



# CIVIC SPARK BY **INNOCENT MWUMVIKANO**



- NATIONALITY** *Burundian (based in Belgium)*
- ORGANISATION** *Tournons la Page Burundi*
- ROLE** *Secretary General*
- AREAS OF INTERVENTION** *Human rights, democracy, rule of law, good governance, citizen participation*

*How can we defend democracy when the law on paper does not reflect the law in practice?*

- 01** · Democracy is not a one-off event; it is a daily practice.
- 02** · Civic education, dialogue, peaceful mobilisation: citizens bring the law to life.
- 03** · The activist of tomorrow takes many forms, united by their refusal to indifference.



## 01 . MISSION

### WHAT IS THE MISSION OF YOUR ORGANISATION?

*Tournons La Page Burundi is a citizens' movement based on a simple yet demanding principle: democracy must not be a one-off event; it must be a daily practice. In practical terms, this means restoring citizens' belief that they have a voice, and that this voice matters.*

## 02 . ROLE

### WHAT IS YOUR ROLE?

*I coordinate TLP Burundi's activities, help shape advocacy strategies and work with civil society organisations. But my role is often that of a bridge-builder: between rights and citizens, between legislation and reality, and between young people who want to take action and the forums where their voices can be heard.*

## 03 . METHOD

### WHICH METHOD DO YOU USE TO MAKE THE DIFFERENCE?

*I do not believe in instant change. I believe in raising awareness. Change often begins with a conversation, a training session, or a question asked at just the right moment. We focus on civic education, dialogue and peaceful mobilisation. The law alone does not change a society: it is the citizens who bring it to life.*

***“The law alone does not change a society. It is the citizens who, by understanding their rights, bring it to life.”***

**- Innocent Mwumvikano**



## 04 . EVENT

### WHICH EVENT SPARKED THE BEGINNING OF YOUR JOURNEY AS A DEFENDER OF DEMOCRACY?

*It wasn't a single incident, but a series of experiences that can't be forgotten. In the late 1980s, a neighbour who held a high rank in the army tried to seize our land. Justice prevailed, thanks to my father's courage in standing up to this man for over 15 years.*

*In Burundi, I was confronted from a very early age with arbitrary detentions and violations of fundamental rights. I saw people vanish from the justice system, sometimes never to be seen again. As a lawyer, this tension between what the law says and what people actually experience made it impossible for me to remain a bystander.*

## 05 . WHY

### WHY SHOULD PEOPLE START FIGHTING FOR POLITICAL FREEDOM?

*Because political freedom is what enables a society to engage in self-reflection without fear. Without it, decisions are imposed from above. With it, they are shaped collectively. It allows us to challenge, to propose, to correct, and to dream. A society that loses it always ends up losing far more.*

## 06 . TOMORROW

### WHO DO YOU SEE AS TOMORROW'S DEMOCRATIC ACTIVIST?

*The democracy activist of tomorrow will not have just one face. It might be a student organising debates, a journalist who still asks the right questions, a lawyer who refuses to trivialise injustice, or a young person who chooses to inform rather than divide. Someone who simply refuses to be indifferent. And when I look at African youth today, I see a generation that has not given up on striving for a better future.*



**Innocent Mwumvikano**  
*Interviewed by Fondemos.*