

The Rwando-Congolese Dialogue



Report of the Fact-Finding Mission to Rwanda May 2017

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I. Executive Summary

A team of students from Columbia University's School of International and Public Affairs recently assisted with the planning process for the 2017 forum of the Rwando-Congolese Dialogue, an initiative that brings together Rwandan and Congolese youth civil society leaders working in the areas of environment, income generation health and other social sectors for capacity building activities. The organization aims to enable participants to strengthen their organization and also foster cross-border dialogue and cooperation, while contributing to a shared vision for the future of their region.

Over the course of seven months, the four members of the Columbia team conducted research to learn more about the NGO, governmental and fundraising landscapes in both Rwanda and Eastern Congo. In preparation for a March trip to Rwanda, the team and clients identified key stakeholders who would be able to offer information, guidance, and support for the Rwando-Congolese Dialogue. Once in Kigali and Gisenyi, the team conducted sixteen interviews over the course of five days in order to gauge support for and concerns with the organization's work.

After compiling and analyzing the qualitative data, ten themes emerged as issues or areas of concern that if addressed, would strengthen the organization's impact in the area. Among these themes was the concern that the organization's focus is too broad, that participant selection methodology may exclude important youth leaders, and that an explicit focus on conflict resolution and addressing ongoing regional political tensions between the two countries may lose the Dialogue valuable support. Fostering collaboration among technical experts in the two countries would be easier to implement, and would likely achieve the same goal of encouraging mutual understanding, although it would do so implicitly.

The team developed a series of 14 actionable recommendations for the organization under the broader themes of: (1) Organizational focus, (2) Ensuring sustainability, (3) Formalizing relationships, and (4) Promoting Visibility.

The Columbia team recommends narrowing the forum's focus to either provide access to funding opportunities or technical training, depending on the selected participants' needs. The team also recommends avoiding any explicit discussions of conflict and relying instead on the format of the forum to foster dialogue around shared interests to build trust. Finally, the organization must account for the disparities between the two countries and work to ensure that both groups have equal opportunities for success at the forum.

II. Introduction

Rwanda and the Democratic Republic of the Congo have a troubled history. During the 1990s, Rwanda, along with Uganda, invaded Congo twice, and the resulting wars are estimated to have killed millions of Congolese. Officially, Rwandan military involvement in eastern Congo ended in 2003; however there have been allegations of continued Rwandan military support to militias in the region such as CNDP and M23. While high-level dialogue through the UN and multi- and bilateral channels continues, lower level dialogue among Congolese and Rwandan professionals working on shared projects concerning the environment, health, and other issues may help foster mutual understanding and more favorable conditions for the eventual relaxation of tensions. Similar projects have been attempted in other conflict prone regions, such as the collaboration between Israeli and Palestinian musicians known as the West-Eastern Divian Orchestra and the Springboks Rugby team in post-Apartheid South Africa as depicted in the film *Invictus*.

Similarly, the Rwando-Congolese Dialogue is an initiative to foster understanding and dialogue through capacity-building for youth civil society leaders. The organization provides an opportunity for leaders in the region to come together and discuss shared issues of concern, with a view towards reducing polarization and fostering mutual understanding in a setting that combines both the formal sharing of technical knowledge and informal interaction among stakeholders who would otherwise seldom meet each other.

The Rwando-Congolese Dialogue was first conceived in 2009 when the organizational founders, Baptiste Raymond and Séverine Losembe worked on a project addressing deforestation in Eastern Congo and met conflict-affected groups from both countries. Eventually, they came to see an opportunity for linking conflict resolution with capacity building. They started the Rwando-Congolese Dialogue which holds annual forums alternating between Rwanda and the Congo but involving NGO leaders from both countries. Baptiste and Séverine approached the Columbia team for assistance preparing their 2nd forum, now scheduled for August 2017.

The Columbia team was tasked with a scoping exercise to assess potential interest for the forum and to make recommendations regarding the 2017 forum. The team traveled to Rwanda in March 2017 and met with many stakeholders in order to collect information and make recommendations. The theme of this forum will be the environment and so the team focused on stakeholders with expertise in environmental initiatives. The recommendations have been organized around the categorical framework of (1) Organizational focus, (2) Ensuring Sustainability, (3) Formalizing Relationships, and (4) Promoting Visibility. Most of the stakeholders had concerns on the focus and content of the forum which pertains to the recommendations made under Organizational Focus. Beyond this the team made many other practical recommendations under the remaining categories. Some of the team's specific recommendations have already been carried out, such as registering the NGO in Rwanda.

2.1 Organization & Mission

The Rwando-Congolese Dialogue (RCD) seeks to bring together civil society leaders from Rwanda and the Democratic Republic of Congo in order to



Figure 1 - The Rwando-Congolese Team (March 2017)

foster mutual understanding and regional collaboration. It hosts an annual forum alternating between Rwanda and Eastern Congo, bringing together an equal number of NGO leaders from both countries for capacity building. Also present are entrepreneurial leaders, speakers, technical experts and coaches to support the participants. The forum will include important training content for youth leaders, such as fundraising, project management, and communications. Additionally the forum will include opportunities for networking and funding exposure. The forum will conclude with a roundtable discussion in which all participating stakeholders will offer recommendations for policy makers.

The organization was registered under French law in 2015 and conducted its first forum in November 2015 in Goma. It brought together 12 civil society leaders, 6 from the Eastern Congo and 6 from Rwanda. The theme was “Developing Economic Opportunities for Young People.” Participants focused on education, entrepreneurship and female empowerment. This forum brought together stakeholders from the University of Goma, Indego Africa, National Federation des Entreprises du Congo, Vision Jeunesse Nouvelle, Care International amongst others. The keynote speaker at this forum was Julien Paluku, the governor of North Kivu. The 2nd forum will take place in August 2017 and the theme of this conference will be the environment. In this conference there will be 6 civil society leaders, 3 from Eastern Congo and 3 from Rwanda.

The organization is supported financially by USAID and CARE International via Tufaidike Wote initiative. The Rwando-Congolese Dialogue is supported operationally by Columbia University which provides capacity and consultancy for the forums. Eventually the organization hopes to recruit a larger network of alumni and stakeholders between Rwanda and East Congo while maintaining a high standard of participants. In the long term the Rwando-Congolese Dialogue would like the forum to be self-sustaining with alumni returning as coaches and speakers. After years, a network of successful alumni could foster an increasing awareness and understanding of each other - Congolese and Rwandans - in the region.

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Baptiste is a strategy consultant, based in Paris. Baptiste has an education in economics, international relations and mediation. He is an alumnus of the École Normale Supérieure Ulm and holds a masters from the École d'Économie de Paris, a master's from Columbia University School of International and Public Affairs, a certificate in mediation from the Harvard Program on Negotiation, and a degree in political science from the Sorbonne.

2.2 Country Background

The complex nature of the conflict and its many different actors underscores the need for dialogue in the region. This section will briefly review (1) the troubled history of these countries and (2) the current situation. For more information regarding current actors and groups active in the conflict, refer to the annex.

History of the Rwanda Congo Conflict

The conflicts in the Great Lakes Region have a long and contested history. Different political actors hold different views of how they unfolded. Nevertheless, certain contours of the crisis are well known.

Colonial Era

For hundreds of years the minority Tutsi population ruled the region now known as Rwanda under Tutsi-dominated

monarchies. During colonial times, Rwanda and the Congo were both under the rule of the Belgians who reinforced the Tutsi dominance through a system of indirect rule. There were significant migrations between Rwanda and Congo's Kivu provinces. Significant numbers of Tutsis and Hutus settled in the Kivu regions¹. While these populations were not large, they later became significant to the politics of both countries.

Ethnic Tensions – Hutu and Tutsi

The approach of independence brought a major increase in tensions between Hutu and Tutsi peoples in the region, and periodic outbreaks of violence, including the Rwandan Revolution of 1959 in which the Hutu masses rose up against the Tutsis, causing thousands of the latter to flee to neighboring countries, the Rwandan Civil War of 1990-4, and the Tutsi Genocide of 1994. These tensions also had huge repercussions in Eastern Congo.

During the 1950s, as the Belgians prepared to hand over power in the run up to independence, Tutsi elites were worried over the planned transition to democracy. Violence escalated between these groups and the majority Hutus easily secured power in a Belgian-sponsored election in 1960. The transition of power was marked by significant violence leading to hundreds of thousands of Tutsis fleeing into neighboring countries. Many ended up in Uganda. In 1987, they organized a new rebel group known as the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) which aimed to return to Rwanda by force. The RPF invaded Rwanda in 1990, precipitating a three-and-a-half-year civil war. In 1993, the government of Rwanda and the RPF came to a power-sharing agreement under the Arusha accords. Hostilities continued, however, culminating in the infamous Rwandan Genocide of 1994 in which an estimated 800,000 Tutsis and moderate Hutus were slaughtered². The RPF, which was already in the country as part of the power sharing agreement, advanced and seized power in July 1994. Millions of Hutu Rwandans, fearing reprisals, fled to neighboring countries.

In the enormous refugee camps across the border in Zaire, Hutu militant groups, including Le Rassemblement pour le retour des Réfugiés et la Démocratie au Rwanda (RDR), Forces Armées Rwandaises (FAR), Interhamwe, and Armée pour la Libération du Rwanda (ALIR) began organizing and stockpiling weapons with which to retake Rwanda from the RPF. These groups also posed a threat to the Banyamulenge residing in South Kivu. As tensions mounted, the deputy governor of South Kivu told ethnic Tutsis, such as the Banyamulenge, to leave the Congo.³ In this context a rebel coalition called the Alliance des Forces Démocratiques pour la Libération du Congo-Zaire (AFDL) was formed with strong support from Banyamulenge, Rwanda and Uganda. The AFDL targeted Rwandan refugees and cleared out refugee camps in the area⁴. The AFDL eventually marched west all the way to Kinshasa and overthrew Zairean leader Mobutu Sese Seko who was thought to be supporting the Hutu militants in the camps. In his place, they installed rebel AFDL leader Laurent Kabila.

¹ Mahmood Mamdani. 2001. *When Victims Become Killers: Colonialism, Nativism, and the Genocide in Rwanda*. Princeton University Press: Princeton.

<http://www.refworld.org/docid/3df4be9a14.html> [accessed 20 Dec 2016]

² Human Rights Watch. *Leave None to Tell the Story: Genocide in Rwanda - Numbers. March 1999*.

<https://www.hrw.org/reports/1999/rwanda/Geno1-3-04.htm> [accessed 20 Dec 2016]

³ Human Rights Watch. *Attacked by All Sides" Civilians and the War in Eastern Zaire. 1 March 1997, A901*

<http://www.refworld.org/docid/3ae6a80d0.html> [accessed 20 December 2016]

⁴ Human Rights Watch. *"THE WAR WITHIN THE WAR - Sexual Violence against Women and Girls in Eastern Congo. June 2002. New York, NY.*

<https://www.hrw.org/reports/2002/drc/Congo0602.pdf> [accessed 20 Dec 2016]

The Second Congolese War

The Second Congolese War, which began in 1998, is widely regarded as the deadliest war in African history. Some five million lives may have been lost.⁵ The war erupted in the Eastern Congo when Rwanda and Uganda fell out with Laurent Kabila and began supporting rebel groups that were wreaking havoc in the country. Local Banyamulenge formed their own Rwanda and Uganda-backed rebel group, the Rassemblement Congolais pour la Démocratie (RCD), which eventually splintered into numerous subgroups who fought both against Kabila's troops and among themselves⁶. Laurent Kabila struggled to resist the rebel forces on multiple fronts. The conflict eventually involved numerous countries and actors all seeking to secure their interest. The Ugandans, Rwandans, and their proxies captured vast amounts of territory, including a military base in Kitona on the Atlantic Ocean and the Inga hydroelectric dam in Kinshasa.⁷ While it seemed that Kinshasa would soon fall to the rebels, Kabila was able to diplomatically maneuver support from Chad, Angola, Namibia, and Zimbabwe in order to regain control⁸. After Kabila was assassinated by a bodyguard in 2001, the Sun City Agreement and the Pretoria Accord of July 2002 helped restore some stability to the region. Eventually, Rwanda and Uganda agreed to withdraw their troops, and a transitional government was put into place with representation from many actors in the conflict. In 2006 the country held elections in which Joseph Kabila, Laurent's son, won and marked the end of the transitional government.



Figure 2 - Map of the Congo and Foreign Influence 1998

Remaining Insecurity

While Congo has made tremendous steps in reducing conflict since the Second Congolese War, insecurity persists. Rwanda and Uganda-backed militias continued to operate in the region after 2003 and were most recently active in 2017. For example, former members of le Congrès national pour la défense du peuple (CNDP), who integrated with the Congolese army in a 2009 peace deal, mutinied in 2012 and took over Goma. The UN has claimed that these rebels, called the M23, were directly commanded by Rwanda and also backed by Uganda.⁹ Officially the M23 surrendered in 2013, but there seems to be renewed activity. In 2017 it was reported that two helicopters were shot

⁵ Jeffrey Gettleman. "The World's Worst War." The New York Times. Dec 15 2012.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2012/12/16/sunday-review/congos-never-ending-war.html>

⁶ Minorities at Risk Project, *Chronology for Tutsis in the Dem. Rep. of the Congo*, 2004. <http://www.refworld.org/docid/469f388115.html> [accessed 20 December 2016]

⁷ Chris Simpson. "D.R. CONGO: Rebels Control Power, Kabila Flees Capital" Inter Press Service - News Agency. Aug 14 1998. <http://www.ipsnews.net/1998/08/politics-drcongo-rebels-control-power-kabila-flees-capital/> [accessed 20 April 2017]

⁸ Nelson Kasfir & Scott Straus. *A Gordian Knot Could Produce Partition*. The LA Times. 19 Oct 1998. <http://articles.latimes.com/1998/oct/19/local/me-34090> [accessed 20 December 2016]

⁹ The British Broadcasting Corporation. "Rwanda defence chief leads DR Congo rebels, UN report says." 17 October 2012. <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-19973366> [accessed 15 April 2017]

down while in pursuit of M23 rebels and four crewmembers were captured and tortured by M23 rebels.¹⁰ Beyond rebel groups, numerous small armed groups called Mai Mai have organized for years to defend their villages against the Rwanda-backed militias. They too have been responsible for atrocities, as have remnants of the Hutu militias and génocidaires still residing in eastern Congo. See Annex for more information on armed groups residing in Eastern Congo. Below are some of the unfortunate features characterizing the violence in Eastern Congo.

Sexual and Gender Based Violence (SGBV)

In 2014 the Enough Project released a statement which described SGBV as a tool of war - *“In the Congo, sexual and gender-based violence, or SGBV, is a tool of war, committed often in tandem with other human rights violations, including land grabs, illicit minerals trading, and forced displacement. Rape and other forms of sexual violence have been used to instill fear, distrust, and shame and manipulate group psychologies.”*¹¹

USAID writes about the unreported nature of SGBV crime despite its prevalence: *“SGBV crime has unfortunately been a distinctive characteristic of violence perpetrated in the Congo. Despite a 2006 Congolese law against SGBV, many cases of sexual violence are neither reported to local authorities nor investigated.”*¹²

Child Conscription

According to UNICEF, the Congo has one the largest problems with child soldiers. A 2006 report claims that the *“DRC is thought to have the largest concentration of child soldiers in the world. At the height of the war, estimates suggested that as many as 30,000 children were fighting or living with armed forces or militia groups.”*¹³

Plunder of Resources

A UN report in 2001 by a panel of experts on the exploitation of resources in the Congo concluded that the Congo has *“become mainly about access, control, and trade of five key mineral resources: coltan, diamonds, copper, cobalt, and gold. [...] Exploitation of the natural resources of the Democratic Republic of the Congo by foreign armies as become systematic and systemic. Plundering, looting, and racketeering and the constitution of criminal cartels are becoming commonplace in the occupied territories.”* The report also controversially describes presidents Kagame and Museveni as the *“godfathers of the illegal exploitation of natural resources and the continuation of the conflict.”*¹⁴ Recent UN reports, up to 2016, continue to describe abuses related to control of resource extraction in the country, including

¹⁰ Aaron Ross. “Military helicopters crash in eastern Congo, four crew missing. Reuters Africa. 30 January 2017. <http://af.reuters.com/article/topNews/idAFKBN15E00U>. [accessed 15 April 2017]

¹¹ Holly Dranginis. *Interrupting the Silence - Addressing Congo’s Sexual Violence Crisis within the Great Lakes Regional Peace Process*. 20 March 2014. Enough Project. <http://www.enoughproject.org/news/dr-congo-us-un-must-address-sexual-violence-peace-process> [accessed 20 December 2016]

¹² The United States Agency for International Development (USAID). *Democratic Republic of Congo - Sexual and Gender-Based Violence Fact Sheet*. Updated on 02 November 2016. <https://www.usaid.gov/democratic-republic-congo/fact-sheets/usaiddrc-fact-sheet-sexual-and-gender-based-violence> [accessed 20 December 2016]

¹³ The United Nation’s Children’s Fund (UNICEF). *Child Alert - Democratic Republic of Congo: Martin Bell Reports on Children Caught in War*. July 2006. https://www.unicef.org/childalert/drc/content/Child_Alert_DRC_en.pdf [accessed 20 December 2016]

¹⁴ UN Security Council. *Letter Dated 12 April 2001 from the Secretary-General to the President of the Security Council*. 12 April 2001. S/2001/357. <http://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/DRC%20S%202001%20357.pdf> [accessed 20 December 2016]

the slaughter of elephants from the air and clandestine gold shipments.

Displacement

The number of internally displaced in the Congo is significant as over the years Congolese are consistently displaced by various armed factions. The Office for the Coordination of Human Affairs (OCHA) wrote in May 2016 that ongoing violence in the Congo was forcing thousands of people to flee. Furthermore they wrote that North Kivu has been the worst affected and that it hosts over 780,000 IDPs which represents “*one of the most concentrated IDP populations in the world.*”¹⁵

Violence and Insecurity

According to a 2011 report by UNEP, combat continues in the Congo and is “currently centered in the eastern part of the country (the Kivus and north-eastern Orientale), where around 20 armed groups remain active.” The report add that the fighting is “waged by militias originating from neighbouring countries.”¹⁶

In 2015 Oxfam reported that there is still cyclical violence in the Kivus, particularly in South Kivu where communities still live in fear of “*physical harm, sexual violence, kidnappings and killings.*”¹⁷

In March 2017 there were reports of new violence in the Congo. In the Kasai region, a group called Kamuina Nsapu, has allegedly beheaded 42 police officers and also kidnapped and killed UN experts in March 2017.¹⁸

2.3 Environmental Context

The theme for the 2017 August forum will be the environment. The team did considerable research on environmental initiatives in the region and furthermore met with stakeholders who had expertise on environmental opportunities in the region. There are stark differences in the environmental governance between Rwanda and the Congo, yet these countries face similar regional environmental problems. Rwanda has very effective environmental governance within the country. Congo is facing a dire situation because of the ongoing insecurity and poor governance, but has great potential if bold measures are taken.

The Green Economy Approach

Crucial to understanding post-conflict environmental initiatives is the idea of the green economy. The green

¹⁵ The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA). *DRC: A life of endless Displacement*. 02 May 2016. <http://www.unocha.org/top-stories/all-stories/drc-life-endless-displacement> [accessed 20 December 2016]

¹⁶ The United Nations Environmental Program (UNEP). *The Democratic Republic of the Congo Post-Conflict Environmental Assessment United Nations Environment Programme Synthesis for Policy Makers*. 2011. http://postconflict.unep.ch/publications/UNEP_DRC_PCEA_EN.pdf [accessed 20 December 2016]

¹⁷ The Oxford Committee for Famine Relief (OXFAM). *202 Oxfam Briefing Paper - Secure Insecurity: The Continuing Abuse of Civilians in Eastern DRC as the State Extends Control*. 6 March 2015. https://www.oxfam.org/sites/www.oxfam.org/files/file_attachments/bp202-secure-insecurity-drc-protection-060315-en.pdf

¹⁸ Max Bearak. “Congolese rebels behead 42 police officers in dramatic escalation of conflict.” The Washington Post. https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/worldviews/wp/2017/03/26/congolese-rebels-behead-42-police-officers-in-dramatic-escalation-of-conflict/?utm_term=.5c56c90f89a1. [accessed 15 april 2017]

economy agenda is in alignment with international norms of development as embodied in the 1992 Rio Declaration, 2015 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and the 2016 Paris Agreement on climate change. The green economy concept prioritizes human development as the overarching goal but with strong emphasis on sustainable and environmentally friendly means. UNEP defines a green economy as one that results in “improved human well-being and social equity, while significantly reducing environmental risks and ecological scarcities. In its simplest expression, a green economy is low-carbon, resource efficient, and socially inclusive.”¹⁹ In Rwanda and Congo the element of social inclusion is vital amidst historical and deep ethnic tensions. Furthermore these countries must find ways to effectively regulate resource extraction. This is particularly a challenge for the Congo because of its massive size, weak government, and ongoing interventions by foreign actors. Both these countries are very low-income and must link human development in their environmental initiatives.

Rwanda – Proactive Governance

Rwanda is widely regarded as making great strides in environmental governance since the 1994 genocide. Rwanda’s green efforts are visible - for example Rwanda has embarked on a massive reforestation effort and engaged in agro-forestry to reach its goal of increasing forest cover to 30%. Rwanda has designated Nungwe Forest as a national park (2004) and rehabilitated the Rugezi wetland (2005). In 2012 Rwanda established the FONERWA fund specifically for green initiatives. In 2008 Rwanda banned all plastic bags in the country.²⁰ Rwanda also maintains a long-held tradition of Umuganda which is a monthly community cleanup effort. These measures and others indicate a relatively proactive government in the region.

Nonetheless the 2011 UNEP report states that Rwanda’s success is “dependent on the continuous provision of goods and services by the country’s ecosystems” and that it is “crucial to seize the opportunities available for reducing serious environmental risks, which are likely to be magnified by potential climate change and accentuated disasters.”²¹

Rwanda is the most densely populated country in Africa at 350 inhabitants per square kilometer. Rwanda faces environmental problems related to this such as soil degradation, deforestation, and destruction of ecosystems. Rwanda must vigilantly pursue a green economy to stay ahead of environmental challenges.

Congo - Great Risks and Potential

Congo has at least \$24 trillion in unexploited mineral wealth, representing great opportunity, but also risk for the country. The resources of Congo are one of the root causes and drivers behind the conflict in the Congo which is why it is essential to link conflict resolution and environment-related initiatives.

In 2011, UNEP conducted an extensive report on the Congo and recommended the “green economy” approach. The report covers many ongoing environmental degradations in the Congo. The mining industry represents one of the

¹⁹ United Nation Environmental Programme (UNEP). *Towards a green economy: Pathways to sustainable development and poverty eradication*. Geneva, Switzerland: . 2011.

http://web.unep.org/greeneconomy/sites/unep.org/greeneconomy/files/field/image/green_economyreport_final_dec2011.pdf

²⁰ Vincent Biruta. “5 ways Rwanda is leading on green growth.” The World Economic Forum. 09 May 2016.

<https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2016/05/5-ways-rwanda-is-leading-on-green-growth/> [accessed 15 April 2017]

²¹ The United Nations Environmental Program (UNEP). *Rwanda - From Post-Conflict to Environmentally Sustainable Development*. 2011.

http://postconflict.unep.ch/publications/UNEP_Rwanda.pdf [accessed 20 December 2016]

largest challenges to the Congo as 18% of the population is dependent on this sector. The UN estimates that 15 tons of mercury are used annually in artisanal gold mining. This mercury, which provides an easy and effective method to separate gold from ore, represents massive environmental risk to the region where most of the waste mercury is carried off by run-off water or remains in mine waste. This issue highlights the scale of environmental degradation in the country. Related to the mining sector are concerns over uranium radiation, landscape degradation via open pit mining, and dust and water contamination by cobalt, lead, and copper. The UN identified other major problems in agriculture, forestry, mining, biodiversity, water, and fisheries.

Nonetheless the report concludes on a positive note of the country's current resources: "the DRC's natural capital is one of the planet's most important. At present, its natural wealth is still relatively intact and in good condition. Yet, a rapidly growing population, projected to reach almost 110 million people in 2030, coupled with intense international resource competition for raw materials is placing multiple pressures on the country's natural resource base."²²

While there are considerable differences in environmental governance between Rwanda and the Congo, they are facing similar environmental challenges. For example, these countries share a border, which causes an overlap of Kivu and Virunga Park. Additionally these countries face similar challenges in such issues as regional agriculture, forestry, bio conservation, global warming impact, and mining contamination. Cooperation on such issues represents a great opportunity, but is complicated by the insecurity in Congo and Rwanda's controversial involvement. This is the difficult environmental context of the two countries, a context that calls for increased cooperation.

III. Methodology

The team used a variety of methods and strategies to carry out the project. Throughout the course of the project the strategy changed to accommodate new information. The team therefore used their time in March to travel to Rwanda to assess support for the Rwando-Congolese Dialogue in Rwanda in preparation for the tentative August forum. This effort entailed meeting with various stakeholders in Rwanda - including government officials, forum participants, and NGO partners.

3.1 Planning

The team started planning for the project in November 2016. Originally the team intended to participate in the 2017 forum which was planned to take place in March 2017. Unfortunately, funding challenges required that the forum be postponed until August 2017. The team quickly adjusted their plan to continue their travel to Rwanda and conduct a scoping exercise through meeting with stakeholders in Rwanda. The graphic below highlights how planning phases changed. Furthermore the updated Gantt chart (included in the annex) reflects various timelines of the project.

²² Ibid., 22.

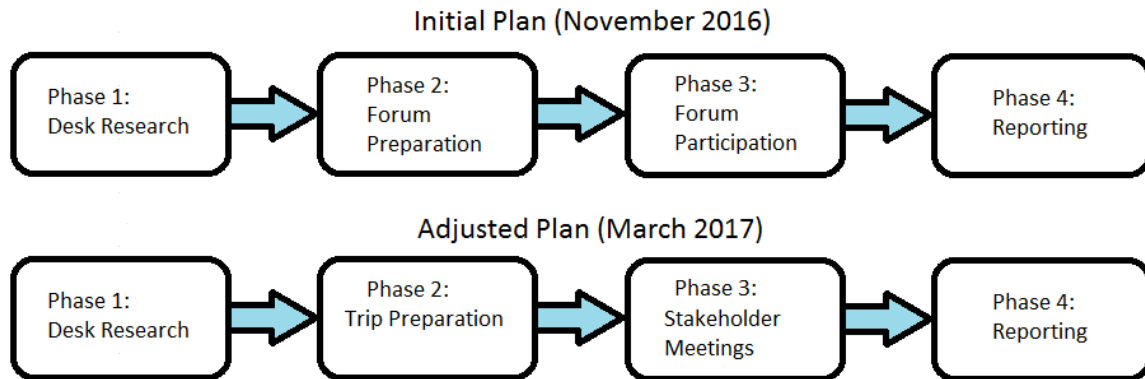


Figure 3 - Initial Plan adjustment to Final Plan

Meetings in New York

In addition to the planning effort, the team met approximately every other week with their clients Baptiste and Séverine. (For a schedule of meetings, please refer to annex). The Columbia team also met weekly with faculty advisor Helen Epstein.

Desk Review

The team started conducting desk research of Rwanda and the DRC in November 2016. This initial research familiarized the team with the landscape of environmental and conflict resolution projects in the region. An “environmental and conflict resolution NGO landscape” of East Congo and Rwanda region was produced. This initial research was divided into four parts by the team - The Rwanda NGO Landscape, the East Congo NGO Landscape, the Political Structures of Rwanda / Congo, and the International NGO Landscape. These presentations will contribute to a training session during the first day of the forum in August 2017.

Trip Preparation

After the team was informed on February 6th that the forum was delayed, they started planning a research trip to develop recommendations for the upcoming forum, tentatively scheduled for August 2017. The team familiarized themselves with all the various stakeholders with whom they could meet and devised an interviewing strategy for its in-country visit.

3.2 Stakeholder Meetings

Once in Rwanda, the team met with various stakeholders. Due to the shift in the structure of the project, the team’s field trip to Rwanda was primarily aimed at developing recommendations for the forum. The goal was to meet with different types of stakeholders as a way to form various partnerships and familiarize stakeholders with the organization. Below, we describe the types of stakeholders with whom the team met and their characteristics. (For a complete calendar of stakeholder meetings, please refer to the annex.)

- Government - The team met with the Rwanda Governance Board (RGB), Economic Community of the Great Lakes Region (CEPGL), FONERWA (Rwanda’s Green Fund), and the National Youth Council. The team was

hoping to meet with Rwanda Environment Management Authority (REMA), the mayor's office, and the Rwanda Development Board (RDB) but was unable to secure meetings. Meetings with government officials were generally positive.

- **NGOs** - The team met with Never Again Rwanda, Survivor's Fund, Great Lakes Energy, Rwanda Green Initiative, and the Vision Jeunesse Nouvelle ("Youth Vision" an organization committed to serving marginalized out-of-school youth). The team was hoping to meet with Rwandan Environment Conservation Organization (RECOR) but was unable to do so given limited time.
- **Potential Coaches / Speakers / Supporters** - The team met with Professor Aloys Ruzibiza, Joel Tembo Vwira, Patrick Abedi and, John Kanyoni.
- **Participants** - The team met with participants Juvenal Mukurarinda, Amos Mbuto, and Marie-Louise Majuawayezu. The team was unable to meet with Arnold Galibwa due to travel and communication problems in Gisenyi. Participants were happy to meet with Rwando-Congolese Dialogue staff. The interviews were generally set up as a 2nd application interview but also as a candid session to learn more about their expectations and hopes for the forum.
- **Media Partners** - The team met with Kigali Today. In attendance were Christine Kabanda who is the Marketing Director. Alongside Christine were Leon Nzabandora the Kigali Today Radio Director and Prosper Bitebeka the Chief Editor. The team presented the Rwando-Congolese Dialogue to them and made the case for the need for media representation specifically for publicity and media coverage for the forum.

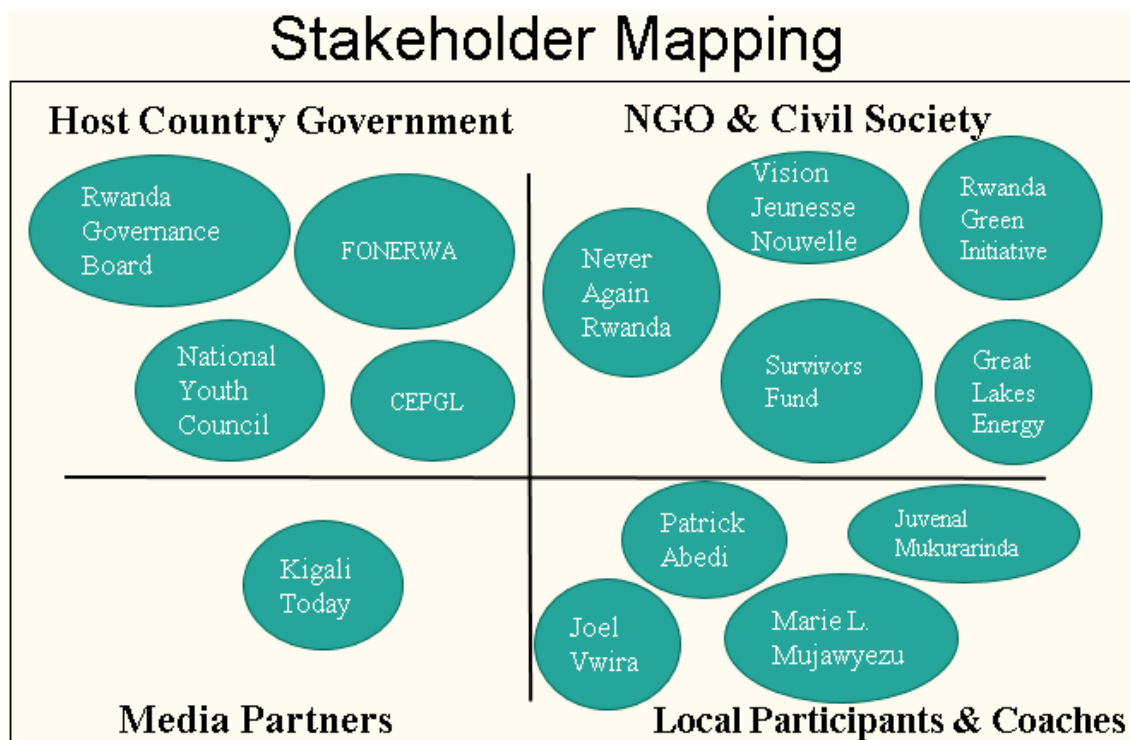


Figure 4 - Map of Stakeholders in Various Sectors

3.3 Reporting

Upon returning to the US, the team has been dedicated to producing a report of all the progress made, recommendations, and next steps forwards. This report is the culmination of this effort and should serve to guide subsequent teams and forums for the direction forward.

IV. Results

After multiple meetings with various stakeholders, 10 major themes arose as areas of concern for the future development of the Rwando-Congolese Dialogue. Listed below are these emergent themes that must be addressed to ensure the continued growth of the organization and the success of the annual forum.

4.1 Addressing the Conflict

The issue of addressing the conflict was a repeatedly raised as a concern from meetings with all types of stakeholders. Some were concerned the forum would become too politically sensitive by heavily focusing on the conflict and levels of distrust between the two countries. Others were concerned the forum would not directly address the “elephant in the room” and questioned the very premise of the Rwando-Congolese Dialogue if a discussion of the conflict was not a centerpiece of the forum. The varied opinions on the topic underscore the sensitive nature of discussing the tension between the two countries. In nearly every meeting conducted, there was a different opinion on where the Rwando-Congolese Dialogue should be on the spectrum between a forum on capacity building and one on conflict resolution. The major concerns regarding how the forum will address the conflict and distrust between Rwandans and Congolese can be summarized as the following:

Those who say the forum must directly address the conflict: Several NGO representatives were very concerned that the forum will not directly address the conflict. They questioned the purpose and efficacy of bringing together participants from the two countries without addressing the conflict and levels of distrust between the two groups at the outset of the forum. They felt it is necessary to address the “elephant in the room” before asking the participants to collaborate together. This sentiment was most strongly expressed by Never Again Rwanda. This is not surprising considering the emphasis the organization places on conflict resolution. Despite some skepticism, Never Again Rwanda did offer to facilitate a session of the forum to address the conflict. While the Rwando-Congolese Dialogue may not aim to directly address the conflict, Never Again Rwanda’s expertise in facilitating these types of discussions may be beneficial given the extremely difficult and sensitive nature of the ongoing conflict and distrust between Rwandans and Congolese.

Results - 10 Major Themes
1. Addressing the Conflict
a. Address the conflict
b. Don't Address the conflict
c. Conflict Resolution Actor
2. Demographics of Participants
a. Language Requirements
b. Locations
c. Educational Requirements
3. Differing Needs of Country Participants
4. Registering the Organization
5. Access to Funding
6. Concept Note and Application Writing
7. Concerns over Coach Involvement
8. Clarifications for potential stakeholders
9. Messaging
10. Visibility

Figure 5 - List of 10 Themes (Results)

Those who say the forum should not address the conflict: The extremely sensitive and politically charged debate over the geopolitics of the Great Lakes Region was underscored by some government officials' reluctance to recognize any ongoing conflict between the DRC and Rwanda. This is obviously a concern for a forum that hopes to address, even indirectly, the issue of conflict resolution between the two countries. Some government officials supported discussing the conflict if done in a fair, apolitical manner. Others suggested that addressing the conflict at all would be too politically sensitive and the focus should be entirely on capacity building for environmental projects. Finally, others suggested there is no longer an ongoing conflict and, therefore, the forum does not need to address it at all. These differing views from Rwandan government officials portray how complex and varied opinions are within the government about the historical ties and interactions between the countries over the last two and a half decades. These differing views from the Rwandan government put the Rwando-Congolese Dialogue in a difficult position. While the forum should seek the support and participation of the Rwandan government, it risks entering a very difficult and uncomfortable political landscape. The Rwando-Congolese Dialogue must take steps to ensure the issue of the conflict is discussed fairly, is based on facts, and represents the many different views present at the forum.

Those who question the Rwando-Congolese Dialogue as a conflict resolution actor: Several government officials and NGO representatives questioned how the Rwando-Congolese Dialogue will further the issue of conflict resolution given the numerous, high-profile conflict resolution efforts already operating throughout the region. There was concern that a forum with only six participants would not make a significant contribution to conflict resolution or increasing trust and understanding between Rwandans and Congolese. Some recommended refining the messaging of the Rwando-Congolese Dialogue to better address how the forum will approach the issue of conflict resolution in a new, unique way to distinguish itself from the existing organizations. Alternatively, some suggested downplaying the conflict resolution aspect of the forum considering the abundance of larger organizations already operating in this field.

4.2 Demographics of Participants

Another concern raised by government officials and NGO representatives was the demographics of the participants at the forum. The forum seeks highly-qualified candidates with existing NGOs hoping to expand the scope and impact of their projects. However, some NGOs felt this would exclude an important demographic of youth leaders most in need of capacity building and access to international donors. Many of the highly-qualified participants would likely be successful without participating in the forum. NGO representatives expressed concern about the participants in the following areas:

Language requirements: The choice of language for the forum is a very difficult decision. English has been chosen as the primary language for the 2017 forum. English and French are widely spoken in the region along with numerous local languages on both of sides of the border. While choosing one official language is necessary to facilitate presentations at the forum, this has the potential to exclude many well qualified participants, especially Congolese who do not speak English. They expressed concern that choosing only candidates who can effectively communicate in English will exclude many well qualified candidates who could benefit from the programming of the forum. NGO representatives suggested providing translators or coaches speaking other languages to assist participants not comfortable communicating exclusively in English.

Locations: Some NGO representatives also raised a concern that the location of the selected participants limit some of the impact of their projects and their contribution to sustainable environmental management throughout the

region. There was concern that participants would only come from Kigali and Goma. This may limit the scope and impact of the forum if all the participants come from the two largest cities in the region. Several NGO representatives suggested inviting participants from multiple regions and rural areas to have a greater impact on the environment across multiple areas along the border region.

Educational requirements: Another concern on the topic of participant selection was the high academic requirements established for attending the forum. The Rwando-Congolese Dialogue seeks exceptionally well qualified and well educated candidates. However, this raised some concerns with NGO representatives who felt this criteria would exclude an important group of potential participants from attending the forum. Many people in the region currently lack the educational requirements but would benefit enormously from attending a capacity building forum like The Rwando-Congolese Dialogue. Therefore, there is concern that the forum would exclude those most in need of capacity building and only include those already capable of effectively managing environmental projects.

4.3 Differing Needs of Rwandans and Congolese

Several NGO representatives expressed concerns about the usefulness of bringing Rwandans and Congolese together given the economic, political, and social disparities between the two countries. Rwanda has a thriving development and environmental NGO network, political stability and support, and is able to attract large international donors to fund small-scale environmental projects. NGO's in the DRC operate under much more difficult circumstances. Given the disparity between the two countries, some NGO representatives emphasized the potential differing needs and questioned how the content of the forum will be useful and informative to participants from both countries who may be at different stages of development of their environmental projects.

Rwanda has many more small-scale environmental NGOs that are well-functioning, well-managed, and scalable. The Rwandan participants the team interviewed emphasized their capability, project management skills, and the advanced stage of their project development. These participants hoped the forum would give them greater access to sources of funding. Therefore, a forum on fundraising and providing access to international donors may be the most beneficial forum for such a participant.

On the other hand, the needs of Congolese participants may be different due to the more difficult political, economic, and social situation in the DRC. Many NGO's in the DRC are much smaller and receive little to no funding from large international donors. The Congolese participants interviewed by the team seem to be at an earlier stage in developing their NGOs and would likely benefit from more training on project management and design. A forum emphasizing this type of capacity building may be more beneficial to these participants who may need more time to develop their NGOs before they are in a position to apply for funding from a large donor.

In sum, the needs of Rwandan and Congolese participants may be drastically different. They will likely come to the forum with environmental projects at very different stages of development. Furthermore, the prospects for the participants to receive funding or technical support following the forum are much greater for the Rwandans due to the robust NGO sector, abundance of international donors, and active support from the Rwandan government. The future prospects for the Congolese participant's projects are simply not as good. Several government and NGO officials emphasized the importance of addressing these differing needs and tailoring the forum content and format.

4.4 Registering the Rwando-Congolese Dialogue

Registering The Rwando-Congolese Dialogue as an organization operating in Rwanda was an issue raised by numerous government officials. Currently, The Rwando-Congolese Dialogue is a registered organization in France. Government officials emphasized the need to register the organization with the Rwanda Governance Board in order to legally operate within the country and to receive any additional support from the Rwandan government. Government officials also suggested registering the organization in the Democratic Republic of the Congo because the organization operates in that country as well. Additionally, registering in both countries is necessary to receive any support from regional organizations, such as CEPGL.

4.5 Access to Funding

Of the four potential forum participants, the team was able to successfully meet with three, all of whom expressed a desire for assistance with fundraising efforts and access to funding resources. While dialogue with Amos was limited as the interview was conducted in Swahili, he explained that he would like to increase his “fundraising capacity” so as to scale up his project. Mary Louise was very explicit in outlining the multiple challenges she is facing in scaling up her project, beginning with the time constraints for applying for funding from various donors. She wished that there was more time and a better communications network from which to learn about upcoming application deadlines. She expressed frustration that, on several occasions, she learned about a funding opportunity only a few days before the deadline and had to rush her work in order to complete the application. The team’s meeting with the third applicant, Juvenal, reiterated the need for a platform that disseminates information about potential funding opportunities as well as the requirements of each donor. He expressed a wish to interact with donors such as FONERWA, SIDA, USAID and UNDP at the forum and urged the Rwando-Congolese Dialogue to include sessions in which participants are taught how to pitch competitive projects to donors in a clear and effective manner. In addition to these participants, Patrick Abedi, the National Coordinator for Benenfance based in Goma, explained that while many youth leaders in the DRC had ample experience with training and capacity building, they often reached a limit in how effective their organizations could be due to a lack of interaction with appropriate funders. At a certain point, all of these youth leaders need to be able to sit down and present their initiatives to the appropriate donors.

4.6 Concept Note & Application Writing

Multiple potential participants expressed keen interest in developing their capacities in terms of drafting concept notes and applications. As participants cited a lack of time and preparation as one of the key causes of failure to secure funding, it may prove fruitful to prepare a set of easily-adaptable concept notes and basic application information, so as to have on hand in case of a last-minute application or presentation.

4.7 Concerns over Coach Involvement

Juvenal, one of the pre-selected participants for the 2017 forum, has had the most experience in working with training programs and mentors of the three participants that the team met with. Based on these previous experiences, he highlighted the need to engage coaches and mentors who genuinely care about the Dialogue and truly want to see the participants succeed. The Rwando-Congolese Dialogue should be looking for coaches who have

the time and motivation to keep in touch with the participants after the forum, as this is often not the case with similar initiatives in the region. It would be beneficial to create a robust network or platform where all current participants, alumni, coaches and volunteers can reach out to one another, continue to share and exchange ideas, and search for new funding opportunities. This platform would address multiple needs of an evolving Rwando-Congolese Dialogue.

In addition to participants' views on coach participation, local staff also had opinions as to how to maintain strong coach involvement. To begin, coaches with ample experience and knowledge to share may work in the public or private sector and have very busy schedules. In addition to being offered per diem and remuneration for participating in the conference, local staff also cited the possibility of continuing to offer financial incentives for prolonged involvement with the Dialogue and their continued interactions with the participants.

4.8 Clarifications for Potential Partners, Participants and Speakers

Multiple potential speakers and coaches asked for a clarification of roles and tasks related to forum participation during stakeholder meetings. While they were given a relatively standard outline of a coach's role and/or a speaker's role, they asked for more details, which can be written up in a terms of reference (TOR) document. In addition to communicating participation and speech content information, logistical arrangements should also be communicated as travel and booking arrangements seem to factor into decision-making for conference participation.

In addition to potential speaker and coaches TOR's, organizations such as Never Again Rwanda and Kigali Today media outlet asked the Rwando-Congolese Dialogue team to more clearly define a "partnership" between the Dialogue and themselves. Many stakeholders seemed enthusiastic to work with the Rwando-Congolese Dialogue but requested formal letters outlining the parameters of the proposed partnership. The same was true for potential speakers and mentors, who wanted more information so as to best contribute to the Dialogue.

4.9 Messaging

On multiple occasions during the team's meetings with both NGO's and government officials, they asked to clarify whether the Rwando-Congolese Dialogue is an organization that focuses on conflict resolution, peacebuilding or capacity building. While it was easy to explain what the Rwando-Congolese Dialogue *does*, the organization may benefit from clarifying the messaging around the organization's mission and objectives for the participants and the future of the region. A few of the interviewees suggested presenting the work produced by the 2015 participants so as to have a better idea of what the Dialogue hopes to accomplish.

Potential partners, coaches and speakers also wondered whether the Forum was focused entirely on capacity development or aiding participants in increasing funding. They were also confused as to whether the organization is an environmental initiative or some other sort of organization. All of these clarifying questions simply suggest a refinement of outward facing Rwando-Congolese Dialogue materials: website, slide decks and informational pamphlets.

4.10 Visibility

Professor Ruzibiza in particular expressed concern that the annual forum should “match expectations”. If the Rwando-Congolese Dialogue is seeking media and government attention, then the content of the presentations as well as the speakers and quality of the participants must be of a high caliber. The recommendations to be presented during the final roundtable must be polished and of professional quality. As mentioned earlier, the small number of participants gave a few of the interviewees a cause for concern. According to their logic, if the conference is meant to be a small, intimate affair, they didn’t quite understand why the Rwando-Congolese Dialogue would be seeking wide ranging support and publicity.

The team’s meeting at Kigali Today further highlighted this issue, even if it was not discussed explicitly. When asked who the target audience of a media campaign would be and what message the organization would like to communicate, there was a discussion of pre- and post- forum support. Kigali Today’s questions about types of support the organization will seek highlighted the need to understand what type of visibility the Rwando-Congolese Dialogue will seek and why. While not stated explicitly, the Kigali Today team’s questions pointed to a mismatch in the organization’s publicity goals and the form and structure of the annual Forum. They did not necessarily understand the need for such an elevated platform for such a small initiative.

4.11 Limitations of Results

There were some limitations concerning the team’s work for the Rwando-Congolese Dialogue. It is the team’s hope that acknowledging and accounting for these limitations will help inform and improve future efforts on behalf of this organization.

Team was unable to visit Congo - The team briefly considered traveling to Goma for various stakeholder meetings during the trip. However the team was unable to consider this on such short notice due to security procedures with Columbia and visa requirements. Visas for Americans are 100 dollars and require an invitation. If subsequent teams wish to consider meeting stakeholders in Congo they should consider the more difficult visa and security protocols required relative to Rwanda.

Stakeholder Meetings - The team was able to meet with most stakeholders which were identified prior to travel but were unable to secure meetings with other potentially informative stakeholders. Due to time constraints and schedule limitations, the team was unable to organize meetings with the Rwanda Environment Management Authority (REMA), the Kigali mayor’s office, the Rwanda Development Board (RDB), and others. Of all the potential interviewees, it took the longest time to establish meetings with government representatives. More time in advance for outreach and planning will prove particularly useful for securing meetings with high-level government representatives.

French Language - The team faced relatively few problems with French as the team was mostly in Kigali where English is widely spoken. However on a few occasions, and particularly in heavily francophone Gisenyi, the team had slight difficulties dividing its Francophone members amongst simultaneous stakeholder meetings. It is recommended that future teams continue to be proficient in French, particularly if they are meeting stakeholders in Western

Rwanda and Eastern Congo.

Desk Research on Congo - The team conducted significant desk research of the stakeholder landscape in the Rwandan and Congolese border region before traveling to Rwanda. The research was skewed heavily to the Rwandan government and NGO landscape due to the lack of information available online about Congolese public and private actors in the environmental sector. Alternatively, Rwandan governments and NGO's are well represented online and information is readily available due to the record keeping of the Rwanda Governance Board. In order to gain comparable levels of information for the DRC landscape, travel will be necessary for a scouting trip.

V. Conclusion

Based on an analysis of the themes that arose during the stakeholder interviews, the student team has developed the following list of recommendations. The recommendations are the product of considerable analysis after meeting with the stakeholders in Rwanda. The Core recommendations represent the brunt of concerns brought up by stakeholders. The practical recommendations represent other areas of improvement identified by the team while in Rwanda. These recommendations are additionally broken down into a framework of organizational focus, ensuring sustainability, formalizing relationships, and promoting visibility.

Type	Category	Recommendation
Core Recommendations	Organizational Focus	Narrowing the Focus
		Participant Demographics
		Addressing the Conflict
		Annual Theme of Forum
		Disparity in Country Contexts
Practical Recommendations	Ensuring Sustainability	Maintain Columbia Relationship
		Secure Funding
		Establish Network of Coaches
	Formalizing Relationships	Hire a staff member
		Clarify Terms of Reference
		Register in Both Countries
	Promoting Visibility	Create a Website & Networking Platform
		Distribute Regular Newsletter
		Develop Business Cards

Figure 6 - Final Recommendations

5.1 Organizational Focus

Narrowing the Focus: One recurring theme from the team's meeting with stakeholders was confusion about the focus of the forum and questions regarding what makes the Rwando-Congolese Dialogue a new and innovative

approach to tackling regional problems. Several NGO representatives and government officials commented that The Rwando-Congolese Dialogue forum attempts to do too many things. There was some concern that fostering cross-cultural dialogue, giving capacity-building instructional programs, and providing access to donors may be overly ambitious for only six participants during a four day conference from such a young organization.

Given these concerns, the team recommends narrowing the focus of the Rwando-Congolese Dialogue to better meet the needs of its participants. While being cognizant of the conflict and distrust between the two countries is important, simply holding the forum with both Rwandans and Congolese should be sufficient to meet the forum's goal of fostering dialogue between participants from both countries. As an alternative to directly addressing the conflict as a means of building trust, it is recommended to state early on that the aim of this forum is for everyone to work together to address shared issues of concern to the region. Given the extremely sensitive nature, political complexities, and differing views on the topic, directly addressing the conflict should not be the explicit objective of the organization. Furthermore, there are already numerous conflict resolution organizations operating throughout the Great Lakes Region that are much larger, more established, and with greater expertise on the issue. For example, multiple stakeholders made reference to the Cross-Border Dialogue for Peace in the Great Lakes Programme implemented by Interpeace.

Instead, the Rwando-Congolese Dialogue should decide whether the forum will focus on technical or managerial capacity building or providing access to donors. Based on the team's discussions with participants, these two options are the areas of greatest need for young NGO leaders. A more narrow focus will help the organization develop greater expertise in a given field and differentiate itself from the multitude of other development organizations operating throughout the region. The focus of the forum also largely relates to target demographics of the participants which will be addressed in the following section.

Participant Demographics - Narrowing the focus of the forum will likely depend on providing the most beneficial experience possible given the type and experience level of the participants attending. Therefore, establishing criteria and qualifications for the participants is an important step toward narrowing the focus of the Rwando-Congolese Dialogue. The team recommends narrowing the focus and selecting participants based on one of the following objectives:

1. The Rwando-Congolese Dialogue should seek highly qualified candidates with projects at an advanced stage of development and focus the annual forum on providing access to donors. According to many of the participants interviewed, access to funding opportunities is the primary objective for those attending the 2017 forum. They hoped the forum would allow them to present their projects to donors and hear honest feedback about their strengths and weaknesses to increase their chances of receiving funding in the future. Several of the participants interviewed had projects that were already at an advanced stage of development. For these participants, a forum focused on providing access to donors would be the most beneficial to helping their projects increase in both scale and impact.
2. Alternatively, the Rwando-Congolese Dialogue should seek less highly qualified candidates with a unique concept for an environmental initiative or in the very beginning stages of project development. A forum with this demographic of participants should focus on capacity building sessions to provide project management skills, public speaking skills, project development advice, and a panel of NGO exemplars to share best practices. A forum of less highly qualified participants should focus on providing the basic skills needed to

begin and develop a project to the point that applying for funding in the near future becomes a realistic possibility.

Sharpening the focus of the dialogue and selecting the desired demographics of the participants is a necessary step to tailor the content of the forum and ensure it is providing the best information available to address the needs of those attending. Based on the team's research, there are numerous well-funded and established NGOs and conferences working on capacity building projects in the region. These organizations have a long history of working in the region, have developed expertise in many areas, are able to train many more people in project management skills, and conduct their activities year round.

Currently, it is unclear what makes the Rwando-Congolese Dialogue uniquely qualified to provide this training to young NGO leaders given the abundance of organizations with similar goals in the region. Therefore, the team recommends pursuing the first option of providing access to donors to highly qualified participants with existing environmental projects. The team believes this model will fill the gap between capacity building projects for NGOs in the early development stages and those at an advanced stage that already receive funding from large donors. Given the small size and limited duration of the annual forum, providing donor access is the best opportunity to achieve the organization's goal of helping these projects scale up and increase their impacts. Furthermore, this shift in focus will help to establish the Rwando-Congolese Dialogue as an organization that provides a unique opportunity to the participants and to attract even more highly qualified candidates that seek exposure to international donors.

In sum, the Rwando-Congolese Dialogue must narrow the focus of the annual forum to differentiate itself from the abundance of other organizations working on capacity building projects in the region. The forum is currently too small, too young, and too short in duration to make a significant impact on these projects if the focus is solely on capacity building. Therefore, the Rwando-Congolese Dialogue should seek highly qualified candidates with projects that are ready to scale up if greater funding were available. The organization hopes to foster an elite class of young NGO leaders ready to increase their project's impact. Providing access to international donors is the best way to develop this elite class of young leaders, meet the needs of their organizations, and differentiate the Rwando-Congolese Dialogue from the numerous other organizations in the region.

Addressing Conflict - As previously stated, the team does not recommend addressing the conflict directly. There are already numerous organizations working on conflict resolution initiatives in the Great Lakes Region. Additionally, it is unclear how such a small organization based outside the region could effectively facilitate a discussion on such a sensitive topic. Finally, the drastically different views of NGO representatives and government officials risks terminating partnerships with organizations who may disagree with the forum's approach to this issue.

Given these limitations, the team recommends continuing the Rwando-Congolese Dialogue's existing stance toward the issue of addressing the conflict but refining the message to better communicate it to potential partners. The team believes even using the term "conflict resolution" may be overly political in this context and should be avoided. Even referring to a conflict raises skepticism about the objectives of the organization and how it views the conflict. Alternatively, the team believes the Rwando-Congolese Dialogue should adopt the phrase "fostering a dialogue between Rwandans and Congolese by discussing issues of shared interest to the region." This terminology meets the organization's objectives of fostering a dialogue between the two groups of participants without entering such politically difficult terrain.

Annual Theme of the Forum - Selecting a theme for each annual forum is undoubtedly important to ensure a meaningful conversation around issues of shared concern and providing them access to experts and donors operating within that specific field. However, there is a risk that changing the theme every year may either exclude qualified participants working outside of the theme or create a network with too diverse of an area of expertise. If the Rwando-Congolese Dialogue hopes to create a network of experts and young NGO leaders, it should be careful not to expand the scope of themes so broadly that large parts of the network of experts and projects are unrelated to each other.

Additionally, having too many themes risks excluding highly qualified participants who did not participate the first time their sector was chosen for that year's conference. For example, the 2017 edition of the forum will focus on environmental projects. If a highly qualified NGO leader working on an environmental project is not able to participate at the 2017 forum, they may have to wait many years before the environment is chosen as a topic again. This risks limiting the number of potential participants and the scale of their impacts if there are too many themes.

The team recommends defining a short list of rotating themes or areas to be selected for each year. For example, the annual forum could rotate between themes involving social, environmental, and economic projects at each conference. These are very broad themes but encompass the vast majority of small scale projects operating within each country. This smaller repertoire of themes will allow the Rwando-Congolese Dialogue to better build a network of experts and a knowledge base in each of the theme areas and reduce the waiting time for candidates not selected to apply again to a forum in their project area.

Disparity in Country Context - There are multiple disparities that exist between the two countries, specifically in reference to the NGO landscapes and development, as well as future prospects for funding. Numerous NGO representatives and government officials emphasized how much more difficult operating an NGO in the DRC is relative to doing so in Rwanda. There is a real risk that the forum will provide ample opportunities for funding and technical assistance to Rwandans and neglect the needs of Congolese participants. The Congolese may become discouraged by the lack of opportunities available to them relative to the abundance of initiatives to support Rwandan projects. Therefore, the forum must provide equal access and opportunity to Congolese participants. The Rwando-Congolese Dialogue must ensure there are donors and experts available that will work in the DRC to assist those participants. While the forum should not shy away from the realities on the ground in each country, there should be special attention given to the Congolese to ensure the opportunities presented are balanced so that all participants can benefit equally from the forum.

5.2 Ensuring sustainability

Maintain Columbia Relationship - A new group of graduate students from Columbia University's School of International and Public Affairs (SIPA) would be beneficial for The Rwando-Congolese Dialogue to ensure fresh ideas, expertise, and continuing improvements to the forum each year. These students could help facilitate the forum, arrange partnerships, and conduct research on best practices and existing NGOs. The continued involvement of a team from the Economic and Political Development Workshop class at SIPA should be formalized by The Rwando-Congolese Dialogue to assist with the continued success of the annual forum.

Secure Funding - The Rwando-Congolese Dialogue must establish partnerships to ensure funding for the upcoming and all future editions of the forum. Securing a stable source of funding is essential for the continued success of the

organization and its ability to host the forum at the time participants expect it. While establishing this reliable source of funding is certainly difficult for a small organization, securing this funding should be done before details on the date and location of the forum are released. Furthermore, given the changing landscape of funding for development under the current U.S. administration, the Rwando-Congolese Dialogue should consider risks to sustainable funding, in particular to USAID.

Establish a Network of Coaches - The Rwando-Congolese Dialogue must work to establish a network of coaches and experts that can continue to advise the participants from year to year. In order to ensure the long-term success of participants' efforts, the relationships between participants and coaches must be sustained beyond the four day forum. This is essential for providing the long-term support and building the network of coaches the Rwando-Congolese Dialogue envisions. Additionally, if the organization hopes to attract highly qualified and motivated coaches, they must consider some form of reimbursement or compensation for the coaches in accordance with local norms.

5.3 Formalizing Relationships

Hire Staff - Although The Rwando-Congolese Dialogue is a small organization, they should aim to hire a staff member to assist with forum preparation, securing partnerships, and maintaining relationships with coaches and participants. As the organization grows, it will be necessary to have an ongoing presence on the ground in both Rwanda and the DRC. Relying on the volunteer work of Furaha Hakizimana and a week-long trip each year from a group of Columbia University students may not be sufficient to ensure the success and continuing growth of the organization. Funding is understandably a limitation to this recommendation at this time. However, hiring a permanent staff member should be considered in the near future to establish a year-round presence on the ground in Rwanda and the DRC. Additionally, an office space would facilitate the staff member and also promote visibility for the organization.

Clarify Terms of Reference (TORs) for coaches, speakers, and partnerships - Several of the potential coaches the team spoke with were unsure of the requirements and expectations for their participation in the 2017 edition of the forum. To combat this uncertainty, The Rwando-Congolese Dialogue should develop specific TORs to outline the responsibilities and expectations of coaches, speakers, and partners. This is needed to help recruit the most highly qualified and motivated candidates that will maintain a continued involvement with the Rwando-Congolese Dialogue. At the time of writing, the development of these TORs is already in progress.

Register Organization in both Rwanda and the DRC - Government officials and NGO representatives emphasized the need to register The Rwando-Congolese Dialogue as an organization in both Rwanda and the DRC. Currently, the organization is registered under French law. Registering in Rwanda is necessary to legally operate within the country and to receive any funding or technical assistance from national or regional government organizations. At the time of writing, registration is underway in Rwanda. However, the team also recommends registering in the DRC as the 2018 edition of the forum will be held there.

5.4 Promoting Visibility

Create Rwando-Congolese Dialogue Website and Networking Platform - As the organization continues to grow, it should establish a website with a built-in networking platform, so as to connect current participants, alumni, and coaches. This will enable the support of participants' projects, the sharing of relevant information, and the exchange

of best practices. This platform will also help reinforce the organization's network of coaches and make it easier for them to support their mentees. The website will serve a dual purpose of enabling this communication and increasing the visibility of the organization.

Distribute Funding Opportunities Newsletter - The Rwanda-Congolese Dialogue should also establish a newsletter to publicize funding opportunities for NGOs in both countries. Learning about funding application deadlines in a timely manner was a challenge for most of the participants interviewed. Many complained that they found it difficult to find opportunities for funding or were often rushed to complete the application by the deadline. Establishing a monthly newsletter featuring upcoming deadlines for funding opportunities would be useful for the participants hoping to receive funding and will achieve the organization's goal of giving participants access to funding opportunities.

Develop Rwanda-Congolese Dialogue Business Cards - Nearly every meeting conducted by the team ended with the exchange of business cards. These cards are a very prominent aspect of the business culture in both Rwanda and the DRC. Therefore, the team recommends designing and printing business cards to increase the organization's visibility following meetings with important potential partners. These would be useful for Furaha as she conducts meetings in the region and for other affiliated with the Dialogue operating around the world.

VI. References

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VII. Annex

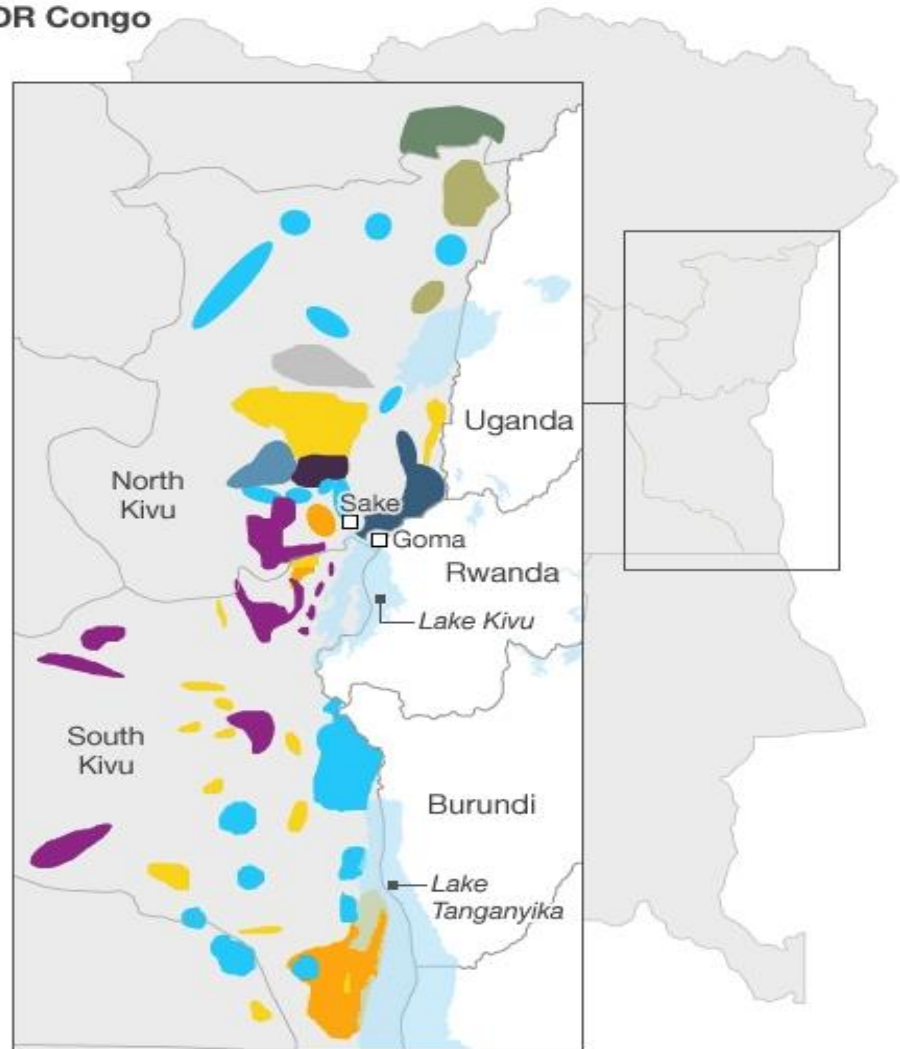
The following map is provided by IRIN news agency and quickly demonstrates the complexity of actors in the Congo. This map was last updated in 2012 and there has since been many developments. Nonetheless the map is useful in seeing the locus of various actors.

7.1 Map of Rebel Groups East Congo 2012

Rebel groups in eastern DR Congo

UN forces and the Congolese army are present in large towns

- ADF-NALU**
Ugandan-led Islamists
- APCLS**
Mai Mai group
- FDLR**
Mostly Hutu Rwandan rebels
- FRPI**
Based in gold-rich Ituri region
- M23**
Mostly Tutsi, said to be Rwandan-backed
- Rai Mutomboki**
Anti-FDLR group
- Sheka**
Mai Mai group
- UPCP**
Loose coalition of smaller nationalist groups
- Mai Mai groups**
Local forces claiming to act in self-defence
- Other armed groups**



Source: Oxfam

*An estimate of where armed groups were in November 2012 based on the best available information. The conflict is changing daily.

Figure 7 - Map of Various Rebel Groups in Eastern Congo in 2012

7.2 Project Gantt Chart

RCD Gantt Chart

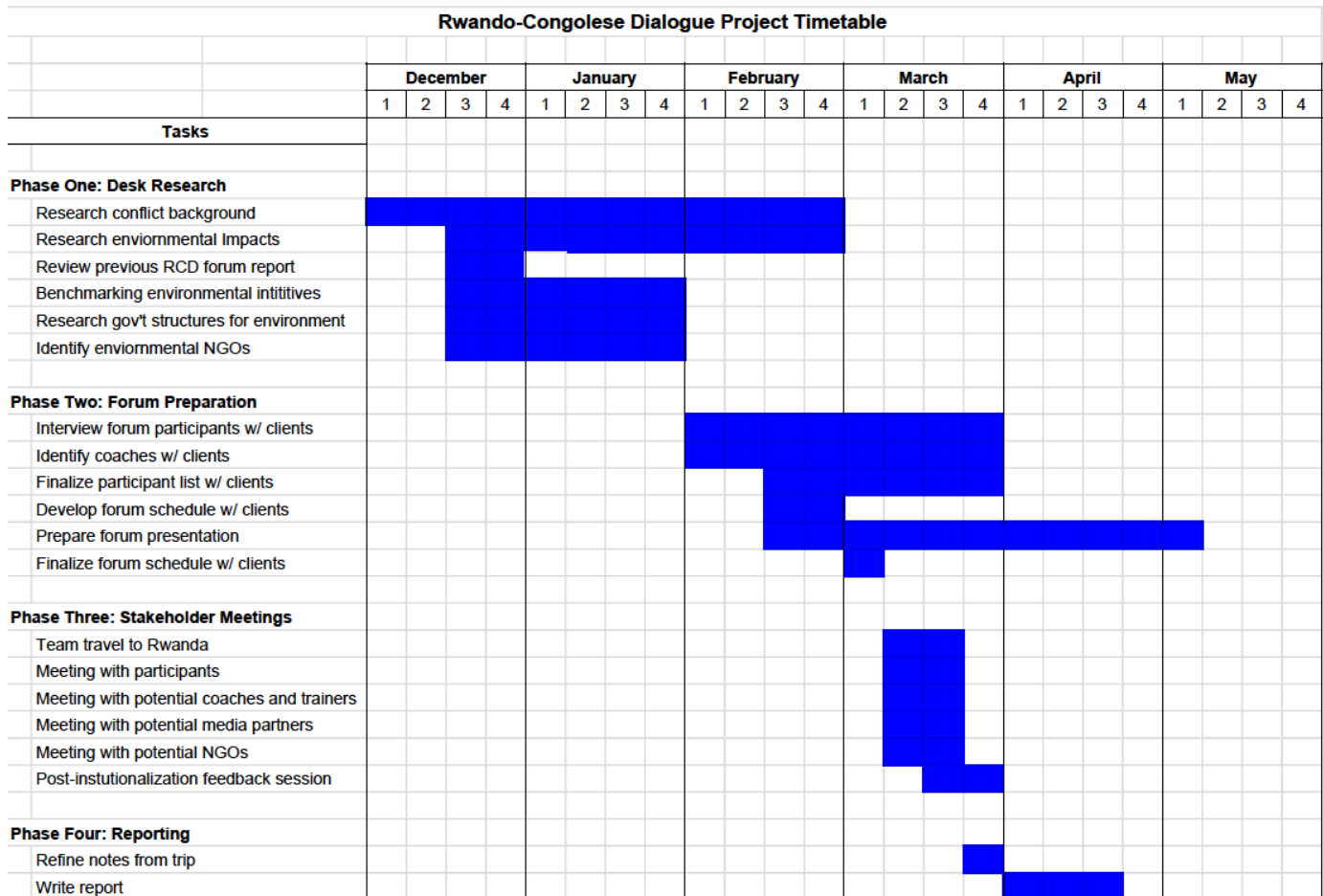


Figure 8 - Gantt Chart used by the Team in Initial Planning of Project

7.3 Schedule of Client Meetings

December 09 Friday - 4:30 PM

- Topic: Introductions
- Where: Chadbourne Office
- Attendance: Severine, Baptiste, Rachel, Adam, Michael, Dubem & Helen

January 07 Saturday - 10:00 AM

- Topic: Benchmarking
- Where: Chadbourne Office
- Attendance: Severine, Baptiste, Adam, Michael & Dubem

January 20 Friday - 5:00 PM

- Topic: Benchmarking and Forum plans
- Where: Chadbourne Office
- Attendance: Rachel, Dubem, Michael, Baptiste, & Severine

February 16 Thursday - 4:30 PM

- Topic: Benchmarking & Announcement of Forum Date Change
- Where: Google Hangouts (From Columbia Campus)
- Attendance: Baptiste, Severine, Michael, Dubem, Rachel, & Adam

February 21 Tuesday - 11:15 AM

- Topic: Baptiste's Suggestions for Benchmarking
- Where: Google Hangouts (From Columbia Campus)
- Attendance: Baptiste, Adam, & Rachel

February 24 Friday - 10:00 AM

- Topic: Discussion of Stakeholders
- Where: Google Hangouts - (From Columbia Campus)
- Attendance: Severine, Baptiste, Michael, Adam, Rachel and Dubem

March 8 Wednesday - 1:00 PM

- Topic: Alignment Meeting before departure
- Where: Google Hangouts (From Columbia Campus)
- Attendance: Baptiste, Adam, & Michael

March 15 Wednesday - 7:00 PM (GMT+2)

- Topic: Debrief Session
- Where: Google Hangouts (From Rwanda)
- Attendance: Baptiste, Severine, Adam, Rachel, Dubem, & Michael

March 22 Wednesday - 7:00 PM GMT+3

- Topic: Debrief and Analysis session
- Where: Google Hangouts (From Tanzania)
- Attendance: Baptiste, Adam, Michael & Rachel

April 9 Sunday - 4:00 PM

- Topic: Forum presentations & Questions for report
- Where: Google Hangouts
- Attendance: Severine, Adam, Michael, & Rachel

May 3 Thursday - 6:00 PM

- Topic: Concluding comments
- Where: Google Hangouts (From Columbia Campus)
- Attendance: Severine, Baptiste, Dubem, Adam, Michael & Rachel

7.4 Stakeholder Meetings Schedule (March 13-17)

Rwanda Meeting Schedule

	Mon 3/13	Tue 3/14	Wed 3/15	Thu 3/16	Fri 3/17
9am				9 – 10 CEPLG	
10am					9:30 – 10:30 Survivor's Fund (SURF)
11am	11 – 12p Never Again Rwanda	11 – 12p Kigali Today	10:30 – 12p Professor Ruzibiza	10:30 – 11:30 Amos Mbuto 11:30 – 12:30p Patrick Abedi	11 – 12p Meeting: Rwanda Green
12pm					12p - Great Lakes
1pm				12:30p – 2p Joel Tembo Vwira	12:30p – 2p Review Session with Furaha
2pm	2p – 3p RGB		2p – 3p FONERWA	2p – 3p Vision Jeunesse Nouvelle	
3pm			3p – 4p National Young Council		
4pm	3:30p – 4:30p Mr. John Kanyoni				3:30p – 4:30p Juvenal
5pm					
6pm	5:30p – 7:30p Team Dinner with Furaha				

Figure 9 - Schedule of Stakeholder Meetings while in Rwanda March 13 - 17

7.5 Planned Agenda for 2017 Forum



2017 Forum Agenda

Kigali, Rwanda - August 2017

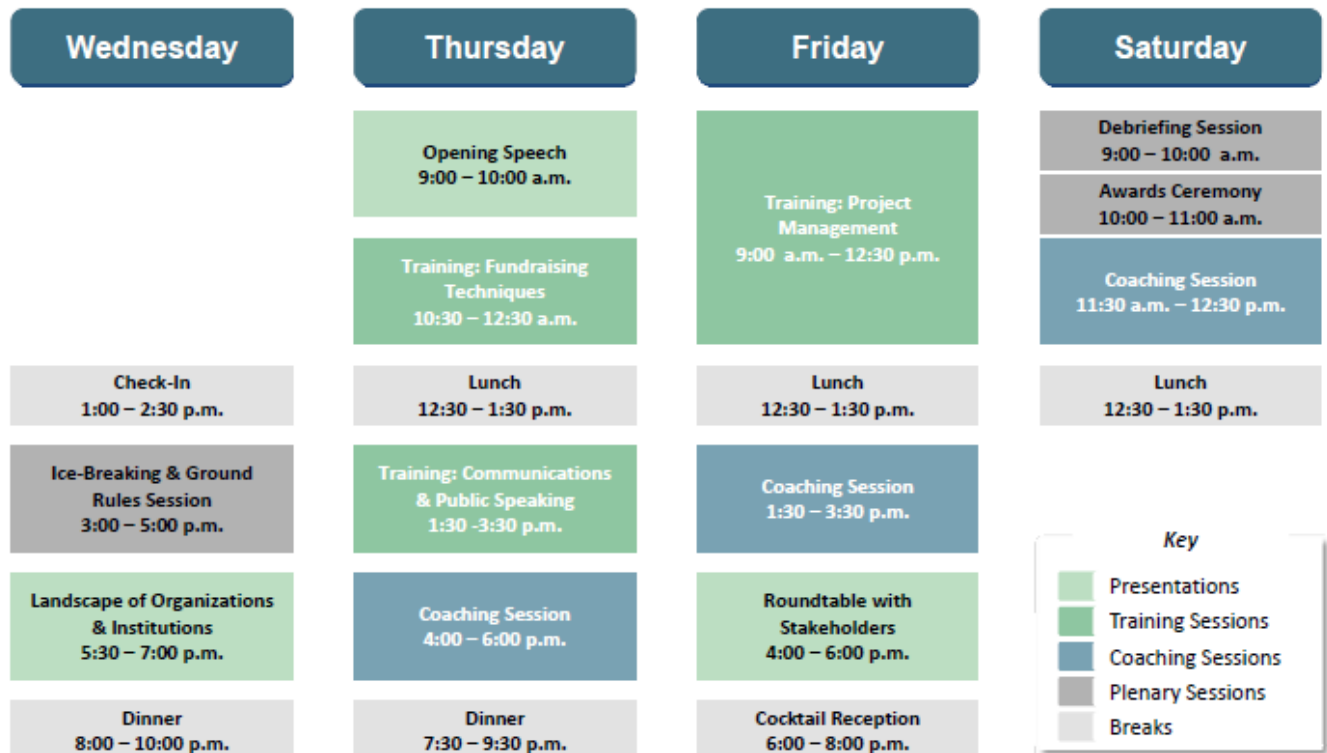


Figure 10 - Projected Schedule for the August 2017 Forum

7.6 List of Small NGOs with Environmental Initiatives in Rwanda

List of Small Rwanda-Focused NGOs with Environmental Initiatives					
Acronym	Name	Type	Location	Scale	Activities
ADARWA	<u>ADARWA</u>	Local NGO	Kigali, Rwanda	Small (5 Staff)	Carpentry
ICRAF	<u>ICRAF - World Agroforestry</u>	Regional NGO	Naribo, Kenya	Small (5 Staff)	Research / Dissemination of Agroforestry in line with SDGs and International standards
DA	<u>Duhamic Adri</u>	Local NGO	Kigali, Rwanda	N/A	Microloans, Food Security, Farming Techniques
ARECO	Association Rwandaise Des Ecologistes - Areco Rwanda Nziza	Local NGO	Kigali, Rwanda	Small	awareness, biodiversity conservation, natural resource management, climate change, energy efficiency
GVTC	GVTC (Greater Virunga Transboundary Collaboration)	Regional NGO	Kigali	Medium (15 Staff)	Transboundary conservation
IGCP	<u>International Gorilla Conservation Program</u>	Regional NGO	Congo, Uganda, Rwanda	Large (22 Staff)	Conserving mountain gorillas & habitat
ARCOS	<u>Arcos Network</u>	Regional NGO	East Africa	Medium (16 Staff)	Conservation, Biodiversity in Albertine Rift
ACNR	<u>ACNR (Association pour le conservation de la Nature au Rwanda)</u>	Local NGO	Gasobo, Rwanda	Small (6 Staff)	Environmental education, biodiversity, conservation, policy advocacy, climate change
ARDR	<u>ARDR - Association Rwandaise pour le Developpement Rural</u>	Local NGO (orphanage)	Gasabo, Rwanda	Small (11 Staff)	community participation, rural development, water manage, healthcare, literacy, womans organization
PDD	<u>Peace and Durable Development (PDD)</u>	Local NGO	Kigali, Rwanda	Small	training, family health, environment conservation, forest protection, tree planation
FPH	<u>Friends Peace House</u>	Local NGO	Kigali, Rwanda	Medium (19 Staff)	vocational training, loans, conflict resolution, agriculture conservation
Instifodh	<u>Instifodh</u>	Local NGO	Kigali, Rwanda	Small (2 staff?)	Training, research, peace, land / agricultural rights
Moucecore	<u>Moucecore</u>	Religious Local NGO	Kigali, Rwanda	Medium (15 Staff)	Church mobilization, poverty eradication, water hygiene, child development
WCS	<u>Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS)</u>	International NGO		Large	Conserve wild life and wild places
RWC	Rwanda Environment Conservation Organization (RECOR)			Small (4-10 staff)	Climate Change, biodiversity, energy, forestry, water, sustainable dev education
Rwanda Aid	<u>Rwanda Aid</u>	Local NGO		Medium (12 Staff)	Tree nursing, Farm training, education, disabilities
CBFP	<u>Congo basin Forest Project (CBFP)</u>			Medium (10 Staff)	Forestry
FHA	<u>Forest of Hope Association</u>	Local NGO	Gisenyi, RW	3 Staff	Forestry
RISD	<u>Rwanda Initiative for Sustainable Development</u>	Local NGO	Ngororero	N/A	landrights, advocacy, reserach
REDO	<u>The Rural Environment Development Organisation (REDO)</u>		Gasabo, RW	3 staff	social integration, microprojects, agriculture, environmental awareness, tree planting
RDIS	<u>Rural Development Inter-Diocesan Service (RDIS)</u>	Local NGO	Muhanga, RW	11 Staff	Evangelism, crop promotion, environmental conservation, water sanitaiton
RYACA	<u>Rwanda Youth Alliance for Climate Actions (RYACA)</u>	Local NGO	Nyarugenge, RW	N/A	Awareness and action campaign
RGI	<u>Rwanda Green Initiative</u>	Local NGO	Nyarugenge, RW	N/A	Rwanda Power Shift
RENGOF	<u>Rwanda Environmental NGO's Forum (RENGOF)</u>	Local NGO	N/A	N/A	ENvironmental Education, Soil restoration, Water management, sustainable agriculture, climate change adaptation, gender mainstreaming
APEFA	<u>Action pour la protection de l'environnement et la promotion des filieres agricoles</u>	Local NGO	Gisenyi, RW	N/A	Forestry, Land, Husbandry, Watershed, Livelihood security
SACOLA	<u>Sabyinyo Community Livelihood Association (SACOLA)</u>	Local NGO	Musanze, RW	2	Conservation