Hi FXB

FXB honors Day of Commemoration of the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi.

April 7th was declared by the United Nations as the Day of Commemoration of the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi, commemorating the deaths of more than one million people who were murdered during the genocide in Rwanda in 1994.

In honor of the Day of Remembrance of the Victims of the Rwanda Genocide, FXB is featuring an interview with Damascène Ndayisaba, Director of Operations FXB Africa, who is from Rwanda and has worked with FXB for over twenty years.
How did you get involved with FXB, the nonprofit international organization for which you have been working in Rwanda during the past 20 years?
I am from Cyeza / Rutobwe district in Rwanda where FXB started its programs in April 1995. On a Sunday of May 1995, when I was going to Kigali where I worked for a local organization supporting widows and orphans victims of the Rwanda genocide in the Southern Province, I missed my bus. I saw a car and two white men. I approached them and asked for a lift. The men took me on board and began to ask me several questions about myself and my project. Throughout the journey, we did not stop talking: they really wanted to know more about my program and how we served our beneficiaries. When we arrived in Kigali, they told me that they were from FXB International and that they were going to contact me. One of them was the Executive Director at the time (Leon de Riedmatten) and the other, Head of Mission (Hedi Amami).

A few months later, I received an invitation from FXB International to join FXB Rwanda as a social worker, to develop a project similar to the one I was implementing in Mayaga. I accepted, and in 1999, I became national coordinator.

1. How did FXB evolve in Rwanda during the past 20 years?
FXB began with a rehabilitation program for houses destroyed during the genocide against the Tutsi. Nearly 600 houses were built and about fifty children were placed in safe homes. In 1998, FXB launched a second project to support poor families by helping them improve their socio-economic conditions. More than 3,500 families started income-generating activities while children received school support. Among these families, we noticed the scale of HIV/AIDS. 500 adults were sent to the hospital for testing; unfortunately, 15% of them were infected. We therefore provided support for HIV positive mothers and children affected by the disease. This program
gradually evolved into the current FXBVillage Model. Currently, 65 staff members work for FXB Rwanda and more than 7,000 families have gone out of poverty in the country.

2. What are you personally most proud of in your work with FXB?
Under my leadership, FXB Rwanda was awarded a first grant from US President’s Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFR) to launch 20 new Community Development Programs FXBVillage in Rwanda and Uganda, as well as a second grant to launch 14 other programs. This greatly expanded our area of intervention. Currently FXB is present in all provinces of Rwanda. This presence and especially the impact of our programs on these respective populations makes me proud but I am even more proud when people across the country run behind me, calling me by name and extolling the merits of FXB.

FXB is one of the few organizations in the region that goes down to the family level by providing families with a comprehensive package of services they need. Among the people who came out of extreme poverty countrywide, FXB’s contribution is quite considerable.

3. Today is the 23rd anniversary commemoration of genocide against the Tutsi. Some victims are living beside neighbors who have been involved in the murder of their families. How did the Rwandan genocide affect the population, more than 20 years later?

Thanks to the Government’s current commitment of denying impunity and favoring forgiveness, the genocide perpetrators and the victims coexist peacefully and help one another. They all recognize that the genocide has struck in one or another way every Rwandan. In fact, during the genocide, almost every family either lost one of its members, or had a relative in prison or in exile.

All of us are unanimous that it should not happen again. People who saw Rwanda during the genocide can hardly recognize that 20 years later, it is the same country. Everything has changed so much.

4. What message would you give younger generations?
The genocide that struck Rwanda in 1994 did not come by itself. It was the fruit of hatred and selfishness. Education, and this is what FXB advocates for, gives us this capacity to analyze, to decide and to act freely but with respect for our neighbor’s rights.

Young generation must know that evil brings no good. It is not a matter of wisdom, morality or trauma. On this earth, I have already seen enough: misery and happiness, evil and good. I understood well that a hungry belly has nothing to do with human values.

I also encourage citizens of this world to work for poverty eradication and fight for everyone’s most fundamental rights. Without this, our world goes straight to its loss.

5. How do you think FXB is contributing to a stronger and more cohesive Rwanda?

Individual and community development that FXB promotes brings all actors to associate with their neighbors for greater success of their income generating activities. Cooperatives, groups, collective activities…. all create a strong relationship between the participants of the programs and gradually strengthen national unity: “Knitting a little piece of the peace process” as Albina du Boisrouvray, Founder of FXB, used to say when she launched FXB’s first program in Rwanda. I
deeply thank Albina for being among the first visionaries and for acting as she did in Rwanda without waiting too long!

Donate today to help us continue life-changing work in Rwanda!

About Mr. Ndayisaba: Trained as a psychologist and educator, Mr. Ndayisaba first worked as a Senior School Principal. Later, he carried out trainings in business management and in community well-being promotion. For the past twenty two years, he has been working with FXB in Rwanda, initially as Social and Administrative Manager, and later as Country Director. Having acquired important expertise in the socio-economic and cultural dynamics of African great lakes communities, he substantially contributed in designing the FXB comprehensive program of support targeting orphans, vulnerable children and destitute families affected by HIV/AIDS in Rwanda, that he later developed in Uganda, Burundi and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC).