

Alex



Identity and start of the wars:

My name is Alex. The genocide began in 1990 when I was 23 years old. During the genocide, I faced a significant problem because they pursued me relentlessly. Fortunately, I found a kind person who hid me, but that was in the midst of the genocide.

Consequences of the wars:

I saw people who had been cut with machetes. At the end of the genocide, I was traumatized without knowing it, because I paid attention to nothing. I didn't take care of myself. I was just living, and I realized this later, maybe in 2002. That's when I realized the mental state I was in. It was not a good place. When the Gacaca courts were introduced, we were able to express ourselves. We spoke, and those who were found guilty were punished and imprisoned. When the Gacaca courts concluded, that was when I returned to my normal state. Days passed, and things returned to their normal course. I would say I regained my mental health.

Mental health and reconciliation:

At first, I didn't understand the process of unity and reconciliation. I didn't understand it well. I thought, unity and reconciliation, if someone killed my loved ones or killed people over there, am I the one who has to ask them for forgiveness? But deep down, I thought, in the 2 to 3 years following the process of unity and reconciliation, I saw that it was necessary to forgive a person who asks for forgiveness. It was at that moment that I felt life returning to me and started living like everyone else. That's when I realized that the process of unity and reconciliation was important. And when I look around me, I see the impact of unity and reconciliation, and I would say that the number of traumatized people has decreased. The number has decreased. It's not like in the past. You realize that in the life we are living, the cases of trauma are decreasing and ending. We realize that unity and reconciliation, as well as Gacaca, have had their impact. They have had an impact on people. It would be like telling a child, your little brother did something wrong to me, and then you punish him in front of me. You punish them and that helps the offended person. It would help me because he had wronged me. When I see you punishing him, it has a good effect on me. I can compare unity and reconciliation and Gacaca; they were important.