



Nkwihoreze: exploring intergenerational resilience through creative arts in Rwanda

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8th June 2024

6th World Congress on Resilience

8th June 2024, World Congress on Resilience, Kigali. Presented by Ch. Uwihoreye



Arts and Humanities Research Council





Agenda

Background & Context

Birth of Nkwihoreze Project

Methodology

Findings

Implications

Trauma x Resilience

“How do you remember what you haven’t lived?”

I have to remember what I haven’t lived through those who did.

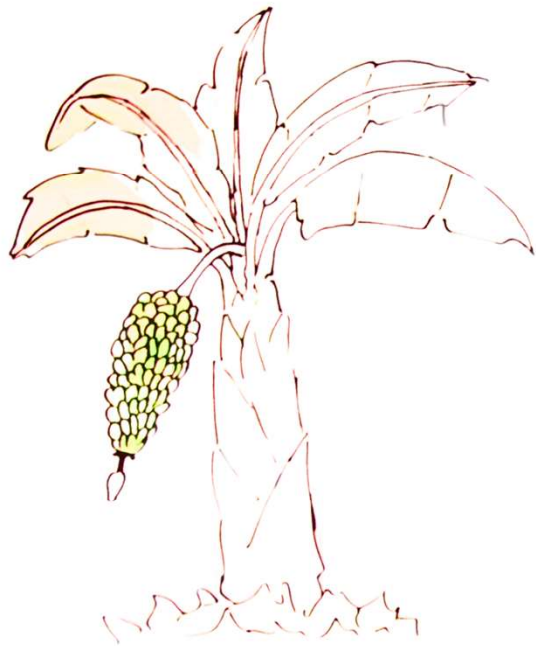
I have to play my role so that it won’t happen again.

I don’t need to have lived then to remember now.

Ivan Nyagatare



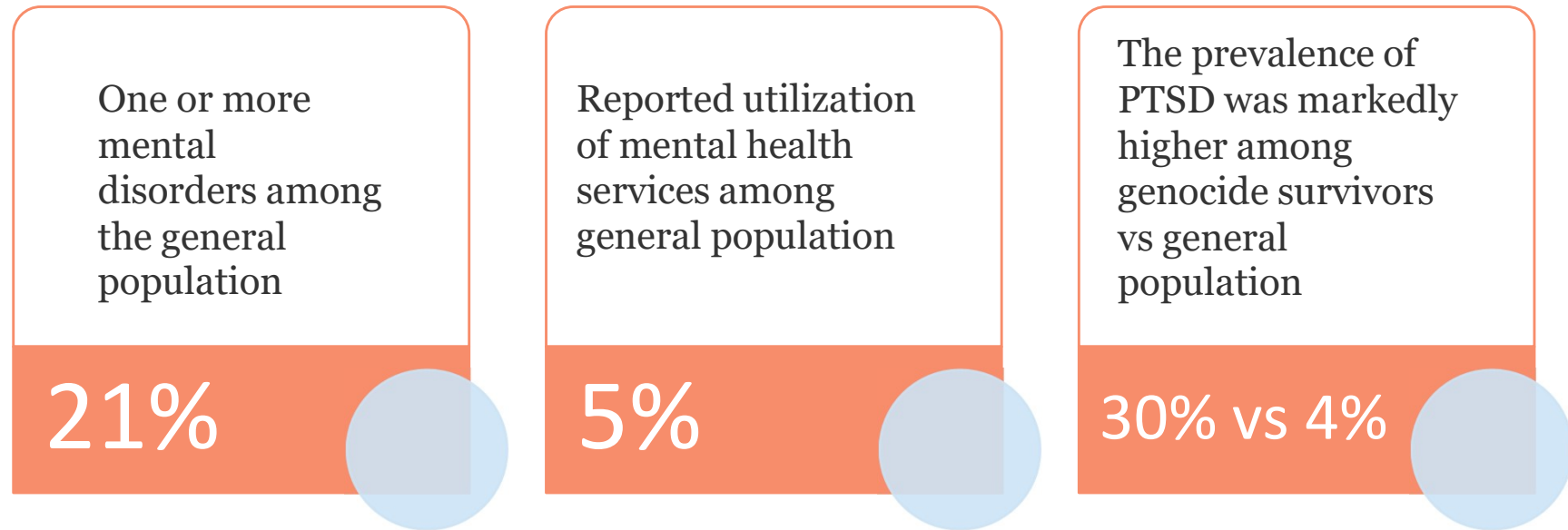
Trauma x Resilience



Trauma x Resilience

- Intergenerational transmission of trauma definition
- Existing body of research on trauma transmissions (i.e. sexual abuse, Holocaust survivors, Vietnam veterans)
- Growing body of research on trauma transmission. in Rwanda following the 1994 Genocide Against the Tutsi (Rudahindwa et al., 2020, Uwizeye et al., 2021; Uwizeye et al., 2022).





Data source: Kayiteshonga, Y., Sezibera, V., Mugabo, L. *et al.* (2022).

Mental health disorders in Rwanda

Focus purely on trauma
disempowering

Interventions based on Western
concepts give insufficient
consideration to specific social,
political and cultural context

Lack of consideration for children's
agency and meaning making



Challenges with existing body of evidence

Focus on resilience and healing through social reconnection, art is empowering

Creation of culturally appropriate tools in close cooperation with local community

Children's voice, co-production and multi-profession partnerships



Nkwihoreze: addressing challenges

“Taking care and strengthening one another” in Kinyarwanda

Nkwihoreze project: phases 2024



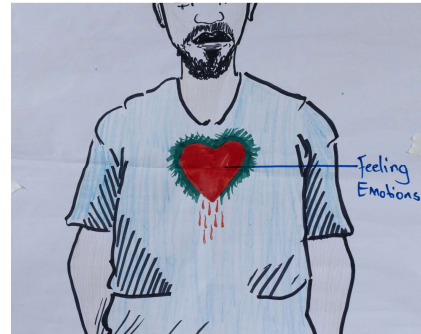
Jan - Feb

Two pilot workshops & participant recruitment (160 families)



March - August

Creative Arts workshops with children and ch.+families



Sept - November

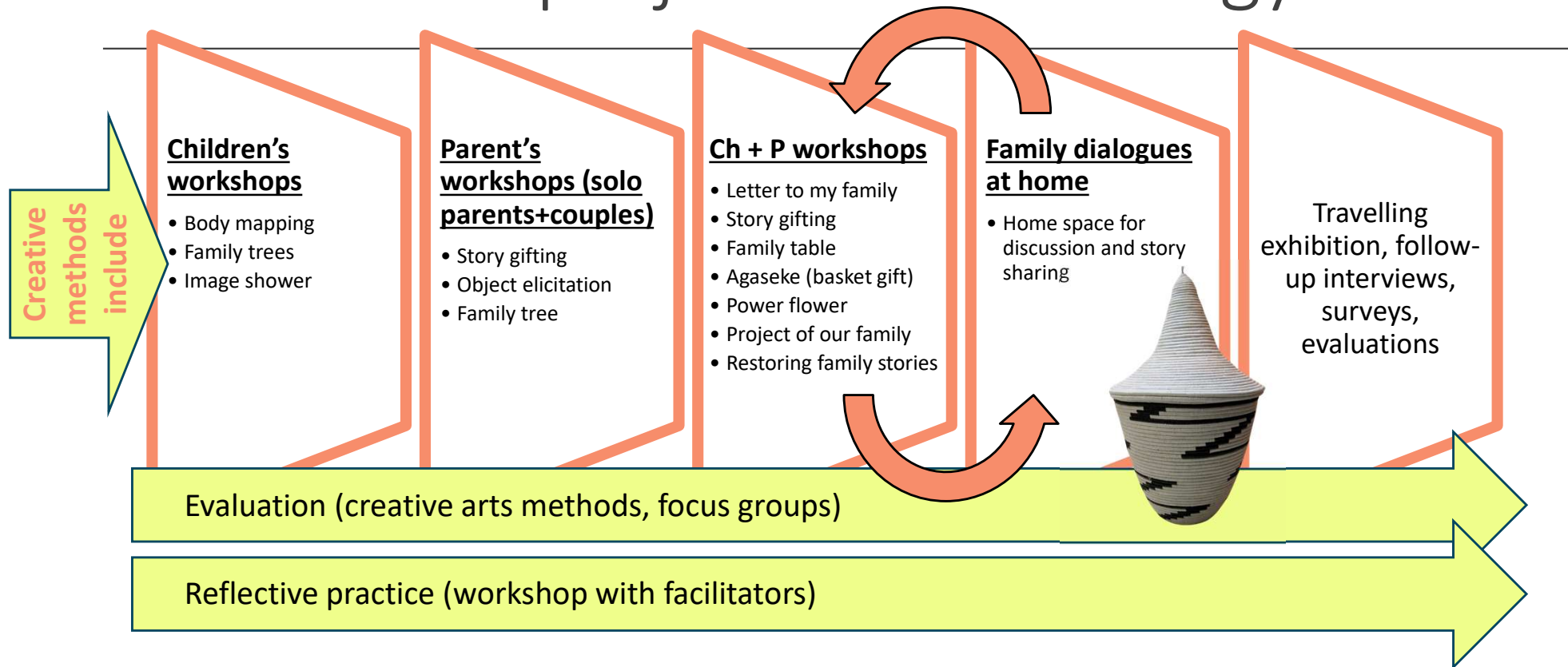
Travelling interactive exhibition and community visits



Nov - December

Train 100 psychosocial workers, dissemination, resources

Nkwihoreze project: Methodology



Nkwihoreze project: Findings (interim)



- project welcomed by families
- children want to explore stories
- children have lots of questions
- art enables communication about sensitive topics and is a natural connection to Rwandan culture

Nkwihoreze project: Findings (interim)

→ **'igitaramo cy'umuryango'**
(circle of family dialogue)

→ **Healing** for both participants
AND facilitators

→ resilience echoing through use
of **metaphors**

→ **resilience as a two-way flow**
(from children to parents as well as
parents to children)



Implications

- Need for awareness about intergenerational transmissions and value of family communication
- Mental health support must take into account historical and cultural context of Rwanda
- Interventions must be informed by young people's understandings
- Arts-based methods offer a promising approach to engaging with cultural understandings
- Understanding family stories as possible sources of strength or resilience



Conclusion

Questions



Thank you



www.nkwihoreze.org



NkwihorezeProject



@Nkwihoreze



References

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Nyagatare, Ivan: poem, For the full poem please see: <https://twitter.com/gentlemanwalkin/status/1511864878788657160>

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