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**Rebuilding Communities:**  
**A case study of empowerment in post-conflict Rwanda**

A thesis presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of  
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## **Abstract**

Empowerment became a popular concept in the 1990s, so popular that some believe the concept has lost its impact. This thesis uses the empowerment levels of; personal, relational and community, to investigate a psychosocial intervention in the post-conflict environment. The post-conflict environment is one that is disempowering for both men and women.

Rwanda, one of the most complicated and devastated post-conflict situations seen since World War II, is the location of the World Vision intervention examined in this thesis. World Vision's Personal Development Workshop aims to provide a safe environment where people can process their experiences of the genocide. They use lectures, individual exercises and small group discussions to cover the topics of understanding the grief process, dealing with emotions and the concept of forgiveness.

The thesis concludes that both male and female participants of the Personal Development Workshops have been empowered at all three levels. It shows the benefit of using the empowerment approach in the community context and suggests that consideration of psychosocial interventions is crucial in post-conflict settings. The need for such interventions to be continued for many years after the conflict has ended is also identified.



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## List of Abbreviations

ACT-Rwanda	Association of Committed Teachers
AEE	African Evangelical Enterprise
AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
ADP	Area Development Programme
AVEGA	Association of Genocide Widows
DAWN	Development Alternatives for a New Era
DevNet	Aotearoa New Zealand International Development Studies Network
GAD	Gender and Development
GBV	Gender-Based Violence
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
HPR	Healing, Peacebuilding and Reconciliation
IDP	Internally Displaced People
IMF	International Monetary Fund
INGO	International Non-Government Organisation
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
NGO	Non-Government Organisation
NZAID	New Zealand Agency for International Development
PDW	Personal Development Workshop
RPF	Rwandan Patriotic Front
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
US	United States of America
WAD	Women and Development
WID	Women in Development
WV	World Vision
WVI	World Vision International
WVNZ	World Vision New Zealand
WVR	World Vision Rwanda