



# AJECL asbl

Association des Jeunes de Saint Charles Lwanga  
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"Mens Sana in Corpore Sano"

# ANNUAL REPORT 2023



101 students trained by Gwizamahoro Club GS Kamabare, Nyarugenge sector, District Bugesera received their certificates as peace builders in the local community.

[www.ajecl.org.rw](http://www.ajecl.org.rw)

# I. BRIEF PRESENTATION OF AJECL

The AJECL (Youth Association of Saint Charles Lwanga) was created in October 2004, in the District of Nyarugenge, Saint Charles Lwanga Catholic Parish of Nyamirambo. It was founded by Father Iyakaremye Théogene helped by a group of young people from the Nyamirambo Parish, with encouragement from the late Father Emmanuel Gasana, who was then priest of this Parish. It obtained legal personality in 2008 by ministerial decree No. 58/11 of 04/18/2008 published in the Official Journal of 01/26/2009. It was registered by RGB (Rwanda Governance Board) on 06/11/2013.

## I.1. THE OBJECTIVES AND VALUES PROMOTED BY AJECL

According to its statutes, the general objective of AJECL is to help young people to become aware of the current problems they face and to find adequate solutions for a better future (“Mens sana in corpore sano”).

There are 4 specific objectives, namely:

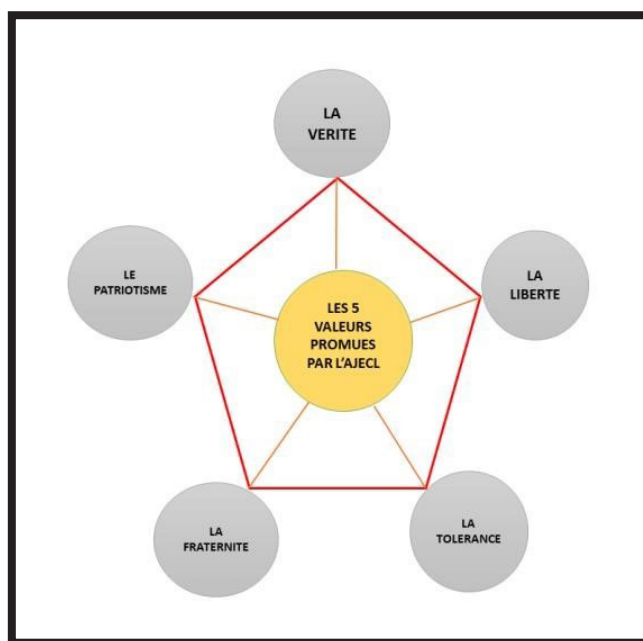
- a) Promote the Christian spirit among young people,
- b) Fight against poverty through the culture of savings and job creation,
- c) Fight against the HIV/AIDS pandemic and care for affected and infected people, and
- d) Promote the culture of Peace.

The key values favored by AJECL were chosen either because they were little appreciated in daily life, or because their interpretation did not contribute to the consolidation of lasting peace. They are: truth, freedom, tolerance, fraternity and patriotism.

## I.2. INTERVENTION ZONES

During this year, AJECL’s key activities were concentrated in 18 sectors of the 5 districts in two provinces and the City of Kigali.

These are the Mageragere, Kanyinya and Kigali sectors of the Nyarugenge district; Ndera sector of Gasabo district, in the city of Kigali. Mayange, Kamabuye, Ngeruka, Mareba, Ruhuha, Nyarugenge and Shyara sectors of Bugesera district in the EASTERN province. The Tumba, Bushoki, Mbogo and Masoro sectors of Rulindo district; Muhondo, Muyongwe, Ruli and Coko sectors of Gakenke district in the Northern Province.



# II. AJECL’S ACHIEVEMENTS FROM JANUARY TO DECEMBER 2023

AJECL’s achievements during the year 2023 are presented in its 4 main areas of intervention.

## II.1. YOUTH ENTREPRENEURSHIP

In the field of youth entrepreneurship, AJECL has followed its regular pattern of services for the young people it supervises in its areas of intervention. Its complete cycle is made up of 5 activities, namely training, supervision, financial support, supervision, evaluation, training.



For this year, the emphasis was placed on updating training modules for young people, training trainers and beneficiaries, financing savings and credit groups and supporting savings and credit groups and members.

### II.1.1. UPDATING YOUTH TRAINING MODULES

Following the needs identified, AJECL has updated its two modules on youth entrepreneurship, namely:

- AMAHUGURWA KU MUCO WA RWIYEMEZAMIRIMO-IBANGA RY’UBUKIRE, GUHANGA AGASHYA NO GUTEGURA UMUSHINGA UBYARA INYUNGU
- AMAHUGURWA KU MIYOBORERE MYIZA

### II.1.2. TRAINING OF TRAINERS AND BENEFICIARIES

After updating the modules on youth entrepreneurship, AJECL, with the support of the project:

Strengthening of entrepreneurial and organizational capacity of 12 SILCS, funded by Lemonaid&ChariTea Foundation of Hamburg in Germany, AJECL trained 39 trainers including 20 from Rulindo district and 19 from Gakenke district.

*Closing of the training of trainers in Gakenke district*



The trainees have assimilated the qualities of a good entrepreneur, the 12 keys to wealth and the development of a bankable business plan.

*Training of young on the development of Business plan*





Regarding leadership training, still within the framework of the same project, 40 trainers followed the training of trainers. 21 trainers came from Rulindo district and 19 from Gakenke district.

*Closing of the training of trainers in the Rulindo district*

The authorities of the two districts appreciated the quality of the training given to the representatives of the savings and credit groups of their districts and encouraged these trainers to put their heart and soul into training the members of their groups and significantly reduce youth poverty in the said districts. Until the end of 2023, 136 members of 6 savings and credit groups in the Rulindo district and 137 members of 6 groups in the Gakenke district have benefited from the training, which has built these groups in the two districts.



*Training for members of savings and credit groups*

### **II.1.3. FINANCING OF SAVINGS AND CREDIT GROUPS**

12 savings and credit groups with 335 members in the two districts were able to save Rwf 8,857,200 themselves. This savings helped them become familiar with the use of small internal loans. Each group opened a bank account either in the Inter-Diocesan Micro Finance Network (RIM) or in the SACCOs in their sectors. AJECL supported their own savings with financial support of 13,100,000 Rwandan francs, in the form of revolving credit, to help each group meet the demands of their members who were able to develop good projects. The aim of this support is to familiarize members of savings and credit groups with the use of external credits so that they can overcome the fear of using microfinance money in financing well-studied projects of their members.

### **II.1.4. SUPPORT FOR SAVINGS AND CREDIT GROUPS**

Apart from the 12 savings and credit groups in the districts of Rulindo and Gakenke, supported as part of the project: Strengthening of entrepreneurial and organizational capacity of 12 SILCS, AJECL supports 11 savings and credit groups in the district of Nyarugenge, 2 in Gasabo district and 2 in Bugesera district.



*Representatives of savings groups And credit of the districts of Nyarugenge and Gasabo, in the coordination meeting (At the AJECL headquarters)*

This support aims to strengthen organizational capacities so that they become stable and sustainable structures capable of strengthening the financial capacities of their members and of collaborating effectively with AJECL in the implementation

Implementation of its long-term education program for the culture of fraternity and Peace: Gwizamahoro program 2100.



*The monitoring and evaluation officer, during a visit to the savings and credit group: Icyerekezo Mpanga (Nyarugenge)*

The following tables show the savings and credit groups created and supported by AJECL this year in the districts of Rulindo, Gakenke, Nyarugenge, Gasabo and Bugesera.

District	Nombre de groupes	Membres du groupes		Montant épargné jusque fin 2023	Appui financier par AJECL
		Garçons	Filles		
Gakenke	6	63	100	7,201,930	6,100,000
Rulindo	6	43	143	5,645,250	7,000,000
Nyarugenge	11	113	111	31,703,280	2,700,000
Gasabo	2	16	25	3,564,250	600,000
Bugesera	2	22	31	2,220,000	500,000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>363</b>	<b>406</b>	<b>50,334,710</b>	<b>16,900,000</b>

## II.2. EDUCATION



AJECL, since 2015, has organized within its Igcumbi cy'amahoro Center, a 6-month sewing training course for young single mothers or those who experience risky family relationships.

It is a project supported by **Friedens kinder (Koblenz, Germany)**. This year 30 young girls in difficulty benefited from free training. All finalists of the year received the Sewing machines at the end of their training.



The center has been accredited by NESAS (National Examination & School Inspection Authority) as a vocational school under the name CEFAM VTC (Training Center in Arts and Trades, Vocational Training Center)

*The CEFAM VTC 2023 finalists received sewing machines for their social integration*

### II.3. THE PROMOTION OF THE CULTURE OF FRATERNITY AND PEACE

The feeling of brotherhood of all humans is the solid foundation of the culture of peace in this world. AJECL uses clubs founded in secondary and higher schools to cultivate this feeling in time among the young people of the 21st century.

Through these clubs, AJECL raises awareness among students in primary and secondary schools to fight against alcohol abuse, drugs, and other threats to the lives of young people up to at least the age of 20. Under the theme of fraternity as the foundation of sustainable development, AJECL celebrated the International Day of Peace on September 21, 2023. It continued advocacy activities in favor of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Rwanda. AJECL organized for the second time the sports competition for boys and girls to strengthen the spirit of brotherhood and peace. And, Finally, AJECL has put into writing its long-term educational approach to the culture of fraternity and Peace: Gwizamahoro Program 2100: Intra-Intergenerational dialogue.

#### II.3.1. GWIZAMAHORO CLUBS IN SECONDARY AND HIGHER SCHOOLS

Gwizamahoro club is defined as a youth school whose objective is to educate young people who will become citizens united by their history instead of tearing themselves apart because of it. Citizens in harmony with God, with themselves, with others and with the environment. Citizens characterized by the values of truth, freedom, tolerance, fraternity and patriotism.

A group made up of 20 to 30 young people is trained for 40 to 60 hours using the modules mentioned above. At the end of the training, the young people take the vows of active non- violence and receive certificates of recognition. And then they are sent to their respective communities to live the ideal of peace with their brothers and sisters.

Through these clubs, AJECL raises awareness among students from primary and secondary schools to fight against alcohol abuse, drugs, and other threats to the lives of young people until at least 20 years old.



This year 2023, AJECL has 6 active Gwizamahoro clubs in the Bugesera district (GS Kamabare, GS Biharagu, GS Gihinga, GS Ruhuha, GS Bushonyi and GS Nziranziza. They bring together 285 members who have completed the training, the vow of active Non-Violence and received their certificates this year 2023.

In the city of Kigali, AJECL has 9 active Gwizamahoro clubs (GS Buye, GS Nyarufunzo, College de Butamwa, College St Andre, LNDC, GS Kanyinya, GS Karama, GS Kigali, and CEFAM VTC). 239 members of these clubs completed the training, the vow of Active Non- Violence and received their certificates this year 2023.

In total, the young people who benefited from training in the culture of fraternity and peace, who took the vow of Active Non-Violence and received their certificates are **524**.



To achieve this result in schools, AJECL trained the teachers who support these young people, two per school. In the Bugesera district, 22 teachers were trained and 10 teachers in the City of Kigali. AJECL also trained 20 teachers in Gakenke and Rulindo districts, 10 per district. They will begin the supervision of Gwizamahoro clubs in these districts in 2024.

As part of promoting development based on the values of peace, AJECL has started training members of savings and credit groups in the districts of Gakenke and Rulindo! 128 members are determined to continue this training until they obtain the certificates in September 2024.

### II.3.2. THE CELEBRATION OF INTERNATIONAL PEACE DAY SEPTEMBER 2023

Every year, the International Day of Peace is celebrated around the world on September 21. The United Nations General Assembly declared this day dedicated to strengthening the ideals of peace, observing 24 hours of non-violence and ceasefire. Never has our world needed peace so much.

This year's theme is Action for Peace: Our Ambitions for the #Global Goals. It is a call to the action that recognizes our individual and collective responsibility in the promotion of peace.

Promoting peace contributes to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which will create a culture of peace for all.

As United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres said: "Peace is needed now more than ever. War and conflict cause devastation, poverty and hunger and drive tens of millions of people from their homes. Climate chaos is everywhere. And even peaceful countries are plagued by glaring inequality and political polarization." Since 2017, AJECL has joined the whole world in celebrating this day with the intention of one day seeing our world come out of the culture of violence and enter the culture of Non-Violence, which is the True Culture of Peace.

This year, AJECL celebrated this day, Saturday, September 23, 2023 under the theme: "Let us consolidate the culture of Fraternity and Peace, as a pillar of sustainable development in our century".

The day coincided with the publication of the approach proposed by AJECL as a way out of the violent transgenerational crises experienced by our country and the Great Lakes Region in general during the 20th century. The approach is entitled: "**Gwizamahoro program 2100: Intra-intergenerational dialogue**".

Also, on this occasion, Professor Gasimba François Xavier gave the participants a lecture on the role of the first two generations of the 20th century in what happened during the last two generations of the same century, especially the Genocide perpetrated against the Tutsis in 1994. It was with the aim of awakening the consciousness of Rwandans at the end of the first generation of the 21st century to prepare the legacy of the first generation to the 2nd generation. 31 young people who followed training on the culture of Fraternity and Peace in the city of Kigali: Lycée Notre Dame de Cîteaux and GS Kigali took the vow of Active Non-Violence and received their certificates as well as the teachers who supervised them during the year.

Today, AJECL officially launched its 20-year anniversary which will be celebrated in September 2024.



### II.3.3. THE ADVOCACY IN FAVOR OF THE NUCLEAR WEAPONS BAN TREATY (TIAN)



As of January 22, 2021, nuclear weapons are subject to a global categorical treaty-based ban for the first time. This is a historic achievement that marks a decisive step towards the abolition of the world's most horrific weapons.

The new treaty strengthens the norm prohibiting the possession and use of nuclear weapons, and delegitimizes the dangerous and erroneous theory of “nuclear deterrence,” which has long been invoked to justify the indefinite retention of nuclear weapons.

Two-thirds of the world's states, including Rwanda, have expressed support for the TIAN and called on all states to join it. As more states become parties to the treaty, pressure on nuclear- weapon states to disarmament builds.

It is within this framework that AJECL, in collaboration with the Episcopal Commission Justice and Peace, (CEJP), thanks to the financial support of ICAN, has organized, since 2022, different advocacy meetings to encourage Rwanda, as a nation long committed to nuclear disarmament, to join the TPNW as soon as possible.

This year, on February 3, in collaboration with the Episcopal Commission for Justice and Peace (CEJP) under the financing of ICAN (International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons) AJECL organized a meeting to monitor the process of signing and ratifying the Treaty Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TIAN) by the Rwandan State. In this meeting, other organizations joined AJECL to put their voice together in raising awareness of this Treaty in Rwandan society, but also to urge the Rwandan State to sign and ratify it.

These are EJO YOUTH ECHO, PAX PRESS RWANDA, LA GALOPE Rwanda, and VISION JEUNNESSE NOUVELL.

#### **At this meeting, the participants were as follows:**

- A representative of ICAN (International Campaign to Abolish nuclear weapons)
- A representative of MINAFET
- A Member of Parliament, Chamber of the vexed
- Executive Director of “Rwanda Atomic Energy Board”
- Members of an ICAN partner organization: AJECL
- Representatives of organizations that want to work together in the TIAN popularization process, namely: Commission Episcopale Justice et Paix Rwanda, Ejo Youth Echo, Pax Press, LA GALOPE RWANDA, vision jeunesse nouvelle
- Media including Isango Star TV, RBA, Ubumwe.com, Igihe.com, Kigali Today and New Times.



After the presentations made, the participants exchanged views and made resolutions and recommendations within the framework of making this treaty known to Rwandans and appealing to the government of Rwanda for the signature and ratification of the Treaty.

### II.3.4. FOOTBALL FOR THE CULTURE OF FRATERNITY AND PEACE



*The girls of Twimpala (Ngeruka) and the boys of Twimpala (Ngeruka) wins Gwizamahoro cup for the 2nd time.*

As part of promoting the culture of fraternity and peace among the young people of the 21st century, AJECL organized the football competition for boys and girls. This Annual competition is organized in the Catholic parish of Ruhuha covers, this year, 5 sectors of Bugesera district namely Ruhuha, Ngeruka, Nyarugenge, Shyara and Mareba. Each sector had a girls' team and a boys' team. The central theme of the competition is: "We, the elders of the 21st century, do not want to grow in hostility but in friendliness."

The players and spectators took the time to deepen the meaning of the key terms for mobilizing young people within the AJECL: the benevolent elder and the malicious elder, the friend and the traitor of the 21st century. The benevolent elder is the one who grows in conviviality and universal fraternity. The malicious elder is the one who grows up with a logic of hatred and violence. The close friend of the 21st century is the cadet of the 20th century who puts the elders of the 21st century on the right path, that of building a better, more peaceful future. The traitor of the 21st century is the one who leads the elders of the 21st century into logic of hatred and violence.

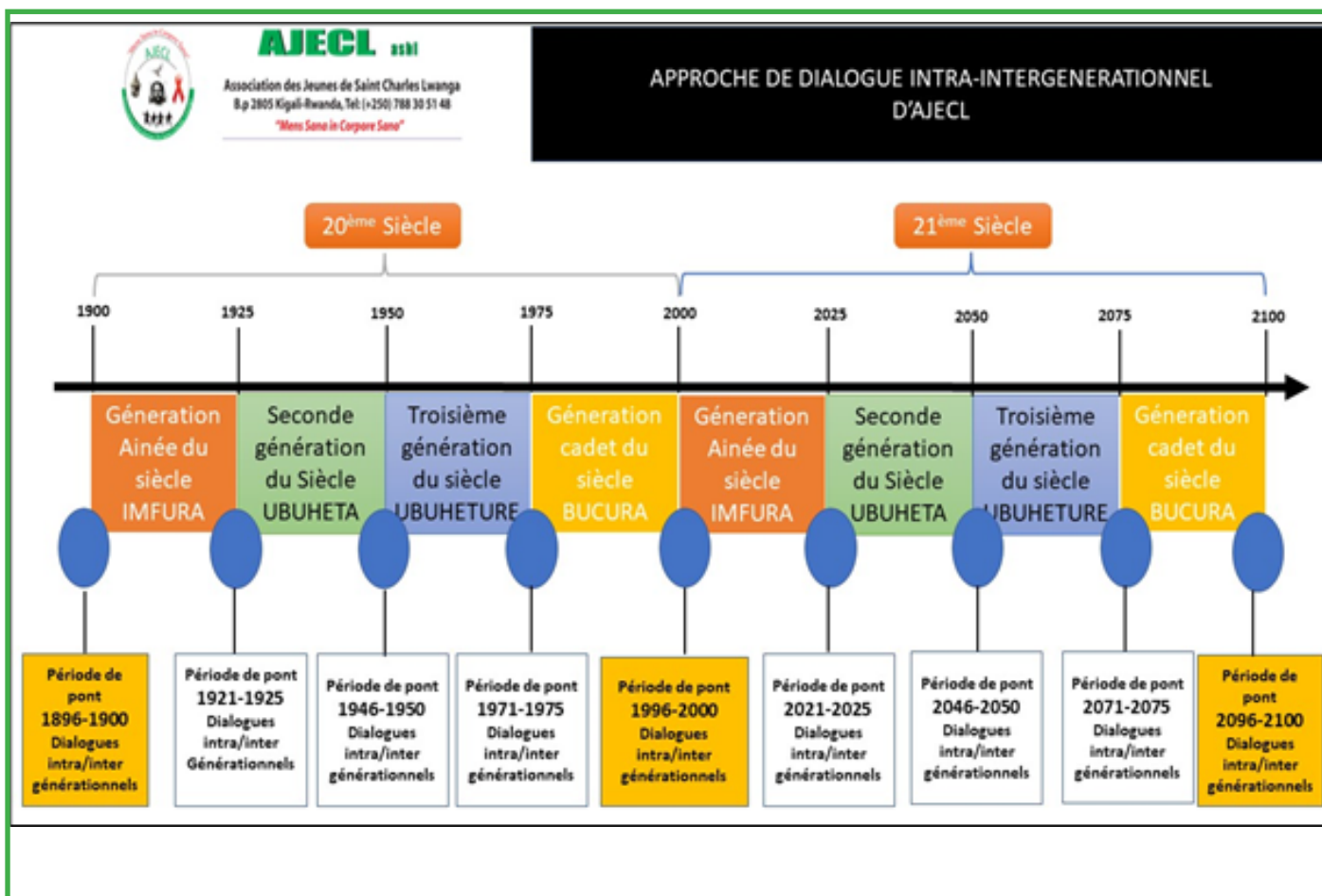
At each match, a message promoting fraternity and peace was delivered to make this central theme a reality. The Twimpala girls team and their brothers won the final and took home both trophies.

## II.3.5. LA PRODUCTION DU LIVRET DE DESCRIPTION DE L'APPROCHE SPEII.3.5. THE PRODUCTION OF THE BOOKLET DESCRIBING AJECL'S SPECIAL APPROACH TO BUILDING LASTING PEACE IN THE 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY

To make its contribution, AJECL has initiated a long-term program of education in the culture of fraternity and peace intended for the youth of the 21st century: GWIZAMAHORO PROGRAM 2100: INTRA – INTER GENERATIONAL DIALOGUE.

During this year, AJECL wrote down the description of this program. This is a description of AJECL's own approach, as a contribution to the achievement of a peaceful world during the 21st century.

The approach presents a century as a family with 4 children: 4 generations that take the names of 4 successive children in a Rwandan family: Imfura, Ubuheta, Ubuheture and Bucura.



*Chaque génération est invitée à se montrer préoccupée par sa période de responsabilité.*

Thus each generation thinks in time about the inheritance to give to the next generation and the latter shows itself mature enough to choose what it inherits and what it does not inherit for the good of its generation and subsequent generations. This is decided in the bridge period, (2021 – 2025; 2046 -2050; 2071 – 2075; 2096 – 2100) This heritage to be accepted or rejected must be evaluated from a holistic point of view, and not partial or partisan. It must therefore encompass all areas of political, economic, religious, socio- cultural, technological, legal and environmental life, the overarching goal being to guarantee a sustainable quality life for all successive generations.

## II.3.6. THE DEVELOPMENT OF PARTNERSHIPS WITH OTHER NGOS WORKING IN THE FILD OF PEACE PROMOTION

### Signing of memorandum of understanding

Being aware that a long-term program of education in the culture of fraternity and peace intended for the youth of the 21st century is too broad for a single organization, AJECL has developed partnerships with other organizations working in the field of peace promotion.

During 2023, AJECL signed the memorandum of understanding with four Rwandan organizations and one Burundian organization: EJO YOUTH ECHO, PAX PRESS RWANDA, LA GALOPE Rwanda, VISION JEUNNESSE NOUVELLE, and NVA

NDUWAMAHORO of Bujumbura. These are in addition to other networks included:

AJECL is part of: Pax Christi International, ICAN (International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons), RFGL (Reseau Fraternité Grands Lacs), and UPABP (Pan-African Union of Peace Builders).

## **PARTICIPATION IN THE NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL ACTIVITIES OF AJECL PARTNERS IN THE FRAMEWORK OF PEACE CONSOLIDATION IN THE GREAT LAKES**

As part of the realization of our partnership, AJECL participated in various peacebuilding activities organized by our partners in the Great Lakes Region during this year 2023.



As part of the “Great lakes youth network for peace and development” project, funded by KAS and through our partnership with vision jeunesse nouvelle, a young person from AJECL, Jean Pierre TUY-ISHIMIRE, was one of the 25 young people trained on peacebuilding in the RGL.

*Training held in Dar es Salaam from September 17 to 22, 2023.*



*Father Théogène Iyakaremye participates in the Regional Workshop “Dialogue Cross-border and Youth Empowerment For Peace in the Great Lakes Region, held in Kigali from 11 to 13 December 2023*



*Father Théogène Iyakaremye Participates in the “Youth for Peace” Conference, held in Bujumbura from November 27 to 28, 2023*



## CONCLUSION

The AJECL approach “Gwiza amahoro program 2100: Intra intergenerational dialogue “ presents itself as a lit lamp placed on the candlestick (Mt 5.15) to illuminate the 3 active generations concerned by the 1st bridge period of the 21st century, but also of the 3rd millennium: Uuheture and Bucura of the 20th century and Imfura of 21st century.

This century will reflect what we have decided and what we have sown through judicious choices and actions in favor of peace and sustainable development.

AJECL, through its initiative to offer Rwandan society a long-term peace education program called: GWIZAMAHORO PROGRAM 2100, wanted to make its contribution to the desired changes during the new century and the new millennium.

Some achievements presented in this 2023 report realize the vision and objective of this long-term peace education program to have the 21st century different from the previous one. The founder of AJECL remains convinced that “**Active non-violence is the best way to live a peaceful world and achieve sustainable development for humanity during the 21st century.**” To achieve this new way of thinking and acting, everything should be done to strengthen the capacities of young people. It is necessary to help them resist all forms of manipulation and exploitation, and to adopt non-violent means. It is important to raise awareness about the culture of peace, social cohesion, justice and progress for all.

We thank our financial partners who contributed to the realization of the activities during the year 2023. Especially we thank **Lemonaid&ChariTea foundation from Hamburg in Germany and Friedens kinder from Koblenz in Germany** as the main financial partners for this year concerned.

We also thank the authorities at the district and sector level of the AJECL intervention areas who work closely with the AJECL team to achieve the expected results.

May God bless all these efforts for peace and sustainable development in our country and in our Great Lakes Region.

**MUGWIZE AMAHORO TUYAGABE MU KINYEJANA CYACU**  
**Done in Mageragere Kigali, Rwanda, January 31, 2024.**  
**Abbot IYAKAREMYE Théogene**