Togetherness and Care amongst Youth Conceived from Sexual Violence: Lessons from Ethnographic Research in Rwanda

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Language & Terminology

• “Born of rape” discourses
  • “war babies”
  • “children born of war”
  • “les enfants mauvais souvenirs”

• Conception vs. Birth

• Our responsibilities in challenging the dehumanization of children, young people and their mothers
Research & Methodology

• The reconstitution of kinship and family relations in post-genocide Rwanda

• Ethnographic fieldwork in Rwanda from January 2019 – July 2021

• The Survivors Fund & SEVOTA

• Interviews, youth camps and home visits with young people and mothers
Youth Camps

• Bringing young people together to form social networks
• 30 young people invited twice in a year
• Formal programme and informal being together, sharing experiences

• “Now I know I am not alone”
• “The only friends I have, I have met here at the camp”

• Friendships & solidarity beyond the camps
“Peer Support” Considerations

• Disclosure of conception

• Stages of the life cycle – childhood, adolescence, young adulthood, parenthood

• Stigma

• Young people conceived from rape as a collective ‘group’
  • Rejection and avoidance of collective identities by young people themselves
  • ‘They Should See Us as a Symbol of Reconciliation’ – Denov (2019)
THANK YOU!
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