

## Press Release

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### **Bible Society NSW Project in Rwanda receives enthusiastic government support**

**“We want to expand the program to all schools in the country”**

Bible Society NSW’s Project on Healing and Reconciliation in Rwanda has received enthusiastic government support from local and national Rwandan authorities.

The project, developed and delivered in association with partner organisation African Enterprise, is literacy based and focuses on the healing power of God’s Word by using Bible stories that focus on themes of forgiveness, justice and reconciliation, such as the Old Testament story of Joseph and his brothers. The aim of the project is to not only improve the reading, writing and comprehension abilities of 102,000 children, but to also break the cycle of hatred through God’s teachings.

During the Rwanda genocide thirteen years ago (1994), 16 percent of Rwandan children hid under a dead body to survive. Almost 70 percent saw someone being killed or injured. In just 100 days, 1,000,000 Rwandans were killed, leaving many children orphans.

Although the project has only been running a few months of a planned three years, the impact has already been widely felt.

“Mere words are not enough to express the great changes that have taken place in the lives of the children and teacher that were trained through the program, and those that were reached by the trained teachers and children. .... The spirit of repentance for forgiveness is easily seen in the children and the teachers, as well as some of their family and community members. The program has also brought about a big improvement in the reading, writing and comprehension skills of the children.”

*Barengayabo Ramadhan, Mayor  
Rubavu District, Rwanda*

“The National Unity and Reconciliation Commission [of Rwanda] (NURC) ... wish to extend my sincere appreciation for the noble activity well done of inculcating [a] culture of reconciliation among the children through the program activities.

“There is no doubt on the part of the NURC that this program has had great impact on the teachers and children in the schools. The child’s practising of reading, designing, writing and comprehension in reconciliation efforts; is effective in building the above mentioned culture as well as learning skills.

“NURC strongly believes in the program and wish that it could be carried out in all the schools in our country. I pledge NURC continued support for the above best practices and wish you the best in grooming the future Rwanda.”

*Madam Fatuma Ndongiza  
Executive Secretary  
National Unity and Reconciliation Commission*

"The program has had great impact on the teachers and the children in selected schools. This is evidenced by a peaceful relationship in the schools and a culture of forgiveness that has been on going in the lives of the teachers and the children.

"Changing the mindset of the teachers who are with the children on a day to day basis, grooming them for what they will become in the future, is changing the nation, since the children will grow up with the right attitude and pass it over to the next generations."

*William Ntidendereza  
Mayor of Kicukiro District, Rwanda*

"The impact this program has already had, demonstrates the effectiveness of using Biblical stories to address issues of modern day life where people are brought face to face with their problems and are offered a real solution," said Daniel Willis, Bible Society NSW CEO.

"We want to do all we can to ensure the impact of this program is extended to the whole country of Rwanda and I will be travelling to Africa in March to work with local officials on how we can best do this," Daniel added.

"A solution that deals with the debilitating hatred and replaces it with love and reconciliation, and eternal hope in a God who walks with us daily, is an eternal outcome and one we're proud to be involved with," said Daniel

(Copies of the letters can be viewed on the Bible Society NSW web site at: [www.biblesocietynsw.com.au/rwanda](http://www.biblesocietynsw.com.au/rwanda) )

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**For more information:**

Martin Johnson, Communications Manager, Bible Society NSW. 0417 028 438. 02 9888 6588

[mjohnson@biblesocietynsw.com.au](mailto:mjohnson@biblesocietynsw.com.au)

Daniel Willis, CEO Bible Society NSW. 02 9888 6588

[dwillis@biblesocietynsw.com.au](mailto:dwillis@biblesocietynsw.com.au)

(Pictures available on request)