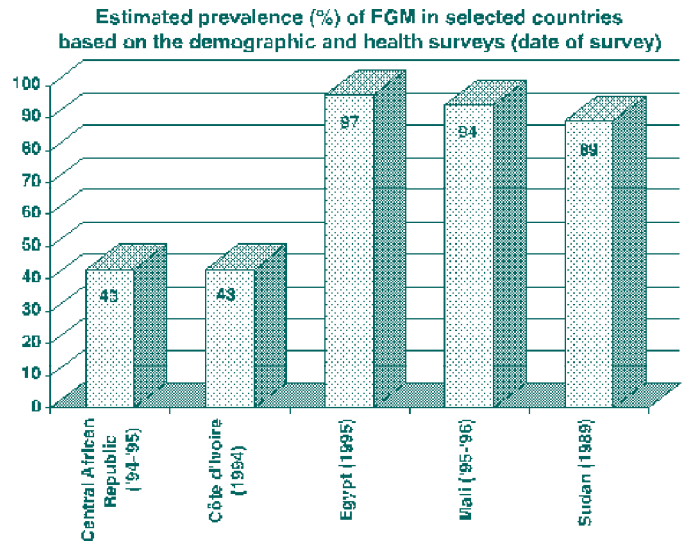
Program Guidelines:

In collaboration with the non-governmental organization Research, Action, and Information Network for Bodily Integrity of Women (RAINBO), the FGM Working Group has developed program guidelines for the eradication of FGM. These guidelines, which will form the basis of an Agency Strategy, provide for establishing a liaison to help coordinate FGM programs and activities; and training for Washington and field-based staff. They also specify programmatic needs for future activities.

Policy and Inter-Agency Collaboration: working group members cooperate with other organizations working in the area of FGM, including: participating in the first World Health Organization Technical Working Group on FGM, which developed the international definition and classification of FGM; coordinating with the Department of State and the U.S. Government Intra-Agency Working Group on FGM Eradication Activities; and collaborating with the Department of Health and Human Services to formulate plans to carry out the Congressional mandate to address the issue of FGM in the United States.

USAID is undertaking several projects addressing both the human rights and health aspects of the practice:

Human Rights and Legal Reform Interventions: USAID's Office of Women in Development is collaborating with the Center for Development and Population Activities and the Inter-



national Center for Research on Women to strengthen the efforts of women's groups and community organizations to educate communities, the media, and policymakers about the human rights implications of FGM, and to implement preventive programs such as advocacy and legal reform.

Community Interventions and Operations Research: Cooperating Agencies of USAID's Center for Population, Health, and Nutrition are conducting operations research to develop and test community-level interventions for the prevention of FGM in several countries, including Kenya, Mali, Guinea, Eritrea, and Burkina Faso. Information and education materials are being developed in Egypt, and work is underway to develop operations research activities in Navrongo, Ghana.

For more information contact Cate Johnson, USAID/G/WID, SA-38, Room 908, Washington, DC 20523-3802; telephone 703-816-0269; e-mail cate@usaid.gov

¹Toubia, Nahid. *Female Genital Mutilation: A Call for Global Action*. New York: Research, Action, and Information Network for Bodily Integrity of Women, 1995.

²This section is based on a report written by Binaifer Davar: "Alert Series: Female Genital Mutilation." Asylum Division of the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service, 1994.

Center for Women Promotes Conflict Resolution in Burundi

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Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), the Center for Women sponsored a series of training-of-trainers sessions in conflict resolution. Each session brought together key women from various provinces in Burundi who are in positions of influence in their communities and trained them how to incorporate tools of peacemaking into their jobs and conduct training sessions. Part of the training included an analysis of the root causes of the conflict as well as dialogue between the Hutu and Tutsi trainees, allowing them to see and experience the struggles of the other side.

Dialogue Between Hutus and Tutsis

Because SCG is a foreign organization, certain activities are easier for it to safely initiate than for Burundian organizations. One of these is to help foster dialogue between groups and individuals who have been separated by war. For some time the Center has been a site for high level gatherings of Burundian women. When Burundi's newly appointed Minister of Human Rights, Social Action, and the Promotion of Women, Christine Ruhaza, held her first comprehensive meeting with representatives from women's groups and associations, she chose the Center for Women as the venue.

In addition, a group of women leaders who fled the country in 1996 and are now living in Kenya asked the Center to help in rebuilding dialogue between themselves and the women who remained in Burundi, with whom they are no longer in contact. The hope is twofold: that rapport can be established across the ethnic divide; and that the dialogue will help bring about the day when they can safely return home.

Roundtable Discussions

In Bujumbura the Center hosts weekly roundtable discussions where approximately 50 Hutu and Tutsi women from all social and political strata are brought together to share information in a variety of fields. The Center reaches out to new participants every time. These meetings foster dialogue and understanding between Hutu and Tutsi women, helping to create a culture of reconciliation. Participants often com-

Dialogue has played a critical role in rehumanizing each ethnic group's perception of the other. As the women meet face to face, they are able to see each other as individuals. As they see their similarities and put themselves in other people's shoes, they realize how important it is to cross the ethnic divide.

ment that participating in these roundtable discussions is the first time that they have exchanged information and ideas on such topics.

Dialogue in the Provinces

Women who live in each of Burundi's 15 provinces and who also belong to the National Network of Women for Peace and Non-Violence have been organizing a *journée de réflexion*, or a day of reflection. These one-day workshops have been convened in each of the provinces with the participation of 70 to 80 women from each ethnic group to discuss topics such as identifying the roots of the ethnic conflict and determining how people can live together again after being divided.

Creating Venues for Action

The Center is working with Burundian women to develop practical opportunities where theories on con-

flict resolution can be put into action. They are helping to create activities where people from both ethnic groups can work together, and have identified agricultural and microenterprise projects to enable Hutus and Tutsis to work on the land side by side as they have for generations. Groups of 50 Hutu and Tutsi women are brought together, often from the camps for internally displaced people, to work on these projects.

Fostering Communication Through Radio

Through its integration with Studio Ijambo, the radio studio SCG operates to reduce ethnic violence and counter hate radio, the Center has the opportunity to reach out to many more women all over the country than just those who can come to the Center directly. Discussions from events the Center is sponsoring are frequently produced by Studio Ijambo for broadcast on RTNB (Burundi's national radio station) as well as Voice of America and the BBC, both of which broadcast across the Great Lakes region.

In addition, last year the Studio broadcast a program on the vision women in the countryside have of women's associations in general. All of the women interviewed responded that they felt abandoned by the women in the city; some had heard that associations existed, but did not know what they were. They felt that most of the attention was being turned to women in the capital, not to peasant women like themselves, who were the backbone of the prewar economy. In only a matter of hours after this broadcast, dozens of women's groups were meeting at the Center for Women to figure out a strategy to reach out to women in the countryside, who are most in need of assistance.

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Studio Ijambo Stresses Peace and Reconciliation

Radio is the most productive and cost-effective means for delivering information in Africa's Great Lakes Region, where an estimated 85 percent of the population has access to radios. Unfortunately, this medium has often been successfully exploited to manipulate listeners and promote fear, distrust, and violence. Responding to the need for balanced and anti-inflammatory broadcasting, Search for Common Ground established Studio Ijambo (Kirundi for "wise words") in May 1995 with funding from USAID and private organizations, making it the first independent radio studio in Burundi.

Studio Ijambo uses radio as a means for promoting dialogue among Hutus and Tutsis and reducing ethnic tension among these groups by stressing themes of peace and national reconciliation. The studio provides a production facility in which journalists of both ethnic groups can produce high quality programs dedicated to reconciliation, humanitarian affairs, women's issues, human rights, and credible news and information. SCG decided to create a studio rather than a radio station to avoid any perception of impartiality. A radio station could have been perceived as a threat to established institutions and could be more easily labeled as pro-Hutu or pro-Tutsi.

Studio Ijambo is broadcast on *National Radio and Television of Burundi* (RTNB), which gives it access to a regional audience of several million people located in Eastern Democratic Republic of Congo, Rwanda, and Burundi. The studio provides daily news updates as well as feature and discussion programs (more than 500 to date). Ijambo produces roughly 15 hours per week of news, public affairs, and cultural programming primarily in Kirundi and French, with some programs in Swahili and Kinyarwanda.

Studio Ijambo requires that viewpoints of both ethnic groups be included in each program it produces. Listeners hear both sides of any given issue, and are able to make more informed decisions at the individual, community, and national level. The representation of both viewpoints is a critical means of promoting non-partisanship while reporting on ethnic conflict and it assures the studio's neutrality.

One of the most vital aspects of this project is the hiring of equal numbers of Hutu and Tutsi staff, which has a number of implications. This type of environment allows the staff to gain the perspective of the other side of the conflict, which helps to overcome stereotyping. When collecting news information, a team of two journalists, one Hutu and one Tutsi, is sent to the field to conduct interviews. Sending out such a team results in more balanced and responsible reporting. This approach has proven to be crucial in establishing the credibility of Studio Ijambo's programs with both Hutus and Tutsis. The studio's journalists are trained to use "non-conflictual" interviewing techniques, and are taught how to define a problem and generate concrete proposals for solutions using methods that promote ethnic reconciliation.

The presence of Studio Ijambo and its daily programming has shown that it is possible to cover potentially contentious topics in a constructive and responsible way. The *common ground* approach to interviewing and reporting has ensured neutrality in Studio Ijambo's reports of dangerous and sensitive events in Burundi and serves as an important example to listeners and government that people of both ethnic groups can work together peacefully.

Center for Women

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Reconstructing Neighborhoods

One of the primary issues that Burundian women have been asking the Center for help with is reconstructing the relationships they once had with their neighbors and families. The Center formed the Bujumbura Women's Group, which has served as the catalyst for bringing former Hutu and Tutsi neighbors together. Dialogue between estranged former neighbors is a solid first step in the process of building trust and is a prerequisite to people returning to their communities. This dialogue has played a critical role in rehumanizing each ethnic group's perception of the other. As the women meet face to face, they are able to see each other as individuals. As they see their similarities and put themselves in other people's shoes, they realize how important it is to cross the ethnic divide.

The greatest impact of the work by the Center for Women is that across the board the women who have been involved in these activities have unanimously agreed to take responsibility for dealing with the roots of the conflict. One result has been that neighbors who have been estranged are now either living together again as neighbors, or those neighbors who are still in the camps are in continuing dialogue with those who stayed.

Rebecca Jennings is SCG's Burundi project director, and Sandra Melone was the Center for Women's director in Burundi from January 1996 to July 1997. For additional information contact: Search for Common Ground, 1601 Connecticut Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20009; telephone 202-265-4300.



Publications on Democratization

Social Capital, Civil Society, and Contemporary Democracy, edited by Bob Edwards and Michael Foley. A special issue of "American Behavioral Scientist," March 1997. Available from Sage Publications, Inc., P.O. Box 5084, Thousand Oaks, CA 91359. (\$8.80)

Democracy in Africa: The Hard Road Ahead, by Marina Ottaway, 1997. Available from Lynn Rienner Publishers, 1800 30th Street, Suite 314, Boulder, Colorado 80301. (\$45.00)

Democratic Experiments in Africa: Regime Transitions in Comparative Perspective, by Michael Bratton and Nicolas van de Walle, 1997. Available from Cambridge University Press, 40 West 20th Street, New York, New York 10011-4211. (\$19.95)

Ethnicity in Africa: Towards a Positive Approach, by Seyoum Hameso,

1997. Available from TSC Publications, P.O. Box 12879, London W13 8WS, United Kingdom. (\$19.50)

Africa Now: People, Politics, Institutions, edited by Stephen Ellis, 1996. Available from Heinemann, 361 Hanover Street, Portsmouth, New Hampshire, 03801-3912. (\$25.00)

Democracy and Dictatorship in Ghana and Tanzania, by Robert Pinkney, 1997. Available from St. Martin's Press, Scholarly & Reference Division, 175 Fifth Avenue, New York, New York 10010. (\$59.95)

Political Reform in Francophone Africa, edited by John Clark and David Gardinier, 1996. Available from Westview Press, 5500 Central Avenue, Boulder, Colorado 80301-2877. (\$23.50)

The New Struggle for Democracy in Africa, by John A. Wiseman, 1996. Available from Ashgate Publishing Company, Old Post Road, Brookfield, Vermont 05036-9704. (\$59.95)

Conferences

The **Organisation for Democracy in Africa (ODA)** is dedicated to effective political education and sensitization of Africans to achieve and sustain democracy. The ODA, founded in 1994, believes it is time to "restore the continent to the path of sustainable growth predicated on the democratic right of the people to elect, install, and sustain responsible, responsive, and accountable governments." The ODA is organizing an international conference on democracy in Africa to be held in Abuja, Nigeria in October 1997. The conference will provide a forum for the exchange of ideas on how to put in place an action plan for building and sustaining democracy in Africa. For more information on ODA contact: Ezeemoo Ndu, ODA, 61 Owerri Road, P.O. Box 713, Eneku, Nigeria; telephone 234-42-770895, fax 234-42-550656. For information on the conference on democracy contact: Professor Obasi Igwe, Department of Political Science, University of Nigeria, Nsukka, Nigeria; telephone 234-42-770895.

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