

**100 Women Who Will Impact Rwanda, A Girls' Mentoring Camp**  
**Rwanda, Summer 2015 | Davis Project for Peace by Patricie Uwase Mavubi (Rwanda)**  
**International House UC Berkeley**

**Section I**

**Project Goals**

The mentoring camp, a network of about 100 young women from 20 secondary schools from across Rwanda, was both a one-week intensive leadership summit and a weeklong national women's mentorship awareness campaign. The purpose of the camp was to provide an opportunity for the generation of the world-renowned Rwandan women leaders to connect, mentor, and inspire the younger generation, so as to keep the momentum of women's participation in peace building in Rwanda.

**Project Planning**

As the planning details of the camp became clear, I estimated that I needed more financial means to cover the costs of the weeklong camp. Due to high inflation in Rwanda, everything had become more expensive. After talking to various restaurants in Kigali, I found out I had underestimated the food cost in my initial plan; feeding the girls for the seven days of the camp was to take a big chunk of the grant cash (\$8,900). In this line, I started a campaign to raise more donations. The fundraising campaign targeted local firms and agencies in Rwanda – and I also started an online campaign. I was able to raise \$2,100 from individual donors, \$815 from the online campaign, 480 bottles of water and cosmetic supplies for the 100 girls from a local manufacturing industry in Rwanda (SULFO Rwanda Industries).

The project was carried out through three phases; namely: 1. The planning stage, which started with the grant award in March 2015; 2. The selection process stage, which took place from July 2<sup>nd</sup> to July 15<sup>th</sup>, 2015 and; 3. The mentoring camp itself that happened from July 31<sup>st</sup> to August 7<sup>th</sup>, 2015. Two planning meetings were held in Kigali, Rwanda, prior to the camp, on June 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2015 as well as on June 28<sup>th</sup>, 2015. As for recruitment, on my first visit to a school, the school head teacher told me that they wouldn't trust me as an individual. I had to be from a recognized organization in Rwanda for them to entrust me with the girls. Also for fundraising purposes in Rwanda, I needed a sponsoring partner to be more credible. Therefore, I partnered with Paper Crown Institute (PCI), a local social enterprise that develops mentorship/empowerment programs for young women in Rwanda.

**Girls' Selection**

One hundred (100) young women, between the ages of 12 and 18, were selected and invited to the mentoring camp. To benefit the whole country equitably, the young women were selected from all five provinces of Rwanda, from a total of 20 secondary schools in the country. The girls were selected from schools located in 16 of the 30 districts of Rwanda. I randomly selected the 6 private schools and 14 public schools from a list of 1515 schools list provided by Rwanda's Ministry of Education. The aim was to reach

more economically disadvantaged girls, who are usually a majority in public schools. My recruitment team of eight people, selected from my pool of mentors, completed the selection process of the 100 girls in 10 days. As a screening condition to get a manageable sample of girls from each school, all the girls had to be at least in the top 10 of their class. Through interviews, at all schools, we selected girls that are self-motivated, disciplined, creative, open to new ideas, and who would make the most out of the camp. On average, it took one full day to select the girls at two schools. That time includes travel time to and from the school as well as the selection time.

After selecting five girls from each of 20 schools, we gave them an official admission letter and waiver form, letting them know that they would be ambassadors of their schools at the camp. The waiver form was signed by the girls' parents to grant them authorization to attend the camp.

The 100 young women campers became pioneers of a network that we have named "the 100 Women Who Will-Impact Rwanda (100 WWW-IR)", as we envision this camp to take place at least once every year.

**Mentoring Camp**

A team of 20 mentors joined me at the camp and helped as chaperones for the girls throughout the camp duration. I realized that hosting the 100 young women for a week alone would be hectic-almost impossible- so I involved other people as chaperones for the girls. I selected these mentors informally, as they are all people I have known for years working in Rwanda. Most of them are people that I worked with in the past, and whose life stories have inspired me personally. The recruiters/recruitment team of five was also drawn from my pool of mentors.

The camp took place from Friday, July 31<sup>st</sup>, 2015 to Friday, August 7<sup>th</sup>, 2015 at the Nyarugenge Campus of the University of Rwanda, in Kigali, the capital of Rwanda. 96 of the 100 young women arrived at the venue between 4pm and 6pm on July 31<sup>st</sup>, 2015, and our team of mentors was ready to receive and register them. Four of the selected girls could not attend the camp for unknown reasons. I have inquired from the four girls, and I found out that they couldn't attend due to personal and family issues (one had just lost her father, the other fell sick before the camp, and the two others had to attend another summer program).

For the next seven days, we had panel discussions on the power of a dream, the power of mentorship, career and educational opportunities, and the character of a successful person and leader. Our panelists ranged from government top leaders such as Rwanda's Minister of Youth, to successful young women entrepreneurs like IT start-up founders, to public figures such as the inspiring Miss Rwanda 2015, and many more. The girls also attended workshops on Sexual Reproductive Health (SRH), Gender & Leadership as well as Career Building and Networking skills, among many other activities over the seven days. The first workshop on SRH was given by one of the mentors, Malyse Uwase, a Public Health graduate student at Boston University, and the two other workshops were given by Paper Crown Institute, my sponsoring partner. The highlight of our programs was our glorious Mentoring Walk on one of Kigali's busiest streets, on our way to visiting Rwanda's Parliament, a Parliament that is world-renowned for its highest percentage of women parliamentarians.

## Section II

Twenty-one years after the genocide that claimed approximately one million lives in Rwanda, peace has a profound meaning and importance in the country. Not only does peace mean stability and the absence of war, it also signifies that each and every Rwandan, especially women, has to play a critical role in upholding peace in the country. Women have been the highlight of the success story of Rwanda's recovery from the destruction caused by the genocide. In 1994, several Rwandan women were on the forefront of the movement led by the Rwanda Patriotic Front (RPF), which stopped the genocide. Today, Rwandan women hold an unprecedented 64 percent of seats in Rwanda's parliament, a parliament with the highest female majority in the world<sup>1</sup>. However, there is a lack of interaction between current women leaders and the emerging young women leaders, and this is where the mentoring camp kicks in as a solution to the issue.

Through the camp activities, women were equipped to build intra- and inter-generational solidarity. Rwanda needs women that will keep the current momentum of women decision-makers & peacekeepers going, and this can only be achieved through mentoring and inspiring younger women. In this line, the mentoring camp indeed created a space, where young women connected and were mentored and inspired.

There is no doubt that this mentoring program has contributed to strengthening the momentum of women's participation in peace building in Rwanda. In the words of one of the young women that attended the camp, Gracie Ngaruka, "we will too strive to mentor other young women and participate in building a prosperous Rwanda as Patrice did". And like John F. Kennedy said, "one person can make a difference, and everyone should try". My hope is that these young women will try and be active participants in the peace-building journey that Rwanda has undertaken since 21 years ago. I am deeply indebted to all that helped me realize my dream to create this mentorship program, especially the Davis Projects for Peace grant program.

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<sup>1</sup> Source: <http://www.voanews.com/content/rwandan-parliament-female-majority-targets-equality/1757899.html>



**Photo 1:**  
Patricie Uwase  
(on podium)  
speaking to  
the 100  
Women Who  
Will Impact  
Rwanda, in  
the Plenary  
Hall of  
Rwanda's  
Parliament



**Photo 2:**  
Patricie Uwase  
(on the  
sidewalk)  
guiding the  
100 Women  
Who Will  
Impact  
Rwanda in a  
Mentoring  
Walk to raise  
awareness  
about the  
power of  
mentorship



**Photo 3:**  
Patricie Uwase  
dancing at  
Rwandan  
traditional  
dance, with  
one of the 100  
WWW-IR and  
guests, at the  
closing  
ceremony of  
the mentoring  
camp.